THE WAR - WEEK — Commentary on Current Events

Assault Upon German-Occupied Countries Is Allies' Chief Problem

The broad lines of Allied global strategy, says the New York Times, were laid down within the month that followed Pearl Harbor. Germany, counted the most powerful foe of the United Nations, was marked for defeat first. A harassing war upon Japan was planned until the full weight of Allied might could be brought to bear following the defeat of Germany. Last week, seventeen months after these decisions had been made, they were being questioned in America. There were demands for a change that would make Japan the enemy to be defeated first.

Victory on Attu

While this discussion was under way Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt and their military advisers were surveying future Allied plans. Hints of their decisions were seen in the action on the fighting fronts in both the Eastern and Western theatres of war. In the East American troops wrested control of strategic Attu Island, in the Northern Pacific, from the Japanese. This tiny fog-bound island could become a base for Allied air blows against the Japanese on near-by Kiska Island. In addition, Americans had gained on Attu a Japanese-built bomber runway from which Flying Fortresses and Liberators may strike at a naval base on Paramushiru, northernmost island of the Japanese homeland, 630 miles to the southwest. With the development of new longer-range bombers even Tokyo, 2,000 miles from Attu, might be within round-trip range.

Blockade Weapon

Some observers saw other, even more important, advantages in the recapture of Attu and the expansion of American bases throughout the Aleutians. These point out that the teeming northern sea commanded by the islands is one of the world's richest fishing areas. From these waters and the adjacent sea of Okhotsk Japan has been drawing a large portion of its food supply. Thus American operations against the big Japanese fishing fleet might in the long run prove a blockade weapon of decisive value. In addition, American possession of the entire Aleutians chain, stretching 1,200 miles from Alaska to within 500 miles of Kamchatka, would provide a series of stepping stones for the eventual attack on Japan proper. In the event Russia becomes involved in the Asiatic war, this route could be of inestimable value in joint operations.

In the West the Allied air forces pressed an ever-mounting assault upon Adolf Hitler's Fortress Europa, an offensive driven home with particular fury against the Italian islands in the Mediterranean. There the drive seemed a prelude to invasion.

Strategy Reaffirmed

In these operations observers saw a reaffirmation of the original plan. The assault upon the German-occupied Continent would remain the Allies' chief concern. It would increase in fury in the air. It would, at the proper time, be extended to include ground action. The Pacific would remain secondary. But in this theatre there were signs that the action would be stepped up and heavy blows would be aimed at Japan even as Germany was being beaten to its knees.

The debate on the wisdom of this course was started in the Senate last Monday by Senator Albert Benjamin Chandler of Kentucky, who contended that America should concentrate against Japan first, Germany second. He offered two arguments to support his contention. The first was that the Japanese were digging into their newly conquered lands and unless ousted now would prove tough opponents later. The second was a charge that after the war in the West was won Great Britain and Russia would withdraw, leaving America to win back the East alone.

Mr. Churchill's Reply

The Senator was answered in dramatic fashion. The Prime Minister of Great Britain appeared before a joint session of the American Congress, where he defended Allied grand strategy in much the same way that he appears from time to time before the British Parliament to defend the policies of his government. Mr. Churchill went directly to the issues Mr. Chandler had raised.

First came a pledge, aimed at allaying the suspicions that Britain would not take her full share in the war in the Pacific. He said:

"And I am here to tell you that we will wage that war (against Japan) side by side with you in accordance with the best strategic employment of our forces, while there is breath in our bodies and while blood flows through our veins."

Role In The East

Next the Prime Minister spoke of the role the British forces can play in the East. He said:

"A notable part in the war against Japan must, of course, be played by the large armies and by the air and naval forces now marshaled by Great Britain on the eastern frontiers of India. In this quarter there lies one of the means of bringing aid to hard-pressed China."

Then he turned to the fundamental Allied strategy and reiterated it. He said:

" * * * it was evident (in 1941) that while the defeat of Japan would not mean the defeat of Germany, the defeat of Germany would infallibly mean the ruin of Japan. The realization of this simple truth does not mean that both sides should not proceed together, and indeed the major part of the United States force is now deployed on the Pacific front."

Japan Must Be Held

In point of fact, the whole agitation for switching the war effort to the Far East is based on that same fatal underestimation of Japan which led to the initial disasters for both Great Britain and the United States. For with all due respect to statements attributed to military commanders in the Far East, it is worse than wishful thinking to assume that either Great Britain or the United States could deflect enough forces and shipping space to the Far East to deal a knockout blow against Japan without courting complete disaster in Europe. And to do anything less would be worse than futile: it would merely divide the Allied forces and invite defeat, or at best produce a stalemate in both theatres of war. Japan must be held at all cost, and in so far as Allied resources permit, bases must be created and roads blasted open in preparation for the day when both America and the British Empire can concentrate all their forces against it. For to defeat Japan will take all that we can give.

