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NORTH AFRICA

The North African picture tonight shows a tightening of the allied forces around the Axis enemy in Tunisia. British and Americans are pushing forward, with advances reported in three sectors.

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First in the news, comes ~~General~~ Montgomery's Eighth Army which, after driving Rommel into hasty retreat, is continuing the pursuit. The Eighth Army, hurrying on from captured Gabes, has taken two towns, seven and nine miles from Gabes respectively. These are in the bottleneck, the corridor through which Rommel had to escape.

~~Their~~ ^{This} newest advance has put the British closer than ever to the Americans in the El Guettar sector. Forces of the Eighth Army are now ^{only} forty-five minutes by jeep car from the Americans.

That expression, "forty-five minutes by jeep", is used in today's North African dispatch---a new bit of military terminology.

2-North Africa

The Americans themselves are pushing forward---from the threatening position they hold on Rommel's flank. They *must* ~~have got to engineer their way~~ ^{get} through heavy mine fields laid by the Germans, but, ^{they} are not encountering much active opposition. All of which would indicate that Rommel is fleeing north in a big way, making a long withdrawal---and not trying particularly to stop a junction between the British and Americans.

At the north end of the line, likewise, allied troops have scored an advance--British troops capturing a place called Sedjenane, which was the scene of bitter fighting last month. ~~The Germans abandoned Sedjenane without opposition--~~ though it's a key road junction in that northernmost area, Bizerte, the great naval base.

We have a British surmise that the Nazi strategy is to withdraw into the powerful fortifications of the Bizerte-Tunis area, with Rommel fleeing to that strategic sector for a last stand for a junction with the Germans ^{who are} already there.

3-North Africa

In Washington today, Director of War Information Elmer Davis, gave an explanation of how Rommel got away---how he escaped from the American and British trap. A sandstorm helped the old desert fox. A dry swirling storm blew in from the desert and covered the withdrawal of the North Afrika Korps--visibility so bad that the United Nations air forces were handicapped.

"The sand storm saved him from an air pounding," said Elmer Davis, and he added: "Rommel escaped with most of his stuff intact---and he will be in a position to fight a good delaying action."

Nevertheless, the War Information Director expressed the belief that the Nazis in Tunis will be put out of business in time to permit a United Nations invasion of Europe before

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long. Elmer Davis said he thought that the Nazi army would be, as he expressed it---"exterminated or at least reduced to a negative status." The term "negative status" might convey the assumption that the Allies could simply bottle up the Nazis at the tip of Tunisia and go ahead with an invasion of Europe.

5-North Africa

Davis used a figure of speech to describe the Rommel strategy with respect to the Italians---the Nazis having the habit of leaving their Italian allies behind. Describing Rommel's retreat, Davis said: "He threw the baby out of the sleigh; once again the baby was the Italians."

Apparently Mussolini's boys know what to do about it, because a North African story today tells us that when they were captured during the recent allied drive, many carried what are called "safe conduct leaflets." These are propaganda pages which American planes dropped over the Italian lines, propaganda urging "don't fight for Hitler." The leaflets are printed in English, French and Italian and instruct all allied troops that any Italian soldiers presenting the leaflets should be given safe conduct together with food and medical

FRENCH

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A new turn in political affairs of the French who are fighting the Axis comes in a statement today that General Giraud has suggested to General De Gaulle that General De Gaulle should do some house cleaning. North African commissioner Giraud has already fixed up his own establishment. That is ---he has abolished from his North African administration many officials who were formerly closely associated with the Vichy Government.

One of the complaints of the De Gaulle fighting French was the presence of Vichymen in the Giraud regime, and ~~now~~ Giraud feels that this cause for contention has now been removed. So he is saying to De Gaulle---why don't you do something similar about your own outfit?

They say that the Giraud people are much opposed to certain elements that are included in the Free French. Off-hand, one might think communist. There have been conservative French allegations about a tie-up between the fighting French and the under-cover communist groups in France.

But today's Giraud^{and}-De Gaulle story from London does not mention the Reds at all. It talks about Fascists---Giraud protesting against the presence of French fascists in the De Gaulle organization. It refers specifically to the Cagoulards, the Hooded Ones, who were an ultra-fascist mob in pre-war France. Giraud contends that the Fighting French include people who were closely associated with the Cagoulards; ^{he} and [^]wants these tossed out.

