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WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS — By Edward C. Wayne

## Mechanized Troops Fight On in Libya As Nazis Show New Power in Russia; Arming of American Merchant Ships Indicates Change in Convoy Plans

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper.)
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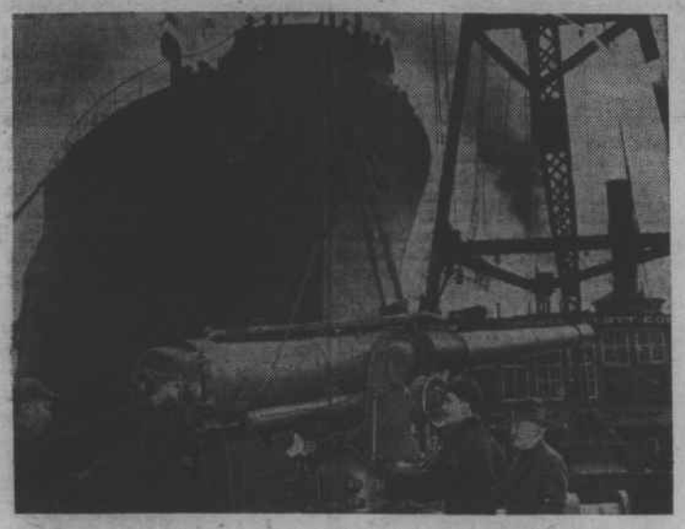

**Above photo shows the first United States merchant ship as it was being armed under permission granted by terms of the recent congressional revision of the neutrality. Armed merchants are now permitted to pass through war zone to belligerent ports. This picture was taken at a yard near New York city as the gun was being lifted to the ship shown in the background.**

### JAPAN:
### *Formula*

As a Tokyo war cabinet framed its reply to Secretary of State Cordell Hull's "peace" formula reports began coming in from Shanghai telling of a southward movement of Japanese troops and war materials in a thrust at Thailand. Following a White House visit by Saburo Kurusu, special Nippon envoy, the state department announced that there were no further conversations scheduled with Japanese diplomats seeking an answer to the Far Eastern situation.

### BRITISH:
### *Libyan Push*

Those who had expected a swift and continuous British victory in Libya, similar to the great push by General Wavell's army which swept the Italians back into Tripoli, were doomed to disappointment.

It was evident that there was plenty of fight in the German mechanized forces, even when apparently hopelessly trapped.

Yet Berlin had not been cheering over the situation. The British sweep at least temporarily had knocked the German-Italian formations back on their heels, and there was little evidence but that the Rommel army would be extremely fortunate to extricate itself from the trap even with heavy losses.

But there also was evidence that the British tanks, many of them of American manufacture, were unable to cope on better than even terms with the German machines.

The battle, once the two armies had made actual contact, was confusing in the extreme, and it showed in sharply etched lines just how possible it is for very small groups of mechanized forces to throw much larger bodies of men into complete confusion.

A rather large South African contingent was so knocked out by a German mechanized attack, even within the so-called iron ring of the British that it was practically disbanded, though some parts of it were able later to attach themselves to the New Zealand forces.

Yet this very Nazi group which had accomplished the maneuver later was shot into hurried retreat and practical dismemberment by a smaller group of British tanks. It seemed that the element of surprise and speed counted for far more in modern warfare than did numbers of men or machines.

Chief favorable report from Libya on the British part was that all reinforcements sought to be brought up by the Germans had failed except those furnished by air.

There was considerable hope among the British that this factor might decide the battle, perhaps very swiftly. Some Nazi tanks were found immobilized because of lack of fuel, and there were reports that the Germans were forced to fly supplies to their men by transport planes towing gliders.

But the British losses admittedly had been heavy, and only a complete victory would be regarded as reward for the expenditures of men and material in the sudden and dramatic drive.

### CONVOY:
### *Changes*

As reports began to come in of the arming of American merchantmen, and the belief grew that they would be sent direct into British ports, it was said that the whole relationship of the United States and the British on the convoy question in the Atlantic was to undergo a change.

There were no definite details as to what this change would involve other than it would be a more considerable taking over by this country of the whole problem of supply of lease-lend materials.

