

# HOW STRONG IS JAPAN?

Frederick V. Field assays the strength and weaknesses of the enemy. The status of the Japanese war economy. What resources can Hitler's Far Eastern partner draw on?

How formidable is the Japanese empire, the enemy the American people are pledged to crush? How tough is the war going to be? Will it take six months or five years? Is Japan a pushover or a substantial adversary?

First of all, let no one deceive himself, and thereby deceive his country, that Japan's defeat is going to be easy. We have been attacked not only by an extensive empire of nearly 100,000,000 people, but one strongly controlled by a bureaucracy which for ten years has been straining every nerve in preparation for the deceitful attack launched on Sunday, December 7.

Japan's navy, the third largest in the world, is a formidable opponent for the Allied powers. It can operate exclusively in the Pacific Ocean while Britain and the United States must keep powerful units concentrated in the Mediterranean and scattered throughout the Atlantic. Nevertheless, it is true that Japan's total tonnage is much less than the combined fleets which are likely to be available to the Allies in the Pacific; the number of Japan's units may be fewer and their fire-power considerably less.

To discuss in detail comparative statistics on the American and allied fleets might afford information to the enemy, and in any case there is little possibility of representing a relationship that will be changing all the time. Highest estimates give Japan a total strength of some 274 ships with a tonnage of some 1,131,000 tons; the Allied forces must be well over that.

In battleships, the United States is definitely superior, our guns per battleship are larger and definitely more numerous.

Our aircraft carriers may be slightly fewer, but their capacity is greater. All the Japanese carriers are believed to carry no more than 350 planes altogether.

Our heavy cruisers carry more and better guns, although Japan's superior fleet of light cruisers is generally conceded to be faster and more maneuverable with the probable exception of the latest American types.

Against Japan's 130 destroyers, plus a score or more of torpedo boats, the United States and its allied powers can do better.

So also, in submarines, Japan has some seventy-five, of which two-thirds can accompany its fleet to sea. In this category, the United States plus Britain and the Dutch East Indies can well match Japanese strength.

Japan is reported to have thirty-eight ships under construction, which reputedly include seven of the 40,000 ton type. But our newest battleships exceed this tonnage. Our construction program calls for more ships than the entire Japanese navy now has.

