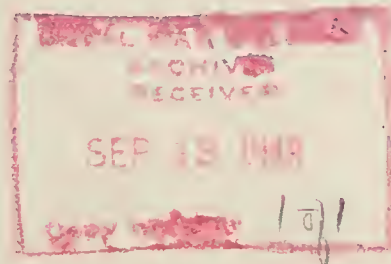


4477
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

WAR DIARY

German Naval Staff Operations Division



PART A VOLUME 33

DECLASSIFIED IN DOD MEMO OF 3 MAY 1972, SUBJ:
DECLASSIFICATION OF WWII RECORDS

MAY 1942.

WAR DIARY OF THE GERMAN NAVAL STAFF

(Operations Division)

PART A

May 1942

Chief, Naval Staff:	Grand Admiral Raeder, Dr. h. c.
Chief of Staff, Naval Staff:	Admiral Fricke
Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff:	Captain Wagner

Volume 33

begun:	1 May 1942
closed:	31 May 1942

DECLASSIFIED BY THE DOD ON 3 MAY 1972, SLLJ;
DECLASSIFICATION OF ALL RECORDS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

Washington, D. C.

UNCLASSIFIED

Foreword

1. The Office of Naval Intelligence has undertaken to translate important parts of the War Diary of the German Naval Staff. The present volume, entitled War Diary of the German Naval Staff, Operations Division, Part A, Volume 33 is the eighth one of the series to appear. Other volumes will follow shortly.
2. The War Diaries, Part A, are important because they contain a day by day summary of the information available to the German Naval Staff and the decisions reached on the basis thereof. Together with the Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1939-1945, which have been published by this office, the War Diaries should provide valuable material for the study of naval problems arising from total war. The War Diary, Part A, is also a useful index to the German Naval Archives of World War II; references may be found in the micro-film library of Naval Records and Library.
3. Due to the cost of publication, only a limited number of copies could be made; it is therefore desirable that the copies which have been distributed are made available to other offices which may be interested.

Washington, D. C.
1948

1 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

According to a diplomatic source Laval has informed the German Government of his intention to suggest to the Japanese Ambassador that Japan occupy Madagascar, which is imperiled as a result of the severance of diplomatic relations between the Union of South Africa and France. He is said to set great value on keeping on good terms with Japan. (For details see Political Review No. 101.)

Laval's utterances conflict with the tenor of a discussion between him and the American Ambassador Leahy, during which Laval is said to have declared his intention to maintain the relations between France and the U.S.. On this occasion Laval evidently declared that he is aiming at a policy of agreement with Germany within a unified Europe, because permanent peace in Europe is impossible without such an understanding. France is conscious of the ties which traditionally bind her to the U.S. but she will fight if her interests are violated and the United States should attack Dakar or Casablanca. Ambassador Leahy commented that the U.S. could not permit France to give aid to Germany.

Undoubtedly the American Government would consider the occupation of Madagascar by Japan as a highly unfriendly act that would have grave repercussions. It must, therefore, be anticipated that the enemy powers will shortly take the initiative to prevent the occupation of Madagascar by Japan. It appears possible that Laval's statement to Leahy was dictated by the desire of forestalling such a move on Madagascar by the Anglo-American powers.

Great Britain:

Violent attacks on Lord Beaverbrook in the House of Commons by the Conservatives for the speech made in the U.S. about a second front in Europe. (For further details see Political Review No. 101.)

The British press discusses at great length the German reinforcements to Norway and points to Trondheim as the logical point for the establishment of a second front. The strategic importance of Trondheim is termed tremendous. The attacks made by the R.A.F. are supposedly only the beginning of the operations, and "Commando" raids are to follow.

U.S.A.:

Admiral Stark, Commander in Chief of the American Naval Forces in European waters has reached England by plane. According to press reports Stark will set up regular Naval Headquarters in Great Britain similar to those established in World War I.

Italy:

Concerning alleged disorders in Italy see Political Review No. 101.

1 May 1942

Russia:

A speech made by Stalin contains vile denunciations of Germany and its leaders. It points to the fact that the German Army is considerably weaker at this moment than at the beginning of the Russian campaign, while the Red Army is stronger, and Russia's international relations far more stabilized. Great Britain and the U.S. are tied to Russia by alliance and friendship. Stalin stressed the fact that Russia is engaged in a patriotic war of liberation and does not intend to conquer or subjugate other countries.

South Africa:

Diplomatic sources report uneasiness and propaganda activity in South Africa since there is said to be great danger of a Japanese occupation of Madagascar and Mozambique.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. On the occasion of a report by the Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff about operations in the Arctic Ocean against a PQ convoy, the Chief, Naval Staff expressed the opinion that the situation might require an increase of the number of our submarines operating in the Arctic Ocean, especially since the chances of success by the Air Force are limited, and our surface forces are greatly handicapped by lack of fuel oil.

This problem has already been considered by the Operations Division, Naval Staff. So far experience has shown that the present operational possibilities of the submarines would be greatly reduced as the days become longer and consequently the coastal waters are more carefully patrolled and shipping more heavily escorted. An increase in the number of submarines could therefore not be expected to increase our chances and is therefore not justified. On the contrary, the present situation warrants investigating whether it would not be advisable to withdraw submarines from the Norwegian theater of operations in order to strengthen the forces in other areas.

II. Situation in the northern theater of operations: Group North reports in an urgent telegram of 30 Apr. that in accordance with orders received, measures have been taken to recall the PRINZ EUGEN and transfer the LUETZOW to the north. The Commanding Admiral, Group North believes it his duty to make the following points prior to the transfer of these forces:

Units of the fleet in the northern area serve to exert strategic pressure and to prevent landings. Strategic pressure, due to lack of oil, is exerted merely by the presence of the ships. To this end there is no difference whether the PRINZ EUGEN or the LUETZOW is at hand. Group North considers the armament of the PRINZ EUGEN superior.

1 May 1942

The risk involved in transferring two heavy naval vessels during the season of the long days and considering the submarine conditions off Trondheim is considered a great one by the Group. Compared to it the disadvantage caused by the delay in putting the PRINZ EUGEN in combat readiness is of minor importance. The Group estimates that there is a 50% probability of one of the ships being damaged during the transfer.

The Group points out that the Fuehrer's directive concerning transfer of combat forces to the northern area is based on the fear of an enemy landing. The Group believes that, unless a landing is accomplished prior to about 1 Jun., no attempt will be made during the ensuing months. The LUETZOW, however, can reach Trondheim only about 20 May. Thus, Group North sees no necessity for transferring the LUETZOW. Moreover the lack of escort forces, for which very little fuel is available, does not favor such a measure. Furthermore, in the opinion of the Group two heavy cruisers do not offer much more advantage than one for an offensive action. A single heavy cruiser is able to cope with lightly escorted convoys, whereas in the case of heavy escort even two heavy cruisers are not likely to be successful, but are subject to great risk.

The question of using the LUETZOW in the area around Novaya Zemlya is regarded skeptically by the Group, which considers the risk out of proportion to the chances of success. Besides, operations are impossible prior to the month of August.

In conclusion the Group points out that the use of heavy cruisers for duty in the Arctic Ocean greatly reduces or even precludes their possibility to operate in the Atlantic. The Group has, therefore, come to the conclusion that the PRINZ EUGEN should be left in the northern area in her damaged state and the idea of transferring the LUETZOW to the north should be abandoned.

The Naval Staff's attitude is fundamentally different. It insists on transferring the LUETZOW to the north and recalling the PRINZ EUGEN. The Naval Staff does not share the opinion that the danger of a major enemy landing is currently decreasing and will no longer be acute after 1 Jun.. It is quite possible that the enemy considers that the advantage to be gained by a surprise night landing, combined with weather and air field conditions which limit the operations of German planes, is not so great as the advantage of having German forces, especially air forces, tied up to a greater extent at the Eastern Front. On the basis of this deliberation the enemy would undertake landings during the summer after the beginning of the German offensive in the east, possibly synchronized with Russian attacks on the northern Finnish front. It is, therefore, still necessary to concentrate all ships and destroyers ready for operations in Norway, and the oil expenditure required for their transfer must be borne. The task of the naval forces in Norway consists in repelling enemy landings and also in preventing supplies from reaching Russia. The LUETZOW constitutes a considerable reinforcement for this task. The chances of success for an attack on a lightly escorted convoy are

1 May 1942

better for 2 than for 1 heavy cruiser. In the opinion of the Naval Staff 2 heavy cruisers appear less endangered in an encounter with strong enemy forces than a single one. (Considerable fighting strength, greater tactical opportunities.)

In principle the Naval Staff aims at again using heavy cruisers in the Atlantic. Nevertheless, for the time being the decision to commit both heavy cruisers in Norway, must stand. Vessels cannot be retained in home ports for a possible use at a later date while there are the immediate and very urgent tasks of repelling enemy landings in Norway and attacking the Murmansk traffic; heavy cruisers can contribute considerably to fulfilling these tasks.

The Naval Staff, as a matter of principle, insists on speedily restoring damaged vessels to full combat readiness, since otherwise the number of vessels fully ready for operations would decrease even more. Moreover, the PRINZ EUGEN in her present state is not able to render the same service as the LUETZOW in repelling enemy landings, especially since the condition of the PRINZ EUGEN is known to the enemy. The PRINZ EUGEN cannot be used against convoys at all.

The Naval Staff, therefore, upholds its previous directive. The risk involved in transferring the 2 ships must be borne in view of the operational necessities. (For details see telegram in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIa.)

III. Mediterranean:

a. The Naval Staff, by way of the German Naval Command, Italy has recently once more pointed out to Admiral Riccardi the necessity of taking advantage of the momentary weakness of the enemy to increase the transports to North Africa, and has stressed the possibility of dispatching these transports unescorted. Admiral Riccardi has now replied to the German Admiral, Rome that the bottleneck resulting from the lack of escort forces has been overcome; repairs in the shipyards have been completed, and we can figure on intensive transport activity in the future.

b. The Fuehrer conference with Mussolini at the Berghof on 30 Apr. was conducted in a most friendly spirit and proved very satisfactory, according to a telephone message from the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Navy. (This was apparently not entirely the case during the last conference in the summer of 1941.)

Final agreement was reached about the continuation of the Libya operation and the operations against Malta. The Libya operation should be executed first, followed by the Malta operation, since both cannot be conducted simultaneously, especially as regards air support. It is intended to rush some reinforcements to Rommel. They will be numerically small.

1 May 1942

The Fuehrer has promised strong German participation in the Malta operation (one parachute division consisting of 3 reinforced parachute regiments). It is important that the Navy concentrate and make available the largest possible number of naval barges even if this should entail a temporary weakening of other areas. (Aegean Sea, if necessary even Black Sea.)

The 2nd Air Force, in spite of these plans, will not be able to remain in Italy in full strength but will have to transfer some of its forces primarily to the western area. Evidently, Field Marshal Kesselring thinks that these forces can safely be withdrawn without giving the British defense of Malta a chance to recuperate. (A detailed written account of the conference with the Duce will follow in a few days.)

Basically, the Naval Staff is pleased with the greater interest in the Mediterranean war shown by the Fuehrer and the resulting decision for German action in this area; however, with regard to the overall naval situation, it is undesirable to put off the Malta operation. The withdrawal of forces (including naval barges) from the Black Sea is considered by the Naval Staff as harmful to Army operations. The necessary means of transportation must and can be furnished from the Mediterranean and principally from the Italian area.

Special Items:

I. Defense of Holland:

The North Sea Station, in its report of 19 Apr., has reiterated its contention concerning the likelihood of a British landing in the Dutch area. Special emphasis was given to the fact that the flat coast, between Hook of Holland and Den Helder, unprotected by outlying dunes, and the small current and rise of tide are particularly favorable to a landing; in addition there are considerably fewer coastal defense batteries than in the French area, and finally an uprising of the population must be anticipated in the event of a successful enemy landing. The North Sea Station, in its concern for Holland, has, therefore, reinforced the defensive strength of the area as much as possible by the transfer of personnel reserves, special commands, training outfits, and by reinforcing coastal defenses and increasing harbor defense flotillas, etc.. The knowledge that a reduction of the defensive forces of the Army in the Dutch area has been ordered (Relief of divisions, certain transfers to the Eastern Front, etc.) motivates the Admiral, North Sea Station to repeat his warnings concerning the extent to which the naval interests are endangered thereby. The North Sea Station now envisages increased peril for Holland and the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam with their valuable wharves, new constructions, armament industries, and stores. In this connection he points out that an enemy landing operation could be carried out without using very much British shipping space, solely by means of special landing craft and small vessels of all sorts. The report concludes with the request to reinforce the Army forces; it declares that unless the

1 May 1942

defenses are strengthened it is not justified to put additional precious naval vessels into the Dutch area for repairs during the coming critical months. On the contrary, the question of transferring vessels and removing stores will have to be considered.

The Naval Staff agrees fully with the judgment of the North Sea Station as regards the importance of Holland and the danger of British landing operations; it knows, however, that the Commander in Chief, West, who is responsible for the defense of Holland, as well as the Armed Forces High Command are fully aware of the situation in Holland and its endangered position, and that everything is being done to bolster its defensive strength. The Naval Staff considers an evacuation of the endangered area out of the question. If it were done, the enemy would achieve his goal at least in part without any efforts of his own. The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division endeavors to do everything in order to increase the defensive strength of Holland to the maximum as far as the Navy is concerned. The Naval Staff, in view of this information, believes that there is at present no necessity to undertake any extraordinary steps with the Armed Forces High Command.

II. The Problem of German Fat Supplies:

According to a report of the Ministry of Food Production, Germany's supply of margarine raw material lags considerably behind earlier expectations; this is due to heavy damage to the oil crop from frost, to disappointing deliveries from Rumania, and unfavorable harvesting prospects in the Russian area. Fortunately, imports from East Asia through blockade-runners have developed favorably. The quantity of fats received this fiscal year already amounts to 24,000 tons. The Ministry hopes to be able to get along until the new crop is available. However, the prospects of the coming year are all but favorable. The Ministry, therefore, places great weight on increasing the imports from East Asia as much as possible. It renewed the suggestion already submitted to the Naval Staff to use tankers for this purpose, because the method of transporting oil in steel barrels, as practiced to date, is inadequate. As a matter of fact, Germany can obtain raw material for margarine in East Asia in practically unlimited quantities. 50,000 to 60,000 tons have already been purchased, including 30,000 tons of whale oil which has not yet been shipped. The Naval Staff informed the Ministry of Food Production that the tanker problem is presently under investigation and that a satisfactory solution might be reached. The Ministry had also requested an investigation of the possibilities of organizing German whaling expeditions into the Arctic or Antarctic. However, such measures are impossible operationally and the necessary ships are not available.

III. Concerning the enemy situation (from 20 to 26 Apr.) see secret and top secret radio intelligence reports No. 17/42.

Special attention is called to the disposition of the heavy combat forces, the effects of German submarine activity on the American coast, and the increased activity of British PT boats on the British coast and in the Channel.

1 May 1942

Situation 1 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

In the South Atlantic the British steamers MENE LAUS flashed a distress signal on 1 May, from quadrant GE 62 (approximately half-way between Capetown and Bahia); the message was rebroadcast from Free-town. A German raider may be involved.

According to Portuguese reports large American transports of troops, aviation personnel and planes were lying in Capetown on 22 Apr., possibly including the steamer QUEEN MARY or QUEEN ELIZABETH.

According to an Italian report, preparations are being made in Brazzaville for the discharge of large quantities of war material. The continuously arriving material is routed over newly built roads through the Belgian Congo to the Sudan and to Eritrea.

2. Own Situation:

No news received from our vessels.

All vessels outside of home waters were informed of the enemy situation by Radiograms 1700, 1744, and 2031.

Sailing instructions received from Naval Attache at Tokyo for steamer TANNENFELS were transmitted by Radiogram 1205. The DRESDEN is ordered by Radiogram 1002 to proceed south from point "Zange" to the latitude which is 2° further north than point "Schraube", then to proceed in easterly direction. At the same time information concerning the planned rendezvous with the DOGGERBANK was transmitted. (See also Radiogram 1627 addressed to the DOGGERBANK.)

II. Situation West Area:

A number of enemy planes were sighted; otherwise nothing to report.

According to radio intelligence and air reconnaissance, the disposition of British and American battleships in the Eastern Atlantic is as follows: KING GEORGE V, DUKE OF YORK, and the American battleship WASHINGTON are in operational readiness in the Scapa Flow area and the Arctic Ocean.

The HOWE was completely fitted in Scapa Flow in the month of February, but she is probably not yet ready for operations.

According to press reports the ANSON was about to be commissioned in February.

The NELSON is probably still under repair in a west coast harbor.

No reports about the RODNEY since January. Air reconnaissance reported

1 May 1942

a vessel of the RODNEY class in Scapa Flow towards the end of March.

The RENOWN is in Gibraltar.

A withdrawal of British battleships from the home area and transfer to the Indian Ocean could thus far not be established unequivocally. Nevertheless this possibility cannot be denied.

Reliable reports concerning British aircraft carriers exist only about the EAGLE and ARGUS, which are in Gibraltar. Our radio intelligence assumes the following distribution:

<u>Home Area:</u>	VICTORIOUS, ILLUSTRIOUS, FURIOUS, FORMIDABLE, and UNICORN. (The new IMPLACABLE has so far not been located.)
<u>Gibraltar:</u>	EAGLE and ARGUS
<u>Indian Ocean:</u>	INDOMITABLE
<u>Freetown Area:</u>	Probably the ALBATROS

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

No special enemy reports. German convoy and minesweeping operations carried out as planned.

2. Norway:

Ship movements along the entire Norwegian coast with nothing special to report. (See report Commanding Admiral, Norway, 1800.) Lively enemy air activity on the Norwegian west coast.

In accordance with orders, Group North is assigning the 7th Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla to the command of the Admiral, Polar Coast, to replace the 15th Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla.

Regarding the question of shifting his command station to Narvik, the Admiral, Arctic Ocean reports that Narvik is considered the most suitable operational base. The lines of communication with the Air Force, Army and Navy commands have been securely established, as ordered. Since Narvik is a railroad terminal point it is considered excellent for the transportation of supplies for the naval forces under this command.

The Commanding Admiral, Group North therefore orders the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to shift his office to Narvik and simultaneously to establish Narvik as a base for submarines operating in the Arctic Ocean. Kirkenes is to be retained as jump-off port and auxiliary base for submarines and destroyers.

1 May 1942

The Naval Staff likewise considers that it is desirable to shift the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to Narvik in view of the pocket battleship operations planned in the northern area. Difficulties could arise only with respect to the close cooperation between the Admiral, Arctic Ocean and the Army and Air Force Commands in the northern area; such cooperation is absolutely necessary for attacks on enemy convoys (cooperation between Air Force and Navy) and also for repelling enemy landing attempts (cooperation of all three branches of the Armed Forces). Thus the Army or the Air Force may raise protest against the shift.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

No additional reports have been received about the enemy task force spotted by air reconnaissance on 30 Apr. at 1435 east of Iceland.

Convoy PQ 15 proceeding in easterly direction was spotted by air reconnaissance on 30 Apr. at 2350 in quadrant AB 8185 on course 60° and is reported to consist of 22 merchantmen, 1 cruiser, and 4 destroyers. It was spotted once more in the afternoon at 1727 in quadrant AB 5947. Reports as to its composition vary between 20 and 25 steamers; escort is said to consist of 1 cruiser, 4 destroyers, and a number of corvettes and patrol vessels. The convoy was proceeding in 6 columns on course 60°. Attacking planes were unable to observe results due to poor weather and strong anti-aircraft fire. It is assumed that no results were achieved.

The westbound convoy QP 11 was sighted briefly in the evening of 30 Apr. by U "88". Other submarines established contact which they were able to maintain during the day. The last report at 2011 puts the convoy in quadrant AC 4188, on a westerly course.

Own Situation:

The Arctic Ocean destroyer group departed for operations during the night of 30 Apr.. The group left port primarily because of a report of a damaged enemy cruiser. However, under the given circumstances the Admiral, Arctic Ocean directs the destroyers against the westbound convoy. According to a report from the Admiral, Arctic Ocean (see Radiogram 1230) the destroyer group at first had orders not to engage in extensive search in case the convoy could not be found due to unexpected bad weather, but to operate instead against the damaged cruiser. However, since the convoy was relocated on the evening of 30 Apr., the reports from the shadows continued favorable, and the convoy escort has been weakened by the withdrawal of destroyers sent to the assistance of the damaged cruiser, the Admiral, Arctic Ocean now considers the convoy to be the most important target for our destroyers.

Group North cannot share this view. The directive issued to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean (See Group North 03950 Telegram 1005) names the cruiser as the main target of operation. It values the sinking of the cruiser higher than the sinking of empty steamers. A subsequent report (see Telegram 1907) shows that the Group was afraid that new

1 May 1942

enemy forces might appear at the convoy and the damaged cruiser, if the destroyers operations against the convoy would take too much time, and that this would then jeopardize the success of both operations. The Group therefore considered it necessary to point out that it is of primary importance to sink the cruiser. The order subsequently issued by the Admiral, Arctic Ocean (see 0911: Attack convoy first, cruiser later) is approved by Group North, particularly since the Air Force has promised to attack the damaged cruiser with torpedo planes at once.

The Naval Staff agreed in principle from the beginning with the Admiral, Arctic Ocean that the convoy represented the primary target of the destroyers. In any case steamers--even empty ones--are the main object of our operations against convoys in the Arctic Ocean. The very fact that the cruiser had been eliminated by torpedo hits and had to be protected by destroyers offered better chances for the attack on the main target, that is the steamers. The cruiser, hit by two torpedoes, constitutes no threat to our operations for a long time to come, apart from the fact that it is doubtful whether it can be repaired at all in the arctic area. In the opinion of the Naval Staff, it was justifiable to consider the cruiser as the primary target only if there was reason to believe that the strength of the convoy escort would preclude a successful destroyer attack. The Naval Staff thinks that there was no basis for such an assumption.

Our destroyers established contact with the convoy at 1355 in quadrant AC 4276 and engaged in action with 3 enemy escort destroyers. They maintained this contact and attacked the convoy with gunfire and torpedoes at 1740 in quadrant AC 4191 and scored hits on the steamers without suffering casualties. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean reports that the destroyers have now broken off the attack on the convoy and are operating against the damaged cruiser with the intention of intercepting her on 2 May at 0600.

It cannot be clearly determined as yet whether the attack on the convoy was discontinued on the initiative of the flotilla commander in view of the prevailing situation or as a result of a definite order. Further news must be awaited. The operation against the cruiser, whose guns must be considered intact, constitutes a hazard to the destroyers, the extent of which cannot yet be estimated, especially if several enemy destroyers should be on the spot.

The Naval Staff purposely abstains from interfering with the operation currently in progress because reports from the battle scene are arriving here only with great delay and only the Admiral, Arctic Ocean can have the necessary insight into the situation.

In spite of snow squalls and interference by icebergs the submarines very cleverly maintained contact in the night of 30 Apr. and during 1 May. On the basis of the excellent reports by the submarines there are no doubts as to the position and course of convoy QP 11. Despite bad weather conditions and strong escort the submarines continued their efforts to attack. U "88" scored a probable hit on one steamer during the night of 30 Apr..

1 May 1942

Also U "589" reports at 0313 a salvo of 2 shots at a steamer and the observation of 2 detonations; thus it is probable that another steamer was sunk. Several submarines report reduced combat readiness due to damages received.

U "436" is forced to return to Trondheim due to damage.

As a precaution submarines U "405" and "703" received orders from the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to proceed to quadrant AB 5920 at top speed in order to take over contact with convoy PQ 15 from the air reconnaissance, if necessary. Admiral, Arctic Ocean ordered them to attack PQ 15 immediately after air reconnaissance spotted the convoy in the afternoon. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean correctly ordered the rest of the submarines operating against convoy QP 11 not to proceed westward beyond 18° E and to assume positions along the line AB 6357 to 6627 on 2 May at 1700 in order to intercept convoy PQ 15.

U "456" continues to trail the cruiser damaged by 2 torpedo hits. Its position at 0934 was in quadrant AC 5559, its speed 3 to 4 knots, course south. Unfortunately the attack periscope of U "456" is fouled. This submarine, therefore, was instructed to maintain contact until the arrival of U "88" which was to attack with all available means. While U "88" soon lost contact with the cruiser, U "456" continued to maintain the contact. At 2155 the cruiser's position was in quadrant AC 5836; according to a report from U "456" she is escorted by 2 destroyers. Although an attack on the cruiser by our destroyers cannot be termed hopeless, the Chief, Naval Staff considers an operation against an enemy, whose guns are probably still intact as fundamentally unsound because of the continuous daylight in the Arctic Ocean and the great risk incurred thereby.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

No important events.

The Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff orders the 1st Air Force (see Telegram 2120) to mine the Leningrad-Kronstadt area and specifies the purposes of this operation as follows:

a. To prevent war vessels from active participation in the ground fighting from the mole of Leningrad and from the naval harbor of Kronstadt, as done in the fall of 1941.

b. To prevent any ship from leaving the harbor.

The planes required for a mining operation of the dimension proposed by Group North unfortunately are not available.

Therefore, the area can be mined only partially.

1 May 1942

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Approximately 30 planes of both enemy air groups were observed carrying out air reconnaissance west of Britain. On the American coast our radio intelligence intercepted several submarine sighting messages and a report about the torpedoing of the U.S. steamer ALCOA LEADER southeast of New York. Submarine sighting reports were also intercepted northwest of Cuba and northwest of Georgetown.

2. Own Situation:

For the operation in the Arctic Ocean see Situation, Arctic Ocean.

On the American coast U "402" sank the steamer CEPELNOS in quadrant DC 1193 and U "752" sank the tanker WEST IMBODEN in quadrant CB 1836.

Approximately 100 miles east of Boston the U "576" sighted a heavily guarded convoy of 7 large troop transports escorted by 1 airplane carrier, 1 battleship, and several destroyers. The submarine stood at a distance of approximately 1,000 meters in firing position but--by a streak of bad luck--was out of torpedoes. 4 submarines in the vicinity are assigned to the patrol line against the convoy.

For details about the submarine operations see the supplement to the submarine situation in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

267 planes flew missions. During the day 17 enemy planes were shot down and 5 destroyed on the ground. Our night flying was limited to a few planes flying armed reconnaissance missions in the Shetland and Orkney area. Several convoys are reported on the British east coast; a small 800 ton steamer was set afire in the harbor of Salcombe.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

The air attack against Malta was continued. During an attack on Port Said in the morning of 1 May, a 6,000 ton steamer was damaged.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

1 May 1942

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

The EAGLE, ARGUS, RENOWN, and a DIDO class cruiser are reported in Gibraltar. The RENOWN undocked on 1 May. In the forenoon the DIDO class cruiser put to sea, ostensibly for practice.

Air reconnaissance sighted several freighters with destroyer escort in the Eastern Mediterranean northwest of Port Said, and a few destroyers in the sea area off Tobruk.

2. Situation Italy:

Nothing to report.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 8th Supply Squadron, with exception of the steamer UNIONE which was unable to sail due to rudder damage, is en route to Tripoli according to plan. Movement of all other transports without important occurrences. Also the coastal traffic on the North African coast continues according to plans with auxiliary sailing vessels, naval barges, and lighters. Unloading facilities in Tripoli have been improved as the result of crane repairs.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The 13th Crete Squadron put into Candia on 29 Apr.. Nothing else to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

See Telegram 1045 for air reconnaissance report of 30 Apr. with reference to the ships lying in Russian ports.

According to air reconnaissance the following Russian naval forces are on duty or deployed in the Black Sea:

Battleship	1	Cruisers	4
Flotilla leaders	2	Destroyers	16-18
Torpedo boat	1	Submarines	45-50
Mine layers	15-16	Mine sweepers	16-20
Motor mine sweepers and dispatch vessels	25-30	Gun boats	9
PT boats approximately	80	Submarine depot vessel	1
PT depot vessel	1		

1 May 1942

This compilation shows the strength of the Russian Black Sea fleet against which own attack forces are available in very limited numbers. Practically the only possibility of opposing it effectively is offered by aerial mines, bombs, and torpedoes by our Air Force.

Own Situation:

Escort and transport activities are continued as much as weather conditions permit.

The Danube Flotilla is making check sweeps with river mine sweepers.

A tow train escorted by 4 Italian subchasers arrived in Galati on 29 Apr.. (For details see reports 2330 and 2350.)

VIII. Situation East Asia:

Nothing to report.

The Military Attache at Tokyo reported in detail about Japanese experiences concerning landing operations, which permit a very interesting and remarkable insight into Japanese landing plans and their execution. For a copy of the report see War Diary, File "Haifisch".

IX. Army Situation:

The General Staff had nothing to report.

2 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

The foreign press discusses the possibility of an early meeting between Churchill and Molotov.

Regarding the speculations in foreign countries on the meeting between the Fuehrer and the Duce see Foreign Press Review.

U.S.A.:

The American radio emphasizes that the string of air bases in the North Atlantic stretching over Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands to Scotland is nearing completion. The bases are to be used by the North Atlantic air patrols and for the ferrying of airplanes to Great Britain.

An official statement from Washington announces that the U.S. would continue to support De Gaulle and recognize his authority over (Free French - Tr. Note) territory, but would "not go beyond" this. The French should be at liberty to choose their own government.

Spain:

Spain and the U.S. have reached basic agreement on the fuel question, providing for the import to Spain of large quantities of gasoline.

Turkey:

The Turkish General Chakmak (Turkish Undersecretary for Aviation) has concluded a 2 weeks visit to Egypt during which he inspected the British bases in the Middle East.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

Conference not held.

Special Items:

I. Operation "Erntehilfe":

According to a communication of the Armed Forces High Command, Special Staff for Economic Warfare, the preparations for this operation are temporarily suspended upon a Fuehrer directive. (This concerns the preparations for the shipment of arms and ammunition to Ireland in case the Irish Government should ask for support.)

II. Command Authority on the Coasts:

The directive of the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff

2 May 1942

to the High Command, Army, Operations Division supplementing directive No. 40 (OKW 1249/42 Gkdos. of 15 Apr.), caused the Naval Staff to submit a request for modification to the Armed Forces High Command. The disadvantages of the supplementary directive were already discussed in the conference on the situation of 23 Apr. (see War Diary). The order of the Armed Forces High Command curtails the authority of the Navy with regard to the tactical planning for the construction of coast defenses to a degree which, in the opinion of the Naval Staff, contradicts Fuehrer directive No. 40. The order does not take into account that the coast artillery not only serves to defend the coast but must also share in the tasks of naval warfare, i.e. in operations off the coast as a part of naval strategy. The aforementioned directive of the Armed Forces High Command assigns the entire tactical planning for the development of the coast defenses (including the coast artillery) to the Army Commander responsible for the combat operations. The Naval Staff, therefore, objects to the Armed Forces High Command and contends that the strengthening of the coastal artillery must in the first place meet the tactical requirements of the commander responsible for using the coastal artillery against sea targets. The Naval Staff, therefore, requests that the Armed Forces High Command change its directive in such a manner that the naval commanders, in accordance with their responsibility, would retain a decisive voice in the tactical planning of the strengthening of the coast artillery defenses.

(For details see OKW Vfg 1249/42 and proposal SKL. Qu. A II 1061/42 Gkdos of 25 Apr. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. X.)

III. Secrecy of Operations:

Recognizing the paramount importance of operational secrecy for the execution of all operations of naval warfare and of preserving the element of surprise, the Naval Staff (Chief, Naval Communications Division, Naval Staff) has compiled the experiences to date and has issued to the subordinated commands directives for the systematic observance of operational secrecy and maintenance of the element of surprise. So far it has not been proved that within our command area any neglect in this respect has been of any advantage to the enemy. However, this does not mean that the danger of permanent or temporary jeopardy of operational secrecy can be definitely ignored.

The directives encompass the following principal points:

1. Conscientious observance of the regulations concerning confidential papers and the regulations regarding the communications service.
2. Efficient supervision in these matters.
3. Operational questions should not be discussed over the telephone.
4. The radio communications personnel, having access to the information, should be limited through use of suitable codes. Caution regarding the styling of radio messages and omission of unnecessary addressees.
5. Distribution of the most important codes should be very much restricted.

2 May 1942

6. The prerequisite for continued and even better results from radio intelligence: utmost secrecy concerning results achieved to date, its development and prospects.

7. Concern regarding operational secrecy should only be aired in the presence of competent superiors and not be made the subject of casual conversation.

8. Utmost precautions with regard to the secrecy of intentions, plans, locations, rendezvous points and waiting areas.

(For details see letter Skl/Chef MND B Nr. 1917/42 Gkdos. of 28 Apr. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.)

IV. The Shipping Situation in the Mediterranean:

The German Naval Command, Italy, pointed out on 18 Apr. that, following the loss of the German steamer BELLONA due to a submarine torpedo hit, the remaining available German tonnage is inadequate to ensure shipping the necessary supplies for the Panzer Army of General Rommel. The only possible solution of this problem is seen in falling back on the ships in the Greek supply traffic.

The Shipping and Transport Branch, Naval Staff Quartermaster Division, stated in an extensive review of the entire transport situation in the Mediterranean, that it is impossible at this time to divert German transport vessels from other areas of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to the African service. The tonnage difficulties prevailing in all areas of the Mediterranean are tremendous. The few foreign vessels available as well as the German ships, not equipped with heavy derricks, are not suitable for the African service due to their low speed, their age, and poor loading equipment. However, the Italy-Africa traffic can be supplemented somewhat by Italian shipping space; all Armed Forces authorities must continue to insist emphatically that this will be done.

(See War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV for copy of letter Skl. Qu. A VI sa 3248/42 Gkdos. to German Naval Command, Italy.)

Situation 2 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

South Atlantic:

According to the Naval Attache at Buenos Aires the U.S. cruiser MEMPHIS, escorted by 1 destroyer escort and 3 submarines, and

2 May 1942

also a heavily damaged tanker arrived at Rio on 24 Apr. and departed on 26 Apr.. The German steamer WINDHUK assisted by a tug, and a very large vessel (probably the QUEEN MARY) also arrived at Rio. The cruiser DIOMEDE was in Montevideo on 30 Apr..

U.S. planes are patrolling the coast between Rio and Santos.

Indian Ocean:

A British steamer south of Durban broadcast submarine warning signals and reported that she was trying to beach herself. Nothing is known about the presence there of a Japanese submarine; however, this appears possible. Another steamer reported sighting a suspect vessel at the northern exit of the Mozambique Channel.

Our radio intelligence reports that a British plane shadowed a British battleship and carrier formation southeast of Colombo for a considerable period of time. This indicates that also the British are obviously encountering difficulties with regard to tactical training and coordination of ship-plane operations.

British Merchant Shipping:

Foreign Merchant Marines No. 11/42 published by the Naval Intelligence Division presents an interesting review of the changes which took place in the first quarter of 1942 with regard to the areas frequented by British merchant vessels. It can be seen that the British tonnage engaged in the traffic between the mother country and the American east coast, Central and South America, and Australia has decreased considerably. On the otherhand, the traffic to Portugal and Spain has increased in order to boost the import of Spanish ores. The ships carrying supplies to destinations other than the British Isles have likewise increased 5% since the end of 1941. This development indicates a transfer of British shipping capacity from the Atlantic to Empire service. Reasons for such adjustments may be seen in the increased necessity of defending the Indian area due to Japan's entry into the war and in the disruption of the British supply flow from the raw material sources of the Far East; an additional reason would be the British hope that the United States will devote more and more shipping space to the British traffic following her official entry into the war and once her mammoth building program starts rolling, thus making up for the withdrawal of British tonnage from this traffic. It remains to be seen to what extent the sinkings along the American coast will affect these British-American plans.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report about our naval forces. Vessels in foreign waters were informed of the enemy situation by Radiograms 0459 and 1913.

2 May 1942

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of 1 May did not establish any enemy ship movements on the Spanish-Portuguese coast. In the western Channel area a convoy was sighted off Start Point in the evening of 1 May, sailing in a westerly direction, and a heavy LONDON class cruiser on course 250° in the vicinity of the Scilly Islands.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

No reports of importance were received from the eastern Channel area either.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Escort and mine-sweeping activities according to schedule. British ground mines were successfully eliminated.

2. Norway:

Very lively enemy air activity on the Norwegian coast. Enemy planes penetrated near Kristiansand-South, Flekkerøe, Stavanger, into the area of the coastal islands off Bergen, near Stadland and over the Sogne Fjord. So far no major damage has been reported.

(For details see also the report from the Commanding Admiral, Norway, 1700.)

During the afternoon one of several Lockheed Hudson planes flying towards Aalesund was shot down.

In the area of the Admiral, West Norwegian Coast, the mine layer ULM completed her mine-laying assignment (north section of Stadland mine field) as planned.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Our submarines are maintaining contact with convoy QP 11 without achieving any success. The convoy was spotted at 1245 by air reconnaissance at 73° 50' N, 13° 20' E (approximately 300 miles north-west of the North Cape) on westerly course; it consists of 12 steamers, 1 cruiser, 5 destroyers.

2 May 1942

No reports were received during the day about the eastbound convoy PQ 15. However, at 2015 the 5th Air Force reported the convoy at 73° 30' N, 18° 20' E and consisting of 16 to 18 steamers, 4 destroyers, and 6 other escort vessels, course 75°.

The damaged cruiser was located at 0455 in quadrant AC 5941. According to a report from U "456" it is partly disabled and emitted white smoke. (For details see "Own Situation".)

Own Situation:

The operations of 2 May present the following picture at nightfall:

The submarines operating against convoy QP 11 are still maintaining contact with it. Attempts at attacking it, unfortunately, are unsuccessful.

U "456" (Commanding Officer Teichert) is maintaining contact with the damaged cruiser located in quadrant AC 5941 at 0455. It observed a torpedo detonation close to the cruiser at 0405 and upon inquiring from the Admiral, Arctic Ocean whether the cruiser may be attacked, received permission to do so. Word is still lacking why the U "456" did not receive the permission to attack sooner, if warranted by favorable conditions; such an attack would, of course, have involved grave risk to the submarine due to the prevailing good visibility and the fouled attack periscope.

At 0507 the destroyers reported their plan to attack from the north. At approximately 0630 they engaged the damaged cruiser and the escorting destroyers. In the course of the destroyer attack both engines of the HERMANN SCHOEMANN were hit and the vessel unfortunately was lost. Upon the sinking of the HERMANN SCHOEMANN the commander of the destroyer group disengaged himself from the battle and withdrew after taking aboard the survivors of the sunken destroyer. Most of the crew were taken aboard the destroyers and the U "88". The commander of the destroyer group reports that in the course of the action 2 enemy destroyers were damaged; one of these was immobilized in quadrant AC 5941. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean commits the submarines U "589" and U "378" against the damaged enemy forces in quadrant 5941. Unfortunately, no further success was achieved by the submarines.

U "456" was forced under water during an attempted attack after the destroyer action was broken off and asks permission to put into Kirkenes for repairs.

The Commanding Admiral, Group North once more points out to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean the need for participation by the Air Force if the cruiser has not been sunk. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean reports that the cooperation of the 5th Air Force was requested from its commander personally, but that nothing could be done due to the weather conditions. Group North, in a telegram to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean stresses the necessity of sinking the enemy cruiser and the damaged enemy destroyers.

2 May 1942

The Group is afraid that in time the enemy will probably receive aid from Kola or from convoy PQ 15. The Group intends to have the remaining destroyers establish a mine barrage as originally planned. Due to the loss of one destroyer, the area to be mined will have to be reduced accordingly, (see Radiogram 1523); the execution of this plan is left to the discretion of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean depending on the weather conditions. A renewed destroyer operation prior to or following the mine-laying is to be considered. Additional detailed directives and suggestions by Group North to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean arouse doubts in the minds of the Naval Staff whether such continued interference with a current operation, for which the Admiral, Arctic Ocean bears the responsibility, is necessary and helpful; the telegraphic suggestions from Group North are apt to discourage rather than foster initiative on the part of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean. (The Naval Staff will be able to make specific comments with regard to this matter only after receipt of the war diaries.)

See Telegrams 1100, 1359, 1523, 1528, 2320 regarding the operation.

In compliance with the order from the Admiral, Arctic Ocean the submarine operation against QP 11 was discontinued at 18° E and the submarines placed in new positions at 1700 in order to intercept the east-bound convoy PQ 15. (See Radiogram 1100.) If contact with the enemy cannot be made, the submarines are to carry on a search with a course of 90° and speed of 9 knots. New orders for this operation in Telegram 2320.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

Baltic Sea:

The Danish steamer VAALBORG struck a mine north of Laaland. Rescue operations are under way.

Otherwise nothing to report.

Concerning the Laying of Minefields by Sweden:

As a result of the conference between the Naval Attache at Stockholm and the Danish Naval Attache, the Naval Staff, evaluating the present war situation, no longer sees a necessity for a mine field between Soederarm and Lagskaer and between Understen and Maerket. Also, the laying of a minefield within the territorial waters near Oeland, which had been demanded up to now is no longer considered necessary.

The Naval Attache at Stockholm is directed to request Sweden to let the minefield remain as a dummy barrage. Its rapid conversion into a live barrage must, however, be guaranteed if the necessity arises.

2 May 1942

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring discloses particularly strong reconnaissance activity of the 15th and 19th enemy Air Groups in the North Atlantic.

Submarines were sighted on the American coast near New York, Cape Fear, Cape Lookout, on the Florida coast, and southeast of Puerto Rico. U "86" reports that it has encountered no traffic in the quadrants CA 96 and 99 (approximately 320 miles east of Cape Hatteras), the purported intersection of the northwest-southeast traffic lanes with those from northeast to southwest; nor was there any traffic farther south between 22 and 25 Apr., although very alert air patrol was noticed at night. The submarine operated during the last few days in quadrants DC 20 and 30, and CA 80 and 90 without observing any traffic; however, this time little air patrolling was encountered.

2. Own Situation:

Arctic Ocean:

See "Situation, Arctic Ocean" and supplementary report in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV regarding the operation in the Arctic Ocean.

American Coast:

On the American coast, U "402" sank the patrol yacht CYTHERIA in the area of Cape Lookout.

Contact with the heavily escorted convoy of 7 troop transports, sighted by U "576" 100 miles east of Boston, can be maintained only by hydrophone, since the convoy's speed is 12 knots compared to the submarine's speed of 6 knots. The enemy proceeds on a northeasterly course.

West Indian Area:

In the West Indies U "162" sank the 8,900 ton tanker ATHELEMPRESS and the Brazilian steamer PARNAHYBA. The Brazilian was armed, showed no flag or neutral markings so that the sinking was justified according to the reports received from the submarine so far.

Mediterranean Sea:

In the Western Mediterranean the U "573" was badly damaged on 1 May by aerial attack; the submarine is unable to dive or maneuver and is ordered to try and reach Alicante and then to proceed to Cartagena. Arrangements for her arrival were made through the Naval Attache at Madrid. The Spanish Navy dispatched 2 tugs to render assistance; German and Italian rescue planes are also under way. The submarine succeeded in reaching Cartagena without further difficulties on the morning of 2 May, and thanks to the Spanish attitude, she will probably not be interned. The Foreign Office is being kept informed about the matter. (See also Reports 0845, 1315, and 1420.)

2 May 1942

For details see supplementary reports of the submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

In a fighter-bomber daylight attack on the harbor of Seaford one 2,500 ton and one 1,000 ton steamer were sunk. A smaller tanker was destroyed by bombs northeast of the Faroe Islands in the afternoon. During the night no operation took place.

Approximately 30 enemy planes flew over the coastal areas of the German Bight and the Baltic as far as Fehmarn, probably for mine-laying purposes. Enemy attacks were centered on western France.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

In the Mediterranean area Malta was raided and armed reconnaissance carried on along the North African coast to a point north of Alexandria.

3. Eastern Front:

On the Eastern Front the VIII Air Corps with 714 planes effectively attacked troop concentrations and airfields on the Kerch Peninsula.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

The harbor of Gibraltar was occupied on 2 May by the RENOWN, EAGLE, ARGUS, and a DIDO-class cruiser; an AURORA-class cruiser was in dock. According to a Spanish report based on utterances of British officers, a number of landing formations are in Gibraltar for training. From the progress of the very intensive training activity it can be concluded that military operations may soon be expected from these specialized troops. It may be that part of them is destined for the Near East, but another part is reputedly earmarked for an operation in the vicinity of Gibraltar, expected in the near future.

The Naval Staff believes that an operation against Tangier and later on also against French Morocco may be in preparation.

Lively enemy escort and supply activity is observed in the Alexandria-Tobruk area.

2 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report. The 4 additional PT boats assigned to the Mediterranean (S "30", "36", "55", and "60") reached La Spezia in the afternoon.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 8th transport squadron sailed into Tripoli and Benghazi on schedule. Nothing to report about the supply traffic along the North African coast.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

An enemy submarine was chased unsuccessfully off Milos. The Crete squadron is operating in accordance with plans. An air raid in the Athens area resulted in minor damage only.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence, several Russian naval vessels received orders to escort a number of steamers with troops and materiel to Sevastopol and to join the combat forces there.

Own Situation:

In the opinion of Group South the mines located in the area of Bugaz may possibly be Russian drift mines. Between 20 and 30 Apr., 7 steamers, 1 tanker, and 4 naval barges carried a total of 20,000 tons from Rumanian to Ukrainian ports, (fuel, ammunition, food, coal). Soy beans, oil cake, and skins constituted the return cargo. 12,000 tons of material was unloaded in Nicolayev during the first 6 days; it is anticipated that this figure will be increased.

VIII. Situation East Asia:

Our Military Attache at Bangkok is informed by the Japanese Naval Attache about the plans for the continuation of Japanese operations. According to him, a Japanese landing in Ceylon has been postponed due to the difficulty of defending the island against counterattacks, and will be coupled at a later date with a fleet offensive against Aden. A landing in North Australia may be expected in the near future, though an occupation of North Australia is not foreseen for the time being.

2 May 1942

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

Movements of enemy armored forces were observed in front of the southern wing. Heavy traffic. In front of the 2nd Army, in the area Yelets-Livny unloading and movement of troops were observed. Behind our lines successful fighting against partisans.

Central Army Group:

An enemy offensive on the 4th Army front at Fomina was repulsed. Enemy attacks on the southwestern wing of the 9th Army near Mostovaya and southwest of Byeloi were thrown back with heavy enemy losses.

Northern Army Group:

Enemy attacks in the Kholm region were repulsed and enemy forces trapped in the southern portion of Kholm were sealed off. The enemy made futile attacks on the Volkhov sector.

2. Finnish Front:

Break-through attempts near Loukhi were repulsed. In the Kandalaksha sector the enemy's strength is estimated at two divisions. On the Murman front a renewed attack against the southern part of the Litsa sector was repulsed.

3 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

The Relations Between U.S.A. and De Gaulle-France:

According to press reports the U.S. considers De Gaulle the center of France's military resistance against the Axis, but does not recognize him as head of a French Government. Thus, there is no intention of recognizing the National Committee under his leadership as a French Government-in-Exile. The U.S. would, however, be willing to support De Gaulle wherever he is actually in control of French territory. Due to this attitude, he has also received lend-lease shipments. The fact that many Frenchmen, while willing to follow his military leadership, are not willing to accept him as future political leader of France is considered to be a decisive factor in the development of the U.S. relations with De Gaulle.

Madagascar:

According to a report of particular interest from the consulate at Lourenco Marquez, dated 1 May, the Italian consulate has received word of a British force lying in Durban ready for an operation against Madagascar and consisting of:

- 2 large troop transports
- 1 auxiliary aircraft carrier
- 5 torpedo boats
- 5 mine sweepers
- 10 submarines

There is no way of checking this report. It must, however, be assumed that Britain and the U.S. are actually making preparations to beat the Japanese to the seizure of Madagascar; failure to do so would entail the disruption of the British supply line to the Middle East and to India. This could be decisive.

The same consulate terms the most recent reports about troops deployed on the border of Portuguese East Africa contradictory. Some observers report strong troop concentrations along the border, others deny any military movements at all. Certain defense measures have been taken in Portuguese East Africa and the reinforcement of the coastal defenses has begun. After receiving these reports, the Portuguese Prime Minister felt very uneasy about the break between France and the South African Union and the prevailing uncertainty regarding South African intentions.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

Conference not held.

3 May 1942

Special Items:

I. The Problem of Supporting Our PT Boats Operating in the Channel by Vessels of Greater Fire Power:

Group West was informed on 22 Apr. that the Naval Staff had agreed in principle to the necessity frequently urged by front circles of supporting PT boat operations with other naval forces. Group West had previously declined to have torpedo boats cooperate with PT boats due to the great risk incurred from mines, the indispensability of torpedo boats, and also for other reasons. (See War Diary 28 Apr..) It now reports after renewed consultation with the Commander, PT Boats, as follows:

The Commander, PT Boats considering the present situation, requests that PT boats returning at dawn be met by covering forces equipped with heavy guns. He considers it sufficient to keep mine sweeper or motor mine sweeper groups in immediate readiness or to station them on the return route of the PT boats near the coast. We are at a disadvantage because of the enemy's superiority in the air (Spitfires) and on the sea (motor gun boats). The cover groups would be greatly endangered by enemy planes, especially if this tactic became routine and thus familiar to the enemy. Under any circumstances the air forces would have to support the cover groups.

The Group now intends to provide for occasional assistance to the PT boats by cover groups in accordance with the Naval Staff's directive and as proposed by the Commander, PT Boats in spite of the great strain on its forces; yet it still believes that the most effective relief will come from air reconnaissance and the fighter forces. It is planned to improve this cooperation through direct consultation between the Commander, PT Boats and the Air Force commands.

The Naval Staff agrees with this attitude. The plan to use cover groups is in the spirit of the directives of the Naval Staff and it remains to be seen what the experiences will be. From all discussions it becomes apparent time and again how badly we need particularly the large motor mine sweepers; because of their heavy anti-aircraft armament (one 3.7 cm gun, three 2 cm guns), they are particularly suitable for combatting the British motor gun boats and must be reckoned with even by Spitfires. The Naval Staff is doing its best to accelerate the construction of these vessels.

II. Readiness of the Fleet Forces:

The following picture of the situation results from the schedule for May 1942 submitted by the Fleet Command:

Of 3 battleships	-	1 on operations
Of 4 heavy cruisers	-	2 on operations (LUETZOW in combat training until 12 May, thereafter assigned to operations)
Of 4 light cruisers	-	2 in shipyards (KOELN tentatively to 31 May) 2 in training

3 May 1942

Of 16 destroyers	-	6 on operations in Norway 6 ready for operations by 12 May 2 ready for operations by the end of May 1 ready by first part of June 1 in trial stage
Of 23 torpedo boats	-	12 on operations 6 in shipyard 3 in trial stage 2 in torpedo training school
Of 8 PT boat flotillas	-	5 on operations 2 in training 1 en route to Black Sea

Situation 3 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

South Atlantic:

The Lourenco Marquez consulate reports on the basis of an agent report:

a. Approximately 45 vessels with ammunition and war material are to sail from Capetown to Australia in lightly escorted convoys between 20 May and 11 Jun..

b. Between the 5th and 9th of each month convoys of approximately 30 vessels sail for Colombo. The assembly of these convoys takes a long time; in Freetown, vessels frequently have to wait 3 weeks until a convoy to Great Britain is formed.

c. American troops, which arrived in Capetown during the month of April were mostly ground personnel for airfields in the South African Union, Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Kenya. Numerous airfields have been installed in the Belgian Congo.

American pilots are arriving in Freetown regularly via Brazil. Several thousand Poles, trained in the U.S. are purportedly to be shipped to the Middle East via Mombasa.

Indian Ocean:

Traffic between Aden and Bombay is said to be escorted since April not only by British cruisers but also by U.S. cruisers and destroyers.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "28" reports the sinking of the tankers PATELLA (7,486 GRT) and CONNECTICUT (8,684 GRT) and requests that the CHARLOTTE

3 May 1942

SCHLIEMANN be ordered to quadrant GD for a rendezvous.

The Naval Staff highly welcomes the sinking of the 2 tankers as the first successes achieved by the auxiliary cruiser. The CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN receives orders to head for the new point "Alfred" daily beginning 6 May. (This point is located 240 miles south of point "Ernst", see Radiograms 0943 and 1249.)

Investigation of yesterday's reported submarine warning signal from the British steamer BALFRAM revealed that it refers to one of the approach points in the harbor area of Capetown. It can thus be assumed to be a success attributable to the minefields laid by the DOGGERBANK. The grounded steamer reported that she was trying to beach herself in Hout Bay.

If correct, this would constitute the third success resulting from the minefield laid by the DOGGERBANK.

The blockade runner MUENSTERLAND receives orders to continue her cruise from point "Morgensonne" along the new points "Erika", "Else", and "Anna". The vessel is informed that an escort submarine will be at her disposal on the home voyage, waiting daily from the dawn of 9 May to 12 May at 2400 at point "Erika". This point is not to be approached prior to the time indicated. Should the submarine not be found, the MUENSTERLAND is to continue on her route, keep radio silence and not try to locate the submarine. Exact location of the new points is transmitted by radiogram; Group West and Commanding Admiral, Submarines are informed.

Information about the enemy situation was sent to our forces in foreign waters by Radiograms 1451, 1632, and 2234.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

No important enemy activity has been observed except for enemy air attacks against our forces on the Channel coast.

According to a report from Northern Ireland a large troop convoy, consisting of 27 merchant vessels and escorted by a U.S. battleship, several cruisers and destroyers, an aircraft catapult ship, and several corvettes, arrived there on 11 Apr. During the 19-day passage from Boston it was continually guarded by air patrols from Newfoundland and Northern Ireland. The convoy did not come under attack and suffered no losses of any kind. According to the report, a force of 16,000 to 17,000 men was landed in Northern Ireland, bringing the number of troops there to 35,000. All service branches were represented. The next convoy is expected around the 2nd week of May, also with

3 May 1942

many types of personnel, probably the skeleton for an army to be formed later on. Many trucks and tanks were set ashore. Among the troops disembarked, 3 companies of the 109th Engineers were noted; they unloaded 20 to 24 invasion barges with hinged front ends.

This absolutely reliable report strengthens the existing impression that all British-American preparations are planned on a large scale, in other words to organize an ample base for future large-scale operations.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

A number of British ground mines were successfully cleared in the Gironde estuary.

Channel Coast:

We suffered light casualties by strafing from enemy pursuit planes during an enemy air raid on our mine sweeper forces off Calais.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Scheduled German escort and mine-sweeping activity.

During the month of April a total of 40 ground mines was swept in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North. In 23 air raids 9 enemy planes were brought down. 4 German vessels were lost, 1 due to a bomb hit, 3 due to mine hits; also lost were 1 submarine chaser and 1 fishing vessel. Escorted traffic of merchant ships amounted to 396 vessels, totalling 1,107,311 GRT; there were very light casualties among the personnel.

2. Norway:

The enemy also attacked the Norwegian coast with a great number of planes on 3 May. The steamer KONSUL KARL FISSE (5,680 tons) was lost and another vessel damaged by a low-level attack on the ships anchored in the harbor of Alesund during the night of 2 May. (See Report 1700.) According to reports received, several steamers were damaged during raids on 2 May.

The Naval Shore Commander, Kirkenes reports on 2 May that convoys to Petsamo can be conducted from now on only during periods of bad visibility. Darkness no longer offers sufficient protection. Support through Stuka attacks on the Russian battery has been requested, but will not be available due to other urgent tasks.

3 May 1942

3. Concerning the Transfer of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to Narvik:

The 5th Air Force requested the Commander in Chief, Air to have the Admiral, Arctic Ocean or at least his chief of staff, remain in Kirkenes for closer personal cooperation with the Air Commander, North (East) regarding the disposition of the air forces. The Air Force believes that effective cooperation with the Air Commander can by no means be guaranteed from Narvik. Group North requests the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to reconsider this matter. (See Telegram 1733.)

4. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

On 3 May no further reports concerning convoy QP 11; it has evidently proceeded on its westerly course according to plan. Convoy PQ 15 is continuously shadowed by submarines and intermittently by planes. Its reported positions were:

At 0644 in quadrant AC 4491, course 110°, speed 9 knots
At 1200 in quadrant AC 4591, course east, then 130°
At 1600 in quadrant AC 4678
At 2200 in quadrant AC 5486

Air reconnaissance reports a convoy at 1810 in quadrant AC 4682, consisting of 23 steamers, 3 light cruisers, 7 destroyers, and several corvettes on course 90°.

Since the destroyer action on the morning of 2 May nothing is known concerning the whereabouts of the heavily damaged BELFAST-class cruiser. A few miles south of the place of action a submarine sighted floating masses of debris, cork rafts and pith helmets. Considering the futile search by the submarines and the belated report of a possible torpedo hit by the destroyers, it is not at all impossible that this might be the spot where the enemy cruiser went down. Particularly heavy enemy radio communication with Murmansk might be connected with the loss of the cruiser. (Arrival reports, possibly hospital reservations, preparations for reception, etc.)

Report No. 6 about the Enemy Situation North as submitted by Group North (See Telegram 1710) is approved.

Special Item Concerning Enemy Situation:

The Foreign Office reports from a diplomatic source that a very large convoy loaded with troops and war materiel, destination North Norway (Narvik, Petsamo, Murmansk) is rumored to have left New York on 28 Apr., escorted by several aircraft carriers and destroyers. The convoy is said to be proceeding to Halifax hugging the American coast.

3 May 1942

The correctness of this report cannot be judged; however, it appears unlikely that a convoy of this size would sail from New York. The possibility of a large convoy being dispatched with supplies to Russia, and possibly also for a landing operation in Northern Norway, should always be taken into account.

Own Situation:

A preliminary battle account of the destroyer group, Arctic Ocean, (see Telegram 0219) presents the following picture:

In the afternoon of 1 May exchange of fire at a range of 8,000 to 9,000 m. with 3 and later with 4 destroyers escorting convoy QP 11; the enemy destroyers operated between the destroyer group, Arctic Ocean and the convoy, and screened the latter from view by smoke and fog. To the north the convoy was protected by the ice border. At a range of 12,000 m., 5 torpedoes were fired at the convoy and 2 hits indicated by the high columns of smoke of the explosions. One third to two thirds of the available ammunition was used. At 1800 the destroyer group, Arctic Ocean broke off the action under orders from the Admiral, Arctic Ocean and on its own initiative, because otherwise the ammunition supply would have been exhausted in fighting the destroyers and without any effect on the convoy.

(Definite judgment on this action is being reserved at this moment. The question remains, whether the destroyer group could have scored more hits by the unrestrained use of torpedoes and guns, if the convoy had been designated as the sole main target.)

The following passages of the battle report concerning the operation against the damaged cruiser are noteworthy:

The attack was staged from the north; the approach was made in line of bearing with intervals of 3,000 m. for attack on target abeam. The range when sighted was 14,000 m. and the destroyers closed in to 8,000 m. in spite of the approaching enemy destroyers. At first there were 2, later 4 enemy destroyers (!), one of them of the Tribal class, one of the J-class. The second turret salvo from the cruiser scored 2 hits on the SCHOEMANN and disabled the engines. The destroyers fired all torpedoes in readiness; the cruiser evidently dodged them by full rudder maneuvers. The immobilized SCHOEMANN was hit several times. After all ammunition had been exhausted, her crew was taken off under cover of smoke and gunfire. The ship was blown up by depth charges. The action was then abandoned due to the exhausted torpedo supply and the superiority of the enemy forces.

The observed effect of our guns, heavy damage to one enemy destroyer (immobilized) and damage to another one are the successes listed in the battle report. So far, 65 of the SCHOEMANN's crew are reported missing.

3 May 1942

According to a supplementary report, a success against the cruiser may have been achieved, though this was not mentioned in the battle report, because smoke at the scene of action prevented observation. For the same reason it appears possible that the enemy is unaware of our blowing up the SCHOEMANN.

Apart from the fundamental question whether it was justified to have the destroyers attack the cruiser which was still able to defend herself (see War Diary of 30 Apr. and 1 May, "The convoy as main target"), the vigorous execution of the attack by the destroyer group in the face of a superior enemy meets with the full approval of the Chief of the Naval Staff, who expressed his commendation in telegrams to the Chief and the destroyers of the Destroyer Group, Arctic Ocean.

By the evening of 3 May the operation has developed as follows:

Following the action, the damaged enemy cruiser cannot be located by planes nor by the 3 submarines ordered to the search. The Commanding Admiral, Group North emphasizes to the 5th Air Force the importance of air reconnaissance (see 0015). U "456" sights ship debris, cork rafts and pith helmets. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean, as well as Group North deem a sinking a distinct possibility (see reports 1100 and 1724). The submarines continuing to operate in the direction of Kola Bay are instructed to relinquish their search on 4 May at 0000. (See 2300.) U "88" puts into Kirkenes with the survivors of the SCHOEMANN. On the termination of operations against the cruiser, special praise is due to the outstanding way in which U "456" (Teichert) maintained contact. The Commanding Admiral, Group North expresses his appreciation to the submarine accordingly (see message 2317).

During the night of 2 May the eastbound convoy PQ 15 was attacked at 0135 by 9 torpedo planes in quadrant AB 4471. The air forces report the sinking of 3 steamers totalling 19,000 tons and the damaging of an additional steamer of 6,000 tons. One He 111 was lost, 3 planes were unable to take part in the attack.

This success is particularly gratifying, it being the first time that torpedo planes were used in the Arctic Ocean; it shows the vast potentialities of the Air Force in operations against the Murmansk supply traffic.

Four submarines continue to maintain contact with the convoy. Due to good visibility they are constantly driven off by enemy destroyers and planes. Nevertheless, U "251" scores a hit, probably on an ammunition ship (see messages 1100, 2300). The boats continue operations against the convoy.

Group North directs the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to order the destroyers to lay mines in Kola Bay along the approach route of the convoy; submarines are to provide remote escort for them. Support by air reconnaissance is recommended. The Group expects that, after the mine-laying operation, the destroyers will be used in combat only if conditions are extremely favorable and the risk incurred is not too great.

(The destroyers will not participate since they are not ready for combat at this moment.)

3 May 1942

The Naval Staff does not approve of the constant detailed suggestions and orders on the part of Group North to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean who certainly is best able to judge the prevailing situation; such suggestions are apt to interfere with the overall command and to have an adverse effect on the decisions made by the Admiral, Arctic Ocean.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

The 4th Transport Squadron is under way from Aalborg to Oslo.

During the night of 2 May numerous enemy planes reached the western Baltic Sea via North Sea, South Jutland, Schleswig Holstein. They penetrated as far as southern Sweden, Bornholm, Stralsund. About 30 planes in 3 waves were involved. The purpose of the operations was to lay mines in the western Baltic Sea.

(For details see reports 0700, 0725, and 0730.)

The Coastal Defense Commander, Pomeranian Coast issues mine warning for the area off the southern coast of Sweden from Trelleborg to Sandhammar. Some concern is felt about the training area west of Bornholm and east of Cape Arkona. The route Sassnitz-Trelleborg is closed until further notice. The area east of Bornholm is not imperiled.

The Naval Staff considers the increasing mining activity of the British air forces extremely annoying because the possibilities for sweeping the new British aerial mines are as yet limited. With the situation what it is, it can be expected that ship losses especially in the Baltic Sea entrances and in the Baltic Sea will increase.

As yet our night fighter planes are in no position to drive off enemy planes at sea. It is imperative to solve this problem as quickly as possible and to develop effective mine sweeping measures in order to check the threatening mine situation as quickly as possible.

Commanding General, Air Force Group Command, Central Area will immediately reinforce the anti-aircraft defenses of Danzig by order of the Commander in Chief, Air. The anti-aircraft units of the Air Force will become tactically attached to the Navy upon arrival at Danzig and will therefore be integrated into the Danzig anti-aircraft defenses by the local anti-aircraft commander of the Navy. (See Telegram 2034.)

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Renewed strong reconnaissance activity by both enemy air groups in the northeast Atlantic, due possibly to the impending arrival of important convoys.

Off the American Coast submarines were reported sighted near Cape Race, Cape Hatteras, the north coast of Cuba, and northeast of Port of Spain.

3 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

Arctic Ocean:

For details about operation against convoy PQ 15 see Situation Arctic Ocean.

American Coast:

U "576" was unable to re-establish contact with the convoy. The 4 submarines, placed on the patrol line to intercept the convoy, are being shifted 30 miles to the north.

Radio intelligence revealed that a British tanker was torpedoed approximately 150 miles southeast of Cape Race.

Mediterranean theater:

Nothing of importance to report.

U "573" arrived in Cartagena. Its commander reported via the Naval Attache at Madrid the nature of the damages suffered. The submarine was attacked first by 3, later once more by 5 planes. The time required for the repair is tentatively set at about 3 months. Within 24 hours, the commander of the submarine will file a written report with the Spanish Station Commandant at Cartagena, explaining that the vessel is so badly damaged as to make it unseaworthy, and ask for the time necessary to repair it. Our Embassy will present a verbal note to this effect to the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Naval Attache at Madrid believes that a commission of Spanish experts will make an estimate of the damage and, if about 2 months are considered necessary for repairs, will grant 3 or 4 months. This was the procedure in the case of Italian ships (See Radiogram 0143 and 1400).

Special Item:

Submarine Warfare in the North:

The Naval Staff had requested the Commanding Admiral, Submarines and the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to present their views concerning continuation of submarine operations in the Arctic Ocean. The question came up because operations are becoming increasingly difficult as the result of the advancing season (continuous daylight). Today the answer of the Commanding Admiral, Submarines arrived: he is fully aware of the great importance of destroying shipping space and supplies in the Arctic Ocean, and especially of its effect on land warfare. On the other hand he believes that submarine operations in this area are badly hampered by the continuous daylight of the northern summer and unfavorable weather conditions. Submarines cannot attack during bad weather, while the British utilize just such weather to get their convoys through. Thus there is little hope of achieving success.

3 May 1942

Likewise the Commanding Admiral, Submarines believes that submarines would not be very successful against landing attempts; they are not built to fight fast moving naval forces and invasion fleets. Growing casualties and losses as well as inadequate repair facilities speak against the use of submarines in the North. The Commanding Admiral, Submarines therefore considers submarine operations in the Arctic Ocean unprofitable. He believes that submarines can fight enemy landings to better advantage by sinking cargo space, and that the Atlantic Ocean and American coastal waters are more suitable for this purpose than the Arctic Ocean.

Before expressing an opinion, the Naval Staff is awaiting the reply of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean. (See War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers raided Hastings and a night attack by 90 planes was launched against Exeter. During an enemy surprise attack by Spitfires against the Abbeville airfield a total of 24 enemy planes were shot down. Thirty seven enemy planes raided Reich territory, focussing on Hamburg; no major military damage was reported.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

In the Mediterranean theater our attacks on Malta and Port Said continued.

3. Eastern Front:

On the Eastern Front the VIII Air Corps continued effective attacks on the Kerch Peninsula in preparation of an army offensive.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

No changes in the ships lying in Gibraltar.

2. Situation Italy:

Nothing to report.

3 May 1942

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Transports to North Africa proceeded on schedule. A convoy returning from Tripoli to Naples was unsuccessfully attacked by a formation of enemy bombers and torpedo planes south of Lampedusa.

In the morning of 2 May the German steamer OTTO LEONHARDT (3600 GRT) was hit by a torpedo off Cape Ducato and subsequently grounded.

An enemy air attack on Benghazi during the night of 2 May resulted in damage to equipment.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

For results of air reconnaissance, see Telegram 2245.

Light enemy patrol activity in the vicinity of the Russian bases and in the Kerch Strait.

Our convoy operations were resumed on schedule on 2 May (see report 1800).

The Air Commander, South reports for the period of 19 Feb. to 30 Apr.: 68,450 tons of enemy merchant shipping sunk in the Black Sea, 26,000 tons of which consisted of tanker space; also, two Russian submarines were sunk. The Kerch Strait was mined with 197 and Sevastopol with 67 aerial mines in 30 missions.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Japanese Headquarters officially announced the occupation of Mandalay on 2 May. This places the most important points on the Burma Road in the hands of the Japanese and, for practical purposes, seals off Chungking-China, since only a fraction of the required supplies can be transported over the remaining supply routes.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

No action of any importance has been reported. There was heavy motorized traffic in front of the southern flank. In the Sea of Azov,

3 May 1942

between Mariupol and Taganrog, a great number of vessels were observed in the evening, which assembled and anchored approximately 17 kilometers off shore. A landing attempt appears possible.

Central Army Group:

Successful operations of our assault troops. The enemy made a futile attempt to cross the Ugra river at the 4th Army front. Strong concentrations northwest of Byeloi seem to indicate further attacks.

Northern Army Group:

Enemy attacks on Kholm were repulsed. Enemy tanks attacking on the Demyansk sector were thrown back. An enemy attack on the Volkhov sector was halted.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Russian attacks in the Loukhi sector were repulsed. In the north additional Russian troops are expected to make a landing attempt south of the Gulf of Motovski.

3. North Africa:

Nothing to report.

4 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Laval and the departing American Ambassador, Admiral Leahy have renewed their mutual assurances that neither government wants to sever relations with the other.

The head of the Japanese liaison staff at Berlin, Vice Admiral Nomura, and the head of the Japanese delegation at Rome, Rear Admiral Abe, were received on 3 May by Marshal Petain, Darlan, and Laval.

It is believed that amongst other questions that of utilizing Madagascar as a Japanese operational base has been discussed in this conference.

Great Britain:

See Political Review No. 102 regarding the radio speech by (Sir Stafford) Cripps of 3 May wherein he said: The suppression of the Nazi philosophy by the Allies is but the negative aim of the war, while the nations are fighting for the positive goal of gaining or safeguarding their freedom. Cripps discussed at great length especially the post-war problems of improving the living standard of the great masses, increasing the regard for the individual, and eliminating the disparity between nations and races.

India:

During a session of the Indian Congress party a resolution for the recognition of an autonomous Moslem administration was voted down 120 to 15. A resolution demanding complete independence from Great Britain was carried by a vote of 180 to 4. India should oppose any and all enemy aggressors. Resistance, however, would have to be non-violent and consist in non-cooperation with foreign intruders, because the British Government prevented the organization of a national defense of India.

Thus it appears that Gandhi's views are prevailing over those held by Nehru. The above-quoted resolutions indicate that Mr. Cripps's mission had very little success. Consternation and disappointment in British political circles is reported.

Australia:

According to press reports the opinion prevails in the U.S. that Japan is probably going to launch an offensive in the direction of Australia, now that Mandalay has fallen. This would mean a serious test for the American sea, ground, and air forces.

It can be hoped that there will soon be a showdown between the American and Japanese forces in the Australian area. The Japanese Navy certainly has no reasons to avoid such a "test". Once it is over, the way for Japan will be open.

4 May 1942

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. Extensive discussion of the operations in the Arctic Ocean (see Situation Arctic Ocean)

II. Report of Naval Staff, Operations Division, Liaison with the Army High Command, about conference on the situation at the Army General Staff:

The Chief of the Operations Division, General Staff views the situation and the development on the Eastern Front with full confidence, in spite of the fact that there is no foundation for real optimism in view of the state of our resources and of grave shortages of materiel (especially vehicles and traction machinery).

The Army figures that there are still 50 Russian divisions available in the rear areas, though neither their training nor equipment can be regarded up to standard. Major Russian offensives which could endanger us seriously are not anticipated. Enemy attacks are expected to center in the area of Schluesselburg, at Kholm, Byeloi and to the south in the area of Taganrog. While the Southern Army Group is sufficiently strong to eliminate any danger and even to take the offensive, a certain weakness of the Central Army Group is developing through the withdrawal and transfer of several units to the southern sectors and the Western Front. Our operations will be characterized by attacks on specific points, which means that operations will be conducted sector by sector. They are planned and will be executed in accordance with the Fuehrer's known directive.

III. Conference between the Fuehrer and the Duce on 30 Apr.:

The Naval Staff has received a copy of the notes taken by the adjutant at headquarters about the discussions of the military situation by the Fuehrer. Copy of the transcript in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

It is a significant fact that a great number of German and Italian generals but not one admiral or naval officer took part in the discussion of the overall strategy, which touched prominently on the conduct of the war in Norway and in the Mediterranean Sea (Malta, North Africa).

During the conference on the situation the Fuehrer discussed the following points in particular detail:

a. The situation on the Eastern Front, which the Fuehrer pictured as very promising.

b. The possibility of large-scale aid to Russia by Great Britain and the U.S. by means of troop shipments and deliveries of war material via the Arctic Ocean and by landing operations in Norway; these the Fuehrer termed dangerous on account of their effect on Sweden.

c. The threat of an enemy landing in France, which may possibly lead to the establishment of a second front, if aided by the unreliable French attitude.

4 May 1942

d. The problem of eliminating Malta and of knocking out the British bases in the Mediterranean; the Fuehrer considers the problem of vital importance for the security of the Axis powers.

e. The question of an offensive against Egypt, subsequent to the elimination of the British war potential in North Africa.

The Fuehrer is convinced that the war on land will definitely be decided in the east. A quick termination of the war may be expected, once Great Britain sees no further chance of winning.

Submarine warfare will continue to weaken Great Britain and U.S. and thus speed the end of the war.

For details of the conference see copy in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV (dated 30 Apr.).

IV. The Question of Chartering Italian Cargo Space:

The Naval Attache at Rome had a conference with Admiral Riccardi, during which the latter at his own initiative touched once more on the question of releasing additional Italian cargo space, stating as follows:

"In compliance with a decree of the Duce, an Office of Transportation was created about 4 weeks ago, within the Italian High Command; headed by General Graziosi, it will deal with all problems of transportation affecting the armed forces as well as civilian requirements. It is independent of the Ministry of Transportation and is to have jurisdiction over the requisition and distribution of merchant shipping space for military and civilian needs, with due consideration for vessels lost and newly built. This office was considered necessary because so far no authority within the Armed Forces Ministries and the Ministry of Transportation had powers of decision over the Minister of Transportation who, by virtue of his position, gives first thought to the post-war requirements. Members of the new Office of Transportation representing the Italian Ministry of the Navy are the Admirals Vicedomini and Fontana. Meetings should be held several times a week. Admiral Riccardi related that within the short period during which the new office has been functioning it succeeded in freeing 3 motor cargo vessels and 1 tanker for the use of the Italian Navy which probably would not have been available without its intervention."

Attitude of the Naval Staff:

The organization of the Office of Transportation within the Italian High Command is highly welcome. It is clearly the result of the constant endeavors of German officials to augment the possibilities for chartering Italian merchant shipping space. It is to be hoped that at long last the demands of the military authorities will be met better than heretofore, in spite of opposition on the part of the Italian Minister of Transportation.

4 May 1942

It should be noted that Admiral Riccardi stated only a short time ago that his careful investigations had shown the non-availability of additional cargo space. The Naval Staff had grave doubts about the correctness of this statement already at the time.

V. Communication with Submarines Operating off the American Coast:

The Chief, Naval Communications Division reports that 2 new radio circuits have been established (American circuits I and II) in order to facilitate the operations of the submarines and to improve communications. All signals over the Greenland frequency will in the future be rebroadcast over the American circuits I and II.

VI. Attitude towards France:

a. Transfer of French Submarines to African Atlantic ports:

The Fuehrer has decided that the French request to shift 2 French submarines to African Atlantic ports can be granted. Italian consent has to be procured. This measure concerns the 2 Syrian submarines which the Italians will not tolerate in the Mediterranean as long as they remain armed; it is for this reason that the French requested their transfer to French Atlantic ports.

b. Report by Rear Admiral Wever (Armistice Commission, France, Navy) about his Discussions with the Italian Armistice Commission at Turin from 20 to 22 Apr.:

The discussions generally had the expected results. The Italians have revised their formerly very rigid attitude in several respects to conform with German ideas. Concerning special problems (evaluation of the French Navy, readiness of the JEAN BART and RICHELIEU, behavior of the French fleet in case of an Anglo-American attack, possibility of defending North and West Africa, repulsion of submarine attacks, and behavior in French territorial waters) see extract of written report in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XVI and Vol. VIII.

Situation 4 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Concerning enemy activity off the American coast see Submarine Situation.

North Atlantic:

According to an agent report, 2 U.S. battleships, 6 heavy cruisers, 8 light cruisers, at least 20 destroyers, and a number of submarines are to sail for Europe during the early part of May, escorting a vast number of merchant vessels with at least 300,000 to

4 May 1942

400,000 tons of war materiel for Russia. Presumably British naval ships will join the convoy. Later they will be met by Russian naval forces.

These figures appear exaggerated. A similar report from a different source was received via the Foreign Office. (See War Diary of 3 May.) Even if news of this kind must, of course, be taken with a grain of salt, it is altogether possible that a very large convoy with aid to Russia will be dispatched in May; this would support the opinion of the Naval Staff that the threat to the northern Norwegian area has not yet disappeared by any means. On the contrary, a maximum of enemy activity such as landing operations and raids must be expected particularly at the time of the German offensive in the East. At any rate, everything must be done on our part to be prepared for such enemy operations. In this connection, attention should be called to the heavily escorted troop transport sighted recently by U "576" east of Boston on north-easterly course.

South Atlantic:

According to an intelligence report, a convoy of 47 vessels, escorted by U.S. destroyers, left Freetown on 29 Apr. for the U.S., and another convoy of 36 vessels sailed for England with food and mixed cargo on 30 Apr..

Brazilian steamers with war materiel and tanks are scheduled to leave shortly from New Orleans with American escort.

On 4 May at 0715 Slang Kop Point rebroadcast a distress signal sent by the Dutch steamer MANGKALIHAT (8,457 GRT). The steamer reported at 0710 that she hit a mine on course 240°, probably 33 miles off Green Point light house (33° 54' S, 18° 24' E, off Capetown).

This is another gratifying success of the minefield laid by the DOGGER-BANK in the Capetown area.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "28" was sent a telegram congratulating her on her success and conferring 25 Iron Crosses II class.

Ship "10" has delivered prisoners to the REGENSBURG according to plans, as revealed by a report (see 2217) from the latter.

The TANNENFELS is instructed by the Naval Attache at Tokyo (via radio Funabashi and rebroadcast by the Naval Staff) to proceed from point "Loewenzahn" and approach the new point 34° 45' N, 139° 32' E in daylight, where she is to await instructions for the continuation of her voyage to Yokohama from Japanese patrol vessels. (See message 1700.)

The PORTLAND is informed by Radiogram 1911 concerning the convoy situation on the north-south route and the assumed enemy positions as of 6 and 7 May at noon. (North-south convoys between 18° and 30° W., Gibraltar convoys between 15° and 23° W.)

4 May 1942

The MUENSTERLAND is instructed once more to proceed from point "Morgensonne" along the new points "Erika", "Else", and "Anna" and about the exact location of these points. (See Radiogram 1329.)

Our ships in foreign waters were informed of the enemy situation by Radiogram 2357.

