

EXPLAINING THE BLOCKADE TO AMERICA

"Its Aim Is To Shorten The War And Hasten Our Victory"

(A talk broadcast from the British Broadcasting Corporation by the Rt. Hon. HUGH DALTON, and addressed to North America, in the series, "Britain Speaks," on December 1, 1940)

I SHALL speak to you to-night quite frankly and without reserve. I am the British Minister responsible for the blockade, whose purpose is to deny the enemy all goods and services, including foreign exchange, which can help him to carry on the war. My aim is to shorten the war, and hasten our victory.

In 1918 the blockade, acting in support of the armed forces, was a decisive factor in ending the war. If the blockade had been tighter the war would have ended sooner, because in some directions our blockade was slack, the war was prolonged for many months, and hundreds of thousands of young lives were lost. Don't ask us this time to slacken the blockade, and so drag out the war and swell the sum of human suffering. The blockade is a silent weapon, but it generates tremendous economic pressure, which in God's good time will break down German and Italian resistance.

My job is to impose shortages upon the enemy. I've succeeded already in imposing on him serious shortages—of rubber, copper, ferro-alloys needed to harden steel, and of textiles.

The Enemy's Oil Position

As regards oil, their key commodity in peace and war, this is how things stand. So long as the British Navy continues to command the seas, including the Eastern Mediterranean, and it will, and so long as our Air Force continues, and it will, to bomb the enemy's oil plants, oil stocks and oil refineries, and as long as the enemy continues to fight at all—he can't fight without using up oil—then, in a period to be measured not in years, but in months, the enemy's oil position will be one of great and growing scarcity.

Some people thought when France was over-run this summer, after Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium had all been over-run, that the blockade was broken. They were quite wrong. Quite wrong. The stocks of oil, rubber and copper, which the Germans looted in those countries, have now all been used up, and so the Germans are now back where they were six months ago, or worse. Remember too, that in Hitler's conquered European territories there are no rubber plantations, no oil wells, no synthetic oil plants, no copper mines, hardly any ferro-alloys.

Italy Most Vulnerable

Now, as for Italy, she's in poor shape. Most vulnerable to the blockade, she's a liability, not an asset to the Axis, and Italy's heart I know is not in this war. Her troops are in the Mediterranean, all

her fleet, except those battleships and cruisers, which the torpedoes of the British Fleet Air Arm have knocked out in Taranto harbour. They can retreat no further. They've touched bottom.

As Minister of Economic Warfare, I try to help the Navy, and the Navy helps me. I have instituted a system of compulsory navicerts to thin out blockade runners and relieve the strain on our naval patrols. The navicert, you know, was invented by an American Consul General in the last war—a jolly good invention too. It's the passport through our blockade that is granted to a cargo, or to the ship that carries it. Any cargo or ship not covered by navicerts is liable to seizure, so those who try to dodge our controls run pretty big risks, but the sea's a big place, and takes a lot of patrolling. Thank you very much for those destroyers you've sent us. We are relieving the strain on the navy by other means as well. We don't grant shipping facilities, such as fueling, insurance, communications and many other services, all very necessary to the masters of ships, we don't grant those to ship-owners who persist in aiding and abetting the enemy. And that's a pretty effective weapon, for most shipping lines have to rely on services of British ports somewhere or other on the trade routes. We do our best too, to

The Rt. Hon. Hugh Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare



Here from the edge of Europe we strike at the heart of evil. Every day and every night our bombs fall on economic targets of the first importance. Oil plants and refineries, arms factories, aluminium works, vital points in transport systems, even beer cellars in Munich, and power plants in Berlin. Our aim is to smash both the power and the will of the enemy to carry on the war.

I remember so well the summer of 1918. I was an artillery officer then, and everybody was asking, "Will the war ever end?" No one could see the way through, and then, suddenly, the enemy broke down.

The Germans can develop a great strength. It's a very brutal strength, but it's also a very brittle strength. We've snapped it before, and we shall make it snap again, quite suddenly. Quite suddenly. Air attacks, plus economic pressure, based on sea power; those will create the conditions of our victory. In the final chapter of this war, the slaves will rise in revolt against the Nazi bosses, and the forces of liberation will sweep across Europe.

"We Shall Never Give In"

Our Prime Minister has said, "In 1940 we have commanded the seas; in 1941 we shall have command of the air." So send us 'planes and more 'planes. Our men will fly them; splendid young men from this Island. Splendid young Canadians and Australians and New Zealanders and South Africans, and Poles and Czechs too, as good as the best. To-day there are too many good targets, and too few good bombers. As soon as we have enough bombers, we shall bomb their war machine to pieces. We here in Britain are bombed, every day and every night, but we shall never give in. We are mentally and morally prepared to face every experience, except defeat. We know we are defending all that remains in Europe of true human values. The considered decision of your nation is to give us in this struggle all help short of war. What more help could you give us? I don't speak here of ships, or aircraft, or arms, or financial arrangements. I speak only of help for economic warfare.

What America Might Do

First let me say how deeply grateful we are for the friendly co-operation which we have had from you already,

both from the Administration and from American businessmen. Your shippers and ship-owners have helped us to work the machinery of the blockade in the navicert system. This is most valuable help, but there is much which you might do, if you felt able. Much more that you might do. You could refuse financial facilities to our enemies in your country. You could refuse to buy anything from them. That would deprive them of dollars, which otherwise they might use for propaganda and spying and sabotage in your midst. You could immobilize all enemy ships in your ports. You could deny facilities to those neutral ships, which we have publicly listed as likely blockade runners. You could decline to ship by them, or charter them. You could refuse to them throughout the world, repairs, insurance, bunkers. You could decline to trade with those firms in neutral countries, whom we have black-listed as friends of the enemy, with whom no British subject may deal, subject to heavy penalty. If such people hold your agencies, you could take them away. That would be a very heavy blow. Last, and most important, you could extend and tighten up your export controls, so as to ensure that no vital materials get through to the enemy. That's a tremendous weapon, if you choose to use it.

The Great Peace

It was clear from the start of this affair, that Hitler couldn't win a long war, and he's already failed to win a short one. This war, I fear, must last a long while yet, but I'm quite sure of the end. Then will come the great peace for which humanity is waiting. When we are through with Hitler and his henchmen there will be a new world to build, and old dreams to make come true. We must sweep away much old junk, mental and material; we must rebuild better than of old. And in that great constructive task, those of us who love liberty and justice, and who shall survive these death-stained days in Europe, will, I know, work in close comradeship with all like-minded eager forward-looking Americans.

World Economic Plan

It is too soon yet to make a blueprint for the new world, but there must surely be a world economic plan. We
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Mr. Churchill Keeps Listeners Indoors

The strange silence in the streets about six o'clock one Wednesday evening, was pointed out by a London paper: "It probably surprised forgetful persons," the paper commented, "but the majority were aware that the Prime Minister was on the air, and were anxious to hear what he had to say in a week when Nazi anger was being translated in savage attacks on London. Mr. Churchill nowadays has probably the biggest listening audience in the world."

prevent the enemy from getting hold of money with which to buy vital war commodities from overseas. That's why we must stop enemy exports.

Bombing Tyranny

So too, I try to help the Air Force, and the Air Force helps me. Bombs and blockades support each other. If we are to have our peace aims later, we must have good bomb aims now. Our Air Force is showing to the full the offensive spirit. We are not only defending liberty, we are bombing tyranny.