

war Bulgaria might collapse, and the collapse of Roumania and Hungary would probably follow. Under these conditions Germany would probably be unable to hold out very long owing to the cutting off of her Balkan sources of supply.

301. In the event of Turkey entering the war, three problems were outstanding: first, her two largest ports, Istanbul and Izmir were largely built of wood and were very vulnerable to air attack; secondly, her coal supply, which in the main, came from Zonguldak on the Black Sea, was also very vulnerable; and thirdly, her railways were not sufficiently developed to stand the strain of a modern war.

302. Obviously the main difficulty confronting a successful Allied plan was to provide sufficient fighter and anti-aircraft defences in time to forestall German air attacks. Owing to the great length of the Turkish lines of communication, it was essential that a major portion of our forces should be infiltrated into Turkey before she actually entered the war.

303. Accordingly, towards the end of November, plans for the establishment of eighteen Royal Air Force squadrons and five heavy and five light anti-aircraft regiments in Western Anatolia were considered. This plan was known as Plan 437 and No. 3 Planning Staff assembled in Cairo towards the end of November, becoming members of Headquarters, Force 686, which was responsible for its detailed planning.

304. Work was stopped on the heavy bomber airfields for HARDIHOOD, but construction was begun to make Milas and Kizilyaka all-weather airfields, as well as those at Dalaman, Gokova and Antalya, with a view to operations in the Aegean.

305. It was envisaged that Force 686, which was to carry out Plan 437, would be maintained from an advanced base at Izmir; pre-dumping had continued throughout the changes, with an initial target of thirty days for the whole force now contemplated, of approximately 33,000 personnel (13,000 Royal Air Force and 20,000 Army) and 5,000 vehicles: of these stores some were in fact used for the maintenance of the forces engaged in the Aegean operations. In mid-December the target was raised to forty-five days. In all, during the year, some 52,000 tons of stores were despatched to meet this commitment.

306. To carry out Plan 437 it was considered that 7,500 men must be infiltrated into Turkey, and the Prime Minister discussed this problem with President Inönü immediately after the Cairo Conference. In December, however, the Turks agreed to the infiltration of only 250 specialists in plain clothes, of whom the majority was infiltrated. The Turkish Government later agreed to further infiltration of up to 1,750 specialists, subject to approval by the Turkish General Staff. None of these was sent forward, but action was taken to concentrate elements of Force 686 in Northern Syria.

307. The situation was by no means easy, and on 28th December a mission left the Middle East for Ankara to discuss the main problem of supplies and infiltration. Although the mission was received most cordially when it arrived, it soon became apparent that there was a wide divergence between the Turkish point of view and our own. The main differences

were that the Turks expected thirty-six Royal Air Force squadrons as against our offer of eighteen, and they demanded an enormous amount of equipment, which they said they must have before operations could begin. It was estimated that the minimum time required to get this equipment into Turkey, even if it were available, would be about four months. Shortly after I relinquished my command, negotiations reached a deadlock, the mission returned to Cairo and Force 686 was dissolved.

308. Although Turkey is still not at war, much valuable military construction has been carried out and considerable quantities of military stores have been dumped there for our own use in addition to those supplied to the Turkish Army. Turkish opinion of the correct state of equipment necessary to enable her to enter the war has varied considerably during my year of command in Middle East, and our supplies have never equalled her demands; but at least that country is now better equipped than she was a year ago.

309. For although by no means all that the Turks have demanded has been available, and supplies have at times had to be diverted to Italy, yet, under the Adana Agreement, during the year 97,000 tons have been delivered to Turkey by sea, 11,000 tons have been delivered by rail and 1,300 vehicles, 300 tanks and 2,300 guns have been despatched by Middle East Command.

310. In addition to these freights to implement the Adana Agreement, much has been supplied both for Turkish military and civilian use and for our own dumps. During the year the total tonnage transported by Middle East to Turkey was 375,000 tons, including 48,000 tons for our own dumps. For this tonnage Middle East was either the supply centre or transit centre, or both, whilst 40,500 tons were supplied by Persia and Iraq Command but were routed by Middle East.

311. These considerable quantities have certainly not met Turkish demands, a fact which contributed to the breakdown of negotiations and the failure of our plans. But Turkish insistence on the supply of equipment is difficult to understand, for the land threat to Thrace has steadily diminished, their transport facilities could probably not have handled the quantities of goods which they demanded, and even after delivery the equipment could not be in use for many months. Moreover, it is extremely doubtful if the Turks could have put their materials to effective use at all, for despite urgent representations from our Military Attaché and the provision of personnel and courses by Middle East Command, they have not trained even adequate cadres for mechanised warfare.

312. Only in anti-aircraft training have the facilities offered been used to advantage. This fact is significant, for there can be little doubt that the German air superiority during the Aegean operations was as weighty an argument for Turkish delay as was the non-delivery of stores, although it could not be used with as good a countenance.

313. This air inferiority over the Aegean might, however, have been avoided, and the course of the operations altered had Turkey been willing to take action. For in November, 1943, with the object of providing fighter