Concerning the Successes of the Capetown Mine Field:

The order for the DOGGERBANK contained the following instructions from the Naval Staff regarding the tactics of mine-laying:

a. Small groups of from 5 to 10 mines, spaced irregularly, are the most suitable pattern for offensive mine operations. They will, as a rule, produce better results than a large number of mines laid closely together.

b. The enemy is alerted by the first mine hit. A closely-knit mine field can then easily be located, swept, or by-passed. Thus it is not very likely that other mines, besides the first ones, will be effective.

c. If the mines are laid at wide intervals, in an irregular pattern and in small groups, additional results are likely to be achieved following the first one. It may be that the enemy finds nothing by searching and is thus led to assume the presence of a submarine, or he may find only single mines nearby; if he then changes his course, he is bound to hit upon another group, because no mine group provides any clue to the location of the others. The enemy frequently lacks the required facilities for a systematic search of the entire ocean area, especially in distant harbors; likewise it would be difficult to designate safe routes.

As far as can be judged, the DOGGERBANK has executed the mining operation according to orders and in compliance with the above quoted directive of the Naval Staff, which thus has proved to be very much to the point.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance over Reykjavik on 3 May disclosed the presence of 1 heavy LONDON-class cruiser, 1 gunboat, 21 cargo vessels, and 3 tankers (totalling approx. 110,000 GRT). This may indicate the assembly of convoy PQ 16.

In the Channel and on the west coast, enemy air activity and continued offensive mine-laying. During the night of 3 May, British PT boats and motor gunboats operated on the French coast, off Cape Gris Nez. In the

4 May 1942

Dover area crash boats and motor launches were at sea. Convoy movements on the British south coast were observed.

2. Own Situation:

Channel Coast:

Vessels of the 8th Mine Sweeper Flotilla and the 10th Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla as well as mine exploding vessels engaged British PT boats off Gris Nez during the night of 3 May; 1 enemy vessel was damaged; we suffered no losses. Escort operations proceeded on schedule.

A number of ground mines were swept on route "Rosa". The 2nd Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla located a single-row enemy mine barrage of moderate depth south of Boulogne. (10 British moored influence mines were swept.)

The ever increasing enemy offensive with PT boats and destroyers, which attack our Channel convoys with mines, gunfire and torpedoes, leads to the following considerations regarding protection to be afforded by mine fields of our own:

Regular use of mines in the form of flanking barrages for the protection of the convoy route is barred by the strong rise of the tide and the strong dip caused by the rise of the tide and the current, which render contact mines ineffective during most of the rising tide. This applies also to non-contact mines, which, besides being subject to dipping, require a minimum depth setting of 15 meters due to their design; considering the progress made with regard to the protective devices of enemy vessels (inclusive of destroyers), results cannot be expected from non-contact mines.

Our present-day mines and the possibilities for using them thus cannot provide any protection.

The only way to protect the convoy route from enemy penetrations seems to be a new method of mine-laying, similar to that planned for operation "Seeloewe". Here the mines are not anchored rigidly on the mooring cable but rather on a long, thick cable so that the mine will float on the surface, just like a buoy. The fact that the mines are easily seen is practically immaterial since the enemy attacks take place only at night. It appears impossible that the enemy would attempt mine-sweeping operations in daylight because the mine fields will be placed within range of our coastal defenses. The limitations to which our movements will be subjected are not considered too severe.

With regard to the use of our PT boats: it will be necessary to refrain from laying mines in certain areas in view of the difficulties otherwise arising for the navigation of returning PT boats. The disadvantage that mines which might tear loose would stay live and thus imperil our shipping must be accepted; besides, some of the risk involved is eliminated by the flexible mooring. The anti-submarine mine, type A, of which about 15,000 are available, may be adjusted for this purpose.

4 May 1942

The Underwater Obstacles Branch is requested to arrange as soon as possible tests of the anchoring of anti-submarine mines, Type A, for the above mentioned purpose in the sea area in question.

It must be investigated how the protection of our convoy routes can be improved as soon as possible by improvised methods. Group West is requested to make this survey and to comment on it. (See also War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.)

Atlantic Coast:

On 3 May several successful mine-sweeping operations in the Gironde estuary and southeast of Palmyre. During the night an air raid alert was sounded in St. Nazaire. It is suspected that the mouth of the Loire was mined.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy air activity over the northern North Sea was moderate but lively over the southern part. Regrettable losses were sustained again in the course of our convoy operations. Northwest of Egmond-aan-Zee, on the Dutch coast, one steamer was damaged by a bomb hit (she is being towed into port); near Terschelling the steamer SIZILIEN was sunk by a bomb hit, in the same place the steamer TROMA was damaged by a mine; mine-exploding vessels cleared ground mines in the same quadrant.

These losses prove that it is urgently necessary:

- a. to augment the anti-aircraft armament of all merchant vessels;
- b. to increase the number of escort vessels;
- c. to provide fighter protection for convoys;
- d. to equip merchant vessels with degaussing gear so far as raw materials are available;
- e. to speed to the utmost the completion of the mine-exploding vessels equipped with the new polarity reversing gear.

The Naval Staff has given the necessary measures priority for a long time, and is once more expediting them as much as possible.

2. Norway:

Convoys and ship movements along the entire Norwegian coast are proceeding on schedule. There was lively enemy air activity in the Trondheim area and all the way to the Skagerrak. The steamer KLAUS FRITZEN (2,936 GRT) sank after being hit by a bomb in the harbor of Maaloe. A concentrated attack on the area Kristiansand South caused only minor damage.

4 May 1942

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

During the night, contact with convoy PQ 15 was lost by the submarines due to strong defense and also by the Air Force due to weather conditions. (Visibility decreased temporarily to 100 meters.) Contact could not be reestablished.

No more reports were received about the enemy BELFAST-class cruiser. Her sinking is now considered a certainty on the basis of observations up to the present time.

Own Situation:

During the night of 3 May the Air Force once more dispatched 8 Ju 88's and 5 He 111's against convoy PQ 15. Only 3 planes were able to attack, unfortunately without result, the others missed the enemy.

The submarines lost contact with the convoy during the night, due to strong defense action. The boats report that they were attacked with depth charges and driven off by destroyers. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean orders the 6 submarines operating against the convoy to assume positions at 1400 in the patrol line, quadrants AC 8521 to AC 8611, in order to reestablish contact. U "589" reports from quadrant AC 5828 observation of torpedo and depth charge detonations. The search for the enemy, which lasted all day, proved futile. Also a new checker board line-up ordered in the afternoon in quadrants AC 8530 and AC 8610 has had no better results. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean believes that the convoy may have swung to the east. Visibility toward nightfall dropped to 100 meters, with snow squalls hampering operations.

(See also Telegrams 1100 and 2300, and Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.)

Since the convoy proceeded faster (at approximately 9 knots) than originally estimated and is already standing off Kola Bay in the evening, it is not possible to prepare the destroyers for action to an extent necessary to execute the mine operation planned by Group North. The destroyers are remaining in Kirkenes until all repairs have been completed. The mine operation is cancelled.

Following a conference with the Chief of the Destroyer Group, Arctic Ocean and the Commander of U "456", the Admiral, Arctic Ocean supplements his battle account by reporting that U "456" had observed a torpedo detonation on 2 May at about 0700, and at 0852 had heard typical sinking noises coming from a vessel close to the submarine. (The SCHOEMANN had already gone down at 0830.) U "456" later saw in the maze of debris besides rising oil and pith helmets also parts from a large war vessel and wooden wreckage. The Naval Staff concurs with the opinion of the Group and the Admiral, Arctic Ocean that the sinking of the cruiser can be regarded as a near certainty.

4 May 1942

The still unsolved question of whether the facts that U "456" was restricted to the task of maintaining contact and that permission to attack the cruiser was not given resulted in missing a good firing chance, is answered in the negative by the Admiral, Arctic Ocean (Telegram 1625). A favorable firing opportunity did not occur. The submarine commander was to request firing permission only if he should have a particularly favorable opportunity.

The Naval Staff nevertheless thinks that the order issued by the Admiral, Arctic Ocean should have been worded so that the submarine could have taken advantage of a favorable firing opportunity without first asking for special permission.

Upon the conclusion of the operation against convoy QP 11 and the enemy cruiser, Group North made its comment and decision known to the Naval Staff and to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean. (See Group North 4092 in Telegram 2250.) The Naval Staff does not agree in all points with the comment of the Group, but reserves decision until the war diaries have been submitted. As far as the recognition for the excellent work of the destroyers and submarines is concerned, and also with regard to the evaluation of the over-all results, the Naval Staff agrees fully with Group North. Provided that the enemy cruiser was actually sunk, the damaging of 2 enemy destroyers and the very probable sinking of approximately 5 transport vessels can be termed an excellent result; it makes up for the loss of the HERMANN SCHOEMANN, no matter how gravely it is felt in view of the extremely low number of our light forces. (See also War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIa.)

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean reports with respect to his transfer to Narvik, that the cooperation with all Air Force commands and air commanders is guaranteed through teletype and radio connections, so that there seems to be no necessity for him to remain in Kirkenes as far as cooperation with the Air Force is concerned. A naval liaison officer is considered sufficient to take care of communication and cooperation with the Air Commander, North (East).

Group North agrees with the Admiral, Arctic Ocean. The Naval Staff also shares this opinion.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Off the Kieler Foerde a 4,000 ton Danish steamer hit a ground mine and sank (!) Ground mines were cleared south of Kjelsnor and Drogden.

The Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic Sea, on board the GAZELLE, is sailing with the ROLAND, the KAISER and the 3rd Mine Sweeper Flotilla from Pillau to Helsinki.

Special Item:

The Military Attache at Stockholm reports from a reliable agent that the British purportedly intend to continue the bombing of the German Baltic ports in order to prevent reinforcements and supplies from reaching Norway quickly from them. The U.S. is said to have called for an operation against northern Norway with the main purpose of preventing interference with the American-Russian transport route by Ger-

4 May 1942

man operations, since this supply route is considered vital for Russia.

This report tallies with numerous similar reports received lately. Group North and the Commanding Admiral, Norway are informed accordingly.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Normal enemy air reconnaissance in the northeast Atlantic. Reports received during the past weeks indicate that British naval forces are still patrolling north and south of Iceland.

Along the American coast reports of submarine sightings, attacks and torpedoings. [For instance: torpedoing of the tanker LUDAKY (6,950 GRT) west of the southern tip of Florida and the steamer MOKIHANA (7,460 GRT) west of Guadeloupe.]

2. Own Situation:

See Situation Arctic Ocean concerning our operations in that area. On the American coast the U "109" torpedoed on 1 May the steamer LA PAZ (6,548 GRT), the motor lighter WORDEN (433 GRT), and on 3 May a CITY OF MANCHESTER-type tanker in the area of Cape Canaveral. The U "136" torpedoed the steamer SCHODACK (5,041 GRT). The U "455" sank the tanker BRITISH WORKMAN (6,994 GRT) in the area of the Great Newfoundland Bank.

Contact with the convoy first sighted 100 miles east of Boston was definitely lost. It appears possible that the convoy put into Halifax in order to join other convoys to make up the predicted large convoy to Russia.

The submarines placed on the patrol line to intercept the convoy are sent to their attack areas as ordered.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

On 4 May, 325 planes were in operation during the day, none during the night. In the Western Area 18 enemy planes were downed for certain during the day, 1 probably. (Yesterday's figure of downed planes is reduced to 15 enemy planes.)

On 4 May, Exeter and Eastbourne were effectively raided and hits were scored on railroad tracks, buildings, and gas plants.

4 May 1942

The enemy penetrated into Reich territory with 40 to 50 planes. (North Sea coast, Frankfurt-Coburg-Ulm-Freiburg.) Only trifling damage was caused by bombs; only one enemy plane was downed.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Attacks on Malta were continued. Fighter bombers attacked Marsa Scirocco. The effects of an attack on Alexandria could not be observed.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

4. Special Item:

a. Ship Plane Squadron 1/196:

With the consent of the Naval Staff, the Operations Staff of the Commander in Chief, Air places Ship Plane Squadron 1/196, effective immediately, under the command of Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief, Navy in matters of administration, training and supplies. Operationally the squadron is under the command of the Fleet Commander and Group North. The Commander in Chief, Air requests that the planes of this squadron which have not been embarked be placed at the disposal of the respective air forces which might require them for operations in coastal waters (submarine chase, escort duty and reconnaissance).

Group North, the Fleet and the Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief, Navy are informed to that effect. The Naval Staff is supplementing this order with the following directive:

The embarked planes of the ship plane squadron will remain as heretofore under the tactical command of the Fleet and/or the respective Naval Commander. It is desirable that the Naval Commander of the fleet formation stationed at a given base (for instance, the Commanding Admiral, Battleships at Trondheim), should employ the ship planes for submarine chase within the immediate coastal waters of such base, in agreement with the senior Air Force commander in charge.

The non-embarked planes of Ship Plane Squadron 1/196 are attached to the Group Command, North. The Group has to place them at the disposal of Air Force commands requiring reinforcement of the reconnaissance and patrol forces in their areas in the interest of naval warfare for use in submarine hunting, escort duty and coastal reconnaissance; all this with due consideration for the training needs of the naval forces (in consultation with the Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief, Navy).

b. The Problem of a Naval Air Force:

The developments during the last months in the situation of our naval air forces have now culminated in the transfer of the Commander, Naval Air to the Commander in Chief, Air and thereby in the

4 May 1942

removal of even the last remainder of a Naval Air Force from the tactical command of the Navy. This fact caused the Commander in Chief, Navy to address a personal letter to the Fuehrer, in which he restated his fundamental opinions regarding the problem of Navy and Naval Air Force. The letter closes with the following statement based on the previous experiences of this war: The airplane, as an instrument of naval warfare, can supplement and widen the scope of the operations of surface and submarine forces to the fullest extent only if complete cooperation can be achieved between these types of weapons. This can be attained, however, only by the creation of a Naval Air Force, constituting an integral part of the Navy's total war potential with respect to personnel, materiel, training and leadership.

For details see letter under Ob. d. M. Gkdos. 5560 of 4 May in War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The transport of supplies to North Africa, the coastal supply traffic in Libya, and the transports to Greece were carried on without any important events. Renewed enemy attacks on Benghazi during the night of 3 May were futile.

See Telegram 1315 for the British Government's note to Italy about the torpedoing of the British hospital ship SOMERSETSHIRE on 7 Apr. and the reply of the Italian Navy.

3. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Operations of the Crete Squadron proceeded according to plan. The anti-torpedo net in Candia was completed. The external double net extends 0.4 m. above and 12 m. below the surface.

Black Sea:

The enemy situation is unchanged. Enemy air raids on Eupatoria, Mariupol and the harbor of Sulina on 2 and 3 May.

Convoys are proceeding on schedule. Anti-submarine operations by destroyers and naval barges off Bugaz. (See Telegram 1800.)

4 May 1942

Regarding the cession of the port of Odessa to Rumania: It had been agreed with Rumania that Odessa would be handed over once the harbor installation plans drawn up by the Germans on the basis of greater experience had progressed sufficiently and the most urgent work had been done. Group South considers that the time for this action has come. As agreed upon, the office of the German Port Commander will become the office of the liaison officer attached to the Rumanian Port Commander, Odessa. He will function simultaneously as German Chief of Staff with the Rumanian area commander. (See Telegram 0546.)

VIII. Situation East Asia:

No official report about the Japanese operations was received. According to Reuter, the rich oil fields of western Central Burma are destroyed so thoroughly that their exploitation appears impossible for a long time to come.

IX. Army Situation:

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

No actions of importance are reported. A landing attempt by small Russian forces on the north shore of the Sea of Azov was repulsed.

Central Army Group:

Enemy attacks west of Sukhinichi and north of Spas Demensk were thrown back with great losses to the enemy; otherwise no important actions.

Northern Army Group:

Group Lang launched its offensive to lift the siege of Kholm and is gaining ground steadily despite strong enemy resistance. At the Demyansk front enemy attacks were repulsed. During the operations of the groups Von Seydlitz and Eicke, south of Lake Ilmen, 2 enemy brigades were annihilated and 4 others badly mauled. Enemy casualties are estimated at 50,000 men. Attacks north of Lake Ilmen were repulsed.

2. Northeast Front:

It is evident that the enemy intends to envelop our forces in the area of Kestenga. We successfully attacked a Russian

4 May 1942

envelopment group at the Murmansk front.

3. North Africa:

No actions due to sandstorms.

5 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

According to an official British announcement, the Allies have resolved to head off any Japanese action against the French naval base of Diego Suarez on Madagascar. In the morning of 5 May a British formation arrived off Madagascar. The French authorities were notified that the Allies had no intention whatsoever of interfering with the French sovereignty of the island. Madagascar was to remain French and part of the French Colonial Empire. The expedition evidently consists of British forces exclusively. At the same time, however, the U.S. Government has officially approved of the British action. The American Charge d'Affaires has notified the French Government that the U.S. would consider any attack on the British forces a hostile action against herself and would react accordingly. The Naval Staff is in no way surprised by this move which had been expected for a long time.

The reports received during the last few days left no doubt that military preparations for such an action were being made. According to present information in the hands of the French Government, the Governor of Madagascar will use all available troops for the defense of the island. Due to the weakness of these defense forces (6,000 troops and a very small air force) the outcome of the action is certain. It remains to be seen how strong the enemy occupation forces are and whether Japan will have a chance to occupy this strategically extremely important island in the event that the French could defend it for some length of time.

(See the Foreign Press Reports of 5 May for the British-American communique concerning the Madagascar operation.)

Denmark:

A Danish Government proclamation declares that Mr. Stauning's policies would be continued and emphasizes the intention to maintain good neighborly relations with Germany. Following the death of Mr. Stauning, the Finance Minister, Mr. Buhl, has been named Prime Minister (Minister of State). A report from our Naval Attache at Copenhagen makes the following interesting statements about the situation in Denmark:

It continues to be the aim of German policy to extract the maximum contribution for our war efforts and war economy from Denmark and to preserve, for the duration of the war, her capacity and willingness to work. While Denmark's dependency

5 May 1942

on Germany has greatly increased, her contribution to the conduct of the war as far as Germany is concerned remains at a remarkably high level. German policy will continue to follow the same line as heretofore, namely to carry through ruthlessly all measures pertaining to our military or economic interests which are essential for the conduct of the war.

Danish policy with regard to Great Britain is guided by the desire not to be considered a belligerent nation by Great Britain and the U.S. Otherwise Denmark is afraid that she will be regarded as a legitimate target of the British Air Force; considering the geographical proximity and the insufficient anti-aircraft defenses, this apprehension can well be understood..... The entry of the U.S. into the war has made a deep impression on the Danes, who have come to know the U.S. and their economic power by their shipping and trade connections. They now fear that Greenland and Iceland may be lost for good. As to the sentiments in Denmark in general, it can be said that the vanishing of all hope for an early end of the war and the losses caused by the widening of the war areas (ships in U.S., Greenland, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, the plantations of the Malay Peninsula, their assets in the Far East) and finally the continuous deterioration of the population's living standard have not worked in our favor. Naturally, enemy propaganda has not been without effect either.

The relations with the Army and particularly with the Navy remain polite and correct as hitherto, but cannot be called amicable except for good personal relations between individual officers. With regard to cooperation with us, the Danish Navy is compliant within the limits drawn by the political leadership and conscientiously performs its obligations. Particular efficiency is shown with regard to mine sweeping, in the development of new devices and degaussing gear test methods as well as with regard to the tactical execution of search operations. These facts combine to ease the strain on our personnel and materiel. At present we have 3 mine sweepers, 3 obsolete torpedo boats, 10 medium-sized wooden vessels, and 24 cutters in Danish territorial waters. They patrol the channels between Sjaelland-Fyn and Fyn-Jutland, the route from Helsingør to Helsingborg, numerous small fjords and entrances of the Belts, the Smaalands Channel, Groen Sound and Boegestroem, the Koege Bay, and the Ise Fjord. Good results are also achieved by the aerial mine observation service, in which former light ships and fishing vessels are employed.

5 May 1942

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. Operation in the Arctic Ocean: Group North's final account and decision regarding the operations against convoy QP 11, and the submission of an abstract from the war diary of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean (see Telegram 1620) in reply to the criticism of Group North cause the Chief, Naval Staff to make the following statement: There can be no doubt that the Admiral, Arctic Ocean has the proper understanding of his task of fighting the enemy convoy traffic, and Group North should therefore have limited itself to directives without interfering with every operational and even purely tactical problem of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean. In a clear-cut order to Group North in which the Naval Staff will outline his views concerning the recent operations in the Arctic Ocean this is to be brought to the attention of the Group Commander.

II. On the occasion of the arrival of the damaged submarine in Cartagena, the Spanish Navy responded most cordially to the request for assistance and helped the vessel in every way possible. The Chief, Naval Staff therefore ordered the Naval Attache in Madrid to express the thanks of the Commander in Chief to the Commander in Chief of the Spanish Navy.

III. Discussion of problems of submarine warfare in preparation for the conference between the Commander in Chief, Navy and the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, which will be held shortly in Lorient or Paris.

A report by the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff about the submarine situation and future plans of the Naval Staff and Commanding Admiral, Submarines (brought about by the shifting of enemy traffic back to the African coast and the strong channeling of traffic in the Fernando de Noronha area) lead to the conclusion that submarine operations must be resumed in these areas at the earliest possible moment. While submarine operations will begin in the Fernando de Noronha area in the very near future, they must, unfortunately, be postponed on the West African Coast, due to the lack of submarines. Besides, the Commanding Admiral, Submarines as well as the Naval Staff believe that the chances of successful submarine operations on the American coast are still extremely favorable. Traffic there is still very lively, the defense not too well coordinated and by no means comparable with that off the British coast.

IV. Operations in the Mediterranean: (only for the information of a very restricted circle within the Naval Staff): The Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy reports the

5 May 1942

following schedule of operations planned in the Mediterranean:

- a. Part 1: Operation "Aida", extending approximately to Sollum and including Tobruk, for the first days of June.
- b. Operation "Herkules" on 10 Jul. For this operation 9 to 10 PT boats are available but only 7 skippers. The German Admiral believes that it is imperative fully to man the remaining boats in view of the small number of naval forces at his disposal.

V. Following a conference with Minister Speer, the Chief, Naval Ordnance Division reports on the new severe restrictions to be imposed on the use of structural steel, necessitating the discontinuation of still more projects under construction; only work on coastal batteries and on projects for the improvement of the fuel situation is to be carried on.

Also the construction of building for living, experimental, and storage purposes for the Navy will have to suffer additional heavy reductions.

VI. Removal of the Commander, Naval Air from the Tactical Command of the Navy: The Commander in Chief, Navy had sent a personal letter to the Commander, Naval Air, Col. Schily, on the occasion of his removal from the tactical command of the Navy on 17 Apr. In it he expressed his gratitude and praise for the great services rendered by Col. Schily and his forces in the course of the war and the outstanding mastery of naval warfare. In a reply received today, the Commander, Naval Air expresses his thanks to the Commander in Chief, Navy and emphasizes his conviction of the absolute necessity for closest cooperation between Navy and Air Force. He assures the Commander in Chief, Navy that also in his new assignment with the 3rd Air Force he will maintain close connection with the Navy and will continue to work for their common tasks in the war at sea. (For copies of the letters of the Commander in Chief, Navy and the Commander, Naval Air, see War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.)

Situation 5 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

South Atlantic:

The Naval Attache in Buenos Aires reports the departure

5 May 1942

of the QUEEN MARY on 28 Apr. and of a convoy of between 6 and 8 vessels from Rio de Janeiro on the same day. The cruiser DIOMEDE has left Montevideo on 2 May.

Indian Ocean:

The French Madagascar radio station at Tananarive reports an early morning attack by strong enemy air and naval forces against the island of Diego Suarez and simultaneous troop landings in the Bay of Courrier on the northern tip of Madagascar. At 0700 an ultimatum was addressed to the Military Governor of Madagascar, calling for unconditional surrender. The ultimatum was rejected with the words: "We shall defend ourselves to the very end". According to Italian reports, the convoy of 45 vessels used for the Madagascar operation was escorted by the aircraft carrier VICTORIOUS, 4 cruisers, 12 destroyers, and 12 smaller vessels, and had left Durban on 30 Apr. According to Reuter, the operation against Madagascar is being carried out by British forces, including some Commando units. (The strength of the French troops amounts to only 6,000 men, namely 6 infantry battalions, 5 light field-artillery batteries, and 1 tank platoon, staff headquarters being in Tananarive and a subordinate Staff at the naval base of Diego Suarez. The marines number 8 officers and 120 non-commissioned officers and men.)

The French submarines MONGE, LE HEROS and LE GLORIEUX were at sea in the morning and have probably returned to Diego Suarez.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "10": The supply ship REGENSBURG reports the completion of her supply mission and requests new orders. The Naval Staff, therefore, assumes that ship "10" has delivered the prisoners to the REGENSBURG, and that the auxiliary cruiser no longer requires the supply ship. However, the release of the REGENSBURG does not fit into the plans of the Naval Staff, and the intention of ship "10" could be approved only if there are compelling reasons. According to the Naval Staff's calculations, the REGENSBURG should be able to deliver another 460 cubic meters of oil to ship "10" out of her cargo (plus 300 cubic meters out of her own allotment) around the middle of July. The Naval Staff places great value on the delivery of this quantity of fuel. It is assumed that the fact that there are so many prisoners aboard may have contributed to the REGENSBURG'S desire to be released. The Naval Staff, therefore, points out that there will be an opportunity to transfer about 100 prisoners to the DRESDEN around the end of May. "Ship 10" is ordered to reinvestigate the situation and

5 May 1942

to report by short code signal whether the immediate dismissal of the REGENSBURG is warranted. The REGENSBURG receives temporary orders to assume her waiting position in the southern Indian Ocean. (See Radiogram 2213.)

DOGGERBANK: The vessel is informed of the mine successes in the Capetown area and is congratulated by the Naval Staff (Radiogram 1021).

The blockade-runner PORTLAND, located north of the Azores, is ordered to continue the cruise from point "Luise" via "Pfauenauge" within Spanish territorial waters to the French border, where she will be awaited by escort forces. She is to sail to Bordeaux. Point "Pfauenauge" should be approached during the night.

Blockade-runner MUENSTERLAND: See Radiogram 1727 for correction of Radiogram 2120 of 3 May.

Steamer WARTENFELS: This vessel is in a Madagascar port. In view of the British operations against Madagascar the ship receives order to sail and proceed to the Sunda Strait, if this should still be possible; if this is not the case, the vessel and the secret documents are to be destroyed. (See Radiogram 1038.)

Our forces in foreign waters are informed about the operations in the Cape and West African areas and about the distribution of British and U.S. battleships and carriers by Radiogram 1826. Radiogram 1211 deals with the enemy situation in the Indian Ocean, Radiogram 1725 with the arrival of the blockade-runner FUSIJAMA.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence reveals that convoy P 300, consisting of 17 steamers and 2 tankers, has sailed from Inverness to Reykjavik-Akureyri. This may be another convoy going to Murmansk.

The enemy continues his aerial mine offensive along the Atlantic coast and the Channel. During the night of 4 May 5 British destroyers were located in the Channel area on route "Rosa" at point 17a. Radio intelligence reports belatedly that, according to a communique of the British Admiralty concerning the St. Nazaire operation, 4 of 18 vessels participating in

5 May 1942

the attack have returned to their home port. This tallies with our own observations.

2. Own Situation:

Channel Coast:

The 10th Mine Sweeper Flotilla reports an engagement with the enemy during the night of 4 May, around 0300, on route "Rosa". The enemy forces consisted of 5 British destroyers, one of which was definitely of the J-class. Both sides opened fire simultaneously at short range (800 m); star shells were used extensively during the action which lasted approximately 20 minutes. Our mine sweepers suffered a few hits and casualties among the crews. Bursts of fire revealed that hits were scored on the destroyers. It is very likely that the enemy was on a mining operation.

In the Channel area some mine sweeping activity. Mine exploding ship no. 6 suffered considerable engine damage from a mine detonating at close range.

Atlantic Coast:

Apart from successful mine sweeping operations, nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Our air reconnaissance observed lively convoy activity on the British east coast. During the night of 4 May a number of enemy planes flew over the German Bight; it is suspected that various areas were mined.

Our convoys continued on schedule. North of Terschelling the steamer BURGUNDIA was damaged by bomb hits. She was towed into Emden. Another steamer suffered casualties among the personnel.

Loss of and damage to steamers by bomb and mine hits have reached deplorable proportions during the last few days. Group North and the Naval Staff are trying their best to reduce these losses to a tolerable level as fast as possible by means of fighter protection, increased anti-aircraft armament, and mine sweeping.

5 May 1942

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Slight reconnaissance activity of the enemy's 18th Air Group and a number of flights over the Norwegian coast.

According to an agent report, rumors were circulated among Norwegians interned in Swedish camps that 10 May was to be the date set for the British invasion of Norway.

This date is to be accepted with great caution since similar predictions have always proved to be nothing but rumors.

Own Situation:

Convoy operations on the Norwegian coast on schedule. The Norwegian steamer IBIS was hit by a bomb during a low level surprise air raid on the harbor of Kristiansund North.

The mine layer BRUMMER carried out her first mining mission in the Folla Fjord according to plans.

During the month of April, 651 vessels totalling 1,908,032 GRT were escorted in the Norwegian area. In 9 submarine attacks 5 steamers were lost. Twenty two air raids took place against our Norwegian forces and harbors. Twenty five mines were swept, 1 enemy submarine struck a mine and sank.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

For the time being enemy convoy activities in the Arctic Ocean have been terminated.

Concerning Russian import facilities via the Pechora Sea and the western Kara Sea, see News Analysis No. 20, Naval Staff, Foreign Navies Branch. According to these reports, the Russians have, during the last few years, pushed the development of harbors and traffic facilities farther to the east of the White Sea into an area inaccessible to Germany. They have succeeded to such a degree that the Russian economy today has at its disposal a system of harbors - evidently on Pechora Bay - which, from a geographical standpoint, offers unhampered access to the open sea. (This refers to the ports of Amderma and Naryan Mar.) This development is the consequence of Russia's realization that her Leningrad-Murmansk railroad due to its proximity to the frontiers, as well as the entire northwestern border region, including Archangel, were imperiled.

5 May 1942

Thought was given to the possibility of using our pocket battleships in the Barents Sea against Russian shipping on the north Siberian waterway. This leads to the following conclusions with regard to the enemy situation:

According to reports received and confirmed by the former Naval Attache in Moscow, Russian navigation from Murmansk and Archangel to the east is using not only the route immediately along the shore line but frequently skirts Novaya Zemlya to the north. The Kara Strait and the Kara Sea are avoided as much as possible, due to unfavorable ice conditions; the Matochkin Strait is also seldom used. The loss of several icebreakers in the White Sea will cause the Russians to stick to these lanes also during the coming summer season. This opens the way for an attack on Russian shipping at the opening of the navigational season 1942 (Jul. to Aug.) in the area of Novaya Zemlya. Success may be achieved as the result of such a surprise appearance. (Group North is being informed about the viewpoint of the Naval Staff.)

Own Situation:

Operations against convoy PQ 15 were broken off. The submarines are returning to their bases for overhaul and to be readied for use against new convoys. The outcome of our operations in the Arctic Ocean has shown that submarines can operate in this region during the light arctic summer season only on a very limited scale. The method of attacking at night, which works so well in the Atlantic, cannot be applied in the Arctic during this season. It is very difficult to maintain contact and to dodge pursuit; unfavorable weather conditions, high seas, etc. further reduce submarine operations, especially, because the enemy is in a position to run his convoys during the period of foul weather. Although one of the submarines was able to maintain contact almost continuously, we did not score any worthwhile success against convoy PQ 15. Time and again our boats were sighted by the enemy shortly before the attack and were driven off by the escort forces. Thus, we can figure only on achieving minor and purely accidental successes during this season until about the end of Aug. Nothing would be changed by employing twice the present number of submarines, because the unfavorable conditions for submarine operations remain unchanged. This condition will last approximately until the beginning of September; at that time conditions for submarines will begin to improve in this area. In spite of these facts the Naval Staff does not consider it advisable to abandon the use of submarines in the Arctic Ocean completely, because it is convinced of the great importance of fighting the Murmansk convoys and the effect thereof on land operations. As long as there is the slightest chance

5 May 1942

of sinking even occasional ships, at least 10 to 12 submarines will have to remain in the area of the Arctic Ocean. However, the question is now being studied whether or not a part of the remaining submarines stationed in the Norwegian area (Bergen, Trondheim) could be shifted to the Atlantic, because the chances of using submarines successfully against enemy landing operations must be regarded as almost nil.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reports that the battleship OKTYABRSKAYA REVOLUTSIYA is lying at the pier; this confirms previously reported damages by hits. The aft smoke stack of the cruiser KIROV is missing. A roof was built over the quarter deck of the cruiser MARTI. The floating dock off the Baltic Shipyard was damaged.

2. Own Situation:

Transport and convoy operations within the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic Sea are proceeding according to schedule. Unfortunately, the 6,000-ton tanker ZABERN, proceeding under escort, struck a ground mine in the Kiel Bay and has to be towed to Kiel in a damaged condition.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Normal reconnaissance activity of enemy air groups in the northeastern Atlantic. Two enemy naval vessels were located 300 miles west of the Rockall Bank.

Radio monitoring intercepted warning signals concerning drifting mines along the Newfoundland coast. An area around Cape Hatteras was declared a danger zone. All vessels are warned of sailing into areas not previously searched by the U.S. Navy.

Submarine sighting signals were broadcast from different points.

In the West Indies our radio intelligence intercepted a

CONFIDENTIAL

5 May 1942

message telling of the torpedoing of the U.S. steamer AFOUNDRIA (5,000 GRT) in the Windward Passage.

2. Own Situation:

Status of our submarine forces as of 1 May 1942:

Submarines in zone of operations:	124	(122)
Submarine Acceptance Command:	74	(70)
In training and preparation for operations:	37	(36)
Training boats:	55	(57)
Probable increment by new commissionings during May:	21	(19)
Arrived in zone of operations in April:	8	(15)
Commissioned in April:	16	(17)
Reported missing in April:	5	(4)
Total on 1 May 1942	293	(285)

(The figures in parentheses indicate the figures of 1 Apr.)

Thus it must be stated that the total number of submarines has increased by only 8 during the month of April, that of submarines in the zones of operation by only 2.

The loss of 5 submarines amounts to 4% of the boats in the zones of operation or 1.7% of the total number of submarines available.

Situation 5 May 1942:

See Situation Arctic Ocean and War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV concerning the operations in the Arctic Ocean. As far as our submarines are concerned, the operations against convoy PQ 15 have been broken off.

Three submarines (U "126", U "128", and U "161") are proceeding to the area of Fernando de Noronha.

In the area west of Trinidad, U "66" (Lt. Commander Zapp) sank a GLENIFFER-class steamer (9,559 GRT) and the tanker HARRY G. SEIDEL (10354 GRT) on 28 and 29 Apr. The tanker GEO. W. McKNIGHT (12,502 GRT) was torpedoed amidships by the

5 May 1942

same submarine; she crumbled, but answered with strong gunfire after being hit. The sinking could not be observed. One more steamer of 7,600 GRT was sunk on 2 May. The submarine is starting on her return voyage. The commander reports heavy traffic on the 200 m line, only slight north-south movements off the islands and no sea patrols. 3 submarines now proceeding to the zone of operations are likewise ordered into the area of Trinidad since the traffic situation is reported to be favorable.

For details see also supplement to Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

During the day of 5 May 291 planes were in operation; a daylight raid on Cowes brought good results; fighter bombers raided Folkestone. No night missions were flown.

67 enemy planes penetrated into the Reich, causing only minor damage.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Good results were obtained in raids on Malta.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

See Telegram 1400 about the ships in Gibraltar. One mine-laying cruiser of the WELSHMAN-class was located in the harbor. A carrier force consisting of the ARGUS, cruiser CHARIBDYS, and several destroyers was at sea during the day, returning to Gibraltar in the evening.

5 May 1942

Eastern Mediterranean:

No important enemy reports.

2. Own Situation:

On 5 May 7 Italian submarines were operating in the Mediterranean.

Submarine U "371" attacked an enemy subchaser group north-east of Tobruk and torpedoed 1 subchaser.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Convoy movements proceeded as planned. Another sea transport is supposed to sail from Naples and Brindisi on 5 May, arriving in Benghazi on 8 May.

Coastal supply traffic and traffic to Greece without any events.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Nothing to report from the Aegean Sea.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring located several Russian submarines off the Crimea and in the western Black Sea; otherwise nothing to report.

Own Situation:

Convoys and transports were handicapped and delayed by bad weather.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

5 May 1942

IX. Army Situation:

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

Lively fortification work and enemy troop movements are observed at the Feodosiya front; no action of any importance at the southern front.

Central Army Group:

The fighting of the last few days southwest of Rzhev proved extremely costly to the enemy. Attacks at Byeloi and Velizh were repulsed.

Northern Army Group:

Our offensive in the direction of Kholm continued, several enemy positions were breached. Our attacks were successful and communication with Kholm was established. Enemy attacks on the Demyansk sector and south of Maluksa were repulsed.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

The enemy renewed his encircling attack at Loukhi. Our reinforced formations were able to gain ground in a counter-attack against tenacious resistance. On the Murmansk sector several attacks against the southern flank and the southern wing were repulsed.

6 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Concerning the Situation on Madagascar: A message from Marshal Petain stresses the willingness of the French Governor General to defend the island to the utmost. This is the only reply that could and should be given to the British.

Admiral Darlan remarked in an order to the French armed forces that the Anglo-Americans, by attacking an isolated French colony, had once more been looking for easy gains instead of fighting their enemies. He reminds the French of the British treachery in Flanders, of Mers el-Kebir, Dakar, Syria, Djibouti, and of the air raids against the French civilian population.

The French Government in a reply note to the U.S. protests energetically against the British Madagascar operation and vigorously objects to the arrogance shown by the United States in prohibiting France from putting up a defense when her territory was being violated. The French Government considers itself the sole judge of France's attitude, which is dictated by honor. (For details see Political Review No. 104 and Foreign Press Review of 6 May.)

The reaction of the French Government and of the French Madagascar garrison follows the pattern adopted in regard to all previous British attacks. The French Government is trying honestly and resolutely to oppose every British attack with all means and to defend the national honor.

Laval declared in a press conference on the evening of 5 May that the most recent events more than ever compel France to pursue the policies inaugurated by Vichy. More than ever a policy of rapprochement to Germany is needed. France is entitled to participate in the restoration of Europe and will defend herself in Madagascar with all means at her disposal.

The British press stresses the vital importance of the Madagascar operation for the Allied over-all strategy. In America great relief is felt over the British step. At long last the Allies had succeeded in being first on the spot. The American press states that, following the elimination of Madagascar, the question is arising whether the Allies should not occupy Dakar too. In Great Britain and in the United States it is felt "that Vichy should no longer be bothered with, and that its possessions should be seized before the Germans do so".

6 May 1942

In Portugal, the attack on Madagascar has further deepened the apprehensions felt about the African colonies.

Great Britain:

The government is seriously concerned about the unfavorable reception of the fuel rationing program. The Council of Ministers is reported to have decided on a new fuel allocation system. The number of miners is to be increased by releases from the Army and the armaments industries in order to step up production. An intelligence agent in England reports about the British situation at the end of April:

Increased dependency of Great Britain on the North Atlantic convoy route, which has become more acute since Japan entered the war. This dependency affects not only a few important supply industries but almost the entire British industry and all her food supplies. Britain today lives from one large convoy to the next. The failure of even a single big convoy to arrive is hardly tolerable. Goods arriving from the U.S. and Canada across the North Atlantic are channeled almost directly to the consumer. (Steel for ammunition is distributed immediately to the industry, plane parts to the plane factories, where they are used immediately; storage has become almost unknown). The limited stocks on hand are considered ultimate reserves. The entire economy is linked to overseas shipments to a degree never before experienced. The agent believes that the withdrawal of the battleships from Brest was a German mistake (seen from the British point of view). Their presence in Brest had forced the British Admiralty to use heavy naval forces for escort duty. The battleships were overtaxed by their use in escort service. Immediately after our ships quit Brest, the British sent their battleships into dock for urgently needed repairs.

The agent emphasizes that every delay caused to the shipping in the North Atlantic would constitute a great gain to us. Attacks on ports are of great importance even if the effect of hits is not great. Any means liable to seriously hurt the North Atlantic convoy traffic would be felt in Great Britain to an unheard of degree, psychologically and materially.

(See note in War Diary of 6 May, Part B, Vol. V.)

6 May 1942

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

The conference on the situation with the Chief, Naval Staff did not take place. The Chief, Naval Staff has gone to Paris, Bordeaux, and the La Pallice-Nantes-Lorient area on official business.

Special Items:

I. Effects of German Mine Warfare During March 1942: See survey in report I E 10354/42 in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.

Considerable disruption of enemy shipping especially on the Tyne. Successful mining operations by the DOGGERBANK in the Capetown area. Lively enemy mine-sweeping activity on the British coast. Rapid detection of mine areas. Location of movements of mine-laying PT boats. Effective aerial mine spotting service by means of radar devices. Total number of British trawlers and auxiliary vessels in home waters amounted to 919 in Jan., as against 840 in Dec. 1941. Enemy protective and mine-sweeping forces under extreme strain.

II. Protection of German ships against enemy aerial mines: The great use made of aerial mines by the enemy against our shipping lanes shows the decisive importance of protecting naval as well as merchant vessels from magnetic mines. Losses suffered recently prove that effective protection in shallow depths can be obtained only by using more sensitive degaussing gear. The war situation makes it imperative that warships, from torpedo boat "39" upward, and important large merchant vessels be equipped with that type of degaussing gear, which at present offers the best protection. At the present time, successful tests show this to be the degaussing gear with supplementary coils in addition to the main coil, plus bow and stern coils for course compensation.

However, the Naval Staff cannot agree with the suggestion of the Naval Construction Division that no vessel of any size, normally engaged in service in the eastern Baltic Sea, should be equipped with degaussing gear. While magnetic mines have so far not been used in that area, it must undoubtedly be anticipated that

6 May 1942

that area will also be imperiled by magnetic mines as soon as enemy mine-laying planes will be able to penetrate that far. Moreover, it must be expected that the Russians too will use British magnetic mines in the eastern Baltic Sea.

In addition to the above it is felt that these vessels may have to be shifted from the eastern Baltic Sea into other areas, for instance the Northern Area, at any moment. Therefore, these ships cannot be exempted from the required installation of degaussing gear; and such installations take a long time due to the present shipyard situation.

The Quartermaster Division considers the continuation of experiments to improve the protection afforded by the present degaussing gear as of great importance. (The Naval Ordnance Division, in a communication addressed to the Naval Staff, states in detail its opinion about the protective value of degaussing gear; it also discusses the problem of installing degaussing gear and outlines its future development. Since this memorandum is of fundamental importance, it is attached to the War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.)

III. Problems of naval personnel: The Recruitment Division, Bureau of Naval Administration submits a preview of the future personnel situation and of the necessity to provide in time for the crews required:

No difficulties are anticipated during the year 1942 for providing the required crews to the fleet although the Navy's allotment of newly drafted personnel and of volunteers has been greatly reduced. Crews will be available in sufficient numbers later on also.

Difficulties exist with regard to non-commissioned officers. During the summer of 1942 alone, the following will be needed for ships to be put into service:

(Not counting the submarine branch or shore commands.)

1,236 senior non-commissioned officers (Portepe-Unteroffiziere)
3,253 non-commissioned officers

Plus the requirements of the submarine branch:

486 senior non-commissioned officers (Portepe-Unteroffiziere)
1,392 non-commissioned officers

6 May 1942

The requirements depend, of course, on the number of newly commissioned ships. If preparations are made as planned shifting of personnel cannot be avoided. It is impossible to stop the assignment of replacements to the submarine branch and to try to satisfy the personnel needs from within the branch; this would leave approximately 100 submarines without crews in the fall of 1942 and constitute an intolerable handicap as far as submarine warfare is concerned.

IV. Concerning the Procurement of Shipping Space for the Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea: The problem of procuring shipping space in the Mediterranean is taken up once more by the Naval Staff with the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (in a memorandum Skl Qu a VI sa 3154/42). The absolute necessity of immediately finding the shipping space needed to supply the armed forces in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is stressed. The negotiations with the French Government regarding cession to Germany of neutral tonnage within French jurisdiction have brought so far no satisfactory result. According to reports now available, the French government is not willing to consent to the cession of any shipping space, either neutral or French, without political concessions on the part of the Axis powers. A survey of the shipping space available for German transports, made by the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch proves that it is not possible to withdraw ships from other areas of the Mediterranean for the benefit of the African supply service. On the other hand it is certain that the supply of the Rommel Panzer Army can no longer be handled with German tonnage alone. Chances of receiving Italian shipping space are, unfortunately, very slight thus far.

The Naval Staff sees the only hope of acquiring shipping space in the requisition of tonnage in French possession and requests the Armed Forces High Command to reinvestigate and decide whether the demands for tonnage made on the French Government by the Commander in Chief, Navy since Jun. 1941 could not be met quickly, if concessions of a political and military nature were offered in return.

(For details see note Skl Qu A VI in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

V. For instructions of the 11th Army High Command to the Naval Shore Commander, Crimea in his capacity as Coastal Defense Commander, Crimea see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIVa.

6 May 1942

Situation 6 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

North and South Atlantic:

Nothing to report. A distress signal from a British steamer in the area southwest of Capetown, which was later canceled, indicates that this area is patrolled by warships.

Indian Ocean:

A belated intelligence report reveals that the cruiser FROBISHER accompanied by the destroyer MADISON and a transport with South African troops sailed on 17 Apr. from South Africa to Port Louis (Mauritius). At about the same time the Free French auxiliary cruiser METZ (3,500 GRT, 4 guns) sailed for unknown destination, after having arrived at Durban from Miquelon on 11 Apr. Allegedly these vessels are to carry out a joint mission leading to the occupation of Reunion. For additional reports concerning the embarkation of troops at Durban see Telegram 1000.

According to a Vichy report about the British operation against Madagascar, the Governor of Madagascar has informed the French government by radio that the airfield of Diego Suarez and the battery in the Bay of Courrier has been knocked out by concentrated enemy air raids. The following British vessels are reported in the Bay of Courrier:

- 1 cruiser,
- 2 troop transports, and
- 4 torpedo boats.

The report further states that landing operations supported by light tanks are in progress there, and that 20 km, south of Diego parachutists have landed. The entire French Air Force is said to be engaged and allegedly has succeeded in damaging 2 British planes. The loss of the submarine BEVEZIER and the gunboat BOUGAINVILLE as the result of air attacks is confirmed.

Vichy reports that the attacking British forces number approximately 20,000 and that their operations are supported by an aircraft carrier.

In Admiral Darlan's opinion this should be the aircraft carrier

6 May 1942

ILLUSTRIOUS. Darlan further reports that there is only 1 fighter and bomber wing on Madagascar with not more than 30 planes. Since the Navy is good and the Army fights--as shown by the facts--Darlan figures that the defense will continue and the French military prestige thus be saved; however, due to the disparity of forces, he has no doubts about the final outcome of the battle.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "10", in reply to an inquiry, reports that it is not absolutely necessary to dismiss the REGENSBURG. This confirms the opinion of the Naval Staff.

Up to 5 May, the blockade-runner TANNENFELS has not been sighted by the Japanese Navy. She is informed about the sighting of enemy submarines by the Japanese. (Radiogram 1341).

The PORTLAND is advised concerning the route to be followed to Bordeaux (Radiogram 0952) and receives information about the recognition signal procedure. (Radiogram 1134.)

Our forces in foreign waters and the Naval Attache at Tokyo are being informed about the experiences en route of the blockade-runner FUSIJAMA. Her taking refuge in Corcubion Bay for a short time on 21 Apr. was not due to damage, as originally assumed, but to the fact that she was sighted by a Consolidated plane. (See Radiograms 1400 and 1700.)

Radiograms 0523, 1017, 1309, and 1922 transmit information about the enemy situation to our forces in foreign waters.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted a convoy of 21 steamers, 8 destroyers, and 1 submarine in the Atlantic 100 miles west of Clifden.

Enemy planes dropped bombs and mines on the French West Coast and in the Channel.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Numerous ground mines were swept from our convoy routes. The Loire and Gironde estuaries were reopened. Enemy bombing raids caused only minor damage.

Channel Coast:

Successful mine-clearing operations. Enemy daylight

6 May 1942

raids on Caen and Calais caused only minor damage.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Lively enemy air activity during the afternoon which subsided in the evening and during the night. Convoy service and channel sweeping in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North carried on according to plan. During the night of 5 May enemy planes flew over Den Helder, Flushing and the southern portion of the German Bight. Mine-laying is suspected.

Group North, in view of steamer losses and damages inflicted by enemy planes on the Dutch coast, reminds the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North that the main task of his forces was the protection of navigation and that escort duties must by no means be neglected in favor of coastal patrols against enemy landings. Coastal waters are to be patrolled only with vessels unsuitable for escort duty.

This order meets with the approval of the Naval Staff.

2. Norway:

No enemy activity apart from several air raids which caused no major damage.

Submarine chasing and all patrol activity in the Varanger Fjord had to be abandoned due to weather conditions (wind force 10 to 12). Supply operations continued on schedule. (See Telegram 1700.)

The Commanding Admiral, Norway submits a plan for an anti-submarine barrage extending from 70° 01.2' N, 30° 22.8' E to 70° 06.8' N, 30° 47.0' E for the protection of the navigation channel in the Varanger Fjord, where enemy submarine activity has lately been increased.

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean has no objections, Group North approves the plan and the Naval Staff agrees. The necessary mines are shipped. (See Telegram 1230.)

3. Arctic Ocean:

Nothing to report. The submarines returning from

6 May 1942

the zone of operations are presently in the Varanger Fjord.

Telegram 1145 contains a short report from submarine U "456" about the operation against the BELFAST-class cruiser. During the destroyer action on the morning of 2 May the boat started out on an underwater run against the cruiser but was unable to attack as it was driven off by depth charges.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

Uneventful patrol and convoy operations. Transport of men on leave from Finland proceeded on schedule.

Special Item:

A telegram of Group North points to the very grave development of the merchant shipping situation caused by ground mine conditions and aerial bombs. Between 3 and 5 May five steamers, totalling 21,582 GRT, have been sunk either by ground mines or bomb hits; another 5 steamers of 24,916 GRT were damaged, but could be towed to port.

Notwithstanding the good results achieved by the anti-aircraft artillery of our protective vessels and steamers, Group North sees the necessity of permanent fighter protection against bomber raids for the duration of the season of good visibility; this protection should be provided especially in the Ems-Schelde area and from Stadland to Kristiansand South.

The danger resulting from ground mines was increased very considerably all throughout the area of the Group and is spreading lately into the eastern part of the Baltic Sea. In the opinion of Group North the present speed of equipping merchant vessels with degaussing and demagnetizing gear is no longer sufficient and this applies also to the delivery of mine-sweeping gear. Merchant shipping and the free movement of the fleet and of our protective forces are seriously threatened, a condition which must be remedied by a very rapid increase of our defensive efficiency.

The Naval Staff agrees completely with this appraisal of Group North. Fundamental measures must be taken, lest the very grave transport problem should become a catastrophe.

6 May 1942

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring revealed nothing of importance, save submarine sighting reports from various points off the American coast. The British steamer EMPIRE BUFFALO was torpedoed northwest of Jamaica. Reports from submarines indicate that:

a. Heavy traffic is still maintained through the Windward Passage.

b. There is no traffic on the New Jersey coast beyond the 10 m line.

Air patrol activity off Nantucket is slight. It has been ascertained that the port of New York is reached as follows: Through quadrant CA 5385 with course 300°, in deep channel to approach buoy in quadrant CA 2877, then along buoys to Ambrose Lightship.

2. Own Situation:

Submarine U "108" reports the sinking of 2 steamers totalling 10,500 GRT in the Windward Passage; submarine U "103" the sinking of the British steamer STANBANK (8,000 GRT) northeast of the Bermudas; submarine U "106" the sinking of tanker LADY DRAKE. Submarine U "157" reports sinking a total of 12,000 GRT southeast of Long Island. (For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation, War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.)

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers sank 1 motor vessel of 2,500 GRT in the harbor of Torquay and 1 patrol boat of 1,000 GRT outside the harbor. Bomb hits were scored on Deal and Dover.

From 40 to 45 enemy planes raided Reich territory during the night of 6 May, concentrating on Heilbronn and Lauffen, in the Karlsruhe district. No damage to industrial or military installations. Seven planes were downed.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Italian air forces continued their raids on Malta.

3. Eastern Front:

The VIII Air Corps raided ports on the Kerch

6 May 1942

peninsula. During the last few nights mines were laid in the Kerch Strait, off Sevastopol, and Kamish Burun.

4. Special Item:

See note in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI about the Naval Staff's requests for radio equipment of carrier planes.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean:

1. Enemy Situation:

No changes are reported from the Gibraltar and Malta areas. More convoy traffic than yesterday in the areas of Alexandria and Sollum. In the morning, air reconnaissance located a convoy, escorted by 1 cruiser and several escort vessels northeast of Sollum on northeasterly course; the convoy also had a fighter escort. Another convoy of 9 vessels northwest of Marsa Matruh.

A reliable source reported on 18 Apr. that Admiral Cunningham was allegedly relieved of his command of the British Mediterranean Fleet and replaced by Admiral Harwood.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

The first group of Italian ships carrying repatriates has arrived in Berbera (British Somaliland) on the morning of 5 May.

The Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy reports that the subject of his conference with Field Marshal Rommel concerned the creation of the physical prerequisites for the reported plan of the Panzer Army. It had been requested to transport 30,000 tons of supplies to Benghazi during the month of May.

In collaboration with the Italian Navy and the Italian High Command, provision has now been made to ship 42,000 tons of supplies to Benghazi in May on 16 steamers, to be supplemented by 11,000 tons in coastal transports from Tripoli. The total supply to Benghazi will thus amount to 53,000 tons, not including trucks. It is highly gratifying that the amount of materiel requested by the Panzer Army is thus greatly exceeded.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

A convoy of 3 steamers sailed from Naples and Brindisi to Benghazi, as planned.

6 May 1942

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The Italian Siena Division reports that it repulsed an attack on Koufonisia. Subsequent reconnaissance revealed no trace of the enemy. This action was evidently of no importance whatsoever.

Shipping is proceeding normally.

Black Sea:

Air reconnaissance over Sevastopol reveals only a few ships in the harbor. One destroyer, 1 mine sweeper, and 1 submarine were the only naval vessels sighted.

Our convoys partly held up by weather conditions. (See Telegram 1800.)

Italian Special Weapons:

The Naval Attache at Rome relays the viewpoint of the Italian Admiralty with regard to air protection for the Italian special weapons in the area of the Admiral, Black Sea. The Italian Admiralty is not so much interested in protection by anti-aircraft artillery as in protection by fighter planes during operations and on the return run from night missions.

VIII. Situation East Asia:

According to an official Australian communique the island fortress of Corregidor and the adjacent fortified islands have capitulated to the Japanese on 5 May.

Heavy fighting is reported from the Burma-Yunnan border. According to a Chungking report, the Chinese started a diversionary offensive on the Chinese east coast in the areas of Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow, Suchow, Wenchow, and Amoy.

No Japanese reports were received.

6 May 1942

IX. Army Situation:

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

Nothing to report.

Central Army Group:

Minor local enemy attacks south of Mtsensk, west of the railroad Sukhinichi-Bryansk, and at Fomina were repulsed. A German shock troop mission was successful.

Northern Army Group:

Our forces advancing for the relief of Kholm crossed the Lovat River after capturing a number of villages, overran fortified enemy positions and established communication with Kholm. Enemy attacks on the Demyansk and Volkhov sectors were repulsed.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Nothing to report. Enemy attacks on the southern wing of the Loukhi sector were repulsed.

On the Murmansk front enemy raids were repulsed.

7 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

See Political Review No. 105 concerning the occupation of Madagascar. Joy and satisfaction are felt throughout Great Britain and U.S.A. that the Allies, for once, were not too late. The occupation is called an unequivocal answer to Laval's nomination as head of the French cabinet.

The French Government is strongly determined to continue the resistance. Apprehension is felt that the island of Reunion, the Comoro Islands and Martinique might now fall into British and American hands.

There is little comment in Japan, and it is emphasized that the Japanese can control the Indian Ocean without holding Madagascar.

Portugal is very much concerned about her colonies. The British initiative is wholeheartedly approved in South Africa.

According to a Vichy report, the French Naval Staff has communicated with the Japanese Naval Attache in order to check on the technical possibilities of Japanese assistance. The Japanese allegedly contended that an intervention has no chances of success unless French resistance can be maintained for at least 3 weeks. (This possibility exists, although the Governor General terms the situation on Madagascar critical.)

Great Britain:

The Air Minister replied to an inquiry in the House of Commons about the nature of the orders to the British planes attacking Luebeck and Rostock that the aerial offensive against Germany is aiming at the destruction of Germany's war potential and at alleviating the German pressure on Allied Russia.

Special Items:

I. The German Ambassador at Paris reports about a conference with Vice Admiral Nomura and Rear Admiral Abe in the course of which Nomura expressed his impressions of western Europe. He said that he had noticed great progress with regard to the defenses of the French coastal zones, particularly as the result of Navy and Air Force co-operation.

Spain is aligning herself more and more with the Anti-Comintern powers, while Portugal is taking pains to stress her neutrality. The French Government has brought its policies in line with an anticipated victory of Germany and her allies.

7 May 1942

The talks confirmed that Darlan, even prior to the British Madagascar operation, had proposed to Admiral Nomura to ward off the Anglo-American threat by a Japanese occupation of the island and French-Japanese cooperation. The Japanese had contended that they were in no position to negotiate with France without first securing the consent of the German Government, since Madagascar was to come under German influence according to the overall German-Japanese agreement on the demarcation of spheres of interest. However, the Japanese believe that in the course of military operations such occupations, limited to the duration of the war, could be carried out by mutual German-Japanese agreement.

The Naval Staff had repeatedly brought up the question of a Japanese occupation of Madagascar in discussions with the Foreign Office and the Armed Forces High Command (see War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII) and had repeatedly stressed the great importance of a Japanese-held Madagascar for operations against Anglo-American sea communications in the western Indian Ocean.

II. The place of the naval liaison officers in the chain of command.

On the basis of past experience Group South requests that the naval liaison officers attached to Army or Air Force Commands, with which cooperation is required, should be subordinate to the Group Command in every respect. Otherwise, energetic and uniform presentation of the Navy's plans cannot be guaranteed by the Group Command.

The Naval Staff shares this opinion. As a matter of principle it seems advisable to re-examine the position of the naval liaison officers in the chain of command. With the exception of the naval liaison officers attached to the General Staffs of the Army and Air Force, over whom the Operations Division, Naval Staff has authority, all naval liaison officers must be subordinate to the Naval Group Commands to whose area belong the commands to which they are assigned. However, Operations Division, Naval Staff reserves the right to assign duties of a general nature directly to the naval liaison officers and to call for direct submission of reports.

The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Plans and Schedules Branch is working this matter out. The request of Group South is granted tentatively.

III. The meteorological expedition to the Greenland-Spitsbergen area (see also War Diary of 16 Apr.) will be known by the code name: Operation "Holzauge".

7 May 1942

Situation 7 May 1942

I. Warfare in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Atlantic Ocean:

Nothing to report.

Indian Ocean:

According to a Reuter report, Diego Suarez was captured and all organized resistance has ceased in the northern part of Madagascar. The latest French reports indicate that the French had successfully fought against the advancing British troops in spite of heavy losses sustained by the French Air Force, and had then put up terrific resistance at the inner defense line of Diego Suarez. The harbor installations were rendered unusable, numerous British planes were shot down and several tanks annihilated.

In the morning of 7 May the French Governor reports that every inch of ground is being defended. Both sides are suffering heavy losses. Landings at other points have not been observed thus far.

Military circles in Vichy believe that resistance in the interior can be continued for some time.

The unloading of war material and trucks is reported from Durban. It is believed that Lourenco Marquez might be threatened.

2. Own Situation:

As a consequence of yesterday's short code message from ship "10" that the dismissal of the REGENSBURG was not urgent, the latter is ordered to assume her position in the waiting area (Radiogram 1601). The Naval Staff is planning a rendezvous between the REGENSBURG and the DRESDEN about the end of May or beginning of June and the transfer of approximately 100 prisoners of war. The REGENSBURG is to refuel ship "10" once more about the middle of June, and subsequently proceed to Japan. (Ship "10" is notified of the above by Radiogram 1705.)

DOGGERBANK: In recognition of the good results of the Capetown mine field, the Commander in Chief, Navy allocates to this vessel 2 more Iron Crosses 1st class and 20 of the 2nd class, for distribution at the Captain's discretion.

The DOGGERBANK is scheduled to meet the DRESDEN between 14 and 18 May. The DRESDEN is ordered to make for the new point "Erna" between 14 and 18 May, or, if traffic should be encountered in that vicinity, the alternate point "Ilse". In case the ships should fail to meet by the evening of 18 May, the DRESDEN is ordered by the Naval Staff to proceed to Japan directly. (Radiogram 1029.)

The CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN is directed (Radiogram 2120) to proceed to

7 May 1942

her previous waiting area after her rendezvous with ship "28".

Ships in foreign waters are informed about the situation in the western Indian Ocean by Radiogram 2256; Radiogram 2350 informs them that they may be joined by the French cruisers MARSEILLAISE and LAMOTTE PICQUET. See Radiogram 0317 regarding the enemy situation in the South Atlantic.

Ships in foreign waters are informed about the Naval Staff's plan to permit our submarines to attack unprotected single vessels on route "Anton" between the equator and 15° N during the period from 15 to 20 May. Information about the operations planned by the submarines will follow.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

A British ship was located about 460 miles west of Lorient at 15° W, another vessel at approximately 24° W. In the evening 6 destroyers were located off Start Point on an easterly course.

Around noon a heavy cruiser on a southeasterly course was spotted by air reconnaissance 60 miles south of the southeastern coast of Iceland.

Photo-reconnaissance over the Channel showed 30 to 40 steamers lying in Portland. Air reconnaissance in the evening located a convoy of 20 to 25 steamers on a westerly course off Portland.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Nothing to report, except enemy air raids during the night of 6 May, causing only slight damage.

Channel Coast:

The 4th PT Boat Flotilla is transferring from Hook of Holland to Ostend for operations north of the Downs.

The catapult ship SCHWABENLAND is en route to Le Havre.

A number of ground mines were cleared by mine-exploding ships.

During the month of April the forces of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West were attacked by planes 5 times; 3 enemy planes were definitely downed. One mine sweeper was a total loss and 2 were damaged.

7 May 1942

Special Items:

The Fuehrer approved the suggestion of the Commander, Armed Forces, West to assign the 1st Army High Command to coastal defense and to have its present duties taken over by the XLV Corps.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Enemy air activity during the day was light, but lively during the night. Enemy planes were sighted over Vlieland, Ameland and the German Bight. It is suspected that mines were dropped in the Heligoland-Sylt area. 2 enemy planes were downed at Esbjerg and 1 at Den Helder by naval anti-aircraft guns.

Air reconnaissance around noon sighted 2 battleships, 1 aircraft carrier, and 3 cruisers in the Scapa Flow area.

Own Situation:

Convoy operations in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out according to plan. One Swedish steamer was damaged off Terschelling by an air attack; a westbound convoy was attacked unsuccessfully west of Texel. (See also Telegram 2000.)

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

A British radio station rebroadcast the announcement of zones closed off the coast of Norway, as published in the Norwegian press (see Radio Intelligence Report 1045.)

Own Situation:

Convoys in the Honningsvaag-Kirkenes-Petsamo area were slowed by foul weather. Shipping on the west and south coast according to plan.

The Commanding Admiral, Norway requests information whether there is reason to believe that the enemy has and uses moored non-contact mines which can be dropped from planes. It is necessary to clarify this matter in order to keep the limited mine-sweeping equipment and

7 May 1942

ships of the Admiral, North Norwegian Coast from being used unnecessarily.

So far, it has not been established anywhere that the enemy is using aerial moored non-contact mines, nor are there any indications that they will be used. However, in the area of Group West, British non-contact moored mines have been laid, by surface forces. Therefore, our defense must expect that they may possibly also be dropped by planes. Russian aerial moored contact mines have repeatedly been identified in the Baltic Sea. (The Commanding Admiral, Norway is informed to this effect.)

3. Arctic Ocean:

On 6 May the British Admiralty announced the sinking of destroyer JAGUAR (1,690 GRT) and on 7 May the loss of cruiser EDINBURGH. News of the loss of the EDINBURGH was released together with the announcement about the action in the Arctic Ocean, while the loss of the JAGUAR was announced without giving any indication as to where she was sunk. The destroyer had last been identified in November 1941 in the Eastern Mediterranean. It appears possible that the JAGUAR, too, may have been lost in the course of the destroyer engagement during the operations in the Arctic Ocean.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Nothing to report concerning patrol and convoy operations in the Skagerrak. The anti-aircraft ship NYMPHE is passing through the Kattegat on her way to Norway.

Several ground mines were cleared in the Little Belt. At Assens, 1 small motor ship of 125 tons sank after striking a mine and also in the Little Belt, one Danish 500 GRT steamer was hit by a mine and grounded subsequently.

A troop transport (supplementary to transport operation "Elch") of 6 ships, including the POTSDAM and GNEISENAU, carrying 6,603 men, 2,683 horses, 629 vehicles and 549 carts is under way from Stettin to Oslo.

Courier service between Sweden and Great Britain is to be carried on by Swedish planes with the approval of the German Government. See Telegram 1138.

V. Merchant Shipping

Foreign Merchant Shipping Report No. 14/42, issued by the Naval Staff, Communications and Intelligence Division, contains the following items of particular interest:

7 May 1942

1. Lively enemy shipping in the Persian Gulf during the last months, especially to Basra and Bandar Shahpur from where war material is going to Russia. Storage facilities for 600,000 to 700,000 tons are under construction in Basra; loading piers and lighters are also being built in order to overcome the lack of adequate discharge and transshipping facilities. A number of small harbors are being improved.

2. The SEA OTTER-type freighter of the U.S., in which great hopes had been placed, has definitely been rejected by the U.S. naval authorities because of insufficient seaworthiness and loading capacity.

3. A decree was issued in Italy, empowering the Minister of Transportation for the duration of the war to grant priority to urgent projects for the operation and repair of merchant vessels.

VI. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Normal reconnaissance activity of the enemy air groups in the rendezvous area of the northeastern Atlantic. Submarine hunt by enemy planes.

Radio intelligence intercepted a number of submarine sighting messages originating off the American Coast. 4 ships, probably escort vessels, were located on 4 May en route to Bermuda, where they are to refuel, and then to proceed to Trinidad.

German submarines were reported in the Gulf of Mexico southeast of the Mississippi river delta, southwest of the southern tip of Florida, and near the Windward Passage.

2. Own Situation:

New gratifying successes exceeding 42,000 tons are reported by our submarines. U "564" (Suhren) reports sinking 17,000 tons (1 tanker and 2 steamers) off the east coast of Florida. West of the Florida Strait and in the Gulf of Mexico submarine U "507" (Schacht) sank steamers FEDERAL and OLANCHO, one 2,600-ton steamer, one 9,900-ton tanker, tanker CUDAHY and steamer ANTONIO, totalling 30,000 tons, and in addition another steamer of unknown tonnage. The submarines report heavy southbound traffic in the western end of the Florida Strait, while no traffic was observed in the eastern part. Intensive air patrol activity but few sea patrols. Heavy traffic of steamers and tankers west of the Tortugas Keys.

From the Guayana coast area, submarine U "162" (Wattenberg) reports sinking 12,000 tons, including a bauxite steamer and a three-masted schooner. For the distribution of our submarines on 7 May, see Supplement to Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

7 May 1942

VII. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers flew daylight raids against Eastbourne, Dover and Hythe and night missions against the government shipyard at Chatham.

On the east coast of England our air reconnaissance located, among others, one convoy east of the mouth of the Humber, consisting of 3 destroyers, 2 tankers, and 55 steamers totalling approximately 230,000 tons (!).

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Fighters and bombers attacked ships and the airfields of Malta.

3. Eastern Front:

Heavy bomber attacks on gun emplacements and enemy rear communications on the Kerch Peninsula. Otherwise nothing to report.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western and Central Mediterranean:

Nothing to report.

Eastern Mediterranean:

Photo reconnaissance shows the following ships in the harbor of Alexandria: QUEEN ELIZABETH in dock, 4 cruisers, 8 destroyers (1 of them in dock), 8 small vessels, 6 submarines; also 35 freighters, 6 tankers, and 2 passenger ships.

2. Own Situation:

During the night of 6 May, 3 boats of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla executed a mining mission against Malta out of Augusta. After laying the mines, they had a gun duel with a British sub-chaser northeast of Marsa Scala; surviving members of the crew were taken aboard, and the subchaser sunk. (See Report 0825.)

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The convoy en route to Benghazi proceeded as planned. All other ship and convoy movements, the coastal supply traffic in Libya and the traffic to and from Greece continued without incidents.

7 May 1942

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The 14th Crete Squadron arrived in Candia. Otherwise nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring located 2 gunboats, 2 mine layers, and 4 submarines in the area of the Crimea and western Black Sea. It must be assumed that the mine layers were able to carry out their mission. Cruiser "D", which left Batum or Poti yesterday, was located in the Tuapse area in the forenoon. Movements of PT boats, mine sweepers, and patrol vessels continued in the vicinity of the Russian bases and in the Kerch Strait.

Own Situation:

The Naval Training Group executed check-sweeps in the northeastern approach to the Varna Bay without results. Convoy operations proceeded as scheduled; enemy planes bombed a convoy but scored no hits.

Several naval barges with fuel were despatched from Kherson to Zaporozhe on the Dnieper river.

IX. Situation East Asia:

3 U.S. mine sweepers and 2 gunboats were sunk off Corregidor.

On 6 May radio monitoring intercepted a message from the British radio station at Townsville, Australia about the sighting of 4 to 5 Japanese cruisers, 6 destroyers, several submarines, and 4 merchant vessels in the vicinity of the Solomon Islands. This could possibly be linked with a message from the Naval Attache at Tokyo, received during the night of 7 May, to the effect that a U.S. battleship and an A-class cruiser had been sunk off Port Moresby. Further details must be awaited.

Special Item:

Our Naval Attache at Tokyo submits a brief resume of his 4-week trip to the front and Japanese occupied areas; the following items of his report are of interest:

The occupation of the southern area was prepared by Japan to the minutest details over a period of 2 years, assisted by an excellently organized intelligence service. These preparations included the "peaceful penetration" of French Indo-China and the construction of airfields for the Naval Air Force at Saigon. The report emphasizes the very extensive staff work at the start of the op-

7 May 1942

erations and the close cooperation with the army. Vice Admiral Kondo (Chief of Operations in the southern area) stressed the importance of the Naval Air Force which had been built up and trained since its inception as an integral part of Japanese sea power; today it can almost be considered its most important component. The Naval Air Force is credited with an overwhelming share in gaining the mastery of the seas, permitting the free movement of Japanese transports and the staging of landing operations. Marines in field-grey uniforms played an important part in the landing operations on such islands as Celebes, Bali, Timor and Wake Island.

Due to the utter destruction of all loading installations and storage facilities in Java's principal ports, our blockade-runners will be able to load raw materials for the time being only in Malaya. Even this will meet with major difficulties for some time to come. The oil fields were destroyed so thoroughly, that it will take a year and a half before some of the refineries will be able to resume operations even on a limited scale. The Naval Attache remarks that the more or less pronounced overbearance of the Japanese, who assert that the British and Americans are greatly inferior, constituted an unpleasant feature of his trip. The Japanese also keep asking when the general offensive against the British Mediterranean Fleet would finally get under way. The annihilation of this fleet would permit a direct connection with Japan and would decide the war in favor of the Axis powers.

X. Army Situation:

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The enemy reinforced his positions on the Sevastopol sector. To the south, the Von Kleist Army Group scored results against enemy transport concentrations. Enemy attacks at Balakleya and south of Orel were repulsed.

Central Army Group:

Enemy attacks southeast of Mtsensk and other points were repulsed by the 2nd Panzer Army. Our troops succeeded in advancing southwest of Rzhev. Apart from minor skirmishes and attacks, nothing to report. Severest measures were taken in the rear of our lines to suppress partisan activities.

7 May 1942

Northern Army Group:

Attacks on our new positions at Kholm were repulsed and our positions improved. Enemy attacks on the Demyansk sector broke down with severe enemy losses. Enemy concentrations on Lake Ilmen were dispersed.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Renewed strong attacks in the Loukhi sector were repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy. Some enemy units were encircled. Enemy attacks in the Murmansk sector were likewise repulsed. A large portion of the Russian landing force in Motovski Bay was encircled.

8 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Concerning political developments of the foreign situation during April 1942 see Foreign Political Review of the Armed Forces High Command, Intelligence Division in War Diary, Part B, Vol. VIII.

France:

Churchill stated in the House of Commons that the preparations for the Madagascar operation began more than 3 months ago! The operation progressed slower than expected, since the French troops had fought very valiantly. Diego Suarez has been captured. According to press reports, the British will also seize the Comoro Islands and Reunion in the near future.

On 7 May Laval had a lengthy conference with the Japanese Ambassador, allegedly about the possibility of Japan's coming to the assistance of Madagascar. Governor General Anet reports to the French Government that he is determined to continue resistance to the utmost at other points of Madagascar, in spite of the loss of Diego Suarez.

Doriot, the leader of the French People's Party, in referring to the British attack on Madagascar, demanded immediate active French resistance, not merely defensive action. He said that there are British colonies in Africa and British vessels in the Mediterranean, all within the range of French guns. Without hesitation, France should ally herself with those nations which have declared war on Great Britain, in order to recover her colonial empire.

Unfortunately, similar frank statements are rarely heard from the French people. It is very difficult to judge the French attitude as a whole, due to the difference of opinion within the government and among the people. A cue to the general feeling in France after Laval's taking over the government may be found in the following excerpts of a report from an authoritative source:

The mood in France has further deteriorated, particularly because of the uncertainty about the future of the government and the intensification of anti-German propaganda; the food situation is bad, the sympathies towards the U.S. are growing. Strong opposition against Laval, particularly among the intelligentsia. Petain's prestige is no longer what it used to be. The civil servants systematically sabotage any collaboration with Germany. A further deterioration of the food situation is impending, due to low grain stocks. The number of Anglophiles is decreasing, while the friendly feeling towards the U.S. is growing very much. Strong confidence in the American war potential. Many Frenchmen put their hopes on an Allied invasion of Europe and Africa.

The Naval Staff is afraid of a progressively unfavorable development of German-French relations if present conditions should persist. While the German political and military leadership are not opposed to

8 May 1942

the collaboration with France, they strongly resent the granting to France of broader concessions of a military or political nature because of their awareness of the unsettled inner-political French situation. The Fuehrer himself believes in the necessity of utmost caution in our relations with France since the aim of all Frenchmen, including the influential personalities within the government is one and the same, i.e., to regain their liberty. Thus he fears that all concessions to France will some day work against Germany, and that collaboration will eventually result in France's benefitting decisively from Germany's waging the war, without herself making any sacrifices or sharing its burdens.

The Naval Staff has repeatedly voiced its conception of the German-French problem to the Fuehrer, the Armed Forces High Command, and the Foreign Office. The Naval Staff does not share the opinion that the distrust of France is justified to the extent that no political concessions should be granted her. It can be understood only too well that the French Government would like to receive definite assurances from Germany as soon as possible which would guarantee that France remains an independent nation (although in a Europe dominated by Germany) and would also retain her colonial empire for the most part. The Naval Staff deems it safe to assume that the present French Government is convinced of the necessity of collaborating with Germany and that it has the honest intention to cooperate. There is hardly any danger that the rearmament and the restoration of France would be directed against Germany. The French have shown at Dakar, in Syria, at Mers el-Kebir, and on Madagascar that they are determined to fight valiantly against British aggression. A nation does not fight this way after a collapse as tragic as the French one, in order to ally herself on the next occasion with the present British enemy, unless such a step were dictated by desperation or by the firm conviction that Germany is certain to lose the war. However, this conviction certainly does not exist at this moment, neither within the French Government nor among large sections of the French population. In the opinion of the Naval Staff, any political concessions or liberties which Germany might grant to France would tend to strengthen the circles favoring collaboration and to make the French population more favorably inclined towards Germany. They would furthermore not only place the French Government in a position to continue its policy of collaboration with Germany, a policy which is liable to collapse if the present situation should persist any longer, but forces could also be

8 May 1942

mobilized which would permit an active participation in the war against Great Britain. Such active participation in the European war against the Anglo-American powers is in our own best interest. It should be realized at this very moment that the present battle in Madagascar is weakening and tying up British forces and might provide a respite enabling Japan to take counteractions; thus it exclusively benefits the German war effort and thus the French sacrifices are made in the interest of the European struggle against Great Britain.

The Naval Staff dissents from the opinion voiced by the Fuehrer in his conference with the Duce, namely, that it does not make any difference in the long run if Dakar falls into the hands of the British; the Naval Staff has emphasized time and again the importance of French West Africa to the enemy and to us. (See the Memorandum "The Battle of the Atlantic" of July 1941). The Naval Staff believes that the loss of West Africa would spell also the loss of French Morocco and thus have great bearing on the warfare in the Mediterranean. The Naval Staff sees the great importance of West Africa and Morocco primarily in the following:

- a. Their value to the enemy as strategical bases for an offensive against the European continent.
- b. Their economic importance for feeding Europe.
- c. Their value as bases, in the event of active cooperation with France which, after all, might develop in the future; these bases might serve the French and German forces in their fight against Great Britain and the U.S. (for instance, for an offensive against the British possessions in West Africa).

The loss of these strategical positions must, therefore, be prevented by all means. The events in Madagascar and Syria also confirm the necessity of strengthening the defenses of Morocco and West Africa; the means to do that must be supplied by Germany, as requested by France. It is quite evident that the willingness to put up a defense and actually and actively to fight on the German side cannot be forced on the French people and the French soldier; this willingness will only spring from the conviction that France is fighting for a great national cause and for the existence and the liberty of the French nation. Only some measure of political assurances from Germany will be able to give the French people this conviction.

8 May 1942

A victorious Germany--and in the Naval Staff's opinion a France fighting on the German side is a notable gain for achieving this victory--need not fear an independent France in Europe. It is not likely that France, after the experiences of this war, will ever turn against Germany again.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. The Chief of Operations Branch reports about the situation in the Arctic Ocean and the British version of the outcome of the recent convoy operations, which ended with the admitted loss of the cruiser EDINBURGH and a total of 4 steamers.

The following conclusion can be drawn:

The final result of the recent operations can be termed excellent; it consists of the sinking of the cruiser EDINBURGH, severe damage to 2 destroyers (one of which was probably sunk), sinking or torpedoing of 5 transport vessels from convoy QP 11 and sinking of 4 transport vessels from convoy PQ 15.

The loss of our destroyer HERMANN SCHOEMANN is compensated by our success; nevertheless, due to the small number of available light forces, this loss is very painful.

