

Munro Reviews Causes of Near-Debate in Korean War

(Special to The Guardian by Ross Munro)

The American fighting men in Korea don't alibi their reverses. I've had G.I.'s and generals at the front tell me: "We took a hell of a licking."

But what are the basic causes of this near-debate in the face of Communist aggression that has galvanized the United Nations to action?

The men in the red-clay fox-holes and the dapper colonels at G.H.Q., Tokyo, are all trying to piece together the answer. There is no pat reply to the question for it has many puzzling ramifications that will never be sorted out.

But it is an important question to try to answer and without making any unwarranted criticisms, these seem to be some of the reasons for the troubles the American forces have had:

Most important of course is the enemy. At least three North Korean divisions, among the 13 or 14 identified, have been trained by Russian advisors since 1946 for invasion of South Korea.

Other divisions have been trained for one or two years for the same job. There doesn't seem to be any question about the purpose of training.

Tough Soldiers

The North Korean soldiers are tough and well-trained. Many of them fought in the Chinese Communist armies. Their leadership is good. Most of the young officers are bold and imaginative. The troops are indoctrinated by the Communists—told they are fighting for the unification of Korea in the face of American imperialism.

They have made the most of their Russian-type weapons and they know far better than western troops how to fight in the mountains, guerrilla-style.

The Reds use fairly orthodox infantry tactics, but can throw masses of men into frontal assaults, while small parties infiltrate around the flanks of the Americans.

The enemy has outnumbered the Americans frequently four or five to one and there have not been enough American troops in Korea to hold an extended line against such strength, despite the fact that the enemy had no air force to speak of and the Americans had a considerable one.

The North Koreans are brutal, savage soldiers to whom mass sacrifice apparently means little. Life is cheaper to them than it even was to the Japs. In the Pacific war, the enemy also has its agents all over South Korea and knows what American dispositions are.

So much for the enemy. To try to understand the picture of near-disaster, you have to go back now to the start of the invasion.

Poor U. S. Intelligence

American intelligence about North Korean moves seems to have been astonishingly bad. GHQ apparently did not think that the aggression was imminent. When the first news of the Reds' crossing the 38th parallel was carried by an American news service, GHQ was inclined to discount it and put it down as another border raid. The story in Tokyo is that staff officers did not even inform General MacArthur about it until six hours later.

That was the first blunder. Intelligence has never quite caught up with the situation. Even when I left the front, there was no adequate information coming back to the American commanders from behind the enemy lines.

This put the field commanders under a severe handicap, for they could not properly anticipate enemy moves.

At the start, the American high command evidently believed that a few American battalions in Korea would be enough to convince the Communists that they should pull back. But this did not work out.

As it was the American 24th Infantry Division was rushed over from Japan piece-meal and put into the line in bits and pieces. The division is extremely bitter about this. The officers and men feel that if they had been ordered to take up defensive positions about the middle of Southern Korea and made a co-ordinated stand they could have blocked the Communist spearhead and held until other divisions got over.

Inadequately Trained

Again without being unduly critical, it is an accepted fact now that the 24th Division and the other occupation divisions in Japan were not adequately trained. It has been a fairly soft life for the troops in Japan. Many of them are young, green kids. It was a terrible experience for them to face highly-trained North Korean forces.

I don't think the American soldier had any idea when this thing started what the fighting was all about. The stock answer I got from G.I.'s was: "I guess I'm fighting, because I'm in the army. I got to kill gooks or get killed myself."

In the first fierce phase of the campaign, American field leadership probably was not as good as it should have been, although even then the commanders had perilously little to work with. But a good many officers and men seemed incapable of adjusting their thinking to the necessities of the campaign—to get off the roads and fight in the hills.

Weapons Good

American weapons for the most part have been good. But there was a lamentable failure in the first phase to have anything at the front that would stop the Communist T-34 tank. Finally rocket launchers were rushed in some of them flown by com-

mmercial aircraft right from the U. S.—and they do the trick.

Wireless communications kept breaking down. One day with the 24th Division I found divisional headquarters was out of touch with its leading regiments for most of the morning and afternoon. In fact, two American correspondents and myself brought back word from the Chinju that Chinju had fallen to the Reds. It was the first word the 24th Division had received. The general who fought the Chinju battle came to divisional headquarters to confirm our report an hour later.

In that same battle, there was one incredible incident. Three new Pershing tanks that could deal with the T-34/85 had been moved up to the Masan-Chinju road. They were vital to the American holding action there.

But they burned out some fan-belts and some voltage meters on the trip and were released back to base for spares. The first box of spares that was dropped by a small plane was fanbelts all right, but they were not the right size.

The tanks remained immobilized on the road outside Chinju. Another plane came over with what was supposed to be the right spares. The tankers opened up the box and found it contained 45 calibre pistols.

The Reds over-ran the tanks and killed the crews on the road. It was the general himself who told me this story—told it in tears of rage.

Fundamental Reason

But the fundamental reason for the early defeats is the overwhelming masses of men that the enemy threw at the Americans. By daring manoeuvre, merciless, ruthless North Koreans outflanked and infiltrated the U. S. lines and by terroristic tactics numbed green G.I.'s.

