

GREAT BRITAIN - Military Situation: December 1941

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

December 1st, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the latest reports received from London
on the military situation. They are
dated November 28th and December 1st,
1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIEDOPTEL 6

28 November, 1941.

(I) MILITARY

LIBYA. The enemy still holds area Northwest of EL DUDA. The enemy raiding column appears to have collected some German garrisons of HALFAYA and SIDI OMAR and was recalled by German headquarters on morning of 27th. It was intercepted by our armoured forces as reported in my OPTEL No. 5.

ETHIOPIA. Deserters report that after our forces had attacked near GONDAR the Officer commanding Italian Reserve Brigade ordered a counter attack which his troops refused to carry out. In West, patriots have cut road CHEIGA-AZOZO and S.A.A.F. aircraft yesterday attacked AZOZO aerodrome and bombed forts and trenches in this area.

(II) AIR OPERATIONS

26/27. 87 tons of H.E. and 11,000 incendiaries were dropped on EMDEN. Thick clouds prevented observation. 13 tons of bombs were dropped on OSTEND where bursts were seen in docks.

27th. Beauforts attacked a 1,500 ton merchant vessel off THE HAGUE and left it listing heavily. Hurricane bombers sank a 2,500 ton vessel and an anti-aircraft ship off Normandy and set a second anti-aircraft ship on fire. 2 M.E. 109's were shot down by escorting Spitfires. We lost 3 Hurricane bombers in an attack on shipping in BOULOGNE harbour.

27th/28th. 98 aircraft were sent out: 86 of them including 11 heavy to DUSSELDORF, 1 is missing and 2 crashed: 3 members of the crew killed.

LIBYA. 26th. A total of 11 squadrons of Blenheims and Marylands resumed attacks on enemy tanks, armoured vehicles and M/T. Near SIDI-OMAR and EL-ADEM many fires were started among transport vehicles, while at EL DUDA a column of armoured vehicles was partially destroyed and completely dispersed.

27th. 4 Malta Blenheims scored hits on barracks near TRIPOLI aerodrome.

Hurricanes in a fight with 12 M.E. 109's over EL-ADEM destroyed 2 and damaged 2. 4 Hurricanes are missing.

28 November, 1941

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. 26th. A 7,000 ton liner escorted by a destroyer was attacked by 2 Blenheims off HOMS (LIBYA). 2 hits were scored on liner and one on the destroyer; next day the liner was seen to be low in the water 300 yards from the shore.

(III) G.A.F.

27th/28th. 38 aircraft were operating over the THAMES ESTUARY.

(IV) AXIS AIR FORCES IN LIBYA

Heavy rain and floods which made aerodromes unserviceable and communication difficult resulted in a slow start by Axis, they are now maintaining an intensive effort and their casualties have not been excessive.

In general Axis Air Forces have been mainly employed in protecting their bases and supporting their ground troops. Their action against our Fleet has been negligible and bombing of our back areas has not been heavy or particularly effective.

Both German and Italian morale seems good. The Italian Fighter Force has been mainly employed in escort of German Junker 87's and on defensive patrol work. The German Me 109's have made effective interception of our aircraft and bombing by their Junker 88's of our aerodromes has sometimes been good.

The main concentration of Axis aircraft is in the BENDHAZI area which is probably congested.

The effect of strained Axis supply situation should become apparent within the next few days, in spite of liberal employment of Junker 52 transport aircraft to improve matters.

The following reinforcements have reached LIBYA since our offensive started:

(a) German: About 25 Junker 88's, sent to CYRENAICA from GREECE at beginning of offensive, have since returned to ATHENS probably owing to shortage of fuel at BENDHAZI.

Some 25 Me. 110's were brought from CRETE and SICILY to CYRENAICA but majority of these have been lost and not replaced.

15 Junker 87's came from CRETE. No reinforcements of Me. 109's have been received, but some are probably coming.

Two to three hundred Junker 52 transports aircraft from RUSSIA and Eastern GERMANY are now being employed in Libyan campaign.

OPTEL 6

- 3 -

28 November, 1941

(b) Italian: Replacements for existing squadrons in CYRENAICA are not being regularly received, but reinforcements by new unit comprising 70 aircraft of all types have arrived.

It is believed that 25 Italian Junker 87's have reached TRIPOLI-TANIA and that some of them may have moved forward to CYRENAICA.

(v) SUPPLIES TO LIBYA

Numerous reports indicate a regular flow of supplies mainly food and lorries and quantities of small arms and ammunition from French North Africa to Libya. Goods railed to TUNIS, the end of standard gauge line, are re-loaded on to metric gauge railway to GABEZ at rate of one train a day. From GABEZ goods are sent in to LIBYA by lorry convoy.

There is no confirmation that a railway has been constructed joining GABEZ with ZUARA in LIBYA. It is however reported that a loop line by passing TUNIS by connecting TERESSA with KASSARINE was completed on September 7th and that substantial quantities of lorries have been delivered to LIBYA by this route.

OPTEL 7

29 November, 1941

The enemy is withdrawing west from frontier area to assist his troops in TOBRUK area. Our armoured troops are concentrating on preventing his escape. No further reports yet of progress of battle.

On afternoon 27th pockets of enemy were still reported holding out in SIDI-OMAR area.

TOBRUK. Night 27/28. Indications that enemy artillery are thinning out. On morning 28th efforts were being made to round up small pockets of enemy on BARDIA road.

COPY NO. 11

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~~BRITISH MOST SECRET.~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

1st December, 1941.

OPTEL NO. 8.

(Information received up to 0700/29 November, 1941).

(1) NAVAL.

On 22nd, a merchant raider, believed to be German GOLDENFELS (7,800 tons) was sunk by a British Cruiser about 800 miles south west of Freetown.

It is confirmed that a British Cruiser sank German Raider KORMDRANT (believed about 10,000 tons) from which some German survivors were rescued. A British submarine attacked an enemy destroyer at anchor in Navarino south west Greece probably obtaining 2 hits.

Early this morning E-boats attacked a convoy North of Cromer: it is believed ONE and possibly 2 vessels were torpedoed.

(11) MILITARY.

LIBYA. 27th. Pockets of enemy remaining in SIDI OMAR area are making communications difficult.

The enemy column reported moving south of GAMBUT has been engaged by our armoured forces which destroyed 14 enemy tanks and much mechanical transport. Enemy was prevented from moving west and scattered north west and south west. The occupants of several vehicles surrendered in an exhausted condition. The battle was still in progress on the morning of 28th and some 50 tanks possibly including some dummies driven south east were being chased by our armoured forces.

Part of Italian ARIETE Division comprising 45 tanks encountered some of our forces near GABR SALEH on morning of 28th and was driven north. A force has been ordered to prevent junction of these tanks with those proceeding south east.

At dawn on 28th an enemy force attacked New Zealand troops near SIDI AZEIZ: some of our troops were forced to withdraw to area of SIDI OMAR.

TOBRUK. Night of 27th/28th was quiet. 79 field and medium guns have been captured, of which 20 are serviceable. New Zealand Divisions are meeting with stiff resistance.

ETHIOPIA. After hard fight from dawn 27th, General NASI surrendered GONDAR Fortress. Full details are not yet known.

RUSSIA: In KLIN sector, the Germans have made some progress eastwards. The situation in TULA sector is confused, but it is believed Germans have made considerable progress in area south east of this town. North west of ROSTOV the Russians are counter attacking.

(111) AIR OPERATIONS.

27th/28th. 68 tons H.E., including 10 4,000 pounders, were dropped at DUSSELDORF. Bursts were seen in town and near a railway centre; large and medium sized fires were started.

28th. Hudsons sank a 1,000 ton tanker in a Norwegian Fiord and set on fire an anti-aircraft ship off the Hague. Near misses were claimed on 3 merchant ships off Norwegian Coast. 28th/29th. All offensive operations cancelled.

LIBYA. 26th. In CAPUZZO area, Hurricane bombers dispersed a stationary mechanical transport believed to be a Staff conference, damaged several vehicles.

27th. As a preliminary to an attack by our armoured units, MARYLANDS and Blenheims bombed the column of enemy tanks and mechanical transport moving westward south east of GAMBUT: many hits were scored. Another effective attack was carried out against a mechanised transport column and a large dump on AKROMA Road near EL ADEM.

During 26th and 27th our fighters made several sweeps over battle area and destroyed 2 enemy aircraft in the air and 3 on the ground, plus 9 damaged. 30 lorries some containing troops and an armoured car were also destroyed.

Central Mediterranean. 27th/28th. 21 Wellingtons dropped 25 tons of bombs including 3 4,000 pounders on Naples. 1 4,000 pound bomb is reported to have fallen in Royal Arsenal and another on a railway junction. Other hits were claimed on a torpedo factory and aircraft works 2 factories and an oil storage depot. 3 oil tanks were ignited and several other large fires were started. Blenheims reported 5 hits on a 5,000 ton tanker in NAVARINO Bay which set her on fire. Near misses were claimed on a 8,000 ton laden merchant vessel.

(iv) G.A.F. 28/29/ 55 aircraft were (?reported in operation) several of which were minelaying: 35 flew across DEVON and SOMERSET and some reached South Wales. One was shot down by a night fighter.

LIBYA. 27th/ One Italian Bomber, escorted by 11 Italian fighters, attacked AUGILA. Hurricanes shot down the bomber: One Hurricane was lost but the pilot saved.

(v) Aircraft casualties in operations over and from British Isles. German: 1 destroyed.

(vi) Home Security. 28th/29th. Parachute mine and bomber were dropped in SOMERSET, DEVON and

GLAMORGAN: but except at a south coast town where a parachute mine fell near centre of the town and another in the docks area causing widespread damage, casualties were few and damage was slight.

COPY NO. 11

BRITISH MOST SECRET
(U.S. SECRET)

1st December, 1941.

OPTEL NO. 9.

Libya despatched 1840 29th.

Enemy tanks and M.T. moving west from
Bir El Chelta withdrew Eastwards at 1230 28th.

Heavy engagement between our armoured
forces and about 70 enemy tanks was taking place at
1400 29th near Sidi Rezegh; at 1645 battle was
still continuing.

Indian troops in possession of all 3
Omars but enemy reported holding strong point just
North of Libyan Omar and being supplied from Bardia.
Dispositions taken to cut this supply line.

Our long range desert group still
patrolling in back areas.

Reported 700 prisoners captured at Gialo
our casualties 20.

Tobruk.

Enemy locality southeast side of
perimeter captured with several hundred prisoners.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

file
~~SECRET~~
December 1st, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the
latest report received from London on
the military situation. It was dated
November 30th, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
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The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

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30 November, 1941

OPTTEL 10

(I) NAVAL

A British submarine attacked an enemy force of cruisers and destroyers yesterday afternoon 70 miles South of TARANTO and claims three hits.

In E-Boat attack reported yesterday a British 3,000 ton merchant vessel and a (7700 ton) tanker were sunk. E-boats again attacked a convoy off CROMER early on 30th and sank another small British merchant ship.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. After tank battle near SIDI REZEGH (see OPTTEL No. 9) the enemy withdrew eastwards. There are no reports of tank (?casualties) in this engagement on either side but 10 German officers and 600 other ranks were captured. The Commander of 21st German armoured division, General Ravenstein, was also taken prisoner by New Zealand division.

So far 1,250 German prisoners including 51 officers and 1,600 Italians including 51 officers have reached ALEXANDRIA. A further 1,200 prisoners mostly Italians are at MERSA MATRUH.

RUSSIA. In TULA area a German thrust is in progress North eastward towards MOSCOW-RYAZAN railway. Strong Russian resistance is continuing in ROSTOV area where ROSTOV itself has been retaken.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

29th. Two Hudsons bombed two small merchant vessels off Dutch coast; one ship was badly damaged and possibly destroyed.

29th/30th. All offensive operations cancelled.

LIBYA. 27th/28th. 15 Wellingtons bombed DERNIA aerodrome; several aircraft on ground were set on fire and others damaged. Four other Wellingtons scored hits on several motor vehicles on road near APOLLONIA.

28th. Five squadrons of Blenheims and Marylands attacked with good results M.T. near MARTUBA and APOLLONIA and on BARDIA - TOBRUK and EL GAZALA - BARCE roads. At EL GAZALA one large enemy aircraft on ground was destroyed and two damaged.

Fighter squadrons carried out several sweeps over battle area; only one enemy aircraft, a ME. 110, was seen and this was shot down by Hurricanes which also machine-gunned about 20 motor vehicles. During these operations we lost four Blenheims and four Hurricanes. Severe enemy anti-aircraft fire was met.

28th/29th. 34 Wellingtons bombed BENGHAZI harbour. Two ships were hit. 5 naval aircraft from MALTA bombed TRIPOLI aerodrome. One enemy bomber was destroyed and others probably damaged.

(IV) Q.A.F.

Nothing of importance.

EGYPT. 28th, dusk. Enemy aircraft bombed railhead at SIDI BARRANI and set fire to a dump.

(V) HOME SECURITY

One bomb was dropped in daylight in Northern IRELAND; no damage or casualties.

30 November, 1941.

OPTTEL 11

LIBYA to evening 30th. At 1400/29th German armoured forces attacked NEW ZEALAND division in SIDI REZEZH area from East and South East with object of cutting it off and encircling it. One of our armoured brigades, strength about 60 tanks, moved North at 1400 and were reported about 6 miles South of SIDI REZEZH engaging enemy at 1645. This armoured brigade had previously been attacked by 16 enemy tanks about one mile further South; we lost 3 tanks, enemy casualties unknown.

Our support group was very active and successful against rear of 21st German armoured division which was attacking NEW ZEALAND division from East.

Corridor to TOBRUK reported clear and positions intact on evening 29th.

Enemy ship reported to have landed supplies near MERSA LUKA between TOBRUK and BARDIA.

Enemy tanks refuelled in area North East of SIDI OMAR and our armoured cars are patrolling this area.

On 28th patrol of long range desert forces shot up vehicles and personnel on road 40 miles North of AGEDABIA; other patrols active in the area BENGHAZI, MECHILI and DERNA.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 2, 1941.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies
of the latest reports received
from London on the military
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November 30th and December 1st.

Believe me,

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Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

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The Honourable
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the
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Washington, D.C.

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Copy No. 11

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(S.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 13

30 November, 1941

LIBYA. 30 Nov. Intense fighting continued on main front EL DUDA, SIDI REZEGH, BIREL HAMID with enemy endeavouring to sever TOBRUK Corridor with attacks from North East and South West.

During morning our armoured forces repulsed attack from West by 24 tanks and later attacked ARIETE Division to East destroying 16 out of 40 Italian tanks, ARIETE Division withdrew Northward towards GAMBUT pursued by 2 of our columns.

Enemy in frontier area continue to resist stoutly.

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Information received up to 7 a.m. 1st December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

On the 29th a 5,000 ton British Merchant Vessel in an outward bound convoy blew up after being torpedoed by U-boat 150 miles North West of the AZORES. There were no survivors.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. During the fighting on 29th November the enemy succeeded in capturing EL DUDA towards evening but was driven out by a counter attack during the night. The Italian Ariete Division is believed to have suffered heavy casualties on 29th.

In the Frontier area, the situation is being cleared up.

RUSSIA. Central Sector: The German thrust from the KLIN Area on MOSCOW has gained ground both in Easterly and South-Easterly directions. Further German progress has also been made West of MOSCOW in the area NOVO PETROVSKOE. A new German attack from the area TULA - USLOVAYA has made considerable progress North-Eastwards in the direction of KASCHIRA and RYAZAN. The thrust Eastwards towards RIAZHEK has reached SKOPIN. South-East of OREL another German advance has also been made. General - The battle for MOSCOW still continues and the Germans appear to be attempting to carry out an encircling movement in case their direct attack fails. Their Eastward advance from the TULA area already seriously threatens the MOSCOW - RIAZHEK - VORONEZH Railway. The Russian success at ROSTOV will at least temporarily delay the German passage over the River DON and subsequent advance into the CAUCASUS.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

30th/1st. 245 Aircraft, including 26 heavy were despatched. Hamburg 180, Emden 50, Ostend 3, Sea-mining 8, Leaflets 4. 19 bombers are missing and two others crashed, but the crews are safe. Coastal command aircraft successfully bombed a 5,000 ton merchant vessel off the Frisian Islands, which was last seen sinking fast. A 4,000 ton vessel was attacked and a large explosion was seen amid-ships, another ship of 6,000 tons was probably hit.

LIBYA. 29th November. 5 medium bomber squadrons and some Hurricane bombers attacked concentrations of M.T. and other military objectives near EL ADEM and SIDI REZEZH, several fires were started among the vehicles and a work-shop was destroyed. Fighters shot down two enemy fighters, probably destroyed one and damaged one. Some large enemy air formations were reported.

29th/30th November. 35 Wellingtons attacked the harbour and shipping at BENHAZI and 5 others bombed DERNA landing ground.

30th. A Maryland Squadron bombed M.T. near EL ADEM and started a large fire among dumps. One offensive fighter patrol of two Tomahawk Squadrons intercepted 30 Ju. 87's with fighter cover, over EL GOBI, they destroyed 9 enemy aircraft, damaged 14 others and forced the dive-bombers to jettison their bombs. 4 Tomahawks were lost but the pilots are safe. A reconnaissance Me. 110 was also shot down near BARDIA.

Central Mediterranean. 30th - Elenheims attacked a 4,000 ton Merchant Vessel off NAVARINO, the ship was set on fire and the crew were seen abandoning her, another 2,000 ton ship was damaged.

(IV) G.A.F.

Nothing of importance to report.

LIBYA. 29th November. Enemy aircraft again attacked SIDI BARRANI railhead, no details available.

(V) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES in operations over and from the British Isles. British, 19 missing.

(VI) LATE NEWS

The Coastal Command operations in paragraph 3 were by R.C.A.F. aircraft.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

PERSONAL

2nd December, 1941.

Dear Mr. President,

You will remember that some time ago you asked me whether I could get any information from the War Office as to the proportion of Army recruits who were rejected on mental or physical grounds for comparison with your own figures.

I send you a note I have just received from England which is, I think, self-explanatory. You will observe that they regard the information as very confidential.

I am,

Mr. President,

Yours very sincerely,

Halifax

The Honourable Franklin D. Roosevelt.
President of the United States.

Medical examination before entry into the forces is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour.

The Ministry has furnished a statement of which a copy is enclosed. It is impossible to give separate figures for the army, which is presumably what the President wished to have, as the statistics record all men examined before entry into any of the Services, there being no means of distinguishing those who subsequently pass into a particular service.

It is not possible, either, to indicate the various disabilities on account of which men are placed in grades 3 or 4, which under present practice are not called up for service.

The information contained in the enclosed statement, with the exception of the definition of the four grades, is of the most secret nature as it reveals the numbers of men who have been examined. Some particulars of the percentages of men found to be fit have passed into the press, but of course no information as to actual numbers has been published.

~~SECRET AND CONFIDENTIAL~~

NOTE ON MEDICAL GRADINGS OF RECRUITS UNDER
NATIONAL SERVICE ACTS.

Statistics relating to the medical gradings of men called up under the National Service Acts for examination by Medical Boards before entry into the Services (Navy, Army, Air Force or Civil Defence) are given below. They include men called up under the Military Training Act during the three months before the war began. They do not include men entering the Regular Forces before the war, Reservists or Territorials called out on the outbreak of war, nor men joining any of the Services voluntarily during the war..

Medical Boards classify men in four Grades defined as follows:-

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Grade I - men who, subject only to such minor disabilities as can be remedied or adequately compensated by artificial means, attain the full normal standard of health and strength and are capable of enduring physical exertion suitable to their age.

Grade II - Those who, while suffering from disabilities disqualifying them for Grade I, do not suffer from progressive organic disease, have fair hearing and vision, are of moderate muscular development, and are able to undergo a considerable amount of physical exertion not involving severe strain.