Yet, in spite of our success, it must be conceded that out of a total of about 25 to 28 enemy tankers and ships carrying war materiel approximately 21 to 24 vessels from these convoys have reached Russian ports safely. This is a similar percentage to that of previous convoys. and it proves that it has not yet been possible to cut off or reduce decisively enemy supply operations in the Arctic Ocean. The reasons for this fact are as follows:

1. The convoys are provided with very strong remote and close escort by naval and air forces. The enemy always counters our light naval forces with superior forces, in addition to ample submarine protection.

2. Extremely unfavorable weather conditions (heavy seas or low visibility), since the enemy utilizes foul weather to get his convoys through.

3. Continuous daylight, throughout day and night, depriving our submarines of the tactical advantages of night attacks. Due to destroyer and air defenses an underwater attack is rarely successful as the light conditions make it impossible to take up positions for the attack.

The following can be said about the combat possibilities of the naval forces:

8 May 1942

a. Submarines: Submarines have very slight chances of success until about the end of August and we can at best count on only occasional successes.

In view of the great importance of checking the Murmansk traffic, the Naval Staff sees no possibility of completely terminating submarine warfare in the Arctic Ocean. On the contrary, since there is no more justification for keeping submarines in central or southern Norway for the prevention of possible landing attempts, all available submarines must be used against convoys in the Arctic Ocean.

We cannot hope to prevent landing operations or to be successful against fast naval forces and transport ships, but only against supply traffic once a landing has been made. Against such traffic it will always be possible to commit our submarines at sea in good time.

b. The disastrous fuel situation interferes badly with the operations of heavy surface forces. At present it is no longer possible to move the TIRPITZ and the HIPPER with their destroyer escorts, except in the event of an immediate threat to the Norwegian coast.

c. Destroyer operations offer few chances, since destroyers always encounter superior enemy forces. Besides, the fuel situation interferes with such action.

d. All experiences with PT boats in the Arctic area have shown thus far that they can be used only occasionally; they depend too much on favorable weather. (Within a period of 4 months they participated in one single mission.) Due to the continuous daylight, PT boats can no longer operate offensively in the open sea and therefore are serving now merely as floating torpedo batteries in the coast defense inside the fjords.

e. It is intended to step up the mine-laying in the approaches to ports of destination of convoys. However, once the thaw sets in and the convoys are shifted to Archangel, they will be out of reach of our mine-laying forces.

Conclusion: The Navy's means to achieve sinkings in the Arctic Ocean during the summer months are very limited, due also to the oil situation. Air Force operations afford the principal means of attack here. As long as the ice border limits the open water off the Arctic coast the Air Force will be able to achieve good results in systematic attacks as recently shown. It is therefore of utmost importance that the air forces in the north area direct their activities against this target.

II. The Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff discusses the examination made by the Commanding Admiral, Group North of the situation prevailing on the convoy lanes within the coastal waters, which has badly deteriorated as a result of the enemy's mine-laying offensive

8 May 1942

and aerial activity. See War Diary of 9 May for the Naval Staff's comment on this report.

III. The Chief of the Naval Ordnance Division, Underwater Obstacle Branch reports that the pole-reversing gear has proved very satisfactory on a mine-exploding trial ship. Four mine-exploding ships have now been completed. Pole-reversing gear for 50 ships is under construction at the Siemens Corporation where work thereon is being rushed as much as possible. An improvement of the situation can be expected shortly. The Chief of the Naval Ordnance Division, Underwater Obstacles Branch emphasizes the need of utmost secrecy regarding the new equipment of the mine-exploding ships.

IV. Guns for PT boats:

Due to the experiences of recent months gained during the operations of our PT boats on the British coast, the Commander, Torpedo Boats recognizes the need of increasing their armament so as to match or surpass the superior gun armament of the British motor gunboats. He proposes either to build motor gunboats or to augment the gun equipment to the greatest possible extent of 3 PT boats of every flotilla.

The Commander, Torpedo Boats prefers the second alternative (due to the time saving involved and the advantage of retaining the torpedo as an offensive weapon).

The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff likewise recommends the second solution, and considers its execution extremely urgent in view of the great threat to PT boats arising from motor gunboats and fighter planes because there is no other way of furnishing adequate protection. (The Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff is following this matter up.)

V. Deterioration of the quality of explosives

The Chief of the Naval Ordnance Division reports that it must be expected that a reduction of the quality of underwater explosives may also become unavoidable. Particularly, it may become impossible in the future to allocate the full required quota of aluminum. The Naval Staff is of the opinion that in this case the full effectiveness of the torpedo charge must be maintained under all circumstances, while a reduction of the explosive effect of mines could be tolerated, if unavoidable.

The problem is being worked out in cooperation with the Artillery Branch and the War Economy Branch of the Naval Ordnance Division. Preparations for the transition to a different explosive for certain mine types, possibly also for depth charges, are to be made so that we will not be caught by surprise if the necessity arises.

8 May 1942

VI. Central Planning in the Four Years Plan

The Reichsmarschall and Chairman of the Council of Ministers for the Defense of the Reich has established a "Bureau for Central Planning" within the framework of the Four Years Plan. This agency has to see that priority is accorded to arms production, as ordered by the Fuehrer, and to coordinate all demands to be made on the entire economy for this purpose for the duration of the war; it must also balance these demands with those necessary for safeguarding the food supply, raw materials, and the industry's productive capacity. The Bureau is headed by Reich Minister Speer, Field Marshal Milch and Staatssekretaer Koerner.

(See excerpt from directive dated 22 Apr., in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XII.)

VII. The Chief of the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff reports about his conference with Reich Minister Speer (in the presence of Reich Commissar Terboven and Reich Minister Dorpmueller) regarding the shipping situation of our transports to Norway. The construction of fortifications and infantry shelters, the Westwall-like reinforcement of the coastal defenses, the extension of roads, the construction of the railroad to Narvik, and of the line from the Varanger Fjord to the west, etc., are straining the transport situation to the limit and require a great amount of shipping space. The Ministry of Transportation declares its inability to provide the required tonnage, since it can hardly even satisfy the needs of even the most urgent transports of economic goods. The Chief of the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff has vigorously protested against the proposed curtailment of coal transports, which would not only badly hurt the economy but would also jeopardize the entire convoy and transport activity of our ships and patrol vessels.

The Chief of the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff is poorly impressed by the officials in charge and by the working procedure in the Ministry of Transportation. He considers the installation of a "shipping czar" inevitable in order to achieve satisfactory control of the transport problem.

The rapid increase of shipping space which is being striven for can be attained only by the allocation of more raw materials and workers for the speedy repair of damaged ships and ships in need of overhauling. Moreover, the turn-over of ships must be speeded by better organization and improvement of harbor unloading facilities. The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff points out that to this end the problem of increasing our escort forces is of decisive importance.

A conference with the Fuehrer, scheduled for 13 May, will deal with the means of best solving the over-all transport problem. In the opinion of the Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff, the best solution would be to place the Office of Maritime Shipping under the Naval High Command and to put a capable man at its head.

8 May 1942

VIII. The Chief of the Naval Construction Division reports that Reich Minister Speer, complying with a request made by Staatsrat Blohm, has ordered a commission to investigate the ship types used by the Navy and their usefulness! The Chief of the Naval Construction Division was justified in sharply repudiating this proposal. (Among other things it was proposed to investigate whether it would be possible to simplify destroyer construction and to combine fleet torpedo boats and destroyers into a single type.) It must be denied that Staatsrat Blohm, in his capacity as deputy of the Reich Minister of Armament and War Production, has the proper authority for this task. This is purely a concern of the Navy, since the necessity and the appropriateness of ship types can fundamentally be observed and judged exclusively by the Naval High Command; this holds true, even if the considerations leading to such an investigation or its results in the above case are sound.

The Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff agrees fully with this opinion and orders that any such interference with the concerns of the Navy be firmly rejected in his name.

Special Items:

I. To clarify Fuehrer Directive No. 40, Group North issued on 16 Apr. orders to Army Group D and to the various Armed Forces commanders and the admirals concerned regarding the use of the Fleet and escort forces. (See War Diary, of 16 Apr.) This telegram is now withdrawn by Group North, as it has been superseded since by instructions issued by the Naval Staff.

II. Concerning the Enemy Situation:

Attention is called to the secret and top secret radio intelligence report No. 18/42 (week of 27 Apr. to 3 May). The survey of enemy convoy and ship movements in the North and South Atlantic, which again contains gratifying information, is of interest. Particular attention should be paid to the data of convoy operations in the Arctic Ocean, the use of heavy U.S. forces for convoy duty from Newfoundland to Great Britain and to the British submarines in the Mediterranean.

It is regrettable that no similar survey exists on the battleships and aircraft carriers in the British home waters, due to the difficulties of extensive air reconnaissance and to the fact that radio communication of these ships is infrequent.

Our radio monitoring service supposes the following ships to be in home waters:

8 May 1942

Battleships: KING GEORGE V, DUKE OF YORK, HOWE (not yet completely armed), ANSON (according to press reports of February just about to be commissioned), NELSON (evidently still under repair), RODNEY (presence doubtful). In addition, the U.S. battleship WASHINGTON (on 15 Apr. in Scapa Flow). Also the TENNESSEE was reported by an agent to have been on the northern route during March.

Aircraft Carriers: ILLUSTRIOUS, FURIOUS, FORMIDABLE (doubtful whether she is ready for action), the IMPLACABLE, which ought to have been located, has not been observed thus far.

Situation 8 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "28" is ordered to dismiss the supply ship CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN to her previous waiting area after termination of their present rendezvous.

Ship "10" is informed (by Radiogram 1416) about the new positions of the tankers at her disposal for refueling.

The blockade runner DRESDEN is directed to approach the new point "Erna" daily, from 14 to 18 May, for a rendezvous with the DOGGERBANK. Should traffic be encountered in this location, she is to head for the alternate point "Ilse". If the DOGGERBANK cannot be found, the DRESDEN is to head south on the evening of 18 May and to proceed to Japan. (Point "Erna" is 2° north and 9° 30' west of point "Schraube", and point "Ilse" is 3° south of point "Erna".)

Information to the forces in foreign waters about the enemy situation is contained in Radiograms 1900, 1954, and 2248.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

On the evening of 7 May our air reconnaissance sighted 6 to 8 enemy vessels, evidently destroyers, off Start Point on an easterly course. Radio monitoring located the torpedo boat KRAKOWIAK and 4 other ships with an unidentified flotilla leader at sea south of Portsmouth at 2230.

8 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

The westerly approach to Lorient between points 33b and L2, closed since 25 Oct. 1941, has been reopened.

The 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla is scheduled to transfer from Brest to Cherbourg during the night of 3 May.

As reported today by the Chief of the Naval Communications Division, the equipment of the islands off the western French coast with radar sets is making good progress. At this moment 4 sets are operating and all of the islands will be equipped by the end of May.

Channel Coast:

The intended transfer of the 4th PT Boat Flotilla to Ostend, which was reported yesterday, could not be carried out due to weather conditions.

The 2nd Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla swept 27 mines west of Etaples. Several ground mines were swept by mine-exploding vessel.

The catapult ship SCHWABENLAND arrived in Le Havre.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Interpretation of yesterday's photo reconnaissance in the Scapa Flow area reveals the presence on 7 May of the following ships: 1 battleship; 2 cruisers, apparently heavy ones; 5 ships, apparently heavy ones; the class of which could not be determined. (Oblique shot.) Bad weather conditions prevented better observation.

Own Situation:

Convoy activity according to plan, but hampered by enemy air attacks. During the night of 7 May a Dutch steamer, damaged by a bomb detonating at close range, reached Den Helder. The steamer HEKTOR was also damaged by a bomb. During the night a west-bound convoy was unsuccessfully attacked west of Vlieland. (See Telegram 2000.) Enemy planes flew over the German Bight and the western part of the Baltic Sea during the night of 7 May evidently in order to lay mines.

8 May 1942

2. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

The British Admiralty published a communique about the convoy operation in the Arctic Ocean. It contends that only one ship was lost out of the seven which made up convoy QP 11. The loss of the cruiser EDINBURGH is admitted as the result of a torpedo hit during an engagement with German destroyers, after she was damaged a few days before by a submarine torpedo. The communique alleges that she was finally sunk on 2 May by British forces because heavy seas made it impossible to tow her any longer. Three vessels of convoy PQ 15 are supposed to have been sunk. It is emphasized that 90% of the highly important cargo of war materiel reached their Russian destination.

On the morning of 8 May an unidentified vessel on a westerly course was shelled by Army coastal battery "975" (at Hitteroe), without observed result. Possibly a mine-laying enemy vessel.

Special Item:

An agent reports from Sweden on 26 Apr. that a Norwegian engineer, who had fled from Norway, made the following statements about British landing plans:

1. The first British attack would allegedly be directed against Denmark and southern Norway in order to secure air bases and to disrupt German supply lines in the Kattegat.

2. An attack is planned on Northern Norway about 1 week prior to this operation and a few days later a landing in central Norway.

3. The British hope that Sweden will resist German demands and eventually also take action against Germany. This report does not appear very trustworthy, because a British attack on Denmark and southern Norway would be doomed to failure from the start and the enemy is certainly fully aware of the difficulties of such an operation.

Another agent reports from an American source that some time between 5 and 7 May a big convoy is to be formed in Canadian ports for the transport of war materiel to Murmansk for Soviet Russia. This convoy is allegedly larger than the one which sailed a few days ago.

Own Situation:

Ship traffic continued without particular incidents; little enemy air activity.

8 May 1942

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Most of the convoy routes in the Kattegat, closed on account of suspected mines, have been reopened. A large number of mines were swept by mine-exploding ships and mine sweepers.

Transport missions and channel-sweeping operations proceeded on schedule. The 4th transport group with replacement units is en route from Aalborg to Oslo.

In the eastern Baltic Sea the routes off Memel, Bruester Ort, and Libau were swept and checked. The group of the Commander, Mine Sweepers, Baltic has meanwhile arrived in Helsinki. (Telegrams 0730, 1930, 2138.)

Special Item:

The Armed Forces High Command declares that, effective 1 May, the Danish area is considered a zone of operations. Thus, the Commander of the Armed Forces assumes command also over the Danish civilian population in case of danger of enemy operations. However, the Danish wishes are to be respected in every way.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

With the exception of several submarine sighting reports from the American coast, nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines plans to resume the attacks on convoys and particularly on unescorted ships in the North Atlantic, after an extended lull in that area. He orders 7 submarines, to be known as the "Hecht" group, to proceed to a line extending from quadrants AK 6155 to AK 9341, where they should arrive on 14 May. The patrol line will then advance southwest on course 240° and comb the British convoy route.

Submarine U "125" reports heavy traffic in the Caribbean Sea, and neither sea nor air patrols southeast of the Yucatan Strait.

On 8 May the submarine U "507" sank the Norwegian steamer TORNY in the Gulf of Mexico, and submarine U "162" a smaller 1,900 ton steamer off Guiana.

8 May 1942

The submarine observed no traffic along the Guiana coast nor on the 200 m line and assumes that the bauxite ports are being entered and left during the night.

For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation, War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers raided the south and southeast coast and scored hits on Chatham and Eastbourne. A British patrol vessel was sunk. Two steamers of a convoy were damaged off Shoreham.

Norwich was attacked by 76 planes during the night.

Forty to forty-five enemy planes flew over Reich territory, concentrating on the Rostock-Warnemuende area; no important military damage.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Our raids on Valletta continued.

3. Eastern Front:

The Air Force staged a concentrated attack on the Kerch Peninsula in support of the offensive of the 11th Army. A Russian mine sweeper was sunk south of Kerch. The sea area around Sevastopol is being patrolled by bomber planes.

The offensive of our land forces against the Kerch Peninsula is being decisively assisted by unremitting raids by our bomber formations, some of which attacked up to 8 times. The enemy is suffering tremendous losses of men and materiel.

Hurricane and Curtis planes are reported for the first time on the front of Army Group South.

Special Item:

Carrier Planes:

The Air Force submitted final data about carrier planes. The assurances received make it unnecessary to make further changes in the plane installations of the aircraft carrier GRAF ZEPPELIN. Details (e.g., concerning navigational and radio equipment) will be clarified in further discussions with the Air Force.

8 May 1942

The results are as follows:

The operational plane types provided by the Air Force are the Ju 87D for use as a reconnaissance, dive-bombing, torpedo and smoke-laying plane, and the BF 109g for use as a fighter. These types are suitable for catapulting in every case. Preliminary tests are to be made with planes of the old type. Test planes of the new type may be expected for July 1943 and mass delivery will start approximately 9 months later. The decision of the Commander in Chief, Navy whether the aircraft carrier is to be built will now be made as soon as possible. (For details see results of the conferences between Naval Staff and Commander in Chief, Air Force in War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.)

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

During the night of 7 May the following vessels left Gibraltar for an unknown destination: RENOWN, EAGLE, one DIDO-class cruiser, one mine-laying cruiser, and 9 destroyers. Fog prevented exact observation.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

Ships in the harbor of Malta unchanged. Barges are being used as mine sweepers in the harbor area.

No ship movements were observed in the coastal waters between Alexandria and Tobruk.

2. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The convoy en route to Benghazi was unsuccessfully attacked by submarines and torpedo planes during the evening and the night of 7-May. It arrived in Benghazi on schedule.

Otherwise nothing to report. With regard to the departure of the 9th transport group of 6 motor ships from Naples and Messina, see Telegram 1240.

3. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Eight Russian submarines were observed in the Crimean

8 May 1942

area and the western part of the Black Sea. Convoy activity under escort of cruisers and destroyers was observed between Gelendzhik and Novorossisk. Very lively convoy and supply traffic in the Kerch Strait area.

Own Situation

Convoy activity according to plan. (See Telegrams 1800 and 1010.)

VIII. Situation East Asia

The Naval Attache at Tokyo reports on the naval engagement off New Guinea. According to his report, a sea and air battle with British and American forces ensued when Japanese troops occupied Tulagi in the Solomon Islands. At noon of 7 May an enemy formation was sighted southeast of New Guinea. It consisted of 2 battleships, 2 carriers, approximately 3 heavy and light cruisers, and several destroyers. The Japanese Naval Air Force attacked with carrier and land-based planes. On 8 May the Japanese report sinking one battleship of the CALIFORNIA class, one SARATOGA-class aircraft carrier, and one destroyer, and severely damaging the battleship WARSPITE, one YORKTOWN-class carrier, the heavy cruiser CANBERRA, and one tanker. Measures have been taken for the pursuit and sinking of damaged vessels. Three Japanese aircraft carriers and 6 Japanese A-cruisers participated in the engagement; one auxiliary aircraft carrier is reported lost thus far.

The German Navy is highly pleased by this new great success of the Japanese Navy and Naval Air Force. It is remarkable that no Japanese battleship took part in this action; thus the great success seems to have been achieved only by the use of torpedo and bomber planes. More detailed Japanese reports have to be awaited before final conclusions can be reached.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The 11th Army took the offensive in the Feodosiya sector against a numerically superior enemy. It was able to break through the enemy line and to gain a foothold in the important Parpatch

8 May 1942

position. The enemy suffered heavy bloody losses. In front of the von Kleist Army Group heavy enemy traffic in both directions. At Slavyansk the enemy renewed his futile attacks. Nothing to report from the 6th Army.

Hungarian troops fought successfully against partisans in the rear of the 2nd Army sector.

Central Army Group:

2nd Panzer Army:

Enemy assault troops staged minor attacks; otherwise nothing to report. Due to heavy rains roads are deep in mud.

No action of any importance took place on the sectors of the 4th, 3rd Panzer and 9th Armies. Observation of enemy movements leads us to expect an attack northwest of Rzhev.

Northern Army Group:

Lively enemy scouting activity at the Lovat River. West of Kholm, German assault detachments were successful. At the Demyansk sector enemy attacks supported by tanks were repulsed. Also at the Lovat River and at Staraya Russa enemy attacks broke down with heavy enemy losses. Enemy artillery was active north of Lake Ilmen. Enemy preparations were smashed. Heavy enemy attacks southeast of Maluksa were beaten back.

2. Finnish Front:

An enemy force north of Kestenga was annihilated and strong enemy formations dispersed. Futile enemy attacks on the Murmansk front. Additional units of the enemy landing detachment south of Motovski Bay were dispersed and destroyed.

9 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

Foreign Secretary Eden stated in a speech made in Edinburgh that after this war no nation will be able to remain in isolation. Great Britain will have to share the burden of leadership and the responsibility with others. Never again will Great Britain neglect her armament. In the new World Order Great Britain, the United States, Russia, and China will cooperate in maintaining the peace. Hitler still appears to be under the illusion that there are people in Great Britain ready to make peace. However, England, the British Empire, and all of the Allies are unanimous in their decision not to negotiate with Hitler.

(For details see Political Review No. 107.)

India:

Reports received indicate that Ghandi and his policy of non-violence are gaining more and more ground against Nehru and his followers who demand an active defense of India.

Australia:

In connection with the naval battle in the Coral Sea, Prime Minister Curtin declares that the outcome of the war cannot be predicted yet. Australia must face the fact that an invasion might be made at any moment. This battle, while not decisive for the outcome of the war, will determine the future strategy of the Allies.

France:

According to foreign press reports, the Vichy Government is making preparations to transfer gold valued at close to \$1,000,000,000 from Martinique to Venezuela. Submarines are allegedly to be used for the transport.

No official word about this matter has been received. Yet, particular attention must be paid to the problem of safeguarding the French gold reserves and to the fate of the French naval forces lying in Martinique (among others the aircraft carrier BEARN and the cruiser EMILE BERTIN), now that Martinique also appears seriously threatened, following the Madagascar operation. Judging from the general attitude taken thus far by the French Navy, there can hardly be any doubt that the French forces would prefer to destroy or scuttle their vessels rather than let them fall into the enemy's hands in the event of an American occupation of Martinique. The Naval Staff will take this matter up with the Foreign Office.

9 May 1942

Turkey:

According to a foreign press report, the Russian Ambassador at Ankara was evidently recalled to Kuibyshev. At the same time it became known that the Turkish Ambassador, recalled from Moscow, will probably not return to his post for quite some time.

Special Items:

I. An analysis of the present situation in German coastal waters, which has become very acute due to enemy mining and air activities, results in the following conclusions on the part of the Naval Staff:

Enemy Situation: An extensive mine offensive is being waged against our coast, the convoy lanes, and the approaches to our bases.

The German Atlantic bases (submarine bases!) are systematically being blocked by mine fields laid in large-scale operations at a distance of 100 miles from the French coast. This constitutes a serious threat to German submarine warfare in the long run, because the approaches are thus sealed off.

Most intensive air activity over the entire area of German coastal waters interferes with our mine-sweeping operations and the movement of our ships. Recently enemy destroyers and PT boats have been very active along our routes, even close to the coasts. In some cases this has led to engagements of our light forces of inferior number and strength with superior enemy forces.

This compares with our own situation as follows:

The convoy problem is a very difficult one; it is becoming increasingly so due to the lack of escort forces. Our forces are taxed to the utmost limit of human and material endurance so that losses are rising steadily and the amount of repairs is high, as illustrated by the following figures:

On 30 Apr. in the western area:

2nd Defense Division	76 vessels ready for combat 54 vessels <u>not</u> ready for combat
3rd Defense Division	60 vessels ready for combat 29 vessels <u>not</u> ready for combat
4th Defense Division	65 vessels ready for combat 32 vessels <u>not</u> ready for combat
Total:	201 vessels ready for combat 115 vessels <u>not</u> ready for combat

9 May 1942

Our mine-sweeping operations are encountering increasing difficulties. Certain lanes can be kept open only by straining all our resources. As a consequence, losses of merchant ships and escort forces have become inevitable and considerable delays in dispatching vital convoys have developed (for instance, tankers to Norway).

The reasons for this development may be summed up as follows:

1. Disastrous lack of defensive forces (destroyers, mine sweepers, torpedo boats, motor mine sweepers, PT boats, and patrol boats).
2. Utterly unsatisfactory labor situation, which does not permit the speedy repair of damaged vessels but, on the contrary, creates intolerable delay.
3. Air forces, which are completely insufficient and can no longer gain absolute air superiority at all points of our coastal regions. Air reconnaissance in the morning and evening is no longer conducted regularly.
4. Our aerial mine operations off the British coast had to be discontinued lately because all available air forces are engaged in retaliatory attacks against England; this fact resulted in the easing of the situation on the English coast, in a reduction of British losses of ships and defensive forces, and in freeing enemy forces for offensives against German shipping.

The situation in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea is similar to that in the western area. There, too, successful enemy activity against our escort and convoy operations is increasing, due to intensified mine-laying, growing use of air forces, and rising enemy air superiority.

Conclusion: The shipping and transport situation in all German and German-dominated coastal waters is very grave; if the enemy continues successfully, all shipping may be completely paralyzed. The Navy is rushing the following measures with all energy and all available means:

1. Increasing the anti-aircraft and other protective armament of all ships and transports.
2. Improving the organization of the mine-detecting service.
3. Improving the mine-sweeping equipment. Completing the mine-exploding vessels equipped with the new mine-sweeping gear.
4. Equipping all war ships, beginning with torpedo boats, and all important large merchant vessels with the improved degaussing gear (degaussing gear with additional windings of the principal coil and supplementary course-compensating bow and stern coils).

9 May 1942

It is difficult to carry out this project, necessitated by the frequent use of aerial mines on the part of the enemy, due to the great quantities of material needed and the insufficient allocation of raw materials.

In the opinion of the Naval Staff, a decisive success against enemy air raids by day and night can be achieved by increasing our fighter planes and by providing convoys with continuous fighter protection. This fact is called to the attention of the Commander in Chief, Air Force in an urgent letter coupled with a request to recheck the defensive measures against enemy air attacks on our transport shipping and our sea lanes in the coastal waters. It is, moreover, necessary to increase the number of Ju 52 mine-sweeping planes in operation.

In connection with the foregoing, the Naval Staff is firmly convinced of the absolute necessity of a speedy reinforcement of our light naval forces; these forces are a prerequisite, not only for the control of the sea communications in our coastal waters, but, most of all, for the continuation of submarine warfare (control of the approaches, security of practice and training areas). The Naval Staff is preparing a memorandum concerning the problem of the light naval forces. Increased allocation of raw materials and additional labor are absolutely essential in order to prevent the gravest consequences to the over-all war situation in the near future.

II. With regard to improving our defenses against British aerial mines and with reference to the considerations under I: The Naval Staff, in a message to all front line commanders, points to the growing threat from British aerial mines equipped with a new firing device (with decreasing induction) which requires that everything possible be done to improve our defenses against these mines. These measures are as follows:

1. Drive off the mine-laying planes (by night fighters, anti-aircraft guns, convoy escorts.)
2. Active defense by spotting mines which have been dropped, clearing them with mine-exploding vessels or mine-sweeping planes and other mine-sweeping equipment.
3. Passive defense against the British aerial mines by demagnetization, the use of degaussing gear, and conscientious adherence to the prescribed traffic routes.

If enemy activities should further increase, a success can be achieved only if everything possible is done with the utmost energy along the indicated lines. The Chief of the Operations Division, Naval Staff implements the above-cited steps with details and directives in his letter I E 8304/42 Gkdos. of 8 May. (See letter in War Diary of 8 May, Part C, Vol. VI.)

III. Mine Stores: Complying with the demand of the Naval Staff to increase the monthly supply of standard mines type C and anti-

9 May 1942

submarine mines type B, (see War Diary 30 Apr.), the Naval Ordnance Division has taken appropriate action and reports that the capacity of the factories is sufficient to cope with the increased demand. Since antenna mines require a particularly large amount of copper, the Naval Ordnance Division requests an order confirming that the 1,000 standard mines type C are to be equipped with contact-release devices.

The confirmation is issued.

IV. Concerning continued construction of auxiliary cruisers: at present, 6 auxiliary cruisers are available, two of which are in the zone of operations, one ready to sail shortly, two are being fitted, and one is being converted. According to available information, the latter will not be ready for combat prior to Jul. 1943. The Quartermaster Division of the Naval Staff is directed to move up this delivery date by all available means, because a serious shortage will otherwise develop in the zone of operations in the spring of 1943. Ship "49" is intended to serve as a seventh vessel, and the Chief of the Operations Division, Naval Staff is demanding that she should be converted. He considers the simultaneous presence of three ships in the zone of operations as the minimum requirement on which the Operations Division, Naval Staff must insist.

This figure of 7 ships is sufficient to meet this requirement. However, losses must be reckoned with and the Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff therefore requests that 2 additional suitable vessels be assigned. He agrees that these vessels should be converted only when this is necessary.

The Chief of the Operations Division, Naval Staff is fully aware of the difficulties in procuring the materials and labor required for the reconstruction; he will, therefore, keep in close contact with the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff, which is now advised that the available ships "28", "14", and "23" do not meet the requirements of a modern auxiliary cruiser; if they are to be used again some time in the future, they can at best be considered as an emergency solution.

(For details see letter to Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff in War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.)

V. Concerning the construction of a PT boat carrier; The Naval Construction Division had submitted the plans for a PT boat carrier, proving that under certain conditions it is possible to build a ship which affords the space and the facilities for transporting, lowering, and hoisting PT boats. This would permit PT boats to operate in more distant areas.

9 May 1942

In view of the prevailing war situation the Chief of the Operations Division, Naval Staff sees no eventuality which would hold promise of successful operation of a PT boat carrier. Due to the enemy's close watch over the approach areas, operations involving the use of a ship of such size against the British convoy traffic on the east or north coast hardly has a chance to succeed. This applies also to operations in the Arctic Ocean. Nor is there much hope of success if so conspicuous a ship were to be used in foreign waters; besides, high seas would permit the use of PT boats only on rare occasions. Thus, the considerable expenditure of labor, raw materials, etc., involved appears unjustified. Instead all possibilities must be studied, created, and exploited in order to speed the construction of torpedo boats, mine sweepers, motor mine sweepers, and destroyers, along with submarines. The Chief of the Operations Division, Naval Staff is at this moment investigating whether the newly-built OSTMARK (19,000 tons), which was suggested for conversion into a PT boat carrier by the Naval Construction Division, could and ought to be used as an auxiliary aircraft carrier. (The Quartermaster Division and the Naval Construction Division, Naval Staff are informed accordingly.)

Situation 9 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

South Atlantic:

According to a Portuguese report, a battleship and an aircraft carrier were in the area off Sierra Leone on 7 May. The battleship referred to may be the MALAYA.

The Consul at Santa Isabel reports the arrival in Duala of several American freighters with war materiel, including tanks; all materiel was immediately shipped to the interior.

The Naval Attache at Madrid reports that the Spanish Government has manifested strong interest lately for the events in the Cameroons. (See Telegram 1100.)

The loss of the Free French corvette ALLYSTANZA on 10 Feb. and the sinking of the submarine cruiser SURCOUF on 19 Feb. after a collision with an American ship were revealed by a British Admiralty communique.

2. Own Situation:

No reports were received from the auxiliary cruisers. The blockade-runner PORTLAND was met on the Spanish-French line and is now underway to the Gironde estuary; this is another very gratifying achievement of the blockade-runner service.

9 May 1942

The blockade-runner MUENSTERLAND is informed by Radiogram 1213 about the enemy convoy movements in the area between 18° and 30° W.

Our forces in foreign waters are informed about the enemy situation by Radiograms 0629 and 2201, and a detailed account of the Madagascar situation is transmitted by Radiogram 1919.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

At 1845 air reconnaissance forces of the Air Command, Atlantic Coast spotted a 2-funneled destroyer on an easterly course, approximately 20 miles west of Brest, *escorted by an enemy land-based plane. Due to the lack of fuel, contact could not be maintained, nor later reestablished because of weather conditions.

It may be assumed that this report concerns a mining operation in connection with British attempts to blockade the Atlantic coast. The weakness of our air forces in the western area, allowing neither adequate air reconnaissance nor the flying of combat missions, is once more deeply regretted.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

The blockade-runner PORTLAND was picked up by our escort forces and is proceeding to the Gironde.

A French fishing vessel was sunk by an enemy plane south of Brest during the night of 2 May.

Channel Coast:

The 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla arrived in Cherbourg; the motor mine sweeper R "45" was rammed on route "Rosa"; her bow sank, while the stern was towed to Dunkirk.

Mine-sweeping operations on the convoy route continued successfully.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Normal enemy air activity over the North Sea; planes penetrated into the German Bight and the western Baltic Sea. It is

* Note: This seems to be an error and should read 120 miles; cf. p. 109 Special Items, I, Enemy Situation par. 2, and p. 125, par. II, 1.

9 May 1942

interesting that an enemy plane, which made a forced landing at the island of Hooe, had 4 mines on board. (Two old type British aerial mines and 2 of the new type with twin contacts.)

Group North, in its seventh report of the enemy situation, relates that regular patrolling of the straits between the Shetland Islands, the Faeroe Islands, and Iceland has not been observed for quite some time. Our reconnoitering submarines have sighted patrol boats or destroyers only occasionally. Patrol service is maintained indirectly by the convoys sailing between the British Isles and Iceland and also by the defense and task forces engaged in escorting PQ convoys. The enemy evidently considers these measures adequate.

(For details see Enemy Situation, Group North, Telegram 1730.)

Own Situation:

Mine-sweeping of traffic lanes and convoy missions in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North proceeded according to plan. It is suspected that enemy planes flying over the German Bight have dropped mines. A number of enemy planes were brought down over the Danish west coast. (See Telegrams 1900 and 2000.)

Special Items:

In view of the daily loss of steamers and of the damage wrought on our Elbe-Holland convoys by enemy air attacks, the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North proposes as follows:

- a. To arm all Swedish and Danish vessels from now on, since the convoys are at present composed of from 80 to 100% Swedish and Danish steamers.
- b. To increase and accelerate the production schedule of line-carrying rockets and launching gear by according them the highest priority and by giving priority to their installation on all patrol boats and merchant vessels in the North Sea area.
- c. To give higher priority to the production of barrage balloons and their equipment.
- d. To maintain continuous fighter patrols, day and night. (Recent experience shows that the enemy is attacking and conducting mining operations against our traffic lanes mainly at night; for his attacks he evidently relies on radar.)
- e. To speed up allocation of more mine-sweeping planes.

Group North wholeheartedly supports the proposition made by the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North because the supply and replenishment service in the North Sea and the Channel area is in jeopardy, due to the daily heavy losses of tonnage caused by enemy planes and mines.

9 May 1942

The Naval Staff agrees completely with Group North and the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North. (See comment of Naval Staff under Special Items.)

2. Norway:

Convoy operations are being delayed by bad weather conditions; at present, 9 steamers are at Kirkenes ready to sail. The Commanding Admiral, Norway has dispatched escort vessels in order to overcome the bottleneck.

During an air raid on Stavanger on the night of 8 May, the steamer KRETA (2,955 GRT) was hit by a bomb, but remains afloat.

Special Items:

a. In the opinion of the Commanding Admiral, Norway, the following measures are necessary to strengthen the defenses of the Bergen base.

Removal of the mine fields in the Nord and Vest Fjords, since they are no longer adequate to close the harbor and protect the roadstead, but rather constitute a permanent threat to our navigation. Installation of a double-row anti-submarine barrage in the Vest Fjord. Preparations for a mine field against surface forces, to be laid west of the anti-submarine barrage only in case of emergency. Installation of a double-row anti-submarine barrage in the Nord Fjord. Preparations for a mine field against surface forces in the Nord Fjord to be laid only in case of emergency. The Commanding Admiral, Norway requests approval of these plans and allocation of mines.

A study of this request by Group North and the Operations Division, Naval Staff is under way.

b. For the purpose of deceiving the enemy, Group North sends a telegram, saying that the return of the PRINZ EUGEN has been postponed temporarily. (See Telegram 1421.)

c. Group North reports that it is difficult to transport the necessary fuel to the bases established in the north and east due to the loss of several tankers by bombs and mine hits. The number of available tankers is insufficient for the operations planned by or forced on the Group. The Group requests that additional tankers be allocated and the damaged ships repaired speedily.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff advises the Quartermaster Division to take the necessary steps.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Radio monitoring belatedly reports the U.S. cruiser RICHMOND southwest of Reykjanes on the evening of 7 May. Otherwise nothing of importance to report about the enemy. Group North

9 May 1942

estimates that convoy PQ 16 will enter the area of Jan Mayen between 14 to 16 May. There are, however, no definite indications for this assumption. The Group intends to concentrate all submarines of Group North which are ready for operations in the area of Jan Mayen, where they are to take up their positions; their command is to be turned over to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean as soon as he has been transferred to Narvik. According to a report of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean there will probably be only 4 submarines available to operate against convoy PQ 16, in addition to those of Group North.

With a view to the experiences of the last operation, the Naval Staff welcomes the intention of the Group to entrust the command of the submarines off Jan Mayen to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean this time at an early stage.

Group North had suggested that the 5th Air Force hold bombers in readiness against British naval forces serving as remote escort for PQ 16. The 5th Air Force answered that it is unfortunately not able to hold any of her planes in readiness for this operation. The weakness of our air forces which are badly needed everywhere must be greatly deplored also in this instance.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

During the night of 8 May, 45 enemy planes flew in a wide sweep over the German Bight and northern Schleswig and penetrated into the western Baltic Sea. It is assumed that no mines were dropped. Warnemuende and Rostock were bombed. Anti-aircraft fire and night fighters downed a great number of enemy planes.

Channel-sweeping and convoy operations proceeded according to plan. (See Radiograms 0730 and 2209.) Transports from Stettin to Oslo were forced to drop anchor temporarily due to the mine situation.

In the western part of the Finnish Gulf the first section (laid at great depth) of the mine field "Nashorn" was between Porkkala and Nargen by the mine vessels KAISER, ROLAND, and the 3rd Mine Sweeper Flotilla.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Submarine sighting reports on the American Coast, north-east of Cape Hatteras and on the east coast of Florida. According to radio intelligence the U.S. submarine R7 takes over patrol duty in the Mona Passage on 12 May.

9 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

On the east coast of Florida the U "333" recently sank a tanker, type GULF PRIDE, a tanker of type W.B. WALKER, and a 6,000 ton steamer, a total of 28,500 GRT. The boat was subsequently chased for 20 to 30 miles by 3 destroyers attacking with depth charges over a period of 6 hours, and was damaged so that she has difficulty in submerging properly. The submarine reports that fast land-based planes and destroyers maintain intense patrol service during the day.

U "352" encountered little traffic east of Cape Lookout. From there to the coast, medium air patrol and strong searchlight activity. The boat is southeast of Cape Fear and reports very alert night patrol activity by submarine chasers, coast guard cruisers, and single destroyers.

U "558" sighted a convoy of 4 tankers and 3 steamers, escorted by a Coast Guard cruiser and 2 gunboats off Cape Hatteras.

For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation, War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers attacked Box Hill and Hastings. No night missions were flown. At least 14 enemy planes were downed during daylight raids.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Nothing to report.

3. Eastern Front:

Strong air forces supported Army operations on the Kerch Peninsula. Our planes also supported the ground forces in the Murmansk area.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean:

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

The task force which sailed from Gibraltar on 8 May is still at sea, probably in the western Mediterranean. On the morning of 9 May radio monitoring revealed the ferrying of planes to Malta. Enemy destroyers are reported north of Algiers and north of Bougie, and in the evening a cruiser northwest of Cape Bon. It is

9 May 1942

assumed that the cruiser is attempting to break through to Malta.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

According to radio monitoring, several vessels of the Alexandria group are at sea in the eastern Mediterranean. However, air reconnaissance over the coastal waters between Derna and Alexandria was unable to locate any war vessels. Northeast of Port Said a British ship which was bombed broadcast an urgent message.

Only light enemy shipping between Marsa Matruh and Tobruk.

2. Own Situation:

In the evening the German Naval Command, Italy reports the intention to dispatch the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla to the harbor entrance of Valletta against the enemy cruiser reported northwest of Cape Bon. The flotilla is to proceed to Valletta in 2 groups, one of which will carry mines. (See Telegram 2100.)

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 9th transport group is supposed to sail on 10 May and use the western route to Tripoli. See Telegram 1900 for a report about the convoy which arrived yesterday, at Benghazi and was unsuccessfully attacked en route by a submarine and planes.

Coastal supply traffic and shipping from Italy to Greece without noteworthy events.

Special Item:

Concerning Naval Barges in the Mediterranean Area:

The Armed Forces High Command ordered that naval barges are to be made available in the Mediterranean as quickly as possible, and that a part of them are to be converted for the transport of the heaviest type tanks for operation "Herkules". To begin with, the first ten naval barges will be converted within a relatively short time. The naval barges assigned to operation "Herkules", which had to be withdrawn in part from the North African supply service, are to be combined into a landing flotilla. The flotilla will go into action in the course of operation "Herkules" only by agreement with the German Naval Command, Italy. Upon their arrival the Army units participating in the operation are to be placed under the command of the 7th Airborne Division; this division is under the command of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South who, in turn, will arrange cooperation with the Italians. The German Naval Command, Italy is ordered to provide for the command and assignment of the flotilla according to this directive. (Regarding the information to Armed

9 May 1942

Forces High Command, German Naval Command, Italy and Italian Admiral at the Naval Staff, see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

A plane of group 126 attacked a suspicious-looking tanker east of Leshos in the morning of 9 May without scoring a hit. The vessel subsequently headed for the Turkish coast and allegedly ran aground; this could possibly refer to the British tanker OILSHIPPER, which was supposed to sail from the Dardanelles in the direction of the Aegean Sea at sunrise on 9 May, according to a report from the Italian Naval Attache at Ankara.

Since there is also a possibility that it was a Turkish vessel, the Commander in Chief, Air Force advises the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South and the 4th Air Force that, in the interest of friendly political relations with Turkey, Turkish ships encountered outside Turkish territorial waters should be spared, provided their identity had been established. However, no obligation to establish the nationality exists in a declared zone of operation, and Turkish navigation so far has kept itself mostly within Turkish territorial waters.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of 8 May revealed intensive convoy activity from Sukhum to Kerch. On 9 May air reconnaissance located several submarines, light naval forces, the cruiser "D", several mine sweepers, and PT boats at sea in the Crimean area and the northeastern part of the Black Sea. Also lively traffic in the Kerch Strait.

Own Situation:

Convoy operations proceeded according to plan. The 1st Landing Flotilla proceeding from Bugaz to Sulina was unsuccessfully attacked by enemy planes on 8 May. (For details see Report 2255.)

VIII. Situation East Asia

The official Japanese Headquarters communique about the battle in the Coral Sea announces the sinking of a U.S. CALIFORNIA-class battleship, an aircraft carrier of the SARATOGA class and one of the YORKTOWN class, the damaging of a British WARSPITE-class battleship and of a CANBERRA-class cruiser. The British violently deny that the WARSPITE was damaged. The U.S. Navy Department distorts the battle into an American victory by asserting that a Japanese landing attempt in Australia was successfully repulsed and that Japan lost an aircraft carrier, 2 cruisers, 2 destroyers, 4 gunboats, and

9 May 1942

2 transports. The casualties of the U.S. Navy are minimized.

It must be said, however, that the Japanese, on the evidence of all reports received, intended nothing more than a landing operation in the Solomon Islands and never thought of attacking Australia; such an operation is considered impossible as long as New Guinea is not in Japanese hands.

There can be no doubt that the Japanese success, as reported by Japanese Headquarters, has actually been achieved at very low cost. Thus Japan has gained superiority at sea also in this theater of war and opened the way for future operations against New Guinea and northern Australia. Nothing definite is known yet about the next Japanese operation plans. Available reports indicate that Japan intends to solve the problem of northern Australia and New Guinea first and to take the offensive in the western Indian Ocean later. The Naval Staff would deeply regret such a development, because it is of greatest interest to Germany that Japan should soon make a showing in the western Indian Ocean.

In the meantime the situation on the Burma Peninsula is developing favorably for the Japanese. The Japanese are advancing with strong forces to the northeast along the Burma Road. It seems that plane losses there are very severe.

The fighting in China is mostly limited to guerilla actions of little consequence.

IX. Army Situation

Nothing of importance to report.

10 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

The Times publishes an evidently officially inspired news item that the British Air Force will in the future launch the heaviest possible attacks on targets within Germany on every occasion presenting itself. Official circles are said to be convinced that Germany's home front will collapse earlier than the military front. To accomplish this should be the principal task of the R.A.F. Continuing its discussion, the paper gives America a broad hint to the effect that the success of the air offensive does not depend on British production alone, but to a large degree on the extent of American aid and most of all on the number of heavy bombers sent to Britain from the U. S.

France:

According to press reports, Vichy circles believe that the relations between France and U. S. have eased noticeably because the U. S. purposely refrained from participation in the Madagascar operation.

The U. S. press published an announcement of the U. S. State Department, according to which a commission, consisting of Admiral Hoover, Commandant of the Caribbean Sea district and Samuel Reber, Deputy Chief of the European Division, State Department, has requested a guaranty from the French Government representative on Martinique that the island will not be used by the Axis powers. The negotiations with the French representative are supposed to have already begun.

Reuter reports in this connection that an agreement about the disarmament and the immobilization of the French combat forces in the harbor of Fort-de-France (Martinique) (BEARN, JEANNE D'ARC, and EMILE BERTIN) will soon be reached.

Japan and Russia:

The Foreign Office belatedly informed the Naval Staff about a conference between the German Ambassador at Tokyo and the Japanese Foreign Minister. As directed by the Foreign Office, the Ambassador emphasized that an offensive against Vladivostok and in the general direction of Lake Baikal by the Japanese army would be of eminent importance. Moreover, that in view of the increasingly difficult Russian situation, Japan would greatly contribute to the fast and ultimate elimination of Russia as a belligerent, provided she is sufficiently strong to attack Russia this year. The Japanese Foreign Minister made no comment to this.

The Naval Staff in a sense deplores this attempt to influence the Japanese in favor of an offensive against Vladivostok and Lake Baikal. Such an operation requires powerful Japanese land and air forces as well as a great number of sea transports and would thus tie up the Japanese fleet and naval air forces. As a consequence, Japan would practically

10 May 1942

be unable to carry the war to the western Indian Ocean, a matter which would have a decisive effect on German land operations. It is the conviction of the Naval Staff that the common war effort against Great Britain and the U. S. would be served much better if Japan could see her principal task in the western Indian Ocean and would use strong forces to stop Britain's very large supply traffic to Persia and to the Red Sea.

Special Items:

1. Limited Operation in North Africa:

The Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy submits copy of a letter from the Commander of the Panzer Army, Africa containing information about the operational goals of the Panzer Army for the limited operations (Tobruk) scheduled for early June. The Panzer Army makes their execution contingent on the fulfillment of certain prerequisites: in the first place, that the required reinforcements (tanks) are supplied, that the German units receive sufficient fuel, ammunition, and food and, finally, that the bulk of these supplies are transferred to Benghazi with the assistance of Italian trucks. A further request concerns assistance to be rendered by the German and Italian Navies with all available forces in the following manner:

1. PT boats to be used against the sea and coastal areas of Tobruk.
2. Submarines to be concentrated off Tobruk and Alexandria.
3. Torpedo boats and mine sweepers to be used for the escorting of convoys and for mine sweeping and submarine chasing in the area Benghazi-Tobruk.
4. Barges to be used for the landing of German assault troops west and east of Tobruk and for the coastal supply service.
5. Heavy Italian naval forces and assault boats to be used to tie up the British fleet in Alexandria.

The Naval Staff is determined to utilize all available forces and to exploit all operational possibilities to support the operations of the Panzer Army to the utmost. Directives to this effect will be issued to the German Naval Command, Italy.

(For details see letter German Naval Command, Italy as per Gkdos. 198/42, file "Aida".)

10 May 1942

II. The Chief of the Intelligence Division, upon his return from a trip to Spain, reports about a conference with the Spanish General Vigon; the following items of this report are of particular interest:

1. The possibilities of defending the main islands of the Canary Islands are considered favorable, though the available guns are only of limited range. The island garrisons have lately been reinforced. There is a scarcity of aviation gasoline.

2. The Commander in Chief, Air Force, by way of the Foreign Office, requested the Spanish Government's consent for the installation of a base for sea rescue planes on the Spanish northwest coast. General Vigon has promised to support the German standpoint. It was proposed to organize the sea rescue service with German materiel and Spanish personnel, interspersed with German officers and technicians.

3. Portugal requested information as to how Spain would react in the event of a British-American attack on Portuguese territory; Spain replied that she is not in a position to take any action if Portuguese island possessions were attacked, but is prepared to lend all support within her power if continental Portugal is invaded.

Situation 10 May 1942

1. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

On 7 May the Portuguese sighted 1 battleship and 1 aircraft carrier off Freetown. Radio monitoring assumes these to be the MALAYA and possibly the carrier RANGER.

Otherwise nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "10" requests an immediate rendezvous with her supply ship REGENSBURG at point "Messing".

The reason for this request is not discernible. The Naval Staff advises the REGENSBURG to head immediately for the last meeting point "Richard" and to await ship "10" there.

The blockade-runner PORTLAND reached Bordeaux. According to her manifest she carries the following precious cargo: 4,624 tons of rubber, 600 tons of tin in bars, 272 tons of tungsten ore, 416 tons of cocoanut oil, 213 tons of lubricating oil, 602 tons of glycerine, 174 tons of tallow, 57 tons of tea, 10 tons of tobacco, 36 tons of gum and shellac, 12 tons of agaragar (gelatine for bacteria culture), 5 tons of "Brandungswurzel" and several small items, including 16 cases of foodstuffs for the Japanese Embassy.

10 May 1942

II. Situation West Area

1. Atlantic Coast:

Reference is made to the report made on the afternoon of 9 May by the Air Commander, Atlantic Coast, about sighting an enemy destroyer 120 miles west of Brest.* Actually not one, but two 2-funneled destroyers with plane escort are involved in this report. (It is very probable that they are on a mine-laying mission.) The plan to reestablish contact with them failed due to bad weather.

Approximately 35 miles southwest of St. Nazaire the mine sweeper M "4424" sank, due to an explosive cutter detonation!

2. Channel Coast:

No important incidents. The 4th PT Boat Flotilla transferred from Hook of Holland to Ostend.

During the night of 10 May a task force sailed from Dover against a German convoy which had left Boulogne for Flushing at about 2200. Its position was broadcast in intervals of approximately 10 minutes. The enemy task force consisted of 1 motor gunboat flotilla leader, 2 PT boats, 1 motor gunboat, and 2 unidentified ships.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Intensified air reconnaissance located extremely heavy convoy and ship movements along the entire British east coast:

100 miles southwest of the Faeroe Islands a convoy consisting of 28 steamers, 3 destroyers, and 12 escort vessels headed for Iceland. (This is probably convoy PQ 17, destined for Murmansk.)

In the Faeroe Islands-Hebrides-Shetland Islands area 12 to 14 ships proceeding singly on westerly or northerly courses.

A convoy of 40 steamers, escorted by 3 destroyers and 8 patrol boats north of Flamborough Head on a southerly course and in the same area 5 hours later another convoy of 35 steamers; in the Humber estuary in the afternoon 34 steamers on a northerly course, east of Cromer a convoy of 32 steamers, escorted by destroyers and escort vessels, headed north. East of Great Yarmouth another convoy of 20 steamers on a southerly course, and east of Harwich a convoy of 14 steamers on a northerly course.

*Note: On 9 May the distance is reported as 20 miles West of Brest.

CONFIDENTIAL

10 May 1942

In the Thames estuary alone 4 convoys of 40 to 50 steamers on northerly or southerly courses were located during the day between 0600 and 2100.

Even in the event of possible duplications, the observed traffic must be considered very heavy. It is therefore all the more deplorable that the available means of the Navy do not permit measures to be taken against this traffic. The only weapon that could be used for this purpose are the PT boats; however, their combat possibilities are strongly limited by the short and clear summer nights, apart from the fact that their number is far too low to be effective. Four to five PT Boat Flotillas with 40 to 50 boats would be able to launch a mine offensive which would check the enemy effectively and achieve big results by the use of torpedoes, compelling the enemy to scatter his defensive forces!

The situation being what it is, only the Air Force would have better chances of success in the fight against convoys. However, the strong forces required for this purpose are simply unavailable right now.

During the day lively enemy reconnaissance activity over the North Sea area, which subsided during the night. Because of 20 incursions which took place during the night of 9 May, it is suspected that mines were dropped in the German Bight.

Own Situation:

Our convoy and channel-sweeping operations proceeded without anything to report. (See Telegram 1900.)

2. Norway:

Convoy missions proceeded according to plan (see Telegram 1700).

Code Name "Birke":

The ADMIRAL SCHEER, 2 destroyers (Z "28" and Z "30"), and 2 torpedo boats transferred from Trondheim to Narvik (Bogen Bay) without incident. Thus, a combat force, though a weak one, has been moved closer to the Murmansk convoy route. Due to the strength of the enemy convoy escorts, it will be used for the time being only if conditions are particularly favorable.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reports the following vessels in the Arctic area:

10 May 1942

Harbor of Iokanga: 5 steamers and 5 small vessels.

Between Murmansk and Rosta: 4 merchant vessels totalling 30,000 tons (!)

Between Rosta and Vayenga: 12 to 15 merchant vessels of about 100,000 tons (!!) and 7 destroyers.

In the Kola estuary: 3 freighters, 3 patrol boats, 6 coastal craft.

In the Litsa Bay: 3 merchantmen, 1 destroyer, and 6 to 8 coastal vessels.

Own Situation:

The destroyer group "Arctic Ocean" was dissolved on 9 May. Z "25" and Z "24" are now directly under the Admiral, Arctic Ocean.

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean reports that he intends to transfer his command post from Kirkenes to Narvik on 11 May aboard the PT boat tender TANGA. He hopes to arrive by 13 May.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Patrol activity along the Swedish coast and at the gap of the Kristiansand barrage has been relaxed and is being maintained by 2 patrol boats each. - Troop transports to Oslo with the POTSDAM, GNEISENAU, and 4 other ships proceeded on schedule without incident. The POTSDAM and the GNEISENAU have begun their return trip to Gdynia.

Enemy planes flying over the western Baltic Sea, the Great Belt, the Little Belt, the Langelands Belt, and Kiel Bay during the night of 9 May are suspected of having dropped mines.

The ROLAND, KAISER, and the 3rd Mine Sweeper Flotilla are laying the remaining portion of the "Nashorn" mine field in the Gulf of Finland.

Regarding the use of small coastal mine-laying craft and naval assault boats on Lake Ladoga see Telegram 1123. Group North proposes to place these boats under the tactical command of the Finnish Naval Staff. The coastal mine-laying vessels form an independent group of the 31st Mine Sweeper Flotilla. The Naval Station, Baltic Sea will see to it that the completed coastal mine-laying vessels are shipped to Finland as fast as possible and the Naval Liaison Staff, Finland will then forward them to Lake Ladoga.

10 May 1942

Special Item:

In a letter to the Operations Staff of the Commander in Chief, Air Force, the Naval Staff submits the report of Group North on the situation and points to the very grave shipping and transport traffic situation in the German coastal waters caused by enemy air raids and the use of aerial bombs. The letter states amongst other things:

"The Armed Forces High Command is taking all possible measures to reduce the losses from enemy activities by reinforcing the anti-aircraft and other protective armament of vessels, and by improving the organization of the mine-detecting service and the mine-sweeping equipment. But these measures by themselves are not sufficient to remove the threat to our shipping. In the opinion of the Naval Staff, the most striking success against enemy day or night air raids will be achieved by the reinforcement of the fighter defenses. Moreover, attention is called to the urgent necessity of speeding up and increasing the allocation of mine-sweeping Ju 52's.

Since a deterioration of the transport situation will primarily affect the supplies for the air forces and Army troops stationed in Norway, it is further requested that the Air Force for its part make another check of the defensive measures against enemy air raids on the transport shipping in our coastal waters."

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

No enemy reports of importance.

2. Own Situation:

Our submarines have lately encountered no or at best very irregular traffic in the area off Cape Hatteras. It seems that the enemy has reacted in this thus far fertile hunting ground either by rerouting traffic or by conducting it only sporadically.

Submarine U "109" reports sporadic north-south traffic and little south-north traffic between Canaveral and Palm Beach on the Florida coast, extensive air patrol activity also during the night, destroyer patrols, and submarine hunting by subchasers.

Submarine U "125" reports the sinking of 34,634 GRT, including the steamers SAN RAFAEL, TUSCALOOSA CITY, EMPIRE BUFFALO, and the tanker CALGAROLITE.

Submarine U "333" reports the sinking of another 6,000-ton steamer; the achievements of this boat are all the more remarkable since its diving ability is impaired.

10 May 1942

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Our fighter bombers raided the air field of Littlestone, Folkestone, and Great Yarmouth. Hits were observed on barracks, industrial plants, and in the cities proper.

For results of reconnaissance over the North Sea, see Situation North Sea. No activity during the night.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Our attacks on Malta continued. In the morning a cruiser (probably a mine cruiser of the WELSHMAN class) was attacked in the harbor of Valletta. Bombs were dropped close to the target so that the cruiser may have been damaged. West of Alexandria a 5,000-ton steamer was set afire by aerial bombs.

During a raid against the harbor installations of Alexandria on the night of 9 May conflagrations and detonations were observed.

3. Eastern Front:

Effective offensive action of the VIII Air Corps in support of Army operations on the Kerch Peninsula. Good results were obtained against the harbors of the peninsula, and a troop transport south of Kerch was sunk.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

The EAGLE, escorted by 5 destroyers, has returned to Gibraltar. No reports concerning the RENOWN. A DIDO-class cruiser and 5 destroyers arrived from the west. Lively radio communication in the area of Gibraltar.

For details of ships in the harbor and bay of Gibraltar see Telegram 1500.

A British plane-ferrying operation in the western Mediterranean is confirmed by reports from our intelligence service in Spain and from a French source via the German Armistice Commission. According to them, 2 large and 6 smaller vessels passed Cape De Gata on 9 May on an easterly course under plane escort; also 60 British planes are said to have flown over Cape Bon on an easterly course.

10 May 1942

Central Mediterranean:

During the morning 2 war vessels were again sighted entering Malta and at noon the presence of a mine-laying cruiser of the WELSHMAN class was again established. The Italians assume that a cruiser and a destroyer, operating singly, are under way to the eastern Mediterranean.

Eastern Mediterranean:

In the areas northeast and northwest of Port Said and between Alexandria and Tobruk lively convoy traffic was observed. In Tobruk 4 small cargo vessels, 3 patrol vessels, 5 small warships, and 2 fast escort vessels were sighted.

2. Own Situation in the Area of the German Naval Command, Italy:

During the night of 9 May the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla executed the mine-laying mission "Malta" according to plan. PT boat "31" struck a mine and sank 700 to 800 meters off the coast, with resulting casualties among the crew. The mine which caused the loss is classified as similar to our type A torpedo mine (surface mine).

Upon completion of the mining mission, the PT boats attacked a cruiser 5 miles north-northeast of Valletta, unfortunately without result. Another PT boat group attacked a fishing steamer escorted by a patrol vessel north of Marsa Scala. The fishing steamer was sunk and the patrol vessel was fired upon and set aflame. (See Telegram 0916 and short action reports 1142 and 1443.)

The loss of PT Boat S "31" is all the more regrettable as she may have struck one of our own type A torpedo mines (surface mine), laid during a previous mission.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 9th transport group of 6 ships, escorted by 3 destroyers and 6 torpedo boats, will sail in the afternoon of 10 May. Three ships are under way to Benghazi. The coastal supply traffic is moving on schedule.

(For details see Report 1200.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The tanker assumed to be the OILSHIPPER, which was attacked on 9 May outside of Turkish territorial waters by the X Air Corps and subsequently beached, has been refloated. (She hoisted the Turkish flag.) Planes of Reconnaissance Group 126 are maintaining contact.

10 May 1942

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Russian cruisers and destroyers shelled the isthmus east of Feodosiya on 9 May. In the area of the Kerch Strait heavy traffic of steamers and small ships.

Own Situation:

Only minor damage resulted from enemy air raids on Mariupol and Eupatoria.

Our convoy, mine-sweeping, and check-sweeping operations along the Rumanian and Russian coasts are proceeding on schedule. The mine-exploding vessel "191" was slightly damaged by an exploding mine on 9 May off Ochakov.

Special Item:

In view of the impending tasks on the Crimean Peninsula and of the use of German and Italian forces, Group South points to the urgent need for clearing these ports, especially Yalta and Feodosiya, by mine-sweeping planes; the Group proposes the transfer of at least 2 mine-sweeping planes to the Crimea. (According to a report from the 4th Air Force, mine-sweeping planes are not yet available for the Black Sea area.)

This request is supported by the Naval Staff and has been submitted to the Air Force Operations Staff.

IX. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

X. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The operations of the 11th Army against the Kerch Peninsula are hampered by bad weather. Nevertheless, the advance to the east continued successfully against strong enemy resistance. A bridgehead was established in the fortifications of the Tatarian Moat. The Russians launched numerous diversionary attacks.

CONFIDENTIAL

10 May 1942

In front of the Von Kleist Army Group strong enemy troop movements were observed on the roads leading to and from Izyum. Minor attacks were repulsed.

On the 6th Army front the enemy was very active at the bridgeheads and Donets crossings in the area of Khotomlya and Volchansk. Air reconnaissance established heavy enemy truck concentrations and preparations for an offensive.

Central Army Group:

Nothing to report.

Northern Army Group:

Major enemy attacks on the Demyansk sector were repulsed and strong enemy attempts to attack on both banks of the Pola River remained unsuccessful. West of Yamno an enemy break-through was sealed off. Our attacks were successful.

2. Murmansk Front:

The enemy brought up reserves on the southern wing of the Litsa sector. Our attack on the enemy landing group is slowly gaining ground against strong resistance.

11 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

See Political Review No. 108 and Foreign Press Review regarding Churchill's radio speech of 10 May.

The speech is far more optimistic and shows greater confidence than Churchill's previous addresses. The following points are of particular interest:

1. France's collapse and Italy's entry into the war was the time of Great Britain's worst crisis. However, it was possible to control the situation and to defend the Near East in particular. Since then the situation has improved considerably.

2. Churchill points out that Hitler made his greatest blunder by attacking Russia. Churchill figures that Germany's losses in the East will outnumber those suffered during the entire first World War. With Germany occupied in the East, the British air offensive will now start in the West with greatly superior forces, and the American air offensive will follow soon. The growing British-American superior air forces will attack the German home front without let-up. The German civilian population is warned. Great Britain still has many German cities with vital industries on her list.

3. The calm before the storm is reigning in the East at the present time. So far however, no concentrations of German troops, which usually precede a spring offensive, have not been observed.

4. Churchill prominently emphasized alleged preparations for a German poison gas attack on Russia. Great Britain is ready to reply in kind to any unprovoked use of poison gas against Russia, as she would if it were used against herself. Great Britain is prepared for poison gas warfare and will use her air superiority to use poison gas against German military objectives on the greatest possible scale. (The great emphasis placed on this subject may serve propaganda purposes in order to prepare the public for a possible Russian gas attack in the East.)

5. Great Britain intends to continue using the northern route to supply Russia, and to do everything to keep it open.

6. For military reasons Churchill does not comment on the offensive against western Europe for the establishment of a second front, demanded in many quarters. He welcomes, however, the aggressive military spirit of the British nation manifested by these demands.

(These statements do not give the impression that an offensive against western Europe is actually intended.)

11 May 1943

7. The occupation of Madagascar is represented as a measure to prevent the island from falling into the hands of the enemy. The decision was made as long as 3 months ago. The expeditionary force left the British Isles more than 2 months ago. Great Britain considers herself the trustee for the brave France of the future.

8. The defense of Malta is praised. The major portion of Germany's planes has been transferred to the East. Hope is expressed that the next air battle over Malta will be victorious.

9. With Japan's entry into the war and the probable entry of the entire American continent, which is expected shortly, a general world war has begun.

The outcome of the naval battle of the Coral Sea is called extremely favorable for the Allied forces. The British-American naval powers will attack the Japanese and overwhelming air forces will crush Japan.

The speech offers nothing basically new; outstanding are the emphasis placed on the all-out effort to continue support of Russia, the restraint with regard to the offensive in western Europe for the establishment of a second front, the indication of an impending British-American air offensive, and the strong poison gas propaganda on the part of the British Prime Minister. New is the note of confidence in the speech, evidently springing from an erroneous evaluation of the German situation, especially in the East, and from the strong hopes set on the aerial offensive against Germany.

Ambassador Halifax also stated over the radio that a great assault force (air force ?) is getting ready in the British Isles, which will break loose with irresistible fury on the predetermined day and will smash the Nazi yoke.

France:

According to an announcement by the U.S. State Department, Admiral Hoover in his capacity of Commandant of the Caribbean area is to visit Martinique for the purpose of entering into separate negotiations with the French High Commissioner (Admiral Robert) about the future of the islands. The agreement is to provide for the continuance of French sovereignty over the islands on condition that the French authorities will agree to give no assistance of any kind to the Axis powers.

(Foreign press reports have it that the U.S. proposed that the French warships stationed in the islands be dismantled.)

According to a radio report from Washington, the U.S. Government will not accept any pledges from Laval, nor will they continue to negotiate with Admiral Robert if he should seek Laval's consent. The High

11 May 1942

Commissioner should make up his mind whether or not to accept the agreement with the U.S. without first consulting the French Government.

The office of the High Commissioner of Martinique officially denies the report about negotiations between Admiral Robert and U.S. Admiral Hoover concerning surrender of the ships. (See War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.)

Additional reports must be awaited. It may be safe to assume that Admiral Robert is acting only upon complete agreement with the French Government and that the French Admiralty (Darlan) has already issued directives concerning the fate of the French naval forces, viz. to prevent the naval forces in Martinique under all circumstances from falling into American hands.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. Report of the Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff about the operations order of Group North for the eastern campaign 1942 (Group North, Gkdos. 600/42 Chfs. of 27 Apr. 1942).

In agreement with the opinion of the Naval Staff, the Group assumes that the Russians will, on the whole, remain on the defensive except for limited submarine activities and will concentrate on the defense of the innermost part of the Gulf of Finland and the Kronstadt Bay. The main goal of the German operations remains that of 1941, namely, completely to seal off the outer and inner Gulf of Finland by mining operations (the enemy's light forces should be countered by our own forces though few).

The operations order of the Group comprises detailed orders for the organization of the command authority and the boundaries of the command areas (see also the Naval Staff War Diary, Part C, Vol. III), as well as the tasks assigned to the Commander, Mine Sweepers, Baltic Sea; the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries; the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic Sea; and the Naval Station, Baltic Sea.

The mine-laying assignment of the Commander, Mine Sweepers, Baltic Sea consists, apart from the already completed mine field "Nashorn" (from Porkkala to the island of Nargen; cover name "Wulf"), in laying the Hogland mine field (from the Aspoe islands to Cape Kurgalo; code name "Seeigel") against surface and submarine forces; also in laying additional mine fields in cooperation with the Finns in order to reinforce the Juminda barrage, and in mine-laying in the areas off Seiskari, Lavansaari, and Schepel.

The task assigned to the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries consists in the main in laying mines in the Sea Channel between Kronstadt and Leningrad, operating from Peterhof.

11 May 1942

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic Sea is ordered to seal the Sound and the Great Belt with mine fields in case there is danger of Russian fleet forces breaking through. Moreover, the SCHLESSEN and the EMDEN, are to be used as floating batteries off Seelandsrev and in the Sound.

Naval Station, Baltic Sea is to establish dummy mine fields and boom barrages off Pillau and Memel and to prepare to seal off the Gjedser Strait; to lay out net barrages at Hela and Gjedser and a barrage to protect the harbor of Kiel.

The Finnish Navy is participating in these operations by laying the northern part of the Hogland barrage; the barrage extending from the island of Bjoerkoe to the southwest; by laying mines off Schepel; by reinforcing the northern end of the Juminda barrage and assisting in mining the Seiskari and Lavansaari areas. Moreover, the Finns will employ submarines and PT boats in the Gulf of Finland and, if necessary, carry out operations with their remaining forces from the Kotka base.

The 5th Air Force plans to mine heavily the Kronstadt area (operation "Froschlaich") and to launch strong air attacks on the enemy fleet in Kronstadt and Leningrad.

The Chief of the Naval Staff agrees fully with the operations plan as submitted by Group North.

II. Transporting personnel on leave to and from Finland

In order to handle the very considerable personnel involved (weekly 7,000 men), the Naval Staff Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch will be compelled to press the GNEISENAU and the POTSDAM into service. The Quartermaster Division calls attention to the fact that the operation of these ships requires about 2,800 t of oil per month! It is more than doubtful that this quantity can be provided from the allocation of the Navy, which is not even large enough to take care of the most urgent requirements of the naval forces. An extra allotment must, therefore, be requested from the Armed Forces High Command.

In this connection it must be emphasized that at present the naval forces in the Norwegian area cannot be used for any operational purpose at all, owing to the disastrous fuel situation. The TIRPITZ group, including the destroyer escort, can go into action only if there is serious threat of an enemy operation against Norway.

III. Report of the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division (Plans and Schedules Branch) concerning the organization of our shipping, its present shortcomings and the Naval Staff's suggestion for changes (in preparation of the planned conference with the Fuehrer).

Present organization: From the available total tonnage the Navy

11 May 1942

requisitions the tonnage required for naval warfare (auxiliary ships, auxiliary cruisers) and for troop transports.

The remainder is at the disposal of the Ministry of Transportation (Maritime Shipping Department) for the shipping of civilian and Armed Forces goods.

The tonnage requisitioned and managed by the Navy is always limited to the actual need and does not fluctuate to any great extent. The requirements for the supply service of the Armed Forces, however, fluctuate more (depending on the number of troops and the necessary construction for defensive and offensive purposes). The transport requirements of the Armed Forces are centrally managed by the Armed Forces Transshipment Staff of the Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas.

The use of cargo space at the disposal of the Ministry of Transportation (Maritime Shipping Department) for shipment of civilian goods is dictated by economic considerations. The Ministry of Transportation assigns shipping space upon consultation with the Association of German Ship Owners. The decreasing amount of tonnage is causing increasing difficulties!

In principle, the management of merchant shipping is dependent on the strategic and tactical situation and as such subject to the rules and regulations of naval warfare.

Suggested Organizational Changes:

Only one authority is to exercise the power of decision over all requirements of naval warfare, the shipment of supplies for the Armed Forces as well as over the shipment of non-military supplies, because all these requirements concern a single object, namely cargo space.

In view of the small tonnage available, rigid organization is essential. The requirements of warfare must be given primary consideration and for this reason no merchant, shipping firm or economist can be permitted to exercise dictatorial control over merchant shipping; this control must be in the hands of the Armed Forces. Prerequisites for such control are: knowledge of the objects of naval warfare, knowledge of the naval war situation, correct judgement as to the feasibility of sea transports from an operational view point, and cognizance of the shipping requirements (shipment of Armed Forces and non-military supplies, and troop transports).

Therefore: Dictatorial control over merchant shipping must rest with the Armed Forces, viz., the Naval Staff (Quartermaster Division). The latter must act in the interests of all concerned (naval warfare, supplies for the Armed Forces, and industry) under orders from the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces.

11 May 1943

To this end: A Maritime Shipping Authority should be established under the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division. This agency should take over the departments of the Ministry of Transportation which handle non-military goods and maritime shipping. A staff of prominent personalities should be chosen from shipping circles.

The central offices in charge of shipping requirements (one for Armed Forces goods [Armed Forces Transshipment Staff] and one for non-military goods) are responsible for the priority rating and order of execution of the demands made.

The authority over the building of new merchant ships and repairs of cargo vessels should likewise be vested in the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division in cooperation with the Naval Construction Division. Allocations should be made by the War Economy Division of the Armed Forces High Command.

The Organization of Naval Offices of the Naval Staff takes care of reassigning tonnage becoming available unexpectedly and directs also the activities in the various ports. Representatives of the private shipping firms are members of this organization.

The Naval Staff is convinced that only a change of the present organization along the lines indicated offers a chance of overcoming the great difficulties which beset our shipping and to meet the high demands made upon it. The Chief, Naval Staff will discuss the foregoing with the Fuehrer on the occasion of the planned conference.

Special Items

Conclusions concerning the enemy's invasion plans, as drawn from his mining activities off our coasts:

During the month of March, Group West had replied to an inquiry whether conclusions regarding the enemy's invasion plans could be drawn from his mining operations off the coasts of the West Area, that the methods used in this mine offensive did not offer any conclusive indications as to the enemy's intentions. The enemy is employing ground mines mostly in the Channel area (Zeebrugge-Boulogne), in the approaches to all important harbors, and particularly off our submarine bases. The use of moored mines is centered on the alternative routes in the Channel, on either side of the Channel Islands, off Lorient and La Pallice, and on the departure routes of our submarines. Since moored mines usually have timing devices, the enemy is well able to navigate these areas at a later time. The fact that no mines are laid off certain coastal areas must not necessarily be attributed to the intention of landing at these points.

11 May 1942

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North has made a similar investigation in the North Sea and along the Dutch-Belgian coast; he points to the remarkable fact that the enemy, while intensifying mine-laying along the well-known convoy lanes off Texel to the east, is not laying any mines along the Dutch coast up to Hook of Holland and farther east to the boundary of the Group's area, save for a few ground mines. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North therefore concludes that this is evidence that the enemy is planning a major landing operation on the Dutch coast at a latter date. He even assumed that the enemy has shown so little activity in Dutch coastal waters and so much offensive activity along the French coast in order to divert Germany's attention from the part of the Dutch coast selected for a large-scale offensive, viz. the Scheldt and Maas estuary.

Group North does not completely agree with this opinion (the timing device would afford the enemy the possibility of laying mine fields, and the very fact that no mines are being laid is attracting attention), but believes, too, that enemy operations should be expected in unmined areas. However, there is no conclusive evidence of such plans.

The Naval Staff views the situation as follows:

The British concentrated the laying of aerial mines primarily in the German Bight and the Baltic Sea entrances. These operations were then extended slowly to the west into the Texel area. After the seizure of the French coastal bases, mining operations were directed also against these bases and their approaches. It is true that the enemy possesses an excellent timing device and is using it a great deal; however, so far no British aerial mine has been known to be equipped with it.

No British aerial mines, excepting a few laid off IJmuiden, are known to have been laid along the coastal strip from Texel to Hook of Holland. And the ground mines swept off IJmuiden could not definitely be proved as being British.

Summing up, it can be said that the British apparently exempted this area from mine-laying for any eventuality in much the same way as we exempted the "Seeloewe" coast.

The Group Commands and local Armed Forces commanders are informed about this analysis of the situation.

Situation 11 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

North Atlantic:

According to an Italian report of 9 May the cruiser ARETHUSA

11 May 1942

has left Ponta Delgada for the Pacific.

Indian Ocean:

On 10 May the Greek steamer IRIION broadcast distress signals from a position 110 miles northeast of Durban and requested assistance because her hold was full of water. There is no reason to link this incident with our operations; however, it might be the result of Japanese submarine activities.

Own Situation:

Ship "10": the auxiliary cruiser was instructed that the REGENSBURG has been advised as requested. The Naval Staff figures that the REGENSBURG will reach the rendezvous point on 13 or 14 May. Ship "10" is free to dispose of the REGENSBURG until 26 May. The Naval Staff plans to have the REGENSBURG meet the DRESDEN around 29 May for the transfer of prisoners and to take on mail. (See Radiograms 0046 and 1732.)

The blockade-runner MUENSTERLAND was instructed to proceed from point "Anna" to point "Mestiza", to approach this point in the darkness and to proceed thence within territorial waters to the French border, where she will be met by escort forces. Her destination is Bordeaux. She is informed of recognition signals by Radiogram 1946.

Radiogram 2109 contains information about the enemy situation to our forces in foreign waters; Radiogram 1914 informs them of the arrival of the PORTLAND, Radiogram 0200 about the position of the Italian tankers which are to refuel the East Africa steamers.

The first group of Italian East Africa steamers is at present replenishing supplies in Berbera and will probably sail shortly. The second group is approximately off Socotra.

II. Situation West Area

Atlantic Coast:

Nothing to report.

Channel Coast:

On 11 May the 2nd PT Boat Flotilla laid mines in 3 groups in the area northeast of Orfordness. The 4th PT Boat Flotilla has been transferred to Boulogne.

The 2nd Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla conducted successful mine-sweeping operations during the night of 10 May in the area west of Calais.

11 May 1942

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report except enemy air activity.

Own Situation:

Our convoy operations were carried out according to plan. North of Ameland a convoy was unsuccessfully attacked by 3 low-flying enemy bombers, all of which were shot down. This is a gratifying success of our anti-aircraft defenses. Successful mine-sweeping operations in a number of places.

2. Norway:

On the Arctic Coast off Sylte Fjord submarine chase by subchasers and planes. Submarines were suspected also on the west coast of Norway in the Boemmel Fjord and the Stock Sound so that shipping between Haugesund and Bergen had to be suspended.

Otherwise, ship movements continue without interference. Slight enemy air activity. Unsuccessful bombing attacks on convoys.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Nothing to report.

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean is proceeding from Kirkenes to Tromsø and thence to Narvik aboard the PT boat tender TANGA, escorted by destroyers Z "25" and Z "24" and 2 motor mine sweepers.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Skagerrak:

Nothing to report from the Skagerrak and Kattegat. Patrol and check-sweeping operations on schedule, convoy missions executed without incidents. (See Telegram 1930.)

South of Samsø the Danish Navy (!) swept ground mines.

Group North reports that, according to information from the 5th Air Force, the Commander, Air Force, Center is taking over as of 13 May the fighter defenses of the entire Skagerrak area and the Norwegian south coast as far as Egersund. Details as to how information on any

11 May 1942

given object to be protected will be transmitted to the Fighter Command, Norway, as well as how cooperation with fighter forces of the 5th Air Force will be effected are at present under discussion. (See Report 1636 of Group North.)

2. Eastern Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence intercepted a radio message of the Baltic Fleet indicating that cases of looting have occurred aboard Russian naval forces.

For enemy situation and information on the Russian forces see War Diary, Part C, Vol. III of 11 May.

Own Situation:

The "Nashorn" mine field (Nargen barrage) has been completed. The mine-laying vessels are presently in Reval, loading mines for the "Seeigel" barrage. (Hogland mine field.)

Mine-sweeping operations off Memel and Libau were terminated without result.

The 17th and 18th Mine Sweeper Flotillas are en route to Finland.

Special Items:

a. In view of the present situation in northern Finland, the Air Force Operations Staff issues the following directive to the 5th Air Force concerning the conduct of aerial warfare:

Warfare against enemy supply operations and enemy discharge ports, which original orders had made the principal objective, must become a secondary consideration whenever our ground forces are under heavy attack or are themselves taking the offensive in order to force a decision. Whenever such a situation demands the support of the Army by Air Forces, the 5th Air Force is ordered to render assistance by concentrating all available forces.

This directive is motivated by the weakness of our air forces also in the northern area. In the interests of naval warfare it must be deplored that the Air Force is not in a position to reserve sufficient forces within the Arctic area for operations against the important enemy supply transports and terminal ports, the destruction of which would further the operations of our Army on the Eastern Front best of all.

b. The Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries reports that the Commander

11 May 1942

of the 207th Army Defense Division was named commander of the coastal defenses of the Baltic countries with the title of "Coastal Commander". This designation is customarily used exclusively by the Navy and its general use would only create confusion; moreover, only an officer of the Navy can be in charge of coastal defenses. The Naval Staff, therefore, requests the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command to reserve this designation exclusively for the Navy, as was the case in the past.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Normal reconnaissance activity in the rendezvous area west of the British Isles.

