

● PSF SAFE FILE: WEST AFRICA

~~SECRET~~

Safe File: West Africa

Box

In reply refer to Initials
and No.

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

7 May 1941

Dear Mr. President:

I am sending this over to you just as I received it late this afternoon. I have only glanced through it. It was hurried up and therefore is not a finished paper. The detailed study of this project is proceeding and for the moment I am withholding criticism of it. It does give a lead on their thoughts, some of which I can agree with and some of which I cannot.

I am sending for another copy for myself so that I may go into it more carefully.

I shall send this over to Harry Hopkins to be held until such time as you feel like going through it. I told "Mac" I proposed not to bother you with a thing for the present.

I am also sending you the latest we have on the disposition of the French Fleet.

I do hope you round to quickly but in any case this is one time when the Commander in Chief takes orders from his Medical Officer. *J. Hopr,*

Sincerely,

Betty.

The President,
The White House.

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By Authority of ART. 0445,

OPNAVINST 5510.1C BY OP

By RHCRS Date OCT 10 1972

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By Authority of ART. 0445

BRIEF
of

Study on Occupying a Base in West Africa OPNAVINST 5510.1C BY OP

By RHDS Date OCT 10 1971

LOCATION OF BASE.

Base selected should be Dakar. Only other site worth considering is Freetown. Climate, health conditions, communications, base facilities and ease of defense, all favor Dakar. Not practicable to maintain base at Freetown with Dakar in hostile hands.

FORCES REQUIRED.

Dakar is well defended and its seizure would require a major operation. Assistance to the defending forces by Axis Powers must be expected. Cape Verde Islands probably also would have to be occupied to protect communications to Dakar.

100,000 Army troops, including an armored division, 500 planes, 100 transports and corresponding supporting naval vessels would be required for this operation.

THE TIME FACTOR.

Necessary forces not available until Sept. 1st and then only if we suspend present commitments as to operations to be carried out in Iceland and the British Isles under ABC-1. Time required for necessary preliminary joint training with Navy and overseas movement will prevent expedition from reaching West Africa prior to November 1st.

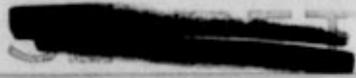
ADVANTAGES.

Should British lose present war, our possession of base for sea and air forces in West Africa would be advantageous to hemisphere defense by permitting more effective control of sea lanes from Europe to South America. For our participation in present war, a base in West Africa would be useful only in the protection of friendly shipping in the South Atlantic.

DISADVANTAGES.

This operation would not contribute materially toward winning the present war and it is not vital to hemisphere defense. It would seriously delay our capacity to establish an air force in England to strike directly at Germany until the spring of 1942. It would require the diversion of a large amount of shipping away from the vital theater. Once committed on the African continent we may be drawn into operations requiring forces and logistic measures out of all proportion to the value of our West African base. This may involve an indefinite postponement of decisive offensive operations against Germany in Europe. This operation would interfere with our long-range training program, very seriously as to antiaircraft artillery.

CONCLUSIONS. The disadvantages involved in undertaking the establishment of a base in West Africa far outweigh the advantages of our possession of a base there.



In reply refer to Initials
and No.

Op-12-2-EH
(SC)NB/EP13-28
Serial-053412

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

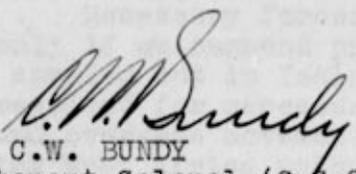
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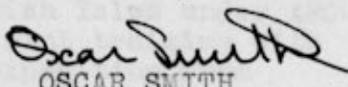
MAY 7 1941

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From: Joint Strategical Planning Committee.
To : Joint Planning Committee.
Subject: Study of the Occupation of a Base in West Africa.
Enclosure: (1) Brief of Study.
(2) Study in detail.

1. The enclosed study of the "Occupation of a Base in West Africa" is submitted.


C.W. BUNDY
Lieutenant Colonel (G.S.C.) USA


OSCAR SMITH
Captain, USN

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OPNAVINST 5510.1C BY OP

By RHFR Date OCT 10 1974

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OPNAVINST 5510.1C BY OP

By RHFR

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BRIEF
OF
Study on Occupying a Base in West Africa

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DISADVANTAGES.

