

Last Civilians Leave Haiphong as Communists Prepare To Take Over City

Quemoy-Matsu Defense Declared Most Misunderstood Topic in World Affairs

Editor's note: The following dispatch from the editor of the New York World-Telegram & Sun was filed from Paris on the last leg of a round-the-world flight of six weeks, most of which were spent in the trouble spots of the Far East—a part of the world with which the writer has been in close and constant touch for 30 years.

By ROY W. HOWARD
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Paris — From SEATO to NATO, from East Asia to Western Europe, the military and political spotlights are on Quemoy and Matsu.

Even in this glare of publicity, these tiny islands, almost unheard of until the last few months, continue as the world's most confusing, provocative and generally misunderstood topic of discussion.

The chiefs of staff as well as the man in the street are engulfed in confusion.

Opinions as to the importance of the future fate of the islands vary widely. To some nothing more is involved than a small real estate deal. To others, better informed, the fate of the islands may set up an historic milestone for Communism's drive toward conquest.

Meantime, the need for an informed American public opinion is most pressing. Viewed from either the Far East or Europe, American opinion as reflected in news dispatches of the statements of public figures seems hopelessly confused over many critical issues with which we are legitimately concerned.

Simply stated, the paramount issue is whether, when the Chinese Reds attempt — as it is agreed they ultimately will — to seize Quemoy and the island

group known as Matsu, the United States will assist Chiang Kai-shek's forces in defending the islands.

As a result of congressional action, America's ultimate course will be determined by the President. It is generally agreed that this is as it should be.

America is committed to resist any Red aggression against Formosa and the Pescadores, and believes that if there is a showdown Britain will back us up. However, virtually all the British and probably a majority of the American public do not recognize in any Red attack on the offshore islands the same menace they recognize to be involved in an attack on Formosa itself.

Realignment of opposing opinions in the pending controversy may be of interest. To take them separately, the arguments of those opposed to American or British assistance in the defense of Quemoy and Matsu are that:

The controversial islands are nearer to the Red mainland than to Nationalist Formosa, and have too little strategic value to justify changing a major conflict.

The islands are unnecessary to Chiang Kai-shek's defense of the Pescadores or Formosa.

Possession by the Reds would not deter any future anti-Communist move against the mainland since they would be unserviceable as stepping stones or an attack base.

A clash with Red China over Quemoy and the Matsus would be another wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Supporting the other side of the argument are probably 80 to 90 per cent of the top flight American military and diplomatic personnel operating in the Far East. These professionals believe that permitting the Reds to take the islands could mean the beginning of the end of Free China. They also think it would topple such shaky remnants of American prestige as still exist in the Far East. In support of this position they argue that:

The islands are of great value as a deterrent to aggression because, by minimizing Red ship-

ping access to Amoy and Foochow, they retard the buildup and hamper the support of mainland forces opposite Formosa, and since the island inhabitants are fanatically anti-Communist and unflinching in their support of Free China, thousands would face certain execution if captured.

Chiang's unaided defense of the islands would be costly to the Reds. With American support the cost of the attack probably would be prohibitive.

Chiang admittedly must defend the islands to preserve the morale of his army of Nationalist Chinese who voluntarily accompanied him to Formosa to fight Communism. These men already have strategically retreated so many times under American pressure that another withdrawal would shatter the army's confidence both in Chiang's leadership and American support.

Nationalists Needed
This is important to America because without a dependable Chiang army American troops will be necessary to insure the continuance of Formosa, an outpost of America's Pacific defense.

Millions of Chinese reside in Burma, Thailand, Indochina, Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia where they frequently exercise great political influence. Many of these people are not enthusiastic about Chiang Kai-shek but are overwhelmingly anti-Red and recognize the Generalissimo as the only present hope for a Free China. They want China freed from Communism but know that this is only possible with outside help. If Chiang is forced to defend Quemoy and Matsu alone, the lack of American assistance will shatter the belief of the overseas Chinese that the free world is really determined to block Red aggression. Such a loss of confidence would be disastrous to anti-Communism throughout Southeast Asia.

