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Vol. I

ESTIMATE
of
Potential Military Strength
Documents C
Naval Attaché
BRUSSELS

Volume 1
Documents Numbers 1 to 10
(6 Jan. 1937 - 16 Jan. 1940)

DECLASSIFIED

ISSUED BY OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE, NAVY DEPARTMENT

ATTACHE'S REPORT BLANK A-4-a/5385-A

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From L Date JANUARY 6, 1937 Serial No. 4 File No. 803-100
(Continuation new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. index)

Source of information _____

Subject Belgium Reorganization of the Belgian Army
(Nation reported on) (Index title as per index sheet) (Subtitle)

Reference _____

Notes.—(The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personnel, or political names, and the gist of the report.)

REORGANIZATION OF THE BELGIAN ARMY

Archives

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Director	A-B-C-D-E	Intelligence	Personnel	Budget	C.N.O.	Gen'l Staff	War College	M.I.D.	Nav.	Inf.	T.&D.	C.&R.	Eng.	S.S.A.	M.A.S.	Ann.	U.S. M.C.	R.O.
Sec. Nav.	C. in C.	Com. Sec. For.	Com. Sec. For.	C. in C. Adm.	Com. S. S. S.	Com. Air		Operations	Com. Div.	W. R.	Com.	PLT.	State	Com. Sec.	Ship. Board	Return to Source No.		

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From: L Date: January 6, 1937 Serial N° 4 File N° Army Components
802-100
803-300

Subject: Reorganization of the Belgian Army.

The Belgian Army is to be re-organized and the proposals for same are as follows:

I.- LIGHT TROOPS.

The cavalry will retain its present means of displacement and will be furnished additional ones so as to enable it to fulfil its traditional mission now greatly enlarged by the preponderance of fire. This forces the cavalry principally to fight on foot and has necessitated a change in its armament, but on the other hand has made it an integral part of the other arms. In addition to scouting and covering duties and to protecting the Army's flanks during battle, the cavalry will now participate in actual battle operations.

The cavalry will become the general Army Reserve, taken in the widest meaning of this word.

Rapid and daring decision in manoeuvres will be required, speed in displacement and violence in shock as well as intensive fire.

However complex the cavalry's new role may seem, it boils down to the following: A great deal of fire, transported by every available means in order to arrive quickly and in sufficient quantity.

The certainty of arriving betimes signifies that no means of conveyance can be neglected.

There are still occasions when the horse will be required. A small army, similar to the Belgian one has not the right to place itself in a position where any means of combat is required.

Armored cars and the "foot-cavalry" transported by trucks will be doubled. Their use is justified whenever the firing does not demand too long or too quick marches.

La.....

In principle the cavalry on foot will work towards the "pivots" of the army, the motorised elements, towards the marching column, and the tanks towards the centre.

The command will be very elastic, allowing the absorption of reinforcements by the different echelons. Each important echelon will have a General Staff containing an officer who is a motor-specialist, as also an artillery officer.

Each one of the important units must be able to meet a tank attack as well when stationary as on the march. The corps will thus have the material principally consisting of anti-tank guns which can be effectively employed without forming part of a battery.

Following is the proposed organisation:

A. War Position.

Cavalry or the light troops of the Army.

1 Cavalry Corps. 1 General headquarters for the service of which there is one artillery regiment (R.A.P.C.), either drawn or on tractors and 3 divisions.

Light Division (D.L.) General headquarters etc. 1 regiment of light artillery (R.A.L.) of two groups of 75's and one of 105's, 2 brigades of 2 cavalry regiments and 1 of cyclist carabineers. The Cavalry regiments have 3 squadrons of fusiliers, 1 of machine gunners and 1 of support (2 platoons of A.B., 10 carriages of which 6 have guns, 1 platoon of 8 carriages of anti-tank guns, 1 motorised platoon of machine guns). The cavalry regiments of 2 battalions consisting of 5 companies each - All in all for the Light Division, 96 anti-tank weapons and 400 automatics.

Shock Division (D.C.) General headquarters etc. 1 regiment of mechanised artillery (R.A.M.) of 2 groups of 75's and one of "105" mortars, on caterpillar tractors, 2 brigades of 2 regiments of dragoons and 2 groups of 3 squadrons of 22 armored

cars....

cars each and one squadron of motors. The first brigade is provided with light fast armored cars, the second with heavier armament. All in all 270 anti-tank weapons and 600 automatic weapons and 528 armored cars.

Mounted Division. (D.P.) General headquarters etc. 1 division of mounted artillery (R.A.P.), 2 brigades of 2 regiments of two groups of cavalry each, similarly composed as the cavalry regiment, from which they have come, but with lorries instead of horses for the transport of the personnel by brigade. One regiment of dragoons of 2 groups each of 3 squadrons of dragoons - (light armored cars, heavier armored cars and motorcycles) - All in all for the Mounted Division: 220 anti-tank arms and 600 automatic weapons.

Cavalry Corps (C.A.) The Cavalry required one light regiment, which has a complex mission to fulfil and which is needed in order to insure the corps' safety and reconnoitring. This consists of general staff, 1 cavalry regiment, 1 battalion of motor cars, 1 group of dragoons. All in all some 60 anti-tank arms.

The Division. 1 "light group" consisting of a mounted squadron, 1 company of cyclists or motor cars, 1 squadron of arms.

The "light group" operates in liaison with the divisional motor car battalion.

The Regiment: To each battalion: 1 motor car platoon; 1 company of motor cars to each regiment and one platoon of mounted scouts.

B. In Time of Peace.

In active service: In the Cavalry Corps: The Light Division and the shock division - The other units are staffed. A detachment of lories, sufficient to transport 12 groups or battalions is held in marching order readiness.

The four cavalry regiments intended for the cavalry corps continue to belong to the C.A. They form part of the

brigades, each consisting of 4 cavalry regiments and 1 cavalry cyclist regiment.

The Cavalry regiments always contain 4 regiments of cavalry serving from 18-24 months (in addition to the recruits) and 4 cavalry regiments serving from 6-12 months.

In case of necessity the recruits take charge of the horses and the 6 regiments are transported by lorries together with the cyclist cavalry. The squadrons will merely have 120 horses.

The D.P. (peace time division) is formed for purposes of manoeuvres. The Shock Division always possess 300 armored cars.

All in all the "light troops" contain 5,000 recruits (of which 1,000 are cyclist cavalry) and 3,000 regulars.

There is thus in continual marching order a "general army reserve", susceptible of rapid transfer to points that are menaced.

The present squadrons which are too heavy and the groups unarmed against armored cars, will be substituted by selected squadrons united into mixed regiments prepared for any mission.

II.- THE INFANTRY.

A. War footing.

The company: Only 3 platoons, 4 combat groups, 1 or 2 small caterpillar tractors for ammunition, 15 liaison men, either with motor cycles or motor cars. There will be 45 troops less than at present. One platoon of motor scouts (50 men) to each battalion. One unclassified battalion to each regiment comprising the signal corps platoon, the mounted scout platoon, the company of fire-arms (16 guns, one half of which are on caterpillar tractors, and the other drawn), one company of machine guns and one of motor cars.

If.....

If needed, a fourth company, consisting of 3 motor car platoons of the battalions. The three last companies of this will absorb the 810 men left over from the present companies.

The Division will be increased by a fourth picked regiment, charged with certain duties, formerly performed by the Carabiniers. Hence its name.

This regiment will have one motorized battalion (infantry type), 1 machine gun battalion (4 companies), 1 battalion of fire-arms (1 mortar company, - 8-47's type H.I.)

Each Infantry division will have 2 transportation companies each able to convey in trucks an infantry battalion or a light artillery group.

Such an organization will mean great progress in the army, owing to the anti-tank strength of the Infantry Division (110 guns, and 24 mortars) as also to the number of safety provisions.

B. Peace footing.

In times of peace there will be two active battalions and the battalion cadre per regiment. This can be obtained by a contingent of 580 militia per regiment, staffed with 200-250 regulars. Each year a third battalion will be formed during the manoeuvres.

III.- ARTILLERY.

A. War footing.

The Infantry's Artillery division will be brought up to six groups. This will be accomplished by adding a second group of howitzer 105's.