This operation would contribute little or nothing towards winning the present war and it is not essential to hemisphere defense. It would delay our capacity to establish an air force in England to strike directly at Germany until the spring of 1942. It would interfere with our long-range

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BRIEF
of

~~SECRET~~

Study on Occupying a Base in West Africa (Cont'd)

BASE IN WEST AFRICA

DISADVANTAGES (Continued)

training program, particularly as to antiaircraft artillery. It would require the diversion of a large amount of shipping away from the vital theater. Once committed on the African continent we may be drawn into operations requiring forces and logistic measures out of all proportion to the value of our West African base. This may involve an indefinite postponement of decisive offensive operations against Germany in Europe.

CONCLUSIONS.

The disadvantages involved in undertaking the establishment of a base in West Africa far outweigh the advantages of our possession of a base there.

Freetown is the port of the British colony of Sierra Leone. It has the advantage of being in friendly hands and its initial occupation should, therefore, be comparatively easy. However, the British defense forces there are not believed adequate to insure against its falling into unfriendly hands, particularly if information should leak out of a possible intention on our part to occupy it. Available information indicates that Freetown is not so well suited as Dakar for an air base, owing to probable difficulties of providing adequate landing fields for the necessary dispersal of air forces. Climatic conditions at Freetown are very unfavorable for Americans. Communications are scarce. Freetown would be subject to air bombardment from Dakar and possibly to attack by ground forces based at that place. Hostile air and naval forces based at Dakar could seriously threaten our communications with Freetown.

Dakar has every natural advantage as a base site. Climatic conditions are much better than those of Freetown. Communications are comparatively good. Good airfields and wireless facilities now exist at Dakar, as well as numerous

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By RAH Date OCT 10 1972

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By PAAB Date OCT 10 1972

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STUDY OF THE OCCUPATION OF A

May 7, 1941

BASE IN WEST AFRICA

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the feasibility and desirability of the occupation by the United States of a base in West Africa. The study is based upon the assumption that the object of occupying such a base would be to secure it for the use of our own air and naval forces in hemisphere defense and to deny it to the Axis Powers.

2. POSSIBLE BASE SITES.

The only points in the area under consideration having an adequate harbor for a naval base and practicable sites for an air base (land and seaplane) are Dakar and Freetown. Neither Bathurst (Gambia) nor Bolama (Portuguese Guinea) has an adequate harbor for a base although either or both might be used for the subsidiary operations of small forces.

Freetown is the port of the British colony of Sierra Leone. It has the advantage of being in friendly hands and its initial occupation should, therefore, be comparatively easy. However, the British defense forces now there are not believed adequate to insure against its falling into unfriendly hands, particularly if information should leak out of a possible intention on our part to occupy it. Available information indicates that Freetown is not so well suited as Dakar for an air base, owing to probable difficulties of providing adequate landing fields for the necessary dispersion of air forces. Climatic conditions at Freetown are very unfavorable for Americans. Communications are scarce. Freetown would be subject to air bombardment from Dakar and possibly to attack by ground forces based at that place. Hostile air and naval forces based at Dakar could seriously threaten our communications with Freetown.

Dakar has every natural advantage as a base site. Climatic conditions are much better than those of Freetown. Communications are comparatively good. Good airfields and seaplane facilities now exist at Dakar, as well as numerous landing fields throughout French West Africa. The harbor has been well developed as a major French naval base. The peninsular location of Dakar is favorable for defense against land attack. The outstanding disadvantage of Dakar is the fact that it is strongly defended. Reliable information indicates that there are some 34 seacoast guns, 3 to 12 inch;

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By RHEP Date OCT 10 1972

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20,000 troops at Dakar, and probably an additional 20,000 in the hinterland; an airforce of 5 squadrons of Martin bombers and 3 squadrons of pursuit; 1 battleship, aground but capable of firing its guns, 2 cruisers, 5 destroyers, 12 submarines.

Considering the advantages and disadvantages of both places, it is believed that the choice of a base site in West Africa rests with Dakar. Even if the decision were to occupy Freetown initially, it would be necessary ultimately to occupy Dakar in order to deny it to the enemy.

