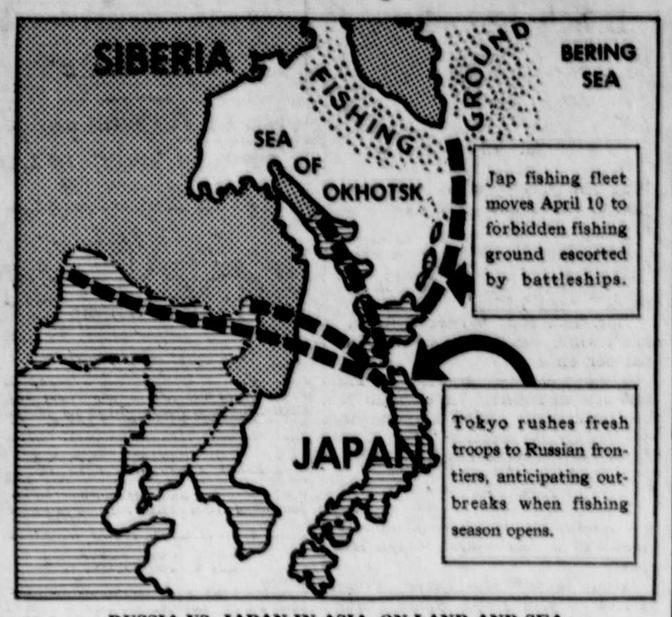
Weekly News Analysis

Russia Returns to Spotlight, Faces Foes on Two Borders

By Joseph W. La Bine



RUSSIA VS. JAPAN IN ASIA, ON LAND AND SEA
Fish and an old grudge provide a crisis.

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

International

Since Russia was ignored at the Munich conference last September, the Soviet has withdrawn to its shell, apparently content to fight internal problems and let the rest of the world fight Adolf Hitler. This action was justified. France, Britain, Italy and Germany ignored Moscow in settling the Sudeten issue; apparently Russia was not wanted in Europe, and anyway Japan was barking at her vulnerable Asiatic door.

But necessity sometimes makes strange bedfellows. Though Communism looks far more like Nazi-ism than Democracy, Russian-German interests clash on two vital points: (1) Hitler wants the Russian Ukraine, a vast expanse of rich and fertile land which now gives Russia most of its oil, wheat, meat and mineral; (2) Germany's ally in the vengeful anti-Communist pact is Japan, and Japan is Russia's most ancient and bitter enemy.

Hence Russia has emerged on the international front once more as a direct aftermath of Germany's Czechoslovakian seizure. Huge, mysterious, of unknown strength, the blundering nation whose army collapsed amidst its last European venture during the World war, finds

CAROL AND GEORGE
Britain's foresight was short.

itself threatened simultaneously on both east and west:

West. Czechoslovakia's fall brought Hitler part way to the Ukraine but alien soil still stood as a barrier. To cross the Russian frontier German troops must pass through either Rumania or Poland. The latter nation's hostility to the Reich has increased since Prague's collapse because Warsaw had good reason to fear Germany might annex the Free City of Danzig and close the corridor which is Poland's only outlet to the Baltic or any other sea. Moreover, agitation for German annexation of Lithuania's seaboard town of Memel, and for possible creation of a protectorate over Lithuania itself, would leave Poland surrounded on three sides by Germany and her satellites.

Discarding Poland as a path to the Ukraine, Hitler has turned to Rumania which not only offers a corridor to Russia but many choice spoils besides. The groundwork for this coup was laid last November after King Carol, fearing Nazi-ism, made a desperate bargaining trip to London in search of British-French trade support. Though wined and dined by King George *(see photo)* and other personages of British royalty, who a few years ago had ignored him as a scapegrace, the Rumanian king found London unwilling to play ball. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was too busy appeasing Dictators Hitler and Mussolini to risk upsetting Europe's diplomatic applecart with a trade agreement that would discriminate against the Reich.

En route home Carol signed an economic accord at Berlin, accepting for safety's sake a Nazi overlordship he disliked. This was not placed into effect until the Czech coup, when Carol found German troops pounding on his door. Today Berlin controls more than half of Rumania's exports (wheat and oil) and imports (manufactured goods). Once in Bucharest, it is but a short hop to either the Ukraine or such Balkan states as Bulgaria and Yugo-Slavia, where the Master of Central Europe has already made his strength felt.

Though at first happy that German penetration was going eastward instead of into Belgium or France, Europe's democracies have at last realized their error. A month ago Germany was strong militarily but impotent economically, devoid of foreign exchange and short of food. Today, with Czechoslovakia's big gold reserve, with Rumanian wheat and oil, the Reich is strong in all ways, a far greater threat than the empire of 1914.

