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REDS BREAK JAP PACT

AMERICANS CROSS WESER RIVER

Allies Menace Hannover; 3rd Army In Surge

WITH U. S. NINTH ARMY—(AP)—Ninth Army tanks and infantry crossed the Weser River today in the vicinity of Tundern, south of Hamelin, and poked out onto the roads leading to Hannover.

By JAMES M. LONG

PARIS — (AP) — The Third Army advanced to within 132 miles of Berlin today in the Schlotheim area while other Allies closed up to the Weser River on a wide front 23 miles from Hannover. The Germans were retreating pellmell toward the Elbe, which flows within 50 miles of the capital. The Germans appeared to be evacuating Hannover.

Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Sixth Armored Division captured the ancient Thuringian town of Muelhausen (36,000) and then moved eight miles northeast to the Schlotheim area, closest approach to Berlin.

At Schlotheim, the Third Army was 72 miles from Leipzig and 170 miles from Russian siege lines and within seventeen of the great German supply center of Nordhausen, frequently bombed in recent days.

Ten small arms factories were captured in Third Army gains along a 100-mile front. One column reached Muehlberg, seven miles southeast of Gotha, in a drive toward Czechoslovakia which would sever Germany. Considerable enemy traffic was seen moving toward the Czecho border.

WESER REACHED

The Weser was reached on a 48-mile front, from fifteen miles north of Minden to the Pied Piper town of Hamelin by four divisions of the American Ninth and British Second Armies.

Allied planes struck through rain at road-jamming columns of Nazis, in flight east to the Elbe, the last river before Berlin.

Hannover itself, a Prussian rail and industrial center, was imminently threatened. The Germans, still too badly staggered to form an effective line along the 250-foot-wide Weser, were filling secondary roads particularly in their run for the Elbe, which flows into the North Sea above Hamburg on the west side of the Danish Peninsula.

Pilots said the traffic was heavy all the way from the Weser to well beyond Hannover and that the columns were streaming east.

The Eastern Allied onslaught was shaping into two mighty drives. One was toward Hannover, Brunswick and Berlin.

The other was across Thuringia toward Leipzig and a probable link-up with the Russians.

Both drives had terrific mobile strength. Already 55 divisions have been identified east of the Rhine and nineteen of these are armored with up to 8,750 tanks.

Neither drive had encountered anything like enough resistance to block the momentum.

Against the Weser Line, the British Second and U. S. Ninth had 55,000 men shoulder to shoulder, with more coming up. The Germans blew all bridges in the American sector, one after the Nazi garrison at Minden had been offered a chance to surrender while negotiations were under way. British tanks appeared and attacked the city from the north.

Shells from Churchill tanks whamming into the town disrupted arrangements for peaceful occupation of the town and the bridge site. The startled Germans blew the last span and left American tanks and British Tommies high and dry on the Weser's west bank.

Veteran Ninth Army infantrymen behind the Weser vanguards began cleaning out a pocket from Muenster north and east to Osnabrueck where the German 84th Division and several smaller units were believed trapped by the American-British junction at Minden. The pocket was about seven miles wide and fifteen long.

RUHR ATTACKS

First Army troops opened fresh attacks to destroy up to 150,000 trapped Germans in the Ruhr, advancing four miles northwest from the eastern end of the encirclement.

Ninth Army divisions northeast of the Ruhr advanced as much as 28 miles and captured Herford (36,000), Detmold (16,600), Bad Oeynhausen (8,000) and Nehelm

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Reds Fight Into Greater Vienna Area

Soviets Battle To Encircle Capital

By RICHARD KASISCHKE

LONDON — (AP) — The Russians have fought into "Greater Vienna," the Germans reported today, and Moscow dispatches said Russian forces were pouring over the Danube between captured Bratislava and the Austrian capital to join in the assault.

The Russians were battling to encircle the capital of Austria, which Hitler incorporated into Germany in 1938. While some forces fought to draw lines to the northeast of the capital, others battled to cross the maze of rivers and railways and attack from the southwest.