3. OPERATIONS INVOLVED AND FORCES REQUIRED.

It is visualized that the operations required in order to occupy a base in West Africa would include the establishment of an advanced base for long-range land and seaplanes in Freetown and probably a land base for short-range aircraft in Bathurst, followed by air operations from these bases for the purpose of gaining air superiority over the Dakar Area. It may also be found desirable to occupy the Cape Verde Islands as an advanced base for air and light naval forces. As soon as the necessary air superiority is obtained a landing attack would be launched probably within thirty miles of Dakar followed by an overland advance and capture of the Dakar Peninsula.

An alternative plan would be to establish the Army forces initially at Freetown and advance overland against Dakar - a distance of some 600 miles. The logistics difficulties of such a plan would be tremendous. Only one road exists and it would be difficult except in dry weather. No railroad exists. A long space of time would be required to establish the necessary base facilities at Freetown. This, together with the time required for the overland advance would permit the enemy to strongly reinforce Dakar. Owing to adverse climatic conditions losses from disease would be heavy. Altogether, such a plan would probably require more forces than a landing attack in the Dakar area.

It is highly important that the forces provided be adequate to insure the certainty of success of the undertaking. Our future position would be seriously compromised by a failure such as the British suffered at Dakar. Even if the French should promise only a token resistance, we should be prepared to succeed against the maximum resistance of which they are capable with such support as the Axis Powers could give. In this connection, Weygand has announced that he will oppose occupation of Dakar by any foreign power. Our operations against Dakar, therefore, probably would precipitate a definite alignment of Vichy and Weygand with the Axis.

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It is estimated that an Army force of about 100,000 troops would be required for this task. This force should include at least one armored division. An air force of at least 500 planes would be required. A large amount of shipping would be required - about 100 transports and 10 hospital ships in the initial expedition, and about 15 supply ships a month for maintenance. At least 5 aircraft carriers would be required.

The Army forces required cannot be made available prior to September 1st and then only if commitments made in the recent staff conversations with the British as to operations we would undertake in the event of our entry into the war are suspended. These commitments are: (1) the defense of Iceland, (2) the defense of our naval and air bases in the British Isles, and (3) the establishment of an air striking force in England. Considerable interference with our long-range training program, particularly as regards antiaircraft artillery, also would be entailed. Before embarking on an expedition of this sort the troops should have a period of seasoning in a tropical climate. They must have at least a month's intensive joint training with the Navy in landing operations. It is estimated that the expedition could not reach the West Coast of Africa prior to November 1st. In fact, weather conditions in that area would be unfavorable for military operations until that time owing to rain and the prevalence of storms.

Assuming that the British would improve existing aviation facilities at Freetown and Bathurst as required to permit operation of our aviation from land bases immediately upon arrival, it is estimated that the time required to capture Dakar by a landing attack would not exceed a month. If the plan calling for an overland advance from Freetown were adopted it might require six months.

4. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OCCUPYING A BASE IN WEST AFRICA.

The western bulge of Africa, in the Dakar-Freetown region, has important strategic advantages as a base area for sea and air forces operating in the South Atlantic sea lanes. Should the British lose the present war, the possession of a secure base in this area would be of assistance to us in the defense of the Western Hemisphere. Sea and air forces based here, together with similar forces based near the eastern tip of South America, would be advantageously located to deny the Atlantic sea routes between Europe and South America to the Axis Powers.

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By RHR, Date OCT 10 1972

This area is only about 1620 miles from the eastern tip of South America and is nearer the Western Hemisphere than any other part of Africa or Europe. It would therefore be advantageous to the Axis powers as a base for operations against this Hemisphere. It is the most likely point from which those Powers might launch a movement to South America by air. The denial of this area to the Axis Powers would be advantageous from the viewpoint of hemisphere defense.

Neither the denial of this area to the Axis Powers nor its possession for our own use is an essential requirement for hemisphere defense. Depending upon our own strength, particularly at sea, compared to that of a victorious Axis, an effort to hold a base in this area might well constitute an overextension on our part.