Considerable interest was evoked by the Harriman speech in London in which the American envoy said that the U. S. navy was "shooting German planes," though there had been no detailed reports of such engagements.

The general feeling was that before Christmas American ships would be going all the way to Britain, armed merchantmen, protected by the American navy to a point close to the British isles, and from there in convoyed by British naval vessels and British planes.

### SEVEN:
### *Join Nazis*

Seven smaller European nations, most of them those regarded generally as more or less favorable to Axis domination of Europe, formally joined the new Axis anti-Comitern pact at a conference in Berlin which was spotlighted by Von Ribbentrop's claim that the Russian war "already had been won."

The remainder of the struggle, Von Ribbentrop said, was solely between the Axis powers and Britain, together with her transatlantic helpers.

He said:

"If it should some day come to war on the one side between the United States of America and Europe and Asia on the other side, I state once and for all that the responsibility lies with President Roosevelt.

"Whether the United States comes into the war or not, it cannot alter the Axis victory."

### RUSSIA:
### *In a Bad Way*

The Russians were being forced back on their heels in the Moscow territory by the German system of shifting their chief attack forces from one front to another, vastly complicating the Reds' defense problems.

After a long attack which had been concentrated on the southern front, and during which the Soviet defense of Moscow had been carried on with such success that the Germans were reported on the retreat in many sectors, the Germans then suddenly smashed back at Moscow, and broke through the lines in several important districts.

The Russians were frankly worried again by the situation, and said that the weather, which had been a strong ally during the past weeks, had again turned more favorable to the attackers, who were taking the advantage to shove home bitter assaults all around Moscow.

## Entering Protest

*Mathew Woll (left) and William Green, a vice president and president, respectively, of A.F.L., pictured as they called on President Roosevelt to protest against anti-strike legislation. Bristling with defiance, Green stated that A.F.L. has been co-operating with the defense program but that now it is in a position of being penalized for "acts of some irresponsible leaders" outside his organization—presumably a dig at the C.I.O.*

### COMMANDOS:
### *Make Sortie*

The British Commandos tipped in these columns as about to become active again, worked a sortie on the Normandy coast, and returned with only one man wounded.

British sources felt that the official recognition by the Germans of the attack made by the group was the best proof that at least some of its objectives had been accomplished.

What made the landing on the French coast particularly notable, however, was the issuance of a statement of sharpest criticism against the British high command by a retired naval officer and hero of the last war, Admiral Keyes, founder and trainer of the Commandos.

He accused the staff of preventing the use of this body of men for several months when their use properly "might have changed the character of the entire war."

Also included was a brief description of the Commando which made the Normandy attack, men wearing black uniforms, their faces blacked with burnt cork, choosing a moonless night, armed with Tommy guns, Bren guns, knives and clubs, and sworn to achieve their objective no matter what the outcome.

They returned with only one man wounded slightly through the arm by a machine gun bullet. The Germans said they "had been repulsed with heavy losses."

### EXPLOIT:
### *By Nazis*

Two Nazi airmen will go down in history as two of the most daring and imaginative of prisoners of war.

Escaping from a British prison camp, they got British flying coats, copied the buttons by carving them from wood, and covering them with tinfoil, and had them sewed onto their under uniforms.

They then walked brazenly into a British airdrome, announced they had been assigned to bomb Dutch airports, got into a bomber and took off. Knowing they needed more fuel to get to their destination, they landed again 100 miles away and asked for gasoline.

Suspicious, airport attendants suggested they have a bath and a luncheon before taking off. The Nazis were reluctant to take off their clothing.

While they were in the bath their garments were examined and the false buttons discovered. They were arrested and sent back to the prison camp.

### BULLITT:
### *A New Job*

William C. Bullitt, former ambassador to France, had been given a new and important assignment by the President, that of special envoy to the Libyan area, especially to study lease-lend needs.

The former ambassador's mission was to cover the entire Near East, including the Nile river area, the Red sea and possibly the Persian gulf.

The campaign in north Africa, President Roosevelt felt, is an important and severe testing ground fo American-made arms, and the ultimate success of the effort there may depend on the rate at which replacements of damaged machines can be made.

The President was asked by the newsmen where Mr. Bullitt's headquarters would be, and where he could be reached. The President chuckled and said "In a plane."

