

BOX 167. (Continued)

5. A-16/3 WARFARE -- Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean: June 12,
1942 - February 3, 1943.

middle east

SECRET

**WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON**

February 3, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The following message received this morning from General Wedemeyer, our chief Army Planner whom you met at Casablanca, will probably interest you.

"Completed visit in Middle East and Persian Gulf areas. Observations most gratifying.

"Crawford (he replaced General Maxwell at Cairo and this reference relates to a reduction in our elaborate installations south of Cairo to the Red Sea, in accordance with the reduced necessities in that theater) has proper perspective with reference to Cairo area.

"Connolly (he is in charge of the development of the port and harbor facilities at Basra, and of the railroad to the north) is accomplishing difficult objectives without fanfare. Good judgment, hard work and tact all mark his approach to solution of problems involving other nationals. He definitely has their respect and may be expected to gain increasingly their cooperation.

"Ridley (he is our representative in Iran) is following sound procedure. His projected plans appear conservative and in keeping with his directive.

"Somervell will supplement above upon his return.

"New subject: I am attending conferences at Wavell's Headquarters. American representatives include Stilwell, Wheeler, Bissell, Somervell and Arnold; British representatives, Wavell and members of his staff. I almost included Sir John Dill among American representatives for he is proving most helpful (I requested Sir John Dill to accompany Arnold and Somervell into India).

"Effort is being made to instill realism and action reference immediate and post-monsoon operations in Burma. Present British attitude lethargic, however, I am optimistic.

"Resume of results of conferences will follow shortly."

[Handwritten Signature]
Chief of Staff.



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Ally Middle East

VERY SECRET

January 23, 1943.

President Inoqui:

The Prime Minister, who has been conferring with me, is going shortly to Cairo. He will in all probability wish to confer with you or with your Prime Minister at some convenient secret place. In case Prime Minister Churchill does seek a conference, I earnestly hope you or your Prime Minister will find it possible to meet him.

ROOSEVELT



admin. file

10, Downing Street,
Whitehall.

AT:

The British Embassy,
Washington, D.C.

THE PRESIDENT

The Prime Minister has just received a telegram saying that the House of Representatives in New Zealand have expressed approval of the 2nd New Zealand Division remaining in the Mediterranean. Mr. Churchill felt sure that you would like to have early notification of this news in view of the great efforts you have made and the great help you have given to this end.

T. R. Rowan

22. 5. 43

A16-3 *medit*

TELEPHONE:
EXECUTIVE 1940



BRITISH NAVAL STAFF
COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C.

BRITISH ADMIRALTY DELEGATION

MOST SECRET - U.S. SECRET

3rd December, 1942.

Salupis

Dear Captain McCrea,

Paymaster Captain Shaw has now left the U.S.A. to join Admiral Cunningham. I see that in his letter to you of the 7th November he gave some news of the independent sailings to North Russia: I believe you will already be in possession of the latest information regarding these sailings so will confine myself to the latest news I have of QP.15 This convoy was scattered by a continuous gale but only one ship is so far known to have been lost and one other is still unaccounted for. No reports of air attacks have been received. The convoy is now under the protection of our cruisers.

In addition to the above it is now known that the four ships which reached Malta from the East on the 20th November have been successfully unloaded without incident.

Yours sincerely,

S. P. McGuire

S. P. MCGUIRE
Paymaster Lieutenant Commander
Admiral's Secretary.

P.S. Since writing the above I understand the President has expressed a wish to know the composition of Force Q. I regret that we have no definite information but from all reports it is obviously a force of cruisers and destroyers - probably 3 cruisers and 3 destroyers under the command of Rear Admiral H. M. Burrough. I think the cruisers are in all probability CHARYBDIS, SCYLLA and SIRIUS.

Captain J. L. McCrea, U.S.N.
Naval Aide to the President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

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*Capt. McAra
to file*

**WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON**

POST SECRET

From: *Alb-3 (Middle East)*

July 20, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Inclosed is a questionnaire sent to the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in the Middle East by the British Chiefs of Staff in London with the replies thereto. It was given to Admiral Stark who was asked to treat it as being highly secret. He in turn sent it to General Marshall for his information.

