

Though it appears that the Persian people in general are entirely opposed to the grant of an oil concession to Russia (see *Summaries*, Nos. 262 and 263), certain newspapers in Persia are conducting a pro-Russian campaign in which they are violently attacking the Prime Minister and accusing him of being opposed to Russian interests in Persia. The editors of three newspapers, who mildly supported the Persian Government in this controversy, assert that they were advised by the Soviet Embassy to cease opposing the Russian demand. Even Seyyid Zia himself, whose papers do not take a strong line in the matter, says that he received a message from the Soviet Embassy warning him that the Russians had the means of dealing with anyone who opposed them. On the 19th October the Prime Minister addressed the Majlis on the subject and defended the Government's attitude. Though it is believed that the majority present agreed with the Government refusal to grant the concession, no vote was taken on the matter; but the Prime Minister intends to put the question again before the Deputies and ask for a vote.

THE FAR EAST.

Just before the American landing in the island of Leyte, in the Philippines, on the 20th October (preliminary operations in the Leyte Gulf were begun on the 17th), the Japanese were celebrating an alleged "overwhelming victory" won against the American task force which raided Formosa and the Ryukyu Islands from aircraft-carriers from the 12th to the 15th of the month. In this battle 11 aircraft-carriers, 2 battleships, 3 cruisers and several other warships were claimed to have been sunk by air attack. There seems to have been no foundation for these claims, as it has been officially stated from the American side that no warships were lost, though some units of the task force sustained damage. It is possible that the claims may to some extent be attributed to the over-estimation of results, which is normal in air attacks on ships unless reports are rigorously checked. But for the most part the "victory" was apparently a deliberate invention for propaganda purposes, it being considered in high quarters that the occasion demanded a boost of this kind. The last time when comparable, and equally unfounded, claims were put out was last November, when a slaughter of American capital ships off Bougainville was announced to coincide with the proceedings of the Greater East Asia Conference, and prevent the spirits of the delegates from being depressed by the monotonous sequence of American island-to-island advances in the Solomons. This month, after another run of successful American landing operations, with an invasion of the Philippines obviously pending, Japanese morale has been in need of a tonic, all the more so as the Koiso Government had decided to launch a new "National Rally Movement" for spiritual mobilisation of the people to meet the coming ordeal; for this purpose news of devoted garrisons fighting to the last man against heavy odds might be effective in stirring patriotic emotion, but confidence in ultimate victory needed to be fortified with some success on account.

The National Rally Movement (also called in *Domei* broadcast the "Crush Anglo-American Movement") was, according to the President of the Information Board, Taketora Ogata, to be directed jointly by the Government and the Taisei Yokusankai. As the statement spoke of people "joining" the Movement, it would seem that it is to have some sort of membership distinct from that of the Taisei Yokusankai and its affiliated bodies. That the Government attach importance to this new device of patriotic revivalism is indicated by the massing of eminent personalities at the inaugural meeting held in Hibiya Hall on the 20th October. General Koiso was present with eight other Cabinet Ministers and the Speaker of the House of Representatives as well as Admiral Seizo Kobayashi, the new head of the Taisei Yokusankai. General Koiso said that Japan's "latest overwhelming victory over the enemy task force in the air battle off Taiwan (Formosa)" had further strengthened the nation's firm confidence in final victory in the Greater East Asia war. This battle, however, he warned his audience, was "only the beginning" of the struggle which was about to develop on an even greater scale, and only by repeated successes similar to that just achieved could the enemy be definitely beaten. Therefore all Japanese "behind the guns" must redouble their efforts in the production of "aircraft and other armaments." They had a holy cause to fight for, whereas the enemy war leaders suffered from "a total lack of any real and justifiable cause big enough to stir up the Americans and British from the bottom of their hearts." Some Americans, he said, believed they were fighting for "freedom," but none of them could say why it was necessary to go to war with Japan in order to safeguard it, and such

an ideal was inconsistent with what the British and Americans had done in India, China and the Philippines. The real Anglo-American war aims were simply world-domination, as had been shown by the Dumbarton Oaks proposals for an international organisation, whereas Japan was fighting to liberate East Asia from this domination. The Anglo-American "mad beast" must be driven out of East Asia; God would not allow it to be "rampant" any longer.

General Koiso in this speech evidently tried to combine the victory stimulant with a warning of hard times ahead, but in general the trumpeting of the Formosa "victory" were so extravagant that the news of the American landing in the Philippines must have been somewhat bewildering even to the Japanese public. Japanese publicity, however, did its best to explain how this invasion was possible after the American fleet had just suffered so great a disaster. One explanation, adopted by Izubuchi, the Army spokesman in Shanghai, was that the original intention of Admiral Nimitz had been to break straight through to the coast of China; it was this plan which had been upset by the Formosa victory. Another version was that Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur were divided by acute jealousy of each other; Nimitz had "attempted to penetrate Japan's inner defence line ahead of MacArthur's invasion of the Philippines," but had been defeated. A somewhat more realistic picture of the situation was given out by the *Domei* naval commentator, Masanori Ito, who said that the Americans' naval strength was such that they were able to resume the offensive "without having to wait to replenish losses even after such a serious setback as that off Taiwan." They had begun the invasion of the Philippines by "scraping together" the remnants of the defeated 58th Task Force with naval and air forces from other sectors; Japan in a like situation would similarly have refused to abandon an offensive.

In the Philippines the Japanese army held parades and festivities to celebrate the Formosa "victory" just before the American landing. This was presumably to impress the native population as well as to brace up the morale of the troops. The time has now come when the alleged devotion of the Filipinos to "Greater East Asia" will be put to the test, and in particular the Philippine Constabulary will be placed in the line of fire if not actually at the front. On the day of the landing on Leyte General Santos, head of the Constabulary, left Manila for a tour of inspection throughout the islands. General Guillermo Francisco, a former head of the Constabulary and now "Adviser on Security" to Laurel, said in an interview: "The strength of the Japanese forces and the assistance of the Philippine Constabulary is sufficient guarantee of the safety of the Philippines from any enemy invasion attempt. I am confident that the Filipino people take matters calmly. They will keep peace and order in the face of danger."

News of the landing in the Philippines has caused some improvement of morale in Chungking, especially as the Japanese advance on Kweilin has for the time being come to a standstill, apparently on account of the difficulty of supplying the forward area in Kwangsi. There has even been a hope that the fighting in the Philippines would compel the Japanese to move units from China for reinforcements. The political situation, however, remains tense and if, as seems likely from past experience of operations in the Pacific, the campaign in the Philippines is arduous and prolonged, Chungking may suffer still further disappointments before there can be any direct intervention by American forces in the Chinese theatre of war. Rumour in China persistently credits the Japanese with an intention of trying to reach Kunming after the capture of Kweilin, and, if this design is indeed entertained by the High Command, it may be pursued without regard to events in the Philippines; the advantage to Japan in its achievement would lie in the establishment of a bolt-line which would still cut off Chungking from Burma or Indo-China, even if everything to the south of China had been lost by Japan.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

There has been great excitement and general rejoicing at the "dramatic fulfilment of General MacArthur's pledge" to return to the Philippines and avenge the surrender of Bataan and Corregidor. In announcing the not unexpected American landing on the island of Leyte, President Roosevelt revealed that the invasion forces were "supported by the greatest concentration of naval and air power ever massed in the Pacific Ocean. We pledged the people of the Philippines that their freedom would be redeemed and that their independence would be established and protected. We are fulfilling that

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