

(c) To study the possibility of regaining the landing grounds in the area Derna—Martuba—Mechili for our air forces at an early date, provided this can be done without prejudice to the tasks defined in (a) and (b).

(d) To prevent to the utmost extent possible, without prejudice to the tasks defined above in (a) and (b), the use by the enemy air force of the landing grounds in the area Derna—Martuba—Mechili.

(e) To avoid your forces being invested in Tobruk in the event of our having to withdraw to the east of that place.

(f) To complete the preparation of defensive positions on the general line Sollum—Maddalena—Giarabub at the earliest possible date.

10. To allow you to plan for the future, a list of the troops likely to be available to you is attached to this instruction.

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

APPENDIX "A" TO OPERATION INSTRUCTION No. III.

<i>Assumed Order of Battle for planning the offensive.</i>	<i>Available for Battle.</i>
H.Q. 13 Corps.	
H.Q. 30 Corps.	—
1 Armd. Div.	—
One Armd. Car Regt.	—
2 Armd. Bde. Gp.	—
201 Gds. Motor Bde. Gp.	—
7 Armd. Div.	
One Armd. Car Regt.	End-February.
4 Armd. Bde. Gp.	Early March.
7 Motor Bde. Gp.	Mid-April.
10 Armd. Div.	
One Armd. Car Regt.	Late-March.
1 Armd. Bde. Gp.	Mid-April
One Motor Bde. Gp. (if ready).	Unable to fore- cast.
22 Armd. Bde. Gp.	End-March.
8 Armd. Bde. Gp.	Mid-May.
1 Army Tank Bde.	
4 S.A. Armd. Car Regt.	
6 S.A. Armd. Car Regt.	End-April.
3 Ind. Motor Bde. Gp.	Mid-March.
50 Div.	End-February.
1 S.A. Div.	
2 S.A. Div.	
Free French Bde. Gp.	

N.B.—(a) An Armd. Bde. Gp. will consist of three Regts.

(b) The above dates are based on the arrival of equipment and "A" vehicles, but also depend upon the arrival of transport, which cannot be forecast with any accuracy.

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G.H.Q., M.E.F. Operation Instruction
No. II2.

23rd February, 1942.

General Sir H. M. Wilson, Commander, Ninth Army.

Lt.-General E. P. Quinan, Commander, Tenth Army.

1. With a view to providing reinforcements for the East and the Far East, the following

formations will be, or may be, moved from the Middle East:—

(a) 70 Division—as soon as the move can be arranged, and utilizing ships earmarked for 6 Australian Division.

(b) Remainder of 6 Australian Division.

(c) 9 Australian Division, as soon as the move can be arranged.

(d) Possibly, though not yet decided, one Indian infantry division from Iraq.

Moreover,

(e) It is unlikely that more than one infantry division will arrive in the Middle East from the United Kingdom before mid-August.

2. If all these formations are withdrawn, the infantry formations remaining in the Middle East will comprise:—

50 Division.

New Zealand Division.

Two South African Divisions.

Four Indian Divisions.

161 Indian Infantry Brigade Group.

Two Free French Brigade Groups.

Polish Brigade Group.

One Greek Brigade Group.

A total of eight infantry divisions and five infantry brigade groups.

3. After providing for:—

(a) The security of the Western Front of Egypt—Three infantry divisions; one infantry brigade group.

(b) The security of Cyprus—One infantry division.

There remain four infantry divisions, and at most four infantry brigade groups, to meet the requirements of Ninth Army, Tenth Army and G.H.Q. Reserve.

4. This force would be inadequate to stop an enemy attack in strength through Persia and Syria, directed on the Persian Gulf and the Suez Canal.

5. Should this eventuality arise, I intend to impose the greatest possible delay on the enemy's advance with the object of gaining time to enable reinforcements to arrive.

6. This delay will be imposed upon the enemy:—

(a) By supporting Turkey if she resists and if the necessary air forces are available, in accordance with our present plans.

(b) By protecting advanced aerodromes from which our air forces can attack the enemy's vulnerable communications through Turkey.

(c) By the thorough demolition of communications and all oil stocks and installations.

(d) By holding delaying positions astride his main lines of advance in country unsuited to armoured fighting vehicles.

(e) By counter-attacking with armoured formations whenever a suitable opportunity can be created.

7. It may be assumed that the following forces will be available:—

Ninth Army.

One armoured division of

One armoured brigade group

One motor brigade group

Two infantry divisions.