

MR 500 NORTH AFRICA, MID EAST, MEDITERRANEAN, (4) -
WARFARE.

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, 1942 ✓

Map Room
Box 93
Folder 5

MR 500 NORTH AFRICA, MID EAST, MEDITERRANEAN (4) - WARFARE (NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, 1942)

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*The Map Room
The White House*

[Signature]
26

COPY NO.

To: Cs.-in-C., Middle East
Repeated: General Eisenhower,
Joint Staff Mission
From: Chiefs of Staff.
Dated: 31st December, 1942.

~~TOP SECRET~~
IMPORTANT

Following from Chiefs of Staff No. C.O.S.(M.E.) 344.

J.I.C. Appreciation of Rommel's plans in Tripolitania in near future in relation to enemy strategy in North Africa is as follows.

2. Ever since the battle at El Alamein Rommel has had the tendency to look over his shoulder. This tendency has been particularly marked at times when his maintenance position has been bad, e.g. near Benghazi and at El Agheila. Rommel is again showing signs of nervousness at the danger of a British outflanking movement, and appears to over-estimate the British readiness to attack.

3. Recent evidence indicates that Rommel is making preparations in anticipation of a further withdrawal Westward from his present position at Buerat. These include preparations for the evacuation of certain non-essential equipment and personnel from Tripoli.

4. Now that Tripoli is no longer an effective supply port Rommel is largely dependent upon supplies overland and by lighter from Tunisia. If an Allied threat to the Sfax-Gabes Area were to develop, and if the Axis forces in Tunisia require help to counter it, he might feel compelled to despatch a protective force to assist in the defence of that area which is vital to his supplies. His known intention to render mobile the 164th Division and Mikolai (late Ramke) Brigade may be to have such a force ready, or it may be to have a mobile force ready to operate offensive on the Southern flank of the Buerat position.

5. There is no evidence that the enemy have strategic plans for withdrawing Rommel's Force for operations in conjunction with Von Arnim's forces in Tunisia. Moreover, there are certain factors which make such a wholesale withdrawal at present unlikely, namely -

- (a) Shortage of M/T in Tripolitania and the fact that Rommel is living on day to day supplies of petrol would compel him to carry out any withdrawal by stages.
- (b) If Rommel abandoned the airfields around Tripoli and the Port of Tripoli to the Allies, the ports and communications in Tunisia on which the Axis would then be dependent for supplies would be subject to short range bombing from yet another area in addition to Malta and Algeria.
- (c) A wholesale and hurried withdrawal would inevitably mean that once again the bulk of the Italian forces in the forward area would have to be abandoned.

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FEB 20 1973

300 N. Africa

(d) The Axis and particularly the Italians would, for political reasons, be reluctant to abandon Tripolitania completely.

6. Present Axis policy in North Africa is probably therefore to build up, and so far as they can to extend Westwards, their bridgehead in Tunisia, to keep open the supply link with Rommel's forces in Tripolitania and to hold off the Eighth Army for as long as possible in order to deny the Allies the use of the airfields and ports of Tripoli. At present the orders to Rommel are to hold the Buerat position, and he is accordingly preparing to do so. He is likely, in fact, to hold the Buerat position unless maintenance difficulties and until pressure by the Eighth Army compel him to withdraw. As yet, the pressure and particularly the threat of being outflanked have not yet become sufficiently serious to have compelled him to take the decision to withdraw.

7. If Rommel is compelled to abandon the Buerat position, there is no good defensive position east of Gabes until the Mareth Line is reached. Accordingly, Rommel's tactics would be to withdraw fighting to successive delaying position, possibly

- (1) Wadi Soffegin (South of Misurata),
- (ii) The hills East and South East of Tripoli, and
- (iii) The Tunisian Frontier.

T.O.O. 1600Z/31.

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U.S. C.O.S.

