

4. *Probable Location of Axis Air Forces*

Fighter bombers and L.R. bombers

Airfields in the "Heel".

Airfields in the Foggia area.

Airfields in Sardinia.

Fighters

Airfields in the Naples area.

L.R. Bombers

Airfields in Lombardy.

## REMARKS

5. *Available Airfield Accommodation within Range of Assault*

(a) Gerbini

Sufficient airfield space (backed by port facilities) to accommodate such fighters as are capable of reaching Salerno.

(Distance 224 miles.)

(b) Reggio

4 to 6 S.E.F. Sqns. can be augmented by strip farther north if ground in our possession.

(Distance 184 miles.)

(c) N.E. corner of Sicily

One small strip only reported. Probable that others can be constructed quickly. Estimate 4 to 6 S.E.F. Sqns.

(Distance 178 miles.)

(d) Milo (Trapani)

2 good airfields would take 2 gps. T.E.F.

(Distance 226 miles.)

6. *Availability of Aircraft Carrier Support*

(a) Mediterranean

1 carrier.

N.W. Scotland

1 carrier.

Pacific

2 carriers.

(b) Auxiliary carriers are still considered unsuitable for air operations of this nature as they are still incapable of operating modern fighters of the Seafire class.

7. *Availability of Fighters*

3 Groups T.E.F. (day)

P-38's (augmented).

2 Groups F.B.

A-36's.

18 Squadrons S.E.F.

Spits.

4 Squadrons T.E.F. (night)

Beaufighters.

8. *Airborne Operations*

It will be necessary to capture the airfield at Salerno at an early moment, and it may therefore be found essential to employ airborne forces for the purpose. If airborne forces are employed by day, or require part daylight fighter cover, the commitment will compete with long range fighter resources required for the assault.

9. *Bomber Operations*

(a) A-20's (Bostons, range 280 miles) with Doolittle tanks are the only light bombers capable of reaching enemy airfields in the "Heel", Naples and Sardinia.

(b) While heavy bombers (B-17's) can reach all airfields, including those in Northern Italy, from which the enemy are likely to operate air forces, the mediums are capable of operating against the majority of airfields in the Rome/Naples area, including the "Heel"—also Sardinia.

10. *General*

(a) Problem primarily one of producing long range shore based fighter cover to cover an assault in either the Naples or Salerno area. Assault in the Salerno area offers more attractive proposition from air point of view for following reasons:—

(i) Spitfires with 90 gal. L.R.T. can reach it.

(ii) A good airfield capable of taking 4 S.E.F. Squadrons is within 3 miles of assault beach and might therefore be brought into very early use.

(iii) Is close to a good port which should fall into our hands quickly.

(b) The Salerno assault suffers however from the bottleneck of Salerno town and harbour which must be kept free for land advance to Naples.

(c) Long range tanks (90 gal.) may place a limitation on number of Spitfires employed, but suitable airfield accommodation within Spitfire range is more likely to be the bottleneck. Total stocks of long range (90 gal.) tanks at present within the theatre are estimated at 840.

(d) Beaufighters would be able to provide night protection operating from airfields in Sicily (Gerbini).