WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS By Edward C. Wayne

Conflicting British and Nazi Reports Tell of Fierce Fighting in Balkans; Russia-Japan Sign Neutrality Pact In Surprising Diplomatic Maneuver

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

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Concrete evidence of the manner in which the U. S. army is being expanded in line with the defense speed-up is this view of the motorized Ninth division during a review at Fort Bragg, N. C. Some 15,000 men and about 1,500 vehicles of all types participated with three infantry companies marching in front of the motorized units.

BATTLE:
Of Greece

Descriptions tending to show that the Battle of Greece was becoming even fiercer and more furious than anything which had taken place in France or the Low Countries were penned by newspaper correspondents during the early days of the Balkan struggle, although these correspondents were having difficulty in getting their stories across.

Never in warfare had there been such confusion in reports. One day the Nazis predicted that the Jugoslavs would "surrender in 48 hours," that "tens of thousands of prisoners had been taken," that King Peter had fled to Turkey and that General Simovic had done likewise to Moscow.

On the same day the Jugoslavs denied all these reports and said their "resistance was stiffening," told of bitter "counter-attacks" and urged the people not to believe false reports.

Nazi reports that there had been a governmental overturn in Croatia were followed by dispatches telling of the invasion of Croatia by Hungary. On almost the same day came Serbian dispatches telling of "stern resistance" north of Zagreb, in the very territory where the Hungarian invasion was supposedly taking place.

Athens was virtually the only source, except Berlin, that was apparently getting news direct. From the Athens dispatches came a series of events that clarified themselves, though the picture in the gross was still much muddled.

These told of two main achievements on the Grecian front by the Nazi invaders. They were (1) the break-through from above the Struma river valley, and (2) the capture of Salonika.

The latter came with a suddenness that was utterly shocking to those who had believed that the Greeks would do the impossible, and put up a stern fight. It also was a shock to those who had believed that the British were based on Salonika.

A glance at the map showed the import of the news. Eastern Thrace had been cut off, and how many Greek soldiers were in that territory Athens alone knew.

The Nazis immediately sent out a dispatch saying that 300,000 men had "laid down their arms." The Greeks said they were continuing to fight, but admitted the eastern forces had been cut off. It was not immediately apparent why they would have to surrender, for the way seemingly open for them, if beaten, to retreat and interne themselves over the Turkish border.

Another vital phase of the battle then manifested itself, when it became known that the Greeks had decided to make their main defense line a V upside down, stretching from near Valona on the Adriatic up to Lake Ochrida in the center, and to the Aegean near Katerina on the east.

It became known that from Mount Olympus, mythical home of the Greek gods, near the Aegean sea, to Lake Ochrida was the "Anglo-Greek line" and that here the main resistance could be looked for.

The contact came after about five or six days of fighting, when the Germans broke through at Monastir gap (Bitolj) and ran slap into heavy British and Greek contingents.

What happened then was not clear, but the Greek dispatches immediately began to take on a new note of confidence. The Germans had been hurled back—their advance had been shattered, the Germans were in full retreat—these terms and others of like ilk were used.

Whether this would prove a turning point or a standing point where the war might halt its fierce movement, remained to be seen. Typical of the puzzling reports were some that told of British and Nazi tank battalions slashing in an open plain—when the relief maps showed the lines to be drawn in a mountainous territory.

According to the most optimistic Greek report, the vanguard of German tanks, motored armored cars, motorcycles and divebombers struck against the organized central line of the Greeks and British on a 12-mile front.

The report said "the defeat of this German column was a terrific disaster. The German tanks, motorcycles and infantry were hurled back into a broken retreat on a 12-mile front, from Florina to Vanitsa."

Berne, Switzerland, was one of the few points which was sending anything that sounded at all reasonable about the Jugoslavian situation. It seemed that the Serbs were planning to defend a big triangle, mostly mountainous, which seemed to leave Belgrade and other parts of the Jugoslav plain territory undefended.

