

ISSUED BY THE INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, OFFICE OF CHIEF OF
NAVAL OPERATIONS, NAVY DEPARTMENT

ATTACHE'S REPORT

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From Y Date 2 May, 1940 Serial No. 175 File No. 105
(Commence new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. Index)
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11652, Sec. SEC and (C) of (R)

OGD letter, May, 1, 1940

By SR

MAY 21 1940 SECRET 2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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four destroyers sank three German steamers and an armed trawler. In Norway, the Allies landed at three points, Amdalsnes, to the south of Trondjhem, Namsos to the north of Trondjhem, and Narvik in the far north. Only British composed the landing force at Amdalsnes. The French detachment landed principally at Namsos, with some elements at Narvik. The landing forces were bombed by planes during the landing, but what losses were suffered is not known. Admiral Darlan, in commenting confidentially on the operation, said that his ships had landed the French force without the loss of a single man, and that he was certain that the British wished they could say the same.

At this time (2 May) the Allied southern force is in a very exposed position and probably soon will be forced to retire and leave completely all parts of Norway, south of Trondjhem. The Germans put reinforcements into Oslo so rapidly that they simply overwhelmed the much smaller British detachment. From 18 to 29 April, it is reliably reported, that 128 ships of a tonnage of 512,000 entered Oslo, coming from Germany and Denmark. The French Army 2nd Bureau estimates the number of Germans in Norway as now about 106,000, of which 1500 are in Narvik, about 8,000 in Trondjhem and the remainder in the southern part of Norway. In Namsos, the Allied detachment is holding firmly, so far, but they as yet have received no attacks in force. In Narvik, the Allies are gradually closing in on the town, and it appears to be only a question of a very short time before the Germans there will either be forced across the Swedish border or will be forced to surrender. From every indication, it seems that in a comparatively short time, all Allied and Norwegian resistance in that part⁽¹²⁻⁷⁴⁾ of Norway will be overcome and that German domination of that section will be complete.

The French Army and Navy are considerably disgruntled over the failure of the British force, south of Trondjhem. Their Second Bureau stated that they had only agreed to this southern force on the premise that the British Fleet could prevent German reinforcements reaching Oslo by ship. At a meeting of the Allied War Council, Churchill said he could stop all ship transport in the Kattegat and Skagerrak. If that could be done, the Germans would be obliged as a last resort to send troops through Sweden to Norway, and thus Sweden would be brought in on the side of the Allies. The British Fleet's failure to carry out their task has thrown the whole plan awry. To protect their sea transport all German submarines available were called in and placed in the Kattegat and Skagerrak. These, together with heavy air patrols and mines, have been sufficient to deny entrance to the British naval forces, and have enabled the ship transport to be carried out, using only armed trawlers as escorts.

General Gamelin informed our Ambassador that the results of the almost certain German success in Southern Norway would be again a severe loss of Allied prestige, and that after Norway was cleaned up, Germany would spread out like ~~ink~~ "a spot of oil" over southeastern Europe. General Gamelin also was irritated at what he expressed the British idea of "muddling" through a war. He reported confidentially that at one of the recent meetings of the Allied War Council, the British proposed that an expeditionary force of 200,000 men be

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Tech. Div.	C. in C.	Com. Sec. Per.	Com. Sec. Per.	C. in C. Adm.	Com. S. S. R.	Com. Adm.	Attached at	Operations				Com. Div.	W. P.	Com. J. R. T.	State	Com. Sec.	Return to Room No.										

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Sheet 5

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prepared and despatched to Norway, - the French to furnish 100,000 and the British the same number. The French refused categorically, and said that with the French troops on the Maginot Line, and because of the uncertain intentions of Italy, the possibility of a German entry into Holland and Belgium, they would not use French troops for side-shows. The maximum number that they would agree to send for any Norwegian expeditionary force would be 40,000. Of this number only 20,000 would be French; the others were to be Polish, Czech, etc.

