

United Nations, and asking for information as to what further obligations Persia would incur and what advantages she would secure by so doing. No mention of this subject had been made by any responsible Persian since last February, when Qawam-us-Saltaneh, then Prime Minister, approached Sir R. Bullard on the subject of a closer alliance (see *Summary* No. 175).

The Ministers seemed to appreciate that the initial move for the Persian Government to take was to declare war on at least one of the Axis Powers—a step which did not seem to frighten them so much as it did a year ago. But what they are chiefly concerned with is what Persia is likely to gain from adherence to the United Nations' declaration. One of their chief points seems to be that Persia should be represented at the "Peace Conference," and they wish to know if, in the event of their signing the declaration, Persia would have the right to take part in all discussions and be treated like all other Allies at the "Peace Conference."

Considerable local excitement has been caused by the return to Persia of Haj Aga Hussein Qummi, an aged Shiah divine who has lived for many years in Iraq. Before he reached Tehran on the 3rd July some of the richest merchants, urged thereto by the Chamber of Commerce, went out to meet him; and on arrival at the capital he was greeted by the Prime Minister and several members of the Cabinet. Qummi's visit appears to have given some impetus to a movement among the clergy to reassert the influence which they lost under Reza Shah, and to the hopes of the merchant classes to use religion to combat Communist and other extremist policies. There is also some ground for believing that the latter view is shared by the Persian Government. The breaking of the clergy's power was one of the ex-Shah's best achievements, and any return to clericalism now would be most unfortunate.

THE FAR EAST.

This week Chungking commemorated the "Double Seventh," the anniversary of the 7th July, 1937, when a clash between Japanese and Chinese troops near Peking marked the outbreak of Japan's war against China, now entering its seventh year. The anniversary was the occasion of several important speeches. The Generalissimo gave a special broadcast, declaring that "in the seventh year of our war of resistance, offensives that will deal crushing blows to the enemy will be started in various war theatres of the world and there will be an unending stream of victories." He emphasised the bearing of the Allied victories in North Africa on communications from Britain and the United States to the East and asserted that the time for the utter defeat of the aggressor (apparently meaning Japan in particular) "cannot exceed two years." This optimism sugared the pill of a warning to his hearers that "all depends on whether we can endure hardships that will be even greater than those we have gone through in the last six years." Marshal Chiang Kai-shek did not hesitate to grasp the nettle of "our failure to overcome special defects in our economic fabric" and claimed that "as long as our Government and our people co-operate together under an organised plan to increase production and cut down on non-essentials there is no reason why our wartime economic problems cannot be solved."

General Ho Ying-Chin, War Minister and Chief of the General Staff, evidently thought that the Generalissimo's allowance of two years more for finishing the war savoured of pessimism, for in a speech to an international gathering for the "Double Seventh" he expressed the hope that on the same day next year the Chinese would be in Nanking celebrating their final victory, while forces of the United Nations would be holding parades in both Berlin and Tokyo. General Stilwell, who made a speech in Chinese, did not commit himself to such a prediction, but spoke of the United States sense of a responsibility to help China.

In addition to these and other speeches delivered in Chungking there was also a message from the Generalissimo "to the peoples of the United Nations." In this message Marshal Chiang Kai-shek stated that the Chinese people were no longer worried as to whether the United Nations would win the war, but as to when and at what cost they would win. Now was the time for the Allies to launch large-scale offensives against Japan, and no less urgent a task was the creation of United Nations "joint machinery for the winning of the peace as well as for the efficient prosecution of the war." As against the contention "in certain quarters" that the formation of such a body during the war might cause friction among the Allies, the Generalissimo argued that "differences of opinion, if any, can at no time be better dissolved than when we are fighting a war shoulder to

shoulder." He also urged the necessity of a "post-war world organisation with the solid backing of an international force" as a condition for the security of nations, the permanent restraint of aggressors and the successful functioning of democracy.

The Generalissimo's anxiety for the early formation of some kind of Council of the United Nations seems to reflect a mood of suspicion which is reported to exist in Chungking. Chinese leaders are uneasy about China's rôle in the post-war settlement, because they are aware that she cannot for a long time hope to have an intrinsic strength comparable to that of the United States, Britain or the U.S.S.R.; they are therefore anxious to obtain guarantees now, before the end of the European war, with regard to their major war aims, especially recognition of titles to full sovereignty over Manchuria and Formosa. It is also important for Chiang, in dealing with the waverers in Free China, to be able to show diplomatic success in obtaining agreements from China's allies as an offset to Wang Ching-wei's agreements with Japan and to have endorsement from the other United Nations for aspirations which Japan could not satisfy even by a peace offer which proposed substantially a return to the *status quo* of 1937. Chinese concern over the future of Manchuria was recently mentioned in *Summary* No. 195; as regards Formosa, the suggestion put forward in the United States that it should be put under some kind of international control, or that its cession to China should be made conditional on the leasing of strategic bases to the United Nations, has provoked a very sharp reaction in the Chinese Press.

The future of Indo-China is another matter in which the Chinese have already displayed unofficially a considerable interest, though there is no juridical basis for any Chinese claims in this quarter. In contrast to the British, Dutch and American territories which the Japanese have overrun by force, Indo-China remains under a European administration which has collaborated voluntarily with the Japanese and is in Chinese eyes a hostile régime; the question for the future is whether China will regard Vichy's acts as the responsibility of the French State or whether she will be prepared to accept a restoration of French authority in Indo-China by forces of the French National Committee of Liberation. General Giraud, in a statement to the press in New York on the 9th July, gave a pledge to the United States that "France will be at your side to liberate the Pacific from Japanese domination"—a statement which implies that French expeditionary forces will be in the neighbourhood of Indo-China when the time comes for the Japanese to be driven out. That any Frenchman now in authority there will still be in a position to play a part on the day of liberation becomes less and less likely as time passes and the Japanese attitude becomes ever more menacing. The Japanese press has been denouncing the "tepid" quality of French collaboration as contrasted with the alleged enthusiasm of the neighbouring Asiatic nations for the Co-prosperity Sphere. General Toj has now visited Nanking, Manila, Bangkok, Singapore and Batavia, but has refrained so far from honouring Admiral Decoux with his presence; on the other hand, a lesser and militarist, the retired General Matsui, has been touring Indo-China and apparently making contacts with leading Annamites. The French colonial forces are reported to be kept short of ammunition, so that they would hardly be capable of resistance, whatever measures the Japanese may see fit to take.

The Siamese Government has been making the most of its success in obtaining Japan's consent to territorial annexations in Malaya and the Shan States. According to *Domei*, placards with maps showing the expansion of Siamese national territory were put up everywhere in the streets of Bangkok to impress on the people the extent of their good fortune and the generosity of Japan. What undertakings Siam has given in return for this bounty has not been revealed, but it is unlikely that Japan has conceded so much merely as a reward for past services. Siam will perhaps be expected to contribute, not only labour for work on communications, but also military contingents to help the Japanese in the defence of Burma, especially the Tenasserim coast. The Siamese army has not hitherto been regarded seriously as a military force, but conscription has been legally in force in Siam since 1936, and with Japanese instruction and equipment Siamese troops might be useful auxiliaries, if they have a will to fight. The Japanese at present are thought to have not more than 4 divisions in Burma, but they may increase their strength there by October, when the dry season is due to begin.

Of 64 "active" divisions, not counting garrison troops, Japan is believed now to have 10 in Japan Proper, 14 in Korea and Manchuria, 23 in China, 16 scattered over the South Seas region from Burma to the Solomons and 1 unlocated. In view of the revised estimate of Japanese strength in Korea and

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