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WAR DIARY

German Naval Staff Operations Division

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MARCH 1940

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WAR DIARY OF THE GERMAN NAVAL STAFF

(OPERATIONS DIVISION)

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PART A

March 1940

Chief, Naval Staff:	Grand Admiral Raeder, Dr.h.c.
Chief of Staff, Naval Staff:	Vice Admiral Schniewind
Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff:	Rear Admiral Fricke.

VOLUME 7

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OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

Washington, D.C.

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 7 is the twenty-third 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 microfilm 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.

Items of Political Importance

U.S. Under Secretary of State Welles is conferring with Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and Secretary of State Weiszaecker today. It is known that the discussions in Rome were held under most cordial conditions. Mussolini is said to have given a complete survey of the European situation and of justifiable demands by Germany and Italy and to have described the Franco-British peace terms as ridiculous and impossible.

The Norwegian Foreign Minister, Koht, stated in the Storting (29 Feb. 1940) that it would be a non-neutral act to stop Norwegian shipping to Great Britain. Even if the British authorities forced Norwegian ships to put in to a control port this still would not justify the Germans sinking Norwegian ships. Maintenance of trade with Great Britain was of vital importance for Norway.

The conclusion of the commercial treaty with Norway was greatly endangered by the reports current about Norwegian shipping losses and the anti-German reaction caused by them. In spite of this the treaty was favorably concluded.

There are now fresh rumors also in Norway that the Western Powers will demand from Sweden and Norway right of way for troops to Finland. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry, however, states definitely that so far the Western Powers have undertaken no diplomatic steps in Oslo or Stockholm and that no enquiries on the subject have been received. Both countries are adhering unconditionally to their neutrality and would oppose any attempt by the Western Powers to send troops through Norway and Sweden by all the means in their power.

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Discussion on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

Special Items

Report on the Fuehrer's instructions for the immediate formation of an Operations Staff for "Weseruebung".

Commanding General, 21st Corps, General von Flakenhorst, is appointed head of the Operations Staff. (See instructions.)

Chiefs of Staff are appointed for the individual preparations by the three Services. (Captain Krancke for the Navy.)

A further order states that the forces of the Army and Air Force engaged in "Weseruebung" shall be subordinate to the augmented 21st Corps Headquarters. The preparations required to be made by the Navy and the forces to be provided are summarized. (Preliminary work, preparations, transports, supplies, escort, coastal defense, submarine chase.) (See directive in "Weseruebung" file.)

This directive thus represents Armed Forces High Command's first order to the Navy regarding preparations for "Weseruebung".

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Task Force "H" (probably two cruisers) put in to Freetown on 29 Feb. with the destroyers DAINTY and DIAMOND. The cruiser DORSETSHIRE proceeded from the Falkland Islands to Simonstown with the wounded from the EXETER and AJAX.

The WARSPITE and HOOD are still at sea.

A convoy of 30 ships with 2 destroyers left Gibraltar in the afternoon, westbound.

France:

Intelligence Center, Spain reports intensified patrol off Spanish ports in which German steamers are lying.

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Otherwise nothing special to report.

North Sea:

According to a Rotterdam agent's report, British torpedo boats come up to the vicinity of the Banjaard Bank to protect the approaches off the Western and Eastern Scheldt.

The Maltese Cross ships ALEXANDRIA and PYR, which put in to Esbjerg with coal, report that they were unsuccessfully attacked by planes en route.

Subsequent evaluation: The aircraft carrier FURIOUS was at sea on 27 Feb.

Shipping Losses

Atlantic:

The French steamer P.L.M. 15 (3,715 tons) sunk by a torpedo.

The British steamer PYRRHUS (7,418 tons) sunk by enemy action off the west coast of England.

North Sea:

The Italian steamer MIRELLA (5,340 tons) sank after striking a mine off the east coast of England. The Latvian steamer KATVAIDAS (3,206 tons) probably sunk in an air attack.

For disposition of forces and the activities of the main enemy units during the last week of February, see Radio Monitoring Report No. 8.

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Special Items

1. Visible decrease in the number of British submarines in the operational area; instead various submarines being used as convoy escorts from Great Britain to Norway.

2. Lively activity by air reconnaissance formations.

3. Continuation of undisturbed convoys in quick succession between the Shetlands and Norway.

4. a) Battleships still in the Clyde.

b) Organization of the cruisers:

Cruiser Squadron on escort service: under the Commander in Chief, North Sea: ARETHUSA, PENELOPE, AURORA, BIRMINGHAM, EDINBURGH. (BELFAST, SHEFFIELD in dock).

Assignment: escort of convoys to Norway.

1st Cruiser Squadron: NORFOLK, BERWICK, DEVONSHIRE, YORK, SUFFOLK (at present in dock).

Assignment: Patrol of the sea area Great Britain-Iceland.

Northern Patrol Squadron: SOUTHAMPTON, GLASGOW, NEWCASTLE, MANCHESTER.

Assignment: Patrol of north Norwegian waters. (Norwegian coast patrol.)

Kirkwall is being used to an increasing degree as a base for cruisers and destroyers.

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Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

The SCHLESIEN has lost her starboard screw owing to the ice. Minesweeper M "5" reports that she touched ground slightly, south of Heligoland, during fog on 29 Feb. Last night the 10th Air Corps operated against merchant shipping off the east coast of Britain. A number of hits were scored on merchant ships. (1 Latvian steamer sunk, 2 severely damaged.)

No operations by Commander, Naval Air today.

Baltic Sea:

Kiel still completely blocked by ice. There is still a solid covering of ice in the western and central Baltic as far as Darsserort-Moen; east of this, however, the ice decreases rapidly.

Nothing special to report.

Submarine Situation

U "26" put in to port, and reports sinking four steamers totaling 17,270 tons. Operational area south of Ireland, later in the central part of the Bay of Biscay. Duration - 29 Jan. - 1 March 1940.

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U "13" operating in the North Sea from 16-29 Feb., returned without any successes.

U "60", in the North Sea from 15-29 Feb., likewise returned without any successes.

In the Atlantic operational area: U "54", "28", "29".

On passage: West of the Shetlands: U "32".
Northern North Sea: U "38".

On return passage: Route II: U "50".

In the North Sea Operational Area: U "20", "62", "63".

On passage: Southern North Sea: U "17".

War against Merchant Shipping:

The steamer WANGONI, which put in to port today, reports that at 2050 on 28 Feb. an unidentified vessel (probably a British submarine) fired two rounds at her unsuccessfully eight miles south of Kristiansand.

According to an Estonian press report, the Russians have again canceled limitation of the Russian blockade area north of Baltic Port, so that the free shipping route is reduced by a further five miles.

There are various reports that the crews of neutral ships are refusing to sail to Great Britain because of the danger of being torpedoed.

Merchant Shipping:

The German steamer ITHAKA (1,773 tons) ran on the rocks near Batum on 27 Feb. The German steamer CHIOS (1,731 tons) is proceeding from Borkum roads to Rotterdam, the German steamer SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN (2,369 tons) from Rotterdam to Hamburg.

Fort de France informs the French West Indies forces of the sailing of the German steamer HEIDELBERG from Aruba on 29 Feb.

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and of the ANTILLO on 1 March. French forces are ordered to carry out reconnaissance and patrol.

Afternoon:

Report by the Chief, Operations Branch on his conference with Group West in Wilhelmshaven.

Deputy Commanding Admiral, Group West estimates the risk for battleship operations beyond the line Shetlands-Norway as very high (blocking of the return route on the line Shetlands-Norway by superior enemy forces) and claims that mining operations will produce considerably greater success. Chief, Operations Branch stated Naval Staff's views clearly but does not think that the Commanding Admiral was fully convinced.

Since the SCHARNHORST will not be ready to sail until 4 March, and the battleship operation might then interfere with the sortie of the LUETZOW and the auxiliary cruisers, Chief, Naval Staff is forced to agree to a further postponement of the battleship operation in favor of minelaying operations during the present new-moon period.

(For memorandum of the conference with Group West see Part B, V, 112.)

Conference between Operations Division and Captain Krancke of the Armed Forces High Command Working Staff on the subject of "Weseruebung".

"Weseruebung Nord" is to take place simultaneously with "Weseruebung Sued" (Denmark) and operation "Gelb". In this case the 7th Air Division and parachute troops will probably not be used in "Weseruebung". Transport plans are being drawn up on the basis of Operations Division's preliminary

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deliberations.

Tromsøe has been omitted in the allocation of ports, so that six destroyers can be moved to Narvik. The Navy and Air Force are to bear the brunt of the first operation. The 1st Sea Transport Unit is to be brought up later, as soon as the situation in the ports is under control.

A working Staff will be formed within Operations Division, which is to commence the necessary preliminary work as quickly as possible, since the Fuehrer will possibly demand the execution of the operation at short notice. First deliberations are to include the following individual subjects:

Available forces (readiness as regards materiel, operational use, escort), embarkation, crossing, penetration into the ports, securing the ports from attack by sea, first landward defenses. Swift establishment of operational freedom for naval forces, reinforcements, supplies, escort of reinforcements, defense of the Skagerrak by means of mine barrages, coastal organization, Coastal Defense Commanders, North and South, combined command? Organization at home, plans for equipment and for exploitation of the area.

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Items of Political Importance

The foreign press brings news that after 2 March Great Britain will stop all German deliveries of coal by sea bound for Italy and subject them to the contraband control.

Great Britain has made an offer to Italy to deliver to her the total amount of coal she is receiving from Germany and to take products of Italian heavy industry and agriculture in exchange.

This measure will have the severest repercussions on Italian war economy and is barefaced blackmail of Italy. According to the latest report from the Naval Attaché, she was given the choice between delivering products of her heavy industry (arms, planes) to Great Britain in exchange for British coal and receiving no more coal at all by sea. Mussolini's rejection of the plan with respect to Germany has now been taken by Great Britain as a pretext for the measures announced.

In the event of the measures actually being carried out, Naval Staff considers the present a propitious moment for publication of the law regarding action against exports from Great Britain. The Special Staff for Mercantile and Economic Warfare in Armed Forces High Command is informed of Naval Staff's viewpoint.

Even if the practical effect of the German law will at present be slight, in Naval Staff's opinion this specially favorable moment for its publication must be utilized, so that it can be applied as the situation permits during later measures in the conduct of mercantile and economic warfare. So that the present propitious moment is not again allowed to pass unexploited, allowance can be made in this case for any relaxation in the full force of the law which may become politically or economically expedient as the result of concessions to the neutrals.

Gradual yielding to the British threats can be seen to an increasing degree in the Norwegian press. The Norwegians'

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attitude regarding naval warfare is definitely anti-German, considering the large number of ships and lives lost through German naval operations.

(See also Foreign Press Report No., 54.)

Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles is having discussions with the Fuehrer today.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

Special Items

Operation "Weseruebung" is thoroughly discussed with special reference to organization. Naval Staff is well aware of the difficulties of carrying out "Weseruebung", involving as it does all-out operations by the whole Navy. The problem, however, has now by far exceeded the purely military province and has become a first class question of war economy and politics.

It is no longer solely a case of improving Germany's strategic position and gaining isolated military advantages or of weighing the pros and cons of the possibility of executing "Weseruebung" and of asserting military scruples, but for the Armed Forces it is a matter of accommodation at lightning speed to political conditions and necessities.

Naval Staff is therefore of the opinion that the Fuehrer's demands that the Armed Forces should solve this problem by using all the means in their power, must be fulfilled.

The date for the execution of "Weseruebung" is still unknown, but it may be very soon if the weather is suitable. In these circumstances the Navy is resolved to abandon all scruples and to sweep aside the difficulties that arise by using all its forces. The Fuehrer will, of course, be

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clearly informed of the difficulties standing in the way of the execution of "Weseruebung".

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic

Great Britain:

About ten auxiliary cruisers or auxiliary vessels can be reckoned with in the South Atlantic in addition to the warships so far detected. The DESPATCH reported on 29 Feb. that she had captured a German steamer. The cruiser has proceeded to a British port in the Antilles to replenish ammunition and exchange personnel and is then to return to the Pacific.

France:

Nothing special to report, apart from convoys detected and reports on patrol activity.

Shipping losses:

The Norwegian steamer SILJA (1,259 tons) sank on the way from Italy to Bergen. The Swedish steamer LAGAHOLM (2,818 tons) is reported to be on fire (60 miles north of the Minch).

North Sea:

The Commander in Chief, Home Fleet was probably at sea in northern Scottish waters during the afternoon. At the same time there was probably a convoy in the sea area between Scapa and Rosyth, escorted by the anti-aircraft cruisers CALCUTTA and CAIRO, one submarine and four destroyers (possibly including the JUNO and JUPITER). The cruiser SHEFFIELD is undergoing repairs in Rosyth. Dockyard period is expected to end in the middle of March.

Radio intelligence succeeded in deciphering an Admiralty radio message dated 1 March to command posts in the home area,

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and discovered a projected operation into the southern part of the North Sea for the night of 2 March. An unnamed operation is to be carried out apparently at 54° 16'N, 5° 9'E, i.e. in the middle of the German declared area on Route 1. (The following addressees were named: Commander in Chief, Home Fleet; Commanders in Chief, Portsmouth, Rosyth; Commander, Destroyers, Home Fleet; 1st and 2nd Destroyer Flotillas; 2nd and 6th Submarine Flotillas; the tender DOLPHIN; Vice Admiral, Dover; Vice Admiral, Submarines; Flag Officers i/c Humber, Harwich.) It can be deduced from the contents and type of the message that a minelaying operation is planned to seal off Route 1, which was probably explored by submarines and fishing vessels.

Own Situation:

North Sea:

Group West at once sent out six destroyers to take up a patrol line in the declared area through Route 1 because of the information about the enemy obtained by radio monitoring. Two more destroyers are following as a covering force. Air reconnaissance flown by Commander, Naval Air and the 10th Air Corps over the central part of the North Sea detected four destroyers on course 30° (probably deceptive course) at 54° 30'N, 2° E at 1830. The planes avoided the destroyers, however, apparently under the assumption that they might be our own. An enemy submarine, course 210°, was sighted south of this at the western edge of our declared area. The boat submerged when approached. It is possible that our air reconnaissance prevented the enemy from executing his plan and that he then decided to break off his projected minelaying operation. In any case, our destroyers on Route 1 made no contact with the enemy.

The 10th Air Corps carried out various operations against merchant shipping along the east coast of Britain:

0200-0800: Operations against merchant shipping between Kinnaird Head and Flamborough Head, also by one plane in the Channel (planes of the 26th

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Bomber Wing).

Results: Severely damaged: 1 steamer
Set on fire: 2 steamers
Effect not observed: 3 steamers

0200-0700: 3 planes of the 100th Bomber Wing:

Severely damaged: 1 steamer

1650-2300: 5 planes of the 26th Bomber Wing between the Firth of Forth and North Foreland. Various attacks on patrol boats and steamers. Effects not observed.

Searchlight, anti-aircraft and fighter defenses over the Humber and Thames estuaries.

Radio monitoring gives various reports from trawlers and steamers about attacks made on them (including the Latvian steamer ELIZABETE).

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report.

Baltic Sea:

The cruiser LUETZOW at sea on exercises.

Nothing special to report. Air reconnaissance took off to establish the ice situation: central and western Baltic frozen over, with single open spaces. Navigable channel in the Sound. Fast ice in the Flint Channel. Southern part of the Great Belt and also the Little Belt closed.

Submarine SituationAtlantic:

U "52" put out into the operational area.
 U "50" (Lieut (s.g.) Bauer) returned from long-range operation. This boat has achieved an outstanding success in sinking 36,000 tons. (6 steamers, including 2 large tankers). See brief report B.IV.

Otherwise unchanged.

North Sea:In the Operational Area:

Area of northern Scotland:	U "62"
	U "63"
Cross Sand:	U "20"
Maass lightship:	U "17".

Commanding Admiral, Submarines reports the following plans for operations:

Bergen-Floroe area outside territorial waters:	U "7", "21", "24", "56".
Longstone:	U "9".
Aberdeen:	U "22".
Pentland Firth-Noss Head:	U "57".
Busta Voe and Lax Firth (Shetlands):	U "58".
North Hinder Lightship:	U "14".

All the submarines are equipped with torpedoes only, except U "58" which receives TMC mines to carry out a minelaying operation.

Merchant Shipping

The steamer WANGONI reports: Fired upon - two rounds 8.8 or 10.5 cm - at 2050 on 28 Feb. about eight miles south of

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Kristiansand. Vessel which fired not sighted, apparently a submarine. According to the Captain, the submarine may have been cooperating with three trawlers.

Items about the Enemy's Economy

France's peacetime coal imports of 6 million tons are said to have risen to 20 million tons. Excess requirements must be met by Great Britain.

Result:

Increase in British pit-prop requirements from the American continent (transportation from the U.S.A. to European ports outside the war zone).

Great Britain is trying to charter small Scandinavian ships to carry the increased coal exports to France.

Items of Political Importance

The official German Armed Forces High Command half-yearly report for the first six months of the war contains, in addition to the great successes achieved by German naval warfare, the first naval losses so far, which are given as 1 pocket battleship, 2 destroyers, 6 minesweepers and patrol vessels and 11 submarines.

(See War Diary, Part B, V, 114.)

Italian note to Great Britain protesting against obstacles put in the way of Italian shipping and the cutting-off of German deliveries of coal by sea.

Wave of propaganda in the British press in favor of extending the conflict to other theaters of war. Varanger Fjord, Narvik and Batum, as specially important points, must come under British control.

