

cover for our forces in the Aegean and a small force to assist in the protection of Istanbul, two plans, called **SUPERCHARGE** and **LITTLE HARDIHOOD**, which envisaged Turkey as a co-belligerent, were produced. Our forces were to be maintained from depots in the Izmir and Istanbul areas and would require no advanced base. Executive action was taken to concentrate the forces for both these plans in the Aleppo area, but the fall of Leros on 16th November removed the need for the immediate establishment of these fighter squadrons in Turkey and the plans were abandoned.

314. Even after the fall of Leros and the evacuation of Samos, I thought it possible to drive the Germans out from the Aegean if air support could be provided from the airfields which, under Plan 437, were to be operated by the Royal Air Force on the Turkish mainland. Accordingly, in December, the 3rd Corps Headquarters began the preparation of Plan **HERCULES**, for the capture of the key island of Rhodes. On 2nd January, 1944, however, the landing-craft for this operation were diverted to the Anzio landing in Italy, and **HERCULES** was cancelled; nevertheless, in the hope that Plan 437 would ensure Turkish co-operation, planning was continued and all the possibilities of such an operation were investigated.

Politics and Internal Security.

315. However the precise weight of argument for the failure to bring Turkey into the war may be distributed between our failure to supply her demands and her fear of the Luftwaffe, the ultimate conclusion must be that Turkey doubted our power to save her from at least the initial stages of a German attack. Elsewhere in the Middle East, such political problems as affected the military situation during my year of command arose from precisely the opposite cause—a feeling that fear of German attack was removed and that political quarrels might be indulged more freely.

316. In Egypt this has caused no military problems, though there has been considerable political uneasiness. For although the Wafd Government, under Nahas Pasha as Prime Minister, has continued to support the United Nations war effort loyally, in its internal administration it has not proved so satisfactory.

317. The failure of the Government to take effective measures against those responsible for profiteering and hoarding has reduced its support in the country. From the British point of view the most serious factor in the internal security situation is the danger of an increase in anti-British feeling. There is a tendency to blame us for the state of affairs because we are supporting the Government responsible; and there is evidence that the profiteers and other anti-social elements are endeavouring to lay the blame for their own acts on British shoulders.

318. Another result of the scandals and accusations in which the Wafd Government has been involved has been to widen the breach between the Prime Minister and the King, who pronounced the Government guilty of peculation and corruption and clearly expected their resignation. The King did not,

however, dismiss the Government which, whatever its demerits, was affording the Allies full and valuable support; but the political crisis thus produced in May might well have caused serious interruption in the preparations for the attack on Sicily.

319. The Egyptian people generally are disillusioned by all the political parties, but although the political situation is clearly one which must cause much unrest for Egypt, it has not led to any diversion of the effort of Middle East Command from the prosecution of the war, and Egyptian policy has become increasingly pro-Allied.

320. In Palestine, on the other hand, the period under review has been noticeable for a gradual hardening in the attitude of the Jewish community towards His Majesty's Government, an attitude encouraged by the Jewish Agency and its associated bodies.

321. In February, 1943, four British deserters were arrested and charged with selling stolen arms and ammunition to an illegal organisation in Palestine. The ensuing major Military Court cases, in August, had widespread repercussions on the political and internal security situation in Palestine; for the defending officer, in mitigation, suggested that the real responsibility lay with the Jewish Agency. The case was heard in open court, and the defending officer's speech was given wide publicity and brought a protest from the Jewish Agency, which went so far as to say that the trials were a deliberate anti-Semitic frame-up and compared them with the Dreyfus case.

322. Hardly had this excitement died down when a search in the Jewish settlement of Hulda, for Polish deserters, uncovered a cache of weapons, and on 16th November another search with the same purpose in the village of Ramat Hakovesh resulted in a fracas. This was followed by a campaign of misrepresentation and threats on the part of the Jewish Agency, which left no doubt that any future searches would be met with strong resistance. The policy in regard to searches, reaffirmed in 1943, has been that only if reliable information is received should searches be made, and then with particular care to avoid any incidents. After this search, His Excellency the High Commissioner informed the General Officer Commanding in Palestine that for political reasons it was regarded as most important that action likely to lead to major incidents with the Jewish population should be avoided at the present time.

323. By January, 1944, the attitude of the Jewish Agency towards the Government had hardened to such an extent that any action conflicting with the policy of the Biltmore Programme or for enforcing the White Paper met with opposition and obstruction. The Jewish Agency was in some respects arrogating to itself the powers and status of an independent Jewish Government. It no longer attempted to deny the existence of arms caches, but claimed the right not only to hold arms for self-defence but to resist any attempt on the part of lawful authority to locate them. It was, in fact, defying the Government, and to that extent rebellion could be said to exist.

324. There has also been some unrest among certain units of the Palestine Regiment. In