Where a man has been placed in this Grade solely on account of either defects of visual acuity or deformities of the power extremities, or both, the letter '(a)' followed by the words "vision" or "feet" in brackets, will be inserted after the grade, i.e. "Grade II (a) (vision)" or "Grade II (a) (feet)".

Grade III/

Grade III - Those who present such marked physical disabilities or evidence of past disease that they are not fit for the amount of exertion required for Grade II.

Grade IV - Those who suffer from progressive organic disease or are for other reasons permanently incapable of the kind or degree of exertion required for Grade III. These men are unfit for any form of service.

After examination men are posted to the Services as required. The figures given below do not therefore relate to a particular Service, but to the Services as a whole.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Number of men examined</u> <u>during the period</u> <u>8.6.39 to 27.9.41.</u>	<u>Percentage of</u> <u>Total Examined</u>
I	1,876,905	65.8
II(a) (Vision)	117,126	4.1
II(a) (Feet)	85,276	3.0
II	225,488	7.9
Total of II(a) & II	427,890	15.0
Total of I & II	2,304,795	80.8
III	271,417	9.5
IV	276,960	9.7
<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>	2,853,180	

Notes

- (1) Apart from men who have been medically examined, 25,039 men liable for Service who are obviously crippled or have lost limbs have not been medically examined or called up.
- (2) No figures are available to show the particular disabilities on account of which men have been placed in Grades III and IV.
- (3) Men placed in Grade III, although liable for Service, have not in general yet been called up.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 4th, 1941

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of
the latest report received from London
on the military situation. It was
dated December 2nd, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Hanfax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States

of America,

Washington, D. C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~~~(TOP SECRET)~~

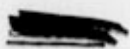
OPTEL No. 16

LIBYA. To A.M. 2nd December. Throughout 1st December very heavy fighting continued in area BIR EL HAMID - ~~IAASRAM~~ (three miles further east) - SIDI REZEGH, in which enemy succeeded in splitting junction of New Zealand Division with TOBRUK garrison, and forced us to withdraw to South. TOBRUK garrison still hold EL DUDA. By night 1/2 December our main concentration including our armoured forces was on line of track TIGH EL ABED (SHEFFERZEN to EL GOBI) from whence enemy moving south of escarpments were being harassed. Portion of New Zealand Division were patrolling West from MENASTIR (fourteen miles N.N.W. of BARDIA). Indian troops were clearing up frontier area where enemy still hold BARDIA, area SOLLUM - HALFAYA, and a point six miles N.W. of SIDI OMAR. By morning second December our patrols were forward on line of escarpment from a point twenty miles west of BARDIA through a point six miles W.S.W. of SIDI REZEGH, thence to EL GOBI. Armoured car patrols operating on enemy L. of C. West of ACROMA were successful, and destroyed enemy M.T.

(II) AIR

During first December, four Blenheim squadrons with fighter escort bombed enemy M.T. and tanks south of SIDI REZEGH at noon. Details obscured by cloud but large fire started among vehicles. In afternoon one Maryland squadron with fighter escort attacked about three hundred M.T. north of SIDI REZEGH. Bombing was very effective, many vehicles destroyed. Dump inside BARDIA perimeter also bombed causing a very violent explosion and large fires.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

 December 5th, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

— I enclose herein two copies
of the latest reports received from London
on the military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

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~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 19

Information received up to 7 a.m., 4th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Attacks on Shipping - 2nd. Norwegian ship of medium tonnage torpedoed and sunk East of GIBRALTAR. Third p.m. British ship of small tonnage mined and sunk in BRISTOL CHANNEL.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 2nd. (Additional to OPTEL No. 18). Our patrols reported area from BARDIA to twenty-five miles to West clear of enemy. German armoured cars were encountered in GAMBUT area. Night 2nd/3rd. Italian troops, probably Ariete Division reported area BIR COLETA (six miles South of GAMBUT) morning 3rd. Enemy motor transport reported moving East along TRIGH CAPUZZO (EL ADEM-SOLLUM road). About fifty motor transport had reached SISI AZEIZ and about one thousand motor transport were following a few miles behind, being harassed by our mobile columns. A detachment of the enemy was also reported digging in at EL GOBI.

RUSSIA. MOSCOW Sector. In their North East and Eastward advance from the Sector immediately South of TULA, the Germans have forced a salient reaching the railway running South East from XASCHIRA at a point some eighty miles East South East of TULA.

ROSTOV Sector. There are indications that the German forces have moved back to the TAGANROG area.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

A Beaufort attacked a three thousand ton merchant vessel off STAVANGER and set it on fire. 3rd/4th. No offensive operations owing to wide-spread fog.

LIBYA. Night 1st/2nd. Wellingtons dropped seventeen tons of bombs on objectives at BENGAZI and DERNA and on motor transport on the DERNA - CIRENE Road. Hits were obtained on buildings at DERNA and on the motor transport, but at BENGAZI results could not be observed owing to bad weather. 2nd. Operations were severely restricted by rain and low cloud, but South African Marylands scored hits on buildings at BARDIA, and Hurricanes destroyed one enemy aircraft and damaged fourteen on the ground at JEDABAYA and MERSA BREGA (forth three miles South West of JEDABAYA). During these operations we lost five fighters.

(IV) G.A.F.

3rd and 3rd/4th. Activity against United Kingdom negligible.

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~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 20

LIBYA. TOBRUK reported all quiet night 2nd/3rd December.

3rd December. Ground and air reconnaissance indicate enemy in some strength in area triangle SIDI REZEGH - BIR CHLETA (20 miles further East) EL GOBI. Our patrols destroyed 3 Italian tanks, 10 miles North of EL GOBI, 57 enemy tanks seen 8 miles South East of SIDI REZEGH and enemy concentrated about BIR CHLETA were engaged, but no details reported.

Royal Engineers destroyed 65 disabled enemy tanks, and estimated a further 25 seen so badly damaged as not to require further demolition.

Cloud restricted air operations but fresh digging seen in area South of SISI to EL ADEM, also large concentration of motor transports 5 miles South West of EL ADEM, and a great number of motor transports (?widely) dispersed to South East of SIDI. 3 Blenheims squadrons effectively bombed enemy motor transports concentrated on TRIGH CAPUZZO obtaining many hits on motor transports and A.F.V's.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 8th, 1941.


Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of the
three latest reports received from London
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Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

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Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

REGRADED
 UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~OPTEL No. 21

Information received up to 7 a.m., 5th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

3rd/4th. Motor torpedo boats and motor gun boats severely damaged a trawler in an attack on several enemy vessels off CAP GRIS NEZ; our light craft sustained some damage and a few casualties.

A Polish submarine attacked an escorted convoy of three ships on 21st November off NAVARINO and considers 1 sunk.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. On morning of 3rd, enemy column of tanks and mechanical transport advanced East from GAMEUT towards MENASTIR and SIDI AZEIZ and were successfully engaged by one mobile column.

Morning 4th. West of MENASTIR 40 Germans were killed, 4 guns captured and a large number of mechanical transport vehicles destroyed.

Pressure on enemy centres of resistance in frontier area continues.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

4th. A 2500 ton merchant vessel was attacked by a Hudson off Southern NORWAY and left on fire and sinking.

4th/5th. All operations cancelled.

LIBYA. 2nd. Our fighters destroyed 1 enemy aircraft on ground at BARCE, probably destroyed 20 and damaged a further 6.

3rd. Though operations were restricted by bad weather, our bombers successfully attacked mechanical transport N.E. of SIDI REZEZGH scoring many hits.

4th. Petrol and oil lorries were (?set) on fire in SIRTE area and 3 enemy aircraft were damaged on TAMET aerodrome. Report from military source states during fighter sweep in EL ADEM - SIDI REZEZGH area we destroyed 13 enemy aircraft, probably destroyed 7 and damaged 11. 3 of our fighters are missing.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. 4th. Hlenheims from MALTA attacked railway sidings at ST. GIOVANNI near REGGIO. A train of 24 petrol wagons was completely burnt out and 2 other fires were started in railway centre. 1 Hlenheim is missing.

(IV) G.A.F.

Nothing to report.

(V) The Italians appear to be disputing with Germans over ITALY's share in Roumanian oil. The Italians complain that their recent agreed quota cannot be delivered (was) Germans are refusing tank car facilities. Meanwhile the sea route via DARDANELLES has proved too costly to be workable.

ITALY's oil stocks are believed to be virtually exhausted and minimum import requirements to maintain her war effort are estimated at 100,000 tons a month. Deliveries from ROUMANIA have dropped from 110,000 tons in September to below 80,000 tons in October and indications are that they will fall even lower.

(VI) The Germans are making more and more use of producer gas. They have announced that in German-controlled Europe, 150 thousand lorries have already been fitted with generators and that plans are in hand for converting further considerable numbers. More agricultural tractors and even canal barges are also being fitted with generators. In ROUMANIA, Methane gas is being developed as a substitute for oil.

(VII) RUSSIA

There is reason to believe heavy Russian attacks have been made in DONETZ Basin. In ROSTOV area the Russians have passed retreating German force to River MIUS North of TAGANROG.

11

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UNCLASSIFIED ~~(U.S. SECRET)~~.

OPTEL NO. 22.

Begins:- (Information received up to 0700 6th December).

(1) NAVAL.

1 of H.M. Armed Boarding Vessels has been damaged or sunk between Alexandria and Tobruk. Several survivors have been rescued. 33 survivors from a medium sized British Merchant Vessel were landed at Madeira on 4th. The ship was in a Southbound Atlantic convoy and was torpedoed on 30th November South South East of Azores. 17 of crew are missing.

(11) MILITARY.

Libya.

4th. On morning of 4th enemy attacked El Duda from West and South East and from area of Bir El Hamed and were repulsed with heavy casualties. This attack was renewed in the afternoon by enemy infantry supported by a heavy bombardment and enemy succeeded in gaining a footing. Counter attack, supported by "I" tanks, retook some of the ground and a night operation, staged to recover 15 of our (? disabled) tanks, restored the whole position.

Same afternoon one of our armoured brigades and an Indian brigade in an attack on El Gobi destroyed 15 tanks of Ariete Division and 150 M.T.: 400 Italian prisoners, 2 medium batteries and 5 anti tank guns were captured. 55000 gallons of enemy fuel was destroyed and 55 supply lorries and much ammunition taken.

An enemy column of 30 tanks and 300 M.T. probably of 15th German Armoured Division, moving Eastwards along Trigh-Capuzzo was engaged by 1 of our mobile columns.

Further report of New Zealand action West of Menastir gives 100 Germans killed, 100 prisoners, mostly Italian, taken and 2 tanks knocked out. Our casualties were 9 wounded.

Total prisoners in Tobruk are now 53 officers and about 2,500 other ranks, approximately 40 percent Germans.

Indian troops in their recent operations in Sidi Omar area captured 59 guns of all types.

Russia.

Moscow Sector. German forces have made a slight local advance near Klin.

Central Sector. Between Tula and Kursk the Germans have made some progress towards Yelets.

(iii) AIR OPERATIONS.

At dusk on 4th Hudsons hit and probably destroyed a 2,500 ton M/V off Norway.

5th. Hurricane Bombers and Fighters damaged several coastal vessels off Northwest France. One M.E. 109 was destroyed. 4 Hurricanes and 2 Spitfires were lost during day. Off Dutch Coast Beaufighters damaged a small ship and a Hudson probably sank a trawler.

5th/6th. No bombing operations.

Libya.

3rd/4th and 4th/5th. Wellingtons dropped a total of 75 tons of bombs on enemy concentrations El Adem area and started large fires.

4th. 11 Blenheims and 2 squadrons of Marylands attacked transports East of Sidi Rezegh. Large fires were started and explosion caused among about 700 M.T. on Trigh-Capuzzo South of Gambut.

Acting on information from ground sources, 2 S.A.A.F. Tomahawk squadrons surprised, over El Adem, a formation of dive bombers escorted by Italian Fighters. In ensuing fight, 6 Junker 87's were destroyed, 1 and 1 Fighter probably destroyed and 5 Junker 87's damaged. No casualties to Tomahawks but 2 collided when returning, both pilots saved.

4 Tomahawk and Hurricane Squadrons intercepted a formation of Junker 87's escorted by German and Italian Fighters, about 70 all told, which were attacking our ground forces in Sidi Rezegh area. The dive bombers were forced to jettison their bombs; one Junker 87 and 8 Fighters were destroyed, one Junker 87 and 5 Fighters probably destroyed and 6 Fighters damaged. Our casualties one Hurricane and two Tomahawks, two pilots safe.

(iv) G.A.F.

Nothing to report.

(v) Aircraft casualties in operations over and from British Isles.

German - one, British - six.

(vi) Since Surian campaign the Germans have permitted an expansion of French Air Force, the first line strength of which has increased from about 850 aircraft on 1st October to nearly 1,000 on 1st December.

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~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL NO.23.

LIBYA.

5th. Our mobile columns operated throughout the day harassing the enemy with great success especially on Trigh Capuzzo and in area Sidi Regegh El Adem where he is concentrated. One of them returned with 100 prisoners having destroyed 60 enemy M.T. and a forward supply depot. In the evening, an enemy counter attack North of El Gobi was repulsed.

TOBRUK.

400 Infantry and 150 M.T. were engaged South of El Duda by our artillery, machine guns and aircraft. Heavy casualties were inflicted and columns scattered in confusion.

5 Dive bombers were shot down by our ground troops.

6th Battle reported in progress at 1100 between our armoured force and 15th German Armoured Division 12 miles North of El Gobi.

AIR

5th. Reconnaissance reported 55 enemy aircraft at Gazala aerodrome, 50, mostly fighters, at Martuba, and 70 at Derna. 1000 dispersed M.T. 20 miles West of El Adem and over 1000 M.T. South of El Adem.

Hurricane Bombers made two effective attacks on M.T. and troops on Trigh Capuzzo. Severe dust storm prevented medium bomber operations.

19 Tomahawks intercepted 35 dive bombers escorted by 30 mixed fighters about to attack our troops near El Adem. Majority jettisoned their bombs. Tomahawks destroyed 17 dive bombers and 3 fighters, probably destroyed 3 dive bombers and 3 fighters and damaged 1 dive bomber and 4 fighters. 4 Tomahawks missing. In further air fight, one German fighter was destroyed and one Italian and 3 German fighters damaged. Two Hurricanes missing.

5th/6th. Weather prevented heavy bomber operations.

Taken from Pearl Harbor
material -

"British Reports - 1941
Box 16 - Drums -

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 8th, 1941.

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the latest report received from London
on the military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH SECRET~~REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIEDOPTEL No. 24

Information received up to 7 a.m. 7th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Air reconnaissance reported at 3.15 a.m. 6th two Japanese convoys of 25 and 10 ships respectively, escorted by Cruisers and Destroyers, off POINT CAMBO (COCHIN CHINA) course 270 degs. West. Contact has since been lost and no further news is yet available. The armed boarding vessel mentioned in yesterday's summary was sunk by torpedo aircraft. She had on board 300 British wounded and 100 prisoners of war. 201 persons were rescued. A small British merchant vessel was sunk off CROMER last night, probably by mine.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 6th. Pressure by our mobile columns was maintained on the whole front BARDIA - EL ADEM and also on the enemy lines of communication in rear. Appreciable losses were inflicted. Latest reports indicate that the enemy has concentrated his forces South of EL ADEM and is moving South East towards EL GOBI which is held by our troops.

RUSSIA. German pressure on MOSCOW is continuing.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

6th. Spitfires seriously damaged storage cisterns and buildings at two Alcohol Distilleries in the CHERBOURG Peninsula. Similar targets in the DUNKIRK area were also attacked. In operations off the Norwegian Coast, a Hudson claimed hits on a 7,500 ton merchant vessel and Beauforts probable hits on a 4,000 ton merchant vessel and a 5,000 ton tanker.

LIBYA. Nothing further to my OPTEL No. 23.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. 5th/6th. 20 Wellingtons attacked NAPLES for five hours. Over 25-1/2 tons of bombs were dropped, two 4,000 pounders starting a large fire in the torpedo factory and other bombs falling on the arsenal, air frame works and the railway centre. One of our aircraft is missing.

(IV) G.A.F.

6th. A German bomber was destroyed by our fighters South of PLYMOUTH.

MALTA. 5th/6th. About 20 bombers approached the Island during a period of nine hours. Only 8 crossed the coast causing some damage.

OPTEL No. 24

(V) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES in operations over and from the British Isles - German 1.

(VI) The transfer from the Baltic States to FINLAND of broad gauge locomotives and rolling stock, including tank wagons, will help to relieve the transport situation and assist German economic exploitation. It confirms previous reports that the whole railway system in the Baltic States has been or will shortly be converted to standard gauge and also the opinion that GERMANY intends to convert the gauge of all railways in occupied RUSSIA.

(VII) Both empty and full oil trains to and from ITALY have regular military escorts on the Roumanian - Hungarian section of the route which indicates the degree of unrest in HUNGARY and ROUMANIA.

OPTEL No. 25

7 December, 1941

Report time 1740 G.M.T. today from C. in C. CHINA that Japanese were attempting to land from 5 ships at KOTA BHARU (on East Coast of MALAYA immediately south of SIAM MALAYA frontier.)

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 9th, 1941.

~~SECRET~~

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the latest report received from London
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Believe me,

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Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

Copy No. 11

~~DEFENSE MOST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 26

Information received up to 7 a.m. 8 December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

PACIFIC. At 2030 G.M.T. 7th 18 aircraft attacked SINGAPORE but no repetition no Naval damage was done. In attack on PEARL HARBOUR the U.S. Battleship OKLAHOMA capsized, a destroyer in the dock was blown up and U.S. Battleship TENNESSEE, a destroyer and a minelayer were set on fire. 4 aerodromes were attacked and hangars and some A/C on the ground were set on fire. The power stations were also hit but not repetition not put out of action. Heavy casualties to personnel are reported. 1 submarine and at least 2 enemy A/C were destroyed.

MEDITERRANEAN. On afternoon 7th a naval sloop was seriously damaged by bomb and an armed boarding vessel was mined in TOBRUK harbour.

On 1st a British submarine sank a 2,400 ton Italian ship northbound about 65 miles North of PANTELLARIA.

A Canadian corvette has been sunk in collision 150 miles West of CAPE RACE.

A medium sized British merchant vessel in northbound coastal convoy was mined off East Coast on afternoon 7th.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 6th. The 15th German armoured Division escaped by infantry move against EL GOBI from the North West. 21st German armoured Division with remnants of Italian Ariete division remained at JURA East of EL ADEM with a line of dug-in anti-tank guns stretching south towards EL GOBI between 2 armoured divisions. In evening the enemy (~~made~~) an attack on one of our formations west of EL GOBI but it did not develop. 7th in the morning enemy tanks, probably comprising both 15th and 21st armoured divisions, were still reported west of EL GOBI, apparently being engaged by our armoured and unarmoured troops. The enemy appeared to be on the defensive. In the frontier area the enemy was still holding a defended area around BARDIA, a strong point between SOLIUM and SIDI OMAR and HALFAYA position. Patrols from TOBRUK joined up at SIDI REZEKH with armoured car patrols which had advanced from South. 18 abandoned German tanks and much material including wireless equipment were found in this area.

In addition a number of wounded New Zealand troops were found in an abandoned enemy dressing station and are being evacuated. During 6th our mechanised mobile columns destroyed 23 Italian tanks, over 100 mechanical transports and a complete German artillery battery. 200 prisoners were taken and 90 Germans killed.

MAIAYA. It appears that 1st Japanese attack on KOTA BHARU was repulsed but subsequently the enemy troops succeeded in landing and are reported infiltrating towards aerodromes. They are being engaged by our Land and Air Forces.