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RC 18
13205/1842
efg

INCOMING MESSAGE Nov 18, 1942
CCWD
1927E

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(D) and 6(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RHIP, NARS Date FEB 20 1973

From: Cairo
To: AOWAR Washington DC

No. AMSMK 2600 Nov 18, 1942

Observations obtained from Colonel Gard who was attached to main body of British attacking Forces in El Ahamlin break through follow: Main attack was executed by Ninth Australian Division and Fifty First Highland Division. Purpose main attack penetrate mine fields in north so Tenth Armored Corps might be employed in encirclement and pursuit. Above named Divisions made penetration of fixed highly organized defenses over very flat featureless terrain which singularly lacking in dominant terrain features. Universally all main attacks were delivered at night to allow infantry minimum four hours after securing objective in order dig in to repel hostile counter attacks which were unassailingly delivered both with armored and motorized infantry. These attacks were more typical of last wars position warfare, attacks were characterized by heavy masses of Artillery firing what amounted to rolling barrage advancing at a rate of two and one half to three minutes one hundred yards with interpolated pauses for passage of infantry units to continually attack. Australian Division on north attacked with two infantry regiments abreast and another Infantry Regiment in reserve. One infantry regiment attacked on front of one Bn covering front of one thousand yards with additional mission of securing north flank of penetration. Other Infantry Regiment attacked on two Bn front covering two thousand yards with their advance closely coordinated with advance Fifty First Highland Division on south. Australian Division employed on its front of three thousand yards three three six guns of which thirteen Regiments were twenty five pounders and fired approximately six zero zero rounds per gun until daylight. Attacks generally started at two zero one five Z. Artillery preparations began twenty minutes before attack hour with all artillery guns employed on counter battery program. This program

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North Africa*

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INCOMING MESSAGE

Page 2

From: Cairo
To: AGWAR

No. ANSME 2600 Nov 18, 1942

was fired for fifteen minutes. For Marshall from Andrews general ratio employed on counter battery program was twenty to one. As result German Artillery was silent for approximately two hours after attack started and were unable respond requests for defensive fire from their infantry. Following Guards conclusions "antitank gun has beaten tank-tank no longer useable tactically should be employed strategically. German fifty MM and higher calibre guns and British six pounders will disable any tank on battlefield today. Antitank and anti personnel mines are dominate defensive and delaying devices in use. Infantry on foot can no longer make contact with delaying or withdrawing force. It is emphasized that this operation took place on forty mile front under conditions approximating stabilization. It was by skilful use of artifice that British obtained tactical surprise, they gained no strategic surprise as captured documents which Nye have examined show that Germans expected attack any time after October fifteenth". Not if desire any particular technical or tactical questions answered cable will obtain from Gard all data given here.

Andrews

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OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RHP, NARS Date FEB 20 1973

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BVC

CCWD
November 22, 1942
0124 Z

PARAPHRASE

PRIORITY

From: Gibraltar
To: AGWAR

No. JAN 147, November 17, 1942

From: Murphy
To: State Department

Necessity for complete study and affecting a definite program of economic supply for North African Area has become very urgent. A vast reduction of the presently scant consumers supplies will be noticed due not only to presence our military forces there, but to fact North Africa now cut off from France, its main source of supply, presenting an immediate and quite grave situation. Considering that through decisions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the Commander in Chief will be concerned in the economic policies only insofar as they will effect this operation, civil authorities of UK and US are urgently requested to take some immediate action in this respect.

In reference to some type of skeleton organization to handle these matters, a foreign service officer of senior rank and experience in financial dealings would be most useful. Financial questions are at present, temporarily being handled by Tailor and Bernstein of Treasury and as matters of State. Considered well to assign and send not more than two persons, to be selected by Board of Economic Warfare, also recommend prompt assignment of a Lend Lease representative. Urgently needed and of higher importance than personnel is information as to if, when, and what goods (if any now in transit) may be expected to arrive here, also need information from State Department, for regulating our program of economic supply.

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CM-IN-9676

*320
North Africa*

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WAR DEPARTMENT
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER

INCOMING MESSAGE

From: Gibraltar
To: AGWAR

No. JAN 147, November 17, 1942

PAGE 2

The department is awake and fully informed as to the need of wearing apparel, coal, cotton goods, food stuff, gas oil, news print, medical supplies and other materials urgently needed in this area. The department is informed that industry in this area is partially dependent on France as its source of supply. This lengthens the list of urgently needed products. Comment desired in near future.