Already, Moscow dispatches said, they had captured two secondary airfields, one a few miles east of Baden, and the Schwechat field just south of Vienna, while a third, Zwoelfaxing field, just southeast of the city, was under fire.

TANK BATTLES

Great tank battles were being fought in the suburbs of the city of 1,900,000, Moscow said. The famous deer park had been converted by the Germans into an artillery position from which heavy barrages fell upon Russian ranks.

Although one Moscow newspaper said high Nazis were evacuating the city, most Soviet advices indicated that the Germans were determined to fight in Vienna as they fought in Budapest.

King Tiger tanks and numerous types of self-propelled weapons were being rushed into the battle against the Russians, Moscow reported.

Already across the Wierbach River, southeast of Vienna, the Second and Third Ukrainian Armies of Marshals Rodion Malinovsky and Feodor Tolbukhin fought shoulder to shoulder against the German line along the Liesing River, which runs from west to east through the city's suburbs swinging just south of the beautiful deer park.

SUBURB CAPTURED

Zwoelfaxing, one and a half miles from the city limits, was captured yesterday, Moscow announced.

Tank fights were taking place in suburban Laac, Erlaa, Rodaun and Inzersdorf, four miles from the center of Vienna.

A heavy struggle was in full swing in another suburb, Perchtoldsdorf, south of the Liesing, a junction vital to the defense of south Vienna.

If Tolbukhin succeeded in forcing the Liesing River, which falls into the Liesing just south of the deer park, and then the Liesing, he would be in position to launch an attack upon Vienna from the west, as well as the south and east.

The pressure on Vienna from the east was intensified by the fall of Bratislava, capital of puppet Slovakia on the north bank of the Danube 30 miles east of the Austrian city.

The Russians who had swarmed into Bratislava seized that city of 160,000 so quickly that there were indications they may have won intact the bridge over the Danube there.

British Destroyers Attack German Convoy

LONDON (AP) — A British destroyer force patrolling the Norwegian coast early yesterday torpedoed and sank one supply ship of a seven-ship enemy convoy and scored shell hits on a second supply ship and an escort vessel, the Admiralty announced today. A third supply ship was probably hit by a torpedo, the announcement said.

Fag Shortage Hits Home

PLEMINGTON, N. J. —(AP)— The cigarette shortage hit home yesterday when 50 American tobacco company stockholders left the company's annual meeting with a lone pack of cigarettes apiece instead of the customary carton.

No Clean Cut Surrender

Eisenhower Sees Guerrilla Warfare

WASHINGTON —(AP)— Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower has informed President Roosevelt that "a clean-cut military surrender" of the Nazis is improbable.

In a letter to the Chief Executive, released by the White House today, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe foresaw extensive guerrilla warfare.

He said he was hopeful of launching operations at the proper time that "should partially prevent a guerrilla control of any large area, such as the southern mountain bastion."

The White House said Eisenhower's letter was not written in response to one from the President.

TEXT OF LETTER

The text of the General's communication:

March 31, 1945.

Dear Mr. President:

The further this campaign progresses, the more probable it appears that there will never be a clean cut military surrender of the forces on the Western Front. Our experience, to date is that even when formations as small as a division are disrupted, their fragments continue to fight until surrounded. This attitude, if continued, will likely mean that a VE-Day will come about only by a proclamation on our part rather than by any definite and decisive collapse or surrender of German resistance. Projecting this idea further, it would mean that eventually all the areas in which fragments of the German Army, particularly the paratrooper, panzer and SS elements may be located, will have to be taken by the application of or the threat of force. This would lead into a form of guerrilla warfare which would require for its suppression a very large number of troops.

Of course, if the Government of

See LONG GUERRILLA on Page 8

Okinawa Roars

Jap Attacks Fail To Halt Yank Push

By LEIF ERICKSON

GUAM — (AP) — United States Army units driving toward the Okinawa Island capital, Naha, have been slowed by stiffening Japanese resistance while Marines on the north side of the American wedge worked forward from three to five miles virtually unopposed.

