

Description: This is a report by Johnny Bevan to COSSAC (which later became known as SHAEF) outlining his "First Thoughts" on a needed cover plan for Operation Overlord. It is the first documentation of many deception plan drafts with many names.

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File 381: Fortitude Volume I, Operation Fortitude [1261-1283]

(IKEducation scans #125-128)

Document 4

Road and rail communications in France, Germany and the Low Countries permit of the rapid movement of land forces within these countries. This is the most important factor in considering how we would like the enemy to dispose his forces to suit OVERLORD. Though we would obviously like to see the enemy weak in the OVERLORD area itself, this by itself would not be of great benefit if considerable enemy reserves were centrally disposed in France and could quickly reinforce the area. Therefore the maximum assistance which we could render to OVERLORD would be to induce the enemy to weaken his forces in France and in countries adjacent thereto. In order, however, to achieve this, we will have to persuade him that we have no intention of carrying out cross-Channel operations in 1944.

3. Factors for and against our being able to persuade the enemy to this effect.

The situation on the Russian front and in the Mediterranean in 1944 cannot at present be foreseen, but they will be vital factors affecting the chances of our being able to persuade the enemy to maintain only weak forces in France and the Low Countries. Assuming that the Russian Army is still fighting, the Germans will be obliged to maintain the bulk of their forces on that front. In the Mediterranean area Italy may or may not have collapsed and our possible courses of action are set forth in J.P.(45)221(S), Revised Draft of the 7th July, 1943. The Germans will anticipate threats by us to the Balkans, Southern France and the Iberian Peninsula. Assuming, therefore, that the Germans have been obliged to reinforce the Balkans and Southern France, the number of enemy forces available for Northern France and the Low Countries will be comparatively small. However, the following factors must, to some extent, render it impossible for us in the final stages to induce the enemy to maintain weak forces in Northern France and Belgium.

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TO CONFIDENTIAL
By authority of CALA C
By J. P. PAISLEY
Major, A.C.
Date #2 Aug 1944

Deception Policy in Relation to Overlord
First Thoughts

MOST SECRET

Copy No. 1

DECEPTION POLICY IN RELATION TO OVERLORD

FIRST THOUGHTS

PRESENT SITUATION

1. In Deception Policy 1943 - Germany and Italy² the main object of our deception policy was stated as follows:-

"Our broad strategic deception policy should aim at threatening the Germans and Italians on all fronts (wherever such threats can be plausibly sustained) with the object of containing enemy forces and discouraging their transfer to the Russian Front."

To give effect to this policy in North Western Europe, operation COCKADE has been designed to induce the enemy to contain his forces in Northern and Western France and Norway this summer and autumn.

OVERLORD

2. Primary Requirements.

Road and rail communications in France, Germany and the Low Countries permit of the rapid movement of land forces within these countries. This is the most important factor in considering how we would like the enemy to dispose his forces to suit OVERLORD. Though we would obviously like to see the enemy weak in the OVERLORD area itself, this by itself would not be of great benefit if considerable enemy reserves were centrally disposed in France and could quickly reinforce the area. Therefore the maximum assistance which we could render to OVERLORD would be to induce the enemy to weaken his forces in France and in countries adjacent thereto. In order, however, to achieve this, we will have to persuade him that we have no intention of carrying out cross-Channel operations in 1944.

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BY J. P. PAISLEY
Major, A.C.
Date, 2 AUG 1944

(a) The extent and timing of the enemy's knowledge of the preparations for OVERLORD

The transfer of Allied forces from North Africa to the U.K. and increased BOLERO movements may, to some extent, become known to the enemy and thus increase his anxiety regarding the possibilities of invasion (though not necessarily of Northern France). Moreover, the time is bound to come when it will be impossible to conceal the large concentrations of invasion craft on the south coast of England, which will constitute a direct threat to Northern France. We will refer to the moment when the Germans observe these preparations as D - X weeks.

- (b) One of the main considerations of RATTLE was that heavy air, and possibly naval, bombardment of the strong enemy coastal defences would be necessary for a considerable period before D. day. Although these bombardments would be directed against a wide frontage and extend beyond our real objectives, they would, however, provide the enemy with a valuable indication of our general intentions.