No Sig

ACTION COPY: OPD

INFO COPIES: G-2, GEN DEANE(CC/S) SOS (GEN STYER), LOG

CM-IN-9676 (11-23-42) 002EE eob

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By RT, NARA, Date 4/12/94

BOARD OF ECONOMIC WARFARE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lieutenant W. C. Mott, USNR
FROM: Captain W. D. Paleston, USN
SUBJECT: Your Request for Information

DATE: November 17, 1942

Enclosure: Economic Value to the Axis of Sicily and Sardinia - Report prepared by Mr. Fowler Hamilton of the Board of Economic Warfare

1. Enclosure gives a brief resume of the economic value to the Axis of Sicily and Sardinia.

2. If you would like a more detailed report, I will be very glad to supply it.

W. D. Paleston

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MEMORANDUM

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

November 16, 1942

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To: Captain Puleston
From: Fowler Hamilton
Subject: Economic Value to the Axis of Sicily and Sardinia

I. The Economic Value of Sicily

The occupation of Sicily would be a serious loss to Italian economy.

With an area of 25,709 square kilometers, the island of Sicily supports a population of over four million, or more than 150 persons per square kilometer. This population accounts for 9 percent of the Italian total population.

Sicily's contributions to Italian economy are chiefly agricultural. About 95 percent of the island's area is classed as productive while about 55 percent is arable land. Forests cover only 3.5 percent.

1 1/2 million acres
Sicily is more than self-supporting in food stuffs and has in fact a large exportable surplus. The total Italian wheat area is five million hectares of which 800,000 hectares are in Sicily. The Sicilian wheat area produces between 1/7 and 1/8 of the total Italian wheat harvest and this amount is large enough to permit the export of about 400,000 metric tons to the mainland after providing the requirements of the island's population.

Italy produces annually about 250,000 metric tons of barley of which one-fourth is Sicilian. Sicily produces about one-fourth of the total Italian cotton production which this year was planned to reach about 50,000 metric tons or about one-third of Italy's needs. About 50 percent of the Italian bean production of 650,000 metric tons is of Sicilian origin and the island makes a vital contribution to the Axis food supply through its production of citrus fruits which constitute 80 percent of the Italian total of 800,000 metric tons, and through the production of 150,000 tons of almonds most of which have gone to Germany in recent years. Approximately 15 or 20 percent of the total Italian production of tomatoes and vegetables are raised in Sicily, while the island contributes about 10 percent of the total olive oil yield. The olive oil production satisfies the island population's requirements with but a small amount for export. Similarly, Sicily's wines, which have the highest alcoholic content of all Italian wines, meet the local requirements and are exported to some extent.

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By RT, NARA, Date 4/12/94

Sicily, on the other hand, is not well suited to animal husbandry and the latest Italian figures (1938) indicate that the island supports only 430,000 equines, 200,000 bovines, 67,000 porcines, 800,000 ovines and 338,000 caprines. About seven or eight percent of the total number of Italian sheep ^{goats} and goats are in Sicily.

sheep to goats

Aside from foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials, Sicily contributes only sulphur and asphalt. Of the total Italian sulphur output amounting to 350,000 tons in 1939, 65 percent was produced in Sicily. As an industrial area Sicily has little or no importance due chiefly to the paucity of coal and hydroelectric power. Production of electric power from all sources in 1938 was only about two hundred million kilowatt hours while coal consumption was estimated for the same year at about 600,000 metric tons, including all coal used for railroads and electric power plants. Sicilian industry employs about 300,000 persons who are engaged mostly in the processing of agricultural products and in the refining of sulphur. There is some local industry servicing the island's population, and at Palermo are located shipyards capable of building submarines and destroyers as well as small merchant ships.

Connection between Sicily and Italy proper is for the most part maintained by railroad ferries plying the Straits of Messina between Villa San Giovanni on the Italian Peninsula and Messina on the island. In prewar days there was a daily ship between Palermo and Napoli but this service has been discontinued.

The railroad from Villa San Giovanni to the Brenner Pass is electrified. On the island of Sicily the main railroad lines connect Messina with Syracuse and Messina with Palermo, while a second line crosses the island from Palermo to Catania. The western part of the island is not well serviced with transport facilities. Recently a project was undertaken to connect Palermo and Trapani directly but the work has probably not been completed. Sicilian railroads for the most part cannot carry heavy traffic since about 40 percent of the island's 2,182 kilometers of road is narrow gauge. There are 2,051 kilometers of highway maintained by the government of which 1,800 kilometers were macadamized in 1939. Before the war there were less than 20,000 automobiles and fewer than 4,000 trucks in Sicily.