You expressed a desire to see this document about one week ago. The delay in its reaching you was because it had been sent to General Devers at Fort Knox and it has just been returned.

Henry H. Stimson

Secretary of War.

- (1) To what extent did the close defense of Tobruk enter into the scheme of defense when the Army originally stood on the Gazala position?
- (2) What was decision to hold Tobruk taken?
- (3) Is there any truth in statement that an alleged last-minute decision to throw troops into Tobruk led to disorganization in defense?
- (4) In view of that statement, what were general and specific reasons suggested?
- (5) Why is fact of that statement, in particular, being stated in the report and if so, what are the reasons for its inclusion? The staff of that report were available 27th day in forward line.

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IN

MOST SECRET

0310/24th June

From: The War Office.

Date 24.6.42

CIPHER

Addressed: C. in C. Middle East.

M O S T I M M E D I A T E

97079 Cipher (M.O. 5) 24/6

For Commanders in Chief from Chiefs of Staff.

No. (M.E.) 276.

The action taken in Middle East in releasing the ban on making comments on operations has resulted in a flood of criticism from correspondents in Middle East and published in London newspapers today. Tone is extremely critical and enquiries are demanded both in Press and Parliament.

2. The Government is not in possession of information with which to answer criticisms which have been made, and have delayed a debate, by promising as much information as possible early next week.

3. We are most reluctant to ask for information of past operations when we know you have so many preoccupations, but we feel that we must ask you to provide as an interim measure answers to the following questions which are now being asked in Press and which are most likely to be asked in Parliament. For our own information we should like your replies to be as full and explicit as possible. Matter which it is undesirable to publish will not be quoted here.

4. Questions.

(1) To what extent did the close defence of Tobruk enter into the general scheme of defence when the Army originally stood on the Gazala position?

(2) When was decision to hold Tobruk taken?

(3) Is there any truth in statement that an alleged last-minute decision to throw troops into Tobruk led to disorganization in defence?

(4) In view short resistance Tobruk what were grounds for considering garrison adequate?

(5) How in fact did our equipment, in particular tanks, anti-tank (2-pr and 6-pr) and 25-prs. compare with enemy equivalents. How many of each type were available 25th May in forward area?

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0310/24th June

- (6) Is Grant tank entirely satisfactory?
- (7) M.E.109 alleged superior our fighters. Is this so?
- (8) Air cooperation with army is said to have been excellent. But how is it that little interference with major enemy moves or supply seems to have been caused?
- (9) Was tank recovery and repair satisfactory and was there difficulty in making right type of spare part available where required?
- (10) Was every step taken to supply vital defences Bir Hakheim including strong armoured escort for convoy? Was there 75 mm ammunition available to send?
- (11) Was our armour used in small packets and not in bulk?
- (12) What are facts of our losses in armour on 13th June alleged due to running into enemy anti-tank guns? On face of it appears that there must have been inadequate reconnaissance. This is being quoted in Press as turning point of battle.
- (13) Was our training of staffs and junior commanders satisfactory?
- (14) Was there indecision on the part of higher commanders resulting in loss of opportunity?
- (15) Was there any lack of aggressive spirit?
- (16) Is there any explanation other than of exhaustion of our troops for failure to follow up our initial success?
- (17) Has failure of operation had any adverse effect on morale of Army? If so, is this due to any particular cause?

If there is any other important consideration not mentioned we hope you will include it in your reply.

Answers are required by 28 (repeat 28) June.

-----0310/24

(Received from War Office 1220/24)

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U.S. SECRET - BRITISH MOST SECRET

MESSAGE

MOST SECRET

1922Z/25th June

From : MIDEAST

Date 26.6.42
Received 0900

CIPHER

Addressed : Air Ministry

MOST IMMEDIATE

IZ 680. CC/71. 25.6.42. Reference C.O.S. (M.E.) 276 24/6.

Following for Chiefs of Staff from Commanders-in-Chief.