RUSSIA. FINLAND and Leningrad Sector. No change. Central Sector. Such slight progress as the Germans have made in their attack on MOSCOW has been in DMITROV area due North of the capital. West of MOSCOW, the position remains unchanged. Fierce fighting continues in TULA area, where Russians are offering stubborn resistance. The German thrust towards MOSCOW thence to RYAZHSK - VORONEZH railway continues, and a slight advance has been made south west of RYAZHSK.

East South East of (?) the Germans have gained ground in the direction of YELETS. UKRAINE. No change except in extreme south, where Russians have succeeded in pushing back the Germans from ROSTOV to a line running north and south just East of TA(X)ANROG. There is no information that Germans have yet abandoned line of River MIUS. CRIMEA. No change. Pressure on SEVASTOPOL has probably eased as result of operations in ROSTOV sector. General. The Germans attempt to encircle MOSCOW has made little progress. Owing to Russians having been able to exploit their success at ROSTOV the German menace to CAUCASIA has been further postponed.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS.

7th. An 800 ton merchant vessel off Dutch coast was attacked by Hudsons and left sinking. During offensive operations over Northern France, in which 1 R.C.A.F. and 1 R.N.Z.A.F. Squadron took part, our fighters attacked the DIEPPE power station. 1 Spitfire is missing.

7th/8th. 254 A/C were sent out - AACHEN 132, BREAST 31, CALAIS 24, OSTEND 23, DUNKIRK 22, BOULOGNE 19, and leaflets (HOLLAND and PARIS area) 3.

LIBYA. 6th. 2 Squadrons of MARTLETS and 4 of Blenheims attacked mechanical transports in EL ADEM area. Bombs fell among a group of tank, tank carriers and M/T. One Blenheim is missing. BEAU fighters attacked M/T on DERNA-TOERUK road and aircraft on the ground at EL THIMI, 5 of which were damaged. Two BEAU fighters were lost but crew of one believed safe. Hurricane.

machine gunned JEDA BAYA landing ground, destroying 4 enemy aircraft and damaging 7. 3 Hurricanes are missing. Blenheims scored probables on barracks at HOMES (2group). 1 Beau fighter is also reported lost. 6th/7th. Wellingtons made 2 heavy attacks on stationary mechanical transports on EL ADEM - AKERNIMA - EL GAZALA roads causing many fires.

Wellingtons attacked ROYAL arsenal at NAPLES dropping 13 tons of bombs in a raid which lasted 5 1/2 hours. Fires were started in target area, in docks and in railway centres.

(IV) G.A.F.

7th/8th. 41 enemy A/C operated.

(V) A/C casualties in operations over and from British Isles.
British - 1 missing.

(VI) The total number of Japanese A/C in French INDO-CHINA is now about 350. Approximately 100 are in North and 250 in South. Fighters probably do not exceed 100.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~SECRET~~
December 11th, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the latest reports received from London on
the military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Haifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

REGRADED ~~BRITISH MOSS-SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED ~~U.S. SECRET~~

OPTEL No. 28

Following is supplementary resume of operational events covering period November 27th - 4th December.

(I) NAVAL

E-boats were active off East Coast and our H.T.B's and Motor Gun Boats on 3 nights attacked E-B oats and Armed Escort of Merchant ships in Straits of Dover with inconclusive results.

Extensive sea and air searches have failed to locate any survivors of H.M.A.S. SYDNEY.

There was no submarine activity on North Atlantic convoy routes and U-Boats are now concentrated in an area East and West of Gibraltar. At least four are operating in South Atlantic.

Our shipping losses though somewhat heavier than of late were moderate. A report has recently been received that two medium sized British merchant vessels on passage on Government service from MALTA to GIBRALTAR were sunk by aircraft off TUNISIA on November 14th and 15th and that French naval units picked up survivors.

TRADE. During the week ending December 3rd 972 ships were convoyed. Imports into U.K. during week ending November 29th were one million two thousand tons which includes 358,779 tankers imports.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. The enemy was evidently surprised by our preliminary move and General Rommel's armoured forces were brought to battle and a great part of them destroyed. On other hand the fight has been bitter and casualties heavy and enemy was able to cut TOBRUK corridor and reconcentrate those parts of two German armoured divisions which survived first 14 days of campaign. The opposing forces have now fallen apart without a decision being reached both forces having fought themselves temporarily to a standstill. Meanwhile our patrol and mobile columns are constantly harassing and inflicting losses upon enemy prior to next phase of operations.

RUSSIA. The situation in MOSCOW sector still gives cause for anxiety. The Germans have gained ground at three points (a) at KLIN, (b) from West of city, (c) East of TULA. The last named of these gains is the most serious for not only has it cut KASHIRA railway (though not the more important KOLOMNA-RYAZAN railway further North East) but also it forms an advanced pincer towards

encirclement of MOSCOW itself. No thaw has come to check advance though heavy snow may form into deep drifts which would hamper tank movements. Russian resistance continues stubbornly and German progress consequently slow. In ROSTOV sector the Russian counter attack towards TAGANROG is of great importance in as much as it retards by at least three weeks and possibly much longer the German time table for a subsequent move into CAUCASIA.

YUGO SLAVIA. The revolt is continuing.

ROMANIA. The rise in level of the lower DANUBE owing to heavy rainfall indicates that river is unlikely to freeze early this winter.

BALKAN STATES. It is estimated that total number of German divisions in BALKANS is still 14 although a certain amount of reshuffling of units has been and still is taking place.

SPAIN. Battle casualties and sickness have reduced Spanish division in RUSSIA from about 20,000 to less than 14,000. The division is believed to be now employed on line of communication duty in Southern sector.

MALAYA. 2 Field Regiments armed with 25 pounders have arrived. Volunteer Force were mobilized on 1st December.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

UNITED KINGDOM. Bad weather prevailed throughout most of week; night bombing operations were only possible on two occasions. Attacks were made upon HAMBURG, EMDEN and DUSSELDORF, a total of 396 tons of H.E. and nearly 25,000 incendiaries being dropped.

In spite of unfavourable weather aircraft of Coastal and Fighter Commands continued to harass enemy shipping both in daylight and by night; it is estimated that 8,500 tons were sunk and 28,000 tons damaged.

German Air Force activity was almost entirely directed against our shipping with little success. From character of German Air Force operations during past few weeks it appears that policy of saving their long range bombing force on Western Front is still being vigorously pursued.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. A 10,000 ton laden tanker was seriously damaged by bombs and subsequently sunk by our Naval forces; in addition it is estimated that 11,000 tons of enemy shipping was sunk or damaged by our aircraft.

LIBYA. Our aircraft dominates the battle area and provides close support for our ground forces in spite of rain and low cloud conditions. Operations were mainly directed against enemy's supply system over a wide area.

The German Air Force failed to maintain a high level of activity probably due to supply difficulties, our successful attack on their aerodromes,

and their lack of fighters. A few large enemy formations were met but our continuous fighter sweeps and numerous bombing attacks met with relatively little opposition. Operations by long range bombers were confined to small scale raids against our railway communications. This weak effort appears to indicate a difficulty in maintaining the serviceability of the JU 88 under desert conditions.

RUSSIA. German Air Force. The continued low scale of German air operations on all sectors of Russian fronts is probably due to prolonged bad weather and withdrawal of all types of units to Germany for refitting. This decrease in German air strength has deprived their ground forces of their habitual scale of air support and at the same time has enabled the Russian Air Force to be employed with increasing effect. The German Air Force no longer retains air superiority in certain sectors.

The Russian success at ROSTOV is likely to affect considerably the air situation in this area. An important advanced air base has been established at TAGANROG and if dislodged from here, the German Air Force will no longer be able to operate so effectively against ROSTOV area and military objectives to the East and South except with long-range bombers; moreover the loss of supplies and equipment of all kinds accumulated in this forward area must inevitably have a delaying effect on further air operations directed towards CAUCASIA.

(IV) Extracts from photographic and Intelligence reports on result of R.A.F. air attacks on enemy territory in EUROPE.

BERLIN. November 7th/8th. The SPANDAU Power Station was hit.

OCCUPIED FRANCE. Over 1,900 tons of alcohol were destroyed in one of our daylight fighter-bomber attacks.

NAPLES. A large canning factory has been destroyed.

(V) OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT BATTLE CASUALTIES.

METROPOLITAN Area. British in the air: Bombers, 18, Fighters, 3, Coastal 6, Army Co-operation 1, total 28.

<u>German</u>	Destroyed	Damaged
Bombers	5	4
Fighters	2	-
Totals	7	4

No account is taken of aircraft destroyed on ground.

MIDDLE EAST. British in the air: Bombers, 5, Fighters, 19, total 24.

German and Italian

	Destroyed	Probably Destroyed	Damaged
Bombers	8	-	10
Fighters	21	5	11
Miscellaneous	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	29	5	22

In addition at least 82 were destroyed or damaged on the ground.

(VI) HOME SECURITY

Estimated civilian casualties for the week ending 6 a.m. 3rd December were two killed, 11 seriously wounded.

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~~SECRET~~
(M. C. SECRET)

CPTEL No. 31

10 December, 1941.

MALAYA. Up to 4 a.m. 10th December. 9th. Air reconnaissance reported 1 battleship, 2 cruisers, 7 destroyers and a number of transports off KOTA BHARU, 1 transport off KUANTAN and 15 transports and 1 aircraft carrier off SINGORA.

11 Blenheims bombed SINGORA aerodrome where 40 bombers were seen on the ground and about 40 fighters in air (?). Result unobserved. Heavy air attacks on our aerodromes in Northern MALAYA. At SUNGAI PATANI 5 enemy aircraft brought down by our anti-aircraft fire. KUANTAN aerodrome was evacuated by our aircraft.

Reinforcements have reached KELANTAN sector. In centre our troops were just across THAILAND Frontier on evening of the 9th. On left at KEDAH no change: 7 enemy light tanks destroyed.

A small enemy force which landed near KUANTAN at 10 p.m. on 9th was driven off and all was quiet on morning of the 10th.

HONG KONG. Situation satisfactory. Our line intact except for 1 Redoubt captured by enemy during the night of the 9th/10th.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 11, 1941

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~
Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of the two
latest reports received from London on the
military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

~~BRITISH H.Q. - SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 27

Information received up to 0700 9th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

On evening of 8th enemy aircraft attacked minesweeping trawlers off East Coast Scotland. 1 was sunk and another badly damaged.

A British submarine attacked an unidentified destroyer off West Coast of GREECE obtaining 4 hits by gunfire.

HONGKONG. On 8th in a raid on KOWLOON by Japanese aircraft 29 persons were killed. Shore batteries and naval units were also attacked but no damage or casualties are reported.

Same day a flying boat dropped bombs on OCEAN ISLAND Southern Pacific. No details are known.

A small British merchant ship was sunk by mines yesterday off CROMER.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 6th. Our forces established contact with TOBRUK garrison on BARDIA - TOBRUK road and in SIDI REZEK area, where 700 New Zealand casualties were recovered.

7th. West of EL GOBI 5 enemy tanks and much M.T. were destroyed and 8 tanks probably destroyed, 3 of ours were slightly damaged.

8th. Our troops from TOBRUK engaged, 2 miles North of EL ADEM an enemy force of approximately 2000 infantry and some tanks which were advancing from South. The results of this engagement are not yet known.

MALAYA. There is no further (?) information about operations in addition to that which was reported in yesterday's summary.

RUSSIA. There are indications that in KLIN and KURSK areas the Germans are meeting determined Russian resistance and that the state of roads in former area is very bad.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS.

7th/8th. Aircraft from 2 R.C.A.F. and 2 R.A.A.F. squadrons took part in night's operations. 46 aircraft dropped 50 tons high explosive on AACHEN. Visibility was bad but bursts and a blazing factory were seen in town. 43 tons were dropped at BREST and some bombs fell on or near battle cruisers. 23 aircraft attacked CALAIS docks under good conditions and smaller number bombed docks

at OSTENEL, DUNKIRK and BOULOGNE. A total of 62 aircraft bombed other various targets. 5 bombers are missing and 1 crashed.

9th. 8 Hurricane bombers, sent to attack an alcoholic distillery bombed a saw mill in Northern France and Spitfires destroyed 2 Me. 109's on ground. In air fight 5 enemy fighters were destroyed, 1 by a R.C.A.F. Squadron and 4 damaged. 10 Spitfires are missing.

LIBYA. 7th. 2 Maryland squadrons attacked ACROMA and M.T. south of town; 1 tank lorry and many vehicles were destroyed. Our fighters shot down 2 dive bombers and 6 fighters, probably destroyed 1 dive bomber and 1 fighter and damaged 2 fighters. 5 Hurricanes are missing and also 2 Bostons from reconnaissance.

7th/8th. A strong force of Wellingtons attacked enemy transports on ACROMA - GAZALA road starting large fires where M.T. were blocked. South of GAZALA Inlet. Other M.T. 15 miles East of GAZALA was also attacked. BENDHAZI and CASTEL BENITO aerodrome were bombed effectively.

MALAYA. 7th/8th. Our aircraft attacked Japanese ships engaged in landing operations, 2 of which were set on fire.

8th. An aircraft reconnoitring SINGARA was attacked by 6 enemy fighters but returned safely; 2 Hudsons and one Catalina are missing.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY U.K.

8th/9th. 50 enemy aircraft of which about 12 came inland were operating.

MALAYA. 8th. Enemy aircraft attacked our aerodromes in Northern Malaya and at SINGAPORE; no appreciable damage is reported.

HONGKONG. On same day enemy A/C attacked aerodromes; 3 of our aircraft were put out of action.

HAWAII. 7th. U.S. losses were 63 fighters, 4 light bombers, 28 heavy bombers and 5 fortress aircraft.

(V) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES IN OPERATIONS OVER AND FROM BRITISH ISLES

German, 5 destroyed, 4 damaged. British, 7th/8th, 5 bombers, 8th, 10 fighters, total 15.

(VI) HOME SECURITY

8th/9th. Some bombs were dropped in Northumberland and Durham; insignificant industry damage, 5 fatal service and 6 civilian casualties.

(VII) SICILY

30 JU 88's recently withdrawn from HOLLAND have arrived. It is estimated there are about 70 of this type now in SICILY comprising 30 long range bombers and about 40 long range night fighters.

(VIII) FINLAND

The fats ration has recently been cut from 600 to 150 grammes a month reducing Finnish rations to only about 12 per cent of British or German rations.

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~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

DEC 10 1941

OPTTEL NO. 29.

MALAYA: Situation 9 a.m. Local Time 9th December.

Now 3 reinforced land operations: Right KOTA BHARU, Centre Northeast of KROH 50 miles northeast of PENANG, Left South SIAM immediately north of Kedah Frontier. Right as enemy land forces threatened KOTA BHARU Aerodrome all our A/C left (? there) 8th December and Aerodrome was demolished at 3 a.m. 9th December. Indian Troops holding a line just north of KOTA BHARU but position confused with considerable enemy (? infiltration). Centre of our troops crossed frontier p.m. 8th December advance being opposed initially by Siamese Police.

Left our reconnaissance unit crossed frontier making contact with enemy at BAN SADA0 40 miles North of ALORSTAR. After inflicting casualties on the enemy who had 10 armoured fighting vehicles, our forces withdrew destroying 2 major road bridges between BAN SADA0 and frontier. Railway bridge also destroyed.

AIR: Enemy has concentrated on our aerodromes in Northern Malaya. Heaviest attack at SUNGEI PATANI to Northeast of Penang, and at ALORSTAR. At former several of our fighters were destroyed on the ground.

HONG KONG: 3 p.m. 8th December enemy crossed frontier on broad front during morning our troops withdrew according to plan - all demolitions successful.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 12th, 1941

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of
the latest report received from London
on the military situation. It was
dated December 10th, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

~~BRITISH HIDE SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

OPTEL No. 30

Information received up to 7 a.m., 10th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

A Russian submarine operating off Northern Norway torpedoed on the 3rd a Westbound merchant ship of 5,000 tons and sank a trawler and a motor boat escorting the ship. Another Russian submarine torpedoed a Westbound tanker north of VARANGER Fjord. H.M. armed boarding vessel ALOUETTE intercepted a small French merchant vessel off LISBON and is sending her into GIBRALTAR.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. On 8th December we made good progress. The enemy continued to fight a stubborn delaying action West of EL ADEM and North West of EL GOBI but the remains of his armoured divisions are being driven back and he appears to be retiring Westwards. EL ADEM is now in our hands and the siege of TOBRUK appears to have been finally raised. 9th - From the EL GOBI area our armoured formations were in progress of out-flanking the enemy and mixed mobile columns were working wide Westwards and Northwards in the direction of ACROMA. To the East of TOBRUK and in the frontier area vigorous mopping up operations were in progress but BARDIA, HALFAYA and a strong point between SOLLUM and SIDI OMAR were still in enemy hands.

MALAYA. Nothing further to my OPTEL No. 29.

SIAM. There have been further enemy landings at PRACHUABKIRIKHAN, 150 miles South West of BANGKOK, but reports of fighting in this district with British forces from BURMA are not confirmed. Japanese forces entered BANGKOK a.m. 9th.

HONG KONG. Our troops are now established in their main positions which are being successfully maintained in the face of an enemy attack by a force estimated at about two divisions. Our patrols are active and one of them ambushed and practically annihilated a Japanese Platoon. 8th/9th. Two air raid alerts but no enemy aircraft located. Air attacks on the 9th were countered by A/A fire. Civilian air raid casualties now reported as 70 killed and over 100 injured.

RUSSIA. There are indications that the Germans are now trying to stabilise the MOSCOW Front. The Russians are continuing their heavy pressure on the Germans in the ROSTOV Sector.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

9th. Coastal aircraft bombed and probably sunk a 6-7,000 ton merchant vessel off NORWAY and attacked a convoy off the Dutch coast obtaining 3 hits on a 7,000 ton ship which was still burning 6 hours later. Another ship of 3-4,000 tons was also hit. Our fighters attacked an Alcohol Distillery in Northern France and consider they destroyed it. Off DURHAM a JU 88 was shot down by fighters.

LIBYA. 7th/8th. Hurricanes damaged 6 aircraft on JEDABYA aerodrome and a number vehicles on the EL AGHEILA road. 8th. Squadrons of light bombers successfully attacked transport near ACROMA and EL ADEM, stores dumps at BARDIA and DERNA landing ground where 8 aircraft, including 5 JU 52's were destroyed. Blenheim fighter damaged M.T. North East of MARAWA. 12 enemy fighters attacked 3 of our landing grounds near MADDALENA, causing a few casualties.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

UNITED STATES. 8th. PHILIPPINES. There was further Japanese air activity over Southern and Central LUZON, WAKE ISLAND was bombed. 9th. HAWAII. No renewal of Japanese attacks. Some U.S. bombers which arrived from CALIFORNIA made an unsuccessful search for the attacking Japanese aircraft carrier. GUAM. An air attack on AGAMA caused heavy casualties. A large ship, possibly a transport, and two destroyers were sighted off the Island at 6.00 p.m. A Japanese aircraft carrier is believed to be operating 750 miles North East of PEARL HARBOUR. Reports of attack on NAURU, also of the bombing of TOKYO, KOBE and FORMOSA are all unconfirmed.

(V) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES in Operations over and from the British Isles. German, 1 destroyed.

(VI) During the past week the Russian Air Force has been very active on all sectors of the Front. They have carried out both bombing and machine gun attacks on German ground troops with good results. They are reported to be maintaining continuous pressure on the enemy and to be affording remarkably good support to their own troops. The success of these operations is of particular importance at a time when the Germans are attempting to stabilise the Front. It is believed that during the past few weeks the Russians have had numerical and operational air superiority on the whole sector of the front South of KURSK and have maintained at the same time local air superiority at a number of points between TULA and ALININ.