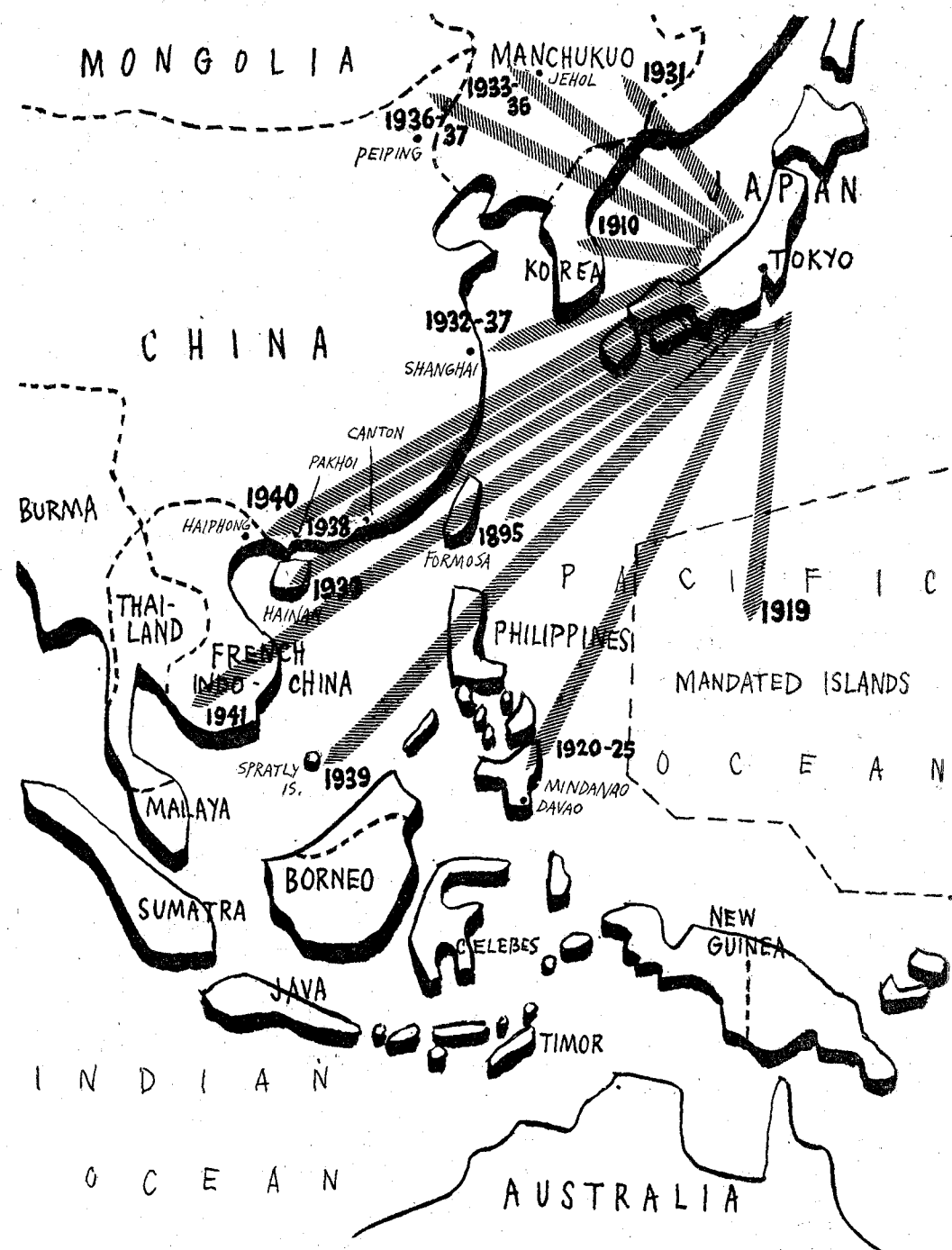
In addition to inferior fire-power, Japanese ships almost invariably have thinner armor. A sixteen-inch shell, for example, can penetrate the 33,000 ton *Nagato*, of Japan's navy. The *Nagato* has a cruising range of 3,000 miles and a battle range of 1,500; our ships can do much better. In general, the Japanese fleet moves more quickly than ours, but is not built for sustained action at home, while ours is designed primarily for long distance pulls.

It is true, however, that while we must get to Manila and Singapore for the best bases, five to eight thousand miles from Pearl Har-

bor, Japan's naval base at Camranh in Indo-China definitely increases her ability to do real damage in the south Pacific between Manila and Singapore, and around the Dutch East Indies.

JAPAN'S AIR FORCE has been universally sized up as inferior to ours in most every respect. According to the *Wall Street Journal's* estimate, Japan's rate of output is only 250 a month. Ours may be as much as ten times that amount.

But while our production is constantly increasing, Japan's production may be declining



The Map of Japanese Aggression: Death Rays of the Rising Sun

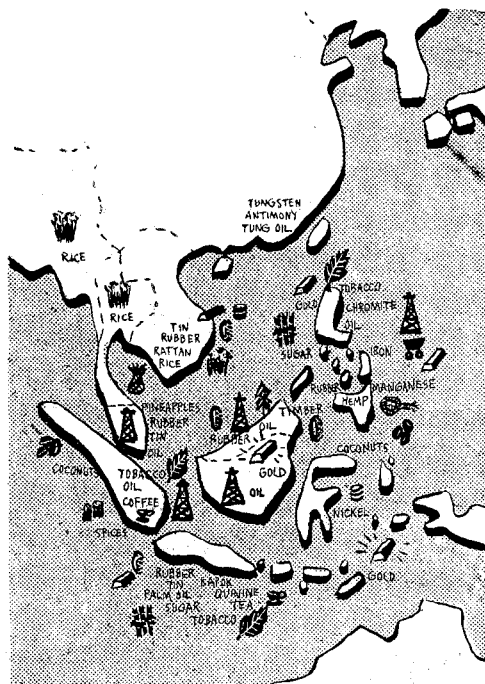
along with the general stagnation and decline in her industrial production. Not only are fifty percent of Japan's models obsolete, but American air experts generally believe that their newest designs are several years older than our latest models, with consequent inferiority in speed, range, maneuverability, fire, and hitting power. Trained pilots do not total much more than planes, and although the Japanese have greatly improved their bombing accuracy since the early days of the Chinese war, they have virtually no experience in actual combat, owing to China's shortage of planes. Though such estimates may prove below the actual truth, yet all available evidence indicates that Japan cannot hold superiority in the air over the combined, American, Dutch and British resistance. Japan cannot possibly keep pace in new production.

