

Great Britain: Military Situation: May 1940

PSF
Direct Order
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BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.,
May 19th, 1940.

Personal and Secret

file →
Dear Mr. President,

Mr. Winston Churchill has instructed me to send you the enclosed appreciation of the military situation in Europe, which was despatched from London late on the evening of May 18th. I expect to receive similar messages from time to time in the future and have instructions to send these to you for your personal and secret information if you would care to have them.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. R. R. R.

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

**REGRADED
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Western Front.

1. Little news has been received during the day about area from the Saar to Maubeuge. It still appears that the German break through has been held on the south and southwest though there is a reference to a bridgehead having been formed by the enemy southeast of St. Quentin. Direction of German thrusts may indicate an intention to continue the advance in a northwest direction.

2. Air photographs show that demolitions and air bombing have done considerable damage in the area of German communications. It is clear that administrative problem of troops in the salient created by the Germans must be a difficult one.

3. Forts of Namur and some of the forts of Liege are believed to be still holding out. To the north withdrawal of Allied troops westwards has been completed according to plan and has not so far been pressed by the enemy.

4. Weather. Fine warm weather has now continued for several days. In the Gulf of Bothnia it is probable that all ports are now open except those in the extreme north (Lulea and Tornea) which should be open in the course of the next few days.

5. Air. There was an increase in operations by the German long range bombers in
northeast/

northeast France on May 17th and some objectives in eastern France were also attacked. The objectives in northeast France were chiefly communications: a few aerodromes, troop trains and ammunition dumps were also attacked.

Aircraft from seven - possibly eight - long range bomber squadrons were identified as operating, these being chiefly from mid-west and southwestern Germany. Four long range bomber formations have been apparently completely inactive during the past few days, three of these being in northwestern Germany.

6. No further identifications have been received of dive bomber units operating but requests for dive bomber support by German land forces continue to be made.

7. Four independent bomber reconnaissance Gruppen continue to be very active. Transport aircraft continue to operate on closer front and at least three cases are known of transport aircraft evacuating wounded to Dortmund area.

8. The confirmed German aircraft losses during the period May 10th - May 17th inclusive amount to 677.

Norway.

9. Troop transport activity between northern Germany and Norway has increased during the past two days.

It/

It is suspected that aircraft from a second long range bomber squadron are now in Norway: the exact number is not known but it is estimated that there are altogether about 100 Heinkel 111s in southern Norway.

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UNCLASSIFIED**

PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 20th, 1940

~~SECRET~~
file

Dear Mr. President,

After our conversation on May 12th I telegraphed to the Foreign Office to ask if I could be informed of any other ways in which action by the United States Government might be of assistance to the Allied Governments at the present juncture, over and above the armament needs that have already been communicated to you.

I have now received four more telegrams from the Foreign Office indicating various matters connected with the economic and financial aspects of the war in respect of which action by the United States

Government/

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

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

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Government would be of the greatest
assistance. Copies of these telegrams
are enclosed herein marked A.B.C.D.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

Lottman

I also enclose a further operations
telegram just received.

A.



The re-armament programme outlined in President Roosevelt's speech to Congress on May 18th will make heavy demands upon all essential materials. The Allied Governments are anxious that their export control scheme shall be administered in such a way as to meet American re-armament requirements as well as their own. The objects of Allied control schemes are (a) to ensure their own supplies and (b) to deny supplies to the enemy direct or through neutral channels. It is expected that a similar system will be extended in the very near future to the overseas possessions of Holland and Belgium.

If the United States Government were prepared to put into operation, both in the United States and in their overseas territories, a control scheme analogous to that operating in the Allied Empires, this in present circumstances would be of cardinal importance in limiting Germany's war effort and would do away with a large part of the frictions inevitable in the administration of contraband control. In such circumstances the Allies would undertake that priority of distribution of all available supplies would be determined by consultation between the United States and the Allied Governments so as to secure the interests of both parties and of peaceful neutrals.

Should the United States Government with this end in view be willing in principle to impose an export licensing control, to permit equivalent action through the operation of the navicert system, on commodities produced in the United States or its overseas territories, the order of priority of supplies of all United States and Allied produce to all quarters would, it is suggested, be settled by mutual consultation and subject to such practical machinery as might be devised. His Majesty's Government would attach great importance to the adherence of South American Governments to any such scheme and believe that the President, if the principle were acceptable to him, would/ *

- 2 -

would agree that this could best be secured by himself approaching them direct in the first instance. The United States Government would no doubt wish to avoid an extension of export licensing systems as between the United States and other American countries.

Should the United States Government consider that discussions might usefully be pursued along the foregoing lines His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would in view of the urgency of the matter prefer that initially they should be with the United States Government alone and at the earliest possible moment, and they would suggest meetings to concert detailed plans either in London or in Washington.

Pending the elaboration of the details of the scheme proposed in the first telegram, His Majesty's Government suggest as action that would be immediately helpful:-

(a) arrangements to block all German balances in United States.

(b) arrangements to prevent the sale of bearer securities shipped from Europe except under license so as to safeguard the market against sale for German account of securities obtained in occupied territories.

(c) The general extension of the Navicert System and if possible the prohibition of any shipment to an European destination without Navicert.

Italy has been piling up stocks of war material such as minerals, lubricating and vegetable oils, castor seed, toluol, cotton linters, molybdenum, glycerine, scrap metals, hides, etc. far in excess of her normal requirements. Most firms in America supplying these goods are German owned or German controlled but there is no conclusive evidence that any considerable quantities of them are being passed on to Germany at present and it therefore is impossible for our contraband control to hold them up.

It seems not unlikely that these goods are being imported and held in Italy on joint account of axis Powers for use at such time and in such a way as their joint interest may require in accordance with Mussolini's declared policy of belligerency.

If the United States Government were prepared to restrict the export to Italy of these and similar warlike materials at the source their action might still prove an effective step towards preventing the spread of the war to the Mediterranean.

Extract from Foreign Office telegram
No. 789 of May 16th.

To my mind the most valuable help which America can give should take the form of materials and foodstuffs at low prices or on easy credit terms more especially those supplies of war cut off by recent events in Northern and Western Europe or are threatened by possible developments in Mediterranean. Help in this form should not savour of intervention and in the case of foodstuffs would have additional attraction of affording an outlet for surplus of agricultural produce e.g. maize, starch and lard. Our probable food requirements are being worked out in detail as also our needs in matters of steel, machine tools, explosives etc. by appropriate organs of Anglo-French Coordination Committee who will telegraph separately as soon as possible.

Telegram despatched from London
on the evening of May 19th.

Sunt

Western Front.

1. There is no further information about the bombardment reported yesterday on Sear. The French Second Army at and East of Sedan and French Sixth Army along the South of German break through have held their ground.

2. On front of French Ninth Army appreciable bodies of French troops remain on Oise and detachments are reported still to be operating as far forward as Vervins, Mondrepuis and Trelon. The German main effort continues to be towards north-west. They had approached St. Quentin and captured Bohain and Le Cateau by 19.30 hours on May 16th. There is also a bridgehead in Forest Mormal area. They have additional minor bridgeheads in St. Quentin area, but main break appears to be their penetration to Bohain and Le Cateau. It is believed that Germans are using bulk of their armoured divisions and several motorized divisions on front of French Sixth and Ninth Armies. It is supported by infantry divisions which are advancing by forced marches in and west of Ardennes. The Germans are reported to be very tired. Further German penetration north west would constitute a grave danger to lines of communication of British Expeditionary Force. A defensive position has been used on line of canal du Nord from Peronne to Douai manned by British troops. A small force extends this line along river Scarpe to Tournai.

3. North of French Ninth Army the position of the

French/

French First Army is rather in advance of positions held by French Ninth Army and B.E.F.

4. The B.E.F. was reported at 19.00 hours May 18th to be withdrawing according to plan to the line of the river Escaut between city of Tournai and Eecke during the night of May 18th-19th. They had not been pressed.