It is therefore obvious that we shall not be able to persuade the enemy right up to D. day that we have no intention of carrying out cross-Channel operations. Assuming, however, that we are able to conceal for the most part the preliminary preparations for OVERLORD, then we might be able to induce the enemy to maintain only comparatively weak forces in Northern France and Belgium up to D - X weeks. We will refer to this as STAGE 1. Thereafter (STAGE 2) the concentration of invasion craft and preliminary tactical air activities will indicate cross-Channel operations and give the enemy X weeks in which to reinforce.

4. Conclusions with regard to the objects of Deception Policy

STAGE 1.

- (a) To induce the enemy to weaken his forces in Northern France and in areas (excluding Southern France) where they would be available as immediate reserves for Northern France.
- (b) To contain the maximum enemy forces in those theatres from which their transfer to Northern France would occupy more than X weeks.
- (c) To retard, as far as possible, the improvement of enemy defences in the OVERLORD area.

STAGE 2.

- (a) To induce the enemy to dispose his forces in Northern France and Belgium in such a manner as will cause the least interference with OVERLORD.

SUGGESTED PLANS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTS IN STAGE 1.

5. Assumptions

- (a) Russia is still fighting and the Germans are forced to maintain the bulk of their forces on that front.
- (b) Italy may, or may not have, collapsed but the Germans have been obliged to maintain strong forces in the Balkans and Southern France.
- (c) Our strategic bomber offensive against Germany is continuing.

6. Considerations

- (a) The collapse of Italy and the fact that our forces in the Mediterranean, both factual and notional, will be considerable, will provide an automatic threat to the Balkans and Southern France.
- (b) Assuming VAULT or LIFE BELT take place, and following on the course of our operations in the Italian islands and Italy, the enemy may be increasingly nervous of our intentions in the Iberian Peninsula and may be induced to maintain forces on the Spanish frontier.
- (c) Assuming the enemy obtain information regarding BOLERO and the transfer of Allied troops from North Africa to the U.K. we must provide him with plausible reasons for these movements.

7. Suggested Plan or Story.

- (a) The Allies reluctantly decided to cancel operations SPARLEY and WADHAM in September 1943 for the following reasons:-
 - (i) Invasion craft promised by the Americans did not arrive.
 - (ii) Enemy coastal defences were too strong to justify any risk.
 - (iii) The Allies felt that they could subdue Germany by bombing alone.
- (b) The Allies later agreed only to carry out landing operations against those areas where least resistance might be expected, and gave up the idea of tackling Northern France. Such operations in the Mediterranean will consist of the invasion of the Balkans from Italy across the Adriatic and also via the Dodecanese and Crete in May 1944. A strong diversion as cover for these operations will be undertaken against Southern France.
- (c) In Western Europe the Allies intend to invade from the U.K. the Bilbao-Bayonne area where little resistance is expected.
- (d) They will also attempt the invasion of Norway and Denmark.

Reserves will be available to reinforce the success of either or all the operations in (b), (c) and (d).

SUGGESTED PLAN TO ACHIEVE OBJECTS OF STAGE 2.

8. Assumptions

- (a) Deception Plans to give effect to the story in para. 7(b), (c) and (d) will be continued up to OVERLORD D day.
- (b) The Germans on D - X weeks will appreciate from the concentrations of landing craft and tactical air activities that we intend to invade Northern France or Belgium, but will not know details of strength or timing.

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9. Considerations

- (a) Indications that a cross-Channel assault had only limited objectives and would take place later than was in fact the case, might tend to retard and lessen the scale of reinforcement.
- (b) While the re-introduction of STARKEY and WADHAM at this stage might induce the enemy to give first priority to the defence of the Pas de Calais and Brest Peninsula, it might also tend to draw German reserves to a central position in the Paris-Rennes area, where they would interfere with OVERLORD. On the other hand, the re-introduction of STARKEY alone would be more plausible and would tend to contain German forces in an area where they would not immediately interfere with OVERLORD.

10. Suggested Plan or Story

Information was received by the Allies on D - X weeks to the effect that the deterioration of German morale and the disintegration of the Germany Army had reached a stage which justified an attempt to carry out cross-Channel operations. The risks involved are so great that they have decided to attack the Pas de Calais where they will obtain the maximum benefit from their air superiority and have the shortest sea crossing. In view, however, of the limited forces trained in amphibious operations, the attack itself is only intended to form a bridgehead which it is hoped to extend in the autumn of 1944. The assault has been timed for the 1st June, 1944.

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13th July, 1943.

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