

## FRENCH

*Naval*

Aircraft Carrier Task Group  
Support Forces Group, including 1 Battle-  
ship, Cruisers, Destroyers and Frigates.  
Minesweeping Group

*Land*

10 Division Aeroportée  
7 Division Mécanique Rapide

*Air*

Fighter/Ground Attack Force, shore-  
based and carrier-borne  
Reconnaissance and Transport Forces

The following Commanders were nominated  
to draw up plans and to assume command in  
the event of operations:—

Vice-Admiral D'Escadre P. BARJOT—  
Deputy Commander-in-Chief

Vice-Admiral M. RICHMOND, CB., DSO.,  
OBE.—Naval Task Force Commander

(Succeeded by Vice-Admiral D. F.  
DURNFORD-SLATER, CB., on 24th October,  
1956).

Contre-Amiral P. LANCELOT—Deputy  
Naval Task Force Commander

Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh STOCKWELL,  
KCB., KBE., DSO.—Land Task Force  
Commander

General de Division A. BEAUFRE—Deputy  
Land Task Force Commander

Air Marshal D. H. F. BARNETT, CB.,  
CBE., DFC.—Commander Air Task Force

General de Brigade R. BROHON—Deputy  
Commander Air Task Force

I formed a small Allied Headquarters in  
LONDON and similarly Task Force Com-  
manders built up their Headquarters which  
were also located in LONDON.

Owing to the Forces concerned being located  
as far apart as the UNITED KINGDOM, MALTA,  
CYPRUS, FRANCE and ALGIERS, and my Head-  
quarters being split between LONDON and  
CYPRUS a great deal of travelling was required  
by all Commanders.

Throughout August and September plans  
were made to take action in EGYPT if some  
crisis should occur to demand our interven-  
tion. These plans were necessarily flexible as  
it could not be foreseen precisely in what  
circumstances it might be necessary to inter-  
vene.

Whatever action was required by us would  
however clearly require airborne and sea  
assault operations and the British and French  
Airborne Forces and Commandos were pre-  
pared and trained for such action.

The main limitations to our operations were  
caused by the following factors:—

1. Lack of harbours or anchorages or  
landing craft "hards" in CYPRUS: thereby  
necessitating any seaborne assault being  
launched from MALTA, which was over 900  
miles away.

2. Shortage of airfields in CYPRUS. At  
the outset of the planning only NICOSIA was  
in operation and that was under reconstruc-  
tion and not working to full capacity.

AKROTIRI and TYMBOU were developed  
rapidly during September and October.

3. Limited resources of landing craft and  
air transport. We had only a total of 18  
LST's and 11 LCT's. We had an air lift  
for two battalions but very limited air supply  
resources.

## TWO

Early in October I was instructed to recast  
our current plans so that action could if neces-  
sary be taken any time during the winter  
months.

This had wide repercussions.

Men could not be kept for long stretches  
at a number of hours notice to move, and  
in view of the prolonged period that the call  
up had lasted it was especially desirable to  
send reservists, who had been called up at very  
short notice, on leave.

Certain vehicle ships had to be unloaded as  
some of the vehicles had been loaded for as  
much as three months and batteries and equip-  
ment were deteriorating so much that they  
were unlikely to be able to start on landing.  
In addition there was a danger from petrol  
fumes in the loaded ships.

A stockpile of supplies was built up in  
CYPRUS but even so owing to the limited port  
resources the majority of ships for the follow-  
up and supply for the assault troops must come  
from the UNITED KINGDOM. This demanded  
ships which it was quite impossible economic-  
ally to hold loaded for a long stretch being  
requisitioned and sailed to the EASTERN  
MEDITERRANEAN.

Neutral shipping in and approaching the  
SUEZ CANAL would have to be diverted before  
any operations could take place.

Up-to-date intelligence was required of  
Egyptian preparations and land and air dis-  
positions. This would necessitate photographic  
reconnaissance over the area of assault and the  
airfields.

Action would be necessary and was planned  
to evacuate the British contractors working in  
the SUEZ BASE.

Weather would be deteriorating and empha-  
sised the time required to sail the assault land-  
ing craft from the nearest harbour where they  
could be held, at MALTA, to PORT SAID.

The effect of these factors was to make a  
requirement for a longer period between the  
executive order to start operations being  
received and the date it was possible to land  
on the mainland of EGYPT.

The period of notice which had been  
accepted for the start of operations was 10  
days, although in the event we got little more  
than 10 hours.

*Exercises*

One of our greatest problems was to train  
and exercise the troops and Headquarters in-  
volved for the task which lay ahead, owing  
to the immense dispersion of the forces  
involved.

The forces in the UNITED KINGDOM were  
concentrated on SALISBURY PLAIN and at their  
home stations and certain useful unit training  
was carried out.