Special Reports on the EnemyAtlantic:Great Britain:

According to radio monitoring the ROYAL SOVEREIGN was west of Newfoundland on 26 Feb. with convoy HX 22.

British and French warships, including two submarines, are reported east of Montevideo.

France:

Nothing special to report apart from convoys detected.

North Sea:Readiness:

The old battleship RESOLUTION, which is at present in dock, is scheduled to complete repairs in the middle of March. The old battleship MALAYA is to undergo repairs from the end

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of March to the middle of April. The cruiser ENTERPRISE is likewise undergoing repairs at present.

Submarines:

There is at present only one submarine off the Norwegian coast in the Lindesnes area. There are two submarines in the Heligoland Bight and one in the Texel area.

Shipping Losses:

The British steamer CATO (710 tons) struck a mine off the west coast. The British steamer SHEAF WATER (2,730 tons) was beached after a collision. The British steamer ALBANO (1,176 tons) was sunk by a mine in the North Sea.

Own Situation

Atlantic:)
)
North Sea:) Nothing to report.
)
Baltic Sea:)

Ice situation:

Unchanged in the western Baltic. Channel broken in Swinemuende Bay. Neufahrwasser and Gdynia roads ice-free.

Unchanged in the Kattegat and entrances to the Baltic. Kiel Canal navigable. Drift ice in the Elbe. Shipping near Cuxhaven severely impeded. Less drift ice in the Weser. Drift ice in the Jade, shipping possible. Shipping unhindered in the Ems.

Submarine Situation:

Atlantic:

Unchanged.

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U "54" (Lieut. (s.g.) Kutschmann) must be regarded as lost. The boat no longer replied to requests to transmit radio messages. The French report dated 27 Feb. about the sinking of a submarine off Cape Finisterre by the destroyer SIMOUN must unfortunately be taken to apply to U "54". According to this the boat was forced to surface by means of depth charges, then rammed by the destroyer and finally destroyed with depth charges.

North Sea:

U "17" and U "63" are in the North Sea operational area;
U "7" and U "14" are proceeding into the operational area;
U "20" and U "62" are on return passage.

Merchant Shipping

Returned from overseas: the steamer SAO PAULO (4,977 GRT) with 10,000 bales of cotton.

Losses:

Captured by British warship on 2 March and taken to Trinidad: the steamer HEIDELBERG (6,530 GRT).

Set on fire by the crew on 1 March after being stopped by a British cruiser (west of Aruba): the steamer TROJA.

Sailed from Aruba on 1 March, transmitted on 3 March: "Position 63° 20' N, 14° 50' W. Sinking rapidly. Time of receipt 1154": the steamer ARUCAS (3,369 GRT).

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Items of Political Importance

For Italian note of protest on the coal question see Foreign Press report dated 4 March.

In connection with the ALTMARK, the German representatives in Norway report that it is not possible for Norway to oppose British military actions. The Norwegian authorities are said to have forbidden firing on superior forces without permission. The British tradition is very pronounced in the Norwegian Navy and the officers moreover lack the pluck to defend the honor of their neutrality effectively.

Further reports from Norway state that if there was a change in Government soon, a Hambro-Morwinkel Cabinet would state its readiness to "accord the Western Powers right of way on the grounds of Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant".

Exhortation to the people in the Finnish press to reach maximum efficiency and force for the purpose of holding out. Just at this time Finland expects more help from foreign powers.

The Italian press publishes reports which all agree about an imminent German offensive in the west.

The U.S. press publishes the interview between Commander in Chief, Navy and U.S. radio reporter Jordan (see Part B, V, 106). The interview is given a favorable reception in the U.S. press.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial ItemsUrgent verbal communication from Armed Forces High Command:

"The Fuehrer has ordered all preparations for "Weseruebung" to be carried out as quickly as possible. Plans for the operation are to be completed by 10 March, so that from this date the Fuehrer can order the commencement of the operation at four days' notice."

The Fuehrer's demand must be complied with. The extraordinarily short space of time is caused by the present political situation, which makes imminent military intervention by the Western Powers in favor of Finland seem possible. Such British interference in the Russo-Finnish conflict would be regarded only as a pretext towards the attainment of the true strategic aims of a British landing in Norway namely: cutting Germany off from Norwegian/Swedish iron ore imports by the occupation of the north Norwegian ore ports and of the northern Swedish ore area; great pressure on Sweden to cease all deliveries of ore to Germany; extension of hostilities to Scandinavia; relief from German offensive pressure in the west.

The short time available makes it necessary to devote all naval forces to this one assignment. All other operations planned are canceled by Naval Staff, effective immediately ("Schleswig" operation, destroyer minelaying operations, sailing of the cruiser LUETZOW, bringing out the auxiliary cruisers and supply ships). The submarines ready to sail will be kept back for the present.

Work is proceeding within Naval Staff on the first operational directive for the Group Commands, based on Armed Forces High Command's first directive which was roughly drawn up on Naval Staff's previous deliberations. The number of persons participating must be kept as small as possible, since the success of the operation depends to a great extent on the degree of surprise.

With regard to the organization of command, which requires special consideration, Naval Staff for the present plans as follows:

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Operational control of the naval)
operation and operational command) Group West.
in the western area:)

Operational control of the)
operation in the Baltic Sea)
entrances, Kattegat and)
Skagerrak and operational) Group Baltic.
command in the Baltic area)
(supply area):)

Deputy of Commander in Chief,) Admiral Boehm is
Navy:) being considered.

Commanding Admiral, West Norwegian)
Coast: former Commanding Admiral,) Vice-Admiral v. Schrader.
Defenses, North.)

Commanding Admiral, South)
Norwegian Coast:) One of the former Coastal
Defense Commanders would
be most suitable.

Commanding Admiral, Defenses,)
North:) Former Commander, Minesweepers
Commodore Ruge.

Commanding Admiral, Defenses,)
Baltic:) To Kiel, later transferred
into the operational area,
subordinate to him as
Commanding Admiral, Naval
Forces: Commander,
Torpedo Boats.

(For instructions issued on 4 March see "Weseruebung" file.)

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

The battleships HOOD and VALIANT are at sea; are to take on supplies in Kirkwall (?) or Scapa on 7 March.

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The battleship REVENGE, with two Canadian destroyers, is with convoy HX 24 which sailed from Halifax on 2 March.

The cruiser HAWKINS received the following schedule on 2 March:

"On 4 March put in to Montevideo for 24 hours. Do not refuel. Proceed to the Falklands for repairs, then patrol east of the La Plata between 30° and 40° S, and west of 40° W. Then refuel in Buenos Aires."

The cruiser DORSETSHIRE left the Falklands on 2 March for Simonstown.

France:

Air reconnaissance and a large-scale submarine chase by 15 vessels, including numerous destroyers, and planes followed on a report of a submarine southwest of Penmarch. No success reports.

The captain of a German steamer in Bonanza reports the constant presence off the Guadalquivir of enemy patrols which illuminate the estuary at night with searchlights. Daily enemy air reconnaissance.

North Sea:

Convoy ON 17 (40 ships) left Rosyth at 1700 on 3 March northbound, escorted by the cruisers CALCUTTA and EDINBURGH, one submarine, probably also destroyers. The convoy will probably call at Kirkwall.

Only slight enemy air activity as compared with the preceding days. Two planes in the vicinity of the German coast during the evening and at night.

Shipping Losses:

The British steamer SAN FLORENTINO (12,842 tons) struck a mine north of Land's End. The British steamer CHARLES F. MEYER (10,516 tons) reports being torpedoed 25 miles west of

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Boulogne. (U "28"?). The British trawler BEN ATTOW (156 tons) sank off the east coast of England after an explosion. The Dutch steamer RIJUSTROOM (160 tons) sank in the southern North Sea. The Dutch coaster ELZIENA (197 tons) sank. The Swedish steamer LAGAHOLM (2,818 tons) sank off the Scottish coast.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Minesweeping operations and the escort officer service for merchant shipping had to be suspended because of the weather. The sea plane bases at Borkum, Norderney and List are again in operational readiness by day.

The ice situation in the North Sea has improved further.

In the afternoon U "34" was unsuccessfully attacked by a Blenheim on Schillig roads. The British radio reports that the boat was sunk by a bomb hit between the conning tower and stern.

Baltic Sea:

Ice situation generally unchanged. The stormy winds are splitting up the ice in parts; this starts moving so that there are some quite large ice-free places, with pack ice elsewhere. Shipping still impossible in the western Baltic.

Nothing to report.

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Submarine Situation:

Atlantic:

Unchanged.

U "50" returned from long-range operation.

North Sea:

Unchanged.

Merchant Shipping

Losses:

According to a report from the Consul General at Reykjavik, the steamer WOLFSBURG sent an S.O.S. in the Denmark Strait on 2 March. The ship (6,200 tons) sailed from Pernambuco on 2 March (obviously meant to read 2 Feb., Tr. N.) with a cargo of cotton.

Foreign Shipping

The British Embassy informed all U.S. petroleum companies that the Embassy will for the present cease issue of Navy-certs for oil shipments to Holland, Belgium and Denmark in order to cut off shipment on to Germany. Stocks of oil in these countries are said to be ample for their own requirements. The Embassy threatened that the British Fleet would take oil transports not accompanied by a Navy-cert into control ports.

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Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items

Conference on "Weseruebung" and the draft of Naval Staff's first directive. Various individual questions are discussed with Chief, Naval Staff:

Importance and extent of naval measures.
Seaward defense of bases.
Question of setting up guns.
Immediate seizure of the British consulates.
Occupation of the cable stations.
Prompt notification of ex-Minister Quisling.
Arrest of steamers entering and leaving the ports to be occupied.
Procedure as regards Danish and Norwegian warships.
Occupation peaceful at first; ruthless action only if resistance is offered.
Question of air defense, departure from ports and fjords necessary immediately after disembarkation of troops because of enemy air raids and enemy blockade operations.
All submarines in operational readiness to act as stationary defense off the ports (about 21 boats available on 10 March).
Announcement of declared areas off the ports?
Position of mine barrages in the Skagerrak.
Own air situation still not clear.
Considerable supplies for the Air Force.
Preparation of sea transport units, three of these scheduled at present.
Crossing.
Disposition of naval forces.
Operation is concentrating on the northern area.
Necessary for strong forces to be available immediately in the north.
Narvik is the critical spot of the operation; 6-8 destroyers are scheduled for this, the rest of the destroyers for Trondheim.
Necessary for the battleships to act as remote escort for the northern groups.

The difficulty of the return operation is not underestimated. Naval Staff, however, considers battleship operations at a distance from the coast to be an urgent necessity. It would

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also be a psychological error to leave the battleships in the estuaries during such an operation.

Denmark:

(Fuenen, Jutland, Zealand) = "Weseruebung Sued".

Organization:

Deputy of Commander in Chief, Navy, Admiral, West Norwegian Coast, Admiral, South Norwegian Coast, Port Commanders, Battery Commanders.

Discussion of service instructions. Assignments of the Deputy and of the Admirals of the coasts.

Secrecy: Only the most restricted circle is to undertake the preliminary work.

Supplies for ports in the north and south.

Naval Staff is making every endeavor to conclude the preliminary work for "Weseruebung" by 10 March. During preparations, however, difficulties must be expected to arise as the result of the ice situation in the Baltic and the Kiel Canal which will make it impossible to keep within the short time given (e.g. provision of transport space).

Naval Staff fully recognizes the difficulties arising in the execution of the operation, in holding occupied positions and especially in the return of the naval forces in a sea area controlled by the enemy, and these are again discussed thoroughly at today's conference on the situation.

The operation actually goes against all the precepts of naval warfare. Naval supremacy in the intended area of operations definitely lies in enemy hands because of the far superior British Fleet. In spite of this, Naval Staff is convinced - given surprise - that it will be possible without very great difficulties to take the troops across with naval forces, penetrate into the fjords, land in Norwegian ports and take possession of the harbors and fortifications.

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The immediate departure of naval forces after carrying out the landing operation, giving the first support for the troops landed and refuelling, is an absolute necessity for the maintenance of the German Fleet's future operational capacity.

The return trip of the northern groups is estimated as the most difficult operation, for they must expect to encounter superior enemy forces when breaking through the sea area controlled by the enemy.

1500: Conference with Chief, Operations Division on "Weseruebung". The following were present:

Chiefs, Operations Branches, Group West, Group Baltic and Fleet; Chief, Operations Branch, Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic; Captain Krancke from Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff; Chief, Submarine Division; from Service Division: Chiefs, Fleet Supply Branch, Organization Branch and Transport Branch; the officers concerned of Naval Staff, Operations Division.

Chief, Operations Division gives the first general information on the political situation, the Fuehrer's demands, Naval Staff's previous deliberations and the proposed course of "Weseruebung", as it will be set out in Naval Staff's operational directives.

1500: A conference on "Weseruebung" is held with the Fuehrer in the afternoon. Chief, Naval Staff, as in duty bound, again points out the importance and the difficulties of the operation for the Navy. The following special considerations are put forward amongst others:

1. The importance and extent of the operation require complete concentration of all the Navy's forces on this assignment. Everything must be given over to it. The following demands are therefore necessary:
 - a) Cancellation of the sortie by the LUETZOW and supply ships, also that of the auxiliary cruisers.
 - b) Cancellation of the destroyer minelaying operations on the east coast.

- c) All available submarines which are ready to sail or will be, to be retained for use in "Weseruebung".
- d) Operation "Gelb" measures must be canceled or greatly limited.

This complete cessation of naval warfare can only be advocated if the execution of "Weseruebung" is an absolute certainty and takes place soon.

2. After "Weseruebung" has been carried out successfully:
 - a) Ore imports from Narvik are to cease for the time being. Date of resumption cannot be predicted.
 - b) The situation regarding naval strategy will be somewhat better and more far reaching, but on no account will it have altered decisively in our favor (Iceland, Faroes), since practical exploitation of our favorable position will unfortunately be possible only to a very limited degree because of our lack of naval forces.
 - c) The safe holding of all positions in Norway in case of a mass attack by Great Britain is a problem which can only be considered solved after lengthy expansion of coastal defenses on land, at sea and in the air. The number of points which might be attacked is so large that they cannot all be protected satisfactorily. Fighting strength in the air and in anti-aircraft defense is especially necessary.

Submarine operations will be restricted for a long time.

(The war against merchant shipping must be relegated to second place.)

3. When commencing the operation the greatest care will be necessary in judging the weather four to six days in advance. Apart from the destroyers' own dependence on the weather (in the north) a situation is to be avoided at all costs in which the operation commences, the destroyers sail with transport crews and then after three days the Air Force states on X-day that the execution of the operation must be postponed.
4. The transport operation cannot proceed according to plan if Great Britain has taken defensive measures in expectation of such a German action by disposing strong naval forces off the ports of destination.

5. After "Wesertime" all merchant traffic by sea to west and north Norway will cease for a time. Any reinforcement and supply operation which may become necessary over the Baltic and Gulf of Bothnia (Lulea) will not be possible until the ice situation changes (April).
 6. The question of supplies for the Norwegian population after all overseas imports cease requires to be cleared up.
-

Items of Political Importance

The President of the Board of Trade states that all German coal being exported from Rotterdam to any foreign port whatsoever will be liable to seizure as contraband.

Anglo-Italian economic negotiations continue. Both parties hope to settle the coal dispute.

The U.S. press comments in a hostile manner on the reports reaching abroad of Germany's maximum demands, which Ribbentrop is alleged to have raised in his conversation with Welles. Otherwise, however, it is acknowledged that Sumner Welles was given a most favorable opportunity of getting to know the German viewpoint in Berlin. Germany's firmness during the discussions has made an impression in the U.S.A. The downfall of British naval supremacy hoped for by Germany in this war and the assumption of naval supremacy by her in Great Britain's place is, however, rejected strongly by the U.S.A. as incompatible with U.S. interests.

(See Foreign Press and Political Review.)

Special Reports on the EnemyAtlantic:Great Britain:Disposition of forces:

According to radio intelligence the cruiser BERWICK (1st Cruiser Squadron), which is at present patrolling in the Denmark Strait, is to be relieved by an auxiliary cruiser on 7 March and to proceed to Scapa. The cruiser YORK is to leave her patrol area on 9 March without relief and likewise proceed to Scapa. The cruiser NORFOLK also will leave the Clyde on 7 March for Scapa. The cruiser DEVONSHIRE is apparently still in Rosyth, the SUFFOLK is probably still undergoing repairs in the Clyde. The heavy cruisers are thus following the movements of the battleships, some of which are already on the move. Scapa is again a main base. A fact specially worthy of notice is the almost simultaneous withdrawal of the heavy cruisers, some of which are on patrol, without their being relieved at the same time. This completely denudes the area Scotland-Iceland-Greenland of heavy ships.

The old battleships REVENGE, ROYAL SOVEREIGN and MALAYA can be assumed to be on the North Atlantic route.

The Naval Attaché in Madrid reports:

"The Spanish Intelligence Service reports from Gibraltar: The British reckon that there are at present two German submarines off the coast of North Africa or southern Spain. Special patrol has been instituted in the North African bays of Benzus, Cabo Negro, the Rio Martin estuary and Bahia Alhucemas. French patrol near Chafarinas."

France:

Radio monitoring picks up reports of convoy movements, patrol activity and air reconnaissance in the Channel area, western part of the Bay of Biscay and along the Spanish coast.