5. On the left the Belgian Army, unpressed by enemy, is showing a natural disinclination to withdraw as strategy demands. The line to which they were withdrawing on night of May 18th-19th ran through Ghent along Canal to Terneuzen. At Antwerp all dry docks and heavy cranes and about one hundred and fifty thousand tons of petrol and oil have been destroyed by us and one lock has been blocked.

6. Air. The German use of dive bombers, in conjunction with armoured divisions on ground, continues. It is certain that in this connection aircraft have had orders to harass civilian refugees in flight with a view to undermining morale of French. Delayed action bombs which go off at intervals after twenty minutes or so, after traffic has begun again, have been used. Royal Air Force fighters have been instructed to concentrate on combatting this form of attack wherever possible. German air bombing attacks have also been on aerodromes and ports. Our aerodrome at Vitrys was bombarded and eight Hurricanes were destroyed on the ground. Dunkirk, Calais, Dieppe and Bologne were bombarded during last night. The attack on Dunkirk is reported to have been heavy and part of town was on fire.

7. Yesterday afternoon eleven Blenheims successfully attacked troops and communications in area of Landrecies-

Avesnes/

Avesnes. Three Blenheims were lost. During last night, twenty four of our aircraft attacked communications at Namur.

Dinant, Gembloux and Givet. Reports are satisfactory. Twenty-two aircraft attacked oil targets at Hanover. Twelve maintained continuous patrol over Krefeld and Kamen with object of disorganising railway/ Marshalling yard, and dropped bombs. Reports are satisfactory. Twenty-eight aircraft repeated attacks on oil targets in Hamburg and Bremen. Mines have been laid by air off Dutch Coast. All the above aircraft returned except one.

8. Preliminary reports indicate that at least sixteen confirmed and six unconfirmed enemy aircraft were shot down by fighter patrols operating from this country during May 18th. Our known casualties are 6 Hurricanes confirmed and three unconfirmed.

9. Norway. Enemy air attacks in Narvik area continue.

10. North Sea. A mine-layer was mined and sunk off entrance to Humber on May 18th. On May 18th one of our aircraft delivered a dive bomb on a U-boat twenty nine miles N.N.W. of North Rona and claimed one hit. Two other submarines were attacked. These, and other indications, may foreshadow a recrudescence of U-boat activity.

11. South Atlantic. An enemy raider may be at sea. Indications are that mines off Cape Agulhas, the sighting of a suspicious ship on May 2nd, and fact that British ship "Scientist" (6,199 tons) which left Durban April 27th is overdue. Two German merchant vessels have escaped, one from Canary Islands and the other from Azores. These may be acting as supply ships.

BF 11/13/40
BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 20th, 1940

~~SECRET~~

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein for your
confidential information a copy of the
latest telegram from London regarding
the military situation. This was
despatched at mid-day today.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. S. Austin

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

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

REGRADED
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**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

Telegram Despatched from London on May 20th, 1940

~~SECRET~~

Western Front.

German armoured fighting vehicles were reported advancing towards Valenciennes this morning. The German tactics aim at exploiting success with utmost speed and vigour. As soon as opposition is met at one place, the line of attack is changed. The advance is made regardless of situation on flanks.

It is understood that French second army was today attacked by German mechanised forces. No detailed reports are yet available. The French first army is now satisfactorily in line with British Expeditionary Force. The British Expeditionary Force withdrawals have gone according to plan, unpressed and with comparatively small losses from enemy dive bombing attacks. It is now known that in addition to successful demolitions at Antwerp, many tugs, valuable salvage plant craft and a large quantity of barges, some from interior, were successfully evacuated.

Air.

For last three days, four enemy long-range bomber "Geschwader" have been inactive. Confirmed German losses up to and including May 17th were seven hundred and nine. The reports of losses for May 18th, so far as received, show fifteen

confirmed/

confirmed and ten unconfirmed. Reports from squadrons operating in France have not yet been received. Reports of our bombing of German oil installations show that in one case, flames were believed to reach up to 2,000 feet and a pilot at 10,000 feet said that he could read his map in the glare.

One of our destroyers off Nieuport has been badly damaged by enemy bombing.



PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 21st, 1940.

~~Secret~~

file ↗

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein the three
latest reports from London on the
military situation.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Norton

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States

of America,

Washington, D. C.

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~~SECRET~~

Telegram despatched from London on
May 20th, 1940.

Western Front.

East of Montmédy Germans are not taking
offensive.

To West the French second army holds Canal
de Ardennes-River Aisne with sixth Army continuing line
to Chauny thence Crozat Canal to St. Simon. A French
tank counterattack yesterday from Laon northwards
reached River Serre where it was held. Germans have
blown up some bridges along south flank of their
break through. Obvious inference is that this is to
protect their flank to help them in their exploitation
in a northwest axis advance.

2. French ninth army is attempting to hold line
of St. Quentin-Cambrai, but situation here is obscure.
Cambrai was in French hands at 8 p.m. yesterday.

It is certain that enemy armoured fighting
vehicles have penetrated both French ninth army and
detachments of British troops previously reported on
line of Canal du Nord from Peronne to Douai, but it
is not yet known in what strength. German armoured
fighting vehicles are reported at Bapaume and
approaching Arras from southeast and at Vitry five
miles west of Douai.

3. Further north, French first army extends to
line through Valenciennes to join with British
Expeditionary Force at Maulde. The British
Expeditionary Force having successfully withdrawn to
line of River Escaut, are in position as far north as
Audenarde, Belgians carry line through Ghent to

Terneuzen/

Terneuzen on coast. Right flank of British Expeditionary Force is protected by small detachments holding bridges along line of St. Amand-Douai Canal-Labassée-Bethune. There has still been no very great pressure on either British Expeditionary Force or Belgians.

4. It seems already that main German thrust is northwest towards Channel ports. It is estimated that they have been operating in salient a minimum of 20 divisions, 8 or 9 of which are armoured, 4 motorised infantry and rest normal infantry divisions. These latter had their heads on line Hirson Beaumont on night of May 18th-May 19th. This main thrust is still being opposed by ninth army.

5. During night of May 19th-May 20th Royal Air Force bomber effort concentrated against German communications leading forward through Ardennes. Preliminary reports are satisfactory. Hits were registered on railway station at Gembloux and canal and river crossing at Hal. All our aircraft returned safely. During yesterday our fighters shot down 29 aircraft (confirmed) and a further 14 (unconfirmed). Fourteen of our Hurricanes are missing. Day attacks were made on enemy concentrations on Rivers Sarre and Aisne by Battles escorted by Hurricanes. Attacks were successful but six Battles failed to return.

6. German air force continues to be employed as before mainly in direct support of their break through. There are reports of small parties of German parachutists being landed in neighbourhood of their break through well in advance of their armoured forces.

A French column moving up, when fired on by a small parachutist detachment like this, is liable to be considerably delayed before it realizes weakness of opposition. Such parachutists also cut telephone lines, intercept despatch riders and generally do all they can to increase confusion.

Scandinavia.

7. A very heavy concentration of 200 enemy aircraft was reported yesterday at Vaernes Aerodrome near troops, and accordingly was bombed last night. Details are not yet available. British Forces have now evacuated Mo.

North Sea.

8. Reports have been received of German mine laying by air in Thames Estuary and on both sides of English Channel as far as Isle of Wight.

9. Results of our air attacks of May 18th-May 19th previously reported. Sixteen of our aircraft dropped 25 tons of HE bombs and a number of incendiary bombs on their target at Hannover causing a large explosion and several fires. Portion of bridge at junction of Rivers Meuse and Sambre at Namur was seen to collapse. Hits were observed on Marshalling Yard at Köln-Eifeltor, Wedau, Vohwinkel and railway junction at Basel. Several aircraft detailed to bomb Bremen and Hamburg failed to locate their targets and returned without dropping their bombs. Of all aircraft engaged in these night attacks only two failed to return.