B. Peace footing.

The easily mobilized and motorized artillery, permits Staff-units. Each Infantry Artillery division will have two active mounted groups, 2 motor car groups and 2 motorized staff groups, regarmed at the camp.

The light batteries have 85 troops, the others 65.

IV.- STEEL ARMS.

Engineering courses will be actively pushed, so as to render the recruits available after 6 months' training.

V.- GENERAL ORGANIZATION.

12 active infantry divisions. The contingent will be brought up to 80,000 and the regulars to 25,000.-

In addition to the 12 infantry divisions, the cavalry corps will be organized as follows: 6 mixed groups of chasseurs Ardennais. Three of these from the Ardennes, one from Liège, one from Limbourg and one from the Campine. Behind them twelve reserve divisions.

The mobilization of certain units will be instantaneous, of others, very rapid.

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From L Date Feb. 23, 1937 Serial No. 36 File No. _____
(Commence new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. index)

Source of information _____

Subject Belgium The Belgian Military Budget
(Nation reported on) (Index title as per index sheet) (Subtitle)

Reference _____

NOTE.—(The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personal, or political names, and the gist of the report.)

THE BELGIAN MILITARY BUDGET

1937

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A-B-C-D-E														
Director	B-2, B-3, B-11, B-12, B-13, B-14, B-15, B-16, B-17, B-19	Maneuver	Intelligence	Budget	C. N. O.	Gen'l Staff	War College	M. I. D.	Nav.	Ord.	T. & D.	C. & E.	Eng.	S. & A.
Sen. Nav. Adm.	C. in C. U. S.	Com. Sub. For.	Com. Sen. For.	C. in C. Asia	Com. S. & S.	Com. Air	Adm'd at	Operations				State	Com. Comm.	Ship. Board
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From: L Date: February 23, 1937 Serial N° 36
Subject: The Belgian Military Budget.

The Budget Committee has approved the request made by the Ministry of National Defense demanding additional amounts needed by the Army owing to the increases in men and service recently voted by Parliament. (See report N° 70, dated November 16, 1936, Belgian Military Budget).

The additional amounts allowed are:

For ordinary budget	Frs. 46.000.000.-
For extraordinary budget	Frs. 128.000.000.-

The last amount will largely be employed for orders to be placed in 1937 and deliveries to be made in 1938.

(Motorization of the infantry, complete change in the cavalry abandoning all horses, and additional equipment for the air force).

AMERICAN LEGATION
LISBON
OFFICE OF THE NAVAL ATTACHE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3

November 6, 1937.

(Letter) # 55

*Enclosure to
Archives*

From: Naval Attaché, Lisbon

To: Director of Naval Intelligence

Subject: Belgian Military Organization. #5385-A

Enclosure: Report of Italian Military Attaché.



AE-1/QA/EF9(11-6)

- 1) Herewith is forwarded report on the organization of the Belgian army, dated May 31, 1937, forwarded by Lieut.Colonel Duca, the Italian Military Attaché to Belgium, to the Office of Military Intelligence in Rome.
- 2) It is believed to be correct in all respects.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (2)

OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SLR

Date 10/11/73

Belgium

800 - Army
803 - Organization

A-4-a 5385-A

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
(OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE)

RECORD OF TRANSLATION

Translation requested by: Western Europe Section.

Date of request: 22 December 1937.

Language: Italian.

Subject: Organization of the Belgian Army.

Source: Report of Italian Military Attaché to Belgium, accompanying
Naval Attaché letter No. 55, Lisbon, Portugal, of 6 Nov. 1937.

Original title: BELGIO. Organizzazione delle Forze Armate.

Author: ----

Translation furnished by: O.N.I. Translating Section.

Date: 21 April 1938.

Translated by: MEM

Number of pages: 13.

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Authenticated:

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Translator in charge.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 5(E) and 5(D) or (D)
OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SLR Date MAY 21 1973

Source: Naval Attaché Letter No. 55,
Lisbon, Portugal,
6 November 1937.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Original language: Italian.

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ORGANIZATION OF THE BELGIAN ARMY

I.- Organization of the Armed Forces

The Armed Forces consist of the Army (1), of which the Air Service forms an integral part, and of the Gendarmerie. There is no Navy.

The Belgian Congo has its own armed force, with organization and roster entirely independent of those of the Mother Country.

(a) Army.

The King is the supreme head in peace and in war.

The command is actually exercised by the Minister of National Defense, who acts "by order" of the King.

The Minister of National Defense has under his authority the following departments, which in their entirety constitute the Ministry of National Defense:

- The Minister's Cabinet
- The General Staff of the Army
- A "Superior Direction" of Infantry
- A "Superior Direction" of Artillery
- A "Superior Direction" of Engineers and Fortifications.
- An Air Service
- A "Superior Direction" of Medical Corps Activities
- A Service of Supply
- A Service of Military Constructions
- A Service of Military Personnel
- A Technical Service of Engineers
- A Veterinarian and Remount Service
- A National Mobilization Service
- Administration of Civil Personnel
- A General Inspectorate of Army Administration.

The territorial organization of the army is separate from and independent of that of the troops, and is composed of four Territorial Circumscription Headquarters (1. Brussels; 2. Antwerp; 3. Liège; 4. Namur), and after them in order come the Headquarters of the Provinces (at the above-named cities) and the Military District Headquarters (at the most important garrisons).

(b) Gendarmerie

This is organized as an independent body with its own rosters and budget, and is directed by a General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, but is subordinated to the Minister of National Defense, who has the same jurisdiction over it that he has over the army.

(1) This report contains no Air Service data.

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OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SIR Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

II.- Military Budgets

Ordinary Army and Air Service Budget - 1937.

	<u>Belgian francs</u>	
Military personnel (special allowances, indemnities, etc.)	585,386,425.	
Material (rations, quartering in barracks, supply of material and armament, transportation, etc. Including 31,000,000 francs for Air Service)	280,987,874.	
Miscellaneous expenses	<u>17,916,860.</u>	
Total, ordinary expenses	884,291,259.	
Exceptional expenses	<u>1,663,000.</u>	
	885,924,259.	885,924,259.
Charged to Public Works budget for works of military character		50,000,000.

Extraordinary Army Budget - 1937

Completion of fortifications:

Herve plateau forts	14,500,000.	
Eben-Emael fort	1,000,000.	
Improvement of Liège and Namur fortifications ...	1,500,000.	
Secondary fortifications (system of shelters, dug-outs, etc.)	13,625,000.	
Barbed wire reserve and anti-tank installations .	6,500,000.	
Purchase and replenishment of arms and munitions	428,287,000.	
Construction of barracks at Antwerp	<u>6,000,000.</u>	
	571,412,000.	571,412,000.

Gendarmerie Budget - 1937

(ordinary and exceptional)	<u>135,536,727.</u>
Aggregate total	1,642,872,986.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)
OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

III - Military obligations.

The duration of general and personal obligations devolving on all men between the ages of 20 and 50 who are fit for military service, is 25 years, divided as follows:

15 years in the regular army
10 years in the territorial army.

Young men of 17 are enrolled in the "recruiting reserve", and can be called to the colors in case of mobilization.

Duration of service for the entire contingent is 12 months, with an extension of 5 months for men allocated to the line of infantry, cyclist units, motorized cavalry units, and fortress regiments, and for all student officers and non-commissioned officers belonging to the reserve.

Recalls. Men recalled to the colors must, in the course of 10 consecutive years, serve 6 weeks in all in various grades.

Reserve officers and non-commissioned officers. These are recruited from the conscripts who hold certificates showing the completion of certain studies; they serve 17 months and attend special courses in the various arms and branches.

Volunteers. Voluntary enlistments for as much as six years are accepted for the frontier cyclist units, motorized cavalry units, and fortress regiments.

Reenlistment. A large number of men reenlist and remain in the army to discharge the duties of professional non-commissioned officer: clerk, orderly, musician, cook, attendant, etc.

Language system. Conscripts have the right to be assigned to French, Flemish or German language units, depending on the language spoken in the commune of origin. Unilingual and mixed language units are designated each year.

In 1937, 15,800 conscripts asked to be assigned to Flemish language units and 206 to German language units.

