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PLAN PEACE WITH ITALY

Hitler's conquests would have been utterly impossible if the peoples over which he now rules had presented a single front against him from the beginning, comments the New York Times

The lesson is one for the United Nations to learn not merely defensively but offensively. It may mean an enormous saving in time and treasure and lives. It may help to determine the very outcome of the war if the United Nations can drive wedges between Nazi Germany and those "Allies" that it continues to hold almost as much by terror as it does the countries it has conquered.

In his speech on Sunday, Prime Minister Churchill offered the Italian people the choice of getting rid of Mussolini and making peace with the United Nations, or subjecting their land to the weight of war "in a measure not hitherto dreamed of".

Yet if we seriously hope to have the Italians conclude a separate peace with us before we are forced to attack all their strategic bases from the air and undertake a land invasion of their country, we must go beyond the general sort of statement that Mr. Churchill has now made. We are most likely to induce the Italians to overthrow their present leaders, to try to cast out the German "occupying forces" and to sue for peace if we convince them that they really do have the choice between war and slavery on the one hand and peace and freedom on the other.

This means that we must tell the Italians at least in broad terms what our conditions of peace will be.

One or two of these conditions are not difficult to formulate.

The Italians must depose Mussolini and his Fascist organization. We must assure the Italians that they will be a free people. We must make it clear that as an immediate consequence of peace, trade between them and the United Nations will be restored so that they may receive the food and other supplies necessary for the prompt rehabilitation of their country.

In return, we should require absolute assurance of a suspension of all Italian trade with Germany. The frontier between the two countries would have to be closed as long as the war continued.

The New York Times also mentions other problems in this category, including the problem concerning the borders of Italy, especially those that have been in dispute with Yugoslavia, and raises the question of Italy's colonies, saying that some of these problems could no doubt be postponed until a general peace settlement after the defeat of Germany, while others might be handled in a frankly provisional manner.

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We must be prepared, continues the New York Times, to answer the same kind of questions with respect to Finland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and so on when the proper time arrives as those we must now raise with regard to Italy.

If we are to integrate our diplomacy with our war effort we cannot postpone active discussion of the conditions of peace. Our ultimate decisions will depend upon the decisions we make now.

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CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY

The New York Times in an editorial on "Christmas Eve in Germany", points to Germany's food problems, her health problems, her overcrowded hospitals and her rising death-rate, and says that this Christmas in Germany will be neither tranquil nor holy.

"Stille nacht, heilige nacht" - the sentiment must seem a mockery now. And all because a ruling clique led by a fanatic has yet to discover that the precepts of the great religions express age-old convictions of civilised mankind and stand for something more than the imaginary predestination of any one nation to rule the world.

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LUFTWAFFE AND ITALY

Already, said Winston Churchill, in his Sunday broadcast, the German air force is a wasting asset; in that single sentence the British Premier disposed of the fears which have been current in this country and elsewhere that the Nazis had a vast reserve of air power, says the Washington Post.

If Hitler had any air reserves these would obviously have been rushed into the fray with Stalin. That the Nazi air force is now a wasting asset means that new construction is not keeping pace with losses. It means that Italy can hope for less and less support from the Nazis when the United Nations' wrath from the skies begins to appear in force over the fair land of Italy.