For Russia, today's situation is more dangerous than last autumn's. With Poland nipped out, the Reich would control the Soviet's entire western frontier, gradually eating into the borderlands by undercover penetration. It was not unexpected, therefore, that Russia should follow Britain and France in protesting the Czech grab, becoming even more alarmed over Rumania's economic collapse. Since the U. S. has also protested by diplomatic note and imposition of an additional 25 per cent tariff on German imports, the red bearded Soviet finds itself no longer isolated but drawn into virtual diplomatic comradeship with the three nations whose democratic political philosophies are farthest removed from its own.

East. Russo-Jap conflict dates in modern history to the war which ended with the treaty of Portsmouth in 1905. Since then ambitious Japan has jumped to the Asiatic mainland and penetrated Manchukuo and Mongolia, both of which front on Russian Siberia. For at least six years this clash of interests has occasioned spasmodic border tussles, most of which went unreported until last summer's Chankufeng hill incident. The simple fact is that slow-moving, stubborn Russians always were and always will be at odds with Japan's attitude of self-righteousness. Asia is not big enough for both.

Last December 31 the fishing rights Japan has enjoyed in Siberian waters since 1905 expired. Russia refused to renew them and Tokyo now plans to send its huge floating canneries into Russian waters during early April, protected by warships. As the crisis approaches, both governments are rushing troops to the Siberian-Manchukuoan frontier where most Oriental observers confidently predict a war must eventually break out.

Significance. European and Asiatic crises are related, insofar as (1) Japan and Germany have a virtual military alliance, and (2) Russia is involved in both disputes. Moreover, Jap aggression the past year has followed amazingly close behind European dictator coups, as when Canton was captured after Munich, and Hainan island was occupied after Barcelona fell. Thus Jap-Italo-German parallel action has already been evidenced. With huge Russia emerging as the unexpected focal point, today's tense situation encircles the world, involving more nations than any period since the World war's heyday.

Miscellany

A new, sub-low priced sports car will be introduced on the American market this summer.

● The tomb of Pharaoh Psou Sen Nef, Egyptian ruler of about 950 B. C., has been discovered by Prof. Pierre Montet of Strasbourg university.

● The U. S. army has asked congress to forbid West Point graduates from marrying during the first three years of active service.

Agriculture

Time was when last year's price had little effect on this year's crop. Since AAA, however, American farmers have realized the folly of heaping insult on injury by adding new surpluses to already swollen granaries. Lack of export market and heavy production last year sent U. S. farm surpluses to a new high. The expected result, now verified by the department of agriculture's crop reporting board, will be a general cut in this season's production of most products.

Most outstanding fact of the survey is that grain farmers will slash 17 per cent from their spring wheat planting, yet total 1939 wheat acreage is expected to exceed the AAA's announced goal by nearly 11,000,000 bushels. Total winter and spring wheat prospects are for 65,678,000 acres.

Official explanation for the decline: (1) efforts to conform with the soil conservation program; (2) reaction ments to changing feed require- to last year's decline; (3) adjustments, necessitated by last year's surpluses.

Estimated 1939 crop acreages (000 omitted):

	Average 1929-'38	Indicated 1938	Indicated 1939
Corn, all	101,714	93,257	92,062
All spring wheat	22,393	23,515	19,505
Durum	3,668	3,856	3,545
Other spring	18,726	19,659	15,960
Oats	39,472	36,615	35,393
Barley	12,654	11,334	13,219
Flaxseed	2,503	1,096	2,023
Rice	925	1,069	1,006
Grain sorghums, all	8,389	8,582	9,779
Potatoes	3,361	3,069	3,076
Sweet potatoes and yams	860	883	880
Tobacco	1,675	1,627	1,695
Beans, dry edible	1,951	1,753	1,727
Soybeans	4,718	6,858	7,891
Cowpeas	2,475	3,057	3,028
Peanuts	1,877	2,183	2,319
Tame hay	55,746	56,309	57,231

Mexico

Last year Mexico's President Lazaro Cardenas chased U. S. and British oil companies out of the country and seized their properties. A big enough problem in itself, expropriation loomed still more important in the light of U. S. efforts to solidify the Americas against foreign economic intervention. Meanwhile Mexico made hay by selling its ill-gotten oil to Germany while Pan-American nerves neared the breaking point.

Like other American nations which have tried barter trade agreements with the Reich, Mexico soon discovered she was unable to use the manufactured items Germany offered in lieu of cash. Seizing the opportunity, victimized oil companies sent Donald Richberg, attorney and former "brain truster" to make peace with Senor Cardenas.

Richberg terms: Control of the properties should be returned to the companies long enough for them to break even on all past and present investments. Then the property would revert to Mexico.

Cardenas terms: Co-operative Mexican-company operation of the oil properties, with U. S. and British firms to invest new cash for their development. But Mexico would maintain complete control over the industry.