Owing to the great distance to any important objective, the paucity of communications and the desert terrain, a base in West Africa would have little or no value for offensive operations on the continent of Africa.

The principal disadvantage to the occupation of a West African base is the effort required to secure, defend and maintain such a base and the involvements which may ensue.

It has been mentioned that the employment of the necessary forces for this operation will require the suspension of other operations in the area of the British Isles. Those operations, particularly the establishment of an air force in England to strike at the heart of Germany, will contribute far more towards winning the present war than our occupation of a base in West Africa. The establishment of an effective air striking force in England would be delayed until the spring of 1942 by diverting the necessary air forces to this operation.

As indicated above, about 100 transports, including cargo carriers, and 10 hospital ships would be required. The diversion of this number of ships would jeopardize the flow of essential supplies and munitions to England and interfere seriously with other important sea communications. Furthermore, it would be necessary to complete essential alterations in available commercial vessels to get them for this duty. Since the operation visualizes landings at open beaches or where harbor facilities are lacking, the ships must have the facilities for handling and landing their cargoes. Recent experience in converting ships for transport duty indicates that essential alteration would require months.

It would be necessary therefore at this time to withdraw the ships to be used and begin conversions. This in turn will interfere seriously with construction and repair work in the available ship yards.

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By PHS OCT 10 1972

OPNAVINST 5510.1C BY OP
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All replacements and supplies must come from the United States whose nearest ports are 3500 miles distant. Should the Axis Powers emerge victorious in the present war and have at their disposal strong naval forces they could operate against the flank of our line of communications and seriously threaten their security.

If such a base be established it is safe to assume that Axis Powers will do their utmost to capture or deny its use to us and our associates. We would be forced to a choice between a static defense or active operations in the field. History proves, corroborated by current war operations, that a static defense without heavy reinforcement rarely is successful. Furthermore, a static defense would in all probability permit the enemy to employ his air forces to deny the use of the base by our naval forces. To undertake active operations in North Africa would involve such large forces, such involved logistic measures as to be entirely out of proportion to the value of the base to be defended.

Should England be defeated in the present war the Axis Powers will be able to employ very strong forces against Dakar operating on interior lines from relatively nearby bases. While it is true that the Sahara and 2400 miles intervene between the North African coast and Dakar, there are roads through the Sahara, a net-work of airways towards Dakar, and the Germans have proved adept in supply over long distances.

In the event of our entry into the present war as an associate of England, the Axis Powers will still be able to dispose of considerable strength against a West African base. To expose ourselves to the necessity of dispatching, supplying, and maintaining a sufficient force in North Africa, would most certainly leave us but two choices: to sacrifice the defending force or to undertake operations which would involve an indefinite postponement of the eventual decisive offensive against Germany in Europe.

5. CONCLUSIONS.

a. The establishment of a base area on the West Coast of Africa requires the seizure of Dakar.

b. The seizure and establishment of a base at Dakar would require Army forces in the order of 100,000; 100 transports and 10 hospital ships, and corresponding naval vessels for escort and convoy.

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c. November 1, 1941 is the first date on which an effective expeditionary force could reach the West African Coast.

d. The effort and ensuing involvement will be so great as far to outweigh the advantages of possession of the base or denial of the base to an enemy.

6. ACTION RECOMMENDED.

It is recommended that the War and Navy Departments oppose the occupation of a base in West Africa under the existing conditions.

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OPNAVINST 5510.16 BY OP

By RAHRS Date OCT 10 1972

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DIVISION OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

