

III. *The Blitzkrieg—Lightning War*

The third period is that of the Blitzkrieg—lightning war, as it is expressed in English. It accords with the plan which Hitler has all along had in mind. Save by those possessed of gangster instincts, its possibility could never have been conceived. It aims to bring, one by one, under the iron heel of Nazi Germany, nation after nation, whether neutral or belligerent, by methods of terrorism and barbarism unparalleled in warfare throughout the ages. The element of surprise is all-important. The process was under way before the invasion of Poland. It began with the invasion of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. It resulted in the destruction of Poland; it has been only too manifest in the conquest of Denmark and Norway, of Holland and Belgium. It is now seeking by lightning strokes to conquer France and Britain.

These two countries have been taken by surprise; not so much by sudden attack upon themselves—sudden attack was expected at the commencement of the war. The surprise has come by the swiftness, the magnitude and the ferocity of the events that preceded them. No part of the world has been shocked by these tragic happenings more than this continent. The loyalty of neutral nations to international law became the weapon with which a treacherous enemy struck at their hearts. They have been sacrificed on the altar of their own neutrality.

An Altered and Much Needed Perspective

The lightning war in Europe has forced Britain and France to view the whole situation in a different perspective. Their plans, and with them, our plans, have had to be changed, and quickened in the light of new and appalling developments. Contributions of men, machines and material have had to be hastened. Daily improvisations have become necessary and have been made. The movements of men and ships have had to be altered. Large additional sums of money have had to be found.

It is, I fear, only too true that the magnitude and speed of action, the immensity of the changes in the military situation, and the unparalleled horrors of the conflict have all but destroyed our sense of time. It is difficult to realize that a month has not yet elapsed since Holland and Belgium were invaded. The heroic resistance of these small nations to the German onslaught, and the magnificent response of Britain and France to their appeal for aid were absorbing the attention of the people of Canada when, just a week later, our new parliament met.

As we watched the spectacle of the German forces crushing Holland and Belgium under the full might of concentrated warfare, it was inevitable that an unparalleled intensity of feeling should develop throughout the