On the American coast, radio monitoring intercepted numerous submarine sighting signals, especially in the area off Cape Hatteras, Cape Lookout, and southeast of the Mississippi River delta.

2. Own Situation:

In the morning, submarine U "569" of task force "Hecht" encountered an enemy convoy on a westerly course, approximately 600 miles west of Porcupine Bank in quadrant AK 9334. The submarines U "124" and U "94" which were in the vicinity established contact which is being maintained. All boats of group "Hecht" were directed to converge on the convoy; and they achieved very gratifying successes, totalling 31,000 GRT, in addition to which another steamer was torpedoed. No reports are available thus far about the size of the convoy or its escort. It is assumed that the convoy is protected by comparatively weak forces. The action which is still in progress proves that there are excellent chances for success by submarines which appear unexpectedly in areas which they had for some time avoided.

Submarines proceeding to the area of Fernando Noronha likewise established contact with a convoy, headed northwest, 300 miles northwest of the Cape Verde Islands. No results have yet been reported.

On the American coast, submarine U "506" sank a 3,500-ton steamer in the West Indies on 3 May, and on 10 May the tanker AURORA. The submarine had encountered only moderate traffic, mostly single vessels, in the Providence Strait and south of it from Miami through the Florida Strait to the Tortugas Keys. No ships were sighted in the Gulf of Mexico.

For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

11 May 1943

Attention is called to the map, showing the ship movements in the Central and South Atlantic during the months of March and April, contained in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV; it indicates the strong convergence of traffic in the areas of Fernando Noronha and southwest of Freetown. Unfortunately, it is impossible at this time to assign submarines, to the Freetown area, owing to the lack of available forces. However, the Commanding Admiral, Submarines intends to do so as soon as submarines become available.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers raided Beckton and Hull without observing particular results. The 3rd Air Force flew no night missions and the 5th Air Force had only a few planes on reconnaissance flights.

In the afternoon enemy torpedo planes penetrated into the German Bight; nothing of importance has been reported.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Nuisance raids on Malta continued. Italian bombers attacked Tobruk.

The X Air Corps successfully attacked an enemy destroyer force 300 km north of Sidi Barrani. (See also Warfare in the Mediterranean.)

3. Eastern Front:

In the Crimea little activity due to bad weather. Otherwise mostly reconnaissance missions, with no important action reported.

4. Special Item:

Concerning a separate Naval Air Force:

In a letter to the Commander in Chief, Air Force the Commander in Chief, Navy expresses his gratitude for his order continuing the services of the Commander, Naval Air. On this occasion he points out that the gradual transfer of forces to the Air Force, which had continued through the last few years, was not due to the fact that the Naval Staff had considered this solution to be desirable and useful in the interests of naval warfare. On the contrary, these transfers, made only under the heavy pressure caused by the weakness of the Air Force, were tolerable for the Navy only by the fact that with the transferred formations also personnel was added to the Air Force which had years of peace-time training in cooperation with the Navy. Owing to this

11 May 1942

circumstance it was believed that the fulfillment of the aims of naval warfare was insured.

In this connection, the Commander in Chief, Navy disagrees with the Reichs marschall, who believes that the Air Force had solved all problems arising in naval warfare and emphasizes that most of the credit must undoubtedly be attributed to the officers and crews trained by the Navy and taken over by the Air Force. On principle, the Commander in Chief, Navy considers the present solution as unsatisfactory to the interests of naval warfare and reiterates in his letter to the Commander in Chief, Air Force that, in his opinion, a Naval Air Force is an absolute necessity. According to his conviction, the smooth and successful conduct of naval warfare requires, apart from a strong fleet, a naval air force trained and educated by the fleet for the tasks awaiting it and which is at the disposal of the Naval High Command. (Attention is called to the Japanese successes.)

In concluding his letter, the Commander in Chief, Navy expresses the hope that the Commander in Chief, Air Force will lend his support to the Navy in the coming years of expansion. (For a copy of the letter see War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.).

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

On 11 May the following ships were at Gibraltar: 2 aircraft carriers, 1 DIDO-class cruiser, the MAIDSTONE, 1 auxiliary cruiser, 7 destroyers, 6 gunboats, and 37 freighters and tankers. The RENOWN has not been reported. In the afternoon the cruiser CHARYBDIS arrived at Gibraltar. On the evening of 10 May a convoy of 7 loaded steamers escorted by 2 corvettes steamed into Gibraltar from the west.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

The mine cruiser which arrived in Malta on 10 May could no longer be located. However, in the morning an Italian flying boat sighted a cruiser, allegedly carrying the French flag, 60 miles east of Bone on a westerly course. The Italian Navy assumes that it is the British mine-laying cruiser MANXMAN.

German air reconnaissance located a British destroyer force on a westerly course northeast of Ras Azzaz in the eastern Mediterranean. The same force was reported at noon north-northeast of Bardia on a southerly course.

11 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

The enemy force reported at noon northeast of Bardia consisting of 4 destroyers was attacked during the afternoon in several waves; 3 destroyers were sunk. The last destroyer took the survivors on board and escaped at top speed on a southeasterly course. This is a very gratifying success of the X Air Corps.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 9th transport group is proceeding to Tripoli according to plan. No important events are reported. Also single-ship traffic and the convoy to Benghazi continued without particular incidents. (See Telegram 1200.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Convoy traffic on schedule. (See Telegram 1800.) Otherwise nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

An accumulation of approximately 20 small vessels was observed in the Kerch Straits and at noon a cruiser was reported leaving Sevastopol. Our air reconnaissance located:

In Sevastopol: 2 destroyers (one of them damaged), 4 submarines, 1 mine sweeper, and an indefinite number of smaller vessels.

In Poti: 1 battleship, 2 cruisers (1 of them in dock), 5 destroyers, 2 torpedo boats, 9 submarines, 23 PT boats, and a large number of freighters and small vessels.

In Batum: 1 heavy cruiser, 4 destroyers, 2 mine sweepers, 5 motor mine sweepers, 7 submarines, 5 PT boats and numerous freighters, tankers and small vessels.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report. Convoy traffic on schedule.

VIII. Situation East Asia

According to Reuter, the garrison of Ceylon has been reinforced by troops from East Africa.

11 May 1942

The U.S. forces in the Philippines are said to have received orders to cease fighting.

According to the Military Attache at Bangkok, shipping between U.S. and Vladivostok observed so far is very slight. (Reportedly only about 3 ships each arrived during March and April.)

Japanese landing operations in Burma are proceeding according to plan. The press reports occupation by the Japanese of the Burma railroad terminal Myitkyina and of Kinu (90 km north of Mandalay).

Special Item:

The Japanese liaison officer was advised that Lorient was chosen as port of arrival for the Japanese submarine due in July. A berth in the submarine pen and docking facility have been reserved. Drydock facilities are available only outside the pen, since no pen of the length required exists. (See Telegram 1400.)

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The 11th Army continued the offensive against the Kerch Peninsula with excellent result in spite of terrain difficulties due to muddy roads. Diversionary enemy attacks were repulsed. Increased enemy resistance was encountered in the Saraimin sector.

After strong artillery preparation the enemy attacked in the Slavyansk sector of the Von Kleist Army Group. All attacks were beaten off.

Apart from minor enemy attacks nothing to report at the sectors of the 6th and 2nd Armies.

Central Army Group:

No important events. In the rear of our lines successful fighting against partisans.

Northern Army Group:

In the area of Kholm and northeast of Demyansk enemy attacks were repulsed. So far we have been unable to throw back the enemy who penetrated into our positions on the Pola River. North of Lake Ilmen rather heavy enemy attacks were repulsed. Strong artillery fire from the direction of Yamno.

11 May 1943

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Enemy attacks in the Loukhi area collapsed with heavy losses. In the Murmansk sector, the enemy landing group west of the Litsa River was reinforced.

3. North Africa:

Normal reconnaissance activity and artillery fire.

4. Special Item:

The Army General Staff (Intelligence Division, West) has made an extensive study of the enemy's communication facilities over the land route between the African west coast and the Nile valley; it is concluded that all reports about the construction of transafrican automobile roads may be discounted as propaganda and are certainly in any case grossly exaggerated. It is doubtless possible to transport supplies from the African west coast to the Nile area over a number of routes (improved roads and rivers), and the enemy is actually doing this. However, such transports take a long time and their volume will certainly have to be limited. Major troop movements or transports of complete ship cargoes are difficult, costly, and time-consuming. For instance, the time required to transport the cargo of a 5,000 GRT freighter (approximately 7,000 tons of weight) from Lagos or Duala to Port Sudan is estimated at 6-7 weeks, to Alexandria at 8-9 weeks, while transports by sea around the Cape of Good Hope require only approximately four weeks.

12 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Relations between Washington and Vichy have grown more strained. The American press asserts that the U. S. Government will ignore the French protest against U. S. negotiations with Admiral Robert. In case the seizure of Martinique should become necessary, a Pan-American commission will have to convene in accordance with the resolutions of the Havana Conference, in order to take over the administration. (See War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII concerning the political discussions with France and the demands made on her by the German political leaders.)

Great Britain:

See Political Review No. 109 for a report about the speech by the British Home Secretary Morrison.

India:

In a statement to the press, Gandhi declared that an agreement about the complete separation of Great Britain and India will be reached before the end of the war. The presence of the British in India is tantamount to inviting Japan to attempt the invasion of India. A free India would be in a better position to prevent an invasion through passive resistance and obstruction carried on consistently to the bitter end.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. Assumptions regarding the enemy's plans:

Reports of the last weeks indicate that the enemy will increase the shipment of war materiel in the near future since he is aware of the vital importance of the aid given to Russia. Reports from various sources speak of super-convoys from the U. S. to Europe escorted by very strong naval forces, to sail around the middle of May with troops and material for Russia. Early in May, one submarine sighted a large strongly escorted convoy carrying troops east of Boston on a northerly course. Numerous agents reported about planned

CONFIDENTIAL

12 May 1942

British-American landing operations in the Arctic area in order to prevent interference with the supply traffic from the U.S. and the British Isles to Russia. Other reports repeatedly mention enemy plans for operations against central and south Norway and against Denmark, but, on the whole, reports concerning impending enemy actions against the north Norwegian area prevail.

In the face of these divergent reports, the Naval Staff concludes as follows:

In spite of the progressing season, the threat from enemy operations in the north Norwegian area has not diminished. On the contrary, it must be expected that enemy activity will increase at the time of the German operations in the East, or rather shortly after the start of these operations, when the German forces in the East are most heavily engaged. The nature of the enemy's operations cannot be safely predicted: whether they will consist of a landing for the purpose of establishing a temporary or permanent foothold in Norway or whether the enemy will make only brief raids on different coastal sectors in order to destroy important installations and to disrupt German supply lines. The enemy's action will be determined by the availability of the necessary ships. It is at least doubtful whether the enemy will be in a position this year to assemble the tonnage required for a large-scale landing operation and for maintaining the necessary supply shipments. The Naval Staff is inclined to believe that the enemy, in view of his difficult shipping situation, will decide in favor of raids only, aiming at relieving the Russian front and destroying vital base and supply installations; this, of course, in addition to increasing the shipments to Russia. Nevertheless, the possibility of a large-scale landing operation cannot be discounted altogether for the following reasons and must, therefore, be kept in mind:

The enemy has undoubtedly recognized that only an offensive in 1942 can bring aid to Russia in time and permit decisive successes against Germany. Apart from these facts, the development of submarine warfare and the very high sinking figures are forcing the enemy to adopt rigorous measures involving great risks.

The Naval Staff, therefore, anticipates that the enemy will take the following course of action:

In the North Area, the enemy will strengthen the Russian Arctic front by very heavy shipments of troops and material. Besides, it must be

12 May 1942

expected in the first place that raids will be conducted in northern Norway in order to paralyze the German Arctic front and to prevent German operations against the supply shipments to Russia.

Also in the West Area our defense measures must be directed primarily against enemy raids; in addition, however, there is also the possibility of a large-scale attack of limited scope, for instance, in order to knock out our principal submarine bases.

II. For a general survey of the situation in the principal theaters of war as of 12 May and for a brief estimate of the situation see War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIb of 12 May. (Compiled to serve as basis for the conference of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters.)

III. As of 10 May, the Chief, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Krancke is named permanent representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters, to maintain close liaison between the Fuehrer and the Chief of the Naval Staff and the Naval Staff itself. Vice Admiral Krancke will continue for the time being also as Chief of the Quartermaster Division, and will be represented in this capacity in the Naval High Command by a "permanent deputy of the Chief, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff". (Nobody has yet been named for this post; Captain Machens, now Chief of Staff of the Commanding Admiral, Norway, is slated for it.)

IV. The Chief of the Naval Staff Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch discusses the following items contained in the report received from Vice Admiral Krancke from the Fuehrer Headquarters:

a. The Fuehrer agreed to have the turrets of the GNEISENAU installed at Bergen and Trondheim. The Fuehrer requests the utmost speed in dismantling and preparing for the installation of the turrets in Norway, so that the internal construction work and the equipment of the turrets can be undertaken already during the winter months.

b. The Fuehrer has approved the plans for the formation of the naval land units for the occupation of the western French islands, as submitted.

c. Complying with a suggestion of the Naval Staff, the Fuehrer has abandoned the idea of transferring additional PT boats to the Black Sea (camouflaged through the Dardanelles).

CONFIDENTIAL

12 May 1942

d. The Armed Forces High Command directed all units of the Armed Forces as well as the Reich Minister of Armament and War Production to recheck for possible reductions the demands made by the General Staffs. The Chief of the Naval Ordnance Division reports in this connection that the Navy has been cut to such an extent that further cuts are impossible.

e. Concerning the Trondheim dock: The Fuehrer is anxious to have the Trondheim dock built for ships considerably larger than the TIRPITZ class. (Up to now, it was planned to build the first dock so as to accommodate ships of the TIRPITZ class, in order to have one dock available as quickly as possible for the battleships now in the North Area.)

f. The Fuehrer requests information about the conclusions of the Naval Staff regarding the future construction of aircraft carriers and about their future use for war on merchant shipping. The Naval Staff has not yet reached any definite conclusions. These will depend to a great extent on the over-all strategic situation and on the potential enemies after the end of this war.

g. In the course of the conference on 13 May with the Commander in Chief, Navy, the Fuehrer will raise the question of establishing an air base on Spitsbergen; he believes that an air base could be established there with relatively little equipment (anti-aircraft batteries and coastal batteries), thus permitting more effective interference with the Murmansk convoy traffic. At the same time, the Fuehrer has emphasized the importance of increasing coal production and of utilizing coal in the Norwegian area.

The Naval Staff has studied the Spitsbergen problem intensively in the past and feels compelled, today as then, to oppose the occupation of Spitsbergen vigorously. The reasons for this attitude are: Difficulty of holding the island; the great cost of defending it; the necessity for a continuous flow of supplies; the labor problem; the problem of shipping space; reasons of prestige; the impossibility, in spite of all possible countermeasures, of defending Spitsbergen against determined British attacks.

V. The Chief of the Operations Branch, Naval Staff discusses the operations order of Group North to transfer the cruiser LUETZOW to Norway; it is planned to transfer the LUETZOW to Narvik (Bogen Bay)

12 May 1942

and to use Trondheim as stop-over port. 5 destroyers will serve as escort. The Commander, Destroyers is in charge of the operation.

First part of the operation: Ship will sail from Swinemuende on receipt of code word "Walzertraum"; she will proceed through the Great Belt, the Kattegat, and the Skagerrak to Kvarenes Fjord (east of Kristiansand-South). There the voyage will be interrupted for two or three days to enable the destroyers to carry out their mining assignment (mine field 17b, code word "Burgund").

Second part of the operation: On receipt of code word "Walzerkoenig" the ship will sail from Kvarenes Fjord through the gap of the Kristiansand mine field to Skudenaes Fjord, then via the island route to Krakhelle Scund. After nightfall across the Bue Fjord via quadrants AF 8752 and AF 8439 to Bredsunddybet. From there via island route to Trondheim.

Group North has set the following dates:

Start of operation "Walzertraum" : 15 May from Swinemuende.
Start of operation "Burgund" : Evening of 17 May from Kristiansand.
Start of operation "Walzerkoenig": 19 May from Kvarenes Fjord.

Simultaneous with the LUTZOW operation it is planned to withdraw the damaged PRINZ EUGEN (operation "Zauberfloete"), so that she would leave Trondheim on 16 May, enter Bue Fjord in the morning of 17 May and leave the island route in the evening at Skudenaes.

The Naval Staff has no comment with regard to Group North's operations order and schedule. The Chief of the Naval Staff approves of the Group's plans.

(For details see files "Transfer of LUTZOW and PRINZ EUGEN".)

VI. Report by the Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff about the Armed Forces High Command's directive: "Misleading the enemy with Regard to Our Operations in the East".

The directive deals with the first stage of operation, lasting approximately until 25 May, and the second stage, beginning on 25 May.

The purpose of deceiving the enemy during the first stage of operation is to increase his uncertainty about our plans for the Eastern Front

CONFIDENTIAL

12 May 1942

and to conceal our preparations and troop movements for operation "Blau". After the end of May it will no longer be possible to prevent the enemy from gaining some knowledge of the disposition of our forces. It will therefore be necessary in this stage to confuse him as much as possible as to the focal point and the direction of our measures. It is particularly important to direct his attention away from the Southern Army Group toward the Central Army Group.

(For details of these instructions see the directive of the Armed Forces High Command, War Diary, File "Barbarossa".)

VII. Various Problems

a. The Chief of the Naval Communications Division reports about the advisability of installing another coastal listening station in Narvik owing to the excellent experience made in Trondheim. The Chief of the Naval Staff agrees with the plan.

b. The Chief of the Naval Construction Division reports in reply to an inquiry: At present, 970 workers are engaged at 23 shipyards in the repair of merchant vessels.

The repair of the GNEISENAU (ship and engines) requires 4,000,000 working days, that is a labor force of approximately 800 workers!

c. The Chief of the Naval Ordnance Division reports about the copper situation: According to information from Reich Minister Speer, the Navy can figure on an additional monthly allocation of 500 tons of copper in the 3rd quarter of this year, bringing the total allotment to 2,500 tons. Beginning with the 4th quarter, the drive for salvaging copper from medium and low tension wires will begin to show results. (Reduction of the diameter of over-thick cables and replacement of copper wires by iron ones.) This will result in freeing a very big quantity of copper. It is, of course, necessary that all branches of the Armed Forces provide personnel to dismantle the old lines and lay the new ones.

The Chief of the Naval Ordnance Division expects an increased copper allocation also for the year 1943, and requests that the greater quantity available should not be assigned strictly to increased submarine construction, but should be distributed so as to take care of other urgent requirements also (for instance, equipment of merchant vessels with degaussing gear, construction of light naval vessels, etc.)

12 May 1942

The Chief of the Naval Staff orders that everything be done to further the drive to salvage copper from medium and low tension lines, because the additional allocation of copper is vitally important for the Navy.

Situation 12 May 1942

I. Warfare in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

North Atlantic:

According to an unconfirmed Italian report, the RENOWN and a cruiser of the PENELOPE class have sailed to the U.S. for overhauling and repair. (This report is not entirely reliable.)

South Atlantic:

On 9 May, radio intelligence located a force, evidently made up of a battleship or aircraft carrier, possibly 1 cruiser, and 5 destroyers, in the Gulf of Guinea, south of the Ivory Coast.

Indian Ocean:

Our radio intelligence service predicts that a large convoy with war materiel is probably scheduled to depart from Capetown to Australia under the escort of an auxiliary carrier in the second part of May or early in June. (A similar report was made a few days ago by an agent through the Lourenco Marquez consulate.)

According to French reports concerning the whereabouts of the Madagascar forces the dispatch boat D'IBERVILLE is at Tamatave; the dispatch boat D'ENTRECASTEAUX, which was severely damaged during an air raid, is at Diego Suarez. Nothing is known about the submarines MONGE and LE GLORIEUX. Communication between Vichy and Madagascar was reestablished. The Governor reports that the British are digging in south of Diego Suarez.

2. Own Situation:

No reports were received from our auxiliary cruisers and auxiliary vessels.

CONFIDENTIAL

12 May 1942

Information about the enemy situation was sent to our forces in foreign waters by Radiograms 0731 and 2014.

Our submarines receive permission to attack on our Atlantic route "Anton" in the area west of 20° W and between 15° N and 5° S during the period of 13 to 25 May.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Special Item:

A reliable agent reports that, according to information from different sources, all British ships and ships bound for the British Isles have received orders to put into British or neutral ports by 28 May. The reason for this measure is supposed to be that at this time neither British warships nor planes will be available for the protection of merchant vessels because they will be needed for the planned offensive.

This report tallies with a similar one received some time ago from South America. It deserves attention, since it confirms reports from various sources about an imminent British offensive.

Atlantic Coast:

No enemy activity to report.

According to radio monitoring, German PT boats were located during the night of 12 May by British radar in the Channel off Dungeness. A westbound German convoy was reported northwest of Gravelines and 4 British flotilla leaders, 6 motor gunboats, 6 torpedo PT boats, and several motor launches were put on its trail.

Radio monitoring reveals that since 1 May there have been 2 vessels at sea in the Dover area every day, compared with about 1 vessel every other day until now.

12 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

The 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla had a brief brush with British PT boats off Dunkirk on route "Rosa" during the night of 11 May while en route to Hook of Holland. A pincer attack attempted by 4 British PT boats was detected in time and repulsed. No hits on the enemy vessels were observed.

The mine-exploding vessel "171", escorted by the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla, left in the afternoon from Hook of Holland.

The 2nd PT Boat Flotilla accomplished its mining mission during the night of 11 May according to plan. The 4th PT Boat Flotilla left in the evening for a torpedo and mining mission in the area of Dungeness. (See Enemy Situation.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Light enemy reconnaissance activity.

Our convoy and channel-sweeping operations were carried out on schedule. Parts of the 8th Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla engaged enemy PT boats north of Scheveningen during the night of 11 May; a hit on the bridge of an enemy boat was observed, also heavy smoke and flames. The enemy boats withdrew at top speed in a northwesterly direction. (See also convoy traffic in Telegram 1943.)

2. Norway:

Report about the sighting of a submarine off Nordkyn. Submarine hunt without result.

Enemy planes flew over the area of the Admiral, North Norwegian Coast; on this occasion the steamer HARM FRITZEN (4,800 GRT), en route from Maaloe to Aalesund, was hit by 2 bombs and was grounded.

Submarine hunt and check sweeps on the west coast in the island waters around Boemmel Fjord brought no results. The waters were reopened to shipping.

Our ships proceeded without incidents. (See Telegram 1715.)

12 May 1942

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Special Item:

Attention is called to the intelligence report mentioned under Enemy Situation, West Area concerning the order issued to British ships.

According to the opinion of Group North, it may be assumed that, apart from the enemy forces directly engaged in escorting convoys, the enemy ships constantly in the Arctic Area consist of the following:

- 1 British or U.S. cruiser
- 5 new Russian destroyers
- 4 old Russian destroyers
- 6 Russian torpedo boats
- 10 or more motor PT boats
- (approx.) 35 Russian submarines in addition to an unknown number of British and U.S. submarines.
- 5 mine sweepers
- 11 motor patrol boats
- (approx.) 100 auxiliary vessels

(For details see Enemy Situation, North Area, Telegram 1825.)

Air reconnaissance reports the following ships in the Kola Bay area in the evening of 10 May:

- 1 cruiser
- 9 destroyers
- 9 escort vessels
- 36 steamers (!)

12 May 1942

A survey of the ice situation shows that the central portion of the White Sea is practically free of ice, while there is a 2 km wide strip of ice along its western coast. The water between Zimnegorski and Mudyugski is mostly covered with ice, but an ice-free channel of approximately 1 km in width runs from north to south. The entrance to Archangel was not reconnoitered.

The ice situation in the White Sea allows the conclusion that it is already possible to resume communications with Archangel with the aid of ice breakers; this would be of great importance for the continued support of Soviet Russia by shipments of war material from Great Britain and the U.S., and would make enemy shipping more inaccessible to us (particularly as regards the use of mines).

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Nothing to report, except mine-sweeping activity in the Great Belt and Little Belt. In the eastern Baltic Sea the 1st and 2nd transport groups arrived at Hangoe in the afternoon. The 3rd group is en route from Stettin and the 4th group from Danzig.

V. Merchant Shipping

1. A Swedish paper publishes the following figures of shipping space at the disposal of the enemy powers:

The British-American tonnage at the end of 1941 is estimated at 35,000,000 GRT. In 1942, 5,000,000 GRT of American and 2,000,000 GRT of British shipping space will be built. For 1943 a further increase can be anticipated. The probable war losses in 1942 will thus be balanced, if not exceeded, by new ships.

The Swedish figures of available shipping space and the probable new ships tally with those of the Naval Intelligence Division, Foreign Merchant Marine Branch. However, according to the opinion of the Operations Division, Naval Staff it is not to be expected that

12 May 1942

the American construction program will actually be carried out. It may thus be anticipated that the high sinking figure will not be balanced, and certainly not exceeded, by the enemy's building program.

2. The Japanese Navy has issued new and more stringent regulations for naval warfare, covering ten points. For details see the short report of the Naval Intelligence Division "Foreign Merchant Shipping". No. 15/42

VI. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Submarines were reported near Cape Lookout, Cape May, St. Johns, Manzanillo, northwest of Guadeloupe, and off La Guaira, Venezuela. Radio intelligence of 11 May reports the torpedoing of the steamer CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, northeast of the Lesser Antilles.

All U.S. warships are warned of danger zones off Cape Sable and Cape Hatteras.

2. Own Situation:

North Atlantic:

The convoy intercepted by group "Hecht" is constantly reported by several submarines, which are being driven off, however, by the escort. No report of any success. At 1830 the convoy was in quadrant AC 8566.

No successes were reported by our submarines on the American Coast.

Submarine U "507" reports in detail on the situation off the Mississippi River delta. She sank a 10,000 ton tanker on 12 May.

Submarine U "162" reports sinking the tanker ESSO HOUSTON in quadrant EE 8465.

Of the submarines in the South, U "126" reestablished contact with the convoy northwest of the Cape Verde Islands. The submarines are

12 May 1942

being driven off by the escort ships. Submarine U "128" renewed the attack during the night of 12 May and reported 8 hits, but was unable to observe their effect. Additional reports are expected.

For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

Special Items:

1. Route A was opened for submarine attacks, effective from 0000 on 13 May to 22 May at 2400. (See Radiogram 1830.)

2. The German Embassy reports with regard to the damaged submarine lying at Cartagena that preliminary Spanish examinations make it appear probable that two to three months will be required to render the boat sea-worthy. Spain intends to notify Great Britain of the result of the final examination and the ruling made. As far as the possibility of repairing the vessel can be judged at present, it appears that she can hardly be restored to complete seaworthiness. The Navy Minister, in a remark to the Military Attache, hinted that the crew might be returned to Germany in such an event. There can be no doubt that the Spanish Government will oblige us in this matter to the best of their ability.

VII. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers raided Southampton and Shoreham. Hits were scored on the electric power plant.

No air activity by us or the enemy during the night.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Our attacks on the Malta airfields continued. North of Derna one of our air transport groups suffered losses through enemy fighter planes.

Five Ju 88's and two He III's carried out a mining mission against Port Said.

12 May 1942

3. Eastern Front:

Attack on enemy forces on the Kerch Peninsula; on this occasion several steamers and small vessels were sunk and others damaged.

On the northern part of the Eastern Front successful attacks were made on steamers in the Litsa and Kola Bays; 2 steamers were sunk, 3 steamers damaged by bomb hits.

The 5th Air Force reports sinking a submarine in the North Cape area.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

According to our intelligence organization in Spain, a large warship (possibly American) entered the harbor of Gibraltar in the afternoon; otherwise the ship situation of the harbor is essentially unchanged. No additional news was received concerning the whereabouts of the RENOWN and the AURORA-class cruiser.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

The situation in Malta is likewise unchanged. Normal convoy and supply traffic between Alexandria and Tobruk.

The British Admiralty admits the loss of the destroyers, bombed and reported sunk by the X Air Corps on 11 May. The destroyers JACKAL, KIPLING, and LIVELY are involved.

2. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 9th transport group consisting of 4 motor ships arrived in Tripoli on 12 May without incident; its German cargo consisted of 467 motor vehicles and 6,404 tons of war materiel.

Due to enemy action the convoy to Benghazi was delayed. Libyan coastal traffic proceeding on schedule.

12 May 1942

The amount of cargo unloaded at Tripoli during the month of April is reported as follows:

Total cargo discharged (not including tankers and coal steamers):
74,800 tons.

Of this, German cargo:	20,217 tons
By coastal vessels:	12,895 tons
Of this, German Cargo:	5,271 tons

The German Naval Command, Italy reports that upon order, or by request, of the Italian High Command, and with General Rommel's consent, 2 more naval barges were transferred for training purposes. For the time of their detachment 2 Italian auxiliary sailing vessels have been assigned for German coastal supply.

3. Area Naval Group South:

Nothing to report.

IX. Situation East Asia

The Air Attache at Tokyo submits the communique issued by the Japanese Admiralty about the battle in the Coral Sea. (For this report see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV). According to this report, the aircraft carrier SARATOGA was hit by ten 250 kg bombs and 9 torpedoes, in spite of her strong defenses; the aircraft carrier YORKTOWN was struck by 8 bombs and 3 torpedoes; the battleship WARSPITE suffered torpedo hits. On the preceding day (7 May), a CALIFORNIA-class battleship was sunk by naval land-based planes which had taken off from Rabaul. Throughout the entire engagement no naval forces took part in the battle. The action came as a consequence of the Japanese seizure of Deboyne Island in the Louisiade Archipelago and evidently also of a landing attempt at Port Moresby (though our Attache reports that this is officially denied), during which several Japanese transports were sunk.

12 May 1942

X. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The 11th Army successfully continued the operations on the Kerch Peninsula.

On the sector of the Von Kleist Army Group heavy enemy artillery fire north of Slavansk. Otherwise nothing to report.

The 6th Army was attacked by superior enemy forces (at least 12 infantry divisions and 300 tanks) south and east of Kharkov, where the enemy succeeded in breaking through our positions. Countermeasures are underway.

Central Army Group :

Enemy attacks south of Mtsensk were repulsed with heavy enemy losses. Successful actions against partisans.

Northern Army Group :

Strong concentrations at Gorgbi, west of Kholm. Strong troop concentrations also before the Demyansk front. Enemy attacks at Lyuban, north of Lake Ilmen, were unsuccessful.

2. Finnish Front:

Heavy motor traffic and troop movements in the Murmansk sector indicates an imminent enemy offensive.

3. Special Item:

The Foreign Office relays a telegraphic report from a Lisbon agent (dated 25 Apr.) about remarks made by the Commander in Chief of the Polish Army in Russia (General Anders), who is on his way to London. The Polish General, after his release from Russian imprisonment, negotiated with Stalin and allegedly obtained concessions regarding the treatment of the Polish problem. About Russia's military strength he said that at present the second reserve units are fighting, while the third reserve of 100 to 120 division is being organized

12 May 1942

in the Ural region; under Stalin's orders this force will not go into combat prior to the winter of 1942-43, even if Moscow should fall, in order to be available as a specially trained and well-rested unit. Her artillery is Russia's best weapon, and it has an officer corps well-trained technically; the Russian air force has good pilots but poor navigators; the infantry is suffering from lack of initiative on the part of the higher commands and the troop officers.

13 May 1942

Items of Political Importance:

France:

Concerning Martinique: Ambassador Ritter of the Foreign Office reports: As reported by Ambassador Abetz, Laval urgently requested on 11 May a conference about the steps which the French Government should take in the face of the U.S. threats. The French Government sees 3 alternatives:

a. A formal protest, but actual compliance with the U.S. ultimatum.

b. An order for the scuttling of the French ships in Martinique in the event of American intervention, without France's taking any diplomatic steps.

c. To order that the French ships be scuttled, in the event of American intervention, and to break off relations with the U.S.

Ambassador Abetz considered the last-named solution the most favorable. (It would imply the elimination of American representatives in North and West Africa, the internment of all agents, etc.)

On 12 May the Foreign Office advised the Ambassador to inform the French Government that, according to the terms of the armistice, France has to avoid everything that could possibly benefit Germany's enemies. This includes the immobilization demanded by the U.S. The only possibility is to destroy completely all warships and merchant vessels to prevent their falling into enemy hands, and this means that they must be scuttled. The German Government is interested exclusively in the fate of the French ships; all other problems, including a possible break of relations with the U.S., are up to the French Government. (Unofficially, the Ambassador is informed that it might be a good thing from our viewpoint, if the French Government would use the American demands as a pretext to break off relations with the U.S.)

On the evening of 12 May, Abetz reported that Laval and Darlan are in agreement: Admiral Robert is to receive orders once more to scuttle all French warships and merchant vessels in the event that the U.S. should resort to force. The French Ambassador to Washington is to be instructed to inform the U.S. Government that its demands are unacceptable.

On 13 May a detailed note was sent by the French Government to Ambassador Haye (Washington) and Admiral Robert (Martinique), protesting against American interference, rejecting the American demands, and reiterating that the French Government will never accept the responsibility for an action which might jeopardize the good relations with the American people (!!) at the same time the French Government is willing to consider American proposals (!!).

13 May 1942

(Comment of the Naval Staff: The note's assertion of willingness to negotiate, evidently offered in order to gain time, is disappointing.) Moreover, Admiral Robert received the order to scuttle immediately all warships and merchant vessels and to make them utterly useless if the U.S. should take any action whatsoever.

(For details see data in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.)

A report coming from a reliable source is significant with regard to the problem of the defense of West Africa. It relates that Governor Boisson is firmly resolved to defend the colony not only against Great Britain and the U.S., but also against Germany, and, if need be, even against Vichy. There may even be efforts gradually to detach the West African possessions from the French mother country and to make them autonomous (?).

Great Britain:

In the wake of Churchill's speech, the entire enemy press has embarked on a tremendous propaganda attack against the German people. (See Political Review and Foreign Press Reports.) This propaganda campaign recalls vividly the Allies' efforts in 1918, when the German people were threatened on the one hand and on the other were given promises of lenient treatment if they would rid themselves of their leaders in time. It is possible that the serious undertone of the Fuehrer's latest address has caused the enemy to misjudge the situation and that the enemy therefore considers the present moment opportune for a propaganda campaign.

Russia:

About the situation in Soviet Russia see Political Review No. 110.

Special Items:

I. The Chief, Naval Staff is at the Fuehrer's headquarters for a conference with the Fuehrer.

Principal topics: The improvement of shipping conditions to Norway; changes in the shipping organization. Increase of ship repair facilities. Increased construction of new ships.

Additional subjects: Continuation of the construction of destroyers, the building of the Trondheim docks, the decision of the Fuehrer concerning the conversion of the EUROPA, POTSDAM, and GNEISENAU into auxiliary aircraft carriers.

For details see the notes of the Commander in Chief, Navy in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VII.

13 May 1942

II. In the afternoon a conference took place between the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff and Admiral Nomura concerning various pending problems. For minutes of this conference see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV. Amongst other things, Admiral Nomura inquired about the German attitude with regard to Martinique and requests information as to the official opinion and the measures taken to prevent American seizure of the French naval and merchant ships in Martinique at present. When the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff answered this question (see minutes of conference), the Naval Staff was not aware yet of the telegrams exchanged between the Foreign Office and Ambassador Abetz (see the above-described development of the situation under Items of Political Importance). In the evening of 13 May the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff is informed by Ambassador Ritter (Foreign Office) of the developments of the last few days and of the telegrams exchanged.

III. The French propose to station the 2 submarines ready for operations, CAIMAN and MARSOVIN, at Toulon in order to reinforce the defense of the Provence coast. This suggestion, which had already been approved by the Naval Staff on an earlier occasion but was rejected by Italy, is supported at the Italian Armistice Commission by the German Armistice Commission. This is being done on account of the unsettled situation in the Mediterranean and the definite threat to that area, in consideration of France's proven determination to fight (Madagascar); the suggested measure would strengthen the defenses against British attacks. It remains to be seen how Italy will react to the proposal. (See Telegram 1100.)

IV. The Army General Staff (Intelligence Division, West) submits a survey of the forces and the transport situation within the British Empire, stressing particularly the Middle and Near East.

a. The assumption that most of the transports from the British Isles and the Middle East are going to India and that at the same time the forces withdrawn from the Middle East are gradually being replaced from Britain has thus far proved correct. The tonnage engaged in these operations is estimated at approximately 1,800,000 tons. After completion of these troop transfer movements, the supply service to India and the Middle East can be maintained with less shipping space; it is, therefore, certain that the tonnage now engaged in transports will gradually return to ports in the British Isles!! Thus additional reserves of shipping space will become available. The shipping performance in the past proves that the British Empire up to the month of April had sufficient tonnage to move approximately 6 infantry and 2 armored divisions in a continuous though protracted operation without using the same ships twice!!

b. The disposition of enemy forces in the Middle East indicates a particular shortage of front-line divisions. At this moment the forces in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria consist almost completely of garrison troops! It is assumed that the next troop transports from Britain will not go to India but to the Middle East.

(For details regarding these questions, which are of vital importance for the German operations against the Suez area, see the memorandum "Fremde Heere West" in War Diary, Files "Aida".)

13 May 1942

Situation 13 May 1942

I. Warfare in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Middle Atlantic:

An agent reported on 4 May from Freetown that the next convoy to the U.S. will leave Freetown between 12 and 14 May; it will consist of approximately 20 steamers, escorted by one cruiser, one auxiliary cruiser, and several escort vessels. (The cargo consists of manganese ore, tin ore, tin, cocoa, rubber, etc.) A reliable agent in contact with the British Military Attache reports with regard to the situation in Central Africa that the threat to Portuguese Guinea will become acute in the near future. It appears possible that an operation against Dakar and French West Africa is being planned.

This report rates attention. In the opinion of the Naval Staff, an operation against French West Africa must be expected at this time in view of the enemy operations now in progress against the French colonies (Madagascar, Martinique). (See War Diary of 8 May.)

• South Atlantic:

A U.S. plane reports to Natal about the sighting of a burning steamer, accompanied by another ship, approximately 300 miles south of St. Paul. From the same area a British motor tanker gave merchant raider distress signals (QQQ) and reported a suspect vessel 650 miles southwest of Freetown. These reports have probably no connection with the operations of ship "28".

Both reports together with the latest steamer positions obtained by radio monitoring are evidence that traffic has been shifted to lanes in the middle of the South Atlantic, which thus far were little used.

2. Own Situation:

No reports were received from our naval forces.

Information about the enemy situation to ships in foreign waters by Radiograms 0225 and 2359.

13 May 1942

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Lively enemy activity in the Channel during the night of 12 May. A German PT boat flotilla was located by the British radar service, and this contact was maintained. A German westbound convoy was contacted by enemy radar every 10 minutes between 0125 and 0430, while an eastbound convoy was not, evidently being considered less important. According to radio monitoring, the following task force was dispatched against the German convoy: 4 flotilla leaders, 6 motor gunboats, 6 motor torpedo boats, and several motor launches, the latter as covering forces for the returning British task force. British radio reports about the ensuing engagement were intercepted. In the morning 2 motor launches were ordered to search for the overdue motor torpedo boat "22" in the area east of Dungeness. The futile search was later abandoned. Off Portsmouth several warships were observed at sea in the morning.

On 12 May, a Tynemouth patrol boat was ordered to the assistance of a sinking vessel; 12 men were rescued. (See Radio Intelligence Report 1110 on the enemy situation.)

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

With the exception of successful mine-sweeping operations, nothing to report.

Channel Coast:

Ship "23" and its escort was shelled between 0200 and 0300 by British long-range guns without suffering damage. On the basis of the results of continuous British radar location, a number of enemy attacks were launched between 0345 and 0456 by numerous motor gunboats and motor torpedo boats. The weather favored the attacking enemy boats, which, owing to bad weather and in spite of ample and timely warnings, were detected very late by our convoy. Star shells had very little effect. During the engagement the SEEADLER and ILTIS suffered torpedo hits shortly after 0400 in quadrant BF 3324, left lower corner. Both vessels sank fast. Before she was sunk, the ILTIS destroyed the British motor torpedo boat "22". The 2nd Mine Sweeper Flotilla reports successful fighting against the attacking enemy boats and smoke and flames observed on one of them. Several enemy PT boats were damaged during this engagement.

Ship "23" herself reached the port of Boulogne under escort in the morning, undamaged. The 4th PT Boat Flotilla, which had served as remote escort, closed in on the scene of action after completing its large-scale mining mission at the southern end of the Varne Bank, and rescued the survivors. There were deplorable losses of personnel, including the commander of the ILTIS.

For details see short battle reports 1020, 1300, 1323, 1410, and 2050.

13 May 1942

Ship "23" sailed in the evening from Boulogne to Le Havre.

The 4th Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla swept a great number of mines in the area south of Boulogne.

The loss of the 2 torpedo boats of the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla is deeply regretted by the Naval Staff in view of the disastrous weakness of our light naval forces, and all the more since the boats of the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla have always given an excellent account of themselves, especially in the West Area and the Channel; they have proved equal to all demands made on their crews, the gun equipment and the engines. This grave loss must be attributed primarily to the very poor visibility prevailing at the time and to the excellent radar facilities of the enemy. Unfortunately, our jamming station network has not yet been fully developed in the West Area, so that it was not possible to interfere successfully with the enemy's radar activities. The completion of our jammers must therefore be rushed with all possible speed. The engagement and the subsequent inevitable losses furnish another argument for the repeated demands for the speedy reinforcement of our light naval forces.

Special Items:

I. Group West submits another brief evaluation on the enemy's mining operations in the West Area (also in connection with potential enemy landing operations; see notation in War Diary of 11 May). The situation is briefly characterized as follows: The new fuze used on British ground mines has caused the mine situation to become much more acute since the end of March, by reducing the effectiveness of our anti-mine defenses and practically eliminating our most effective mine-sweeping equipment (namely, the "V.E.S." magnet gear of our mine-exploding vessels). As a consequence the Channel has for the first time been blocked completely. The enemy continues to lay very many ground mines in the Channel and in the approaches to our submarine bases. Our mine-sweeping planes are proving very valuable. So far it could not be established that the British are using acoustic mines. Moored mine barrages block the convoy route west of Cherbourg and north of Dunkirk and are constantly being reinforced by enemy mining operations. Our mine-sweeping forces are being taxed heavily; they are exposed to frequent aerial attacks in the daytime, and there are no reserves whatsoever. Thus far it has been possible to keep our submarine lanes open in spite of all difficulties.

Group West concurs with Group North in the opinion that the enemy, for reasons of secrecy and deception, does not find it expedient to betray prematurely any large-scale action planned by not mining the areas involved; on the contrary, it must be assumed that he would try to detract our attention from these very areas by using mines with timing devices. The Naval Staff's comment on this sub-

13 May 1942

ject will be found in the War Diary of 11 May.

II. The attention of Group North, Group South, and the Commanding Admiral, Norway is called to the order issued by Group West; this order calls for utmost caution in recording closed areas on grid and navigation charts, and prohibits strictly the recording of mine barrages and their exact location, lest our mine fields be compromised.

(See letter Skl I E 11354/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Light enemy reconnaissance activity over the North Sea area. Our convoy missions proceeded according to plan.

2. Norway:

On the forenoon of 12 May there was an exchange of gunfire between a subchaser group and a large Russian submarine, equipped with 2 guns, off Nordkyn; hits on the submarine were observed. The retreating submarine was pursued by bombers called in for the purpose; these damaged the boat with bomb hits, forced her to dive, and maintained contact with her. Subchasers brought to the scene destroyed the submarine in the afternoon, 65 miles north of Nordkyn.

This action is an excellent example of good cooperation of aircraft and subchasers in a submarine chase. In this particular instance, the destruction of the enemy submarine must be credited to both branches. (See Report 2131.)

Convoy missions on the Norwegian coast are proceeding as planned. The anti-aircraft cruiser NYMPHE passed Kristiansund, North on her way north. Destroyer Z "25" is proceeding to Trondheim.

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean reached Narvik aboard the TANGA.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

The radio intercept service of the Air Force reports that convoy "U 24", consisting of 22 transports and 2 tankers left port on the evening of 11 May for Reykjavik. It was joined at 2330 by 3 anti-aircraft escort vessels off Bell Rock!!

This convoy movement went unnoticed by our naval radio intelligence. It is probably another convoy with Russian supplies for Murmansk or Archangel.

13 May 1942

Extraordinarily busy enemy radio activity during the day and the night of 12 May over the Murmansk-Great Horsea Island circuit and also via British blind transmission. Radio messages were delivered to the Chief of the Home Fleet and the Flag Officer of the II Battle Squadron. The Chief of the Home Fleet and the Commander of the Destroyers, Home Fleet are frequently addressed together in radio messages. This heavy radio traffic seems to indicate that a major portion of the British Home Fleet is at sea in the Arctic Ocean.

In view of the situation so far, the Naval Staff agrees with the conclusion reached by Group North, namely that the very lively radio activity in conjunction with the numerous reconnaissance flights on 9 and 10 May from northern Scotland in northeasterly and northwesterly directions are indications that convoys PQ 16 and QP 12 have got under way under the protection of a strong task force. Nevertheless, the possibility of a major enemy operation in the Arctic area (as part of a landing operation) cannot be completely discounted. The development of the situation bears close watching.

Air reconnaissance of the 5th Air Force reported at noon the sighting at 0830 of an enemy force 140 miles northeast of Iceland; it consisted of 4 cruisers and 4 destroyers on course 340°, proceeding at 10 knots. Upon approach of our plane, some of the ships changed the course to 70°.

On 12 May an agent on Iceland reported 2 merchant vessels with passenger accommodations in the Hval Fjord; their capacity is 5,000 tons, they are half loaded, large cases are stowed on deck. (Probably airplane parts.) Hval Fjord is patrolled by planes day and night and closely guarded.

Another interesting intelligence report was relayed by the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries concerning heavy traffic on the railroad line Vologda-Archangel. On 3 and 4 May 15 trainloads of troops and guns moved in the direction of Archangel (possibly reinforcements for the Russian Murmansk front). 5 freight trains in the vicinity of Vologda loaded with tanks and large cases were sighted on 6 May. (Probably moving the war material brought to Russia on the last PQ convoy.)

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

13 May 1942

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Operations in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic Sea continued according to plan. Mines were swept in the western Baltic Sea.

Nothing to report from the eastern Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Numerous reports about the sighting of submarines came from the entire U.S. eastern coast, from Halifax to the Mississippi River Delta. Radio monitoring intercepted a directive about the showing of lights off Newfoundland.

A British Admiralty report of 7 Mar. revealed that 6 convoys with 74 vessels reached British ports without losses during the week ending 1 Mar.

2. Own Situation:

During the day contact with the convoy in the North Atlantic was lost. However, submarine U "94" sank 2 more steamers of 11,000 GRT in the morning, so that at least one more boat was able to achieve further results.

Contact was successfully maintained with the convoy northwest of the Cape Verde Islands, though evidently no sinkings were achieved.

Submarine U "564" reported sinking a 5,000 GRT freighter on 8 May and an 8,000 GRT freighter off Florida. East of the Antilles, submarine U "156" sank 2 ships totalling 12,630 GRT, one of them the CITY OF MELBOURNE. Submarine U "69" sank an 11,410 GRT tanker of the VICTOLITE class on 12 May, and on 13 May the freighter BLACK-TERN (5,000 GRT) in the Lesser Antilles.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Except for minor reconnaissance activity on our part, nothing to report.

13 May 1942

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Fighter planes raided Malta. In the evening, 6 planes flew a mining mission against Port Said.

3. Eastern Front:

During operations in the area of the Kerch Peninsula several Russian steamers were damaged by bomb hits and a number of small vessels sunk.

4. Special Items:

Mine-sweeping planes: At present, 4 mine-sweeping planes in all are ready for operations. (Two with the 3rd, 1 with the 4th Air Force, and 1 with forces of the Commanding General, South.) Another plane is under repair and 10 planes are supposed to be ready by the middle of July. The Naval Staff regrets that its repeated requests for faster production and delivery of mine-sweeping planes produce results so slowly.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

On the night of 12 May a mine-laying cruiser of the WELSHMAN class put into Gibraltar from the east. This is evidently the cruiser which appeared a few days ago in the area of Malta. There are no indications that the cruiser has carried out a mining mission in the Central Mediterranean, and it is thus assumed that she was engaged in supply operations for Malta, taking advantage of protection afforded by mined areas.

The following ships were in Gibraltar on 13 May at noon:

2 aircraft carriers
1 DIDO-class cruiser
1 mine-laying cruiser
1 auxiliary cruiser
6 destroyers
approx. 33 freighters and tankers

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

No changes are reported from Malta.

13 May 1942

In the eastern Mediterranean only light supply traffic between Alexandria and Tobruk.

According to an unconfirmed report, the U.S. cruiser RALEIGH escorted by 2 destroyers passed Port Said on 18 Apr. in the direction of Beirut. The U.S. ships were expected back in the Suez Canal by 1 May and are allegedly to be used for escort duty between East Africa and the Mediterranean.

See agent report 1900 regarding the arrival of troop and war materiel transports to Egypt from the U.S. According to this report, five to six ships with air force personnel, planes, engines, and tanks reached Egypt around 20 Apr. Another large U.S. convoy with war materiel is expected about 19 May. According to the same source, approximately 14,000 men from Great Britain arrived in Egypt between 17 and 19 Apr., some of which were sent on to Palestine; they represented mostly replacements and included no major units. (See Telegram 1900.)

Another intelligence report states that the trans-african road from the Cameroons to the Sudan is not yet beyond the planning stage. Shipping to Port Sudan and Suakin by means of coastal sailboats and fishing vessels has been greatly developed and is said to have reached considerable proportions. The frequently-mentioned U.S. base in Eritrea is termed a bluff. Thus far only the foundation for future operations seems to have been laid.

2. Own Situation:

The German Naval Command, Italy reports that it is possible to launch the first stage of operation "Aida" (operation "Theseus") already on 21 May. The Naval Command is therefore trying to rush all preparations so that everything will be ready for participation by the naval forces by nightfall of 20 May.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Convoy movements to Tripoli and Benghazi proceeded according to plan.

The daily average of cargo unloaded at the harbor of Benghazi is reported as 2,500 tons, an excellent and gratifying performance. The total unloadings at Benghazi during the month of April, amounted to 25,496 tons (of which 12,498 tons were German material). In Derna 2,386 tons of German cargo were unloaded during the month of April.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

13 May 1942

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring, the battleship PARIZHSKAYA KOMUNA sailed from Batum with the fleet command aboard and was in radio communication with Sevastopol and ships in the northeastern Black Sea on 12 May.

Lively traffic in both directions was observed in the Kerch Strait.

Own Situation:

Convoy operations according to plan. Mine-sweeping without particular results.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Our Military Attache at Bangkok reports that Chiang Kai-shek has taken over as commander in chief of the Yunnan front. Three Japanese columns are advancing northward; the eastern column via Yunnan, the central column in the Irrawaddy Valley, and the western column along the Chindwin River. Retreating British troops are abandoning their heavy armament.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The 11th Army continued the pursuit of the enemy along the entire front in the direction of Kerch. An enemy attempt to make a stand was frustrated and the enemy thrown back across the Tatarian Moat.

On the southern wing of the 6th Army front the enemy renewed his heavy tank attacks in the Orel sector in a westerly direction. He succeeded at several points in breaking through our lines. Counter-attacks are under way. East of Kharkov our tank forces advanced against the enemy tanks which had penetrated our lines. At Tarnovaya the enemy succeeded in breaking through our lines and advanced northward. Movements of strong enemy forces were observed north of Volchansk.

Central Army Group:

Our shock troops carried out a number of successful raids. No major engagements.

13 May 1942

Northern Army Group:

Futile enemy attacks in the Demyansk area. We annihilated the enemy units encircled north of Lake Ilmen. All attacks south of Maluksa were repulsed.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

The enemy is bringing up reinforcements in the Loukhi sector. Also on the Murmansk front reinforcements continue to arrive at the Litsa sector, and the landing group is gaining strength. Countermeasures are under way.

14 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Martinique: According to a telegram from Admiral Robert to the French Government, the American demands comprise the following points:

1. Complete immobilization of French vessels and warships.
2. Censorship of mail and control of telegraph and radio communication by U.S. authorities.
3. Supervision of immigration, merchant shipping and passenger traffic.
4. Limitation of the activities of French naval and land forces to police duties.
5. Transfer to the U.S. of the French merchant vessels laid up in the Antilles (six freighters totalling 26,700 GRT and 6 tankers of 45,244 GRT).
6. Freezing of Government funds and gold bullion. (French gold in the Antilles amounting to 12,100,000,000 francs.)

If these demands are met, the U.S. are prepared to recognize the High Commissioner as supreme authority of French Guiana and the French Antilles, acting, however, independently of Vichy, and to leave these possessions as heretofore under the French flag.

An immediate reply to point 1 was demanded. Following a protest by the French Government, the U.S. granted an extension to 13 May.

Since then no further reports have been received.

Madagascar: The British Foreign Office announces that the British Government is still resolved, to protect French sovereignty in Madagascar. The French National Committee (DeGaulle) will receive its due share in the administration of this French colony (!)

According to a French survey the Anglo-American powers have already alienated within 2 years, 26% of the French colonial empire. This includes the Cameroons, French Indo China, New Caledonia, Tahiti, French Equatorial Africa, Syria, St. Pierre, and Miquelon. Now, Madagascar has also been attacked, and the French Antilles are threatened.

Special Items:

I. The Chief, Naval Staff is at the Fuehrer's headquarters for another conference together with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines,

14 May 1942

who reports in detail about the development of Submarine warfare and the present submarine situation. For the results of the discussion of other items, see minutes of the conference by the Commander in Chief, Navy in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VII.

II. Concerning the French Forces on Martinique

On the morning of 14 May the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff, after conferring with Ambassador Ritter, replied as follows to yesterday's inquiry of Admiral Nomura, about the orders issued and the measures taken to prevent the French warships in Martinique from falling into American hands:

a. In complying with the armistice agreement, France issued some time ago directives regulating the behavior of the French forces in the West Indies.

b. The new dangers arising from the attitude of the U.S. have prompted the German Government to remind the French Government once more of the necessity to comply with the stipulations of the armistice agreement. The French Government has given even stricter orders than heretofore, and is fully aware of the consequences of a failure to observe these stipulations.

To supplement this reply, Commander Taniguti was informed that the Naval Staff is convinced at this moment that Admiral Robert will execute the scuttling order of the French Government.

Their sinking by German submarines can at present not be considered for political reasons.

III. Concerning the merchant shipping situation caused by the enemy ground mine offensive and aerial attacks (see also War Diary of 6 May and 9 May):

Group North and Group West were informed today by telegram once more that the Naval Staff fundamentally agrees with Group North's survey of the situation of 6 May and is not surprised by this turn of events. All possible measures to provide the necessary means of defense were undertaken long ago. If achievements frequently lag behind the most urgent requirements, it is due to the raw material and labor situation. The Naval Staff is going to make the survey the basis of renewed protests on the top level. (This matter is being taken care of partly during the present discussions between the Commander in Chief, Navy and the Fuehrer; in addition, the Permanent Representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters has received the necessary instructions.) The Naval Staff will take up once more with the Air Force Operations Staff the problem of fighter protection for merchant shipping and convoys. (See Telegram 1105.)

14 May 1942

IV. Concerning the Operations in the Kerch Strait

Group South reports that the 11th Army High Command, complying with a suggestion of the Fuehrer, is making plans and preparations to seize the eastern shore of the Kerch Strait soon, subsequent to the current operations. In agreement with the Southern Army Group, some of the ships of the patrol flotilla in the Sea of Azov (which thus far have been at the disposal of the Commanding General, 1st Panzer Army) will be placed under the Naval Shore Command, Crimea for this operation. Details of the planned operation are not known, so that it is impossible to judge its feasibility with the modest means available for the purpose. Group South is under the impression that the capacity of the available shipping space is overestimated by the 11th Army High Command. (The engines are unreliable, breakdowns occur frequently, the engines are noisy, the ships are not fit to take heavy weapons aboard.) Group South is making preparations for the use of naval barges. However, this means that supply transports will suffer delays because the Danube Flotilla alone cannot cope with them. Moreover, the naval barges must be transported through mined areas not yet reconnoitered. It will be possible to put into Feodosiya only after extensive mine-sweeping, due to the numerous aerial mines in those waters. This applies also to the southern part of the Kerch Strait which is likewise full of aerial mines of all types. If the Army Group is prepared to accept the disadvantages inherent in the use of the naval barges, Group South believes that it will be able nevertheless to find ways and means of fulfilling the tasks involved eventually.

The Group requests the Commanding Admiral, Black Sea to provide as soon as possible for motor pinnaces and jolly boats, to augment the personnel of the coastal defense flotilla, to assign naval personnel for manning the Siebel ferries of the Army, and to comply with the demands for the required officers.

The Naval Staff advises the Quartermaster Division of the Naval Staff, the Bureau of Naval Administration, and the Officer Personnel Division to take all necessary steps and to speed the preparation of all measures so that the operation will suffer no delay by fault of the Navy; this is necessary since the Army operations on the Kerch Peninsula are already in full swing, and the order to launch the operation mentioned by Group South can be expected shortly. The Naval Staff attaches the greatest importance to the exploitation of all naval facilities in supporting this operation.

V. Concerning Carrier Planes:

A few pending problems concerning the aircraft carrier GRAF ZEPPELIN were clarified in discussions with the Air Force Operations Staff. It was definitely established that no further structural changes of the GRAF ZEPPELIN will be necessitated if she is equipped with the 2 models JU 87 and BV 109G, converted for use as carrier planes. The discussions about the navigational and radio equipment of the suggested plane types are nearing an end. Further

CONFIDENTIAL

14 May 1942

difficulties in this respect are hardly to be expected, so that the matter is now ready for a final decision. (For details see note in files concerning the result of the discussions with the Air Force Operations Staff in War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.)

VI. Concerning the Centralized Control of the Armaments Industry

In order to centralize the control of the armaments industry, the Fuehrer, by decree of 7 May, has placed the armament organization of the Armed Forces at the disposal of the Minister of Armament and War Production for the duration of the war. Thus, the following agencies are directly subordinated to the Ministry of Armament and War Production:

a. The branches of the Bureau of War Economy and Armaments responsible for the execution of the armaments program. (They are now designated as "Ruestungsamt".)

b. The subordinate armaments bureaus ("Ruestungsinspektionen" and Ruestungskommandos") which thus become agencies of the Ministry of Armament and War Production.

The branches of the Armed Forces are obliged to adhere to the decisions of the Minister of Armament and War Production in all matters placed under his jurisdiction by order of the Fuehrer.

Situation 14 May 1942

1. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Atlantic:

A British warship is proceeding to the patrol area, presumably directly north of the equator, between 26° W and 30° W. She may be expected to take up patrol duty on 14 May.

On 9 May radio intelligence located an auxiliary cruiser patrolling the area northeast of St. Paul.

Our Military Attache at Buenos Aires reports the arrival of the cruiser DIOMEDE in Montevideo on 12 May.

Indian Ocean:

The Lourenco Marques Consulate General reports the transfer of American troops from Durban to Madagascar. According to the same source, shipping on the east coast of Africa proceeds in convoys under escort as far as Aden.

14 May 1942

French reports state that the mazut stores in Diego Suarez have been set afire and the airfield installations destroyed. The defenses of Tamatave and Majunga are being reinforced by the French.

Pacific Ocean:

The Attache at Tokyo reports that according to information received from the Japanese Navy, about 3 or 4 Soviet steamers ply between America and Vladivostok every month. All ships were allegedly searched by the Japanese and found to carry nothing but grain. Exact data concerning the imports to the Soviet Union across the Pacific are not available at this moment. Since the Japanese Navy would seize any merchant vessels sailing under the flag of nations at war with Japan, shipments from U. S. west coast ports can be carried exclusively by the Soviet Russian merchant marine. According to the calculations of the Naval Staff Intelligence Division, the available Russian cargo space is fully adequate to transport the quantities available for export according to our figures, provided that the volume of Russian coastal shipping is reduced. Although the Japanese Naval Staff issued a directive "to treat as enemy ships all vessels sailing with the consent of enemy governments" and though the contraband list was considerably enlarged, Japanese actions thus far seems to indicate that Soviet ships sailing from the U. S. to Vladivostok are not subject to seizure.

2. Own Situation:

No reports were received from our auxiliary cruisers. Ship "10" will probably meet the REGENSBURG in the next days. Ship "28" is believed to have resumed operations following her rendezvous with the CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN.

The DRESDEN will meet the auxiliary ship DOGGERBANK within the next few days in the South Atlantic waiting area. She is under orders to deliver the mail and then to proceed southward (to a latitude 5° south of point "Schraube", where she is to change to an easterly course). The Naval Staff plans a meeting of the DRESDEN and the REGENSBURG at a point approximately 5° west of point "Feile" for the delivery of mail to ship "10" and the REGENSBURG. The DRESDEN is to prepare to take 80 to 100 war prisoners aboard, who for operational reasons must be taken off the REGENSBURG. The makeshift accommodations aboard the REGENSBURG cannot be avoided. (See Radiogram 1716.)

The Japanese Navy requests information whether the steamer WARTENFELS sailed from Madagascar. It must be assumed that this is not the case, since the WARTENFELS has not been heard of.

The blockade runner TANNENFELS reached Yokahama as scheduled on 12 May, and has thus completed the first half of her blockade-running mission without incident.

CONFIDENTIAL

14 May 1942

Our forces in foreign waters are informed about the enemy situation by Radiogram 1200, 1928, and 2330.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

During the forenoon, British ships were located 115 miles southwest of Brest and in the evening northwest of Cape Vilano. According to a Portuguese report, a British cruiser seized the mail (!) from the Portuguese steamer ANGOLA off the mouth of the Tajo River on 8 May. According to another report, 2 battleships or cruisers and 5 destroyers were sighted on 12 May off the Portuguese coast west of Vianna do Castelo, proceeding on a southerly course; a large southbound convoy was sighted in the same area on 13 May.

In the Channel area a British force was dispatched against German ships located by radar. An agent reports that clandestine traffic with the British Isles is being maintained in the Channel area, mostly by French fishermen. The operations of the British air force are said to be based in part on intelligence received from these vessels.

An intelligence report from the U. S. from the end of April deals on the basis of reliable information with the impending sailings of large convoys; one to sail allegedly some time between 9 and 11 May from Gulf ports to Iceland or Ulster with troops and war material, the other in the direction of the Panama Canal and the Pacific after 12 to 14 May. It has been ascertained that most of the 3rd Armored and the 8th Infantry Divisions are to be shipped to Ulster. Their total strength is estimated at 18,000 to 19,000 men and a very large number of vehicles.

(For details see Telegram 1515, intended for the information of the Commanding Admiral, Submarines.)

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Nothing to report.

Channel Coast:

Ship "23" is under way from Le Havre to the roadstead of Dinard, under escort of the 8th Mine Sweeper Flotilla and the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla.

The 2nd PT Boat Flotilla submitted, a brief report about the mining of the English coast during the night of 11 May. (See report 1450.) It is assumed that the mission was undetected.

Otherwise nothing to report.

14 May 1942

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Convoy operations proceeded according to plan without incident.

2. Norway:

Enemy air activity against our convoys on the Norwegian coast; in the area of the Admiral, North Norwegian Coast, the Norwegian steamer TAMPA was damaged and subsequently grounded.

Otherwise our shipping proceeded according to plan.

The anti-aircraft cruiser NYMPHE is proceeding through the Vest Fjord on her way to Narvik.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

An agent reports from Iceland that 2 destroyers are engaged in patrolling off the Hval Fjord. Air patrol activity is maintained by flying boats based at Akranes.

Southwest of the Faeroe Islands, 2 enemy troop transports and 2 torpedo boats on course 130° were reported by air reconnaissance. It was established that there are enemy troops on the island of Jan Mayen; one of our planes was fired on with machine guns from the ground.

In the forenoon, the Air Force reported an enemy force consisting of 1 cruiser and 4 destroyers southeast of Bear Island on a north-westerly course. Continuous contact was maintained and a successful attack carried out in the evening.

Own Situation:

7 boats of the 6th PT Boat Flotilla were detailed for a reconnaissance mission from Svolvær.

4 FW 200 planes of the Air Commander, North Sea, after an approach flight of 7 hours, attacked an icebreaker of 3,000 tons and a 2,000-ton merchant vessel in the Ice Fjord (Spitsbergen). The icebreaker sank immediately. Fire on the merchant vessel resulted in violent explosions, and the vessel was probably destroyed. Information about this successful engagement was conveyed to our meteorological station on Spitsbergen.

CONFIDENTIAL

14 May 1942

The cruiser formation intercepted by air reconnaissance southeast of Bear Island was shadowed during the day and successfully attacked by bombers at dusk. Several direct bomb hits were scored on the cruiser, which was subsequently sunk by a torpedo. The sinking is confirmed by aerial photo. The ship was a U. S. PENSACOLA-class cruiser of 9,100 tons. Her crew was taken aboard by the destroyer escort.

This sinking is all the more gratifying since it involved an American cruiser; this is the first engagement of an American cruiser with German forces in European waters, and the outcome was a bitter lesson for the U. S.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

In a secret official Russian ships catalog of November 1941, neither the battleship MARAT nor the cruisers PETROPAVLOVSK and MARTI are listed. They are evidently no longer fit for combat.

From an intercepted radio conversation between the Chief, Operations Division, Black Sea Fleet and a party in Leningrad, our intelligence service learned that simultaneous fleet operations in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea must be expected to begin on 14 May.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report. The Bay of Kronstadt is reported free of ice. Group North requests the 1st Air Force to begin with the mine-laying operation (code name "Froschlaich") and calls the attention of the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries to the urgency of mining the Kronstadt Sea Channel at the earliest opportunity.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Group "Hecht", operating in the North Atlantic, was ordered to advance in patrol line with a general course of 50° and to operate from the specified stations against an eastbound convoy (HX 189) which had been located by our radio monitoring service.

14 May 1942

According to reports, the submarines are hampered by high seas and bad weather. Submarine U "406" sighted the outgoing convoy again in the evening in quadrant BD 1744, but was driven off by the escort.

From the American coast, submarine U "593" reported a torpedo hit on a zig-zagging Swiss steamer, the neutral markings of which could not be made out from a distance of 500m.

Submarine U "564" sank a 5,000-ton tanker in the Florida Strait, U "162" the steamer BRITISH COLONY (6,800 GRT), under way from Trinidad to Gibraltar.

Submarine U "98" encountered no traffic on the 20 m. line along the Florida coast except for destroyer patrols and subchasers. Strong air patrols, using flares during the night. The boat assumes cooperation between planes and subchasers.

Due to the evidently changed shipping situation, the Commanding Admiral, Submarines orders a number of shifts in the zone of operations. Thus one submarine each is detailed to operate off New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Baltimore, in the Windward Passage, off Cape Hatteras, and the eastern exit of the Florida Strait.

For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

In successful fighter bomber raids 4 steamers, totalling 7,000 tons, were sunk in the harbor of Torquay; several small ships capsized in the harbor. Southwest of the Faeroe Islands an unsuccessful attack was made on 2 troop transports.

No night missions were flown against the British Isles. There was also little enemy air activity.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

In raids against the Malta airfields, it was established that the fighter plane defenses had again been reinforced.

3. Eastern Front:

The VIII Air Corps heavily attacked enemy concentrations in the Kerch area in spite of unfavorable weather conditions. The enemy suffered tremendous losses. Particularly hard hit were embarkation and unloading operations in the Kerch Strait.

14 May 1942

For a report about the successful operation of the Air Force in the Arctic Ocean see Situation Arctic Ocean.

Stukas attacked ships inside the Kola Bay and destroyed a 10,000 ton tanker.

The Operations Staff of the Armed Forces estimates the total strength of the Russian air forces on the basis of air reconnaissance and radio monitoring reports to be unchanged; there are 2,000 1st class planes and 500 2nd class planes, to which must be added approximately 200 British planes in the North Area.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

The mine-laying cruiser which arrived in Gibraltar on 12 May left again during the night of 13 May, probably eastward. The Italians assume another supply mission for Malta.

The Italians assume that the report of the Italian intelligence service about enemy formations and a southbound convoy on the Portuguese west coast (see Situation West Area) refers to a possible convoy or plane-ferrying operation from Gibraltar to the eastern Mediterranean; this appears all the more possible since radio monitoring noticed increased radio communication of an unusual nature between the commanding admiral at Gibraltar and various command stations in the Mediterranean.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

Normal supply and convoy traffic in the area Alexandria-Tobruk. Judging from radio communication, 2 or 3 convoys or task forces are at present in the Alexandria or the Cyrenaica area.

2. Own Situation:

In connection with the assumption that the British mine-laying cruiser is engaged in another supply mission to Malta, the Italian Navy ordered extensive air reconnaissance in a westerly direction; in addition, submarines and PT boats in the area from Cape Bon to Pantellaria were alerted. 2 cruisers and 2 destroyers were allegedly off Cape Bon and La Galite on 15 May.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The transport which reached Benghazi on 13 May carried German cargo consisting of 182 vehicles and 4,000 tons of supply. North African convoys and coastal supply operations continue on schedule.

14 May 1942

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring located the cruiser A with destroyer escort still in the eastern Black Sea.

A great number of fishing steamers, small vessels, and a few PT boats were located in the Kerch Strait between Kerch and Akhtarsk.

Own Situation:

Convoy operations proceeding on schedule. The operations staff of the Commanding Admiral, Black Sea will be transferred to Constanta on 15 May.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

On the Kerch Peninsula Russian resistance was broken in spite of unfavorable terrain conditions, and the town of Kerch reached.

Enemy attacks on the front of the Von Kleist Army Group were repulsed. Air reconnaissance established extensive troop movements in the Izyum area.

Our forces on the southern wing of the 6th Army had to be withdrawn due to heavy enemy pressure. Heavy fighting is in progress against greatly superior enemy forces supported by a great number of tanks. East of Kharkov we repulsed enemy attacks. Here alone the enemy employed approximately 12 infantry divisions, 1 motorized brigade, 3 cavalry divisions, and 2 armored brigades.

At the 2nd Army sector no special activity.

14 May 1942

Central Army Group:

Enemy attacks were repulsed. North of Mtsensk movements of strong enemy forces in a southeasterly direction. Our thrusts near Byelev were successful.

Northern Army Group:

Futile enemy attacks west of Kholm, on the Lovat River and in the Staraya Russa area. The enemy suffered heavy losses when penetrating west of Yamno.

2. Finnish Front:

A landing group west of Litsa Bay was repulsed.

3. North Africa:

Heavy sandstorms prevented all operations.

15 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Radio New York reports that the 3 French warships in Martinique will be immobilized according to an agreement reached between the French authorities of Martinique and the American representatives. The question of neutralizing the fleet bases is still to be discussed.

This seems to indicate that some sort of negotiations between the French and Americans have actually begun; this fact and the very cautious and weakly-styled note which the French Government handed to the U.S. yesterday have made a very unfavorable impression on the German Government. The latter strictly rejects and condemns any inclination of the French Government to negotiate with the U.S.

In the afternoon of 14 May the Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff had a telephone conversation with Ambassador Ritter; he pointed out that neither the directive of the Foreign Office nor the note of the French Government are sufficiently unequivocal in their demand that the French warships in Martinique must positively be destroyed lest they fall into the hands of the U.S. The Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff emphasized in this connection the conviction of the Naval Staff that, in dealing with this problem, the following fundamental facts must be taken into account.

1. It is certain that the U.S. is endeavoring to gain permanent possession of the French West Indian colonies.

2. If the French attitude continues what it is, difficulties will undoubtedly arise sooner or later between the U.S. and France; in this case, the U.S., under pretext of "the existence of a new situation," will take additional and final steps against the French West Indies.

The Foreign Office, influenced by the attitude of the Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff, has once more clearly formulated the demands of the German Government on France in a telegram to Ambassador Abetz; it was pointed out that the demands of the Reich Government as transmitted on 12 May had barred from the beginning the mere immobilization of the French ships. The principal German demands are outlined once more as follows:

Prevent immobilization. Do not tolerate a situation to arise which later on would offer Great Britain and the U.S. a possibility to seize the ships. The ships must be scuttled at the slightest hint of danger. Prepare everything so that the ships can be scuttled at a moment's notice in such a manner that they cannot be raised or otherwise be useful to Germany's enemies. With regard to the French gold holdings, the German Government has taken note of the French information that all preparations have been made to sink the gold in the harbor of Martinique in the event of an American attack.

15 May 1942

For details see the note of the German Government and other pertinent information in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.

Great Britain:

According to a report from Iceland, the British distrust of Eire continues undiminished. Irish dock and shipyard hands are being dismissed and put to work as farm hands in the interior of England. American propaganda in southern Ireland is very active. It is expected that the U.S. and Great Britain will soon openly take action against Ireland and that the U.S. will be the first to break diplomatic relations.

India:

According to a foreign diplomatic source, Gandhi is planning a new action aiming at India's national independence. It is believed that Gandhi will assume leadership of the National Congress.

Finland:

See Political Review No. 112 for Minister Tanner's foreign policy address.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. The Chief, Naval Staff reports about the result of his conference with the Fuehrer:

a. The Fuehrer approves of the suggestions of the Naval Staff with regard to the reorganization of maritime shipping and the Shipping Office, but wants to study the problem once more before making his decision.

b. The Commander in Chief, Navy gained the impression during his conference with Minister Speer that the latter is sincerely trying to cooperate with us and to assist the Navy effectively. The Navy owes Minister Speer a great deal, particularly for his preventing the discontinuation of destroyer construction. Speer figures that the drive to salvage copper from medium and low tension cables will eventually furnish the Armed Forces with approximately 50,000 tons of copper. (So far, the Navy has been granted in writing an additional 500 tons per month.) Speer himself is thoroughly convinced of the necessity to continue to build destroyers.

As a result of the conference the impression now prevails that, owing to the measures taken, the primary bottleneck hampering the Navy is no longer the copper problem but the labor problem.

15 May 1942

The Chief, Naval Staff directs that the suspended work on destroyers, mine sweepers, torpedo boats, etc. is to be resumed. A program for additional constructions is to be worked out by the Naval Construction Division and to be submitted at the earliest possible date. For the time being, however, no plans should be made to increase the number of submarines being constructed to 25 boats per month, because the building of light combat ships must be considered particularly urgent. (According to a remark by Vice Admiral Krancke, the Fuehrer himself has reached the conclusion that the building of submarines alone is not sufficient, and that light combat and escort ships are just as badly needed.)

Nevertheless, the Chief, Naval Staff is fundamentally determined to stick to the original building program of 25 submarines per month as the ultimate goal, which must be stressed in all discussions and preparations. (It would be impossible to increase the number of new submarine construction to 25 boats per month at present, on account of the labor situation, even if sufficient quantities of copper could be allocated.)

c. The Fuehrer decided that 3 auxiliary aircraft carriers should be built (EUROPA, GNEISENAU, and POTSDAM). The Chief, Naval Staff orders the Naval Construction Division to prepare the necessary plans immediately; the Fuehrer agrees with the Chief, Naval Staff in that the construction of submarines, torpedo boats, escort ships, etc. has priority over that of the auxiliary aircraft carriers.

(The Operations Division, Naval Staff is studying the operational potentialities of the auxiliary aircraft carriers and the strategic goals to be set.)

The Fuehrer personally is perfectly convinced that the Navy can no longer operate without aircraft carriers and without fighter protection of her own, but as regards the lack of a German Naval Air Force, he is likewise convinced that under the circumstances it was impossible at the time to arrive at a different solution, because the organization of the Air Force in general would have been seriously and adversely affected by the simultaneous creation of a separate Naval Air Force.

d. During his conference at the Fuehrer Headquarters, the Chief, Naval Staff gained the impression that also Staatsrat Blohm, in his capacity as deputy for warship construction in the Staff of the Minister of Armament and Munitions, has the best intentions and full understanding for the need of cooperation with the Navy. Friction arising occasionally from the fact that the representatives of the Minister are overstepping the limits must be eliminated by broad-minded cooperation and good will on both sides. The great common goal is the increased efficiency and striking power of the Navy!

e. The Chief, Naval Staff, on the basis of the Fuehrer conference, orders the Trondheim dock to be built with a length of 350 m and a width of 60 m so that it will accommodate, not only the TIRPITZ, but also larger ships to be built in the future.

15 May 1942

II. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff reports about the conference with the Commanding Admiral, Group North. The meeting of Admiral Carls with the Admiral, Arctic Ocean (Admiral Schmundt) and the discussion of the recent operation in the Arctic Ocean has greatly helped to clarify divergent opinions and to eliminate misunderstandings which had arisen from correspondence and radio communications. It may be expected that the command situation which was sometimes very unpleasant will improve considerably from now on and that major differences will no longer occur. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff therefore proposes to forego the intended intervention by the Naval Staff and not to send another directive to Group North, since the matter has been settled in accordance with the Naval Staff's point of view.

The Chief, Naval Staff agrees to this proposal, but believes it necessary that in principle an admiral should be in command when the 2 pocket battleships (SCHEER and LUETZOW) begin to operate in the Arctic Ocean. In his opinion, modern warfare presents every commanding officer with tactical problems which make it impossible to direct the operations of a formation (destroyer escort, fighter protection, commitment of air forces, cooperation with submarines, etc.) as in the past. The command of the cruiser group in the Arctic Ocean should be in the hands either of the Commanding Admiral, Battleships or of an admiral to be named for this purpose.

III. The Chief of Communications Division, Naval Staff reports that the radar gear for submarines is now coming off the production line and the first pieces are already going into use in the zone of operations. Unfortunately, we can figure only on 10 sets (instead of 20 as intended) to be delivered monthly, due to a shortage of raw material and bottlenecks in production.

IV. The Chief of the Underwater Obstacles Branch reports the result of the torpedo firing tests against anti-torpedo nets, held between 29 Apr. and 3 May. These experiments were made with torpedoes of types G7e, G7a, and FW with the British pistol, mark VIII, equipped with net cutter. Shots were fired at depths of 4, 6, 8, and 10 meters against our anti-torpedo nets with 10.5 cm mesh. Results were as follows:

2 rows of single nets 5 to 30 m apart offer no protection;
2 rows of double nets 5 m apart give complete protection.

Special Items:

I. Concerning the position of naval liaison officers attached to offices of the Armed Forces High Command the Army and the Air Force.

The naval liaison officers attached to army groups, air forces, army high commands, and the Air Commander, North Sea are removed from the command of the Naval Staff, as of this date, and are placed under the naval Group commands in the areas in which they serve. The naval liaison officer attached to the Commander in Chief, Army and to the Commander in Chief, Air Force remain under the Naval Staff.

