

IV - 69 - 17. "War Making Japan Strong - Woman Reporter Back from China"
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War Making Japan Strong

Woman Reporter Back From China

Japanese gunnery and aviation, which were considered second-rate when the China "incident" broke out three years ago, have improved to the point where the Land of the Rising Sun will be a formidable opponent in a major war with the United States or any other power.

This observation, gleaned first hand, was voiced yesterday by Miss Agnes Smedley, veteran newspaper correspondent, who has been with Chinese regular and guerrilla forces in the front lines ever since the Sino-Japanese hostilities began. She is visiting her sister, Mrs. Myrtle Finney, of Chula Vista.

GRADUATED HERE

Miss Smedley, who was graduated from San Diego State college when it was a Normal school and who was on the college faculty during the World war, was a correspondent for the Manchester Guardian until recently when that British newspaper was forced to curtail its foreign service because of diminishing paper supplies necessitated publication of smaller editions.

"Chinese soldiers on the front lines have told me that the Japanese, through the constant practice they have had in China, have become expert in artillery and in air fighting and bombing," Miss Smedley said.

CHINA TO SURVIVE

Asked how long China hoped to survive the Japanese invasion, Miss Smedley commented:

"China not only will survive the invasion but will drive Japan out of her country—with sufficient aid from America, and only with that aid will it be possible.

"The Chinese are fighting today because they believe the free peoples of the United States and other democracies are behind them, and as long as that belief is backed by tangible evidence, Japan will be kept busy for some time."

A demoralizing factor to the Chinese, Miss Smedley reported, is the inability of the Chinese to understand how the United States can furnish moral and financial aid to China and still allow Japan to buy oil and other materials of war with which to fight the Chinese.

EFFECT MINIMIZED

Miss Smedley believes the Russian-Japanese pact merely recognized existing facts and that the treaty had no effect on Russian shipments to Chiang-Kai-Shek's government. Miss Smedley left China recently, on a neutral liner, and she said that at that time there was no evidence that Russia was decreasing aid to China.

The recent rift between the Central government and the Communist armies, Miss Smedley said, was the result of effective Japanese propaganda.

"It almost worked too well," Miss Smedley reported, "except that, when the Central government sent an army to wipe out the Communists the Japanese attacked both armies



AGNES SMEDLEY

... foreign newspaper correspondent, who has been with Chinese regular and guerrilla forces in China, and now is visiting here.

and leaders of both factions realized they were only playing Japan's game.

"While there may be differences, it seems certain now that China will continue unified as long as the Japanese menace continues."

Emperor Hirohito's men, according to the correspondent, are becoming more and more calloused in China and Chinese know that "when Japanese armies start an offensive, they can expect the worst in the manner of brutalities and oppression."

Miss Smedley, who also served in the Chinese Red Cross, spoke bitterly of the treatment accorded Chinese by the Japanese conquerors.

BRUTALITY EMPHASIZED

"There no longer is an appropriate way to describe Japanese military philosophy. The memory of the sacking of Chinese cities and the indignities imposed on Chinese men and women by the invaders stays with me as the most horrible experience any peoples ever had."

The only reason Japan has not moved into the Dutch East Indies, Miss Smedley said, is because of the fear of United States wrath which might result in a major war.

"Japan could drive the British out of the Orient without too much

trouble, but the fear of the United States holds it back from attempting to fulfill its dream of Asiatic conquest. I believe the decision in the Pacific, as far as the Japanese are concerned, now rests with the result of axis efforts to take the Suez canal.

"If Suez falls, and the American fleet is sent into the Atlantic, I'm sure Japan will move. The Japanese military have taken advantage of every diplomatic and military opening in the past and they're awaiting this important development impatiently but fully prepared."

While in China, Miss Smedley was seriously ill as the result of insufficient vitamins in the Chinese diet. She recovered in a Chungking hospital.

"All we had in the northwest and other battle fronts was two meals a day—of rice and turnips, rice and turnips. With each move to some other sector Chinese officers would tell her the diet would be better as "they grow better turnips there."

A Reuters dispatch, given prominence in the United States press, recently disclosed an alleged Japanese campaign to put Miss Smedley, along with five other correspondents including Edgar Snow, on an official death list because of their sympathies for the Chinese cause.