Answers to your questions are as follows: -

1. The positions of 8 Army covering Tobruk comprised the Gazala defences, Bir Hacheim and an intervening position occupied by 5(?)th Infantry Brigade. This was extended in depth by the defences of Tobruk and prepared positions of El Adem and Acroma, so that whole area Gazala-Tobruk-Bir Hacheim formed one defensive system. Throughout operations Tobruk was garrisoned by approximately one division, whose task was to defend the perimeter against an enemy thrust which might penetrate the forward positions, and also to defend the port and base against seaborne or airborne attack.

2. The defences of Tobruk with El Adem and Bel Hamed formed a defensive position which General Ritchie was ordered to hold should evacuation of the Gazala position become necessary. Although the possibility of the temporary isolation of Tobruk had to be accepted, it was intended to prevent its investment and attack by operation of our armoured and mobile forces from South and South East. The rapid attrition of our armoured forces, however, necessitated the evacuation of El Adem and Bel Hamed, and enabled the enemy to establish himself on the escarpment and hold off our mobile forces, which were then too weak to interfere seriously with attack on Tobruk. The garrison of Tobruk synchronised position to meet attack before the evacuation of El Adem L(?), and Bel Hamed. The prolonged investment of Tobruk by enemy was not contemplated as it was considered that with our main forces holding the Sidi Rezegh-Bel Hamed area, and also prepared positions in Salum Maddalena area, it would be possible rapidly to reorganize and rebuild our armoured forces so as to resume the offensive without appreciable delay, while our mobile forces prevented enemy staging a strong attack on Tobruk.

3. No, since main part of garrison of Tobruk was 2nd S.A. Division and 11 Indian Infantry Brigade, both formations having been in Tobruk since battle began. Other formations entered Tobruk, having

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withdrawn from fighting at El Adem L and Knightsbridge in understandable disorganisation, but these should have occasioned no difficulty to garrison Commander.

4. The Garrison which remained in Tobruk was practically the same strength in men and weapons and tanks as that which held Tobruk during greater part of last year, and they had supplies and stocks adequate for 90 days resistance. This was the largest garrison which could be spared without unduly weakening the main body of the 8th Army. The defences were as strong, if not stronger, than last year, and there was every reason to suppose at the time that our general defensive position would hold and play its part in defence of the fortress. The reasons why garrison was not able to hold out are not yet known.

5. Equipment. In terms of equipment, the only tank capable of meeting German tanks on anything approaching equal terms is Grant. We deployed 138 Grant against 320 Mark(iii) and (iv)* Matilda, now hardly count in armoured battle, for lack of more powerful weapon than the 2-pounder. The 2-pounder anti-tank gun does not penetrate German frontal armour, and the German tactics ensure that their A.F.V.s did not present their vulnerable flanks and rear. The 2-pounder is therefore of doubtful value except in large numbers at short range. The 6-pounder did well. The 25-pounder in its proper role remains a first class weapon. At the beginning of battle 8th Army deployed 516 2-pounders, 112 6-pounders, and 464 25-pounders, and 138 Grant tanks.

6. 823 Grant tanks is a fine fighting army, which stands up to heavy punishment; its main defect is that its 75mm gun has a very limited traverse. To that extent it is not entirely satisfactory. This defect is remedied in later models not yet available in Middle East.

7. The M.E.109 is superior in all round performance to our Hurricanes, Kittyhawks and Tomahawks. The Spitfire is generally equal in performance at most altitudes, but only 6 were available for battle. These factors did not affect the operations of our air forces nor prevent us establishing air superiority in the battle.

8. Air co-operation throughout action was admirable, and we know the enemy suffered heavy casualties through our confirmed action. But troops moving dispersed in open desert do not present decisive targets to air action however powerful, and are unlikely ever to do so. The enemy (corrupt group) act as well as we do.

9. Until 13th June 1942, tank recovery very satisfactory - 460 recovered, 200 repaired in field, 130 evacuated, 130 under repair in forward workshops. After this date, through battle field, recovery was impossible in most cases. Since commencement battle 250 have been evacuated from workshops and 153 have been written off as destroyed. Spare part situation was reported to be at forward workshops throughout (?) as result special air and road delivery to field positions. Notable exception was spares and assembly for Grant tanks, of which none had been received prior to battle, and only 22 and 30 cases engine spares received during battle. You will appreciate this necessitates cannibalisation. Result is today, 40 tanks are without engines, and a further 15 tanks are stripped of guns, suspensions and engines.

