

● PSF

SAFE FILE: NORTH AFRICA

**SECRET**

*PSF Safe: North Africa  
Box:*

WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON

December 26, 1941.

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DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: North Africa.

Date- 10-27-66

Signature- *Carl L. Spitzer*

Assumption: The French will invite the United States and Great Britain jointly to occupy and defend North Africa.

U. S. Forces

The United States is prepared to embark the following forces for movement to Casablanca:

a. One Marine Division, combat loaded, (11,000 men). Shipping is immediately available to move 2/3 of the division on 10 days' notice. Shipping will be available for the entire division on or about January 15.

b. Two pursuit groups (160 planes), one light bombardment group (57 planes) and one medium bombardment group (57 planes), (12,000 men). Units will be equipped by January 15 and can be ready to embark ten days thereafter. Twenty days will be required to collect and prepare the necessary commercial shipping after the decision to do so is made.

c. One Infantry Division, reinforced, (21,000 men). Units can be ready to embark on ten days' notice. Twenty days will be required to collect and prepare the necessary commercial shipping.

d. One armored division, (13,000 men). The Division will be supplied with the necessary ammunition, (37 mm and .50 caliber in particular), by February 15. Ships utilized for Marine division should be available for the armored division 45 days from date of initial sailing. Units can be ready to embark on ten days' notice after February 15.

The antiaircraft units are to be supplied by the British.

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The U. S. Army is prepared to reinforce the foregoing initial contingent with air and ground forces to the extent necessary to maintain its position in North Africa against probable Axis attack. Adequate U. S. antiaircraft defense cannot be provided prior to July.

If the above operation is ordered, shipping will not be available for other overseas movement in the Atlantic.

*William H. Hall*  
Chief of Staff.

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WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON

*Safe File: Africa*

January 9, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: North Africa.

The accompanying report, proposing an operation against North Africa, by occupying the Madeira Islands and Tangier, and landing a large force at Casablanca, has been given careful consideration.

This operation, if successful, would have important and far-reaching results. Control of North Africa would protect the South Atlantic sea lanes and air routes, and would prevent the extension of Axis influence to the West and South. However, the operations envisaged have important disadvantages.

A landing in the Madeiras will undoubtedly be opposed by the Spanish. Also it would sacrifice the important element of surprise in a landing on the mainland. If the Madeiras are occupied, the use of these islands as a base for operations against the mainland will be subject to interruption since they are within easy bombing range of Spanish and Axis aviation based on the Canaries and on the mainland.

Tangier is now occupied by the Spanish and a landing there would probably be opposed. For the defense of Tangier, in addition to the local Spanish garrison, Franco has about 150,000 troops in Spanish Morocco which can be used to reinforce the initial defensive troops. Furthermore, Tangier is highly vulnerable to air attack from bases on the Iberian Peninsula as well as in North Africa.

The occupation of Tangier would probably precipitate the embroiling of the large Spanish forces in this area. The delay caused the Allies by Spanish resistance would prevent surprise and would enable the Axis to support the Spanish.

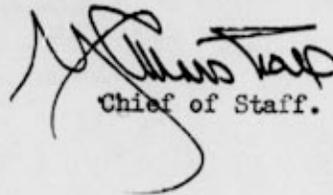
The assistance to be expected from the natives of North Africa and the opportunist French mentioned in the attached ~~report~~ course, problematical. The dominating

*By Authority of Sec Army*  
*1211 TAG per 720984*  
*By RHR Date SEP 1 1972*

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factor will be fear of the Germans. Self-preservation undoubtedly will be the controlling motive. For planning purposes, it must be assumed that both French and natives will adopt the line of action which involves the least danger to themselves.

The only plan for the occupation of North Africa which is considered feasible is one which contemplates a French invitation for a direct occupation of French Morocco, with a reasonable assurance that the troops in Spanish Morocco would not cooperate with the Axis powers in opposing our occupation of French Morocco. This plan, now being studied, is the only one within the joint capabilities of the United States and the British in the near future.

  
Chief of Staff.

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December 23, 1941

Re: Attached

This material (about 20 minutes reading) is divided:

- A. Our legal position in international Tangier, opposite Gibraltar.
- B. Page summary why American flag should be placed there with an American Minister, now a vacant post, on day determined. (Detailed document backing up this page summary available.)
- C. Political factors in today's North and West Africa.
- D. Leaders in North and West Africa, their opinions and importance as applied to race groups.
- E. Summary digests of conversations.

The broad point is that offensive action should start at Tangier and spread south to Dakar and east to British junction, and from the Tangier spearhead dig in with air force in depth to support the British by air at Gibraltar.

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If Tangier and the Madeira Islands are the first surprise attack points, the element of surprise might be aided by:

(A) A member of the Foreign Relations Committee, like Pepper, making a repeat speech saying Dakar backed by the Cape Verde Islands are the best defense of Brazil.