One corner of this triangle was the southeastern town of Skolpje, but the fall of this point was early claimed by the Nazis. But for days thereafter the Jugoslavs were reported from Berne to be counter-attacking vigorously in this neighborhood, and to be driving southward from central Jugoslavia with determination and courage, determined not to be cut off from the Graeco-British lines.

Part of the German strategy, however, was to accomplish just this, and early it was claimed that the Germans and Fascists in northern Albania had joined hands, though this was not borne out immediately in subsequent stories from the front.

Churchill warned that some "surprise move" might come from Russia, and indeed the whole of Europe watched expectantly.

NEUTRALITY PACT:
Soviet-Japan

In an unexpected diplomatic move Russia and Japan announced the signing of a five-year neutrality pact between the two countries. In effect the pact provided that either nation would not become involved should the other find itself involved in war.

The pact came as a surprise to international observers who had been inclined to believe that the Russian government was beginning to lean away from axis-dominated policies. It was said in some sources however that Russia was anxious to be sure that she would not be attacked by Japan should the Soviet find it necessary to open a military drive against Hitler in the Balkans.

For Japan the pact looked like a green light for a further stepping up of war against China and an expansion move to the south in the Pacific area.

HIGHLIGHTS . . . *in the news*

NEW YORK: Some of Mayor LaGuardia's experts have perfected a "time bomb bus" which has had successful tests. It's to be used for carrying away time bombs. The interior is "dynamite matting" and a TNT bomb was exploded inside of it harmlessly. The driver will still be successfully nominated as a hero.

WASHINGTON: Aliens held in deportation proceedings, including crews of German and Italian ships recently seized, are going to be sent to two western army camps, Fort Missoula, Montana, and Fort Lincoln, North Dakota. The camps will be operated by the Immigration service.

LABOR:
Stress Eases

LEON HENDERSON
Almost a price czar.

Although 400,000 soft coal miners were still locked in a disagreement that kept mines in 12 states idle, it was obvious that this strike was just "slow in settling" and that the general labor situation was better.

The Ford strike was settled, Henry Ford for the first time in his career entering into an agreement with a labor union, and the great River Rouge plant with its 85,000 employees was reopened.

Statisticians figured that the strike had cost wage-earners several millions of dollars, the figure running as high as $8,500,000, probably taking into consideration several thousands of workers who had been forced into idleness by the closing of the main plant.

The immediate lessening of pressure in the strike situation did not, however, mean that the whole thing was "under control," for there were many bitter fights looming over the horizon, one of them involving General Motors, another threatening U. S. Steel, and several others threatening smaller plants.

Chairman Dies of the unAmerican investigating committee claimed there was a Communist plot to tie up the vital aluminum industry.

It was almost a relief when the picture changed somewhat and the forces in Washington began to train their guns on employers instead of employees, for a change.

Leon Henderson, vibrant former member of the SEC, and head of the President's price-control setup, was given additional powers and set up almost as a price czar.

His first pronouncements came as a clap of thunder. He announced that there was "ruthless profiteering" among the producers and dealers in cadmium, a vital defense metal. This was his first "shot" and it was followed quickly by others.

He named 11 industries in which there was profiteering and announced that he intended to stop it. He was asked what prices were too high, and answered "all prices are too high."

He then bared his weapons. He said that his theory was that price increases would never "bring out production" and that "jail sentences" wouldn't do it either. He talked about economic "sanctions" against profiteers, and said, in the cadmium instance, that if the profiteering didn't stop, the government would "put the dealers out of business" and that "they would have only themselves to blame."

He even stepped out into the arena and announced that he considered wages came within his territory, because they were a "prime factor in costs." He said he would find ways and means to keep wages down if they got too high, also.

Americans took Mr. Henderson with a grain of salt, perhaps, but it was a change in a picture which had painted the forces of Labor as the Big Bad Man who was halting national defense, and showed a new picture in which the Businessman was the villain, and not the worker.

U. S.:
Attitude

Following his messages of comfort and friendliness to Jugoslavia and to Greece, President Roosevelt promised "all possible aid" as "soon as possible" to both countries, and then took two steps which seemed to fall in line with the general war picture.