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Telegram despatched from London
early morning, May 21st

Western Front

Early this morning the Germans were reported to be attacking Arras but no confirmation has been received subsequently. With regard to estimated position of heads of German infantry divisions given in this morning's telegram it now seems probable that at least portions of their infantry are further forward than was previously estimated. It is now considered probable that some German infantry will reach Le Cateau today. At the same time the following information obtained by air photograph illustrates administrative difficulties from which German troops in salient must be suffering: all eight bridges at Liege have been completely demolished. There are no pontoon bridges. These extracts are of course not exhaustive.

2. For first time in its propaganda broadcasts Germany is attributing to Allies intention to use poison gas on Western Front. The Germans made exactly same accusations before poison gas attack at Ypres in April 1915. They have also recently revived their accusations of use of poison gas in Poland.

3. Additional information just received states that French seventh army is now continuing line on the left of French sixth army, through

Ham/

Ham, Nesle, Roye and along River Avre to Amiens. North of German break-through, the first French army has re-fused its right flank along line Conde, Denain and Douai. It has recaptured Forest of Mormal. Thus though there is not yet news of German break-through being stopped a limit appears to have been set to its flanks.

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Telegram despatched from London
afternoon of May 21st

Western Front.

1. East of Montmedy there is no change though there has been pressure at Montmedy itself. Between Montmedy and St. Quentin there appears to be no change; enemy are still holding this line with motorized infantry, probably supported by one Armoured Division, as a defensive flank.

2. Between St. Quentin and St. Amand position is still obscure. French resistance is still continuing in places and yesterday Forêt de Mormal was reported as having been recaptured. There are however considerable gaps through which mechanized forces have passed. Six German Infantry Divisions are moving up from the East and should approach this line today.

3. Exact extent of German penetration is not known but last night German armoured fighting vehicles were reported to be all round Arras though the town itself was successfully held by British troops. This morning air reports have been received of German Mechanized Units advancing on Abbeville on either side of the river. Another enemy column was sighted at Prevent, which is believed to have turned toward Abbeville; alternatively it might be making for Boulogne or Calais; though the strength of these German Mechanized Columns is not great

it/

it is obvious that they seriously compromise the lines of communication of British Expeditionary Forces, French north of break-through, and line withdrawn from Belgian forces. Our air forces are at present on the way to bomb these enemy Mechanized Columns.

4. On the morning of May 20th French were reported as holding successfully the Line of River Escaut from Maulde-Conde-Brusay-Bouchain from St. Amand to Bethune; an improvised force continues to hold a defensive check protecting the British Expeditionary Forces from the South.

5. North of St. Amand four Divisions of British Expeditionary Forces are still in position of the River Escaut up to Audenarde; these were heavily attacked yesterday by probably two armoured and two motorized divisions. German elements got across the river but were pushed back. Object of these attacks may be to force British Expeditionary Forces from Audenarde to the north. Belgians are in position as yesterday and have completed their withdrawal in good order.

6. It seems clear that German thrust continues to be directed on the sea with a view to cutting the line of communication of the Allied Forces north of the break-through. Main axis of German advance now appears to be in a northwest direction south of Arras.

7. During the night of May 20th and 21st the Royal Air Force gave immediate support by bombing
columns/

columns of troops and mechanical transport in the region of Arras-Bapaume-Cambrai-St. Quentin and also in the northern sector in area of Audenarde-Gramont. From preliminary reports these attacks appear to have been successful and practically all our aircraft have returned. There is so far no news of enemy air activity owing to break-down of land line communications to France. Dunkirk was heavily bombed during the night. Chief of General Staff and Air Officer Commanding B.A.A.F. were bracketed by bombs in France last night, neither being injured in any way.

8. Up to six p.m. May 20th seventeen raiders were reported along the coast of Holland, Belgium, and France between Flushing and Etaples and inland as far as Amiens. Since the same hour 55 raiders have been reported, three off East Coast remainder coming from Belgian Coast and proceeding to the Downs, through Channel down to Le Havre, returning closer to English Coast and bombing a convoy off Beachy Head. Fighters were sent up but no interceptings were made.

Scandinavia.

9. Swedish press reports that Norwegians hold position between Narvik and Swedish frontier thus cutting off German forces in Narvik.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

PSF
G.B.
BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 22nd, 1940

file *11*
Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the latest telegrams regarding the military situation which were despatched from London this morning.

My Government understands that there are now two or three United States warships at Lisbon. They think it would be very useful if they could be kept there for the present. In the first place anything that tends to deter Spain from entering the war will make it easier to keep Gibraltar in Allied hands. Secondly my Government thinks that if the situation deteriorates in the Mediterranean "Fifth Column" action in Spain and Portugal will be promoted by local Germans against the régimes of General Franco and Dr. Salazar, both of whom wish
to/

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

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

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

-2-

to maintain neutrality, in order to replace them by régimes which would act in concert with the Axis powers. We have had evidence that a large number of German tourists have been entering Spain recently. The continued presence of United States warships might have a steadying effect in Lisbon and Spain and in particular in strengthening Dr. Salazar's hand.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Austin



Telegram despatched from London on
morning of May 22nd, 1940.

Western Front

German mobilized divisions acting as flank guard to main thrust appear to have reached Ham this morning. On Northern face of German salient Allied line appears to run from Arras east-wards along the Scarpe. Forest of Mormal has been evacuated by French. Advance guard of German infantry divisions may reach line of Perrone-Cambrai today and enemy columns will probably make supreme effort to reach coast today which they may have done already.

Report just received of counter attack launched this morning by two British and two French divisions across axis of German advance on road to Arras-Cambrai. No definite news of progress yet received except that at 1415 hours Arras was no longer surrounded by German forces.

In Belgium, German attacks against Allied positions on River Escaut were beaten off yesterday. Belgians contributed largely to these successes.

Enemy concentrated to Netegen across River Escaut south of Audenarde was successfully

counter-/

counter-attacked today.

Air

2. Enemy air force operations maintained yesterday and though no information received from British Air Force in France intensity of these operations appeared greater than on previous three days. Total confirmed German aircraft losses up to May 20th are 756, not including aircraft brought down by British Air Force in France during last three days as no reports received. On May 20th and night of 20th/21st May bomber aircraft successfully attacked enemy armoured vehicles, transport and villages packed with troops. Oil plants in Holland also attacked with success. Enemy columns moving westward also bombed successfully today.

Petrol.

3. It is estimated that Germany's petrol reserves were sufficient to enable her to carry on present activity for about 12 months though imports from Roumania and synthetic oil sources are increasing. Estimated stocks destroyed by air action at Rotterdam and Amsterdam deprive Germany of supplies sufficient for about 3 weeks of warfare at present rate of expenditure.

Scandinavia.

4. Only few German troops reported in South Norway which is held by S.S. and Gestapo. Two divisions said to be passing through Lillehammer north-westwards, probably towards Mordfjord, Aandalenes and Trondjhem.

British/

British aerodrome improvised near Narvik after great labour, and fighter aircraft have been flown off a carrier on to it. There is, however, reason to believe that considerable proportion of petrol supply for Narvik air detachment was lost today in ship sunk by air bombing. Mo is now in German hands.

General.

5. It will be appreciated that these telegrams leave many questions unanswered. For example how did Germans cross River Meuse by intact bridges and break through extension of Maginot Line? No information yet available and those who knew are probably prisoners or dead. French appear to have blown up few bridges. Gort's tactics are to prepare all possible bridges for destruction, guard each one with field guns and when German tanks appear, tanks and blow up bridge. It will be appreciated that position of British Expeditionary Force and Belgian Army is somewhat critical owing to extensive German penetration by mechanized forces. Next day or two will clarify situation.

Telegram despatched from London on
the morning of May 21st, 1940.

Norway.

Railway from Trondhjem is reported open near as far as Mosjoen. Germans have outflanked Allied positions south of Mosjoen which is now probably in German hands.

Germans have withdrawn their positions on high ground south and east of Lake Hartvigvd (eleven miles north east of Narvik). Their present positions are not known. In Sildvik area (8 miles east of Narvik) they are reported to be repairing railway to Sweden.

