

to accept any Japanese terms of peace short of military evacuation. That a Japanese Government should dare to propose such humiliating terms in the face of Japanese military opinion is practically inconceivable. The deadlock would seem, therefore, complete. Feeling in Washington on the subject is reflected in a message of the 10th November from the correspondent of *The Times*, who says: "No solution appears possible which would not involve a reversal of either American or Japanese policy translated into some form of immediate if not total action."

If, as then seems likely, the Washington conversations break down, Japan will find herself held in the steadily throttling grip of the Anglo-American-Dutch economic restrictions. The present indications of what in those circumstances would be her next step have been mentioned in the last two *Summaries*. A thrust into Yunnan by way of Indo-China still seems the most imminent, though it is bound to be a matter of several weeks before the necessary invading force could be concentrated and properly equipped for the campaign into China. The outlook for an attack on Siberia, or for the invasion of Thailand by way of a stepping-stone to Burma or Singapore, has not materially changed, and there are as yet no substantial signs of an immediate Japanese intention to make a thrust in either of these two directions. There remains yet a fourth possibility, namely, that Japan might, in the first place, go for the Netherlands East Indies, and by preference for Borneo. The likelihood of this suggestion, which comes through fairly well-informed channels, rests largely on the fact that lack of petroleum is becoming for Japan a major preoccupation, since the cutting-off, by means of the "freezing" order, of American and Dutch supplies. "America," said a military writer in a Tokyo newspaper last week, "threatens to can Japan like a sardine"—but *not*, he might have added, with the usual complement of oil!

The hazards facing Japan if she challenges the United States and Great Britain were underlined by the Prime Minister in his Mansion House speech. He announced that the British navy is now in a position to spare a powerful force of heavy ships for the Pacific; he said that we are making every preparation to protect British interests in the Far East and "to defend the common cause"; and he affirmed that Great Britain would go to war with Japan "within an hour" of war breaking out between the latter country and the United States. The devout hope that conflict might be avoided with which the Prime Minister seasoned his warnings to Japan was the feature upon which Japanese comment at first concentrated, the *Domei* summing-up of opinion being that the speech was an indication "of Britain's anxiety to preserve peace in the Far East." Later, however, several of the leading newspapers took the line that the speech was intended to intimidate Japan and were correspondingly abusive.

Mr. Churchill's reference to the "common cause" and his subsequent remark that a failure by the Chinese to secure their liberation would be "a disaster of the first magnitude to world civilisation" should carry encouragement to Chiang Kai-shek, whose especial plea for air support in resisting the expected attack on Yunnan and the Burma Road is under examination in the light of what is actually possible, having regard to available resources.

The American Government's decision to withdraw from Chinese treaty ports the garrisons of United States marines is an essentially practical move in view of the present tension; suggestions of "a gesture of appeasement" can be correspondingly discounted. His Majesty's Government, it will be recalled, took similar action in North China in November 1939 and in Shanghai in August 1940.

Recent reports from Nanking concerning the puppet Government speak of increasing friction between Wang Ching-wei and the Japanese, such as may even, it is thought, culminate in Wang's resignation.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Not since the first application of the Lease-Lend principle has the United States committed itself in the economic sphere so boldly to the Allied cause as in the announcement on the 6th November of the thousand-million-dollar loan to Russia. The offer to extend this credit was made by the President, acting upon the discretionary power entrusted to him under the Lease-Lend Act, in a letter to M. Stalin on the 30th October, and was accepted by the latter "with sincere thankfulness." Exactly how the loan will be made to synchronise with the current Lease-Lend programme has not yet been fully revealed. It seems likely that major Russian needs will be met through the diversion of certain United

States contracts placed before the first Lease-Lend appropriation became law on the 11th March last, so that the sum to be found for Russia out of the current appropriation may not have to be large. The Administration appears to have been actuated by political considerations in its decision not to ask for a separate vote to cover Russia's needs from Congress, though Congress, it will be recalled, recently rejected a proposal to bar that country from the benefits of Lease-Lend.

American public opinion has, on the whole, reacted favourably to the news of the loan, hailing it as tangible evidence that the United States Government has every confidence in Russia's ultimate ability to win. As might have been expected, some opposition has been forthcoming from the isolationist press, although this has not stressed the ideological objection so much as the threat to the United States' own defence effort which the size of the loan presents—a line which will hardly be taken seriously in view of repeated isolationist assurances that their own country is, in any case, in no danger of attack. Apart from the loan, the news of M. Litvinov's appointment as Soviet Ambassador to Washington, the encouraging tone of M. Stalin's speech, and the more favourable reports from the Eastern front have combined to raise American spirits.

Mr. Hull's warning to Finland, and the subsequent publication by the State Department on the 7th November of his conversations of the 18th August and the 3rd October with M. Procope, the Finnish Minister, have given rise to considerable comment and speculation throughout the week. While there has been almost universal sympathy for Finland's present misfortunes, a large section of the American press has not hesitated to tell the Finns that when they play the Nazi game they must be stopped. In a manner somewhat characteristic of the sentimental naïveté that has long obscured his never very penetrating political judgment, ex-President Hoover has issued a statement protesting against the United States using pressure upon "democratic" Finland on behalf of Communist Russia, and asking whether America has "lost all sense of human and moral proportions."

It was announced on the 5th November that Mr. Kurusu was visiting Washington to "assist" Admiral Nomura in his flagging discussions with the State Department. A few hours after the news reached the capital, Mr. Hull made it clear at a press conference that Mr. Kurusu was not coming at the invitation of the United States Government, and the visit is regarded in the State Department as merely the outcome of a wish on the part of the Japanese Government to gain time. His Majesty's Ambassador in Washington has learnt that the talks are looked upon by the United States Government as nothing more than exploratory, and that, if actual negotiations become possible, they will be carried on in consultation with this country, with the Chinese and with the Dutch. The Prime Minister's pledge of the 10th November regarding Japan has been greeted with fervent approval by all Americans except the most irreconcilably Anglophobe wing of the isolationist group—the *Washington Post*, for example, calling attention to the fact that a solid Anglo-American front now awaits Mr. Kurusu on his arrival in the United States. The report that consideration is being given to the question of withdrawing United States marines from shore garrisons in Japanese-dominated China has been widely interpreted—perhaps incorrectly, and certainly prematurely—as part of a preliminary realignment of American forces in the Pacific area into something like battle order.

With the Senate's approval on the 7th November, by a vote of 50 to 37, of amendments to the Neutrality Act which will permit American merchant ships to enter combat zones and belligerent ports as well as to be armed, the Administration is claimed to have won what is possibly its biggest victory in Congress since the war began. Although the final vote may not have been quite as large as Administration leaders in the Senate had hoped for, the almost complete lack of public interest in the arguments and warnings of the isolationists—as shown by the empty seats in the Senate chamber during the debates, the poor attendance in the galleries and the almost universal refusal of the press to rise to the expected pitch of excitement—has constituted the sort of popular rebuke for which the President's opponents had scarcely bargained. Mr. Sam Rayburn, the Speaker of the House of Representatives—who, unlike his British counterpart, is very much a party man and a leader of the dominant side in the Lower Chamber—has now stated that a direct vote in the House will be pressed for not later than Thursday, the 13th November, and has thereby raised the hope that the revision of the Act will be ready for the President's signature by the evening of that date.

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