

THE KOREAN CRISIS

THE patent intervention of Communist Chinese forces in the Korean war dominated the military and diplomatic efforts of the United Nations in December. For United Nations forces the month meant retreat before numerically superior forces. The retreat took the Eighth Army 120 miles south to points below the Thirty-eighth Parallel where, relieved of the immediate pressure of Chinese and North Korean units, its consolidation along a 140 mile defence line was accomplished. The evacuation of the Tenth Corps from the Hungnam sector on Christmas Eve considerably relieved the gloomy picture. An army of 105,000 men and complete equipment was moved in an amphibious operation to the Pusan-Pohang concentration area.

In a war summary issued late on Christmas Eve, General MacArthur said that Communist troops were "deploying into attack positions" at several points and generally building up their strength along a line facing the United Nations forces. Elements of Communist troops were reported from the front to have crossed the Thirty-eighth Parallel, a line which the Chinese Communist Foreign Minister declared on December 22 had been "obliterated forever". Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea was once again being evacuated and thousands of refugees poured south into Pusan.

United Nations forces suffered a further blow in the accidental death of Lt. Gen. Walton Walker on December 24. Lt. Gen. Matthew Ridgway flew immediately from the United States and assumed command of the Eighth Army on December 26. At the same time the Tenth Corps, which had operated independently in the north-eastern campaign, became part of the United States Eighth Army.

Communists Attack

The New Year was inaugurated with attacks by Communist forces all along the United Nations line. These attacks were launched on New Year's Eve and unofficial estimates set the attackers' numbers at 200,000 Chinese and 85,000 North Koreans. Holes were punched in the United Nations line, one wedge extending to within twenty miles of Seoul. Many competent observers saw in these attacks a co-ordinated offensive by Chinese and North Korean forces with its objective the destruction or expulsion of United Nations forces. A tightening up of security regulations in the last few weeks of the year, reduced the flow of newspaper coverage of troop movements and battle progress. It will be sometime, therefore, before the details of the year-end offensive are complete.

Canadians in the New Year are likely to have an even greater interest in the Korean war than heretofore. In mid-December the Second Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry arrived in Korea. The Battalion immediately got down to a schedule of intensive training. Nothing concerning future activities of the force had been made public at the year's end.

Throughout the month of December, diplomats of the free nations grappled with the problems raised by Chinese intervention in Korea—problems which were global in their implication. At their Washington conference, President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee discussed fully the international issues presented by the Communist menace throughout the world, and major policy decisions were taken to meet the threat of more general war. At Lake Success, consideration was being given to the possibility of arranging a cease-fire in Korea and eventual negotiation of the crisis.

During their important Washington talks, President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee laid the groundwork for the policy they would pursue in the critical days ahead. Following their final meeting on December 8, they issued a communiqué which did not deal with Korea in isolation, but set the Korean war in the framework of the world crisis. In that communiqué President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee