WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS By Edward C. Wayne

Reports of Hess Flight to England Fill News Columns and Radio Lanes; Convoys Plus Strikes Plus Priorities Equal Headaches in Defense Program

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper.)

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BOMBSHELL:
Human Variety

The Rudolf Hess incident was the dropping of a bombshell into the moors of Scotland which went up with a louder explosion than any of the tons of TNT that Hitler's aviators had yet sent across the channel.

Imaginations ran riot—the house of commons was in a dither—more than 20 basic theories were advanced to explain why Hess fled Germany in an airplane and dropped to earth in a parachute, and with the interweaving and variations of these, one had several thousand stories to choose from.

To list the British theories and those of neutrals would be futile because they were not only limited by the imaginations of their creators. To list the German explanations also would be futile because they obviously were the propagandic outbursts of a government whose nose was temporarily out of joint.

Outside of this, all was speculation, all was guesswork, but the guessers, most of them being paid at so much a word, let themselves go and endless columns were printed.

Yet the story was not being "overplayed"—most thinking newspaper men being at a loss for earlier comparisons in journalistic history, which, one must recall, doesn't go far back when history is considered.

But outside of the type of story that history presented in the Middle Ages and during the days of Caesar and Hannibal, and Anthony and Cleopatra, and Cassius and Brutus, and Helen of Troy, Hess' flight was unique.

Most newspaper commentators were willing to call it the biggest story in centuries and let it go at that. They wagged their heads and said, "What if Cordell Hull were to fly to Germany, or what if it had been the other way over the channel and Anthony Eden had made the trip?"

This was enough to settle the point as to the magnitude of the news to their own satisfaction, anyway.

Basic explanation of the Hess incident, on the standpoint of logic,

RUDOLF HESS
'A louder explosion than bombs.'

brought personal considerations and personal safety to the fore. It was pointed out:

a. Hess had evidently wanted to escape Germany for some reason for he was practically under a detainment sentence by Hitler's having grounded him.

b. If his reason for escape was sound, then to pick out a spot where he would be utterly safe from retribution, England was the one and only spot in the world.

c. If personal safety was his motive, then an inescapable parallel was that something must have been wrong with the unity of the Nazi party of which he was No. 3 fuehrer.

This was enough explanation for British serenity over the incident, also for German perturbation. It was significant that most German dispatches covered these three points.

Point No. 1 was covered when Hitler announced Hess was crazy and had been detained for his own safety. No. 2, that he should select England, Germans explained by saying that the nature of his insanity was that he believed that he, single-handed, could bring about peace. Point No. 3 was handled by a straight-out denial that anything was wrong with the Nazi party. Hess was a "good Nazi but crazy."

'Painted Toenails'

Whether crazy or not, when they took off his shoe and sock to attend to his fractured ankle, he was found to have painted toenails, hardly the American idea of a hard-boiled Nazi leader's personal decorations.

Everyone who ever had any contact with Hess told his paragraph or two, from the palmist who said he was "superstitious" to the newspaper commentator who took five minutes "coast to coast" to tell how he had seen Hess go skiing two years ago.

PRIORITIES:
And OPM

A new difficulty in the U. S. handling of defense work loomed when William S. Knudsen, motor official and head of OPM, seemed to take as a personal issue the question of taking priorities out of his hands and giving them to a special organization answerable only to the army and navy chiefs.

Knudsen was quoted as saying that he would quit if the plan went through.

Thus the question of priorities lifted its head as a vital defense issue, further complicating the picture.

Priorities were becoming a very real issue in business, also, many manufacturers finding that this one question might easily keep them from success or failure in carrying out contracts. The right to a priority of delivery of machine tools might alone answer an entire question of manufacture.

Knudsen took the attitude that if the work of production manage-

WILLIAM S. KNUDSEN
He forced an issue.

ment was his, that to remove from his hands a vital tool like the right to decide questions of priorities, would be to make his task impossible, and to rob him of his prime prerogative.

It seemed likely that unless this question was ironed out swiftly to the liking of the Danish-born production expert, the government might be looking for a new man.

STRIKES:
Up-Grade Again

The labor trouble tempo in the United States defense industry was on the upward curve again, ith a $30,000,000 order for Browning machine guns held up at the Colt factory in Hartford, Conn., and other old labor difficulties threatening to break out anew, including the coal strike.

Always rearing its head was the threatened General Motors strike, which would, if it occurred, affect millions of dollars in defense work and about 160,000 employees, and John L. Lewis said that if the coal contract with southern operators was not forthcoming soon, he would call the 400,000 coal miners out again.

This brought the strike news back onto the front pages with a bang, and Representative Thomas of New Jersey, a Republican, called for a roundup of Communists in labor groups, and to order them all arrested on treason charges. This was the most drastic step suggested thus far.

SHIPS:
Britain Bound

President Roosevelt assured the nation that the administration's objective of 2,000,000 tons of merchant shipping for Britain would be realized by mid-June.

This assurance carried with it the important promise that the bill permitting the President to take possession of foreign vessels idle in American ports was in the category of "sure things."

The senate and house engaged in a desultory effort to write into the bill amendments chief among which was the Tobey amendment forbidding the use of convoys.

The whole convoy issue, as indeed all other news of the war on this side of the water took a back seat during the news ascendancy of Rudolf Hess, but the issue was there, ready to rip itself out into the open at an appropriate moment, and to become the central point of a whole congressional debate on the President's general foreign policy.

The 2,000,000 tons of ships for Britain within a month came as the Nazis were claiming 10,000,000 tons of British ships sunk by U-boats since the start of the war, and with the British, while admitting losses of at least half that amount, generally showing the pinch sharply.

Further drastic reductions in the meat ration (and little is as dear to the Britisher as his beloved beef and mutton) were announced and the general trend of commons debate indicated that Britain was feeling the ship pinch tremendously.

Gold Star Mother

When American Gold Star Mothers conducted their annual ceremonies in Glendale, California, Mrs. Anna Barnbrock, 94, oldest of the group in the nation, participated in the ceremonies. Mrs. Barnbrock is pictured standing before the marble statuary "A Compassionate Mother," which was unveiled.

DRAFT:
Bars Lifted

Of extreme import was the decision of congress to lift all bans to the size of the army or to the question of selective service for any purpose for which it might be used in the national defense.

Also vital was the decision immediately to classify the 10,000,000 young men still unclassified in the first call, and to set up the second call for an early date, probably in July.

Two things were highly likely as a result—that the draft would be used to call men of a younger age than before, and that it would also be used to hunt out "missing links" among the skilled trades for use in defense industry.

The first eventuality naturally would follow the report of army chiefs after a few months' experience with draftees that the younger men were far more adaptable than the older, and could take their training quicker and better.

The second resulted from the realization that many men in the uniform would be much more productive to defense in shipyards or munitions plants and that the classification lists, if turned over to defense production men might result in discovery of these facts before the uniform was donned.

The lifting of any ban on the size of the army tended to indicate that there was justification for the growing belief that the end of a calendar year would not very likely mean the end of a man's military service, under present conditions.

VICHY:
A New Role

More and more it was becoming apparent that newest German propaganda was to convince the world, especially the United States, of one fact—that the war was over and Germany was about to undertake the difficult task of reconstruction.

In effect the story to (as one German writer put it) "poor daddy Roosevelt" was this:

"All British have been chased from the European continent except at Gibraltar.

"Thus Germany's prime objective has been achieved. We shall now try to cement these 300,000,000 people into one force, working for Germany.

"With this force we shall confront the United States and defeated Britain."

First move in the "war is now over game" was to lighten, somewhat, the armistice terms for France—and to ask deeper collaboration.

This, according to dispatches, Vichy accepted unanimously.

The German plan called for the return of some prisoners of war, the raising of the line between occupied and unoccupied France, and a list of demands on the French for co-operation which might never be made public.