THE STRENGTH of the Japanese army has always been shrouded in even deeper secrecy than the navy and air force, and the most reliable estimates only come up to August 1939. Last July a Shanghai source reported that Japan had mobilized 1,000,000 men—the largest mobilization since the start of the China war. This figure would include some veterans of the China war and some who had been exempted from military service for physical reasons. In August 1939, at any rate, the total number of officers and men was approximately 1,500,000. Although the trained reserve forces may amount to 9,000,000, it is extremely doubtful that the army is well enough equipped to put one-third of this number into action at once. Two million would be more likely.

It is important to realize that the Japanese army is spread over many separate regions, with units in Manchukuo, Korea, North China, Central China, and South China, Japan itself, Formosa, and, since last summer, Indo-China. An attempted invasion of the Dutch East Indies would be undertaken by troops now stationed in Southern China and in Indo-China.

These military forces at the disposal of the Japanese empire have, through a treacherous, deceitful surprise attack, gained an initial advantage. It may take many weeks for the initiative to pass to the United States and her allies in the battle for freedom. Assuming, and we have absolute faith in the validity of the assumption, that the Japanese are not able to strike decisive blows in the early phases of the war, much will depend upon the staying power of the opposing forces and this, in turn, depends upon the strength of the industrial economy behind the respective combatants.

How strong is Japanese economy? Can it now produce in sufficient quantity and with a degree of quality needed to fight a long-term, major war? How long can war production be maintained? These are questions to which the answers cannot be precise. We can point to a serious deterioration in the physical welfare of the Japanese worker and



*What Japan Is After*

to a consequent lowering of his productivity. But we can point to this only as a trend, not as a concrete determinant of when Japanese production will thereby suffer a breakdown. Similarly, figures indicate a serious iron ore shortage and suggest a continued trend of deterioration in the metals industries; they do not indicate the precise or even the approximate moment at which this factor will prove decisive.

No American, in other words, can afford the luxury of waiting for or counting upon the collapse of the Japanese war effort through the breakdown of the economy behind it. That is a costly error which has been made since 1931, when it was widely predicted that Japan could not afford to carry out its plans of Asiatic conquest. That is a well-nigh fatal error the democracies made with respect to Nazi Germany's chances of staging an economic comeback.

THE BACKGROUND for modern Japanese industry was laid in the latter part of the nineteenth century, during the period known as the Meiji Restoration, when the alliance between the state and the financial oligarchy was cemented. The early industrial development of Japan was characterized by two factors which molded the present period and accounted for the somewhat exceptional form in which fascism has developed in the last decade. One of these factors was the leading part taken by the state in the fostering of industry, particularly in those branches related to war; the second factor was the extreme concentration of capital and economic power in a small financial oligarchy which financed the state in its program and to which the state later turned over a large share of its industrial enterprises at ridiculously low prices.

These two related groups, the state and the oligarchy, each in fact simply an aspect of the other, have controlled Japan's economy

ever since. Today, the state owns and operates the railways, postal, telegraph, and telephone services; arsenals, dockyards, gunpowder, and clothing factories owned by the army and navy; exercises monopolies over tobacco, camphor, and salt; controls a large number of recently organized semi-official companies to promote production in strategic industries, to develop communications and raw material resources in China, and to monopolize the generation and transmission of electricity and the sale of coal.

The state's partner, the fascist oligarchy, is led by "the big four": Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda, each operating simultaneously in finance, commerce, and industry. Take a quick look at the position these four companies alone held in relation to the whole of Japanese economy in 1937. Their banks possessed more than one-third of the total deposits in non-government banks and their trust companies held some seventy percent of all trust deposits. Their trading companies handled one-third of Japan's total foreign trade. They were heavily invested in shipping, shipbuilding, warehousing, colonial enterprises, engineering, mining, textiles, metal manufacture, sugar refining, and flour milling. A large part of the entire chemical industry was under their control.

