Dear Washington

By Helen Essary

RUSSIA'S attack on Finland should neither distress nor surprise the United States, in the opinion of Dr. Hans Thomsen, German charge d'affaires.

"The conquest is part of the Soviet plan to redesign its own, to take back what it lost in the World War," said Dr. Thomsen.

"As a military triumph actually it is unimportant. Merely an expedient. Russia must have a seaport in the Baltic. There is the coast line of Finland close at hand and very convenient for Russian shipping. The result is inevitable."

"But why shouldn't the United States be greatly outraged at this attack on perfectly harmless people?" I asked.

DR. THOMSEN replied calmly.

"Such an attitude," he said, "should be understood by the people of the United States. When your Government wanted the land that is now Texas in 1848, it merely moved in and took it from Mexico. It isn't recorded in the history books that the citizens of your country were horrified.

"At least they have never yet given back the land. To some of us in Europe, it seems both necessary and simple procedure to rearrange the map of Europe in the same way, to suit on a larger scale. Let me show you.

Dr. Thomsen moved out of the smoking-office adjacents to what was the drawing room, when Ambassador Hans Luthier had lived at the Thomsen House. Look at this pile of the world. Russia has but one logical course. Her choice, however, is undecided. It is an indecisive choice.

"Germany's Thomsen attack on Finland was both fortunate and unfortunate, because, again I say, everyone knows eternal peace in Europe is impossible."

"Too much blood has been shed over the borders. Real characteristics will always prevail and will not permit any country, big or little, to long endure rule by outsiders. This is why the German National Socialist government did not have to wait long for Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria. There were really German countries with many thousands of Germans already there."

"Do you think this will be a long war," I asked Dr. Thomsen. He, naturally, could not say definitely, but he did not think it would be short.

"It will be a cautious war, however. Both sides have learned that it is stupid to sacrifice a hundred thousand young men for a spectacular attack that will have no particular results. Each side will move warily."

"Now England can do nothing. Not at the moment. She has set up her flag on French soil and moved her armies in. But that is all."

We were talking of war as casually as if we were discussing a new play. Such blithe ignorance of the human element, the pointless destruction of the man who would be murdered, almost kept me from thinking the conversation had reality. It was also incredible that Dr. Thomsen did not seem to feel there was a remote chance of Russia and Germany failing to conquer Europe. And I told the distinct idea that they conquer together according to a fixed plan.

"Shaking over the certainty that Hitler and Stalin, leaders of the ruthless conquest, must some day come face to face and then what, was one question I did not ask Dr. Thomsen.

WHAT he thought about the attitude of the United States was yet to be mentioned.

"While Germany and Russia are running about, what do you suppose the United States will be doing meanwhile?" I said.

Dr. Thomsen looked squarely at me and answered, "you will be staying at home and looking after her own big country and being thankful."

"The United States has enough to deserve honoring her people. Europe never has and never will be any proper conception of how it is that some day the Nazis will cross the ocean and invade United States. I laugh!"