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W.P.(40) 13.

COPY NO. 19

WAR CABINET

DESPATCH OF FORCES TO NORWEGIAN PORTS.

Note by the Secretary.

By direction of the Prime Minister I circulate herewith a Memorandum prepared in the War Office.

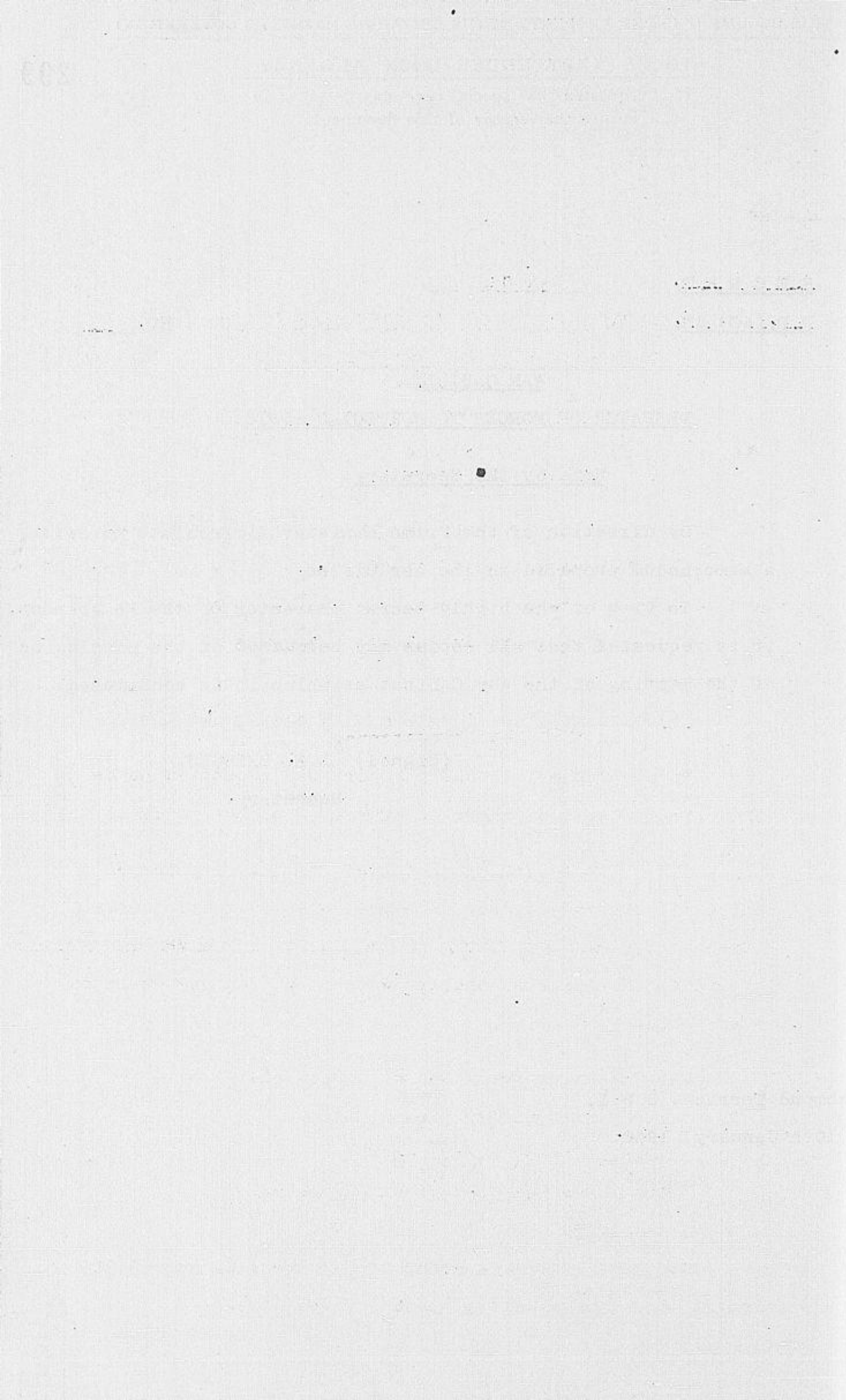
In view of the highly secret character of the Memorandum, it is requested that all copies may be returned at the conclusion of the meeting of the War Cabinet at which it is considered.

(Signed) E.E. BRIDGES.

Secretary.

Richmond Terrace, S W.1,

10th January, 1940.



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SECRET.

W.P.(40) 13.

WAR CABINET.

DESPATCH OF FORCES TO NORWEGIAN PORTS.

Memorandum by the War Office.

1. At the meeting of the War Cabinet on 3rd January, the Secretary of State for War was requested, in consultation with his Service colleagues and the Minister of Shipping, to arrange for the preparation of detailed plans for the occupation of Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim and to submit a report as soon as possible, showing:-

(a) What would be immediately involved

and

(b) What might be involved at a subsequent date, in the above operations.

In particular, an early report was requested as to the earliest date on which the forces could be ready to sail.

2. The plans for the despatch of the military forces which will be immediately involved, are now sufficiently advanced for the War Office to be able to inform the War Cabinet regarding these forces and the date by which they could be despatched.

3. The following force would be required:-

Force Headquarters and Signals.

Five infantry battalions.