Good port facilities are available at Palermo, Messina, Catania, Syracuse, Trapani and Marsala. The bulk of the sulphur of the island is exported through the ports of Porto Empedocle and Licata, on the southern coast. In January 1939, 10,000 fishing boats with a GRT of more than 25,000 tons were registered in Sicilian ports. These ships constitute about 25 percent of the Italian fishing fleet.

In 1939, only 216 towns out of 351 had telephone service. The city of Palermo with a population of more than 400,000 persons had only 8,000 telephones.

The Bank of Sicily, one of the oldest Italian institutions, has financial control of most of the island's activities even though there are branches of other Italian banks on the island.

II. The Economic Value of Sardinia

Slightly more than one million persons live on the island of Sardinia where the density of population is 43 per square kilometer, the lowest in all of Italy. The island has few resources and the population, outside of the city of Cagliari, lives at a fairly low standard. Recently, land reclamation projects were started with a view to raising the living standard.

None the less, Sardinia makes a substantial contribution to Italian economy. Unlike Sicily where the major contribution is agricultural, Sardinia produces minerals in important quantities.

In the region of the Iglesiente, at the southernmost tip of the island, about 150 miles from North Africa, are some of the richest Italian mineral deposits. Italy is deficient in most minerals and from the Sardinian deposits it obtains its full supply of lead and antimony, 50 percent of its zinc and small amounts of barium, manganese, iron and silver. The largest sea salt producing plants of Italy are located near Cagliari. Italy's total production of brown coal amounts to about 4,000,000 metric tons, of which one-third is mined in the newly developed coal region of the Sulcis Basin which has access to the port of Sant'Antioco, recently improved. Some minerals are refined on the island and some are sent to the mainland in an unrefined state. All pass through the ports of Sant'Antioco and Carloforte.

Electric power is supplied on the island by two hydroelectric plants on the Rivers Tirsu and Coghinas respectively and by several thermoelectric plants, of which the most important are at Santa Gilla and Santa Caterina. The total annual production is less than 180 million kilowatt hours, most of which is used in the metal refineries.

Sardinia has a surplus of wheat which is sent to the mainland but the chief agricultural contribution of the island is about 15 percent of the Italian wool supply. Since the standard of living is low, the island is self-sufficient agriculturally.

Connections are maintained between the ports of Civitavecchia and Napoli on the mainland, and Cagliari and Terranova on the island. These ports along with Carloforte and Sant'Antioco are the only ones providing good facilities on Sardinia. In January, 1939, there were registered 2,000 fishing boats with a GRT of 3,700 tons, representing 4 percent of the Italian total. The southern tip of Sardinia has the most important tuna fisheries and canning plants in Italy.

There are about 1,400 kilometers of railroads on Sardinia. The main line, oriented north-south connects the important ports with the chief towns and mining regions. About 400 kilometers of it are standard gauge. The secondary lines of narrow gauge extend into the region of the Gennargentu on the east side of the island and are privately operated. There are about 1,500 kilometers of state highways of which two-thirds are macadamized. However, the island had only 4,000 cars and 1,500 trucks in January 1939. Sixty-two Sardinian towns or 22 percent had telephone service.

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RC 16
Filed 1915/12
AMR

INCOMING MESSAGE

CCWD
Nov 12, 1942
2052Z

From: Cairo
To: MILID AGWAR

No. AMSME 2485, November 12, 1942

Following observations made by More while attached Ninth Armored Brigade of New Zealand Division. Outstanding features noted are: details and completeness in planning and execution of concentration movement prior to battle; superb morale of troops especially in comparison with June campaign; fierceness of fighting by all concerned including some Italian units; great concentration British Artillery; effectiveness of artillery fire and air attack on forward transport believed to be one of chief reasons for break through; effectiveness of Field Artillery against tank concentrations and British six pounder against tank attack; airground coordination; effectiveness of Axis antitank fire attributed to camouflage of guns, with withholding fire until close range, coolness and confidence of antitank gunners. Consensus of opinion Armored Force personnel is that United States M four medium is superb fighting tank outclassing anything on Western Desert; three seven MM gun of M three medium proved valuable in close combat. Medical care and evacuation completely satisfactory cases urgently needing surgery arrived clearing stations where life and limb saving surgery performed within six hours in nine zero percent cases; whole blood transfusions used extensively as far forward collecting stations with life saving results; Red Cross emblem did not provide protection advanced areas. Forward as far Bagush only small proportion useable enemy transport and equipment captured seven five percent of which Italian. Large