Most observers believed that Germany, in order to get and hold the Mediterranean, would give almost any concession to beaten France to grab the French fleet, but this did not appear on the surface as a condition.

Why a Change?

What did change Vichy's role in the world? Up to that moment the world had pictured Vichy and unoccupied France as a saddened, hungry nation, bled white by the Nazis, and hoping against hope for the day when a British victory would return the country to peace, prosperity and freedom.

Now the world had to picture a France which had further surrendered, which was sending Darlan to repeated close and secret conferences with a "high Nazi authority," and which was prepared to tell the United States, in effect, just what the Germans were claiming:

"The war is over, Europe now is dominated by Germany, and France is going to collaborate politically and socially, to see what she can gain for herself in the reorganization of Europe. If you go into the war on the side of Britain you are against, not for us."

The Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND
By DREW PEARSON & ROBERT ALLEN

Washington, D. C.

SHIP PREMIUMS TO JAPAN

It is hard to believe, but the government of the United States actually is paying war risk insurance to the Japanese for helping to insure the S.S. America, pride of the U. S. merchant marine.

This is just part of the revelations over re-insurance which are breaking this week at the justice department. These probes also show that when a vessel is injured, Axis insurance companies get all the data regarding its cargo, time of departure, destination, and the interior plan of the ship.

Thus, despite all the censorship of Secretary of the Navy Knox, Germany has had an easy means of knowing all about every ship that leaves the United States.

This is accomplished when American insurance companies, because of the heavy risk involved in insuring a cargo in wartime, reinsure with various foreign companies. In other words, they sell part of the policy abroad, thus distribute the risk. That is how Japan makes a lush profit on insuring American vessels, even vessels owned by the U. S. A.

Last year congress passed a law providing war risk insurance for U. S. shipping, but the maritime commission, for reasons best known to itself, has declined to take advantage of the law. Commission members state quite frankly that they wanted to throw the business to **private** insurance concerns—as long as private insurance was available.

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DEBATE FREEZING AXIS FUNDS

One of the most vigorous inner cabinet debates in a long time concerned the question of freezing German-Italian funds on deposit in the United States. In a heated discussion, Secretary of State Hull and Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones were the only cabinet members who stood out for letting the two Axis powers continue to spend money as they wished in this country.

Many people may not realize it, but whereas the government has frozen the funds of all the conquered nations — France, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Greece, etc.—it continues to permit the conquering nations to use their money in the U. S. A. in any manner they wish.

For instance, Germany gets more than a million dollars monthly from the lease of patents to American companies. This is paid in American dollars and can be spent for anti-American propaganda or anything else, or shipped back to Germany. Italian diplomatic attaches, for instance, were found carrying $2,000,000 in U. S. currency in a suitcase from New Orleans to Mexico for propaganda purposes. Another $2,000,000 of U. S. currency was shipped to Buenos Aires by the Italian embassy.

Meanwhile, France, for example, no longer sells perfume, etc., to the United States, but sells to Germany, which in turn ships the perfume through Vladivostok to the United States. Reason is that French funds are frozen, so the French can get no money from the U. S. A. But German funds are not frozen, so French trade to the United States now increases Nazi profits and helps build up trade channels for the future.

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STREAMLINED FOODS

Because of the acute shipping shortage, food items for shipment to Britain are being selected for high vitamin and calorie content, also for minimum bulk and weight.

In general, preference will be given to concentrated and dried foods, rather than bulky canned goods such as fruits, which contain a considerable amount of water. Tomatoes are an exception because the juice they are packed in is high in vitamins.

One item urgently desired by the British is dehydrated vegetable soup, 12 tons of which will make 700,000 bowls.

A plan is under consideration to transport some of this concentrated food in the big bombers being ferried across the Atlantic, which can easily carry a 12-ton load.

The $400,000,000 that has been allocated for the food-aid program will be used to buy 15,000,000 cases of canned tomatoes, 20,000,000 cases of evaporated milk, 50,000,000 pounds of lard, 250,000,000 pounds of cheese, several million pounds of Wilshire cured ham, millions of powdered eggs, and thousands of tons of dehydrated vegetable soup, dried raisins and prunes.