North Sea:

The HOOD and VALIANT are to take on supplies in Scapa on 7 March. The task force is escorted by destroyers of the

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4th, 5th and 8th Destroyer Flotillas. The fact that the heavy ships have moved to Scapa confirms the deduction already made from the refuellings by heavy cruisers in Scapa that this base is again considered safe after the last minelaying measures.

In addition, the strikingly heavy concentration of forces which will take place in Scapa around 10 March demands most serious consideration with regard to possible British action against Norway under the pretext of measures to aid Finland.

The assembly of about 20 ships is reported from Bergen. This includes a 5,000 ton U.S. ship, which according to a reliable source, is said to have brought large quantities of ammunition for transshipment to British ships. It is said to be noticeable that there is an uncommonly large number of British ships in the present assembly of steamers.

Air Force Operations Staff has drawn up consideration on the purpose of declaring the area of northern Scotland under the Special Defense Regulations. The result is summarized in War Diary, Part B, V, page 115.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Naval and Air Force activity was restricted by stormy weather.

The steamer KIEL was attacked unsuccessfully by British planes 20 miles west of Westerland.

The supply ship ALTMARK is still in Joessing Fjord. Weather makes it impossible to sail.

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Baltic Sea:

Nothing to report.

Slight improvement of the ice situation in the eastern Baltic. Very heavy pack ice still in Swinemuende Bay, heavy ice pressure in the western Baltic, no shipping possible.

Submarine Situation:

Atlantic:

U "29" reports:

"Minelaying carried out; two steamers (about 10,000 tons) sunk in the Land's End area. Heavy traffic, weak defense near the Scillies, in the Bristol Channel and St. George's Channel.

Weather very good at present. Commencing homeward passage."

At 1813 on 5 March Land's End radio transmits:

Admiral Devonport broadcasts the following warning to merchant shipping:

The area within a radius of 5 miles around the point 50° 23' N, 5° 49' W is to be avoided. (In the Bristol Channel.) The British steamer SAN FLORENTINO has reported striking a mine there on 4 March. (Minelaying by U "29".)

U "28" still in the operational area.

U "54"?

On passage:

Northern North Sea: U "52".

West of Ireland: U "32", "38".

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North Sea:

In the operational area: U "17", "63", "14".
On return passage: U "7".
Returned from operation: U "20", "62".

War against Merchant Shipping

The following directive is sent to ships on operation, with regard to the treatment of U.S. ships:

In previous directives regarding the conduct of war against merchant shipping submarines have already been instructed never to stop U.S. ships. For political reasons it is advisable to extend this directive also to surface forces:

"U.S. ships are therefore neither to be stopped, seized nor sunk". (See War Diary.)

Merchant Shipping

Returned home:

The steam tanker FR. BREME (10,347 GRT) (left Murmansk on 19 Feb), returned from overseas.

Losses:

The Admiralty announces that the following steamers were scuttled to avoid capture:

WOLFSBURG (Denmark Strait), HEIDELBERG, TROJA (Caribbean Sea), ARUCAS (Iceland).

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Items of Political Importance

Churchill stated in reply to a question in the House of Commons as to whether the Government had made preparations for an action against the German transport of ore from Norway:

"So far no steps have been taken, for political reasons, to suppress German ore traffic within Norwegian territorial waters."

The British press speaks of the imminent despatch of American volunteers to Finland. 3,000 men would be transported (?).

Norway and Denmark intend to approach the German Government for a conference on the possibility of increasing the safety of Norwegian and Danish shipping. Continuation of shipping to Great Britain is considered vital for the existence of these countries.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

Special Items

Report on the "Weseruebung" directive and discussion of various individual points.

The following subjects especially were discussed:

1. Agent from Norway (supporter of Quisling) states that Great Britain and France are demanding bases

and right of way for their troops from the Norwegian Government under the pretext of taking help to Finland. It has been agreed that the Norwegian Government will officially refuse to grant the Allies bases and right of way, but will content itself with a protest in case of an accomplished fact. Great Britain and France are now examining the landing and transport facilities in Norwegian ports with the knowledge and consent of the Norwegian Government. The Allies plan to land mechanized troops in Stavanger, Trondheim, Narvik and perhaps Kirkenes.

(See file: Special appendices to "Weseruebung".)

2. After yesterday's conversation with the Fuehrer, 10 destroyers are allotted for Narvik. The remainder, with the HIPPER, for Trondheim. The Fuehrer considers it important, in the interests of artillery support for the Army and immediate adequate harbor defense, that after disembarkation about 2 destroyers should remain in Narvik and 1 cruiser in Trondheim. There are, however, important operational reasons against fulfillment of this request. Naval forces cannot take on the assignment of supporting troops from the rear or of exercising pressure on the population. Forces must regain their freedom of action as quickly as possible and combine for further possible operations, especially as there is every probability of an encounter with the enemy.
3. In view of Army and Air Force requirements considerably more transport space will be required than was originally scheduled. Naval Staff objects strongly to this addition since it entails a very high risk of the enemy's being prematurely warned and may even endanger the whole operation.
4. Defense of ports by submarines. Four large submarines are to operate off Narvik.

5. Skagerrak barrages are to be laid during the first night if possible.
6. Any engagement is to be avoided. Convoys are not to be attacked. An attack on convoys could only be considered if the battleships accidentally came upon them. On no account seek them out. Engagements are also to be avoided if possible on the return passage. If, of course, forces are so situated that joining battle is unavoidable, this is to be fought according to tactical principles while endeavoring to gain the greatest possible success.
7. Considerations are necessary for the event of the British occupying the Norwegian area. Possibilities of German counter action. Immediate occupation of Denmark and Southern Norway necessary. Securing of the Swedish ore region, if necessary at least prevention of a British attack on the central Swedish ore regions.
8. Ice situation in the Baltic at present permits no shipping movements. Special difficulties in the Great Belt, since barrage markings have drifted.

1200: Conference between Chief, Operations Division and the representatives of the Groups, Fleet, Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic, etc., on "Weseruebung".

Adjustment of views and survey of the situation. Thorough discussion of Naval Staff's first directive, being issued today, clearing up any queries and divergent opinions.

Chief, Operations Branch, Group West expresses strong objections against passing through the Great Belt on the outward trip, as this would give the enemy previous warning through his intelligence service. Naval Staff agrees with this objection in principle. The question as to whether it is possible to embark all forces and load all steamers in the North Sea will be gone into by Naval Staff with Armed

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Forces High Command. Execution, however, appears very doubtful.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Shipping Movements:

The old battleship REVENGE was south of the Great Newfoundland Bank (43° N, 53° W) with convoy HX 24 on 5 March.

The aircraft carrier EAGLE has not gone into dock at Simonstown but plans to put in to Singapore on 16 March to undergo repairs.

A submarine is reported (U "28"?) northwest of Cap de la Hague; British forces are sent out on air reconnaissance and submarine chase north of 50° and French forces south of 50°.

The declared area announced on 5 March within a 5 miles radius of point 50° 23'N and 5° 29'W, was withdrawn again on the morning of 7 March.

France:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

It is confirmed that the battle cruiser HOOD and the old battleship VALIANT will put in to Scapa at 1800 on 7 March. Destroyers received a rendezvous 40 miles northwest of the Orkneys. Air escort is scheduled for the same time (0800). Anti-aircraft firing exercises are obviously planned from 1400.

An unidentified vessel was detected off Hardanger Fjord, possibly connected with convoy ON 17 or HN 17.

Flights by enemy planes into the Heligoland Bight during the evening.

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Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

British submarine, seemingly the UNITY, reported at 0915 that the supply ship ALTMARK put out to the east.

Air reconnaissance by the 10th Air Corps over Scapa had to be broken off because of the weather.

Operations against merchant shipping carried out off the east coast of Britain (Thames-Firth of Forth) in the afternoon and evening by 1st Group, 26 Bomber Wing, 10th Air Corps.

Result:

Five steamers damaged by bomb hits, other steamers attacked but effect not observed. (See also Air Situation for 7 March.)

Baltic Sea:

Nothing to report.

Ice Situation:

Western Kattegat: No hindrance.

Little Belt: Closed.

Great Belt: Fast ice and heavy drift ice.

Sound: Pack ice, severe hindrance to shipping.

Kiel Bay: Almost closed.

Western Baltic: Unchanged.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:)
) Unchanged.
North Sea:)

On her return from the Cross Sand area, U "20" reports, in addition to detailed observations of traffic and sea marks, the sinking of a 5,500 ton steamer and a 4,000 ton steamer, also two misses.

Patrol by fast motorboats.

(For brief report see Part B, IV.)

Merchant ShippingLosses:

The steamer URUGUAY (5,846 GRT) sent an SOS from position 68° N 15° W (north of Iceland) at 1705:

"Am sinking fast".

The ship sailed from Pernambuco on 11 Feb.

War against Merchant Shipping

In connection with the sinking without warning of Danish fishing vessels by M "1" in the declared area, Naval Staff issues the following directive about immediate action against enemy and neutral merchantmen inside the German declared areas, as a supplement to the regulations previously issued for the conduct of war against merchant shipping:

The declared areas announced to date in the North Sea and Baltic are merely declared mine areas of a defensive character. Since the warning of neutral shipping in accordance with Article VIII of the Hague Covenant concerns only danger from mines, immediate action by German forces against the merchant and fishing vessels encountered in

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these areas is only permissible under the circumstances stated in paras. 22 and 23 of the directive on the conduct of war against merchant shipping (use of armed force, enemy escort, transmission of intelligence, forcible resistance, use of radio, enemy troop transports, sailing without lights) especially if they transmit news of military importance or carry out actions on the enemy's behalf by minesweeping or exploration of mine-free channels.

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Items of Political Importance

1. For situation in the Russo-Finnish conflict see Foreign Press. Russian advance on Viborg, where the Russians have formed a bridgehead in the northwest part of Viborg Bay.

Rumors about Swedish arbitration are increasing. There is still an urgent desire within the Finnish Government to commence negotiations with Russia. According to a "Havas" report Russia is already said to have laid down the following conditions:

1. Cession of the entire Karelian Isthmus including Lake Ladoga.
2. Cession of the area northeast of Lake Ladoga with Sortavala.
3. Cession of Hangoe peninsula.

The Russian conditions contain no further reference to a "Kuusinen Government" and no demand for Petsamo.

2. Reports from Sweden state that there are no further disturbing signs of complications in the situation on the part of the Western Powers. Finland has not officially asked for aid and Sweden has stated to the representatives of the Western Powers that right of way through Sweden will on no account be granted to foreign troops.

3. Report from Great Britain about the withdrawal of 16,000 reservists from France to Great Britain, giving as a reason that they are required as skilled workers. (Possibly preparation of an expeditionary force for Norway/Finland.)

4. Under Secretary of State Welles in Paris from 7-9 March in the course of his investigations.

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5. To date the British have held 16 Italian colliers in the Downs. No British reply to the Italian note yet. Agreement is expected by Italy's stopping shipment of coal from Rotterdam.
(See also Political Review No.56.)

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

1. Discussion on "Weseruebung": Discussion of individual points. Chief, Naval Staff refuses to leave one cruiser in Trondheim and destroyers in Narvik after the troops are disembarked as incompatible with operational necessities, and will confer on the question with the Fuehrer again.

Admiral Boehm will be Commanding Admiral and Deputy of Commander in Chief, Navy for Narvik.

While Commanding Admiral, Fleet is ill, Vice Admiral Luetjens will be Deputy Commanding Admiral, Fleet and Rear Admiral Schmundt Deputy Commanding Admiral, Scouting Force.

2. M "1"'s action against Danish Fishing Vessels: Discussion on the commander's report and the Group's comments; in the above case it agrees with the commander's procedure but stresses that the procedure used is not to become a rule. Chief, Naval Staff states his agreement with the measures taken, taking into consideration the commander's actual impression at the time. No repercussions are expected from the Danish Government. Further thorough investigation is planned after M "1"'s War Diary is submitted.

The first supplement to Chief, Naval Staff's directive on

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"Weseruebung" (1. Abtl. Skl. I Op 231/40 Gkdos. chefs dated 6 March 1940) is issued to Groups and Commanding Admirals. (See 1 Skl. I op 252/40 dated 7 March.)

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Disposition of forces: Radio intelligence now detects Commander in Chief, Home Fleet at sea (probably on the RODNEY or WARSPITE) apart from the HOOD and the VALIANT, which are en route to Scapa.

The battle cruiser REPULSE was scheduled to sail from Plymouth to Freetown on 23 Feb. Radio monitoring has so far picked up no signals. The ship's presence in Freetown must be assumed.

The Embassy in Dublin reports from a reliable source that some time ago a steamer and a tanker struck mines and sank off Liverpool. (Probably the steamers we detected which ran on U "30"'s mines.)

France:

Submarine chase in the Channel. Hunt for a submarine near Boulogne during the night of 7 March. Radio monitoring detects further convoy movements and air reconnaissance.

North Sea:

On the afternoon of 6 March enemy bombers received the ALTMARK's approximate position and the order to extend their search as far as 8° E. The ALTMARK was to be bombed but only

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outside Norwegian territorial waters. The nationality of submarines was to be established definitely before they were bombed. (It may be deduced from this that enemy submarines near the coast were to watch the ALTMARK's route.)

A submarine (probably U "14") is reported near Cross Sand.

Convoy Movements:

According to reports from Bergen and Haugesund a fairly large convoy sailed from near Floroe on the evening of 6 March.

Shipping Losses:

The Dutch steamer VECHT (1,965 tons) sank in the North Sea. (German air attack?)

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

We are informed from Oslo that the ALTMARK arrived in Sande Fjord about 2400 on the night of 6 March and made fast at about 0830. The crossing was carried out under the escort of the Norwegian minesweeper OLAF TRYGVASON and the destroyer ODIN and was without incident. Tugs were only required for making fast in Sande Fjord. A strong towing tug will, however, be required for further passage, as in bad weather the ship cannot be maneuvered.

Between the British declared area and the Dogger Bank air reconnaissance on 7 March detected numerous British trawlers, which fired on our planes with machine guns and 2 cm guns; there were also some merchant ships south of the Dogger Bank. None of our planes was lost.

A squadron of Commander, Naval Air, West took off to attack the trawlers. Results not observed.

In the afternoon and evening the 10th Air Corps carried out operations against merchant shipping off the east coast of Great Britain.

Result:

Several (five?) steamers severely damaged or destroyed.

(For particulars see Air Situation.)

Baltic Sea:

Nothing special to report; slight improvement in the ice situation.

Samsøe Belt ice-free, shipping possible in the Great Belt, western Baltic still closed, heavy pack ice in the Sound.

Submarine SituationAtlantic:

U "52" is ordered to transfer the focal point of her operational area to southwest of the Faroes, in order to utilize favorable chances of attack. Attacks on the Northern Patrol left to her discretion. U "38" is likewise to operate in the area Shetlands-Faroes-Hebrides. There are also in the operational area:

Southwest of Ireland, approaching
Liverpool Bay: U "32"

Western entrance to the Channel: U "28"

On return passage, southwest of
Ireland: U "29"

North Sea:

In the operational area: U "14", "63"

On return passage: U "7"

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Merchant Shipping

The steamer SEATTLE (left Willemstadt/Dutch West Indies on 5 March) was stopped by a British warship. The Chief of the West Indies Station has expressed his thanks via Admiralty to the owners of a British steamer for the prompt report about the sailing of the three German steamers SEATTLE, VANCOUVER and MIMI HORN from Curacao on 5 March.

The Ministry of Transportation has wired the following order to the Embassy in Madrid and Consulate at Las Palmas via the Foreign Office:

"Send home no more ships which are ready to sail. Return home probably not until fall. Order about perishable cargo follows."

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Items of Political Importance

Continuation of Swedish arbitration in the Russo-Finnish conflict. Reports about the Russian conditions announced are confirmed.

According to a report from Denmark, the Western Powers have requested right of way through Sweden and Norway on the grounds of Section 16 of the League of Nations Statutes. The B.B.C. states that the Western Powers are resolved to give Finland considerable aid if she will make an appeal to them for this.

The Italian press gives news of alleged Franco-British preparations for the landing of an expeditionary corps in Scandinavia.

While the Scandinavian countries are apparently bringing strong pressure to bear on Finland to accept the Russian conditions, Britain is directing her energies to preventing Finland's agreement to the Russian peace proposals by pointing out that British aid will become effective in the immediate future.

An agent from Narvik reports that Great Britain has demanded free passage via Narvik for troops and arms for Finland. Great Britain is also said to be considering Kristiansand on the south coast as a base.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items

1. Report by Chief, Operations Branch on the Armed Forces High Command supplementary directive for "Weseruebung", in which the necessity of transporting strong forces to "Nienburg" and the immediate creation of sufficient artillery defense for this port is again especially emphasized.

2. Second supplement to Naval Staff's directive for "Weseruebung". (See Skl. I op 252/40 III Ang. dated 8 March. "Weseruebung" file.)

Special Items

- a) Forces previously scheduled for "Stadthagen" will go to "Bremen", since there is no serviceable airfield at the former. If necessary the BRUMMER is to remain in "Bremen".
 - b) Occupation of cable station "Elsfleth".
 - c) The HANSESTADT DANZIG for assignment "Kopenhagen".
 - d) The SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN for assignment "Korsoer". (1st Infantry Battalion.)
 - e) No Commanding Admiral for "Weseruebung Sued" but a Coastal Defense Commander. (Vice Admiral Mewis.)
3. Ice situation in the Baltic still does not permit any shipping movements in connection with "Weseruebung". This will also affect all transportation of materiel and the planned movements of Group "Oldenburg".
4. The subject of publishing the special law against British exports was re-examined on 7 March during a conference with the Special Staff for Mercantile and Economic Warfare of Armed Forces High Command.