(B) And then have Brazil and the United States give some publicity to the defense of the Western Hemisphere along the Brazilian Coast, and

(C) Some small publicity about our Navy making safe the Atlantic narrows between Dakar and Brazil.

December 22, 1941

In Tangier, as everybody knows, and in all of Morocco, we have treaty rights which existed to meet the Treaty of Algeciras, etc. We have a Minister in Tangier who is the only Minister with diplomatic rank (others have consular rank.) Our Minister is, of course, accredited to the Sultan of Morocco, in Rabat, and we recognize the French Resident only as the Sultan's Foreign Minister, and we have never recognized the Franco-Spanish Treaty of 1912 by which the French gave the Spaniards their protectorate. In other words, we stand on the Treaty of Algeciras and our rights in all of Morocco, Spanish and French, and Tangier, which in our eyes are all still a unit. And I see no reason why, if we are to attempt action against Tangier, we shouldn't see to it that we are called upon by the Sultan to defend the integrity of his empire, which, of course, is sorely menaced by the Germans and their stooges, the Spanish. And, as the State Department realizes, the Germans and the Spaniards are grooming the former Sultan, who is in Tangier, Abdul Aziz, to supplant the present Sultan in the event of a German-Spanish attack.

Of course, the Sultan is only a creature of the French, and is entirely in the hands of General Nogues, the French Resident in Rabat. As the State Department knows, General Nogues was appointed by Blum's Popular Front Government. He has been under fire from Vichy. Weygand hated him, because Weygand was afraid that Nogues, Free Mason and reputed liberal, had strong British sympathies.

Nogues is, of course, an opportunist, and gives lip service to Vichy. However, to keep himself in power, he has had to exploit his relationship with the Sultan. The Sultan adores him, and whenever Weygand appeared in Morocco, the Sultan in his official greetings always managed to mention Nogues as being the personification of France. Obviously, to have the

Sultan, we will have to have Nogues. But, if we mean business, and can prove it, we could have Nogues.

As the State Department must remember, last December the Sultan put on a very special show for our Minister, Mr. White, and gave him many marks of respect and public reception, but, if I am correctly informed, our State Department, in its zeal to appease General Franco, has diminished our standing in Tangier by leaving the post of Minister vacant. (If any one has been sent recently, I don't know about it.)

We have to make up our minds either to assert our rights in North Africa and show up in their defense, or to abdicate altogether. All of this situation, of course, is very well known in the State Department, and they are better qualified than I to give a summary of treaty rights and to explain the historical importance of Northern Africa to us.

We have not recognized General Franco's occupation of Tangier. We did not have to, because we never recognized the special international status of Tangier which was set up after 1909. But we, and the British, have played up to Franco and, although we succeeded in getting him to remove some of his artillery from Tangier, we have not done anything to make him get out. There is, of course, a great historical precedent for action in Morocco in defense of our treaty rights: Teddy Roosevelt's dispatch of the fleet to rescue an American "protege". In fact, the Moors in Tangier remember only one hostile action in modern times, the bombardment by Mr. Roosevelt's warships.

We used to think the Mediterranean important enough to send our fleet to clean up the Barbary pirates on two occasions, and once to put Rai Suli in order.

May I point out that Franco has troops, estimated between 120,000 and 200,000, which could be supported by German aviation from perfect bases

in Seville across the straits for a drive down through French Morocco.

If we were in Tangier, we would flank them. If they were in Tangier, they would put their artillery across the straits.

## Africa - Military Considerations

The United States cannot tolerate a German lodgment in the Atlantic Islands or on the West Coast of Africa.

It is the offensive which wins in war. A direct occupation of Dakar and the Islands alone would be defensive. It would abandon the Strait of Gibraltar and French North Africa to the Germans and allow the British to be driven from their only naval base in the Western Mediterranean. It would miss the opportunity of cooperating with the British advance in Libya.

The same amount of force, or perhaps somewhat more, used in Morocco would be an offensive operation. It would stop the Germans at the shore line. It would exclude them from that part of the African Continent altogether. It would assure the safety of West Africa and gain much more. Coupled with the British advance in Libya, it might place the Allies in possession of the whole north shore of the African Continent--which is a strategic necessity for the blockade of Germany and the winning of the war.

If this can be accomplished now with a minimum expenditure of force, it will be far better than to do it later on at maximum cost. It must be done sometime.

The military steps suggested for consideration are: 1. Occupation of the Madeira Islands as an advance base; 2. Occupation of Tangier by well-equipped highly mobile force to contain the troops in Spanish Morocco and command communications between Spanish and French Morocco, covering the main landing at Casablanca; 3. Disembarkation of the main body of troops at Casablanca.

