

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

By Edward C. Wayne

Valuable Oil Supplies of Middle East Result in Shift of War Scene to Iraq, But 'Battle of Atlantic' Still Remains As Most Important Phase of Conflict

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



When the British put forth an effort to hold the Iraq oil wells by force they faced cavalrymen like these. These Iraqi troops make an impressive sight on parade but Iraq asked Germany for heavy mechanized forces to aid in keeping the British from complete control of the highly valued oil fields.

(See Below: WAR—Changed Scene)

WAR:

Changed Scene

Although nothing in the European war was a certainty except its uncertainty, it seemed reasonably likely that the attempted Axis pincers move against Suez via north Africa and the Middle East would change the vital scene of the war to that locality.

That Suez eventually would fall to the German-Italian forces was deemed a likelihood, though the failure of this campaign would conversely mean a distinct turn of the tide in British favor.

Even before the outset of the campaign, when the British had concluded the first move into Iraq, the British ministry of information attempted to prepare the public for an adverse outcome by letting it be known that even the fall of Suez would not be fatal to the British cause.

Indeed, the propaganda articles pointed to Alexandria as a much more vital spot in the Mediterranean than Suez, but how this helped when Alexandria was as much of an Axis objective as Suez was a little difficult to see.

Perhaps it was that the British thought they could hold out at Alexandria after Suez had fallen, thus naming the objectives in chronological order.

All this was considerably in the future, however, for the British attempted to "jump the gun" as they had at Salonika and Piraeus, by landing an expeditionary force in Iraq. There was one vital difference, however, that in Iraq they were meeting an unfriendly regime, whereas in Greece the landing was welcomed, as the Greeks already were at war with the Axis.

Within a few days after the landing from the Persian gulf the British found themselves virtually at war with Arabia, though the Iraq army was only 28,000 regularly armed and uniformed men. But the government which had got its power through a Nazi-inspired coup d'etat, ordered all citizens to grab whatever arms they had and to wage a holy war against invading England.

Objective

Vital objective of the British was to prevent damage or seizure on the part of the Arabs of the vital Mosul oil fields, and the British drive was aimed particularly at Kirkuk, the start of the pipeline from the Mosul fields which supplied airplane and fleet fuel for the Mediterranean forces.

However, though the Arabs were conceded little chance to stand up to the British attackers, they were on the ground, and even as they started shelling British troops and the Habbaniyah air field, and even as they started appeals to Germany for help, thus laying the groundwork for the landing of a German expeditionary force, Arabs seized the Kirkuk end of the pipeline, and were reported to be flooding the oil fields.

It could not be estimated how much damage was being done, but though the pipeline seizure was pleasing to the Germans, a serious sabotage of the oil fields would prove embarrassing to Germany, though much more to the British.

For the Germans stood even more in need of oil than the British. The latter could get oil from other sources, notably from the United States, but one of Germany's secondary objectives in the Near East

was this same group of oil wells.

Of course, if the German drive southward should succeed, the Haifa end of the pipeline would fall as well as the Kirkuk end, not to mention the oil field itself.

Formula

None doubted that Germany would hold to this so far winning formula of warfare and leave the Arabs largely to their fate until the planned advance had been thoroughly worked out. This was the method employed in northern Africa, where the Germans let the Italians take their beating until they were driven back to Tripoli.

Then the forces of the Reich crossed the Mediterranean, largely in Italian ships, landed on the north African coast, and promptly and with high speed drove the British back on their heels, taking everything that the Italians had lost in a matter of weeks, where it had taken the British months.

This was the western end of the pincers which was aimed at Alexandria Egypt and Suez, with the move of the eastern end, which started with the Grecian campaign and the general Balkan infiltration, expected to start as soon as the proper diplomatic and military preparation was finished.

Many believed the Germans would have to hurry this time, for some observers reported the Russians to be drawing troops from the eastern part of the country, and beginning to concentrate them in central Russia.

This might mean two things, either a protective movement, or an effort to beat the Germans to the Near-Eastern punch and to go into the Eurasian territory themselves, perhaps through Persia. There was an outside possibility that Russia, however, might content herself with a Persian grab, and aim toward British India.

Soviet Upset

The Soviet was considerably upset, it was true, by the German entry into Finland; was more upset by the infiltration into Bulgaria; and still more bothered by the reports from Turkey that the Turks were planning to follow the lead of all Balkan countries except Yugoslavia and Greece, and permit the Germans to have their will unchecked.