March 15, 1941

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Disposition of French Fleet

Port:	BB	OBB	CV CVS	CA	CL	DL	DD	SS	PG FE	XGL
<u>French Control</u>										
Toulon	1(1)	1(2)	1(3)	4(4)	3(5)	19(6)	16(7)	30(8)	14(9)	
N. Africa	1(10)						7(11)	13(12)	2(13)	
Casablanca	1(14)				2(15)	2(16)	5(17)	4(18)	3(19)	
Dakar	1(20)				2(21)	3(22)		8(23)	5(24)	
Have left - destination unknown Beyrouth						2(25)		3(26)	2(27)	
West Indies			1(28)		2(29)				1(30)	1(31)
Indo-China					1(32)			2(33)	13(34)	
Total French	4	1	2	4	10	26	28	60	40	1
<u>British Control</u>										
England		2(35)				2(36)	7(37)	7(38)	12(39)	
Mediterranean		1(40)		3(41)	1(42)		3(43)	1(44)		
Total British		3		3	1	2	10	8	12	
<u>Lost</u>										
<u>Dur. Hostilities</u>					1(45)	4(46)	6(47)	2(48)	2(49)	
<u>Since Armistice</u>		1(50)					1(51)	5(52)	1(53)	
Total Lost		1			1	4	7	7	3	
<u>Scuttled</u>								5(54)	6(55)	
<u>Condemned</u>							1(56)			
Total	4	5	2	7	12	32	46	80	61	1

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 Basic Source of Information: French Ministry of Marine.
 By Authority of ART. 6445

OPNAVINST 5510.1G BY OP

By PHB Date OCT 10 1972~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 15, 1941

North

<u>Africa</u> (Cont'd) (12)	<u>SS</u> CAIMAN	MARSOUIN	SOUFFLEUR
	REQUIN	DIANE	ARIANE
	EURYDICE	DANAE	TURQUOISE
	SAPHIR	NAUTILUS	CIRCE
	CALYPSO		

(13) PG BATAILLEUSE CHAMOIS
PR

Casablanca

(14) BB JEAN BART (77% completed)

(15) CL GLOIRE PRIMAGUET

(16) DL MILAN EPERVIER

(17) DD ALCYON BRESTOIS TEMPETE
BOULANNAIS SIMOUN

(18) SS CASABLANCA THETIS MEDUSE
ORPHEE

(19) PG COMMANDANT DELAGE BOUDEUSE GRACIEUSE
PR

Dakar

(20) BB RICHELIEU (damaged)

(21) CL GEORGES LEYGUES MONTCALM

(22) DL LE FANTASQUE TERRIBLE
L'AUDACIEUX

(23) SS BEVEZIERS SIDI FERRUCH ESPOIR
VENGEUR AMPHITRITE AMAZONE
ANTIOPE SIBYLLE

(24) PG D'ENTRECASTEAUX D'IBERVILLE GAZELLE
PR SURPRISE COMMANDANT RIVIERE

Bevrouth

(25) DL QUEPARD VALMY

(26) SS PHOQUE DAUPHIN ESPADON

(27) PG LA GRANDIERE ANNAMITE
PR

West Indies

(28) CV BEARN at Martinique

(29) CL EMILE BERTIN at Martinique
JEANNE D'ARC at Guadeloupe

(30) PG VILLE D'YS at Martinique

(31) XCL BARFLEUR

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OPNAVINST 5510.1C BY OP

March 15, 1941

By RAH/A Date OCT 10 1972

Indo-China

- (32) CL LAMOTTE PICQUET
- (33) SS MONGE PEGASE
- (34) PG DUMONT D'URVILLE ADMIRAL CHARNER MARNE
PR AVALANCHE VIGILANTE BALNY
DOUDART-DE-LAGREE TOURANE TAHURE
COMMANDANT BOURDAIS ARGUS MYTHO
FRANCIS GARNIER

England

- (35) OB PARIS at Plymouth
COURBET at Portsmouth
- (36) DL LE TRIOMPHANT at Plymouth
LEOPARD at Portsmouth
- (37) DD LA CORDELIERE L'INCOMPRISE LA MELPOMENE
FLORE (all at Portsmouth) BOUCLIER (all at
MISTRAL OURAGON Plymouth)
- (38) SS SURCOUF JUNON MINERVE (all at
Plymouth)
LA CREOLE at Swansea
ORION ONDINE at Southampton
RUBIS (unknown port)
- (39) PG SAVORGAN DE BRAZZA LA CAPRICIEUSE CHEVREUIL
PR COMMANDANT DUBOC LA MOQUEUSE COUCY
COMANDANT DOMINE EPINAL SUIPPE
LA CONQUERANTE ARRAS AMIENS

Britain

Mediterranean

(All at Alexandria)

