

were representatives of Ibn Saud or the Yemen present at the opening ceremony. It may well be that, owing to Ibn Saud's last-moment decision, his delegate may be late in arrival. Nahas, in his speech of welcome, expressed the hope that representatives of Ibn Saud and the Imam would attend "in the near future."

Great interest has naturally been aroused among the Jews of Palestine by the announcement, issued by the War Office on the 19th September, that "His Majesty's Government have decided to accede to the request of the Jewish Agency for Palestine that a Jewish Brigade Group should be formed to take part in active operations." In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Mr. Ben-Zvi, president of the Vaad Leumi, after welcoming the decision to establish a Jewish Brigade, said: "The recognition of our right to fight under our own name in this war strengthens our confidence that after the war the world will recognise our right to national independence in our homeland, our right to be masters of our destiny in the same way as any other nation."

The Executive of the Vaad Leumi has telegraphed to Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Shertok to thank them for their efforts in bringing about this successful issue. The message concludes: "We hope and trust that the recognition of the right of the Jewish people, the first victim of Nazism, to be represented under its own flag among the armies of the United Nations fighting for the freedom of the world, will be followed by the recognition of its right to live in its historic homeland as a free nation among other free nations." The entire Hebrew press of Palestine has published editorial comments on the announcement. That of *Haaretz*, for instance, states: "Although the war in Europe is nearing its conclusion, our services are still needed and our opportunities have not yet passed. We hope that the decision of the British Government symbolises the beginning of a clarification of our position in general."

Sir E. Spears followed up his talk with the Syrian President and his ministers on the subject of the proposed treaty with France by a similar discussion with the Lebanese Foreign Minister. The latter's views, which he said he believed to be those of the Cabinet, were that the Lebanon could not enjoy real independence if she were bound by treaty with France. The other Arab States, with their great Moslem majority, would regard such an act on the part of the Lebanon as disloyal to themselves. Moreover, economically the Lebanon could not survive without the goodwill of the other Arab States, and he emphasised that with Moslem hostility to the Lebanon its Christian community would be the first to suffer. The Lebanese President has since seen General Beynet, and has confirmed that his Government is unwilling to make a treaty with France, and, further, that he has no intention of undertaking any international obligations until the "peace conference."

The Syrian Government has taken a further step in its determination not to negotiate a treaty. The Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs has sent a telegram to Mr. Eden on the subject, informing him that the Syrian Government firmly refuses to consider such a suggestion. He goes on to say that his Government considers the French mandate to have been terminated; that by the agreement of December 1943 all powers formerly exercised by France had been transferred to Syria; and that Syria henceforward intends to continue to observe all its obligations in accordance with the desire of the Syrian people and with the support of the United Nations.

The President of Syria has also addressed a letter to Mr. Churchill stating that, as "Syria has been liberated during this war from the chains of secret agreements [*sic*] which it was made to endure in the name of mandates," there is no reason why Syria should now enter into negotiations with the French Government. Syria has no wish "to grant France any advantage" from any point of view, whether cultural, material, political or military. The letter concludes by stating that the Syrian Government "declines to make any agreement according to a privileged position to any State whatever." Letters on similar lines have been addressed by the Syrian President to President Roosevelt and to M. Stalin.

On the 19th September the State Department published a statement on the recognition by the United States of the independence of Syria and Lebanon. The appointment of Mr. Wadsworth as United States Minister to Syria and Lebanon was also announced. This was followed on the 20th September by a personal statement from President Roosevelt, ending with the words: "The peoples of Syria and Lebanon have given ample evidence of their adherence to the principles of democracy and international collaboration. In welcoming them into the society of free sovereign nations I am glad to pay tribute to the French people who... have given practical illustration of their ideals by taking action to implement the independence of the Syrian and Lebanese peoples."

THE FAR EAST.

On the 23rd September the Japanese-sponsored Government of the Philippines declared war on Great Britain and the United States. The declaration followed the American air raids on Manila on the 21st and 22nd September, which, according to *Domei*, caused heavy civilian casualties and "served to induce a people of honour and self-respect to participate in the war." "President" Laurel in his proclamation declared that on the occasion of the inauguration of the Philippines Republic on the 14th October, 1943, he had appealed to all nations of the world for amity and goodwill and had in particular pleaded to the people of the United States that the Philippines be spared the suffering and destruction involved in further military operations on their soil; in spite of this the United States and Britain had bombed various parts of the country from the air, "thereby violating the territorial integrity of the republic and causing death and damage."

According to a *Domei* radio commentator the Philippines Government began "girding itself for war" early in August, and early in September Laurel indicated to his Cabinet his resolve to declare war by referring to a "momentous decision then being made." On the 24th August Laurel reshuffled his Cabinet, handing over to Ministers two portfolios which he was holding himself; the effect of the changes was as follows:—

	Former Cabinet.	New Cabinet.
Home Affairs	José Laurel	Teofilo Sison.
Justice	Teafilo Sison	Quintin Paredes.
Public Works and Communications	Quintin Paredes	José Paez.
Economic Affairs	José Laurel	Pedro Sabido.
Executive Secretary	Pedro Sabido	Nicanor Roxas.

At the same time Manuel Roxas, Chairman of the Planning Board, was given ministerial rank.

Two days later it was announced that the Philippines had been divided into seven administrative regions, formed of groups of provinces, and that each would be placed under a commissioner appointed by the Government, while the city of Manila and four adjacent provinces would be under the Government's direct supervision.

There is so far no evidence that the Laurel régime has any armed forces, except for its constabulary, with which to oppose an American invasion, but the declaration of war commits it more definitely to the side of Japan and has been hailed by Japanese propaganda as a fresh proof of East Asian solidarity. It remains to be seen whether the declaration will have any substantial effect in getting local Filipino support for the Japanese military forces holding the islands. By way of obtaining a popular sentiment adverse to the return of the Americans the Government has for a long time done everything possible by means of special anniversaries and commemorations to revive memories of the Malolos Republic and its struggle against the Americans in 1899-1903, but these memories are faint by now, and it is unlikely that any strong feeling can be thus aroused. In any case the population of the Philippines is not homogeneous; the attitude of the Moslem "Moros" of Sulu and Mindanao will not necessarily be the same as that of the Catholic Filipinos, while in the Davao region the Japanese settlers on the land are a special factor of local importance.

The Japanese now speak of an American invasion of the Philippines as imminent, but declare that it will cost the Americans more heavily than any of their previous campaigns in the Pacific. Meanwhile in Japan itself the formation of a Home Guard, to which reference was made in *Summary* No. 257, is stated to be going ahead rapidly. In addition to members of the Reservists' Association who have already received military training, categories of the population who have never been called up for military service are now undergoing training. Since General Koiso himself mentioned the possibility of Allied landings in Japan, the idea has been made quite familiar to the public and the task of preparing to defend the homeland is treated as an urgent necessity. The civilian evacuation and dispersion measures are apparently being carried out with considerable energy; they include the removal of houses as well as of people, and a Tokyo broadcast claimed that a plan for shifting 120,000 houses had been 80 per cent. completed by the 10th September.

More information is now available about the intervention of the People's Political Council in the negotiations between the Chungking Government and the Communists. The delegation of five members of the council, all non-party

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