Allies To Occupy Reich And Italy

German Militarism To Be Crushed Once and For All

The Allies are determined to avoid one of the major mistakes of the 1918 armistice and intend to occupy Germany and Italy with their military forces lock, stock and barrel when the final collapse comes, it was asserted in informed quarters.

Furthermore, it was understood that during the period of military occupation the Allied leadership has decided to deal only with military authorities and only on an unconditional-surrender basis.

There will be no trafficking with puppet governments brought out of the limbo to save the face of discredited regimes.

And if the military authorities in the occupied countries cannot re-establish order, the Allies will do the job themselves in the transition period until the people have the opportunity to choose their own free governments, it was said.

"This time there won't be any armistice," one well-placed informant declared. "German militarism is going to be crushed once and for all.

"As proclaimed at Casablanca there must be unconditional surrender. This done, there won't be any future Hitler to rise up and say it was the home front that collapsed, instead of the army.

"The failure to occupy Germany after the last war was responsible in large measure for this war. That mistake will not be repeated."

It was said that the United Nations' decision to treat only with the military authorities in the post-war interlude was based upon a desire to prevent any appearance of supporting political factions.

Australia's Method

Soldiers in Australia between 18 and 19 years of age who have completed their military training will be used in rural mobile labor pools until mature enough to be sent to operational stations.

THREE LITTLE PRINCESSES

Although their country is an island of neutrality in a continent of war, these three little Swedish princesses have gay smiles for the camera at their home near Stockholm. They are Princesses Birgitta, 6; Margaretha, 9, and Desiree, 5, daughtrs of Prince Gustaf Adolf and great-granddaughters of King Gustaf V.

OTTAWA REPORTS

That Canada's 1943 Food Production Drive Will Be Greatest in Our History.

That Farmers Have Been Given Special Consideration in Meat Rationing Plan

No single wartime regulation by the Canadian Government more closely concerns the day in and day out lives of all Canadians than the meat rationing order. There were lots of folk completely unaffected by one or other of the restrictions passed upon the consumption of liquors, or tea, or coffee, or even gasoline, but nobody, from infancy to old age, except a very few vegetarians, is unaffected by meat rationing.

Weeks and weeks of intensive study and careful consideration were devoted by experts to the planning of this unprecedented change in the Canadian way of accustomed living. The experts approached the problem in the full realization that rural Canada presented a completely different set of circumstances from those prevailing in the cities. Full consideration of the way of life of the farmer's family in respect to meat supply has een given in the meat rationing plan.

There are some 650,000 farmers in Canada, and very many of these secure a part of the meat they and their families consume from the slaughter of their own animals. Many secure a portion of their meat from the farmer next door or the one on the next concession. The fact is, the farmer gets much of his meat supply from his home-killed stock, and there is a good deal of exchange of meat between farmer and farmer.

On the other hand, very many farm households purchase a portion of their meat from the meat shop. A farmer kills a hog for his own family's use, probably sells half of it to another farmer down the road. But he and his family do not want to live on pork until the whole half hog has been eaten. He wants to be in a position to buy a roast of beef or a cut of lamb occasionally.

The meat rationing plan has been designed to take these facts into account. Farmers who slaughter meat for their own use are allowed to retain at all times 50 per cent. of their meat ration coupons with which to purchase meat from a retailer.

Farm households are urged by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board to live at all times within the spirit of the rationing order. If they have been eating more than two pounds (gross weight) per person a week, they are asked to cut their consumption by 10, 15 or 20 per cent., as the need may be, to bring them within the ration regulations.

They will want to think in terms of the overall supply and they will remember that our total consumption must be reduced by approximately 20 per cent. if our responsibilities to Great Britain, to our armed forces, to the Red Cross, etc., in fact, all those who are keeping the war from our shores, are to be met.

Farmers who kill their own stock and consume it themselves or buy meat from or sell meat to other farmers, are asked, however, to keep areful track of the coupons involved. Special stamped and addressed envelopes will be provided them by local ration boards so that they will be able each month to mail the coupons from their own households and those they have collected from other farmers to whom they have sold meat. Farmers who have been accustomed to mailing coupons for farm butter, will be familiar with the procedure.

If True, Where Do They Hide?

A writer in The Christian Century, Chicago, doesn't like the "harsh mechanical phrase — Unconditional Surrender." He thinks a "negotiated peace with Germany, without Hitler," would prove "the key to a just and lasting peace."

He declares that there are "millions of Germans who have steadfastly opposed Hitlerism ever since it raised its ugly head, and other millions of Germans who have now come to oppose the Nazis through the experiences of these last few bitter years."

What, one might ask, have all these millions, and additional millions, of Hitler-hating Germans been doing during the past four years? Have they allowed a comparatively few Nazi gangsters to browbeat and bulldoze them all?