*German tanks. All other tanks, Crusador, Stuart, Valentine /10

10. The full story of Bir Hacheim is not very well known. It is however clear that garrison was fully supported by every means which military situation permitted, and in spite of hostile investment, supplies and water entered Bir Hacheim. Supplies were also flown in by air. There was sufficient 75mm ammunition. When garrison was withdrawn there were still supplies and ammunition available in post. The withdrawal from Hacheim was supported by mobile troops including tank units.

11. The organisation of armoured regiments included squadrons of Crusadors of Stuarts and squadrons Grants on basis one Grant squadron to 2 squadrons of Crusador type. It was hoped this would strengthen fighting power of all armoured units engaged. In retrospect, the Crusador type tanks showed such low fighting value that burden of battle in all units was borne by Grants. To that extent, therefore, Grants were not used in mass. This lesson has been learned particularly since Crusador mounting a 2-pounder is no longer fit to face the modern German tank. It is noteworthy that practically all armoured fighting took place in triangle Acroma-El Adem-Knightsbridge, and main struggle was on South of Trigh Capuzzo near Knightsbridge. Our armoured Divisions do not appear to have been unduly dispersed in this fighting.

12. We have not yet been able to examine facts armoured action of 13th June and it is possible crucial (corrupt group) counter-stroke on enemy's Northern flank met powerful anti-tank flank guards which he used with considerable skill. It cannot be said there was inadequate tactical reconnaissance particularly under abnormal condition armoured (?) fighting was in barren and very dusty area where at an early date moves look very much alike at even 476 yards and it is almost impossible to distinguish friend from enemy. This condition is seldom understood by critics. It is quite possible that much of the damage was done by powerful self-propelled 88mm anti-tank dome anti-aircraft gun which Germans alone possess and which we badly need ourselves. It is probable our armoured defeat on 13th June was turning point of a long passing through battle since (corrupt group) the enemy secured an armoured superiority in open country it was also clearly necessary to withdraw infantry of Eighth Army from a dangerous position.

13. It is possible to train Staff Officers as such in wartime quickly and thoroughly and there had been no complaint about staff working which appears to be very satisfactory. It is impossible to train junior commanders so quickly and a tactical sense is sometimes long development particularly in quick mobile armoured action. Training of commanders has been continuous even in foremost area but we are still largely an amateur army fighting professionals.

14. So recent is battle and so much to be done since, that there has not been time to review little evidence we possess. Certain phase commanders have been replaced and this must be regarded as normal in any long passing through battle. We find no indications of indecision on part highest command on available evidence.

1922Z/25th June

15. None. Men fought to end and continued attack in full realization of disparity in equipment between ourself and enemy.

16. Our initial success was in fact a repulse of enemy's massed attack. The enemy was by no means beaten and drew off from battle in good order covered skilfully by powerful anti-tank weapons to which we have referred in para. 12 above. Definite attack on these weapons by tanks failed. An infantry counter stroke designed to clear aside this anti-tank screen and make way for an (corrupt group) penetration of Cauldron began well but petered out owing enemy's disposition in depth and eventually succumbed to heavy intervening counter attacks, significant our own armour was inadequate to protect flank of infantry. The major fact of battle is that though on first day the 8th Army checked and threw back enemy's massed armoured assault, its own armour suffered so seriously in that encounter as to make it impossible for General Ritchie both to contain enemy in area to which he had recoiled and to develop a counter offensive against his rear. A little better fortune on this first day might have left us with a margin superiority sufficient both to contain enemy and to counter attack. The exhaustion * since it was clearly evident that greater part of our tanks had very low fighting value. This fact prevented (?) subsequent operations and will continue to do so until we attain equality in Grants or re-arm Crusaders with 6-pounders.

