

P.J. - Sunoco. Friday, Sept. 12, 1941.

SHIP

Last night, while President Roosevelt was denouncing German attacks at sea, an event had occurred about which he apparently knew nothing. If he had known, he would surely have told - would have featured the information as the ~~newest~~ newest and the latest, hot news to support his case. The President spoke at ten o'clock at night. ^{and} Less than twelve hours before he began his radio address, a Nazi submarine torpedoed ^{another} ship off Iceland. ^H Among the incidents excoriated by the President was the sinking, last Tuesday, of the steamship STESSA, a vessel operating under the flag of the Republic of Panama, but owned by an American maritime concern. It was a former Danish ship taken over by the United States and transferred to the Panamanian registry - ~~and was~~ on its way to Iceland with a non-military cargo of foodstuffs.

The ship sunk yesterday, the very day of the President's address - was much the same. There's an almost startling similarity. The S.S. MONTANA was likewise a vessel flying the Panamanian flag and of American ownership. Like the STESSA, it was one of the Danish ships taken over by the United States

and transferred to ~~the~~ Panamanian registry. And also - it was carrying a cargo to Iceland, non-military, lumber this time.

this latest
Yes, ~~that news~~ sinking would have been a telling item

to have included in the list of Nazi offenses, two almost identical ships instead of one.

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But the news did not break until today. The State Department was informed by the Navy Department - at noon. Why wasn't the event known before? Why wasn't it known yesterday? These questions bring up an odd point. The Navy Department states that the torpedoing off Iceland was witnessed by British warplanes. You'd think that they would have flashed the information so that the President would have had it. There must be some reason that can't be guessed right now.

No lives were lost, ~~in the sinking of this second Panamanian ship owned by Americans.~~ The crew took safely to their boats, and at last reports were still afloat. No one of the crew is an American. *HP* Secretary Knox was asked if any American warship had hurried to the scene to carry out the President's order to

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shoot on sight. The Secretary replied that apparently no United States naval vessels were in the vicinity.

A report of the sinking was given to the President while he was holding a Cabinet meeting this afternoon, and you can be sure that this latest incident immediately became a large matter of discussion by the President and the Cabinet - the incident that the President did not know about yesterday. I'll bet he wishes that he had known.

REACTIONS

The immediate German response to the Roosevelt proclamation was to announce the sinking of a lot of ships - twenty-six in all. The Nazi high command tells of a big battle between a pack of submarines and a huge convoy in the North Atlantic. ^{In} By this action, Berlin claims, the U-boats torpedoed and ~~sunk~~ [^] ~~twenty-five~~ ^{-two} freighters for a total of a hundred and thirty-four thousand tons. The attack, say the Nazis, has been going on for two days and is still continuing. In addition, Berlin announces the sinking of three steamships off the coast of Britain for a total of twenty-one thousand tons, and they claim that German planes bombed and damaged a British cruiser. The Italians chime in by reporting that Fascist submarines ^{also} sank [^] a couple of British ships in the Atlantic.

The Berlin news was announced on the radio with the blaring of trumpets, and undoubtedly was timed to be some kind of an answer to the momentous radio event of last night.

As for a more direct reply - Nazi Germany certainly seems to be in a quandary. Hides
What will ~~they~~ do about President

Roosevelt's order to the Navy - to clear German submarine and surface raiders out of a large area of the North Atlantic?

An area which President Roosevelt described as - "defensive waters."

The Nazi dilemma was sharply pointed out today by many commentators.

Either they will withdraw their raiding boats from the forbidden

area, or they'll fight ~~and~~ ^{whereupon} the United States would be in a

shooting war. If they withdraw - they'll leave the sea open to

the unimpeded flow of war supplies from the United States to

Britain. That is - virtually unimpeded, depending upon the

extent of the area in which American warships will operate

under the order to shoot first. That might lose the war for them.

But then, the entrance of the United States into the conflict might do the same thing.

It's a tough one for Hitler to decide in those

dreamy seances of his. Universal opinion is that the President's

proclamation puts it directly up to Hitler. And what the Nazis

do is likely to tell the tale of whether or not we get into the

war, how and when.

So what has Berlin to say today. In Nazi quarters, the statement was issued that Germany will take what it calls - appropriate measures. ~~And~~ They'll take what action they feel they're compelled to take. ~~They use the word "compulsion"~~ And one Nazi spokesman used these words:- "The President clearly told the world that he alone is responsible for all ensuing developments." All of this is pretty vague - with little indication of what the Berlin decision will be.

From Rome the expression of opinion is much more forthright. Gayda, Mussolini's ^{voice,} ~~mouthpiece,~~ writes that there ^{will} ~~is~~ be shooting. He ~~said~~ that the Axis now has no alternative but to take action, which he describes in these words:- "attack the United States naval vessels on sight."

In Britain, the Roosevelt declarations ~~are~~ ^{is} received with unmitigated rejoicing. The British people believe ^{this} ~~that the~~ ~~order to shoot on sight~~ will be followed soon by the event which the British so much desire - the United States entrance into the war.

In Moscow too there is cheering. Today Vice-^Uommissar

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Lozovsky quoted the presidential radio talk and described it in the following words:- "This," said he, "is a most serious blow to Germany, not only in a political sense - but something more."

DEFENSIVE WATERS

The one most important question left in doubt in the President's address last night was this - defensive waters? How much of the Atlantic Ocean comes ^under ~~that~~ heading? The question is of the utmost importance - everything hangs on it. If the President has ordered the Navy to keep Axis submarines and surface raiders out of a certain area of the Atlantic - what area? How much of the ocean is to be made safe for the shipping of every nation - especially including British? How far across does the zone of shooting at sight extend?