Armed Forces High Command and Naval Staff are unanimously of the opinion that publication cannot be considered until negotiations between Great Britain and Italy on the subject of coal deliveries have come to a negative conclusion. The subject is again to be brought to the Fuehrer's attention. (The Fuehrer refuses publication at the present moment for political reasons.)

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Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Disposition of forces:

Contrary to yesterday's assumption, the REPULSE did not sail for Freetown, but left Greenock on 7 March with the RODNEY, WARSPITE and ten destroyers to proceed to Scapa.

This striking alteration in the REPULSE's program is especially noteworthy in connection with the general concentration of forces in Scapa.

The cruiser BERWICK put in to Scapa from the Denmark Strait.

The ROYAL SOVEREIGN put in to Halifax on 7 March.

Task Force "H" (cruisers) plans to be at position 26° S, 40° W (off Rio) on 11 March.

Operations by forces in the West Indies and South America depend on the sailing of our steamers from neutral ports.

France:

Nothing special to report apart from submarine chase in the Seine Bay and various submarine warning reports.

North Sea:

The HOOD and VALIANT arrived in Scapa on 7 March according to plan. The heaviest concentration of forces since the war began has now been effected in Scapa through the transfer of three more battleships, together with all the heavy cruisers in operational readiness and several destroyer flotillas.

Naval Staff sees the following possibilities as a reason for the present striking concentration of the British Home Fleet:

1. Scapa has now been protected to such an extent by comprehensive defense measures against penetration by submarines and against air raids that it has become possible to move the battleships back to Scapa Flow.

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Such a transfer has been urgently desired by the British Fleet for a long time, since the materiel and personnel strength of the Fleet must have been greatly strained by the compulsion to make a detour to the west coast and by the necessity thus of maintaining some of the battleships constantly at sea. There are no calm anchorages in the open bays of the west Scottish coast and their safety is also greatly prejudiced by German naval measures (mines, submarines). In these circumstances Scapa must still be regarded as the best anchorage and the most favorably situated base for operations by the heavy ships against German forces.

2. Convoy traffic on the Great Britain-Norway route has assumed such proportions that, with regard to the expected operations by German forces, a close escort of cruisers and destroyers alone cannot protect it, but the use of heavy ships is necessary. Scapa is, therefore, in this connection especially favorably placed, both strategically and operationally, for Home Fleet operations in the area west, north and east of the Orkneys/Shetlands.
3. The Admiralty is possibly expecting German Atlantic forces to sail during the coming new-moon period, a step which must by all means be prevented.
4. The concentration of heavy forces acquires special significance with reference to the development of the Russo-Finnish conflict. Reports about a supporting operation for Finland planned by the Western Powers and about an imminent landing in Norway are increasing to such an extent that the movement of the heavy forces to Scapa must be closely connected with them. It is not to be assumed in this case that the troops will sail from Scapa, since troops and material will only be embarked in ports on the Irish Sea and the southwest coast or in the Channel ports. The Fleet's only assignment will, therefore, be to provide adequate protection for the troopships to Norway against attacks by German battleships and cruisers from the Heligoland Bight and to render impossible any German counter-action from the sea by operating along the Norwegian coast. According to Naval Staff's opinion, therefore, it is quite possible that the direct cause of the striking movement of all heavy forces to Scapa is a landing operation on the Norwegian coast planned in connection with the aid for Finland.

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According to a report in the London press and foreign intelligence, the Admiralty is said to have discovered a device to counteract the German magnetic mine. Hundreds of British ships have already been equipped with an anti-magnetic device. This is a cable loop laid around the whole ship's hull which neutralizes the magnetism of the hull so that the mine is no longer fired.

This news shows that the British counter-measures have doubtless recognized the correct way to combat the danger from these mines. Defense by cable loops corresponds to the German self-protection. It was learned from the British press that in November one of our aerial mines fell into British hands, having being salvaged very skillfully and expertly. All the particulars of the technical construction of the magnetic mine and its workings are thus known to the British. This knowledge has rendered the development of their counter-measures considerably easier. Even if we may doubt - according to our own experience - that the enemy will thus have at his disposal an effective counter to the magnetic mine in the immediate future, we must still assume that in a few months, six at most, the development may lead to a practical minesweeping gear and self-protection for ships which is effective to a certain extent. This knowledge is of special importance when judging the appropriateness of a speedy commencement of the use of aerial mines on a large scale. In Naval Staff's opinion aerial minelaying operations should, therefore, take place as soon as possible, considering also the possibility of the further development of the enemy's defensive measures.

According to a statement from a British airman who made a forced landing in Dutch territory, a large-scale R.A.F. attack on Northern Germany is planned for the beginning or the middle of next week. (250 planes.)

Certain importance is attached to the report, since this is possibly a deliberate deception for the purpose of concealing the true British plans to attack Norway with the aim of helping Finland. It might also be possible that a large-scale R.A.F. diversionary attack on German Fleet bases and northwest German industry is planned simultaneously with an action against Norway.

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For shipping movements and activity of the enemy's main units during the first week of March, see Radio Monitoring Report No. 9/40.

Shipping Losses:

The British steamer COUNSELLOR (5,068 tons) was sunk off the northwest coast.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Nothing special to report. The 10th Air Corps carried out armed reconnaissance of Scapa. Approach run at 6,000-7,000 m. altitude. Because of deterioration of visibility and icing-up of the windows unsuccessful attack on a cruiser and six steamers allegedly in the Holm Sound (planes' position given apparently false. Planes were possibly not over Scapa).

One Ju 88 shot down.

Naval Staff expects that Scapa's defensive readiness has now been brought to its peak as regards planes, submarines and mines. In spite of this, an Air Force attack on the Home Fleet now assembled there again after a long interval must be requested, utilizing favorable weather conditions. Naval Staff considers it impracticable for only three planes to attack Scapa Flow with its strong anti-aircraft defenses, since in this case the anti-aircraft fire can concentrate on the small number of attackers. The use of strong air formations must be requested in order to destroy heavy enemy forces effectively. At the same time, the use of aerial mines

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against Scapa is under review. Successes against the vessels lying in Scapa would, in addition to the purely material result, probably cause decisive reactions on any enemy plans for an occupation of Norway or despatch of fairly strong forces to intervene in Finland, and would thus be of extreme importance.

Air Force Operations Staff is informed of Naval Staff's views.

Baltic Sea:

Slight improvement of the ice situation. Western Baltic still impassable. (See Situation Baltic.)

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:)
) Unchanged.
North Sea:)

Merchant Shipping

Disposition of German merchant shipping on 9 March:

<u>In Home Waters:</u>	<u>Ships</u>		
(Ships over 1,600 GRT)	579	=	68.0%
Of these -			
On Norwegian run:			
51 ships, totaling 139,748 GRT.			
(13 under 1,600 GRT)			
On Holland run:			
3 ships, totaling 5,266 GRT.			
<u>In neutral ports:</u>	219	=	25.8%
of these anchored: 24.			

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The following cannot return:

Ships

a) Because of unfavorable situation of their anchorages (Mediterranean, Black Sea, Red Sea, Persian Gulf)

73

(plus 5 without radio)

b) Scheduled for special duties:

41

At Sea, Homeward bound:

2

=

0.2%

Returned to date:

114 = 12.5%

Lost: (2 without radio)
(plus 1 trawler)

49

=

6.0%

Total:

849

=

100.0%

Norway run:

During the months of January and February the following have arrived from Norway:

64 ships with about 360,000 tons iron ore;
17 ships with mixed cargo.

Items of Political Importance

Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop in Rome for conversations with Mussolini and Count Ciano.

For situation in the Russo-Finnish conflict see Foreign Press. The Russians are advancing despite strong Finnish resistance. Negotiations under Swedish mediation are now said to have commenced officially.

Russian conditions:

Cession on lease of Hangoe peninsula.
Cession of islands in the Gulf of Finland.
Cession of the Karelian Isthmus, including the north coast of Lake Ladoga.
No cession of Petsamo.

Italy's attitude has undergone a change insofar as she is now also calling upon Finland to submit and to accept the Russian peace conditions.

Anglo-Italian coal negotiations not yet concluded. Germany is to make an effort to increase the export of coal to Italy overland by all available means so that Italy becomes almost independent of Great Britain for coal supplies.

The French and British press demand the immediate extension of the war to Scandinavia.

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The Finnish Foreign Minister informs the Swiss Ambassador that if the Russian demands are excessive the Finnish Government will request immediate official aid from the Western Powers. This help had been definitely assured without regard to the forcible extension of the war to the northern area.

The Norwegian Government requests the speedy return of the ALTMARK to Germany, since further developments in four to five days' time cannot be foreseen and fresh violations of neutrality must be expected.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

1100:

Special Items:

Discussion on the state of "Weseruebung" preparations.
Report on operational order No. 1 of Group 21 (General v. Falkenhorst).

For establishment of new warship constructions according to the allocations of raw materiel to be expected see War Diary, Part B, V, 118.

1200:

Report by Commander in Chief, Navy to the Fuehrer:

Commander in Chief, Navy emphasizes his conviction that the occupation of Norway by Great Britain might possibly decide

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the war against Germany and that "Weseruebung" must therefore be regarded as urgent. Further, as in duty bound, he informs the Fuehrer of the special difficulties which the character of the operations involves for the Navy. The return of the naval forces after the execution of the landing must be regarded as the most difficult operation of the whole "Weseruebung". (For particulars see Memorandum of Commander in Chief, Navy, Part C, Vol. VII.)

Special Reports on the Enemy

Great Britain:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

Commander in Chief, Home Fleet aboard the RODNEY was 30 miles west of the Pentland Firth at 2000 on 8 March.

No longer any heavy cruisers in the Shetlands-Greenland area from 9 March.

While there were formerly always two heavy cruisers in the Shetlands-Iceland-Denmark Strait operational area, the cruiser BERWICK is not being replaced by the NORFOLK, as originally planned, but by an auxiliary cruiser.

The NORFOLK and BERWICK to Scapa

The YORK, the second cruiser on patrol, is also withdrawn from her operational area without any substitute. On 9 March she is in Scapa Flow. The DEVONSHIRE, originally scheduled as the YORK's relief, is proceeding to Scapa after a short overhaul in Rosyth.

It is apparent from reports by the captains of steamers that submarines frequently form a part of the escort for convoys to Norway; they are mostly disposed astern. The destroyers proceeding ahead are said to drop depth charges constantly.

For Reuter report on alleged defense against magnetic mines see War Diary, Part B, V, 117.

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Shipping Losses:

The British steamer ASHLEY (1,300 tons) sent an SOS near Goodwin lightship. The British steamer THURSTON (3,000 tons) and the French steamer "S.N.A. 1" (2,700 tons) sank after a collision.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

Enemy planes flew in around noon, but there was no contact with the enemy by naval forces. Fighters took off in vain. Our own air reconnaissance and the planned torpedo patrol could not be carried out.

The supply ship ALTMARK is informed that her earliest possible return is planned.

Baltic Sea:

Ice situation in Kiel Bay still unchanged. Still no shipping in the western Baltic because of drift ice. Entrance to Swinemuende is ice-free because of ice-breaker activity.

The Attaché in Copenhagen informs us of a proposal from the Danish Naval Staff regarding the limits of German and Danish check sweeps for mines after the ice period is over.

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Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

In the operational area: U "28", "32", "38", "52".

Carried out the assignment off Portsmouth as planned: U "28".

On return passage in Shetlands-Orkneys area: U "29".

North Sea:

In the operational area: U "17", "63".

Merchant Shipping

The following directive is forwarded to the Ministry of Transportation:

Naval Staff does not consider it advisable under the present circumstances to have German merchantmen sail from ports overseas.

The route along the Jutland-Frisian coast, through the Heligoland Bight to Holland, which was some time ago recommended to Swedish shipping as safe, is at present being followed by a Swedish steamer for the first time.

Measures in the Economic War

The memorandum of the Special Staff for Mercantile and Economic Warfare in Armed Forces High Command (see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XII, Conduct of Economic Warfare) makes the following proposals on the subject of economic measures against Great Britain's supplies from Denmark. The Fuehrer has agreed to them in principle:

1. Germany will not call off the German-Danish agreement for the present.
2. If the Anglo-Danish agreement should be called off by Great Britain in the immediate future or sabotaged by Great Britain, Germany will at first refrain from all use of force and all serious pressure on Denmark. In this case, rather, the Danish Government will only at first be instructed on the following points:
 - a) Germany expects that after Great Britain has stopped exports of animal feeding stuffs, the Danish deliveries of foodstuffs to Great Britain will cease.
 - b) After a suitable lapse of ten days, sparing of "Maltese Cross" steamers will cease.
 - c) Germany will be ready to give Denmark economic aid if Danish-British exports are diverted to Germany.

(Unofficial information.)

Items of Political Importance

The Italian colliers held by Great Britain in the Downs are released. Italy, however, has decided that she will send no more steamers to Rotterdam.

Official assumption of Russo-Finnish peace negotiations. Prime Minister Ryti in Moscow. The Western Powers are making desperate efforts to interrupt the negotiations by sudden most pressing offers of aid to Finland. According to an official statement made by Chamberlain, the British and French Governments have informed Finland that they are ready to help her jointly and immediately with all the means in their power, if she requests this aid.

Assessment of Reports about an Imminent Landing in Norway by the Western Powers:

(For compilation of reports see War Diary, Part B, V, 120.)

- I. The attitude of the British and French press and of public to the ALTMARK affair and on the question of aid for Finland shows an increasing tendency - as already ascertained for some time - towards an extension of the war to the Scandinavian area. The very numerous reports, which have been increasing lately, about British requests for bases in Norwegian territory and cutting-off exports of ore to Germany from Scandinavia have been combined since the end of February/beginning of March with highly significant reports from radio intelligence and agents, among which the following are specially important: sudden concentration in Scapa Flow of all heavy British forces which are in operational readiness; reports from Norway of an imminent landing of British troops and arms for Finland; the Norwegian Government's request that the ALTMARK should return speedily to Germany.

- II. The reports as a whole definitely indicate the possibility of a directly imminent large-scale action by the Western Powers in Norway. The enemy has without doubt been making preparations for a landing in Norway and may have them finished on 11 March.
- III. His strategic aim is the complete cutting-off of Germany's ore imports from Scandinavia by occupying the north Norwegian ore ports, the central Norwegian ports of Bergen and Stavanger and the northern Swedish ore region and also, by extending pressure to Sweden, the complete cessation of further deliveries of ore from Sweden.
- IV. According to reports received the operation may be carried out by Canadian units and French Chasseurs Alpains. The British naval forces provide a fairly large amount of transport space. Merchant shipping will not be required for the first sudden occupation. Its preparation, however, may also have been kept secret to a great extent from radio intelligence and agents. There may possibly be fairly large quantities of supplies for the first weeks of the operation already on board the strikingly large number of British merchant ships reported in Norwegian waters at the beginning of March.
- V. The enemy sees no possibility of winning the war in the European theater. He regards the extension of the war to the Scandinavian area, to cut off German ore imports, as an urgent strategic necessity. The operation must be carried out soon, for the following reasons: Finland's precarious position, which furnishes him with a pretext; the expected and feared German offensive in the west; the ice situation in the Baltic Sea and entrances to the Baltic, which is still hampering German operations at present.
- VI. The Western Powers have no doubt learned from the German shock tactics of the last years (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Memel). They need to win successes and prestige as regards their own people and the neutrals and possibly expect decisive successes from a surprise attack in the "Ides of March" already

historic for German political and military measures. The striking concentration on 10/11 March of British heavy forces in Scapa, which is still greatly endangered from the air, combined with other reports received, makes a landing operation in Norway by a Franco-British Expeditionary Corps, with the aid of the entire British Home Fleet, seem perfectly possible already in the week from 11-16 March.

This possibility of imminent operations will be a probability if the enemy learns through his agents of any preparations in Germany for a German occupation of Norwegian ports and bases.

The conclusions resulting from these discoveries lead to considerations within Naval Staff of the following measures which have become necessary:

1. Immediate dispatch of large submarines with long endurance to the ports of disembarkation in question in Norway: Narvik, Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, as defense against British measures.
2. Bombing attacks on the British heavy forces lying in Scapa, using very strong attacking forces.
3. Use of aerial mines in Scapa Flow and its outlets.
4. Constant air reconnaissance into the Orkneys/Shetlands-Norway area and over Scapa.
5. Political pressure on Sweden; threats of Russian action to Norway and Sweden.
6. At the first news of British landings in north and west Norway:
 - a) Strong Army and Air Force units to be thrown into southern Norway to occupy Oslo, Kristiansand and further ports according to the situation.
 - b) Immediate occupation of Denmark.
 - c) Laying of the Skagerrak mine barrage.

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- d) Air raids on British bases in Norway, points of disembarkation and naval forces.
- e) Very strong political pressure on Sweden.

Armed Forces High Command is being kept up to date about the reports received of British preparations and about the knowledge revealed from radio intelligence.

Commanding Admiral, Submarines is informed by telephone of Naval Staff's survey of the situation and instructed to prepare for the dispatch of large submarines scheduled for "Weseruebung" to ports on the west coast of Norway. An order by Naval Staff to this effect can be expected on 11 March.

Supplement III to "Weseruebung" directive is issued to the Groups, Commanding Admiral, Submarines, etc., (see I op 283/40 gkdos. Chfs, "Weseruebung" file).

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic/Indian Ocean:

Great Britain:

The old battleship RAMILLIES put in to a port in Western Australia on 8 March.