(VII) It is believed, but not confirmed that the two aircraft carriers from which the attack against HAWAII was launched were the SORYU and ZIUKAKU. They normally carry: SORYU, 12 fighters, 12 torpedo bombers and 18 dive bombers. ZIUKAKU, 12 fighters and 36 torpedo bombers and/or dive bombers. The attack therefore probably did not exceed this scale. The torpedo bombers can carry torpedoes or bombs. Air attacks on MANILA could have been made either from FORMOSA or CANTON, more probably the former. Air attacks on SINGAPORE will most probably have been delivered by aircraft based on SOCTRANG.

(VIII) The Japanese occupation of THAILAND will, subject to their being able to ship the commodities to JAPAN, assure the supply of some 48,000 tons of rubber per annum and valuable supplies of tin from the provinces South of the KRA Isthmus. This rubber from THAILAND will, together with that from INDO-CHINA, provide JAPAN with all the supplies she needs and allow for some export to FRANCE or GERMANY. The quantity of tin available may be limited by immobilisation of mining machinery. Small but useful quantities of wolfram and zinc are also available. From the Northern provinces, JAPAN will have access to substantial supplies of rice which will provide her with a margin of safety, and also useful supplies of hides. Prior to occupation JAPAN obtained from THAILAND all the rice and hides she asked for, most of the rubber but less than 1/3 of the tin.

(IX) OCEAN ISLAND was attacked from the air on 8th and 9th. Serious damage to residency. No other damage reported.

Last paragraph received indecipherable. Check requested.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

13th December, 1941.

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the latest report received from London on the military situation. It was dated December 11th, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,
(For the Ambassador)

R. I. Campbell

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 32

Information received up to 7 a.m. 11th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

H.M.S. PRINCE OF WALES and H.M.S. REPULSE were sunk by air attack at about 0650 on 10th, 140 miles North North East of SINGAPORE. One high level and 3 torpedo bombing attacks were made on H.M.S. PRINCE OF WALES and hits scored with one bomb probably a one thousand pounder and 4 or 5 torpedoes. One high level attack and one torpedo bombing attack were made on H.M.S. REPULSE and hits scored with one or more bombs and 2 or 3 torpedoes. Each torpedo bombing attack was carried out by 9 aircraft and all attacks were pushed well home and skillfully carried out. About 7 aircraft were shot down.

On 5th, one of H.M. submarines in Southern approaches to Straits of MESSINA obtained one hit on a 4 thousand tons half laden merchant vessel in convoy escorted by torpedo boats. Owing to counter attack, the result could not be observed.

A homeward bound convoy from CANADA was attacked on 10th about 300 miles West of IRELAND. 2 unknown ships were torpedoed but are still afloat.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 9th. Our mobile forces had a successful day and continued to harass the enemy in a Westerly direction from EL ADEM. Junction between our forces in TOERUK and those outside has now been firmly established and road from East has been opened. Our artillery shelled concentrations of M.T. Southwest of EL ADEM. Enemy gun positions covered by armoured cars were attacked and about 40 enemy tanks were engaged by our armoured forces. In coastal area our patrol are clearing up remnants of enemy and near the TRIGH CAPUZZO they located and destroyed 38 enemy tanks in work shops. MERSA LUCCA was occupied by our troops in evening.

10th. Mopping up in EL ADEM area continues. Small pockets of enemy infantry and armoured cars possibly of Ariete Division were located in area North of BIRHAKSIM.

MALAYA. At KELANTAN patrol troops have been reorganized and are reported nearly intact. It is estimated that (about) one enemy division has landed in this area.

Our central columns on KROH road has met slight enemy opposition.

KEDAH Area. Contact with enemy was established in early hours just North of CHANGLUN.

KUANTAN. No further enemy attacks reported. Heavy scale of air attack has made majority of Northern aerodromes unserviceable; demolitions have been carried out at ALORSTAR aerodrome.

RUSSIA. The Russian claim to have retaken TOKHVIN is believed to be correct.

GILBERT ISLANDS. Japanese have apparently landed at TARITARI and TARAWA.

U.S. It is believed Japanese troops have occupied GUAM and WAKE ISLANDS and have landed on North and West coast of LUZON, PHILIPPINE Islands.

SIAM. A Japanese Force of about 2 divisions is continuing to move into SIAM from Southern INDO-CHINA. 2 to 3 Japanese Divisions have been landed on East coast of KRA Isthmus.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

10th. 8 Hampdens laid mines off Dutch coast and 8 other attacked military objectives near mouth of EMS. A Hudson probably hit a 2500 ton merchant vessel off NORWAY.

LIBYA. 8th/9th and 9th. Dispersed aircraft at DERNA and EL TMIMI aerodrome and M.T. in the vicinity were bombed.

9th. Fighter sweeps were carried out throughout the day over EL GOBI-EL ADEM-TOBRUK area during which several formations of German fighters were met. 7 enemy aircraft were destroyed, one probably destroyed, and 6 damaged. 9 of our aircraft are missing and certain more have not returned but may have landed at TOBRUK.

9th/10th. Wellingtons in a 6 hour attack dropped over 36 tons of bombs on store depots West of TRIPOLI. At least 6 large buildings were destroyed and numerous fires were started which merged into one large conflagration. M.T. vehicles were also machine gunned.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

JAPAN. It is estimated that there are now about 400 aircraft in French INDO-CHINA and SIAM. A general air movement Southwards continues. About 80 long range fighters have moved to PATANI aerodrome near Northern Malayan Frontier.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

15th December, 1941.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the
latest report received from London on the
Military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH MESS SECRET~~

~~(M.S. SECRET)~~

OPTTEL No. 33

Information received up to 7 a.m., 12 December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

MEDITERRANEAN. A British submarine sank an escorted 15,000 ton merchant ship 60 miles South West of NAVARINO yesterday afternoon. On the 7th H.M. submarine torpedoed a merchant ship of the RAME class 3,700 tons which was entering SUDA BAY. On the 10th a British cruiser bombarded DERNA and shipping in the harbour at close range. A British gunboat successfully bombarded the road 13 miles West of TOBRUK on the nights of 6th/7th and 7th/8th. A British trawler disappeared without trace and is presumed to have been sunk by submarine whilst on patrol off GIBRALTAR yesterday.

FAR EAST. Ninety officers and 1,195 ratings have been saved from PRINCE OF WALES and forty-three officers and 858 ratings from REPULSE. The Navy Department WASHINGTON announce that one Japanese light cruiser, one destroyer and ten aircraft were destroyed during the attack on WAKE ISLAND on the 9th. It is reported that the Japanese battleship HARUNA about 29,300 tons was hit by bombs off JZON on the 10th. Enemy aircraft attacked NAURU Island yesterday afternoon and severely damaged the Wireless Station. In the attack on homeward convoy reported yesterday, two medium sized merchant vessels were sunk (one British, the other Egyptian). It is feared that a third ship of smaller tonnage has also been sunk.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. On the morning of the 10th ACROMA was reported clear of the enemy and our troops advancing northwards had reached the TOBRUK - DERNA road. About noon enemy M.T. totalling about 1,000 vehicles and dispersed over some sixty square miles, were reported West of ACROMA moving West and North West. Our forces took over 300 prisoners, some guns and much M.T. mostly from the Italian Trieste Division. By the evening, although operations were hindered by a wide spread sandstorm, we were close to GAZALA where there were indications that the Eastern defences were occupied by the enemy.

FAR EAST

MALAYA. In the North East our forces have withdrawn to a position covering MACHANG aerodrome about thirty miles South of KOTA BHARU. Enemy activity confined to patrols. On the KEDAH frontier, North West MALAYA, enemy infiltration has been going on and our troops have withdrawn to pre-arranged positions.

GENERAL. The general direction of Japanese troop movements continues to be towards the MALAY Peninsula. The main features of enemy tactics experienced so far are rapid infiltration and immediate outflanking of any defences. Attacks are supported by co-operating aircraft giving accurate direction to quick firing artillery lighter than our 3.7" How. Medium machine gun, and mortar fire described as very accurate. Marked ability to push on even over most difficult country. Enemy well supplied with tommy guns.

BURMA. Japanese attack against VICTORIA POINT reported impending.

SARAWAK. Demolition of MIRI aerodrome and oilfield installations completed.

U.S. TERRITORIES. Fighting continues at GUAM and on WAKE ISLAND. The Japanese landings on LUZON are reported to have been repulsed on the West Coast but to have succeeded on the North Coast.

RUSSIA. The Russians are believed to have retaken YELETS.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

11th. Six Hampdens dropped bombs at EMDEN, on a Dutch aerodrome where hangars were hit and on a town in the FRISIAN ISLANDS. 11th/12th. 124 aircraft operated as follows - COLOGNE, sixty, BREST, twenty-six, LE HAVRE, thirty-three, Sea mining, five. Three are missing.

LIBYA. 9th. Eight Hurricanes destroyed eight motor vehicles including three petrol lorries and damaged a further twenty-two on the JEDABYA - EL AGHEILA road. 9th/10th. Wellingtons bombed DERNIA causing fire and large explosion, M.T. near BOMBA and the aerodrome at GAZAIA. 10th. Bad weather prevented bombing operations. 10th/11th. Eight Wellingtons dropped fourteen tons of bombs on BENGAZI harbour.

SICILY. 11th. Blenheims hit two 5,000 ton merchant ships in CATANIA Harbour and set one of them on fire.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

MALTA. 10th/11th. Sixteen aircraft operated against the Island but caused no damage.

HONG KONG. 11th. Frequent attacks were made on our patrol vessels by enemy dive-bombers one of which alighted in the sea.

MALAYA. 11th. PENANG was bombed fairly heavily. Civilian casualties about 100 killed, no military damage or casualties, A.R.P. reported good.

(V) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES IN OPERATIONS OVER AND FROM BRITISH ISLES

British - three missing.

(VI) JAPAN

Air reconnaissance on the 9th reported 40 Japanese bombers at SINGORA, probably from SOUTH CHINA, this would reduce the total bomber force in SOUTH CHINA to about 150 aircraft. There are probably between 80 and 90 fighters, type T 'O' stationed in the KRA Isthmus, 40 at SINGORA and the remainder at PATANI.

(VII) There are 36 German and Italian merchant ships in Japanese controlled ports. Of these, about 13 could, without conversion, reach EUROPE without refuelling, although Japanese would have to supply the oil. There are substantial stocks of German owned rubber at present in Japanese controlled territory in the FAR EAST.

(VIII) LIBYA.

There has recently been an increase in the scale of night operations by German long-range bombers operating from Greek and Libyan bases. The average during the past week was about 10 to 12 sorties per night.

(IX) The Russians now claim to have air superiority over the Germans on their entire front and especially in the MOSCOW area. Our Military Mission confirms this.

(X) Report received from HONG KONG received this morning states that enemy made progress yesterday and that our forces have now withdrawn to the outskirts of KOWLOON.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

RECEIVED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~
December 15th, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copy of
the latest report received from London
on the military situation. It was
dated December 13th, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~REGRADED
UNCL & SIFIEDOP/TEL No. 34

Information received up to 7 a.m., 13 December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Early this morning a British destroyer reported that, in company with other British destroyers, she torpedoed two Italian cruisers off CAPE BON, TUNISIA. One blew up, the other was left on fire from stem to stern. They also damaged a destroyer by gunfire and sank an E-boat. No damage or casualties to our ships. On 24th November a British submarine torpedoed a merchant ship and salvage ship in CANDIA Harbour. American Naval aircraft claim to have damaged a Japanese battleship of the Kongo Class off the coast of LUZON in addition to the HARUNA. A 5,000 ton British merchant vessel in Northbound coastal convoy was sunk by mine off the HUMBUR on the morning of the 12th.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 11th. Our advance westward continued. In the coastal area, GAZALA is held by the enemy in some strength, although air reconnaissance indicates considerable movement of mechanical transport west and north-west from this area. It is being marked by our troops who have advanced parallel to the coast and were reported within five miles of the town. They have captured about 500 German and Italian prisoners. About ten miles south of GAZALA, the enemy launched an attack with 35 tanks during the day and infantry also were opposing our troops. The results of these engagements are not yet known. Further south our armoured forces are carrying out a wide encircling movement directed on DERNA, EL GUBBA and MEKILI. Other armoured columns were directed on enemy troops in the area south of GAZALA on the EL ADEM-MEKILI Road, where our infantry are also in contact with the enemy. In the area North-West of GAZALA, our support group scattered a column of German mechanical transport and is reported to have caused great destruction and confusion amongst enemy columns. Operations throughout were hampered by sandstorms.

FAR EAST

MALAYA. KELANTAN Area. Nothing to report. KEDAH Area. Some withdrawal by our forces has taken place in this area to a line just north of ALOR STAR. Our troops operating north of KROH were forced back towards the frontier by unexpectedly strong forces, including tanks and light artillery. An enemy prisoner stated that many men had inflatable rubber belts enabling them to cross rivers. Men landed without rations and were helped by fifth columnists. The enemy are using infantry and tanks in close co-operation.

HONG KONG No details of fighting have been received. There are slight indications that an enemy force is being prepared at SIATOW to co-operate in an attack on the Island of HONG KONG.

PHILIPPINES. Japanese landings, covered by strong support, continue at APARRI in NORTH LUZON.

RUSSIA. The Germans are now on the defensive on practically whole of the MOSCOW Front from KALININ to South of YELETS, which the Russians have recaptured, also in the TAGANROG Sector.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

11th/12th. 23 R.C.A.F., 4 R.A.A.F. and 4 R.N.Z.A.F. Aircraft took part in the night's operations. The results of the attacks on COLOGNE, BREST and LE HAVRE were generally unobserved owing to cloud. 12th. Six Hampdens despatched on individual tasks, destroyed some aircraft on the ground, bombed a factory near BREMEN, and attacked ELBERICH Oil Refinery from 300 feet. Hudsons operating off the Dutch Coast made low-level attacks on a destroyer, a 4,500 ton merchant vessel, a smaller vessel and a trawler, but owing to the necessary evasive action results were unobserved. One Hampden, one Spitfire and one Hudson are missing.

12th/13th. 39 Aircraft were sent out: BREST 24, DUNKIRK 9, DONES OIL DEPOT, ST. NAZAIRE 6. At ST. NAZAIRE bombs fell on the target causing fires among the Oil cisterns. One aircraft is missing. A Canadian Coastal Hudson obtained a direct hit from (84?) feet on a merchant vessel of 8,000 tons of TEXEL, and another of the same squadron hit a 4,000 ton ship off the FRISIAN ISLANDS.

LIBYA. 10th. Six Boston Light Bombers attacked an enemy column near NEKILI; five of them are missing. 11th. Our Fighters shot down five Messerschmidts 109 and two Junkers 88, while Marylands shot down three Junkers 52, another was destroyed by anti-aircraft fire, and six other enemy aircraft were damaged. One Blenheim and six Fighters are missing. Hurricanes attacked mechanical transport south of BENGHAZI and destroyed a staff car, a petrol lorry, another large vehicle and damaged 38 other vehicles.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. 11 Blenheims scored two near misses and a possible hit on a 5,000 ton merchant vessel in ARGOSTOLION HARBOUR, CEPHALONIA. 11th/12th. Wellingtons dropped 17 1/2 tons of bombs on PATRAS, where quayside buildings were demolished and a 12,000 ton liner was probably hit. Naval Aircraft destroyed three aircraft on the ground at CASTEL BENITO. 12th. Blenheims scored hits on a munition factory at COTRONE, and nine Hurricanes successfully bombed COMISO aerodrome.

SIAM. 12th. Our aircraft carried out numerous reconnaissances, and six Blenheims bombed SINGORA.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

MALAYA. 11th. Butterworth Aerodrome was attacked, and one aircraft shot down by anti-aircraft fire. The attack on PENANG on the 11th was made by a total of (7157) aircraft in three waves. On the 12th a further heavy attack was made which disorganized essential services.

BURMA. 11th. A heavy air attack was made on TAVOY.

(V) Aircraft casualties in operations over and from the British Isles, British - 4 missing.

(VI) LATE NEWS.

HONG KONG. A report has been received from the Governor, Straits Settlements, that the Japanese Commander-in-Chief has asked us to enter into negotiations for the surrender of HONG KONG. This request has been refused.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 16th, 1941.

~~Secret~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the two latest reports received from
London on the military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

OPTTEL No. 35

Information received up to 7 a.m., 14 December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

A British destroyer was disabled by bombs west of MILFORD HAVEN and has been towed to port. 18 fatal casualties. A British submarine has sunk an enemy merchant vessel east of NORTH CAPE. Further information regarding the action off CAPE BON shows that two cruisers and one torpedo boat were sunk and torpedo boat badly damaged by 3 British destroyers and a Dutch destroyer. A British submarine reports having attacked two large unidentified ships and a destroyer South of TARANTO. Four hits were obtained.

MALAYA. 12th. A Dutch submarine sank four laden Japanese troop ships off PATANI. A naval auxiliary minesweeper has failed to return from the East coast of MALAYA and is considered lost. A small British tanker was torpedoed yesterday west of ALEXANDRIA but is returning to port under her own power.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 11th. The enemy strong-point between SOLLUM and SIDI OMAR was occupied without resistance and much equipment captured.

12th. The enemy endeavouring to cover his withdrawal was still holding GAZAIA. He was being contained by our troops who engaged his tanks, apparently with good results, South-West and South of GAZAIA, capturing prisoners and guns. The remains of the Italian Ariete Division are some thirty miles South of EL THIMI and are being engaged by our troops. During the 11th and 12th four enemy aircraft were shot down by our ground defences.

MALAYA. No further report received. A Japanese convoy large enough to be carrying two to three Divisions was reported on 12th December steaming South-South-West off CAMBODIA POINT.

HONG KONG. 12th. Withdrawal from KOWLOON carefully prepared and begun at dusk 11th, has been carried out with some difficulty owing to constant pressure by superior numbers. Field and Medium Howitzers evacuated without loss. Much M.T., all Carriers and all armoured cars evacuated. Scale of enemy air raids increased during last 24 hours. Continuous shelling of Island represents a nuisance value only counter battery and harassing fire by our coast defence guns landwards reported effective.

PHILIPPINES. Activity continues with further landings in the North of LUZON.

RUSSIA. The Russian counter offensive is continuing on the whole MOSCOW front and is particularly effective in the KLIN and TULA Sectors. The Russian claims to have encircled KLIN and to have recaptured YAKHROMA, VENEV, MIKLAILOV and STALINGORSK are likely to be substantially correct.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

12th/13th. 15 R.N.Z.A.F. Aircraft took part without casualties. BREST. 22 tons of bombs were aimed at the German ships but owing to cloud and ground defences bursts could not be accurately located, 23 tons were dropped on searchlights and anti-aircraft positions, some heavy guns being silenced.

DUNKIRK. Visibility was good and 16 tons of bombs were dropped in the docks area starting fires. 13th. 16 Hampdens were sent to the BREST area. Four of them laid mines, ten abandoned task and two are missing. Spitfires damaged a Distillery in Northern FRANCE. 13th/14th. Operations cancelled.

LIBYA. 12th. 14 Marylands and six Beaufighters patrolled North of DERNIA on the supply route from CRETE and destroyed four transport aircraft and damaged twelve. Five Marylands are missing. Of five Blenheims which unsuccessfully searched for shipping North-East of BENGHAZI two were shot down by Messerschmidts 110. Two squadrons of Blenheims with fighter escort attacked vehicles in the THIMI area.

MEDITERRANEAN. 13th. 11 Blenheims attacked a tanker and two destroyers in ARGOSTOLION HARBOUR with unobserved results. Three Blenheims are missing and one Messerschmidt 109 was shot down.

CRETE. 11th/12th. 20 Wellingtons bombed PALEME aerodrome causing large fires and igniting a petrol dump.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

13th/14th. About 25 aircraft operated off the East Coast.

BURMA. 11th. 23 Japanese aircraft renewed the attack on TAVOY aerodrome. The aerodrome at VICTORIA POINT is prepared for demolition.

(V) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES in Operations Over and from the British Isles: British - two bombers missing.