All of which would seem to put a new complication into the French political picture. They say the Giraud demand ^{has} ~~have~~ delayed the much talked of meeting between himself and De Gaulle. *And* London states it is now uncertain when the fighting French chieftain will go to Africa to confer with Giraud.

DARLAN

— The Cosmopolitan —
Today a magazine in this country published an article that, to my mind, rates as a stroke of editorial genius.

In November, immediately after the Allied offensive in North Africa, Cosmopolitan Magazine sent a message to Algiers and asked Admiral Darlan to write an article for publication in America, an article explaining his position. Darlan who had been a number one figure in the Vichy Government of France, had commanded the weak resistance to the American and British landings in the French colonies---and then quickly had come over to our side.

Darlan wrote the article---^{just}~~shortly~~ before he was assassinated.

It was delayed, but now appears.

Darlan advocated the surrender of France, and then he ordered resistance to the Allied offensive. What explanation does he give? Here are his words: "In getting Hitler to sign the armistice," he writes, "France at least succeeded in making him commit the first and possibly the most serious of his military blunders. I sincerely believe," he goes on, "that, but for the armistice, the troops of the Axis would immediately have proceeded to occupy

2-Darlan

North Africa."

So there is the Darlan angle^{---that}---the surrender of France
persuaded Hitler to refrain from seizing North Africa.

Darlan continues: "It was to avoid giving the Axis a pretext for such an occupation that the French Navy and French troops were obliged to resist the arrival of the first American contingents." In other words, he ordered the French to fight so as to give the Nazis no excuse for coming in. Why, then, did he order the resistance to be stopped? Darlan states he changed his mind when he was convinced of the power of the American offensive.

"Perceiving," he writes "that the strength of the armies that were disembarking would enable North Africa to regain its freedom of action and to face the real enemy, I gave the order to cease fire." In other words, when he saw that we were coming in a large enough force to keep the Axis out of North Africa---Darlan changed

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hides.
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-- speaking from the pages of the Cosmopolitan--
Such is the veritable voice from the grave---explaining the

Darlan contention that all along he acted as a French patriot.

TAXES

Tonight the prospects for a tax bill seemed vague indeed. With both the Ruml plan and the Administration "twenty-per-cent withholding-tax" rejected, and ^{with} the whole thing sent back to the Ways and Means Committee, it seems doubtful when the committee will get around to preparing a substitute. There is some opinion in Washington that they are going to let the whole thing slide--- and keep going under the present system of collecting income tax.

Congressman Ramspeck of Georgia, a number one administration leader in the House, stated today that a lot of Congressmen, ^{both} ~~but~~ Democratic and Republican, are willing to put all pay-as-you-go proposals on the shelf.

And this afternoon, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn, said much the same thing. Speaker Rayburn had a conference at the White House with President Roosevelt this afternoon, and upon emerging stated that it looked as if the whole income tax thing would have to be sidetracked, because other pieces of legislation were demanding urgent attention---like the Guffy coal act and the reciprocal trade treaty program. These require ^{the} prompt attention of the committee, and so "pay-as-you-go" may ^{have to wait.}

2-Taxes

~~have to wait.~~

However, Republican Congressman Carlson of Kansas states that he is going to continue his fight for the Ruml plan;-- He's the author of the bill for Ruml skip-a-year that was defeated yesterday. Today he argues that, unless pay-as-you-go

is adopted, we will have to have a national sales tax. ~~(That~~

~~is---a certain percentage levied on everything we buy. Speaking~~

~~of the treasury, he said: "They've got to get more money, and~~

~~get it quick." And he added: "If the pay-as-you-go plan is~~

~~rejected finally, then there is no way out but through a general~~

~~sales tax.")~~

FOOD

Today in Washington the acute meat shortage was blamed on a last minute buying spree before rationing went into effect. Elmer Davis, director of the Office of War Information, puts it in these words: "So many people went out whole hog for the last steak." ^{RP} Concerning any impression that the nation has run out of meat, he said: "Definitely not true."

His statements were amplified by other officials, who declared that the shortages were not because of any decrease of the nation's meat supply. People were buying more---because of the increased purchasing power of millions of workers whose income in war time is greater than it used to be.