15 May 1942

Nothing is changed in the position of the Naval Liaison officers sent by the Group command; the Admiral, Arctic Ocean; the German Naval Command, Italy; and other commands to German or foreign armed forces headquarters. The Naval Staff reserves the right to call on naval liaison officers for direct submission of reports and surveys concerning problems or assignments of a general nature.

II. Japanese plans of operation:

The Naval Attache at Tokyo reports that he encountered marked reserve on the part of the Japanese Navy after his return from the front. He explains this attitude by the fact that the German Foreign Minister in person spoke to Ambassador Oshima about the occupation of Portuguese Timor which the Naval Attache at Tokyo had been discussing with the Japanese Navy; this was done although the contact man of the Naval Attache had requested that no further Japanese officials should be drawn into the matter. Due to this indiscretion, the Japanese Navy Minister found himself in an embarrassing position towards the rest of the Cabinet.

(According to the Naval Staff's records, this incident occurred because the Attache had informed the Ambassador at Tokyo, who in turn relayed the information to the Foreign Office. The Naval Staff will see to it that the Attache's telegrams are handled in accordance with his wishes as far as the Foreign Office and the Japanese Embassy at Berlin are concerned.)

The Attache comments on the probable future conduct of the war by Japan as follows:

- a. The offensive against Ceylon has been postponed till late fall, particularly since landings are nearly impossible there after the middle of May on account of the prevailing monsoon.
- b. On the other hand, the occupied territories are to be safeguarded against attacks from the east, which means the seizing of a part of the Aleutians, Hawaii, the Gilbert Islands, the Fiji Islands, the New Hebrides, and New Caledonia. When this has been done, the possibility of air raids on Tokyo and Osaka as well as the danger of a recapture of the seized territories will practically have been eliminated. The seizure of a part of the Solomon Islands in the early part of May was the first step in this direction. The Navy sees no major difficulties for a landing on Hawaii after the successes in the Coral Sea.
- c. Occupation of New Guinea. From there (Port Moresby) it is planned to launch an offensive against Australia after careful preparation. The army is of the opinion that this operation must under all circumstances take place during the current year, since it would become impossible later on when enemy defenses have been strengthened. It is assumed, moreover, that the fall of Australia would have a tremendous impact on India's morale.

15 May 1942

The Attache reports further that Admiral Kondo, too, has termed the seizure of Hawaii as absolutely necessary in order to reduce the threat of air and submarine attacks. The operation is planned on a large scale as soon as conditions permit. Admiral Kondo repeatedly voiced his regrets that Italy's weakness and the German preoccupation on the Russian "secondary theater of war" did not permit the elimination of the British Mediterranean fleet and a subsequent landing at Port Said, which would definitely eliminate Great Britain from the war during the current year.

The Naval Attache at Tokyo requested that this information be held in strictest secrecy and be divulged neither to the Foreign Office nor to the Japanese Embassy, not even to Admiral Nomura. The Naval Staff is therefore deliberately withholding information about the Japanese operational plans from all other departments, including the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command.

The Naval Staff's comment on the Japanese plans is as follows:

India and the Near East are still the heart of the British Empire. Both are of great importance to the Anglo-American powers on account of their oil deposits and their value for the communication with Russia, and because they offer the only possibility to restore communication with China for the deployment of troops for future operations against Japan. The reported construction of bases by the U.S. and the accumulation of British and American war materiel in these areas confirm the opinion of the Naval Staff. The India-Near East-Indian Ocean area is therefore not only of particular interest to Germany and Italy on account of the possibilities to disrupt the flow of supplies to Egypt, Iran and Iraq, but is of greatest importance also to Japan. As time goes on, the Anglo-American positions in that area will be increasingly consolidated; for this reason it is the opinion of the Naval Staff that everything must be done to attack the enemy positions in those areas at the earliest possible moment, since they are constantly growing stronger.

With regard to the Japanese admiral's remark about Russia being a secondary war theater, it must be stated that the struggle for survival carried on by us in Europe against the gigantic Russian empire is equally decisive for Japan; it depends entirely on the outcome of this struggle whether the Anglo-American powers will be able to mass their forces against East Asia.

This estimate of the situation by the Naval Staff is submitted to the Naval Attache (with 1 Skl 933/42 Gkdos Chefs).

15 May 1942

Special Items concerning the Enemy Situation:

For intelligence gained by radio monitoring during the week of 4 to 10 May see secret and top secret radio intelligence report No. 19/42.

Attention is called to the following important facts: Excellent detection of the North Atlantic convoy traffic. Location of convoys also between Bombay and Colombo. Increased patrol and combat activity of light forces in the Channel. No definite data concerning the heavy forces in the British home waters. In the vicinity of the British Isles the following U.S. forces have definitely been located: 1 battleship, 2 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, and 2 destroyers. According to an agent's report the following U.S. ships are assumed to be or are expected in the eastern Atlantic: 2 more battleships, 1 carrier, 1 heavy cruiser, and several destroyers. Attention is called to the Russian activities detected in the Black Sea.

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

North Atlantic:

Direct shipments from New York to Puerto Rico are allegedly no longer taking place at the present time; cargos are shipped first to a Gulf port by rail and forwarded by sea from there.

South Atlantic:

The 4 passenger vessels of the Puerto Rican Line are en route to Alexandria with approximately 2,000 U.S. troops each.

Indian Ocean:

Vichy reports about the situation in Madagascar that the British have reinforced their positions 10 km from Diego Suarez without further gain of ground. Several large enemy transports with considerable reinforcements have arrived.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "10" captured the steamer NANKIN (7,131 GRT) in large quadrant KU; she is temporarily being used as auxiliary ship. Prior to her seizure she sent out radio signals so that the enemy is informed about the auxiliary cruiser's operating in quadrant KU.

The auxiliary ship DOGGERBANK reported meeting the DRESDEN as scheduled in the South Atlantic waiting area. Our forces in foreign waters were informed that submarines are free to attack in the southern part of prize route "Anton" until 2400 on 26 May, because the submarines of the South Atlantic group have been delayed by other operations.

15 May 1942

Report to our ships in foreign waters about the enemy situation by Radiograms 0600 and 1106.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

According to a report from Dublin, the steamer QUEEN MARY was recently observed near Belfast, where she is allegedly being converted into a troop transport. At present she is loaded and at anchor in an inlet.

During the night of 14 May enemy destroyers and PT boats were active in the Channel and probably also a larger ship in the waters off Cap de la Hague. Our patrol boats had a short engagement with enemy forces. Lively enemy air activity on the Channel coast.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast

Radio monitoring intercepted a message from a British plane which had made a bomb attack on a medium-sized merchant vessel at 1230 approximately 60 miles west-northwest of Ferrol. At 1410 a submarine was reported near the merchant vessel. The plane was ordered to attack and reported dropping depth charges and scoring 4 near misses. The ship concerned by these reports is the blockade runner MUENSTERLAND. The submarine then reported that she was attacked by the plane and that she lost contact with the MUENSTERLAND which she was escorting.

It is assumed that the MUENSTERLAND continued on her course. It is planned to have Group West pick her up on 16 May. The MUENSTERLAND received orders to proceed without delay.

Channel Area:

During the night of 14 May our patrol boats "204" and "205" were engaged by light British forces in the area of Cap de la Hague. The brush lasted from 0345 to 0350 and from 0403 to 0412. The boats withdrew from the vastly superior enemy forces under the protection of fog. Patrol boat "205" was damaged by gunfire. For short battle report see Telegram 1045.

The enemy operation was very probably directed against ship "23" and her escorts. They did not, however, take part in the engagement, but, on the basis of repeated radar locations and after noticing the engagement of the patrol boats, wisely changed course and reached Cherbourg.

Around noon, the minesweepers M "26", "256" and "152", under the

15 May 1942

Commander of the 8th Mine Sweeper Flotilla, which had gone out on a check-sweeping mission from Cherbourg, were attacked off Cap de la Hague by 12 British bombers and 50 fighters. M "26" was hit by a bomb and sunk. M "256" was damaged and sank during an attempt to tow her into the outer harbor of Cherbourg. M "152" made port. The Flotilla Commander and the captains were rescued. Casualties amount to 7 dead, 30 missed, and many wounded.

Also this attack, which resulted in the deeply deplorable loss of 2 new mine sweepers, is probably due to the enemy's intention to intercept and destroy ship "23", the value of which must have been known to him. The loss of the 2 boats is particularly painful in view of our lack of modern mine sweepers in the West Area.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Except for enemy air activity, nothing to report.

Own Situation:

On the evening of 15 May, 8 enemy bombers attacked a convoy north of Terschelling. Patrol boat "2002" and the steamer SELJE (6,698 GRT) were lost due to bomb hits. 5 of the attacking planes were shot down by the escort.

The attacks and subsequent losses here, as well as in the case of the plane attack off Cap de la Hague, prove anew the compelling need for adequate fighter protection for our convoys and the forces engaged in mine sweeping.

Enemy planes flew over the German Bight probably on a mine-laying mission; several planes were shot down by naval anti-aircraft guns. Regarding convoy operations see Telegram 1946.

Supplement: According to Group North's report mine sweeper M "1307" was badly damaged by a mine near the Graa Dyb approach buoy on the evening of 14 May, and was grounded off Esbjerg.

2. Norway:

Convoy operations proceeded according to plan. During the night of 14 May there was some enemy air activity in the areas of Petsamo, Kirkenes, Stavanger, and Lister; otherwise nothing to report. (See Telegram 1700.)

15 May 1942

3. Arctic Ocean:

A British warship was located 180 miles east of Jan Mayen. In the evening our air reconnaissance reported a formation, consisting of 4 cruisers and 6 destroyers, on course 240°, speed approximately 18 knots, 260 miles east of Jan Mayen.

Thus far it has not been possible to gain a clear picture of the enemy situation from the movements reported yesterday and today by the Air Force. The formation reported today may represent a covering force for the damaged cruiser from Murmansk which has been sunk meanwhile by the Air Force, identified as a cruiser of the PENSACOLA class. On the other hand, it could also be the remote escort for departing PQ convoys, which are expected by the Naval Staff to increase in the near future. Finally, these movements might be linked with reconnaissance activities of British forces in connection with major enemy operations in the Arctic area.

According to the latest reports, 2 destroyers were also damaged by bomb hits during the engagement with the American force which was reported yesterday. One of the ships was reported so badly damaged that she may be assumed a total loss.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

In the declared area of the Skagerrak a great number of Swedish fishing vessels do not obey regulations concerning sailing routes. Strong measures are imperative.

In the Kattegat and the Skagerrak mine-sweeping activity was intensified and 19 patrol boats were stationed in the positions ordered for operation "Walzertraum". (Transfer of cruiser LUETZOW to Norway.) Mines were swept in the Langelands Belt, the Little Belt, and the Kattegat.

The group reports that the harbor barrages of Swinemuende, Gdynia, Neufahrwasser, and Pillau have been laid according to plan. Transports in the eastern Baltic Sea proceeded without any incident of importance. Mine sweeper M "1802" ran aground on a rock outside the entrance of Abo Harbor.

Special Items:

1. Group North instructs the Baltic Naval Station to take over immediately the entire anti-mine defense service in the central and eastern Baltic Sea and in the declared area south of Oeland.

15 May 1942

The Commander, Mine Sweepers, Baltic Sea transferred a number of mine sweepers to the Baltic Naval Station in order to strengthen the anti-ground mine defenses in the central and eastern Baltic (especially in the submarine training areas). This shift became necessary because the control of the Baltic anti-mine defenses by the Commander, Mine Sweepers, Baltic Sea from his command post in Finland has proved too difficult and too slow.

2. Concerning the Operation of Siebel Ferries on Lake Ladoga:

According to reports from the Naval Liaison Staff and the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries, the Air Force plans to transfer Siebel ferries to Lake Ladoga in order to attack the Russian supply traffic.

However, complying with a Finnish request to the Fuehrer and a subsequent directive of the Armed Forces High Command to this effect, the Navy also will send forces to Lake Ladoga to attack the Leningrad supply traffic and to protect the Finnish shore. For this purpose several coastal mine-laying vessels and 4 Italian subchasers are already on the way and will be under the tactical command of the Finnish Fleet Staff.

The matter is referred to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff and it is pointed out that the Naval Staff considers it necessary to place all forces deployed on Lake Ladoga under a unified tactical command.

3. Concerning the Mining of the Kronstadt-Leningrad Area:

For the result of the discussions between the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries and the 1st Air Force see Telegram 1628. This air force as well as the Commander in Chief, Air Force consider it impossible to lay aerial mines in Leningrad harbor and the eastern section of the Kronstadt roadstead due to the very strong anti-aircraft defenses; therefore it is intended to mine only their western portions. The suggestion of the Naval Staff to mine also the grain and coal harbor of Leningrad would thus not be carried out; however, in Group North's opinion this is not of too great importance.

The Air Force is planning to renew the bomber attacks on the warships in Leningrad in the next few days. In this connection, Group North reports that at present there is danger that the ice will melt in the easternmost part of the Gulf of Finland if the wind continues from the east, and that the Russian forces will therefore gain freedom of movement even before the "Seeigel" barrage is completed, as there is a heavy ice jam at Juminda. The Air Force has therefore been urgently requested by the Group to launch operation "Froschlaich". The Group shares the opinion of the Naval Staff that heavy air attacks by dive bombers must be made on the Russian fleet until lasting results are achieved which will prevent an offensive of the Russian Baltic fleet. (For details see Telegram 1628.)

15 May 1942

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Usual reconnaissance activity of British air groups in the rendezvous area west of the British Isles. Nothing to report from the American coast except a few intercepted messages about the sighting of submarines and submarine attacks.

2. Own Situation:

North Atlantic:

Thus far, group "Hecht" has not made contact with any convoy and continues to advance northeastward.

On 10 May, submarine U "588" sank an 8,000-ton steamer with war material in the area southwest of Halifax. The boat reported moderate traffic between Cape Sable and Halifax and little patrol activity. Off Halifax, sea patrols are frequent, and when visibility is good also air patrols are active, though not very alert.

Submarine U "156", proceeding to West Indian waters, sank 2 ships of 4,300 tons each in quadrant EE 60.

Submarine U "507" reported on 13 May from the Mexican Gulf that, shortly after a futile attack on a steamer in the waters west of the Mississippi River delta, air cover was provided for all steamers passing through that area. The boat's score thus far amounts to a total of 45,854 tons.

As suggested, the submarines proceeding to the area of Fernando Noronha received permission to attack unescorted ships on the prize route "Anton" until 26 May inclusive.

For details see supplement to Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Nothing to report.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Nuisance attacks on Malta airfields.

15 May 1942

3. Eastern Front:

The VIII Air Corps continued its operations in support of Army operations on the Kerch Peninsula, concentrating its attacks on loading and unloading operations along the coast. Good results were achieved against enemy attempts to ferry troops. 4 He 111's flew torpedo missions. On the eastern coast of the Black Sea 2 steamers were damaged by torpedoes. On the remaining sectors of the Eastern Front, major operations in the Kharkov and Loukhi areas and in the Murmansk sector.

In attacks on ships in Kola Bay one merchant vessel of 8,000 tons was very heavily damaged; also damaged were 2 more vessels totalling 15,000 tons.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

In the evening of 15 May, the battleship MALAYA arrived in Gibraltar from the west. Thus, there are once more 1 battleship, 2 carriers, 2 cruisers, and 9 destroyers in the harbor of Gibraltar.

The mine-laying cruiser MANXMAN and her escort of 2 destroyers are not in the harbor and are assumed to be in the western Mediterranean; no report about sighting her has been received. According to a report from the Spanish branch of the Armed Forces Intelligence Division, the mine-laying cruiser allegedly brought anti-aircraft ammunition, bombs, aerial torpedoes, depth charges, and barbed wire to Malta on 10 May. It is believed that she is once more carrying supplies to Malta.

According to an Italian report, a convoy of 4 ships passed the Strait of Gibraltar on an eastward course during the night of 14 May.

Central Mediterranean:

The situation is unchanged.

Eastern Mediterranean:

Air reconnaissance established only moderate traffic between Tobruk and Alexandria. An Italian submarine sighted 2 destroyers northwest of Derna.

2. Own Situation:

In view of the suspected Malta run of the enemy mine-laying cruiser, the Italian cruiser RAIMONDO MONTECUCCOLI and 2

15 May 1942

destroyers were ordered to cruise in the area south of Sardinia until 15 May, afternoon, and to proceed then to Cagliari.

11 Italian submarines are operating in the Mediterranean.

Northeast of Sollum our submarine U "83" torpedoed an escort vessel, which probably sank.

According to a report from the German Naval Command, Italy, the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, in view of the fact that the mine-laying cruiser MANXMAN passed Cape Bon during the night of 9 May on her way to Malta, intends to place the following proposals before the Armed Forces High Command:

(1) The French territorial waters off Cape Bon must under all circumstances be blocked effectively as soon as possible.

(2) It is, therefore, proposed as follows:

a. To permit the stationing of 2 French air squadrons in the Cape Bon area and to install coastal batteries on Cape Bon.

b. The French are to be forced to protect their territory effectively against trespassing by the British.

As reported by the German Naval Command, Italy, the Italian Navy termed this matter a political one when it was brought up by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, and has so far reserved its opinion.

The Naval Staff takes the following viewpoint:

- (1) From the beginning, the French territorial waters off Cape Bon had been considered as the weakest point of the blockade of the Strait of Sicily. The Italian Navy was repeatedly requested to seal it off; this was refused, however, for political reasons.
- (2) Continuous observation of British shipping and recently also entries of routes made on a map captured off Malta prove that the British penetrate through the Strait of Sicily within French territorial waters.
- (3) The Naval Staff is in complete agreement with the proposals of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South. Their realization is an important prerequisite of the effective closure of the Strait of Sicily, which is so urgently required.

This problem with the above comment is submitted to the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command. The German Naval Command, Italy is being informed of the Naval Staff's opinion.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

15 May 1942

Transports to Tripoli and Benghazi are proceeding on schedule; there is nothing to report about the coastal supply traffic to Libya and the shipping to Greece, except for the fact that an enemy submarine shelled and set afire a small auxiliary sailboat west of Derna on 14 May.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radar location, 1 battleship and several cruisers and destroyers were at sea on the evening of 13 May, approximately 35 miles north of the central Anatolian coast. On the evening of 14 May, cruiser A and 1 destroyer were still located in the area of south Crimea, probably en route to Sevastopol. 8 Russian submarines were observed at sea in the central and western Black Sea. 1 cruiser and several destroyers and PT boats were located in the eastern Black Sea on 14 May.

Own Situation:

Supply operations with naval barges and mine-sweeping by the Naval Training Group, Bulgaria proceeded without particular incidents.

VIII. Situation East Asia

No reports were received concerning the naval situation.

In a telegram to the Foreign Office, the Ambassador points out that the capture of the most important point in Burma constitutes a severe blow to Chungking, which is now deprived of the hope of receiving material Anglo-American assistance from the Indian Ocean. Still, Japanese political and military circles do not yet believe that the loss of the Burma Road will lead to the imminent collapse or yielding of Chiang Kai-shek. Ambushes and continued activity of guerillas and ambushes in the rear of Japanese occupation troops are foreseen. The Japanese divisions in China, estimated at 30 at the most, are adequate for defensive tasks but too weak yet for a large-scale offensive against Chungking, according to the Ambassador's opinion. There are no immediate indications that the Japanese forces in Manchuria and Korea, estimated at 25 divisions, will soon be engaged in operations against Soviet Russia. Political leaders apparently have no intention of changing their attitude toward the Soviet Union before the future development on the European front becomes discernible.

15 May 1942

IX. Army Situation1. Russian Front:Southern Army Group:

The last enemy resistance on the Kerch Peninsula was broken. The enemy endeavors with all means to keep his grasp on the Yenikale Peninsula in order to protect his troop embarkations.

In the Slavyansk sector of the front of the Von Kleist Army Group the enemy renewed his attacks. Strong troop movements were observed on the road from Izyum moving toward the front. Heavy enemy troop movements also south of Losovaya.

On the front of the 6th Army the enemy continued his attacks at the 2 points of penetration, south and northeast of Kharkov, all of which were repulsed with heavy enemy losses. Likewise repulsed were particularly violent attacks east of Kharkov. Our tank forces, advancing west of Salto, forced the enemy to withdraw to the northeast.

Central Army Group:

An enemy attack south of Mtsensk was repulsed. Enemy troop movements in front of the Central Army sector continued. The enemy began to shell our front systematically, expending large quantities of ammunition.

Northern Army Group:

The enemy applied heavy pressure on our positions on the Lovat River. Several attacks southeast of Staraya Russa were beaten off. North of Lake Ilmen our troops are engaged in restoring the situation at the break-through point at Maluksa.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

The western shore of Litsa Bay was cleared of dispersed enemy units. The enemy suffered heavy losses of men and material.

3. North Africa:

Enemy land and air reconnaissance was revived. No important engagements have been reported.

16 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Martinique: The French authorities in Martinique made the following announcement:

The terms for the immobilization of the warships are now being studied. The immobilization measures will become effective, however, only when the agreement with the U. S. has been concluded.

Secretary of State Hull gave a somewhat contradictory version by saying that the preparations for the immobilization of the French warships in Martinique are making progress and that an accord had thus been reached with regard to one of the most important military problems. The status and future use of the merchant vessels in Martinique is predominantly an economic question which is still being discussed.

There is also a striking contrast between Mr. Hull's announcements and the statement made to Ambassador Abetz by the French Government. Following a conference with Laval, Ambassador Abetz reported that Admiral Robert has firmly rejected the American demands to disarm the French warships, with regard to guns as well as to ammunition, and has announced that he will not tolerate any impairment of their defenses. Admiral Robert was ordered by the French Government on 15 May to suspend all negotiations about the immobilization of the French ships until receipt of additional instructions. He also received renewed confirmation of the order of 13 May, directing him to take all measures for the immediate scuttling of warships and merchant vessels in the event of British or American seizure.

The question whether an attempt to break out should be made, at least by the cruiser EMILE BERTIN, has been for the last few days the subject of discussions between the French Government and the Admiralty. Difficulties in this respect arise from the fuel situation. According to a French report, one U. S. cruiser and 3 torpedo boats are lying off Martinique; moreover, air patrols are maintained by superior forces.

Ambassador Abetz also reports that another conference with Laval has confirmed the fact that the French Government has complied with all demands contained in the German note. Preparations to blow up all warships, merchants vessels, and planes have been made.

The ships will be scuttled by blowing them up, so that they cannot be raised and put to future use. In reply, Ambassador Abetz informed the French Government that the orders issued by the French Government comply fully with the demands made by the German Government by virtue of the armistice agreement, and that the German Government must insist on their being carried out.

16 May 1942

(For additional details see War Diary Part C, Vol. VIII.)

Today's U. S. papers are stressing the point that the outcome of the Martinique discussions in itself constitutes a clear defeat of the French Government and of Laval. The U. S. Gov't simply ignored him and thereby proved that the Vichy Government is of no importance at all.

Trans-ocean News Service published a report about large-scale French military preparations in French West Africa. These preparations were made particularly in Dakar where the garrison has been increased to 3,000 men. The number of men inducted and in training has been increased. Washington also contends that strong French troop movements are going on in Morocco.

It is not at all impossible that these reports are issued for propaganda purposes in preparation of an intended American attack on French West Africa and Morocco. The developments in these areas bear careful watching.

Norway:

Concerning the internal situation in Norway see Political Review No. 113.

Special Items:

I. The Naval Attache at Madrid reports as follows with reference to a report of the Embassy to the Foreign Office:

According to a usually well informed source in contact with the British Embassy, the London conferences of Hopkins and Marshall are said to have reached the following conclusions:

a. The Axis powers are to be driven out of Africa. War material and troops are to be sent to Egypt partly by way of West Africa (principal base at Brazzaville) partly around the Cape. It is planned to reinforce the British Mediterranean fleet and to sever the life line of the Axis to Africa by attacks on Sicily, Greece, the Dodecanese, and Crete.

b. In order to tie up German forces in the west, a series of raids (similar to those on St. Nazaire and Boulogne) will be made in France and Norway.

c. The aid to Russia will be stepped up as much as possible.

d. A request that Russia declare war on Japan in order to relieve the Anglo-American situation in East Asia has been declined by Stalin, for the reason that Russia is in no position to conduct war on two fronts.

16 May 1942

The Anglo-American argument that Germany is unable, according to reliable reports, to take the offensive along the entire Russian front and will therefore attack only in the South (Caucasus), where Russia will receive British and American assistance by way of Iran, was unable to induce Stalin to change his mind.

This report sounds quite reliable and conforms on the whole to our evaluation of the enemy's operational plans.

II. Comparison of the ground mine situation along German and British sea lanes.

A map is submitted to the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command and the Air Force Operations Staff which presents a comparison of the ground mine peril in the waters surrounding the British Isles and in the German area, on the basis of the existing water depths. The chart shows that the British shipping lanes on the southeastern coast, are only slightly imperiled by ground mines whereas the German routes run almost entirely through waters favorable for the use of ground mines. The German shipping lanes which must be kept under constant supervision are approximately four times as long as the British ones, a fact which clearly indicates our infinitely more difficult situation. In addition, the threat arising in the Norwegian waters from moored mines ties up considerable forces which must be withdrawn from the anti-ground mine defenses of the other areas.

The attention of the Armed Forces High Command and the Commander in Chief, Air Force is called once more to the fact that, in order to improve our defenses, it is necessary to check the mine-laying activities of enemy planes; to increase the production of ships and mine-sweeping gear; and to increase the number of available mine-sweeping planes.

(See map and analysis in War Diary Part C, Vol. VI.)

III. A memorandum of the Naval Ordnance Division concerning the results of the work done and the measures taken thus far by the Navy in order to save scarce raw material is contained in War Diary Part C, Vol. XII.

Situation 16 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Indian Ocean:

On 15 May Simonstown repeated in the evening a distress signal from a station with the call letters UHDBV 13: "Have been torpedoed or struck mine".

16 May 1942

No position was given. It is possible that this message is connected with another success of the DOGGERBANK's minefields in the Capetown area.

Concerning the situation in Madagascar, it was reported that the organization of the defenses of the principal points on the island, especially of Tananarive, is making progress. Several fortified positions were completed and preparations made for a great number of demolitions. The German and Italian ships (including the WARTENFELS), which were in the harbor of Diego Suarez when the attack was launched, have allegedly been sunk or blown up.

Pacific Ocean:

In the Australia - New Zealand area radio communications of an operational nature is on the increase.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "23": Group West received confirmation of the Naval Staff's opinion, voiced already in an exchange of telegrams, that the time of departure of ship "23" depends primarily on the weather situation.

The Naval Staff shares the Group's opinion that under these circumstances the sailing of the ship should take place without regard for the phase of the moon.

The auxiliary ship DOGGERBANK received orders to await new instructions in her last waiting area. The DRESDEN is expected to continue her voyage according to plan after she has met the DOGGERBANK.

Ships in foreign waters were informed about the enemy situation by Radiogram 1941 (movements in the South Atlantic and steamer reports) 2028, 2017 (submarine warning signal from Simonstown), 2350 (positions of steamers), and 0643 (change of recognition signals of U. S. naval vessels, etc.).

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

In the morning of 16 May the blockade runner MUENSTERLAND was sighted by air reconnaissance 20 miles off Gijon and was later picked up by escort forces.

16 May 1942

A picture of the present distribution of the forces of the Air Command, Atlantic Coast is presented by the following survey of assignments for 17 May:

Coastal Patrol Force 106: Attack on convoys on southern English coast.

Coastal Patrol Force 406: Submarine chase and reconnaissance.

Bomber Wing 40: One plane for reconnaissance on northern Spanish coast.

Bomber Wing 77: Armed reconnaissance by flights of two south of Ireland and over the Bristol Channel, also attacks on convoys on southern English coast.

3rd Squadron of Long-Range Reconnaissance Group 123: Patrolling of harbors; one plane off-shore reconnaissance of southern and western English coast.

Channel Coast:

During the night of 15 May 3 boats of the 2nd PT Boat Flotilla were detailed for a mining mission on the English southeastern coast (18 mines were laid according to plan without being detected by the enemy directly at and northwest of buoy 56). For short report see Telegram 1130.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Moderate enemy air activity over the entire North Sea area, principally in the direction of Norway. Mine danger in the German Bight, particularly north of Terschelling and Borkum.

Convoy and channel-sweeping operations in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defense, North proceeded according to plan; several ground mines were swept.

2. Norway:

On 15 May a withdrawing enemy submarine was pursued in the Varanger Fjord with gunfire and depth charges. She was then attacked by a plane called in for the purpose. The result is still unknown.

The anti-aircraft cruiser NYPHE arrived in Narvik (Bogen Bay).

Supply missions executed without incidents. There was only light enemy air activity.

16 May 1942

3. Arctic Ocean:

On 15 May at 1030 our air reconnaissance sighted 4 destroyers on a southwesterly course in quadrant AB 6470.

Around noon several cruisers and destroyers approaching from the west were sighted in quadrant AB 6440; they picked up the four destroyers spotted in the morning and continued on a southwesterly course. They were attacked, but the effects were not observed.

In the forenoon of 16 May air reconnaissance spotted a task force of 4 cruisers and 5 destroyers approximately 300 miles south of Jan Mayen on course 240°. The same force had been sighted in the evening of 15 May by air reconnaissance east of Jan Mayen. (See War Diary of 15 May.)

Another force was reported by air reconnaissance at 1120 approximately 120 miles east of Iceland, allegedly consisting of 13 warships. Definitely observed were one battleship and one aircraft carrier. It is tentatively assumed that these ships belong to an escort force of a PQ convoy, about to sail.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Enemy planes during the night of 15 May penetrated over Jutland and Skagen to the western Baltic Sea, probably on a mining mission. Several ground mines were swept in the Kiel Bay, in the Great Belt, and east of Langeland Island.

In the Kattegat and Skagerrak patrolling and mine-sweeping activities were increased in connection with the sailing of the cruiser LUETZOW.

The LUETZOW started her northward voyage through the Baltic Sea entrances according to plan; she was spotted in the forenoon by British reconnaissance planes in quadrant AO 4496 and reported as one battle cruiser escorted by 5 destroyers. Having been reported by the enemy plane, the formation turned about and was again sighted by the enemy approximately 35 miles northwest of Skagen. After reversing course once more in the evening, the force passed the Skagerrak without incident. Its arrival in the Kvarnes Fjord east of Kristiansand is expected during the night of 16 May.

Nothing to report from the eastern Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

On 16 May a patrolling U. S. task force, presumably one cruiser

16 May 1942

escorted by 3 destroyers, was located by radio monitoring in the coastal area of Iceland.

We intercepted several submarine sighting reports from off the American coast east of Boston, in the Florida Strait, and in the West Indies.

On the basis of belated evaluation, our radio intelligence service reported that on the morning of 12 May an explosion took place at the eastern jetty in the southwest passage to the Mississippi River. The cause was allegedly not yet determined. Damage is said to be slight and shipping was not interrupted.

2. Own Situation:

In the Caribbean Sea, submarine U "103" sank the steamer RUTH LYKES by gunfire.

Submarine U "507" forced the steamer AMAPALA by machine gunfire to a halt after a 2-hour chase, and scuttled her by opening the 'sea-cocks. Thus, this submarine has sunk nine steamers totalling 50,000 GRT, and is now starting on the return voyage. This outstanding success deserves special recognition (commanding officer: Lt. Commander Schacht).

Submarine U "506" sank 2 ships in the Gulf of Mexico totalling 13,000 tons.

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines ordered the submarines operating off the American coast to approach close to areas with heavy ship traffic and harbors during the coming nights of the new moon, to observe the traffic there, and to report their findings.

Attacks without warning are permitted as of this moment against all visibly armed merchant vessels of the South American nations and Mexico which have broken off relations to the Axis powers. Only Argentina and Chile are exempt from this order.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

During a fighter bomber raid on the Devonport area an enemy warship, probably a destroyer, was sunk, and a gunboat and a freighter damaged. Our planes were not very active during the night.

Enemy operations during the night were confined to mining activities in the German Bight and the western Baltic Sea.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Nothing to report.

16 May 1942

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western and Central Mediterranean:

The situation in the waters of Gibraltar and Malta is unchanged. South of Messina and northwest of Brindisi the sighting of submarines was reported.

Eastern Mediterranean:

Only slight supply traffic between Tobruk and Alexandria. Air reconnaissance sighted two destroyers with fighter escort north of Sidi Barrani.

2. Own Situation:

The battleship ANDREA DORIA and her escort arrived in Messina. The 3rd PT Boat Flotilla did not operate due to weather conditions.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Three motor ships of the 10th transport group sailed for Tripoli and Benghazi on schedule. Nothing to report about other ship movements and the coastal supply traffic.

4. Naval Group Area South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

An enemy submarine was reported east of Rethymno and a submarine hunt was ordered south of Kythnos.

Own Situation:

The 15th Crete Squadron is proceeding from the Piraeus to Suda Bay.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

In the area of the western Black Sea as far as the Crimea 12

16 May 1942

submarines, several destroyers, mine layers, and small vessels were reported at sea. Cruiser A, escorted by one destroyer, arrived in Sevastopol in the evening of 14 May. Our air reconnaissance observed lively traffic of small vessels, probably troop transports, in the Kerch Strait. At dawn, enemy shipping subsided due to the threat from German air forces, but submarine activity increased in the waters around the Crimea and in the western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

The Danube Flotilla executed mine-sweeping missions between Ochakov and Bugaz without incident. Naval barges were used for supply transports between Sulina, Nikolayev, and Skadovsk.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Following an interview with Admiral Kondo (Chief of the 2nd Fleet), the Naval Attache at Tokyo reports as follows:

There is no more doubt concerning the actual American losses in the battle of the Coral Sea, although the sinking of the YORKTOWN was not observed. The Japanese lost only one auxiliary aircraft carrier and a few transports.

The 2nd Fleet has been withdrawn from the south and will be overhauled in preparation for new operations. The defense of the occupied areas is entrusted to a newly organized southeastern fleet consisting of 2 cruisers and 8 destroyers, with Singapore as its main base. The operations off Port Moresby were carried out by the recently organized 4th Fleet, consisting of 3 aircraft carriers, 6 cruisers, and 8 destroyers.

A landing on Ceylon can be made by the end of October at the earliest due to the monsoon prevailing during the summer months. In view of the fact that at the present time resistance on Australia can be expected to be slight, an attack against Australia is being given serious consideration. However, such an attack can be made only after all of New Guinea and the intermediate islands have been occupied, and after the completion of extensive preparations.

It may be anticipated that Japanese submarines will soon make their appearance on the southern and eastern African coast. At present, enemy submarines are very active in Japanese waters. Several steamers and transports have been lost.

With reference to the land situation in Burma and China, the Ambassador reports that Japanese political and military circles are not convinced that the loss of the Burma Road will result in an immediate Chinese collapse or in a conciliatory attitude on the part of Chiang Kai-shek. The Japanese General Staff explained that for the time being and in

16 May 1942

the near future they will be occupied, after completion of the operation in the South, with preparing for the coming large-scale offensive. During this transition period only minor Japanese actions may be expected.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The battle of the 11th Army against desperate enemy resistance continued. Thus far 68,000 prisoners have been taken, and 616 guns and 235 tanks destroyed. The operations are progressing successfully.

Strong enemy attacks against Rumanian units on the left wing of the Von Kleist Army Group were all repulsed. Other violent attacks in the areas north of Krasnograd, on the railroad line to Kharkov, and north-east of Kharkov resulted in fighting with varying success, but on the whole the attacks were repulsed.

Central Army Group:

Nothing to report.

Northern Army Group:

Movements of strong enemy forces were observed, especially north of Lake Ilmen.

2. Finnish Front:

Attacks by our forces in the Loukhi sector were successful.

On the Murmansk front, the enemy did not resume his attacks, evidently on account of the disastrous defeats and heavy losses sustained during the landing operation in the Litsa Bay. All of the 119 enemy attacks made between 26 Apr. and 13 May were repulsed, the enemy suffering heavy casualties. The success achieved by our troops at this front deserves particular appreciation.

3. North Africa:

Normal reconnaissance activity and gunfire in spite of continuing sand storms.

17 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Martinique: A Vichy communique states that the French Government sharply repudiated the tone and the contents of the U.S. note of 9 May addressed to the High Commissioner of Martinique; however, "the Government is not opposed to negotiations, provided that the U.S. demands do not infringe on France's sovereignty".

Doriot declared in St. Denis: French volunteers will later reconquer the colonies stolen by the British, if the French Government is not able to do so. France cannot save herself by creeping on her belly before the British and Americans, but only by attacking determinedly all those who have proved to be France's worst enemies!!

Mexico:

Radio broadcasts reported a declaration of Garcia, President of the Senate, that Mexico will have to declare war on Germany in view of the seriousness of the situation caused by the torpedoing of the Mexican tanker PROTERO DE LLANO.

Special Items:

I. Concerning the problem of preventing American seizure of the ships lying in Martinique, the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff asks the following questions:

1. Is it possible for German submarines to sink the French ships lying in the harbor of Martinique?
2. Do the submarines have any chances of scoring against the American forces which are assumed to be lying off the harbor of Martinique?
3. How soon could our submarines arrive in the area of Martinique harbor, if such an order were to be given?

After consultation with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, the following reply is given to the Armed Forces High Command:

1. Only one of the submarines available is equipped with special British charts of Martinique. These charts are not included in the standard equipment of submarines. There are no German charts of the harbor.
2. It is possible to sail into the harbor of Fort de France, but only on the surface, because of the shallow water. The vessel entering the harbor would have to appear to be in distress, or something similar, because otherwise resistance would have to be expected from the beginning.

17 May 1947

3. Success cannot be expected from one single submarine in view of the number of targets. But even several boats could not ensure success in spite of greatest determination, because nothing is known about the anchorage, the protection of the warships by steamers moored alongside them,,etc.

Moreover, nothing is known about the nature of the American ships assumed to be on guard outside the Martinique harbor. A submarine attack appears possible. It is believed that the area is patrolled by planes.

Submarines can reach Martinique as follows: 1 submarine within 24 hours; 2 more boats within 48 hours; 2 more boats within 72 hours.

Of the last two submarines, one has only a few torpedoes and little fuel left. All submarines would have to be withdrawn from excellent hunting grounds.

II. The Foreign Office submits a report from a special source dealing with the importance of Russia for the British strategy:

Great Britain's attitude and decisions are increasingly dependent on the Russian situation. The situation will not change unless Germany succeeds in eliminating Russia, which acts as a brake upon her striking power against Great Britain. New advances and conquests are not sufficient. The winter campaign has not disappointed any expectations, since nobody had expected Russia to do more than tie up the bulk of the German armies and to force Germany to re-deploy all of her forces. The conviction prevails that the decisive German blow can be averted or delayed only by Soviet Russia's fighting power. Churchill is hoping that the Russian resistance can be maintained until the British and American striking power has sufficiently developed so that direct action on the Continent can be undertaken.

It is alleged that such action appears impossible at present due to the lack of adequately trained troops.

For the time being, the task of the British air force will consist only of diversionary operations which Russia has requested, while all other operations are limited to nuisance raids, for the purpose of tying up German forces. The landings and major operations on the continent which have repeatedly been considered will be carried out only if imperative, or if the situation on the Eastern Front should absolutely require a diversionary offensive.

At present, Great Britain does not expect that the decisive battle will begin before the year 1943.

(For details see also report of 16 May, War Diary, File "Barbarossa".)

17 May 1942

Situation 17 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

No reports received from our auxiliary cruisers. The blockade-runner REGENSBURG reported via the TANNENFELS, which has reached Japan, and the Naval Attache, how long she can continue operations, her fuel oil stores, etc., and her experiences en route to Japan. (See Report 0900.)

The blockade-runner MUENSTERLAND sailed into the Gironde on 17 May. She returned with a precious cargo of 2,620 tons of rubber, 2,920 tons of whale oil, 1,128 tons of lard, 361 tons of edible oil, 110 tons of coffee, 8 tons of tea, tungsten ore, tin ore, etc.

Information about the enemy situation to ships in foreign waters was sent by Radiogram 0521.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report except for some air activity.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Ship "23" is proceeding along the Atlantic Coast to the Gironde. The blockade-runner MUENSTERLAND arrived at Bordeaux. The escort submarine U "68" could not make contact with her after the air attack and had to put into Ferrol for repairs at noon; upon completing them, the boat sailed in the evening under her own power.

Channel Coast:

Successful sweeping of ground mines.

The motor mine sweeper mother ship RAULA was sunk during a daylight raid on Boulogne by 10 enemy bombers and 10 fighter planes!

In the evening of 17 May the 2nd and 4th PT Boat Flotillas were sent on mine-laying missions in quadrants AN 8174 and 8412.

17 May 1942

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

An enemy warship was located 40 miles east of the Shetland Islands. Normal air activity was observed over the North Sea and the German Bight. Otherwise nothing to report.

Own Situation:

Our convoy and mine-sweeping operations continued according to plan. Further investigation revealed that a sixth torpedo plane was destroyed during yesterday's attack on our convoy!

2. Norway:

During the night of 16 May the enemy raided the areas of Haugesund, Bergen, and Stavanger and dropped aerial mines in the Karensund; this area has been closed to shipping. Several mines were cleared.

Coastal patrols reported an enemy submarine which had surfaced in quadrant AF 8294! Pursuit was undertaken. In the Varanger Fjord our hospital ship HUMBOLDT was unsuccessfully attacked by a submarine!

Supply transports on the Norwegian coast proceeded without incidents.

Special Items:

Operation "Walzertraum": The cruiser LUTZOW anchored off Kvarenes after passing the Skagerrak according to plan. The Commanding Admiral, Destroyers sailed with destroyers in the afternoon for the mine-laying operation "Burgund". (Laying of barrage 17b to close the gap of the extended Westwall mine field in the northern North Sea. The mission is being carried out according to plan.) Several air raids.

Operation "Zauberfloete": The PRINZ EUGEN left Trondheim at 0430 on her home voyage and was compelled to stop temporarily between Bergen and Boemmel Oe due to mines suspected in the Karm Sound; she was sighted there by enemy air reconnaissance and was reported as on a northeasterly course. The enemy maintained contact. Between 2015 and 2050 approximately 40 enemy seaplanes attacked the PRINZ EUGEN with aerial torpedoes in the area south of Lister. This attack was successfully repulsed. Thus far, 19 planes are reported downed by fighters and 3 by coastal anti-aircraft guns. Reports about planes downed by the ship's anti-aircraft guns have not yet been received. The force is proceeding without having suffered any damage.

A splendid success of the ship's defenses and her fighter escort.

17 May 1942

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

The enemy task force located on 15 May consisted of a heavy LONDON-class cruiser, one heavy CUMBERLAND cruiser, 2 light DIDO-class cruisers, and 6 destroyers. During the attack a hit was probably scored on the stern of a heavy cruiser and a near miss 5 m from the stern of another heavy cruiser, both with one SC 1000 bomb. On 16 May the force was picked up again, the last time approximately 190 miles eastnortheast of Iceland at 1440; it consisted of 4 cruisers and 2 destroyers running at full speed on course 220°. Four more destroyers followed at a distance of 40 km at low speed.

The enemy force, picked up yesterday 80 miles east of Iceland, consisted of one battleship, one aircraft carrier (probably of the FORMIDABLE class), 2 cruisers, and 3 destroyers. The force is assumed to be the remote escort of a new PQ convoy.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

During the night of 16 May the enemy raided the western part of the Baltic Sea, the Flensburg Foerde, and the Mecklenburg Bay. Mining is suspected. Ground mines were cleared in the Great Belt, the Little Belt, and the Langelands Belt. See Telegrams 0730 and 1905 regarding the operations of the forces of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic Sea.

It is suspected that neutral fishing vessels are conducting secret reconnaissance for the enemy in our declared mined areas at the western entrance of the Skagerrak; the German Government has therefore warned the Danish and Swedish Governments that any non-German vessel encountered in this area will be destroyed without warning. In agreement with Group North, the Operations Staff of the Air Force orders that all non-German ships found in the declared area of the Skagerrak are to be attacked without warning.

Movements of our troop transports between Stettin, Danzig, and Finland are proceeding without incident.

As reported by Naval Shore Commander "R", the light buoys of the Kronstadt Channel were lit up for the first time during the night of 16 May. It must therefore be expected that the Russian fleet is preparing to sail.

The Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries scheduled the mining of the Sea Channel for the night of 17 May. Group North calls the attention of the Air Force to the urgency of mine-laying operation "Froschlaich" and requests that the planned air attacks on the

17 May 1942

Russian fleet be carried out as soon as possible. (The 1st Air Force reports that the start of operation "Froschlaich" is subject to the permission of the Commander in Chief, Air Force.)

See Telegrams 1154 and 1200 for the directive of the Commander in Chief, Air Force regarding a change in the areas to be mined in the Kronstadt-Leningrad Channel.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Our operations on the American coast continue exceedingly successful. Submarine U "135" sank a 10,000-ton tanker of the PERSEUS class in quadrant CB 5156, U "653" a 4,500-ton steamer in quadrant CB 7230.

Particularly gratifying successes are reported from our submarines in the West Indies, where 3 tankers of 24,000 GRT and 4 steamers totalling 21,000 GRT were sunk.

For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation, War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter-bomber missions were flown over southern England. Our forces undertook no night missions.

Lively enemy air raids in the Channel area. (During 5 major raids 380 enemy pursuit planes and 11 bomber planes were counted). Boulogne was damaged.

Enemy mine-laying operations continued during incursions over the German Bight and the western Baltic Sea.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Our nuisance raids on Malta continued. Otherwise reconnaissance missions only.

17 May 1942

3. Eastern Front:

Utmost support was given to our attacking armies.

The Air Force was very successful in the area of the Commanding General, Lapland (where 13 enemy planes were downed) and in escorting the PRINZ EUGEN, on the southern Norwegian coast (where 19 planes were shot down by our fighter forces). Four ships were heavily damaged by bomb hits during raids on enemy ships and transports in Murmansk and in the Iokanga Bay.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

Five destroyers left Gibraltar on the evening of 16 May, returning there after firing practice. At noon on 17 May, the following ships were in Gibraltar: The battleship MALAYA and MAIDSTONE, 2 destroyers, 2 gunboats, and 38 freighters and tankers. (See telegrams 1805 and 2000.) The 2 aircraft carriers, escorted by cruisers and destroyers, left in an easterly direction in the course of the forenoon. Both carrier groups held firing practice en route. It can be assumed that the force is again ferrying planes to Malta.

Central Mediterranean:

Nothing to report. Only light convoy and supply traffic in the area Alexandria-Tobruk.

Eastern Mediterranean:

An agent reports that the destroyers annihilated by German planes on 12 May carried important war materiel for Malta.

2. Own Situation:

Two Italian cruisers with destroyer escort are in readiness at Cagliari, while a task force consisting of 2 battleships (ANDREA DORIA and CAIO DUILIO), 2 heavy and 2 light cruisers, and 6 destroyers is in readiness in Messina. The Italian Navy has arranged for intensified air reconnaissance in the western Mediterranean.

During the night of 16 May four boats of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla went on a mine-laying mission off Malta. PT Boat S "34" was gravely damaged by a direct hit from a coastal battery. Under heavy fire the other boats tried to lay a smoke screen around the damaged boat. After the survivors were taken off, S "34" had to be blown up. The sinking could not be observed; if still afloat, the wreck is to be sunk by the II Air Corps. (See Telegram 1200 for the short report

17 May 1942

of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla.)

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 10th transport group is proceeding as scheduled. Shipping to Tripoli and Benghazi continued without incidents. (See Telegram 1200.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring located 13 enemy submarines at sea in the eastern Black Sea and south of the Crimea; also a flotilla leader and destroyers in the same area; also destroyers and mine sweepers in the area off the central eastern coast.

A cruiser escorted by destroyers and PT boats arrived at Sevastopol in the forenoon.

Own Situation:

Supply traffic is moving on schedule. The German PT boats S "26" and S "28" have been en route from Linz to Constanta since 16 May.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The 11th Army is advancing concentrically against enemy units encircled in the area east of Kerch against stubborn resistance. Enemy landing attempts in the rear of our attacking forces were repulsed.

17 May 1942

Diversionary attacks on the Sevastopol sector were repulsed. The harbor traffic has increased.

On the northern front of the von Kleist Army Group strong forces are launching an offensive between Slavyansk and Doropolye in order to disperse the enemy in the penetration area of Izyum. The attack came as a complete surprise to the enemy, whose well-fortified positions were overrun.

In front of the 6th Army the enemy renewed his attacks with utmost fury. Thanks to the resolute resistance of our troops all attacks were repulsed with heavy enemy losses. An attack of our troops east of Kharkov was successful. The battle with the enemy who penetrated into Krasnograd is still in progress.

Central Army Group:

South of Sukhinichi we gained some ground; futile enemy attacks at several points. Otherwise nothing to report. In the rear of our lines successes against partisans were scored.

Northern Army Group:

Attacks in the Demyansk sector were repulsed. South of Staraya Russa we gained ground. The battle to mop up the forces that penetrated at Maluksa is still in progress.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Our attacks at Loukhi overcame strong enemy resistance.

3. North Africa:

Nothing to report.

18 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Martinique: Laval made a detailed explanation about the French negotiations with the U.S. concerning Martinique. The gist of his statements follows:

1. France will under no circumstances abandon her sovereign rights in the Antilles, whatever the consequences may be.
2. The warships and merchant vessels now in ports of the Antilles will under no circumstances be allowed to fall into the hands of a foreign power.
3. Admiral Robert is acting on behalf of the French Government and in complete agreement with it. Admiral Robert, the representative of the French Government in the Antilles, makes no decisions without its consent.

(Concerning this problem see also Political Review No. 114 and Foreign Press Review No. 114.)

According to a report from the Japanese Naval Attache at Rome, it became perfectly clear during Nomura's visit in Vichy that especially Laval is fully determined to collaborate closely with the Axis powers and with Japan in particular. The Japanese are convinced of the honest intentions of Petain, Darlan, and Laval to cooperate with the Axis. The masses of the French people are, however, opposed to it, and therefore caution and skepticism are indicated!

Great Britain:

Cripps' statement on the second front: The British Government as well as the British people are anxious to establish a second front in western Europe; the government is preparing for the big offensive, but it is necessary to wait for the opportune moment and the right place!!

Cripps's statement on India: Great Britain is still willing to begin a new chapter in her relations to India, and is standing by her offer of complete independence, but only after the conclusion of the war!

India:

Gandhi in an announcement appealed to Great Britain to withdraw immediately from all Asian and African possessions, but at least from India.

Australia:

Foreign Minister Evatt very openly reminds the Anglo-American powers in a radio speech of the great contribution which Australia has made

18 May 1942

thus far toward the conduct of the war and points to the great danger threatening her now. He declares that only through immediate and determined aid to Australia can this continent be saved.

(See also Political Review No. 114.)

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. Concerning Operations in the Arctic Ocean:

The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff Operations Division reports about the directive of Group North to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean with regard to future operations in the Arctic Ocean:

Narvik is to remain the base of operations of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean for the time being. A transfer back to Kirkenes is under consideration by Group North; it depends on the situation and the experiences made until the dark season, when most of the fighting against convoys will be shifted eastward.

For the present, Kirkenes is to remain a secondary base for submarines and light forces, and also the 8th PT Boat Flotilla is to remain there.

The following forces are directly under the operational command of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean: The submarines and naval forces assigned to him up to now, the pocket battleships with their destroyer and torpedo boat escorts, the 6th PT Boat Flotilla, and the submarines U "377" and "703" which thus far belonged to the submarine force of the Group (to be used also against landing attempts in the Arctic area).

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean is in charge of submarine warfare against enemy shipping and escort forces in the area east of the Denmark Strait and Jan Mayen. The submarines of the Group are allocated as reinforcements. (In accordance with previous experiences the command over these boats is likewise to be exercised by the Admiral, Arctic Ocean, once they are en route.) The main targets of submarine warfare are to be the PQ convoys and any damaged worthwhile single targets (cruisers, carriers, battleships). In case of landings the submarines will concentrate on troop transports and escorts.

Destroyers and pocket battleships will operate against convoys solely by order of the Group. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean can make requests for such operations. It is planned to use them against QP convoys and weakly protected targets. Short-range operations as far east as approximately 18° E are contemplated. The ships are to avoid engagements with equally strong or superior enemy forces. (No action is planned yet against convoy PQ 12.) The first engagement of the LUETZOW and the ADMIRAL SCHEER with reinforced destroyer escort is under deliberation!

18 May 1943

Group North will issue directives for mine-laying off the Murmansk coast.

In the event that battleships or additional cruisers should be committed, it is planned to entrust the Group directly with the command of the main operations. The Group reserves for itself the right to choose the operational areas, distribute the forces, and hand over tactical command to the Commanding Admiral, Battleships.

The fortification of Narvik, which up to now was carried out by the fleet and the Commanding Admiral, Battleships, is entrusted to the Admiral, Arctic Ocean.

The directive conforms basically with the concept of the Naval Staff and with the results of the discussions between the Commanding Admiral, Group North and the Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff and between Group North and the Admiral, Arctic Ocean. With regard to command of the submarines, the Chief, Naval Staff considers it particularly important that all submarines in the Arctic Ocean which are ready for operations be placed completely under the command of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean, in order to ensure unity of operational command and the most effective use of them. A proposal has been submitted by the Commander, PT Boats to withdraw the 8th PT Boat Flotilla and the tender LUEDERITZ from the Arctic Ocean. The Admiral, Arctic Ocean has himself come to the conclusion, as shown by his "Investigation about the Possibilities of Naval Warfare in the Arctic Ocean", that there is no possibility for torpedo and mine-carrying PT boats to operate in the continuous daylight of the summer months; the Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff therefore suggests that the proposal of the Commander, PT Boats be complied with and the 8th PT Boat Flotilla be withdrawn. The Chief, Naval Staff agrees, but considers it important that the 6th PT Boat Flotilla should remain in the northern area for the time being as a defensive weapon against possible enemy landings.

Up to now, Group North has been planning to put the oldest commander in tactical command of the pocket battleships, and suggests that a tactically-trained staff officer be assigned as his aide. The Chief, Naval Staff considers that control by the oldest commander is not adequate in view of the heavy demands made on the commander of a task force, and orders therefore that a full-fledged flag officer and a full-fledged staff officer be assigned to command the pocket battleships. (The staff officer is to be supplied by the Fleet Command.)

II. Concerning Martinique:

According to advance information received, the Fuehrer has ordered a submarine stationed off Martinique with the following tasks:

1. To attack the American naval forces assumed to be outside the harbor.

18 May 1942

2. To investigate the ships in the harbor and the anchorages in the bays, if this can be accomplished secretly.

3. To destroy French warships and merchant vessels leaving the harbor to prevent their falling into American hands. Particular attention to be centered on the aircraft carrier BEARN.

Special instructions will follow for special cases where outgoing French ships ought to be spared, as for instance if they are heading for European or French African bases.

This matter is still under discussion with the Foreign Office and definite orders by the Armed Forces High Command will be issued after clarification.

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines is instructed of the above.

III. Concerning the Sailing of Blockade Runners from Bordeaux:

A more frequent shipping schedule is planned for the run from Europe to East Asia originating from Bordeaux, beginning in late summer 1942, in order to import goods essential for the conduct of the war, as rubber, tin, tungsten, edible fats, etc. This plan can be realized only if loading facilities, harbors, storehouses, anchorages, and shipyards remain fully usable and are not destroyed by air raids.

The Special Staff for Economic Warfare calls the special attention of the Naval Staff and the Commander in Chief, Air Force to this fact and requests that maximum protection be provided against air raids at Bordeaux. The Naval Staff supports this request with the Commander in Chief, Air Force by way of the liaison officer at the Air Force, Operations Staff.

IV. The Chief of the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff reports on the organization in the Southeast Area:

The Naval Staff carefully examined once more the stand taken by Group South. A solution satisfactory in every respect is impossible, the problem of communication being of decisive importance. For the time being the communication out of Sofia is much better than out of Bucharest. A bigger communications center is under construction. It is not yet possible to make a complete transfer. The intention remains that Group South should be in command of the Southeast Area, and the Commanding Admirals, Aegean Sea and Black Sea subordinated to the Group. (Certain problems of supplies are to be handled by these Admirals in direct consultation with home offices.) The Commanding Admiral, Black Sea, who bears full responsibility for naval warfare in the Black Sea, must move from Bucharest to the Black Sea zone of operations. Group South has ordered his temporary transfer to Constanta. As soon as the Crimea can

18 May 1943

be used as a base, it is intended to transfer the Commanding Admiral, Black Sea there possibly first to Simferopol and later to Sevastopol.

The Naval Staff deems it essential on principle that Group South should go to Bucharest, if only for a close connection with the Rumanian political leaders. As long as a complete transfer cannot be made, only the liaison staff and a part of the staff of the Quartermaster Division is going to Bucharest, the rest to remain in Sofia for the time being.

The Chief, Naval Staff agrees with the plans as reported.

Situation 18 May 1943

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

North Atlantic:

2 British destroyers left Ponta Delgada on 15 May for Madagascar via Freetown.

South Atlantic:

U.S. cruiser MEMPHIS and 1 destroyer were expected at St. Paul on 18 May.

The Spanish garrisons of Fernando Po were reinforced.

Indian Ocean:

According to a French report of 16 May, the following ships were in Diego Suarez: 1 battleship of 35,000 tons, the battleship RAMILLIES, 1 aircraft carrier, 6 to 8 cruisers, 30 destroyers, torpedo boats, escort ships, and 25 small ships.

This report cannot be checked.

2. Own Situation:

The French assume that the distress signal from an unknown source (have been torpedoed or struck a mine), rebroadcast by Simonstown on 15 May (see War Diary of 16 May), may have some connection with the British corvette AURICULA which is said to have struck a mine in the Bay of Courrier (Madagascar). However, according to an Admiralty communique, the corvette was lost already on 5 May. This fact indicates that the minefield laid by the DOGGERBANK in the Cape area may have

18 May 1942

scored another success.

Ship "10" urgently requests by short signal delivery of supplies. (See Radiogram 1930.)

Through a change in paragraph B4 of the operation order all raiders receive permission to attack immediately and without warning all ostensibly armed ships of South American and Mexican nationality with the exception of those belonging to Argentine and Chile.

The impending arrival of the DRESDEN and the REGENSBURG in Japanese waters was announced to the Attache at Tokyo by Radiogram 1700. Information about the enemy situation is contained in Radiograms 2159 and 2314.

II. Situation West Area

1. Atlantic Coast:

With the exception of various air reconnaissance reports about in and out-going traffic in the Bristol Channel, nothing to report.

Ship "23" sailed into the Gironde.

In the evening of 17 May, the MUENSTERLAND (6,408 GRT) reached Bordeaux. The port commander reports that the total cargo of 8,192 tons contained 2,700 tons of rubber, 2,960 tons of whale oil, 400 tons of ore, etc.

2. Channel Coast:

Enemy Situation:

Several enemy ships and small vessels were located in the Dover area and on the southeast coast of England. The enemy raided the Channel coast.

Special Item:

See news evaluation no. 23 by the Naval Intelligence Division, Foreign Navies Branch for a survey of British motor torpedo boats, motor gunboats, and motor landing craft. According to a reliable intelligence report of April 1942, the number of available landing craft at that time amounted to from 200 to 210 boats. Of these, 120 to 140 were allegedly brought to Poole (west northwest of the Isle of Wight), an additional 30 to 36 boats to Rye (northwest of Dungeness).

Own Situation:

During the night of 17 May the 2nd and 4th PT Boat Flotillas

18 May 1942

laid mines on the English coast without being detected. The 2nd PT Boat Flotilla placed 24 mines in the area of buoys 56 and 56a, the 4th PT Boat Flotilla 24 mines on the convoy route at buoy 55a. (See Telegrams 1010 and 1410.)

During enemy air raids on the Channel coast harbor patrol boats off Lapanne were damaged.

The tanker ILL was struck by a mine and reached Dunkirk in damaged condition.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Normal convoy operations on the British coast, little air activity over the North Sea area.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report about our convoy operations. (See Telegram 2106.) During the night of 17 May our patrol boats had several brushes with enemy PT boats off the Dutch coast.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Our Petsamo shipping was recently repeatedly fired on by Russian batteries on the Rybachi Peninsula. German guns retaliated. An enemy submarine stood off the Sylte Fjord on 17 May.

Own Situation:

Supply and escort missions on the Norwegian coast without incident. North of Smøla the ULM laid an anti-submarine barrage of type B mines. Several enemy air raids over southern and central Norway. Mines were dropped over Karmøe Sound, north of Skudenes. Mine-exploding vessels swept a number of mines in the Karmøe Sound.

The PRINZ EUGEN continued her home voyage without further interference. During yesterday's aerial torpedo and bomb attacks on the south-western Norwegian coast, 5 enemy planes were downed by the anti-aircraft guns of the PRINZ EUGEN, 2 by torpedo boats, 19 by fighter planes, and 4 by anti-aircraft guns of the Air Force. The PRINZ EUGEN reached Kiel in the evening.

18 May 1942

Thus, operation "Zauberfloete" has been completed. Upon conclusion of the operation the Naval Staff is highly gratified to state that we succeeded in returning the damaged PRINZ EUGEN to her home port without further damage; this was accomplished due to the excellent work done by the shipyard and the command at Trondheim, after careful preparation; due to the outstanding support of the Air Force, and due to the efficient whole-hearted cooperation of the ship's crew. The splendid work of navigating the ship by means of a makeshift rudder and the defense against strong air attacks off the Norwegian coast in excellent close cooperation of Air Force and land and ship-based anti-aircraft artillery deserve special praise.

Operation "Burgund" (laying of minefield 17b) was executed according to plan. Group North has ordered the start of operation "Walzerkoenig" for 19 May.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Air reconnaissance reported approximately 11 steamers totalling 50,000 GRT in the Iokanga Bay; in the Murmansk Bay 13 steamers; in the northern part of Kola Bay 8 steamers, 3 destroyers, and 2 patrol vessels. Convoy PQ 16 has so far not been spotted, although it should have left Ireland days ago according to schedule. Group North sees a chance of gaining information by constant reconnoitering of the convoy assembly places at Iceland, and by extending systematic air reconnaissance to the ice border. The Group advises the 5th Air Force to this effect.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Nothing to report from the western and central Baltic Sea.

The Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries reports that the Kronstadt Channel was mined with 14 type B torpedo mines by assault boats for the first time during the night of 17 May. As proposed by Group North, the Naval Staff requests the Air Force Operations Staff to cancel for the time being the mining of the channel planned by the 1st Air Force; this operation would jeopardize the success of the mining operations planned by the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries first carried out during the night of 17 May, which were very likely not noticed by the enemy. It is intended to continue laying mines with assault boats. It is, however, requested that the Air Force should start as soon as possible operations in areas A, B, C, and F. (See Telegrams 0942 and 1830.)

18 May 1942

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence intercepted the U.S. submarine S "20" west of Cape Sable. A great number of submarine warnings were intercepted on the American coast and in the Caribbean Sea.

2. Own Situation:

Submarine U "588" reports sinking a 7,000 ton freighter on 17 May in the Gulf of May (Gulf of Main ? Tr. N.); U "162" reports sinking an unidentified steamer east of the Lesser Antilles.

Special Item:

Concerning the submarine mission off Martinique, the following order is received from the Armed Forces High Command:

The Fuehrer has ordered 1 submarine to be stationed off Martinique. Her tasks consist of:

1. Attack on enemy naval forces inside and outside of French territorial waters.
2. Unobtrusive reconnoitering of the ships in the harbor, and of the anchorages in the island bays.
3. It is permitted to attack French warships and merchant vessels leaving the harbor without warning and without restriction.

Main targets of this operation are the aircraft carrier BEARN and the tankers. Special instructions will be issued if Germany should agree to allow the French to move certain ships.

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines is advised to this effect. Submarine U "156" is ordered to proceed from the area east of the Lesser Antilles to Martinique.

The submarines U "431", "81", "205", "565", "83", and "33" are lined up along the Mediterranean coast from Tobruk to Marsa Matruh. Submarine U "431" reports torpedoing a grounded steamer northwest of Sollum.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers raided Deal and Brighton and scored hits

18 May 1942

on railway and industrial installations. No night missions, no enemy air raids.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Our operations centered on convoy escorts. The forces of Air Command, Africa operated against the enemy on the front of the Panzer Army. Reconnaissance missions over Egypt to Alexandria.

3. Eastern Front:

Strong forces went into action on all Army fronts; principal operations were centered on the front of the Southern Army Group, particularly against the enemy on the Kerch Peninsula.

Successful mission against the harbor of Murmansk, where Curtiss planes with U.S. markings were observed. 13 enemy planes were downed.

The VIII Air Corps reports that 323 enemy planes were shot down, 70 planes destroyed on the ground, 16,300 GRT cargo space and 1 mine sweeper sunk in the period from 1 May to 18 May!

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

The situation at Gibraltar is unchanged. According to a report from the intelligence branch in Spain, a convoy of 4 freighters escorted by 2 corvettes passed the Strait of Gibraltar in the evening of 17 May in an easterly direction.

The carrier force which left Gibraltar on 17 May (ARGUS, EAGLE, one cruiser, several destroyers) was sighted repeatedly during 18 May in the area south of the Balearic Isles and north of Algiers. Approximately 90 miles northwest of Algiers, an Italian submarine contacted and successfully attacked the enemy force. In the evening, the carrier force was again spotted northeast of Algiers and was attacked by Italian torpedo planes.

In the forenoon a British plane sent SOS signals from 20 miles north of Algiers and reported an attack by 2 French bombers!

Central Mediterranean:

Enemy planes established contact with one of our convoys. Submarine sighting signals on the eastern coast of Sardinia, northwest of Benghazi, east of Malta, off Cape Misurata, and south of Crete.

18 May 1942

Eastern Mediterranean:

Normal convoy activity in the area from Alexandria to Tobruk.

Photo reconnaissance over Alexandria on 17 May reveals the presence of the QUEEN ELIZABETH (in floating dock; she was hit on about 10 or 12 May by a heavy bomb, as reported by an agent), 3 D-class cruisers (1 in dock), 1 C-class cruiser, 4 destroyers, 9 submarines, 6 small warships, 3 hospital ships (1 of which, the SOMERSETSHIRE, is grounded), approximately 30 freighters totalling 100,000 GRT, and 6 tankers of a total of 33,000 GRT.

2. Own Situation:

An Italian submarine reports scoring a torpedo hit on a cruiser during the attack on the enemy carrier force northwest of Algiers at 0825. In the evening Italian planes report 1 torpedo hit a cruiser amidship during torpedo attacks on the same force; a high flame was observed. The attack was carried out by 3 torpedo planes!

These results are so far unconfirmed by radio intelligence but in view of the detailed reports there can hardly be any doubt that the hits were actually scored; in view of the enemy's efforts to hold Malta by all means and to provide it with the necessary supplies, these results are very important.

Contrary to yesterday's reports about the blowing up and sinking of PT boat S "34" off Malta, the II Air Corps sighted the vessel still afloat and sank her with a bomb hit. During this operation, 1 Me 109 was lost.

(For detailed report of the blowing up of the boat and the destruction of the secret documents see Telegram 1930.)

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 10th transport group arrived in Benghazi and Tripoli according to plan. The German part of the shipment consisted of 105 vehicles, 9 guns, and 3,660 tons of other supplies. 2 troop transports are proceeding to Benghazi, thus far without incident. The convoy returning from Tripoli to Naples is also on schedule up to now, while 1 of the 2 steamers (the BOLSENA) en routed from Benghazi to Brindisi was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine during the night of 17 May.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

18 May 1942

Black Sea:

Continuous heavy enemy submarine activity is reported from a wide area off Sevastopol (possibly supply operations?).

Our convoys and supply transports with steamers and naval barges are proceeding according to plan. (See report 1130.)

PT boats S "26" and "28" en route to the Black Sea arrived in Budapest on 18 May.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

On the Kerch Peninsula, heavy fighting is in progress against stubborn enemy resistance on the coastal strip from Kerch to Yenikale. Lively enemy traffic in the harbor of Sevastopol.

The Von Kleist Army Group attacked successfully in the direction of the Izyum area in order to cut off strong enemy forces west of there. The western banks of the Donets River were mopped up. The 16th Panzer Division reached the heights surrounding Izyum. At the 6th Army the enemy continued to attack at both penetration points. Heavy see-saw fighting is going on. Northwest of Livny the enemy made unimportant gains.

The defensive and offensive actions of the Von Kleist Panzer Army being fought in the Izyum area constitute the 2nd phase (1st phase on the Kerch Peninsula) of the major German spring offensive. Our offensive was unleashed earlier than originally planned, due to the strong Russian offensive in the Kharkov area which offered a problem requiring a large-scale operational solution. The planning and execution of this operation, according to a report of the Permanent Representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters, must exclusively be credited the decision and the initiative of the Fuehrer.

18 May 1942

Central Army Group:

We attacked successfully south of Kirov, southwest of Rzhev, and south of Velikie Luki. Enemy attacks northwest of Yel'nia were repulsed.

Northern Army Group:

We began an offensive in the southern section of Kholm and south of Staraya Russa. We made some gains at the penetration point at Maluksa.

2. Finnish and African Fronts:

Nothing to report.

3. Special Item:

The Soviet Russian Situation as seen by the Japanese Military Attache at Kuibyshev:

The Russian winter offensive is considered a failure also by the Russians themselves. Yet, the morale has not weakened and there is no opposition to Stalin. There are at this moment approximately 210 Red divisions (!) left, of which 10 to 15% are not at the front. The air force has more than 3,000 operational planes, though the training of the personnel is poor. The supply situation of the army is tolerable, armament production is inadequate, there is a lack of motor vehicles. The troops are sufficiently fed. Rivers (Volga) play a very large part as means of transport. The civilian population is very poorly supplied. Anglo-American aid is insignificant. The main supply route is by way of Murmansk. Archangel was allegedly kept open all winter (?).

Personnel reserves are ample but there is a lack of officers. No new Russian weapons or combat methods are to be anticipated. Labor is employed on a large scale for the reinforcement of the southern front and the areas of Rostov, Stalingrad, Black Sea coast. The Russians expect the German spring offensive to focus on the Caucasus.

The Japanese Attache believes that the loss of the northern ports and main cities as well as the loss of the areas west of the Volga would lead to the collapse of the Soviet in Europe (but not of the entire system). If, in addition, the southern Caucasian area were lost together with the industrial centers (like Chkalov, Ufa, Perm), any danger for Europe would be eliminated.

19 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Italy:

The press reports that Mussolini spent a few days in Sardinia during the past week and emphasizes in this connection Italy's territorial demands on France. It is also said that the Italian Government intends to put pressure on France and to force the cession of Corsica and Nice.

France:

Radio Martinique announces that the negotiations between Admiral Robert and the U.S. delegation are progressing in a satisfactory manner.

The press reports that Washington circles believe the U.S. Government is prepared openly to break off relations with Vichy if the awaited neutrality agreement for the French possessions in the West Indies cannot be perfected owing to Laval's interference.

U.S.A.:

The Office of War Production on 16 May announced its intention to cancel almost all contracts for the construction of armament factories which cannot be completed until summer 1943 and cannot begin producing at that time. This would mean that approximately 2/3 of all projects which have either already been approved or for which the contract has been let would have to be abandoned. The Office of War Production adds that the decision was made in order to allocate the available raw materials immediately to the production of essential goods, and also because it is expected that the development of the situation during the spring and summer of 1942 will bring the turning point of the war. It is intended to continue with the construction of plants for the production of artificial rubber and aviation gasoline, whereas the building of steel works will be discontinued. The Office of War Production plans to allocate all available stocks of raw material to the immediate production of arms and ammunition.

If these plans of the Office of War Production are realized, it would mean a complete reversal of the American concept of the war as held up to now; it would be a shift from preparedness for a protracted war to the expectation of a decision within the year 1942/1943.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

Did not take place on account of the Chief's trip to Denmark on official business.

19 May 1942

Special Items

I. Survey of the Naval Staff concerning the operational possibilities of mine-laying submarines

The submarine is regarded as the suitable tool for mining operations in places where neither surface vessels nor airplanes can be used for operational reasons. A mine-laying submarine is equipped to carry 65 mines. Her long range permits her to reach areas which until now have been inaccessible.

The Naval Staff considers the following areas to be promising:

- a. The area of the Kola Bay, the approach to the White Sea, and the waters adjacent to the east.
- b. The waters off the English west coast, the area surrounding Iceland and off Northern Ireland.
- c. The U.S. east coast and the islands off Central America.
- d. The waters off the African west coast.

Remarks referring to:

- a. Owing to the bright summer nights, mine-laying submarines can only be used in the latter part of the summer.
- b. Mine-laying submarines have good chances of success, particularly at some points of the west coast, and will certainly come as a surprise to the enemy. The latter will be forced to carry out sweeping operations, which will prove difficult owing to the depth of the water and the average weather conditions.
- c. The use of mines must be coordinated with the use of torpedoes. As soon as the type A rack mines are ready, the Commanding Admiral, Submarines will begin to use them.
- d. The harbors on the African west coast are particularly important in view of their export of essential materials and because they are used for the transit traffic to Egypt.

When the chances of mining operations are weighed, it appears advantageous to assign the highest priority to the mining of the West African ports in order to attack and hurt the enemy at as many points as possible and to force him into splitting up his defenses. The result of the DOGGERBANK's mining operation off Capetown indicates that this enterprise was a complete surprise to the enemy. The Naval Staff sees the advantage of the great loading capacity of mine-laying submarines not so much in the fact that a great number of mines can be transported to one spot, but that mines can be laid simultaneously or rather at short intervals outside of several harbors.

19 May 1942

The mine-laying submarine, compared with a surface ship, has the advantage that she does not have to lay mines on a presumed shipping route without full cognizance of the local situation, but is able to mine a shipping route which she has observed to be in actual use. A loose mine pattern extending across the full width of a shipping lane is preferable to a compact minefield. The greater the area mined, the more difficult it is to sweep. The success achieved by the mining of the Capetown waters is renewed proof of the validity of this theory.

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines, Group West, and Group North receive a detailed memorandum containing the Naval Staff's conclusions about the use of mine-laying submarines, and are also instructed of the guiding principles of operation derived from past experiences. The Commanding Admiral, Submarines is requested to submit his plans to the Naval Staff; Group West is to prepare operations plans for the areas west of the British Isles in cooperation with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines; Group North is to make preliminary plans for the mining of the Kola Bay and White Sea areas. (For details see directive 1/Skl I E 940/42 Gkdos. Chfs. of 19 May in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.

II. Organizational changes within the Naval Staff

The Commander in Chief, Navy has ordered the conversion of the Quartermaster Division into a separate department ("Amtsgruppe"). It will consist of 4 branches ("Abteilungen") and one group ("Gruppe"): The Naval Branch (Skl Qu A I S), the Land Branch (Skl Qu A I K), the Air Defense Branch (Skl Qu A I L V), the Training Branch (Skl Qu A I A) and the Administration Group (Skl Qu A I Allg.)

Situation 19 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

South Atlantic:

The Military Attache at Lisbon reports from a reputedly reliable source that the military commander of Sierra Leone has requested the government of Portuguese Guinea to permit the use of the harbors of Portuguese Guinea as military bases. The Portuguese Government has directed the Governor to reject the demand.

While this information has not yet been confirmed, the situation in Portuguese Guinea must be viewed as at least serious, since ominous reports have repeatedly been received from there in the recent past.

In this connection a report of our intelligence office in Portugal is interesting, according to which a convoy of 75 steamers escorted by 15 warships, among them an auxiliary aircraft carrier, 3 light cruisers,

19 May 1942

and 11 destroyers and corvettes, is expected to arrive in Freetown from a Florida port on 26 or 27 May. The convoy is said to have sailed from a Florida harbor on 12 May. The convoy allegedly carries an expeditionary force of 50,000 men, 500 tanks, 450 planes, and an adequate amount of war supplies. (The source of the above information is a British ship radio operator; see also Report 1800.) For the moment it is impossible to check this information; however, the Naval Staff considers it definitely worthy of attention. It is very conceivable that the enemy will launch an attack on French West Africa from Freetown within the current year, since he is aware that the present state of the French West African defenses would hardly permit effective resistance. The enemy would thus be able to complete an important step in his preparations for an offensive against the European continent.

2. Own Situation:

No reports from our auxiliary cruisers. Ship "23" arrived in the Gironde estuary on the morning of 19 May, according to schedule. Group West informed her of the cover name for the sailing order.

The REGENSBURG is notified by Radiogram 1546 of the Naval Staff's plan of a rendezvous with the DRESDEN for delivery of mails and war prisoners at the north corner of the waiting area about the end of May.

All our forces in foreign waters are informed of the enemy situation by Radiogram 1936.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance during the forenoon located altogether 33 steamers, totalling approximately 170,000 GRT, in the area from the North Channel to Milford. These included 3 large ships of 15,000 to 20,000 GRT.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report from either the Atlantic coast or the Channel area.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

A reliable agent reports as follows: Lord Mountbatten, with

19 May 1942

approximately 900 to 1,100 commandos, approximately 8 infantry battalions of the "Scottish Commands", several field artillery batteries, and technical troops have embarked at Dunfermline (on the Firth of Forth, northwest of Edinburgh). The embarkation order, the deadline for furloughs, the close of mails, the preparation of tugboats, and other symptoms seem to indicate that the above-named forces and the greater part of the assembled Home Fleet will sail on 18 May, presumably during the evening. Destination and objective of the operation, etc., are unknown. Several squadrons of the Coastal Command and the Bomber Command have arrived at Scotch bases since 12 May. (See Report 1125.)

It is difficult to judge this report. All of the manifold enemy reports which have been received lately from agents make it clear that the enemy intends to launch operations of unknown nature at unknown points at about the end of May. (Dates varying from 18 to 28 May have been mentioned.) Some reports name northern Norway, others central Norway, still others Jutland and also Holland and northern France as focal points of the enemy operations.

The above report about an embarkation of enemy troops in the Firth of Forth may definitely be linked with the enemy's general plans for an offensive. For this reason the report is communicated to the front line commands. Particular readiness and watchfulness appear to be indicated for the next few days.

Own Situation:

Our mine-sweeping activities are handicapped by bad weather. Convoy operations continue on schedule.

According to a report of Group North the following convoy missions were carried out during the month of March in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North:

8 westbound convoys:	39 ships	totalling 101,963 GRT
10 eastbound convoys:	25 ships	totalling 63,307 GRT
21 northbound convoys:	99 ships	totalling 308,634 GRT
18 southbound convoys:	93 ships	totalling 291,566 GRT

Total: 256 ships totalling 765,470 GRT

In addition to these, 43 ships with 111,930 GRT of the Ems-Elbe shipping (in both directions).

2. Norway:

Radio monitoring intercepted a report sent by a British plane at 1000 about the sighting of a German task force consisting of 1 pocket battleship and 10 destroyers southwest of Bergen. Additional re-

19 May 1942

ports followed throughout the day and continued into the night of 19 May. In the evening our planes reported an enemy submarine on an easterly course approximately 120 miles west of Aalesund.