Should the Russians actually jump actively over to the British side of the war, which was deemed extremely unlikely until the British had imparted a serious defeat to the Axis, then the whole complexion of things would be changed and Italy and Germany would find themselves with a real problem on their hands.

What seemed most likely was the eventual fall of Asia Minor to the Axis, and even at long last the fall of Suez and Alexandria.

Closest observers of the war believed that even with all of this the British had a chance to win if they could definitely win the battle of the Atlantic; could definitely resume the unchallenged mastery of the seas; could receive from the United States "all-out" aid including active entry into the war; and could repel an invasion of the British Isles themselves.

Those in touch with the Washington scene believed this country much closer to being actually in the war, with some actually predicting that our entry was no further off than 60 days.

HIGHLIGHTS . . . in Defense News

The state department granted unlimited licenses to the British Iron & Steel corporation and the British purchasing commission under which customs collectors are authorized to accept shipments of specified products, without the presentation of license forms, going to British New Guinea, British North Borneo, Federated Malay States, Unfederated Malay States, Hongkong, Oceania, Papua, and Sarawak.

OPM Director of Priorities Stettinius put into effect blanket priority ratings enabling manufacturers of airplane frames, engines, and propellers to obtain needed materials "to speed production of military airplanes for the United States and Great Britain." Mr. Stettinius also announced immediate application to 16 vital defense metals of a system of inventory controls designed to prevent excess stocks in industry.



Washington, D. C.

MEDITERRANEAN KEY

Key to the fateful battle of the Mediterranean which is about to burst in full fury is not the Suez canal, but Britain's great naval base at Alexandria, 125 miles west of the canal entrance.

The loss of Alexandria would deprive the British of their key "bridgehead" in northern Africa and ensure Axis domination of the eastern Mediterranean.

Actually, the Suez canal itself has been of little value to the British for months. It went out of use as the so-called "life-line of the empire" when the Axis air attack that severely damaged the air carrier Ilustrious proved it was suicidal to attempt to convoy shipping through the long and narrow waterway.

Since then the Mediterranean has been a "no man's land" for all the belligerents. While 2,000 miles in length, its narrow width at certain places has made it extremely hazardous for both sides, and the British have been routing their shipping around the Cape of Good Hope for some time.

Loss of the Mediterranean would, of course, be a serious blow to the British; but it would by no means end the war or mean victory for the Axis. With her fleet intact, Britain would still be able to carry the fight to Hitler and Mussolini.

MACHINE TOOLS

Chief reason behind the big curtailment in auto production was the release of urgently needed machine tools for defense. The machine tool bottleneck could be broken overnight if all the machine tools owned by the motor industry were turned to the making of planes, tanks and other armament.

Defense experts estimate that there are around 1,500,000 machine tools in the U. S., of which more than half are in plants making motor vehicles or parts for them, and in the allied metal fabricating industry. The list includes grinders, milling machines, lathes, boring machines, presses, gear cutters, drillers, and shapers, all vital in the production of defense equipment.

New output of machine tools is now speeding at the rate of 14,000 a month. This is a spectacular achievement and a great tribute to the industry. But it is only a drop in the bucket compared to the 750,000 machine tools already possessed by the auto and metal fabricating industries, which army men say would increase defense production to full flow immediately if pooled and devoted entirely to this purpose.

HIDDEN COLLEAGUE

A stocky, gray-haired man, flanked by a group of sightseers, approached a Capitol policeman and asked directions to the office of Sen. Hiram Johnson of California.

Tucked away in an obscure corner of the north side of the Capitol where tourists never tread, Johnson's office is one of the hardest to find in the great structure.

"I'll do my best to explain how to get there," said the policeman.

"Are you a tourist?"

"No," grinned the inquirer, "I'm the other senator from California, Senator Downey."

FERRY SCHOOL

Everybody is wondering how the swarms of fighting planes which U. S. factories will produce for the British in the next 12 months will be delivered overseas. The answer, for the big ships, is that they will be flown across—and in such great numbers that the British are setting up a special pilot training school for that purpose, in the United States.

The school will give an intensive refresher and training course to volunteer pilots to qualify them for "ferrying" the big bombers across the Atlantic.

The volunteers may be British, Canadian, or American. However, it is expected that the largest numbers will be Americans. The British can use 250 of them.

GOOD NEIGHBOR PILOTS

Another "Good Neighbor" gesture will soon be made to our immediate neighbor to the south, Mexico. The state department will offer pilot-training courses to a number of Mexican youths in the United States.