(VI) RUSSIA. Our Mission reports 8/12 our Valentine tanks have done well in the MOSCOW sector. It is reported that 90 had been in action and only three knocked out to date. The Germans on the MOSCOW Front appear to have no lack of ammunition. More and more evidence is accumulating of the great difficulties experienced by the Germans in mechanical transport maintenance.

(VII) GERMAN AIR FORCE

The German Messerschmidts 110 have suffered such severe losses both in RUSSIA and LIBYA that two Gruppen (about 60 aircraft) of these twin-engined fighters are believed to have been disbanded in order to keep other units up to strength.

(VIII) GERMAN WOOL SHORTAGE

A German offer was made to TURKEY of 30 locomotives and of rolling stock including tank wagons in exchange for woollen blankets. The Turks refused. An increasing proportion of substitute materials is being used in uniforms. The most recent uniform examined contained 35 per cent of synthetic fibre (the highest proportion yet found) and was of poor quality.

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIEDOPTCL (Unnumbered)

Information received up to 7 a.m., 15 December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

A British submarine attacked two Italian battleships screened by destroyers eight miles south of MESSINA on the morning of the fourteenth and obtained two hits on one Cavour class battleship.

A British light cruiser was sunk by U-boat last night thirty miles west of ALEXANDRIA. No further details yet.

A medium sized British merchant vessel was sunk by U-boat on fourteenth to fifteenth about fifty miles South-West of GIBRALTAR. Another British ship of similar tonnage in an outward convoy sank six hundred miles North-East of NEWFOUNDLAND on the eleventh after a fire. Sabotage is suspected. All crew were saved.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 13th. It now appears that practically all the enemy forces in CYRENAICA which remain fit for battle are facing the eighth army between GAZALA and the EL GOBI - MEKILI road. Fourth Indian Division, advancing North-Westwards South of GAZALA, was twice counter attacked by about forty tanks. Both attacks were repulsed with loss to the enemy of sixteen tanks destroyed and twenty-one officers and three hundred and fifty men captured, this division also shot down four dive-bombers.

The pressure of our armoured formation on the enemy's Southern point, some twenty-five miles South of GAZALA continues. Twenty-five guns, four hundred prisoners and 70,000 gallons of petrol and oil have been captured in this area.

BURMA. A Japanese force landed at CHILPORN has penetrated into BURMA North of VICTORIA POINT. The demolition plan for VICTORIA POINT aerodrome and wireless station has been put into effect and the garrison are being withdrawn.

Reported that the Japanese have advanced beyond CHIENGRAI, about four hundred miles north of BANGKOK, towards the Burmese border.

CHINA. Withdrawals of Japanese forces from ICHANG on the YANGTZE River are reported, this would relieve about another two divisions for operations elsewhere.

RUSSIA. LENINGRAD Sector. The recapture of TIKHVIN has eliminated the danger of the German forces in that sector linking up with those on the River SVIR.

Central Sector. The Russians have had marked successes against the Northern and Southern arms of the German enveloping movement around MOSCOW, and the Germans have been obliged to withdraw both in the KLIN and TULA areas with heavy casualties and much loss of equipment. The withdrawal in the latter area has been considerable. Between these two sectors the Germans have made a slight withdrawal in the ZVENIGOVOD area, due West of MOSCOW, in order to conform with their retirement in the KLIN area. Troops in the German Salient East of TULA, which originally extended as far as SKOPIN, have been withdrawn and the line now runs approximately South from TULA to a point West of YEFREMOV and thence to LIVNI which the Russians now claim to have recaptured. The Russians are attacking along the whole of this line.

UKRAINE. No change. Despite heavy casualties the Germans continue to hold the line of THEOMIUS and TAGANROG.

CRIMEA. Pressure on SEVASTOPOL has probably further eased. No German attempt to cross the KERCH STRAIT is likely at present.

Conclusions. After trying for over two months to capture MOSCOW the Germans decided to stabilise and withdraw to a shorter line suitable for defence during the winter. Their sustained effort under difficult conditions had however so much reduced their fighting capacity that the Russians have been able to launch and press home heavy counter-attacks along nearly the whole of the Central Sector, particularly in the KLIN and TULA areas. As a result, the German withdrawal has not been altogether according to plan and has involved them in serious difficulties. They may now well have to revise their original intentions as to their winter line. The threat to the MOSCOW-RIAZHEK-VORONQAD Railway has been removed for the winter. The situation has undergone a very marked improvement in the important central sector. The Russians now appear definitely to hold the initiative.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

14th. A 1,200 ton merchant vessel was sunk off NORWAY by a coastal Hudson of the Royal Netherlands Air Service.

LIBYA. 12th/13th. Extensive and successful operations were carried out by our fighters and bombers. Twenty Wellingtons started ten large fires at DERNA aerodrome, enemy M.T. was attacked north of EL TINI, on the road near EL AGHEILA and in the BOMBA-DERNA area. Many vehicles were destroyed and others damaged. In addition to casualties reported yesterday, 22 enemy aircraft were destroyed, nine probably destroyed and fourteen damaged. Fourteen of our fighters and three bombers are missing.

FAR EAST. 10th. Six R.A.A.F. Hudsons from DUTCH EAST INDIES bombed TOBI ISLAND, about two hundred miles northwest of NEW GUINEA.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY, LIBYA

12th/13th. TOBRUK was bombed, one enemy aircraft shot down by A.A. 13th. Another enemy aircraft shot down by A.A. at EL ADEN.

MALTA. 13th/14th. Six enemy aircraft operating singly over a period of 13 hours dropped some bombs without causing any damage.

MALAYA. 13th. PENANG had two air raids. No damage to PRAI docks. KUANTAN aerodrome was machine gunned by low flying aircraft. Four enemy aircraft were shot during the day.

BURMA. 13th. MERGUI. The aerodrome and harbour were bombed. The Wireless Station, petrol dump and barracks were hit but details of damage have not been reported. Enemy aircraft also approached RANGOON.

(V) Aircraft casualties in operations over and from the British Isles: British - 1 bomber.

(VI) It is probable that 24 German E-boats have passed down the RHONE Canal and are now in the MEDITERRANEAN. Their endurance at 22 knots is about 600 miles.

(VII) CORRIGENDUM

Japanese convoy reported off CAMBODIA POINT was actually off East coast of INDO-CHINA. A large fleet of transports was reported at CAMRANH BAY on the 14th. This is probably the same convoy.

**BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

~~SECRET~~

December 17, 1941.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of the latest reports received from London on the military situation. They are dated 4th-11th December and 16th December.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

H. Halifax

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States
of America,
Washington, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED~~EXCLUDED FROM SECRET~~~~(U.S. SECRET)~~OPTEL No. 38

Following is supplementary resume of operational events covering the period 4th to 11th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Our submarines, operating against the Axis sea supply route to AFRICA, made a number of successful attacks on shipping. Light naval forces continued to support our military operations in LIBYA. Operations in far eastern waters since the outbreak of war with JAPAN have been fully recorded in the daily summaries. The German main units in the BALTIC were engaged in intensive exercises during the week.

Submarines. There was a concentration of U-boats in the GIB-RALTAR area throughout the week and a smaller number were working in the North-Western approaches, but otherwise there was little activity either in the North or South Atlantic. 15 or 16 U-boats are believed to be operating in the MEDITERRANEAN. Our shipping casualties were light, apart from 2 probably 3 ships torpedoed in convoy west of IRELAND, all were due to mines. Shipping losses for November amounted to 100,491 tons, 88,003 tons being British. This total is nearly 100,000 lower than the previous month, and, except for March, 1940, represents the smallest monthly total since the beginning of the war.

Trade. During the week ending 10th December, 978 ships were convoyed. Imports into the United Kingdom from ships in convoy for the week ending 6th December were 973,000 tons, including 276,705 tons of oil imports. Enemy mine-laying by E-boats and aircraft took place off the east coast. 49 mines were accounted for during the period.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. The British forces have now regained the tactical initiative. Except for small parties at HALFAYA and BARDIA, who must sooner or later surrender, the enemy forces are now concentrated West of the line GAZALA-BIR HAKEIM, fighting a rearguard action in the hope of being able to stand on a defensive line further West. The object of the remnants of the 3 enemy armoured divisions, who are now probably grouped as one formation, must be to retain sufficient mobility and striking power to inflict casualties as they withdraw. The task of the British forces is to maintain such pressure on the retreating enemy that he cannot reorganize sufficiently to fight effectively.

RUSSIA. The German General Staff having decided to try to stabilise their Russian front, the danger which threatened MOSCOW is probably removed at least till the Spring. The German troops are on the defensive along most of the line and are even under such pressure in some sectors that the withdrawal of divisions to refit may not be easy. In the southern sector, it is of particular importance for the Germans to resume their advance, but weeks and possibly months might now elapse before they recapture ROSTOV with corresponding postponement of their time-table for CAUCASIA. Finally, the air situation is encouraging, for it appears that the Russian Air Force at present holds superiority on the most of the front, particularly in the MOSCOW sector.

JAPAN. It appears probable that the primary Japanese objectives are SINGAPORE and the PHILIPPINES. Operations against HONG KONG and the Pacific Islands are subsidiary to these principal aims, the threat to BURMA and BORNEO being intended to develop subsequently. At HONG KONG, our troops have now acted on their standing orders to evacuate the Mainland when attacked in overwhelming strength. Their retirement has been successful in so far as they have fought off enemy attempts to interfere with its orderly execution. Guerilla activity by the Chinese may develop later in the rear of the Japanese attacking force. In MALAYA, our naval and air losses have compelled our land forces to face a situation which had not been contemplated, in as much as they must now bear the brunt of an attack by Japanese forces enjoying sea and air superiority, enabling them to reinforce with little British interference. The demolition of railway bridges, etc., which our troops are effecting as they retire should impede the enemy's advance. Further north, the occupation of SIAM gives the enemy an important base for operations against either MALAYA or BURMA, and even against our sea communications in the BAY OF BENGAL. The Japanese have some ten divisions already in MALAYA. SIAM and Southern INDO-CHINA, and a further 12 or so, including most of the seven in JAPAN, might be made available immediately or at short notice for other operations. The limiting factor, however, would be shipping and air support.

WESTERN PACIFIC. The phosphate plants in OCEAN and NAURU Islands have been demolished according to previously prepared plans.

BURMA. The second flight of an Indian infantry brigade has left INDIA for RANGOON.

HUNGARY. The number of Hungarian troops on the Russian front has been reduced to about 30,000.

RUMANIA. The Rumanian contingent in RUSSIA, though being reduced, still amounts to the equivalent of about two divisions in action in the CRIMEA.

YUGOSLAVIA. The Serbian Patriots, Under Colonel Mihailovich, are being harried in the mountains, but are still capable of causing the Germans considerable trouble.

BULGARIA. There are some indications of the beginning of German troop concentrations in BULGARIA.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

UNITED KINGDOM. Operations were severely restricted by bad weather, bomber command only being able to carry out their programme on one night. Several successful attacks were made on enemy shipping, it is estimated that 37,000 tons were sunk or damaged by our aircraft. The G.A.F. activity was negligible.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. A total of nearly 40 tons of H.E. and incendiaries were dropped on NAPLES in the course of two attacks.

LIBYA. Day night bombers and hurricane bombers directed heavy attacks chiefly against enemy armoured vehicles, M.T. and aerodromes. Naval aircraft joined in by bombing BARDIA docks and Wellingtons raided TRIPOLI. Our fighters patrolled the battle area and accounted for several dive bombers. They also harassed the enemy and took heavy toll of his mechanical vehicles in low-flying attacks. The Axis air forces kept up a high scale of operations with their dive bombers and single engined fighters.

FAR EAST. Owing to heavy enemy attacks by superior forces, we were obliged to evacuate the aerodromes in Northern MALAYA after losing some of our fighters destroyed on the ground. PENANG has been bombed several times with fairly heavy casualties among the civilian Asiatic population.

RUSSIA. Intensive operations by the Russian Air Force in conjunction with their recent counter-attacks provide further evidence of the present German weakness in fighters, due to withdrawal of units for refit or employment elsewhere. The service ability of German aircraft has probably been reduced by the intense cold to a greater extent than those of the Russian Air Force whose ground staffs are more familiar with such conditions and whose aerodromes have not been within the battle zone.

(IV) EXTRACTS FROM PHOTOGRAPHIC AND INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ON RESULTS OF R.A.F. AIR ATTACKS ON ENEMY TERRITORY IN EUROPE

NAPLES. Casualties and damage on 27th/28th November were the heaviest so far. Photographs in September and October show severe damage to railway sidings at the central junction and confirm reports that a munition train was destroyed causing widespread damage from explosion and blast. One part of the arsenal has been badly damaged, two large cisterns wrecked at an oil refinery and a large gas holder destroyed at the gas works.

~~RESTRICTED SECRET~~
REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED ~~(H.S. SECRET)~~

OPTTEL No. 37

Information received up to 7 a.m., 16th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

MEDITERRANEAN. A 6,000 ton Italian merchant vessel is beached near CAPE METHONI (South West GREECE) after being torpedoed by a British submarine. There are about 150 survivors from the British cruiser sunk off ALEXANDRIA.

CHINA. A Dutch submarine sank one enemy merchant ship on the 12th and one oiler on the 13th off KODA BHARU.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 14th. Our troops attacked all along the line and by 11 a.m. had forced a gap in enemy centre. By 2.30 p.m. enemy were still holding position to East of GAZALA BAY and astride main road, and also further to South astride TRIGH EL AHD. In afternoon, enemy counter attacked in latter area employing 21 tanks. Attack continued until the evening but enemy failed to press attack home. Three enemy tanks destroyed.

MALAYA. 15th. In South KEDAH, enemy resumed his attack at dawn and succeeded in isolating our left brigade. Touch has not yet been restored in spite of counter attack. Our forces operating in the KROH area have been reinforced by a further two battalions and are at present holding their ground without difficulty. Enemy's main objective appears to be to penetrate between our two forces in this area. He is pressing home his attacks with fanatical courage in spite of very heavy losses.

KELANTAN. No change.

BURMA. A small reconnaissance patrol, operating in the area of MESSOD (170 miles East of RANGOON), was fired on by Siamese Gendarmes.

HONG KONG. The withdrawal from the mainland to the island was completed by morning 13th December. The three 6" coast defence guns on STONECUTTERS Island have been destroyed by us and the garrison evacuated. Heavy and accurate Japanese artillery fire continues against our defences in the Northern part of the Island. The Japanese are concentrating ferry craft on the KOWLOON side, and it is thought they may soon attempt a direct assault on the island.

RUSSIA. The Russian forces are continuing their counter offensive. They have captured REFREMOV (North West of YELETS) and are advancing on OREL.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

15th/16th. 47 aircraft despatched to BREST 17, OSTEND 25, sea mining 5. One bomber is missing.

LIBYA. 13th/14th. 15 Wellingtons bombed DERNA town and aerodrome. Hits were made on the barracks, on a mechanical transport depot and on a concentration of vehicles. Two large fires were started.

14th. Our fighters attacked a convoy of 40 South bound lorries on the EL AGHEILA - BENGAZI road, inflicting heavy casualties on troops, destroying two lorries and damaging 35, during the day, our fighters shot down four enemy aircraft. We lost four fighters.

14th/15th. 10 Wellingtons dropped 16 tons of bombs on BENGAZI Harbour, all of which fell in the target area.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

15th/16th. 37 aircraft operated against the United Kingdom of which ten made landfall.

MALTA. 14th/15th. Eight aircraft raided the Island. Slight damage was caused to civilian property.

MALAYA. 15th. IPOH TOWN in PERAK STATE was bombed by 20 enemy aircraft. The aerodrome and a petrol dump hit.

(V) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES IN OPERATIONS OVER AND FROM THE BRITISH ISLES

British - 1 bomber missing.

(VI) HOME SECURITY

15th p.m. 20 shells fell in the DOVER area, causing some damage to houses and slight damage to military property. One fatal service casualty and several people injured.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

18th December, 1941.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the latest
report received from London on the Military
situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 39

Information received up to 7 a.m., 17 December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Home Waters - 16th. The PRINZ EUGEN has left dry dock and is reported alongside the coaling jetty at BREEST.

CHINA. - 15th. HONG KONG. One of H.M. destroyers shelled two river boats in KOWLOON BAY and blew them up.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. Our attack on the enemy line between GAZALA and the TRIGH EL ABD was continued, and progress was made in the area East and South of GAZALA. The position here and in the South where other Indian troops had attacked in the TRIGH EL ABD area, was considered satisfactory. Enemy casualties were thought to have been heavy. In the meantime an armoured force had worked round the enemy's Southern flank and reached its objective at BIR HALLOH EL ALBA (nearly 40 miles West of GAZALA) where it engaged ten enemy tanks and some guns. It is thought that prior to this action the enemy was unaware of this new threat to his rear. During the 13th and 14th, New Zealand troops captured nearly 1,100 prisoners, and Polish troops 200. On 14th we destroyed six enemy tanks and 300 tons of ammunition.

MALAYA. 16th December. KEDAH - Heavy fighting continues. Our forces at present on line of River MUDA, to North-East of PENANG, but our losses in men and equipment have been heavy, and a further withdrawal is likely to be necessary. In KELANTAN, there was some patrol activity, but elsewhere nothing to report. Air reconnaissance showed a large concentration of enemy transports off KOTA BHARU and PATANI.

HONG KONG. 16th. Bombing and shelling on an increased scale took place. Enemy's fire was accurate but apart from some damage to ABERDEEN Dock, military damage or casualties do not appear to have been severe. Public morale is generally high and satisfaction at rejection of proposals for parley widely expressed. One enemy aircraft was shot down into the sea off LANTAS Island.

SARAWAK. Enemy troops have landed North of MIRI and there are reports of landings at LUTONG (further to North). Ten large Japanese warships, one tanker and one submarine have been reported off this area.

BURMA. No activity beyond an exchange of shots between one of our patrols and a Thai post at MYIADI (a few miles North of HESOD).

RUSSIA. The German withdrawal in the MOSCOW front is continuing. The Russian claim to have recaptured KALININ is considered to be correct.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

15th/16th. 20 tons of bombs were dropped at OSTEND and bursts were seen in the dock area. At BREST 32 tons of bombs were dropped but accurate observation of results was not possible owing to cloud. Eight R.A.A.F. aircraft took part on these operations. 16th. A Beaufort hit a Flak ship off the Dutch Coast with a torpedo. Two Spitfires were shot down near CALAIS. 16th/17th. 173 aircraft despatched to - WILHELMSHAVEN 83; OSTEND 32, BREST 22, Sea-mining, BREST 18, DUNKIRK 14, Leaflets (PARIS area) 4. One bomber is missing, one came down in the sea and a third crashed but the crew is safe.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. 15th/16th. 20 Wellingtons attacked Naval shipping at TARANTO. Bombs fell in the target area but a smoke-screen prevented detailed observation of results.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

16th/17th. 41 aircraft operated against the U.K., of which 14 made landfall.

MALAYA. 15th. Enemy fighters carried out a low-flying attack on the aerodrome at KUANTAN but no damage or casualties are reported. 16th. Enemy air activity on a limited scale only.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 19th, 1941

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of
the latest report received from London
on the military situation. It was
dated December 18th, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~DEFENSE MOST SECRET~~

~~(S. S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 40

Information received up to 7 a.m., 18th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Northern Waters. 26th November. A Russian submarine sank an 800 ton merchant ship in FUGLO SOUND (S.W. of North Cape). Between 28th November and 6th December another Russian submarine sank one 10,000 and two 6,000 ton escorted merchant ships in the vicinity of North Cape.

17th p.m. Two of H.M. minesweepers were in action with two enemy destroyers off GORODETSKY (entrance to WHITE SEA). One was slightly damaged and the other has so far been unlocated.