17. There is no indication that our failure has had any adverse effect on the 8th Army. All formations and units fought tenaciously even when (corrupt group) run and may be expected to continue to fight in that way. We would like to stress that this battle was won by a small but very well armed and well organized body of German troops, the equivalent of 2 armoured and 1 mechanized divisions. Their victory is due to better equipment in hand of highly trained troops. Undoubtedly the day of large infantry formation in Western Desert is past. It is perfectly possible to reorganize our forces on an armed and mobilized basis which should be at least as effective as the German desert (?) battle (?) we are engaged in now, but it will mean considerable modification of the replenishment organisation which so far has restricted the development of a suitable striking force in Western Desert. The basis of this must be suitable armoured fighting material and tank weapons. Reinforcements by major formation (such as 8th Armored Division) equipped with tanks of obsolete armament is of little value. Once fully reorganized rearmed we do not doubt our ability to avenge this reverse. All efforts are being devoted to this object now. It must always be realised that all three fighting services in Middle East suffer from a chronic shortage of material and personnel, in fact we live from hand to mouth at critical periods, and are expected to reinforce other theatres. Regarding our deficiencies we wish to refer you to Minister of State's telegram MS/12.

/18.

*Was British material rather than physical or moral exhaustion.

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1922Z/25th June

18. A strong force heavy bombers would have been some compensation for inability of Malta to operate air force and submarines offensively against the enemy lines of supply, and would also have enabled us to bring an advantageous (corrupt group) air attack against their communications and bases. With such a force therefore we should have been able to do something to prevent him building up his supplies in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica and might have been able to null his attack. Once the battle was joined a heavy bomber force, although it would have been very useful, would not have had decisive effect on operation.

-----1922z/25

(Received from Air Ministry at 2130/26)

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE, Washington

1010 July 11th, 1942 1:00 P.M.

I saw Laval this morning and transmitted to him the message in the sense indicated in your 430 July 9th midnight.

Laval stated that he regretted he had to inform me that the President's proposal was unacceptable and that he was certain that German and Italian consent thereto could never be obtained. He added that to accept our proposal the Germans would insist that an equivalent amount of French naval tonnage should be sent to a French harbor in occupied France.

He was not prepared to accept our statement to the effect that the proposed arrangements could not be said to be violative of the Armistice agreements and informed me that I could expect from him a written answer not later than Monday, July 13th.

While Laval's attitude was not favorable to the proposed arrangement, he remarked with obvious satisfaction that he was glad to see that our government was willing to suggest that French ships should be sent to a French port.

Signed TUCK

A16-3 (Middle East)

FROM CAIRO TO AGWAR WASHINGTON

NO. AMSME 190 JULY 10, 1942

27 May Rommel attacked with Tobruk as his objective. When Tobruk fell he had inflicted such devastating losses on the 8th Army that an immediate follow up was indicated. Maxwell to Marshall. Throughout entire operation so far as the British are concerned, Rommel proved he is the master of the desert. Since the battle of El Alamein will be desert warfare, it is logical to assume Rommel is again capable of successful offensive action. After Alamein there may be one more desert battle, possibly a battle of the Pyramids. Following these battles will be the battle of the Delta. In this type of warfare tanks play a lesser role than infantry, artillery, engineers and air. For a decision both sides will require reinforcements. British air reinforcements are en route from United States and England. One infantry and one armored division are en route from England. Allied needs are great. The 8th and 9th Armies, one of the 3 divisions of the 10th Army are now committed. In the Aegeans and Greece are at least one German and 14 Italian divisions. The British have insufficient naval and army forces to prevent these troops from reaching East Mediterranean shores. Our best hope of stopping an Axis overseas expedition is by R.A.F. and U.S. air forces. Geographically, Axis is in far more favorable position to reinforce than are the Allies. Italy can afford to be lavish in allocating reinforcements. Italy until now was defeated. Rommel's successes have transfused Italy. Suddenly she finds herself almost saved. To win in Egypt she can afford to risk all. The whole future of Italy is at stake. There is hope. The people are bursting with pride. Italy will bend every effort to exploit her present advantage.