Initiator of the idea was Vice President Henry Wallace. When he visited Mexico last year, one of the problems discussed was the shortage of aviators in the Mexican army. Wallace was told that Mexico wanted to undertake a pilot-training program similar to that in the United States, but lacked planes and instructors.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Leading economists rate the industrial and financial surveys completed by the O'Mahoney monopoly committee as the most valuable source material on the economy of the country ever compiled.

Department of agriculture is recommending a new plant to hold soil in the gullies—but they wish the Japanese would tell how to produce the seed. Known as kudzu, it is one of the plant secrets of Japan. It serves not only as a soil binder but also as a feed, surpassing alfalfa.

Ask Me Another A General Quiz

The Questions

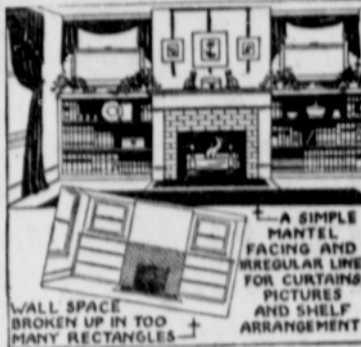
- 1. How far apart are North America and Asia at the narrowest point of Bering strait?
2. What is a thimble-rigger?
3. Why does a polar bear never slip on glassy ice?
4. St. Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians were written to the inhabitants of the city now called what?
5. What is the smallest deer in the world?
6. What is the principal constituent of pewter?
7. Where are the Grand Banks?
8. How does Brazil compare in size with the United States?
9. Who was the founder of psycho-analysis?

The Answers

- 1. Fifty-six miles.
2. One who swindles with the aid of three small cups, shaped like thimbles, and a small ball or pea.
3. The soles of the polar bear's feet are covered with thickly set hair which gives him perfect traction.
4. Salonika.
5. The mouse-deer of Indo-China. It weighs about four pounds.
6. Tin.
7. Off Newfoundland.
8. Larger by 250,000 square miles.
9. Sigmund Freud.

NEW IDEAS for Home-makers By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

SMALL windows and bookshelves at the sides of a fireplace often create a monotonous series of rectangles. Watch out for them for they play an important part in decorating plans. You see them here in the small sketch—six of them—window; overmantel space; window; bookshelves; mantel; bookshelves—around and around they go.



The only architectural change shown in the large sketch was a mantel facing built of three boards and simple mouldings. This broke up one rectangle. Irregular lines for swag drapes over the windows

softened the angles of two more. A large picture or mirror over the mantel just added still another rectangle, so small prints were hung with ribbons. The arrangement of vines, books and bibelots on the shelves took care of the rest.

NOTE: Directions for cutting and making the swag draperies shown in today's sketch may be found on page 11 of Book 1. In the series of service booklets offered with these articles. Also book 7 is now ready for mailing. It contains more than 30 of these home-making ideas with step-by-step directions for each; as well as a description of the series. Booklets are 10 cents each and should be ordered direct from:

MRS. RUTH WYETH SPEARS, Drawer 19, Bedford Hills, New York. Enclose 10 cents for each book ordered. Name, Address.

SMASHING SALE Firestone TIRES. Here are bargains you have never seen before—and may never see again! Hurry, sale ends June 1st. Equip your car now for the holiday and summer driving season—it may be your last opportunity to get such bargains! 6.00-16 \$5.95 And Your Old Tire Firestone CONVOY TIRES. LIFETIME GUARANTEE. Every Firestone tire carries a written lifetime guarantee—without time or mileage limit.

Firestone STANDARD TIRES. Here is the lowest sale price we've ever had on this big Firestone Standard Tire—a quality tire with an exclusive safety tread that gives extra long mileage. At this special SALE PRICE, it is an amazing buy! 6.00-16 AND YOUR OLD TIRE \$6.98. Firestone HIGH SPEED TIRES. FIRST QUALITY AT A BARGAIN PRICE. Here is the tire that was original equipment on millions of cars—now improved to give still longer mileage and greater protection against blowouts and skids. Compare it with any other first quality tire on the market—THEN LOOK AT THIS PRICE \$9.98. BATTERY SALE. More for your money. An outstanding battery bargain. Buy today and save money. \$2.89 EXCHANGE.

GET OUR LOW PRICES ON TRUCK TIRES. Come in and get your complimentary package of the new Idabelle Firestone Marigold flower seeds. They are yours for the asking. Listen to the Voice of Firestone with Richard Crooks, Margaret Spears and the Firestone Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Alfred Wallenstein, Monday evenings, over N. B. C. Red Network. SEE YOUR NEARBY FIRESTONE DEALER OR STORE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE AMAZING BARGAINS.