

GIBRALTAR.

Menace of Germany.

GUNS IN MOROCCO

Dominating Straits.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.)

LONDON, April 21.

Germany's miniature "Maginot Line" in Morocco, when it is finished, will run from Cap de L'Eau and Iles Chafarines, in the extreme east of the Spanish zone, to Benzou and Ksar Seghir, opposite Gibraltar, and on the west coast from Arzila, just south of the Tangier international zone, to the neighbourhood of Larache.

This is the statement of a special correspondent of the "News-Chronicle," who has just completed a tour of investigation in Morocco. In recent months, he declares, there have been two distinct though closely linked occupations of the Spanish Protectorate the first for the purpose of creating permanent German influence, the second for giving assistance to the Spanish rebel cause.

The first of these is of more immediate importance to the British people. There is, he declares, no longer any free passage of the Gibraltar Straits. At Benzou, directly opposite Gibraltar Bay, a new German 40.5 gun has been installed and its capabilities severely tested. It has been fired several times

tested. It has been fired several times towards Spain, and has proved satisfactory. Outside Benzou, on the Punta Blanca, German engineers have installed and camouflaged a battery of three smaller guns with a range of almost 14,000 yards. They were made in 1921 for the Spanish Navy by Vickers. They have now been reconditioned at Cadiz and adapted to land use.

"I have seen photographs and have talked with two of the many men who were taken from prison and forced to help to build sunken emplacements," the correspondent continues. "All three guns are more or less hidden by an outcut in the hillside, and are connected by subterranean galleries with a common magazine. Each has its own automatic ammunition hoist."

CROSSFIRE OVER STRAITS.

This battery is complementary to a similar one of new German guns on Punta Carnero, which is on the Spanish mainland opposite. Between them they can rake the sea passage with crossfire and make a mockery of the guaranteed freedom of the Straits. The Straits are also menaced from Ksar Seghir, which lies between Benzou and the Tangier international zone. Here, states the correspondent, there is a battery of three new guns whose calibre he has been unable to discover, although he is reliably informed that they are German.

Ceuta, it is stated, is now a fortress. In the city itself there is a battery of four 15.5-inch guns. On the house roofs of the Plaza Azcarate, Calles Canalejas, and Rebellin, and on the roof of the church of Los Remedios, are installed four German anti-aircraft guns of the latest pattern. The peninsula of El Hacho, which juts out eastwards from Ceuta, is part and parcel of this giant fortress. Here there are eleven guns. Near the penal settlement are two batteries of four guns each. All are 75's, and in the extreme north of this peninsula, on the heights dominating it, are three 15.5's. All are new, and all are German, it is stated.

At Castillejos, southward on the border of Spanish sovereign territory and the Spanish Protectorate, four German 75's point towards Morocco. Half-way along the coast lies Villa Alhucemas, in whose bay German submarines find ideal shelter. This bay, flanked by Capes Morro Nueva and Quilates, is a forbidden

Capes Morro Nueva and Quilates, is a forbidden zone. Accurate information filters out only with extreme difficulty, it is stated, for it is here that whatever headquarters the Nazis have installed in Morocco and whatever concentration of troops there may be, are to be found. It is more difficult of access than Lhassa. It is known, however, that on both capes concrete emplacements have recently been built and that each is fortified with at least a battery of four 75's.

SEAPLANE BASE.

Further east lies Melilla, with its ideal seaplane base, the inland sea of Mar Chica. At this moment, it is stated, there are not more than 20 Italian seaplanes using it, most having gone to the mainland after the fall of Malaga. Melilla and its environs are even more heavily fortified than Ceuta. On Cap des Trois Fourches, northwards, are four new German 75's, which guard the sea passage in and out of the harbour. Four new 105's have been placed strategically close to the Melilla Lighthouse, and in the old town there is a battery of four new 75's. Just south-west of the town at Forte de Rostro Gordo, German engineers have installed a battery of reconditioned German 115's which they brought from Ceuta. There are four. They were cast in 1905. There are at least eight of the newest anti-aircraft guns at Melilla, most of them surrounding the harbour, two actually on the jetty.

The harbour is much used by German and Italian ships. It is stated, for it is one of the chief sources of the rebel supplies, and it is from here that ore from Rifian mines leaves for Germany. Such is the weight of traffic that the harbour was recently reconditioned and brought up to date. All minor fittings were brought from Melilla by German destroyers bearing the marks LU and LW. It is seldom, however, that big German cruisers now appear at Ceuta and Melilla. They are more careful. Their favourite haunt is a little bay north of Cap Noir. Here, between Ceuta and Tetuan, unobserved by foreign Consuls and other busybodies, they lie off the village of El Medik, in a "strategically admirable position."

Fortifications which are being erected between Arzila and Larache are not yet finished. In order to hurry them up, a system of forced labour is being applied.

