1946

South Korea, Brilliant Campaign

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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The triumphant raising of the flag of victory over Seoul affords a good opportunity to appraise the success of the United Nations' Korean campaign. Certainly it must go down as one of the most brilliantly executed of its kind in history. No instance comes to mind in which forces caught by surprise and so drastically outnumbered and outgunned at the beginning have been able so quickly to fall back in orderly fashion, stabilize and regroup, stave off fanatical assault, and then complete an end run to encircle the enemy. The rout of the Communist armies from South Korea adds another star to the record of the old master, General MacArthur, for it was he who engineered the strategy for the whole campaign.

It has been said that the amphibious landing at Inchon represented more daring than brilliance. In a narrow sense that may be true - favorable conditions prevail at Inchon only a few days during the year because of the gigantic 30-foot tides. If the invasion had failed, the cost might well have been great. But the essence of great generalship is knowing when to take chances; generals who play everything safe never achieve triumphs.

The campaign is the more remarkable because of the widespread misapprehension and misinformation about it during the early days. The world was caught off guard by an intelligence failure, and in the first shocked days the retreat, fought inch by inch, frightened both laymen and news correspondents. But as the United States began to pour in troops from Japan - first mere battalions, then divisions - the retreat soon became a planned withdrawal. Perhaps the most noteworthy showing of all was that of the South Koreans, who fought with real valor after they had time to recover their wind. Incidentally, Allied forces never did fall back to the final line which the generals thought they might have to strike as the last ditch in holding the Pusan perimeter. If there was any Allied numerical superiority toward the end, it was only because of the fantastically large enemy casualties.
In this campaign I want to, if I may, speak not as a Democrat but as an American. There are those who are rather shortsighted; some may be a little more absorbed with their own desires than they ought to be, but basically we all want the same thing. I think we have got to sit down very realistically and see what it will take, and then we have got to proceed and do the things that are necessary. Peace is not cheap, but war is a lot more expensive. Mr. Hoffman testified some months ago before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I believe, that the cost of the war, when it is finally added up, will be over $1,350,000,000,000—that is one trillion three hundred and fifty billion dollars. So in terms of money there is no comparison between what war costs and what it will cost to build an enduring peace. But, we have to build it; we have to build it brick by brick, and stone by stone. What those of us who pointed to the importance of Korea have said has been borne out. I think in terms of peace and in terms of security for our own children. Let us learn by it. Let us not spend our time in recriminations. Let us profit from our lessons, and let us all, together, wisely plan for the future, a future that has strength in it; a future that is mapped along courageous and hopeful lines, and let us rid ourselves of the fear that is every day being deliberately injected by some into the bloodstream of America. We have nothing to fear except our failure to face facts and to take the action they call for.
I deserve no credit for my war record. I feel deeply grateful that I was privileged to serve my country. The men who really deserve credit for their war records are the men who never have returned from war. I do not believe that any candidate for political office should ever presume upon his war record.

I feel very humble in comparison with the men, in all branches of the service, who died and were never able to return. In comparison with them, my contributions have been very small indeed.

My opponent has given much publicity to his war record but I have a war record too. There are 100,000 other Montanans with war records. There are good and, in most instances, better than ours. I deserve no credit for my war record.
My opponent states "Mike Mansfield failed to oppose State Department's appeasement of Communist Aggression". As he says "let's look at the facts for a few minutes".

Is voting for the Marshall Plan to stop Communism in Europe appeasement? Is voting for the North Atlantic Pact to arm our friends in Europe appeasement? Is voting for a 70 group air force appeasement? Is fighting for a strong Marine Corps appeasement? Is voting for military aid to China, the Philippines, Iran, and Korea appeasement? Is voting for economic aid to Korea appeasement? By the way, my opponent, has stated that "the blood of every American killed in our war against Communism should cling to the conscience of my opponent, Mike Mansfield". This is so despicable a charge that it is contemptible. Why doesn't he tell you that the bill for economic aid to Korea was defeated by a vote of 192 to 191 in the House on January 19, 1950? Who led the fight for this aid and who fought to have the second bill — which passed — brought out? The Republicans led the fight against aid to Korea and called it "Operation Rathole". It was an easy bill to vote against; it was an easy bill to demagogue about; but, it is a hard vote to explain today.
Of course, I was the author of the Mansfield Report on China. Everyone in Montana knows that and my opponent admits he has known about it for five long years. Who sent you the Report on China? I did and what did you say or do about it? Nothing — nothing at all until you decided to run for political office. You say you were amazed when you saw it. Five years is a long time to be amazed and do nothing. Why not? Tell the people of Montana or don't you think they're entitled to know?

