

Turkish authorities that they should remove him to some provincial town inland, where they could keep him under closer supervision. The Ambassador pointed out that the Mufti, in escaping to Berlin, must have passed through some country in disguise; and that where the Mufti had succeeded, Rashid Ali might follow suit. To this the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that if Rashid tried to escape he would be transferred to some remoter spot, and that stricter surveillance would be exercised in future. His Majesty's Government, however, consider this proposal quite inadequate, and their opinion is being conveyed to the Turkish authorities.

Meanwhile the Mufti's family, who had assumed a false name, were among those whose repatriation from Ahwaz was authorised by the Palestine Government. Their identity was discovered in Bagdad and, after a warning had been sent to the High Commissioner, they were sent on to Palestine.

While the recapture of Rostov by the Russians has had a good local effect in Iraq, Axis propaganda has made the most of German resistance in the Libyan campaign, on which public opinion is consequently suspended.

In a conversation in Cairo between Mr. Lyttleton and General Catroux on the situation in Syria and Lebanon, the Minister of State told the general that, however much British and French policy in the Near East had differed in the period between the two wars, we could regard the independence of Syria and Lebanon as the opening of a new phase of joint policy. General Catroux agreed, and added—in Mr. Lyttleton's view quite sincerely—that the Free French intended the independence to be a reality. Arguments in favour of a joint declaration to be made by the Free French and ourselves were also discussed; Mr. Lyttleton at the same time urging that treaty negotiations between the French and the two independent States should be postponed.

There is widespread dissatisfaction in the Lebanon both over the form of the recent declaration and over the composition of the new Ministry. It is not only the politicians and the people who are dissatisfied. The Maronite Patriarch is displeased because—in spite of a promise to the contrary—he was not consulted by General Catroux over the choice of the President, and is said to have taken a solemn oath to break off relations with the French. Not content with this, he sent a Maronite politician to Colonel Furlonge, the British political officer at Beirut, to acquaint him with his decision, adding that the Patriarch wished to place his community under British protection. Colonel Furlonge naturally replied that he could not meet such a request without reference to higher authority; but that the policy of His Majesty's Government was to support the power of the Lebanese Government. It has since been decided to send no written reply to the Patriarch on the matter.

Opposition has not been allayed either by the letter from General Catroux offering the post of President to M. Nakkash, and suggesting that he should form what the Lebanese regard as little short of a totalitarian Government; or by the advances made by M. Nakkash himself in a letter to the "Falange Libanais," a semi-Fascist body entirely Christian in composition and under Jesuit influence—a move that is likely to upset Moslem susceptibilities, especially as the substance of the letter has been made public.

Ibn Saud has for some time been disturbed about the Italian Legation at Jeddah. Being short of funds and lacking means to obtain them, the legation have been pestering Ibn Saud to advance them a loan. His Arab sense of hospitality makes it difficult for him to refuse them subsistence; on the other hand, it is clearly out of the question that the Italian Legation, at least one member of which is known to have engaged in subversive activities, should be paid by Ibn Saud in effect from funds received from His Majesty's Government. The obvious, indeed the only course, open to Ibn Saud is to ask the Italian Government to withdraw its legation until the end of the war.

A report received a few weeks ago indicated that Germany hoped to persuade Ibn Saud to call a congress for religious discussions in Mecca or Medina during the pilgrimage—the real object being to obtain from certain tribal chiefs from various Arab countries information as to the part each would be prepared to play in helping Germany if she broke through in the Caucasus. Whether owing to Ibn Saud's absence from the Hejaz or from some other cause, it now seems unlikely that any form of congress will be held. It is, nevertheless, thought that the pilgrimage may be used by the Axis Powers for propaganda purposes among Moslems, and the gist of the report is to be given in confidence to Ibn Saud, in

addition to the names of any agents likely to be employed by Germany for this purpose.

The news from the Libyan front has brought a return of pessimism to the Egyptian public, which had been led to expect a rapid and sweeping victory.

It is reported that, at a parliamentary meeting of the Wafdist party on the 3rd December, the resignation of their members of Parliament was decided in principle, though many of them do not wish to retire. This may give rise to a renewal of the interpellation by the Wafd on censorship of parliamentary proceedings, regardless of the fact that the censorship was imposed at our request.

The Egyptian Government has decided to break off diplomatic relations with Japan; and, according to the Egyptian press, will arrest or deport Japanese residents in Egypt.

#### THE FAR EAST.

On the 7th December Japan, without warning, attacked American and British possessions in the Pacific, thereby involving the United States and Great Britain in war with Japan simultaneously and in perfect alignment. Japan's declaration of war followed next day in an Imperial Rescript which gave as the *casus belli*, firstly, American and British support for Chungking, secondly, "increased military preparations on all sides of our Empire," and, thirdly, "direct severance of economic relations." Great Britain, the United States and the Netherlands declared themselves at war with Japan on the 8th December, the perfidy of Japan's unheralded attack being duly placed on record.

The diplomatic exchanges between Washington and Tokyo which had begun in April of this year continued up to the last moment; in fact, Japanese aircraft had already discharged their bombs over Pearl Harbour when Admiral Nomura and Mr. Kurusu handed to Mr. Hull Japan's reply to the American note of the 26th November, mentioned in last week's *Summary*. This posthumous statement did not hint at forcible action, but it declared agreement impossible and contained a comprehensive indictment of the United States and Great Britain. Taken in conjunction with the (now published) American note, it constitutes the clearest official exposition of the fundamental differences which have now developed into war. The American note, besides setting out the necessary basic principles for a Far Eastern settlement—namely, exclusion of force, respect for national territory and sovereignty, conciliation in disputes and economic co-operation—had suggested also practical measures for applying these principles to the existing situation. They included a non-aggression pact between Japan, the "A.B.C.D." Powers, Russia and Thailand, Japan's withdrawal of her troops from China and Indo-China and of her support for any other régime in China than the Chungking National Government, the unfreezing of Japanese funds, and the reduction of trade barriers; there was added the further *desideratum*, that no agreement with third parties should be so interpreted as to conflict with the peaceful aims of the American settlement proposals.

The Japanese reply laid particular stress on two questions, that of China and that of third-party agreements. The American "demands" in regard to China, it said, shattered the very basis of the negotiations; they ignored Japan's "sacrifices" during the last four years, menaced the existence of Japan and disparaged her honour and prestige. The reference to third-party agreements aimed, the note presumed, at preventing Japan from fulfilling her obligations under the Tripartite Pact, an unacceptable proposition and one, it may be added, which Government speakers in Tokyo have affected to regard as specially offensive. With regard to the other issues, the United States was accused of trying to impose Utopian and impracticable principles as camouflage for its and Great Britain's own selfish desire to continue to exploit East Asia; of seeking to perpetuate "the old concept of collective security, far removed from realities in the Far East" and designed to protect America's rear in the Pacific while Americans are preparing an attack on Germany and Italy; and, in general, of thwarting in every way Japan's aspiration to "common prosperity" and her efforts for peace through the "New Order."

If presented before the commission of acts of war, the note might have been claimed by Japan to have constituted a species of ultimatum, mitigating the ignominy which she has brought on herself by her perfidious method of procedure.

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