For a time there was considerable apprehension concerning an Italian move into Dalmatia or perhaps the Island of Corfu, but in the last two days French circles are feeling much better and it is now stated that, at least, for the next two weeks and perhaps even longer there will be no Italian moves. The Italian naval attaché informed this office that one reason for this let-up was that the Italian Ambassador in Paris was called to Premier Reynaud's office and informed definitely that the Allies and Turkey would take no initiative anywhere in the Balkans.

The Swedish Naval Attaché also informed the Attaché that Sweden had received formal, official notification that the Allies would in no case violate Swedish neutrality unless the Germans did so first. This news has allowed the Swedes in Paris the first full night's sleep, without cares, since the events in Norway commenced in April.

RECEIVED
 IN CH. OFFICE, ROOM 357, 400 4TH ST. S.E.
 452, WASH. MAY 1, 1940
 BY ESR DATE MAY 21 1973

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MAY 31 1940

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(Commence new series with January (Jan) from O. N. I. Index)
 Source of information PERSONAL OBSERVATION, PRESS, CONTACTS
 Subject VARIOUS EUROPEAN POLITICAL FORCES INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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COURIER NOTES - Lieut. Comdr. L. RACONNET, USN

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Resume

Yet impossible to forecast Italy's intentions - the country continues to prepare for war, probably will enter on Germany's side.

Ciano's attitude puzzling - has probably been taken to task by Mussolini, and will do as he is told in the future.

Rumors current that England is ready to discuss the Mediterranean problems with Italy.

75,000 troops and 25,000 workmen in Albania.

Harbor defense nets in place in Brindini.

Germany building up Archduke Albrecht as the Nazi Chief in Hungary. Believed that in case of a coup the Archduke would be placed on the throne as a puppet ruler.

Rumored that Germany's plan is to sweep British navy out of the channel with air attacks, then to launch a large scale invasion of England.

In Hungary, Regent Horthy believes Hungary should resist any German invasion, but majority of people not in favor of resisting.

Yugo-Slavs talk bravely of what they will do if the Italians molest them, but country not united - doubtful that they would fight if attacked by both Germany and Italy.

Roumania not likely to put up very strong resistance if invaded, in spite of her large army.

Bulgaria so anti-British and French that she can, for all practical purposes, be counted upon as an ally of Germany in case of a push through the Balkans.

Turks want to remain at peace, but are resigned to the fact that they will eventually be drawn into the war, and will honor her agreement with France and England and fight to the best of her ability.

Greece may put a resistance if she gets immediate help from the Turks and Allies. Otherwise she would probably fold up very quickly.

~~SECRET~~

SHEET 1

FORM 1060, Sec. 303 and 304 of (10)

OPD Edition, May, 1932

By SLC Date MAY 21 1940

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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 Source of information Personal observation, press, 600 SAOTS
 Subject VARIOUS EUROPEAN POLITICAL FORCES INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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 COURIER NOTES - LIEUT. COMDR. L. RAGNETT, USN.

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 RECLASSIFIED

E. O. 11652, Sec. 2(D) and (4D) or (C)

ITALY

OSD letter, May, 1973

By SLR Date July 21 1973

It is still impossible to forecast what Italy's intentions are, but she is going ahead with preparations for war. The war industries have been speeded up, additional classes have been called to the colors, harbor defense nets are being put back in place, and the tone of the newspapers, as well as the utterances of officials, all point towards Italy's entrance into the war.

The general attitude of the majority of the Italian people remains about the same - they don't want to fight on Germany's side, but they will do so if Il Duce says so.

Ciano's attitude is somewhat puzzling. Several weeks ago he intimated confidentially that he wasn't in full accord with the foreign policy being pursued and that he wouldn't be surprised if he were relieved of his post. Now he definitely states that he is in full accord with Mussolini, and that all rumors to the contrary are false. It is probable that his earlier statement was correct, but that since then Mussolini has taken him to task and that Ciano has decided to abandon his own ideas and to loyally follow the leader.

The Balkan countries are still very alarmed over Italy's intentions, but if anything, there appears to be a slight lessening of the tension, although there appears to be no reason for this optimism except wishful thinking.

