

Bombing Japan No Easy Task Map Will Show

CHICAGO, April 7—In the bombardment of questions which assails anyone who has just returned to the United States from China there is one query which recurs with monotonous regularity: Why aren't we bombing Japan? Looking at a map, where Japan and China seem almost to touch, it does appear that hitting at Japanese cities from our bases in China should offer no insuperable difficulties. But to the men of the spot, where distances are measured in hundreds of miles instead of inches, where supply problems are agonizing and where big airdromes are few and vulnerable, the task of striking deep into Japan's vitals looms up for what it is—a job of truly formidable dimensions.

There is, however, a silver lining to this dilemma. Preparations for heavier and more frequent bombing of Japanese bases are going forward. During the coming months our air force will range farther and plunge deeper into the core of Japanese military and naval power than ever before. The promise has been made to China and it will be kept, despite impressive obstacles.

Problems of Supply

Unless carriers are used—and we have few to risk for such a purpose—the bombing of Japanese bases is, first of all, a problem of supply. For long range bombing of this kind you must have heavy bombers, or medium bombers especially equipped for long-distance flying. These bombers, when they can be spared from other more urgent fronts, have to be flown 15,000 miles before they even reach their base of operation. All gasoline, all personnel and all maintenance equipment required to keep these huge craft flying have to be flown into China from India, which is the nearest point that can be reached by ship and train. Most bombs also have to be carried by air into China, often for distances as great as 1,000 or 1,500 miles, to reach only the points from which the bombing missions can begin. Chinese arsenals produce limited quantities of light and medium bombs, but cannot begin to supply the needs of any large-scale offensive.

In the second place, bombing Japanese bases is a problem of distance. There are Chinese troops with 900 miles of Tokyo, but that doesn't mean that there are suitable airdromes that close to the enemy capital. Any attempt to construct such facilities in guerrilla areas behind the Japanese lines would inevitably provoke attack from Japanese ground forces which could reach and wipe out such installations with ease. The most advanced Chinese airfields are capable of accommodating heavy

bombers are still well over 1,000 miles from Tokyo.

Closer at Hand

There are, however, many Japanese bases closer at hand which can be bombed with ease and with damaging effect if we can get the planes to China in sufficient quantities to do the job. Our present air force in China is much smaller than most Americans suppose. Because of this and because of supply difficulties, it has had to limit its operations to nearby objectives. The effective attacks on Hong Kong, Canton and Haipong and the damaging raids on Japanese shipping are only a sample of what American pilots will be doing in China when they get the tools to work with. The longest American raid out of China, so far, was the attack on the Kailan coal mines, in extreme northern China. It failed in its purpose—the destruction of the powerhouse controlling the mines—but as a morale booster, its effect on the Chinese in occupied regions was electric.

Many fine targets lie within less than 1,000 miles of Chinese bases. Japanese bases on the island of Formosa and Japanese installations at Nanking, Shanghai, Tientsin and Peking are within easy flight. Manchuria, the great continental base of the Japanese army, is also within practical range. The day will certainly come when American bombers will be striking regularly at such major bases as Dairen and Mukden. In Manchuria and north China are situated some of Japan's biggest mines and largest industries. That area is Japan's major source of iron. The biggest coal mine in the Japanese empire is only a few miles from Mukden. Near Mukden, too, are arsenals and aircraft factories. In western Japan, inside the practical radius of flight for heavy bombers, are such centres of industry and shipping as Nagasaki and Shomonoseki.

Successful Raid

The Doolittle raid on Tokyo, though highly successful, was expensive and demonstrated what a tough job of planning and execution such a project involves. But it has been done once and can be done again. I wonder if it is generally realized what a terrible vengeance was exacted by the Japanese army for that American raid on the Japanese capital. The ven-

geance was wreaked not on the Americans but on the Chinese. It was a direct result of the Tokyo raid that the Japs launched their offensive last summer in Chekiang province, eastern China, which must rank as one of the bloodiest and most barbaric chapters of the whole China war. Their object was to capture and destroy Chinese airdromes which they believe the American pilots had tried to reach and from which future raids on Tokyo might have been possible.

The Japs pillaged and burned nearly every town and village in their path. They turned their crops and ruined what was left. Horses to graze on the peasants' They carried off or destroyed stores of food and grain. They made bonfires of farming implements. They killed recklessly. In the course of their advance, they subjected undefended cities to incessant and murderous bombardment, for no other purpose, apparently, than to show their spite against the men who had dared to fly over the palace of their emperor. The city of Lishui, site of one of the airports from which Tokyo could have been raided, was bombed for 21 consecutive days, until more than 60 per cent of its buildings had been laid flat. Once they had captured the airdromes, the Japs cut them to pieces with long deep parallel trenches, for which, of course, they used press gangs of Chinese peasants and villagers. Then they withdrew. Not for many months will east China recover from that orgy of vengeful destruction.

Aim to Terrorize

Obviously, one of the Japanese aims was so to terrorize the Chinese population that they would resist any effort to re-establish bomber bases in their territory. Similar tactics have been employed in southeast China, where there has been much indiscriminate Japanese bombing accompanied by leaflet raids in which the people were warned, in effect, that "this is what happens to Chinese who give help to American pilots." But the Chinese are not easily intimidated.

Free China has numerous airdromes, scattered over her whole area, but very few of these are large enough or sufficiently well equipped to serve as bases for heavy bombing operations. That's another reason why the bombing offensive against Japan has been slow in starting. Moreover, unless sufficient fighter planes are made available to protect these fields, they are vulnerable. The more bases there are, the better will be the opportunity of playing hide-and-peek, with the numerically superior enemy. Because of our numerical weakness in the China skies our air force there has had no other choice but to adopt hit-and-run guerrilla tactics.

When Gen. Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, chief of the American army air force, went to Chungking to report to Gen. Chiang Kai-shek on Casablanca, he was able to study American air problems there at first hand. Gen. Arnold promised China that the volume of airborne supplies would be stepped up, that more airplanes would be sent and that bombing operations would be intensified. These promises are on the way to fulfillment, though world strategy, with its emphasis on Europe, puts limitations on the amount of help that can be assigned to China at this stage of the war.

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