Heavy artillery and mortar fire from well-organized Japanese units yesterday put the brakes on the 24th Corps drive toward Naha, limited gains on the southwestern coast to 2,000 yards, and stopped the Seventh Division push on the southeast coast after an advance of only 500 yards.

The 24th Corps units were within 3,000 yards of Machinato airstrip and four miles from Naha. The southeast drive reached the vicinity of Nakagusuku after overrunning several entrenchments and fortified points.

Marine Third Amphibious Corps forces continued rapid extension of their northern lines for distances of from three to five miles, then took a brief respite to avoid over-extension of communications and supplies.

Yank forces now control more than 60 square miles, or one sixth of the island, and the operations timetable has had to be completely revised, Maj. Gen. Roy S. Geiger, Marine commander, said today.

He envisioned stiffer fighting when Army units meet Japanese forces on the southern line before Naha and the airdrome, largest in the Ryukyu chain.

Wherever the Japanese choose to stand they can be hit with the greatest American artillery forces ever employed in a Pacific operation.

Today's communique from Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz reported "concentrations" of Jap-

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Mine Seizure Expected

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Solid Fuels Administrator Ickes said today he hoped to receive an order for Government seizure of soft coal mines today.

Terming the coal situation "worse than unfortunate," Ickes said at his news conference that thirteen blast furnaces of the United States Steel Corporation have shut down and that twenty more will be down by tomorrow noon.

"We are headed toward a serious interruption in the production of steel," he said.

He added that "I don't think we ought to wait at all before taking over the mines."

NEEDS POWER

"I need the authority however," he said. "The War Labor Board must forward a certificate to the President and the President must issue the order. I hope that will be done at once."

The Solid Fuels Administrator asked if he had communicated his views to the WLB, said that his office was in constant touch with the agency and that the himself had been in communication with the President.

RESIGNS—Premier Koiso of Japan, who resigned with his Cabinet today.

Koiso's Jap Cabinet Falls

LONDON —(AP)— The Japanese government of Gen. Kuniaki Koiso fell today in the midst of the empire's grave military crisis and Emperor Hirohito called on Admiral Baron Kantaro Suzuki, 77-year-old president of the privy council, to form a new cabinet, Tokyo broadcasts announced.

Koiso and all his ministers stepped down, a communique said, "because of the gravity of the situation," a reference to the mounting series of disasters during their eight months in office which have reached a climax in the American invasion of Okinawa, on the doorstep of the homeland.

The communique, broadcast by Domei Agency, said "A far more powerful administration will be formed" and the choice fell on the aged Suzuki after the Emperor had consulted the elder statesmen of the Empire.

IN SEMI-RETIREMENT

Suzuki had been in semi-retirement for eight years prior to his appointment as president of the Privy Council last Aug. 10.

Koiso succeeded Premier Hideki Tojo last July, when United Nations successes forced the saber-rattling war chieftain out.

The text of the Tokyo communique:

"In view of the gravity of the situation the Cabinet has decided to resign en bloc in order to open the way for a far more powerful administration.

"Premier Koiso accordingly tendered the collective resignation of his Cabinet to the throne today."

The communique was preceded by a Domei News Agency bulletin announcing the fall of the Government.

NAZIS FLASH NEWS

The German News Agency DNB broke a routine transmission to flash news of the Japanese Cabinet's resignation, indicating its importance within Germany.

Koiso was the strong, tough man of the Japanese Army's Kwantung clique as early as 1932, several years before Tojo—"The Razor"—rose to prominence in the same group.

As chief of staff of the Kwantung Army in 1932 Koiso played a prominent role in the conquest of Manchuria in defiance of the League of Nations and the Western powers. Later he was identified with agitation for Japanese expansion in the South Seas, a program which led to war with Britain and the United States.