The mystery remains, however, as to how the Reds have kept going under the American air and U. N. naval attacks and in the face of the building up of beach-head. How do they keep getting ammunition and gasoline to the front when their lines of communication are being continually attacked?

I asked intelligence officers about this and there is a strong suspicion that the North Koreans established scores, even hundreds of dumps secretly in South Korea before the invasion.

They also might have sent junks down the coast, loaded with supplies, that could be picked up in the inlets and coves as the advance went on.

I tried to get on to Admiral William Andrewes, commander of the Royal Navy, commander of the U. N. fleet units carrying out the west coast blockade. He thought it was the only answer, for he is convinced that very few enemy ships are running the blockade successfully. (Copyright Southam News Services.)

Business Spotlight

By Forbes Rhude
Canadian Press Business Editor
Commercial opinion in Yorkshire anticipates a strong opening of the wool marketing season in Australia. Aug. 28, says an International Wool Secretariat report to the Wool Bureau, Inc., Toronto.

Though there is evidence of consumer resistance in some wool-consuming countries, says the report, conditions at the moment are dominated by the strong statistical position of wool—which means that more wool is being sought than is being produced.

Meantime the Canadian Woolen and Knit Goods Manufacturers Association reports that wool cloth was shipped to Canada from Britain during the first five months of this year at a rate 28 per cent above the 1938 level.

Meat Lower

Chicago meat men expect the prices of meat to come down, says a Wall Street Journal story, and any drop in the United States is likely to cross the border. The Journal adds:

Lower livestock prices should make such essential packinghouse by-products as hides, tallow and lard a little cheaper. However:

"Meat marks are mercurial, and anticipations of lower prices could be disappointed if, for instance, the country heads into general sharp inflation."

Another Journal story says that drugstores in California, tired of fighting food supermarkets, now are seeking alliances with them. It says that in Ontario, Calif., Owl Drug Company, Rexall's west coast chain, has hitched one of its units to Lucky Star Market, a grocery outfit.

They have each invested half the capital for a new supermarket "which might best be described as a 'drugocery' where a lady can push her cart over about 21,000 feet of floor space and pile it high with everything from potatoes to patent medicine."

SMALL POPULATION

The State of Nevada counts little more than one person per square mile.

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Marrying Mark

By VIOLETTE KIMBALL DUNN

Continued

She was almost at the front door before she apparently remembered the others. Lucy and Valerie still sat together in the big chair. They were chatting busily, but looked up as she called to them. "I'll be seeing you very soon, Valerie darling. Good-bye, Miss Hadley. So nice to have met you."

"Good-bye, Mrs. Waterford," said Lucy. "Valerie, don't forget, you're coming for a day with me very soon."

"Thank you lots," said Valerie quickly; "but now I must study all day. You see, I've been missing so much education—"

"Darling I don't give up that easily," said Elise softly. "You'll find out—" she sounded faintly threatening.

Elise made good her threat two days later. She called Valerie late in the afternoon, asking her to lunch the next day. She said nothing about Lucy. Valerie happened to be in her own room when the call came. She had a curious illusion of walls closing in as she tried frantically to think of some reason why she couldn't go. Again it was Mark who saved the day.

"I couldn't promise without asking my father," she was almost faint with relief.

Elise became reproachful. Valerie could practically see the drooping red line of her lips. Elise said she must ask him that very night, and telephone her at once. Valerie promised. She put the telephone down and sat staring at it.

Lucy came in and found her a few minutes later. "I wondered if you'd like a couple sets of tennis, or a swim in that adorable pool?" she suggested. "I'm not going to make a bookworm of you, you know."

"Yes, of course," said Valerie obediently.

"In other words, yes or no," laughed Lucy. "What's happened to you kitten?"

Valerie sat and looked back at her. She hadn't yet got entirely used to saying what she really thought. She had lived so long in a world of outward acquiescence.

ALEXANDRA W. I.

Mrs. Nathaniel MacKinnon was hostess to the Alexandra Women's Institute for the month of August. Meeting opened in the usual manner with singing of Ode and Creed repeated in unison. Nine members answered to roll call, with three visitors present.

Minutes of previous meeting were read, approved and signed. Treasurer gave her report of recent ice cream social; bills presented and paid. Mrs. Nat. MacKinnon and Mrs. Bruce Judson gave their reports on annual convention.

Discussion followed re. buying of cans collectively for, summer canning, and book of poems by "John of the Lilies." Correspondence was read and disposed of. It was agreed to postpone ice cream social for time being.

Some of the members offered to meet at the school for the purpose of cleaning and re-varnishing desks and chairs the following Monday night. September meeting was invited to the home of Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Gordon Burhoe. Lunch committee, Mrs. Ernest MacCabe, Mrs. Bruce Judson and Mrs. George MacLennan. Roll call to be responded to with recipe for fat school lunch. Collection 85 cents.

So she sat and looked at Lucy and said nothing, not knowing what to say. There was nothing uncomfortable about it as there often was when you were supposed to talk and didn't. Lucy just sat and looked out the window.

