WAR CABINET.

OPERATIONS IN NORWAY.

Note by the Secretary.

The Note by the First Lord of the Admiralty (Annex I) and the aide memoire prepared by the Chiefs of Staff (Annex II) were considered by the Military Co-ordination Committee at their meeting held on 19th April, 1940 at 10.0 p.m. (M.C.(40) 30th Meeting).

The Preliminary Notes for an appreciation of the situation in Central Scandinavia, prepared by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Annex III), were not circulated but were read to the Military Co-ordination Committee at the same meeting.

(Signed) E.E. BRIDGES.

Secretary.

Adelphi Terrace, S.W.1.
OPERATIONS IN NORWAY.

Note by the Chairman, Military Co-ordination Committee.

1. The considerable advance made by Carton de Wiart, the very easy landings we have had from Aandalesnes and other ports in this southern fiord, the indiscretions of the Press pointing to a storm of Trondheim, and the very heavy Naval forces required for this operation called "Hammer", with the undoubted major risks connected with keeping so many valuable ships so many hours under close air attack, have led the Chiefs of Staff and their Deputies to advise that there should be a complete alteration of the emphasis between the two pincer attacks and the Centre attack: in the following sense: that the main weight should be thrown into the Northern and Southern pincers, and that the central attack on T. should be reduced to a demonstration.

2. Owing to the rapidity with which events and opinions have moved, it became necessary to take a decision of which the Prime Minister has approved, as set out in paragraph 1, and orders are being issued accordingly.

3. It is proposed to encourage the idea of a central attack upon T., and to emphasise this by a bombardment by battleships of the outer forts at the suitable moment.
4. Every effort will be made to strengthen Carton de Wiart with artillery, without which his force is not well-composed.

5. All the troops we have now under orders for "Hammer" will be shoved in as quickly as possible, mostly in warships, at the various ports of the Romsdale Fjord to press on to Dombaas, and then, some delaying force being sent southward to the Norwegian main front, the bulk will turn north towards Trondheim. There is already one brigade (Morgan's) ashore beyond Aandalesnes with the 600 Marines. The brigade from France and the supporting Territorial brigade, will all be thrown in here as quickly as possible. This should enable Dombaas to be secured, and the control to be extended to the more easterly of the two Norwegian railways running from Oslo to Trondheim, Storen being a particularly advantageous point. The destination of the Second Demi-Brigade of Chasseurs Alpins, the two battalions of the French Foreign Legion, and the thousand Canadians, can for today or tomorrow be left open.

6. The position of the Namsos Force must be regarded as somewhat hazardous, but its Commander is used to taking risks. On the other hand, it is not seen why we cannot bring decisive superiority to bear along the Aandalesnes-Dombaas railway, and operate as occasion serves beyond that most important point, the object being the isolation of Trondheim and its capture.

7. Although this change of emphasis is to be deprecated on account of its being a change, it must be recognised that we move from a more hazardous to a less hazardous operation, and greatly reduce the strain upon the Navy involved in "Hammer". It would seem that our
results would be equally achieved by the safer plan, and it does not follow that they will be delayed. We can certainly get more men sooner on to Norwegian soil by this method than the other.

8. It is not possible to deprive Narvik of its battleships at the moment we have urged strenuous action. Warspite has therefore been ordered to return. Some further reinforcement will be required for Narvik, which must be studied at once. The Canadians should be considered.

9. At the same time, the sweep of the Skagerrek will now become possible to clear away the enemy anti-submarine craft and aid our submarines.

10. In harmony with the above, the Planning Staffs are working this afternoon upon the precise arrangements. The First Sea Lord is explaining the situation to C.-in-C., Home Fleet, as I shall do tomorrow when I visit him at Scapa. The Military Co-ordination Committee will meet this evening at 10 p.m. to consider the technical proposals either at 10 Downing Street or the Admiralty as the Prime Minister may desire.

(Signed) WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.
ANNEX II.

WAR CABINET.
MILITARY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE.

OPERATION "HAMMER".
Aide Memoire prepared for the Chiefs of Staff.

In view of the success of the landings at Namsos and Andalsnes the Chiefs of Staff have thought it right to re-consider the plan for Operation "Hammer" as a matter of urgency.