IV - Territorial Military Circumscriptions

This zone has the same boundaries as the administrative circumscription.

The Army Corps, consisting of two divisions of infantry is the most important unit, both in peace and in war.

Three Army Corps (I, Brussels; II, Antwerp; III, Liège), one for each of the first three military circumscriptions, compose the peace time army.

The commandant of the Army Corps is also the commandant of the corresponding military circumscription.

The 4th Military Circumscription (Namur) does not have an Army Corps, but a combination of detachments and services of the field army and fortress garrison, known as the "troops for the defense of Luxemburg and Namur". (Luxemburg-Namur defense garrisons).

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OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

The annexed sketch shows the present location of the various units of the Belgian Army in detail down to the battalion as of 15 May 1937.

At the present time, however, many changes with respect to location and subordination are in progress as a result of the organization of four artillery battalions of infantry regiments, the motorization of the cavalry, the reorganization of the engineering and the extension of the periods of service adopted at the end of 1936.

V - Budgetary Effectives

By law these cannot exceed 84,000 men, as follows:

45,600 conscripts
33,000 professionals, volunteers and men recalled to the colors
5,400 recalled

The contingent for 1937 has been fixed at 81,000 men, as follows:

39,500 conscripts
12,050 professionals or reenlisted men
13,300 volunteers
7,750, corresponding to the increased length of service of 5 months for 18,600 conscripts.

8,400 men recalled or serving under other administrations.

VI - Mobilizable Effectives

Regular army (15 classes, including the class under arms) 700,000 men.
Territorial army (10 classes) about 400,000 men.

VII - Organization

- (a) Peace complement: see Section I.
- (b) War complement.

Commander-in-chief: the King.

Chief of the General Army Staff, who has under his authority:

The General Army Staff, composed of:

- Section 1.- Operations.
- Section 2.- Intelligence.
- Section 3.- Organization, Material, Mobilization.
- Section 4.- Transportation and movements; supply and evacuations.

The units and services are distributed as follows:

Field Army:

(Army Corps
(Cavalry Corps
(Ardenne Chasseurs Corps
(Frontier Cyclist Units
(Army Artillery Brigade
(Reserve Division

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OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

Units and Services (continued):

Engineer units
Fortress units
Air Force
War zone anti-aircraft defense
Units and establishments of the various services.

VIII - Formation of the Units

(a) The Army Corps consists of:

Staff
2 infantry divisions
1 regiment of artillery
1 regiment of engineers.

(1) Infantry divisions now existing and those expected on mobilization:

(a) Infantry divisions in peace time	6
(b) Reserve divisions to be organized immediately after mobilization (1)	6
(c) Secondary reserve divisions to be formed at a later period if required (2)	6
(d) Ardennes Chasseurs Division (existing in peace time	<u>1</u>
Total	19

6 of which are optional and have reduced armament.

(1) No provision has been made for incorporating these divisions in the Army Reserve Corps.

(2) Reduced tactical equipment and formation.

(2) Organization and tactical equipment of the Infantry Division

3 infantry regiments:	(Staff (3 battalions of infantry (1 battalion heavy infantry (machine-gun - motorized)
Each infantry battalion:	(Command (3 rifle companies: 3 platoons: 3 squads. (1 m.g. co: 3 platoons: 2 sections: (2 squads.
Each heavy infantry battalion:	(Command (1 heavy m.g. co: 3 platoons: 2 sections: (2 squads. (1-47 mm. gun co. (8 pieces) (1-76 mm. mortar co. (8 pieces)
1 artillery regiment:	(Staff (2 dets. of 2-75 mm. rapid fire batteries (1 or 2 dets. of 2-75 mm. long range batteries (1-75 mm. light howitzer batteries.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (B)

OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

INFANTRY DIVISION - TACTICAL EQUIPMENT

Total tactical equipment	Sub-machine guns (1 to each rifle squad leader)	Automatic rifles (1 to each rifle squad leader)	Heavy machine guns	Trench mortars (4 to each rifle platoon)	47 mm. anti-tank guns	76 mm. mortars	75 mm. rapid-fire guns	75 mm. long range guns	75 mm. light howitzers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)			
For each infantry regiment	81	81	48	108	8	8			
For the artillery regiment							16	8 0 16	8
Total for each division	243	243	144	324	24	24	16	8 0 16	8

- (1) SCHMEISSER sub-machine gun Cal. 9.(mm.)
- (2) BROWNING model, Cal. 7.0.
- (3) MAXIM Cal.7.9 converted German material.
- (4) V.G.B., Belgian types, 1935 model.
- (5) 1935 model guns, Belgian foundry products.
- (6) STOKES-BRANDT type.

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

(b) Cavalry Corps

Motorization of the cavalry is in progress and this work is expected to be completed in 1938.

The Corps consists of:

Staff

2 cavalry divisions, each one composed of:

(a) 3 mixed regiments (1), divided into:

1 mounted detachment: (2 dragoon squadrons (3 troops)
(1 machine-gun squadron (3 platoons)

1 motorcycle detachment: (2 motorcycle rifle platoons
(1 squadron heavy infantry
(machine guns - motorized)
divided into:

1 heavy m.g. platoon
1 47 mm. gun platoon (3 pieces)
1 76 mm. howitzer platoon (4 pieces)

1 armored car squadron of 3 platoons (1 car).

(b) 1 cyclist carabineer regiment consisting of:

2 battalions: (2 rifle companies
(1 heavy machine gun company.

(c) 1 cyclist engineer battalion of 2 companies.

(1) Each regiment retains its traditional name of "Guides", "Lancers", "Mounted Chasseurs".

actical Equipment of Cavalry Corps (see next page)

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (F)

OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

CAVALRY CORPS - TACTICAL EQUIPMENT

Units	Automatic rifles	Heavy machine-guns	47 mm. anti- tank guns	76 mm. mortars	Armored cars, armed with 1.7 machine guns	75 mm. guns	105 mm. howitzers
For each cavalry regiment	36	12	8	4	9		
For each cyclist regiment	18	9					
For the artillery regiment						32	8
Total	252	81	48	24	54	32	8

Source: M.A. Lisbon ltr.
No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (G)
OSD letter, May, 4, 1972
By SLR Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

(c) Ardennes Chasseurs Division

Staff

3 regiments of Ardennes Chasseurs, each one composed of:

	(2 rifle companies of 2 platoons each	
	{	
	{	(1 platoon heavy M.G.'s
	{	(2 sections of 2 guns)
1 Battalion of	(1 company of heavy infantry	(1 76 mm. mortar platoon
Ardennes Chasseurs:	((machine guns - motorized):	(2 guns)
	{	(1 platoon 47 mm. anti-tank
	{	(guns (4 pieces)
	{	(1 platoon armored cars
	{	(2 cars)
	(Command	
1 Battalion Ardennes	{	
Cyclist Chasseurs:	(2 mixed cyclist companies:	(2 rifle platoons
	{	(1 heavy M.G. platoon
	{	(3 sections of 3 guns)
	(Command	
	(1 rifle co. in 2 platoons	
1 School Battalion:	(1 co. of heavy infantry	(1 platoon heavy M.G.'s
	((machine guns - motorized):	(4 guns)
		(1 76 mm. mortar platoon
		(2 pieces)
		(1 47 mm. gun det. (2 pieces)
		(1 armored car platoon
		(2 cars)

1 motorized heavy artillery detachment of 3 75 mm. batteries.

(1) The school battalion is located away from the regiment in a zone situated to the rear with respect to the frontier.

Tactical Equipment of Ardennes Chasseurs

Units	Automatic rifles	Heavy machine guns	Anti-tank guns	Armored cars	76 mm. mortars	75 mm. guns Model 34
For each regiment	30	20	6	4	4	
For the artillery group						12
For the entire division	90	60	18	12	12	

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 8(B) and 8(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

(d) Frontier Cyclist Units

3 battalions in all and 1 independent company, differing in organization and garrisoned as follows:

Frontier Cyclist Battalion of Limburg:

Command and 2 companies at Maeseyck
1 company at Lanaeken

Frontier Cyclist Battalion of Verviers:

Command and 1 company at Verviers (equipped with 3
47 mm. anti-tank guns)
1 company at Homburg (equipped with 4 - 47 mm. anti-
tank guns)
1 company at Henri-Chapelle (equipped with 5 anti-tank
guns)

Frontier Cyclist Battalion at Liège:

Command and 2 companies at Visé
1 company at Liège

Independent Frontier Cyclist Company of Malmédy: at Malmédy.

