

Nor were the French alone in this appalling belief. It was generally held on the continent of Europe and, to a surprising degree, even in the United States. Public attention there became concentrated on the extent of American preparedness to meet the threat to this hemisphere which would follow the defeat of Britain. The myth of isolation was dissolved in an almost frenzied pre-occupation with self-preservation. In order to meet the requirements of United States defences on land and sea and in the air, a movement of opinion developed even to the length of urging the retention in America of supplies of equipment and munitions desperately needed by Britain. Ominous rumours spread and gained credence that Britain could not hold out.

Aid to Britain short of war

But Britain did hold out, and held out magnificently. The world's vision cleared. Great Britain stood forth as she has through the centuries, an impregnable fortress of freedom. On this side of the ocean despair vanished. The English channel came to be viewed as the first line of defence of the United States and of the new world. This break in the encircling gloom, this dawn of fresh hope on the horizon inspired in the United States a new desire to do all that was possible, short of actual war,