The task force of the Commander, Destroyers, which includes the cruiser LUETZOW, continued its northward voyage in the morning of 19 May after carrying out its missions as planned.

Nothing to report with regard to convoy missions in the Norway area.

Group North filed the report about escort missions executed during March in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Norway as follows:

Area Admiral, Arctic Coast:	134 ships of 322,752 GRT
Area Admiral, North Norwegian Coast:	109 ships of 320,167 GRT
Area Admiral, West Norwegian Coast:	162 ships of 419,747 GRT

Unescorted single-ship movement:

Admiral, Arctic Coast:	81 ships of 105,717 GRT
Admiral, North Norwegian Coast:	338 ships of 398,537 GRT
Admiral, West Norwegian Coast:	162 ships of 307,458 GRT
Naval Shore Commander, Oslo Fjord:	8 ships of 28,088 GRT

The above figures demonstrate the importance of the supply and non-military shipping along the Norwegian Coast and the heavy burden it imposes on the naval escort forces.

For the short report of cruiser PRINZ EUGEN concerning the execution of operation "Zauberfloete" see War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIA.

The following data of this report are particularly interesting: Good observations made by our radar search receivers ("Fu. M. B."); excellent reconnoitering by enemy reconnaissance and shadowing forces; remarkably correct observation reports by enemy shadowers which come out from behind the clouds only occasionally; the use of our ship planes to reinforce the plane escort; enemy low-level attacks by 40 planes approaching simultaneously abeam from both sides; attacks primarily with torpedoes; a few planes also attack without torpedoes and use machine guns to harass our anti-aircraft defenses and navigation. A few torpedoes exploded upon hitting the surface; the difficult task of dodging more than 30 torpedoes with only a make-shift rudder succeeded, thanks to extensive engine maneuvers. Several torpedoes exploded close to our ships at the end of their runs. No casualties or major damages were suffered by the ships participating in operation "Zauberfloete". After the bomber planes had retreated, 2 enemy bombers made high-level attacks during which 8 bombs exploded in our wake; course was changed frequently.

The excellent impression made by the manner in which the return voyage of the PRINZ EUGEN was conducted, acknowledged in yesterday's entry in the War Diary, is fully confirmed by the short report of her commander.

3. Arctic Ocean:

19 May 1942

Enemy Situation:

An agent reports that 4 British cruisers and 3 destroyers entered the Hval Fjord on 17 May.

The Air Force reports an additional increase in the number of planes on the airfields in the Murmansk area. In the opinion of the 5th Air Force this indicates the following:

- a. Reinforcement of the defenses of the harbor and airport of Murmansk against our attacks.
- b. Assembly of the planes delivered by the PQ convoys for ferrying to other enemy fronts.
- c. Preparation of a strong fighter force for the protection of potential enemy landings in the Petsamo-Kirkenes area.

The opinion of the 5th Air Force is accepted.

Special Item:

Concerning the Command of the Pocket Battleships in the North Area:

The decision of the Commander in Chief, Navy, according to which the Commanding Admiral, Battleships is given temporary command of the battleships, is transmitted to the Group, the Fleet, and the Commanding Admiral, Battleships. The leave needed by the Commanding Admiral, Battleships is not to be shortened. In order to prevent that operations which might unexpectedly become necessary are jeopardized by the absence of the designated commander, a naval staff officer is to be assigned to the SCHEER at the earliest moment in order to assist the oldest commander who is in temporary command.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Convoy operations in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic proceeded according to plan. Ground mines were swept in a few places. Group North is convinced that enemy aerial mining activities in the Great Belt and the western Baltic make it more and more unlikely that Russian forces would attempt to break through or the British to penetrate. The Group therefore believes that if the enemy continues to lay mines on the present scale, our preparations for mining operations in the Sound and the Belts and also our minefield patrols can be curtailed.

The Naval Staff agrees with the Group's opinion.

19 May 1942

The plans of the Commander, Mine Sweepers relating to the Gulf of Finland are handicapped by fog. With regard to the mining of the Kronstadt Sea Channel, the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries furnishes an exact account of the mines laid; he reports that exact soundings were taken in the Channel and that the mines were definitely dropped in the right place. The operation was carried out undetected by the enemy, since the weather was favorable and the 1st Air Force carried out a number of effective nuisance raids. The enemy did not interfere and was not sighted. (For mine-laying report see Telegram 1620.)

In accordance with the Naval Staff's request, the 1st Air Force is ordered by the Air Force Operations Staff to mine area F by plane in view of the fact that the Sea Channel is being mined by the Navy. An order of the Commander in Chief, Air Force will follow with regard to the future mining of the Sea Channel section in the area northwest of the Leningrad moles by the 1st Air Force; it will depend on the results obtained by the mining operations of the Navy.

Attention is called to Telegram 1620 of the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries, wherein he points to the plans for mining operations on the part of the 18th Army Command, which were to be carried out in the Kronstadt Sea Channel by engineers. The Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries had no knowledge of these plans. Such operations are and must remain exclusively the business of the Navy, since the Army has neither the technical nor the nautical experience in this field. The use of mines at sea by the 18th Army Command is therefore rightly opposed by the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries. Group North will submit its point of view to the Northern Army Group.

Concerning the Use of Naval Forces on Lake Ladoga:

The Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries reports about the intention of the Air Force to bring up Siebel ferries to Lake Ladoga. In view of the presence of naval forces on Lake Ladoga, the Naval Staff had proposed to the Armed Forces High Command to place all forces employed on Lake Ladoga under unified tactical command (see War Diary of 15 May, Paragraph IV). The Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command now states that the Air Force will not use Siebel ferries on Lake Ladoga.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

A number of reports from our submarines were received concerning enemy patrol activity off the U.S. coast; according to them the enemy has organized strong patrols by planes and in some places also by Coast Guard cutters and destroyers, but the effective strength of the enemy defenses can still be considered weak. For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

19 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

Submarine U "125" again reported heavy traffic en route to the Yucatan Channel; on 15 May she sank the steamer CAYUGA, on 18 May a 9,000-ton tanker and the steamer WILLIAM J. SALMAN of 2,590 GRT. After sinking a total of 9 steamers totalling 44,990 GRT, the boat (under the command of Lt. Folkers) is starting on her return voyage.

Submarine U "502" reported sinking the steamer CAPE OF GOOD HOPE on 11 May, en route from New York to Capetown with a cargo of tanks, crated airplanes, and ammunition.

Submarine U "558" sank the steamer TOWA in quadrant DN 58.

Submarine U "156" reported sinking the 4,900 GRT steamer QUAKER CITY. (For details see Supplement to Submarine Situation.)

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers raided Hastings and Box Hill. During the night of 19 May a strong force attacked Hull.

The enemy penetrated with 80 planes into the western German industrial zone, concentrating on Mannheim and Ludwigshafen.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

We continued our raids on Malta. Unusual numbers of fighter planes were reported to be at the Halfar airfield.

3. Eastern Front:

Extremely strong forces were employed for the support of the 11th and 17th Armies.

A raid on Murmansk brought good results against grounded planes and in an engagement with enemy fighters.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

19 May 1942

Western Mediterranean:

Gibraltar-based forces made an about-face in the waters north of Algiers during the night of 18 May and are on their way back to Gibraltar. Reconnaissance planes regained contact in the forenoon of 19 May with the enemy force reported as consisting of 2 aircraft carriers, one cruiser, and 6 destroyers. For details of yesterday's enemy situation reports see Telegram 0600. The torpedo hits on the British force which they report could not be substantiated by the reports of today's air reconnaissance. It is possible, however, that damage was inflicted, and additional reports must therefore be awaited.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

Normal enemy supply shipping activity between Alexandria and Tobruk. In the forenoon 2 freighters, 3 warships, and 3 lighters were located at Tobruk.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Convoy and single-ship movements to Tripoli and Benghazi as well as north African coastal shipping proceeded without incident according to plan. The two troop transports to Benghazi arrived at their destination without incident. Nothing to report from the Italy - Greece shipping route.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Special Item:

The German Naval Command, Italy had requested that the 1,200 anti-submarine mines type A from the stores of the Commanding Admiral, Aegean Sea be allocated for the execution of a large-scale operation to seal off the Aegean Sea by an east-west barrage according to Italian plans. Before making a decision about the allotment of these mines, the Naval Staff considers it necessary to clarify whether the Italian mines will be on hand in time for uninterrupted work on the Aegean east-west barrage; this is a condition for the allocation of our material. It also has to be established that the laying of the Aegean east-west barrage will not interfere with the mining operations considered of prime importance by the Naval Staff, namely, those in the Sicily Strait, the waters off Malta, off Benghazi, and in the near

19 May 1942

future also in the approaches to other more easterly harbors. In this connection inquiry is made of the German Naval Command, Italy, the Commanding Admiral, Aegean Sea, and Group South.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reported the following situation on 19 May: In the area of Sevastopol and the Crimean south coast one flotilla leader and 2 destroyers, in the western Black Sea and the Crimean coast 6 submarines, in the northeastern Black Sea 3 destroyers and several mine sweepers.

Own Situation:

The enemy continued his heavy air attacks on Mariupol, Eupatoria, and other bases. It was belatedly reported that major damage was wrought to the shipyards by an air raid on Nikolayev on 15 May.

Convoys proceeded on schedule. The total of supplies shipped north from Rumanian ports between 20 Apr. and 17 May reached 46,941 tons. An additional 13,000 tons are en route at present; after their arrival a total of approximately 60,000 tons will have been shipped up to 20 May. This result of the first month of supply operations must be considered good and very satisfactory.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

Heavy fighting continues on the 11th Army front on the Kerch Peninsula against stubborn enemy resistance. The fort of Akburnu was taken after violent fighting by daring assault boat operation.

The operations in the Donets Basin in the area of Izyum proceeded successfully in spite of sweltering heat.

19 May 1942

On the 6th Army front the enemy continued his attacks against the southern and eastern front at Kharkov with strong tank forces. All of them were repulsed, the enemy suffering heavy tank losses.

Central Army Group:

No important actions except for successful assaults on partisan forces.

Northern Army Group:

The battle in the southern area of Kholm is still in progress. Otherwise, except for small thrusts, nothing to report.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Enemy attacks on the Svir River were repulsed. Also north of Kestenga renewed strong attacks were repulsed by the troops of the Commanding General, Army Group Lapland.

3. North Africa:

Lively enemy scouting and artillery activity. Successful German scouting operations. The enemy continued lively armed air reconnaissance over the entire area of the Panzer Army.

20 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

Political Review No. 116 highlights interesting details of the session on 19 May of the House of Commons. It is remarkable that Churchill did not take part in the session, allegedly because he had nothing to add to the statements made a short time ago. Hore-Belisha sharply criticized Churchill's war policies and demanded that the Allies follow a unified strategic plan against the solid block of the Axis powers. Prior to issuing the order for the opening of a second front it would have to be guaranteed that the enterprise would be successful, since Great Britain cannot afford another Dunkirk. Under no circumstances should the government be allowed to start prematurely. Cripps defended Churchill's strategy, and calls him a first-rate minister of defense. The War Cabinet is fully aware of the gravity of the present situation; he pointed to East Asia, to the threat to Australia, the difficulty of holding Malta, and the necessity of living up to the aid to Russia program, in spite of the difficulties offered by the sea route via Murmansk.

France:

According to enemy news broadcasts, Secretary of State Hull has announced that the French ships at Martinique and Guadeloupe will be deprived of fuel in order to immobilize them.

Special Items:

I. Continued construction of the aircraft carrier GRAF ZEPPELIN

As a result of the conference of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters on 13 May, orders are given to complete the aircraft carrier GRAF ZEPPELIN. The Commander in Chief, Air Force is informed to this effect.

II. Concerning future operations by the Commanding General, Lapland

The Armed Forces High Command submitted a directive for the future operation by the Commanding General, Lapland. It emphasizes the importance of the Rybachi Peninsula for warfare in northern

20 May 1942

Lapland. It points out, however, that the forces required to seize the peninsula will probably not be available in Lapland within the next few months. It may be that the enemy, realizing the major importance of the Petsamo area for the war in general, will force major engagements upon us which in turn will require the reinforcement of the Norwegian Mountain Corps. For this reason the Fuehrer has ordered the focal point of our defenses to be shifted to the Norwegian Mountain Corps after the situation at Loukhi has been reestablished. There the old defense positions are to be reoccupied. However, the Commanding General, Lapland is instructed to continue to make all preparations for the possible seizure of the Rybachi Peninsula. The decision whether the attack on the Rybachi Peninsula can be launched in the late summer of this year or will have to be postponed to the latter part of winter 1943 depends on the events on the Finnish front and on our success in shipping supplies to Finland.

No other offensives are planned for this summer, particularly because the Finnish Army will not be ready for them before the forces now tied up on the Karelian Isthmus become available.

Before issuing new orders, the Naval Staff expects to hear the report of Lt. Commander Busch, up to now liaison officer at the Army High Command in Lapland, who is being recalled from Finland for a new assignment.

Since the preparations for operations involving the Rybachi Peninsula are to be continued, the Naval Staff intends to name another liaison officer to the Army High Command in Lapland at the beginning of August.

III. Concerning the enemy's plans of operation

Our intelligence service reports on the basis of reliable agent reports that a British landing operation will probably take place on 23 May.

It is impossible to verify this report. Continued readiness of the entire coastal defenses is necessary. The respective Armed Forces commanders have been informed directly by the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command.

IV. Concerning the command authority on the coasts:

The Naval Staff had protested against a directive of the Armed Forces High Command of 15 Apr. which limited intolerably the authority of the Navy with regard to the tactical planning of our

20 May 1942

coastal defenses (see War Diary of 2 May, Special Item). To this protest the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command replied that the directive in question was merely intended to clarify a question raised by the Army High Command in connection with technical matters, and was meant to define the authority of the General of the Engineers as over against that of the commanders of the Armed Forces. The order of the Armed Forces High Command was not intended to change directive no. 40. Neither is it planned to limit the command authority and the influence of the High Command, Navy with respect to the subordinate naval commands, which are needed to fulfill the special tasks of the Navy in accordance with directive 40.

The subordinate commands are instructed accordingly.

V. Concerning the relief of industry from unessential production

In consequence of a directive by the Armed Forces High Command (War Economy and Armaments Division), stressing the necessity of relieving industry from unessential production, the Commander in Chief, Navy reiterates his order to all departments to continue to check conscientiously the absolute necessity of all contracts, and to take all measures to prevent the placing of orders not absolutely essential to the war effort. (The directive stipulates that all unessential production should be stopped at once.

The Commander in Chief, Navy already ordered on previous occasions (July and September 1941 and again in January 1942) to suppress ruthlessly or restrict all projects exceeding the basic requirements of the Navy and having no bearing on the victorious outcome of the war. All department heads were urged to take drastic steps in this matter.

VI. Concerning the organization of the Southeast Area:

In complying with a decision of the Commander in Chief, Navy (see War Diary of 18 May), the Naval Staff instructed Group South about the organization of the southeast area as follows: Group South is to remain at Sofia for the time being; a liaison staff of the Group to be stationed at Bucharest; the Commanding Admiral, Black Sea with his entire staff is to be transferred to the Russian theater at a later date; the Quartermaster Division of Group South is to have central control of the allocation of supplies for the entire

20 May 1942

southeast area; shipping and transport are to be placed under the Commanding Admiral, Black Sea and the Commanding Admiral, Aegean Sea in administrative and operational matters. (For details see Skl. Qu A II 1054/42 Gkdos in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIVA.)

VII. Concerning the organization and readiness of the French fleet:
see News Analysis No. 24 of the Naval Intelligence Division, Foreign Navies Branch under the heading "Foreign Navies".

Situation 20 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

Own Situation:

Group West has received the sailing orders for ship "23". After leaving her escort forces the auxiliary cruiser is to proceed alone along longitude 4°30' W until she reached 43°50' N, which is outside of Spanish territorial waters but within 20 miles of the Spanish coast. After dark she is to head northwest to quadrant BE 5750, and then west to 30° W. From that point she is to proceed according to orders from the Naval Staff. The ship has orders to turn back if she is detected by the enemy.

The following plans of the Naval Staff are transmitted to blockade-runner REGENSBURG:

A rendezvous with the DRESDEN is planned for after 30 May to deliver oil and mail, and to receive prisoners. On or about 10 June a **rendezvous** is planned with ship "10" for the purpose of turning over the remaining fuel supplies. Thereafter the ship is to proceed to Japan. The Naval Staff assumes that the REGENSBURG will have sufficient fuel to reach Japan after delivering fuel to the other ships.

The DRESDEN is informed of the above.

Blockade-runner TANNENFELS transmits her experiences via Naval Attache Tokyo, and these are sent to ships in foreign waters by Radiogram 1843.

Information on the enemy situation is sent by Radiogram 2334.

20 May 1942

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

It is reported from Northern Ireland that another U.S. troop transport arrived in an Ulster port. The convoy consisted of several units of American artillery, tanks and mechanized troops and is allegedly the largest troop transport effected thus far.

Southeast of Brest a British ship was located in the evening while broadcasting an urgent message. No detailed information was obtained. In the morning hours, British planes flew over the Spanish naval base of Ferrol; anti-aircraft guns which went into action scored no hits.

During the night of 19 May enemy planes attacked the western French coast, bombed St. Nazaire and laid mines off Lorient.

Movements of enemy torpedo boats and motor gunboats were observed in the Channel.

The questioning of a survivor from motor torpedo boat "220", which was sunk on 13 May, yielded detailed information about the British motor torpedo boats and their operations. (See the interrogation report in Telegram 2000.)

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Ship "23" sailed from the Gironde for operations in the Atlantic. During an air raid on St. Nazaire 20 bombs fell in the shipyard district without important damage.

The entrance to the harbor of Lorient had to be closed due to suspected mining.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

During the day normal enemy air activity subsiding

20 May 1942

alt together during the night.

Normal convoy traffic on the English southeastern and eastern coasts.

According to a report from an allegedly reliable agent, the landing operation originally scheduled for 18 May will probably not be launched until 23 May. No definite proof of the intended enemy operation has been found.

Own Situation:

Northwest of the island of Walcheren the Rhine flotilla was attacked during the afternoon by 6 Spitfires, which were driven off by anti-aircraft fire. We suffered no casualties. Our mine-sweeping operations on the shipping route in the southern part of the North Sea were successful. Convoy missions proceeded according to plan. (See also Telegrams 1900 and 1910.)

2. Norway:

The task force of the Commander, Destroyers, and cruiser LUETZOW arrived at Trondheim in the forenoon, thus completing operations "Walzerkoenig" and "Walzertraum". The excellent manner in which this mission was carried out according to schedule deserves praise.

The PRINZ EUGEN reports about the excellent cooperation with the fighter forces and about the tactics applied in fighting off aerial attacks. The report emphasizes particularly the good work of the fighters, who regarded the protection of the ship as their main object and did not strive only to shoot down enemy planes. The fighters drove off and shot down the most dangerous of the enemy's planes; then they stopped pursuing the attackers as soon as they had driven them far enough away so that the enemy torpedoes no longer endangered the ship. (See Report 2045.)

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, Norway has ordered a second degree alert for the entire area of the Commanding Admiral, Norway in view of the alarming rumors of imminent enemy operations against Norway.

20 May 1942

An Army post in the area of the Admiral, West Norwegian Coast reported sighting a surfaced submarine in the Bjorne Fjord. A submarine chase was ordered; depth charges were of no avail.

Past experiences with similar reports from the Army suggest the possibility of an error. It would be very remarkable if an enemy submarine were actually operating in this area. Anti-submarine patrols are being maintained.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The Air Force reports with reference to the raid on the enemy's meteorological station on Jan Mayen that the post is surrounded by a number of fortified and occupied machine gun nests.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Nothing to report about our convoy and channel-sweeping operations in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic Sea. Several ground mines were swept in the Kattegat and the Little Belt.

Submarine U "117" started on an experimental mission (the laying of a live barrage with rack mines type A in deep water in the Skagerrak.)

Our operations in the Gulf of Finland are still hampered by fog and ice. The troop transports from Stettin to Finland are running on schedule.

The Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries is advised by Group North to inform the 18th Army Command that the Navy has been mining the Kronstadt Channel and will continue to do so, and therefore the Army should refrain from all mining activities both there and at sea. Group North indicates that it is very desirable, however, that the Army lay mines in the Neva River above Leningrad in order to prevent the Russians from strengthening their naval forces on Lake Ladoga.

20 May 1942

With regard to operations on Lake Ladoga, the Commander in Chief, Air Force declares that he is willing to confer with the Naval Staff about unified tactical command over his forces intended for Lake Ladoga, if and when the forces announced by the Naval Staff arrive. (See War Diary of 19 May, Paragraph IV.)

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

The U.S. announced the existence of a declared area off the U.S. east coast near Cape Fear. Radio Annapolis reports the placing of numerous wreck buoys off Cape Hatteras.

2. Own Situation:

North Atlantic:

During the night of 20 May submarine U "159" sighted a convoy of 15 ships on a southerly course west of the Azores. The boat received permission to attack.

Submarine U "158" en route to the Caribbean Sea, sank the 6,300-ton steamer CARINA.

The submarine group "Hecht" contacted a convoy east of Newfoundland in the afternoon and was ordered to attack. However, the boats were prevented partly by fog and partly by enemy escorts from getting into position and attacking.

U.S. Coast:

Reports of successes were received from our boats, particularly those in the West Indies. Submarine U "155" reported the sinking of a MACUBA-class tanker in the Lesser Antilles area. After making an unsuccessful attack on a freighter, the boat was chased for some time by planes and U.S. destroyers, which made no use of depth charges.

Submarine U "108" sank the tanker NORLYS just prior to terminating her operations off Cuba and has thus increased her successes to a total of 32,250 GRT. (Commanded by Lt. Commander Scholz.)

20 May 1942

Submarine U "564" which operated in the Florida Strait reports with regard to the situation that enemy traffic completely stopped for some time; on 18 May an escorted convoy was sighted west of the Bahamas. Defenses consist of effective hydrophones, not radar. Strong air patrol activity is maintained by bases and training schools located along the coast. The boat is withdrawing from the zone of operations after sinking a total of 30,000 GRT (Commanded by Lt. Suhren).

Submarine U "69" reported in the forenoon sighting in quadrant ED 9497 a convoy headed for Trinidad. The boat is ordered to head for Martinique and to remain outside the harbor.

For details see Supplement of Submarine Situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

During a fighter bomber raid in the Channel area a 1,000 ton steamer was damaged. Other attacks on shipping took place without observed results.

Our planes flew no night missions, neither did the enemy.

A survey of the disposition of the Air Force in the West Area, as of 19 May is contained in the appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. V, under the date of 19 May.

2. Mediterranean:

Our operations concentrated on sea reconnaissance and convoy escorts. Nothing to report.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

20 May 1942

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

Around 0600, the aircraft carriers ARGUS and EAGLE and the cruiser CHARYBDIS, escorted by 7 destroyers, entered the harbor of Gibraltar. Up to this time, no confirmation of Italian hits on the aircraft carriers or the cruiser has been received.

Central Mediterranean:

The situation is unchanged.

Eastern Mediterranean:

Lively convoy traffic in the area Alexandria-Tobruk.

For details see the reports of the German Naval Command, Italy no. 0600 and 1800.

2. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The second troop transport has been under way from Benghazi to Italy under destroyer escort since the evening of 19 May. Supplies for Tripoli are on schedule; nothing to report concerning coastal supply traffic for Libya.

On 19 May the steamer PENELOPE (1,160 GRT), under way from Bari to Brindisi, was sunk by a submarine. Enemy submarines were sighted during the day off Cape Passero west of Leukas, also west of Spalato and at the northern end of the Strait of Messina.

3. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report, except for an enemy air raid on Candia on 19 May. Shipping proceeded without incidents.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

CONFIDENTIAL

20 May 1942

Heavy traffic of small craft in the northern part of the Kerch Strait, also lively movement of surface forces in the waters off the harbor of Sevastopol. Radio monitoring located the cruiser "F" and several flotilla leaders and destroyers at sea in the Crimean area. 4 submarines were located in the western Black Sea.

According to a report of Group South a small Turkish steamer proceeding from Burgas to Istanbul was fired upon and set aflame on 18 May by a surfaced Russian submarine directly on the Turkish border line and within Bulgarian territorial waters.

Own Situation:

On 19 May, some convoy traffic (see Telegram 1035) proceeded according to plan, while other convoys had to be postponed due to bad weather.

The enemy attacked Mariupol heavily with successive waves of planes. There was little damage to naval installations.

In the evening, 4 Italian subchasers sailed from Constanta for transfer to the east, according to special orders.

The following survey illustrates the state of readiness of the German forces in the Black Sea on 20 May:

Date of readiness of large PT boats: 2 at the end of May
2 middle of July
2 end of July

Date of readiness of large motor : 2 beginning of July
mine sweepers 3 middle of July
3 end of July

Date of readiness of small motor : 4 end of May
mine sweepers

Date of readiness of motor fishing : 14 end of June to middle of July
vessels

Submarines: U "24" middle of September, U "9" middle of October,
U "19" middle of November.

Apart from the 4 Italian subchasers, there are already 6 Italian midget submarines and 4 small Italian motor torpedo boats in Constanta at this moment.

20 May 1942

It is intended, furthermore, to transfer one more medium-sized mine-sweeper to the Danube Flotilla, 4 auxiliary PT boats to the 1st PT Boat Flotilla, and 5 to 10 naval barges to the Black Sea (Constanta).

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation:

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

On the front of the 11th Army the destruction of the remaining enemy groups northeast of Kerch is in progress.

The Von Kleist Army Group launched a concentric attack northwest of Barvenkova and west and south of Losovaya. Diversionary enemy attacks were repulsed.

The enemy is putting up vigorous resistance on the entire front.

The 6th Army repulsed an enemy attack on Krasnograd. South of Kharkov the enemy was able to hold his positions. Northeast of Kharkov fresh strong Russian tank forces joined the battle; so far all attacks have been repulsed.

In some places Russian penetration attempts were immediately foiled by successful counterthrusts.

Central Army Group:

We made a number of successful attacks between Velish and Demidov. Enemy attacks south of Velikie Luki and northeast of Yelnia were repulsed.

Northern Army Group:

Strong enemy attacks northeast of Molvotizy were repulsed, as was a tank attack at Lyubnitsa.

20 May 1942

2. Finnish Front:

Nothing to report.

3. North Africa:

No action reported.

21 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

In the House of Commons Hore-Belisha criticized the government's war measures and expressed doubts to what extent the optimism being fostered at present in Great Britain is actually justified. Although there is a chance that Russia might win the war, restraint is called for. The possibility that Japan might open a second front against Russia in East Asia should be taken into account. He pointed to the fact that China's communications with the Allies have been completely severed, and to the very grave British-American shipping losses.

Cripps pointed out that today's principal strategic difficulty is the correct evaluation of the relative importance of the different war theaters. The rapid transfer of forces over wide distances is extremely difficult. The Axis powers have the advantage of short supply lines! The support of Russia, particularly through air attacks, is the most valuable contribution to the war effort until the Allies are in a position to launch the carefully planned offensive against the European continent. War production must be increased further, because this alone will make it possible for the Russians to hold out.

Attlee, in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister, declared that Britain is doing everything in her power to reinforce her forces in India. However, it is impossible to concentrate the main British forces at any specific point before Japan has revealed her principal target.

With regard to the support of Russia, Attlee emphasized that Great Britain will carry out her supply program as promised, in spite of the terrific strain on the available shipping space and the naval forces.

The various speeches held in the House of Commons permit the following interesting conclusions:

1. The British strategy evidently has some very weak spots, principally as regards lack of unified strategic planning, faulty organization, lagging war production, the serious development of the shipping problem, and the impossibility to cope with the demands for personnel and materiel at all war theaters.
2. The great hope of our Anglo-American enemies is and remains Soviet Russia. Russia's survival and victorious conduct of the war is considered the decisive factor and even the prerequisite for the survival of the British Empire. Thus support of Russia is the main objective of the entire war effort.
3. Although there is every intention of launching a vigorous offensive against the continent, the execution of such a large-scale undertaking does not appear imminent. The only thing that must be anticipated is that the air offensive will be intensified.

21 May 1942

4. The problem of shipping space has taken a critical turn and limits operational possibilities and freedom of decision decisively.

From the above the following conclusions can be drawn with regard to future German naval warfare:

1. We must attempt with all means available to attack and disrupt the British-American supply traffic to Soviet Russia in the Arctic and Indian Oceans. Particularly the principal supply route to Murmansk and Archangel is of greatest importance for the outcome of the war. It is necessary to concentrate all suitable weapons of Navy and Air Force to cut this flow of supplies.
2. Attempts must be made to maintain the present sinking record of our submarines and even to exceed it; these sinkings increase the enemy's difficulties tremendously and provide additional protection to the European continent against an enemy invasion.
3. Attacks on the enemy's war industry, harbors and shipyards in the British Isles remain of the utmost importance. Aerial bomb attacks must be supplemented with large-scale mining operations in the approaches to the harbors and in the coastal shipping lanes.
4. We must take advantage of the present weakness of the enemy (shipping space, scarcity of protective and combat forces) by the greatest possible activity in all theaters of war and by vigorous offensive action. (Commitment of surface forces in the Arctic Ocean, submarine warfare, auxiliary cruiser activity, mining operations in foreign waters and the waters around Great Britain by surface and submarine forces, increased air activity against the British Isles.)

U.S.A.:

Upon his return from the U.S.A. our Washington Military Attache gave his views on the situation in the U.S.A. as of the middle of May, revealing the great difficulties encountered by American warfare. Here again the spotlight is on the mounting difficulties in the transport situation, caused by the many sinkings by our submarines in the western Atlantic. In the opinion of the Military Attache, the extensive losses, especially of tankers, and the impossibility of overcoming the scarcity of cargo vessels must have decisive influence on the outcome of the war. The completion of 5,500,000 GRT of shipping space, 60,000 planes, of which 45,000 are combat planes, 2,000 anti-aircraft guns, and 45,000 tanks as planned for 1942 will not be achieved, in spite of the most rigorous conversion of industry to war production. Yet it must be expected that during 1942 about 25,000 to 30,000 combat planes (!) will be delivered, among them about 1,300 4-engine and 8,000 twin-engine bombers, 2,500 single-engine bomber and torpedo planes, 1,000 twin engine and 9,500 single-engine fighter planes, and 1,000 flying boats. The difficulty lies not in the production of war material, but in the transport situation. For troop transports overseas,

21 May 1942

a maximum of 1,500,000 GRT of shipping space might be available within a few months, if other important tasks are curtailed considerably. However more than 500,000 GRT at the most will probably be available within a short time.

Since it is impossible to attain the goal set for the production of shipping space, Roosevelt is trying to gain time by a number of actions to protect important points, to prevent a reconciliation between Japan and China, and to support Russia. A Russian collapse is dreaded more than anything because Roosevelt sees no chance of carrying on the war against Germany effectively without the assistance of a strong land power.

(For further details see the copy of the report Skl M Att. 1924/42 in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XVII.)

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. The Chief, Naval Staff surveys briefly the results of his inspection tour to Denmark and voices his concern about the low level of defensive power of the north Jutland area against potential enemy landing operations.

Northern Jutland's terrain conditions and its numerous airfields particularly the very large one at Aalborg, offer no difficulties whatsoever for an enemy landing from the air. Wide stretches of its shoreline also permit landings from the sea if not prevented by bad weather (surf). The heavy Hanstholm battery is particularly threatened, the defenses of which have been improved somewhat, but are by no means adequate. The Commander in Chief, Navy has ordered Vice Admiral Mewis to call the attention of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Denmark to the fact that he considers the defenses of the Army in northern Jutland inadequate, especially in the area Hanstholm-Skagen-Aalborg. The entire tip of northern Jutland north of Limfjord must be regarded as insufficiently protected.

Group North is ordered to investigate what possibilities there are of increasing the difficulties of an enemy landing on the Danish coast by laying minefields for the immediate protection of the shore.

Additional defense measures are under consideration by the Naval Staff Quartermaster Division.

II. The Chief of the Naval Construction Division reports about the progress of ships under construction:

It was possible to increase construction by checking carefully the copper requirements of the various shipyards, by investigating the stocks of copper on hand at the shipyards, and by new copper allocations.

The Chief of the Naval Construction Division sees the possibility of continuing to build the following with small allocations of copper:

- a. 5 destroyers (Z "35", "36", "43", "44", "45").
- b. Turbines of fleet torpedo boats type 41 (T "37" to "42").

21 May 1942

- c. Power installations and electric motors of fleet torpedo boats type 40 ("62" to "64", possibly also "65" to "72").
- d. Power installations of torpedo recovery vessels "17" to "24", possibly also "25".
- e. Completion of 15 out of 27 mine sweepers type 40, construction of which had been suspended.
- f. Power installations of 8 escort vessels type 41.
- g. Completion of 29 PT boats, work on which had been suspended.
- h. Completion of 4 motor mine sweepers and 10 motor mine sweeper escorts, work on which had been suspended, and the construction of 16 additional motor mine sweepers.
- i. Completion of 15 subchasers, work on which had been suspended.

Beyond that, another 200 tons of copper will probably be available, which could be used for additional new ships which are to be built according to the priority program of the Naval Staff. The Naval Staff, Operations Division has this matter under consideration.

The new copper allocation and the rigorous examination of all copper requirements and available stocks have thus resulted in a temporary alleviation of the severest bottleneck the Navy has yet encountered and have also checked a disastrous development in the construction program of light combat and escort ships.

III. Concerning the closing of the French Tunesian territorial waters:

A telegram of the Operations Staff of the Air Force informs the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South and the Naval Staff that the recent run of the British mine-laying cruiser MANXMAN close to the French Tunesian coast has prompted the Fuehrer to order that if British warships attempt to use French territorial waters or if it is very probable that such attempts are being made we may attack such ships even in French territorial waters.

This order is forwarded to the German Naval Command, Italy. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff is requested for a confirmation.

IV. The Spitsbergen problem:

The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff Operations Division reports about a directive of the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff concerning the occupation of Spitsbergen as follows:

The Fuehrer has once more taken up the idea of occupying Spitsbergen. The question of creating an air base for combatting effectively the British convoy traffic to Soviet Russia is as important as that of exploiting the Spitsbergen coal mines for the supply of northern Norway. The Air Force will have to do the necessary reconnoitering before further planning is resumed. The Commander in Chief, Air Force, aided by the Navy, is charged with this mission. The object of reconnaissance is to clarify the following questions:

21 May 1942

1. Is the erection of an air base feasible technically and in view of the requirements for personnel and materiel?
2. What defensive and protective measures are necessary against attacks, both from the sea and the air? How big a force will have to be maintained on Spitsbergen for this purpose?

The Commanding Admiral, Norway and Group North are being informed of the deliberations of the Armed Forces High Command; the Commanding Admiral, Norway is ordered to represent the Navy at the coming discussions.

(See also War Diary, Part B, Vol. II a and file "Spitsbergen".)

When this problem was examined in 1941 (for the last time on 7 Oct. 1941), the Naval Staff summarized its views by declaring that an occupation of Spitsbergen was considered neither necessary nor useful for the following reasons:

"a. The strategic importance of Spitsbergen is not great either for the enemy or for us (particularly during the arctic winter).

b. Economic interests (coal) would not be furthered by the occupation of Spitsbergen. Because of his superior naval strength, the enemy is in a position to cut off coal transports from Spitsbergen to Norway at any moment or to render them impractical due to the losses involved.

c. The enemy is capable at any time of showing up in Spitsbergen with forces superior to our own, so that the occupation might cause us to suffer an unpleasant setback or else would require the commitment of considerable forces. This in turn would create a new task for our naval warfare which would put a constant additional strain on naval forces and shipping space."

The Naval Staff has not changed its viewpoint basically.

The attention of Group North and the Commanding Admiral Norway will be called once more to the above opinion of the Naval Staff of which they had been informed on 9 Oct. 1941.

V. Concerning the import of edible fats from East Asia:

The Naval Staff Quartermaster Division has been advised that, according to a communication of the Armed Forces High Command, Special Staff for Economic Warfare, it is in the interest of supplying the German population with fats to deliver the liquid edible fats bought and stored in East Asia to the domestic food industry as soon as possible and thus to avoid a further reduction of the fat ration. Now the Food Minister has renewed his plea for maximum assistance in speeding the delivery of the East Asian edible fats, owing to the heavy frost damage to the oil crops and the anticipated shortage of fats in the coming year.

The Naval Staff had given orders as far back as 6 May to assign the supply ship UCKERMARK, the auxiliary supply ships SPICHERN and PASSAT as well as the tanker CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMAN to this task and to hold them in readiness for sailing by July or August. However, the dispatching of ships of normal speed would involve too great a risk for ship and cargo, due to the increased effectiveness of

21 May 1942

enemy forces in the rendezvous area during the summer months; it was therefore decided that during this period the fast supply ship UCKERMARK would be dispatched so that she could reach western France with the first shipment early in October 1942, so that she could make a second voyage, if necessary. Since we cannot hold out unless the fat supply is assured to a reasonable extent, the renewed request of the Food Minister makes it necessary to allocate additional tankers for blockade-running between East Asia and western France. In view of the long route and the necessity to make the best possible use of the available tanker space only motor tankers can be considered for this purpose.

The Naval Staff Quartermaster Division is directed to have a number of motor tankers ready for operations by the middle of August at the latest. (See also Skl 981/42 Chfs. of 21 May in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XI.)

Situation 21 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Ship "10" is notified of the Naval Staff's plans concerning the REGENSBURG by Radiogram 2200.

The REGENSBURG is scheduled to meet ship "10" around 10 Jun. for delivery of approximately 600 cu. m. of oil and will subsequently proceed to Japan.

Our ships in foreign waters are advised of the MUENSTERLAND's arrival at Bordeaux (see Radiogram 1428) and also of the experiences of the blockade-runner TANNENFELS on her arrival in Japan (see Radiogram 1002). She emerged from the Sunda Strait on 1 May without having sighted either Japanese patrol vessels or planes and was met on 11 May by Japanese patrol vessels after passing the Mikomoto lighthouse.

Information about the enemy situation by Radiogram 2053.

Group West and the Commanding Admiral, Submarines are informed that blockade running has been suspended temporarily and that the Naval Staff plans to resume operations in August. (First sailing date middle of August, first arrival date middle of September.) Suggestions for the protection of slow-moving outgoing or returning ships by submarines, without actually escorting them, are to be submitted to the Naval Staff.

21 May 1942

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Our Intelligence Center, Portugal reports with regard to the alleged order to all British merchant vessels to seek British or neutral ports prior to 28 May (see War Diary of 12 May) that the information coming from different sources is contradictory and may possibly be considered as spread by the enemy for deception purposes. Since the date of 28 May was confirmed from different sides, the Armed Forces Intelligence Division assumes that it is the date set for some sort of operation. On 19 May a crew member of a British steamer stated that ships en route to the British Isles which are unable to reach their destination prior to 28 May received instructions to make for British or British-controlled ports. He added that between 28 May and 1 June the English Channel and a strip 150 miles wide off the Irish coast will be closed to shipping.

The same source reports that the Azores will be occupied in the near future.

It is impossible to evaluate these reports. The closing of the area off the Irish coast might be an indication of a British operation against Ireland, but it is just as possible that false reports are being spread as a screen for other operations.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

The sailing of ship "23" thus far proceeded according to plan. Otherwise no incident of any importance has been reported from the west coast and the Channel.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Normal convoy activity on the British coast. During the day and in the evening slight enemy air activity, which increased during the night, around Bergen, the Skagerrak and the German Bight.

The report of an agent concerning the embarkation of Admiral Mountbatten and of troops in the Firth of Forth has meanwhile been confirmed in part by an additional intelligence report: according to enemy radio monitoring the 101st, 102nd and 103rd Special Service Brigades, the latter never reported so far, have held maneuvers in the area of the Firth of Forth which were terminated in the forenoon of 21 May. Thus there is a definite possibility that the report concerned nothing but British training exercises, possibly including even troop embarkations for training purposes. Additional information, particularly with regard to the whereabouts of Admiral Mountbatten's forces, should be obtained,

21 May 1942

however.

Own Situation:

Convoy missions in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North proceeded according to plan. Several ground mines were swept in the traffic lanes off the North Sea coast.

Group North reports that not a single mine sweeper, type 35, is within the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North at the present time, owing to the prolonged shipyard periods and the transfer of the 6th Mine Sweeper Flotilla to Group West. It will not be possible to reinforce the forces of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North by vessels of Group North until the situation in the Gulf of Finland is cleared up or unless the Norway area is weakened.

Group West emphasizes the particularly grave ground mine situation in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North and the great number of steamers lost, and proposes a redistribution of the mine sweeper flotillas.

The Naval Staff concedes the difficult situation in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North. The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division is ordered to take further measures. (See Telegram 1945.)

2. Norway:

At 1800 on 20 May a no. 1 state of readiness was assigned for the Norwegian area. Group North directs the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to keep one half of the vessels in the Narvik area on 3 hour and the other half on 6 hour readiness. If the necessity arises, the Admiral, Arctic Ocean is authorized to order a higher degree of readiness at his discretion, without, however, increasing the fuel consumption. (See Telegram 1608.)

In the Vest Fjord an EMC mine field was laid and adjusted for a depth of 3 m. The mine layer COBRA completed her mining mission in the Fugloe Fjord.

In the area of the Admiral, West Norwegian Coast submarine patrols are being continued in Kors and Bjoerne Fjords. Patrol vessels reported that an enemy submarine was definitely sighted in the Bjoerne Fjord!

3. Arctic Ocean:

An agent reports from Iceland that a large armed passenger steamer escorted by 2 destroyers arrived at Reykjavik on 20 May. The ship has guns fore and aft.

No convoys in the Arctic Ocean were sighted by air reconnaissance. The Air Commander, North reports that, owing to daily reconnaissance flights and favorable visibility, it is considered impossible that convoy PQ 16 might have passed without having been noticed.

North of the eastern rim of Rybachi Peninsula a convoy of 4 vessels escorted by destroyers and patrol vessels was observed on an easterly course. 12 steamers are in the harbor of Iokanga. 2 steamers were heavily damaged and a third one slightly by air raids.

21 May 1942

It is reported that drift ice from the Arctic Ocean does not extend below 74° N; a wide ice-free channel runs from Bear Island to the western coast of Spitsbergen.

Special Item:

Concerning command in the Arctic Ocean:

The Fleet Commander is of the opinion that the direct operational command of the pocket battleships in the Arctic Ocean should remain with the Admiral, Arctic Ocean until the Commanding Admiral, Battleships takes over the tactical command. Thereafter, the Fleet Commander proposes to place the Commanding Admiral, Battleships directly under the operational command of Group North. He believes that the Admiral, Arctic Ocean will have to participate only insofar as this is necessary for transmitting communications during operations with submarines and planes. The Fleet Commander requests that the Admiral, Arctic Ocean not be charged with the problem of the defenses of Narvik, as planned by Group North; the Fleet suggests instead an order that the Fleet and the Commanding Admiral, Norway jointly handle the problem of bases, etc. for the naval forces.

The Naval Staff agrees with the decision of Group North, in declining the request of the Fleet Commander regarding a change of operational command. The operational command within the designated Arctic Ocean area is exercised according to the directives of Group North by the Admiral, Arctic Ocean, who is in close touch with the tactical commands and has reliable communications at his disposal. This arrangement is considered perfectly satisfactory from an operational viewpoint and must not be affected by the belated assignment of an admiral for the tactical command of the cruisers. The transfer of fleet forces and submarines to the command of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean is not a permanent organizational measure but a temporary one which may be changed according to the situation.

The Naval Staff considers the request of the Fleet Commander regarding the authority in questions of the Narvik defenses appropriate. The Group has reserved its decision for the time being. An intervention in this matter by the Naval Staff appears to be necessary.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Submarine U "117" has completed the experimental mission "Merkur" in the Skagerrak and is on the way home. Check-sweeping and convoy missions in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defense, Baltic Sea are proceeding according to plan. A Danish steamer which struck a mine had to be beached in the Little Belt; at the southern entrance of the Sound, a Norwegian steamer was lost on 20 May also due to a mine. Transport operations in the eastern Baltic Sea proceeded uneventfully and suffered only slight delays from fog.

21 May 1942

The mining of the Kronstadt Sea Channel:

The request of the Naval Staff to mine the target areas A, B, and C, in addition to area F, was unfortunately refused by the Commander in Chief, Air Force. The Operations Staff of the Air Force believes that the ships at Leningrad would be prevented from sailing, as desired, once the Sea Channel is mined by the Navy and target area F by the Air Force. The Air Force is not in a position to mine target areas A, B, and C, because its forces are needed in the West Area. (See Telegram 2210.)

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Lively enemy air activity of the 15th Reconnaissance Group over the rendezvous area. Planes report a number of submarines sighted in the area of the Rockall Bank and alleged bomb hits on them.

Nothing to report from the American coast.

2. Own Situation:

The Italian submarine "I 15" reports sinking on 20 May a U.S. battleship of the CALIFORNIA class off the northeast corner of Brazil (quadrant FC 7500). The battleship was proceeding at a speed of 15 knots, on a 200° course and was escorted by destroyers. Today the submarine confirms that 2 torpedoes hit the bow and that the battleship subsequently listed and sank up to the bridge.

The Naval Staff welcomes the achievement of the Axis submarine. It is hoped that the battleship actually sank.

Our submarines report gratifying successes in the North Atlantic and off the American coast. Submarine U "159" scored 5 hits on 4 steamers of the convoy reported west of the Azores; 3 steamers were left sinking and the 4th steamer probably sank. This success netted approximately 14,000 to 18,000 GRT.

Submarine U "533" (Lt. Thurmann) reports belatedly the sinking on 12 May of 2 freighters totalling 11,000 GRT in quadrant BB 1475, that is in the St. Lawrence River, west of the isle of Anticosti, and also the torpedoing of a 3,000 GRT steamer. The submarine had cruised in the St. Lawrence River estuary between quadrants BB 1730 and BA 3670 and remained submerged during the day. She observed no traffic, but air patrols and sea patrols.

The penetration of the submarine into the St. Lawrence River and the successful torpedoing of 3 vessels deserve special praise; as evidenced by the reports of the foreign press, this achievement has aroused strong concern in Canada and the U.S.A.

Submarine U "432" sank a fishing steamer south of Halifax by gunfire; she had proceeded to this point close to shore without encountering any other ships but motor cutters.

21 May 1942

Submarine U "751" reports the sinking of 2 ships of 10,000 GRT east of the Bahamas and in the Caribbean Sea.

Submarine U "588" sank a steamer of 3,282 GRT.

In the West Indies submarine U "103" sank 3 steamers of 13,130 GRT. Submarine U "156" (Hartenstein) sank a Dominican steamer (6,868 GRT) at the harbor entrance of Fort de France (Martinique) and reports the aircraft carrier BEAFN, 5 tankers, and 3 passenger freighters at this port.

For details see supplement to submarine situation, War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

3. Special Item:

During the last few days the submarines U "87", U "373", and U "701" sailed from St. Nazaire for a mine-laying mission on the U.S. coast. The Commanding Admiral, Submarines assigned special mining missions to the various boats, as follows: submarine U "701" is to lay 15 TMB mines in Chesapeake Bay, set for 60 days, in depths of 12 to 20 m with minimum intervals of 1000 m. Submarine U "373" will lay 1 TMB mine south of Delaware Bay at point "Overfalls", time setting 60 days, to be laid in water of 15 to 22 m depth. Submarine U "87" will lay 10 TMC mines outside of New York harbor at point "Ambrose", time setting 60 days. All mines are to be laid after a thorough observation of existing traffic conditions as close to land as possible, where they may be expected to be most effective.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

36 of our planes mined the Humber estuary during the night.

There were no enemy incursions over German territory.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Except for reconnaissance of sea areas and of the airfields in the Nile River estuary, nothing of importance to report.

3. Eastern Front:

The air forces strongly supported our attacking armies.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

The situation in the harbor is unchanged. In the evening

21 May 1942

a convoy of approximately 20 freighters left Gibraltar in westerly direction.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

5 boats of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla are to sail from Augusta tonight for transfer to the Gulf of Suda via Navarino Bay.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Convoy and single ship traffic proceeded without incident. Also the coastal supply traffic to Libya and Greece proceeded according to plan. (See Telegram 1200.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

In the afternoon of 20 May a convoy escorted by destroyers and PT boats was sighted off Cape Kherson heading for Sevastopol, with 1 cruiser as remote escort to the west. In the area of the western Black Sea and the southern Crimea the radio intercept service located 1 cruiser, 2 destroyers and 5 submarines on 21 May.

In the eastern part of the Black Sea, additional submarines, flotilla leaders and destroyers were seen at sea. Mine-sweeping and patrol vessels were observed in the vicinity of the bases and in the Kerch area.

According to the unconfirmed report of an agent, the Russians are preparing landing operations in the Crimea from Novorossisk and Gelendzhik with a great number of PT boats.

Own Situation:

Supply traffic is proceeding according to plan. It is reported that the supply shipments from 20 April to 20 May from Constanta, the Danube ports and Odessa to Nikolayev and Kherson amounted to 57,000 tons of ammunition, food, fuel and army supplies. The return freight to the Danube totaled 3,000 tons of oil cake, iron bars, and skins. No losses were suffered. The supply dumps in Nikolayev and Kherson are overflowing at the present time with supplies, because rail transportation facilities are inadequate to cope with the present shipping situation.

The quantity of supplies handled within a single month is satisfactory.

Special Item:

Group South reports about the measures taken with respect to the Naval Staff's directive of 17 Apr. (see War Diary of 19 Apr.)

21 May 1942

concerning the cooperation of naval and air forces in the Black Sea. It can be expected that close and uninterrupted liaison with the Air Force is ensured by the orders issued and the agreements reached, and that a continuous exchange of information will be maintained. (For details see the excerpt from the report of Group South in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a.)

VIII. Situation East Asia

No special reports were received.

For a report of the Japanese Navy concerning the battle in the Coral Sea, see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV of 21 May.

Special Item:

The Ambassador at Tokyo reports about the situation in Japan 6 months after the beginning of the war in East Asia. The following statements are interesting:

Japanese leaders are confronted by new tasks, now that the goals set in East Asia have been attained; no preparations or exact plans for these new tasks have been made thus far as for previous operations. Japan is now engaged in completing unfinished tasks and in reorganizing her forces. The Japanese Navy is opposed to an attack on the Soviet Union at this moment. A revision of this standpoint is possible at any time and depends primarily on the outcome of the German offensive and the development of Russo-Anglo-American relations. On the Chinese front, only local actions are to be expected, such as the seizure of air bases in central China from which raids on Japan could be launched. Major operations against the Indian mainland are not being planned at present.

The invasion of Ceylon is not imminent (monsoons). Japanese leaders consider the operation against Ceylon very difficult unless the Anglo-American positions in the Near East are attacked simultaneously. It is therefore likely that any actions in the Indian Ocean will be limited to harassing operations by naval and air forces. The Ambassador assumes that operations in the near future will concentrate in the South Pacific. It is evidently planned first to seize the island groups off the coasts of Australia and New Zealand.

Large-scale destruction, especially of oil refineries, makes the full industrial exploitation of the occupied territories very difficult at present. The benefits which can be derived from these territories are out of all proportion to their former productivity. Thus the East Asian hemisphere will, within the near future, hardly feel an alleviation of the situation with regard to raw materials, consumer goods and, worst of all, food stuffs; to this must be added the great scarcity of shipping space. There can be no doubt, however, that Japan will overcome all existing difficulties with ruthless energy. (For details, see the telegraphic report of the Tokyo Embassy in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV of 21 May.)

21 May 1942

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The 11th Army destroyed the remainder of the enemy forces east of Kerch.

The Von Kleist Army Group continued successful operations in the Izyum area; all motorized formations were pulled out of the west front for an attack in northerly direction from the Petrovskaya bridgehead. All enemy counterattacks were repulsed.

The 6th Army repulsed the Russian offensive in the Kharkov area, which involved 20 to 22 rifle divisions, 4 cavalry divisions and 15 to 18 tank brigades. South of Kharkov, German forces opened an attack in a southerly direction. In the vicinity of Balakleya strong enemy movements in easterly direction were observed. Northeast of Kharkov, German panzer attacks achieved complete success.

Central Army Group:

Successful actions against partisans in the rear of the front.

Northern Army Group:

Enemy attacks on our newly won positions west of Kholm were repulsed, as were strong attacks in the Demyansk sector. Unsuccessful enemy attacks are reported also from the Pola River and the Lovat River.

2. Finnish Front:

Enemy attacks on the southeastern sector were repulsed.

On the front of the Commanding General, Lapland no combat activity, except north of Kestenga.

22 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

Political Review No. 118 contains additional details of the debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

The Labour Party reiterated its stand that British labor will reject all negotiations with the Hitler government and that it insists on complete annihilation of German armed might.

Minister of the Interior Morrison stated that justice should be done to the German people, but the Nazi leaders should be treated as gangsters. A compromise peace with the Nazis would be unpardonable treason toward the entire world. As long as the Nazi leaders are in power there can be no just peace for Europe.

Speeches of this sort are only too apt to remind Germany of the siren songs of 1917-18 and to strengthen her unbending resolve for an uncompromising continuation of the war.

Sweden:

According to a report from a diplomatic source, King Gustav Adolf told a neutral military attache that there is but one threat to Sweden, and that is bolshevism.

U.S.A.:

Secretary of State Hull declared that Allied strength is steadily increasing and will soon permit a large-scale and sweeping offensive. It is justifiable to hope that the victory of the Allies is nearer than could be expected at first.

These statements are interesting in connection with the conversion of American war production; they reveal the great expectations placed by the enemy leadership on the planned offensive, the nature and scope of which are not yet discernible.

Argentina:

President Castillo announced that Argentina is under no circumstances willing to break the relations with the Axis Powers but will adhere in any case to her policy of neutrality. However, a continuation of this policy depends primarily on the events at the different theaters of war and on the support of her policy by Germany. (Among other factors, by honoring the Argentine flag in naval warfare, by giving assistance in the expansion of the Argentine merchant fleet, and possibly by delivering medical supplies and arms.)

Brazil:

Following the conference at Rio, the tension in the relations between Germany and Brazil has become increasingly acute. The Brazilians are treating Germans and German interests in the most shameless manner. The Brazilian Government is evidently not making the slightest attempt to oppose North American pressure.

22 May 1942

Mexico:

Tension prevails in Mexico on account of the sinking of a Mexican tanker by a submarine. A Mexican note of protest was rejected by Germany.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. The Fuehrer has ordered that all branches of the Armed Forces must submit upon request and without any reservation all data and information required by the Armed Forces High Command as the Fuehrer's agent.

The Commander in Chief, Navy wants to be informed in each case about the data requested. Where the Naval Staff is concerned, the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff is also to be kept informed.

II. Operations in the Arctic Ocean:

The Chief Operations Branch, Naval Staff Operations Division reports about the directives issued by Group North:

The Commanding Admiral, Battleships proposed on 20 May to keep the LUETZOW in Trondheim for about 8 days so that she may familiarize herself with the situation and, as soon as the operational situation permits, to transfer her from Trondheim to the Alta area under escort of 2 destroyers and 2 torpedo boats; at the same time the SCHEER force would be shifted from Narvik to the Alta Fjord. The Commanding Admiral, Battleships considers it inadvisable to leave the LUETZOW, the SCHEER, and the destroyers together for an extended period, since there are already a dangerous concentration of forces, a possibility of an enemy surprise attack, and insufficient German air reconnaissance and fighter protection.

A prolonged stay might induce the enemy to attack, and Narvik is not a particularly favorable base for operations in the Arctic Ocean. On the other hand, the Commanding Admiral, Battleships (at the present time the Fleet Commander) considers the fjords north of Tromsø (Alta area) suitable as an operational base, provided the transfer is timed so as to avoid premature disclosure prior to the actual operation.

However, Group North places particular value on the early transfer of the LUETZOW group to Narvik, in order to reinforce the Narvik group in view of the present uncertain enemy situation, and plans to transfer the ships to the Alta Fjord or some other base near the main coast only shortly before the beginning of operations by the Admiral, Arctic Ocean. The latter will have to see that Narvik is not overcrowded with light forces by appropriate distribution of the ships after consulting with the Admiral, Arctic Coast. The Group therefore intends to transfer the LUETZOW group, including the NORDMARK on the evening of 24 May. Code name for this operation is "Lohengrin". The transfer north is to be made with 3 destroyers (Z "29", Z "27" and the BEITZEN). The Commander, Destroyers is to take over the command of the northern destroyer group.

The Naval Staff completely agrees with the decision for an early transfer of the LUETZOW group to Narvik and with the plans of Group North. The Chief, Naval Staff merely repeats that the 2 cruisers should operate in the Arctic Ocean only if a separate admiral is given

22 May 1942

tactical command of the cruiser group.

III. The Trondheim dock:

The actual dimensions of the dock are to be 350 m x 60 m. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff emphasizes the need of keeping these dimensions secret lest conclusions could be drawn with respect to the size of future ship construction. The Chief, Naval Staff directs that for reasons of deception the dimensions 300 m x 45 m should be mentioned.

IV. The Chief, Naval Construction Division and the Chief, Naval Ordnance Division report in connection with the ship construction program (see War Diary 21 May) that the bottleneck has now shifted from the copper situation to the steel situation. The total iron requirements of the Armed Forces, due to the increased production of ammunition, are such that cuts must be made somewhere and so-called "front-line requirements" scrutinized most rigorously. In the opinion of the Minister for Armament and War Production, only submarine construction, submarine repair, mines, torpedoes, and ammunition may be considered front-line requirements. Everything else must be curtailed. According to the Chief, Ordnance Division, the Navy program calls for 142,000 tons of steel, 40% of which Minister Speer reportedly concedes to be front-line requirements, and only 45% of the rest will be allotted. This would actually represent less than half of the quantity needed.

The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division is going to state emphatically in today's conference with Minister Speer that the Commander in Chief, Navy alone has a right to decide what constitutes front-line requirements, and that the Navy's demands and the construction program have already been reduced so decisively that today only the most urgent operational requirements are being manufactured.

V. Sweeping gear for British ground mines:

The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division reports that 6 or 7 units of pole reversing gear will be ready for use by 1 June. After this date 10 units will be delivered weekly. Beginning early in July between 50 and 60 units will be ready and from then on 2 will be produced weekly.

This quantity is considered adequate.

VI. Demobilization:

The Commander in Chief, Navy demands that no more time than absolutely necessary be wasted on problems of demobilization. He denounces vigorously the demobilization maneuvers which were conducted for instance in Denmark.

VII. Interception of enemy cable communications:

The Naval Staff suggested that we obtain information about the enemy's plans and about enemy warfare in the Atlantic by gaining access to the cables running via the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands. In accordance with this proposal, the Intelligence Center, Portugal was directed by the Armed Forces Intelligence Division to make every effort to obtain such cables. Some time ago such efforts failed because the agent who handled the matter was expelled from Portugal.

The new directive made it possible once more to acquire a great deal of valuable material, which is now being forwarded to the Chief, Naval

22 May 1942

Intelligence Division for study and evaluation.

Special Items:

I. Concerning the enemy situation:

The evaluation of radio communications intercepted between 11 May and 17 May will be found in the secret and top-secret radio intelligence report no. 20/42.

It contains particularly excellent information about British convoy activity in the Atlantic. The Russia-bound convoy PQ 16 was not located by radio monitoring. It was determined that shipping in the Iceland area has increased, and that a convoy system has been initiated in the American coastal waters between Newfoundland and New York. South of New York no convoys have yet been detected by radio monitoring.

Of particular interest are the excellent results obtained by the British location-finding service concerning German convoy traffic and operations of German PT boats in the Channel area.

II. Aircraft carrier GRAF ZEPPELIN:

The request of the Naval Staff to the Air Forces with regard to carrier planes and their radio equipment is to be found in War Diary, Part C, Vol. V. of 22 May.

Situation 22 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

North Atlantic:

Radio monitoring results lead to the assumption that the U.S. battleships WASHINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE, 1 aircraft carrier and 4 or 5 cruisers are either already in British home waters and the eastern Atlantic or en route there.

Newspapers report commissioning of the LONG ISLAND, the first U.S. merchant vessel to be converted into an aircraft carrier. The ship is reportedly able to carry 30 fighter planes or 15 to 20 torpedo planes. These figures appear grossly exaggerated in view of the ship's 7,800 tons.

South Atlantic:

It is reported that the construction of air bases on the Brazilian coast, namely at Natal and Pernambuco, is being intensified. The Brazilian Government assigned a number of warships to convoy duty in order to protect Brazilian shipping, particularly tanker traffic to the U.S.A.

Approximately 5 cruisers, 2 auxiliary cruisers, and 4 destroyers are assumed to be in the Freetown area at present; furthermore, 4 cruisers, 2 auxiliary cruisers, several destroyers are in the Cape area, and 1 cruiser and approximately 4 auxiliary cruisers off the South American east coast.

22 May 1942

Indian Ocean:

According to Portuguese reports, 2 British cruisers and 8 destroyers, among them also U.S. ships, have been patrolling all routes between Madagascar and Mozambique during the last 5 days in order to prevent the evacuation of refugees. The German Armistice Commission reports that submarine LE GLORIEUX and aviso D'IBERVILLE escaped undamaged from Madagascar and are proceeding to Dakar. Aviso D'ENTRECASTEAUX was blown up by her crew, submarine LE HEROS was sunk and no information was received about submarine MONGE.

The following British ships must be assumed to be in the Indian Ocean and Australian waters at present: 4 battleships, 2 aircraft carriers, 12 cruisers, several auxiliary cruisers, and at least 12 destroyers. To these must be added the cruisers CAMBERRA, ACHILLES, and ADELAIDE, presumed to be somewhere in Australian waters, though nothing definite is known of their whereabouts.

2. Own Situation:

With reference to the report received from ship "10" about the seizure of steamer NANKIN, we now have parts of an Australian admiralty report, which were intercepted by radio monitoring. The report says that the MELBOURNE received QQQ and AAA signals on 14 May at 0850 at 26° S and 80° to 90° E. These signals seem to indicate an attack by ship "10" with the assistance of a ship plane.

Good wishes for Whitsuntide were sent by the Commander in Chief, Navy to all forces in foreign waters by Radiogram 2019.

II. Situation West Area1. Enemy Situation:

In the forenoon air reconnaissance sighted a convoy of 17 steamers, escorted by 3 destroyers, approximately 420 miles west of Cape Finisterre on a 30° course.

During the night of 21 May a great number of enemy planes flew over the French west coast; it is suspected that ground mines were laid in the Gironde, off Lorient and in the Loire estuary.

2. Own Situation:Atlantic Coast:

Shipping lanes off the Atlantic coast had to be closed on account of suspected aerial mines. A number of ground mines were swept. A mine-exploding vessel was strafed by low-flying planes off Lorient.

Channel Coast:

During the night of 21 May 3 vessels of the 2nd PT Boat Flotilla carried out a successful mine-laying mission in the waters off Cromer and laid 18 type B aerial mines. While this operation was under way, a British destroyer, which obviously had located the PT boats, appeared from the northeast. The mission was completed according to plan. The 4th PT Boat Flotilla is scheduled to operate south of Smith Knoll

22 May 1942

during the night of 22 May.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Moderate enemy air activity over the North Sea area. Around noon a considerable number of fishing vessels was observed off the Scheldt River mouth and northwest of Den Helder. Investigation by patrol boats revealed them as harmless Dutch fishing craft.

Own Situation:

In view of the various intelligence reports about enemy operations planned around 23 May, an intensified state of readiness was ordered for the nights of 22 May to 24 May.

Convoy operations proceeded according to plan. Several ground mines were swept. Enemy planes flew over the German Bight during the night of 22 May; mine-laying is suspected. (See Telegram 2005.)

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

According to agent reports the British are planning heavy air attacks against large German ships lying at Trondheim. There were few enemy incursions on 22 May.

Own Situation:

Convoy and transport operations on the Norwegian coast proceeded uneventfully.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

One of our submarines reported Asdic activity and sighted a number of east-west wakes southeast of Jan Mayen. Fog over the Arctic Ocean prevents further observation.

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines is instructed to take all steps so that any submarines leaving or about to leave Germany within the near future can go into operation immediately in the event of an enemy invasion in the north area.

An agent reports that a considerable shipment of British fighter planes for Murmansk is under way. The transports were to sail from the British Isles on 15 May.

22 May 1942

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Convoy and mine-sweeping operations in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat proceeded according to plan. (See Telegram 0730 and 2041.) Due to enemy incursions with suspected mine-laying, a number of routes in the Kattegat had to be closed. Several ground mines were swept in Kiel Bay and in the Great and Little Belts.

Additional sections of the "Seeigel" barrage were laid according to plan in the Gulf of Finland.

V. Submarine Warfare1. Enemy Situation:

British planes reported and attacked German submarines north-east of the Shetland Islands. According to intercepted radio communications, the 15th British Air Force is operating in great strength.

The radio intercept service reports submarine sighting reports from along the American coast off New Orleans, in the Windward Passage, and south of Jamaica.

U.S. radio stations report the creation of a sea defense zone comprising the bays of Matagorda, Galveston and Corpus Christi on the Texan Gulf coast. Shipping in this area requires a special permit.

2. Own Situation:

The submarines stationed east of the U.S. coast will henceforth be designated as group "Pfadfinder".

Submarine U "158" sank a bauxite steamer with gunfire south of the Bermuda Islands and submarine U "432" sank steamer ZURICHMOOR (4,455 GRT) east of Nantucket Island.

From the Caribbean submarine U "155" reports sinking a 3,000 ton freighter; U "106" the sinking of a 9,000 ton freighter west of Florida Strait.

VI. Aerial Warfare1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Nothing of importance to report. German planes did not operate during the night. Enemy planes flew into western France, the area of the Baltic Sea entrances, and the western Baltic Sea where mines were laid.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

The forces of the Air Commander, Africa raided enemy airfields in North Africa and reconnoitered the coastal area.

3. Eastern Front:

~~Nothing to report.~~

22 May 1942

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

1. Mediterranean:

On 22 May the following ships were at Gibraltar: MALAY, ARGUS, EAGLE, 1 cruiser, 1 auxiliary cruiser, and several destroyers.

According to the unconfirmed report of an agent, a major convoy from the U.S. is expected shortly in Gibraltar.

Enemy submarines were observed in the Otranto Strait, southeast of Brindisi and north of Benghazi. In the Eastern Mediterranean air reconnaissance observed increased supply shipping. An eastbound convoy of 13 ships, including 8 warships, was sighted east of Sidi Barrani.

Air reconnaissance reports also patrol ships, escort vessels and warships in the waters off Alexandria and Tobruk.

2. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Transports to Tripoli and Benghazi and return transports to Italy proceeded uneventfully. The 10th transport group carried 347 vehicles (including tanks), 9 guns, and 10,553 tons of supplies for the Armed Forces.

Coastal supply traffic to Libya and shipping to Greece is proceeding according to plan.

3. Special Items:

In a letter to the German Armistice Commission, the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff points once more to the necessity of sealing the Strait of Sicily. Recently it has been repeatedly noticed beyond any doubt that the British are flying over Tunisian territory and in particular are using French territorial waters off the Tunisian coast to penetrate the Strait of Sicily. This must be stopped without any delay in the interest of Axis warfare in the Mediterranean. The Armed Forces High Command therefore considers it necessary to inform the French of our demand that appropriate measures be taken to block effectively the French territorial waters off Cape Bon as well as French Tunisian territory against trespassing by the British.

Specifically the following demands must be made:

a. French air forces must be stationed in the Cape Bon area in order to attack British planes crossing over Tunisian territory and obliged to carry out extensive armed reconnaissance off the Tunisian coast, the observations to be submitted promptly.

b. Coastal batteries must be set up at Cape Bon.

c. The French territorial waters off Cape Bon must be sealed with minefields.

The German Armistice Commission, France is ordered to obtain the Italian Armistice Commission's consent to these measures as fast as possible and to see that the above demands are presented to the French in agreement with the Italians.

22 May 1942

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The Crete Transport Group is proceeding from Suda to Piraeus without special incidents.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance on 21 May established concentrations of small vessels in the harbors of Yeisk, Akhtarsk, Temryuk, and Tamanskaya and in the adjoining bays. Lively shipping was observed in the area of Sevastopol. Observation in some parts is made impossible by smoke screens.

Radio monitoring located 1 cruiser, 1 destroyer and several submarines in the western Black Sea, the Crimean waters, and the central Black Sea; and off the southeast coast 1 flotilla leader and other submarines.

According to the German Attache the Turkish press published news of another Russian submarine attack on a small Turkish sailing vessel off the Anatolian coast on 19 May. See Telegram 1629 with regard to our convoy operations.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Land Situation:

The Japanese advanced along the Burma Road to the western bank of the Salween River, and are facing difficulties since bridges were destroyed. Besides, the beginning of heavy monsoon rains is reported from Burma, so that all fighting will come to a standstill for some time.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

Northeast of Kerch the battle against remnants of the enemy forces continued.

Enemy attacks in the Donets bend at the front of the 17th Army of the Von Kleist Army Group ended with the complete destruction of the enemy. Enemy forces trying to advance south of Izyum were repulsed. German panzer units and infantry divisions advancing northeastward dispersed the enemy panzer forces attacking at Losovenka. All attacks of German and Rumanian forces were successful.

On the front of the 2nd Army an enemy attack east of Kursk was repulsed.

22 May 1942

Central Army Group:

No fighting was reported from this sector except successful actions against partisans behind the front.

Northern Army Group:

Enemy attacks west of Kholm were repulsed, as were renewed attacks on the southern Demyansk sector. In the Pola River valley strong enemy concentrations were observed. Enemy attacks in the pocket north of Lake Ilmen were repulsed.

2. Finnish Front:

Enemy forces trapped north of Kestenga were destroyed; a German attack at Loukhi was successful. Due to the bad weather of the last few days the roads are deep in mud and all movements are impeded.

3. North Africa:

Enemy reconnaissance thrusts at the northern front sector were repulsed. Enemy air forces are attacking our supply columns in Cyrenaica, evidently trying to gain information about movements of German troops.

23 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

According to a diplomatic source, the negotiations between France and the U.S.A. about Martinique have not yet been concluded. In order to avoid a complete break the Americans evidently made concessions to the French in matters of minor importance, while insisting on their basic demands (principally concessions for maintaining trade relations). Admiral Robert is still firmly determined to make binding agreements only with the approval of the French government.

De Gaulle: All reports recently received indicate that the prestige and strength of the De Gaulle movement have declined considerably. Chaotic conditions are said to exist in some of the colonies controlled by De Gaulle. In Syria De Gaulle and the British are at odds. Growing dissatisfaction is reported from French Equatorial Africa. De Gaulle is personally disliked everywhere. There are also rumors of a rift within the De Gaulle National Committee.

U.S.A.:

Roosevelt said at a press conference that the shipping situation must be considered very grave due to the sinkings. However, the scarcity of tonnage will be alleviated by increased ship construction. The output of the shipyards in the U.S.A. has risen by more than 500%.

Admiral Land (Chairman of the U.S. Maritime Commission) declared that the U.S. is now turning out 2 merchant ships a day. This number will be increased to 3 by next fall and 2,300 freighters will be commissioned by the end of 1943.

Mexico:

The Foreign Minister announced that the German Government rejected the Mexican note about the torpedoing of a Mexican tanker. The President of the Republic will now decide the course of action. In the evening Reuter disclosed that the Mexican Cabinet for all practical purposes declared war on the Axis and that the ratification of this measure by Congress is expected shortly. The President asked Congress to approve the declaration of war on the Axis.

Official confirmation of this report is still lacking.

Chile:

In a message to Congress, the President stated as regards Chile's foreign policy that Chile will stay neutral and maintain her independence, but will not permit Chilean territory to be used to the detriment of American countries.

23 May 1942

Special ItemsI. Readiness of the light forces:

Judging from the present situation, the following conditions will prevail in July:

Destroyers:

Engaged in operations	9
Ready in Germany	1
In shipyard	5
In training	1

Torpedo boats of the 2nd and 3rd Torpedo Boat Flotillas:

Engaged in operations	5
Assigned to torpedo school	6
In reserve	2
In shipyard	3
In training	1

Torpedo boats of the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla:

Assigned to torpedo school	1
In shipyard	3
In training	2

For details see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V of 23 May.

II. Reinforcement of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla in the Mediterranean:

The loss of 2 PT boats and future tasks in the Mediterranean make it necessary to consider how the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla might be reinforced. Owing to the size of the Rhine-Rhone Canal locks, only PT boats S "151" to S "158" (Bulgarian boats) can be considered for this transfer route since they are smaller than the German PT boats. Some of these boats are at present with the 7th PT Boat Flotilla for training purposes. Later they are to be used as training boats of the PT Boat Training Detachment.

The Naval Staff Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch points to the disadvantage which must necessarily arise to the training of PT boat crews if these boats are transferred to the Mediterranean. Before making a decision in favor of the transfer it is, however, of the greatest importance to know whether the level of the Rhine-Rhone route during the summer months will make the transfer practicable at all; it must under all circumstances be avoided that the PT boats are laid up before entering the Rhone, due to lack of sufficient water during the summer, thus removing them from the training service without useful purpose.

The Naval Staff is therefore inclined to postpone the transfer to the Mediterranean until the fall (second half of September). The matter is still under investigation.

III. Operation "Herkules":

a. Commander Junge (Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff) reports about a conference at the Fuehrer's Headquarters

23 May 1942

regarding the execution of operation "Herkules". General Student informed the Fuehrer about the enemy situation on Malta, the fortifications, the strength of the troops, and the British forces to be committed. Evidently the Italians have at present absolutely no definite plan for the tactical execution of the operation.

The Fuehrer has very little confidence in the success of this undertaking, because the Italians lack the necessary forces for an offensive and because there is no guarantee of secrecy on the part of the Italians. The operation is a particularly difficult one, much more so than the Crete operation which offered the greatest difficulties even to us.

The difficulties in the case of "Herkules" are seen in the excellent condition of the defenses, the limited tactical and geographical possibilities for an attack, and insufficient knowledge of the tactical details of the defense. Not much confidence is placed in the Italian Navy, which must, however, face the British naval forces which are expected to converge from east and west. Should the Italian Navy fail, the Air Force would have to fill the gap and would thus be distracted from its indispensable task of directly supporting the fight on the island.

Finally, the Fuehrer doubts that it would be possible to maintain secure sea communication with the island after its seizure. This argument was countered by the Permanent Representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters, who pointed to the much more difficult communication with Africa, which, too, was achieved.

The result of the conference may be summed up as follows: the preparations for operation "Herkules" are to continue, although no one is very eager any more to carry it out. The Naval Staff is still convinced of the necessity of going through with operation "Herkules" and considers it a prerequisite of any major North African offensive in the direction of Suez. To give it up, in the opinion of the Naval Staff, is tantamount to giving up the operation against Suez. The possession of Malta is of paramount importance also for the purpose of maintaining our communication with Africa and our position in Cyrenaica. It must be said, moreover, that the chances for capturing Malta will probably never again be as favorable as they are this summer. Even today, shortly after our air attacks have somewhat subsided, new life has come into the British Malta position. (Constant replacement and reinforcement of the British air forces.) Thus there is a definite threat that the conditions prevailing during the summer and autumn of 1941 will recur, if operation "Herkules" is not carried out. But we cannot afford today the ship losses incurred last year, in view of the badly reduced tonnage at our disposal. The enemy is fully aware of the importance of his Mediterranean position and will certainly do everything to reinforce his position. It is quite obvious that operation "Herkules" is a major gamble. However, to refrain from carrying it out is, in the opinion of the Naval Staff, a much greater risk in the long run. The Naval Staff considers the seizure of Malta a strategic must and therefore an absolute necessity if we want to safeguard our existence in North Africa and a future operation against Suez.

23 May 1942

The Naval Staff is convinced beyond any doubt that the Fuehrer is fully aware of the strategic importance of the island. The Naval Staff has repeatedly emphasized the strategic value of Malta in discussions with the Armed Forces High Command and the Fuehrer. The reason for the Fuehrer's concern and his momentary unwillingness is probably his justified doubt of the tactical feasibility with preponderantly Italian forces. Under no circumstances - and in this respect the Naval Staff shares the viewpoint of the Fuehrer - must operation "Herkules" be allowed to fail. Therefore the Naval Staff is also convinced that only German command and heaviest commitment of German forces offer a guaranty for the success of this difficult undertaking. It must, of course, be conceded that the operation cannot be carried out without support by the bulk of the Italian Army and without Italian naval forces. Vice Admiral Krancke in his capacity as Permanent Representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters is informed of the Naval Staff's opinions.

The Chief, Naval Staff will inform the Fuehrer personally once more about the above at the next conference.

b. The Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy submits detailed considerations about the possibilities of landings on Malta from a navigational and strategic viewpoint. He further submits his comment on landing plans submitted by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, and at the same time a proposal regarding the command of the German naval and invasion forces. (See report no. 232/42 of the German Naval Command, Italy of 16 May and Naval Staff report no. 993/42 Chfs.)

The German Naval Command, Italy, after a thorough examination of coastal and off-shore conditions, arrives at the conclusion that favorable landing conditions exist only on the northwest and west side of the island; there are no navigational difficulties there if the weather is calm, and there are no major enemy coastal fortifications. Landings in the southeastern part of the island are considered impossible due to strong enemy coastal fortifications. In the southern portion, landings are feasible under certain conditions, but the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy believes that landings in this part involve a very heavy risk due to the nature of the shore and the enemy's coastal defenses.

The Naval Staff basically agrees with the analysis of the German Naval Command, Italy. The difficulties of a landing in the southern section cannot be overlooked; it must, however, be left to the decision of Army and Air Force authorities whether it is possible to eliminate the coastal defenses by parachute forces, thereby creating the prerequisite for successful landing operations.

IV. Fuel oil for the Italian Navy:

The Italian Naval High Command submitted a memorandum to the German Naval High Command regarding the critical fuel oil situation of the Italian Navy and further requests for fuel oil.

The Naval Staff Quartermaster Division, Supply and Fuel Branch takes the following stand:

23 May 1942

The critical fuel oil situation of the Italian Navy is known. Ordinarily an additional delivery of 30,000 tons of fuel oil, besides the existing quota of Rumanian oil, would be justified. However, the German oil situation is also strained to the utmost and forces the German Navy, just as it does the Italian Navy, to restrict her oil consumption to the volume of fuel oil production, without tapping the emergency supply. This must be preserved for emergency operations forced on us by the enemy.

Realizing the difficult supply situation of the Italian Navy, the German Navy gave up any oil delivery from Rumania. German production is just about enough to permit only the most essential naval tasks. If coming developments indicate large-scale enemy operations in the Mediterranean, the Naval High Command would abandon its policy of preserving the German emergency fuel supply and would give part of it to the Italian Navy.

As long as such a situation has not actually arisen, we unfortunately cannot deliver 30,000 tons of additional fuel oil out of German supplies.

The Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy is advised of the Naval Staff's attitude in this matter and requested to inform the Italian Naval High Command accordingly.