(e) Artillery Units

(1) Army Corps Artillery:

1 regiment to each Army Corps, composed of:

2-155 mm. howitzer detachments of 2 batteries each
1 detachment of 2-105 mm. (long range) batteries
1 detachment of 2-105 mm. batteries

(2) Army Artillery:

2 regiments organized into one independent brigade,
composed of:

1st Regt: 1 det. of 2-155 mm. (long range) batteries
1 det. of 2-150/43 mm. batteries
1-155 mm. howitzer det. of 2 batteries

2nd Regt: 1-220 mm. mortar det. of 2 batteries
1-150/17 howitzer det. of 2 batteries
1-170 mm. railway battery and 1-280 mm. battery

(3) Fortress Artillery

2 regiments (1 at Liège and 1 at Namur) composed respectively
of 12 and 7 batteries (1 battery to each citadel)

(4) Anti-aircraft Artillery

1 A.A. field artillery regiment in 5 detachments of 2
batteries each
1 regiment of territorial A.A. defense (in formation)
4 sections of Madsen 40 mm. A.A. guns.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 5(2) and 5(D) or (20)

OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By SFR

Date

MAY 21 1973

TOTAL TACTICAL EQUIPMENT - ARTILLERY UNITS

	40 mm. A.A.guns	75 mm. A.A. guns	105 mm. guns	150.17 mm. howitzers	120 mm. guns	155 mm. howitzers	150/43 mm.guns	170 mm. R.R. artillery	155 mm. guns	220 mm. mortars	260 mm. R.R. artillery
Army Corps			24		24	48					
Army				5			8	2	8	4	2
Fortress											
				Fort equipment							
Anti-aircraft	28	40									

Source: M.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55
of 6 Nov. 1937

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937

IX - Peace Time Effectives

(a) Infantry (The various traditional names do not imply any difference in equipment, composition, or employment of the regiments).

	<u>Regiment</u>	<u>Battalion</u>
Infantry of the line, grenadiers, carabineers, chasseurs	18	72
Cyclist carabineers	2	4
Ardennes Chasseurs	3	6
Frontier cyclists	-	3
Total	23	85

(b) Cavalry

	<u>Regiment</u>	<u>Squadron</u>
Guides, Lancers, mounted Chasseurs	6	36

(c) Artillery

	<u>Regiment</u>	<u>Bns or Dets.</u>
Divisional (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th)	6	27
Army Corps (13th, 14th, 15th)	3	12
Army (1st, 2nd)	2	6
Cavalry Corps	1	4
Ardennes Chasseurs	-	1
Fortress (19 fortress battalions), Liège and Namur	2	5
Anti-aircraft (1st, 2nd)	2	5
Total	16	60

(d) Engineer Corps

	<u>Regiment</u>	<u>Battalion</u>
Regiments of Engineers (2nd, 3rd, 4th)	3	9
Regiment of Signal Troops	1	2
Cyclist battalion	-	1
Pontoon battalion	-	1
Railway units	-	1
Total	4	14

X - Mobilization

Preparation:

The nucleus units (frontier cyclists, Ardennes Chasseurs, Third Army Corps, Cavalry Corps, fortress regiments of Liège and Namur) apply their system of replacement, completing their complements in their garrison.

The peace time field army units are transferred with their available force to their assembly areas where their ranks are completed by the addition of men recalled to the colors.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (H)

OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By GWR

Date MAY 21 1973

Source: N.A. Lisbon ltr. No. 55 of 6 Nov. 1937. [REDACTED]

The first six reserve divisions are formed immediately at the respective mobilization centers.

Time requirements (anticipated)

- To apply the replacement system: 24 hours.
- To mobilize the peace time units: 3 to 4 days.
- To organize the reserve divisions: 6 to 7 days.

The six secondary reserve divisions will be mobilized later, on the basis of orders to be issued by the central authorities.

XI - Fortifications

These constitute an essential element of national defense.

They are constructed at the northern and southeastern frontiers to protect the country from possible German invasion.

Basic purpose of secondary fortifications

To bar access to the center of the fortified defense zone by means of a triple row of forts along the Aachen-Liège-Namur-Charleroi line.

To protect the flanks of the defense zone (Campine-Luxemburg) by means of a series of secondary fortifications (i.e. shelters, dug-outs, etc.) echeloned in depth and supplemented by the natural and artificial defenses of the terrain in such a way as to retard the advance of the invader.

To increase the delay in advance by systematically organized inundations and destructions throughout the entire covering zone.

To have an extremely strong position behind the Escaut, between Antwerp and Ghent, in order to keep the way clear for communication with the ports and coast of Flanders.

XII - Military defense organizations and pre-and post-military training.

None.

XIII - Gendarmerie

Independent, and organized in about the same way as the Italian carabinieri. It consists of:

- Command of the Gendarmerie Corps
- 1 mobile legion
- 4 mobile detachments (Brussels, Antwerp, Charleroi, Liège)
- 8 territorial detachments.

The detachments are divided into:

- 1 mounted squadron
- 1 foot squadron
- 2 cyclist squadron
- 1 armored car company.

The legion also has a battery of Stokes 81 mm. mortars.

The total effectives of the Gendarmerie amount to 170 officers and 7200 non-commissioned officers and gendarmes.

In time of peace the Gendarmerie cooperates in garrison and guard duties for the secondary fortifications. During mobilization it cooperates in the work of inundation and planned destruction and supplies mounted and cyclist detachments to the commands of large units.

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From L Date Oct. 4, 1939 Serial No. 18 File No. 1001-400

Source of information Chief of Air Service (Commence new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. Index)

Subject Belgium (Nation reported on) (Index title as per index sheet) (Subtitle)

Reference

NOTE:—(The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personal, political names, and the gist of the report.)

Discussions have proceeded during several years between the head of the Belgian Air Force and the Naval Attaché as to desirability of purchasing American planes. This has now been decided on and an Air Mission is proceeding to the United States for this purpose.

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A-S-C-D-E				Memo-graph	In-voice	Budget	C. H. O.	Gen'l. Sec'y	War College	H. I. B.	Nav.	Ond.	T. B. B.	C. & R.	Eng.	S. & A.	M. & S.	Adm.	U. S. M. C.	H. Q.
Director	B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-11, B-12, B-13, B-14, B-15, B-16																			
Tech. Div.	C. in C.	U. S.	Comp. Sec. Fin.	Comp. Sec. Fin.	C. in C. Adm.	S. & S.	Comp. Adm.	Attached at			Operations			State	Com. Sec.	Returns by				
	U. S.	U. S.	U. S.	U. S.	U. S.	U. S.	U. S.				Com. Sec. W. P. / Com. R. T.									

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From: L

Serial No. 18

Date: October 4, 1939.

MATERIEL NEEDED BY THE BELGIAN AIR FORCE.

The Chief of the Belgian Air Service, Lieut. General Duvivier, has during the last two years more and more clearly realized how weak was his branch of the Army, particularly in regard to materiel. He has time and again urged upon the Minister of National Defense, General Denis, sweeping reforms and an entire re-organization, stating in his reports that lacking such it could in no wise fulfill its part in case Belgium were attacked. The lack in materiel was particularly deplorable. General Duvivier stated, "as the men themselves consisted of the élite among the country's youth, well trained and dependable." The gravity of the present hour, coupled with the fact that money (two billion Belgian francs) has been voted for purposes of National defense, have resulted in the Ministry of National Defense instructing General Duvivier to now go ahead and purchase, as soon as possible, in the only place where it now could be purchased, namely the United States, what is most urgently needed by the Air force.

General Duvivier has had two long conferences with the Naval Attaché for Air in the matter, who suggested also consulting the U.S. Military Attaché and particularly the Commercial Attaché. The Naval Attaché for Air stated that while he was happy to offer any and all sympathetic advice, as the question was principally a commercial one, it was rather one for the Department of Commerce to handle.