2. In the first place, the Chiefs of Staff have always realised that Operation "Hammer", as originally conceived, was open to very considerable risks. A combined operation involving an opposed landing has at all times proved to be one of the most difficult and hazardous operations of war, for which the most detailed and careful preparation is necessary.

3. They have appreciated that the plan had the following disadvantages:-

(a) The concentration of almost the whole of the Home Fleet in an area where it could be subjected to heavy air attack.

(b) In the absence of previous reconnaissance and of air photographs, the plan has been worked out from maps and charts.

(c) Owing to the urgency of carrying out the operations at the earliest possible date, insufficient time has been available for that detailed and meticulous preparation which is so necessary in operations of this character and magnitude.

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The new factors in the situation are—

(a) The seizure of the landing places at Namsos and Andalsnes without loss and the establishment of our forces ashore at these places.

(b) Reports from a reliable source that the Germans are working hard at improving the defences of the port and approaches at Trondheim.

(c) Press reports have already appeared of our intentions to carry out a direct landing at Trondheim.

5. Weighing up the above considerations the Chiefs of Staff are unanimous that we should take advantage of our unexpected success in landing forces North and South of Trondheim to turn a venture, which was attended by grave hazards, into an operation which can achieve the same result with much less risk.

6. It is essential that we should seize Trondheim and use it as a base for subsequent operations in Scandinavia, and if we were to do so by a spectacular direct assault in the near few days, the political reactions would no doubt be most favourable. Nevertheless the Chiefs of Staff feel that if the operation failed or was even only partially successful, the effect on subsequent operations and on Norwegian resistance, as well as the political repercussions, would be very grave.

7. Moreover, by a change of plan, the press reports of our intentions can be turned to our advantage, and by judicious "leakage" in various directions, it should be possible to reinforce the impression that our original plan still holds.

8. The revised plan, in brief, is as follows:-

(a) Push in the maximum forces possible at Namsos and more particularly at Andalsnes.

(b) Get control of the road and rail communications running as quickly as possible through Dombaas.

(c) The force from Namsos to invest Trondheim from the North and the force from Andalsnes to advance on the port from the South.

(d) A bombardment of the outer forts by H.M. ships, with a view to deluding the enemy into thinking a direct assault is about to take place just before the main landings at (a)
9. The Chief of Staff consider that by dispersing our forces, and by making use of as many landing places as possible, the risk of air attack, which may be heavy at Andalsnes, can be accepted. They are examining the possibility of establishing fighters ashore near Andalsnes.

10. By the plan now proposed we shall invest Trondhjem by land and blockade it by sea and although its capture will take longer than originally contemplated, it may be possible to put our main forces ashore at a slightly earlier date.

11. Finally the Chiefs of Staff point out that the enveloping operation, as opposed to direct assault, will release a considerable number of valuable units of the Fleet for operations in other areas e.g. at Narvik.

12. They recommend that the outline plan referred to in paragraph 8 above should be adopted in preference to our original plan for a direct assault, and that the necessary details should be worked out with the utmost despatch.
Preliminary Notes for an Appreciation of the Situation in Central Scandinavia.

Memorandum by
the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

1. Object.
Our object remains to capture Trondheim and establish control of that part of Norway which will give security to the railway running east from Trondheim into Sweden.

2. Enemy Strength.
The chief enemy forces which affect our problem are:
(a) Those in Trondheim area, say 3,000 to 5,000 liable to be reinforced by air up to a total of say 8,000.
(b) Those which have landed in Oslo area. These can be reinforced by sea and air. Within a week or two they might amount to two or three divisions including possibly one light division. We may anticipate that some part of them would advance up the railway towards Lillehammer, while some other part, after clearing up the Norwegian division which has been north-east of Oslo, might advance along the light railway through Elverum. Other detachments might advance by such passable roads as could be found with a view to outflanking Allied forces which might be opposing the direct German advance along the railways.
(c) It seems unlikely that the Germans could make any effective advance from the south-west, i.e. from Bergen or Stavanger, owing to lack of roads and railways.
(d) Air. The scale of air attack which the Germans will develop may increase beyond what we are now experiencing if they are able to develop ground aerodromes. On the other hand, the use they are now making of frozen lakes as aerodromes must cease with the thaw.

3. Own Strength.
(a) Based on Namsos.
146 Inf. Bde. (transport en route).
Demi bde. Chasseurs Alpins will commence landing
tonight. Their transport is with them. They have 12 25-mm.
A.A. guns.

