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FRENCH GOVERNMENT COLLAPSES MILITARY ASSUME CONTROL

On the 2nd of February the French Government resigned on mass. Handing power to the General Staff Council, ending civil administration in the Republic.

With the world falling apart for the French, following the Spanish attack in the south and civil unrest in Lyon and Paris, the Government of the Republic gave up all pretence of control of the situation by formally passing control of the country to the Army.

General Pretalat, having only recently been appointed as Commander in Chief of the Army, found himself, within 14 days, the effective leader of the French Republic.

His concerns must first be with preventing the Spanish from securing firm footholds in the south, and it is to military affairs, as expected that the French have moved first. With the massing of almost their entire army in the south of France.

This has left Paris unprotected, yet the General must know that should the Germans attack all is lost. So his actions to take on one problem at a time seem militarily sound.

German troop movements do not appear to have resulted in any form of aggressive action towards the

French, it may be that the outcry by the world for Adolf Hitler to honor his treaty obligations have been listened to in Berlin.

Pretalat has announced that he looks forward to the day when the Free French Army returns home and requested that they consider a landing in the Spanish rear, but did say that this seemed unlikely as it would bring Britain into the war with Spain and most probably lead to Germany's attack upon France, something that would be evil for the whole of France, Republican or Free French.

Stalin Dead

Mixed messages reach the west.

In a move that appears to have caught many commentators off guard, the Soviets have reported that Finnish and German agents have successfully killed Joseph Stalin.

A series of events appear to have unfolded in Russia. Late on the 7th



of February, news reached Helsinki that the Russian Garrison in Murmansk had killed a number of Political Commissars, whilst in a

number of the Baltic cities a state of marshall law was being enforced.

By early morning on the 8th, it was apparent that from radio intercepts in Helsinki, Olou, Istanbul and Stockholm that elements of the Red Army and factions within the Political machine were attempting to gain power from Stalin.

The situation appears to have come to a head at around lunch time on the 8th when forces of the Red Army appear to have attacked the Kremlin, the fate of Stalin being unknown by western observers. The Soviets have however gone on

to claim that the Kremlin was attacked by Finnish and German troops, resulting in the death of Stalin.



Marshal Zhukov

The Soviet Union appears, for the time to be under military control with Marshall Zhukov at the head of the new regime, although Beria, seems to be the civilian figure head, but no one can really confirm who holds absolute power, if either man.

CCP withdraw west

Following another failed attempt to hold their lines the Communist Chinese forces have started to withdraw west again.

Following the fall of Huhehot to the Japanese the CCP are now left with no population centres, and have been forced to start a withdrawal towards the Soviet Union. The race will now be on to see if the Peking Army Group can prevent their escape.

Tangiers taken by French

A swift military push out of Casablanca has seen the Spanish colony of Tangiers fall to the Free French.

Seen as the opening salvo in the eventual struggle between Britain and Spain, British sponsored Free French forces successfully forced the garrison of Tangiers to surrender, after a brief fire fight.



The Russian Front Stagnates.

Japanese Land in French Indo China

Japanese Forces have again caught the allied forces on the hop, but this time the British and French have reacted meeting force with force.

On the 16th of the month, a large body of Japanese assault and transport ships appeared off the city of Haiphong in northern Indo China. Two landings followed, one against the city the other to the south. Although the initial landings went unimpeded, the RAF was able to launch raids against the enemy by mid day.

Japanese fighters, unable to match the RAF spitfires were soon cleared from the sky and Japanese bombers were quickly forced to run for home, as the Spits secured air control over the battlefield.

RAF bombers then carried out a small number of operations against the enemy ground forces, causing

delays in the advance on Hanoi and preventing the Japanese marines from capturing the French depot intact.

As the battle continued on land the RAF switched to hitting the enemy assault ships in the second wave, causing heavy loss of life on the packed troops ships.

As the month comes to an end the British control the sky and have the ability to inflict continued damage on the Japanese navy and land forces, but the Japanese have at least 6 divisions ashore and are poised for an advance on Hanoi.



The situation around Hanoi.

Battle for Zhitomir

German and Russian forces clash around Ukrainian city of Zhitomir, as winter offensive appears to have started.

German infantry encircled within the city came under heavy assault from the north, south and east as the Soviets attempted to prevent them from linking up with their comrades to the west.

German Army Group Centre, in a bold winter thrust through 4 corps at the Soviet lines, the Soviet troops disintegrating before the German advance. However, at the same time the Soviets launched almost 3 army groups against the German defenders of Zhitomir, whilst looping to their rear to prevent an escape. The 2nd Cavalry being able

to loop around the rear and prevent the German infantry out of the west linking up with the garrison. In 6 days of bitter fighting the German infantry fought hand to hand actions with the Soviets, but by the 7th of the month all news of the defenders of Zhitomir had stopped.

By now the attacking German troops were exhausted, as where the Soviets, the lines set and both armies took to shelling one another again.

News out of the region has indicated that around 25 thousand German troops surrendered, this being a shadow of what was available. German sources indicate that around 1,000 German troops managed to get through Soviet lines.

Spanish pushed back

Spanish Troops have been thrown back from the approaches to both Marseilles and Bordeaux.

With the Spanish unable to draw upon reinforcements from the Portuguese border they have been forced to use only those forces already committed to the operations in Southern France. This is now proving to be inadequate, with the French committing every available battalion to the fight, even drawing a further 2 divisions from North Africa.

The Spanish have already been forced to pull back from their drive on Marseilles as the armour could not be supported by the bogged down infantry.

It would appear that the French gamble has paid off, the Germans have remained firmly on their side of the Treaty lines and not moved to interfere with the French, even as the French 201st division overran the Spanish 19th Division north of La Rochelle.

The Republics battlefleet has also taken to shelling coastal regions of Spain, particular attention paid to Barcelona and Valencia. It was in this latter city that the French have managed to destroy the final elements of the Spanish Navy. Franco must now be praying that the Germans come to his aid.



Cadiz Shelled by Free French

The Free French Navy has brought the war home to Spain.

A force of French Naval units headed by at least one battleship shelled the City of Cadiz for over 6 hours, destroying the harbour and slipways, and large numbers of Spanish merchant ships within the port facility.

Finish Draft

Believed to be as a response to recent radio broadcasts from Russia, the Finns have announced another draft.

With 45% of all able bodied men in uniform already, the Finns have taken measure to draft a further 54,000 men to the army in response to the possibility of increased tension leading to a state of war with the Soviet Union.

U.S. Shipping Sunk in Pacific

The US Navy has announced that ships of the Pacific Fleet have put to sea off Guam to support American merchant shipping after an attack upon some 12 US merchants.

American trade between San Francisco and Manilla has been effected on lightly, but the US Navy has warned that should they discover the nationality of the attacking submarines then the full force of the US Fleet will be brought to bear.

With ships of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the British Royal Navy known to operate in these water the finger of guilt has been passed to both, with American opinion split as to who would perform such an act of aggression.

The Whitehouse has instructed the Navy to take all necessary actions in defense of US merchants traffic.