For the purpose of visiting manufacturing plants, determining types of machines desired, costs, methods of shipment, dates of delivery, etc. a specially fitted air mission consisting of the following three officers will leave for the United States (going first to Washington) at an early moment. It has been advised at once to report to the

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L-18 of 4 Oct. 1939

- 2 -

Belgian Embassy, through which it will first get in touch with the Intelligence Sections of our Navy and Army, in order to benefit by such advice as they may care to offer. General Duvivier at once brought up the question of payment, stating that where cash was required, as in the case of the United States, he trusted arrangements could be made in accordance with the Belgian law, namely 50 percent payment upon the placing of the order and the balance upon delivery.

In addition to the Air materiel needed, the Chief of Staff of the Belgian Army, General Van den Branden, has instructed the commission to study the possibility of the purchase and delivery of American made machine guns for the Army.

Following air officers have been selected to go to America:

Colonel Foidart

Commandant De Weerd

Captain Arendt

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OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

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From L Date Oct. 25 1939 Serial No. 36 File No. 808-100

Source of information Colonel R.

Subject Belgium
(Nation reported on) Index title as per Index sheet

Reference

NOTE—(The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personal, or political names, and the gist of the report.)

Resumé: A Belgian Staff officer gives the problem of a possible German invasion of Belgium as viewed by the Army Authorities.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 5(E) and 5(D) or (B)

OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By SLR Date MAY 21 1973[illegible]

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From: L

Serial No. 36

Date: October 25, 1939.

THE PRESENT PROBLEM OF BELGIAN DEFENSE.

Now, at the beginning of winter, Belgium's military situation is a very different one from what it was at the end of August.

The danger of a surprise attack is past, for the Army is mobilized and a large part of it is stationed near its various combat positions. The various positions are constantly being improved and if work upon them continues throughout the winter months, they will be in fine condition by next spring.

It is now evident that France has wisely decided to remain on the defensive on land. The chances of France violating Belgian neutrality have disappeared. They have probably never existed, though certain important authorities have felt otherwise and this has influenced the distribution of the Belgian forces.

The winter will probably pass in a quiet manner for the Belgian troops. One must, however, have in mind what may happen next spring in case the war continues.

Germany's general situation necessitates an offensive.

Under the present conditions such an offensive can only be undertaken along the front of some 190 miles running from Switzerland to the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. This is the strongest part of the French frontier and France has more than enough effectives to defend itself.

If the Germans wish to intensify their offensive tactics and employ their aptitude for manoeuvres, they must increase the scale of their attacks.

German military doctrine preaches a war of manoeuvres. The present war of position, actually the only possible one along the French front, must be galling to the German high command.

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OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By SIR

Date MAY 21 1973

L-36 of 25 Oct. 1939

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Belgian territory can give Germany a chance for a campaign of manoeuvres where the French Army might be seriously defeated. It is hardly probable that the French would remain in their frontier positions if Germany invaded Belgium. They would probably leave their intrenched positions and the German General Staff might then compel them to fight in open country.

Between now and next spring German forces will unquestionably have increased. Germany has a large reserve in men, not yet employed, and whose military education could be rapidly completed. It is no exaggeration to state that by next March, Germany might have from 125 to 130 divisions in her line, allowing her to supply all the man power needed along a very extended front.

If Germany invaded Belgium, after annihilating the Belgian Air force, the movement across Belgium would in the beginning prove very difficult. On the other hand, as the present Belgian neutrality is very strict, one cannot count on Allied intervention, even in the air, being immediate.

Forced to fight, Belgium would at once put up a stiff defence in Luxemburg. The object would be to hold the banks of the river Meuse above the town of Namur. Liège could hold out. It is believed that an invader could be held up for some time in the territory between Liège and Antwerp. All efforts would be made so as at least to hold the general line from Maastricht to Antwerp. If this line is broken, the whole Meuse front, as far as Namur, would fall, as well as the central portion of Belgium. The occupation of Maastricht would in itself be a grave menace to Liège's position. A small advance south of the Maastricht-Diest line would catch Liège's defences in the back.

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OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

by SLR

Date MAY 9 1973

L-36 of 25 Oct. 1939

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Only if Belgium was attacked via Holland - a different case from the one under consideration - would the Belgian Army be forced immediately to occupy Maastricht.

In order to succeed, the German manoeuvre against France must take place south of the D mer valley and before French reinforcements have strongly assisted the Belgian Army.

The German attack must thus be pushed vigorously with means far superior to those of the Belgian Army, especially in the Air and in mechanized units. The Germans will from the start certainly attempt to spread panic and confusion throughout the whole country.

The success of the German manoeuvre is however doubtful. The Belgian General Staff has certainly considered it carefully and has taken all possible measures to meet it.

The attack would probably come somewhere along the Montjoie-Cleves line, on a front of some ninety-three miles, the advance being from Cleves and Montjoie the pivot. This pivot would not be fixed. From the very outset Maastricht would be vigorously attacked. The Belgian forces would be drawn eastward, as far as possible.

The eventual reinforcing of the defence of Luxemburg would favor the German manoeuvre.

From Cleves to Malines, namely the route of the advancing wing, is some 92 miles, as the crow flies. Along this route there are however formidable obstacles in the form of waterways.

Owing to the Dutch feeling it wise in no way to discuss the problem with Belgium, the latter is ignorant as to whether the Dutch would unquestionably flood their own territory between the German and Belgian frontiers.

The first serious resistance in Belgian territory would be along

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OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

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Date MAY 21 1973

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the Canal which runs from Lanaeken to Antwerp along the Dutch frontier.

If the Germans overcome it, they would have to cross a very extensively destroyed area before reaching the Albert Canal, the last Belgian defence in the direction of the Dutch frontier.

Leaving out of account Luxemburg and any opposing Dutch forces the German offensive would probably advance on the Montjoie-Cleves front with some 25-30 divisions in the first line and some 15 in the second and an important number of armored divisions. Its superiority in numbers would in the Campine be of three to one. The Belgian Army could not hold out alone longer than from seven to ten days. The most likely hypothesis is that it would be reinforced sufficiently to hold out along the Albert Canal.

The Allied front would then become the Maginot line between Thionville and Charleville, the river Meuse from Charleville to Visé, passing Namur and Liège with their bridge heads. It would then follow the Albert Canal, Hasselt and Herenthals joining the Escaut at Antwerp and continue to the Dutch positions in Zeeland and the Hollandse Diep.

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From L Date Oct. 28, 1939 Serial No. 39 File No. 961-300
(Commence new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. Index)
Source of information Captain G - r.
Subject Belgium
(Nation reported on) (Subsidiary)
Reference [REDACTED]

NOTE.—The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personal, or political names, and the gist of the report.

Resumé: Belgium is founding a modest coast-guard service, that may later be enlarged into a Navy.



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OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR Date MAY 21 1973

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Trk. Dir.	C. in C.	Com. Sub. Pac.	Com. Sub. Pac.	C. in C. Asia	Com. S. & S.	Com. Ad.	Adm. of	Com. Sec.	W. P.	Com.	P. T.	State	Com- munications	Return to Room No.							

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From: L

Serial No. 39

Date: October 28, 1939.

THE NUCLEUS OF A FUTURE BELGIAN NAVY.

The dangers surrounding the Belgian coast have brought about the establishment of a modest, preliminary, Naval force (more or less coast artillery) commanded by an artillery officer, M. de Carpenterie, who has served for a number of years in the French Navy, in the Belgian Naval Supply, and Torpedo services.

The present force consists of three squadrons. It has since September patrolled the Belgian coast. Many mines have either been exploded or brought ashore, or if they have drifted ashore, have been rendered harmless. It has charge of the naval target practice, superintended fishing grounds (according to the Hague convention), salvage operations, information service, etc.

Up to the present, former pilot boats have been used. Armed with 47 mm. guns and machine-guns, mines have been destroyed.

An inspection service will be started next month.

As soon as Belgium has been able to acquire the necessary mine sweeping apparatus, mine sweeping will also be commenced. The principal waterways will be swept regularly, and particularly entrances to the Belgian ports and the portions of the Escaut belonging to Belgium. Trawlers with motors will be employed.