Koiso pledged a united na-

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Japs Accused Of Giving Aid To Germany

Treaty Denounced On Eve Of Conference At San Francisco

LONDON — (AP) — Soviet Russia today denounced its neutrality pact with Japan, accusing Tokyo of helping Germany to war against Russia.

The Moscow radio announced that Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov had informed the Japanese ambassador that continuance of the compact was impossible since Japan was fighting against Russia's Allies, the United States and Great Britain.

"In such a situation the pact of neutrality between Japan and the USSR has lost its meaning," Molotov said.

The note was handed the Japanese ambassador at 5 P. M. today i nthe midst of a new Japanese Cabinet crisis.

The pact was signed in April, 1941, and whether Russia would denounce it before the opening of the world security conference at San Francisco April 25 had been a subject of speculation.

The Soviet note emphasized at the outset that "the pact of neutrality between the Soviet Union and Japan was concluded on April 13, 1941—that is before the attack by Germany on the USSR, and before the outbreak of war between Japan on the one hand and Great Britain and the United States on the other.

"Since that time the situation has radically changed," the note said. "Germany attacked the USSR and Japan—Germany's ally—helps the latter in her war against the USSR."

The treaty ordinarily would have run until April 1946.

The denouncement becomes effective April 13, just 12 days before the opening of the San Francisco conference.

The Moscow announcement said Japan's ambassador Naotake Sato had "promised to bring the declaration of the Soviet Government to the attention of the Japanese Government."

PLANS NOT REVEALED

There was no indication in the Moscow announcement of Russia's intentions in future relations with Japan. However, Premier Marshal Stalin has publicly described Japan

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Pact Provision

Russia Not Yet Free To War On Japs

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russia's renunciation today of her neutrality treaty with Japan does not necessarily free her immediately to join in the fight against the Mikado's Empire.

If both parties stick to the letter of the compact they must maintain neutrality toward each other until expiration of the treaty's five-year term, April 25, 1946.

The pact, signed in Moscow April 13, 1941, and ratified 12 days later, binds the two parties "to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between them" and "to observe neutrality throughout the duration" of any conflict in which either might be engaged with another power.

The clause setting the term is this obligation is:

"Article III—The present pact comes into force from the day of its ratification by both contracting parties and remains valid for five years. In case neither of the contracting parties denounces the pact one year before expiration of the term it will be considered automatically prolonged for the next five years."

What Russia has done is to forestall any obligation to be bound by the pact beyond April, 1946, to give notice that she recovers full freedom of action as regards Japan from that time.

However, the effect of denunciation must be to weaken the force of the obligation of neutrality on both sides. It remains to be seen whether both can keep the letter of the pact during the terms period ushered in by Moscow's action.

Soviet Club Over Japan

By JOHN M. HIGHTOWER

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Russia's denunciation of her neutrality treaty with Japan is considered one of the final steps preceding Soviet entry into the Pacific war.

The United States, according to State Department officials, was not formally notified of the Moscow action in advance. But in some informal manner the Russian action was foreshadowed in a general awareness that denunciation would be founded on the conclusion that Japan, at war against Russia's allies and on the side of her enemies, no longer could be considered a neutral.

Whether further steps were planned by Russia to void all treaty neutrality restrictions was not immediately clear in view of the Soviet note's declaration that the treaty was meaningless.

Previously it was understood that the denunciation would not take effect until a year after it was made.

SEES RUSSIAN ENTRY

Chairman Thomas, Democrat, Utah, of the Senate Military Committee told a reporter "this certainly must mean the eventual entry of Russia into the war with Japan." He foresaw as one result

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Gloria Mum On Reports She May Wed Stokowski

RENO, Nev. — (AP) — Showing no resentment and photographers, Gloria Vanderbilt Di Cicco refused to discuss reports she plans to marry orchestra conductor Leopold Stokowski after obtaining a divorce from Pat Di Cicco of Hollywood.

