

garrison has made large guerilla activities impossible. None the less, the Germans have been seriously disturbed, our mission has been maintained and increased, and Cretan morale stands high.

278. In Crete, and still more in Greece, the personal popularity of the British liaison officers has been of great value to them in their difficult task of organising (and at times restraining) the guerillas in their attacks on the Germans whilst at the same time seeking a settlement of the disputes between the bands.

279. Whilst these operations were being pursued to achieve the liberation of the Balkan countries, plans were also being made for their administration after their liberation. In February, 1943, the Allied Territories (Balkans) Committee was established, under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant-General in charge of Administration and including representatives of all interested organisations in Cairo, to consider the steps necessary on military grounds to ensure efficiency of the civil administration in the Balkan territories after their liberation.

Planning was at first confined to Greece, but was part of a wider policy of planning relief for the civil population in the Balkans which was started, on War Office instructions, on 15th April, 1943. Middle East's responsibility was laid down as Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania and the Dodecanese only, and no planning was to be undertaken for Roumania or Bulgaria.

280. By October, 1943, it became apparent that owing to the speed of the Russian advance in South-east Europe the commitment might arise earlier than had at first been expected, and that planning to meet it would have to be accelerated.

On 12th October, 1943, therefore, British Military Liaison Headquarters (Greece) was set up, under command of Major-General Hughes, to maintain liaison with the Greek authorities and to plan for the relief of the country on evacuation by the Germans. The basis of the plan was that the Greeks themselves would be responsible for civil administration and for the execution of relief measures to the maximum extent compatible with their resources.

281. It was also accepted that only essential relief could be undertaken by the army and that the rehabilitation of liberated territories would be a matter for such civil relief authority as might be later appointed. The period of military responsibility was arbitrarily fixed at six months from the date of occupation, during which time it was intended that the civil relief authority should have observers in the various territories to enable as smooth a transfer of responsibility as possible to take place.

282. A special Balkan planning section, attached to the staff of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, was set up to prepare detailed estimates of requirements for the first six months' period. These estimates, which included, *inter alia*, requirements of foodstuffs, medical supplies, clothing, petrol and oil, chemicals, soap and coal, were based on intelligence received from the territories concerned and from information given by the War Office. The procedure adopted was that all estimates were passed to the "Q" Staff at General Headquarters, Middle East, for examination and, when finally agreed, forwarded through staff or service channels to the War Office for approval and action.

This planning section was later transferred to the staff of Major-General Hughes, leaving the Chief Civil Affairs Officer responsible for planning for the Dodecanese only.

283. The intention was to stockpile in Middle East sufficient quantities of the commodities required to tide over the period needed to organise supply direct from the United Kingdom or United States to Balkan ports. This period was estimated by the War Office as six to eight weeks, and by January, 1944, considerable shipments of grain had been received, but little progress had been made in the stockpiling of the remaining requirements, other than those available locally.

284. Another activity which came into greater prominence as the Balkans increased in importance was political warfare. The Political Warfare Executive, Middle East, had been active during the Tunisian, Sicilian and Italian campaigns, using leaflets and radio to soften enemy morale; officers trained by the Executive went with our forces to the Aegean islands, and now in preparation for activity in the Balkans much valuable work was done. For this theatre, a pool of trained officers was set up and a school was established for training field units.

285. Whilst training, organising, equipping and planning for those Balkan countries which were already involved in the war has been a difficult task, it has been even more difficult to perform the same functions for Turkey, since that country has been willing to enter the war only on its own terms and when it considers itself properly equipped to do so.

286. In the tortuous and interminable negotiations with the Turks, and in providing and forwarding the supplies which have been the main object of discussion, Middle East Command has been closely concerned.

287. Our programme of assistance, resulting from the Adana Conference on 30th and 31st January, 1943, was two-fold. First, we had to supply Turkey as soon as possible with sufficient equipment to provide her armed forces with one year's reserve for war. Secondly, we had to despatch to Turkey, if she were forced into war, a self-contained force under British command to provide fighter defence of vulnerable points and to support the Turkish Army in the field; in addition, certain British anti-tank and anti-aircraft units were to be placed under Turkish command. Later the Turks were given the choice of further strong Royal Air Force reinforcements or a corps of two armoured divisions; it was not considered practicable to provide both until at least the Aegean was opened to our shipping and the port of Izmir could be used.

288. The limiting factor to our programme of assistance, both in preparation for war and after Turkey should enter the war, was the capacity of the Turkish railway system, and it was agreed that the staff talks should be resumed at the earliest possible date to study this problem and to consider the means by which the capacity could be improved.

289. Accordingly, talks were resumed in Ankara on 26th February, 1943, under the chairmanship, on the British side, of the Military Attaché, Major-General A. C. Arnold. Progress was handicapped by Turkish inability or unwillingness to appreciate the limitations of