The patrol vessels will be replaced, as soon as purchased, by better fitted motor vessels carrying torpedoes. They will be armed with small naval guns, have a speed of forty knots or more and a length of about seventy feet.

A guard ship, for the fisheries, is being built at Hoboken.
Length: 96 meters; breadth, 10 meters; 30,000 H.P.; speed; 30 knots;
Armament: 2 (and later 4) 105 mm. guns and 2 Bofors machine guns.

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OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

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Two other vessels are under consideration as mine sweepers.

The new vessel will belong to the Coastal Naval Defense and will be manned by the Navy, reserve officers being taken from the merchant marine and from the officers of the fishing service. The Navy and the General Staff of the Army are busy creating and developing the nucleus of a future Navy. It has at present ten officers and 150 men and is to be brought up to a total of 1,200 officers, non-commissioned officers and men.

The Naval School is at Zeebrugge, commanded by Captain Couteau.

Materiel is urgently needed, particularly mine-sweeping apparatus for tugs making 5-6 miles an hour, torpedoes, mines (Elaac), coastal motor boats. Officers have called upon the Naval Attaché making inquiries as to the possibilities of purchasing any or all of the materiel in question in the United States.

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OSD letter, May, 1, 1973

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From L Date Nov. 2, 1939 Serial No. 44 File No. 103
(Commence new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. Index)
Source of information Vice-Admiral F.
Subject Belgium-Holland
(Station reported on) (Index title as per index) (Subtitle)
Reference ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

REMARKS.—(The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personnel, or political names, and the gist of the report.)

Resumé: The question of Dutch-Belgian military co-operation is at present definitely rejected by Holland.

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OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

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Tech. Dir.		C. to C.		U. S.		Com. Sec. Fin.		Com. Sec. Fin.		C. to C. Ards		Com. S. & S.		Com. Adm.		Admiral of		Com. Dir.		W. F.		Com. R. T.		State		Com. Mar.		Return to		Name		Fin.							

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From: L

Serial No. 44

Date: November 2, 1939.

THE QUESTION OF DUTCH-BELGIAN MILITARY CO-OPERATION.

One fact stands out clearly, in the question as to Dutch-Belgian military collaboration, namely Holland's desire, under all circumstances to observe a policy of entire independence. This, in the eyes of the Dutch, excludes all chances of any present collaboration. Any attempt by the Belgians to make Holland swerve from the fundamental principle of Dutch independence is bound to fail. Holland has decided not to enter into a Military alliance with any other nation, whichever it may be. The Government has made this statement time and again and 99 percent of the Dutch population back it.

From a theoretical point of view, various contingencies are evidently possible. These are however merely reviewed grudgingly by the Dutch. Holland is very much alive to the fact that she may be invaded by one of the Great Powers. Then, and first then will the Netherlands decide if they are to call for the Military help of another country. Even the idea of consultations with the General Staff of a neighbor country is rejected, for, if Holland should enter upon them she would irritate the country, which would have the greatest reason to believe the consultations were held in order to act jointly against it. The latter, feeling itself menaced might decide upon measures which might just draw Holland into the conflict which she was trying to keep out of. Military consultations with a neighbor would act as a red rag to a bull.

Not a day passes without the press insisting upon the country's strict neutrality.

As for the attitude in official circles, it is definitely against any Military conversations between the two nations. The Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed it recently when he stated: "The attitude of the Netherlands Government in the question of Dutch-Belgian ^{military} co-operation,

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OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

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was expressed in the preliminary report of the Committee named by the Second Chamber. It is hoped that the sentiments of the two countries toward each other may contribute towards binding the present ties even closer together, each one, however, following its own policy of independence.

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From L Date Nov. 15, 1939 Serial No. 49 File No. _____
(Communicate new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. Index)
Source of information _____
Subject Holland and Belgium
(Nation reported on) (Index title as per index sheet) (Subtitle)
Reference _____

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Resumé: The report contains the various arguments advanced for and against the probability of a speedy invasion of German forces across the Eastern Belgian & Dutch frontiers.

DEF 1939



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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (B)

OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

By SLR Date MAY 21 1973

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From: L

Serial No. 49

Date: November 15, 1939.

THE PROS AND CONS OF A GERMAN INVASION OF
THE LOW COUNTRIES.

The possibility of a German invasion has been uppermost in the minds of everyone in Belgium during the last two weeks. There have been two opinions, one has held that a German invasion was certain to come, it was merely a question of time and all signs pointed to German troops shortly pouring across the Dutch frontier with the inevitable subsequent invasion of Belgium, either by the Germans or by the French-British troops. Others felt such fear was unwarranted. Colonel Requette, who is considered one of the best military critics in the country and who stated a month ago that it was his belief that a German invasion was inevitable, has now, despite the signs of invasion having greatly increased, entirely reversed himself, and stated: "I do not believe in an invasion."

To take the first point of view. It is emphasized that German aggression has always, as in the present instance, been preceded by an intense newspaper and radio campaign, against the victim, and a heavy concentration of troops and war materiel on its frontiers. Beyond this German planes have been constantly violating Belgian neutrality by flying across Southern Belgium. The German press has further emphasized that Holland and Belgium, have violated their neutrality by playing into British hands in submitting to the blockade and exporting to Germany constantly diminishing quantities of what she needs and used to receive.

The Low Countries' attitude in the matter, though not to Germany's liking, has in reality been irreproachable. Extremists feel that what Germany expects as the price of remaining the other side of the frontier, is obedience if not servitude.

If Holland should, for instance, refuse to have her vessels call

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By SLR

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at the Downs or Kirkwall, Great Britain would probably seize them on the high seas, and bring them in, just the same, for examination. What then? Germany would claim that she would have to defend poor, little, threatened Holland as she evidently was unable to do so herself.

It is further claimed that even if German soldiers do not cross the frontiers, Germany is attempting a war of nerves on Holland and Belgium, this being augmented by the press, the radio, the movement of troops and by thinly veiled threats. It is asked: Does Germany intend to force upon Holland and Belgium a counter-blockade policy? She certainly has succeeded in giving little Belgium "the jitters". The question on all lips is: "When are the Germans coming?" "How many days of peace remain?" In the present lull, before the expected storm, it seemed to many that a campaign of intimidation may have been initiated in place of one of aggression - and that increased pressure is being exerted in order to force upon Holland and Belgium a renunciation of a portion of their trade with England. It is further felt that Germany is hesitating, uncertain which way to turn and what means might prove most useful to the purpose she has in view. Hitler cannot wait indefinitely in impressing popular opinion in Germany. Naturally, even if Belgians are strictly neutral in their attitude, their sympathies cannot be belied, nor can the past be forgotten. In international wrongs, bygones can seldom be bygones. Belgians feel that.

To turn to the second point of view - the one that cannot believe in a movement of German troops into the Low Countries.

Belgium has today called some 600,000 men to the colors, so-called "general mobilization" would merely mean 100,000 additional men, of inferior fighting qualities. Holland has some 400,000 men under arms. There would thus be added a million soldiers to the Allied armies already facing the Germans. Neither country has, it is true, any aviation worth

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 5(E) and 5(D) or (E)

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mentioning, but the little Belgian army is well trained and equipped, her fortifications and defences, though limited, are not to be despised, and the Dutch put considerable faith in their inundating the portions of the country to be crossed by the Germans, claiming it would be next to impossible for tanks, heavy materiel and guns to reach their block houses and defensive lines.

The Germans must reflect when they consider all these factors, as also, the determination of both countries to defend themselves to the bitter end. Germany likewise realizes that if Holland is on the side of England that Dutch harbors would be most convenient for English men-of-war wishing to reach German naval bases.

Germany can attack the Allies by four routes; through the Low Countries, through Lorraine, through the Bale district or in either a military or economic manner, through Southeastern Europe. The Low Countries do not seem the most likely.

A Belgian Government economic mission is in these days in Berlin studying with German experts the present trade difficulties. Germany naturally hopes the conversations may result in Brussels agreeing to maintain the pre-war rate of exports and imports to and from Germany.

This is of course impossible, as many of the previous exports were re-exports of foreign goods, which no longer arrive, or manufactured articles from rawstuffs, now lacking. It is urged that Germany would scarcely be wasting her time, even as "a bluff" on such negotiations, if she was about to march into the country.