The cruiser SUSSEX, coming from the Indian Ocean, passed Port Said towards the Mediterranean.

France:

Nothing special to report.

Intelligence Center, Spain reports that three Norwegian tankers were detected in a Gibraltar convoy.

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North Sea:

Commander, Destroyers, Home Fleet was proceeding from the Clyde to Scapa on 10 March with three destroyers. None of the submarine positions previously identified has altered. There are only three submarines at present in the actual operational area.

Shipping Losses:

The Swedish steamer BRODIN (1,960 tons) ran aground in the Irish Sea? The British steamer CHEVY CHASE (2,700 tons) sank in the North Sea after an explosion. The British steamer BORTHWICK (1,097 tons) struck a mine.

Own Situation

Atlantic:)
)
North Sea:) Nothing special to report.
)
Baltic Sea:)

Ice Situation:

Slightly improved. Kiel still shut in by ice. Pack ice in part of the western Baltic, partly ice-free. Pack ice in Swinemuende Bay. Great Belt navigable. (For particulars see Situation Baltic 11 March.)

Readiness for "Weseruebung", which was to be attained by 10 March, has so far not been established as a result of the

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ice situation (impossible to put out from Stettin, Kiel, Pillau, all naval forces not moved to ports of embarkation, the steamers of the sea transport units not in readiness).

Submarine Situation

Unchanged.

Commanding Admiral, Submarines' Operational Order "North Sea and Atlantic No. 1" provides for the disposition of about 30 submarines in the following areas:

Off Westfjord:	4
Off Trondheim:	2
Area off Bergen:	4
Off Stavanger:	2
In the Shetlands-Norway area:	6
East of the Orkneys:	5
Off the Skagerrak:	4
According to special orders:	3

Submarines are for the present to remain unseen; permitted to attack only enemy warships and troop transports.

The submarine assignments arising from "Weseruebung" are stated in Commanding Admiral, Submarines' Operational Order, code-word "Hartmuth". (See "Weseruebung" file.)

Merchant Shipping

According to a British radio report, the motor vessel HANNOVER (5,200 tons) was stopped during the night of 7 March by a British cruiser between San Domingo and Puerto Rico, set on fire by her own crew and abandoned.

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Chief, Naval Staff and Chief, Operations Division in
Wilhelmshaven for conferences with Group West.

Naval Staff considers the immediate dispatch of large submarines for disposition off Norwegian ports necessary (see survey of the situation of 10 March) as a defense against surprise British landings in Norway which must be expected according to reports received. This does not prejudice readiness for "Weseruebung", since the boats' radius of action (roughly 4 weeks) permits them to extend operations for a period within which in all probability either a British operation will be carried out in Norway or the final decision about the execution of "Weseruebung" will be reached.

Commanding Admiral, Submarines and Group West therefore receive the following directive (SkI. I op 287/40):

1. As defense against any British plans, submarines provided in accordance with B.d.U. Gkdos. 0086 Chfs (Operational Order North Sea - Atlantic No.1) under 1 and 2 are to operate off the two ports (Narvik and Trondheim) at once. U "31", "43", "44", "65" are to be disposed off Bergen and Stavanger for the present.
 2. Unseen approach and disposition, radio silence.
 3. Assignment: Attack and report on possible British troop transports and warships which are about to effect landings in these ports. No operations against merchant shipping.
 4. Our own operational plans can be expected to materialize at a date within the operational endurance of the boats. Supplies for the boats at both places in the north are provided in our own operation.
-

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Naval Staff summarizes its deliberations in a short survey of the situation, which is submitted to Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff as the basis for further decisions and of which the Groups are informed. These concern the event of Great Britain's actually undertaking the occupation of Norway in the near future, in order to cut off Germany's ore imports from Sweden, and of her operations in the Norwegian area then anticipating our own plans or coinciding with them. The survey of the situation (see War Diary, Part B, Vol.V, 120 "Weseruebung" file) comes to the conclusion that if Great Britain should attack Norway she will endeavor not to limit herself to northern Norway alone but also to establish herself in the chief ports on the west coast. Great Britain can, however, only obtain full strategic advantage from the possession of these west Norwegian ports if Sweden's attitude is definitely pro-British. This will only be the case if Germany takes no counter action at all to oppose the British troops which have landed. Everything therefore depends on throwing the strongest possible troop contingents and air forces into the south Norwegian area immediately - if not actually at the same time as - British expeditionary forces land in Norway, in order to permit the enemy as little freedom of movement as possible, to prevent him penetrating further south and to obtain a favorable base for offensive operations against the enemy forces which have been landed.

Both the enemy's operations and the Swedish attitude will also be strongly influenced by a German occupation of Denmark; this will result in Sweden's being so hemmed-in that she will hardly be able to resist the German demands which arise from the British operation and British pressure on her will have no effect.

In the case of such a necessary lightning landing in Norway, forces must endeavor to push as far to the north as the enemy measures permit.

Armed Forces High Command's preparations, as well as those of the three Services, must be adjusted to the possibility of such a Norway operation at very short notice as the result of a possible Franco-British landing there.

Items of Political Importance

Russo-Finnish negotiations continue. A certain agreement is

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said to have been reached. Difficulties are apparently arising over the question of ceding Hangoe.

The "threatening" possibility of a Russo-Finnish peace being concluded is said to have caused the greatest disquiet in Great Britain, according to a London agent, and will possibly have serious repercussions on the domestic policy of Great Britain and France.

An agent reports, with reference to a landing by the Western Powers in Norway, that fairly large contingents of troops, allegedly Chasseurs Alpains, are in readiness to be transported to Finland via Scotland and Norway.

Embarkation probably planned at Channel ports.

For Daladier's demands during his conference with Sumner Welles see Political Review No. 58.

Foreign Minister Ribbentrop was received by the Pope on 10 March. Discussion about the Polish question (?). Conferences with the Italian Government are said to have touched on the following subjects, among others:

Fulfillment of Italian coal and armament requirements.
Comprehensive adjustment of the relations between Italy and Russia.
Relations to the Balkan countries and to Turkey.

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Special Reports on the Enemy

Great Britain:

The 3rd Cruiser Squadron, consisting of the CALYPSO, CALEDON, CAPETOWN and the monitor TERROR, is on exercises near Alexandria.

Daventry reports:

"46 German prisoners and 16 British wounded from the AJAX and EXETER have landed in Capetown. The cruiser SHROPSHIRE afterwards put in to Capetown."

France:

The Attaché in Madrid reports:

"The French submarines ORION and ARGO were off Las Palmas on 3 March. The port was reconnoitered by French planes. Spanish warships were in defensive readiness."

A French vessel was sent to the aid of a Dutch steamer which reported damage 130 miles west of Ouessant. In the afternoon there were three French and two British destroyers, supported by planes, on a submarine chase in the same area.

North Sea:

The escort of convoy ON 19, for which the cruisers AURORA, PENELOPE and CALCUTTA were originally scheduled, has been assigned to other vessels. The cruisers named are ordered to remain in Rosyth. There is no visible reason for this change of plan. It might be seen in the necessity of maintaining the cruisers' readiness.

Patrol vessels in the Dunkirk area are kept informed by Admiral, North of the appearance of submarines in the Hoofden (northeastern entrance to the English Channel, Tr. N.) and off the Dutch coast.

It is reported from Bergen that 25 ships, mostly laden with wood, have again assembled there.

Shipping Losses:

Atlantic:

The British steamer CLAN STUART (5,760 tons) had a collision near Start Point.

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North Sea:

The Greek steamer NITRITOS (3,850 tons) struck a mine off the Thames.

The Danish steamer AMOR (2,300 tons) struck a mine off the Dutch coast. The British steamer BORTHWICK (1,100 tons) blew up off the Dutch coast.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

During misty weather U "31" (Lieut. (s.g.) Habekost) was attacked by a British bomber at noon and sunk while proceeding at periscope depth in the Jade near Buoy 12 (near the York wreck). Salvage operations have been commenced. No detailed reports have yet been received.

Because of the flight of enemy bombers into the Jade, which cannot be prevented either by anti-aircraft fire or by fighters as a result of the misty weather, Group West requests barrage balloons on barges in the estuaries.

(A small number of such barrage balloons on barges is already available near Borkum.)

Baltic Sea:

Nothing special to report.

Ice Situation:

According to a Norwegian report, ice conditions between Gothenburg and Oslo have improved to such an extent that the greater part of the three mile zone is easily navigable.

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Western Baltic:

Pack ice, heavy drift ice here and there. Slight loosening of the ice off the coasts of Pomerania.

Eastern Baltic:

Solid covering of ice with cracks. No shipping.

Submarine Situation

U "38" and "52" are ordered to proceed to the North Sea operational area.

U "52" reports no traffic and no patrol vessels south of the Faeroes.

U "54" is requested to report her position but does not answer.

In the Atlantic operational area:

U "28", "32", "38", "52".

On passage: through Routes 1 & 2 U "30", "34", "46", "47",
"49", "51".

On return passage: West of declared area: U "29".

In the North Sea operational area: U "63".

U "14" has returned from her operational area in the eastern entrance to the Channel and reports the sinking of four steamers totaling 9,500 tons; she also obtained valuable navigational data.

War against Merchant Shipping

Intelligence Center, Spain reports:

"The British liner AQUITA was sailing camouflaged as a Norwegian vessel and was therefore erroneously reported as an armed Norwegian steamer."

This report establishes for the first time the definite misuse of neutral markings by British merchantmen.

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According to a report from The Hague the Dutch Government has, by means of a Royal Decree, ordered all Dutch captains to remain completely neutral when meeting warships or war planes and, especially, not to use radio. This decree is attributed to the conduct of the BURGERDIJK, which was torpedoed because she sent radiograms while boats were being lowered.

Merchant Shipping

Nothing special to report.

Measures in the Economic War

The Norwegian press is occupying itself with the British export blockade against Germany and is examining closely its contravention of International Law.

Great Britain states that the export blockade is a counter-measure against Germany's trade blockade. If, however, the war against merchant shipping is regarded from the viewpoint of fresh reprisals, there would be far reaching consequences for the neutrals.

"We can hardly judge the consequences if Germany should begin a systematic war on British exports, even if these are carried on neutral ships."

Items of Political Importance

Norwegian note to the German Government regarding commencement of negotiations about the possibility of increasing the safety of Norwegian shipping.

The conclusion of the Russo-Finnish peace negotiations is regarded as imminent. According to various reports, Norway and Sweden are exercising strong pressure on Finland to accept the Russian conditions, although all the Scandinavian countries feel that they are very severe. In Scandinavia there is growing recognition of the fact that Great Britain's offer of aid to Finland was made only in her own interests and she intended to include the Scandinavian countries in her plans. Furthermore, the Norwegian Foreign Minister informed our Ambassador that so far the Western Powers had made no official demand regarding right of way through Norway. "One never knows, however, what Great Britain will be so foolish as to do next".

The Finnish Government's decision to commence negotiations for peace with Moscow is said to have been reached after the Swedish refusal to allow foreign troop transports to pass.

Daladier made a statement in the Chamber of Deputies about French aid for Finland. From the beginning of December to date France has sent 145 planes, 496 guns, 5,000 machine guns and a large quantity of ammunition. France is also ready to send men. The decision about intervention was taken on 5 Feb. French troops of the Expeditionary Corps have been assembled for embarkation since 26 Feb. A considerable number of ships has been retained in two large ports on the Channel and Atlantic coasts and is ready to sail, but so far no direct official appeal has been made by Finland to France or Great Britain. They are still awaiting this. This appeal from Finland is necessary, because the Swedish

and Norwegian Governments are opposing the passage of Allied troops through their territories with all their power. An appeal from Finland would have immediate effects.

The reports received by Naval Staff and present suppositions about the plans of the Western Powers are fully confirmed by Daladier's statement. We must now definitely expect that:

1. When there is an ostensible pretext for their action, the Western Powers have definitely decided to violate Norwegian neutrality and land troops in Norwegian ports.
2. Expeditionary troops are already in readiness to embark in Great Britain and France and preliminary work for the landing is actually finished, including the readiness of the British naval forces necessary to protect the crossing.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

Special Items

- I. Report by Chief, Operations Branch on state of preparedness for "Weseruebung":
 - a) Ice conditions in the Baltic still do not permit any movement of naval forces or of the steamers required for the sea transport units.
 - b) The following are now ready for action according to a report from Commanding Admiral, West:
 1. In the North Sea: GNEISENAU, SCHARNHORST, HIPPER, KARLSRUHE, BREMSE, 10 destroyers, 4 boats of the 6th Torpedo Boat Flotilla.
 2. In the Baltic: (Passage to ports of departure dependent, however, on the ice situation) LUETZOW, KOELN, EMDEN, KOENIGSBERG, TSINGTAU.

3. Probable time required by vessels still frozen-in in the Baltic after their arrival in the North Sea: CARL PETERS, DIETER VON ROEDER, ERICH GIESE, HERMAN KUENNE, HANS LUEDEMANN, KONDOR, ALBATROS - 5 days each, depending on the result of the trial runs.
6 boats of the 1st PT Boat Flotilla - 3 days.
4 boats of the 2nd PT Boat Flotilla - 2 days.
4. Commanding Admiral, West reckons from previous experience that not more than ten destroyers will be in full operational readiness for "Weseruebung" from 20 March and also expects breakdowns through engine trouble on a long run at high speeds.

Naval Staff cannot completely concur with this lamentably low estimate regarding the destroyers, since if "Weseruebung" proceeds normally the speeds required from the destroyers will on no account make excessive claims on them. If there are breakdowns, only limitations of speed and not total breakdowns are to be reckoned with; this will, of course, render the execution of "Weseruebung" to schedule more difficult, but will not have a decisively prejudicial effect.

- II. The subject of Fleet forces remaining for a long period in the northern area is discussed in a conversation between General Keitel and Chief of Staff, Naval Staff. In a conversation with the Fuehrer, Field Marshal Goering urged that naval forces be left in the ports until the Air Force is in a position to use strong forces to control the sea area to be traversed on the return trip, so that the risk of the return passage would be greatly lessened. Naval Staff must on principle decline to accept other than naval strategic and operational principles for the return trip of the naval forces. Support for the return trip from the strongest possible formations of the Air Force is naturally most desirable and necessary; it would, however, be incorrect to rely on such support being definitely available, since the weather and unforeseen

difficulties and incidents might make Air Force operations doubtful just when they are urgently required to support the naval forces.

Air Force General Staff is again consulted on this subject and the number of air forces actually available in the northern area ascertained. Their strength - according to information available to date 3 squadrons on W-Day and 3 bomber groups and 1 Stuka group to be moved up later - must be described as hardly adequate in view of the extent of the assignment, and it still seems doubtful whether large-scale operations by these air forces will be possible at all in view of operation "Gelb" which is to follow.

- III. According to a communication from Commander in Chief, Air Force, the 9th Air Division will take over the assignment of mining the areas for which the Naval Air Force was previously scheduled in operation "Gelb".
-

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

The old battleship MALAYA is with convoy HX 26 (sailed from Halifax on 10 March) as remote escort. Two submarines are among the close escort.

An agent reports from New York that the QUEEN MARY is being made ready to carry planes from the U.S.A. to Great Britain by the removal of the partitions on all the decks.

France:

Nothing special to report apart from convoys detected and air patrol activity.

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North Sea:

Convoy ON 19 will be east of the Shetlands on the forenoon of 13 March, escorted by two cruisers and by destroyers of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla.

The cruiser EDINBURGH has arrived in Scapa after carrying out an escort assignment.

According to a captain's report (by radio) a large number of British steamers is said to have lain at anchor off Sogne Fjord during the night of 11 March. He also reports that, according to other captains, an enemy aircraft carrier with 50 planes on skids is said to have been lying off Petsamo. These planes are to be ferried across to Finland, after a catapult start, by Finnish pilots trained in the U.S.A.

Shipping Losses:

The British steamer CLAN STUART (5,670 tons) sank near Start Point after a collision. The Dutch steam tanker EULOTA (6,236 tons), en route for Curacao, sank after an explosion. The British steamer GARDENIA (3,700 tons) and the British trawler HALIFAX sank on the east coast after an explosion, (Possibly the result of Ship "11"'s operation).

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report. See submarine situation.

North Sea:

For report of Commanding Admiral, Submarines on the loss of U "31" see War Diary, V, 116. The bombing attack took place from about 30 m. altitude during misty weather and with cloud base about 200 m. The submarine was found and marked. No more signs of life. Salvage operations will probably last two to three weeks.

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Ship "11" (Lieut. Cdr. Betzendahl) reports the execution of his minelaying assignment northeast of the Goodwin Sands, approximately at South Falls. The ship, disguised as an Estonian, proceeded through Dutch territorial waters without incident, arrived in the operational area in favorable weather on the evening of 10 March and laid 146 EMC mines and 144 explosive floats there between 2130 and 0030. The return trip passed off according to plan and without incident. Patrolling by planes and lively steamer traffic was observed in Dutch territorial waters.

With this operation the ship, with her low speed of 6-7 knots, has carried out her assignment excellently and has laid her mines at a specially favorable and much traversed spot. Three steamers can already be assumed lost today.

Enemy bombers flew into the Heligoland Bight in the early afternoon and unsuccessfully attacked two patrol ships on Route "Blau" off List.

Torpedo patrol by three torpedo bombers was without result as there were no chances of attack until it was becoming dark. Attack therefore unsuccessful.