German air losses in their Norwegian operations up to end of April are estimated to be 212. This figure includes losses due to our bombing of air bases but does not include crashes and other damage behind lines of which we have no knowledge. During May air activity has been comparatively little and air losses would be correspondingly small.

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

PSF G.B.
BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
May 23rd, 1940.

Personal and ~~secret~~.

file →

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith a copy of
the latest telegram regarding the military
situation which was despatched from London
late last night.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Stowe

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

Telegram despatched from London
on the evening of May 22nd.

Western Front.

1. General lack of information in last twenty-four hours owing to difficulties of communication. Between Montmedy and St. Quentin there does not appear to have been any large change. Arrival of German motorised divisions acting as a flank guard at Ham early May 21st confirmed and German claim domination of Laon area. German defensive flank along line of Aisne-Oise canal now consists of eight infantry divisions. Little information about St. Quentin-Cambrai area but main weight of enemy attack appears to be before line of Cambrai-Bapaume-Albert. An enemy column was bombed at Frevent and is then believed to have gone into hiding for remainder of the day.
2. Reinforcement to defenses of channel ports have been sent from England. Strong air protection is being provided along French coast to cover movement of troops and stores.
3. On north face of salient Allied lines appear to run from Arras area eastwards along River Scarpe. Position of the British Expeditionary Force and Belgians believed largely unchanged since yesterday. Belgians like British are fighting well. No news yet of any big German thrust in this area.
4. British Expeditionary Force counter attack south from Lens-Douai area towards Arras was in progress at 5 p.m. yesterday but information not yet available as to result. Arras believed held by British.
5. Enemy columns which reached Amiens yesterday morning/

morning have explored north-east towards line St. Pol-Abbeville. Reconnaissance detachments reported on coast near Montreuil. Believed no enemy movements so far north of line St. Pol-Hesdin-Montreuil. Germans reported to be pushing reconnaissance elements from Abbeville in direction of Treport (20 miles west of Abbeville). Otherwise no further advance north of River Somme reported.

6. It is believed that Germans intend to strike north from Amiens-Abbeville area in direction of Calais and Dunkirk. Reports indicate that there may be best part of three armoured divisions in former area.

7. French report that nearly all tanks seen are thirty-five ton type, a few larger ones reported.

Air.

8. Information as to enemy air activity yesterday lacking owing to communication difficulties. There was however continued activity yesterday over north coast of France and Calais and Dieppe were bombed. Twenty Junker 88 were seen off North Foreland but did not approach coast. Boulogne was bombed last night.

9. Yesterday our aircraft attacked in area of Montreuil-Abbeville-Fravent directed against German armoured forces. All roads were blocked with all kinds of traffic and it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe. Heavy raids also made last night on road and rail communications in area Aachen-Dusseldorf-Crefeld also on Namur-Dinant-Aachen area. Railway and road bridges at Namur were severely damaged and hits are claimed on railway bridge at Serang (near Liege) and road bridge at Dinant. Four aircraft failed to return.

Scandinavia/

Scandinavia.

10. Narvik area. Allied forward movements continue slowly. Haastad base area is being intermittently bombed.

Bodo area. No great change.

General.

11. Refugees are arriving in boats of every description off Newhaven.

12. It will be appreciated that situation in area Arras-Cambrai-Peronne-Abbeville is most confused and all roads are choked with refugees. Main object of Allies is to prevent enemy mechanised detachments from being supported by their main armies.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~Secret.~~

PSF
Y.B.
BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
May 23rd, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herein a copy of the latest telegram from London regarding the military situation. This was despatched from London early this morning.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Starn

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.


Telegram despatched from
London on the morning of
May 23rd.

Western Front.

Difficulties of communication continue.

While there is no reason to suppose that enemy is deviating from his attempt to reach the coast in force he has manifested in the last 24 hours less activity than previously, his operations having been restricted to pushing forward armoured reconnaissance units. This delay probably due to difficulty of maintaining momentum over long lines of communications and also to our bombing activities. It is considered however that resumption of thrust cannot be long delayed and that it will be probably continued in northerly and north-westerly direction from Amiens area. German High Command probably consider possibility of cutting off British and Belgian forces to be of greater importance than propaganda value of approach on Paris.

France and Belgium.

2. French First Army reported holding line Arleux-Bouchain-Valenciennes-Bleharries. No change in general line held by British and Belgian forces at present. No definite news of British counter attack southward from Lens-Douai towards Arras.

3. There was further increase in German air force operations on May 21st. Aircraft from all long range bomber Geschwader in Germany were identified as operating, including units that have been inactive for the past few days. Operations were spread over coast of Holland and Belgium, Straits of Dover area and over
north/

north-east France. One long range bomber Geschwader equipped with JU 88's is believed based in Holland probably at Amsterdam. (Note: Geschwader is group of one hundred and twenty aircraft). A dive-bomber Gruppe (39 aircraft) previously based at Cologne is now operating from Belgium. Enemy air attacks on Boulogne and shipping in vicinity were made today.

4. Further reports now received indicate that our raids in area Aachen-Düsseldorf-Krefeld and area Namur-Dinant-Aachen on night of May 21st - May 22nd scored hits on four trains and on seven railway junctions. Considerable damage also done to railway at Aachen. Although presence of refugees hampered operations of our bombers yesterday in area Montreuil-Abbeville-Frevent a number of attacks were successful. Out of total of 184 sorties 8 aircraft were lost.

Scandinavia.

5. Germans are in contact with Allied forces at Strandjorden (twenty miles north-west of Mo).


**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

*PSF
L.B.*

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~SECRET~~

file
May 24th, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of
the latest telegram from London
regarding the military situation.
This was despatched late at night on
May 23rd.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Storan

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

Telegram despatched from London
on evening of May 23rd, 1940.

Western Front.

1. From Montmedy to west no great change in situation of French second and sixth armies. Believed French second army has withdrawn slightly in Sedan area as result of attacks. German flank guard now reported in strength up to Amiens, where they have blown up bridges and are in contact with French seventh army. Heads of their infantry divisions have reached Peronne.

2. On north of enemy salient our light defensive screen on line St. Amand-Leus-Bethune in position. British counter attack two days ago met more resistance than expected but was successful and has eased situation in Arras and along River Scarpe to east. Three divisions now in position from Arras towards east joining with French who carry line to Valenciennes thence north through St. Amand. In this counter attack 400 Germans were captured, 300 killed and a good number of tanks destroyed. Yesterday morning French fifth army counter attacked with two divisions and at ten a.m. French 25th division, after meeting little resistance, reached just North Cambrai, where they were still at four p.m. They reported at the same time heavy enemy attacks on Arras.

3. Guards Brigade (less one battalion) with anti-tank guns and tanks landed Boulogne yesterday are in position around the town and reported in action. Enemy tanks reported close to this town. Dunkirk has been bombed and reports indicate enemy tanks moving

in its direction. Our own men worked throughout last night. Three enemy tanks reported nine miles south. British naval and military authorities are coordinating in functioning and defence of Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne.

4. Our withdrawal to river Escaut was carried out with very few casualties and practically no material was lost, but supply situation of British Expeditionary Force is now reported as very serious. Arrangements are being made to land supplies by air.

5. In area of Boulogne-Arras-Amiens it is estimated that five German armoured divisions are operating. It appears that role of this group is to secure Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk. It is believed that four armoured divisions are operating in area Valenciennes-Avesnes-le Cateau-Arras. Heads of foremost infantry divisions are believed to have reached line of Peronne-Cambrai or even beyond this.

6. Supply situation of Germans must be very difficult as all their troops west of Cambrai are operating and being maintained through gap Cambrai-Ham.

7. Royal Air Force raids on enemy forward detachments continued throughout yesterday and enemy columns were heavily bombed. All but three of our aircraft returned safely. During the night of the 22nd-23rd May our aircraft successfully bombed road and railway crossings over river at Gembloux and railway communications at Binche. Enemy communications in area between rivers Meuse and Rhine also bombed and direct hits registered on trains near Geldern and Aachen. All our aircraft returned safely.