Germany's going against the Red Army has been tough and costly. She has had no decisive victory since Crete. Germany cannot afford to allow Rommel's brilliant successes to die unexploited. Only relatively small forces are needed to exploit her present advantage. Our allied plans must be based on assumption Germany will make necessary sacrifices to reinforce Rommel. Were Germany to take the Middle East, interrupt the Basra -- Caspian Sea supply line, so great would be the victory she would be justified in spending another winter in Russia. The effect of another winter of war on Russia is likely to be tragic. The Slovak temperament will not stand as much sustained pressure as will that of the Tunic. If in 1943 the Red Army quits, a clean cut allied victory will take years and is next to impossible. The fate of the Middle East marks the turning point of the war. Once lost, Middle East can scarcely be regained. Without Middle East, we must fight against odds for a foothold on which to create a new front. Drastic remedial measures must be taken: American and British flow of suitable aircraft must be heavy, continuous, immediate. Allied forces in Middle East, the equivalent of six divisions must be armed and equipped. One American armored corps dispatched to land in Basra if other ports are not available urgently recommended. Foregoing prepared by Fellers and not changed in any respect by Maxwell who agrees that Middle East is very seriously short of combat troops and recommends dispatch of heavy bombardment aviation assistance without delay and movement of armed corps to South Africa in strategic service.

Signed

MAXWELL

Dated July 11, 1942

A16-3 (Middle East)

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <u>ALUSLO SUEZ</u>		OPNAV	PPPPPPPPP
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE <u>7 JULY 1942</u>	FOR ACTION		DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM _____			PRIORITY
DECODED BY <u>PHILLIPS</u>	INFORMATION		ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY <u>V TUCKER</u>			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

LT COPELAND ~~060700~~ NCR 7888 PAGE 1 OF 2

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT

TEXT

OPNAV 031846. GODFROY CONTACTED ABOARD FLAGSHIP FIFTH MESSAGE DELIVERED. GODFROY STATED WILL NOT MOVE SHIPS OTHER THAN FRENCH PORT WITHOUT PERMISSION VICHY. CLAIMS ANY OTHER ACTION DIRECT VIOLATION TERMS GERMAN-FRENCH ARMISTIC RESULTING GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FRENCH PEOPLE AND ULTIMATE GERMAN DEMAND EQUIVALENT NUMBER FRENCH SHIPS NOW FRENCH PORTS. GODFROY DESIRES PROCEED BIZERTE WHICH COMMANDER IN CHIEF MED WILL NOT ALLOW. STATED IF ALLOWED PROCEED BIZERTE WOULD SCUTTLE SHIPS BEFORE ALLOWING GERMANS TAKE CONTROL. THIS HIGHLY PROBLEMATICAL DUE SENTIMENT OF OFFICERS AND CREWS. EXPRESSED COMPLETE DISAPPROVAL MOVEMENT SHIPS THROUGH SUEZ CANAL STATING THIS ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BRITISH CONNIVANCE. GODFROY FRIENDLY U.S. BUT EXPRESSED EXTREME BITTERNESS BRITISH APPARENTLY UNDER IMPRESSION BRITISH HOLD FRENCH IN CONTEMPT DUE ARMISTICE. EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE ALARM RUSSIA STATING MANY COMMUNISTS

SEALED SECRET

PAGE 1

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

37137

Regraded Unclassified

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM _____	FOR ACTION		PRIORITY
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE _____			DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM _____	INFORMATION		PRIORITY
DECODED BY _____			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY _____			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

PAGE 2 OF

060700 NCR 7888

PAGE TWO OF TWO

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT
TEXT			

FRANCE AND RUSSIAN VICTORY PROBABLY CAUSE CIVIL WAR FRANCE.

MY IMPRESSIONS GODFROY NOT GREATLY CONCERNED SITUATION
 EGYPT FEELING HIS POSITION NOT CHANGE GERMANS SUCCESSFUL
 TAKING ALEXANDRIA. I AM CONVINCED THAT REGARDLESS OUTCOME
 SITUATION EGYPT GODFROY WILL NOT ORDER MOVE SHIPS NEUTRAL PORT
 WITHOUT PERMISSION VICHY.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF MED INFORMED. SHOULD I ADVISE
 MINISTER PERTINENT FACTS.