Mrs. Di Cicco ventured out in one Reno night spot last night but returned to her cottage today. Earlier she had kept to her rooms, telling friends she was "emotionally upset" by reports linking her with Stokowski.

A New York newspaper said Stokowski is en route to Reno and Gloria would join him there after her decree from Di Cicco.

Two-Minute

News Roundup

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Diplomatic Front

Soviet Russia has taken formal steps to end her treaty of non-aggression with Japan. Whether this means Russia now will join in the war against Japan is not yet clear but there are many signs pointing in that direction.

The momentous news that Russia has denounced the treaty was announced by the Moscow Radio.

Tokyo probably knew what was coming. Premier Koiso and his entire cabinet, resigned only a few hours earlier, because of what was described as the gravity of the situation. Emperor Hirohito called on a comparatively "moderate" statesman—the 77-year-old Admiral Suzuki—to form a new cabinet.

The Pacific

Diplomatic developments somewhat overshadow military operations in the Pacific, but everywhere our forces are continuing their gains. American forces advancing southward on Okinawa Island toward the capital of Naha have been slowed by increased Japanese resistance but other columns have gained three to five miles in the north. In the Philippines, American troops have landed on little Masbate Island and cleared it of the enemy.

Western Front

On the Western Front, the Allies are at the Weser River along a 40-mile front and are menacing the stronghold of Hannover on the road to Berlin. Allied pilots striking in this area said the Germans appear to be evacuating Hannover in a retreat to the Elbe River—the last water barrier before Berlin. The roads beyond Hannover are said to be jammed with fleeing enemy soldiers.

In other parts of the Western Front, the American Third Army is consolidating its gains of the last 14 days and is driving down the last 58 miles to the Czech border. The British and Canadians are continuing to close in on Holland, but there are indications that many of the Germans may have escaped that trap.

Air Warfare

In the air, 2,200 American bombers have attacked targets around Munich and Nuernberg close on the heels of night raids on north Germany by 1,000 British Mosquitoes.

Russian Front

The Russians are said by the Germans to have broken into what is described as "Greater Vienna," but there is no late official word from Moscow on the siege of the big Austrian capital. Marshal Stalin in an order of the day says the Red Army has captured the railway center of Brneck twenty miles east of Vienna in the Bratislava Gap.

Behind Cabinet Change Scene

Admiral Suzuki May Lead Off In Japanese Peace Offensive

By GLENN BABB

Associated Press Foreign News Editor

Admiral Baron Kantaro Suzuki may be the front man for a Japanese peace offensive.

With military disasters mounting rapidly to the climax of the Okinawa invasion, it has been apparent for some weeks that the cabinet of General Kuniaki Koiso was doomed.

"LIBERAL CLIQUE"

Close students of Japanese affairs have believed that the new government would be one of "moderate" or "liberal" guise which the Japanese might hope could gain a hearing for peace tenders to America and her Allies.

Suzuki, on the basis of his prewar record, would fit into that picture. Although an active naval officer for nearly 40 years, he was not identified with the cliques which led Japan into a program of conquest and war against the United States.

He was, in fact, marked as an enemy by those elements. On February 26, 1936, Army units of the Tokyo garrison, led by extreme nationalist young officers, revolted and attacked several of Japan's highest leaders whom they called "the Emperor's evil counsellors"—that is, men who advised Hirohito against aggressive military policies.

Suzuki, then retired from active naval service, held the post of Grand Chamberlain, one of the officials nearest the throne. He was attacked before dawn in his Tokyo home by a group of army officers and received sword wounds of such severity that for a time his death was expected.

In the same series of assassination attempts two former premiers, Admiral Viscount Saito and

See NIPPON PEACE on Page 8

WEATHER

Rain this afternoon with moderated front tonight. Thursday fair and mild.

Temperatures at 8 A.M. Today: High 74, Low 54. Hours in Charlotte yesterday: Highest 74, Lowest 54.