We have already accepted the principle that the defense of South America depends on the West African Coast. Actually it begins at the Strait of Gibraltar. The way to keep the Germans out of Africa is to keep them out of Africa, not prepare to fight them after they have gotten there.

## Personnel Suggestions

In Tunisia, M. Karila, lawyer, about 40 years old. Local politician. Democrat. Herriot sympathizer.

In Algiers, M. Joxe, Professor of History at Lycee of Algiers. May be supervised by police in connection with all liberal movements. Honest and anti-Hitler.

At Rabat, in the French Morocco, Captain or Major Maurice Agulhon. On the staff of General Nogues. Anti-German and anti-Darlan. Closest man to Herriot in North Africa.

Nogues, chief French civil power in Morocco. Had good attitude at time of Armistice--at that time wanted to resist Germans in North Africa. Somewhat weak and an opportunist, but has rich ambitious wife.

(Remark: Nogues all right, but old and very tired, and will not bet on a dark horse.)

At Meknes, in French Morocco, Col. Francois. Anti-Darlan and anti-Laval. Courageous, adored by younger aviation officers. Leaders of young French aviators. Not bribable.

Near Oran, at naval base Mers el Kebier, Admiral Jarry, in command of base. Younger flag officer, quite anti-German and devoted to France. Believes America's aid can help bridge the gap created by the English attack on Oran. Very anti-German and one of the best elements in the fleet.

At Tunis, Admiral Esteva, was Chief of Operations Section when Darlan was Chief of Staff. Formerly commander of the French Far Eastern Squadron, but very close to Darlan.

(Remark: Object to statement that he is "very close to Darlan." Do not think that he is close to Darlan. He has shown great personal integrity in resisting collaborationists' designs in Tunis.)

At Tunis, General Delattre de Tassigny. One of the Army officers who was close to Weygand but was somewhat more leftish than he and with a broader vision. Could be approached but might be very pro-Fascist now. Young and ambitious. Earlier was very anti-Fascist and helped put through the Russo-French pact in earlier years.

At Dakar, Governor-General Boisson. Doubtful quality, probably anti-democratic.

General Juin, Commander at Dakar, is pro-Darlan and dangerous.

M. Platon, Darlan's Minister of Colonies, probably now located at Dakar, is also bad.

In Moscow, Maurice Thorez, previously French labor leader, would be one of the best Frenchmen to conduct propaganda among the men of the French Mediterranean fleet. About 35 years old and very strong with radical French labor. Would have to be brought back from Russia.

(Remark: Would object to simply calling Thorez a "labor leader" and not calling him a Communist.)

#### Native Chiefs

Sultan of French Morocco. Residences at Fez and Rabat. Has been supported by French money but is personally anti-German and probably would be useful if Vichy went pro-Hitler. Is important because he is the Caliph for all Morocco, French and Spanish. Would require monetary support.

The Spanish have another pretender to the Caliphate, Abdul Aziz. He has a separate entourage in Spanish Morocco and has been supported by Spanish money (Willkie of the situation). Is important in Spanish Morocco but probably supported by only 10 to 20 per cent of the Mohammedans and Spanish Moroccans.

El Glaoui, Shiek of Marrakeeh, about 55 years old. Hereditary chief of the Atlas Mountains in French Morocco. Controls the ports of Mogodor and Agadir. Is probably against the Germans and certainly against the Italians. Is not honest. Devoted to money and women. Needs assurances as to his financial holdings in London, America, and other places after the war is over as well as large promises now.

(Remark: I would add that El Glaoui, if the French bought him, could be bought by any one else.)

Now in Connecticut, Arshevski. Russian descent. Was an officer of French Secret Service in Morocco. Anti-Vichy. Knows a lot about Morocco. Can trust his judgement of men but not of political situations. Completely anti-Hitler. Married to a rich woman.

Now located near Madagascar on the French island of Lareugnion, Abdul el Krim. His brother, Sidi Mohammed, is also with him, held captive by the French there. Is adored by the Riffian natives and would be useful to bring back to Spanish Morocco.

#### Additional Suggestions and Comment:

Colonel Randolfo Pacciardi, should be added to the list. He is a conservative Italian Republican of the Sofrya (?) group. Commanded the Garibaldi anti-fascist legion in Spain at the Battle of Guadalajara. Arriving tomorrow (December 23) on the Portugese liner Serpa Pinto from Casablanca. He has spent ten months in Algiers and Morocco.

Leon Rollin, former Inspector General of Havas News Agency. Great mind, great organizer. Algiers, through Prof. Joxe.

Believe you should be very cautious in counting exclusively on liberal and democratic elements in Africa. First, because they are the minority; second, because they did lose their war; third, because they are pretty much disliked by the others; fourth, because if we can't count on the others, we are lost. Let me say here that I do not like the Fascists any better than Pierre Cot likes them, but I would like to see a pragmatic policy, to see us exploit the disillusionment of Nazism on the part of the Fascist minded officers and politicians who seem to think that a British and American victory would be a lesser evil.