COPY NUMBER...³.....

DISTRIBUTION

RECORD COPY: P1A....COMINCH(2)....

SHOW COPY 10.....13(TO INFORM STATE DEPT)....

BAD(ADM CUNNINGHAM PERSONNALLY).....

SEALED SECRET

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

A16-3 (Middle East)

SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

25th actually

June 26, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Prospective Movements of Planes
to the Middle East.

General Brereton with all available heavy bombers in India has been ordered to Cairo immediately.

One Pursuit Group (80 P-40 planes) will be loaded on the Carrier RANGER at Quonset, Rhode Island, about June 27th for immediate departure for Takoradi.

One provisional light bombardment squadron (25 Hudsons), intended for China, now leaving Florida to receive final orders at Omdurman.

One group of medium bombardment (57 B-25's) now in California flies East tomorrow to pick up new equipment for immediate departure for Cairo. 36 new planes will be available on their arrival on the East Coast, the remaining 21 will be available at the rate of 5 a day. The group will depart by squadrons as rapidly as equipped.

One group of heavy bombardment (35 B-24-D's), being equipped with new airplanes, will depart from Florida for Cairo by squadrons, one squadron leaving every 2 days beginning June 29th.

[Signature]
Chief of Staff.



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WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
ARMY DEPARTMENT

SECRET

met with Brit. this
a.m. They have
returned to consult
with P. M.
meeting late in
day

A16-3 (Middle East)

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1942.

Mr. President:

The attached was prepared for your consideration before I had heard your comment this afternoon regarding Fellers' last message, 1156. I would make this comment: Fellers is a very valuable observer but his responsibilities are not those of a strategist and his views are in opposition to mine and those of the entire Operations Division.

D.P.M.

Reasons are logistical, serious confusion of command (further complicated by strong racial and religious prejudices), and the indecisive nature of the operation.

The leakage or wastage of strength logistically in operating in such distant theaters is tremendous. We are necessarily involved in the Southwest Pacific at 8,000 miles, the central Pacific at 3,000 miles, Alaska at 2,000, the Caribbean at 1,000, Greenland and Iceland at 2,000; we have the drain of the Ferry Service across Africa into the Middle East, and the lease-loan shipments to India for China. Now, if we undertake to support large forces in the Middle East, it is our opinion that we have denied the probability of assembling American forces of decisive power in any theater in this war.

The importance of the Middle East and a protected supply through the Mediterranean are evident. The influence on Italy of a North African frontier in the hands of the United Nations would be great, but it would be only an influence with the hope of gaining a foot-hold on the southern but indecisive fringe of the European continent. We would still be a long distance from Germany, with extremely difficult natural intervening obstacles.

You are familiar with my view that the decisive theater is Western Europe. That is the only place where the concerted effort of our own and the British forces can be brought to bear on the Germans. A large venture in the Middle East would make a decisive American contribution to the campaign in Western Europe out of the question. Therefore, I am opposed to such a project.



[Signature]
Chief of Staff.

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WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1942.

T:

American forces in the Middle East.

Regarding large American ground forces in the Sunday night. The desirability of the Uni-rol of operations in that area was mentioned. of the Operations staff, that we should not

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WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: American forces in the Middle East.

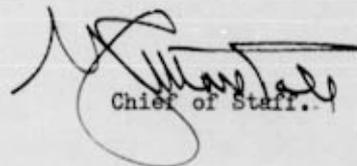
The matter of locating large American ground forces in the Middle East was discussed Sunday night. The desirability of the United States taking over control of operations in that area was mentioned. It is my opinion, and that of the Operations staff, that we should not undertake such a project.

The controlling reasons are logistical, serious confusion of command (further complicated by strong racial and religious prejudices), and the indecisive nature of the operation.