Bullitt was to fly there and fly back and make his personal report on his observations to the President as soon as possible.

## Engineers Keep London Cleared

### City's Streets Are in Perfect Condition, Water and Gas Supply Normal.

NEW YORK.—A vivid description of engineering problems in England during wartime has been given by Walter D. Binger, commissioner of public works in Manhattan, who recently returned from London by bomber. Mr. Binger, who is the chairman of the national technological civil protection committee, had been in London since September 4, 1940, preparing a confidential report for the war department on engineering aspects of civilian defense.

"I went to London armed with a battery of questions to ask the most eminent engineers in that country concerning such subjects as protective conditions against bombs, defense against air attacks, blackouts, supervision of water supply, and defense against air attacks. I must admit that most of my report is confidential but there is still a lot I can say of interest to the American populace," he commented.

"In London I was guided by a representative of the Institute of Civil Engineers to see the work the engineers were doing. In this way I was not hampered by government officials. For example, the chief engineer of one of the biggest railroads in the country conducted me to the main points damaged by bombs.

**Railroad Often Bombed.**

"This particular railroad line has received about one-half of all the attacks of German bombers on railroad lines in England. Due to the advance preparations the line has never been halted long enough to cause serious trouble.

"This is made possible by advance preparations. All along the line emergency stations are set up. They are fully equipped with men and machinery to get to the scene of the bombing and repair all damage. A bridge which carried the main traffic of four lines was almost totally wiped out, but in 24 hours one of the lines was traveling over it on schedule."

Another reason for England's remarkable stand against bombing attacks is that their repairs are made on a permanent basis instead of temporary.

Mr. Binger declared that all the streets in London are in almost perfect condition. The gas and water supplies are functioning as in peace time.

**Water System Savior.**

"Many engineers before the war scoffed at the water piping system in London," he went on. "They thought it was obsolete, but this 'obsolete' water system was a savior. Due to the many cross pipes and cross sections of the piping system the enemy bombers could never make a death blow at London's water supply. In this respect London is luckier than New York."

A unique use of the cellars of bombed houses was described by Mr. Binger. When a house is demolished by a bomb the debris is cleared away. The cellar is cleaned and lined with rubber. When this is accomplished water is piped into the cellar and it is used as a reservoir. There are now 150 such reservoirs in London. The largest holds a half million gallons of water.

Engineers in London are planning to build 800 more of them.

"One of the reasons a factory is able to recover so quickly after a bombing is because of the 300,000 tarpaulins stored by the ministry of aircraft production," he said. "Immediately after a bombing these tarpaulins are put over all open machinery and windows."

### New Battleship Alabama Is Assembled to Music

NORFOLK VA.—A new ingredient is going into the building of the 35,000-ton battleship Alabama. It's the same stuff that Negro section hands have been putting into tracklaying for the railroads for years and Commander W. McL. Hague, superintendent for construction at the Norfolk Navy yard, said it seems to be good for warships as well.

The "stuff" is music, sweet and swing, classic and corny. The several thousand workmen getting the new battlewagon ready for her launching next February hear six concerts daily from phonograph records played through an amplifying system.

On the premise that music provides a needed contrast to the clatter of riveting machines and helps relieve the pressure on the workmen, Commander Hague established his hipside symphony some time ago with four music periods during two of the shifts and two other periods during layoffs for lunch.

## *Fishermen to Warn Of Coming Storms*

### *California Will Get Data Now Denied by War.*

SAN DIEGO.—Wartime regulation of radio transmission from ship to shore has left southern California vulnerable to surprise attacks of unseasonable weather from south of the border, Meteorologist Dean Blake revealed.

For years southern California and San Diego county in particular, has depended on scattered weather reports from ships navigating in the Pacific along the coast of Lower California and Mexico for advance warnings of approaching storms.

Since the war started these reports have become almost nonexistant, and consequently, southern California meteorologists don't get a very clear picture of weather conditions at sea.

There is a possibility that a tropical hurricane might approach to within a few hundred miles of the California coast and even hit the coast and cause considerable damage to property before sufficient warnings could be given to mariners and coastal cities.

To remedy the situation, Blake has called on the owners, operators and navigators of San Diego's large fleet of long-range tuna boats to have their radio operators send periodic reports of the weather as they cruise over the fishing banks along the Mexican coast, sometimes as far south as the Galapagos islands on the Equator.

