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# Korea Exposes One Of Worst Blunders In American History

Those Responsible  
For Military Weakness  
Should Be Relieved

By David Lawrence

Whatever the immediate significance of the Korean war, a profound effect on the long-range military policy of the United States has been produced.

Never again can America depend on that narrow concept of a one-weapon strategy, the failure of which has brought the nation to its senses suddenly to learn that American interests can be as gravely injured by a series of local attacks in different parts of the globe as by a blitz at a given point by the large-scale forces of an enemy.

For one of the worst blunders in all American history has been committed. It is a blunder inexcusable because it defied the plain lessons of history taught in every naval or military war college in every nation of the world for centuries past.

The truth is that a nation with global responsibilities, disregarding the simple fact that three-quarters of the earth's surface is covered with water, ignored the age-old doctrine which called for the stationing of naval and military forces at strategic locations outside continental United States. America's offensive strength has always been her best defense.

Today Soviet Russia has acquired a vast coastline on the mainland of China and is reaching down with her land armies to Korea and is plainly threatening Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines. Against this the United States has an insignificant fleet in the Pacific Ocean. Its airpower from floating bases is relatively small. Its firepower from battleships and heavy cruisers for shore bombardment is virtually nonexistent. Its "hunter killer" defense by planes from small carriers against submarines is tragically absent from important sea areas in our line of communications, though the planes and the ships have been available for five years.

History shows that seapower is basic to the transportation of men and supplies and for the effective use of land power and air power at the point of trouble.

## Navy Loses Its Status.

Whoever, therefore, scuttled the American Navy is responsible for today's debacle, having deprived the Navy of its status as a "fleet in being" recognized for centuries as a fundamental principle of national strategy. Those responsible for this mistake in judgment should be relieved of office—civilian or military.

Whoever took away from the United States Army its own airplane units capable of operating always with ground troops—compelling the Army to rely instead on the intermittent help of bombers or inadequate tactical units furnished by a U. S. Air Force primarily and rightly concerned with long-range strategic bombing—should be relieved of office, whether civilian or military. For to send a ground army into action without its own air artillery is like sending infantry into action without ground artillery.

Whoever fostered the idea that land armies of the United States could fight nowadays without armored divisions of tanks in sufficient numbers should be relieved of office—civilian or military.

Whoever sold Congress the idea that America would not need overseas bases—floating or fixed—with adequate forces maintained constantly in areas of potential trouble distant from our shores should be exposed to view now.

Politeness, personal friendships or sensitivity, partisanship are criminal excuses if they stand in the way of punishment of the blunderers. No other course will satisfy the mothers of the men who are dying in Korea nor the mothers of the many more young men about to die as a consequence of these mistakes.

## Whitewash Indicated.

The Congress shows signs of preparing a whitewash. A subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee has been hastily appointed with hand-picked partisans, and already it has been announced in effect that past mistakes will be ignored. What a travesty on Congressional government! Will the American people have to punish the Democratic Party at the polls next autumn, deprive it of its majority status and accept Republican leadership which has also been indifferent if only now to register a protest and get the President to clean house? He might do it by transfers and camouflaged changes in function, but the end result should be to get some new military and civilian planners of strategy at the top.

America today needs to fix on a new long-range policy commensurate with her responsibilities in the United Nations. America needs at least 3 million troops with plenty of tactical aviation of their own, a naval fleet close to what it had in 1945, an Air Force of 70 groups for strategic bombing, and a mobile force of U. S. Marines of at least 250,000 men to be stationed in various parts of the world where it can be supported by the sea power and air power.

These are the real costs of survival. These are the elements of a national strategy based on the lessons of history and experience. The price of peace is never inexpensive and the price of survival always is economic discomfort and sacrifice. The tragedies of ancient Greece and Rome, the tragedies of Italy and France and Germany and Japan in modern times, attest too plainly from a military and naval viewpoint to the disregard by their top commanders or civilian rulers of the significant lessons of strategy in world history.

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## Blame For Korea

Now that this Nation is again involved in a crisis, the typical American habit of seeking a scapegoat reappears. The blame for our present international situation has been placed on Congress, the President, the Administration's leaders as a whole, and even the armed forces. This is an outright case of ducking the blame on the part of the American people.

Republican members in Congress have been pointing an accusing finger at their Democratic opponents. The latter have been tossing the charge right back. Then there have been far too many newspapers, columnists, reporters, etc., who have been laying the blame at the feet of Congress as a whole. But one cannot rightfully blame this body, for it is an elected body and only reflects the wishes and desires of the people.

Thus, when Congress, faced with the mandate from the people they represented to find an easy and cheap way to provide for the national defense, bought the Air Force theory of defense through strategic bombing with atomic weapons. This solution would cost money, but probably not as much as maintaining a draft or some form of universal military training. And it would permit the youth of America to lie fallow and untrained.

A small part of the blame may be placed on those officials of our Government, who having

had reliable information on the world situation, including Korea, failed to act accordingly and acquaint the people with the facts and the steps that needed to be taken.

The attack in Korea came as no surprise to many Army officers. In the early days of our occupation there plans for its defense were based on the fact that attack, even then, was imminent. A congressional committee visited General Hodge to be briefed on the situation. But one member of that committee was so concerned that he slipped away from the briefing to take scenic photographs. Yes, we can blame this individual, but who elected him?

Intelligence on Korea was repeatedly transmitted through the armed forces to responsible civilian officials. But, as *Time* magazine recently pointed out, the President slashed the defense budget in order to pay off campaign promises. It was a time that called for a John Adams, who sacrificed his own personal political ambitions and those of his party for the welfare of the Nation. Instead we elected a clever politician who chose to give the people their "bread and circuses." I think that it is time that the American people, regardless of political affiliation, recognize that the blame rests squarely on their own shoulders, and think of the future and not the past.

LOUIS V. NAISAWALD.  
Alexandria.

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