MEDITERRANEAN. 17th. Early in the morning our aircraft located a force of enemy battleships, cruisers and destroyers Southbound escorting 4 merchant ships, to the Westward of NAVARINO. At 5.55 p.m. our light forces were in action with the enemy 165 miles to the Southward but lost touch at 6.47 p.m. since when no further reports have been received.

Attacks on shipping. 13th. A Spanish tanker of medium tonnage was sunk by a U-boat off the Spanish coast to the East of GIBRALTAR.

15th. A Portuguese ship of medium tonnage was torpedoed in the vicinity of CAPE ST. VINCENT.

16th. A Dutch coastal vessel was damaged in the BRISTOL CHANNEL by an enemy aircraft which was probably shot down by a Corvette.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 16th. We continued to press the enemy along the whole front taking about 1,000 Italians prisoner. Strong resistance was encountered some 12 miles South-West of GAZALA. Meanwhile a mobile detachment had reached TMIMI astride the GAZALA-DERNA road where some enemy M.T. was destroyed. In the afternoon our armoured forces moving from BIR HALEGH EL ALEBA (See OPTEL No. 39) engaged the enemy in the rear of his right flank North of the TRIGH EL ABD.

17th. 10 a.m. 22 German tanks (probably remnants of 15th and 21st German armoured divisions) escorting a large column were discovered withdrawing in the direction of TMIMI. Later enemy began to retreat all along the line. Our forces followed up and by noon, New Zealand troops had reached a point 10 miles North West of GAZALA. The main portion of our armoured forces was moving from the BIR HALEGH EL ALEBA area on TMIMI.

Frontier Area. South African troops captured an enemy post forming part of the defences of BARDIA. Following prisoners of war have reached

ALEXANDRIA up to 15th December:

German - 72 officers, 2,926 other ranks

Italian - 237 officers, 4,869 other ranks.

HONG KONG. Enemy shelling and mortar fire have caused some damage to our beach defence pill boxes on North shore of the Island and to one coast defence battery. Bombing has caused some damage to food stores and water mains. Our artillery fire has dispersed enemy troop concentrations and transport on the mainland and silenced four enemy guns. On 17th, a further summons to surrender was received. The Governor replied that he was not prepared to receive any further communication on the subject.

MALAYA. 17th. KEDAH. On right enemy attacked our detachments in GRIK area (25 miles S.S.E. of KROH) in some strength. On left, withdrawal from River MUDA is continuing. Our reserve formations now on line of River KRIAN (20 miles to South).

PENANG. Withdrawal proceeding.

KALANTAN. We now hold position on River NAL (25 miles South of KOTA BHARU). Enemy broke off engagement after suffering casualties. Elsewhere nothing to report. Enemy air activity negligible. Anti-aircraft defences have shot down 13 enemy aircraft to date, plus 5 probable.

PORTUGUESE TIMOR. The Netherlands East Indies Government announce that on the morning of 17th December Portuguese Timor was occupied by Dutch and Australian forces.

RUSSIA. Nothing additional to official communiques.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

16th/17th. WILHELMSHAVEN (71 tons), OSTEND (35 tons), BREST (31 tons), and DUNKIRK were attacked in fair visibility. 13 aircraft from R.C.A.F. squadrons took part in these raids.

17th. Our fighters destroyed a Junker 88 off KENT.

17th/18th. 137 aircraft despatched to BREST (121) HAVRE (14) leaflets PARIS - ORLEANS (2). At BREST, attacked by 99 aircraft a large explosion and fires were seen, though a smoke screen hindered observation. One bomber missing. Another came down in the sea but the crew is safe.

LIBYA. 16th. Our light bombers started a large fire in dumps near BARDIA and attacked BENINA aerodrome. In the course of continuous fighter patrols to the Southwest of GAZALA and frequent sweeps between GAZALA and TMIMI only two enemy aircraft were sighted, one of which was destroyed.

F FAR EAST. 17th. Six light bombers escorted by 5 fighters operating from SINKAWANG (North-West BORNEO) unsuccessfully attacked Japanese warships off MIRI.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

17th/18th. About 40 enemy aircraft operated against the United Kingdom, of which 18 crossed the coast for short periods.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 20th, 1941.

~~SECRET~~
Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the two latest reports received from
London on the military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

Copy No. 11

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

OPTTEL No. 41

HONG KONG. 19th. Message despatched at three thirty a.m. local time reported that after heavy bombardment Japanese have effected a landing on North East corner of the Island. Every effort was being made to evict them. Eight thirty six a.m. situation reported very grave as enemy had made a deep penetration. Ten nineteen a.m. wireless station was being abandoned due to adjustment of defences. Last cypher book and table was being destroyed after despatch of message.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

OPTTEL No. 12

Information received up to 7 a.m., 19th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

ATLANTIC. 19th a.m. A British destroyer was sunk by a U-boat west of GIBRALTAR.

MEDITERRANEAN. 19th, 1.45 a.m. A British cruiser and destroyer were mined 20 miles north of TRIPOLI and are unable to steam. A British cruiser was also mined but is proceeding at 16 knots.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 17th. Our forces further pursued the retreating enemy, and by 4.30 p.m. our armoured forces and infantry had reached the general line from TMIMI south-west to BIR HALGH EL ALEBA, an advance of 30 miles. Remnants of the Italian armoured and motorised forces appear to be withdrawing via MEKILI and remnants of their infantry to DERNÄ. Remnants of the German armoured forces have withdrawn to DERNÄ possibly making for BENHAZI by the Coast Road. Our forces are continuing the advance north-west of DERNÄ and west of MEKILI.

MALAYA. 18th. In KELANTAN, minor enemy activity only.

KEDAH. The withdrawal from River NUDA to River KRIAN has been carried out successfully. The evacuation of PANANG to PORT SWETTENHAM and SINGAPORE has also been effected successfully. The attack on our detachment at GRIK has not been pressed. The enemy carried out a fairly heavy bombing attack on the Eastern railway at MERAPOH (40 miles north of KUALA LIPSE. 11 large transports are reported off PATANI, where there is continuous launch activity.

PACIFIC ISLANDS. Japanese are reported to have vacated TARAWA after destroying the wireless station.

RUSSIA. Russian pressure continues in the MOSCOW and TULA areas. The Russian claim to have taken ALEKSIN (30 miles north-west of TULA) and SHEGKINO (15 miles south-west of TULA) is believed. Heavy Russian attacks are also reported from the DONETZ BASIN. The Germans are intensifying their pressure on SEVASTOPOL.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

18th. 47 Heavy Bombers were despatched to attack SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU at BREST. Bursts causing explosions were seen on the sterns of both battle-cruisers, two bursts just to the south-west of the docks were also followed by flashes from each vessel amidships, and thick black smoke was observed rising

from the GNEISENAU. Fires were started in the jetties and amongst the camouflage netting. 11 squadrons of fighters provided escort to within ten miles of BREST. Bombers shot down three Messerschmidts 109, probably destroyed three and damaged nine. Fighters destroyed four and damaged one. Our losses were four Stirlings, one Manchester and one Hurricane. Two other bombers crashed, the crew of one being saved.

18th/19th. 19 bombers despatched to attack BREST but visibility was poor and results were unobserved. One aircraft crashed on return.

LIBYA. On 16th and 17th, Hurricanes damaged 46 lorries and five petrol tankers on the EL AGHEILA road. During the attack on BENINA aerodrome on 16th, two large aircraft were destroyed on the ground and two fires started. On 17th, heavy attacks were made by Blenheims on an enemy mechanical transport column south-east of DERN and motor vehicles near MEKILI, many vehicles being destroyed. Bombers attacked and hit buildings at GIOVANNI BERTA (18 miles east-south-east of APOLLONIA) and Hurricanes with bombs attacked mechanical transport near EL THIMI and MEKILI. Marylands destroyed 15 Junkers 52 at BARCE aerodrome.

17th/18th. Wellingtons successfully bombed BENINA aerodrome and attacked mechanical transport on the BARCE-TOORA road. During above operations, two Messerschmidts 109 were destroyed in the air. Six Hurricanes are missing.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. 16th/17th and 17th/18th. Naval Swordfish attacked a 4,000-ton tanker, which is believed to have sunk. 17th. Four Blenheims attacked transport in the ZUARA area (west of TRIPOLI) and destroyed two train coaches and two petrol tankers. One Blenheim is missing.

FAR EAST. Dutch bomber squadrons attacked enemy shipping at MIRI. One destroyer was hit and near misses were made on one cruiser and on two transports.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

18th/19th. 38 aircraft operated against the United Kingdom, the majority of which are suspected of minelaying in the HUMBUR area and in LIVERPOOL BAY.

MALTA. 16th/17th and 17th/18th. Bombs were dropped on the Island causing damage to civilian property.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

23rd December, 1941.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies
of the latest reports received from London
on the military situation. They were dated
20th and 21st December, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

R. I. Campbell
For the Ambassador.

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

~~SECRET~~REGRADED
UNCL. & SIFIEDOPTEL (Unnumbered)

Information received up to 7 a.m., 21st December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

20th Noon. Air reconnaissance showed PRINCE EUGEN in dry dock at BREST.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. 20th. At 10.30 a.m. general situation was that the continued pressure of our forward columns was keeping the enemy on the run. The majority of the remaining German Forces appear to be in the SOLUK area, while the remnants of the Italian Divisions are still North East of BENGAZI and much disorganized. Our mobile columns which have reached EL KARRUBA are directed one on REGIMA and BENGAZI and the other on MSUS and SOLEIDIA. Reports so far received indicate that twelve enemy tanks were destroyed on the 19th, eight new Italian tanks were abandoned at MEKILI. Reconnaissance of TRIPOLI (L) on 19th showed that two supply ships of about six thousand and five thousand tons had arrived. A third ship of similar size was approaching the port under escort. It has now been reported that our Patrols with parachute troops dropped early in the operations, succeeded in destroying 22 enemy aircraft together with bomb and petrol stores on a landing ground thirty miles West of SIRTE.

MALAYA. On the morning of the 21st enemy reached the (?) river at MAHANG. There was no contact West of this place. Our troops are holding the line of the KURAU River and Southern end of CHENDEROH LAKE. In an action near LENGONG GRIK road on the 19th, 60 enemy dead were counted, our casualties were small. Nothing to report from KELANTAN, KUANTAN and JOHORE areas. A small detachment of British troops from MIRI arrived at SINGAPORE on 21st.

HONG KONG. The latest report at 6.00 p.m. local time 19th stated that the enemy had over run the North West corner of the Island.

RUSSIA. The Russians are maintaining heavy pressure on the MOSCOW front. Particularly in the area North West of TULA. The Germans are continuing their attack on SEVASTOPOL.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

20th. One Hudson bombed a cargo vessel of 3,000 tons off the Norwegian coast, the ship appeared to be hit.

LIBYA. 19th. Light bombers and fighters attacked enemy M.T. columns retreating Westwards from the MEKILI and DERNA areas. Attacks on a large column East of EL KARRUBA were very effective. Heavy damage was done to M.T. on the BARCE-TOCRA and BENGHAZI-CHEMINES roads. Two aerodromes were bombed. During the operations 3 German fighters were shot down, our losses were two Marylands and one Beaufighter.

MALTA. Blenheims bombed ZOURA railway station and hit a goods shed and destroyed rolling stock. 40 aircraft were found destroyed on the aerodrome at DERNA.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

20th to 21st. 48 aircraft were operating, 30 of which were probably sea mining in the THAMES Estuary.

MALTA. 19th. 13 enemy fighters and bombers approached the Island and on the 20th 40 enemy aircraft carried out two attacks, only slight damage was caused. One German bomber was destroyed, two Italian fighters probably destroyed and three German bombers damaged, three Hurricanes are missing. Bombs dropped on 19th/20th had little effect.

SARAWAK. 19th. The raid on KUCHING aerodrome was from a high level and caused only slight damage, the town was bombed and machine gunned, 22 civilians were killed and a petrol store destroyed.

(V) G.A.F.

It is considered that the Germans will make every effort to withdraw their force in CYRENAICA, of over 200 aircraft, to bases in TRIPOLITANIA. This may, however, be impossible owing to the present inadequate ground facilities and part of the force may have to withdraw to the AEGEAN area or to SICILY.

(VI) JAPANESE AIR FORCE

There are at present about 400 aircraft in Southern INDO-CHINA and Southern SIAM. The average scale of effort against MALAYA during the first four days of the Japanese attack was about one hundred and twenty aircraft per day.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(S.S. SECRET)~~

OPTTEL No. 43

Information received up to 7 a.m., 20th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Aircraft catapulted from a ship escorting a homeward convoy destroyed 2 Focke Wulf aircraft and damaged a third East of the AZORES yesterday. One of H.M. submarines attacked two large Northbound merchant ships escorted by 2 destroyers in the Gulf of TARANTO on the 13th and obtained one hit with torpedo. A small British merchant vessel in homeward convoy was torpedoed early on the 19th 400 miles West of CAPE ST. VINCENT and is reported sinking. A 9,500 ton tanker in coastal convoy and carrying petrol was set on fire and abandoned off Northwest WALES yesterday evening.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. The pursuit of the enemy continues. By the evening of the 18th 4th Indian Division had captured DERNA aerodrome but the enemy were still in possession of the town and its defences which were reported strong. Our armoured forces were about 12 miles southwest of MEKILI with a detachment 15 miles further west. MEKILI was still occupied by the enemy. During the morning of the 19th our troops occupied both DERNA and MEKILI and the pursuit of the retreating enemy westwards along the roads DERNA-BARCE and MEKILI-EL ABIAR was continued. So far the enemy retreat has been rapid and comparatively little opposition has been met. The number of prisoners has therefore not been great although much M.T. has been captured. There are signs of considerable enemy disorganization. In the frontier area South African forces continue the investment of enemy positions at BARDIA and near HALFAYA. The defences of BARDIA are reported to be exceedingly strong, our artillery is causing considerable damage.

MALAYA. A further withdrawal of our forces in the northwest was carried out without interference and they are now on a line 15 miles north of IPOH and are reorganizing. The bombing attack on the railway mentioned yesterday caused no damage. The civil and military evacuation of PENANG was successful. Three ships have reached PORT SWETTENHAM and SINGAPORE. Coast defence guns, petrol stores, the power house and aerodrome were destroyed. Total air raid casualties in PENANG are estimated at 600 killed.

RUSSIA. The Russians claim to have occupied RUZA, the German withdrawal is continuing on the whole front from KALININ to TULA.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

19th. A Hurricane shot down 2 German bombers into the sea.
19th/20th. Bombing operations cancelled.

LIBYA. 18th. Our bomber and fighter aircraft kept up a heavy attack on about 2,000 M.T. withdrawing westwards from MEKILI. Many vehicles were destroyed. Marylands hit at least four JU 52's dispersed on BENINA aerodrome.
18th/19th. 42 Wellingtons operated against BENGHAZI, some mines were laid and hits were scored on the moles and on M.T. near the town. A/A fire at BENGHAZI had greatly decreased. 3 Wellingtons laid mines inside TRIPOLI Harbour while 3 others bombed the town.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN. 18th/19th. Naval aircraft scored hits with torpedoes on two merchant vessels of about 8,000 tons in a south bound convoy north of HOMS.

SARAWAK. 19th. Dutch Glen Martins attacked enemy vessels off the northeast coast claiming one hit and one near miss on a Japanese cruiser and a hit and two near misses on another large ship. They also claim one enemy aircraft shot down. One Glen Martin was lost.

(IV) ENEMY ACTIVITY

MALTA. 18th/19th. 7 aircraft bombed LUQA aerodrome. One Wellington on the ground was destroyed and others were damaged.

SARAWAK. 19th. Enemy aircraft continuously attacked PONTIANAK in WEST BORNEO causing considerable damage to the town. KUCHING aerodrome was bombed by 15 enemy aircraft. Aircraft casualties in operations over and from the British Isles - German, two destroyed.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 23rd, 1941.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Mr. President,

_____ I enclose herein a copy of the
latest report received from London on
the military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

(For the Ambassador)

R. I. Campbell

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

~~(S)~~

OPTEL No. 45

Information received up to 7 a.m., 22nd December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

An Auxiliary Aircraft Carrier escorting a homeward Gibraltar convoy was sunk by U-boat yesterday 500 miles West of CAPE FINISTERRE, some ships of the convoy have also been torpedoed. Aircraft from the Auxiliary Aircraft Carrier yesterday morning sighted a U-boat with a hole in her side transferring men to another U-boat. The aircraft shot 3 men. One of H.M. submarines torpedoed a large tanker entering SUDA BAY on the 11th and another of H.M. submarines in an attack on 2 North bound merchant ships in the Gulf of TARANTO on the 13th obtained 3 hits on one and 1 on the other.

HONG KONG. 20th. Motor Torpedo Boats sank 4 enemy landing craft between KOWLOON and the Island, our losses were two Motor Torpedo Boats sunk and 1 damaged. An Oiler, two boom defence vessels and an auxiliary patrol vessel were scuttled as they were unable to steam. On the 21st, a medium sized Greek cargo vessel was damaged by mine off the East Coast and beached and a Norwegian vessel of about 5,000 tons was torpedoed.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. The pursuit of the enemy continues, but our columns have been hindered by sand storms and heavy rain in the coastal area our patrols have reached CYRENE and APOLLONIA. In the centre our columns are attacking 5 miles West of EL KARRUBA, where much abandoned material was found. Further South, by the morning of the 21st we had reached MSUS and are working forward to regain contact with the enemy. There are indications that the enemy is making a stand to cover the evacuation of equipment from BENGHAZI.

MALAYA. The withdrawal of our forces decided upon owing to loss of aerodromes, from the Northern part of KELANTAN has been completed. Bulk of stores and equipment has been withdrawn. On the 21st, enemy pressure on GRIK road increased, one Battalion cut off during the night 19th to 20th fought its way out with about 30 casualties, Japanese suffered heavily.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

20th to 21st. A Hudson attacked the oil depot ST. NAZAIRE and started fires. Bad weather prevented bombing operations. About 20 enemy aircraft were suspected sea mining off the East Coast.

LIBYA. 19th. Fighters inflicted heavy casualties on transport and lorry borne troops South of JEDABYA.

19th to 20th. The enemy heavily raided TOBRUK, no damage was reported.

20th. Blenheims bombed BARCE aerodrome, and others with fighter escort, were intercepted by German fighters near BARCE and forced to jettison their bombs. Three German fighters were destroyed and one probably destroyed, four Blenheims and five Tomahawks are missing.*

MALTA. 21st. Bombers escorted by fighters attacked the Island causing slight damage to barracks and 5 fatal casualties. One enemy fighter was destroyed, one probably destroyed and one damaged. Two Hurricanes were lost.

MALAYA. 21st. KUALA LUMPUR aerodrome was attacked by 13 Japanese dive bombers with fighter escort. Our fighters destroyed one bomber and another was probably destroyed by anti-aircraft fire. Our losses - one fighter, pilot safe. Reported that Japanese bombers when attacked by fighters or anti-aircraft fire immediately broke formation in disorder.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 26th, 1941.

~~SECRET~~
Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the latest reports received from London
on the military situation. They were
dated 11th-18th December and December 23rd.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

(For the Ambassador)

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

Copy No. 11

~~BRITISH TRUST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 48

HONG KONG.

Situation up to 5 p.m. 23rd December. During previous 24 hours enemy kept up incessant attacks and local raids accompanied by intensive bombardments by artillery mortars and dive bombers.

Some ground on MOUNT CAMERON lost during night was recaptured early in morning by party Royal Marines.

In afternoon Middlesex at LEIGHTON HILL beat off determined attack.

Position generally unchanged. Troops very tired. Enemy in possession of Indian Military hospital but reported behaving well towards wounded. Water position in city and peak most precarious as principal reservoirs are in enemy hands, and pipe lines from others damaged. Strenuous efforts being made to improve position food supplies greatly reduced by enemy action.