There are strong reasons for following the 1st Echelon of
the French force with a second echelon, so that the whole can
operate together. The second echelon includes mountain artillery
and light tanks, and could commence landing about the 25th.
They are not so organised that the two demi Brigades can be
easily separated.

(b) Based on MOLDE and AANDALSNES.

About 1,000 men of 148 Inf. Bde. have landed, and are to
be followed shortly by the remainder. Transport is on route
with four light A.A. guns, bringing their total to eight.

(c) Reinforcements available:

15 Inf. Bde.
147 Inf. Bde. (transport and one battery 25-pdrs. ready
to sail.) also four light A.A. guns.
Base personnel - 1 heavy A.A. battery, one 25-pdr.
battery, one A.T. battery.
1,000 Canadians, in no way organised for sustained
operations in Scandinavia.
A further French contingent - 2 bns. Foreign Legion, and
four bns. Poles might reach Scandinavia the first
week in May.
Another heavy A.A. battery should be available about the
21st May.

(d) Norwegians.

Owing to very serious shortages of equipment, small
reliance can be placed on any Norwegian forces at present.
Should we be able adequately to cover their re-organisation and
re-equipment, some material value might be got from them after
a month or two. Rifles to be supplied at once.

(e) Air.

Nil. It is essential to develop our own air resources.

4. Some limiting factors.

(a) Snow. In the NAMSOS - TRONDHEIM area, snow and thaw will
hamper movement for another weeks.

In the AANDALSNES - LILLEHAMMER - TRONDHEIM area, snow
may disappear a little sooner.
(b) Mountains. The mountainous character of much of the country restricts movement on any considerable scale to well-defined lines of advance. Demolition of communications is fairly easy.

From the above factors it is clear that advance and attack are hampered and defence facilitated by the conditions, and that control of railways is extremely important. 

(c) Base facilities. Facilities for the development of a base either at Namsos or in the Molde -Arendal area are meagre in the extreme, and will certainly set a limit on the forces which can be maintained.

Closely linked with this factor is the vulnerability of shipping when approaching these bases in the face of hostile air forces.

It follows that the hasty despatch of troops through these bases entails risks of administrative breakdown. Moreover, should shipping losses from air attack prove unduly heavy, the abandonment of the operation on this account might have to be seriously considered.

5. Enemy courses of action.

Enemy forces in Trondheim area have pushed east to the Swedish frontier and southwards down the railway. It seems likely that, while fortifying their position at Trondheim itself and against advance from Namsos, the Germans would be well-advised to operate such forces as they can spare southwards from Trondheim in an endeavour to open up through communications to their force advancing north from Oslo area.

Similarly, the forces assembling in the Oslo area must almost certainly have as their main role an advance to effect a junction with Trondheim forces. This they are likely to attempt not only along the main railway to Dombaas, but also the light railway further east. The road running alongside this railway is the only one likely to be clear of snow in the immediate future.

* Whether in snow or in mountains, the force which is equipped and trained to give it tactical mobility will possess a great advantage over one which is not so trained.
6. **Own courses.**

If we are to capture Trondheim by a pincer movement from the north and south, it is essential that each half of the pincers should operate in security. It is clear that the southern pincer would be threatened by any powerful German advance in the direction of Oslo. To secure ourselves against such an enemy advance is therefore an essential measure for the realisation of plans.

To hold the enemy on their line of advance to Lillehammer is the first essential. This will certainly need a brigade as soon as we can get one forward. As the Germans develop their advance, we may well need a division. It is equally important to arrest a German advance along the light railway. This will need a detachment, which must if possible operate to the southward of the lateral road from Venebygden to Atcosen K. It is therefore clear that for some weeks, it would be out of the question to provide any appreciable force to advance on Trondheim from the south. It is probably true that our pincer movement could not be developed within a month.

The capture of Trondheim could therefore only be effective before this date by an advance from Namsos.

In principal, those of our forces which possess the least tactical mobility should be employed on the defensive role in the south, and those possessing the greatest tactical mobility on the offensive role from the north. This constitutes a strong argument for employing the whole of the Chasseurs Alpins under Carton de Wiart.

The possibility of effecting a feint by naval forces against Trondheim is of importance. It is at present impossible to say at what date it might be of the greatest value. The date must depend on Carton de Wiart's progress.