Dispatches were telling of British planes "rushing into the battle of Greece in constantly increasing numbers," but how many of these were being rushed across the 6,000 miles from the United States was a military secret.

The two steps President Roosevelt took openly were to take over for this country the defense of Greenland, by special agreement with the king of Denmark.

The second was to open the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to American ships carrying aid to Britain, Greece and Jugoslavia.

Some isolationists whooped it up against both of these moves on the part of the administration, but the word was generally received throughout the country with calm, most people figuring we were practically in the war and that this was another step.

The Greenland decision apparently left Hitler cold, for he made little reference to it. Yet it was important because Nazi planes had been reported flying over Greenland, and if the U. S. was to look ahead to the time when it would have an air base there, it might spell trouble.

Washington Digest

Nation's Attitude on War Puzzle to U. S. Officials

Washington Hears Conflicting Reports on Issue of Full Participation; Wildlife Is 'Mobilized.'

By BAUKHAGE
National Farm and Home Hour Commentator.

WNU Service, 1343 H Street, Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON.—One of the interesting events to watch in the capital these days is the welcoming of a traveler who has safely returned from the great west or the wide prairies. Washingtonians gather around him with wan but hopeful smiles on their faces. They are never quite sure whether he is about to pull a peace-pipe from under his blanket or a tomahawk.

And they are not sure whether the tomahawk is meant for use on them or as a sign that the wild tribes of Chicago and Pittsburgh and Cripple Creek and Hollywood are ready to join the militant East in a good old-fashioned war-dance.

Of late some of these returned travelers have surprised the braves who collect the wampum and the medicine men who sit around the council fires along the Potomac.

Surprised at what they hear from the peaceful folk who live in the valley of the Father of Waters and who are tilling their fields on the great plains and among the Rockies. While these distant Americans are loyal to Big Chief in the White Tepee (according to the Gallup poll), "they just ain't a-spoilin' for a fight."

In other words even some of the writers and pamphleteers who have been most enthusiastic about aid to the democracies at all costs have changed their tune. They are beginning to say that the American people are still so strongly against permitting America to become a belligerent that Washington must step carefully lest it go too far in that direction. I have very good reasons for feeling that the President is beginning to be influenced by this feeling.

Diplomat's Viewpoint.

Recently I talked with a foreign diplomat whose country, still at peace, is trembling under the threatening shadow of the dictators. He said he found it hard to understand the American people. He was sure that they were willing to save the democracies from defeat at any cost and yet they seemed to be solidly against putting this country into war. "It reminds me," he said, "of a line from the poet Goethe," and he quoted:

"Two spirits dwell within my bosom."

Some of the President's associates who are able to look on the situation abroad objectively and are in close touch with our observers in foreign parts are saying, in effect, this:

"The present American foreign policy is not being run counter to the majority of public opinion.

"It is fully realized that while parts of the East and certain groups in Washington are ready for United States participation in the war immediately, the people as a whole would object strenuously to getting us into the conflict.

"But they feel that even if this country should take steps which lead us nearer to the edge of the conflict than we have already gone, they believe that Germany is so anxious to avoid a formal state of war with us that she would hesitate a long time before bringing about such a step.

"In other words even if we were to convoy British supply ships to the very edge of the Western hemisphere, to Greenland for example, and there was an open battle between an American warship and a German submarine, war might not be declared by either side."

Evidence of this conviction was offered by Democratic Senate Leader Barkley when he was opposing the Tobey amendment recently which expressly forbade the use of convoys. Senator Barkley said:

". . . if we have violated international law in such a way as could result in a declaration of war against us by Germany, we have already done that, and the convoying of ships, would be only an incident."

Wildlife Mobilized For Defense

The United States is mobilizing wildlife for defense—the department of agriculture's recruiting drive is on!

When the axe of the first settler rang out on the continent of America, its echoes disturbed the "balance of nature." Until then the natural food supply regulated the animal population of the primeval forest and the lonely glen.