Health civilian population remarkably good and conduct admirable.

Civil defence services run very well.

Civilian casualties about 4,000 of whom possibly 1,000 killed.

REGRADED
UNCL & UNL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~(U.S. PROPERTY)~~

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

OPTEL No. 46

Information received up to 7 a.m., 23rd December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

During the night 21st/22nd a small Norwegian ship in the homeward Gibraltar convoy was torpedoed. A 7,000 ton British ship was sunk by mine off the East coast on the 21st.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. Reports now received of operations by our advanced columns on the 20th state two large enemy columns containing tanks and guns were successfully engaged near EL KARRUBA, two field guns and much M.T. destroyed. Continuous stream of abandoned M.T. and equipment reported on line of advance of our armoured force from MEKILLI. Many prisoners captured.

22nd. There are indications that the enemy, mainly Italian, may try to hold the area EL ABIAR-BENGAZI. The majority of the Germans are believed to be further south in the JEDABYA area and most of their air forces seem to be operating from south west of SOLUK. In the north our advance on BARCE continues and also on BENGAZI and the SOLUK area.

MALAYA. 22nd. It is believed that enemy suffered heavy losses on GRIK road on the 21st where situation is now quiet. Nothing to report from other sectors.

HONG KONG. Our forces continue to hold the north west of the Island and also STANLEY Peninsula in the south. On the 21st the enemy launched a determined attack from the East and have isolated our position at LITTLE HONG KONG where food and ammunition is stored. We are attacking the enemy rear from STANLEY but progress is slow and our forces are showing signs of exhaustion.

RUSSIA. The Russians are continuing their offensive on the MOSCOW front and in particular are making strong attacks in the area between VERNHCE and TIM (forty-five miles East of KURSK).

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

22nd. Hudsons reported hits on a 2,500 ton merchant vessel and a 6,000 ton tanker off NORWAY.

22nd/23rd. 22 bombers of which ten R.C.A.F., were sent to WILHEIM-SHAVEN, all returned safely. Enemy activity in United Kingdom area was negligible.

LIBYA. 21st. Our fighter Sweeps over a wide area met no hostile aircraft. An enemy bomber was shot down in the Gulf of BOMBA.

21st/22nd. Wellingtons attacked TRIPOLI (L) aerodrome destroying at least seven dispersed aircraft and damaging others besides buildings and hangars. Three 4,000 pound bombs were dropped in the M.T. dispersal area and large fires were started.

MALAYA. 22nd. Two enemy raids by a total of eighteen fighters were made on KUALA LUMPUR aerodrome. One enemy aircraft was destroyed, three of our fighters are missing and one crashed, three pilots safe. Three Dutch fighters were reported missing on the same day and a fourth crashed.

SIAM. 21st. Our fighters from BURMA destroyed seven aircraft on an enemy aerodrome.

HONG KONG. 20th. Three Chinese bombers escorted by six fighters were seen dive bombing the Japanese north of KOWLOON.

(IV) BORNEO

The Japanese are reported to be improving the aerodrome at MIRI.

(V) FRANCE

A convoy of some twenty merchant ships to be escorted by warships is reported to be forming at CASABLANCA for MARSEILLES. Such a convoy is about four times the usual size for this route.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH-NAVY-SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 47

Following is supplementary resume of operational events covering the period 11th - 18th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

An Italian battlefleet was at sea covering convoys to North Africa. British and Russian submarines had several successes in the Mediterranean and in Northern waters. A Canadian destroyer suffered considerable damage from heavy weather South of ICELAND on 14th. There was little U-boat activity during the period and the general trend of submarine movements to the Mediterranean seem to have continued. A number have passed Gibraltar and there are indications that several may have turned back after having been attacked and damaged. The Japanese losses in the Far East are believed to be one battleship sunk and two damaged in addition to casualties to light craft and transports. Shipping losses have been light although little information from the Far East of Mercantile losses has yet been received. It is known that some British ships have been seized by the Japanese who claim to have captured 120,000 gross tons.

TRADE. During the week ending 17th December 998 ships were convoyed. Imports into the U.K. during the week ending 13th December totalled 1,043,000 tons and included 350,000 tons of tanker imports.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. The enemy forces now much disorganized and consisting of the remnants of the 3 armoured divisions, 2 Italian motorised divisions, and not much more than 2 Italian Infantry Divisions, have retreated Westwards from the DERNA-MEKILI line towards BENGHAZI, where defensive works are reported to be in course of construction. The task of the British Forces is to create confusion among the enemy's troops and prevent him rallying, though the extension of our lines of communication is presenting administrative difficulties in pressing home our advantage. For the enemy also the supply question is acute, and even if fresh convoys succeed in reaching him through BENGHAZI he is likely to have difficulty in stabilising fresh defensive positions East of that town.

JAPAN. The gravity of the situation in MALAYA is mainly due to the fact that the enemy, already some 4 divisions in strength with at least 150 tanks, is able to disembark reinforcements in Southern SIAM (chiefly at SINGORA and PATANI) unhindered from the air. In the whole Far Eastern theatre the enemy has at present the great advantage of being able to move his forces in comparative

freedom from one front to another. The chief factors influencing Japanese strategy at present appear to be (A) time, (B) the attitude of RUSSIA. JAPAN must obtain quick results in view of her difficult economic situation and the inevitability of defeat, if the UNITED STATES and ourselves are given time in which to build up our strength against her. She is also anxious not to start another front in the North, whilst fighting is still in progress on the Southern and CHINA front. It therefore appears that after the initial phases of the war are over, the position of JAPAN, who has now been at war for over four years in CHINA, will become precarious if operations are opened on her Northern front, and if there is sufficient time for the UNITED STATES and ourselves to strengthen our military position in the FAR EAST.

BURMA. G. in C. INDIA included BURMA in his Command as from 15th December.

RUSSIA. The Germans in their retreat are suffering heavy casualties and loss of equipment and it is clear that in some sectors they are being severely harassed and prevented from withdrawing according to plan. Particularly Northwest of MOSCOW, where they have lost KALININ and in the TULIA sector, where they had to fall back 60 miles. In the South they still hold TAGANROG and have not retired West of the River MIUS. There is no evidence that any divisions have yet been pulled out for refitting.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

UNITED KINGDOM. A slight improvement in the weather enabled our night bombing to be resumed on a fairly heavy scale. BREAST was attacked on six nights by a total of 167 aircraft which dropped 277 tons of H.E. Although intense darkness and efficient smoke screens prevented accurate bombing results appeared hopeful. It is estimated that about 13,000 tons of enemy shipping were sunk or damaged by our aircraft.

MEDITERRANEAN. In spite of sandstorms and inferior weather conditions the retreating enemy was given no respite. By day, our light bombers and fighters helped our ground operations by directing frequent and intense attacks chiefly upon M.T. concentrated and retiring on roads and on aerodromes. Since the enemy had lost at least six forward aerodromes, there was a certain amount of congestion on those in the BENHAZI area. Full advantage was taken of this situation by our bombers and fighter-bombers. Transport aircraft flying between CRETE and DERN to relieve the difficult sea route, were also the object of special attack. Heavy night-bombing raids were directed upon the main ports used by the enemy both in AFRICA and Southern ITALY. Our aircraft sank or damaged about 15,000

tens of Axis shipping. The German Air Force kept up a large scale effort although the activity of his dive bombers noticeably decreased, probably owing partly to losses and partly to supply difficulties. JU 88's concentrated mainly on front-line target so attacks on back area and communications were rare. German single engined fighters were employed to the utmost. Many ME 109's were shot down but, generally speaking, the German single engined fighters had been handled well.

FAR EAST. During the period 7 to 17th a total of seventeen enemy aircraft are known to have been destroyed in MALAYA, of which 13 are claimed by A.A. guns.

RUSSIA. On the whole of the Central Sector, the German Air Force supply situation appears adequate for the present requirements of the reduced Air Forces in this area. In the South, Russian pressure appears to be heaviest in the DONETS BASIN but German Air Force commitments in support of operations in the CRIMEA and TAGANROG localities probably prevent them furnishing a sufficient Air Force to cover operations further North. It is thought that for some time the supply situation in the whole area East of the DNIEPER BEND has been acute and probably accounts for the failure hitherto to maintain an intensive scale of activity.

(IV) BOULOGNE.

On 12th/13th October, 3 barges loaded with fuel oil and 5 motor torpedo boats were sunk in the harbour. Some submarine shelters were damaged. 24 bombers sent. 36 tons dropped.

(V) HOME SECURITY

Estimated civilian casualties for week ending 0600/17. None killed, four seriously wounded.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 26th, 1941

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the latest reports received from London
on the military situation. They were
dated 24th and 25th December respectively.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President.

very sincerely yours,

(For the Ambassador)

R. I. Campbell

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

~~BRITISH MUST DESTROY~~~~SECRET.~~

25th December, 1941.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIEDOPTEL No. 49

Information received up to 7 a.m., 26 December, 1941.

1. NAVAL

Reconnaissance of BREST yesterday showed that the GNEISENAU had left drydock and gone to 453 torpedo boat station. SCHARNHORST and PRINZ EUGEN were still in dock. The Dutch submarine O.16 which sank four Japanese troopships on the 12th, blew up after entering one of our minefields on her way to SINGAPORE, on the 12th. A 6500 ton Russian Tanker was torpedoed and sunk near the Dardanelles on the 10th. A small Belgian Merchant vessel and a medium sized Greek ship were both sunk by mines off the East Coast on the 23rd and 22nd respectively, and on the 23rd a Greek ship of similar size was mined off YARMOUTH and has been beached. A small British Merchant ship was sunk by U-Boat East of TORRUK yesterday.

2. MILITARY

LIBYA On the night 21/22nd a long range desert patrol destroyed 37 enemy aircraft at JEDABYA. On 22nd our patrols harassed enemy infantry and columns of M.T. in the area East and South of SOLUM. After driving off a German force of 35 tanks and 150 M.T. they captured ANTELAT. In the North our Column directed on BENGHAZI continued its advance West of EL KARRUBA, 500 prisoners have been taken in this area.

On 23rd an enemy column near MAGRUN 45 miles South of BENGHAZI was engaged and retreated in disorder leaving fifty German prisoners. Enemy reported destroying aircraft on MAGRUN aerodrome. A total of 92 German and 53 Italian M.13 tanks had been destroyed or found destroyed by R.E. up to 13th. Enemy still appears to be trying to hold BENGHASI until he has evacuated more equipment and stores. Our advance has been delayed owing to bad going and maintenance difficulties. These are now being overcome and every effort is being directed towards preventing the enemy escaping and then destroying him.

MALAYA. 23rd, North West, our forces now hold the line of the PERAK River. North East, our forces from KELANTAN have been withdrawn to the RAUB-BENTONG area. The enemy's line of advance is limited to a single railway and there is no information as yet of any pressure.

JAPANESE FORCES.

It has been reported that mobilisation of ten new divisions has been taking place in Japan since the 15th. This will bring the total strength up to 72 divisions which it is believed is the maximum that Japan can equip and maintain. Reports indicate that Japanese are employing in the PHILIPPINES about 55,000 to 60,000 on LUZON and about 20,000 on MINDANAO.

RUSSIA

The Russians are increasing their pressure in the Leningrad Sector. North West of MOSCOW the Germans have been forced back for a considerable distance to the West of the KALININ - MOSCOW Railway.

3. AIR OPERATIONS

WESTERN FRONT 22nd/23rd.

21 tons of H.E. and 1,800 incendiaries were dropped on WILHELMSHAVEN. The town was identified in spite of much cloud and bursts were seen in the target area. 23rd. A Sunderland probably hit with bombs a 12,000 ton tanker off CAPE FINISTERRE. 23rd/24th. 145 aircraft were sent out COLOGNE 69, BREST 47 Secammin. Two crashed on return. About 48 enemy aircraft were operating against this country.

MEDITERRANEAN

LIBYA. MAGRUN landing ground was heavily bombed on 21st/22nd and on the following day. At least six enemy aircraft were destroyed and others damaged. Our fighters attacked about 25 aircraft which were landing and taking off destroying nine of them. Hurricanes attacked Southbound troop carrying vehicles on the JEDABYA - EL AGHEILA Road and Blenheims bombed Westbound M.T. between SIRTE and MISURATA. Many vehicles were destroyed or damaged and heavy casualties were inflicted on troops. 22nd/23rd Nine aircraft from Malta bombed TRIPOLI (L) aerodrome.

FAR EAST

RANGOON had its first air raid on the 23rd. A military report states that four enemy aircraft are believed to have been shot down.

MALAYA - 23rd.

Several bombing and machine gun attacks were made by enemy aircraft on IPOH and the PONTOON Bridge over the PERAK River. A petrol dump and ammunition train were destroyed at IPOH.

BORNEO.

Dutch and British aircraft reported on 23rd at least two enemy cruisers, three destroyers and ten transports moving in the direction of KUCHING.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~BRITISH MOSS CODES~~
~~(U.S. CODES)~~

OPTEL No. 50

Information received up to 7 a.m., 25th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

HONG KONG. One of H.M. Gun Boats was sunk by dive-bombing on the 21st.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. Our troops captured BENINA and REGIMA on the afternoon of the 23rd and occupied BENGHAZI on the morning of the 24th. On the evening of the 23rd 74th Indian Division occupied BARCE after overcoming some resistance about five miles to the East. Our operations in SOLUK area and the occupation of BENGHAZI seem to have separated the German and Italian forces and little fight is left in the latter. Further South on the afternoon of the 23rd a fairly large German force, after making a determined stand at ANTELAT, was withdrawing South West having suffered much damage and a heavy loss of vehicles. Strong columns have been directed upon JEDABYA and steps taken to cut the road between JEDABYA and EL AGHEILA.

MALAYA. 24th. PERAK. No ground contact. Our forward troops were dive bombed constantly during 23rd/24th and on 24th bombing was haphazard and few casualties resulted. Other sectors nothing to report.

SARAWAK. Large enemy concentrations off SADONG and landings being attempted. KUCHING aerodrome denied and all denial schemes completed 24th.

HONG KONG. On the afternoon of the 24th fighting was continuing with undiminished intensity along the same line as previous night. A slight enemy penetration in the central sector towards MOUNT CAMERON was being contained by our troops. Enemy bombardment of our positions from aircraft mortars and artillery of all calibres continues. Position substantially unchanged.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

23rd/24th. BREST. 72 tons of H.E. were dropped and bursts were seen across the docks but the smoke screen prevented detailed observation.

COLOGNE. 60 tons of H.E. and over 6,000 incendiaries were dropped on the estimated position of the town over which heavy cloud conditions were met. 13 R.C.A.F. and 7 R.N.Z.A.F. aircraft took part in the night's operations. One New Zealand aircraft crashed, one killed and five injured.

24th. The large tanker, attacked and probably hit by an Australian Sunderland, was again picked up by a Sunderland and was steaming at about 12

knots with a slight list and escorted by a JU 88. At 9.15 a.m. 24th after engaging the JU 88, Sunderland attacked in face of heavy A.A. fire. At 10.30 a.m. the tanker was again sighted at ORTIGUEIRA Harbour where she was attacked the same afternoon by a Beaufort and hit amidships with one torpedo. The ship was finally beached. One Hampden attacked one of the battle cruisers at BREST and dropped a heavy weight bomb in the target area.

MEDITERRANEAN. 23rd. Marylands attacked a landing ground West of EL AGHEILA and Tomahawks destroyed 8 aircraft on the ground at MAGRUN. Hurricanes destroyed a petrol lorry and 8 other lorries on the road West of EL AGHEILA. Little enemy M.T. movement was reported East of this place.

23rd/24th. 7 Wellingtons successfully attacked barracks and M.T. parks at MISURATA. A nuisance raid lasting 10 hours was made on TRIPOLI (L). Enemy aircraft attacked MALTA without causing serious damage and were suspected of mine laying. On the 24th four JU 88's with heavy fighter escort twice attacked MALTA Harbour. One bomb hit a merchant vessel and one of H.M. ships was slightly damaged. Three JU 88's were destroyed and another probably destroyed by A.A. and fighters. One Hurricane is missing.

FAR EAST. MALAYA. 23rd. One of our aircraft attacked PATANI aerodrome where about 100 enemy aircraft had been located.

BORNEO. 24th. Five Blenheims attacked an enemy force off KUCHING and obtained one hit on a transport and six near misses. A heavy enemy attack on SINKAWANG aerodrome rendered it unserviceable but no aircraft were destroyed.

BURMA. Further reports of air raids on RANGOON on 23rd indicate that of 60 Japanese bombers escorted by fighters 10 aircraft were shot down for the loss of three from air Volunteer Group Squadron. One pilot is safe. The R.A.F. had no casualties. Unconfirmed estimates of casualties give 400 persons killed. Anti-personnel bombs were largely used and damage to the Harbour was slight.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

27th December, 1941.

~~SECRET~~
Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the latest
report received from London on the military
situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

(for the Ambassador)

R. I. Campbell

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
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OPTTEL No. 51

Information received up to 7 a.m., 26th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Report from HAIFA states that on 25th a British 6,000 ton tanker was on fire and a Norwegian 7,000 ton Tanker had been severely damaged by fire. No further details but thought the result of air attack. A naval anti-submarine vessel was destroyed by enemy aircraft at PENANG on the 12th. Two medium sized British merchant vessels and one of smaller tonnage have been mined off the east coast. The two former have sunk.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. Pockets of enemy troops still remain and are showing fight in the area north east of BENGAZI. BARCE aerodrome is not yet considered safe from ground attack. On the 24th enemy columns of M.T., armoured cars and some tanks were attacked by our mixed columns in the GHEMINES-BEDA-FOMM area. The enemy is still showing signs of life in the JEDABYA area and will undoubtedly do his best to avoid being cut off. The pursuit is being maintained.

MALAYA. Enemy troops have reached KJALA TRENGGANJ on the east coast.

RUSSIA. The enemy attack on SEVASTOPOL is continuing.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

WESTERN FRONT. 25th/26th. Thirty-nine enemy aircraft were operating mainly in the THAMES ESTUARY.

MEDITERRANEAN. 23rd/24th. Seventeen Wellingtons bombed the landing ground at EL AGHEILA and another one in the vicinity starting fires. One hundred enemy aircraft were found destroyed on BERCA landing ground.

24th. Our fighters attacked M.T. and troops in the EL AGHEILA area. Many vehicles were destroyed or damaged and casualties inflicted on troops. Three Blenheims attacked a large schooner in ZOUARA Harbour, probably damaging it below the water line. Enemy aircraft dropped twelve mines on BENGAZI eleven of which fell outside the harbour.

24th/25th. Nine Wellingtons bombed TRI POLI Harbour and also a Cruiser and three Destroyers ten miles outside steering a N.N.Wly. course. Six naval aircraft also laid mines. Three enemy aircraft were over MALTA for eight and half hours. No damage was caused.

(IV) A Japanese division probably from SIAM is reported to be concentrating in the KRA Isthmus on the railway between PRACHUAB, KHIRIKUN and CHUMFORN.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 29th, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies of
the latest reports received from
London on the military situation. They
were dated December 27th and 28th,
1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

(For the Ambassador)

R. I. Campbell

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

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~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 52

Information received up to 7 a.m., 27th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

MEDITERRANEAN. A Greek schooner arrived at TOBRUK on 19th with enemy cargo and was taken in prize.

23rd. H.M.S. Schooner TIBERIO capsized and sank off MERSA MATRUH. One fatal casualty.

26th. A Polish ship of medium tonnage carrying troops and supplies was sunk by U-boat north-east of TOBRUK. All the troops and the crew were rescued.

HAIFA. The British tanker reported on fire in OPTEL No. 51 is burnt out, but the fire in the Norwegian tanker is under control and her tanks are intact.