Spare-Time Workers In British Plants

The office staff of a firm in the Midlands decided that they wanted to help in actual production, in additoin to their ordinary work. Shifts were therefore arranged to fill in all the times when the machines would otherwise be idle, in between day and night shifts, and at certain times on Saturdays and Sundays. Volunteers were asked for, and about two thirds of the staff joined in the scheme. They are now making nuts for aricraft, the women being engaged on machining and viewing and the men having been trained in setting.

Lake Freighters To Carry Guns

Lakers In Combat Zones To Be Manned by Navy

Keen-eyed veterans of the Royal Canadian Navy, some of whom have heard their shots rattle off the steel sides of enemy submarines on the Atlantic, will this year become crewmen of lake freighters for the first time in history.

Each of the lakers that finds its way through waters designated by the navy as a combat zone will carry stern guns for protection against lurking U-boats and blue middied gunners, who know how to handle them, will be on duty 24 hours a day.

Night and day shipyard workmen are putting the finishing touches on guns and equipment which skippers hope will bring death and destruction to U-boats and their crews who lurk in waters off Canada's eastern shores.

Special deckhouses are being built to house the gunners, only a few feet away from the guns, and lookouts will scan the water night and day for the tell-tale feather of enemy periscope.

Last year, according to the lake skippers, they could do little more than shake their fists at U-boats that surfaced near their boats and took pot shots at other ships in their convoys. But this year, they say, things are going to be different.

One skipper said that last year they could have finished off more than one submarine that surfaced near them, but hadn't as much "as a pea-shooter to hit back with."

The need for more ships on deep-sea routes, shipping authorities said, has made it almost a necessity to send the lakers on runs through combat zones.

What Determines Color Of The Sea

Canadian troops stationed as observers in Tunisia have commented frequently on the blue water of the Mediterranean.

Pure ocean water has a clear blue color because salt water does not absorb the blue rays of sunlight as it does the red rays. The proverbial blue of the Mediterranean is due to the fact that there are few large streams carrying the impurities into it, and there is a constant stream of salt water pouring into it from the Atlantic.

The blueness of sea water depends largely upon its saltiness. The Arctic and Antarctic Oceans, which are cold and not very salty, are vivid green in color. The Yellow Sea is golden because of the sediment brought to it by large streams arising in the desert of Western China, and the dull red tint of the Red Sea arises from millions of microscopic plants called algae. The Gulf Stream is marked by a clear blue ribbon of warm water in the Atlantic.

VOICE OF THE PRESS

FARM IMPLEMENTS UP

Examples are given of the prices received at recent farm auction sales. A six-year-old horse-drawn mower which cost $90, went for $75. A hayloader in use for twenty-four years, which cost $85, brought $95—ten dollars more than its first owner paid for it. A mechanical potato-digger, which cost $150 ten years ago, brought $162.

—Hamilton Spectator.

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CONSUMERS OF GASOLINE

Every single day airmen in training in this country fly 2,000,000 miles, which constitutes another very good reason why gasoline ration allowances for non-essential travel are considerably reduced this year.

—Brockville Recorder and Times.

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STARVING

It was meatless Tuesday and it was just heartbreaking to see those poor fellows in the restaurants trying to keep body and soul together by eating baked trout, pea soup, scrambled eggs, chicken pot-pie and the like.

—Fort William Times-Journal.

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AT LEAST IT ACHES

The Nazis are shocked by Churchill's vulgar phrase, "the underbelly of Europe," and suggest the more refined word "abdomen." Whatever thing is, it aches.

—The New Yorker.

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NEEDS A BIG HOLE

Goering orders slit trenches be dug for the protection of German civilians. Meanwhile, Hefty Herman is no doubt trying to scare up a steam shovel for his own use.

——Kitchener Record.

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TO FIT THE CRIME

Japan announces that it has punished British and American service men in the Philippines for posing as civilians. Maybe we should punish the Japs for posing as human beings.

—Stratford Beacon-Herald.

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JOKE ON HIM

A report from Indiana says that a youth who stole an auto "for a joke" was found in a ditch. The joke was on him.

—Brantford Expositor.

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UNFAIR TO WOLVES

A headline mentions "Jap Wolf Pack." An insult to the wolf which is, by comparison, a gentleman.

—Ottawa Journal.

Petticoat Rule

Petticoats— literally — are ruling the range country. Rancher Floyd W. Lee tried hiring 80 Navajo Indian women as sheep herders, and said men herders were never like this. Each squaw wears at least a dozen flaring, gypsy skirts, he explained—doffing them as needed to wrap up chilled, newly-born lambs.

FUNNY BUSINESS

"Send it as a one-word telegram—my brother's a numerologist!"

REG'LAR FELLERS—Strictly Fresh

By GENE BYRNES