

Western Front
Now!

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FOR?

Second Front

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WHAT'S HOLDING UP

THE whole world is watching the bloody valley of the Don, the rolling Cossack countryside made famous in Sholokhov's novel. Here is where Hitler is hurling his millions of men, the tanks and airplanes of a winter and spring's preparation, in the desperate effort to smash Timoshenko's armies, to cut across the plains of the northern Caucasus, to reach the Caspian Sea.

And that is just the trouble. The whole world is watching, but not much more.

"IN RUSSIA, in Egypt, in China," said the *Wall Street Journal* last week, "the Axis has broken the Allied defense strategy, and approaches thumping 1942 successes which would blot out the hopes of victory . . . in 1944."

In these words lies the crux of the great world crisis that confronts us.

"The Axis has broken the Allied defense strategy" . . . why? Because it was a strategy of defense, this so-called strategy we have been pursuing for the last twelve months. It was a strategy of underestimating our allies. It was a strategy of mending colonial fences instead of tending to the central and decisive theaters of the struggle. It was a strategy of retreat where struggle-to-the-death should have been the password. It was, in fact, no strategy at all.

"The Axis approaches thumping 1942 successes," says the *Wall Street Journal*, "which would blot out our hopes of victory—in 1944." What a grim and horrible irony this is, that our side—which could be victorious in 1942, could go into the new year without Hitlerism and Hitler's war—should now be faced . . . with what? Victory next year? Oh, no. Victory the year after? No, not even that. The *Wall Street Journal's* editor confesses that this strategy of defense implies a long, indeterminate struggle, five years, eight years, into a dim and distant future.

THE fact of the matter is that our enemies are still so powerful that no one nation among the United Nations can expect to win this war by itself. If the Soviet Union, which was the best prepared of all the United Nations, with a steadfast population that understood and was ready for total war, has not been able to stop the Axis by itself, then neither China, nor Britain, nor the United States will be able to do so. It was for this reason that an alliance of nations came into being. It was because we need our allies just as much as they need us. It was because only our combined efforts could save us all.

The second front, the strategy of two-front war, is therefore not an academic theory, an intellectual trinket, a chess device of idle minds. *It is the only strategy that a coalition of nations can pursue, for it is the only strategy that conforms to the existence of a coalition.* Failure to pursue this strategy—and to act upon it in time—means ultimately to nullify and break up the coalition. It means to allow the Axis to defeat us one by one, as they have been doing for these ten long, miserable years.

It is not as though those who still argue against a second front have an alternative strategy. No matter how powerful the United States may be a year from now or two years from now, that power will be worthless unless we can exercise it against the bastille of the Axis itself. That bastille cannot be taken unless British and American power is exerted in conjunction with our allies, and from the bases that our allies give us.

Without China and India we cannot defeat Japan. She will meet our bombers in mid-ocean the minute she can turn away from the mainland of Asia. She will bomb our bases, our factories on our own shores.

Without Russia we can never defend the Near East; without the Near East India is lost. And without Russia the Royal Air Force, which is today able to roam the skies of western Europe, will find that the Luftwaffe will challenge it in the air, challenge it on the airfields of Britain itself.

Without Russia, China, and Britain, all the power that America can mobilize will make us that much more of a prize for the Axis to concentrate upon, and to loot. We should be left to face a hostile world alone, the strategic keys of which would be in enemy hands.

And the oppressed peoples of the world would remember with bitterness the vast opportunities that were lost in the year 1942. America would be remembered as a country that was big but not great, in Dorothy Thompson's phrase.

We know it's not easy for Americans to visualize themselves fighting alone. The landing of a dozen spies on our coasts, the occupation of some fog-bound islands off Alaska—that seems trivial and faraway. But these are mere tokens of what would confront us if, in default of collective action to defeat the aggressors, we permitted the Axis to win impregnable positions in central Asia. The Caucasus and Caspian seem far away. But that is where the fulcrum of American security lies. *That is where the issue of a free world or a slave world teeters in the balance.*