It is further believed that various rumors of invasion are partly due to foreign press and radio messages, some of which has wilfully been spread by the Allies.

The utmost pressure has been brought to bear by the French and British military representatives, and particularly the latter, upon the Belgian war office in order to make this see the reason and necessity

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By SLE

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of studying jointly and secretly where in case of war, help might first be needed, as well as by what arms, and where. The German representatives are aware of this as well as Belgium's refusal even to listen to any such siren voices, luring it from its strict neutrality.

Surprise is a great essential of war. This element is now lacking in an attack on Holland and Belgium, where every possible precautionary measure has been taken. Again, it is urged would not Germany strike, where least expected, in other words, not on Belgian or Dutch frontiers?

Say Germany was able to cross a section of the flooded Dutch territories and to rapidly cross northern Brabant in the direction of the Zeeland Islands which would be of the greatest value as a submarine base. It would, however, seem impossible for Germany to take these, if one takes into account the Dutch naval forces and their immediate strengthening by British men-of-war. Looking at it from the most favorable German point-of-view, namely that the Germans would take the western and eastern islands, with the mouths of the rivers remaining in the hands of the defenders. If this were the case, the exits from the bases would be in the hands of the English and instead of bases, they would merely prove traps.

During the world-war the British Admiralty considered several times seizing Borkum, the German island nearest to Holland. She gave up the idea as too risky. A German invasion of Holland would give England the opportunity and means of permitting her to attack, with good chances of success German North-Sea ports, the enemy fleet and the bases where German submarines are being built. From the Frisian Islands to Wilhelmshafen is only 94 miles, while from Scapa Flow it is 625. The mouth of the Elbe is only 148 miles from the Zuider Sea.

Taking these factors into consideration, experts believe that the first consequence of a German invasion of Holland would be the tight blockade of German ports.

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This would prove of great advantage to the Allied powers. If Holland and Belgium are attacked, Germany's western frontiers open to attack will be more than doubled, running right up to the North Sea, the Northern portion without any Siegfried line of fortification.

And last of all, though Germany might to a certain extent profit by such foodstuffs and rawstuffs as she might seize in Holland and Belgium, the present, appreciable commerce between the countries would all be destroyed and the western blockade would become hermetic.

Such are the thoughts of those who do not believe in a speedy invasion of the Low Countries.

Both sides believe that while the period of alarm is not over, the situation is clearer and the passing of every day of peace, makes it less liable that Holland and Belgium will be invaded this winter.

The British Ambassador to Belgium, Sir Robert Clive, in discussing the subject stated:

"I received absolutely reliable information that the German army intended to invade Holland and Belgium on the 12th of November. The idea was abandoned in the last moment, owing to the German General Staff insisting that the inundations in Holland and the previously unsuspected difficulties in crossing the Albert Canal territory made the task too costly. I felt so certain of what was about to happen that I had told my wife to have our bags packed."

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OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

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NAVAL OPERATIONS, NAVY DEPARTMENT

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A-1-9, 13102-C

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From L Date Nov. 24, 1929 Serial No. 53 File No. 1000
(Commence new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. Index)

Source of information

Subject Belgium
(Nation reported on) (Index title as per index sheet) (Subtitle)

Reference

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MILITARY AVIATION.



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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (F)

OSD letter, May. 3, 1972

By SLR Date MAY 21 1973

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From: L Serial No. 53 Date: November 24, 1939.
File No. 1001-1005.

MILITARY AVIATION

Owing to the almost primitive state of Military Aviation in Belgium the subject has been treated under the one heading of "Military Aviation" rather than under various subtitles and their subheads, material for most of which is non-existent.

While a certain number of commercial planes have been built in Belgium and French and British licenses have been purchased for certain types of planes, even these require engines imported from abroad.

The only coordination between the Civil and Military Services is the common use of different sides of the largest air field, that at Haren, on the outskirts of Brussels.

The present war has already shown constant violation of Belgian neutrality by flights inside Belgian frontiers of German and British planes, the former purposely, the latter erroneously. Belgium has shown itself unable to hinder same either by its anti-aircraft batteries or through the efforts of its pursuit planes. There is no independent air-ministry. The only air service (outside the commercial ones) being that of the Army.

The morale of the Service is excellent, the young men being really a pick of the nation's most adventurous and spirited youth. It is therefore pitiable that their materiel is so poor that it would prove well-nigh suicidal to attempt combat in same against planes and pilots similar to those now operating in Messerschmidts and daily expected across the Eastern frontiers.

Belgium possesses no airships, dirigibles or balloons.

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OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

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The Belgian Military Air Force.

The Belgian Military Air Force is under the command of Lieut. General Duvivier who is Commanding Officer of the "Défense Aérienne du Territoire" (DAT) which consists of:

1. The whole Air Force and Military Air Services.
2. The whole organization of Ground Air Defense (Artillery, Projectors, Sound Locators, Observers, etc.).
 - A. Headquarters: DAT, Brussels.
 - B. Department of Ministry of National Defense, "Service de l'Aéronautique."
 - C. Aéronautique Militaire.
 - (a) Headquarters, Brussels, Major General Hiernaux, commanding.
 - (b) 1er Régiment d'Aéronautique.

This consists of:

Headquarters - Awans-Bierset (Liège).

Three Army Corps Cooperation Groups at Awans-Bierset and Tirlemont, consisting of observation and reconnaissance planes.

- (c) 2ème Régiment d'Aéronautique.

This consists of:

- (1) Headquarters: Nivelles.
- (2) Three Fighting Groups at Nivelles and Schoffen.

- (d) 3ème Régiment d'Aéronautique.

This consists of:

Headquarters: Evere.

One Army Cooperation Group at Evere.

One night group at Evere.

One bombing squadron.

One balloon Company, Zellick.

- D. School of Military Aeronautics: Evere.

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OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By: ~~SECRET~~

Date: MAY 21 1973

E. Depot: Courtrai.

F. School of Flying Training: Wevelghem.

Officer Commanding: Colonel Massaux.

Consisting of:

- (a) One primary training squadron.
- (b) Two advanced training squadrons.
- (c) One depot squadron.

Military Aeronautical Establishments: Evere.

- (a) Administration.
- (b) One Construction Group.
- (c) One Technical Investigation & Instruction Group.
- (d) One Supply Group.
- (e) One Depot Squadron.

G. Works Inspection Department: Evere.

Air Force Medical Service: Brussels.

Aerodromes in Peace Time.

Brussels (Evere)
Tirlemont
Diest
Nivelles
Awans-Bierset
Wevelghem

In addition to these there are various subterranean war-time hangars.

Aeronautical Supply - Brussels.

Aeronautical Supply, which is under the supreme control of the Commander of the DAT is under the immediate command of a senior officer.

The officer commanding the Air defense of the territory, is responsible for all the ground defenses against air attack, and the whole organization of the Military Aviation.

The Commandant of the Aéronautique Militaire is under the direct orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the DAT, and his duties are similar to those of a general commanding a division of Infantry.

The number of the personnel in the Air Force is about 4,800 of which some 570 are flying personnel.

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Total number of planes of all kinds: 450

First line planes: 170

Types of Military Aircraft.

1. Fighting - Fairey "Firefly" (480 h.p. Rolls-Royce Engines)
Fairey "Fox" (860 h.p. Hispano-Suiza engine)
for observation and pursuit.
Gloster "Gladiator" (825 h.p. British Mercury IX
engine) for pursuit.
Hurricane (Rolls-Royce "Merlin" engine)
2. Army Cooperation & Reconnaissance -
Fairey "Fox" (480 h.p. Rolls-Royce engine or
(860 h.p. Hispano-Suiza engine)
Bimotor, used both for light
bombing and pursuit.
Bréguet 691
Renard 31
3. Bombing - Fairey "Battle" Rolls-Royce "Merlin" engine.
Avro 504 N (200 h.p. Lynx engine) and
Avro 626
4. Training & Communication -
Morane (230 h.p. Salmson or 200 h.p.
Lynx engine)
Stampe & Vertongen
R.S. V 26 (180 h.p. Hispano or 200 h.p.
Lynx engine)

With the exception of the Fairey Battle, Hurricane and Gloster planes, Belgium in 1939 merely had old-model planes.