And then suddenly Valerie spoke almost before she knew it. "It was the telephone—Mrs. Waterford. You know—Elise. Do you sometimes find things quite puzzling?"

Lucy brought her thoughts back from the broad lawn beyond the windows. "Often," she said. "But puzzles aren't so bad. You just take a game of them if you just take them as they come. It's really not so much the puzzle as what you do with it."

"Oh, I see," said Valerie. It was a new angle and suggested possibilities.

Lucy watched her and wondered if she would say anything more. She hoped she would, but had made up her mind not to pry.

Valerie moved a little nearer. She would tell Lucy. After all, a tutor couldn't be only for books. Lucy was very wise. "You see, I don't like her. Mrs. Waterford, I mean. My mother did. That is, I suppose she did. They were together a good deal anyway, whenever I was home. Of course that wasn't very much. And then there's being loyal and not criticizing and all. And still there it is—I don't like her."

Lucy wondered if it were possible that less than ten years lay between them. She felt like Methuselah. "I often get like that," she said.

Valerie looked up. "Really?" she asked hopefully. "Absolutely. And when I do I turn it into a kind of game. I call it 'Making Excuses.' Not for myself—that's not so good—but for other people. Especially when you don't like them. I think maybe they aren't happy, or their shoes don't fit, or somebody dropped them on their heads when they were babies. You know—like that."

Valerie laughed. "That's fun," she said. "I wonder what I could think up for Elise? Would the head dropping one do?"

"Well, first tell me why you don't like her."

"Do you like her?" countered Valerie.

Lucy thought furiously. "How do you know? It's a little soon to tell. You see, I never laid eyes on her until last night."

"Oh!" said Valerie disappointedly. "But sometimes you can tell right away. Look at father and me and you."

"I suppose that was an exception," said Valerie. "Well suppose you were me—I mean I—and didn't like Elise. What excuse would you make? I mean for her?"

Lucy thought hard. Elise would not be lacking in mental gymnastics, she decided, as long as she stayed at Wide Acres. "You didn't tell me why you don't like her," she said.

"It's like this," Valerie explained. She drew on the bright chintz of her chair with a pointed finger. "She's going from here to here, you see." She made a straight line between two points. "But she doesn't go this way—" a series of curves indicated Elise's circuitous course. "And then she wants to ask you something terribly, and she doesn't. She just talks around it until you get all mixed up and tell her something you don't want her to find out. So you see, she isn't a very nice person. At least I don't think so."

"There are the excuses I told you about."

"All right. You begin."

"Well—" said Lucy, "she's alone, isn't she? Being lonely often makes people disagreeable."

"She didn't have to be," explained Valerie. "There was her husband. He was quite nice. Not very handsome or young, but nice. And she knew he wasn't very young or handsome when she married him. Then after a while they weren't married any more. If she was lonely why didn't she keep him?"

"I give it up," said Lucy. She had rather a feeling of being carried over her head.

To be continued

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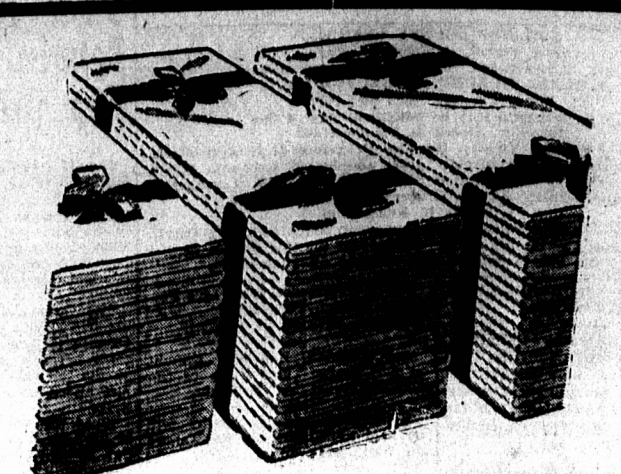
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To be continued



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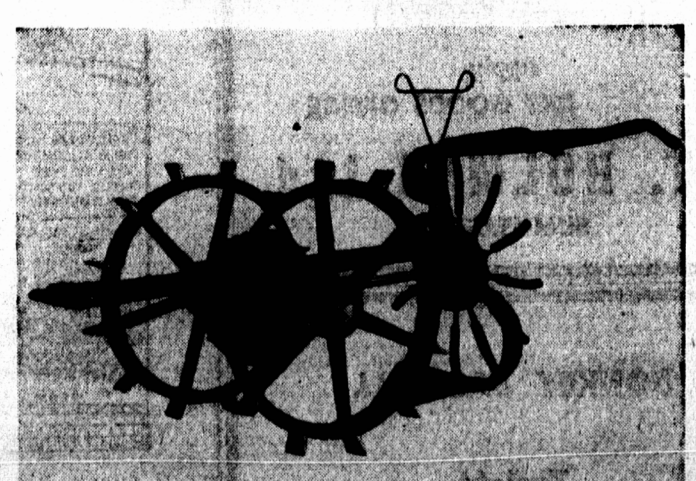
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