But the white man cut down trees, planted corn and wheat.

Birds and animals, robbed of their ancient homes, poached on the settler's field and garden. The settler, both to protect his crops and to add to his larder, went forth with trap and rifle. The sportsman hunted where he would. American wildlife all but disappeared in some sections, did in others.

Most farmers—most people, for that matter—have a sneaking affection for the furred and feathered folk who live on their land. But the old fear of their predatory habits lies deep—birds that pick and rabbits that nibble and the foxes, the little oxes that clear back in King Solomon's time, spoiled the vineyards.

Today the farmer is rapidly breaking down this ancient fear and with the encouragement of the government—material as well as moral—he is hanging out the welcome sign and offering free board and lodging to wild life.

Already more than half the nation's game exists on privately owned farm, range and forest land. Department of agriculture officials tell me:

"The biggest part of our work of conserving our national resources of quail, pheasants, doves, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, opossums and many other kinds of valuable game and fur animals must be done by individual farmers—right on their own land."

That is why benefits under the Triple A go to farmers who plant odd corners with trees and brush and grains and legumes which furnish house and hearth of the wild folk.

So now many a patch of scab rock in a field that once was a desert island has become an oasis where small animals and birds live and move and have their being.

Given a pat on the back the wild life helps the farmer, eats the bad bugs. Given a chance to forage in the upland growth and woodlots and helped with a little food that the state is glad to furnish, they do not bother the crops.

And the game birds and animals have served another purpose. They have built a new comradeship between the city sportsman and the farmer. Twelve million sportsmen in this country are glad of the chance to shoot on the farmer's land. Six million farmers have proved by their co-operation with the AAA plan for conserving wildlife that they are glad to offer the hospitality and the sport which the city people love: a chance to hunt with gun, rod or camera and sketchbook.

* * *

Spring Comes To Nation's Capital

Spring comes to the Capital.

A cheerful squirrel is begging for peanuts in the shadow of General Lafayette's statue. Suddenly it darts for a tree as a newsboy cries:

"Whole col-lum an-eye-a-lated in Balkans."

The newsboy passes, selling his blood-spattered news.

I watch the squirrel. He watches the newsboy, then darts down to the grass and rolls over three times in sheer glee at not being a man . . .

Walking down with the government workers in the morning: I pass the tall and dignified brick facade and the great, sheltering dome of St. Matthew's cathedral.

A couple, arms locked, pass me. They have walked this same path, this same way to the same office for years. But today, after an Easter holiday, a bright new platinum band is on her finger.

A sudden spot of color on Washington's wide Sixteenth street. A little row of one-story, brick houses. Once they were slave quarters, now they are squeezed in between a stiff, grim brownstone mansion and a tall residence with high peaked roof and bellying bay window, prim clipped hedges. The dweller in one of the little brick boxes has painted his front a warm red. It glows like a glass of chianti held against the light.

The cherry blossoms. Walking under them early enough to be alone you can almost feel their enveloping beauty resting on you like a delicate robe of pink down.

* * *

WPA 'Bookmobiles' Reach Rural Readers

More than 200 traveling lending libraries are now on the road. They are called bookmobiles. "Before the WPA library program began operating bookmobiles about four years ago, traveling library service to rural communities was almost unknown," says Assistant WPA Commissioner Florence Kerr, who nationally administers WPA library service along with all other community service programs.

FARM AND HOMILIES
By Baukhage

¶ The United States has never declared war in any month but April, with one exception. Here are the dates:

Revolution, April 19, 1775.
War of 1812, June 18, 1812.
War With Mexico, April 25, 1846.
Civil War, April 15, 1861.
War With Spain, April 21, 1898.
World War, April 6, 1917.

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All in Silence

A scolding wife can say endless disconcerting things, and she hits or misses; but a silent woman says everything.—H. G. Wells.

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The silly when deceived exclaim loudly; the fool complains; the honest man walks away and is silent.—La Noue.

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