THE BASIC WEAKNESS in Japan's wartime economy lies in the scarcity of industrial raw materials. That, coupled with the fact that the nations that have already declared war against Japan were, in normal times, the principal suppliers of those deficit materials, indicates that the only way for Japan to overcome this weakness during the war is by winning great overseas victories. Even in that unlikely event the hostility of native populations, the long trade routes to be guarded, and the damage that would have been done to the sources of supply before evacuation argue against Japan's achieving much success in this respect.

The seriousness of Japan's raw material position can be indicated by a few figures. In 1937 Japan produced only nineteen percent of the iron ore it consumed, seventy-seven percent of the pig iron, only nine percent of the crude oil and forty-four percent of petroleum products, and only sixty-two percent of the copper. In coal, despite comparatively meager reserves, they were able to produce over ninety-five percent of their requirements.

Where has Japan gone to make up these deficits? In the case of the steel industry, two of the three basic requirements for which are iron ore and pig iron, here is the picture. In 1936, the year before the outbreak of major hostilities against China, Japan obtained forty-five percent of its iron ore imports from British Malaya and another thirty-three percent from China. All of those Chinese sources later fell into Japanese hands, but, under such circumstances that in 1938 from those same mines Japan was able to obtain less than one-seventh the amount of ore. Japan replaced this loss by turning to the Philippine



Islands, a source which we may be confident will never fall intact into Japanese hands.

In 1936 thirty-nine percent of Japan's pig iron imports came from India, another thirty-three percent from the Soviet Union and twenty-eight percent from Manchuria. Two years later imports from the Soviet Union had already reached zero, the figure which they have today reached for India. Manchurian sources have also dwindled because of a contradiction that soon developed in the exploitation of that Japanese conquest and which prevails for all the formerly publicized raw supplies of the puppet state. It turned out that the effort to develop industries in Manchuria parallel with those in Japan proper and designed to furnish supplies for the growing empire not only drained Japan of capital but also used up more than the industrial materials the colony could furnish. Manchuria, rather than solving Japan's industrial problems, became another Japan, another mouth gaping for raw materials it didn't have.

One of the most critical Japanese raw material deficits has always been in petroleum. In 1939, for instance, of Japan's estimated petroleum demand of 40.4 million barrels, only 2.7 million barrels were produced within Japan. In 1937, for which Japanese trade figures are available, sixty percent of its petroleum imports came from the United States (a proportion later increased), and another twelve percent from the Dutch East Indies, and six percent from British Borneo. Manchuria provided a mere one percent. Estimates of Japan's oil reserves put in storage in preparation for the war vary; the consensus of informed opinion is that the supplies on hand will last for a year and a half.

Despite this basic raw material weakness, Japanese economy registered certain substantial advances in the 1931-41 decade. During the first half of that period there was a conspicuous expansion of Japan's total industrial output, marked by a greater diversification of industry as a result of the growth of the metal, machinery, and chemical industries. By 1936 Japan could produce a large part of the finished steel products needed for domestic use and had even developed an export trade in certain types of machinery.

From 1937 on this trend was accentuated, especially by the controls placed on peace industries in favor of war industries. These years were also marked by increased inflation accompanied by a sharp rise in the cost of living; the tremendous extension of government control and regulation to almost every aspect of the economy accompanied in turn by a continuous struggle between big business and the militarist-bureaucrats for control of the "new economic structure."

Industrial production in 1939 was 13.5 percent greater by volume than in 1937, an increase made up, however, of a 41.8 percent increase in the volume of producers' goods and a 15.1 percent decrease in the volume of consumers' goods.

Indications of serious industrial stagnation became apparent during 1940. Actually pro-



WHAT THE WARLORDS TEACH: Japanese use live Chinese prisoners for bayonet practice.

duction in all branches of industry with the exception of metals and machinery was, by the end of the third year of war, below pre-war levels. Even in these vital war industries the output in August 1940 was below that of August 1939.