I hope and pray that the victory will not be for their ideals, because, if so, it will be no victory for us, and we will again lose the peace, which we can't afford to do. But if these people are willing to be used, we should use them. I realize that the French liberal emigres will cry out in horror on such a proposal, but at this late date in history, we cannot afford to pass up any potential allies, even if we don't like the color of their hair.

Should like to make the following comment on the above list: Where a man is mentioned as "opportunist" and "possibly pro-Fascist now", he can be had if we can convince him that we mean business. If the opportunists have gone over to the other side, it was because they thought we were losing the war. It is up to us to convince them that our side is safe for them. It is in the nature of the opportunist to come running to the support of the victor.

You may say that we don't want these people. My answer is that we need them in the war, and will dispense with them in the peace.

December 22, 1941

Ex-Algerian Governor, French Admiral Abrial, who was at Dunkirk, is very pro-Fascist. When he was told that America was going into the war, he said, "Murphy did not say that." He then said, "Murphy believes that America is not all-out, but wants a negotiated peace and a stalemate."

The reporter said, "Murphy is wrong. We are all out."

Abrial kept repeating, "Murphy did not say that."

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Murphy was Embassy Counselor under Bullitt. He is now main source of information on North Africa, on detached service at Algiers.

December 22, 1941

Notes from conversation:

Do not forget that Petain has half the fleet, the bases, and the Nazi factions among his people.

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Catroux is adored by all French in North Africa. They believe he is the great pro-consul in the Republican tradition of Lyaxtey.

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The French liberals believe that De Gaulle is a symbol, but not an effective administrator. They are afraid of his politics--his right wing Catholic Fascist mind.

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In Tunis, the Arabs are seeking every opportunity to kill an Italian, because the Italians bombed Tunis, and the French, who control it, are anti-Fascist because they hate the fifty-five thousand Italians who would become their overlords, instead of their agricultural workers, in the event Berlin-Rome wins. So, we have both the French and the Arabs against the Axis in Tunis due to the fact that Italian colonization (55,000) is a true menace to both Arab and French.

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Take Dakar last, because we would have to move up from the south, and the Germans would beat us into Tangiers and down the coast. Forget Dakar, take Tangier.

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Between Tarifa and Africa is but a few miles, and German artillery and guns in force are there now.

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The conservative and upper class would go German if the Arab Krim were brought in early. Germans are now praying for an Arab uprising.

The Germans were behind a February mutiny of natives in Algiers. They use it as blackmail against France.

We have got to get French military and colonial caste with us.

Bring Krim in only after Germans and Spanish are quiet. Then use Krim as our boogey man.

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Arabs can be gotten by actual sugar, because they use it rather than alcohol. Lump sugar is Fifth Column. Tea very important.

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The Sultan of Morocco is secondary to Pasha el Glaoui, who still has a feudal set up.

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The French, during the First World War, were able to withdraw all troops from Morocco simply by subsidizing the Lords of the Atlas with money.

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French prestige is at zero because the Algerian and Moroccan soldiers, fine men, were recently in French collapse, deserted by French officers. They saw the crack-up and then went home to tell their people that the Frenchman is a coward.

They hate the Spaniards, because of a long tradition of cruelty. They will never forgive the Spaniards for the expulsion. They still carry the keys to their Granada homes, and pass them down through the centuries.

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The Arab mind in North Africa says: (A) The Frenchman is better than the Italian or the Spaniard, but the Frenchman has just shown us that he is a coward and a bum. (B) The Spaniard is still the Arab pet hate. (C) The Arab hates both the Italian and the Spaniard as an economic competitor. They compete for their jobs, which the French upper class have to give. They also compete in the craft life of the cities.

Therefore, the natural friends of Hitler, the Italians and Spaniards of today, and possibly the Frenchmen of tomorrow, are all hated by the Arabs, and the American flag, twice successful in their vicinity, is regarded with a respect and friendliness which might be cashed in today.

But there is great respect for Hitler, the War Lord, coming that way. The Mussulman says: "The victor is the victor because Allah says so."

They only know the Germans through propaganda. German propaganda is now based on the single sentence: "We are winning, we will be winning; and Allah must be with us."

Hitler's trouble is that to move actively in North Africa, he must use Spanish collaboration, and the Arab hatred of Spain would embarrass him greatly. The Arabs would fight the Spaniards with kitchen knives, regardless of Hitler's Allah propaganda.

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Answering the question: "Why did the Arabs fight with Franco?" the statement is: "We get paid by Franco to kill Spaniards and rape their women, and we get back to Andalusia, our old home."