V. The copper situation:

In a special release dealing with the problems of war economy, the Naval Ordnance Division, War Economy Branch surveys the copper situation and the prospects of obtaining supplies from the Japanese sphere of influence. The survey arrives at the conclusion that Japan is in no position to contribute any appreciable quantities of copper to Germany's economy at the present time. On the other hand, Japan's copper requirements are safeguarded for a certain length of time to a degree which permits the delivery of small quantities (about 5,000 tons) of copper in exchange for goods important to Japan. Copper shipments from East Asia depend on the solution of the problem of cargo space. The tonnage thus far available for the blockade-running service must be assigned for the transport of other essential goods, especially oils and fats, as determined by the Armed Forces High Command. Thus if copper imports were to receive a higher priority, this could be done only at the expense of other raw materials to which priority has already been granted. (For details see excerpt in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XII.)

Situation 23 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

South Atlantic:

The Fleet Commander, South Atlantic who was stationed in Freetown up to now is at present at Capetown, according to a decoded intercepted message. The duties of the Freetown Admiral were taken over by the Rear Admiral, West Africa.

23 May 1940

Indian Ocean:

A distress signal from the Mozambique Strait was repeated by the Mauritius radio, but later cancelled.

According to a French report, new British troops have landed at Diego Suarez. French troops have withdrawn along the Majenda road west of Diego Suarez and on the road to Manarara east of the town.

Pacific Ocean:

Vice Admiral Ghormley, U.S.N., has taken over the command of Allied headquarters at New Zealand. Thus the entire Australian area is under American command.

2. Own Situation:

As of 24 May 0000 the Naval Staff takes over command of ship "23". The blockade runner DRESDEN is ordered to approach the new point "Anni" (3° south and 7° west of point "Feile"), where she is to meet with the REGENSBURG. Ship "23" is informed that the REGENSBURG is probably disguised so as to look like the CAMBRIDGE. The REGENSBURG is advised accordingly (see Radiogram 1508).

The Naval Attache at Tokyo is informed by telegram that the DRESDEN will probably arrive on 10 Jun. at point 1 on route "Gelb" and the REGENSBURG probably at the same point on 19 Jun.

The forces in foreign waters receive information about the enemy situation by Radiogram 1649.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Patrol Boat "1808" struck a mine off the French Atlantic coast and had to be grounded outside the traffic lane near point 4 on route "Rosa".

Channel Coast:

The mining mission of the 4th PT Boat Flotilla had to be called off during the night of 22 May due to fog. (See Telegram 1000.)

23 May 1942

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Convoy traffic off the British coast was normal.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Norway:

In the Varanger Fjord a subchaser was unsuccessfully torpedoed by a submarine. A submarine chase is in progress. Off the Kwanangen Fjord the steamer ASUNCION (4,626 GRT) struck a mine and sank. Mine-sweeping operations are in progress. Other convoy and ship movements according to plan.

According to the report of an agent in Spain with connections in Norwegian circles, at a conference early in May between Roosevelt, the British Military Mission and the Norwegian Envoy, it was decided to launch an attack on the Norwegian coast, i.e., on the harbors north of Bodo. This town is said to be strongly fortified and the base for mobile German army reserves.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

At 1600 air reconnaissance sighted an enemy fleet force consisting of 1 battleship, 1 aircraft carrier, 3 cruisers, and 4 destroyers at 66° 50'N and 20° 10'W (north of Iceland). Later a light cruiser was reported north of this point on an 18° course. At 1900 air reconnaissance observed another enemy force which it reported as consisting of 10 merchant vessels and 10 warships (including 1 aircraft carrier). It was proceeding on a 30° course at 7 knots in two lines abreast. Hazy weather prevented detailed observation.

It is very likely that this report refers to the eastbound PQ. convoy in the Russian traffic, protected by a heavy force including an aircraft carrier.

The fact that this force was located so soon by air reconnaissance is very fortunate and permits the submarines to operate against it.

Special Items:

Armed Forces Intelligence reported on 10 May that, although there are rumors of heavy paratroop concentrations in Iceland and Scotland, a confirmation of these rumors could not be obtained either through business men or any other sources. It was, however, positively ascertained that a steamer of the Admiralty converted for the use of paratroops was taken from Wick to Lerwick (Shetland Islands) together with 2 other ships carrying 450 paratroopers, a great amount of war material, and light weapons. These are commando forces. According to a further intelligence report of 22 May, Lord Mountbatten and the above-named commando forces disembarked at Lerwick and Sandness (Shetland Islands).

23 May 1942

The same source reports that the bulk of the Home Fleet arrived at the Orkney Island bases. The transfer north of additional groups is said to continue.

It is impossible to judge the reliability of these reports.

The observation that the commando forces of Lord Mountbatten are at Lerwick on the Shetland Islands is interesting, to say the least, and requires further investigation, since the possibility that the rumored impending attack on Norway will take place cannot be discounted. In connection with these reports there is also a possibility that the convoy observed by the Air Force in the Arctic Ocean might have something to do with enemy operations in the Arctic area. It remains to be seen how the situation will develop; the entire coastal defense system is on the alert.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

During the night of 22 May the enemy flew over the Danish waters and the western Baltic Sea. Mine-laying is suspected. Convoy service in the Skagerrak and Kattegat proceeded without incident. (See Telegrams 0750 and 1930.)

A Danish steamer, under way from Stralsund to Copenhagen, sank with her grain cargo east of Binz after striking a mine. North of Swinemünde a motor trawler with her towed coil gear in operation was lost due to a ground mine.

Additional sections of the "Seeigel" barrage were laid according to plan.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

German submarines passing between Iceland and the Shetland Islands were repeatedly located and attacked by British planes.

Several reports about the sighting of submarines were intercepted by radio monitoring from off the American coast.

2. Own Situation:

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines dispatched a second submarine, U "69", to the Martinique area. On 21 May this submarine sank the British 1,927 GRT steamer TORONDOC approximately 40 miles west of the island of Santa Lucia. Information is passed on to the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command about the achievements of submarines U "156" and U "69" and about the report of submarine U "156" that no U.S. ships were sighted off Martinique. (See Radiogram 1000.)

Otherwise no reports were received about any new successes of our submarines.

23 May 1942

VI. Merchant Shipping

In its short report No. 16 "Foreign Merchant Shipping" the Naval Intelligence Division, Foreign Merchant Marine Branch surveys the enemy ship-building programs on the basis of available information. Within the first four months of 1942, the Allies produced 160 ships of approximately 1,200,000; however, it must be taken into account that precise production figures from Great Britain and Canada are not available. Judging from the reports received, it can be assumed that the figures quoted come very close to the facts. Since the average production of the first 4 months this year thus amounts to 300,000 GRT, it may be assumed that the actual sinkings still greatly exceed the newly built ships.

VII. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Reconnaissance off the British coast and in the Arctic Ocean was the principal task of our air activities. No night missions were flown by German planes, nor were there any enemy incursions. In the afternoon, 4 planes raided Avonmouth from an altitude of 4,000 to 6,000 m above the clouds by direction finding.

Results were not observed.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Fighter bombers raided the air fields of Malta and attacked air fields in the Egyptian area during the night.

3. Eastern Front:

The 4th Air Force and the 8th Air Corps operated in maximum strength west of Izyum.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Western Mediterranean:

The ship situation in the harbor of Gibraltar is unchanged.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean:

The situation in the Malta area is likewise unchanged. The number of merchant vessels, escort and mine-sweeping ships in the harbor of Tobruk has increased. Traffic outside of the harbor was lively.

23 May 1942

2. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Convoy operations were carried out according to plan without incident.

3. Own Situation:

Special Items:

a. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that work on the bases in preparation for operation "Herkules" is proceeding on schedule. Suda and Derna are planned as PT boat flotilla bases and Benghazi and Derna as bases for the motor mine sweeper and landing flotillas.

The PT boat flotilla was to have transferred from Navarino to Suda on the evening of 22 May. 4 PT boats will be brought up from Livorno via Augusta at a later date. The motor mine sweeper flotilla is at Derna and is engaged in escort duty between Benghazi and Derna. Apart from the increased number of supply transports directed and protected by the Italian Navy between Italy and Libya and in coastal traffic between Tripoli and Benghazi, there is at present a special supply service for the final needs of the Panzer Army. This special supply service to Derna uses German steamers and carries German cargo, and is controlled by the German Naval Command, Italy and escorted by German motor mine sweepers.

The Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy is transferring with a small operations staff to North Africa today and is taking over command at Derna. (See also Report 0030.)

With regard to the start of operation "Theseus", the German Naval Command, Italy reported its intentions as follows:

- (1) To land Army units behind the enemy lines.
- (2) To bring up German supplies as soon as our front line advances.
- (3) To protect the operations under (1) and (2).
- (4) To attack enemy supply transports and naval forces.

An effort is also to be made to get the participation of the Italian naval forces. Nothing further is known about this at the Naval Staff.

The landing operation is to take place during the night of x day and the early morning of the second day. The landing of a force of approximately 600 men with 3 tanks and guns behind the enemy is planned; they are to block the enemy's retreat to Tobruk. The landing craft will consist of 3 naval barges, 2 landing boats and one motor mine sweeper. 3 motor mine sweepers are to provide protection through artificial fog and gunfire. 5 PT boats are to afford protection in the direction of Tobruk.

Tobruk itself is to be blocked for incoming or outgoing ships by 5 or 6 submarines.

23 May 1943

b. The closing of the Strait of Sicily:

With reference to the directive of the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (see War Diary of 22 May), the German Armistice Commission, France reports as follows: For quite some time the German Naval Command, Italy has been conferring directly with the Italian Naval High Command about this problem and making detailed proposals concerning the location of the mine fields. The Italian attitude thus far was always negative. The Italians also objected to the establishment of French bomber units on the Tunisian coast. In the opinion of the Armistice Commission, this negative attitude can best be influenced, both favorably and quickly, by direct negotiations with the Italian Armed Forces High Command. The Armistice Commission therefore requests the Commanding General, Armed Forces South in Italy to obtain Italian consent to the measures demanded by the Armed Forces High Command through direct intervention at the Italian Armed Forces High Command. After reaching an agreement with the Italians, the Armistice Commission, France will present the demands to the French.

The Naval Staff shares the opinion that an agreement with the Italians can be achieved only by direct negotiations with the Italian Armed Forces High Command. All means of arriving at the eventual closing of the Strait of Sicily by talks between the two navies have been completely exhausted by the Naval Staff (see the conference with Admiral Riccardi at Garmisch) and the German Naval Command, Italy without success.

c. The Italian East Africa steamers:

The German Naval Command, Italy is informed that returning Italian repatriation ships while passing through the Cape area must observe the same routes as those used on the outbound voyage. This is necessary in view of German mining operations in the Cape area and on account of the activities of German auxiliary cruisers.

The German Naval Command, Italy reports by Telegram 1943 the routes for the East Africa steamers between Port Elizabeth and Las Palmas. According to this report, the routes are actually different from those of the outbound voyage. It is therefore necessary to approach the Italian Navy once more, because the courses as reported now not only limit the freedom of action of the Naval Staff with regard to auxiliary cruiser operations, but endanger the Italian ships too.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Activity of the Russian forces was at a minimum. Radio monitoring revealed nothing of interest.

23 May 1942

Own Situation:

Convoy and mine-sweeping activities proceeded according to plan, though hampered to a certain degree by the weather. The enemy is continuing his air raids on Mariupol and Skadovsk.

Special Items:

Naval Group South reports that, according to the observations of its chief of staff on his trip in the Russian area, the Army is continuing its preparations for operations across the Sea of Azov.

The standpoint of Group South that the Navy must try under all circumstances to support the Army's operations with all available means meets with complete approval. This requires not only advice by naval personnel and assistance in manning the ferries, but also the commitment of all ships which can be made available prior to the beginning of the operation. In view of the large-scale destruction in the shipyard and harbor of Mariupol and the poor, if not entirely unsatisfactory, condition of all ships of the coastal patrol flotilla in the Sea of Azov, Group South requests that at least 50 motor pinnaces equipped with search gear and machine guns be sent at once in order to form a new coastal patrol flotilla. This step must be taken so quickly that the vessels could be ready for operation at Mariupol in 4 weeks at the latest.

The Naval Staff Quartermaster Division will attend to this matter.

IX Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

X. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The battle against the remaining enemy troops continues on Kerch Peninsula.

Desperate enemy attempts to break out of the pocket west of the Donets River to the east broke down with heavy enemy losses. The operations of the Von Kleist Army Group were supported by strong air forces with particularly good results. The pursuit of the beaten enemy continues without pause. The tank losses of the enemy are heavy.

Tank movements in a northerly direction were observed north of Livny in front of the 2nd Army.

Central Army Group:

Nothing to report, except for futile enemy attacks in front of the 2nd Panzer Army.

23 May 1942

Northern Army Group:

The 16th Army successfully repulsed enemy attacks at Molvotitsy, south of Lyubnitsa, and in the Lovat River valley. On the 18th Army sector the enemy has again reinforced his position at Yamno. Enemy thrusts at Maluksa were unsuccessful.

2. Finnish Front:

Nothing to report.

3. North Africa:

Lively enemy air activity and attacks against our supply columns.

24 May 1942
Sunday

Items of Political Importance

Mexico:

Parliament was called into special session for the purpose of discussing the declaration of war on the Axis Powers as well as decisions concerning seizure of Axis property and internment of Axis subjects residing in Mexico.

Egypt:

The Transocean News Agency reports about conferences between the British and Egyptian General Staffs, aimed at the commitment of the Egyptian Army side by side with the British Near East Army in the event that an Axis offensive in Libya would necessitate a British retreat into Egyptian territory.

No other political news items were received.

Situation 24 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

South Atlantic:

The cruiser DIOMEDE arrived at Montevideo on 23 May.

Red Sea:

According to Italian reports from Egypt, a British naval detachment is at Aden, probably for an operation against French Somaliland.

2. Own Situation:

All ships in foreign waters were advised by Radiogram 0838 that ship "23" sailed from western France on 20 May, after fighting 2 severe engagements during the Channel breakthrough without damage to herself, but with the loss of the ILTIS, the SEEADLER and 2 mine sweepers.

All ships in foreign waters were informed by Radiogram 2232 about the routes followed by the Italian East Africa steamers from Port Elizabeth to Las Palmas.

Information about the enemy situation by Radiograms 0543 and 1602.

II. Situation West Area

Nothing to report.

24 May 1942

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Moderate reconnaissance during the day, subsiding completely in the evening due to bad weather.

Own Situation:

The Norwegian 937 GRT steamer BOER struck a mine and sank west of Westerland.

Convoy operations in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North proceeded according to plan without major incident.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

According to an intelligence report from Spain, in the conference between Roosevelt, the British Military Mission and the Norwegian Envoy to Washington it was decided to launch attacks on the Norwegian coast and ports north of Bodoe.

Own Situation:

The steamer ASUNCION (4,626 GRT) carrying supplies struck a mine south of Loppekalven on 23 May and sank. A Russian aerial mine was cut loose on 24 May at this place.

The mine-sweeping vessel BALI was fired upon unsuccessfully by an enemy battery on Rybachi Peninsula on the afternoon of 23 May while sailing from Petsamo and returned fire. A futile submarine attack on a German convoy took place on the afternoon of 23 May south of Vardoe. Petsamo was raided by enemy planes on 22 May. Bombs dropped on battery 560 missed the target.

On 24 May the BRUMMER and the ULM laid mines. Owing to mine-sweeping, mine-laying and special operations in the Vest Fjord carried out by the escort forces, 13 steamers have accumulated at Kirkenes; after completion of the mining operations they will proceed on their way. In the area of the Admiral, West Norwegian Coast, the minefield in the Sogne Fjord was laid according to plan. The first group of the 21st Landing Flotilla left Bergen for the north, and the 2nd group arrived at Bergen.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance planes of the 5th Air Force report 3 merchant vessels escorted by 5 patrol vessels on an easterly course in the area 180 miles east of Spitsbergen. At 2330 a submarine established contact with the PQ convoy located by the Air Force approximately 200 miles east of Jan Mayen. Contact was lost one hour later due to fog.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

24 May 1942

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances:

Convoy and patrol activities according to plan without major incident. Tests of the Mine and Barrage Testing Command and of the Torpedo Experimental Station were held in the Skagerrak.

2. Eastern Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence it appears that the order for the evacuation of Leningrad has been given. The concentration of ships on Lake Ladoga may be in connection with this matter.

Own Situation:

Minefield "Seeigel 3" and the southern row of "Seeigel 4" were laid according to plan during the night of 23 May. The Finns report that minefield "Rukajaervi A" was also laid according to plan.

The ferry connection by naval barge between Aseri and Tytersaari has been resumed. The 27th Landing Flotilla and 3 Siebel ferries arrived at Hungerburg.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Lively aerial reconnaissance was observed in the northeast Atlantic. A German submarine was reported by planes northwest of the Hebrides. The sighting of a number of submarines was reported from the U.S. coast at Brunswick and Cape Lookout, from the vicinity of Cuba and from the Mississippi River estuary. A U.S. steamer reports that she was fired upon by a submarine south of Jamaica.

According to a communication of the Naval Attache at Buenos Aires, a reliable agent reported that the Argentinian steamer RIO IGUAZA radioed that she had taken aboard 55 survivors of the U.S. battleship sunk by an Italian submarine on the Brazilian coast.

This appears to confirm the statement of the Italian submarine commander.

2. Own Situation:

On the afternoon of 23 May, submarine U "69" reported from Martinique that she had been fired upon while surfaced by an incoming freighter outside the main harbor. After submerging the submarine attacked the steamer unsuccessfully. A report of this incident is transmitted to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff.

Additional reports in supplement to submarine situation, War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

24 May 1942

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

96 German planes raided Poole during the night; good results were observed. From Belgium and northern France 7 enemy incursions were reported and 3 from western France.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Nothing to report.

3. Eastern Front:

No major incidents were reported.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

According to an intelligence report from Spain, the ARGUS sailed from Gibraltar in a westerly direction under escort of 3 destroyers.

Air reconnaissance observed rather lively convoy traffic between Alexandria and Tobruk. According to radio monitoring, the Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet is at Alexandria.

2. Own Situation:

According to the Naval Staff's request, the Armed Forces High Command will see to it that the French seal the territorial waters off the Tunesian coast effectively against enemy warships. Until this is done, the use of arms against enemy warships in Tunesian territorial waters is permitted.

The German Naval Command, Italy is informed of this directive of the Armed Forces High Command, with copy to the German Armistice Commission, France.

The Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy assumed command over the naval forces assigned to operation "Theseus" at Derna as of the evening of 23 May. The bases were completed according to plan. Suda and Derna will be finished on 25 May. The PT boat tender BENGASI will probably be ready for operations at Augusta on 30 May.

5 vessels of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla arrived at Navarino on 22 May and proceeded in the evening to Suda. 4 PT boats left Livorno on the evening of 23 May and will continue via Augusta on 27 May. The motor mine sweeper flotilla and the landing flotilla are being assembled according to schedule. Derna is ready for the arrival of PT boats and motor mine sweepers.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Supply traffic to Tripoli and Benghazi according to plan and without major incident. In Benghazi the steamer TINOS was raised so

24 May 1942

that 5 large vessels may now unload simultaneously.

Apart from the increased regular supply transports to Libya and the coastal supply shipping from Tripoli to Benghazi which are under the supervision of the Italian Navy, a special supply transport to Derna for final supplies for the Panzer Army has been started for the first time, with German steamers and German cargoes, under the supervision of the German Naval Command, Italy and protected by German motor mine sweepers. Thus far, the steamer REGULUS arrived in Derna on 18 May, steamer LOLA on 25 May, and steamer BROOK on 22 May.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The auxiliary cruiser BARLETTA was restored to combat readiness and arrived at Pireaus from Trieste on 23 May. Group South is not in a position to allot fuel to destroyer "ZG 3" from its own stocks and therefore requests an additional allocation (see Telegram 1930)

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring located 3 destroyers and 6 submarines in the area of Sevastopol and the southern tip of the Crimea. Air reconnaissance located 1 destroyer at Sevastopol, the harbor of which is concealed by smoke screens; 1 battleship, 1 light cruiser, 1 destroyer, and 5 submarines at Poti; 1 heavy KIROV class cruiser, 2 light cruisers, 1 destroyer, 7 submarines, 9 PT boats, 5 motor mine sweepers at Batumi; and 1 submarine at Gelendzhik.

Own Situation:

The special detachment for the Kerch mining mission has arrived. During an enemy air raid on Mariupol on 20 May one motor trawler was sunk, another one, several lighters, and the floating dock were damaged by fragments. Air raids on Sulina and Mariupol on 24 May caused no damage to naval installations.

In case of favorable weather 2 Italian subchasers are scheduled to sail from Sulina on 24 May.

Convoy operations in the Black Sea proceeded according to plan.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

24 May 1942

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The over-all situation at the Sevastopol sector is unchanged. On Kerch Peninsula the enemy hideouts in the east were mopped up. There were many deserters.

At the front of the Von Kleist Army Group the enemy attacked our defense forces in the early morning hours from the west in the area north and south of Losovenka and also from the east from the direction of Savintsy. All attacks were repulsed. German divisions advancing from the south have reached the area north of Rostensvenskoye, Artelnoye and Novy Orel. The divisions south of Kharkov pushed south and reached the area east of Yefremo. From the north the Breith Group attacked the flank of the enemy divisions attacking eastward. The enemy carried out a number of diversionary attacks on our positions northeast of Kharkov in order to relieve pressure on his forces fighting in the pocket. On the northern wing of the 6th Army the reinforced enemy launched a number of futile attacks.

Central Army Group:

At the 4th Army sector we carried out successful operations in a northerly direction north of the highway Yelnya-Yukhnov and also to the south from the Vyazma area.

General Model was seriously wounded. General Schubert has taken over the command of the 9th Army.

Northern Army Group:

The enemy succeeded in breaking through the southern rim of the pocket west of Yamno at one point.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Fronts:

According to prisoner of war statements, enemy reinforcements are approaching in the Loukhi sector.

3. North Africa:

Nothing to report.

25 May 1942

Items of Political ImportanceGreat Britain:

Two large meetings were held in London advocating the establishment of a second European front. A communist speaker declared that the workers of all Europe, Germany included, would rise against the Nazis the very moment an invasion army sets foot on land.

During speeches held on Empire Day, Amery, Secretary of State for India, declared that Great Britain temporarily lost Hongkong, Singapore, and Malaya because she was too confident that the British Navy would keep Japan from going to war. Duff Cooper hailed the creation of the British Empire as the most outstanding single achievement of the British people. The establishment of British possessions in uninhabited or undeveloped parts of the world without too much government support must be credited to the spirit of adventure of countless Britishers. Since the British Empire was created without force of arms, it did not possess sufficient armed forces to protect its large territories against large and far-reaching aggression. This accounts for the difficulties encountered today. Great Britain did not anticipate that large countries could fall into the hands of small-time gangsters, but she must pay a high price for this mistake. Today the very existence of the Empire is in deadly peril.

The yearly convention of the Labour Party, held on both Whitsuntide holidays, discussed several resolutions concerning the continuation of the present war policy and the truce on the domestic front. It is remarkable though, that for the first time a strong minority is in favor of the Labour Party's shifting to the opposition.

According to information from an official German source, a comparison between the present German and the present British food supplies reflects the following situation: Bread, flour, and unpackaged oatmeal are obtainable in Britain in unlimited quantities, while these items are rationed in Germany; the average British consumer receives 520 g of meat per week, the German consumer only 300 g; the sugar ration of 626 g per month is approximately the same in both countries, although the German is better off on account of an additional ration of marmelade; also the fat ration of 270 g weekly is about the same in both countries. (The German figures correspond to the average quantities and include the larger rations for persons producing their own food.

Russia:

The present Russian Charge d'Affaires at Tokyo was promoted to the rank of ambassador, because Moscow is placing great weight on maintaining as correct and normal relations as possible with Japan, particularly at the present moment. Official Japanese circles, however, object to the new ambassador, because he cannot be compared with the Japanese Ambassador at Moscow, who used to be foreign minister.

Hungary:

The relations between Hungary and Rumania took a sharp turn for the worse through the recall from Bucharest of the Hungarian envoy. This step by Hungary is in connection with Hungary's protest against Marshal Antonescu's most recent speech. The Hungarian Prime Minister termed the present situation very grave and voiced his doubts, as to whether the military promises made to Germany can be kept under these circumstances, since a war between Hungary and Rumania appears

25 May 1942

inevitable in the long run.

Croatia:

German military circles report that the weakness of the Pawelic-Kwaternik Government has increased. The main reason for the country's political distress can be attributed beyond doubt to exploitation by the Italians. The hatred of the Croats, Moslems, and Serbs toward Italy can hardly be described and is constantly being fed by the undiplomatic Italian attitude. The Croatian Army is in a difficult position, because the Chief of State feels that the secret police is his only support against domestic foes and that the army is worthless.

U.S.A.:

The Italian diplomats who returned from the U.S.A. declared that Roosevelt's imperialistic viewpoint has won out. The entire country is arming feverishly and already the production figures which are constantly rising have reached sizable proportions. The morale, especially of the young people, is good. No one has the slightest doubt as to final victory. The war against Japan is the more popular, although official circles are convinced that possibly only the coming generation will be able to reconquer the territories lost to Japan. The scarcity of shipping space, especially of tankers, is causing the main difficulty. Until the ship-building program goes into high gear, which is expected in about 4 to 5 months, the American war policy is still hampered. For a few months already, particularly since America's entry into the war, and the constant British defeats on all fronts, the feeling toward Britain has been deteriorating considerably. The conviction is growing that the war can be won only under U.S. leadership and with U.S. resources. Churchill's prestige has suffered badly.

Secretary of State Hull cautioned against unwarranted optimism.

Special Item:

The Naval Liaison Officer to the Armed Forces High Command reports that the Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command intends to ask Minister Lammers to take care of the matter concerning the representative of the Reich shipping firms. Goering, in his capacity as Reichsmarschall and as Deputy for the Four Years Plan, requests that this official be under his authority. Far-reaching new demands must also be expected from Minister Speer. The Permanent Representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at Fuehrer Headquarters will report to the Commander in Chief, Navy about the recent discussions on this matter at Fuehrer Headquarters.

Situation 25 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Indian Ocean:

~~The British steamer KIOTO flashed a QQQ signal in Mozambique~~

25 May 1942

Strait, but canceled it 30 minutes later.

2. Own Situation:

During the night of 24 May the following short signal was received from ship "28": "QQQ warning from MENELAUS was due to ship "28". MENELAUS not seized or sunk. Enemy aware of operation."

In acknowledging receipt of the signal, the Naval Staff announced the following intention (see Radiogram 1402): The Naval Staff plans to send ship "10" to an East Asian port for engine overhaul in September or October, and she will have to enter dock. The Attache at Tokyo is instructed to request information from the Japanese Navy about facilities in Singapore, Saigon, Hongkong, or Shanghai and to obtain its consent. (See message 1400.)

All forces in foreign waters are informed by Radiogram 1839 that 3 German and 4 Italian submarines are stationed at present off the Brazilian north coast from Natal to somewhere near Punta Itapaga.

Enemy situation report by Radiograms 0619, 1648, and 2219.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

A British ship was located 30 miles west of Lisbon. Enemy reconnaissance activity over Brest and Ouessant from noon to 1840.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

On 24 May 2 ships escorting an ore shipment off Cape Machichaco was unsuccessfully attacked by a Sunderland plane. 2 ground mines were swept off Brest and off the Gironde. La Pallice and the Loire River estuary to Nantes were reopened to shipping.

Channel Coast:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Nothing to report.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

25 May 1942

Own Situation:

The mine-laying mission assigned to the BRUMMER and the ULM was carried out on 24 May according to plan.

The LUETZOW transferred from Trondheim to Narvik. Group North praises the smooth and safe execution of this maneuver in cooperation with the Air Force as very gratifying. (See Telegram 1950.)

The 5th Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla found a single-row minefield off Kvaenangen Fjord and swept 4 more Russian mines.

Group North submits a report by the Commanding Admiral, Norway, according to which operations of the naval forces are subject to delays on account of the unsatisfactory tugboat situation, since the transfer of 6 tugboats, approved as early as the beginning of March has not yet been effected. Adequate supply of fleet forces is no longer assured, particularly in Narvik; there are not sufficient salvage tugs for fleet operations; and the completion of the Norwegian bases under construction, especially in Trondheim is endangered. (See Telegram 1956.)

Upon inquiry by telephone by the Commanding Admiral, Group North as to whether the wish of the Commander in Chief, Navy that the heavy cruisers SCHEER and LUETZOW be placed under one command is binding also if these ships have to go into action unexpectedly, or whether he might in that case act at his own discretion, the Chief, Naval Staff decided as follows: Admiral Schniewind is to remain at Trondheim in order to command the TIRPITZ group if these ships should be needed in the course of the operation; Admiral Schmundt is to be in charge of the Narvik group until another commander arrives; group North is to have over-all command of the operations during this period. Furthermore, the Narvik group is to be committed only with adequate air reconnaissance and under no circumstances if the situation is unclear or the weather unfavorable (fog).

Group North issued a directive to this effect and at the same time requested the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to review the feasibility of an attack on convoy PQ 16 by the pocket battleships, which is contemplated only if reliable air reconnaissance finds neither aircraft carriers, battleships nor cruisers as remote or close escort.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Submarines as well as reconnaissance planes located convoy PQ 16 in the early morning in quadrant AB 58; it consists of 35 steamers escorted by 1 cruiser, 5 destroyers and 8 escort vessels. In the same area, a convoy on a westerly course, made up of 14 steamers and escorted by 1 cruiser, 6 destroyers and 5 escort vessels was observed. It is impossible to determine beyond doubt whether this indicates a meeting between convoys PQ 16 and QP 12, or whether the group on the westerly course is a part of PQ 16 which was spotted as it was joining the main convoy.

Own Situation:

Among the submarines operating against the convoy, submarine U "703" scored 2 hits on an 8,000 GRT steamer and missed with 2 shots on another one. For detailed description of the submarine

25 May 1942

action see supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

Submarines and planes of the 5th Air Force were able to maintain contact with the convoy throughout the day. However, no successes were scored by the planes. For 26 May it is planned to direct heavy torpedo and bomber forces against convoy PQ 16.

The 5th Air Force is advised by Group North that for the time being only submarines can operate against battleships and heavily guarded convoys, and that our cruisers can be considered only if extensive air reconnaissance under good visibility conditions has definitely established that neither battleships, aircraft carriers, nor cruisers are in the operations area as close or remote escort for the convoy. In the Group's opinion, aerial attacks are therefore desirable. (See Telegram 1900.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances:

Patrol and convoy operations proceeded according to plan. A ground mine was swept in the Little Belt.

2. Eastern Baltic Sea:

The minefields "Seeigel" 5, 6, 7, and 8 were laid according to plan. The Finns report that operation "Rukajaervi B", too, was carried out as planned.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Normal reconnaissance activity in the northeast Atlantic. Between the Orkney and Shetland Islands a suspicious object was investigated, possibly a submarine conning tower; later the same plane reported sighting a diving submarine.

A submarine chase was ordered northwest of Porcupine Bank.

In the same area, west of there, and also about 350 miles south of Greenland a number of British ships were located.

In the afternoon the coast guard vessel GENERAL GREENE was reported in an engagement with a submarine east of Nantucket Island. A report about a submarine attack was intercepted approximately 65 miles south of New York.

All U.S. warships in the West Indies were informed about a submarine attack which had taken place at 1600 off Fort de France. U.S. steamer BEATRICE (3,451 GRT) reported from a position 60 miles southeast of Kingston (Jamaica) having been fired on by a submarine and asked for immediate plane assistance.

2. Own Situation:

~~Concerning the operation in the Arctic Ocean see Situation~~

25 May 1942

Arctic Ocean and supplement to submarine situation.

No successes have been reported from the American east coast.

Group "Hecht", operating in the North Atlantic, is ordered to call on submarine U "116" for supplies.

In the West Indies, submarine U "502" sank the armed Brazilian steamer GONCALVES DIAZ (4,996 GRT) which had no markings.

Submarines U "156" and U "69" operating off Martinique are advised that their principal task consists of attacking U.S. warships and outgoing vessels (in view of possible intervention by the U.S.A.). Incoming ships are to be attacked only if positively identified as enemy vessels.

An old U.S. destroyer was torpedoed 5 miles west of Fort de France. The ship escaped into the inner harbor, her bow torn off. (See Enemy Situation.)

The submarines of the South Atlantic group off Fernando Noronha (U "161", "128", "126") are to operate for the time being against coastal shipping.

In the Mediterranean, submarine U "83" is assigned to a special mission. Submarines U "205", U "559", and U "431" are deployed off Tobruk. For further reports see supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

Special Items:

In his war diary, the Admiral, Arctic Ocean repeatedly pointed out that some of the submarines engaged in the Arctic Ocean are on their first assignment and he attributes their small success to lack of experience on the part of their commanders.

In a conference with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, the Naval Staff Operations Division brought up this subject. In reply, the Commanding Admiral, Submarines pointed out that even the best submarine commanders must first become familiar with the conditions peculiar to the Arctic Ocean.

Thus it would be advisable to change the submarines in the Arctic Ocean as seldom as possible, so as to train a number of specialists in Arctic Ocean warfare.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

During the day a number of single planes raided industrial and armament plants in England. Our planes did not operate during the night, nor were there any enemy incursions.

Mediterranean Theater:

Fighter bombers raided the Malta airfields.

25 May 1942

Eastern Front:

Barentsburg on Spitsbergen was attacked with incendiary bombs and machine guns; good results were observed. The previously destroyed railroad bridge in the Kandalaksha area received additional bomb hits. East of Nordkyn a surfacing enemy submarine was damaged at the stern by a bomb hit.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean1. Enemy Situation:

The following ships were at Gibraltar at 1430: MALAYA, EAGLE, 1 DIDO-class cruiser, MAIDSTONE, 1 auxiliary cruiser, 4 destroyers, 1 passenger ship, 19 steamers, and 7 tankers. 78 planes were on the airfield.

Between 1720 and 2145 the MALAYA and 4 destroyers were outside the harbor.

Submarines were reported 30 miles north of Durazzo, 45 miles northwest of Alexandria, off Cape Misurata, 90 miles south-southwest of Naples, and 20 miles southwest of Taranto.

Convoy and supply traffic between Tobruk and Alexandria as usual.

2. Own Situation:

Motor minesweeper R "15" was heavily damaged by collision with a naval barge 50 miles west of Derna on 22 May.

The second group of Italian East Africa steamers sailed for home on 24 May from Berbera.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The motor ships ANKARA and MONVISO were repeatedly sighted by enemy planes en route to Benghazi during the night of 24 May.

Coastal supply shipping proceeded according to plan.

4. Area Naval Group South:Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:Enemy Situation:

For the ships in the eastern ports of the Black Sea and at Sevastopol, as reported by air reconnaissance of 23, 24, and 25 May, see daily situation report and Telegram 1712.

Own Situation:

2 Italian subchasers which left Sulina on 24 May had to return

25 May 1942

on account of engine trouble.

Enemy air raids on Genichesk, Simferopol and Sorygyol caused no damage to naval installations.

Group South reported that air raids on Crimean and Ukrainian ports have become more frequent recently. The same is true of plane and submarine attacks on convoys. The enemy's activity is concentrated on supply bases, supply vessels and shipyards and on our supply routes on land and sea.

Convoy activity proceeded on schedule.

The Armed Forces High Command directed the German Army Commission, Rumania to obtain Rumanian consent for the following measures:

a. Without changing existing political boundaries and authority, the tactical command of the designated coastal zone, roughly as far as Tiligul Liman to the west, should be concentrated in the hands of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Ukraine.

b. All Rumanian forces which at the present time are east of the new demarkation line are to be left there and to be subordinated to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Ukraine in matters pertaining to the defense of the coast. (See Telegram 1250.)

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The situation on Kerch Peninsula remained unchanged. The pocket south of Kharkov is being drawn tighter. Pressure is brought to bear from all sides in bitter fighting against stubborn enemy resistance.

In the Belgorod area the enemy succeeded in breaking through our lines.

Central Army Group:

An enemy attack at Novosil was repulsed. Our forces successfully attacked the cavalry division surrounded at Vyazma.

Northern Army Group:

All enemy attacks on the front of the Army Group were repulsed.

2. Finnish Front:

Nothing to report.

25 May 1942

3. North Africa:

Nothing to report.

26 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

The Transocean News Agency reports about American efforts to expand and consolidate the De Gaulle movement as a step toward creating a French government which would be recognized upon the invasion of the Continent. The intention is to include all groups opposed to the Vichy regime, the communists included.

Great Britain:

A detailed account of the Empire Day speeches and of the Labour Party's Whitsuntide meeting is contained in Political Review No. 120, paragraph 2.

Reuter reports that General Paget, Commander in Chief of the Home Forces, protested against the hate-filled language used in a British radio broadcast.

Italy:

An article in Populo d'Italia, which describes the progress made in 2 years at Mentone, indicates that the Italians are still striving to occupy Nice, Corsica and Tunisia, which was prevented by the armistice.

Spain:

The visit of the Caliph of Spanish Morocco to Madrid gave rise to speculations about a conference on far-reaching political problems, including also the questions of changing the Tangiers Statute and making the Caliphate of Tetuan independent of the French.

Finland:

German military circles report that the ill feeling created among Finnish officers by Sweden's non-belligerent attitude at the beginning of the war has vanished. The Swedish attempt to arrive at closer relations with Finland became obvious during the recent visit of Crown Prince Gustav Adolf. The idea of a Swedish-Finnish military alliance after the war has by no means been rejected completely by Finland.

Hungary:

A detailed account of the growing tension between Hungary and Rumania is contained in Political Review No. 120, paragraph 7.

South America:

The U.S.A. has intensified its efforts to incite Argentina, Brazil and Chile to war against the Axis Powers. Germans in leading positions have already been expelled from Argentina in order to take the wind out of the opposition's sails at the coming opening of Congress. It can be expected that German organizations still existing will be dissolved. The Government's difficulties in maintaining a policy of neutrality are growing, at any rate.

26 May 1942

Japan:

As reported by the Tokyo Embassy, the Japanese press in China discusses with increasing frequency the possibility of a German defeat in Russia, mentioning derogatory Reuter reports as well as reports from the Vichy Telegraphic Service (Ofi). This is done for the purpose of emphasizing outwardly good relations with Soviet Russia. Germany has made it clear how dangerous such statements are.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. Field Marshal Kesselring requested the Commander in Chief, Navy to see that the barges under construction at Palermo are completed on schedule, because operation "Herkules" depends on it. The Chief, Naval Construction Division explained that the delays are due to transport difficulties and to the necessity of increasing the capacity of the barges so as to be able to carry 52-ton tanks. He promised that everything would be done to speed their completion, whether operation "Herkules" is to be carried out or not.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South will also continue the preparations for operation "Herkules" in any case.

II. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division reports on the steel conference with Minister Speer:

The Minister will confine himself to dealing only with steel allocations for armor and ammunition, and does not intend to interfere with naval affairs. As far as the Navy is concerned there is no difference between operational requirements and other requirements. The requirements of all three branches of the Armed Forces have been cut equally. This reduction amounts to 30%. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division insisted that the situation of the Navy is fundamentally different from that of the other branches of the Armed Forces. It was recognized that the Navy would need 30,000 tons. The strain on the German steel situation is caused primarily by the large quantities of ammunition required, the stepped-up transport program, the construction of locomotives and by transportation bottlenecks. However, the emergency is considered to be only temporary and there is hope of an improvement by fall. These circumstances justify drawing temporarily on available stocks.

The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division also reports that Gauleiter Sauckel is satisfied with the result of his conferences with Laval about recruiting additional labor. (Employment of 350,000 French laborers in Germany was discussed.) The labor situation is expected to ease in any case within the next few months.

III. The Chief, Underwater Obstacles Branch, Naval Ordnance Division reports on the results of the experiments of submarine U "117":

Out of 66 rack mines laid at depths varying from 520 to 450 m, a total of 43 exploded. Although the tests furnished valuable information, they proved also that the use of these mines at the depths mentioned is impracticable. The maximum depth at which

26 May 1942

the mines are used must thus be limited to 250 m and the intervals at which they are laid should be increased. It is requested that submarine U "118" be assigned to continue the experiments so that the mines may be released for use at depths up to 250 m as soon as possible.

It is intended to use Fab Vb mines instead of Fab Va, which are still unsatisfactory.

IV. Since Vice Admiral Cyliax will probably be sick for at least 7 weeks, the Commander in Chief, Navy orders that his post as Commanding Admiral, Battleships be taken over by the Torpedo Inspector, Rear Admiral Kummetz, who is to proceed to Narvik as soon as possible to embark on one of the pocket battleships.

V. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff Operations Division reports that the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy took over command in connection with operation "Theseus", and that headquarters was established at Derna according to reports received. (See War Diary 24 and 25 May.)

The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff Operations Division further reports on the directive of the Armed Forces High Command regarding Tunisian territorial waters. (See War Diary 24 May.)

According to information from the Commanding General, Armed Forces South, the Fuehrer has clearly stated that the Italians would hardly be successful in operation "Herkules". Since we have no forces available the difficulties of this operation must be regarded as very great.

VI. The Chief, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff reports concerning the problem of a representative of Reich shipping firms:

Gauleiter Kaufmann is slated for this office. The Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command in a letter to Minister Lammers recognizes the necessity of closest relations between the representative of Reich shipping firms and the Navy. He considers it inopportune to incorporate the representative of Reich shipping firms into the Four Years Plan (as demanded by the Reichsmarschall) and declares that it is impossible to connect him with the Office of Maritime Shipping.

A Fuehrer decree concerning this question is in preparation.

It will greatly depend on these instructions to what degree this new order is consistent with the interests of the Navy.

The Commander in Chief, Navy will get in touch with Minister Lammers.

Special Items:

Following the transfer of 3 more destroyers which will be ready for operations by 1 Jun., there will be 9 destroyers available in the north area after the withdrawal of destroyers FRIEDRICH IHN and Z "24" for shipyard overhaul.

26 May 1942

The torpedo boats FALKE and KONDOR of the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla must go into shipyard on 1 Jun. Since the JAGUAR will be in the shipyard until August and the MOETE and torpedo boat T "22" will not be ready for operation in July, Group West does not have a single torpedo boat ready for action. In view of the fact that torpedo boats are indispensable for keeping the submarine routes open, the Naval Staff orders that, since 9 destroyers are sufficient for the northern area, enough torpedo boats be transferred to Group West so that at least 4 vessels will be ready for operations at any time. The Naval Staff believes that the torpedo boats assigned for transfer to the west area should be equipped with 2 quadruple guns each. All necessary steps for carrying out this order are to be arranged by the Fleet in consultation with Group West. (See Telegram 1818.)

Situation 26 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Naval Staff sees no reason why ship "28" should have sent the short signal received on 25 May (see War Diary 25 May). If the signal had been sent immediately following the QQQ signal by the MENELAUS, the Naval Staff could have assumed that ship "28" had shifted her operations to the northeast. Since the short signal did not indicate any position, the Naval Staff has no clue as to the further plans of the auxiliary cruiser. Ship "28" is advised accordingly by Radiogram 1045.

Ships "28" and "23" receive the following instructions by Radiogram 1853:

a. Effective as of 1 Jun.: The zone of operation for ship "28" is east of 15° W and that of ship "23" west of 15° W.

b. Effective as of 1 Jun.: Armed attacks without previous warning are permitted in waiting area "Komponisten".

c. Area "Komponisten" is replaced by the large quadrant containing point "Schubert". For this large quadrant the same orders which were in effect heretofore for the "Komponisten" area will apply as of 1 Jun.

d. The delivery of supplies to ship "23" by the CHARLOTTE SCHLIEHMANN in the new waiting area is scheduled for 8 Jun. approximately.

e. The Naval Staff intends to have ship "23" operate later against the traffic between the Cape and the Plate River estuary, southwest of the waiting area. It is contemplated to extend the zone of operation of ship "28" farther to the west, north of the waiting area, for the duration of these operations.

26 May 1942

f. At the end of June, ship "28" will be supplied in the waiting area from the DOGGERBANK, which will then be dismissed to Japan.

The war diary of ship "10" up to 25 Feb. 1942 has arrived by way of the Attache at Tokyo. The suggestion contained therein, namely that operation "Antarktis" be repeated in November, is being studied. The experiences with the ship plane are very valuable. The fact that Capetown was closed on 18 Mar. due to the mine situation, which the war diary mentions, was unknown to the Naval Staff. The experience had with regard to remote signalling shapes will be utilized.

Confirmation of receipt of the diary was sent to ship "10" by Radiogram 1320.

Information to ships in foreign waters that, effective immediately, the zone of submarine operations on the Brazilian coast is extended to a distance of 400 miles offshore by Radiogram 2321.

All ships in foreign waters are informed of the MUENSTERLAND's experiences during her voyage by Radiogram 2138.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

One enemy ship was located 100 miles west of the southern tip of Ireland and one 300 miles west of Lorient. According to air reconnaissance a cruiser was proceeding in the afternoon on a 60° course east of Falmouth.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

3 ground mines were swept by a mine-exploding vessel off Lorient.

Channel Coast:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

During the day air activity was lively but diminished in the evening and during the night.

26 May 1942

Own Situation:

Convoy and patrol operations in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North according to plan. Ground mines were swept north of Wangeroog, west of Roem Island and northeast of Heligoland. In the afternoon enemy planes attacked boats of the Rhine Flotilla at Domburg and Westkappelle, damaging 4 of them. 1 mine-sweeping vessel was set afire during an air raid off Flushing.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

At 1030 British air reconnaissance reported 1 pocket battleship, 1 cruiser and 4 destroyers anchored in Bogen Bay.

Own Situation:

An incoming convoy was fired upon by a Russian battery on Rybachi Peninsula. The Norwegian steamer VARDOE (860 GRT) was set afire. During the passing of the convoy, the battery was attacked by 10 of our Ju 87's; a direct hit was scored which destroyed an enemy gun.

Enemy air activity over Petsamo on the evening of 24 May, over Stavanger on the morning of 25 May, and over Oford Fjord, Narvik and Lister on the forenoon of 26 May. Mine-sweeping and patrol services according to plan. For reports of the Admiral, Arctic Coast concerning the type B anti-submarine minefields in the Tanne and Sylte Fjords laid by the ULM and the BRUMMER on 24 May see 1/Skl 12146/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIA.

Group North reports completion of the transfer of the LUETZOW to Narvik according to plan. (See Telegram 0744.)

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance, 20 steamers, some of them with steam up, among them 10 of over 8,000 GRT, were assembled in Kola Bay in the forenoon. It was established that the route to Archangel is free of ice.

Air reconnaissance reported that a cruiser force consisting of 1 heavy, and 2 light cruisers and 3 destroyers was in quadrant AB 5383 at 1725. They probably are remote escort for the convoy.

Own Situation:

Contact with convoy PQ 16 was maintained. According to reports from the submarines, it consists of more than 30 steamers proceeding in several columns. It is escorted by 7 destroyers, a number of corvettes, 2 large submarines, and a LONDON-class cruiser. The shadowing submarines were driven off by the destroyers and forced to submerge. One of our submarines (U "436") had to withdraw to Narvik on account of damage suffered from a depth charge.

Submarine U "591" attacked a Tribal-class destroyer with a 3-fan which missed. Detailed report in supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

26 May 1942

According to air reconnaissance, the convoy consists of 34 steamers, escorted by 4 patrol vessels, 6 destroyers, and 4 cruisers.

In the early morning the Air Force sank a steamer of 8,000 to 10,000 GRT and damaged 4 others, some of which may be assumed to have sunk, since it was observed that the crews of 2 of them were taken off the ships. The attack was repeated in the afternoon and an 8,000 GRT steamer was sunk, and 2 steamers of 6,000 and 4,000 GRT set afire. 26 bomber planes took part in this action. Raids were also staged on Murmansk, where a 10,000 GRT tanker and a 3,000 GRT steamer were damaged.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances:

Convoy and patrol activities in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses Baltic Sea proceeded according to plan. Ground mines were swept west of Fehmarn, off Kjelsnor, off Fredericia and in the Little Belt. A trawler struck a mine in Howard Bay and sank.

2. Eastern Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Movements of small vessels (coast guard and mine-sweeping vessels) have repeatedly been observed since 20 May between Leningrad and the Finnish coast and also between Kronstadt and Lissy Nos. On 20 May a submarine was reported at the Seeskaer pier and another one on 25 May in the Kronstadt Sea Channel.

Own Situation:

A motor mine sweeper in the Sea Channel, damaged probably by striking a mine, was sunk at 0230 by the Koenigsberg naval battery. The combat forces of the Commander, Mine Sweepers, Baltic Sea were assigned to regular escort and channel-sweeping operations.

As reported to Group North by the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries, the Commanding General, 18th Army does not intend to have army forces execute further mine-laying operations in Kronstadt Bay. The mining of the Neva River is not feasible at the present time, because the far bank of the river as far as the mouth, including Schluesselburg, is in enemy hands. Upon request of the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries, the Army assigned 2 heavy anti-aircraft guns to combat ships; they control most of the river between the Neva River bend and Schluesselburg. 2 searchlights for these guns were placed at the Army's disposal by the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries. The mines supplied to the Army for mining of the Neva River were taken back and will be used for other tasks. (See Telegram 1750.)

26 May 1942

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Submarine sighting signals were intercepted on the American coast off Nantucket Island, off Long Island, Cape Hatteras, Cape Fear and Cape Lookout. An unidentified ship reported a floating mine off Cape Hatteras.

Reports of submarine attacks were intercepted in the West Indies 90 miles and 200 miles south of the Mississippi River estuary and south of Haiti. A submarine was sighted west of Martinique.

2. Own Situation:

Regarding convoy PQ 16 see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean.

Due to a recent report received by the Armed Forces High Command about enemy landing plans in Norway, 2 of the submarines under way from Germany were ordered to Narvik as reinforcements. Submarines U "134" and U "408", which are on their way to western France, and according to dead reckoning should be north of Rockall Bank, are instructed to return to Narvik immediately at increased speed. Submarine U "408" which was damaged by an aerial bomb must be replaced by U "214".

Reports from the American coast and the West Indies claim that the steamers GEORGE CALVERT (6,000 GRT), HEKTOR (1,128 GRT), ALCOA CARRIER (7,000 GRT), POLYPHEMUS (6,269 GRT), the tanker SAMUEL Q. BROWN (6,625 GRT), an unidentified tanker of 6,000 GRT and a 326 GRT schooner were sunk, for a total of 34,048 GRT.

Submarine U "593" sighted an enemy force consisting of 1 aircraft carrier and 2 destroyers on a westerly course south of Long Island; due to the enemy's speed and strong air patrols, the submarine unfortunately had no opportunity to attack.

The submarines stationed off Martinique were cautioned not to attack ships in the harbor of Fort de France.

The submarines of the South Atlantic group are warned that single ships may no longer be attacked after midnight of 26 May on the part of route "Anton" that had been open for attack. The extension of the operations zone requested by the Commanding Admiral, Submarines along the Brazilian coast can be granted for the time being only as far as 400 miles, in view of the expected passage of ship "23". It is contemplated to widen the strip to 600 miles after 5 Jun.

The Mediterranean submarines operating off Tobruk are forbidden to attack submarines, because Italian submarines are operating in adjoining waters. The submarines are assigned primarily to cutting off any traffic to and from Tobruk, and particularly to preventing breakthrough attempts toward the open sea. Additional reports from all zones of operation are contained in supplement to submarine situation, War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division reports that the 2 Dutch submarines UD "5" and UD "3" will be ready for operation by the end of June and the middle of July respectively. Both boats may be used for the transport of 21 torpedoes each and also as weather ships. ~~Their range amounts to 8,500 miles at 8 knots.~~

26 May 1942

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

3 He 111's raided Southampton during the day in the course of an operation against convoy PQ 16. See Situation Arctic Ocean.

During the night of 20 May 4 enemy flying boats flew over the Great Belt, probably for the purpose of dropping mines.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Bomber planes raided enemy airfields on Malta, in Cyrenaica and in Libya.

3. Eastern Front:

The Air Force operated in maximum strength at the front of the Von Kleist Panzer Army. Bomber planes raided Murmansk (see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean).

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance in the forenoon sighted 4 mine sweepers, 1 large patrol vessel and 3 barges outside the harbor of Valletta. East of Marsa Matruh a major convoy consisting of 6 steamers, escorted by 4 destroyers, was observed on a westerly course. The Italian Navy sighted submarines 150 miles north-northwest of Benghazi and about 200 miles east of Cape Passero. According to intercepted messages, ships of the Home Fleet were in radio communication with Gibraltar and Malta and are thus possibly under way from the British Isles to Gibraltar. Continuous exchange of radio communications between the Admiralty, Gibraltar, Malta and the Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet might indicate that either warships or a convoy are under way to or from the eastern Mediterranean.

Normal supply traffic between the Suez Canal and Near East ports and lively submarine activity in the eastern Mediterranean were noted by radio monitoring.

2. Own Situation:

Torpedo planes operating against the convoy sighted off Marsa Matruh were unable to locate it.

The Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy reports that the first group of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla is transferring from Suda to Hilal on 26 May, and that the 4 boats of the 2nd group are scheduled to sail from Augusta on 27 May. 5 boats of the 6th Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla are at Derna. 2 boats are escorting the steamer LOLA and 1 damaged boat is at Benghazi. 4 boats of the landing flotilla are in Bomba Bay, 1 in Derna, 2 are en route from Tripoli to Benghazi, 1 from Benghazi to Derna, 1 boat is in Benghazi for repair. Steamer LOLA and an auxiliary sailing vessel

26 May 1942

were expected to arrive at Derna in the evening of 25 May. During the month of May up to 25 May inclusive, 4,990 tons of German supplies were unloaded at Derna through the German Naval Command, Italy. The total of goods unloaded at the harbor of Derna since 7 Mar. amounts to 42,849 tons.

Operation "Theseus" starts at 1400 of 26 May. The Commanding General of the Italian Armed Forces, North Africa has handed over to the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy control and protection of supply traffic between Benghazi and Derna and the organization, execution and protection of landings behind the enemy lines with German forces.

Special Items:

On 13 Apr. the Naval Attache at Rome transmitted the following information from the Commander in Chief, Navy to Admiral Riccardi:

"a. The highest German command still upholds its opinion that the Italian Navy should convert its submarines for transportation in view of expected naval developments in the Mediterranean.

"b. The Commander in Chief, Navy intends to approach the Duce by way of the Fuehrer with regard to the release of additional Italian shipping space, because it appears it will hardly be possible to carry out the transport tasks foreseen in the Mediterranean without additional tonnage.

"c. It is the personal opinion of the Commander in Chief, Navy that a strategic thrust in the direction of the Suez Canal is of decisive importance for the outcome of the war and that the Naval Staff requests to be informed in time of any differing plans the Italians might have."

For Admiral Riccardi's comments regarding paragraph c see War Diary of 24 Apr.

The Naval Attache asserts that the Naval Staff did not order him to arrange for an interview with Riccardi about the operation, and he did not take the initiative to arrange such a conference.

The Italian Navy has assigned different routes to the Italian vessels returning from East Africa than those they used on the outbound voyage. The Naval Staff is unable to understand this step, because at the time when the ships first sailed from home it had emphasized the necessity of following definite routes skirting the Cape at a great distance. The Naval Staff had felt obliged to make this suggestion in spite of the operational disadvantages involved, in order to avoid endangering the Italian ships. The sudden announcement of the changed route affects the Naval Staff's freedom of action with regard to operations of our ships.

The German Naval Command, Italy is therefore requested to relay the above to the Italian Navy in appropriate form. Admiral Bertoldi has already been informed to this effect.

26 May 1942

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Transports to North Africa according to schedule. The sailing of steamers CAPO ARMA and GUALDI to Benghazi was postponed until 27 May. Naval barge MFP "154" was strafed and bombed during an enemy air raid and suffered slight casualties. An enemy plane was shot down.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Departure of the Crete transport group was postponed to 29 May because of congestion in the harbor of Candia. Otherwise nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Unchanged.

Own Situation:

Transport and convoy services according to plan. The Navy suffered no damage from air raids on Simferopol, Genichesk and Saki. According to a report by Group South, poison gas alarms were sounded at Saki and Eupatoria following the raid on Saki. Investigations are under way.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

Mopping up operations on the Kerch Peninsula continue.

On the front of the Von Kleist Army Group our forces are engaged in heavy defensive fighting against desperate breakthrough attempts by the enemy forces compressed in the Bereka River pocket. Our divisions advancing from the south and west have reached the Bereka River. Tank forces attacking from the north reached the area northwest of Losovenka. The destruction wrought by our attacking forces was assisted by effective attacks of bomber forces. All enemy attempts to break through have failed thus far. The number of prisoners taken in the Bereka River pocket is mounting steadily.

Hungarian units successfully attacked partisan bands in the rear of the 2nd Army.

26 May 1942

Central Army Group:

An enemy attack west of Sukhinichi was repulsed. Our operations south of Vyazma are progressing favorably.

Northern Army Group:

Continuous rain prevents transport of supplies to our forces southeast of Staraya Russa by roads. Provisions and ammunition are being brought up by air. The enemy is trying to extricate his forces from the pocket north of Lake Ilmen in an easterly direction. The advance of our forces in the northern section of the valley along the rail line from Leningrad to Novgorod met little enemy resistance.

2. Finnish Front:

No reports have been received.

3. North Africa:

Reports have not yet arrived.

27 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

For a report on the resolutions of the Labour Party convention see Political Review, No. 121, paragraph 1. The resolutions deal only with social and economic matters. The economist Laski compared the present war with the Spanish war of succession, Churchill playing the role of his ancestor Marlborough and Hitler that of Louis XIV. He also said that the war must be won not only in order to destroy Hitler but also the capitalistic system. Hore Belisha declared that the establishment of a second European front is absolutely necessary if the war is to be ended during the current year.

Egypt:

The scarcity of food has increased considerably. On 21 May no bread was distributed in Cairo, and the excitement of the population was evident in the streets. Unemployment is likewise increasing rapidly.

U.S.A.:

In reply to a request by the Russian Ambassador, the Government submitted new proposals for increasing deliveries to Russia.

According to news agency reports, the Government's attitude toward Laval is undergoing a change and it is considered a good omen that a premature break of relations with France has been avoided.

Brazil:

President Vargas has put several economic agreements into effect which were reached during the conference at Rio between Great Britain, Brazil and the U.S.A. For details see Political Review No. 121, paragraph 7.

Mexico:

Hostility toward the Axis Powers is rising. There can be no doubt that the resolution now before Congress to declare a state of war will be carried.

Japan:

The plight of German residents of the Dutch East Indies has necessitated tedious and difficult negotiations between Berlin and Tokyo. For details see Political Review No. 121, paragraph 10.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

No reports or decisions of importance.

The conference of the chiefs of staff, scheduled for 3 Jun., is postponed until the beginning of July, because the Chief of Staff from Rome cannot leave his post and the Chief of Staff to the Commanding Admiral, Norway is being changed.

27 May 1942

Situation 27 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

The distress signal intercepted from a steamer east of St. Helena seems to have no connection with ship "28", since the suspicious vessel is described as a large fast passenger steamer.

As reported by an agent, the ships leaving the La Plata River assemble off the coast of Rio Grande do Sul. Fast large meat-carrying steamers proceed from there to Freetown unescorted, smaller and slower ships are convoyed to Freetown and Capetown, where ships to India and the Middle East assemble.

Considerable traffic was observed between 24 and 27 Apr. in the harbor of Recife, consisting mostly of Brazilian vessels painted for camouflage. The Brazilian cruiser BAHIA is stationed at Recife. 4 small cruisers, 12 destroyers and 6 submarines, all belonging to the U.S. Navy, were seen at Recife, in addition to the naval tanker ASCOT. The warships are dispersed over the harbor area during the night and completely blacked out, because the harbor can be entered very easily.

2. Own Situation:

An inquiry of the Naval Attache at Tokyo with respect to the cover names, color of paint and armament of the REGENSBURG and DRESDEN is answered by radiogram, according to communication 1448.

The Foreign Office submits a report of the Spanish Embassy at Rio de Janeiro concerning the exchange of German and Brazilian diplomats aboard the steamer CUIBA scheduled to sail from Rio on 30 May, which was accorded safe conduct by the enemy. The Brazilian Government was informed by us that the steamer will not be molested, halted, or searched by German forces.

In order to avoid incidents, the Naval Staff is requested to inform German and Italian forces accordingly.

All necessary steps are taken to comply with the above request.

The German Naval Command, Italy reports the positions of the East Asia Groups "Alpha" and "Beta" as of noon, 26 May. (See Telegram 1900.)

All ships in foreign waters are informed about the enemy situation by Radiograms 0302 and 1447.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

The Armed Forces High Command transmits an intelligence report from "an absolutely reliable source", according to which the Chief of the British Intelligence Service in Switzerland, Military Attache General West, issued the following directive about the middle of May to the British agents operating in the Brest area:

27 May 1942

"During the first week of June constant watch should be kept for the pre-arranged signal and following its receipt, all tasks should be carried out according to plan."

In the Armed Forces High Command's opinion this directive might point to a surprise attack on the Brest coast planned for the beginning of June.

Group West and the Commanding Admiral, France were notified immediately

According to air reconnaissance, an incoming convoy of 8 steamers was located at the entrance of Bristol Channel around midnight.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance located moderate convoy traffic on the English east coast.

Own Situation:

2 ground mines were swept on route "Weiss" northeast of Heli goland.

An enemy plane was shot down at Velsen by naval anti-aircraft guns. North of Walcheren 3 vessels of the Rhine Flotilla were attacked by 37 Spitfires, 5 of which were brought down by naval anti-aircraft guns; 2 vessels of the Rhine Flotilla were slightly damaged.

The Naval Liaison Officer to the Army High Command reports that the Commander in Chief, West suggested that in order to increase the defenses of the Netherlands the replacements for the VI and X Army Corps and the forces of Naval Station, North Sea be formed into combat groups which could be brought up in an emergency by fast transport. The Chief of Army Equipment and Commander of the Replacement Army and the Chief, General Army Office were requested by the Army General Staff to study this problem in consultation with the High Command, Navy; the Commanding General, West; and the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Netherlands and to submit appropriate suggestions.

The matter is being taken care of by the Naval Staff Quartermaster Division; the Naval Staff Operations Division approves of the proposal.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

British air reconnaissance concentrated on the Norwegian coast. The Naval Staff believes that Group North correctly evaluates the frequent reports about enemy invasion plans. Group North believes that it is their purpose to create uncertainty as to place and time, but also

27 May 1942

that preparations are actually in progress and that we must expect increased activity if our forces are particularly heavily engaged at the Eastern Front. No prediction regarding the scale of the planned landing operation can be made at this time.

Own Situation:

On the basis of a recent agent report, the Armed Forces High Command considers it quite possible that the British intend to attempt a landing in Norway. The Fuehrer has ordered that all submarines outbound from German ports be directed to Narvik (see War Diary of 26 May). The Naval Staff informs Group North of the above and of the orders issued to submarines U "134" and U "408". Group North is to get in touch with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines in order to fix the date at which the latter will take over the command of these submarines and to report when the submarines now out of commission in Norway will again be ready for operations. (See Telegram 1000.)

Group North assumes that several cruisers and aircraft carriers are in the vicinity of the PQ convoy; for this reason and in view of the increased probability of an enemy landing, the Group sees the necessity of withholding the pocket battleships and places them and the destroyers on 3-hour readiness as of 1500.

The Group intends to commit the pocket battleships and destroyers by way of Alta Fjord; if air reconnaissance shows that the enemy cruisers and aircraft carriers have withdrawn in a westerly direction; otherwise, they will remain inactive until the QP convoy sails from Murmansk. (See Telegram 1147.)

The following information is submitted to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff about the special defense measures taken in view of the increased threat of enemy landings as indicated by the Armed Forces High Command:

- A. Submarines:
- (1) Submarines U "214" and U "408" will proceed to Narvik immediately.
 - (2) Probably 3 submarines will depart from home ports by 1 Jun. and an additional 3 by 10 Jun.
 - (3) Disposition of the 19 submarines in the Norwegian areas:
 - a. 5 submarines in action against PQ 16
 - b. 1 submarine under way from Narvik to join the operations against convoy PQ 16
 - c. 1 submarine unable to dive, returning to Narvik
 - d. 2 submarines ready for operations at Trondheim
 - e. The following submarines are out of commission at present, but expected to be ready for operations as indicated:

At Trondheim:	1 submarine on 21 Jun.
At Bergen:	3 submarines, 3 Jun., 24 Jun., 6 Jul.
At Narvik:	2 submarines, indefinite
In Germany:	4 submarines, 10 Jun., 27 Jun., 1 Jul.

27 May 1942

Transfer of the submarines listed under (2) and their temporary assignment to the north area conforms to the orders previously issued by the Naval Staff.

B. Ships:

Ready for operations:

- a. At Trondheim: TIRPITZ, HIPPER, 2 destroyers, 3 torpedo boats
- b. At Narvik: LUETZOW, SCHEER, 6 destroyers, 1 torpedo boat, 6 boats of the 6th PT Boat Flotilla
- c. At Kirkenes: 4 boats of the 8th PT Boat Flotilla
- d. It is planned to transfer 3 destroyers from Germany early in June.

C. Plans:

Since it can safely be assumed that the entire British Home Fleet will be at sea in the event of large-scale operations, the Naval Staff believes that it would not be to the best advantage of our defense to provoke a naval battle in which the respective forces would be of such unequal strength. It is therefore intended to use all forces available in the actual invasion area for defense, and to use the remaining ships to attack recognized weak spots of the enemy forces, so as to produce the maximum effect by coordinating both groups. (See Telegram 1400.)

According to the situation report of the Commanding Admiral, Norway, steamer VARDOE, which was set afire by a Russian battery (see War Diary 26 May), ran aground. The vessel is in full sight of the enemy and cannot be approached; the Norwegian steamer URANUS (935 GRT) was strafed and slightly damaged during an enemy air raid off Bjoerne Sound.

Enemy planes raided Petsamo on 26 May, and Lister and Stavanger on 27 May.

6 barges of the 2nd group of the 21st Landing Flotilla sailed from Bergen in a northerly direction.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Submarine activity in the Arctic Ocean was normal. A submarine located in quadrant AN 4444 is apparently on the way to the zone of operations. Air reconnaissance is concentrating on the Iceland area. German submarines proceeding through the areas between the Shetland and Faeroe Islands and between the Faeroe Islands and Ireland were constantly located during the last few days.

On the basis of reconnaissance by our submarines and planes, Group North assumes the following:

- a. QP 12 is probably en route.
- b. The meeting point of QP and PQ convoys has been shifted farther

27 May 1942

to the west.

c. It is possible that PQ 16 and PQ 17 have been combined into one convoy together with an especially important group of ships from America. Probably a heavy force including an aircraft carrier is acting as remote escort. For the first time it was noticed that submarines are included in the escort to protect the convoy against our heavy ships.

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean doubts that the information concerning convoy QP 12 is correct. He calls attention to the air reconnaissance report of 26 May according to which 20 steamers with steam up were anchored in Kola Bay, which would indicate that the convoys will meet east of 25° E. This assumption is supported by the argument that the enemy might find it better to concentrate the cruiser escort on one convoy at a time in view of the threat from our ships in Bogen Bay. It must further be taken into consideration that convoy PQ 16 might go to Archangel. (See Telegram 2326.)

The picture of the situation is by no means clear.

2. Own Situation:

Contact with convoy PQ 16 was maintained during the night of 26 May and during all of 27 May by submarines and planes. Due to good visibility and constant daylight, interrupted only by scattered snow and rain squalls, our submarines found it extremely difficult to attack and were driven off again by the powerful escort before they were able to close in. One of the submarines was attacked by one of our own dive bombers with bombs and gunfire, fortunately without being hit. For details see supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

The 5th Air Force, which attacked between 1230 and 2030 in very great strength (more than 100 Ju 88's and a number of He 111's) was quite successful, however. The 5th Air Force reports 9 steamers totalling 62,000 GRT and another medium-sized steamer sunk, 6 steamers totalling 30,000 GRT and 1 destroyer badly and 16 more steamers totalling 99,500 GRT slightly damaged. The convoy's last reported position at 1935 was 73° 40' N, 22° 55' E. At that time it consisted of 28 steamers, 2 cruisers, 6 destroyers and several escort vessels. Other attacks were made during the afternoon on ships in the harbor of Murmansk; 2 steamers were reported sunk, a third one damaged.

Group North ordered the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to recall the submarines now in operation to their bases when they reach approximately 71° 30' N, in order to have at least some submarines available for operations against subsequent convoys and for repelling landings. (See Telegram 1150.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Complying with the directive of the Chief, Naval Staff (see War Diary 21 May) regarding reinforcement of the northern Jutland defenses, Group West, the Admiral, Denmark, Naval Station North Sea, and the Baltic Naval Station receive orders from the Naval Staff. For copy see 1/Skl 12230/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. III.

27 May 1942

Group North requests the 1st Air Force to attack the railroad and the harbor of Lissy Nos in order to prevent the use of this base and the shipment of supplies to Kronstadt. See Telegram 1201.

V. Merchant Shipping:

In view of the poor crop expected this year, the Minister of Food and the Minister of Economics have renewed their request to do everything possible to increase the number of blockade runners between East Asia and western France. According to the data furnished by them, cargo space for the shipment of 440,000 tons of material will be required during the coming shipping period 1942-1943, inclusive of 270,000 tons of edible fats from East Asia.

Since Japanese ships are not available, all efforts must be made to put the available German and Italian shipping space to better use than ever. The Special Staff for Economic Warfare, Armed Forces High Command and the Naval Staff Operations Division have therefore worked out a new timetable by which the shipping period is extended and the time required for loading and unloading is cut, thus permitting shipment of 146,000 tons of goods on "Etappe" supply ships from East Asia. It is planned in addition to allocate 7 or 8 supply ships or motor tankers to transport approximately 70,000 tons of edible fats. Thus it is expected to transport 210,000 tons during the coming shipping period, not counting losses; this is the maximum to be achieved with the available means.

According to the new schedule, the first blockade runners (KARIN and IRENE) will sail from France on 8 and 15 Aug. respectively, and from Japan (TANNENFELS, DRESDEN, KULMERLAND, RHAKOTIS) on 21 Jul. and the middle and end of August. The last ships will arrive in Europe by the middle of May, in Japan by the end of June 1943.

For details see War Diary, Part B, Vol. VII.

VI. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Submarine sighting reports were intercepted from the American east coast off Nantucket Island and Cape Hatteras, in the West Indies, off the Mississippi River estuary and off Santa Lucia. U.S. steamer ATHENOS (4,639 GRT) was torpedoed 190 miles south of the Mississippi River estuary.

2. Own Situation:

Regarding the operation against convoy PQ 16 see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean.

A convoy of 11 to 15 steamers was located in the North Atlantic in quadrant AL 96; no action is planned against it.

27 May 1942

No reports of successes on the American east coast were received. From the West Indies, submarine U "753" reports sinking the 6,758 GRT tanker HAMLET in the Gulf of Mexico; submarine U "506" reported sinking the armed steamer YORKMOOR (4,457 GRT) by gunfire in quadrant DC 5844.

Since the zone of operations off the Brazilian coast was widened, the South Atlantic submarines were assigned new attack areas.

In the Mediterranean, submarine U "431" scored a hit on a transport of 4,000 or 5,000 GRT and one on a steamer of 3,500 GRT in quadrant CO 4112. Due to a depth charge attack the results could not be observed.

For additional reports from all war theaters see supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VII. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Fighter bombers sank a patrol boat off Portsmouth. Other raids were made on Falmouth.

Regarding the operations against convoy PQ 16 and Murmansk, see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean.

Night missions by 46 of our planes against ships yielded no results. The alternate target of Great Yarmouth was raided instead.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Strong formations of the Air Commander, North Africa attacked land targets. Complying with a suggestion of the Naval Staff, the order of 23 May to lay mines in the Suez Canal and to attack ships at Suez in connection with operation "Theseus" has been issued.

3. Eastern Front:

20 enemy incursions were made into German territory from the east, reaching a line Memel-Koenigsberg-Angerburg-Augustowo. Bombs were dropped on Insterburg, Augustowo and near Kauen and Dvinsk. At Kauen a train carrying soldiers on leave was hit, resulting in 14 dead.

Reconnaissance activity over the Black Sea.

No news was received from the Russian front.

4. Special Item:

A number of questions asked by the Naval Staff regarding Japanese aircraft carriers have been answered through the Japanese Naval Attache. For copy see 1/Skl 12727/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV.

Nothing of particular interest was learned from the reply.

27 May 1942

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean1. Enemy Situation:

At noon of 26 May, 1 French destroyer and 2 submarines passed through the Strait of Gibraltar in a westerly direction. Normal convoy and supply operations in the coastal waters between Alexandria and Tobruk.

Air reconnaissance and radio monitoring revealed a hospital ship, probably the LLANDOVERY CASTLE between Marsa Matruh and Alexandria. A convoy of 3 steamers and 3 escort vessels was spotted east of Tobruk by air reconnaissance and German submarines; it was attacked successfully by a submarine. (See Submarine Situation.) The convoy arrived at Tobruk at 1800.

Only barge movements were observed at Valletta.

2. Own Situation:

Enemy planes raided Messina and Benghazi during the night of 26 May.

According to the report concerning "Theseus" by the German Naval Command, Italy at Derna, the Panzer Army took to the offensive on 26 May. The spearheads of Group Cruewell have reached Senali South. The beginning of the decisive battle may be expected on 27 May at El Gobi. For details see Telegram 0903.

The naval and supply situation on 26 May was uneventful. 540 tons of material were unloaded at Derna on 26 May. According to the situation report of 27 May the offensive of the Panzer Army is making good progress. There are good prospects of encircling the enemy southwest of Tobruk. Units of the Panzer Army have reached the area east of Tobruk. The landing operation planned for 27 May was cancelled by the Panzer Army. 2 PT boats arrived at Derna. 4 motor mine sweepers are in Bomba Bay on their way to Derna. 3 motor mine sweepers are engaged in escort duty. 4 vessels of the landing flotilla are standing by for a special mission in Bomba Bay, 2 vessels are on their way to Bomba with supplies for the Air Force, 1 is at Derna, 1 at Tripoli and 1 at Benghazi for repair. 277 tons of material were unloaded at Derna on 27 May.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

According to plan without major incident.

4. Area Naval Group South:Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance furnished no new information. In the evening of 26 May a submarine was sighted off Klarovka while lowering several boats; she was fired upon by Army coastal artillery.

27 May 1942

Own Situation:

An investigation of the Eupatoria poison gas alarm resulted in the disclosure of a new type incendiary phosphorus bomb but did not indicate that gas had been used.

A minefield in the Kerch Strait was laid on 27 May according to plan.

2 Italian subchasers arrived at Yalta from Sulina on the morning of 27 May.

PT boats "26" and "28" arrived at Constanta from Sulina on 26 May. Convoy and transport services according to plan.

IX. Situation East Asia

In addition to Japanese reports published to date about the battle in the Coral Sea, it can be stated that on 7 May 1 CALIFORNIA-class battleship was sunk and 1 WARSPITE-class battleship and 1 CANBERRA-class cruiser were damaged. On 8 May, 2 aircraft carriers and 1 PORTLAND-class cruiser were sunk and 1 NORTH CAROLINA-class battleship and 1 LOUISVILLE-class cruiser damaged. All of these successes were achieved by the Japanese Naval Air Force.

According to press reports, the fighting in Chekiang Province was developed into a major Japanese offensive in the direction of Kinkwa.

For an announcement by Japanese Headquarters about the successes achieved since the start of the war and the losses sustained as published in a Domei report of 26 May see supplement of report no. 121 of the Naval Intelligence Division, Foreign Press Branch of 27 May 1942.

X. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The situation in the Crimea is essentially unchanged. Destruction of the enemy encircled on the Bereka River bank continues and is aided by the creation of many small pockets. Units of several Rumanian divisions crossed the Bereka River and advanced in north-easterly direction toward Losovenka, and contributed considerably to our success. An enemy attack in the Savintsy bend supported by strong tank forces and directed against our eastern front was repulsed with the assistance of dive bombers.

Central Army Group:

Our forces converging from the north and south succeeded in merging south of Vyazma, so that the enemy cavalry division was encircled in a number of pockets. An enemy attack at Byeloi was repulsed.

27 May 1942

Northern Army Group:

South-southeast of Staraya Russa hard fighting for a supply route is in progress. Our forces pressing northward in the Volkhov valley were halted by enemy counterattacks. Enemy west-east traffic at the Vassel locks west of Yamno was shelled by our artillery.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

No major engagements were reported.

3. North Africa:

No report has yet been received from the Panzer Army about the beginning of the offensive.

28 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

Secretary of State Hull declared in a press conference with regard to De Gaulle's demand for political as well as military recognition of the De Gaulle movement that the U.S. Government and its allies are interested primarily in furthering the military progress of the war. The U.S. Government is not planning at the present time to consider any problems beyond this.

Reuter reports on demands made by the Italian Government on France and considers it possible that Laval might agree to negotiate about the status of Italian residents of Tunisia.

Great Britain:

A resolution introduced at the annual convention of the Labour Party to terminate the domestic political truce was rejected by a very small majority of 1,275,000 votes against 1,209,000. For details see Political Review No. 122, paragraph 2.

India:

Gandhi's growing influence has created increasing concern in Moslem circles.

Egypt:

Prime Minister Nahas Pasha resigned, but was immediately recalled and formed a new cabinet with only slight changes. The motives for his step seem to be differences of opinion within the Wafd Party, a faction of which appears to have given up absolute opposition to the British in order to avoid further complications in the food situation.

Canada:

Immediate introduction of coffee and tea rationing and a reduction of the sugar quota was ordered.

Brazil:

Spain, as the representative of German interests, protested against the incorrect treatment of the Germans arrested at Rio.

Chile:

Congress rejected by a vote of 52 to 34 a resolution calling for a committee to investigate the activities of all foreigners.

Japan:

In addition to the Imperial Rule Assistance Organization another organization with a similar name has been formed for indoctrination and national education of the broad masses. The radical-national party under Nakano's leadership seems to be the only one not taking part in this movement.

The first bill to be introduced in the Diet by the Government will concern appropriations for considerable expansion of the merchant

28 May 1942

marine and for the training of seamen.

According to a report from a diplomatic source, the occupation of Burma, while constituting a heavy blow to Chungking, will not cause the immediate collapse or surrender of Chiang Kai-shek, who is determined to continue guerilla warfare. In view of the unbroken fighting spirit of the Chinese, the available Japanese forces are not strong enough for a large-scale offensive against Chungking.

The Japanese Government is said to have no intention of altering its attitude toward Russia before it becomes possible to predict the future development on the European front. The Japanese forces in Manchukuo have not yet been reinforced sufficiently to permit an offensive.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. In discussing the transfer of the pocket battleships from Narvik to fjords farther north, for instance to the Alta Fjord (see War Diary 27 May, Telegram 1147 of Group North to Admiral, Arctic Ocean), the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff reconfirms his previous order that these ships must not be committed unless adequate air reconnaissance is available.

II. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff Operations Division reports on the directive to the Fleet regarding the disposition of the destroyers and torpedo boats in the Norwegian area, and their allocation to Group West. (See War Diary 26 May.) The Chief, Naval Staff approves of the Naval Staff's directive.

III. Report by the Chief, Fleet Branch, Naval Staff Quartermaster Division on the directive of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Norway regarding coordination of the defense measures through the territorial commanders, that is through the divisional commanders. On the basis of the executive order of the Commander in Chief, Navy to Fuehrer directive No. 40, the Commanding Admiral, Norway protested with full justification against conferring unlimited authority to the territorial commanders with regard to planning and carrying out all defense measures.

The Chief, Naval Staff orders that the Representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at Fuehrer Headquarters support this objection at the Armed Forces High Command and try to settle the matter in favor of the Navy.

IV. The Chief, Fleet Branch, Naval Staff Quartermaster Division reports further that the 2nd PT boat group assigned to the Black Sea has departed from Linz.

V. Report of the Chief, Foreign Affairs Section, Naval Staff Operations Division:

a. Concerning the British apology to Sweden on account of the arming of Norwegian vessels in Swedish ports.

b. Concerning the French communication to the German Armistice Commission in connection with the arrival of the torpedoed U.S. destroyer BELKNAP at Fort de France.

28 May 1942

c. Concerning the German and Italian demands on France for immediate scuttling and destruction of the French warships, merchant vessels and air forces in West Indian harbors in order to prevent their falling into enemy hands.

Re b: The damaged destroyer was given permission to anchor. Communication with the shore was conceded only to the extent required for medical assistance to the wounded. The French Delegation was requested to state whether the destroyer was given a time limit for repairs and what other measures are being planned.

In the Naval Staff's opinion it is undesirable to create a precedent by presenting too rigorous demands in view of the possibility of similar emergencies encountered by German ships.

Re c: The memorandum presented to Vichy on 17 May by the German Government states emphatically that the only way for the French Government to fulfill the obligations of the armistice agreement is by ordering Admiral Robert in the Antilles at once to destroy all warships, merchant vessels and planes immediately upon receipt of the order. In the event that French ships should fall into enemy hands in spite of this order, the German Government will take over an equivalent amount of French tonnage.

The same demand was presented to the French by the Italian Armistice Commission at Turin.

After taking note of the memorandum, Prime Minister Laval declared that the German Government's claim for compensation by confiscating French tonnage is justified. After consultation with Admiral Darlan and Admiral Auphan and following a report to Marshal Petain, Laval further stated that the French Government has no basic objections to the German stand. With regard to the demand for immediate scuttling of all ships, however, he pointed out that it would be necessary to select a moment which would make it possible to blame the Americans for the break of relations. Personally, he is convinced like Darlan and Auphan that hasty action is not necessary because Admiral Robert himself guarantees that everything will be done to achieve the desired result.

Laval subsequently commented in detail also on the political side of the matter, and expressed the hope that an agreement is reached with the German Government before relations with the U.S.A. are broken off, so that the French population and Army can be prepared, since a break with America would probably lead to an immediate Anglo-American attempt to disrupt the communications between France and North Africa. It is difficult to predict the consequences of such a situation. He concluded with a modest plea for a little German support.

The German Government answered these arguments briefly, stating that it is not in a position to change the stand of the German memorandum, and pointed out explicitly that the German demand for compensation applies not only to merchant vessels but includes warships, too.

The Chief, Naval Staff considers the French pledges to destroy their ships at the proper time as satisfactory, and considers that the demand for immediate destruction presented by the Foreign Office is too harsh. (See War Diary of 13, 14, 15, and 16 May.)

28 May 1942

A detailed review of the Martinique question is contained in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.

VI. The Naval Liaison Officer to the Armed Forces High Command reports that the Fuehrer ordered that the new SEYDLITZ be converted into an auxiliary aircraft carrier. The Naval Construction Division was instructed to investigate this matter further.

VII. Concerning the question of command authority over the Commander, Submarines, Italy, the Commander in Chief, Navy reiterates that this commander is subordinated to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines in administrative but not tactical matters. The Commanding Admiral, Submarines is not to add his comment to the war diary of the Commander, Submarines, Italy as far as tactical measures are concerned.

Situation 28 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Enemy situation report and information on the positions of Italian East Africa ships on 26 May and of Sweden ships on 24 May by Radiograms 0130, 1339, 1703, 1946.

The first home-bound group of Italian East Africa ships called at Port Elizabeth on 27 May. No reports were received from the German auxiliary cruisers or blockade runners.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

2 ground mines were swept in the Gironde estuary. After sweeping 9 mines, the mine-exploding vessel "174" was heavily damaged and subsequently grounded off Cherbourg; there is little hope of salvaging the ship which had already been equipped with improved de-gaussing gear.

28 May 1942

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance in the evening revealed a large convoy off the Humber mouth and another one off Lowestoft, both on a northerly course. According to an agent report, Aberdeen is an important loading place for war material to Russia. Customs storehouses are jammed with war material of all sorts. (The feasibility of air raids is being investigated by the Air Force Operations Staff.)

Own Situation:

During an air raid on the Rhine Flotilla off Walcheren Island on 27 May, 1 vessel was badly damaged, another one had to be beached. Casualties amount to 13, including 1 dead.

Mine sweeper M "3236" was rammed by a motor barge during a trial run at Antwerp and sank.

3 ground mines were swept.

Convoy and patrol services proceeded without major incident.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

A submarine sighted a large British submarine in quadrant AF 8448 (60 miles off Nord Fjord).

Own Situation:

Convoy operations between Stavanger and Kristiansand South were halted due to bad weather, all other services proceeded according to plan.

With regard to the allocation of tugboats (see War Diary 25 May), the Naval Staff advises Group North as follows (with copies to Group West, the Commanding Admiral, Norway, the Fleet, and the Commanding Admiral, Battleships): On account of the present enemy situation in the Channel and the available forces of Group West, the transfer of tugboats and tankers involves a considerable risk and requires the commitment of all available forces, so that delays in transferring these vessels to Norway are unavoidable. An improvement of the situation can only be expected when additional escort forces can be allocated to Group West. The Naval Staff has been fully aware of the urgency of solving this problem for the Norwegian area. (See Telegram 1818.)

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

The cruiser force observed in quadrant AB 5383 on 26 May could not be located on 27 or 28 May. The 5th Air Force assumes that the force turned back after air reconnaissance in the Lofoten area reported that the German heavy forces had not left their bases.

28 May 1942

A submarine reported convoy PQ 16 in quadrant AC 5376 at 2120. All day long Russian reconnaissance and bomber planes formed part of its escort. At 2210 the convoy was reported by air reconnaissance at 73° 40' N, 35° 40' E proceeding on a 115° course and still consisting of 38 ships, while a report of 1240 mentioned 48 merchant vessels, 11 escort vessels, and 2 submarines.

16 steamers totalling 70,000 GRT, 1 destroyer, 3 escort vessels, 1 submarine, and 2 tankers were observed in Kola Bay on 27 May.

Own Situation:

The 3 submarines operating against convoy PQ 16 reported no further successes today, either.

2 submarines on their way to join the operations against the convoy have orders to attack the ships damaged by the Air Force. However, one of them, submarine U "703", had to withdraw on account of damage suffered from a depth charge, while the other, U "251", had to head for land for repairs. Also one of the 3 submarines shadowing the convoy, (U "377") had to withdraw because of engine trouble.

Confirming its previous reports (see War Diary 27 May), the 5th Air Force reported the results achieved up to noon of 28 May as follows: Sunk: 12 steamers (86,000 GRT) and 1 steamer of undetermined size. Probably sunk: 5 steamers (22,000 GRT), 1 destroyer. Damaged: 22 steamers (122,500 GRT) and 1 steamer of undetermined size. Probably damaged: 2 steamers (10,000 GRT).

These figures include a few duplications, due to repeated hits on the same ships.

Another steamer of 8,000 GRT was set afire by incendiary bombs in Murmansk harbor on 28 May.

Irrespective of whether the figures reported by the 5th Air Force are correct in every detail, it can be stated that an outstanding success has been achieved in the fight against the PQ convoy traffic. The direct and indirect effects will probably be very considerable and will greatly relieve the Norwegian situation, too. The enemy has learned unmistakably what risks he takes by bringing strong expeditionary forces into the range of the German Air Force.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring intercepted a Russian announcement of a danger zone in Lake Ladoga off Schlusselburg. For details see Telegram 1225.

Outposts on the banks of the Neva River were instructed to investigate whether the breaking up of the ice can be utilized for setting mines afloat.

28 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

The 1st Air Force dropped 18 mines north of Kronstadt during the night of 27 May. Group North orders that mines which cannot be used in the upper part of the Neva (see War Diary of 26 May) be stored with the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries and at the same time authorizes the use of mines in the Kronstadt Sea Channel beginning at Peterhof. (See Telegram 1811.)

The Commander in Chief, Air Force plans to mine Lake Ladoga. Group North directs the Naval Liaison Staff, Finland to suggest appropriate target areas after consultation with the Chief of the Finnish Fleet. The Northern Army Group is requested to indicate the areas which must be kept free of mines for possible Army operations. (See Telegram 2308.)

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

A British ship was located 270 miles northwest of Rockall Bank and another one 110 miles northwest of Cape St. Vincent. Submarine sighting reports were intercepted from off Cape Hatteras, off Long Island, and off the Mississippi estuary. A submarine attack was reported 150 miles southwest of Cuba. East of Tobruk, a plane reported a futile depth charge attack on a submarine.

2. Own Situation:

Regarding the operation against PQ 16 see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean.

Submarines operating in the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico report the sinking of tankers NEW JERSEY (6,414 GRT) and CARRABULLE (5,030 GRT) and of 2 steamers each approximately 5,000 GRT.

For details and further reports see supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Repeated daylight raids on Great Yarmouth. Enemy incursions during the night of 28 May were reported from Belgium and northern and western France; attacks on German convoys off the Dutch coast were also reported.

Group North requests that a suggestion be submitted to the Air Force Operations Staff for bomber attacks on Aberdeen, which is reportedly jammed with war material for Russia. (See agent's report under Enemy Situation, North Sea.)

The Air Force Operations Staff was informed of this fact, but doubts that such an operation would be successful now on account

28 May 1942

of extensive defenses. The Naval Staff will keep this matter in mind.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Strong forces supported the operations of the Panzer Army, North Africa.

3. Eastern Front:

No reports were received from the Russian front. In the Black Sea 1 destroyer was damaged by a bomb hit southwest of Tuapse and 1 cruiser probably damaged by an aerial torpedo. Another force consisting of 1 cruiser, 6 destroyers and 1 steamer was spotted south of Yalta; one of its destroyers had already been hit and damaged on 27 May by an aerial torpedo.

Regarding bomber and reconnaissance activities in the Arctic Ocean see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean. In the zone assigned to the 5th Air Force 22 enemy planes were shot down by fighter planes on 28 May. A fighter operation against an enemy reconnaissance plane in the area between Tromsø and the Lofoten Islands was unsuccessful.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation, Mediterranean:

1 DIDO-class cruiser escorted by 2 destroyers sailed from Gibraltar in an easterly direction. According to Italian reports the Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces in the European Theater, Admiral Stark, arrived at Gibraltar on his way to Alexandria. Air reconnaissance located several single ships off Tobruk and one steamer of medium size with several patrol vessels apparently just arriving at Tobruk. In the forenoon, 3 tankers and 5 steamers were observed between Alexandria and Port Said.

A number of submarine sighting reports from British planes were intercepted by radio intelligence, as were messages addressed to unidentified receivers about the possibility of a landing at 23° 40' E (approximately 20 miles west of Tobruk). At 2330 a British plane reported its position over a northbound group of 5 large vessels 18 miles south of Capo Armi. At 2300 another plane reported 6 unidentified ships proceeding on a northerly course at 12 knots; the position was not given. In the forenoon a plane was ordered to attack a submarine reported 40 miles east of Tobruk.

2. Own Situation, Mediterranean:

Enemy planes raided Messina during the night of 27 May.

Naval barge "149" had a brush with 2 enemy PT boats during the night of 26 May after leaving Bomba Bay. The barge was unsuccessfully attacked with 4 torpedoes; she sank 1 PT boat by a direct 7.5 cm hit and the second PT boat was forced to withdraw.

According to a report of the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy from Derna Headquarters, the Panzer Army cancelled the landing operation planned for 28 May, also.

28 May 1942

In agreement with the Naval Staff, the Air Force Operations Staff transferred 1 mine-sweeping plane from Group North temporarily to Rome where it will be at the disposal of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 11th transport group was scheduled to sail during the forenoon from Naples to Tripoli via the western route. It consists of 3 motor ships escorted by 3 torpedo boats.

The troop transports CITTA DI GENOVA, CITTA DI NAPOLI and CITTA DI TUNISI arrived at Benghazi on schedule. The steamers GUALDI and CAPO AFMA are on the way there. The motor ships BLIXIO and ROSFLLI arrived at Brindisi on 27 May as planned. On 26 May they were unsuccessfully attacked by bombers and a submarine.

Coastal supply traffic according to plan without major incident.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

It was learned by radio intelligence that the cruisers D and E, with the commander of light forces on board an unidentified ship, sailed from their base in the southeastern Black Sea on the morning of 27 May in a northwesterly direction. 1 or 2 destroyers and several submarines were located in the Crimean waters, and 1 destroyer, 1 submarine, 5 minesweepers and 2 PT boats in the northeastern part of the Black Sea. Air reconnaissance spotted a convoy of 9 steamers with 2 cruisers and 2 destroyers sailing from Sevastopol on a southeasterly course. Increasing activity of naval forces in the Sevastopol area was also observed, as were large numbers of small vessels in the harbors of Akhtarsk, Temryuk, Yeisk and Anapa. In the morning of 27 May mines were sighted off the Klarovka battery. (See War Diary 27 May.)

Own Situation:

In the evening of 26 May enemy planes attacked patrol boats in the Mariupol area, causing slight damage and casualties. During the night of 26 May enemy planes raided the harbor of Mariupol, and a gunboat fired on it simultaneously from the sea.

The tankers ALBARO and CELENO arrived at Constanta on 27 May according to plan from the Bosphorus.

PT boats S "72" and S "102" started down the Danube from Linz in the forenoon of 27 May.

Convoy service according to plan without major incident.

28 May 1942

VIII. Situation East Asia

A report about the military situation in East Asia as of the end of May 1942 submitted by the Military Attache at Bangkok is in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV. (Sk1 M att. II 1983/42 Gkdos)

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The situation in the Crimea is unchanged.

The battle of annihilation west of Izyum is over. So far, 213,900 prisoners, 1,237 tanks, 1,812 guns, and innumerable other material were captured. 542 enemy planes were shot down.

Central Army Group:

Fighting of local character only, in the course of which all enemy attacks were repulsed.

Northern Army Group:

German operations in the Volkhov valley were successful. An enemy attack southeast of Schluesselburg was repulsed by concentrated artillery.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Fronts:

No major engagements were reported.

3. North Africa:

The offensive of the Panzer Army is progressing according to plan. Trigh Enver Bei (trail south of El Adem) was reached after heavy fighting. 3 Indian motorized brigades made their first appearance at the front.

29 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

France:

According to the German Ambassador at Paris, Admiral Robert reported on the new proposals brought to Martinique by U.S. Admiral Hoover on 23 May. According to them the U.S.A. consents to demobilization of the French warships on condition that the dismantled engine parts are shipped to Casablanca. A newly founded South American or Spanish company would administer the merchant ships and operate them between North, Central, and South America. The French gold would remain at Martinique but be placed under seal. The U.S.A. also demands complete control of radio and telegraph services. There would be no objection to sending a vessel from time to time from Martinique to Morocco.

As officially announced at Vichy, a U.S. torpedo boat badly damaged by a torpedo arrived at Fort de France in the afternoon of 25 May. After disembarking the injured personnel, the vessel left the roadstead at noon on 27 May without having received assistance. (See War Diary 28 May.)

North Africa:

The German Consul at Casablanca reports statements attributed to the French Commander in Chief in North Africa, according to which the latter discounts current rumors about an imminent Anglo-American invasion attempt on the North African coast. On the other hand, the situation on the African Atlantic coast during the coming months will be very grave. France must be prepared for attacks by strong forces at this coast. General Juin as well as the local commanders of the naval and air forces there are considered absolutely reliable. They have their troops well in hand and will oppose with all their forces any Anglo-American attempt to invade North Africa.

Great Britain:

In its final session the Labour Party voted in favor of the following resolutions: To increase the aid to Russia; to establish a second European front; to give equal rights to the Jews after the war, with a Jewish national home in Palestine; to base post-war reconstruction on the principles of social justice; and to apply the Atlantic Charter to all parts of the British Empire even during the war.

It was also stated that the situation of the Axis Powers is becoming very serious.

A proposal for official cooperation with the Communist Party and for lifting the ban on the Daily Worker was rejected.

A resolution calling for a commission to be sent to Russia was rejected.

After a statement was made to the effect that the Communist Party has brought the Russian nation into disrepute in Great Britain, a resolution was carried by which the "Labour Party assures Prime Minister Churchill that it will back him up unanimously in his determination to fight this war to the end."

Reuter reports that the mine workers' union has asked for another wage increase.

29 May 1942

In discussing post-war problems, the press expresses the opinion that a future peace must be based on a close and permanent alliance between the U.S.A., Great Britain, Russia, and China.

U.S.A.:

According to a report from a diplomatic source, the press again reflects disappointment over the British failure to prepare bases and transport routes across Africa. Disappointment is felt also about the attitude of Russia which emphatically demands that a second front be established, but shows little willingness really to cooperate with its allies. Thus it has not answered the American suggestion to send representatives to Washington to the general staff conference, nor has it extended an invitation for discussions in connection with the London conference of Marshall and Hopkins. It is assumed that the Soviet Government is trying to avoid endangering its relations with Japan.

Argentina:

Castillo declared in a message to Congress that Argentina has friendly relations with all countries. The session of Parliament, beginning on 29 May, will be opened by the opposition with an attack on the state of siege, which puts the Government in the position of suppressing demonstrations of the radical masses in favor of breaking off relations with the Axis Powers.

Mexico:

President Camacho asked Congress to declare that a state of war exists with the Axis Powers. Congress voted in favor of this resolution, so that the country is now at war with the Axis Powers. No formal declaration of war is to be made. In motivating this step the President pointed to the sinking of American ships, and demanded in this connection that the state of war should be considered to be in effect since 22 May.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. The Chief of the Naval Ordnance Division reports on the reorganization of steel quotas after 1 Oct. 1942. For the last quarter the Navy will receive an additional allotment of 18,000 tons of steel.

II. The Chief, Naval Staff Submarine Division reports on the investigation by divers of submarine U "133", which sank in the Mediterranean after striking one of our minefields. The boat is in 80 m. of water, and is torn in 2 parts which are lying one on top of the other. The conditions for raising her are so unfavorable that it is proposed to forego salvaging.

The Commander in Chief, Navy agrees.

III. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff Operations Division reports on the directive issued to ships "28" and "23" about dividing the South Atlantic zones of operation east and west of longitude 15° W (see War Diary, 28 May).

The Chief, Naval Staff approves of the directive.

IV. The remarks of the Commanding Admiral, Group North regarding operations against convoys in the Arctic Ocean were received today and will be submitted to the Chief, Naval Staff prior to his departure today on an inspection trip to Norway. The Chief, Naval Staff emphasizes in this connection the great value which must be placed on the use of submarines for mine-laying off the Arctic Coast, in spite of the considerable difficulties of such operations close to shore due to the Arctic summer.

29 May 1942

V. According to the Permanent Representative of the Commander in Chief, Navy at the Fuehrer Headquarters (Chief, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff), the Fuehrer has ordered the available 5 cm. automatic guns set up at St. Nazaire for the anti-aircraft defense of the locks. The Navy is further to submit a suggestion as to how the Indian popular leader BOSE can be brought safely to Rangoon, because the Fuehrer is of the opinion that this man will be effective only in the Indian area proper.

Special Items

I. Command organization in the Arctic Ocean:

The Fleet Commander, who intends to take over administrative command also of the battleships in the future suggests that the command of Vice Admiral Kummetz be designated as Task Force Command, Arctic Ocean and that all forces of his task force be under his tactical command, and all battleships also under his administrative command. The office of Commanding Admiral, Battleships would be combined for the time being with that of Fleet Commander, with the latter in charge of both. As soon as the HELA arrives with the staff of the Fleet, the staff of the Commanding Admiral, Battleships would be dissolved, or be transferred to the Task Force Command, Arctic Ocean, and the duties of the Commanding Admiral, Battleships would be taken over by the Fleet Commander.

Comment of the Chief, Naval Staff Operations Division:

1. The assignment of the newly-appointed Commanding Admiral, Battleships as commander of the pocket battleships in the Arctic Ocean and of the Fleet Commander as commander of the Trondheim force are temporary measures.
2. In the opinion of the Naval Staff, tactical and administrative command over the pocket battleships is not basically part of the direct duties of the Fleet Commander. The Naval Staff is not interested in deciding this question.
3. The suggestion of the Fleet Commander does not take care of the administrative command of the cruisers.
4. From an operational viewpoint it is basically desirable, to be sure, that the highest ranking commander should have administrative command of his forces. However, the temporary assignment of the Commanding Admiral, Battleships does not have to cause controversy about the basic organization of the Fleet.

The Naval Staff therefore decides to designate the office not on the basis of a temporary assignment, but rather to adapt it to the basic Fleet organization.

II. The Naval Staff arrived at the following conclusions with regard to the question of augmenting the number of submarines operating in the Arctic Ocean:

1. The fight against the convoys to Russia is of such importance that submarine operations must be continued in spite of unfavorable conditions.

29 May 1942

2. Efforts must be made to assign at least 8 submarines against each convoy.

3. 3 of the 19 submarines assigned at present to operations in the Norwegian area are in shipyard for overhaul. Of the remaining ones, a number at Norwegian bases are not ready for operations at the present time.

4. The threat of a British landing operation no longer dominates the assignment of the submarines, since the Fuehrer, too, considers this danger reduced, particularly after the recent sinkings achieved by the Air Force against convoy PQ 16. Thus the principal task is to combat the convoys to Murmansk.

5. 3 additional submarines are already en route to Norway as reinforcements, so that a total of 22 submarines will be available there. It can therefore be expected that it will be possible for 8 of them at any one time to operate against convoys.

6. The idea of increasing the number of submarines to 40 or 50 in order to operate against convoys in great force must be rejected, since this number is not available at the moment and because it would necessitate too great interference with submarine operations in the Atlantic and off the American coast.

For these reasons the following directive is issued to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, Group North, and the Admiral, Arctic Ocean:

1. The fight against PQ convoys is of paramount importance.

2. Although submarine operations have only small chances of success at the moment, due to the light Arctic summer nights and to the particularly strong escorts of the PQ convoys, they are considered of such great importance in the occasional successes and particularly in shadowing the convoys and guiding the air forces to their targets that the assignment of a sufficiently large number of submarines against PQ convoys is justified, although this involves withdrawals from the Atlantic zone of operations.

3. In order to permit operations by 5 to 8 submarines against each convoy, and on the other hand to withdraw from other areas as few submarines as possible for the Norwegian area, the following is ordered:

a. Submarines are to operate against empty QP convoys sailing west only in combination with operations against PQ convoys.

b. The next 3 submarines sailing from Germany will be placed at the disposal of Group North.

c. Until further notice, submarine U "408" will also remain with Group North.

4. Group North thus has 23 submarines at its disposal.

III. According to a communication from the Foreign Office, the French Government is to be asked to demand from the U.S.A. that the damaged destroyer in Fort de France leave immediately or, if unable to do so, be interned. (See War Diary 28 May.)

29 May 1942

From the viewpoint of naval warfare, according to maritime and international law it is wise to uphold the right of a damaged ship to enter a neutral port and to permit the American destroyer in the case in question to stay at Martinique. However, this matter has become a purely political problem. Therefore if the political leaders find it necessary to make a clear-cut demand on France, the Naval Staff must abide by this political decision. (Originally France had proclaimed that no warship was to be permitted to call at Martinique, regardless of condition or rights under international law.)

This matter is no longer of importance, since the destroyer left port on 27 May, but it should be kept in mind nevertheless on account of its fundamental implications.

Situation 29 May 1942

A compilation of enemy communications intercepted by radio decoding and monitoring services in the period from 18 May to 24 May is in Radio Intelligence Report No. 21/42 of the Chief, Communications Division, Naval Staff. This week's reports reveal nothing of particular interest.

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

An RRR signal was intercepted by radio intelligence which revealed the position of an aircraft carrier at approximately 37° S, 22° E (240 miles southeast of Capetown). The message was cancelled shortly afterwards by the steamer which had sent it, probably upon order from the carrier.

The Danish tanker ANGLO MAERSK flashed a QQQ signal from 30° 10' S, 89° 31' E (Indian Ocean), reporting being shadowed by a suspicious vessel. This could refer to ship "10".

2. Own Situation:

Ship "28" reported by a 5th short signal which was difficult to decipher: "Have sunk the Norwegian ship KATTEGAT in quadrant G0. Need a new plane. My position is quadrant GF 4310."

This was acknowledged by Radiogram 2003 with the request to transmit when convenient a correction if necessary.

It appears certain, at any rate, that the auxiliary cruiser scored another gratifying success.

Ship "23" receives the following instructions:

a. No German submarines are at present in the operations zone off the West African coast. It is permissible to detour to the east, also in crossing the area between Natal and Freetown.

29 May 1942

b. According to recent observations traffic of single ships is heavier than before in the center of the area between Natal and Free-town. The Naval Staff therefore believes that operations in that neighborhood have good chances of success, provided favorable weather permits moving away far enough from the scene of attack. The restriction imposed by paragraph G4 of the operations order is canceled for the outward voyage.

Ship "10" is notified by Radiogram 2233 about her camouflage name CAMBRIDGE, as sent to the Naval Attache at Tokyo by the Naval Staff. The ship is instructed to reply with "no" when sending another message if this assumption is incorrect.

Enemy situation report by Radiogram 1942.

The existing regulation that all communications between the Operations Division, Naval Staff and the Naval Attache at Tokyo must be transmitted via the Armed Forces Intelligence Division, Section IV or the Naval Attache Section has caused cumbersome correspondence. The Naval Staff Operations Division therefore suggests to the Naval Attache Section and the Armed Forces Intelligence Division, Section IV that all communications referring to operational subjects (instructions to blockade-runners, information of the Naval Attache at Tokyo about plans) be transmitted by the Operations Division through the naval intelligence officer directly to Tokyo, with copies to the Naval Attache Section and the Armed Forces Intelligence Division, Section IV.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reported in the forenoon a steamer of 10,000 GRT escorted by 2 destroyers on a southwesterly course about 400 miles west of Brest and in the afternoon a westbound convoy of 11 steamers off Portland.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Mine-exploding vessels swept 6 ground mines.

Channel Coast:

The mine-exploding vessel "174" which was badly damaged during mine-sweeping operations must be considered a total loss.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reported a convoy of between 20 and 30 steamers on a northerly course northwest of Cromer and another convoy of 45 steamers on a southerly course north of Deal. Enemy planes

29 May 1942

operated in the area of the Frisian Islands during the night of 29 May, evidently for mine-laying.

Own Situation:

The eastbound convoy "155" was attacked 3 times by enemy planes at 0109 in quadrant 8322 (off Ameland). Mine-exploding vessel "150", which shortly prior to the attack had swept a ground mine, and patrol boat "1103" were sunk and patrol boat "1107" damaged. Steamer NIELS R. FINSEN (1,850 GRT) received a bomb hit below the waterline and was grounded. Our casualties amount to 7 dead, 5 missing, and 10 wounded.

Otherwise convoy and patrol services proceeded according to plan.

The Naval Staff is allocating to Group North on request 80 RMA/H blue mines to be laid as alarm barrages at Flushing, Hook of Holland, IJmuiden, and Den Helder as a protection against enemy attempts to land at, blockade, or raid the Dutch ports. These barrages are to be laid in the event of an alarm in the approaches to the harbors, as far out to sea as possible. Group North is investigating whether regular mines could be used in addition to or instead of the alarm barrages, which would be primed in case of alarm only or be detonated from land. For copies of this correspondence see 1/Skl I E 12803/42 Gkdos. in Wa. Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.

2. Norway:

Nothing to report.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the Shetland Islands revealed 3 steamers, 1 tanker and 1 destroyer at Lerwick. A net barrage was observed for the first time across Bressay Sound off Leiranes. According to an intelligence report from Sweden, a convoy sailed from the British Isles for Murmansk on 25 May.

A submarine located convoy PQ 16 by hydrophone in quadrant AC 5697 at 0710. Submarine U "586" attacked a large group of steamers at 0318 and observed the detonation of 4 torpedoes; on the basis of the firing data 3 steamers are believed to have been hit. The 3 submarines operating against the convoy are returning to base as ordered, after reaching 71° 30' N, and are searching for damaged steamers on the way.

The Admiral, Arctic Ocean reports that poor communication prevented close cooperation with the Air Commander, North (East).

The establishment of reliable communications, was however, the reason for transferring headquarters of the Admiral, Arctic Ocean to Narvik. The matter requires further clarification.

The Air Force, too, was able to score further successes against convoy PQ 16. 1 steamer of 4,000 or 5,000 GRT and 1 of 8,000 GRT were sunk, 1 of 5,000 GRT damaged by a squadron of torpedo planes. 2 torpedoes exploded as they hit the water. At 2030 the convoy was reported to consist of 25 steamers with 7 destroyers, 4 corvettes and 3 submarines.

29 May 1942

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Enemy planes operated over the Baltic Sea entrances during the night of 29 May, probably for mine-laying.

2. Own Situation:

34 Russian M 12 mines and a large number of explosive floats were swept on the shipping route west of the Hogland minefield and the coastal route from Hungerburg to Reval. 3 Russian planes unsuccessfully bombed the 1st Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla. The route from Helsinki to Reval west of Nargen was reopened. The Finnish Air Force attacked a Russian submarine on 27 May northwest of Lavansaari; the result is unknown. An enemy plane which took off from Seiskari dropped bombs on Kolgumpia.

The Naval Liaison Staff, Finland, in agreement with the Finnish Staff, sends suggestions for mining the following areas in Lake Ladoga by the Air Force:

- a. The area between Morye, Orinovechi and Karedzhi
- b. The area north-northeast of Nov. Ladoga. For details see Telegram 1500.

Steamer PALATIA of the 12th transport group ran aground in foggy weather off Engskaer on her return to Stettin and is leaking. The 17th and 18th groups are scheduled to sail for Vasa on 30 May.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Particularly lively reconnaissance activity of the 19th Air Group in the Bay of Biscay and the Channel entrance. A diving submarine was attacked with depth charges and allegedly damaged 240 miles west of Brest at 1158. In the same area 10 miles farther east, a diving submarine was sighted at 1420. Radio intelligence intercepted a message from the ARGUS on 26 May in British home radio traffic. She left Gibraltar on 24 May. It can thus be assumed that she was transferred to the British Isles.

According to an intelligence report from Spain, a convoy from the west is expected to arrive at Gibraltar on 30 or 31 May.

The usual submarine sighting reports were intercepted from off the American east coast and from the West Indies. According to the Transocean News Agency, the old U.S. destroyer BLAKELEY was torpedoed by a submarine in the Caribbean Sea, but was able to make port. It is reported from Rio that a damaged U.S. battleship was sighted from Fortaleza drifting off the Brazilian coast.

The Brazilian Air Ministry announced that 3 Axis submarines were attacked off the coast and one of them sunk. Details are still lacking.

29 May 1942

According to press reports, the Dutch steamer FLORA (1,400 GRT) was sunk in the Caribbean Sea. Steamer COMMANDANTE LYRA (ex - SOUTHLAND) was torpedoed on her way from Rio to the U.S.A. approximately 150 miles southeast of Natal, but was able to reach port. The torpedoed Argentine tanker VICTORIA, is expected to return from New York to Buenos Aires after completion of repairs as soon as the end of June.

2. Own Situation:

Disposition of submarines:

20 in the Arctic Ocean, of which 3 are at Narvik, 3 at Trondheim, 4 at Bergen, 3 at Kiel, and 1 at Hamburg.

56 in the Atlantic, of which 22 are operating on the American coast, including the South Atlantic group, 12 are outward bound, 16 are returning to Germany, and 6 are in the North Atlantic.

20 in the Mediterranean, of which 5 are at Spezia, 2 at Pola, 1 at Salamis and 1 at Cartagena.

4 submarines are en route to or from Germany.

26 submarines are at French ports.

Total of operational submarines: 126

Concerning the operation against convoy PQ 16 see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean. Group "Hecht" has taken over supplies from submarine U "116".

A southbound convoy with destroyer escort was sighted by a returning submarine 400 miles northwest of Cape Ortegal.

On the way to the West Indies, submarine U "172" sank steamer ATHEL-KNIGHT (8,940 GRT) in quadrant DE 9654. Submarine U "156" sank a 5,000 GRT steamer off Martinique and submarine U "107" a steamer of the same size in quadrant DN 7686.

It is surprising that the 3 submarines operating off the north coast of Brazil have so far reported neither traffic nor successes.

Submarine U "83", engaged in a special mission in connection with an Army landing operation on the coast of Tobruk, had engine trouble and had to return to Salamis.

For additional reports from all zones of operation and for details regarding the disposition of submarines see supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

The operation against the convoy off Cromer was unsuccessful.

29 May 1942

No report has been received as yet about the operation against the convoy off Deal.

42 German planes laid mines in the Humber estuary during the night, and 66 planes raided Grimsby and the alternate target Great Yarmouth.

Enemy planes laid mines in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea entrances. Numerous incursions were made over Belgium and northern and western France, and a few over Norway. Bombs were dropped on Cherbourg and suburbs of Paris, causing damage to industrial installations. Anti-aircraft artillery shot down 6 enemy planes, 1 plane was shot down by a patrol vessel, and 1 by fighter planes.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Nuisance raids on the Malta airfields and support of the operations in Libya were continued.

3. Eastern Front:

Air operations concentrated on the Sevastopol area. It is belatedly reported from the front of the Southern Army Group that 60 enemy planes, including 10 Hurricanes and 5 Tomahawks, were shot down on 28 May.

Several small steamers were sunk on Lake Ladoga on 28 May. Concerning the mine-laying operation in Kronstadt Bay see War Diary 28 May.

For operations in the Arctic Ocean see Situation, Arctic Ocean.

Special Items:

For the request to the Air Force Operations Staff regarding radio equipment for carrier planes see 1/Skl I L 12808/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean

1. Enemy Situation:

According to an intelligence report from Spain, the EAGLE took aboard ammunition and 25 planes at Gibraltar on 28 May, so that the group can be expected to sail soon. The cruiser CHARYBDIS, which left Gibraltar on the evening of 28 May with 2 destroyers, was sighted on an easterly course at a speed of 20 knots south of Mallorca between 1300 and 1700.

Lively traffic of steamers and warships was observed in the areas of Alexandria and Tobruk. For details see daily situation report and Telegrams 0630 and 1830. The radio intercept service located 2 submarines in the area between Tobruk and Ras Azzaz.

2. Own Situation:

In view of the reported sighting of the CHARYBDIS group, 2 Italian cruisers and 2 destroyers left Cagliari for the west at 1600 in order to find and attack the enemy force. However, at 2130 the

29 May 1942

Italian task force was ordered to return, evidently as a result of reports about the enemy which have not yet been received here.

No situation report from the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy in Derna was received.

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 11th transport group sailed on 28 May according to plan. The steamer PILO is to proceed from Taranto to Tripoli on 29 May, steamer ALLEGRI from Brindisi to Benghazi.

The convoys of steamers GUALDI and CAPO ARMA were attacked by an enemy submarine 70 miles northwest of Benghazi at 0330. The CAPO ARMA and the destroyer PESSAQUO were sunk. 1,230 tons of material for the Armed Forces were lost.

Coastal supply traffic proceeded according to plan without major incident.

Steamer TINOS was again grounded temporarily in the harbor of Benghazi on account of her dangerous cargo, which can be easily exploded. She can be refloated within 24 hours.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

No new information was obtained by air reconnaissance. According to the radio intercept service the situation is essentially unchanged.

Own Situation:

Lively enemy air activity continued over the occupied coastal areas.

Motor ship SULINA sailing in the northbound convoy sank off Odessa Bay following a detonation. The cause of the explosion has not yet been clearly determined. Shipping to and from Odessa was suspended because influence mines are suspected there. Convoy missions were postponed for the time being.

VIII. Situation East Asia

According to a joint communique from Japanese and Siamese Headquarters, a combined Japanese and Siamese force invaded Burma and captured Kengtung on 26 May. Japanese Headquarters announced that Army units took over completely the principal base of Kinhwa and thus gained control of several airfields in the Yangtze-Kiang area.

The U.S. Navy Department reports successful submarine attacks on Japanese

29 May 1942

ships in the western Pacific. A heavy cruiser was allegedly damaged and 2 or 3 merchant vessels were sunk or probably sunk. Thus the number of ships sunk and damaged by U.S. submarines supposedly amounts to 44 ships definitely sunk, 15 probably sunk, and 12 damaged.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

The situation is unchanged.

Central Army Group:

Enemy breakthrough attempts by the forces encircled at Vyazma were repulsed. The enemy halted his attacks at Byeloi.

Northern Army Group:

Our operations in the valley north of Lake Ilmen are continuing successfully.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Nothing to report.

3. North Africa:

On 28 May the German Africa Corps was south of Akroma and the 90th Light Infantry Division in the area of El Adem. According to a British report, 25 German tanks were in the vicinity of Sidi Rezegh. So far the offensive of the 3rd Italian Corps has proceeded according to plan. The XX Army Corps engaged enemy tanks at Bir Hakeim. The German Air Force attacked heavy traffic on the Via Balbia from Ain el Gazala toward Tobruk with excellent results.

30 May 1942

Items of Political Importance

Great Britain:

Considering that domestic politics are so closely connected with the foreign policy and the conduct of the war, it is interesting to note any symptoms which show the relative strength of the various groups within the country. Thus, the efforts of the Anglican, Catholic, and other churches to create a unified front are significant, particularly in connection with the noticeable endeavor on the part of the Vatican to strengthen its diplomatic position in all countries. Also the fact that the Conservatives are trying to bring about elections for one reason or another, which would lead to a considerable strengthening and increased influence of the party through Churchill's appeal and great authority, is another example of the attempted consolidation, considered necessary for any decisions in view of current developments in the war situation. Thus Eden and Cripps, far from fostering communistic tendencies, have the definite task of averting this threat. A consolidated strong conservative party, with a clear majority in Parliament, is free to decide either to support Churchill and his war policy or to replace him by men favoring compromise and peace. Should the Left come to power, the determination to continue the war would be much more accentuated. Germany therefore has a definite interest in the political development within England.

South Africa:

As announced by Smuts, South African troops are also taking part in the operations on Madagascar, contrary to previous British assertions that no Empire forces are engaged there.

U.S.A.:

Public opinion is beginning to advocate that a Pacific Charter similar to the Atlantic Charter be drawn up in order to clarify the war aims of the Allies in the Pacific area and at the same time to counter Japan's propaganda and stem the rising revolt of the Asiatic peoples against the West.

The Chief of U.S. Supply Services, who is in London, declared that the U.S.A. will send a great number of troops and large quantities of war materiel to the European war theater. Sumner Welles emphasized that American war production will reach the peak by fall. The output of dive bombers and tanks is particularly satisfactory.

Chief of Staff Marshall, too, declared in addressing the cadets at West Point Military Academy that U.S. troops will land in France.

The Chief, Naval Staff is absent from Berlin on an inspection trip to Norway.

30 May 1942

Special Items:

I. Effects in case Brazil and Mexico join the war against the Axis Powers:

For copies of investigations made on this subject see 1/Skl I op 13031/42 Gkdos. and 12964/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XVII.

II. Increased tension in our relations with Brazil makes a sudden outbreak of war possible. An investigation made by the Naval Staff shows that mine-laying and torpedoing operations by naval forces would probably have excellent prospects of success if carried out in a surprise move against the following ports:

Para River Estuary
Natal
Recife
Bahia
Rio de Janeiro
Santos

In view of the situation, only submarines are available for these operations.

The result of the investigations (see paragraph I) is therefore submitted to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, who is requested to make suggestions for operations based on the above conclusions. Due to the long time required by submarines to reach the zone of operations, they must receive their instructions regarding operations along the Brazilian coast before the state of war exists; the order to execute them will then be given by code word. It will also be necessary to designate alternate areas in order to permit disposing of the mines carried by the submarines in case they are unable to use them off the Brazilian coast.

For the time being, the release of SMA mines cannot be counted upon.

For copy of telegram see 1/Skl I op 1026/42 Gkdos. Chfs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.

III. Stand of the Operations Division, Naval Staff on the question of using merchant vessels as auxiliary aircraft carriers.

The EUROPA, GNEISENAU, POTSDAM are suitable for conversion. (See conference of the Commander in Chief, Navy with the Fuehrer on 13 May.)

Only the EUROPA has sufficient speed, though insufficient range, for extended operations with the cruisers of the SCHEER class (25 knots) and the TIRPITZ or HIPPER class (30 knots). The 2 other ships cannot be considered, due to their low speed. Owing to her size and requirements of fuel and operating personnel, the EUROPA would be a liability rather than a help.

The above-named 3 ships can therefore be used as auxiliary aircraft carriers only on a limited scale, for instance:

- a. Under particularly favorable conditions together with naval forces to carry out specific tasks, such as

30 May 1942

against Murmansk convoys. Primarily they would protect the naval forces against enemy aircraft and secondarily their planes would carry out reconnaissance and bomber missions.

- b. To increase the operational range of planes, for instance in the north area.
- c. To provide an emergency base in the event that planes cannot take off from land.
- d. To function as training vessels for carrier planes.

In order to fulfill the tasks under a, b, and c, they should be equipped primarily with fighter planes.

In order to be used as floating airfields they must be equipped with carrier planes and have specially trained crews.

Task d will become an urgent need, because the GRAF ZEPPELIN will soon become ready for operations.

The Naval Staff Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch is informed of the above comment and also of the following demands as to the outfitting of the auxiliary aircraft carriers (with copy to the Naval Construction Division, III M L):

The number of planes should be as great as possible; for the tasks listed under a mainly fighter planes, for tasks b and c multi-purpose planes.

Heavy anti-aircraft guns of not less than 10.5 cm caliber, as well as light anti-aircraft guns.

Neither heavy naval guns nor torpedo equipment are required.

Locating gear for planes and ships.

The present speed of the ships must not be reduced.

Stability as a prerequisite for the taking off and landing of planes.

Proportions of landing decks, hangars, take-off and landing installations should be as similar as possible to those of the GRAF ZEPPELIN.

In priority this program comes after the submarine program, and the programs for construction of light naval forces, naval barges, blockade-runners, merchant vessels, and tankers.

30 May 1942

Situation 30 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

North Atlantic:

Several sources report that a large convoy sailed from Freetown to the U.S.A. on 27 May under escort of torpedo boats.

South Atlantic:

U.S. radio broadcasts announced that the survivors supposedly from a MARYLAND-class battleship, picked up by the steamer RIO IGUAZA, are actually crew members of a British steamer sunk off the northeastern coast of Brazil on 17 May.

This is obviously an attempt to hide the loss of a battleship.

A distress signal from U.S. tanker BEACON, allegedly shadowed by a suspicious vessel, was intercepted in the forenoon in quadrant CH 7990 (480 miles southwest of Luederitz Bay).

Indian Ocean:

Sudden lively radio communication overheard in the evening seems to indicate an action taking place in the Madagascar area.

2. Own Situation:

No reports have been received from our ships in foreign waters.

The Naval Staff plans to supply ships "23" and "28" as follows:

(1) Ship "23" to be refueled by the SCHLIEMANN around 10 Jun. in the vicinity of point "Schubert".

(2) Ship "28" to take supplies from DOGGERBANK around 20 Jun. in the vicinity of point "Wagner".

(3) After completing delivery, the SCHLIEMANN will proceed to the southern section of the new waiting area as defined in Radiogram 1853. (See War Diary of 26 May.)

(4) The next supply delivery to ship "28" by SCHLIEMANN is scheduled for the end of July or beginning of August. Another supply ship from Germany will probably arrive by early August.

Ships "28" and "23" are informed of the above by Radiogram 0422.

Ship "10" is instructed to check on the total fuel supply of the REGENSBURG the next time she takes on supplies and to take over all the oil exceeding the amount required for the REGENSBURG's voyage from a point 300 miles from point 2 of route "Gelb" to Japan at a minimum continuous speed of 12 knots. (See Radiogram 1819.)

30 May 1942

Ship "10" is further informed about the QQQ signal of steamer ANGLO MAERSK intercepted on 29 May and of the Naval Staff's assumption that it has some connection with ship "10". (See Radiogram 0211.)

All ships in foreign waters are notified of the positions of the Italian East Asia ships and the Swedish vessels. (See Radiogram 0802.)

Enemy situation reports by radiograms 1048, 1559, 1741, 2236.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

A westbound convoy of 30 to 35 steamers protected by several escort vessels, destroyers and motor mine sweepers was sighted in the evening by reconnaissance planes east of the Isle of Wight. The 3rd Air Force reports the convoy as stretching over 20 to 30 miles and sailing in 3 columns. From the great altitude at which the planes flew it was impossible to make out whether the ships were towing small vessels. Generally these convoys sail once every 2 weeks, but in this case only 4 days have elapsed since the last one.

Ship traffic in the waters of Portsmouth and Southampton is particularly heavy. West and east of the Isle of Wight a number of small vessels were observed. The convoy was protected by a strong fighter escort.

At the same time, a convoy of 14 steamers headed for the Bristol Channel was sighted north of Lands End and another of 8 steamers and 4 tankers entering the Bristol Channel.

The information concerning the convoy off the Isle of Wight deserves particular attention in view of possible landing operations. Photographs of the convoy are still being evaluated.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance in the forenoon revealed a convoy of 25 steamers and 10 escort vessels off Yarmouth. In the evening another convoy of 50 to 55 steamers escorted by 3 destroyers was observed off Lowestoft. Both convoys were northbound.

30 May 1942

Own Situation:

In the course of repeated enemy air attacks on a west-bound convoy off Terschelling, the steamer VAERMDOE was sunk, the steamer LUCA MERSE and mine sweeper M "504" damaged. In the same area 2 patrol vessels were attacked. 8 of the attacking planes were shot down by naval forces. Attempts to salvage steamer NIELS R. FINSEN were abandoned as hopeless.

2 enemy planes were shot down by naval forces off the East Frisian coast during the night of 29 May.

Renewed air activity over the East Frisian Islands during the night of 30 May; it is suspected that aerial mines were laid.

The destruction of 10 enemy planes within 2 days by forces of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North deserves high praise.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Agents reported by radio from England on 25 May as follows:

"As far as Scotland is concerned, the plan for an invasion seems to have been dropped. The Norwegian interpreters have returned. The mountain maneuvers lasted a few days. The divisions which took part have returned to Aberdeen. All commanding officers are said to have been informed that the troops will rest during the summer. The units brought back from Iceland are being trained in Wales for arctic and mountain warfare and will then be sent back to Iceland."

This seems to account for the indications of an impending operation against Norway. It remains undecided whether these maneuvers were planned as such originally, or whether they were substituted for an intended real operation which was cancelled for some reason.

Own Situation:

The mine-laying vessels BRUMMER and OSTMARK laid the UMB minefield Rotvaer-Baroe according to plan on 29 May. An enemy submarine was located and chased off Sognesjoe on 30 May. German planes observed a torpedo track directed against the German steamer KONSUL EMERS off Trondheimleden. Enemy planes operated over Kirkenes on 27 and 28 May, over Trondheim on 29 May, and over Lister and Stavanger on 30 May.

The diplomatic exchange ship GRIPSHOLM sailed from Kristiansand South for overseas on 29 May.

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

A decoded radio message revealed that the cruiser SHEFFIELD sprang a leak on 4 Mar. in the vicinity of Seydis

30 May 1942

Fjord (Iceland), possibly by striking a floating mine.

Air reconnaissance at 2200 of 29 May established that convoy PQ 16 has split in 2 parts; one third of the ships are sailing in the direction of Murmansk, two thirds toward Iokanga Bay. At 0800 of 30 May, 18 steamers and 18 escort vessels were observed entering Kola Bay.

The losses suffered by this convoy have not yet been reported in detail, but are doubtless very considerable. This gratifying success was achieved by the cooperation of Air Force and submarines; the Air Force sank the most ships, which is understandable enough in view of the circumstances. It remains to be seen how the enemy will react to this experience in order to protect future convoys.

Own Situation:

Our submarines are returning to Narvik according to plan, some of them having arrived there already. Planes of the 5th Air Force attacked and damaged 2 more merchant vessels during the night of 29 May, and on 30 May another 5 ships outside of Kola Bay, northwest of the Kildin Islands, and off Iokanga; 6 enemy fighters were shot down on this occasion.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Shipping routes in the Baltic Sea entrances had to be closed temporarily on account of suspected aerial mines. For details see Telegram 0640.

During an air attack on the 1st Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla off Vigrund, motor mine sweeper R "71" was damaged by a bomb. An attempt is being made to tow her to Hungerburg. 2 Russian M 12 mines and 3 explosive buoys were swept on route "Gelb".

For directive of Group North defining the sections of Lake Ladoga to be extensively mined with aerial mines see Telegram 1726.

Since the Russians are not using the Kronstadt Sea Channel at present, but are routing traffic by way of the Petrov and Korabelniy channels to Lissy Nos and from there to Kronstadt partly under cover of smoke screens, it is possible for small submarines, FUGAS-class mine sweepers, and torpedo boats to slip out unseen from Leningrad to Kronstadt and from there into the Gulf of Finland. The Naval Staff therefore renews its request to the Air Force Operations Staff to mine the areas A, B and possibly also C. (See Telegram 1800.)

V. Merchant Shipping

The British Government is making up for losses of privately-owned merchant vessels by transferring ships built during the war by the Government, title to which will be acquired by the shipping

30 May 1942

firms only after the war.

The Portuguese Government is delaying further shipments of canned fish to Britain until British authorities stop making difficulties in granting navicerts for the transport of goods from Portuguese colonies to the mother country. Mine timber shipments from Portugal to the British Isles were resumed in April.

For further reports concerning the rerouting of maritime transports to Central American railroads, the chromium ore transports from Turkey via Port Said, etc., see short report no. 17/42 of the Naval Intelligence Division, Foreign Merchant Marine Branch.

VI. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring revealed that the British Admiralty will no longer publish reports of sinkings in order to keep this information from the enemy. According to a U.S. radio report, U.S. planes sank a submarine off Newcastle. Following the attack, oil patches were observed on the surface. The U.S. radio also reports the arrival at Santa Lucia of the torpedoed U.S. destroyer BLAKELEY.

Messages about sighted submarines were intercepted from 330 miles southeast of New York, from the entrance to N. Y. harbor, off the eastern Florida coast, and 160 miles west of Jamaica.

2. Own Situation:

In the West Atlantic steamer ALCOA SHIPPER (5,491 GRT) was sunk by submarine U "404" in quadrant CB 4480. In the West Indies, submarine U "558" (Commander Krech) sank steamer TROISDOC (1,925 GRT) in quadrant EB 3111, the steamer BEATFICE (3,451 GRT) in quadrant EC 1471, a 6,000 GRT steamer in quadrant EC 2574, and finally torpedoed steamer W. B. BOYSE THOMSEN (7,061 GRT) in quadrant EB 3855. A passenger ship escorted by a corvette and an escort vessel was unsuccessfully attacked. After achieving the above results the submarine ran out of torpedoes and will receive a new supply.

No successes were reported from the South Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines is notified by the Naval Staff that the special Martinique submarine mission is ended. (See Telegram 1707.)

VII. Aerial Warfare

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Single planes attacked Great Yarmouth, Norwich and Folkestone by day. No result was reported from the combat mission

30 May 1942

against the large convoy off Deal. A few of the planes attacked the harbor of Dover with observed good results. 69 German planes laid mines in the Thames River during the night. Strong formations of enemy planes penetrated into western Germany during the night of 30 May. The attack was concentrated on Cologne and Duesseldorf.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Harassing raids on the Malta airfields were continued. Other forces were engaged in close escort and reconnaissance at sea. Air activity concentrated on supporting the operations in Libya. During the night of 29 May, Bomber Wing 806 attacked 2 enemy ships 60 miles south of Mallorca; the result was not observed.

3. Eastern Front:

Operations centered on combatting the evacuation and supply traffic of Leningrad. Reconnaissance activity in the Black Sea. In the Baltic Sea the mining of area F was continued during the night of 29 May. For operations against convoy PQ 16 see Own Situation, Arctic Ocean.

4. Special Item:

The Naval Staff expects that aircraft carrier GRAF ZEPPELIN will leave the shipyard by 1 Apr. 1943 and that flying tests at sea will begin on 1 Aug. 1943. The Naval Staff therefore informs the competent Air Force authorities of its requirements with regard to equipment and personnel. The total number of planes normally required, including reserves, amounts to 48 BF 109G's and 54 Ju 87D's. The Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief, Navy is requested, in consultation with the Air Force Personnel and Naval Officer Personnel Divisions, to initiate all preparations for the necessary personnel, and to see that they are organized in time. The crews of the Ju 87 squadrons must be trained for a number of tasks, i.e., reconnaissance, dive bombing, torpedo attacks and smoke screen laying. The Naval Staff insists that naval ensigns be trained as observers for all Ju 87 squadrons. Pillau has been decided on as carrier base and peacetime station, Trondheim as operational base.

Air Force authorities are further informed that, on the Fuehrer's orders, steamers POTSDAM and GNEISENAU will probably be converted into auxiliary aircraft carriers, and that it appears appropriate to provide 24 fighter planes and 12 multi-purpose Ju 87 planes for each of the 2 ships.

For copy of the letter sent to the Air Force Operations Staff the Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief, Navy, the Air Minister, etc. see 1/Skl 12839/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

1. Enemy Situation, Mediterranean:

The CHARYBDIS group, sighted on 29 May south of Mallorca,

30 May 1942

was located at 2013 by air reconnaissance on a westerly course; at 2200 it was located farther west by submarine hydrophone. Evidently the group reversed its course around 2200.

Photo reconnaissance of 29 and 30 May revealed no change of the ship situation at Valletta.

Moderate traffic was observed in the Tobruk area. During the night of 29 May an eastbound merchant ship and an escort vessel were sighted, and in the morning of 30 May 2 incoming destroyers were sighted. A submarine was spotted on 29 May 90 miles west of Spartivento and on 30 May at 0630 46 miles west-southwest of Benghazi.

In the eastern Mediterranean in the Haifa area a convoy of 4 freighters escorted by ships and fighter planes was observed on a southerly course by Italian reconnaissance; at the same time an unspecified force escorted by destroyers, probably on a westerly course, was sighted 40 miles west of Alexandria.

Radio intelligence intercepted a message from a British patrol vessel off Jaffa reporting an attack by planes and intercepted reports from hospital ship ABA proceeding westward in the waters off Alexandria.

An agent reports that several thousand special-purpose troops have arrived at Cyprus.

2. Own Situation, Mediterranean:

During the night of 29 May 4 enemy planes apparently dropped aerial mines off Benghazi. The situation report regarding operation "Theseus" transmitted by the German Naval Command, Italy from Derna contained nothing of importance.

After receiving the first situation reports on operation "Theseus", the Naval Staff informed the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy of its assumption that the reports concerning Army operations are being transmitted with the approval of the Army High Command, North Africa, adding that under no circumstances must naval commands release information about Army operations or plans which has not been approved by the local Army commands.

To this the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy replied that situation reports have thus far not been issued by the Army High Command, North Africa. The reports of the German Naval Command, Italy were made on the basis of information from the Air Force and the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, and were transmitted as top secret information exclusively to the German Naval Command, Italy at Rome and to the Naval Staff in order to keep them informed as far as possible. Since the German Naval Command, Italy has strict orders not to pass on this information, other offices can learn of it only through the Naval Staff. In order to avoid difficulties, the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy will limit himself in the future to transmitting operational situation reports issued by the Army High Command, North Africa and the Panzer Army. (See Telegram 1759 of 28 May and Telegram 0330 of 30 May.)

30 May 1942

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

The 11th transport group arrived at Tripoli on 30 May, steamer GUALDI at Benghazi on 29 May. No report was received yet about the arrival at Naples of the 3 CITTA-class steamers. Coastal steamer SAVONA arrived from Tripoli at Benghazi. Steamer BRAVO which sailed with the SAVONA was torpedoed by an enemy submarine and sank during the night of 29 May.

Coastal traffic otherwise proceeded according to plan.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to an Italian report a surfaced submarine was observed west of Nios on the evening of 29 May.

Own Situation:

Planes escorting the Crete group on 29 May allegedly attacked an enemy submarine with torpedoes. A subchaser established that the vessel was a German PT boat. The plane crews insist that it was definitely an enemy submarine. The matter has not yet been clarified.

The 16th Crete group sailed from Piraeus for Candia on the evening of 29 May. Tanker RONDINE postponed her other tasks and carried urgently required fuel to Crete under protection of considerable escort forces.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Increasing submarine activity in the Sevastopol-Crimea area was revealed by radio monitoring. 18 submarines were located, 8 of them in the western Black Sea as far as the Crimea and the rest on the eastern coast.

Own Situation:

On 29 and 30 May enemy planes attacked Saki, Eupatoria, Simferopol, and Yalta. An Italian subchaser at Yalta was slightly damaged by bomb fragments.

An unidentified ship fired on Kerch during the night of 29 May.

Convoy and mine-sweeping operations proceeded according to plan without major incident.

The sinking of motor ship SULINA was probably caused by a submarine torpedo attack. A periscope and a torpedo track were observed by anti-aircraft personnel.

Special Item:

a. The Naval Liaison Officer to the Army High Command relays a request of the Southern Army Group to have the Admiral, Black

30 May 1942

Sea start operations against sea supply routes to Sevastopol in connection with the offensive against this fortress. The Army High Command also requests immediate information about how many and what kind of naval forces will carry out this request of the Southern Army Group.

In the Naval Staff's opinion, the Southern Army Group, which is in direct contact with Naval Group South and the Admiral, Black Sea, should have sufficient information. However, the necessary steps will be taken.

b. As reported by Naval Group, South there are at present 28 Croatian officer volunteers and 372 petty officers and enlisted men serving in its area. Croatian volunteers will be used for the coastal patrol flotilla in the Sea of Azov.

IX. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

X. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

No action of importance, except for repeated enemy attacks launched from the Donets River bend west of Savintsy, all of which were repulsed.

Central Army Group:

The encirclement south of Vyazma is being tightened constantly. Otherwise nothing to report.

Northern Army Group:

Enemy preparations south of Lyubitsa and south of Lake Ilmen on the Lovat River were dispersed. North of Lake Ilmen German attacks to close the gap in the Volkhov Valley were successful. West of Yamno divisions at either wing launched an attack from the north and south against strongly fortified enemy positions.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Nothing to report.

3. North Africa:

No reports were received.

31 May 1943

Items of Political Importance

Mexico:

Both houses of Parliament approved the declaration of war against the Axis Powers unanimously. Thus a state of war exists.

Finland:

Finance Minister Tanner informed the public that as early as 1938 Russian diplomats demanded that Finland cede the islands in the Gulf of Finland and permit Russia to occupy the Aland Islands.

France:

The Transocean News Agency reports that the crews of the French war-ships at Martinique are without exception anti-British, the majority of Government officials and plantation owners loyal to Vichy, while a large number of officers and men of the land forces are pro-British and pro-De Gaulle. The local government is said to be taking energetic measures. Admiral Robert reportedly has considerable influence.

Under such circumstances, it may be safe to assume that Laval's and Darlan's promises regarding destruction of the French ships in time will be kept.

Italy:

With regard to rumors about relations between Italy and France, Count Ciano declared in a speech that they are similar to those between Germany and France. A semi-official press release also pointed out that this is no problem at present, adding that it is not true that at Salzburg the Duce made Italian assistance at the eastern front conditional upon guarantees for fulfilling the well-known Italian demands on France.

Portugal:

The report about the situation in the middle of May submitted by the Naval Attache at Lisbon states among other things that the overall situation has not changed materially since the middle of 1941.

Salazar is still intent on maintaining neutrality as indicated by the following factors:

a. Foreign policy: Uneasiness prevails on account of the second European front in view of potential Anglo-American landings on the Azores and in Portugal. The Army is in no way prepared to cope with the latter. The Azores are to a large degree at the disposal of the British and Americans even without invasion. While the British landing on Madagascar has eased the tension with regard to Mozambique, there is justified concern about the colonial possessions in the Far East; this apprehension is fostered by the British and is being exploited as propaganda for the fight between the white and yellow races.

b. Domestic policy: The efforts to suppress foreign propaganda work in favor of Germany, although the attitude of the Portuguese press on the surface is rather pro-British. Salazar's political

31 May 1942

foes of the extreme left and right are cooperating with the British Intelligence Service in order to oust the undoubtedly pro-German Prime Minister who is maintaining discipline, however, by harsh measures.

c. The economic situation: Portugal is becoming increasingly dependent on Great Britain and the U.S.A. as regards vital imports from the colonies. Germany cannot make up for this. Portugal has not accumulated reserves. Therefore the economic dependence will decide Salazar's policies in the long run regardless of other interests.

Special Items:

I. For the report of the Naval Representative on the German Armistice Commission, France about Rear Admiral Wever's inspection tour to Algeria, French Morocco and the French Mediterranean coast, in which the Chief, Foreign Affairs Section, Naval Staff Operations Division took part, see 1/Skl 13255/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XVI.

The report contains exhaustive information about questions and problems of personnel and materiel, touching on the interests of naval warfare in the areas visited. The fact that a representative of the Operations Division, Naval Staff took part will greatly facilitate the decisions on all problems arising in the future.

II. A detailed investigation by the Naval Staff, Operations Division of possibilities for combatting convoys in the Arctic Ocean by mining the northern route arrives at the conclusion that it was impossible to reach an agreement on a suitable plan, as ordered by the Commander in Chief, Navy, which would not hamper the freedom of action of Group North by going into too great detail.

See 1/Skl I a 12842/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.

III. According to special information from the Naval Ordnance Division, War Economy Branch, Chile's future copper ore production is estimated at approximately 500,000 tons. The U.S.A. is said to have exclusive purchase rights for the entire output. The Special Staff for Economic Warfare of the Armed Forces High Command is requested by the Naval Staff to investigate whether there is a chance of exporting copper secretly, perhaps via Argentina in the form of semi-finished products which are probably not covered by the contract, which could then be sent on to German-dominated territory.

IV. The War Economy and Armaments Division of the Armed Forces High Command reports on U.S.A. war production as of April 1942. Considering the over-all industrial situation, it is estimated that deliveries of merchant ships during 1942 will amount to 4,000,000 GRT only, compared to 5,600,000 GRT which Roosevelt demanded originally. The peak production figure of World War I, namely 3,600,000 GRT in 1919, has thus been exceeded already. Building of cargo vessels has become the most urgent object of armaments production and the output is rising steeply.

31 May 1942

For copy of abstract see OKW/WiRue Amt VB 1356/42 Gkdos. of 11 May 1942 in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XVII.

Situation 31 May 1942

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The German Naval Command, Italy reports on the sailing routes of the Italian East Africa ships, Group Alpha, now on their way home between Port Elizabeth and Las Palmas. (See Telegram 2030.)

Enemy situation report by Radiogram 1952.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

The German Embassy at Dublin reported on 22 May that 2 U.S. divisions, apparently replacements for British troops which are being sent to North Africa and India, are now in northern Ireland. However, command in northern Ireland is still in British hands. 2 British divisions with tank units are still on the southern Irish border. So far, Dublin shows no concern about a potential British occupation. It is widely believed in Dublin circles that increasing pressure of British and American popular opinion makes it likely that Great Britain and the U.S.A. will prepare for a major operation against the Continent during the current year. In view of the lack of shipping space and the inability to secure aerial superiority, an attack on more remote sectors of the German front, as for instance Norway, is not considered likely. A major operation against the French or Belgian coast is also regarded doubtful. (This would leave the Dutch coast only!) British morale is reported strong.

Reconnaissance planes observed at 0530 approximately 20 steamers, each of which was towing 2 or 3 barges, and 1 PT boat in the waters between Dungeness and Eastbourne. The Air Force suggests that this formation may possibly be engaged in laying new minefields in the Humber and the Thames, and is not necessarily an indication that landing craft are being concentrated.

It will be necessary to await photo-evaluation in order to get a clear picture of the nature of the ships.

In the Portsmouth and Isle of Wight areas, lively traffic of approximately 40 steamers was observed.

Air reconnaissance reported additional ship concentrations off Start Point and Milford. 2 medium-sized steamers were sighted on an

31 May 1942

easterly course 300 miles west of Brest and a 10,000 GRT steamer on a southerly course 400 miles west of Brest.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

A ground mine was swept off Lorient. The harbor entrance of Ostend was temporarily closed to shipping due to suspected aerial mines.

III. North Sea, Norway, Arctic Ocean

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

4 convoys were sighted off the English east coast and in the Thames River estuary.

Own Situation:

A ground mine was swept on 30 May by a mine-exploding vessel. Enemy planes were active during the night of 30 May and on 31 May in the coastal area of the North Sea; 3 of the attackers were shot down. Ship "13" of the Rhine Flotilla was sunk and 2 other vessels slightly damaged. A 600 ton barge sank and 1 tug was damaged at Harlingen.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Lively air activity during 28, 29, and 30 May in the Arctic coastal area; bombs were dropped on Kirkenes and Petsamo.

Own Situation:

On 30 May the 5th Mine Sweeper Flotilla checked flanking barrage "I" (Fugloe). The result was positive.

For the report by the Admiral, North Norwegian Coast on the 2-row barrage in Vefsen Fjord see 1/Skl 13124/42 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.

On 31 May a Russian battery on Rybachi Peninsula unsuccessfully fired on 3 motor mine sweepers which were putting into Petsamo.

During an enemy air attack on a convoy off Rolfsø Sound on 30 May, steamer THEDA FRITZEN was damaged and had to make port at Honningsvaag.

Kirkenes airfield suffered some damage by air attacks.

A submarine chase off Sognesjøe yielded no result.

31 May 1942

3. Arctic Ocean:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance confirmed the fact that convoy PQ 16 split in 2 parts. Besides the 18 steamers observed in Kola Bay, at 1735 the remaining 7 steamers with 4 destroyers and 3 escort vessels were spotted north of Iokanga on a 1300 course. Photo reconnaissance at 1000 revealed 30 medium-sized steamers in the area between Murmansk and Pinaks Gori.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance established moderately heavy shipping in a west-easterly direction on Lake Ladoga.

2. Own Situation:

Steamer ORKAN (1,800 GRT) carrying coal struck a mine and sank on the evening of 30 May off Greifswald Oie.

Transport, convoy and patrol services in the area of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic Sea proceeded according to plan.

Steamer GNEISENAU left Gdynia for Abo with personnel on leave.

The 1st Motor Mine Sweeper Flotilla at Ust'-Luga was attacked during the night of 30 May by enemy planes. No damage.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

According to an intelligence report from Spain, a convoy arrived at Gibraltar from a westerly direction. Lively reconnaissance activity in the northern rendezvous area and the Rockall Bank area.

Submarine sighting reports were intercepted from off Nantucket Island, off the Florida east coast, and south of Jamaica.

A report about the destruction of a submarine by a U.S. Navy plane in the latitude of Martinique on 27 May, which was intercepted by radio monitoring, is false. Both German submarines operating in that area are undamaged.

The U.S. Navy Department announced the appointment of Rear Admiral Kauffman as Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Gulf of Mexico, for the purpose of "continuing the battle against submarines in the Gulf area with greater effectiveness".

31 May 1942

2. Own Situation:

In the Caribbean Sea, submarine U "504" sank steamer ALLISTER (1,597 GRT) on 29 May. The returning submarine U "506" destroyed the loaded and armed steamer FRED W. GREEN (2,232 GRT) which was en route from New York to Freetown in quadrant DD 5585 with the last of her ammunition.

New attack areas were assigned to our submarines in the Mediterranean.

For details and additional reports from all zones of operation see supplement to submarine situation in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

Upon inquiry by the Naval Staff, the Commanding Admiral, Submarines reported that no reports have so far been received from our submarines about attacks by Brazilian air or naval forces. Italian submarines have merely reported "attacked by aircraft". A request for further information has been sent out. All of the submarines have reported as late as 2 days ago. (See Telegram 1007.)

The Commanding Admiral, Submarines informs the submarines that Mexico is not yet at war but will probably be in a few days. The submarines must therefore be prepared for attacks by Mexican air and naval forces.

Special Item:

Portuguese shipments of essential war materials such as tin, tungsten, and copper have stopped, because Portugal is at Great Britain's mercy due to the navicert system. Shipping to America and Britain however, continues normal and without hindrance. The German Embassy at Lisbon considers a show of German naval strength off the Tejo and Duro River mouths as desirable.

The Naval Staff informs the Commanding Admiral, Submarines of the above and directs him to instruct submarines passing these areas to show themselves briefly. Portuguese territorial waters are to be respected on this occasion and Portuguese ships are not to be sunk without warning. (See Telegram 1801.)

VI. Aerial Warfare:

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

The enemy attack on western Germany during the night of 30 May centered on Cologne and Duisburg and was carried out by very strong forces (according to British reports more than 1,000 planes). Although this number may be grossly exaggerated, the damage wrought by this large-scale raid mainly on Cologne, Duisburg, Essen and other places was very heavy. Industrial installations were affected. The British themselves concede that 44 of their planes failed to return.

Details about damage are not yet available.

Enemy propaganda terms this first large-scale attack the prelude of a gigantic aerial offensive.

German fighter bombers attacked ships off the Isle of Wight during the day but scored no results.

31 May 1942

77 German bombers staged a retaliatory attack on Canterbury during the night of 31 May. Only a few enemy planes showed up over western Germany that night. 4 enemy incursions were made over Norway, 11 over Belgium and northern France, and 2 over western France.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Nuisance raids on Malta and bomber missions of moderately strong forces were carried out against Tobruk and El Adem.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report from the Army fronts.

2 large steamers were damaged during attacks on enemy ships in the Murmansk area.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

1. Enemy Situation, Mediterranean:

According to an intelligence report from Spain, the CHARYBDIS group sailed into Gibraltar on 30 May at 1900. According to another report from the same source a cruiser which cannot be identical with the CHARYBDIS was sighted at 2330 on 29 May at full speed on a westerly course off Cape Gata; she was in Morse communication with a torpedo boat. The number of planes at Gibraltar was increased to 100 by deliveries from a convoy which arrived from the west on 30 May.

3 additional naval barges were observed at Valletta.

4 medium-sized steamers, 1 warship, 2 patrol vessels, and 9 lighters were in Tobruk harbor on 30 May. During the same afternoon, 4 destroyers and 2 more small ships arrived there.

Normal patrol activity in the area between Alexandria and Tobruk, lively patrol activity off Alexandria and east of Tobruk.

Radio monitoring also located no supply traffic in the area between Alexandria and Tobruk.

Photo reconnaissance of Alexandria at 0830 on 31 May showed 1 QUEEN ELIZABETH-class battleship in dock, 2 DIDO-class cruisers, 1 anti-aircraft cruiser, 5 destroyers, 16 small war vessels, 8 submarines, 4 magnetic mine-sweeping barges, and 1 hospital ship which had run aground. No change had occurred in the number of French ships. In addition, 6 passenger ships, 4 tankers, and 34 steamers were counted for a total of 220,000 GRT cargo space.

2. Own Situation, Mediterranean:

During the night of 30 May Messina was attacked by enemy planes without particular damage. Nothing to report about operation "Theseus".

31 May 1943

3. Transport of Supplies to North Africa:

Steamer ALLEGRI (6,500 GRT) was destroyed in the course of an enemy air attack while proceeding from Brindisi to Benghazi. Her cargo of 90 vehicles, 1,663 tons of Armed Forces supplies and 23 torpedoes for the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla was lost.

The 11th transport group delivered 301 men, 396 vehicles, and 2,993 tons of Armed Forces supplies for German forces to Tripoli. Steamer BRAVO, engaged in the coastal supply service, was sunk by a submarine torpedo 50 miles southwest of Benghazi.

All other transports proceeded according to plan.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

PT boats carried on a submarine chase during 30 and 31 May in the waters of Milos, Attica and off the western Peloponnesos.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring, only 8 submarines were located in the waters of the Crimea and the western Black Sea. In the northeastern Black Sea and on the east coast 2 destroyers and 1 submarine were located, and in the Batum area the fleet command and cruiser "D" have been located since the afternoon of 30 May.

Own Situation:

Convoy and transport operations proceeded according to plan. During the night of 29 May the Italian subchaser "471" carried out a mission in the waters from Yalta to Cape Kherson without sighting the enemy.

Enemy air raids on Skadovsk, Mariupol and Taganrog caused no damage to military installations.

VIII. Situation East Asia

Nothing to report.

IX. Army Situation

1. Russian Front:

Southern Army Group:

An attack on the Hungarian division was repulsed with heavy enemy losses.

31 May 1942

Central Army Group:

No fighting of importance.

Northern Army Group:

In the Volkhov valley communication was established between our forces advancing from north and south and a defense line facing east in the direction of Yamno. Organized fighting is in progress at Soltsy.

2. Finnish and Norwegian Front:

Nothing to report.

3. North Africa:

Progress of operation so far: on 27 May the enemy was thrown back beyond the Trigh Enver Bei River by an attack from the south, and the area south of Akroma was reached on 28 May. The enemy attacked the Italian forces advancing eastward west of Akroma and on the Enver Bei trail.

On 29 May an enemy attack from the area west of El Adem and other attacks against the heights west of Akroma were repulsed. Enemy forces massed at Bir el Gobi succeeded in halting our advance in front of the stubbornly defended Ain el Gazala line.

The motorized units of the Panzer Army temporarily went over to the defense in the area of Harmat and northwest thereof for refueling replenishing supplies.

General Cruewell, Commanding General of the German Africa Corps, was shot down during a reconnaissance flight and is missing. The Commanding General of the 15th Panzer Division was wounded.

In the course of an extremely bitter battle on 27 and 29 May we destroyed or captured 288 tanks, 21 armored scout cars, 53 guns, about 200 vehicles. 2,000 prisoners were taken.

GLOSSARY

AAA

Distress signal sent by ships to denote that they were being shadowed or attacked by a plane.

Aida

Code name for the planned capture of Egypt and the Suez Canal.

Antarktis

Operation of auxiliary cruiser ship "10" in the Antarctic.

Burgund

See "Walzertraum".

Erika

German reference point at 21° S, 17° W.

Ernst

German reference point at 24° 35' S, 23° 50' W.

Erntehilfe

Code name for plan to ship arms and ammunition to Ireland in case that government should ask for German support.

Etappe

Secret German naval organization for providing German naval units with information and supplies from foreign bases. Etappe Japan was of great importance for German blockade-running activities.

Feile

German reference point at 29° 00' S, 76° 00' E.

Hammer

German reference point at 17° 40' N, 40° 30' W.

Herkules

Code name for the planned capture of Malta in cooperation with Italian forces.

Komponisten area

The area between 25° S and 32° S, and 12° W and 22° W; in this area were located points named after composers, such as Wagner, Schubert (which see).

Loewenzahn

One of the designations for point 6 on route "Gelb", located at 34° 00' N, 139° 50' E.

Lohengrin

Code name for transfer of the LUETZOW together with the NORDMARK and escorting destroyers from Trondheim to Narvik.

Luiise

German reference point at 22° S, 23° W.

Merkur

Experimental minelaying mission by submarine U "117" with SMA mines in the Skagerrak. The barrage laid was minefield X.

Nagel

German reference point at 41° 10' N, 40° 30' W.

News Analysis "Foreign Navies" (Nachrichtenauswertung "Fremde Marinen")
A daily analysis of foreign newspaper reports concerning foreign naval news, compiled by the Naval Staff Intelligence Division (3/Skl).

Pfaueauge

German reference point at 43° 48' N, 07° 52' W.

Political Review (Politische Uebersicht)

A daily review of political developments abroad published by the Naval Staff Intelligence Division (3/Skl).

PQ

Designation of convoys proceeding eastward from the United Kingdom to northern Russia.

QP

Designation of convoys returning to the United Kingdom from northern Russia.

QQQ signal

Distress signal sent by ship when sighting or under attack by armed raider. QQQ was also used when suspicious merchant vessels were sighted.

Rack mine, type A

The German SMA mine. A moored influence mine laid by a specially constructed minelaying submarine. Its charge weighed approximately 350 kilograms. This mine was designed for waters of 50 m. to 300 m. depth.

Route "Anton"

A German shipping route. Its geographical borders were: The French coast at 47° 30' N; 47° 30' N, 29° W; 43° N, 40° W; 37° N, 40° W; continued on 37° N; the southern and eastern borders of route "Anton" were defined by the borders of the operations zone of the submarines in the South Atlantic.

Route "Gelb"

German shipping route to Japan via the Indian Ocean and Sunda Strait. The points touched on this route are given below. On occasion the designations for these points were changed.

Duesseldorf	-	24° 00' S, 99° 00' E
Dahlem	-	Sunda Strait
Danzig	-	09° 15' N, 110° 30' E
Darmstadt	-	20° 50' N, 120° 00' E
Duisburg	-	26° 00' N, 128° 40' E
Doeberitz	-	34° 00' N, 139° 50' E

Route "Rosa"

German shipping route along the western coast of France.

RRR signal

Distress signal sent by ships when sighting or under attack by enemy warship.

Schraube

German reference point at 38° 00' S, 03° 00' E.

Schubert

German reference point located at 25° S, 22° W.

Seeigel

Code name for German minefield from the island of Aspoe to 60° 04' N, 27° 09' E; 59° 54' N, 27° 20.5' E, via Vigrund to Cape Kurgalski.

SMA mine

Rack mine, type A. A moored influence mine laid by a specially constructed minelaying submarine. Its charge weighed 350 kilograms. This mine was designed for waters of 50 m. to 300 m. depth.

SSS signal

Distress signal sent when sighting or under attack by a submarine; could also indicate being damaged by a mine.

Theseus

Code name for resumption of German offensive in North Africa in May 1942.

Wagner

A German reference point at 28° S, 19° W.

Walzerkoenig

See "Walzertraum".

Walzertraum

Code name for the transfer of cruiser LUETZOW from Germany to northern Norway. The second part of the transfer from Kvarnes Fjord northward was known by code word "Walzerkoenig". In connection with this operation the destroyers LODY, ECKHOLDT, STEINBRINCK, BEITZEN, and Z "29" were to lay a protective minefield, barrage 17b, from 57° 36' N, 03° 24' E to 57° 17' N, 03° 36' E. This operation was known as "Burgund".

Zange

German reference point at 04° 00' S, 19° 00' W.

Zauberfloete

Code name for the transfer of the PRINZ EUGEN from Norway to Germany.