Why? What had happened? A serious power shortage developed toward the end of 1939; imports of scrap iron from the United States and of iron ore and pig iron from Malaya and India dropped sharply; labor productivity declined sharply. The latter is explained by a shortage of manpower, by the deterioration of machinery because of inability to supply parts or make repairs, and finally a serious decline in physical welfare resulting from the high cost of living and scarcity of consumer goods. This downward trend in industrial production is bound to continue while Japan fights the United States.

In addition, Manchuria, that much talked of "life line," had turned out to be a white elephant. It had become a market, not a source of supply. The national debt at the end of 1940 was nearly 30,000,000,000 yen, equal to the total national income. The note issue during the year increased by more than 1,000,000,000 yen and the rate of government bond absorption fell alarmingly. The United States Department of Commerce, in the absence of Japanese figures, estimated that Japan's merchandise trade deficit in 1940 amounted to \$202,400,000, as compared with \$93,150,000 in 1939.

But certainly there is one more factor which must be taken into consideration, and that is the character and state of mind among

the Japanese people themselves. Here we have to balance a fanaticism and emperor worship, a sense of national mission and extreme pride, the *bushido*, which works as the same kind of opiate that Hitler has instilled into large sections of the German youth. Unquestionably this has enabled the rulers of Japan to force their people through all the sacrifices of the past ten years, coupled, of course, with the comprehensive system of police espionage and terror, which has been responsible for smashing the Japanese workingmen's and peasant organizations more than once. On the other hand, the prolonged agricultural crisis, and the war-weariness have had a real effect on the soldier and officer personnel, who know that their families are suffering, their sisters are being degraded, and only the urns shipped back from the mainland are the people's compensation for all these campaigns. This discontent among the rank and file has been cleverly deflected by the secret societies among the officers into reactionary channels, but the discontent is there. The realization that Japan faces a mortal risk may temporarily cause elation and renewed self-sacrifice, but sharp defeat would cause despair and serious difficulties for the regime at home. There is a tradition of peasant organization and there were a Japanese trade union movement and strong Communist influences, especially in the cultural field. We cannot count on this automatically, but given heavy blows from an aroused America, upheavals in the supercharged Japanese atmosphere will play their part in the Mikado's defeat.

FREDERICK V. FIELD.



# THE DAY WAR CAME

What happened in Washington Dec. 7, 1941. Bruce Minton describes the events in the capital that fateful day.

Washington, D. C.

**Y**ESTERDAY, Dec. 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy.” Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, stood before the joint session of Congress, gripping the stand on which the microphones rested, angry and terribly calm. In front of him sat the Cabinet, the members of the Supreme Court, high officials of the government, the Army, and the Navy. The galleries were packed: admission by card only. Outside on the capital lawn huge crowds had waited from early in the morning to cheer the President as he drove up from the White House.

He spoke only a few words—not more than Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg. But these words were unequivocal, harsh in their unadorned simplicity. Solemnly, this morning, our great nation undertook to resist aggression, and to formalize the state of war that had been thrust upon it. “Always,” said the President, “will we remember the character of the onslaught against us.”

The President came to the rostrum on the arm of his oldest son. The House stood and cheered. During the President’s ringing remarks the members sat quietly, interrupting to applaud only when he declared, “We will gain the inevitable triumph.” The ceremony lasted not more than ten minutes. And then the President was gone, and the robed justices filed out, the Cabinet members left the chamber, the senators hurried back across the Capitol.

The House considered the motion, speeches were brief—and there were few of them.

The motion was called. Each congressman answered his name with an “aye”—except the lone pacifist, Jeanette Rankin of Montana. The House approved the motion 338—1. And as the last vote was registered an usher came from the Senate to announce the concurrence of the upper body, 82—0.

The United States was at war. The inevitable had happened.

IN WASHINGTON the news of the attack against American territory was greeted with tense indignation and anger. As the radio brought the terrible announcement of bombs falling on Pearl Harbor, the people came out into the streets. They stood in small groups in front of the Japanese Embassy. As secretaries scurried about the yard to light bales of paper, a few hooted, but for the most part men and women—and many were young boys out for the day with their girls—waited quietly and watched and sometimes joked a little among themselves. The police buzzed about to keep order, but there was no need for police. A man brought “inside” news that upstairs in the Embassy the official Japanese document consumer was busily eat-

ing the more important papers—“to be attentively noted, read, and inwardly digested,” he added, quoting a phrase used in government offices.