Baltic Sea:

Ice situation still very difficult. Still no shipping in the western Baltic west of Rügen-Moen. Passage from Swinemünde northwards and eastwards is possible as far as Danzig Bay with the aid of ice-breakers or with strong ships proceeding ahead. Still impossible to leave the Baltic through the Sound. Ice situation very unfavorable off Pillau.

The old battleships are on ice-breaker service. The SCHLESSEN is to try to break through to the east. The SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN is to break up Mecklenburg Bay.

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Submarine SituationAtlantic:

U "29" returned from a successful operation. U "28" reports sinking a neutral tanker, is west of Ireland and has commenced return passage. U "32" has carried out her assignment. (Minelaying off Liverpool.) Little traffic and heavy patrol in the Irish Sea and St. George's Channel. One miss, three failures, one steamer sunk. Position southwest of Ireland.

In the operational area also: U "38", "52".

On passage:

In the area off West Fjord: U "46", "51", "49", "47".

Into the area off Trondheim: U "30", "34".

North Sea:

Unchanged.

Merchant Shipping

According to a report from Ciudad Trujillo:

"As Fourth Officer Baer of the HANNOVER stated, the ship was scuttled by the crew after a French destroyer had entered Dominican territorial waters in violation of International Law and requested the HANNOVER to stop."

(At 1300 on 12 March Daventry Radio reports:

"The German steamer HANNOVER (5,600 GRT), which was set on fire by her crew last week after being captured, was towed in to an unnamed port today as a prize.")

Measures in the Economic War:

For report by Armed Forces High Command, Special Staff for Mercantile and Economic Warfare on the effects of any

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non-observance of Norwegian neutrality by Great Britain, of the German war against merchant shipping caused by this in Norwegian waters and of non-observance of Swedish territorial waters by Germany as a countermeasure, see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XII. Conduct of Economic Warfare.

The report makes the following proposals:

1. Non-observance of Swedish neutrality by Germany is not advised as a countermeasure to the violation of Norwegian territorial waters by Great Britain. (Foreign Office).

2. There are other practical means in Sweden which have not yet been exhausted for suppressing contraband traffic from the Baltic to Great Britain, rather than the blocking of Swedish territorial waters. Efforts will be directed primarily to have all shipping in and out of the Baltic submit to the German convoy certificate system as do the Baltic States. As a means of pressure, shutting-off or control (by mines, naval forces) of neutral shipping proceeding from the Baltic and from western Swedish ports to the North Sea is now possible since Norwegian territorial waters in the Skagerrak are no longer respected. Further blows can thus on the one hand be struck at Great Britain, and on the other Germany is relieved of the additional economic burden of helping the Baltic States, whose necessary orientation towards the German economy is desired.

Items of Political Importance

12 March: Conclusion of the Russo-Finnish conflict on the basis of the Russian peace conditions. Cessation of hostilities at 1200 on 13 March. For details about the conclusion of the peace and text of the peace treaty and protocol, see Foreign Press Reports of 13 and 14 March.

Throughout the world, the Moscow peace is felt as a diplomatic victory for Germany and as a severe loss of prestige for the Western Powers, and is even admitted to be such in the enemy press. In Great Britain and France the responsibility for the aid which the Western Powers did not give Finland is now alone ascribed to Norway and Sweden, who opposed the passage of Allied troops through their countries.

The advantage to German conduct of the war as a whole from the Russo-Finnish peace cannot yet be seen. The Western Powers' plans - awaiting immediate execution - for a landing in Norway with the strategic aim of cutting-off German ore imports from the Scandinavian area have been frustrated and destroyed for the present.

Naval Staff does not believe that under these circumstances the Western Powers will undertake military action in Norway after the peace is finally concluded at the present time, but supposes that Great Britain, if she still maintains her strategic aim in the northern area - which is doubtless to be expected - will be forced to await a more favorable moment for her operation. In any case, action by the Western Powers is still possible until the Russo-Finnish conflict is ratified in three days. Particular heed must therefore be paid to reports from Great Britain and France and to the movements of British Fleet forces in the next few days.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

1. Naval Staff feels the loss of U "31" with all her crew and, in addition, ten dockyard and engine specialists to be especially bitter. The regrettable discovery that the Jade in the immediate vicinity of Schillig and Wilhelmshaven can offer no security against such air attacks in

suitable weather forces us to take all steps which will at least render a repetition of such success most difficult. The provision of barrage balloons on barges is to be undertaken with all speed. The formation of escort flotillas for anti-aircraft, mine and anti-submarine defense is necessary and is being undertaken.

2. The Air Force is planning an attack on Scapa within the next few days with fairly strong forces, provided that the weather is favorable. Air Force General Staff has agreed in principle to the use of LM mines over Scapa considered necessary by Naval Staff. Ten planes (He 111) of Squadron "Stein" (9th Air Division) are to be ready for operations in the immediate future.
3. Report on the state of "Weseruebung":
The Fuehrer has ordered that preparations for "Weseruebung" are not to be carried out with extreme haste since the situation has altered because of the conclusion of the Russo-Finnish peace, but are to be accomplished quietly with special regard to secrecy.

Permission is granted, as requested by Group West, to exchange the EMDEN for the KOENIGSBERG, since the war readiness of the EMDEN is only limited because of the cadets' state of training.

A directive is issued to the Groups (see "Weseruebung" file) on procedure during the outward trip and before "Wesertime" (evasive movements if there are breakdowns and limitations of speed) as well as on distribution of destroyers for "Nienburg" and "Detmold".

Chief, Naval Staff again states the urgent necessity of the naval forces' speedy return after the "Weseruebung" landing in connection with the question of Air Force protection for the fleet. See summary of Naval Staff's deliberations on this subject in War Diary, Part B, 120. (Reference "Weseruebung".)

4. The report of the committee investigating the events during the night of 22 Feb. leads Naval Staff

to the conviction that the loss of the two destroyers MAX SCHULTZ and LEBERECHT MAASS was caused solely by bombs from our plane 1 HJM of the 4th Group of the 26th Bomber Wing. For the report of the committee of investigation and report by Chief, Naval Staff to the Fuehrer on same see War Diary, Part B, Vol.V page 119.

Inferences have been drawn from the unfortunate loss of the two destroyers. The discovery of the fact that the destruction of the destroyers, causing great loss of life, was caused by the action of one of our own planes is to be regretted most deeply. Yet it must be a certain consolation for officers and men, especially for the destroyer crews, that the loss cannot be ascribed to successful action by the enemy, whose air forces have so far given no proof of particular accuracy of aim. The destroyer crews have carried out excellently the numerous and difficult destroyer operations so far against the east coast of Britain without loss and without any counter-action. They are to be informed of the events on 22 Feb. and will evaluate the loss of the two destroyers in this light as regrettable catastrophes and will fulfill further assignments in the traditional spirit of daring and unbroken morale.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic/Indian Ocean:

Great Britain:

Disposition of forces:

The cruiser BIRMINGHAM plans to sail from Portsmouth on 16 March and will probably be allocated to a cruiser squadron in northern Scottish waters.

The cruiser SUSSEX, formerly in the East Indies or East Asia, will pass Gibraltar westward bound on 14 March and proceed to

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Liverpool. The COLOMBO will probably be the SUSSEX's relief. The EAGLE and CORNWALL sailed from Colombo on 12 March for Singapore. The EAGLE is to go into dock there.

France:

Intelligence Center, Spain reports:

"An old battleship of the BRETAGNE class, the ALGERIE, one cruiser of the GLOIRE class and four destroyers have passed Gibraltar westward bound. These are probably reliefs - as observed several times already - for the French forces off the West African coast."

Submarine reports and submarine chase near Cap de la Hague, west of the Scilly Isles and northwest of Bayonne.

North Sea:

On the afternoon of 12 March the Admiralty placed the 1st, 7th and 12th Destroyer Flotillas and four other destroyers under Commander in Chief, Home Fleet. Effective immediately.

The reinforcement of destroyer forces of the Home Fleet hereby effected is especially worthy of notice in connection with other measures taken by British naval forces and with the concentration of the Home Fleet in Scapa.

Furthermore, radio intelligence again succeeded in ascertaining the new disposition of British submarines by deciphering British radio messages and in making an extremely striking and important discovery: as opposed to former submarine disposition in the North Sea, on 13 March 15 British submarines in all, i.e. twice to three times as many boats as before, are in waiting position or approaching the Skagerrak area and operating north and northeast of our declared area and in the inner Heligoland Bight. Two more submarines are proceeding to the northeast from Rosyth. All the submarines at present available for the North Sea have therefore obviously gone into action. The reason for this massed submarine operation can be seen only in the following possibilities, in connection

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with other information and enemy measures:

1. This is either a flank protection for the large-scale landing in Norway planned by the enemy, as a defense against German counter-attacks,
2. or the enemy is aware that Germany is making some sort of preparations and fears a German operation against the Norwegian area.

In the first case, this must be evaluated as a "hang fire" measure, for since peace has now been concluded between Russia and Finland immediate action can hardly be expected from the enemy. We must wait and see whether the Admiralty will now recall the boats, some of which are still outward bound.

Report by Naval Staff in Oslo on the closed area off Dunkirk: According to "Notices to Mariners" No. 559 the entrance to Dunkirk between 2° 18' 56" and 2° 23' 24"E is forbidden.

Own Situation

Atlantic:)
) Nothing special to report.
North Sea:)

U "30" reports an unsuccessful attack on a large British submarine in the central North Sea.

Baltic Sea:

Slight general improvement of the ice situation, but still strong ice bars and pack ice especially in the Fehmarn Belt

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and Gjedser Channel. Pillau still blocked. The icebreaker STETTIN, coming from the east, broke through the ice bars in the Gjedser Channel and took the SCHLESIEN, coming from the west, eastwards. The SCHLESIEN is to escort the cruisers LUETZOW and EMDEN (which have still to go into dock for repairs and to have their screws changed) and also the NORDMARK westwards to Kiel on 14 March. The SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN penetrated Luebeck Bay without difficulty and advanced as far as Travemuende and Neustadt.

Shipping:

Group Baltic has instructed steamers to start out because the channels have broken up. When the wind veers to north and northeast on 14 March, however, the ice must be expected to drift back under the coasts and new ice difficulties will arise.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

U "32" commences return passage after successfully carrying out her minelaying assignment off Liverpool.

U "29" put in to port. For brief report see War Diary, Part B, IV. The boat (Lieut. (s.g.) Schuhart) successfully carried out the minelaying assignment in the Bristol Channel (12 TMB) as planned during the new-moon period; she also sank three steamers totaling 24,559 GRT. The boat has thus again achieved most excellent results.

North Sea:

In the operational area: U "38", "52", "63".

On passage:

To West Fjord: U "46", "47", "49", "51".
To Trondheim: U "30", "34".

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Merchant Shipping

Losses:

The steamer ESCHERSHEIM was lost two miles from Hirsthal at 1600. Cause unknown.

Foreign Merchant Shipping

Great Britain:

The British press reports that Great Britain is now beginning her largest merchant shipping construction program. All the newly built ships will receive guns, defensive armament and a "defense girdle" against magnetic mines.

A statement by the Parliamentary Secretary for the Admiralty in the House of Commons shows the strained labor situation in the ports of South Wales (Swansea, Barry, Cardiff, Newport), in which dock facilities cannot cope with the increased demands, and indicates the delays caused by the necessary wait, in spite of the fact that obviously all work which does not definitely require docking is being performed at the normal berths.

Holland:

Dutch merchant shipping losses since the beginning of the war are given as 23 ships totaling almost 100,000 GRT.

Items of Political Importance

1. The conclusion of the Russo-Finnish peace is still the center of political events and world interest. Especially depressing impression in France, where Daladier's policy has been sharply attacked and his position has been greatly shaken by the latest events. (For particulars see Political Review and Foreign Press.)

2. The Norwegian Foreign Office has stated that as no British answer has been made to the Norwegian representations in the ALTMARK affair, London is to be pressed for a reply. For tactical reasons, however, Norway wishes to wait for this until the supply ship ALTMARK has left Norwegian waters. Speeding up of transfer to Germany is requested.

3. Speaking on the radio the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Koth, repudiated Daladier's assertion that Norway refused permission for troops to pass through. An official request was not made to Norway until late on the evening of 12 March when the peace treaty had already been signed in Moscow. Koth also rejected reproaches that Norway was transgressing her neutrality in favor of Germany.

4. On 12 March the Finnish Government asked Norway and Sweden whether their Governments would be prepared to investigate the possibility of establishing a defensive alliance of the three Nordic countries. Sweden and Norway have declared their fundamental readiness. (Such an alliance will probably come up against strong Russian resistance and break down under it.)

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items1. Use of LM Mines:

Naval Staff is still of the opinion that it is a grave mistake to wait any longer with the use of LM mines off the east coast of Britain and that this is no longer justifiable. British press notices leave no doubt that the British have gained possession of an LM mine and are speedily building up counter-measures from exact knowledge of the technical characteristics of the mine.

(See photographic copy of press notice and photograph from the "Times" for the beginning of March in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.)

The subject is again to be discussed with Commander in Chief Air Force, since he himself has already altered his fundamental attitude by giving permission for the use of LM mines in Scapa and in Operation "Gelb". If Commander in Chief, Air Force still declines, Chief, Naval Staff will again report to the Fuehrer on the necessity of the speedy use of these mines.

2. Conference on "Weseruebung":

Fuel supplies for the forces in the northern area seem to be assured by the prompt transfer of two tankers (JAN WELLEM, KATTEGAT) to "Nienburg" with 15,300 tons of fuel, since even when all ten destroyers have filled up completely there is still two-thirds of the whole left for the battleships. Another tanker is to be transferred to "Detmold" for the HIPPER and four destroyers. There will also be an ample surplus here for possible battleship refuelling.

The question of putting the supply ship DITHMARSCHEN into service as a further supply vessel and as a transport for "Weseruebung" is closely connected with Naval Staff's plans for warfare in the Atlantic which, in Naval Staff's view, should be kept in mind in spite of "Weseruebung". The DITHMARSCHEN is therefore principally scheduled as a reserve supply ship for the LUETZOW, and if the necessity arises will still be available as a transport for "Weseruebung".

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Disposition of forces:

Commander, 2nd Cruiser Squadron, on board the GALATEA, and the cruiser AURORA plan to put in to the Clyde on 14 March. With the regrouping of commands in the home area, Commander, 2nd Cruiser Squadron has probably been assigned command of operations to meet convoys west of Scotland.

Convoy service:

Convoy HX 29 plans to sail from Halifax on 2 April and proceed via 45° 15' N, 40° W, approximately 48° 48' N, 20° W and approximately 48° 8' N, 15° 45' W. It is to be picked up by home forces at the last position.

France:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

The ARETHUSA went to Scapa. The EDINBURGH sailed from Scapa on 12 March and will arrive in the Tyne on 16/17 March.

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No further reports about submarine operations.

North Hinder lightship withdrawn.

For disposition and activity of main enemy units from 3-10 March, see Radio Monitoring Report No. 10/40. According to this there were in Scapa or in the inner Scapa area on 10 March:

5 battleships (RODNEY, VALIANT, HOOD, RENOWN, REPULSE).
4 heavy cruisers (DEVONSHIRE, BERWICK, YORK, NORFOLK).
3-4 light cruisers
25-30 destroyers.
The WARSPITE is presumed to be in the Clyde.
NELSON)
BARHAM) Unknown, possibly still in dock.
QUEEN ELIZABETH)

ROYAL SOVEREIGN)
MALAYA) North Atlantic escort duties.
REVENGE)

RAMILLIES Australia.

Shipping Losses:

It was possible to tow the British tanker CHARLES MEYER (11,000 tons), which was torpedoed on 4 March, into a British port apparently with the cargo undamaged.

Own Situation

Atlantic:)
) Nothing special to report.
North Sea:)

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Attainment of readiness for "Weseruebung" continues to be prevented by the ice situation in the Baltic. Forces in operational readiness are not yet adequate for the execution of "Weseruebung". Some of the destroyers are not ready to sail because of small repairs and breakdowns.

For counter-measures against the enemy submarine disposition see Submarine Situation.

According to reports to date eight ships totaling about 16,000 GRT have in all probability been lost as the result of Ship "11" (Lieut. Cdr. Betzendahl's) minelaying operation. The realization of the plan to use Ship "11", which came about in spite of all kinds of difficulties, and the vigorous way in which it was carried out by the captain has gained considerable success. Naval Staff is still of the opinion that the use of such converted merchant steamers promises great success and should therefore be pursued further. In Naval Staff's view the chances of success of such an operation are in an extremely favorable ratio to the risk of a total loss - even then there is every prospect of the crew being rescued.

For memorandum on the use of Ship "11" and her actions see War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.

Baltic Sea:

Improvement in the ice situation. Harbor entrances navigable only with ice-breaker aid. Still severe ice difficulties in the open sea in the western Baltic. Pillau-Memel still blocked. Great Belt navigable through a channel.

The EMDEN and LUETZOW are in Swinemuende; both ships must still go into dock at Kiel before they are ready to sail. This will take about three days.

The SCHLESIEN could only get as far as Arcona where she anchored with a damaged screw; is proceeding to Swinemuende on 15 March.

Because of the extremely difficult ice situation in the Baltic for some time to come yet, Group Baltic proposes that all naval forces for "Weseruebung" should sail from the North Sea, including Group "Oldenburg".

After a discussion with the 21st Group of Armed Forces High Command this proposal is not accepted. Since the execution

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of "Weseruebung" is not for the present directly imminent, the orders given will stand i.e. Swinemuende remains the port of embarkation for the "Oldenburg" Group. The ice situation is expected to improve further, so that by the time for "Weseruebung" shipping movements will probably be unhindered again.