The leakage or wastage of strength logistically in operating in such distant theaters is tremendous. We are necessarily involved in the Southwest Pacific at 8,000 miles, the central Pacific at 3,000 miles, Alaska at 2,000, the Caribbean at 1,000, Greenland and Iceland at 2,000; we have the drain of the Ferry Service across Africa into the Middle East, and the lease-loan shipments to India for China. Now, if we undertake to support large forces in the Middle East, it is our opinion that we have denied the probability of assembling American forces of decisive power in any theater in this war.

The importance of the Middle East and a protected supply through the Mediterranean are evident. The influence on Italy of a North African frontier in the hands of the United Nations would be great, but it would be only an influence with the hope of gaining a foot-hold on the southern but indecisive fringe of the European continent. We would still be a long distance from Germany, with extremely difficult natural intervening obstacles.

You are familiar with my view that the decisive theater is Western Europe. That is the only place where the concerted effort of our own and the British forces can be brought to bear on the Germans. A large venture in the Middle East would make a decisive American contribution to the campaign in Western Europe out of the question. Therefore, I am opposed to such a project.


Chief of Staff.



SECRET

Regraded Unclassified

A16-3 (Middle East)
SECRET

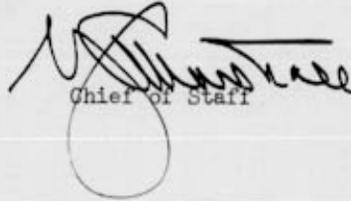
WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

A report has just arrived from Colonel Halverson, commanding the "HALPRO" heavy bomber group now operating from Cairo. He reports that nine of his planes attacked: ~~Benghazi~~ Target 1, wharves and shipping; Target 2, warehouse blocks; on the 21st, from an altitude of 20,000 feet--an 11-hour trip.

He reports that his crews "without exception reached objectives, hit their targets, and returned to base." Each plane carried six 500-pound bombs. Large fires were started in target area, visible to planes for a period of 15 minutes after departure from Benghazi. Three British Wellingtons lighted the targets with incendiaries and flares. One Wellington was shot down by anti-aircraft fire.


Chief of Staff



SECRET

A16-3 (Middle East)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

June 21, 1942

PERSONAL AND URGENT
FOR THE PRESIDENT:

I assume that the War Department has informed you that they have received a report from Colonel Fellers at Cairo confirming my conversation with you of this morning regarding Tobruk and Bardia.

Colonel Fellers has indicated that Tobruk fell during the night of June 20-21 and that the harbor area has been entered. He also reported that the Bardia Capuzzu line has been occupied. In this operation the British have lost five artillery regiments, numerous anti-aircraft guns and two months' supplies.

C.H.

A16-3 (Middle East)

SECRET

COPY

MESSAGE

IMMEDIATE

MOST SECRET

From: Minister of State
To: British Embassy Washington

TIME: 2317
DATE: 12/6

Cipher

No: 11071 of 12th June

June 12, 1942

Following personal for Field Marshall Sir John Dill from Minister of State.

Further to my No/MS15 11th June. Halpro Force operated 13 aircraft against Floesti leaving Egypt night 11/12. Full details of Operation NOT yet available as aircraft have NOT returned Egypt but following is advance information. Four aircraft landed back at Habbaniya, Iraq; one at Mosul, Iraq; Two at Aleppo; and three at Ankara Civil airport. No news of other three. Aircraft apparently encountered cloud over the target area and of the four aircraft which have landed Habbaniya none apparently bombed target. It is probable that aircraft which landed at Aleppo and in Iraq overflow Turkey. British Air Attache Ankara advises that American Ambassador there is in touch with Turkish Foreign Office concerning three aircraft which have landed there. I am informed that Col. Halverston made last minute decision to return from target to Iraq contrary to the advice of A.O.C. in C. and despite strong efforts made to persuade him to return to Egypt by route west of Turkey. A.O.C. in C. also personally impressed on Col. Halverston grave consequences involved if his air craft overflow Turkey and Col. Halverston undertook to observe these instructions. No press release will be made here concerning these operations. I trust that there will be NO publicity whatsoever in U.S.A. Any public reference would ruin any prospects there may be of recovering aircraft from Turkey. I will send further news when available.

Field Marshall Sir John Dill. 3

Please return to Army Signals with distribution marked on it

Regraded Unclassified