

Pathfinder

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THE PRICE OF WAR



The Americans were in the fight almost from the start. With the Roks they bore the brunt of the hard-hitting Communist offensive that overran Seoul, South Korea's capital, and finally stalled in the bloody, heroic bridgehead above Pusan. The Yanks paid an appalling price for stubborn resistance when the odds were great against them and for fierce attacks when the U.N. counteroffensive got rolling. The still incomplete American casualty list shows 4,036 dead, 4,336 missing, 18,129 wounded.

The turning point came Sept. 15 when General MacArthur made an amphibious end run and landed forces at **Inchon**, 150 miles behind the enemy's rear line. After that it was all U.N. In 36 days Seoul was retaken, Pyongyang fell and enemy resistance crumbled.

The battle to curb the aggressors is about over; the struggle to restore peace and unity to Korea is only beginning. That will be a U.N. job with a seven-nation committee (including the U.S. and Russia) assigned to do the preliminary spadework. It cost \$2 billion to win the war; it may cost as much to win the peace. U.N.'s first estimate—\$500 million to \$1 billion for three years—appears to be conservative.

Smashed Capital. From the air Korea looks like a land of charred ghost towns and acres of smoking villages. Seoul was 50% to 60% wrecked. Other cities got a hard pasting. Oil refineries, locomotive works, factories by the scores must be rebuilt. Hundreds of bridges were blown up. It will take millions of dollars and thousands of man-hours to clear away the rubble and build anew.

Reconstruction is one immense job; restoring political unity may be even more ticklish. The U.N. is still undecided on how to join North and South Korea under one government. But last week Syngman Rhee, President of the Republic of Korea, jumped the gun in an attempt to provide his own solution. He appointed governors for the five North Korean provinces, started looking for men he could trust to run towns north of the 38th Parallel. Some of Rhee's critics, who have pinned a dictator tag on him, fear his ambitious aims will point up a new crisis, encourage civilian support of Communist guerillas, plant the seeds of possible civil war. It's up to U.N. to apply the brakes.