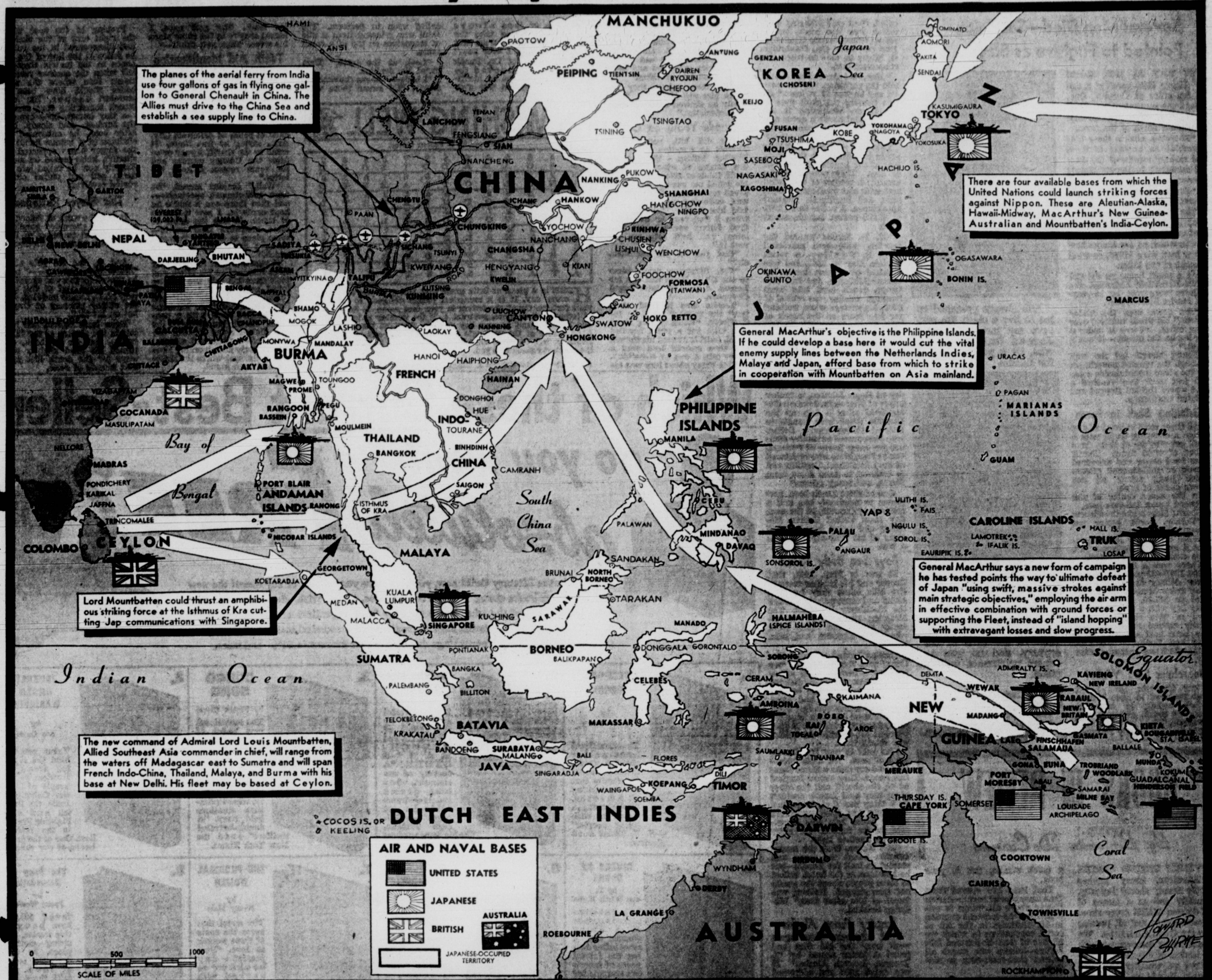


Drive on Burma May Open New Battle for the Pacific



WITH Burma drying out after months of heavy rains that have made major military action impossible, Allied forces are believed ready to open an offensive that will end the threat to India, reopen the Burma Road, and open the way to air raids on the Japanese mainland from the Chinese coast.

At the same time, General Douglas MacArthur's forces are smashing important Jap bases in the South Pacific, moving ever closer to the Philippines, naval forces in hit-run raids are blasting Nippon's island bases, and in the far north American bombers based in the Aleutians are raiding the Kurile Islands.

Thus a three-way drive threatens the Japanese mainland.

A fourth also is possible, a thrust by sea from the Hawaiian Islands and Midway.

Military strategists believe the major drive will come from India, where Lord Louis Mountbatten, supreme Allied commander, has tens of thousands of troops, a strong air force and a battle fleet that possibly will be reinforced by ships from Italy's surrendered navy.

Burma, they say, will have to be invaded primarily by sea, the overland route being almost impossible. This, of course, would have to follow heavy air raids and would require control of the Indian Ocean.

Japan knows a major offensive is on the way, knows that during the monsoon period the Allies have built up a powerful striking force, knows the drive probably will start in Burma.

Japan's forces are spread out over thousands of miles of land and sea, from China to New Guinea. Aware of her vulnerability to attack by air, the Japanese government has ordered total mobilization of her people.

If the Allies strike soon from all directions, east from India, west from the South Pacific, and south from the Aleutians, Tokyo will not be able to build her homeland defenses as thoroughly as she has built the island bases in the Pacific.

If the offensive is delayed, if by any chance China should be knocked out of the war, the war in the Pacific may be lengthened by a decade.