-3-

8. Enemy aircraft active along Belgian and French coasts yesterday, Dunkirk being bombed and shipping attacked off Gravelines. Yesterday evening enemy aircraft bombed shipping off Lowestoft. No reports of fighter action available.



PSF
G.B.

JB-4

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

~~Secret~~

file →

May 25th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of
the latest report on the military
situation which was sent off from
London last night.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Murray

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States

of America,

Washington, D. C.

Telegram despatched from London
on the evening of May 24th.

Western Front.

1. No change reported in sector from Montmedy to Soissons. French Seventh Army is forming in area south of Ham. To west of this, army, which had cleared south bank of river Somme between Peronne and Amiens, hoped to move on Albert Canal last night. No news yet available. French are in possession of Peronne and Amiens.

2. British Expeditionary Force. It is believed that two British divisions are still holding line from Arras to east, whence French continue line through Valenciennes to St. Amand. Fierce fighting in Arras sector yesterday. Cambrai and Bouchain reported captured by French, but this is not yet confirmed.

3. Understand that Belgians intend remaining in position along Terneuzen Canal for the present, but they have occupied lightly Leopold-Lys Canal from Deynze to Zeebrugge with a view to possible withdrawal.

4. French Coast. British Infantry Brigade and tank Regiment landed 19:23 yesterday are operating from Calais to reopening of road to Dunkirk and communication with British Expeditionary Force. All road communication from Calais at present cut, about three miles from town. Town is being shelled. Parachute mines reported off Calais.

5. After very heavy fighting throughout May 23rd Boulogne was evacuated night of May 23rd-May 24th. All troops except 200 were got away by destroyers. No destroyers were lost but they were bombed, machine-gunned and fired on by artillery. Some casualties. Naval and Marine troops had previously carried out demolition work.

6. Dunkirk was bombed yesterday. Reports indicate enemy tanks moving on town.

7. Dieppe closed by mines. One hospital ship and one trawler sunk yesterday inside harbour Havre was bombed yesterday.

8. Breskens (opposite Flushing) has been heavily shelled and Germans are assembling artillery and infantry at Flushing. Enemy artillery action also reported at Ostend.

9. Estimate of five German armoured divisions operating in area Amiens - Abbeville - Calais confirmed. Advance elements of these divisions believed on line St. Omer - Calais. Most reliable reports indicate that these forces intend operating in two portions, westerly towards channel ports and easterly to get between British Expeditionary Force, Belgians and sea. Latter operation would be timed to coincide with an attack westward between Courtrai and Lille on the left of British Expeditionary Force and right of Belgians, which is probably in preparation. No further information regarding movements of German infantry divisions.

10. Enemy submarines reported operating in south portion of North Sea. Motor torpedo boats reported/

reported as far south as Dover. No attacks on shipping reported during past twenty-four hours.

11. Royal Air Force yesterday attacked mechanized formations in coast area and heavy raids were also made last night to harrass enemy reinforcement. Hits were made on troops and transports and on railway stations. One aircraft lost. Enemy communication west of Rhine between Emmerich and Coblenz also attacked last night. According to preliminary reports satisfactory results were achieved. Two aircraft overdue. Yesterday our fighter patrols shot down fourteen enemy aircraft confirmed and further fourteen as yet unconfirmed. Five our aircraft missing and two forced to land.

12. Enemy aircraft active yesterday and last night on coast of northern France. Aircraft reported yesterday near Lowestoft and Cromer but did not make any attack. Fighter patrols despatched but no interception resulted.

13. On night of May 22nd-May 23rd aircraft of A.A.S.F. bombed roads and railways in Luxemburg area, obtaining hits on important railway junctions.

14. No important change at Narvik. Bodo area: No serious pressure yet against Allied position at Stradjordon (twenty miles northwest of Mo).

PSF
J.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 25th, 1940.

~~Secret.~~

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith a copy of
the latest report on the military situation
from London. This was despatched early
this morning.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Horan

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

Telegram despatched from London
on the morning of May 25th.

Western Front.

German pressure reported early today north of Montmedy which may indicate commencement of an attack. French forces have crossed River Somme north of Peronne and Arey also between Arey and Amiens. No further information from Arras-Cambrai area but heavy German troop movement reported on evening of May 22nd southwards from Valenciennes towards Cambrai and Peronne. At Valenciennes most important bridges have successfully been demolished by French.

2. Belgians have withdrawn according to plan to line Zeebrugge-Ecclooe-Deynze-Menin. Belgian cavalry are still south of Breskens.)

3. Main German thrust appears to be directed north-east as well as towards Calais and Dunkirk. British Expeditionary Force is reported to have been attacked in Hazebrouck area this afternoon by enemy tanks which crossed canal between Aire and St. Omer. Some troop-carrying aircraft landed between canal and Hazebrouck.

4. This afternoon aircraft were despatched to bomb concealed batteries which Germans were reported to have established at entrance to Calais harbour. Two hundred German tanks also reported moving towards Calais from southwest. Last report from Calais received 17.40 hours today states Germans in south part of town and British Commander organised line of defence. Telephonic communication has now ceased.

5. Today our aircraft carried out several
attacks/

attacks on enemy mechanised troops between St. Inglevert and Calais, obtaining direct hits. No casualties to our aircraft. Fighter patrols operating between Boulogne and Dunkirk report 26 enemy aircraft destroyed. Of these 20 are confirmed. Two of our aircraft lost.

6. During May 23rd scale of German air force operations slightly decreased. Mine-laying off Dutch, Belgian and north-east French coast continued. Long and medium reconnaissance activity was normal. Troop carrying aircraft reported to have landed south of Dunkirk this morning. Believed transport aircraft are assisting in supplying German ground forces in north-east France.

Scandinavia.

7. German troops have withdrawn further to north-east of Narvik. German forces advancing from south now 18 miles north-east of Mo.

PSF
G.B.

May 25th, 1940.

~~Secret.~~

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith a copy of
the latest report on the military situation
from London. This was despatched early
this morning.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

(SGD) LOTHIAN

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

FRHM:NT

Situation Rpts. /n Piccadilly 1259/26/40

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**



Tel. No. 876 of May
24th.

"K"

IMMEDIATE.

From Viscount Halifax

To Lord Lothian

d. May 25th, 1940. (5.00 a.m.)

r. " " " (1.15 a.m.)

~~Secret~~

Following for the President.

Western Front.

German pressure reported early today
[?] north of] Montmedy which may indicate
commencement of an attack. French forces have
crossed River Somme north of Peronne and Arey
also between Arey and Amiens. No further
information from Arras-Cambrai [? area]
but heavy German troop movement reported on
evening of May 22nd southwards from Valenciennes
towards Cambrai and Peronne. At Valenciennes
most important bridges have successfully been
demolished by French.

2. Belgians have withdrawn according to
plan to line Zeebrugge-Ecclooe-Deynze-Menin.
Belgian cavalry are still south of Breskons.

3. Main German thrust appears to be
directed north east as well as towards Calais and
Dunkirk. B.E.F. is reported to have been
attacked in Hazebrouck area this afternoon by
enemy tanks which crossed canal between Aire
and St. Omer. Some troop-carrying aircraft
landed between canal and Hazebrouck.

4./

*Copies begin
to pass out*

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:DH

4. This afternoon aircraft were despatched to bomb concealed batteries which Germans were reported to have established at entrance to Calais harbour. Two hundred German tanks also reported moving towards Calais from southwest. Last report from Calais received 17.40 hours today states Germans in south part of town and British Commander organised line of defence. Telephonic communication has now ceased.

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6. During May 23rd scale of German air force operations slightly decreased. Mine-laying off Dutch, Belgian and north east French coast continued. Long and medium reconnaissance activity was normal. Troop carrying aircraft reported to have landed south of Dunkirk this morning. Believed transport aircraft are assisting in supplying German ground forces in north east France.

Scandinavia.

7. German troops have withdrawn further to north east of Narvik. German forces advancing from south now 18 miles north east of Mo.

