

culated to serve German interests. To preserve order, and to prevent her own position from being undermined, the British government has been obliged to take quick and decisive action in all these countries.

Trouble came first in Iraq. Open revolt was followed by the establishment of a rebel government friendly to the axis. In accordance with their treaty rights British forces intervened and suppressed the revolt. The legitimate government was restored.

It will be recalled that, during the campaign in May which ended in the crushing of the axis-inspired revolt in Iraq, the nazis were permitted to use the air fields of the French mandates of Syria and Lebanon in order to facilitate the sending of aid to the Iraqi rebels. This axis penetration of Syria constituted a grave threat to the whole allied position in the eastern Mediterranean.

It was accordingly decided that a nazi occupation of this vital strategic area must be forestalled. On June 9 the British and Free French forces invaded the mandated territory. The same day, General Catroux, the leader of the Free French forces in the middle east, proclaimed the independence of Syria and Lebanon. Although the allied invasion was resisted by the French troops in Syria, the government at Vichy refrained from describing the hostilities as actual warfare. An open breach between Britain and France was thus averted. The allied occupation was completed a month later and an armistice arranged, which was ratified by the government at Vichy on July 15.

Since the allied occupation of Syria and Lebanon the most significant development in the middle east has been the intervention by Britain and soviet Russia in Iran. During August, both the British and Russian governments became increasingly apprehensive of the effects of a German "tourist" invasion of that country. Diplomatic action at the Iranian capital had no effect, consequently, on August 25, British and soviet forces entered Iran to protect the oil fields and safeguard communications. They met little resistance, and after four days of desultory fighting the Iranian forces were ordered by their government to cease all resistance. By September 10 a settlement had been reached by which the government of Iran agreed to turn over the axis nationals in that country to the allies, and to expel the enemy legations.

More recently, the government of Afghanistan has agreed, in response to allied diplomatic representations, to expel the axis nationals.

In all four countries Britain has made it perfectly clear that in no way has she in view the expansion of her own empire by the

acquisition of additional territories. Assurances have been given that, at the close of war, the fullest measure of restoration of the sovereignties of these countries will be made.

The strategic importance of safeguarding communications between the British and Russian forces in the middle east can hardly be overestimated. Prompt action is being taken to improve transport facilities on the Iranian railways. In this vital task Canada has undertaken to share.

Now a word as to the far east. As with the countries bordering on the waters of the Mediterranean, so with the Asiatic countries bordering on the waters of the western Pacific, and with the far east generally, the situation has remained, until quite recently, pretty much what it was before the beginning of the Russian campaign. The effect of the latter, however, has been greatly to intensify the tension which previously existed, and which arose from the political and military activities of Japan and her claims to the establishment of a "new order" in east Asia. The Japanese leaders have not disguised the fact that Japan was giving consideration to the further use of force to expand her influence in this area. At the same time Japan has clearly been uneasy at the prospect of taking military initiative in the face of the firm attitude displayed by the United States, Britain and the Netherlands Indies.

At the moment when parliament adjourned, trade negotiations between Japan and the Netherlands Indies had broken down. A Japanese drive southwards seemed imminent. Before action came, the nazis attacked soviet Russia. There is no longer any doubt that the nazi attack was a complete surprise to the Japanese government and to the Japanese people. These soviet-Japanese pacts of non-aggression had been meant by the Japanese to be the counterpart in Asia of the nazi-soviet pact in Europe. Both agreements were being made use of as evidence on the part of Germany and Japan of their desire to limit the arena of hostilities. By Germany and Japan alike they were doubtless intended to secure the neutrality of Russia in a way which would free their own hands in any action which might be taken by either or both of them against the anti-axis powers. Germany's perfidious act seemed to require, if the axis front was to be maintained, a similar volte-face on the part of Japan. This necessary change of front found its expression, not immediately, but by the middle of July, in a change of government in Japan. Mr. Matsuoka, who as foreign minister of Japan had negotiated the Japanese-soviet pact, was not included in the new government. His