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~~We are told that after the armed forces take their quota, enough meat will be left to provide the average amount consumed by civilians during the years from nineteen thirty-five to nineteen thirty-nine. The Department of Agriculture expects that the supplies of poultry available to civilians will be double those of pre-war years. And, we'll have more eggs. This year there will be an average of three hundred and forty-four eggs per civilian. During the four years up to nineteen~~

thirty-nine the average annual consumption was three hundred eggs per person each year.

Elmer Davis told today of measures being taken to ease the meat shortage. He said that the amounts taken by the armed forces and by lend-lease have been scaled down---temporarily. Also--transportation has been speeded up to get meat supplies to the shortage areas. As a result, the Office of Price Administration believes that within a few days, the supply will equal the demand under the rationing system---with everybody getting as much as his ration book permits.

PARACHUTES

We hear today how Donald Nelson and three other high officials of the War Production Board narrowly escaped the glory of becoming heroes---and were they relieved!

The War Production chief and his party took off for Chicago, flying in the Navy plane that is customarily used by Secretary ~~of the Navy Frank Knox~~. Everything went okay, until they neared the airport of the Windy City. The high officials were all set for an uneventful glide down to the flying field, when the pilot announces^d the alarming news--- the retractable landing gear had jammed. He couldn't get the wheels down.

"Gentlemen," said the pilot, "we'll have to make a crash landing and which do you prefer---to take a chance on the crash, or go out by parachute?"

That was a hard alternative to present to Donald Nelson and his fellow executives. A crash landing evoked unpleasant visions of perishing in the wreckage, while the idea of leaping out into space with parachutes suggested the tremulous question---do those things really always open?

2-Parachutes

The executives of the WPB debated among themselves--- what to do? Meanwhile, the plane with its jammed landing gear was circling around the field.

They took a vote on it, and the majority was in favor of ---parachutes. The crash idea was so alarming, they preferred to bail out.

And now all that remained was to do it. They strapped on their parachutes, and all that remained was to jump. It must have been quite a picture to see Donald Nelson and those other mighty men of affairs looking at each other with that pointed expression---"you go first."

They never did bail out. It took them so long to get around to jumping that the mechanic of the plane was able to get the wheels fixed. Whereupon they were informed that the landing gear was okay now, and they wouldn't have to leap into space. ^{So} They sank back in their seats, and secretary Knox's Navy plane proceeded to make an uneventful landing.

I suppose we ought all to offer our sympathy to War

3-Parachutes

Production chief Donald Nelson for missing that chance of

becoming a hero. But don't be downhearted, ^{Mr. Nelson,} ~~Don old boy,~~

~~wait till the next time.~~ maybe you'll have
another chance to be a hero.

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KIDNAP

The days of old seemed to have come back to Chicago this morning---prohibitive days, gangster cars, people kidnaped, with cops and gangsters shooting it out. Today the Windy City police chased an automobile through the crowded loop district, a wild pursuit, the police blazing away with their pistols. In the car were two bandits and a Chicago heiress. *HP The young woman?*

^ She was Helen Priebe, an eighteen-year-old girl who recently inherited a fortune. The bandits seized her as she was on her way home with two companions, one of whom was Thomas Stanton Armour, grand nephew of Armour the meat packing magnate. They were driving *along,* when another automobile with five men in it, forced their car to the curb with the bandit command: "Pull over, this is a stick-up."

They were robbed, and one of Helen Priebe's companions was forced into the bandit car. Two of the robbers got into the automobile with the heiress and her other companion--- *Tommy* young *^* Armour of the meat packing fortune. The two autco

2-Kidnap

drove through Chicago, and presently the crooks turned Armour loose, giving him a dollar for carfare. He pleaded with them to release Helen Priebe, but the bandits took her along.

Young Armour gave the alarm, and the police picked up the trail of the two automobiles---captured one, and chased the other. This latter was the car in which Helen Priebe was held.

So that's how a melodrama of pursuit was staged. It went on for blocks, through the heart of Chicago, the loop--- with the police shooting at the car ahead. Not wanting to take a chance of hitting the heiress, they fired at the tires--- to disable the car.

The bandits got away, however. When clear of the police, they skidded to a stop, and turned Helen Priebe loose. She got out of the automobile, and was left on the street---as the car whirled away and out of sight.

And now Hugh, although you are out of sight, up there in New York, will you whirl away with what you have to say. And s-l-u-t-m.