While gigantic in itself, the program is only about 3 per cent of the U. S. food bill, which in 1940 was $12,000,000,000.

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MERRY-GO-ROUND

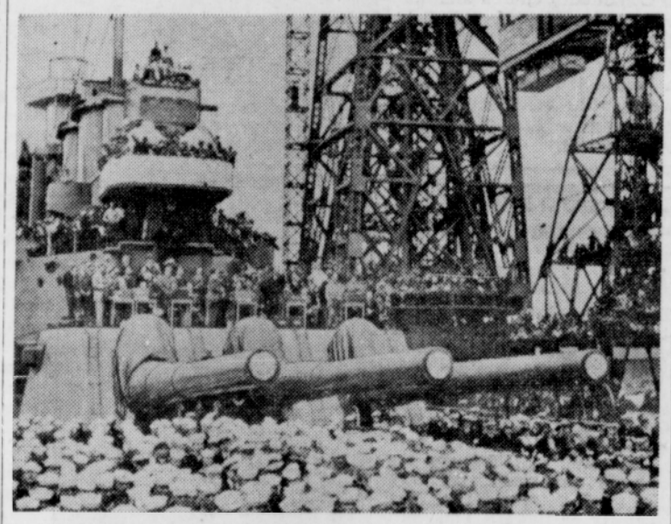
The Nelson Rockefeller committee for cultural relations with South America wasn't at all keen about the Douglas Fairbanks good-will pilgrimage. They resented Franklin Roosevelt Jr., close friend of Fairbanks, putting this one over with his father while they weren't looking.

Mayor LaGuardia declined with thanks FDR's request that he head the new Civil Defense Commission, indicating to the Boss that he wants a cabinet job or nothing.

$5,000,000 Fire Sweeps Philadelphia

Fire swept through three city blocks of the Port Richmond section of Philadelphia, taking property toll of approximately $5,000,000 in homes and factories. A wall of water stopped the fire just short of Cramps shipyards, where large naval construction contracts are under way. Photo shows firemen fighting the blaze.

Giant New Battleship Commissioned



The 35,000-ton super-dreadnaught, U. S. S. Washington, has now joined the United States navy. This view during the commissioning ceremonies shows part of the after-deck with crew members lined up under the great ship's 16-inch rifles.

Wartime Rules Invoked to Guard Capitol

Capitol police begin checking articles carried by visitors, for the first time since World War I days, when a time-bomb exploded in the senate reception room. Acting under orders from the capitol police board, fourteen officers are stopping all visitors at the seven entrances to the building, and relieve all sight-seers of bundles, cameras, umbrellas and other articles large enough to conceal a bomb.

Australian Prime Minister Arrives

Robert G. Menzies, prime minister of Australia, and companions, pictured as they arrived in New York, from Europe, on the Pan-American Dixie Clipper. Left to right: Menzies; Frederick Sheddon, secretary of Australian-British defense co-ordination department; and John Storey, member of Australian-British aircraft production committee.

Into Guard Room!

Lieut. Col. H. Smith, military aide to the President, averted new attacks on American Peace Mobilization pickets in front of White House by taking one soldier into custody, himself, giving him the "bum's rush" into the guard room.

In Hess's Shoes

From now on the office of chancellery head in Berlin will be under control of Hitler, although the present leader, Martin Bormann (above) will remain in office. This will fill gap created by flight of Rudolf Hess, No. 3 Nazi, to Scotland.

Fights Polio

At the invitation of President Roosevelt to take treatment for polio, Higinio Morinigo Jr., son of the president of Paraguay, arrives at Miami airport with his mother and Maria Carmen Pena, four, en route to Warm Springs, Ga.

Gift From Red Cross

John G. Winant, United States ambassador to Great Britain, handing over a check for 70,000 pounds to Lady Reading, chief of the Women's Volunteer Service, in London. The money was sent from the American Red Cross.