

Tanner

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The whole world became a vast sounding board of rumors today. Most of them coming from enemy radios. And most of them, when run down, were found to have not the slightest foundation in fact. Rumors about Marshal Petain, rumors about Pierre Laval, rumors about the French fleet. On many points we are still in the dark. But there are plenty of definite facts to deal with.

First, all of Morocco and all of Algeria are now in American hands. Our armies under General Eisenhower have won control after a campaign of seventy-six hours, a lightning drive that exceeded all hopes.

Next comes the news that we shall not have such an easy time of it in Tunisia. Eisenhower's advance guard is rolling towards the Tunis frontier.

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But when the Americans get there, they will find not French but German troops in possession. The Nazis landed a number of soldiers by air transport. How many we do not know and will not know for some time to come.

Third, Nazi and Italian troops are streaming into previously unoccupied France. The Italians are already in full possession of Nice and are rapidly acquiring the entire Riviera. They are also occupying French Savoy. With the Germans on their way north, the occupation of France is proceeding apace.

Although Marshal Petain did make a formal protest against the entry of German troops and declared that it had violated the armistice, the Germans are moving on Marseilles, also Toulon, the great naval base, home of the French Fleet.

One of the vital matters on which there is doubt is the status of Marshal Petain. There were rumors that he and Weygand had fled from Vichy and

were joining the Allies. There were other rumors that he was taking France into the war on the side of Germany. Both of these groups of rumors appear to be premature. Petain has pronounced a tribute to the French Army for its stand in North Africa and said he would rely on it to continue its defense to the utmost for the honor of France.

But here is an apparent contradiction. The order to French troops in Algeria and Morocco to cease firing was issued by Admiral Darlan. Darlan ~~said~~ he spoke with the authority of Marshal Petain. His message read:- "Our engagements having been fulfilled and the bloody battle having become useless, the order has been given to all land, sea and air forces in North Africa to cease the fight against the power of America and her allies."

At the same time, Admiral Michelier ordered the French fleet at Casablanca to cease firing.

Darlan sent a message to all French commanders

in Algeria and Morocco to put themselves in liason with local American commanders on the subject of terms for suspension of hostilities. General

Eisenhower gave instructions to his armies that the French civil authorities should carry on and that all French who had resisted should be treated with the utmost leniency.

LAVAL

There were rumors also about Pierre Laval. The facts about him are that he rushed back to Vichy today from Munich. There he had been conferring feverishly with Adolf Hitler and his Foreign Minister Ribbentrop. Fascist Foreign Minister Ciano is also supposed to have been there. Just what took place at those conferences we of course do not know. The obvious presumption is that the Nazi Fuehrer told Laval to bring Marshal Petain into the war on the side of the Axis and hurry up about it.

With Laval on his return to Vichy was Nazi Otto Abetz who has been Hitler's envoy to Paris, the hatchet man delegated to use the axe in France. One story has it that Abetz conferred with Petain after Laval had made his report to the Marshal.

All this comes from Vichy. In the face of this almost official information, spokesmen at the Free French headquarters at Cairo persist in the statement that Petain and General Weygand have left France.

FRENCH FLEET

The French Fleet naturally was one of the subjects of world-wide rumor all day. One report was that it had left Toulon and steamed out to keep a rendezvous with the British and American fleets in the middle of the Mediterranean. That once came from two different sources. One, a Free French spokesman in Cairo, who also said that the seventeen French warships which have been mobilized at Alexandria, would join the Allies. And, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation announced that it had picked up a radio message from Michy, that parts of the Toulon fleet would join the Allies.

The British Broadcasting Corporation radioed an appeal from Allied headquarters to the French fleet to assemble at Gibraltar. This appeal urged the crews of such ships as could not leave port to scuttle them sooner than let them fall into the hands of the Germans.

At the same time an official communique

from the British Admiralty in London denied that units of the French fleet interned at Alexandria had been taken over by the British Navy. Those reports were circulated by the German radio, and, said the Admiralty, they are entirely without foundation.

CORSICA

One of the picturesque items of the day was the story that Italian troops had landed at Bastia on the northeastern coast of Corsica. Italian troops on Corsican soil for the first time in a hundred and seventy-four years! The island used to be owned by the Republic of Genoa, but the Genoese always had an unhappy time there. The Corsicans, from time immemorial, have hated work. Their favorite occupation, fighting. And Genoa in Seventeen Sixty-Eight yielded Corsica to the French.

Today an Italian flag flies once more over that turbulent island from whence came Napoleon Bonaparte. Mussolini ~~to~~ seized the island to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Allies, who would make it a most useful jumping off place for an invasion of the shoreline of the Gulf of Genoa.

CHURCHILL

Preparations for a second front in Europe are proceeding, said Winston Churchill. The Prime Minister also warned the House of Commons that such an undertaking takes time.

Then he told the House a few inside facts about the plans for the North African campaign. That President Roosevelt, as I mentioned last night, had suggested it during Churchill's visit to America after we got into the war. He said he and Mr. Roosevelt had agreed, but they also had to consider the advisability of a descent upon France.

Then he acknowledged that Stalin had not greeted with cheers the decision to pick on Africa first. However, the Soviet chief of state had been advised of the reasons for postponing a second front on the continent of Europe until after the African campaign had succeeded. Churchill used these words: "It might have been a relief to our feelings if we had delivered a premature attack across the Channel. But if we had at least a dozen Dieppes in

one day and a dozen Dunkirks a week or two later, a disaster of that character would have been no help to Russia."