After two weeks of consultation brought no solution, Mr. Richberg returned home, promising to come back late in April. Hardly had he left, however, before President Cardenas announced his own final terms before 40,000 cheering workers. Mexico will keep the wells, paying indemnification with oil taken from them.

People

Appointed, to the U. S. Supreme court post vacated by **Louis D. Brandeis,** Securities and Exchange Commissioner **William O. Douglas,** easterner whose western background balances the court geographically.

● Declined, by **Dr. Arthur Compton,** Nobel prize-winning physicist, presidency of Ohio State University.

Headliners

COL. VLADIMAR S. HURBAN

Though a Slovak, and although Hitler has made Slovaks independent of Czechs, Col. Hurban has so much dislike for Germany and Hungary, and so much pride in the late Czechoslovak nation, that he refused to surrender the Czech legation in Washington to the German ambassador. Born in the Carpathian mountains, he knew Magyar oppression as a child. Becoming a soldier, he went to Russia 30 years ago to accept a professorship in the czar's war college. When the World war broke out he and 70,000 other Czechs joined the Russian army. During the revolution these Czechs made their historic movement to Vladivostok, where the group collected funds to send Hurban to Washington. There he joined Dr. Thomas Masaryk in founding the Czech nation. After the government was established he returned to Washington as Czech military attache, later going to Egypt as charge d'affaires, to Sweden as minister, and in 1936 back to Washington as minister. His greatest accomplishment here was consummation of the Czech-U. S. trade treaty last year, now abrogated under Hitler's "protectorate" regime.

Col. Vladimar S. Hurban

Bruckart's Washington Digest

Official Washington Is Watching Events in Europe With Uneasy Eye

State Department Voices Disgust of American People at Hitler's Dastardly Actions; Our National Resources Of War Materials Should Be Developed.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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WASHINGTON. — Obviously, official Washington, as indeed the whole world, has been watching what has been going on in Europe in the last few weeks. They have been watching with more uneasiness, more genuine fear, how Hitler has been expanding the Reich, seizing, crushing, stealing, new territory, subjugating new peoples, as his insane ambition leads him on and on. Those charged with official responsibility have watched because there can be no mistake about the dangers inherent in this wild remaking of the map of the world.

Our government has had the courage to speak out, through its department of state. It has said the Hitler action in overpowering the peoples of Europe, the minority races, is a dastardly thing. There was nothing else that could be done about it. Secretary Hull and Under Secretary Welles, of the department of state, have left no doubt in the minds of other nations, however, that we, as a people, are angry about what Hitler has done. But again: we can do nothing more than protest, because the United States has no business going to war over some other nation's troubles.

But while our state department has been getting on record with its disgust, and there has been a great to-do about strengthening our national defense just in case trouble would break out and involve us, Washington bureaucrats and some selfish elements in congress have been foiling correction of our greatest weakness. President Roosevelt has used his most patriotic voice to force action by congress in development of airplanes for defense, in construction of new battle boats and has moved strongly for production of equipment, guns, and the like.

Strategic War Materials That Must Be Developed

But with all of this hullabaloo, we have not heard nor seen any plans for development of our national deposits of raw materials which are used in the stock pile of war resources. It might not be so important were it not a fact that a score or more of these materials have to be imported. I regret the necessity for being so bold, but it is proper to say that our war and navy departments have advanced not a single program, or even a thought, as to how this nation could gain certain raw materials if we were to be involved in a war that would cut off importation of them.

The war department has prepared a list of some of these "strategic war materials" and it has listed some of the most important, such as nickel, tin, manganese, rubber, etc. That is as far as it has gone.

It is true, and the swivel chair officers will stress the fact, that congress passed a law a few years back that was designed to encourage American production of these essentials. It was called, popularly, the buy-American act. It even went so far as to afford authority for payment of premiums, up to 25 per cent above foreign quotations, in order that American capital would go to work here on those essentials. But has anything resulted from it? The records answer, no.

A congressional committee also lately has answered "no" by drafting another bill to encourage production in the United States of these war essentials. The house committee on military affairs has reported a bill which Chairman May hopes will do the work, but even Chairman May is doubtful of its success. He is doubtful because, as he said, when the bureaucrats in the executive branch of the government do not want to encourage domestic production, they simply sit in their chairs and swing their feet back and forth.

Officials Unwilling to Learn From Other Nations

Those fellows in the executive departments apparently are unwilling to learn from other nations either. I came into possession of a document, for example, that made a confidential report to the national emergency council more than a year ago. It told that the British government had stored in warehouses enough nickel and tin for a three years supply to be used by industries manufacturing war materials. This was done by the British government, notwithstanding the fact that London is the seat of the great International Nickel corporation which owns the largest nickel mines in the world and does 88 per cent of the world's trade in nickel. The British thought it was wise to have the essential material available, when and if needed, and it had that conviction even with the largest nickel mine known now located on British territory at Sudsworth, Ontario, Canada.

