

Terror to Tokyo

By William McGaffin

(Ernie Fyle is on vacation, but will return to an assignment on the Pacific front in the near future.)

U. S. SUPERFORTRESS HEADQUARTERS, Saipan, Dec. 9.—The Japanese empire, secure for nearly three years behind the walls of its vast Pacific fortress, will be laid bare by the Superfortress raids we are now mounting from Saipan. Furthermore our fliers undoubtedly received some unexpected help in Thursday's mighty earthquake.

Japanese industry in Manchuria, Korea and Kyushu, the southernmost island of the homeland, has been under attack since June by Superforts based in China. Now, with Superforts flying out of Saipan as well—a mighty two-arm pincer has gone into operation.

Further harassing the Japs is Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Philippine invasion, which will provide a third arm for the pincers. From bases in the Philippines the third blade of our sword can cut off the Jap homeland from raw material sources in the Nips' stolen empire without which they cannot continue the war.

The heavy earthquake in the Tokyo area on the third anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack may well have added to the damage already caused by the Superforts. A temblor of such intensity would surely add to the demoralization of the Japanese war effort.

Industry Is Concentrated

AS STUDENTS of the Orient know, within the sprawling confines of greater Tokyo is crowded the greatest concentration of war industries to be found in any world capital. In an unknown number of Nakajima aircraft factories alone, an appreciable percentage of the entire Jap output of vital aircraft parts is manufactured.

Close by Tokyo, are three other cities—Yokohama, only 20 miles away, Kawasaki and the major naval base of Yokosuka. In these four cities are concentrated shipbuilding yards, naval bases, petroleum refineries, electric power works, steel mills, factories for production of airplanes, railway rolling stock, electrical and precision instruments, gas masks, barrage balloons and machine tools. Many of these factories and yards are on the coast, where a tidal wave could do untold damage.

We have heard much talk from the Tokyo radio of decentralization of industry in anticipation of air raids. No doubt this has been carried out to a certain

extent with the new war factories. It is a safe bet, however, that there has been little decentralization of this hub of prewar industry which shifted over to war manufacture. The reason is simple—it must remain in that general area to draw workers from the reservoir of more than 500,000,000 people living there.

Tokyo's vulnerability is heightened by its narrow, congested streets and the paper construction of 90 per cent of its buildings. The Japs themselves, in a broadcast warning to the people, have admitted that Tokyo is a "fire trap." Nor is Tokyo's desirability as a target decreased by the fact that it is a center for aviation, railway and shipping business as well as the country's capital, containing all the government ministries and army general headquarters.

One reason for this dangerous concentration of industry lies in the comparatively small size of Japan proper. Its 147,147,701 square miles of area constitutes a smaller mass than the state of California. The problem for the Japs is further complicated by broad belts of mountains which eat up so much territory that only one-sixth of the land is arable. In Japan each square mile must support 3000 persons.

Possibilities Are Enormous

THE POSSIBILITIES open to our two-arm aerial pincers are enormous. For example, we should be able to spoil the Japs' tactics of relieving the strain on their disastrously limited shipping facilities by utilizing raw material sources closer to Japan proper where possible. The Japs smugly declare that they are winning 70 per cent of the lush oil wells in the Dutch East Indies. Yet they are known to be falling back on low-grade oil from Manchuria because it can more easily and safely be brought home than the Dutch oil, which must run the long, dangerous gauntlet at sea.

Before Japan helped itself to Pacific sources of supply, it used to import 93 per cent of its aluminum, 95 per cent antimony, 65 per cent iron, 92 per cent lead, 70 per cent mica, 95 per cent mercury, 90 per cent nickel, 90 per cent oil, 96 per cent rubber, 84 per cent tin, 86 per cent wool and 82 per cent manganese.

Not touching upon the contribution Adm. Chester W. Nimitz' navy has made to Jap attrition nor upon the effect of future amphibious operations, but only considering the forces being brought to bear against Japan from all sides and by all means, it is no wonder that men like Adm. William F. Halsey are beginning to anticipate Jap pleas for a compromise peace.

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