This situation was known to the Government. In 1938 a credit of 600 million francs was voted in order to organize air defence. About 200 millions of it were intended for the aviation service which was to be modernized and the fighting planes increased by purchasing 20 British Hurricane planes and the license to build sixty more in Belgium. Up to now about twenty of them have been delivered. In addition a group of 31 fighting planes was planned, for light bombing and reconnaissance work. For this purpose the Belgian government purchased the license of the Bréguet 691.

Both new buildings and deliveries have been more or less delayed. The English have finally agreed to deliver the Merlin motors for the Hurricanes.

Belgium has turned either to France or England for its military planes. These countries being now too busy with their own requirements Belgium sent an aviation mission to the United States to attempt to purchase 100 badly needed light-bombing and fighting planes.

The Belgian D.T.C.A. (Défense Terrestre Contre Aviation)
The Anti-Aircraft Defense.

The Belgian D.T.C.A. is organized as a watch-service and two regiments.

Both regiments comprise the mobile materiel intended to accompany the Armies.

Up to the beginning of 1939 the D.T.C.A. consisted of a dozen groups of "75's" or guns of higher calibre, which could be subdivided as follows:

- (a) old, modernized materiel
- (b) new materiel, 75's from Bourges
- (c) a certain number of batteries of Bofors 40's

Its watch and listening services had modern materiel.

Of the 600 million francs voted in 1938 by the Government for the Air Service, the D.T.C.A. received about 350 millions and the passive defence some fifty.

After considerable hesitation it was decided to purchase from the British three groups of 3" (75's) Vickers and continue manufacturing in Belgium Bourges 75's.

235 heavy anti-aircraft machine guns were likewise purchased. Up to now the British have merely delivered four Vickers and have agreed to sell eight more. The 75's are being manufactured.

The fifty million francs for passive resistance has been employed to build a certain number of shelters, purchase half a million gas masks and in organizing an air-protection militia, called the Territorial Air Guard.

Pay: The pay of officers in the Aviation Service is the same as that of officers of equal rank in the other branches of the Army, with an addition of 800 francs a month for officers and 500 francs for N.C.O.'s.

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OSD letter, May, 1, 1972

SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

The Military Aviation Service acquires its personnel in two ways. Either from the graduates of the Royal Military Academy at Brussels or from the Antwerp School of Aviation. A certain number of the cadets in the Military Academy elect Aviation upon entering and with those intending to become engineers or artillery men take a three years course instead of the two years of the infantry and cavalry, specializing in aeronautics the last year. Upon graduation, if successful in their 12 months flying training they receive their pilot's certificate and enter the flying corps as lieutenants, junior grade.

Officers for the aviation services are recruited from:

- 1) Officers belonging to other arms.
- 2) Graduates of the Military Academy.
- 3) Non-commissioned aviation officers who have passed the examination of aviation lieutenants, junior grade.

The Antwerp flying school trains former civilians who after successfully acquiring their license can only become non-commissioned officers.

Training Outside the Military School.

Young men wishing training in order to qualify as an N.C.O. in the Army Air Service can obtain this by applying at the Antwerp School of Aviation. Those accepted after the preliminary oral, written and physical examinations take a twelve months course. Those accepted at the end of this course, must then serve for at least 12 additional months as a member of the navigation personnel of one of the Military Air Groups.

All candidates must be between 18 and 24 years old.

Corporals pay 7,200 francs per year plus 2,880 francs equals \$336

Sergeants pay 8,400 " " " " 2,880 " " \$375

Those interested in developing interest in aviation in Belgium are at present heartily discouraged at the obstacles placed in their way. The commanding officers in the Aviation Service, General Duvivier and Hiernaux are believed to lack initiative and the moral courage to insist upon what they believe best for the development of the service

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when meeting opposing views from their superiors. Some 500 boys presented themselves this year for training at the Antwerp School of aviation. Of these only half were selected and when the course of training was over merely 20 were admitted to the Army where none of them can ever, however brilliant their qualities as an aviator, reach higher than an adjutant's rank. A second consideration is that Belgians, as a whole, are not air-minded. For the year 1940, notice has been issued that 40 pilots may be admitted.

The principal reason for the Army's not taking more pilots is that planes are lacking or there are planes without engines which cannot now be obtained from England.

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GSD letter, May, 8, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

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NAVAL OPERATIONS, NAVY DEPARTMENT

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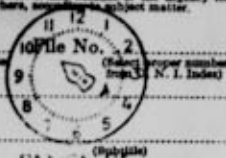
From L Date Jan. 16, 1949 Serial No. 16

Source of information

Subject Belgium

(Nation reported on)

Reference



NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

RECAP.—(The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personal, or political names, and the gist of the report.)

Résumé: The crisis was brought about by false information telephoned from Berlin and prepared by Hitler so as to ascertain Belgium's first moves in case of a German invasion.

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Ex. 6. 11852, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) of (R)
OSD letter, May, 3, 1972

By SEL

Date MAY 21 1973

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From: L

Serial No. 16

Date: January 16, 1940.

THE RECENT BELGIAN CRISIS

Belgium is once more experiencing a fear similar to that which seized her on the 8th of last November. Though general mobilization has not as yet been called, the three additional classes ("D" phase of evacuation), which have just been called to the colors, are the last ones prior to such mobilization. A German aeroplane was forced down by engine trouble in the north-eastern part of the country and the officer on board was found to possess papers reported to instruct him to photograph various vital eastern lines of Belgian defence. In addition to this, numbers of German planes have during the past week been sighted, presumably occupied in similar tasks.

Larger bodies of German troops have been moved from various points along the Dutch-German frontier to vulnerable points along the Belgian-German frontier.

The inhabitants of various sections along the eastern frontier have received instructions to evacuate their homes, and all leaves of absence have been suspended in the Army.

It has long always been planned, in case of critical necessity, to move a large part of the machinery in the Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre at Herstal as also in some of the Liège arms and ammunition factories (and notably the Cockerill works) to similar factories in Bruges and Ghent, where the requisite concrete foundations for same are ready at once to receive the machinery. It is stated that this is now being undertaken.

The British and French Ambassadors were called by the Foreign Office in the middle of the night of the 13-14th, and informed by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Spaak, that the Belgian Ambassador in Berlin had telephoned him that the German Army would move on Belgium on the 14th.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 3(D) of 1973

OSD letter, May, 1, 1973

By SLP

Date MAY 10 1973

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The Belgian Constitution provides that the King will in times of war take over the active command of the Army from the Minister of National Defence. This was done by His Majesty at 4 p.m. on the 14th, and all defences along the Belgian roads and fields, blocking the way for any entrance of French troops were removed.

It is to be noted that during all this excitement, the German Embassy in Brussels took none of the steps for the departure of its personnel that were taken by it during the critical days of last November.

Various well-informed Intelligence Officers here have come to the conclusion that Germany neither intended to invade Holland in November or Belgium this week.

Following are the conclusions to which they have come: The Viscount Davignon called upon M. von Ribbentrop in order not only to complain as to the German aeroplane that had been flying over north-eastern Belgium, and had been forced to land there, but remonstrated vigorously at the contents of the papers that had been taken by the Belgian authorities from the observer. The Viscount Davignon was received most discourteously, informed the papers had probably been trumped up by the Belgians so as to pick a quarrel, which they certainly would find Germany not only ready to give them, but the following morning, if so desired. After various acrimonious statements on both sides, the Belgian Ambassador left with the impression that Germany was preparing to attack the next day and so telephoned the Foreign Office in Brussels without qualifying his statement.

This was exactly what Germany desired, as anxious then as in November to put up a trial balloon in order to ascertain the Belgian reaction. In November, Hitler had acquired the information that in case of a German attack/Holland, Belgium would come to her rescue, now he acquired the information that in case of a German attack on

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By SLR

Date MAY 21 1973

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Belgium, Holland would not come to her aid, but England and France would immediately be appealed to, and the road to France cleared in order to allow Allied forces to enter immediately.

Hitler attained his object.

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (2)
OSD letter, May, 4, 1972

By SLR

Date MAY 21 1972