- (40) OB LORRAINE
- (41) CA DUQUESNE TOURVILLE SUFFREN
- (42) CL DUGUAY-TROUIN
- (43) DD LE FORTUNE BASQUE FORBIN
- (44) SS PROTEE

Lost (during hostilities)

- (45) CL PLUTON
- (46) DL MAILLE BREZE *BISON JAGUAR CHACAL
- (47) DD LA RAILLEUSE *J. ADROIT ORAGE BOURRASQUE
*FOUDROYANT *SIROCO
- (48) SS MORSE DORIS
- (49) PG VAUQUOIS ANCRE

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*These names have been given to other DD's. See Page 2, DD's at Toulon.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DIVISION OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

March 15, 1941

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Disposition of French Fleet

Port:	BB	OBB	CV CVS	CA	CL	DL	DD	SS	PG FE	XGL
<u>French Control</u>										
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<u>dur. Hostilities</u>					1(45)	4(46)	6(47)	2(48)	2(49)	
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Basis Source of Information: French Ministry of Marine.

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March 15, 1941

Op-16-F-3

~~Confidential~~By RMP/RS Date OCT 10 1972Indo-China(32) CL LAMOTTE PICQUET(33) SS MONGE PEGASE

(34) <u>PG</u>	DUMONT D'URVILLE	ADMIRAL CHARNER	MARNE
<u>FR</u>	AVALANCHE	VIGILANTE	BALNY
	DOUDART-DE-LAGREE	TOURANE	TAHURE
	COMMANDEMENT BOURDAIS	ARGUS	MYTHO
	FRANCIS GARNIER		

England(35) OBB PARIS at Plymouth
COURBET at Portsmouth(36) DL LE TRIOMPHANT at Plymouth
LEOPARD at Portsmouth

(37) <u>DD</u>	LA CORDELIERE	L'INCOMPRISE	LA MELPOMENE
	FLORE (all at Portsmouth)		
	MISTRAL	OURAGON	BOUGLIER (all at Plymouth)

(38) SS SURCOUF JUNON MINERVE (all at
Plymouth)

LA CREOLE at Swansea
ORION
RUBIS (unknown port)
ONDINE at Southampton

(39) <u>PG</u>	SAVORGNIAN DE BRAZZA	LA CAPRICIEUSE	CHEVREUIL
<u>FR</u>	COMMANDEMENT DUBOC	LA MOQUEUSE	COUCY
	COMMANDEMENT DOMINE	EPINAL	SUIPPE
	LA CONQUERANTE	ARRAS	AMIENS

BritainMediterranean(40) OBB LORRAINE(All at
Alexandria)(41) CA DUQUESNE TOURVILLE SUFFREN(42) CL DUGUAY-TROUIN(43) DD LE FORTUNE BASQUE FORBIE(44) SS PROTEELost (during
hostilities)(45) CL PLUTON(46) DL MAILLE BREZE *BRISON JAGUAR CHAGAL(47) DD LA RAILLEUSE *L'ADROIT ORAGE FOURRASQUE
*FOUDROYANT *SIBOCO(48) SS MORSE DORIS(49) PG VAUQUOIS ANCRE~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

*These names have been given to other DD's. See Page 2, DD's at Toulon.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

June 19, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

This matter of Liberia is a military one and for this reason it is not a question of substituting Bathurst or Freetown for Liberia. Bathurst is only about 110 miles from Dakar and, therefore, too close for air safety. Freetown is a little further, but is also a bit too close to Dakar for comfort. What I want is the possibility of an American plane hopping off from Natal, Brazil, with the option of landing at any one of three places in Africa -- Bathurst, Freetown or Liberia. I regard this as an essential.

I know all about the difficulty of landing supplies and materials in Monrovia, but, by using the facilities of the Firestone Company, the material for temporary housing of white troops can be landed on lighters.

In regard to sleeping sickness and malaria, this is, of course, a danger on the whole west coast of Africa and is a risk which must also be taken at Bathurst, Freetown, Takaravia and even Legas.

Therefore, please expedite effort to make the arrangements.

F. D. R.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 18, 1941

My dear Mr. President:

I refer to the memorandum you sent to the Secretary of State and myself under date of June 11 with regard to the possibility of requesting the Liberian Government to agree to have the United States send a protective force to Liberia.