Submarine Situation:

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report.

U "43" and "44" put out.

North Sea:

The following boats have been sent out on submarine chase against the British submarines off the Skagerrak and northeast of our declared area: U "7", "9", "20", "24", "56", "57", "59", "19".

Assignment as per "Operational Order of Commanding Admiral, Submarines, North Sea No.20:"

"Attacks on the reported enemy submarines and any other enemy forces sighted. Operational areas according to enemy positions. The areas comprise a circle of 12 miles radius around the named enemy submarine positions."

(See chart of enemy positions in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V, 121.)

Submarine Losses:

The enemy press and radio give the number of German submarines sunk as more than 50. In Churchill's estimation 2-4 boats a week have been sunk since the war began.

Merchant Shipping

It is reported, with reference to the sinking of the steamer ESCHERSHEIM near Hirsthals on 13 March, that she struck an unidentified wreck and sank. The crew was saved all but the captain, the mate and one stoker.

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Foreign Shipping

For British survey of tanker losses to date suffered by the Western Powers see Foreign Press Report No. 64.

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Items of Political Importance

First impression of the Russo-Finnish peace on the neutrals:

In the Scandinavian Countries:

Great relief, but anxiety about further developments and about too strong Russian political pressure on Scandinavia.

In Turkey:

Doubt as to the Western Powers' readiness for action. Anxiety about Russian pressure which could now be concentrated on Turkey. Scruples about obligations towards the Western Powers' aggressive plans in the Balkans. Hope that the Finnish peace is the first step to a peaceful new order in Europe.

In the U.S.A.:

The conclusion of the peace is described as definitely a severe loss of prestige for the Western Powers and judged as an actual gain for Germany's further warfare in view of support from Russia. Favorable impression from the Fuehrer's conversation with Welles.

An agent from Norway reports that members of the Norwegian Government - in spite of the conclusion of the Russo-Finnish peace and Chamberlain's statement - still reckon with the possibility of a sudden British attack soon on Narvik and the Kiruna ore regions.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

1. Armed Forces High Command does not expect any further outbreak of the Finnish conflict and in that connection

does not believe that Great Britain will take action against Norway for the present, since the pretext for such action has been removed by the conclusion of the Russo-Finnish peace. The Fuehrer, however, is convinced that Great Britain will not abandon her strategic aim of cutting off German ore imports, but will at first attempt to suppress German ore shipping along the Norwegian coast within a short time by disregarding neutral territorial waters. The possibility of later action by the Western Powers against Norway by occupying the most important ports and bases still exists. The Fuehrer's opinion is that the Scandinavian area, as a decisive sphere of interest for both belligerents, will remain a permanent seat of unrest. He considers that under these circumstances the execution of "Weseruebung" is still necessary and insists that preparations for it should be so far concluded that it will at any time be possible to start the operation at the shortest notice. "Weseruebung" would then be carried out shortly before Operation "Gelb".

Naval Staff issues "Directive for Immediate Action" (see "Weseruebung" file) corresponding to the orders given by Armed Forces High Command and the 21st Group for "Immediate Action". Naval Staff orders that upon the order, codeword "Immediate Action Weseruebung", all forces in operational readiness are to move to the bases scheduled as ports of embarkation for "Weseruebung". The forces are to be kept in short-term readiness. All further orders about units to be embarked, sailing times, ports of disembarkation, movement of submarines, etc., must be issued as command measures according to the intelligence to hand about the enemy. The laying of the mine barrage in the Skagerrak is to be undertaken as planned.

In the case of "Immediate Action" the battleships will probably have to be drawn into the execution of the landing for speedy transport of the strongest forces possible.

2. Report by Chief, Operations Branch on the Fuehrer's directive with basic orders as to command and chain of command for "Weseruebung".

(For directive of the Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces WFA/Abt L 22094/40 dated 14 March see "Weseruebung" file.)

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3. Report on orders of Armed Forces High Command regarding "Political and Administrative Measures in "Weseruebung".
(See "Weseruebung" file.)
4. Report on Order No. 1 of the Commanding Admiral (Special Staff, Admiral Boehm) dated 13 March.
See "Weseruebung" file.)
5. Group West reports that Ship "16" (commanded by Captain Rogge) is in the Jade ready to sail.
Her departure next week is proposed.

Enquiries to the liaison officer on the staff of Commander in Chief, Air Force on the subject of the use of aerial mines lead to the following results:

1. The following mine-carrying planes will be ready for use:

15 March	10 planes	He 111/H4
17 March	18 planes	
24 March	25 planes	
1 April	31 planes	i.e. 1 Group of He 111/H4.

Plus 14 Ju 88's of the "Storp" Squadron, which will be brought up to group strength in the first half of April; so that by the middle of April two groups will be in readiness as mine-carriers. On 1 May, the 9th Air Division will have 3 mine-carrier groups (2 groups He 111/H4 and 1 group Ju 88).

3 squadrons are available for immediate mining operations: "Stein" Squadron (He 111), "Storp" Squadron (Ju 88) and the 3rd Naval Air Squadron of the 506th Group.

2. Aerial mine situation:

The Air Force General Staff's basic refusal to carry out immediate aerial minelaying is caused less by the question of mine-carrying planes than by the aerial mines

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themselves, which are still described by Commander in Chief, Air Force as inadequate. Naval Staff takes the opposite point of view, that the number of aerial mines available is ample to carry out constant mining operations with the available planes, when the weather is suitable.

The numbers of naval mines on 16 March are:

LMA 268 + 150 in March, 200 in April.
LMB 286 + 150 in March, 200 in April.

The views of Chief, Air Force General Staff are that if the Navy believes that the mine may lose its effectiveness within a short time because of the British anti-mine defense measures, a new situation will arise and corresponding steps will then have to be taken. If however, this is not the case, the previous situation will not have altered and mining operations should be begun when they can be kept up, not, of course, on 1 August as previously planned but much earlier, roughly on 1 May. Chief, Naval Staff when he next reports to the Fuehrer will endeavor to effect an alteration of the Fuehrer's previous decision regarding aerial minelaying operations.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

The old battleship WARSPITE and four destroyers intend to proceed from the west coast via the Minch to Scapa on 16 March.

The cruiser SUSSEX, which was already about 150 miles west of Ouessant, was ordered to return to Gibraltar and await further orders.

An agent reports:

"The liners QUEEN MARY and NORMANDIE are lying in New York for loading. This is taking place under

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strictest guard and secrecy. (Planes?)."

France:

Nothing special to report, apart from convoy movements, submarine chase and air reconnaissance.

North Sea:

Radio monitoring intercepts two very important items, which permit conclusions regarding British preparations for the occupation of Norway or the despatch of troops for Finland:

1. The British submarine disposition in the North Sea off the Skagerrak and in the Heligoland Bight is dispersed. On 15 March some of the boats are again on return passage to their ports of departure. It may be concluded from this discovery that the operations planned have been postponed because of the unexpected Finnish peace.
2. Further, the deciphering service succeeds in partially deciphering an order about "Plan R 3" (see radiogram War Diary, Part B, V, 122) sent at 1437 on 14 March from the Admiralty to Commander in Chief, Home Fleet, Station Commanders, Portsmouth, Scapa, Plymouth, Nore and Clyde, also to the 1st and 2nd Cruiser Squadrons, from which the following is deduced:
 - a) The measures for troop embarkations on a large scale have been taken and completed. The transports are ready and organized. Some of the troops have embarked, the others are ready to embark. The transports are obviously to proceed northwards from west coast Channel ports.
 - b) The transports are assigned new alerts (48 hours, 96 hours, 80 hours) in a transitional order which is probably in force until the political situation is clarified. The movements of the cruiser

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GALATEA with Commander, 2nd Cruiser Squadron and of the cruiser AURORA are connected with the transports.

Both messages indicate postponement of British measures for the present.

No complete abandonment of the Norway operation, the basic plans for which can no longer be doubted, can be detected from the messages. German deliberations and preparations for operations must take this fact into account.

During the night of 15 March British planes of four different bomber squadrons flew into the Heligoland Bight.

In reply to a query the Naval Attache at The Hague reports that the following area is being avoided by Dutch shipping as dangerous:

54° 26' N	3° 3' E
54° 26' N	3° 41' E
53° 49.3' N	4° 5' E
53° 49.3' N	3° 28' E.

The area lies on the Dogger Bank where alleged British minelayers have already been detected twice lately by air reconnaissance.

Shipping Losses:

The Greek steamer FLORA (2,980 tons) overdue from South Wales to the U.S.A. The Swedish steamer NORNA (1,022 tons) overdue. The Greek steamer PANAGHIOTHIS (3,575 tons) ran aground five miles southwest of Dungeness. Two steamers in convoy HX 26 collided on 10 March; one sank.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Submarine chase by planes and submarines unsuccessful to date.

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10th Air Division: weather reconnaissance in the Orkneys area in the morning. Air reconnaissance against enemy patrol forces west of the declared area in the forenoon. One minelayer of 2,000-2,500 tons and one patrol boat in grid square 6816. Several fishing vessels. Unsuccessful brush with British fighters. Flight into the sea area southeast of the Dogger Bank in the afternoon because of reconnaissance reports. Small Danish fishing boat with Danish flag attacked and Danish steamer of 400 tons bombed and machine gunned. The fishing boat was sunk.

Naval Staff cannot condone such offensive action by the operational Air Force on vessels which are definitely Danish in the open sea outside the coastal belt off the British coast.

Baltic Sea:

The HESSEN, SCHLESSEN and SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN, also the ice-breakers WAL and GANTER, are operating on ice-breaker duties in the Baltic. Shipping is still greatly impeded by the ice. Ships can only put in to Swinemuende, Pillau and Memel with ice-breaker aid. Drift ice in the Great Belt; Little Belt still closed.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

Unchanged.

North Sea:

In the operational area:

U "38", "52", "47", "49".

The fate of U "63" (Sub.Lieut. Lorenz) is uncertain. She must be considered lost. In this connection a B.B.C. report deserves consideration, according to which a German submarine was destroyed by depth charges and gunfire from a British tug off the northeast coast of Scotland.

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On passage into the North Sea operational area or in positions for submarine chase:

U "7", "9", "20", "24", "56", "57", "59", "19".

Merchant Shipping

Own Shipping:

Losses:

The steamer LA CORUNNA (7,414 GRT) sailed from Rio on 3 Feb. and was stopped by a British warship on 13 March near Iceland. She was set on fire and scuttled by her own crew.

Foreign Shipping:

It is reported from Lisbon: A tanker which arrived in Lisbon flying the American flag changed her crew here and put to sea again under the French flag. According to statements from some seamen, difficulties are said to be arising in the U.S.A. in signing on U.S. seamen for tankers to Great Britain or France. The seamen are said to have been promised that they will only go as far as Lisbon where crew and flag are changed.

Items of Political Importance

For winding up of the Russo-Finnish war, repercussions on the attitude of the neutrals, and information about plans for an alliance by the Scandinavian countries see Foreign Press and Political Reports.

Rumors of a Government crisis in France and Great Britain, as the result of violent criticism of previous inactive warfare, differences of opinion between Chamberlain and Churchill and also between Daladier and Reynaud.

The Chamberlain Government is reproached with inactivity and lack of initiative.

Special Reports on the EnemyAtlantic:Great Britain:

The cruiser SHEFFIELD plans to sail from the Clyde on 17 March. The cruiser SUSSEX is to arrive in Gibraltar about 0600 on 17 March.

Radio monitoring intercepts various convoy movements. A route is fixed for convoy SL 25, which is expected soon. This runs west of the Cape Verde Islands and Canary Islands and about 240 miles west of Cape Vilano to Great Britain.

The Admiralty sends the following warning to shipping from Land's End radio:

"The Admiralty accepts no responsibility, but advises remaining west of Lundy and reporting to patrol steamer off Helwig lightship."

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This is a warning against the mined area off Swansea.

France:

Nothing special to report.

Neutrals:

The launching of the first 110-foot long sub-chaser within the U.S. Navy experimental construction plan is reported from Wilmington (U.S.A.). This possesses "an oak keel as defense against magnetic mines".

North Sea:

The old battleship BARHAM is observed again in radio traffic.

Submarine Situation:

There are still eight British submarines in the Skagerrak-Heligoland Bight area in waiting positions, following the changes in disposition.

Various flights into the Heligoland Bight by British reconnaissance planes and bombers during the forenoon and evening.

Bombs were dropped without effect near the steamer LINA FISSER in the Hubergat.

Six reports on German planes were transmitted from the radio guardship SCAPA between 1947 and 2058 in connection with the 10th Air Corps' raids on Scapa. Renewed air raid warning in the Scapa area from 2114-2132.

The Danish Admiralty warns shipping of a new mine barrage which appears to comprise the southern parts of the Dogger Bank and the channel south of the Dogger Bank. (See information from the Naval Attaché at The Hague dated 15 March.)

Shipping Losses:

The French steamer LOUISE MARGUERITTE (318 tons) sent an S.O.S.

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near the Scillies. The steamer SUKNOW sank after an explosion five miles south of Nash Point on 16 March. The Yugoslavian steamer SLAWA (4,512 tons) sank off the west coast on 17 March. The British steamer MELROSE (1,600 tons) sank in the North Sea after an explosion. The British trawler PERIDOT struck a mine. The British trawler MAIDA sank after striking a mine.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Ship "21" was unsuccessfully attacked by two British planes in the Heligoland Bight.

Submarine chase unsuccessful.

The 10th Air Corps carried out the attack on Scapa that has been planned for several days. After weather reconnaissance there was an offensive sortie against the Orkneys, carried out by 18 Ju 88's and 16 He 111's (5 planes broke off the assignment prematurely because of technical trouble).

The Fleet units lying in Scapa were attacked between 1950 and 2010, the airfields at Kirkwall, Stromness and Earhouse between 2000 and 2040.

Results as per Air Force reports:

2 hits on a battleship
1 hit on a battleship or battle cruiser
1 hit on a battle cruiser
1 hit on a heavy cruiser
2 bombs dropped in the immediate vicinity of further battleships, so that damage is assumed.

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All hits scored with 1,000 kg bombs.

Airfields attacked with a total of 140 SD 50 and 20 bomb magazines of incendiaries. Heavy fires observed.

None of our planes was lost.

For Air Force report see War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.

The 10th Air Corps has achieved excellent results in the successful attacks on Scapa. The detailed results cannot be checked for the present. According to available reports there is no doubt of some severe and some moderate damage to battleships or heavy cruisers. The ship hit by two 1,000 kg. bombs must be claimed as out of action for some time. (The Admiralty admits slight damage to one ship only.)

The unexpected inadequacy of fighter and anti-aircraft defense in Scapa during the attack is surprising, since it allowed our formation to carry out their attack without losses.

It cannot yet be foreseen whether the British Home Fleet, with the knowledge of the severe threat from the air to this base once more confirmed, will now avoid Scapa as a permanent anchorage and move again to the ports and bays of the west coast.

In the interest of the conduct of warfare in the North Sea and of bringing German forces out into the Atlantic, every endeavor must be made to render it unpleasant for the British naval forces to stay in the Orkneys base, which represents a very severe flank threat to the Shetlands-Norway area.

Naval Staff regrets that we did not succeed in using the aerial mine on Scapa at the same time as the bombing attack. This might possibly have given rise to further great successes.

Baltic Sea:

Ice situation unchanged.

Gjedser Channel not navigable at present. Fehmarn Belt difficult. Not possible to get through to Swinemuende at

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present. Great Belt ice free. Heavy drift ice off
Pillau. (For particulars see Situation Baltic 17 March.)

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

U "47" and "49", proceeding to Narvik, were stopped by
Commanding Admiral, Submarines off Stadtlandet and assigned
waiting dispositions.

Otherwise unchanged.

North Sea:

Since U "1" and "2" sailed there are now ten small submarines
in the North Sea/Skagerrak operational area:

U "7", "9", "20", "24", "56", "57", "59", "19", "1", "2".

Merchant Shipping

The steamer SANTOS (5,943 GRT) which left Rio on 13 Jan.,
arrived in a home port.

Items of Political Importance

The Pan-American President enters a protest to the British Government on behalf of the 21 American republics regarding the violation of the American neutrality zone in connection with the scuttling of the German steamer WAKAMA on 12 Feb.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Radio monitoring intercepts various convoy movements.

A British press report maintains that neutrals, especially Norwegian and even Italian steamers, are now joining British convoys to an increasing extent.

France:

French vessels are informed that there was a German submarine about 25 miles north of Land's End at 1300. French naval circles are saying that there is proof of the sinking of two German submarines during the past few days. Report is untrue.

Otherwise nothing special to report.

North Sea:

Reconnaissance by the 10th Air Corps sighted two submarines off the British coast, and off the Firth of Forth one cruiser (probably the EFFINGHAM) and one minelayer of about 4,000 tons.

According to an agent's report, British naval vessels are patrolling on the route Vardoe-Bear Island-Iceland.

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Shipping Losses:

The Dutch steamer SAINT ANNALAND (2,250 tons) sank in the North Sea after striking a mine. The French steamer ASTREE (2,150 tons) and the French steamer CAPITAIN AUGUSTIN (3,130 tons) sent S.O.S.'s east of Tongue.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

See submarine situation.

North Sea:

Unsuccessful submarine chase in the area south of 54° 40'N and east of the German declared area.

