

in view of the fact that the threat to our bases in the Middle East and Iraq is likely to be more serious from the north than from the west, according to the information at present available to us.

5. We are unlikely to be in sufficient strength by next spring to prosecute an offensive in the west and at the same time hold off a determined attack from the north.

6. Apart from the possible need for withdrawing forces from General Cunningham to reinforce our Northern Front, it may still be necessary to withdraw troops from him in order to keep demands for maintenance within the transport resources available. Every effort is to be made, however, by all concerned to avoid having recourse to this expedient, if it is likely in any way to prejudice the full attainment of his object by General Cunningham.

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C. J. Auchinleck, General,
C-in-C., M.E.F.

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*Note on "Crusader" by Commander-in-Chief,
M.E.F.*

30th October, 1941.

1. *Object.*—To destroy enemy armoured forces.

2. *Implications of object.*—(a) Must do something to bring enemy to battle on ground of our choosing—not of his.

Q. What will make enemy move out to meet us?

A. An obvious move to raise siege of Tobruk.

1st Deduction.—Therefore strong forces must be directed on Tobruk.

(b) Enemy must be brought to battle east of Tobruk, otherwise he will fight delaying actions and evade destruction.

Q. What must be done to effect this?

A. Surprise in time and direction of main thrust is essential.

2nd Deduction.—Long range plans for deception as to intention to attack and date of attack and possible direction of attack must be thorough and continuous.

3rd Deduction.—Weight and nature of main concentration must be concealed as long as possible.

4th Deduction.—Preliminary movement by feinting columns or detachments must not take place prior to advance of main attacking force.

3. *Our Action.*—(a) To move strongest possible armoured and motorised force (30 Corps) towards Tobruk.

(b) Break-out to be made by tanks and infantry of Tobruk garrison in conjunction with this move.

(c) Vigorous feints and raids by light mobile forces to west and north-west from the line Maddalena—Giarabub.

4. *Enemy reaction.*—Enemy may: (a) Keep his two armoured divisions where they are, north of escarpment between Bardia and Tobruk, hoping later to strike at maintenance service of our 30 Corps and thus paralyse it, while retaining free communication with his own base in above-mentioned area.

5th Deduction.—If he does this we should at once secure escarpment, picquet gaps, so as to prevent tank movement; then relieve Tobruk and invest or overrun Bardia—Sollum—Capuzzo with 13 Corps.

(b) Keep his armoured force north of escarpment, move west towards Tobruk and then position himself south of it, with a view to taking in flank attempts by us to raise siege. This entails his abandoning forces in Bardia—Sollum—Capuzzo.

6th Deduction.—In this event, we must be ready to push on with all speed with 30 Corps, join hands with Tobruk sally force and pinch his armoured force between the escarpment and Tobruk.

(c) Allow our 30 Corps to move on towards Tobruk and thrust with his armoured force through his defences in the area Sidi Omar—Halfaya, and attempt to destroy 13 Corps and our advanced dumps, railhead, etc., south of Sidi Barrani.

7th Deduction.—To guard against this, all possible defensive measures, such as laying minefields, positioning field and anti-tank artillery and holding "I" tanks in readiness must be taken.

(d) Abandon Bardia—Sollum, raise siege of Tobruk and withdraw towards Derna, Bengasi and El Agheila without giving battle.

8th Deduction.—In this event, which is possible but not likely, we must be ready to improvise highly mobile columns comprising artillery and motorised units to pursue him at once, and by outflanking his columns and infiltrating between them delay him, and so enable our armoured forces to bring him to battle before he can consolidate in new positions to the westward.

(e) Move his armoured force south of escarpment to a suitable area north of Trigh el Abd and west of Capuzzo with object of striking at our 30 Corps in flank and heading it off Tobruk, his eastern flank being protected by his Sidi Omar—Halfaya defences.

9th Deduction.—If he does this, which seems to be his most likely course, we must accept battle and concentrate the strongest possible armoured force against him in this area.

10th Deduction.—Any subsidiary movements, which might require the detachment of tanks, other than "I" tanks, for their local protection against possible attack by enemy armoured forces, must be foregone, in the interests of ensuring the strongest possible concentration of fast armoured units for the decisive battle. This does not forbid the movement of motorised forces mentioned in para. 3 (c), as these depend on speed for safety, but does preclude the movement of large forces of infantry and artillery round the southern flank of the Sidi Omar—Halfaya—Bardia positions with the idea of isolating the enemy holding these positions; the forward movement of highly mobile motorised forces in this area, however, is not precluded. If the armoured battle ends in a decisive success, these enemy troops can be dealt with at leisure, and the same applies to the enemy investing Tobruk.

5. *Summary.*—(a) 30 Corps with all available Cruiser and American tanks to be directed on Tobruk with a view to bringing enemy main