It is of the utmost importance to Russia that the enemy shall believe that the Allies are in earnest about the second front. And, said Churchill, "we have drawn and kept at least thirty-three German divisions from the west. That includes one-third of the German fighter force and a large proportion of the bomber force. Hitherto, this bomber force has not been used against Britain because it was being saved for an attempt to land in Britain."

The Prime Minister told the Commons that Nazi Marshal Rommel's losses have been mortal. Churchill received a report last night from General Sir Harold Alexander that the Axis total of killed, wounded and captured includes thirty-four thousand Germans and twenty-five thousand Italians, a total of fifty-nine thousand. With many more wandering around in the desert. The British have lost thirteen thousand, six

hundred. And he added that Rommel has also lost five hundred tanks and more than a thousand guns; with the Eighth Imperial Army now advancing in Cyrenaica.

The combined British-American operation in those latitudes, he reported, is designed to regain command of the Mediterranean. It will expose "the belly of the Axis and especially Italy, to heavy attacks. "Italy," he said, "has now come to a much fuller and more bitter realization of the trials and horrors of war."

Churchill said that the last time he was in Cairo, he had sent orders to General Alexander to destroy the German Italian army in Egypt and Libya. And then he added grimly: "The General may soon be sending for further instructions."

KING FOLLOW CHURCHILL

This being its closing session, King George the Sixth appeared in person to prorogue Parliament. That being the sixty-four dollar word meaning to send the noble peers and the honorable members of the Commons home for a rest. The King addressed both Houses in a speech from the throne, and told his Parliament that the United States is gathering strength month by month.

Then he talked glowingly of Russia, saying: "I share fully the admiration of my people for the glorious feats of arms of the Soviet forces." And he said further: "The defense of Stalingrad is a new chapter of heroism written into the annals of war. My government and my people are determined to the utmost to assist the Russians by a supply of the materials of war and by offensive action against the common foe."

GERVASI

Sent to Collier's

One big question is -- how optimistic should we become because of the great and successful offensive in North Africa? Yesterday, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox warned us not to steam up the enthusiastic belief that all was over but the shouting. He said that Rommel's army, now fleeing before the British and threatened by the United States forces from the rear, might receive large reinforcements and still put up a heavy fight before it is finally destroyed.

Along that line, I heard some interesting comment made today by Frank Gervasi, war correspondent for COLLIER'S MAGAZINE. Speaking at the Overseas Press Club, Gervasi said that, in his opinion, it was too early for any soaring burst of optimism. He pointed out a thing hundreds of us had thought -- that maybe Rommel's swift and sudden retreat from Egypt was because the Germans figured that the Americans were about to invade North Africa. We know

that the Axis had been announcing for weeks that preparations were being made for an American blow against the French North African colonies. I told of these Axis rumors repeatedly on this program, but of course we couldn't tell whether or not there was some kind of phony Hitler propaganda. Gervasi thinks the Nazis did have a pretty good guess that the Americans were about to strike through North Africa toward his rear. So therefore he pulled out in a hurry, a retreat so precipitate that it was a disaster.

If this be a correct interpretation, it would mean that Rommel is pulling back toward a defensive position, where he may be supplied with war materials and get reinforcements. In this case, with our American forces and the British coming down upon the cornered enemy -- there may still be a lot of hard fighting ahead before Rommel is completely smashed.

SOLOMONS

In the Solomons our ground forces are pushing ahead both east and west on Guadalcanal. This the Navy announces today on top of the information released yesterday that we now outnumber the Japanese on that island. Our marines and infantry were supported by army planes in the attacks on the enemy there around Henderson Airfield.

The Navy also gives us news from the Aleutians. October Seventh we heard that there was information to indicate the Japanese had evacuated Attu Island in order to concentrate all their forces at Kiska. But on November Ninth, United States Army planes visited Attu, and found seven float-type enemy Zeros and destroyed them. No opposition was encountered, said the Navy and all our planes returned. On the same day, United States Army bombers attacked and damaged two enemy cargo vessels at Kiska.

LEWIS

The Congress of Industrial Organizations today threw a brick at its former chief, John L. Lewis, by adopting a resolution which included these words: "We condemn the efforts of those who like John L. Lewis would drive a wedge between farmer and worker and obscure our common aims, aspirations and needs."

The C.I.O. referred to Lewis' attempt ~~xxx~~ in his widely publicized "District Fifty" to unionize the farmers. The C.I.O. resolved further: "We pledge ourselves to join in a cooperative action with the working farmers of America and their bona fide organizations to secure sound and effective operation of our farmlands and adequate mobilization of farm manpower as a part of our machine for ultimate victory."

The convention also took a fling at the National War Labor Board, calling it "demoralizing, and actually disruptive." Strong words from the C.I.O.

ARMISTICE DAY

President Roosevelt took advantage of his first war-time Armistice address, to give a cheer for the French soldiers fighting on our side. "The forces of liberation are advancing," he said. And, "As a result of recent events, the forces of the United Nations are being joined by large numbers of the fighting men of our traditional ally, France. On this day of all days," he continued, "it is heartening for us to know that soldiers of France go forward with the United Nations."

Standing beside the President at Arlington Cemetery, was a tall but aged figure, huddled in a campaign great coat of Ninteen Eighteen vintage and wrapped in several blankets to ward off the bitter cold of the wind. Eighty-two year old General John J. Pershing, who led our victorious armies in the last World War.

And now Hugh, any news from you?