

Abdul Rahman Azzam has since been appointed), was being established in the Egyptian Foreign Office, and that Egyptian representatives would shortly be appointed to Syria and Lebanon.

The Lebanese Prime Minister commented to the press last week on General de Gaulle's recent statement about the independence of Syria and Lebanon (see *Summary* No. 265). Although the official text had not, he said, been communicated to his Government, he noted with satisfaction that General de Gaulle had referred to "an independent Lebanon—independent from all sides." The President admitted, however, that he did not understand the latter part of General de Gaulle's statement. "It is impossible," he said, "that artificial difficulties should be created here. No one has the right to intervene in the exercise of sovereignty of this country, in its destinies and in its policy, which are now in the hands of the Lebanese, represented by their local and national authorities."

Discussions were resumed on the 30th October between General Beynet and the Syrian authorities, but progress, according to General Beynet, was about as much "as if they had been riding on a merry-go-round." The French continued to press for a treaty while the Syrians were adamant in their refusal to negotiate, and reiterated their demand for the *Troupes Spéciales* to be handed over immediately. At a meeting of the Syrian Parliament later in the day all the speakers supported the policy of the Government.

A deadlock has thus been reached in Franco-Syrian negotiations. Although little is known at present about the terms of the proposed treaty, that little is enough to make the Levant States believe that it would mean giving to France a privileged position which neither Syria nor Lebanon wishes to concede. They fear, indeed, that it might mean the re-establishment of the mandatory position—a prospect naturally abhorrent to them.

Mr. Churchill has replied to the letter from the Syrian President of the 19th September on the question of a treaty between Syria and France (see *Summary* No. 260). The Prime Minister states that His Majesty's Minister will explain the British point of view to the Syrian Government, and hopes that the President will consider it gravely and dispassionately. In response the President has told Sir E. Spears that, while greatly appreciating the spirit in which Mr. Churchill's message was sent, he wishes him to know that Syria cannot grant a privileged position to any other Power, and that the *Troupes Spéciales* must be handed over to Syria.

M. Solod, the newly-appointed Soviet Minister to Syria and the Lebanon, recently told the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Soviet Government, as M. Novikov had already pointed out, "wished to see the Levant States completely independent with no foreign Power occupying a privileged position."

The Persian Prime Minister has replied to the attack made upon him by M. Kavtaradze with regard to the Russian demand for an oil concession in Northern Persia. When first approached by M. Kavtaradze, said M. Saed, he felt sure that his Cabinet would not consent to the demand, but promised to discuss it with his colleagues. He did so on more than one occasion, and informed M. Kavtaradze of their negative reply. When M. Kavtaradze said that this amounted to a rejection of the Soviet request and would "strain relations," M. Saed suggested that if detailed proposals were made they would be considered by the Persian Government, although no final decision could be given until after the war. This offer was refused by M. Kavtaradze. The statement ended with four reasons for postponing the decision.

Up to the 2nd November the situation continued to be threatening. Demonstrations in favour of Russia occurred in Tabriz, and troubles were also reported in Resht and Isfahan. So great was the pressure exercised by the Soviet authorities that it looked at one time as if the Shah might have to sacrifice the Prime Minister, although it is doubtful whether his successor, whoever he might be, could adopt a different attitude. On the 31st October a broadcast from Moscow made a ferocious and baseless attack on M. Saed, accusing him and other "reactionaries" of wishing to make Persia "into a base for a line of attack on Russia." That part of the Persian press influenced by Russia also continued to attack the Prime Minister with unabated violence. On the other hand the number of papers supporting the Government's policy has increased, and Russian behaviour has been criticised as unwarranted interference.

His Majesty's Government regard the matter as sufficiently serious to warrant an approach on our part to the Soviet Government. After consultation, therefore, with the State Department, we are informing Moscow that we consider this to be a question which the Persian Government has the right to decide for itself,

and that, in view of the Anglo-Soviet-Persian Treaty and the Tehran Declaration of 1943, the Persian Government cannot be forced against its will to yield to the Russian demand. Moreover, we have accepted without demur the Persian decision to make no further oil concessions until after the war. The United States Government is taking similar action.

By the 2nd November the horizon began to clear a little. There were indications that the Russians might after all drop their demand. One good sign was that the Soviet authorities promised to provide rail wagons in Northern Persia for grain which has been held up for lack of transport.

(See also under "Soviet Union.")

THE FAR EAST.

President Roosevelt, in his press conference statement of the 31st October, made it clear that General Stilwell had been recalled at the request of Chiang Kai-shek and that there had been no other reason for it than that, as the President put it, "sometimes you just can't help hating someone." The recall, he said, had nothing to do with politics or strategy or with the Chinese Communists, or with the question of supplies for China, nor had it any connexion with the simultaneously announced resignation of Mr. Gauss, the American Ambassador in Chungking. Dr. T. V. Soong, the Chinese Foreign Minister, has now confirmed President Roosevelt's account of the affair. In a statement broadcast on the 4th November, the Foreign Minister said that the Chinese Government had not intended to issue any explanation, because the recall was purely a military matter, but there had been many "unfounded speculations" about the reasons for it, particularly in the United States army. In fact, it had been entirely "a question of personality" and had had nothing to do with any difference of policy between China and the United States. When General Hurley and Mr. Nelson had come to confer with the Chinese Government as President Roosevelt's personal representatives, complete agreement had been reached as a result of the talks, and Dr. Soong believed that, far from any rift developing between China and the United States, the relations of the two countries would from now on become "more understanding, intimate and fruitful than ever before."

The "unfounded speculations" which provoked this statement by Dr. Soong referred no doubt in the first place to the article by Brooks Atkinson, the Chungking correspondent of the *New York Times*, published by that newspaper on the 31st October and widely reproduced in American evening papers of the same date. Atkinson flew home from China with Stilwell and thus eluded the censorship in Chungking, which cut another correspondent's report on the same subject from 388 words to 10. Atkinson seems to have dipped his pen in Stilwellian vinegar, and he attacked the Chungking Government in no uncertain terms. He described Stilwell's recall as "the triumph of a moribund, anti-democratic régime, which is more concerned with maintaining its political supremacy than in driving the Japanese out of China." According to his account (which was reported to have produced "something like consternation" in the United States), General Hurley, as President Roosevelt's special envoy, had been negotiating during September for Stilwell to be given full command over all Chinese armed forces. The Generalissimo at first appeared to agree, but afterwards his attitude stiffened, and at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee (presumably its Standing Committee) in October he declared that Stilwell must go, that control of Lease-Lend materials must be placed in his own hands, and that he would not be coerced into making an agreement with the Communists. If the United States would not modify its demands, China would renounce Lease-Lend and go back to fighting Japan alone, as before Pearl Harbour. President Roosevelt then, according to Atkinson, agreed to recall Stilwell.

Much the same version of the episode was given by the British United Press correspondent, Darrell Berrigan, who added, however, that a dispute about strategy had played a major part in precipitating the crisis, as Chiang Kai-shek alleged that Stilwell had disobeyed his orders in launching the campaign in Yunnan, and held him responsible for the reverses in Hunan and Kwangsi on the ground that he had failed to provide any supplies for the Chinese forces engaged on that front.

Whatever may be the truth with regard to the negotiations carried on in Chungking by General Hurley, the statement that Chiang Kai-shek threatened

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