I agree in principle that such a step as that contemplated would be desirable should it be found that more satisfactory arrangements of the same character could not be made at Freetown and at Bathurst. While I believe that the Liberian Government in all probability would gladly accept such a suggestion from us as that which you have in mind, there are, of course, certain immediate practical problems which would have to be taken into consideration. There is at present in Liberia an epidemic of sleeping sickness, and malaria is very prevalent. All of the accommodations which

The President,

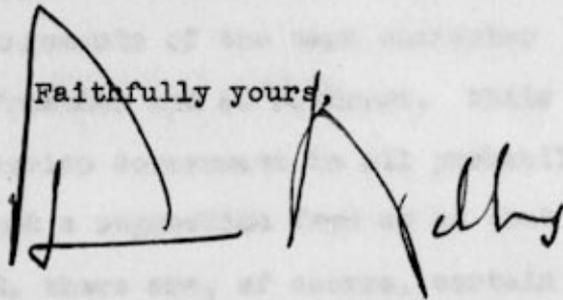
The White House.

would be required for white troops would have to be constructed by us and the lack of any harbor or harbor facilities for the landing of materials required for such construction is, of course, well known to you.

In brief, it seems to me that the objective which you have in mind could probably be achieved far more rapidly and with far less trouble by making some arrangement of this character in Bathurst or in Freetown rather than in Liberia unless and until the situation in Liberia appears to be more critical than it does at this moment.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. A. Hays". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "H".

The President,

The White House.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 11, 1941.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE
and THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE:

I note telegram from Walton in
Monrovia No. 55, June 7th.

I can understand the feeling of
Liberian officials that they do not want
British bases or troops in Liberia.

I think, however, that we should
consider the possibility of a request
from the Liberian Government that in
accordance with the historic, unwritten
protectorate, which the United States at
least feels toward Liberia, the United
States should send a protective force
there. Such a force could be considered
more as a token -- i.e. let us say 500
marines with 6 or 8 antiaircraft guns,
and a couple of 155 mm guns (6") for the
protection of Monrovia from shelling from
the sea.

I recognize that a force of this
size is wholly inadequate if a major
attack is made on Liberia -- but, on the
other hand, it is enough of a force to
protect Monrovia against a raid and could,
if necessary, either be withdrawn or
added to.

F.D.R.

~~CLASSIFIED~~

75F (SABE): WEST AFRICA

~~SECRET~~

WAR DEPT. DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

Date- 1-18-70

Signature- *JWA Boy*

March 18, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The urgency of Ambassador Bullitt's concern as to the Middle East is justified. From a military viewpoint, the region invites attack, and its loss would permit junction by sea between the Japanese and the Germans with the disastrous consequences for the United Nations implied by such an eventuality.

Agreements with the British, prior to December 7, have always placed the Middle East in the sphere of exclusive British responsibility. However, the critical nature of the present situation is such that I have already informed Sir John Dill that the War Department stood ready to assist, in every practicable way, in improving Middle East defenses.

The principal need is for air units. Air Marshal Portal has asked General Arnold for 3 bomber groups and 2 pursuit groups. The Combined Chiefs of Staff have communicated to London a plan, (attached) developed by General Arnold, for the transfer to that region of two U. S. pursuit groups, two light groups, and one medium group -- the airplanes to come from numbers already allotted to the British in this country. Should it develop that the British requirement in the Middle East involves planes rather than operating personnel, I doubt that we can do much to help. However, we are making every possible effort to meet this situation.

Of course, the meat of the situation for us is the urgent necessity of meeting our responsibilities in the Southwest Pacific, the reinforcement of Alaskan defenses, and, above all, the gathering of air power in England. A few minutes ago I received from Admiral King a list of army planes and anti-aircraft guns guarding the fleet base at Pearl Harbor, with the statement that "the picture is not any too encouraging." The Secretary of War has found the need for additional planes in Panama. I will not elaborate on the State Department's desires for planes for South America.