Further, according to that report, the British were unwilling to leave the main nickel refinery on United States soil. It was moved to a Canadian spot where, according to the report, it would be "out of distance of any long range guns." The British royal commission which made the study added that while they and the United States are friendly and none can see any reason for that friendship ever to be disturbed, "no man can forecast the future."

"The shortage of nickel," said the report, "might be a weakness sufficient to determine the issue of a war."

I discussed this question of war essentials with various members of the house—Representative Murdock of Arizona, Representative Francis Case of South Dakota, Representative Scrugham of Nevada, among others. To a man they said that the will of congress was being thwarted by bureaucrats who are unwilling to encourage American industry. Mr. Scrugham, for instance, a former governor of his state and a mining man, told how the bureau of mines had reported there was no worthwhile nickel deposits in Alaska. The same agency has found no reason to encourage American capital to develop manganese deposits in the United States. Mr. Case has been trying to get congressional action on measures to get some use of the metal deposits of South Dakota, but always selfish corporate interests, seeing no further ahead than the point of their red noses, have stalled the programs.

Pleads for Money to Develop Mineral Resources

Mr. Murdock, also a mining man, made a plea on the floor of the house the other day for congress to provide some money enabling realistic procedure with respect to our unknown and undeveloped metal resources—so that we would know in case of war, if for no other reason.

"Since my school boy days," said Mr. Murdock in house debate, "I have been told that Alaska is a treasure house of natural wealth and economic resources. I believe we have been and are overlooking that fact in our dealing with that far off corner of our country. I feel that we ought to develop those resources; we ought to know more about them."

Mr. Murdock's statement causes me to ask the question: since it is our national policy (at present, at least) to spend billions of dollars under the guise of making work, why not designate some few of the millions for worthwhile national development?

Reference was made the other day to testimony given two years ago before the senate finance committee. I looked it up and found that the late Francis P. Garvan, then president of the chemical foundation, had caused an investigation to be made of Alaskan metal resources. The report brought in by a Wisconsin university professor, who did the searching and digging on the ground, makes one wonder what undercurrent of influence has prevented the development of metal claims, such as nickel and tin, up there. Very few of the national legislators knew of the testimony.

Buying for Reserves Would Start Brand New Industries

In my conversations among Rocky Mountain congressmen, I could not avoid the conclusion that capital funds held in the United States will not be put to work on such things without some encouragement from officials in Washington. I know that some representatives and senators are of the opinion that the federal government ought to offer to buy these war essentials here and disregard foreign sources. They believe that a commitment to buy for reserves, if made by the federal government, would start brand new industries going in many, many parts of the United States. All of the while, however, we have the bureau of mines and the war department sitting back and making it hard for Americans to develop America.

This whole situation would be hardly worth analyzing were it not for the facts: 1. The federal government is spending billions for defense, along with other billions that are being wasted, and, 2. It is a measure of safety to have all, or as much as possible, of the things we would need, in event of war, where they can be handled by Americans for Americans. And it is more important, too, because numerous reports have reached Washington in the last year to the effect that German, or Belgian or British capitalists have been making overtures to holders of American mining claims for operating leases on properties that yield such things as essential war metals. It is my belief that sooner or later congress will learn that the bureaucracy, which it created, has wasted too much time; it will learn that foreigners own all of the metal resources here—and we will be buying back the finished material at the prices foreign monopoly cares to establish—just as we are now buying nickel.

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TIPS to Gardeners

Plant Seeds Carefully

WHEN vegetable and flower seeds purchased from reputable firms do not germinate as they should, it is safe to assume that conditions are not favorable for growth, or that seeds were not planted properly.

Therefore, it is of greatest importance to plant seeds according to directions on the packets. Extremely small seeds must be covered only lightly with soil, according to Harold N. Coulter, vegetable expert.

The will to grow is strong in seeds, but they have their limitations. To plant a tiny seed, like the petunia, under an inch of soil is like burying a man under a 20-story building and asking him to push it away.

Heavier, larger seeds, of course, may be planted deeper. Beans and cucumbers may be covered with three-quarters of an inch to a full inch of soil. Peas and corn sprout vigorously and may be planted from an inch to an inch and one-half deep.

Many successful home gardeners actually cover peas and corn with an extra half-inch of soil after they begin to push through. This protects them from birds, and also helps keep weeds down.

Uncle Phil Says:

The Other Sounds Highbrow

"Earning one's bread by the sweat of one's face" may not sound so poetic, but we believe it is correct.

Looking back, how many "new eras" came up to the expectations of those who announced them?

What Caesarism Does

Nero was a kind of imbecile. What was to be gained by persecuting the Christians? But then most of the Caesars were lacking in judgment.

We might answer 98 out of 100 questions in an intelligence test but that wouldn't qualify us for any particular kind of a job.

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