

Tenth Army.

One armoured division of
 One armoured brigade group
 One motor brigade group
 Two infantry divisions.

Cyprus.

One armoured regiment
 One infantry division.

G.H.G. Reserve.

(For allotment as may be necessary to Eighth,
 Ninth or Tenth Armies.)

Up to three armoured brigade groups.
 One army tank brigade of two battalions.
 Two or three infantry brigade groups.

8. Having regard to the probable disparity in strength between the enemy and our own forces, it is essential that our forces should not be irretrievably committed, and that we avoid engagements with the enemy except on ground favourable to ourselves. In the event of an enemy attack, my policy will therefore be:—

(a) To protect aerodromes in Northern Syria and Northern Iraq, from which our air forces can attack the enemy's vulnerable communications through Turkey.

(b) To effect the demolition of communications and oil installations north of the line Dizful—Paitak—Little Zab River—Ana—Abu Kemal—Damascus—Ras Baalbek—Tripoli, and to withdraw to previously prepared positions on that general line.

(c) To delay the enemy as long as possible in front of that line by making bold use of the forces available to attack him in flank and rear.

(d) To fight a series of delaying actions on ground of our own choosing, back to positions in Southern Iraq and Southern Palestine, covering the ports on the Persian Gulf and on the Suez Canal.

9. Our plans and preparations must be adjusted without delay to this new situation. On the other hand it is of paramount importance that we avoid disclosing our weakness or our intentions to the enemy, to Turkey, or to the local populations, because by so doing we may encourage the enemy to attack, drive Turkey into submission, and bring about a serious internal security situation.

My policy, therefore, is:—

(a) To maintain troop movement in the northern frontier areas on the same scale as in the past.

(b) To continue slowly with the construction of those roads in the northern areas on which a start has been made, and with work now actually in progress on defences at Mosul and Qaiara, but not to start any new works in these areas. The object is to avoid giving the impression that we have changed our plans, and at the same time to make available the maximum amount of material and labour for the essential task defined in (c) below.

(c) To complete defences on the general line Dizful—Little Zab River—Ana—Abu Kemal—Damascus—Ras Baalbek—Tripoli in the following two stages:—

Stage A.—On a scale suitable for a delaying action by the forces given in para. 7.

Stage B.—On a scale suitable for the forces given in Appendix "A", so that prepared positions may be available, if reinforcements arrive in time.

(d) To prepare, without delay, bases of supply for mobile striking forces in the neighbourhood of Fatha, Haffa and Qatana, and in the Jebel Druze and Lava Belt. The bases of supply hitherto contemplated at Palmyra and to the north will not be formed for the present, but plans will be completed so that the bases can be made available at short notice, if required.

(e) To complete the bridges at Raqqa (because construction cannot now be stopped without disclosing a change in policy) and Haffa and Fatha.

Approaches to the bridges to Deir ez Zor and Meyadine will be completed if not already started, but the bridges will not be built. Similarly, work started on the Khabur bridges should be completed, but no new work initiated.

(f) To prepare a defended staging post in the Rutba area—if possible at Al Ga'ara—without delay. A reconnaissance will be carried out immediately, and a report submitted to G.H.Q.

(g) To reconnoitre immediately, positions in Southern Iraq and Southern Palestine, in each case for a force of two infantry divisions and attached troops.

10. An immense amount of work remains to be done, and all available resources in the immediate future will be applied to the completion of the defensive arrangements required on the line given in para. 9 (c). Reconnaissances of the rearward lines, supply bases and staging posts will be carried out simultaneously, and reports will be submitted to G.H.G. by 10th March 1942.

11. The policy of stocking will be decided when the recommendations of Army Commanders have been received.

12. The success of a withdrawal of this nature will depend very largely upon the state of training of our formations in mobile warfare. In the near future, a proper proportion must be maintained between the conflicting demands for training and for the construction of defences. Local labour will be used to the greatest possible extent, to free formations for the training in manoeuvre which will be so essential to success.

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

APPENDIX "A" TO G.H.Q., M.E.F. OPERATION INSTRUCTION No. 112.

Forces to be assumed as available when the defences on the line Dizful—Little Zab River—Ana—Abu Kemal—Damascus—Ras Baalbek—Tripoli, are constructed—[para. 9 (c) Stage B, refers.]

Ninth Army.

One armoured division of
 One armoured brigade group
 One motor brigade group
 One army tank brigade.
 Four infantry divisions.
 Polish Brigade Group.
 Greek Brigade Group.
 Free French Forces.

Tenth Army.

One armoured division of
 One armoured brigade group
 One motor brigade group
 One army tank brigade.
 Three infantry divisions.