

Pathfinder

November 15, 1950: p. 22

Korean Pearl Harbor?

*Red China's attack threatens U.N. victory
as Mao moves on three fronts*



New U.N. foe. First Chinese Communists taken prisoner

Will Mao Tse-tung's intervention in the Korean conflict become the Pearl Harbor of World War III? At Lake Success and Washington, in all the capitals of the non-Communist world, that was the great, frightening question as this election week began.

Two weeks ago the United Nations forces had the 20-week war in Korea all but won. The enemy suffered 335,000 casualties, including 135,000 taken prisoner. Torn and bleeding, he was pinned down in the hills of North Korea, a badly-mauled rat in the U.N. trap. All that remained to be done was the mopping-up.

But last week Mao, Red China's boss and Joseph Stalin's partner-in-arms, mixed into the fight at the eleventh hour plus, presumably at the instigation of the Kremlin, and with its blessing. The first surprise attack came at night. It was mounted by reckless fighters, who swarmed into battle on horseback and afoot after bugles had morbidly sounded "taps." The Reds pounced on two combat regiments of the American First Cavalry Division and the South Korean First Division. Hundreds of civilians, caught by the flaming machine-gun and mortar fire, were mowed down. In U.N. casualties, it was one of the costliest engagements of the war.

Deadly Answer. Pfc. George Dick of Lake Village, Ind., was one of the Americans who lived to tell about the attack. The bugles sounded, he said, when he was "talking to a couple of other guys" who couldn't sleep, wondering whether Chinese Communists were helping the North Koreans.

Red China's Attack

“We kidded about some frustrated GI bugler playing his tin horn. We were having a good laugh when two guys no more than five feet from us began spraying us with lead.”

Pfc. Henry Tapper of High Point, N.C., also was in the thick of it and came out alive. Said he: “Someone woke me up and asked if I could hear a bunch of horses on the gallop. I couldn’t hear anything. The bugles started playing taps, but far away. Someone blew a whistle and our area was shot to hell in a matter of minutes. I’m not too sure how it all happened right now, but I know we lost more of our outfit there than got out.”

In the days of probing attacks that followed the Reds put aside bugles and horses and struck with modern lethal weapons from the Soviet arsenal. On the ground they used Russian T-34 tanks, self-propelled artillery, recoilless guns and “*katyushas*,” Soviet World War II multiple rocket launchers. And flashing in from Manchurian bases across the Yalu River boundary of Korea came Russian jets and Yak fighters to strafe troops and battle American planes.

General MacArthur took note of the serious turn of events in a Monday communique. The briefing that followed was one of the most somber in the experience of newsmen who have covered MacArthur from Corregidor to Pyongyang.

Undeclared War. The Communists, said MacArthur, “committed one of the most offensive acts of international lawlessness of historic record by moving, without any notice of Lelligerency, elements of alien Communist forces across the Yalu River into Korea and massing a great concentration of possible reinforcing divisions with adequate supply behind the privileged sanctuary of the adjacent Manchurian border.”

While he did not identify Mao’s regime in his statement, the target was unmistakable. In a formal report to the United Nations Security Council, MacArthur listed 12 separate instances of Communist intervention, on land and air, since Oct. 16.

At the request of the U.S., the Council called a special meeting to consider the issue Wednesday. Last June, with Russia sidelined by a walkout, it moved with admirable speed to resist the North Korean invasion of South Korea. Unless the U.N. again acts quickly and with equally firm resolution, the Allied blood spilled in Korea will have been in vain.

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Vish-

Red China's Attack

insky is at Lake Success, and it's a safe bet that he would veto any Security Council action against Communist China for its intervention in Korea. But last week, the General Assembly set up new machinery to get around the veto when world peace is at stake. It approved the Acheson plan (PATHFINDER, Nov. 1) to give the veto-proof Assembly a chance to act when a veto hog-ties the Security Council.

The Lamps of Manchuria. Last week speculation on Mao's aims in Korea centered on the giant hydroelectric power project on the Yalu River in the general area of present fighting. Built during Japanese occupation of Manchuria and Korea, it is regarded as the TVA of Asia. The 525-foot Suiho dam at Supung is one of the world's largest—compares favorably with some of the large U.S. dams. The Yalu project provides power for North Korea and Southern Manchuria. U.N. spokesmen first interpreted Mao's thrust across the border as an effort to protect the source of power for Manchurian cities.

But MacArthur's serious charges and the U.N.'s quick decision to consider them indicate that Mao is after more than electricity. His forces are invading Tibet (see page 25). He is aiding Ho Chi Minh's Communists in their fight against the French in Indochina. And he has 600,000 troops within easy striking distance of U.N. forces in Korea. These well-armed, seasoned Red fighters are commanded by Gen. Lin Piao, who forged many links in the Communist chain of victories against Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists.

War Fever. In Peking, capital of Red China, the sabers were being rattled louder and louder. Press and radio stepped up attacks on the United States. Screamed Mao's New China press agency: "Just as with the Japanese imperialists in the past, the main objective of U.S. aggression in Korea is not Korea itself, but China." And Red China is swiftly moving to war footing. Factories are urged to step up production "to meet the threat of mounting American aggression." Dairen, Port Arthur, Mukden and other Manchurian cities have been put under martial law. Air-raid shelters are being built in Mukden. The Peking-Mukden rail line has been closed to passenger traffic and the military has been given top priority in use of the line.

Red China's man of mystery may hurl his juggernaut full force into Korea. Or in the face of U.N. pressure he may

Red China's Attack

elect to keep the bulk of his vast army on his side of the Yalu in a maneuver to pin down U.N. forces. In any event, American lads who have been fighting their hearts out from Pusan to the edge of Manchuria face a cold Christmas in Korea rather than a warm reunion at home.

November 15, 1950

OldMagazineArticles.com