Rumors are current that England is ready to discuss the Mediterranean problems with Italy.

The report previously submitted as to the number of Italian troops and workmen in Albania is modified, and fairly reliably confirmed to be 75,000 troops and 25,000 workmen who would be instantly available as soldiers.

While flying over Brindisi it was noted that the harbor defense nets had been put in place. There were none in Trieste harbor.

HUNGARY

The three leading Nazis in Hungary appear to be: Szállasi, who is now in prison, former Premier Imrédy, and the Archduke Albrecht. Szállasi, who is now in prison, was supposed to be Hitler's choice as the Chief, but recently the German Legation has been quietly building up the Archduke. Many observers believe that if a coup is intended that the Archduke Albrecht would be placed on the throne as a puppet ruler.

GENERAL

Germans in the Balkans, including legation personnel and military attachés,

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From Date June, 19..... Serial No. 255 File No. 127
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- Sheet 2 -

E. O. 11652, Sec. 8(E) and 8(D) of
 OSD letter, May, 4, 1972
 By SLR Date MAY 21 1973

On 30 June, after having remained with the Ambassador in occupied Paris since the morning of June 14, the Naval Attaché left with the Ambassador at 0700 and, having been held up by numerous troop movements and numerous refugees on their way back to Paris, passed across into unoccupied France at Moulins and continued on to Clermont-Ferrand. In Clermont-Ferrand the Ambassador, accompanied by the Naval Attaché, made an informal call on President Lebrun and after that the party proceeded to La Bourboule where the temporary Embassy was established.

1 July - Accompanied the Ambassador on a visit to Royat and Clermont-Ferrand, where calls were made on President Lebrun, Admiral Darlan, Maréchal Pétain (with whom we lunched), General Weygand and MM. Chautemps, Laval, Baudoin and the Spanish Ambassador. Admiral Darlan stated that the fleet terms of the Armistice caused more discussion and took up more time than all the rest of the Armistice Articles put together and that the final disposition that was agreed upon was the best that could be done. He said that in no case would the Fleet be turned over intact to Germany, that the French would scuttle it first, but that he, Darlan, believed in the German promise not to use the fleet. On asking him why he thought these promises of Hitler were any more sacred or would be kept any better than Hitler's promises in the past, Admiral Darlan said that he believed it this time because when peace did come it would be to the German's interest to have some sort of a counterbalance against Italy in the Mediterranean and this counterbalance could only be France with a fairly strong fleet. From his method of answering this question it is believed that the Germans themselves used that same statement in the discussions leading up to the Armistice.

We were informed to-day that some of the government departments are preparing to move to Vichy.

2 July - The Naval Attaché again accompanied the Ambassador to Clermont-Ferrand where Chautemps, Pétain and Lebrun were again visited. Maréchal Pétain, in conversation, stated that work was being done on a new Constitution, making France a totalitarian state. The Ambassador commented to the Maréchal that with such a state it appeared to him, the Ambassador, that Pétain would be the Hindenburg and Laval (a very weak choice) the Hitler.

3 July - To-day received the news of the British fleet's attack on the French squadron at Oren. The British squadron, under Admiral Somerville, was composed of the HOOD, RENOWN, ARK ROYAL and accompanying cruisers and destroyers. According to the French Navy's account of this battle, the Commanding Officer of the ARK ROYAL, Captain Holland, who had been Naval Attaché in Paris up until April 1940, went on board the DUNKERQUE, flagship of Admiral Genaul, and presented the French with an ultimatum containing several varied

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- Sheet 3 -

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 3(D) or (G)
 OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR Date MAY 21 1973

choices. One was that the French fleet get underway and go to Martinique or any other port in the Western Hemisphere that they might choose. The second was that they join the British fleet and continue with the war against Germany or, if they did not desire that, be interned in any British port. The third condition was that the French fleet scuttle itself. In the event that none of these conditions would be accepted, the British fleet stated that they would fire on the French squadron and scuttle it for them.

