

23 Oct 51

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FAR EAST

1. Communists trying to expand air operations in Korea:

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[] intensive construction efforts at two new Communist airfield locations in northwestern Korea may be in preparation for large-scale air operations from Korean fields.

During the past week, [] [] the construction of revetments and the resurfacing, possibly with concrete, of runways at two new airfields, at Taechon and Namsi, north of Sinanju. Each field, capable of supporting jets when completed, will be about 6,500 feet long with revetments for 45 aircraft. The field under construction at Taechon is protected by an unusual concentration of both heavy and light anti-aircraft weapons.

In the light of the recent expansion of Communist jet interception activities to the Sinanju area, [] a "continuation of the high level of enemy air activity in this region would undoubtedly render UN air efforts north of Pyongyang extremely hazardous. . . ." Under these circumstances "it would be possible for the Communists to base aircraft on these facilities with relative safety. . . ."

Comment: UN air supremacy over North Korea and the ability to destroy enemy air facilities before they became operational have been predominant factors preventing extensive enemy air operations from Korean bases. This intensive airfield construction, well within the defensive range of Communist jet interceptors from Antung, suggests a Communist strategy of "leapfrogging" units to airfields farther south in order to challenge UN air supremacy closer to the battle line.

On 22 October, nine UN medium bombers attacked the airfield at Taechon and, according to press accounts, "knocked it out."