One Field Company, Royal Engineers.

Ancillary personnel.

The total strength of the above force is some 3,500 men of whom approximately 3,200 are infantry.

SECRET
NO 10

WAR OFFICE
REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE
PREPARATION OF THE
ARMY FOR THE

The meeting of the War Office on 2nd January,

the Secretary of State for War was requested, in

consultation with his Service colleagues and the Ministry

of Shipping, to arrange for the preparation of detailed

plans for the transport of personnel, baggage, and equipment

and to submit a report as soon as possible, showing:-

(a) what would be immediately involved

and

(b) what might be involved at a subsequent date.

In particular, an early report was requested as to

the earliest date on which the forces could be ready to sail.

The plans for the equipment of the military forces

which will be immediately involved, and how supplementary

arrangements for the War Office to be able to inform the War Office

regarding these forces and the date by which they could be

reached.

The following force would be required:-

Four headquarters and signals.

Two infantry battalions.

One Field Company, Royal Engineers.

Artillery personnel.

The total strength of the above force is some 4,500

men of whom approximately 2,500 are infantry.

4. The role of the force would be to deny to the enemy the use of the naval and air facilities at Bergen, Stavanger, and Trondheim.

5. The following would be the general initial dispositions:-

	{	H.Q. Force.
Bergen	{	Two infantry battalions.
	{	Small detachment Royal Engineers.
Stavanger	{	Two infantry battalions.
	{	Detachment Royal Engineers.
Trondheim		One infantry battalion.

6. Detailed arrangements regarding the despatch of the Force are being made by the War Office in conjunction with the departments concerned. If the decision to despatch the Force were taken at any time prior to noon on 15th January, the earliest time by which the force for Stavanger could be embarked ready to leave the United Kingdom is the evening of 16th January. The remainder could be embarked ready to leave the United Kingdom by the evening of 17th January.

The holding of a certain amount of rolling stock is necessary so long as the force remains at such short notice to move.

7. It must be emphasised that it is not possible to send any vehicles with the force and that the administrative services have had to be reduced to a bare minimum. At each destination reliance is being placed upon the possibility of billeting, of making local purchases, of hiring transport, and of using Norwegian hospital accommodation. Once the force has landed it will therefore be able to carry out its role only if assured of the continual co-operation of the local civil and military authorities.

Finally it must be realised that no part of the force is organised to effect a landing against opposition.

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The first part of the report is devoted to a general
description of the project and its objectives.

The second part of the report describes the
methodology used in the study.

The third part of the report presents the
results of the study.

The fourth part of the report discusses the
conclusions of the study.

The fifth part of the report contains the
references.

The sixth part of the report contains the
appendices.

The seventh part of the report contains the
concluding remarks.

The eighth part of the report contains the
acknowledgements.

The ninth part of the report contains the
summary.

The tenth part of the report contains the
index.

The eleventh part of the report contains the
list of figures.

The twelfth part of the report contains the
list of tables.

The thirteenth part of the report contains the
list of abbreviations.

The fourteenth part of the report contains the
list of symbols.

The fifteenth part of the report contains the
list of acronyms.

The sixteenth part of the report contains the
list of references.

The seventeenth part of the report contains the
list of appendices.

SUBSEQUENT IMPLICATIONS.

8. There remains the question of what might be involved at a subsequent date in these operations. The size of the forces to be sent initially to each of the three ports is governed largely by the scale of enemy attack which it is estimated might be brought against them under the climatic conditions which are likely to prevail between now and the spring. When, however, weather conditions and the melting of the snow make free movement possible, these forces will be inadequate to carry out the role now allotted. For example, larger areas will become exposed to parachute landings. On the information at our disposal it is not possible to make an accurate forecast of the additional troops that would be required, but it is likely to be of the order of an extra one or possibly two battalions at each port. Moreover, complete reliance could not continue to be placed upon locally provided transport. In order to possess the necessary tactical mobility units would require a certain number of military vehicles.

9. By undertaking these operations in Norway we might place Sweden in the position of having to declare herself for the Germans or for the Allies. If she declared herself for the Allies we ought, both on moral grounds and in our own interests, to undertake the major operation outlined in W.P.(39) 180; in this case Trondheim would assume great importance as a base. If Sweden declared herself for Germany, it is possible that the situation of our forces at the three ports might become untenable. The most they might achieve would be to do as much damage to the aerodromes as possible before being withdrawn.



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO AN INCREASED COMMITMENT.

10. It may also prove desirable at a later date to make certain changes in the role of the forces, and these possible changes, though not strictly relevant to the present operations, should be taken into consideration.

The changes might be:-

- (a) The aerodrome at Stavanger may be required for use by the R.A.F. as distinct from preventing its use by the enemy. Since this would entail controlling a considerably larger area of country than is required merely to deny the aerodrome to the enemy, the force at this point would have to be increased, the extent of the increase depending upon the circumstances at the time. Moreover, a considerable organisation would be required.
- (b) The laying of the Northern Barrage may involve an addition to the role of the force at Bergen. Until the Chiefs of Staff have examined the full implications of this project, it is not possible to estimate what demands may be made on the Army for this purpose.
- (c) We might have to yield to the strong pressure which Norway would be likely to put on us to increase the Allied forces supporting her against the danger of German attack.

9th January, 1940.