J. Edgar Hoover
Chief of Staff.

- encls.
- Proposal for Estab. of U.S. Air Units in Cairo.
- Memo. for Pres. from Mr. Bullitt with memo. from President



~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 17, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL MARSHALL:

Will you speak to me about
this at your convenience?

F.D.R.

MEMORANDUM

~~SECRET~~ ~~SECRET~~

My dear Mr. President:

I feel that I should repeat to you once more that the entire area south of Turkey remains a vacuum in respect of air force.

As you know, the British have promised to take care of the air for Turkey, if Hitler should attack Turkey. They have no planes closer to Turkey than the Lybian front, where Rommel's air force is now nearly the equal of the British air force.

If Hitler should threaten Turkey, the British would be obliged either to withdraw their entire air force from the Lybian front and send it to the Turkish frontier, - or default on their promise to Turkey.

We are not certain that Turkey will fight against German invasion even if backed up by a British or an American air force. We are almost certain that if no such air force is ready for action, Turkey will submit and permit German troops to pass through into the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. You know the weakness of the British forces now in that area.

A small German army diverted by Hitler from the Russian front to the Turkish border could, therefore, put in desperate danger not only the east coast of the Mediterranean, the oil wells of Mosul, the Persian oil fields, and the refineries at Abadan and Bahrein, but - in cooperation with Rommel - the entire Red Sea and Persian Gulf areas.

If we should send American air units under American command to Egypt immediately, they could enter the fighting on the Lybian front at once and be ready for immediate transfer to the southern Turkish frontier. They would not be stationed somewhere awaiting a possible attack. They would be in battle from the day they should arrive.

I find that almost everyone concerned with military matters in Washington is convinced intellectually that we must reinforce the air arm in the Near East; but I can not find the will to divert aircraft from other points.

It seems to me urgent that this question should be reexamined and that we should make every effort to get into the Near East at the earliest possible moment three hundred pursuit planes and one hundred bombers with full supplies, equipment and ground units. It may already be too late.

If neither the British or ourselves are prepared now to send such an air force into the area, we should at once reexamine the construction projects under the Maxwell and Wheeler Missions. Why use shipping to construct ports, docks, assembly plants and railroads for eventual use not by the British but by the Germans?

Bill
William C. Bullitt

Washington, D. C.,

March 13, 1942.

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED

Wm. Bullitt's letter.

PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S. AIR UNITS
IN CAIRO

1. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, appreciating the urgency of the British request for air reinforcements to the Cairo area, have explored every means of complying with that request. Our analysis indicates that there is insufficient U.S. aircraft available to meet these requirements, although personnel for the units can be made available. It is proposed that the U.S. undertake to provide the air units, and that the British make available the necessary aircraft from their production in the United States, provide the equipment necessary to make those aircraft operational, and undertake to move the units.

2. The plan proposed is as follows:

(a) The force will consist of:

- (1) An Air Force Headquarters
- (2) 1 Medium Bombardment Group
- (3) 2 Light Bombardment Groups
- (4) 2 Pursuit Groups
- (5) Essential Services.

(b) The United States will furnish all personnel and all equipment except aircraft and aircraft accessories.

(c) The British to furnish:

- (1) 60 B34 (Ventura) (medium bombers) at the earliest possible date, in the U.S. These aircraft to be operationally equipped, either here or in Cairo.
- (2) 160 P40 airplanes (Pursuit) to be delivered from stocks in Cairo, set up, and operationally equipped.
- (3) 60 DB7 airplanes (light bombers) delivered in the U.S. as soon as possible and operationally equipped, either in the U.S. or in Cairo.
- (4) 60 Martin 187 airplanes (light bombers) delivered in the U.S. as soon as possible, and oper-

Amred's report

ationally equipped either in the U.S. or in Cairo.

(d) The United States will have units ready for overseas movement as follows:

- (1) Personnel for 2 Pursuit groups - April 20, 1942
- (2) Personnel for 2 light bomb groups - six weeks after receipt of total complement of aircraft.
- (3) Personnel for 1 medium bomb group - six weeks after receipt of total complement of aircraft.

(e) Aircraft of the Medium Bomb group will be flown to Egypt. Other aircraft will be shipped.

(d) Maintenance, supplies, and attrition replacements to be provided from British Production.