You say I "endorsed and blessed the Chinese Communists even though I did not visit their territory in North China? That's charitable because four years ago, my Republican opponent for Congress, said I did visit North China and spent most of my time with the Commies. A debate coach should have his facts straight and not switch so often.

You quote excerpts from my report and you imply what you would like me to think. Listen, I've always done my own thinking. He even finds fault because I report a conversation with Sun Fo, a member of Chiang's Cabinet for reporting what he — not I — said.

He states Sun Fo told me that a connection between Russia and the Chinese Communists might reoccur following World War II and then says, "But nowhere in his Report does Mike Mansfield pass the warning on to Congress and the President". The very Report that my opponent
quotes from was the Report I made publicly to Congress and which has always been a public document since January 16, 1945. Anybody could read it all at any time because it is in the Congressional Record.

He states that my Report in 1945 was responsible for Truman forcing Communists into Chiang's Government or no further aid would be extended. This, I must admit, is news to me because I did not think I wielded such power until my opponent switched that responsibility on to me. Needless to say, it is false.

He states we abandoned China to Communist aggression for five years. Did we? Let's look at the Record and see. Since VJ Day, we gave Chiang the following:

1. Over 2 billion dollars in loans and grants
2. Transported 500,000 Nationalist troops over and around the Communist forces to key sectors in East and North China to insure an orderly surrender of the Japs, disarmament, and repatriation of Japanese.
3. 50,000 Marines were sent to North China to hold the area for Chiang.
4. By end of 1945 we equipped 39 divisions of Chiang's troops.
5. We equipped and 8 and 1/3 group air force.
6. We repatriated 3 million Japs out of China.
7. We gave Chiang 171 naval vessels.
8. We sent a naval mission to Tsingtao.
9. We sent a military mission — 1000 men — to Chiang.

What happened to all this material?
Does that look like we abandoned them? Don’t call me a Far East expert. I’m just a man who tries to understand happenings as they occur and act accordingly. I can’t be on all sides, I can’t be all things to all men, I can’t switch with Calvert.

My opponent says that we invited North Korean Communists to commit aggression and that then we completely reversed our policy and decided on intervention. I did not know that we invited North Korean aggression as I had thought that Russia had something to do with it. Perhaps my opponent feels that we should have done nothing after South Korea was attacked except hole up in Japan, remain weak, and allow Russia to make another thrust elsewhere. I cannot agree with his view or the views of his Republican colleagues because I believe aggression must be met with force wherever it occurs. Not to do so would lay us open to disaster and the loss of our liberty.

He says we are approaching a Third World War? I hope he is wrong because our policy has been directed toward an avoidance of such a catastrophe. The appeasing of Russia has not been done by me because I have always — not just lately — recognized the danger. The Republicans have talked a good game against the Commies but where were they when the chips were down? Where were they on the Marshall Plan, North Atlantic Pact, Aid to Korea and China, etc.?

He points out Russia has vastly improved her military powers and we have demilitarized ourself. Now true! Where did the Republican Party stand on this? You tell them. And you tell us now we are fighting for our very existence! Why didn’t you do something about it over the past
five years?

He says, "Mike Mansfield's Report implied — repeat, implied — that we had nothing to fear from Communism in China. What do you mean implied? You know that your statement is a filthy lie yet you try to put words into my mouth. That won't work — not even for a debate coach who is an artist in taking all sides."
If time permitted, he says, he would brief you on Marx, the Communist Manifesto, and Stalin. You don’t have to brief us because we know what Communism is, what it means, and what it can, if allowed to develop, do to us. You know that we Americans have absolutely no use for Communism and yet, you try by sly innuendo, try to tag us with that label.

He says "I'm not calling Mike Mansfield a Communist but I am saying that he helped to appease Communist aggression". Let's look at the Record.
Why did it take you so long — five years — to tell the people about these charges of yours? Why didn't you write to me and call them to my attention and demand an explanation. Why are you using such low-down guttersnipe tactics? Do you think that by using the Hitler or Stalin technique of the "big lie" that you can hoodwink the people of Montana?

If you had lived in Montana more than the eight years of your actual residence here, you would know that the decent, hard-working, and honest people of Montana know the score and do not go for clap-trap or lies — even from a debate coach who makes his living taking all sides of every question. If there is anything I despise it is someone who switches the truth to serve his own political ends. This is no time for "politics as usual", this is no time to switch, and this is no time to put oneself up as God who alone knows all the answers.
He can campaign his way; I'll campaign mine.

What would my opponent have me report? Would he want me to lie or tell the truth? Why does he attack me for telling the truth? Would he bear false witness to catch a vote? And, if he would, is he fit for any office — or even a teaching position — let alone the Congress of the U.S.

In this job you've got to call them as you see them.