Blake has assigned C. Eugene Shepherd, his first assistant and junior meteorologist, to take charge of contacting and training the tuna fleet weather observers.

The fishermen will report the speed, intensity and position of tropical hurricanes, as well as the movement of tropical air aloft during the winter, Blake said.

### Defense Plan of 1777 Is Revealed by Dredges

PHILADELPHIA.—Dredges working on the Delaware river have uncovered an ingenious but unsuccessful defense planned by George Washington to protect Philadelphia from the British in 1777.

The dredges and shovels, used in a reclamation project by an oil concern, first began to bring up iron-snouted poles sunk in the river bed in rock-weighted wooden pens.

Officials consulted an old map of the city and learned that the course of the Delaware had changed somewhat since the days of the Revolution. They also discovered that the poles apparently were a network of chevaux-defrise, a protective line of iron spikes, which the defenders of the city strung across the river to keep the British ships from moving up the channel.

During high tide this line of spikes was under water and any English ship approaching did so at the risk of having its bottom torn out. The "spikes" were 33 feet long, and placed in the boxes at 45 degree angles, pointing down the river. A channel was left for American ships to clear and a long chain was stretched across at the channel point.

### Newly Formed Air Force To Test Warning Service

WASHINGTON.—The war department announced that the newly formed air force combat command would carry out large-scale operations along the eastern seaboard to test the "alertness and effectiveness" of the air raid protection system.

The department said that thousands of volunteer civilian workers would co-operate with the aircraft warning service at strategic points in the area as part of the maneuvers.

Lieut. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, commander of the combat command, will direct the activities of the first interceptor command with headquarters at Mitchel Field, Long Island.

### Small Device Will Solve Difficult Logarithms

DALLAS, TEXAS.—Small enough to be carried in the coat pocket yet able to solve the most difficult logarithms or the most complicated calculus problem in a few seconds, the planimeter is the device used by the Agricultural Adjustment administration to measure acreage.

The instrument, first made in Germany but now manufactured in the United States, resembles a pair of dividers. One point is placed on an aerial map of the land to be measured. The second point then is moved around the boundary line of the land in question until it meets the first point. The machine then registers the numbers of acres encompassed.

## *Washington Digest*

## Serious Labor Situation Hinders Defense Effort

### Members of Congress Also Demanding Facts On Charges That Big Business Plays Favorites in Defense Contracts.

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The explosion in the defense set-up in Washington foreshadowed in these columns two weeks ago is about to take place. At least, as this is written, the fuse is being laid if not lighted. Senator O'Mahoney of Wyoming and Representative Coffey of Washington are both demanding facts connected with charges that big business is playing favorites in the defense contracts.

But an equally amazing story lies behind the way labor has been dealt with in the defense program. Part of the facts have leaked out piecemeal, some are still very much under cover. Put together they make an amazing revelation of what was behind the President's delay in taking action in the captive mine strike and also how bungling all along the line forced the administration into the worst labor situation that has arisen since the defense program started.

The trouble began when it was decided to take the settlement of certain labor disputes out of the United States Conciliation Service and place it in the hands of the Defense Advisory commission with branches headed by William S. Knudsen and Sidney Hillman. Up to that time from 95 to 98 per cent of the labor disputes were settled by the Conciliation service. But the remaining 2 to 5 per cent were slowing down defense and it was decided that Mr. Knudsen's staff representing industry and Mr. Hillman's staff representing labor could settle the recalcitrants. The theory was that Knudsen's men would crack down on industry and Hillman's on labor. But it didn't work that way. Each favored his own kind.

***Mediation Board Founded***

So the National Defense Mediation board was founded. All went along smoothly for awhile, although more and more criticism was heard that the board was exceedingly pro-labor and achieved settlements by the simple process of conceding to labor's demands.

Then the board made a mistake. It handed down one decision which opened the way for the United Mine Workers union shop demands which smashed the board, threatened the administration's foreign policy and created the worst labor crisis that the country has faced in many a long day.