All night the lights burned in the Navy and War department buildings. Some soldiers were stationed in doorways to guard these buildings, and a few police loitered in the dark shadows of the great pile that is the State Department. The White House, across the street, was brilliantly lit. Little knots of reporters gathered on the grass, stamping their feet in the cold night and waiting for a congressman or Cabinet member to come out of the President’s office, hoping to pin him down for a statement. Across Pennsylvania Avenue hundreds of people lined the sidewalk, staring at the graceful beauty of the columned White House portico. A sober vigil, a vigil that had been held in London and Moscow and now had finally come to Washington. Automobiles crawled along the crowded, tree-lined avenue, and from every radio came the voice of the announcer from inside the White House Press office, reading the bulletins as they were released a sentence at a time. The Capitol dome was alight. A guard at the House Office Building remembered “this time a little over twenty-four years ago, when I was standing right where I am now, and President Woodrow Wilson told us that day, April 6 (it was 1917), that the country was at war. Tomorrow President Roosevelt will do the same. They just rang up to say I should be on the job at eight in the morning. That means the President is coming.”

But how different from 1917. Then, great numbers of Americans declared a war in which they could not believe. Then, demonstrators carrying white floaters marched across the White House Lawn, and throughout the length and breadth of the land were heard the words of doubt and the tears of despair. But Sunday night there was no dissent and no doubt. Sadness there was, but the sadness of a peaceful people who are resolved to resist with all sacrifices and all strength the violence thrust upon them. In this center of our nation there is the certain feeling everywhere that the cities and farms, the little communities, and the great industrial centers are resolute in their determination to see this thing through against a desperate, ignoble enemy.

This war will be no pushover. It is not just a war between the United States and Japan. Everyone down here keeps repeating that fact. It is a war for a way of life: the sheep have been separated from the goats—that’s a favorite phrase—and now the Axis is lined up on one side and the rest of the world is lined up on the other. The declaration of war by the Congress is already con-

sidered incomplete. “The fountain head of conspiracy is in Berlin,” remarked a senator in the lunch room after the session. The United States is at mortal grips with fascism, and declaration or no declaration, the United States is fighting for its very existence against Italy and Germany as well as Japan—against the way of life that is Hitlerism.

This war will be no pushover. There are serious faces everywhere—down at OPM headquarters, in the galleries of the Capitol, in government offices. Until now it has been difficult for some to feel the reality of the struggle, but today the nation is deeply conscious of the need for the greatest effort. We are no longer playing at war. Here, in the nation’s capital, the action of Congress is seen as the expression of the unity that has welded the entire nation. Congressmen, heads of departments, the government in all its intricacy and vastness, realize that a huge task lies ahead. Everyone says much the same things: production is not satisfactory. We have procrastinated. We have been inefficient. We must and will change all that. Our policy will be ruthless against those who for whatever reason impede the all-out effort. The Truman committee and the Tolan committee, investigating our war industries, have pointed to the weak places. They have shown that with all this country’s productive capacity and skill, we have not yet begun to exert our great strength. From this moment things must change. There can be no tolerance of those who put personal interests and profits above national welfare. Production is the key of this war. We will have production such as the world has never seen before.

America First has received a death blow. Its misguided thousands now comprehend the danger to the nation. They will participate, as all Americans will participate, in the fight against Hitlerism. But though their leaders have been repudiated and their untruths answered, we must be alert to those who prepared the way for the bombing of Oahu and Manila, for the loss of a battleship and the sinking of army transports. No matter where they are, no matter what their title, the appeasers must be eliminated from positions where they can do no harm.

Appeasement as a policy has come to the end of its road. The Japanese attack is the final echo of Munich. The degrading bankruptcy of trying to buy off the aggressor left nations unprepared, supine, hopeless before attack. The United States had its appeasers. We are not surprised or unprepared. But the enemies within, some in high places, left their mark.

Organized labor responded instantly to the crisis. Sunday night over the radio Lee Press-

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