Admiral Gensoul reproached Holland very bitterly about using his former friendship with the French Navy to present such terms and refused to receive the communication. After a period of about 5 1/2 hours - the ultimatum had stated that a 6-hour delay would be given - the British squadron, lying to the northwest of Mers-el-Kébir, opened fire across a neck of land.

The coastal batteries around the port had already had their breech-blocks removed and were incapable of returning the British fire. When the British first made their proposals, the PROVENCE, DUNKERQUE, BRETAGNE, STRASBOURG, and COMMANDANT TESTE were tied up, bows on, to the Navy breakwater at Mers-el-Kébir. They were so close to the neck of land that it was impossible for the French guns to be elevated sufficiently to clear the hills. Also, in the morning, fires were dead on all ships and part of the ammunition and fire-control gear had already been removed from the DUNKERQUE and some of the other ships. The British got direct hits on the DUNKERQUE, BRETAGNE, PROVENCE and COMMANDANT TESTE, sinking the BRETAGNE, PROVENCE and COMMANDANT TESTE, and forcing the DUNKERQUE, badly damaged, in shifting berth to run aground. None of these ships will be available for active duty without months in a navy yard. When the British gunfire started, the STRASBOURG and 25 destroyers of various sizes went out the northwest entrance of the port, the STRASBOURG lingering behind to protect the light forces. A running battle occurred without much damage on either side, except that the large French destroyer MOGADOR was sunk by a combination of shell fire and air plane bombs. The STRASBOURG and the remaining 24 destroyers reached Toulon with no casualties, either material or personnel. Two days later, on 5 July, British planes raided the hull of the DUNKERQUE and dropped bombs and machine-gunned crew and workmen who were on the vessel, killing a purported 200 and wounding about 300 more. (Note: The above is the French navy's account of the battle at Oran as given to the Naval Attaché by the Chief of the French Second Bureau. Later, the Attaché had a chance to read the British account and there are considerable variations in the story. Which one is true the Naval Attaché cannot state.)

4 July - The Naval Attaché again accompanied the Ambassador to Vichy, where calls were made on President Lebrun, Laval, Pétain, Chautemps, Baudoin and Admiral Darlan. On this day there was widespread and general indignation against the English. That was the only thing that could be heard in Vichy.

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Tech. Div.	C. in C.	Com. Sec. For.	Com. Sec. For.	C. in C. Aide	Com. S. S. A.	Com. Air	Attached to	Operations														State	Com-munes	Return to Home Sta.							
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- Sheet 4 -

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 11652, Sec. 8(e) and 8(d) on

OSD letter, May, 4, 1978

by OLR Date MAY 21 1973

It was useless to try to do any business as everyone was indignant and better against the English action at Oren. The Council of Ministers met and by one vote took the decision not to declare war against England but instead to break off diplomatic relations and to take reprisals. The curious thing is that the military people in the Council of Ministers (Pétain, Weygand, Darlan, Colson and Pajo) all voted against a declaration of war, while the civilian ministers were all in favor of such a declaration.

5 July - The Naval Attaché called on the Swedish, Spanish and Japanese Attachés, but had no particular news from them except that they all stated the British action at Oren was the only one England could take. None of these Attachés put any faith in Hitler's promises whatsoever. The Japanese Attaché, an old friend since 1933, was particularly exuberant and outspoken, saying that this hostility between England and France gave Japan an absolutely free hand in the Far East as now even the United States would be forced to take too much interest in Europe to bother about what goes on in the Far East. This night four French Navy planes from French Morocco bombed Gibraltar as a reprisal and claimed at least one hit on a large warship and one on a destroyer (This claim believed exaggerated).

6 July. On 6 July there was nothing of particular interest around government circles except that Vice Premier Laval held a conference with foreign and French newspapermen and advised them that from now on France was a totalitarian state and that in the future all newspapers would publish all Government communiqués in full and without criticism. M. Laval continued that if this were not done a French newspaper so trespassing would be abolished and a foreign correspondent would be expelled.

