

6. It is not my intention to try to hold permanently Tobruk or any other locality west of the frontier.

7. The general arrangements for the defence of the line Sollum—Giarabub will be as follows:—

(a) A defended locality in the area Capuzzo—Sollum—Halfaya, to be held by one infantry division with infantry tanks.

(b) A defended locality round Maddalena to be held by an infantry division, less a brigade group, with infantry tanks.

(c) A defended locality at Giarabub to be held by an infantry brigade group.

(d) A general reserve of one armoured division and an infantry brigade group, to be located in the Bir Abu Misheifa area.

8. The Mersa Matruh defended locality will be maintained and improved for occupation by an infantry division.

9. The Maaten Bagush position and the enemy positions at Bardia will be dismantled, and the material thus salvaged used for other positions.

10. Work will be continued in accordance with the original plans on the El Alamein position as opportunity offers, until it is completed.

II. Acknowledge.

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

## 7.

### *Note on Possible Commitments in the Spring of 1942.*

20th January 1942.

1. In the spring, 1942, we may be faced with the following commitments:—

(a) The defence of our Western Front.

(b) The defence of the Northern Front, including Cyprus, and probably also including assistance to Turkey.

(c) The protection of our bases in the Suez Canal and Persian Gulf areas.

2. On 28th December, we reported our estimated deficiencies on 1st April 1942 to the Minister of Defence and the Chiefs of Staff. As a result of recent diversions the situation has changed again.

3. Our minimum estimated requirements for these purposes, and our estimated resources, assuming that the necessary armoured vehicles and transport are provided, are as follows:—

	Minimum require- ments.	Estimated Resources.	Deficiency.
Armoured Divisions	5	3½	1½
Infantry Divisions	17	12	5
Heavy A. A. Regiments	34	15	19
Light A. A. Regiments	55	18	37

These requirements are based on holding forward on the general line Tabriz—Mosul—Syro-Turkish Frontier to deny the enemy air bases and on the despatch of a force to Western Anatolia to assist Turkey.

4. Apart from this serious shortage of formations and anti-aircraft artillery, there are indications that the delivery of A.F.V's. and M.T. vehicles will fall far short of requirements. Consequently some of the formations will not be complete in transport and therefore unable to take part in active operations.

5. Excluding forces in Iraq (one armoured brigade group and three infantry divisions), about which details are not yet fully known, the following is an estimate of the position on 1st April 1942:—

(a) *Armoured Divisions.*

Two armoured divisions completely equipped and mobile.

(b) *Infantry Divisions.*

Two infantry divisions completely equipped and mobile.

Six infantry divisions nearly complete as regards equipment but deficient of transport in varying degrees.

6. From the above it will be seen that we shall be quite unable to carry out operations as envisaged in paragraph 3.

Our only course will be to fall back on defences in rear in Persia, Central Iraq and Southern Syria, and to fight a defensive battle, thereby surrendering to the enemy all air bases and landing grounds north of this line, the effect of which will be greatly to increase the scale of enemy air attack on our bases.

7. Progress in re-equipment after 1st April depends mainly on M.T. arrivals which cannot be forecast accurately. The following is an estimate based on the probable rate of arrivals:—

(a) *Armoured Divisions.*

A third armoured division should be complete with tanks and transport by mid-May.

(b) *Infantry Divisions.*

It is estimated that sufficient transport for an infantry division should be available each month.

8. Therefore by 15th May the position should be as follows:—

(a) *Armoured Divisions.*

Three armoured divisions fully mobile.

(b) *Infantry Divisions.*

Three infantry divisions completely equipped and mobile.

Five infantry divisions nearly complete as regards equipment but deficient of transport in varying degrees.

(c) *Tenth Army (Iraq).*

One armoured brigade group.

Three infantry divisions.

Equipment position not yet fully known.

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

## 8.

*Note on the Western Front by the Commander-in-Chief, M. E. F.*

(For Middle East Defence Committee.)

4th February, 1942.

1. The recent enemy successes in Cyrenaica make it necessary to reconsider how we are to achieve our object, which was and is to