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CM-IN- 5392 (11/13/42) E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(G) and 6(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By RHP, NARS Date FEB 20 1973

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INCOMING MESSAGE

Page 2

From: Cairo
To: NILID AGWAR

No. ANSME 2485, November 12, 1942

numbers damaged Axis aircraft seen at Fuka Bagush airdromes capable service if repaired, estimated at seven zero ME one zero nines and bimotor bombers. Majority of prisoners appear in fair condition; few deserters noted though all prisoners glad be out from under fire and bombing. Recent rains prevented vehicle movement across desert; movement restricted to Coast road which temporarily blocked low places by floods. Rommel ran away with nine zero light estimated six zero percent effective and about two zero percent of Panzers; believed he will leave Postois with German stiffening Hefaya also garrison Tobruk with Italians stiffened; remaining elements Africa Korps will probably retire Sirte. British success due careful diligent and detailed planning and training; better than two to one superiority in fire power and personnel provided by Infantry Tanks Artillery and Air; determined leadership coordinated action security precautions completely enforced and elaborate deception plan.

Andrews

Action Copy: G-2 EA

Info. Copies: OPD
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OSD letter, May 8, 1972
By RHP, NARS Date FEB 20 1973

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11-9-42
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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (H)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

From: Cairo

To: Agwar

By RHP, NARS Date FFR 20, 1973

No. Ansme 2413, November 9, 1942

Following observations are stressed desert battle to November seventh. Axis forces showed plain evidence of different leadership prior to October twenty sixth. General Stumme who commanded in Rommel's absence followed tactical methods of Russian campaign and kept his armor separated, with battle groups spread through the line. Brunt of British attack hit fifteenth Panzer and Littorio who suffered heavy losses. Stumme killed in action twenty sixth and command fell to Von Thoma pending Rommel's arrival. This early phase represents a reversal of previous British and German desert tactics since the former maintained a compact armor force while the latter departed from previous doctrine by separating their tank strength. For Marshall from Andrews by the twenty seventh the Axis armor has been united and there followed four days of vigorous counterattacks against British positions with special regard to the northern salient where further British pressure was expected. During these operations the Africa Korps operated on previous form but was unsuccessful because of earlier losses and strong British resistance. This resistance is especially attributed to effective artillery fire, improved tank and anti tank gun range and fire, and constant close ground support by superior Allied Air Forces. Example of last, in two and half hours Allied light

CM-IN-3956 (11/10/42)

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WAR DEPARTMENT
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INCOMING MESSAGE

Page II

From: Cairo
To: Agwar

No. Amsme 2413, November 9, 1942

bombers dropped eighty tons bombs on area six square miles. Oct thirtieth enemy moved twenty first Panzer north to join ninetieth light and committed Trieste, only reserve, still fearing Northern coastal attack. Nov first British had completed re-grouping of Tenth Corps Armour and that night attacked due West throwing a strong Armored wedge between the Panzer Divisions. Strong enemy counterattacks ensued marked by decisive armor engagements in which the enemy lost heavily in tanks and anti tank guns. Axis withdrawal began soon thereafter and British Armour and armored cars completed their penetration into the rear areas. Deserted Italian Forces in the South ceased resistance and in the absence of available transportation were cleared by the British Thirteenth Corps. Emphasize British battle tactics consistently demonstrated the lessons learned from past experience and suggested during the brief enemy attack of early September. These include heavy and effective use of Artillery against tanks and anti tanks guns, concentration of armor for mass strength carefully utilized, coordination of infantry and tank movements, deliberate choice of limited objectives and clearing of rear minefield hazards to permit action freedom to tanks coming forward, strong and close air support of forward Ground Operations.

Andrews

Action Copy: G-2 *E A*
Info. Copies: OPD
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OSD Letter, May 3, 1972
By RHP, NARS Date FEB 20 1973

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