Telegram despatched from London
on the morning of May 25th.

Western Front.

German pressure reported early today north of Montmedy which may indicate commencement of an attack. French forces have crossed River Somme north of Peronne and Arey also between Arey and Amiens. No further information from Arras-Cambrai area but heavy German troop movement reported on evening of May 22nd southwards from Valenciennes towards Cambrai and Peronne. At Valenciennes most important bridges have successfully been demolished by French.

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Scandinavia.

7. German troops have withdrawn further to north-east of Narvik. German forces advancing from south now 18 miles north-east of Mo.

PSF
Y.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Personal and secret.

26th May 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein copies
of the three latest reports on the
military situation in Europe.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Moran

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

Telegram despatched from London on the afternoon
of May 25th.

Western Front.

Boulogne is held by Germans, but citadel believed held by French. Calais still held by British but is surrounded by Germans. Heavy fighting yesterday, and considerable casualties to British troops and German tanks - German guns commanding entrance to harbour silenced yesterday by our aerial attack. Supply of ammunition for our troops landed at Calais last night. Destroyer "Wessex" bombed and sunk off Calais but most of ship's company saved. Dunkirk believed to be held by French. Reported that German parachute troops have landed at Zeebrugge. Numbers unknown. Block ships was sunk at Zeebrugge last night.

2. North of gap made by German forces, Allied forces form salient with apex at Valenciennes held by French first army. Southern face of salient runs through Douai to Carvin whence it is carried on by three British divisions through Labassée, Bethune, St. Omer, whence French troops hold the line to Gravelines. Considerable German pressure from the south east in this sector yesterday and certain German elements penetrated our line. German pressure yesterday forced British out of Arras and French out of Cambrai. North face of salient held by French to Maule thence by four British divisions to just west of Roubaix and to north east of Armentières, British left flank having been withdrawn.

3. Belgians continue to hold the line through Courtrai along Lys Canal to Zeebrugge, Belgians also have lightly held the line through Ypres to Nieuport.

4. German armoured divisions in coast sector from Amiens-Abbeville to north have reached line St. Omer-Gravelines. Large numbers of German tanks yesterday evening endeavouring to cross river Aa at Gravelines but were bombed by R.A.F. when held up at bridge. Germans penetrated French line in this area in several places.

5. German attack in Courtrai area is developing. Heavy infantry attacks yesterday penetrated Belgian line at Harlebike and Marck (north and south of Cambrai). This westward attack, together with eastward pressure of armoured forces from St. Omer threatens base of Allied salient from both directions.

6. German attack on French second army in Sedan area reported held. To west no change reported up to Ham area. West of Peronne French seventh army has bridge heads over Somme as far as Amiens, and is reported in southern outskirts of Amiens. Germans hold Peronne bridge heads in Amiens and Abbeville. They are reported digging in on south bank of Somme in places.

7. R.A.F. yesterday attacked enemy mechanised units in coast area. All aircraft except one returned. Last night attacks were made on German communications in back areas. From preliminary reports received hits recorded on railway stations,

/bridges

bridges and trains and on aerodromes at Brussels, Flushing and Malines. Further three (confirmed) and one (unconfirmed) enemy aircraft shot down yesterday, bringing total to twenty-three confirmed and seven unconfirmed. Eight of our fighters missing.

8. Little enemy air action over British Isles yesterday but bombs were dropped on steelworks near Middleborough where slight damage and eight casualties resulted. Production is unaffected. Aerodromes at Catterick, Thornaby, Bircam Newton and West Raynham were lightly bombed last night by isolated aircraft. No material damage. Anti-aircraft guns were in action.

Telegram despatched from London the morning of

May 26th.

Western Front.

1. German attack in Montmedy area appears to be checked and most of ground gained recaptured by French. Germans still hold some ground South of River Somme between Amiens and Abbeville. French 7th Army have crossed River Somme at Voyennes, Brie and Ailly.
2. Five German armoured Divisions operating in area Dunkirk, Boulogne, Béthune, Saint Omer, are supported by two to three motorised Divisions. German infantry assisting in holding German Southern flank along River Somme. German armoured troops South of Boulogne have suffered heavily from our air action. Conclusive evidence now available that armoured German heavy 36-ton tanks can be completely penetrated by French 25 mm. anti-tank guns and by British 2-pounder anti-tank guns.
3. British and French troops still in Calais and portion of one French Division in vicinity of Boulogne and Calais. Mixed force of British and French and Belgians also at Bergues near Dunkirk.
4. Germans have large bridgehead round Courtrai and heavy attack by four Divisions against line on River Lys from Wilesbeke to Menin has caused deep breach. Belgian position now on canal Wilesbeke Iseghem then South West to Ledeghem with left flank in the air. British force reported to have delivered counter attack in Hazebrouck area.

5. Less activity by German air force yesterday owing to bad weather conditions. Attacks were made mainly against road and railway transport and ground forces. Their aircraft again active off Dutch and Belgian coasts. Dive-bomber aircraft made numerous attacks throughout yesterday. Troop transport activity normal, some aircraft employed on evacuation of wounded. Estimated 1500 German aircraft lost or damaged between May 10th to May 23rd including 400 troop transports.

6. Our aircraft attacked enemy tanks South West of Calais this afternoon with satisfactory results. Three aircraft lost. Pontoon bridges over River Lys between Menin and Courtrai also bombed this afternoon. Lock at Wevelghem blocked. One aircraft lost. Twenty-four Hurricanes to-day engaged fifty Ju87 South of Calais. Five enemy aircraft destroyed and further 7 unconfirmed. One Hurricane missing. Enemy motor torpedo-boats sunk off Hook of Holland by aircraft to-day.

7. Scandinavia.

German bombers active North of Narvik. German ground troops out-numbered in Mo-Mosjoen area.

Telegram despatched from London on the afternoon of
May 26th.

No change between Sedan and Ham. Between Ham and Peronne French have crossed the River, but no great progress reported. Germans hold bridgeheads in Peronne. French hold the South bank of Somme, between Peronne and Amiens and Germans hold the bridgehead in Amiens. Germans hold small bridgeheads on the South bank of the Somme, West of Amiens.

2. South flank of Allied salient believed to be Denain-Douai-Carvin-Bethune-Aire-Saint Omer-Gravelines. This flank not believed heavily attacked by yesterday, but Germans hold small bridgeheads over the Canal in places. Apex of salient still just West of Valenciennes. It was heavily attacked yesterday. French hold the North flank of the salient through Conde-Moulde to Boughelles. Thence B.E.F. hold the frontier defences towards Menin.

3. B.E.F. in this area not heavily attacked yesterday, but Belgians attacked heavily about Menin, Courtrai and Vynekt. Germans now reported using tanks in the gap formed between the British left flank and Belgians.

4. Dunkirk is open. Belgian Government left by this port yesterday and have reached Dover. French reinforcements have arrived in the Dunkirk area. Situation at Calais is critical, though the quay area and Citadel are still holding out. Docks at Boulogne are reported on fire. Port at Dieppe closed owing to suspected mines. Considerable damage done to the

/dock

dock buildings and shipping in the harbour by enemy bombers.

5. It will be appreciated that the situation described above is very confused and it is, at present, difficult to give exact information.

6. On May 25/26 our aircraft attacked troop concentrations, ammunition dumps and communications in the enemy back areas in France and Belgium. Preliminary reports showed considerable success was obtained. Only one aircraft has failed to return. Heavy attacks were also made on Bapaume, enemy concentrations North of Ghent, industrial targets and communications in the Ruhr area. Two aircraft failed to return. Early to-day nine enemy aircraft shot down between Calais and Dunkirk and further six unconfirmed. One of our fighters missing. Yesterday afternoon our aircraft attacked the Canal bridges between Menin and Courtrai with satisfactory results.

7. German aircraft active yesterday laying parachute mines off the South-East and South coasts of England. Mines dropped in the vicinity of Portsmouth which is now closed.



PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~SECRET~~

file

May 27th, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith the
latest report on the military
situation which was sent off from
London this afternoon.

Believe me,

My dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. L. L.

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

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

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

1. Greater part of north of town held by enemy. Own troops in citadel and outer fort.

Port is working, but town was heavily bombed yesterday. German guns between Gravelines and Calais are interfering with transports going to Dunkirk. German guns in this area were attacked by Royal Air Force yesterday. Magnetic mines have been laid off pier-head at Dieppe. Havre is open. German armoured divisions in coastal area now appear to be in process of relief by infantry divisions. No indication of their future movements. Dover now open and Portsmouth harbour is partially open.

3. North of gap, apex of salient withdrawn eight miles to west. French still hold line St. Amand-Raches, whence British Expeditionary Forces hold through Carvin-Bethune-Aire-St. Omer-Gravelines. Yesterday Germans attacked Carvin and in Hazebrouck area./

area, but their attack has not been pressed elsewhere in this sector.

4. On north flank of salient French hold to Bourghelles thence British continue to Menin and just south of Ypres.

5. Belgian position has been forced back considerably and is now approximately Ypres-Roulers-Thielt-Deynze-Eecloo-Zeebrugge. Belgian situation on right flank is very serious.

6. During night of May 25th-27th Royal Air Force attacked enemy communications and aerodromes in Belgium and railway targets in Ruhr Valley. All aircraft taking part have returned. On night of May 25th-26th Royal Air Force attacked successfully oil plants at Rotterdam. Total enemy aircraft casualties from fighter action yesterday are 25 confirmed and 22 unconfirmed. Nine of our aircraft shot down or missing.

7. Little German air activity near our coasts yesterday.

8. Two cruisers bombed and hit in Narvik vicinity yesterday. One of these cruisers seriously damaged.

PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~SECRET~~

May 27th, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose a copy of the
latest telegram about the military
situation which was sent off from
London very early this morning.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Huran

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

~~SECRET~~

Telegram despatched from London on morning
on May 27th, 1940.

Calais garrison reported still holding out at mid-day although situation was difficult. Warship has destroyed two out of four field artillery guns mounted by enemy to command harbour entrance.

2. Small body of enemy established on River Bresle south of Abbeville. Enemy hold south bank of River Somme between Abbeville and Saint Valery. Local attack by French yesterday at Amiens not successful.

3. German troops in contact with Allied troops on whole line of salient from Halluin (south of Menin) to St. Omer. Some penetration made in Bouchain area. Enemy hold three bridge-heads east of Canal between St. Omer and Aire.

4. Continued German pressure in Courtrai area had forced Belgian right flank back to Lendelede (between Courtrai and Roulers) yesterday morning. British Expeditionary Force has thereby been forced to employ one division on flank defence on lines Comines-Ypres. Enemy has made small penetration across Lys Canal south-west of Ghent.

5. It is considered that immediate enemy object is to destroy Allied forces north of gap, by continuing pressure at Hazebrouck and exploiting their success in Courtrai area. Action against Channel ports will also be continued.

6. Operations of German Air Force show marked increase yesterday over previous day. Reconnaissance made over northern France and shipping in southern

North/

North Sea and Straits of Dover. Further laying of parachute mines off coast of Belgium and Holland. German fighter aircraft mainly engaged in protecting their bombers and transport aircraft being utilised to bring petrol for their air force.

7. Royal Air Force today attacked troops transport and communications in Courtrai area. All aircraft returned. Up to 14.30 hours today 24 enemy aircraft shot down confirmed and 20 unconfirmed. We lost 7 aircraft. Estimated total German aircraft lost and damaged on Western Front between May 10th and May 24th, exclusive of losses caused by advance air striking force and French during last week amounts to 1858. Signs are not lacking that success of Royal Air Force in shooting down enemy aircraft is now having some effect on morale of enemy pilots. Morale of our pilots is very high.

8. Body of Germans in Narvik area reported holding line from Swedish frontier to point four miles north of head of Rombaksfjord. In Bodo- Mo area German troops reached point 45 miles south east of Bodo May 24th. There is possibility of despatch of reinforcements by air from landing ground south of Mo to Narvik. German troops in Mo-Mosjoen area believed to have a few guns and light tanks.


**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

*PSF
G.B.*
BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~Secret~~

file 7
May 28th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith the
latest telegram from London regarding
the military situation. This was
despatched late last night from London.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Hurion

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

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



Telegram despatched from London on the
evening of May 27th, 1940.

At mid-day today Royal Air Force observed that no movement or fighting seen in Quai or Citadel areas of Calais. It is presumed that Calais now occupied by enemy. One of the usual Channel passages from Dover to Dunkirk now impracticable in daylight owing to fire from shore batteries in Gravelines area. Dunkirk and anchorage heavily bombed yesterday and today. Zeebrugge harbour now completely blocked by block ships and canal locks rendered unworkable.

2. South of River Somme enemy withdrew evening of May 26th from River Bresle towards River Somme. Germans attacked Carvin reaching outskirts of town. In St. Omer area enemy reached Hazebrouck but did not press elsewhere.

3. On Belgian front Germans reached Gheluvelt and are at Zonnebeke. German advance continued towards Thielt. Further German attacks assisted by intense air bombing crossing Lys Canal on a ten kilometre front between Eecloo and Maldegem.

4. German air attacks yesterday were widespread though main effort was in Southern Belgium and Northeast France. Several bombing attacks made on Paris-Nancy railways and on railways running north from Dijon. Mine laying operations continued off Belgian and northeast French coasts. Other aircraft were
operating/

operating off Southeast coast of England, but apparently turned back owing to weather conditions. Constant fighter patrols were operating over Dunkirk-Calais-Boulogne area. Transport aircraft continued to operate between western Germany and occupied parts of Belgium and north-east France.

5. Our aircraft today attacked western exits of Courtrai and enemy columns at St. Omer area. German army headquarters east of Boulogne attacked and house reported demolished. Fighter patrols in Calais-Dunkirk area between midnight of 26th/27th May and 13 hours today destroyed twenty-two enemy aircraft with further eighteen unconfirmed. Six British fighters missing.



PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

file ~~SECRET~~

May 29th, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith a
copy of the latest report on the
military situation which was sent
off from London late last night.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. L. L.

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.



Telegram despatched from London
on the evening of May 28th.

By 18.00 hours May 27th German attack had developed along whole front of Belgian Army and had succeeded in breaching it. King of the Belgians asked for armistice and Belgian resistance ceased at 04.00 hours May 28th. Following reported to be terms of armistice. All troop movements forbidden. Troops must show white flags and await orders beside the roads. No war material or stores to be destroyed. German troops to be allowed to proceed to coast. No obstruction permitted to German passage to Ostend. No resistance tolerated.

2. South of River Somme Germans still hold bridgeheads at St. Valery and Abbeville and are established at Bailleul.

3. Very little definite information about British Expeditionary Force and French First Army. Western Sector reported to run line Cassel-Hazebrouck-La Bassee. German forces claimed to be on line Thiedt-Ypres-Wytschaete-St.Amand-Hazebrouck-Cassel on evening of May 27th. Later Germans progressed northwest of Cassel. On May 27th Germans driven back from La Bassee and also failed in attempt to cross canal at Bethune.

4. German air attacks yesterday chiefly in northeast France and on harbours on French side of Straits of Dover. Parachute mine laying continues. Dive bomber aircraft gave close support
to/

to army units, but no information regarding scope of their operations. Constant fighter patrols over Boulogne-Lille-Ostend area. Six German transport aircraft squadrons active between Germany and Saint Pol-Saint Quentin area.

5. Royal Air Force today attacked enemy columns, tanks and transport operating west and east of salient held by British Expeditionary Force. One aircraft not returned. Fighter patrols operating in Calais-Dunkirk area today destroyed fifteen aircraft confirmed and seven unconfirmed. Eight British fighters missing. Reports now received that air attacks reported in immediately preceding telegram resulted in hits on number of railway marshalling yards including Dusseldorf and Dortmund. Aerodromes at Flushing and Wesel successfully attacked; also blast furnaces at Krefeld. Trains and communications in vicinity of Lieges and Vise also damaged.

