

# Jin-nan Campaign & Battle Of Mt Zhongtiaoshan

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In Aug 1939, USSR and Germany signed non-aggression pact. USSR withdrew its military personnel from China. On Sept 1st 1939, at the news of Russian invasion of Poland, Mao Tse-tung made an announcement of support, claiming that Russians had the right to liberate minority Ukrainians and White Russians who numbered 11 million in Poland. Shi Zhe translated Mao's article on "New China Newspaper" into Russian, and Comintern had it translated into French and German for the communist members to study. In the winter, USSR invaded Finland. USSR was kicked out of the League of Nations. In April 1941, USSR signed neutrality treaty with Japan. Mao Tse-tung applauded USSR-Japan pact as Russian's best choice in avoiding the implication of an imperialist world-wide war.

In the spring of 1941, Japanese amassed armies in the areas of Jincheng, Yangcheng, Qinshui, Wenxi, Xiaxian and Anyi for a Jin-nan Campaign, intending to take over control of southern Shanxi Province, clear the pockets of resistance in Mt Zhongtiaoshan and extend its control to the northern Yellow River bank. Since the spring of 1938, Chinese forces had been defending Mt Zhongtiaoshan and hence secured the cities of Luoyang of Henan Province and Tongguan of Shenxi Province as well as posed threat to [[Tong-pu]] Railway to the north. Chinese 1st Military District, with 7 corps, buried themselves inside of the 50 kilometer long Mt Zhongtiaoshan. Chinese forces defended their positions by means of solid trenches to the north and the Yellow River to the south, and dispatched contingents for harassing Japanese in occupied territories. Meanwhile, Chinese forces at Mt Luiliangshan to the northwest hit the Japanese in the hind.

In order to sweep the area effectively, Japanese North China Front Army requested reinforcements with its China Expeditionary Army headquarters to beef up existing troop level of four infantry Shidan of 35th, 36th, 37th and 41st. Shortly after dusk, on 7th, 41st Infantry Shidan and 9th Independent Mixed Ryodan attacked the Henglingguan-Xisangchi line at the junction area between Zeng Wanzhong's 5th Group Army (3C & 17C) and Liu Maoen's 14th Group Army. Simultaneously, 36th Infantry Shidan, 37th Infantry Shidan and 16th Independent Mixed Ryodan attacked towards the east from Zhangdian, Xiaxian and Wenxi directions. On May 8th 1941, Japanese took over Mengxian and Jiyuan in northern Henan Province and Huanqu of southern Shanxi Prov. Zone commander Wei Lihuang frantically ordered that the bulk of 9th Corps cross the Yellow River at Guanyangdu. Additionally, Wei Lihuang wired to have 5th Group Army retreat to the southern bank of the Yellow River while dispatching two regiments of troops from 85th Division of 14th Corps to the Wufujian beachhead on the northern bank.

To the west of Wufujian, 80th Corps, having incurred heavy casualties after two days' battles, crossed the Yellow River for the south after leaving Wang Jun's New 27th Division as rearguards. Division Chief Wang Jun, deputy commander Liang Xixian and tactician Chen Wensi all died in battles. First War Zone, to preserve the troop strength, ordered 5th Group Army to break out towards Mt Luuliangshan. 3rd Corps Chief Tang Huaiyuan, unable to break out of encirclement, committed suicide, and 12th Division Chief Cun Xingqi died during the breakout. On May 14th, 14th Group Army, being ordered to break out towards Mt Taiyueshan, broke out towards the north of Qinshui-Yicheng Road after leaving behind guerrilla attack forces consisting of partial troops from Chen Munong's 10th Division of 93rd Corps near Yangcheng, partial troops of 98th Corps to the south of Dongfeng and partial troops from 15th Corps near Henghezhen. Major Mt Zhongtiaoshan fighting ended on May 27th. While the main bulk of Chinese forces broke through the siege and reinforced defences inside of Mt Luuliangshan and Mt Taihangshan, the stranded troops inside of Mt Zhongtiaoshan incurred continuous Japanese comb-hair sweeps as well as hunger due to lack of food.

Wu Xiangxiang stated that Japanese newspapers widely reported that communist-controlled Eight Route Army (i.e., 38th Group Army) had mostly remained in northern Shanxi Province and furthermore attacked and took over remnant nationalist army by taking advantage of the Mt Zhongtiaoshan debacle. Both UPI and Tokyo news agencies mentioned that Japanese army and communist army did not engage with each other. On May 21st, "Da Gong Bao" ["takungpao", i.e., Grand Justice Newspaper] criticised communists for its passivity in the war. On May 23rd, CCP leader Zhou Enlai published a rebuttal article on the same newspaper as to their passivity during the Battle Of Mt Zhongtiaoshan. "Da Gong Bao" further advised against communist' possibly following Soviet Russia which had signed a non-aggression pact with Japan one month before. On July 21st, "Da Gong Bao" newspaper admonished communists by pointing out that Japanese army, after finishing the Mt Zhongtiaoshan Campaign, did not forget to sweep through communist-held territories of Ji-Cha-Lu [i.e., Hebei, Cha-ha-er and Shandong provinces].

In July 1941, General Xu Yongchang wrote a four year war review, pointing out that China's sustaining and persevering warfare had proved to be the correct strategy. Xu Yongchang further stated that Japanese generals misjudged KMT government as equivalent to warlordship of early Republic years, that Japanese army had lost martial virtues as a result of barbarity and pillaging, and that Japanese soldiers and citizens had lost their morale as a result of prolonged quagmire in China. Citing German strategist Claus Von Clausewitz, Xu Yongchang stated that Japanese, having relied too much upon cannons, were doomed to be defeated by Chinese infantry at the separation of cannons from their field army. Statistically, Xu Yongchang stated that Japanese initialized wars had decreased to 56% in Feb 1940, while Chinese counter-attacks amounted to 46% of all engagements.