

STIFF FIGHTING THROUGH WINTER NOT IMPROBABLE

Bad Weather May Prolong Struggle Against Germany

(By Lyle C. Wilson, British United Press Staff Correspondent.)

Washington, Sept. 9. — (BUP) — Hard fighting on the European front through the winter and into 1945 is a possibility seriously and constantly considered here today despite spectacular Allied advances in France.

Depends on Conditions

The individual regarded by this correspondent and many others as the best informed in Washington on the European military situation puts it this way:

An opinion on the date of Germany's collapse and unconditional surrender must at this time be argely speculative because it depends on several factors, none of which can be calculated precisely. If we get the breaks in all respects, Germany might fold within three weeks—say by October 1. That seems to be the earliest expectable date and it is not improbable. But unfavourable weather conditions or bad luck might easily prolong the European war into next year.

This well-informed individual always refers to the "European war" to avoid any suggestion that the surrender of Germany means that all the war is over. He says simply

that the Japanese war will last long after the European war is over.

Armchair strategists attempting to judge the approach of Germany's unconditional surrender should consider these factors:

1. Except in the south where the port of Marseille is open and relatively undamaged, the vast Allied armies in France are being supplied through Cherbourg, an inferior port, and "over the beach." The Allied thrust in the west urgently requires the capture of Brest and its clearance for traffic. Next in importance to Brest would be the port of Antwerp, in Belgium, which could supply the British armies fighting their way toward Germany through the lowlands. Le Havre is believed to have been wrecked beyond quick repair.

2. Consolidation of the Allied position in France requires a firm joining and amalgamation of the invasion forces which hit France from the south and speeded up the Rhone valley with the invasion forces that hit from the west near Cherbourg.

October 1 Mentioned

3. Any German collapse within the next three or four weeks would almost inevitably have to be accompanied by substantial destruction of German armies in Italy and by a major Red army offensive in the vicinity of Warsaw.

Given those conditions and favourable breaks in their development, the soundest judgment here is that organized resistance in Germany might be crushed by October 1. It is suggested that those factors be kept in mind when estimating the full significance of new bridgeheads across the Moselle, the capture of Liege and what appears to be the collapse of organized German resistance before the American 1st Army in southeastern Belgium.

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