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PESSIMISTIC APPRAISAL OF GERMAN MILITARY SITUATION

BY JAPANESE MINISTER IN SWEDEN

EXTERNAL(2)

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Okamoto, the Japanese Minister in Stockholm, sent his government (Sept. 26) perhaps the gloomiest estimate that we have seen by a responsible Japanese official of the general German position.

After reviewing quite frankly and objectively the various fronts on which German armies are fighting, and expressing amazement at the speed of the Allied advance across France into the border regions of western Germany, the Minister fears that it will not be long until the Allies smash through the German western defences and that similarly to the east and southeast the Russians will shortly be fighting on German soil. Germany, definitely forced on the defensive, is being hemmed in on all sides. German inferiority in tanks and aeroplanes is emphasized.

He states that there is complete control of the home front so that there is no likelihood of an opposition government emerging in Germany before the defeat. There may not be a complete surrender so he suggests that possibly once the main defences of Germany are breached the army will be broken into separate groups, surrendering piecemeal when the situation of any independent group becomes hopeless.

He believes, however, that the morale of the troops must be deteriorating particularly with the large number of senior officers that are surrendering. In this connection he refers to a batch of 70 high-ranking officers recently captured by the Russians.

Although nothing would suit Japan's plans better than a last ditch defence by Germany and a long drawn out war, the Minister states that he cannot honestly expect Germany to hold out much longer.

The Minister apologizes for his pessimistic views but he feels it is his duty to report the situation as he sees it so that his government can estimate the whole scene realistically.

We may assume that this message, which was relayed through Berlin and thus accessible to Oshima, would cause something of a furor in the Japanese Embassy in Berlin where, as far as we know, Oshima has even at this late date accepted at face value the most extravagant Nazi promises of long drawn out defence, effectiveness of new secret weapons, and the possibility of a split between the Big Three. Okamoto in Stockholm, however, does not hold out the hope of German victory or even of a protracted defence and virtual stalemate.

See War

E. H. H.