There is plenty of legitimate ground for the difference of opinion between the two schools of thought. Neither side has all the answers.

Rats Scurry Along Streets, Gutters; Explore Rubbish

By ERNEST L. ZAUGG
United Press Correspondent

Haiphong, Indochina — (U.P.) — The bell in the tower of the French Chamber of Commerce is tiny and cracked and it tolls the hours with an empty and mournful sound.

This is appropriate. The bell is ringing out the French empire in North Viet Nam.

On May 18, this city which Frenchmen built half way around the world from their homeland will be thrown open to the Communists. Ho Chi Min's forces already are at the gates, ready to take over as agreed at the Geneva Conference last summer.

The last civilians to leave were packing and heading south today. They must be out by tomorrow. A token force of soldiers will stay a while longer, but already Haiphong is a city without a master.

The rats seem to have taken over. They scurry along the streets and dive into gutters. They explore heaps of rubbish left by departing refugees. They clamber aboard houseboats which squat in the mud flats of the canal.

Cats Watch
The cats watch and doze, too lazy to interfere.

A pig has planted himself squarely in the middle of a once-busy street. He seems to think he is boss here now. He might as well be.

The mayor of Haiphong, Pham Van Dot, has bravely tried to hold together a disintegrating administration. His chief job was to get as much equipment and as many people out as possible.

French businessmen, who weathered many a storm in this inflamed appendix of Asia, tried to muster their traditional high spirits for their painful departure. Many said they were sure that merchant ships flying the tri-color would some day nuzzle into Haiphong's dock again.

The French are not the only ones going south. About half the native population has gone, too. Many Vietnamese who once denounced French "colonialism" have chosen to go with the French rather than face an austere and brutal Communist regime like the one they have heard about from the north.

Priest Ready
A Roman Catholic priest moves about the emptying streets of Haiphong with a pistol in hand. He shoots mad dogs that prowl the alleys. This keeps his eye sharp. The Reds have already tried to kill him three times.

Haiphong is an Asiatic Dunkirk for the Catholic faith. Of the half-million refugees who have passed through here en route to the south, 90 per cent are Catholics.

When the Communists arrive, Haiphong will get a face-lifting to make it look like other cities under Red rule. The city will probably be cleaned up.

"The rubbish will be picked up," a longtime French resident said, "picked up off the street and put into people's heads."

Nuclear Production In Washington Eyed

Washington — (U.P.) — The Atomic Energy Commission said today it has approved a study by the Puget Sound Utilities Council to determine feasibility of nuclear power production in the state of Washington.

"The purpose of the study," the AEC said, "is to determine the nuclear power system of systems most practical, technically and economically, for future construction and operation in the areas served by the member utilities and to estimate when such construction will prove economically feasible."

Members of the council are the department of lighting of the city of Seattle, the light division of the city of Tacoma, the Puget Sound Power and Light Co. of Seattle, public utility district No. 1 of Snohomish county, and public utility district No. 1 of Chehalis county.

Senior CAP Members Slate Meeting Friday

Senior members of the Medford squadron of the Civil Air Patrol will meet at the CAP building at the Medford airport Friday, April 15, at 8 p.m.

The senior program and the classes for all new probationary members will be discussed. The assistance of all members will be needed on May 22 for the celebration of Armed Forces Day, and the program for that day will also be briefly outlined at this important meeting, officers said.

Several Feared Dead As Bridge Collapses

Woodville, Miss. — (U.P.) — Ragging flood waters of the Homochitto river today halted rescue attempts to reclaim uncounted victims in cars that plunged into the water when a bridge collapsed.

Authorities had no idea of how many persons died late Wednesday when two center sections of the 100-foot bridge caved in. It was feared that at least two or three vehicles tumbled 30 feet into the water.

Radio Station Dancing Declared Not Unusual

Atlanta — (U.P.) — The Georgia Supreme Court holds that dancing in a radio station is not "unusual, unnecessary or unreasonable."

The Supreme Court reversed a lower court decision in favor of Trammel Chitwood, of Calhoun, Ga., who had complained that stopping square dancers in the radio station upstairs were ruining his shoe business.

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