FAR EAST. CHINA. A Dutch submarine has sunk three large transports and a tanker off the SARAWAK coast. A Dutch submarine is overdue from patrol in the Gulf of SIAM and must be considered lost. United States submarines claim to have sunk recently one transport and one mine-sweeper and to have sunk probably a second transport and possibly a sea-plane tender.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. The pursuit of the enemy by our forward troops is being pressed as fast as maintenance problems and bad going permit. In the BENGHAZI sector our troops are rounding up Italian stragglers north east of the town. BENGHAZI Harbour is extensively damaged but one mole is largely intact. The power station is in working order. Considerable war material was found abandoned at BARCE. Further south our columns report that there are no enemy east of a line from REGIMA (30 miles east of BENGHAZI) to 10 miles north of HEDA FOMM (half-way between SOLUK and JEDABYA). The bulk of the remaining German forces appear to be still in and around JEDABYA. They are being continually harried and pursued by our mobile columns. A portion of our forces are operating on their southern flank. There is no news from the old frontier area where pressure on BARDIA and HALFADA continues.

MAIAYA. No further report of land operations received.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

WESTERN FRONT. 26th. Eleven enemy aircraft operated against the United Kingdom of which two flew overland.

26th/27th. 10 aircraft were plotted, two of which crossed the Cornish coast.

MEDITERRANEAN. LIBYA. 24th/25th. 15 Wellingtons (of which one is missing) bombed and machine-gunned small groups of M.T. near EL AGHEILA. Little traffic was observed.

25th. Hurricanes machine-gunned a concentration of M.T., armoured fighting vehicles and artillery nine miles to the south east of JEDABYA. One of our aircraft was shot down by A.A. fire but the pilot is safe.

MALTA. 25th/26th. Hostile aircraft dropped bombs on the island without causing damage, one enemy aircraft was probably destroyed by ground defences.

26th. Two attacks made. The first was driven off but the second resulted in the destruction on LUQA aerodrome of six of our aircraft and damage to five more. One enemy aircraft was probably destroyed by A. A. fire.

FAR EAST. MALAYA. 25th. Enemy aircraft were active in attacking railway communications at SEGAMAT (95 miles north west of SINGAPORE). One enemy bomber shot down by A.A. fire at PORT SWETTENHAM. Air reconnaissance reported 34 transports off SINGORA. 68 aircraft at SINGORA and 33 at PATANI numerous aircraft at SUNBEI PATANI aerodrome.

BURMA. Military sources report that on 25th a further raid on RANGOON and on MINNALODON aerodrome was carried out by 54 Japanese bombers escorted by 30 fighters. Comparatively little damage was done and more than 20 enemy aircraft were shot down. Our losses 6 aircraft (including two of the American Volunteer Group) and two more were destroyed on the ground. Further report of raid on 23rd gave latest casualty figures as 1,000 killed and 700 injured.

SARAWAK AND BORNEO. 25th. SINKAWANG (NORTH BORNEO) aerodrome was heavily bombed and rendered temporarily unserviceable.

26th. Air reconnaissance reports one large cruiser, one destroyer, four transports (one burning) and a number of barges off KUCHING. No land operations were observed.

(IV) INTELLIGENCE

CHINA. A Japanese force of approximately four divisions is reported to have moved to attack CHANGSHA in CENTRAL CHINA on 23rd December.

(V) JAPANESE TACTICS.

G.O.C. MALAYA describes the Japanese forces in Northern MALAYA as a highly trained army of gangsters equipped with a high proportion of tommy guns and mortars and employing all kinds of ruses in an attempt to lower the morale of our troops.

17-176 2401
one is expected
country count

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Copy No. 11

OPTEL No. 53

Information received up to 7 a.m., 28th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

A small Spanish merchant vessel has been intercepted in the Atlantic and is being sent into GIBRALTAR. During an unsuccessful attack by enemy aircraft upon an East-coast convoy yesterday evening, one of the aircraft was shot down by gunfire from the escort ships.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. On the evening of the 26th the main German Force, with possibly some Italians, was in position around JEDABAYA, where it was being harassed by one of our Armoured Brigades. The enemy artillery in this area is reported to include eight 105 mm guns, some 88 mm, and anti-tank guns, and possibly some dug-in tanks. Our forces are closing in on JEDABAYA from the North East and South. Although facilitating the withdrawal of the Italians, the German stand at JEDABAYA may give us the opportunity to get behind and destroy them. Wireless silence prevents us knowing exact position of our outflanking force.

MALAYA. The situation is materially unchanged, although severe casualties are believed to have been inflicted upon the enemy in local counter-attacks. Slight contact has been made on the River PERAK, where the enemy is preparing bridges and rafts.

RUSSIA. The Russians are advancing on a broad front West and South West of TULA, and are also exerting heavy pressure on the Germans east of KURSK and in the DONETS area.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

WESTERN FRONT. 27th. A total of 22 aircraft were despatched to the Norwegian Coast to attack gun positions near STADLAND, and aerodrome north east of BERGEN and shipping off EBERSUND. At the aerodrome, many hits were made on the runways, a merchant vessel was sunk off EBERSUND and near misses were scored on another. Eight of our aircraft are missing. 27th/28th. 206 aircraft were sent out - DUSSELDORF 132, BOULOGNE 34, BREST 29, a Dutch aerodrome 6, sea mining 5, seven are missing and one crashed on return. Only ten aircraft operated against this country.

MEDITERRANEAN. LIBYA. 26 Blenheims attacked mechanical transport on the road west of JEDABAYA, and others from MALTA bombed two 1,500 ton merchant vessels in ZOUARA Harbour, one of which blew up. 26th/27th. Wellingtons

dropped twenty six and a half tons of bombs on TRIPOLI (L) Harbour, two hits and one near miss on shipping were obtained.

MALTA. 26th/27th. Enemy aircraft attacked the island during this night and the following day, causing slight civilian damage. One Junkers 88 was destroyed by our fighters.

FAR EAST. MALAYA. 26th. Enemy aircraft made several attacks on the railway south of TAPAH. Near TAMPIN, 20 miles north of MALACCA, it was cut but was repaired the same night.

(IV) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES IN OPERATIONS OVER AND FROM THE BRITISH ISLES

German - destroyed	27th	1
British - missing	27th	8
	27th/28th	7
Total		15

(V) There is cumulative evidence that a base for supplying fuel oil on a big scale is being established at or near MARSEILLE under German control, the oil is being sent to this area by River and canal from GERMANY through FRANCE via LYON and the RHONE. Reports of the quantity vary from 27,000 to 40,000 tons, including both diesel oil and petrol, suitable for submarines and motor torpedo boats. U-boats in the MEDITERRANEAN are at present using SPEZZIA but there is no evidence that any of this oil is to be shipped there. It may be intended to use the MARSEILLE area as an alternative supply base for German Forces in the MEDITERRANEAN.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

30th December, 1941.

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the latest report received from London on the military situation. It was dated 29th December, 1941.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,
Washington, D.C.

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Copy No. 11

~~BRITISH MOST SECRET~~

OPTEL No. 54

Information received up to 7 a.m., 29th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Light forces and two infantry assault ships returned yesterday after a successful operation on the Norwegian Coast. Military batteries were demolished and industrial plants destroyed. Ninety-six prisoners were taken and heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy. Five merchant vessels, two armed trawlers and a tug were destroyed or sunk. Naval casualties were light and army casualties included two officers and fifteen other ranks killed which were not heavy considering the severe opposition in street fighting. A Dutch submarine sank a Japanese destroyer on the 24th near KUCHING.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. Evening 27th. Air reports indicate that the enemy in the JEDABYA area is obtaining supplies and petrol by sea. Latest reports indicate that our armoured forces are well round the enemy's Southern Flank with patrols as far West as MERSA BREGA. Six enemy tanks were destroyed near JEDABYA on the evening of the 27th. Motorised troops were in contact with the enemy's North-Eastern flank some fifteen miles from JEDABYA while elements seem to have ventured considerably further into the enemy's position and are reported to have shelled transport three miles North of the town. Air observation report identification difficult owing to our columns being intermixed with the enemy.

MALAYA. PERAK. Our troops have withdrawn to positions about twenty miles South of IPOH.

BURMA. An attempt to dislodge the enemy from BOKPYIN on the 27th failed. We suffered some casualties but details are not yet known. This place is on the Coast between VICTORIA POINT and MERGUI, there are no roads to it but there is a small landing ground. A small concentration of troops in Siamese uniform with several lorries is reliably reported on the Siamese border in the area of the upper reaches of the MEKONG River.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

WESTERN FRONT. 27th. Beaufighters and Blenheims (including two R.C.A.F.) protecting naval units operating off the Norwegian Coast drove off all enemy aircraft and destroyed two German fighters three bombers and damaged three other aircraft. Three of our aircraft are missing. 27th/28th. DUSSELDORF. 112 tons of H.E. and 11,000 incendiaries were dropped. Many large fires were started

in the town and near the railway centres. At BOULOGNE and BREST 33 tons. Bursts were seen in the docks area. 16 R.C.A.F., 23 R.A.A.F. and 14 R.N.Z.A.F. aircraft took part in these operations. 28th. Two merchant vessels of about 5,000 tons were attacked by R.C.A.F. Hudsons off the Dutch Coast. One was hit amidships and the other was thought to be hit. 28th/29th. 222 aircraft were sent out - WILHELM SHAVEN 86, HULS 81, EMDEN 40. Intruder Operations 10. Visibility was good and results are believed to have been effective. Seven medium bombers are missing. About seventeen enemy aircraft were operating, most of which are suspected of sea mining in the THAMES ESTUARY.

MEDITERRANEAN. LIBYA. 27th. Four squadrons of Blenheims successfully attacked enemy positions in the BARDIA area. Tomahawks destroyed three vehicles and damaged about fifty others between JEDABYA and EL AGHEILA. Two Tomahawks are missing. Enemy fighter activity in the battle area was very slight. 27th/28th. Naval aircraft laid mines off TRIPOLI (L) and eleven Wellingtons attacked shipping in the harbour. 25 enemy aircraft made raids on 27th. 27th/28th and 28th. No important damage resulted. One bomber was shot down by Hurricanes.

FAR EAST. MALAYA. 27th/28th. Six Blenheims attacked SUNGEI PATANI aerodrome. At least seven fighters were destroyed and five fighters and three bombers damaged on the ground. 28th. Three enemy aircraft attacked PORT SWETTENHAM. One was shot down by Kua and another probably destroyed.

(IV) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES IN OPERATIONS OVER AND FROM THE BRITISH ISLES

German 27th. Five destroyed, three damaged.

British 27th. Three Missing

27th/28th. Seven missing

Total Ten.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

31st December, 1941.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies
of the latest reports received from London
on the military situation. They were dated
December 25th and 30th.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Halifax

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

**REGRADED
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~~SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 56

Following is supplementary resume of operational events covering the period 18th to 25th December, 1941.

(I) NAVAL

Our operations against U-boats in the ATLANTIC, West of GIBRALTAR and in the Eastern Mediterranean have been conspicuously successful. H.M. Air-craft carriers ILLUSTRIOUS and FORMIDABLE arrived in home waters after undergoing repairs in the UNITED STATES. The sixteenth Canadian Troop Convoy also arrived. Heavy air attacks on the German ships at BREST appear to have been unlucky and damage probably only superficial. At ARCHANGEL the ice situation is becoming serious, but more extensive use of MURMANSK can improve import conditions. "Hunt" class destroyers and anti-submarine craft escorted convoys which have been running regularly to TOBRUK and a night patrol by Greek destroyers has been maintained off BARDIA and SOILLUM. Four or five ships of about five thousand tons are known to have made the crossing from ITALY to LIBYA during the week. A group of U-boats was operating on the convoy route northwards from GIBRALTAR in co-operation with Focke Wulf aircraft, and it is probable that German submarines may be moving towards the Western Atlantic. There has been no indication recently of any operating in the Atlantic south of 30 degrees North. Prisoners state that some re-fuelled from merchant ships lying in VIGO about the middle of December. Several are now operating in the MEDITERRANEAN, of which four or five were near ALEXANDRIA during the early part of the week. Shipping losses were considerably higher than of late, largely due to enemy mine-laying off the East Coast.

TRADE. During the week ending twenty-fourth 949 ships were convoyed. Imports into the United Kingdom during the week ending 20th amounted to 890,000 tons, including 290,804 tanker imports. November non-tanker imports were - for Ministry of Food, 954,400 tons; Ministry of Supply, 1,099,500 tons.

(II) MILITARY

LIBYA. The enemy, after failing to hold the DERNA-JEKILI Line, attempted to make a stand East of BEINGHAZI to cover the evacuation of that Port, but later withdrew Southwards. General Rommel's two-armoured divisions, comprising now only some 40 to 50 tanks, are in the JEDABYA area, and our object is to bring them to battle before they can escape to the West. Our pursuit is, however, being much hampered by the rain and mud on our supply routes. The enemy is suffering from shortage of transport and mechanical repair difficulties. The future of the

battle now depends largely on our ability to transport and maintain our supplies in sufficient volume.

RUSSIA. The German retreat is continuing on the whole MOSCOW front from KALININ to OREL, and Russian pressure is preventing the enemy from executing a planned withdrawal. There is no immediate prospect of the Germans succeeding in stopping the Russian advance and in stabilising the front.

JAPAN. In the CHANGSHA area, on the CANTON-HANKOW railway, a strong Japanese force is attacking the Chinese positions. In MALAYA, the Japanese advance has for the moment slackened, but reinforcements are reported to be arriving by sea and land in the Kra Isthmus. Present Japanese strength is estimated at Four Divisions and one Tank Regiment.

SPAIN. No German troop movements have been reported to substantiate the numerous rumours of an imminent attack on SPAIN.

BALKANS. The German rumour campaign is as active in TURKEY as it is in the Iberian Peninsula. There have been several reports of German preparations for future military action based on BULGARIA.

(III) AIR OPERATIONS

UNITED KINGDOM. The principal operation was the daylight raid upon the German warships at BREST. Night bombing was carried out on four occasions, during which a total of about 200 tons of high explosive and 15,000 incendiaries were dropped. Our aircraft damaged with bombs or torpedoes about 25,000 tons of enemy shipping.

MEDITERRANEAN.

CYRENAICA. Relentless attacks by bombers and fighters upon retreating enemy columns contributed to their disorganization. Enemy aerodromes and landing grounds were also heavily bombed, several aircraft being either destroyed or damaged on the ground.

TRIPOLITANIA. ZOUARA was attacked by day and TRIPOLI (L) was bombed on five nights of the week. Our aircraft sank or damaged about 16,000 tons of enemy shipping. Apart from one heavy but ineffective night raid on TOBRUK little was seen of Axis bombers in LIBYA.

MALTA. Enemy activity increased both by day and night.

FAR EAST. Our fighters carried out one successful attack on an enemy aerodrome in SIAM, and Dutch light bombers were in action against Japanese Naval forces off N.W. BORNEO. Enemy bombers raided RANGOON, made several attacks on IPOH in MALAYA and twice visited KUALA LUMPUR aerodrome without causing much damage. In BORNEO they heavily bombed PONTIANAK and made sharp attacks on KULHIN and SINGKAWANG aerodromes.

(IV) EXTRACTS FROM PHOTOGRAPHIC AND INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ON RESULTS OF AIR
ATTACKS ON ENEMY TERRITORY IN EUROPE

BREST. In recent night attacks, no bombs have fallen on the town and damage has been confined to the docks area. On 11th/12th December, one bomb fell about 15 metres from the end of one of the dry docks.

NAPLES. After the raid on 27th/28th November, trains from NAPLES arrived in ROME more than 15 hours late. Photographs confirm various items of important industrial damage since eleventh November. Among them further damage to Royal Arsenal, half the arsenal completely destroyed. Further severe damage to the torpedo factory. Damage to Alfa Romeo works, an Oil Depot and to roofing of the Airframe Works. A large hole in the roof of the main railway station.

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Copy No. 11

~~BRITISH EAST SECRET~~

~~(U.S. SECRET)~~

OPTEL No. 55

Information received up to 7 a.m., 30th December, 1941.

(I) MILITARY

LIBYA. The bulk of the enemy forces are still in position in the JEDABYA area with their armoured forces covering the southern flank. Continued pressure had not yet succeeded in dislodging them. On the 28th a force of approximately 60 enemy tanks supported by artillery attacked one of our armoured brigades. After six hours fighting our troops withdrew eastwards. An unconfirmed report states that the enemy suffered 30 tank casualties. Our troops at BENHAZI state there are reliable reports that about 5,000 of our prisoners have been evacuated by sea to GREECE.

RUSSIA. On the MOSCOW front the Russians are continuing their advance southwest of KALININ. In the CRIMEA, the Germans and Roumanians are continuing to attack SEVASTOPOL and are offering strong resistance to Russian attempts to land at KERCH.

MALAYA. South of IPOH our forward troops have made a steady withdrawal in face of enemy forces estimated at one division supported by artillery and tanks.

SARAWAK. The Japanese have occupied KUCHING. According to Dutch sources part of our garrison has reached Dutch BORNEO.

(II) AIR OPERATIONS

WESTERN FRONT. 28th/29th. WILHELMSHAVEN. No cloud, visibility excellent, town and docks clearly seen. 77 tons H.E. and 6,500 incendiaries dropped. Bursts and fires seen in the centre of the town, near the main railway station and across the docks. Only one aircraft out of 77 on this objective did not return.

HULS. 65 aircraft dropped 55 tons of H.E. and 3,000 incendiaries. Visibility good, target clearly identified, direct hits obtained and photographs taken. Bursts followed by fires and one large explosion were seen on various parts of the objective.

EMDEN. 54 tons of H.E. including five 4,000 pounders, and 2,000 incendiaries dropped. Visibility excellent and slight ground snow helped identification. Several bursts were seen chiefly in the docks area. On the whole a very satisfactory night and the best for some weeks. 18 R.C.A.F. and 7 R.A.A.F. aircraft took part. One Canadian aircraft missing.

29th/30th. Bombing operations cancelled. About 55 enemy aircraft were operating chiefly over Northeast England. About 25 crossed the coast. Our fighters destroyed one enemy bomber and two other aircraft are believed destroyed.

MEDITERRANEAN. LIBYA. 28th. Weather being bad in the JEDABYA area our light bombers concentrated against enemy positions in BARDIA. 4 Blenheims attacked tanker near HOLIS (L) and on 28th/29th 4 Wellingtons bombed TRIPOLI (L).

GREECE and CRETE. 28th/29th. Wellingtons were sent to attack ISALAMIS Naval base and oil installations at the PIRAEUS. Owing to bad weather only three aircraft attacked their primary objective with unobserved results and 8 others bombed the aerodromes at SUDA BAY and HERAKLION where the runway was hit.

MALTA. 28th/29th. 10 aircraft attacked, one was shot down by A.A. fire. 29th. 9 attacks were made by a total of 36 aircraft. One German fighter and probably a second were destroyed. 3 Hurricanes were lost. 2 Blenheims were damaged on the ground.

FAR EAST. MALAYA. 28th/29th. 4 Blenheims attacked SUNGEI PATANI aerodrome causing fires and a large explosion. One Blenheim is missing. 29th. An attack by 18 enemy aircraft on KLUANG aerodrome caused little damage.

NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES. 28th. MEDAN aerodrome, North-east SUMATRA, was heavily bombed. Report of enemy parachute troops dropped is not confirmed.

(III) AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES IN OPERATIONS OVER AND FROM THE BRITISH ISLES.

German - One destroyed. Two probable.

(IV) HOME SECURITY

Bombing apparently directed upon the NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE area was heavier than of late, but scattered. There was some damage to house property and some casualties.

(V) JAPANESE AIR FORCE

Reference summary of 21st, paragraph six. The forces operating from INDO-CHINA, SIAM and MALAYA have now been increased to about 560 aircraft of all types. In addition the number of land based heavy bombers in the Pacific Islands has been increased by a second squadron to a total of 24 aircraft.