7 July. Nothing of particular interest.

8 July. An English squadron, consisting of the aircraft carrier HERMES, several small cruisers, destroyers and fast motor boats, attacked the French battleship RICHELIEU at Dakar with depth charges and airplane torpedoes. The shafts of the RICHELIEU were badly sprung and the aerial torpedoes struck home causing the RICHELIEU to sit on the bottom. The French were again indignant, as up until 10 days ago the HERMES' aviators had been using the French air base at Dakar as their base. The RICHELIEU is now also out of action for about at least two months after arriving at a navy yard. The French cruisers at Alexandria, being able to do nothing else, capitulated to the British fleet at that point today.

9 July. President Lebrun today agreed to resign to allow Marshal Pétain to assume the position and title of "Chief of the Executive Power". The French Chamber of Deputies and Senate voted by large majorities to allow the Pétain government to form a new Constitution as it wished, without final approval by

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From Y Date 6 August, 1940 Serial No. 255 File No. 104
(Continuous new series each January first) (Subject proper number from O. N. I. Index)

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Sheet 5

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 2(E) and 5(D) or (G)

OSD (IntSec), May. 1, 1972

By SLH

Date

MAY 21 1973

these legislative bodies. Senator Chambrun was the only Senator who voted against this bill, and he said afterwards that he considered his protest vote against such an enormity made him worthy of his ancestor, the Marquis de Lafayette.

10 July - The Naval Attaché accompanied the Ambassador to the final session of the French National Assembly, which is composed of the Senators and Deputies sitting together. In this assembly the Constitution of 1870 was voted out of existence and an Act giving Maréchal Pétain full powers to promulgate the new Constitution was introduced. There were several stormy scenes and much booing and hissing among the Deputies and Senators before the Session was finally concluded. It was not a very impressive final sitting of a legislative body governing one of the world powers.

11 July. Early in the morning we started off by car for Madrid by way of Barcelona, spending the night at Barcelona and continuing to Madrid on the following day.

12 July. Arrived in Madrid and accompanied the Ambassador on calls on General Franco, Suner and Beigbeder. In response to questions by the Ambassador about the rumors that German troops had entered Spain and were transversing Spain for possible attack on either Gibraltar or Portugal, all the Spanish officials denied them categorically. The general gist of the conversations with these three men was to the effect that Spain wants to stay out of the present war, and they have no idea themselves, of entering it. However, all official Spain is very jittery over the fact that the Germans still have a large influence in Franco Spain and will push the Spanish into the war either in an attack on Portugal or, more likely, if there is any show of resistance in French Morocco, against that country and against Gibraltar. The Spanish also protested very much against the refusal of the States to sell any gasoline to Spain and were hoping to get that matter cleared up.

13 July - Nothing of interest to report.

14 July. Early in the morning we left by car for Lisbon, arriving after an uneventful and tiresome trip on the morning of the 15th at 5:15 a.m.

16 July. Spent in making various official calls in Lisbon.

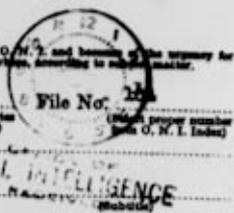
17 July. The Ambassador left this morning at 10:00 a.m., on the Clipper for the States and the Naval Attaché commenced making preparations for his return to Madrid and a trip to Casablanca and eventually his return to Paris by way of the seat of the French government. The reports of these other trips are submitted under separate headings.

F. 6-2, 21839-E

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DAY-BY-DAY REPORT, COVERING PERIOD 30 JUNE-17 JULY, 1940

Summary:

N.A. accompanied Ambassador from Paris to Lisbon, stopping at seat of French government and Barcelona and Madrid en-route.

Had interviews with leading French statesmen, including President Lebrun, Maréchal Pétain, General Weygand and Admiral Darlan.

French government officials very bitter against England on account of attack on French fleet - almost declared war on England.

Attended final session of French National Assembly; Constitution of 1870 voted out of existence and Pétain voted full powers to promulgate a new Constitution. Story scenes; much booing and hissing.

Spanish officials deny that German troops have entered Spain; Spain wants to stay out of present war, but jittery over fact that Germans have a large influence in Franco Spain.

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