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The best surmise that one could draw from the presidential words was, that ^{the} waters which the President considered vital to the defense of the United States would include at least everything west of our supply line to Iceland. But that was just guessing, and today ~~prompt inquiries were made in Washington~~ ~~how much of the Atlantic Ocean is included in the term "defensive waters?"~~ ^u The query was taken to the White House and put to

Presidential Secretary Early. He said he was in no position to

interpret the President's speech, and referred the news men to the State Department - Secretary Hull.

At the State Department the Secretary held a news conference, and there he answered the question by saying that "defensive waters" would cover an area of the ocean where the safety of the Western Hemisphere might be considered to be threatened. This hardly outlined the precise kind of boundaries that one would expect in good map making. The Secretary added that in the final analysis, the extent of our defense waters would be determined by Nazi activity on the ocean. Which still left the boundaries of that all-important area somewhat dim and nebulous. So we'll have to wait and see - future events are likely to provide us with an eloquent and even noisy definition.

GREER

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On Wednesday or Thursday of next week, the Senate Naval Affairs Committee will begin an investigation of the attempted torpedoing of the United States destroyer GREER. That episode of the North Atlantic was, of course, the principal incident that President Roosevelt named last night as reasons for action against Nazi submarines and surface raiders. Resolutions for an inquiry into the affair of the GREER were introduced by Isolationist Senators Nye and Clark. And today Committee Chairman Senator Walsh of Massachusetts announced plans for the hearing. He said that Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox will be asked to testify concerning the attack on the GREER - just how it occurred and exactly what happened. And Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Stark will be requested to appear.

So we're to have a full canvassing of the incident that produced ^{the} a new development in ^{the} administration foreign policy - a step nearer to war. The proceedings will be public, (and for ~~this the following reason is given by Senator Walsh: - "This hearing will not be secret, this time," said he. "It will be an~~

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COLUMBIA

Last night President Roosevelt charged that in the Republic of Columbia there were secret German air fields - not far from the Panama Canal. At Bogota today the Columbia Minister of War stated that he is investigating reports of illegal airfields. These, he said, are claimed to be on the property of Germans living in the Republic of Columbia. He named ~~the~~ places ~~where these secret airfields are said to be,~~ - places some three hundred miles from the Panama Canal.

SPEECH

Last night the second largest radio audience listened in. The presidential broadcast had a rating of sixty-seven per cent. That's the result of a survey made by Radio Agency. The potential radio audience is reckoned at about sixty million people. Of these, sixty-seven per cent listened to the much heralded address by wireless. In other words, more than forty million Americans listened. President Roosevelt, star of radio stars, always has a tremendous rating. In his fireside chat of last December he had a percentage of fifty-nine. His highest was in May when he declared a state of unlimited emergency. That time the percentage figure was - seventy-three points higher than the figure for last night.

White House Secretary Steve Early tells us that telegrams have been pouring into the White House, and the first count shows that they're about ten-to-one in support of the President's order to the Navy to shoot at sight.

LINDBERGH

The White House today took another fling at Lindbergh - with Presidential Secretary Steve Early making comment on the Lindbergh speech last night. At Des Moines, Iowa, under the auspices of the America First Committee, the world's most famous aviator made an address shortly after President Roosevelt was on the air - with his "shoot at sight" declaration. Lindbergh charged that the United States is being led into war by influences that he described in these words:- "the British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt administration."

Today in Washington, White House Secretary Steve Early had the following to say:- "You have seen the out-pouring of Berlin in the last few days. You saw Lindbergh's statement last night. I think," he commented, "there is a striking similarity between the two."

SOVIET AID

The President ~~Roosevelt~~ today gave instructions to the American mission that's going to Moscow. He had a talk with ~~A~~ Averell Harriman and other members of the group that are soon to leave for the Soviet capital, to join a British mission in conferences with heads of the Stalin Government and the Red Army. The fullest aid to the Soviets - that's what the President told them to work for. For how long a period is the United States prepared to help the Soviets? Upon emerging from the White House, Averell Harriman said:- "There will be no time limitation except that we will work for ultimate victory."

WAR

The events of war are clouded in doubt tonight -
largely because of ^{vague} ~~conveyed~~ portents of a renewed Nazi drive.

Moscow continues to tell of victorious counter-attacks.

Berlin is reticent, and admits the offensives that are being staged by the Red army.

It's from London that we have rather worried word that things may become dangerous for the Soviets. London reports that the Nazis have started a new blitzkrieg drive at the center of the line - at Gomel. This offensive seems to be making headway and it constitutes what a British military spokesman described in these terms:- "a definite grave danger to Kiev and the defenses of the Ukraine."

SPIES

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The New York spy trial continues to produce some odd twisters. It was ironic for agents of the F.B.I. to be in under-cover radio communication with the Gestapo in Hamburg - the G-men posing as Nazi spies over here, But the comedy became a scream when the Gestapo flashed the following:- "You are under surveillance". This was the dramatic message received by the G-men, pretending to be spies. The espionage headquarters of the Nazis warned them that they were being watched;- by the F.B.I., no doubt. Just how the Gestapo boys contrived to get that bit of information isn't clear, but they ordered the secret wireless set on Long Island to stay off the air for two weeks. You can imagine how the F.B.I. humorists laughed at that one! But, as they were supposed to be an espionage group over here, they obeyed orders. They didn't communicate with Hamburg ^{by radio} for two weeks. By that time, presumably, they

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were not under surveillance any longer!

So they started broadcasting to the Hamburger Gestapo again just as Hugh is about to start broadcasting to you.

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