6. Little change in Scandinavia. Allied forces continue advance southeast along north side of Rombaksfjord. German air reinforcements continue. No reinforcements or materials appear to be arriving from Sweden. One cruiser and two destroyers damaged in Narvik area today by air bombing.



~~Secret~~

file

*PSF
G.B.*

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
May 29th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith the latest telegram from London regarding the military situation. This was despatched from London yesterday afternoon.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. S. C.

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States,

Washington, D. C.

Telegram despatched from London
on the afternoon of May 28th.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~Secret.~~

1. Calais now completely occupied by enemy. Germans reported near Dunkirk at dawn today. Dunkirk continuously bombed yesterday but port is open. Ostend heavily bombed yesterday.

2. Nothing to report in sector Montmedy-Ham. Germans hold bridge-heads at Peronne and Amiens and are back on Somme St. Valery. North of gap French first army now on line south east of Lille from Pont à Vinden-Thumeries-Bourghelles. South of salient approximate British line is Bethune-St. Omer-Gravelines. Heavy German attack brought their advance elements on line Hazebrouck-Cassel and on road between Cassel-Wormhout.

3. North of salient British hold general line Ammappes-Ypres. British reserves despatched yesterday to fill gap caused by northern withdrawal of Belgian Army. News of position in this area is lacking.

4. Belgian army broken in many places yesterday by mechanized and ceaseless air attacks. King of the Belgians asked for armistice yesterday. Announcements by Reynaud on French broadcast this morning that Belgian army have capitulated.

5. Last night Royal Air Force attacked enemy troops, transports and communications in occupied portions of eastern France and Belgium with success. Two aircraft lost. Marshalling yards in Ruhr and Cologne areas on railways between Rhine and Meuse oil targets at Bremen and Hamburg also attacked last night.

No/



-2-

No reports yet received. All aircraft returned safely. In last 24 hours our fighters operating over Belgian and French coasts and inland towns destroyed 47 enemy aircraft, with further 27 unconfirmed. Fourteen aircraft missing.

6. Several enemy aircraft reported to have been between Dover and Spurn Point and over Shetland Islands. Aircraft also reported to have been over Yorks. No bombing carried out by enemy and no interceptions made. Much enemy air activity yesterday off Dunkirk, Ostend, Calais and Boulogne.

PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~SECRET~~

May 30th, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy
of the most recent report on the
military situation in Europe. This
was despatched from London in the
evening of May 29th.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

L. Nelson

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

~~SECRET~~

Telegram despatched from London in the
evening of May 29th, 1940.

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED

1. Evacuation of British Expeditionary Force now in process. Up to 10.00 hours today it was estimated that 40,000 troops had been landed in England but exact figures have not yet been accurately assessed and it is emphasised that 40,000 is an estimate only. All possible support is being given by Royal Navy and Royal Air Force to this operation. In addition to naval vessels large numbers of small craft of all description are being employed. Two destroyers torpedoed and sunk this morning and a third aground. One of the destroyers had troops on board. Number of casualties not yet known. Efforts are being also made to maintain food supplies for British Expeditionary Force.

2. Information regarding present dispositions of British Expeditionary Force still very scant. Main bodies believed about Prouen-Poperinhe-Ypres-Bixchoote with first corps on west and second corps on east. Outposts on general lines Godthaensuelde-Ypres. West flank of British Expeditionary Force approximately from west outskirts of Dunkirk-Berges-Cassel and thence possibly at Hazebrouck-Merville. Heavy German pressure on Cassel and Berges. Elements of German armoured division reported near Soex, ten miles south of Dunkirk yesterday evening.

3. North flank approximate line on Nieuport-Ypres. This line believed thinly held. Heavy German pressure at Ypres. Advance German elements entered Ostend yesterday afternoon. Special force under General Adam is holding "Corunna Line" along canal from Berges to Nieuport.

4. No great change from Montmedy to the sea. Germans still holding bridgeheads at Peronne, Amiens and Abbeville.

5. During evening of May 28th Royal Air Force attacked enemy troops and transports in St. Omer area and also bombed communications in Guyja-Traur-Givet area. Further attacks made on enemy concentrations and aerodromes in Menin, Courtrai, Bethune, Aire, St. Omer area. One of our aircraft missing.

6. 21 enemy fighter aircraft shot down and further five unconfirmed. Fourteen of our fighters missing. On May 27th fighter patrol AASF in France attacked 24 Heinkel 111 bombers escorted by 20 Messerschmidt 110 fighters. Enemy fighters retired with loss of 1 aircraft and our Hurricanes then destroyed 9 enemy bombers with further 2 unconfirmed. No British casualties. Gladiators in Narvik shot down 11 enemy aircraft confirmed and further 7 unconfirmed. 4 British aircraft damaged all by enemy bombing.

7. Little enemy air activity in vicinity of British Isles yesterday and last night. No reports received regarding scale of enemy air attack in France.



PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Personal and ~~Secret~~.

30th May 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of
the most recent report on the
military situation in Europe. This
telegram, although only sent from
London early this afternoon, was
actually dated May 29th.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Huran

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

*P.S. We just heard that of 12 5:30
this morning 80,000 troops have
been evacuated.*

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

Telegram despatched from London the afternoon of May 30th, (dated May 29th).

At 1500 hours to-day 39,000 troops reported landed and further 7500 on passage. Our fighter patrols have been operating in waves and enemy bombing severe in the districts between these waves. Morale of troops landed is high and reports received indicate that troops in France are fighting vigorously in rear-guard actions with great determination.

Embarking facilities are being shared by British and French troops. Destroyer reported aground in immediately preceding telegram is now afloat and has damaged propeller. One other destroyer damaged (not seriously) by near miss.

2. Location of formations of B.E.F. not known in detail owing to difficulty of communication. All roads very congested. During May 28th Germans reported on approximate line of Cappelle (north of Douai), Haubourdin South of Lille - Lonne (West of Lille) - Estaires - Hazebrouck - Cassel - Bergues - Gravelines. Early to-day heavy German pressure reported at Cassel - Bergues. By 2000 hours yesterday Germans had reached lines of Dixmunde - Newport. Enemy were shelling pier at Dunkirk this morning with shore batteries from South-east. French First Army reported on River Lys at 0300 hours to-day.

3. Little change in Somme sector. Small detachments of German parachutists have been dropped at points 15 - 50 miles from Paris.

4. Slight decrease in German Air Force operations yesterday. Operations again mainly in support of ground troops in North-east France attacking harbours and coastal objectives on North-east French and Belgian coasts. Much enemy air reconnaissance to-day of troop movements and channel shipping. Yesterday and to-day reconnaissance aircraft from a bomber Geschwader operated off South-east coast of England probably as far as Portsmouth. This morning bomber Geschwader to which these reconnaissance aircraft belong was standing by for attack on South-east coast. Judging by operation of reconnaissance aircraft objectives likely to be harbours.

5. R.A.F. to-day attacked enemy tanks and lorries East and West of Salient occupied by the Allies and several direct hits were recorded. All aircraft returned. No anti-aircraft fire encountered and fighter attacks were easily evaded in the clouds. Fighter patrols maintained over evacuation area. No enemy aircraft encountered this morning but during the afternoon up till 1630 hours twenty-six (confirmed) and seven (unconfirmed) shot down. All our aircraft returned. British bombers engaged in attack referred to in my immediately preceding telegram report bombs dropped on M.T.B.s near Dixmunde and Haszebrouck on Haszebrouck - Dunkirk railway and on troops near St. Omer. Seven bridges at Ypres appeared to be demolished.

6. German counter-attack May 28th against Allied troops landed on Narvik peninsula failed and that evening Germans driven out of Narvik

/for

for distance of two miles. Germans now thirty-five miles East-Southeast of Bodo. Since May 15th Germans have withdrawn about one division from Norway and Denmark.