The decision I refer to was in the case of the Bethlehem shipbuilding plant in San Francisco. The A. F. of L. union demanded a union shop, that is, that any man working for the company a certain period would have to join the union. The board granted this demand, thus forcing 20 per cent of the plant's non-union workers to join the A. F. of L. One member of the board, Cyrus Ching, representing industry, held out against the decision. He foresaw that it would create a precedent. When the decision was announced it was stated that it should not be taken as a precedent. This pious statement was like giving the baby a piece of candy "if he won't ask for another."

Once the A. F. of L. had received this concession the C.I.O. stepped up and said: "I want one, too." The result was the famous Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock company case of Kearny, N. J., this time a shipyard on the East coast. Against the vote of the members of the National Mediation board representing industry, the union was given "maintenance - of - membership" which is a diluted union shop. The company refused to accept the decision and the navy took over.

***Another Precedent***

Here was another precedent, whether the board meant it or not. And it didn't take long for John Lewis to take advantage of it and put in his demand for the union shop in the captive coal mines. If he had planned it that way he could not have been provided a better opportunity to vent his ancient grievance against the President and set himself right in the middle of a national issue.

If the case of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding workers was good, Lewis' was far better. C.I.O. has a 95 per cent membership in the captive coal mines. But not the kind of a 95 per cent that most people think it. Not 5 per cent non-union workers scattered here and there in all the mines. But full 100 per cent membership in many mines and none perhaps in a very few small ones.

The National Defense Mediation board voted down Mr. Lewis' demand for a union shop and pandora's box flew open. One of the things that emerged was a highly paradoxical and highly painful situation. For the board, by taking this rare anti-labor step, had virtually left the operators in the position that if they had yielded in the later negotiations they would be in the position of supporting Lewis against the government. Still the situation might have been saved if something had not happened when the President called the operators and Lewis and Secretary-Treasurer Kennedy of the United Mine Workers to the White House.

When the men came in the President did what his labor advisors hoped he would. He made a brief appeal to both sides to get together and settle the question, since a strike must be avoided. If he had stopped there all might have been well. But he went on and said what Lewis felt was prejudicial to his case. This not only woke all the smouldering anger in the breast of John Lewis but when the committee of 200 C.I.O. advisors heard about it they were just as mad. His feeling was reflected when he turned down the President's later proposals.

***President on the Spot***

And the President was on the spot. Congress was insisting on strike legislation. Speaker Sam Rayburn had promised it. Others were demanding that the troops be sent into the captive mines at once.

That, wiser heads who knew the temper of the miners believed, would mean a strike in all the mines and the army would have to beat its bayonets into pickaxes.

So the President paused, wrote a conciliatory letter to both parties. Meanwhile, congress could stew but the President was pretty sure that its members would not take the initiative of alienating the labor vote with primaries coming up in the spring and elections next fall. The prospective candidates for re-election wanted the onus to be placed squarely on him.

Whether the Conciliation service could have handled the captive mine strike as it is still handling the other 98 per cent of the cases of labor disputes no one can say. But it is clear that it was mishandled by the Mediation board and it is likewise clear that if critical congressmen finally crack down on Mr. Knudsen's dollar-a-year men for showing favors to business they have plenty of grounds for cracking down on Mr. Hillman's stalwarts who created the pattern of labor partisanship that came near severely injuring not only the defense program but the administration's foreign policy as well.

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***A Rip-Snortin' Texan Comes to Washington***

Another Texan has come to Washington and the moment of his arrival was an historic one. We have had a lot of rip-snortin', ringtailed wildcats from all parts of the country, some human, and some not quite. Now we have something that will make even the Texas delegation in congress sit up and take notice, for this unwilling delegate from the Lone Star State is the wildest of them all.

He is a Texas long-horn. A steer with an eight-foot spread of horn. He is 12 years old. He weighs 1,200 pounds and he is admittedly wilder than anything in the zoo where he has been given the place of honor —right up near the entrance.

Most people do not know that the Texas long-horn is rarer than the buffalo which he once displaced on the Texas plains. He is a direct descendant from the wild cattle which the Spaniards brought to America when they came. Those cattle could walk endless miles to water. They were bred and developed to meet conditions that existed a hundred years ago in the great Southwest. Then water was piped and ditched into the great ranches and the fatter, easier going Herefords were introduced. The long-horn had the muscles and the endurance but he did have the meat, so he began to disappear.