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## HITLER'S DESIGNS IN THE WEST

### WILL HOLLAND BE ATTACKED?

#### DANGEROUS STRATEGY

From a Military Correspondent

The possibility that Germany might demand the right of entry into Holland and enter by force if it were refused has of late been under discussion. It has been suggested that such an action might be accompanied by assurances to Belgium that no threat to her neutrality was involved and that her frontiers would be respected if she remained quiet.

The question is to a large extent hypothetical, but the establishment of air bases in Holland would provide obvious advantages, at least on the surface, to her unprincipled neighbour. The possession of advanced aerodromes on the west coast of Holland would diminish the flying distance to be covered by bombers attacking this country by well over 100 miles, and, of course, double as much for the but and return flights. The saving of time, say, 25 minutes' flying,



would be of importance, because it would somewhat increase the chance of effecting a surprise, and the saving of petrol would also be considerable. The provision of an escort of fighting aircraft for the bombers would be rendered practicable.

Obviously, if Germany's object were to acquire such advanced air-bases, and that only, she would not simultaneously invade Belgium. Quite apart from the strength of the Belgian Army and fortifications, such an action would bring British and French troops into and across Belgium to block her path. Should she enter Holland only, she might consider that she could count on Belgium standing aside, and not merely failing to aid Holland but also preventing Britain and France from moving to help her. Should Belgium act in this manner she would be placing herself at Germany's mercy, for her eastern defences and the *massif* of the Ardennes would be turned and her much less defensible northern frontier would be uncovered to the Germans, while Holland, overcome by the now familiar Hitlerian technique of the limited objective, would be a potential ally lost.

#### POWER OF THE BLOCKADE

The view of the Dutch themselves is that a step of this sort on the part of Germany must be provided for, but is unlikely. They are aware of the disadvantage, already pointed out here, that German violation of Dutch territory would open up to British aircraft important targets which are at present to a considerable extent sheltered behind the Dutch and Belgian frontiers with Germany. Conscious of their own rectitude and of the respect in which they are held, the Dutch consider that the effect upon public opinion in the United States would obviously be such that Germany must hesitate to arouse the storm. They know that they could scarcely continue to exist in face of a British naval blockade; for, especially in winter, the importation of linseed cake—from Argentina—for their cattle, maize for their pigs, and chemical manures for their soil represents a vital necessity. Germany, they argue, would find it a poor bargain if in exchange for advanced aerodromes, she had to feed some millions of starving people. (Their Belgian neighbours, who expect such a