Torpedo patrol off the east coast of Britain by three He 115's of the 3rd Squadron of the 506th Group in the afternoon. Unsuccessful attacks on two steamers - firing range 500-600 m. - between Flamborough Head and Tynemouth under very favorable weather conditions.

Offensive sortie in the direction of Peterhead by six planes of the 10th Air Corps. Several patrol boats attacked and one destroyed. Engagements with British fighters (Spitfires) on various occasions.

Further sorties against merchant shipping and reconnaissance of effects on the Orkneys had to be broken off because of the weather.

Because of the 10th Air Corps' report that planes returning from the raid on Scapa during the night of 16 March were fired upon by anti-aircraft guns from warships, Group West made a close investigation which definitely proves that in the whole area of Coastal Defense Commander, East Friesland, including Wilhelmshaven and the Jade, no shots were fired from land or from warships. Searchlights were merely switched on in different places when recognition signals were not exchanged at once.

Ship "36"'s special gunnery firing practice was possibly thought to be anti-aircraft fire.

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Baltic Sea:

Slight improvement in the ice situation. Kiel Bay ice free, drift ice in the Fehmarn Belt, heavy pack ice in the Gjedser Channel (impassable). Drift ice in Danzig Bay, heavy pack ice off Pillau. Shipping not greatly impeded in the Sound. Heavy drift ice in parts of the Great Belt, passage impeded.

The Kiel-Swinemuende route is not navigable because of the closing of the Gjedser Channel.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

U "28", on return passage, reports light enemy cruiser on northwesterly course north of the Shetlands.

U "32" reports a non-detonator on a 5,000 ton steamer north of the Hebrides; much traffic, single patrol vessels.

Off the coast of Norway:

Proceeding to Narvik: U "46", "51".

Off Trondheim: U "30", "34".

Off Stadtlandet: U "47", "49".

Area off Bergen: U "43", "44", "38", "52".

Commanding Admiral, Submarines receives the following directive with regard to a certain limitation of the priority of "Weseruebung" and with reference to the situation arising from the air raids on Scapa:

1. "Weseruebung" directive stands.
2. Operations limited to two submarines off Narvik and two off Trondheim. Assignment extended to attacks on convoys in these areas. Strict respect for territorial waters.

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3. Remaining six submarines to operate as directed by Group West, four at least off the north coast of Scotland to exploit the effects of the air raids.
4. No further submarines released at present for assignments other than "Weseruebung".

Commanding Admiral, Submarines thereupon sent out - at noon on 17 March - U "38", "43", "44", "47", "49" at maximum speed to the area west of the Orkneys. U "30", "34", "46", "51" are given permission to attack convoys outside 4-mile territorial waters.

U "52" is assigned patrol of all the entrances to Bergen.

Of the small submarines off the Great Fisher Bank, U "19" and "57" are ordered to the eastern entrance to the Pentland Firth. Attacks on all important targets are permitted.

The following will remain in the operational area North Sea/Skagerrak north and east of the declared area: U "7", "9", "20", "24", "56", "59", "1", "2".

Merchant Shipping

The following are at present on the Norwegian run:

69 ships totaling 234,477 GRT (including 16 under 1,600 GRT).

The Consulate at Haugesund reports on 17 March:

"A British plane circled round the motor vessel HOMBERG (1,238 GRT) several times at 1400 on 16 March near Feierstein (south of Stavanger) inside Norwegian territorial waters."

(Foreign Office is being informed.)

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Chief, Naval Staff and Chief, Operations Division in Kiel and Flensburg for conferences and to inspect the midshipmen.

Items of Political Importance

Meeting between Hitler and Mussolini at the Brenner Pass. (For rumors about the subject of the conversations see Foreign Press.)

A change of Government in France is indicated as imminent. For the situation in France see Political Review No. 65, para 2.

The Rumanian Foreign Minister, Gafencu, emphasizes Rumania's desire for neutrality. Reconciliation of King Carol with the "Iron Guard".

It is confirmed from a reliable source that the Western Powers had made plans to occupy not only Narvik but also other Scandinavian ports in the case of a landing in Norway.

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A secret shipping and trade agreement has been concluded between Estonia and Germany.

The trade treaty settles Estonian foreign trade with neutral countries according to classes of goods, quantities and values. No restrictions with regard to Russia, Lithuania and Latvia. Estonia is obliged to give up all trade with enemy countries. The introduction of the convoy certificate system for Estonian ships is settled in the shipping treaty. A convoy certificate office will be set up with the Naval Attache in Estonia.

The treaty is greatly in Germany's favor and represents considerable progress towards German influence over the economies of the neutral Baltic States.

The trade treaty already concluded with Latvia is to be dissolved and concluded anew, adapted to the German-Estonian treaty. Negotiations are in progress with Lithuania.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Disposition of Forces:

The cruiser NORFOLK, which was not originally scheduled to arrive in the Clyde until 29 March, is apparently already in that area. It is possible that the ship was damaged during the German air raid on 16 March and was then immediately transferred to the Clyde.

The cruisers GALATEA (with Commander, 2nd Cruiser Squadron) and AURORA probably proceeded from the Clyde to Scapa on 16 March.

The cruiser BIRMINGHAM arrived in Scapa on 18 March. The submarine depot ship MAIDSTONE, which sailed from Freetown on 14 March, arrived in the Gibraltar area on 17 March and will

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enter the home area on 23 March.

Some convoy movements were detected.

France:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

About 2230 on 17 March the Admiralty issued a warning about a dangerous mine barrage at 51° 21'N, 2° 01'E.

(Result of Ship "11"'s activities.)

It is reported from Bergen that 40 ships, mostly laden with wood, are lying at the assembly point; will probably sail on the night of 18 March.

The Consulate General in Bergen reports:

"On 15 March the steamer METEOR of the Bergenske Dampskibsselskab arrived from Britain allegedly carrying 300 men, some British, some French.

It is stated that the METEOR, which is said to be chartered by Great Britain, is going back to fetch further men."

It can be assumed that these are transports of volunteers still on the way for Finland. The Naval Attache in Oslo is requested for further particulars.

Shipping Losses:

The British steamer ALBIONE (2,648 tons) caught fire at the entrance to the Bristol Channel. The British steamer TIBERTON (5,225 tons) has been overdue for a month. The Italian steamer TINO PRIMO (4,853 tons) broke up and sank after an explosion off the southeast coast of England.

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The B.B.C. reports that rewards will be paid for information about enemy naval warfare. Civilians who can make reports on German mines will receive £1 - 5. The rewards will be higher for magnetic mines. The Admiralty will pay £1,000 for information leading to the capture or destruction of an enemy warship.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

No operations by air forces because of the weather.

The 16th Patrol Boat Group receives orders from Group West to attack Danish fishing smacks in and west of the declared area. Departure on 18 March.

The following directive is issued regarding procedure:

1. Fishing smacks proceeding without lights in the declared area are to be sunk. Crews to be saved if possible.
2. Fishing smacks with lights in the declared area are to be taken to Borkum for examination.
3. Fishing smacks outside the declared area at a distance of 15-20 miles from Routes I, Ia, II, IIa are to be brought into port.

Vessels to sail camouflaged by day but not by night.

Baltic Sea:

With the east to southeast wind of the last 24 hours

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ice conditions have materially improved except for the situation along the east coast of Schleswig.

Slight drift ice in Kiel Bay, Fehmarn Belt navigable only for strong ships. Gjedser Channel ice-free along the German coast. Swinemuende entrance free. Drift ice in Danzig Bay. Possible to put in to Pillau only with ice-breaker aid. Drift ice in the Sound and Great Belt, but navigable.

Movements by the steamers of the "Weseruebung" transport units are in progress. Ice-aid from the SCHLESIEN, HESSEN, Ship "23" and the ice-breakers GANTER, WAL and STETTIN.

The LUETZOW, EMDEN and NORDMARK are proceeding from Swinemuende to Kiel.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

On return passage:	U "28", "32".
On passage into the area west of the Orkneys:	U "47", "49", "43", "44", "38".
Off Narvik:	U "46", "51".
Off Trondheim:	U "30", "34".
Off Bergen:	U "52".

North Sea:

Off Pentland Firth:	U "57", "19".
On submarine chase north of the declared area:	U "1", "2".
On passage into the submarine chase area:	U "3", "4".
On return passage:	U "7", "9", "20", "24", "56", "59".

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Merchant Shipping

The steamer LINA FISSER, inward bound, reports that at 0845 on 16 March she was attacked in the Hubergat by a British plane (Bristol Blenheim type) with a bomb of about 250 kg. from an altitude of about 300 m. The bomb exploded roughly 80 m. abeam. Column of water about 20 m. high.

Items of Political Importance

The chief item under consideration in the whole foreign press is the conference between Hitler and Mussolini, which is occasioning the wildest rumors.

According to information so far available to Naval Staff the conference has been most cordial and agreement has been reached to a great extent.

U.S. Under Secretary of State Welles, who had postponed his departure because of the Hitler-Mussolini talks, will return to New York on 20 March on board the CONTE DI SAVOIA. He stated before he left Rome that, contrary to all rumors, none of the belligerents had submitted peace proposals and he, on his part, had made no overtures in this direction.

For Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons see Foreign Press for 20 March. He describes the German air raid on Scapa Flow as unsuccessful. Only one warship but no battleship was damaged,

The statement also gives the British attitude in the Russo-Finnish conflict and details of the aid promised and given to Finland. Great Britain now knows that Germany threatened Norway and Sweden with intervention if the planned Franco-British expedition took place and these two countries agreed to allow the Allies to pass through. Great Britain therefore came to the conclusion that she must be ready to provide such forces that she could aid Sweden to defend herself in case of a German attack.

The expeditionary strength calculated on this principle amounted to roughly 100,000 fully equipped and armed troops. Plans were prepared according to which the landing of these troops was to commence in March and be completed before the end of April.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items:

1. Question of the use of aerial mines: When once more approached by Naval Staff the Field Marshal again stated his objections to the use of LM mines by the Navy before the operational Air Force was able to use that weapon. An exception to this attitude of Commander in Chief, Air Force is the use of aerial mines in Scapa and in Operation "Gelb".

According to information from Group West, Squadron "Stein" with 8-10 He 111 H4 is to be ready for aerial minelaying operations against Scapa from today. Weather is, however, unfavorable today.

For summary of views dated 19 March on the subject of aerial minelaying operations see War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI, Mine Warfare. Naval Staff comes to the following conclusion:

- a) The present stock of mines and the supplies to be expected make possible the immediate opening and maintenance of aerial mine warfare, with operations constantly increasing in scope.
- b) The scheduled aerial minelaying operations in Scapa and for operation "Gelb" will draw the enemy's attention to the danger to other ports, he will strengthen his anti-aircraft defenses and favorable opportunities for the execution of further aerial minelaying operations will thus be allowed to pass if more time is lost.
- c) The enemy's discovery of a principle for possible defense against the mines forces us to take swift action.
- d) The use of the Navy's own aerial mines by a squadron of Commander, Naval Air, West is purely a measure of naval warfare which does not affect the conduct of war in the air but will, of course, already increase the success of the blockade against Great Britain considerably. It is especially important at a moment when other naval warfare is practically at a standstill because of the tying-down of all submarine and surface forces of the Navy for "Weseruebung".

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2. Group West is directed to utilize a favorable opportunity for the sailing of Ship "16" in agreement with her captain (Captain Rogge).

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Disposition of Forces:

The ARK ROYAL from Portsmouth to Portland on 19 March.

The MALAYA is proceeding to Great Britain with convoy HX 26.

France:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

According to radio monitoring the following vessels left Scapa Flow on the afternoon of 19 March:

Battleships: RENOWN, REPULSE, RODNEY, WARSPITE, VALIANT.

Cruisers: NORFOLK and BIRMINGHAM.

According to radio intelligence there is also a possibility of the HOOD, NELSON and BARHAM already being in the Clyde area.

These radio intelligence reports give rise to doubts about the actual hits scored by the operational Air Force on 16 March.

Even though the sailing reports have not yet proved that hits were not scored on the battleships, it must at least be stated that the battleships are obviously not completely out of action.

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It is, therefore, possible that the bomb hits were not scored on battleships, but on cruisers.

At 1800 U "47" sighted three enemy battleships about 30 miles northwest of the Orkneys on northwesterly to northerly courses. Contact was lost after 2000. This is probably the first group of the enemy forces from Scapa which is to take up a position of readiness at sea.

Convoy traffic in the North Sea:

The departure of fairly large convoys from Bergen and Skagen to the west is reported during the night of 18 March and on the evening of 19 March. There are said to have been seven armed British steamers in the Bergen convoy; a large number of the steamers is said to have loaded aircraft parts from U.S. steamers. The report was confirmed from another source.

R.A.F. flights into the Heligoland Bight; unsuccessful bombing attacks on sub-chasers and patrol boats.

Continuous single flights over the North Frisian Islands between 1900 and 0200. Bombing attack on Hoernum. About 200 bombs dropped, mostly incendiaries. (See Own Situation.)

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

British raid on Sylt. Carried out in continuous single attacks from 1925 to 0242; 23 runs-in for bombing. Attacks were concentrated on Hoernum airfield. No serious damage apart from a direct hit on the infirmary.

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No killed (3 wounded).

Anti-aircraft successes reported to date: 1-2 enemy planes shot down. For report by Hoernum Air Group, Coastal Patrol see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V, 123.

According to a Danish report various British flights took place into Danish territory. Several incendiaries were dropped on the west coast of Jutland.

This R.A.F. attack, which was intended as a reprisal for the German raid on Scapa Flow, can be described as a complete failure. It must, however, be admitted and taken as the basis for judgment of such attacks, that the failure of the attack must be ascribed less to the German anti-aircraft and fighter defense than to extremely good fortune.

The British fliers were successful in their bombing attack as such. Their accuracy of aim and the caliber of the bombs on the other hand were inadequate. It can be assumed that with bombs of heavier caliber and less luck in the points they hit considerable damage would have been done to the airfield.

Baltic Sea:

For particulars of the ice situation see Situation Baltic, 20 March.

The route from Swinemuende to Kiel is almost unimpeded, as long as the present weather continues. There is still a belt of pack ice, however, east of Rügen, which is not navigable at present for light vessels. The route from Swinemuende eastwards is likewise unimpeded on the whole. Passage through the Sound and Great Belt is greatly hindered by thawing and ice drifting northward.

The LUETZOW and EMDEN have arrived in Kiel. The SCHLESIEEN, with the PREUSSEN, KOENIGIN LUISE, BRUMMER, the 15th Minesweeper Flotilla and the destroyers KUENNE and LUEDEMANN are proceeding from Swinemuende to Kiel. The destroyers had to return to Swinemuende because of a heavy belt of pack ice east of Stubbenkammer.

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Submarine Situation

Unchanged.

Atlantic:

West of the Orkneys: U "47", "49", "43", "44",
"38".

Norway:

Off Narvik: U "46", "51".
Off Trondheim: U "30", "34".
Off Bergen: U "52".

North Sea:

Pentland Firth: U "57", "19".
Central North Sea: U "1", "2".
On passage: U "3", "4".

Merchant Shipping

The steamer EMSRIFF was unsuccessfully bombed by a British plane on 16 March off the Ems. The steamer SANTOS (returned from overseas) reports:

Stopped by the French auxiliary cruiser CHARLES PLUMIER at 1700 on 26 Jan. at 9°47'N (?), 34°47'W and questioned about signal letters, type of cargo, whither bound and whence.

The steamer SANTOS, camouflaged as the Norwegian steamer RYGJA stated that she was sailing from Capetown to New York. She received permission to continue her passage. The auxiliary cruiser circled her once more and demanded that the flag should be dipped. The auxiliary cruiser had already made her boats ready beforehand.

Items of Political Importance

Daladier's Government has resigned. Former Finance Minister Reynaud is entrusted with the formation of a new Government. He is endeavoring to form a coalition Cabinet. Reynaud is avowedly anti-German and is described as the greatest warmonger of the former Cabinet. He has always been in favor of the closest cooperation between France and Great Britain.

Chamberlain stated in a debate in the House of Commons that no proofs can be produced of German violation of Norwegian neutrality. The British Navy and the R.A.F. had kept constant watch for this on the Norwegian coast. If the Navy had spotted German warships even once, it would not have hesitated to penetrate into territorial waters to attack such a ship.

The Swedish Foreign Minister is said to have stated that Russia had abandoned her previous resistance to the fortification of the Aaland Islands and stated at the same time that she had no further territorial claims in Northern Europe.

According to a British press report the Turkish Government officially confirms that secret Government discussions are being held in Aleppo between the Western Powers and Turkey in preparation for any necessary cooperation.

According to statements in the press, the U.S.S.R. is refusing to countenance a defensive alliance of the Scandinavian countries, since such an alliance would be directed against the U.S.S.R. and would be contrary to the Russo-Finnish peace treaty.

Special Reports on the EnemyAtlantic:Great Britain:Disposition of Forces:

The ROYAL SOVEREIGN left Halifax on 18 March as escort for convoy HX 28.

Two British auxiliary cruisers came into collision southwest of the Hebrides on 19 March. One was proceeding to the Clyde after patrol duty.

Fleet Anchorages:

The following are reported as Fleet anchorages off the west coast of Scotland:

The protected bay between Arran and Holy Isle at 55° 32' N, 5° 6' W;

Loch Striven just north of Bute, 55° 50' N, 5° 3' W;

Both bays lie in the entrance to the Clyde.

An anchorage is also named off Oban, 56° 23' N, 5° 30' W and near Kyle-Akin at 57° 17' N, 5° 40' W.

Kyle-Akin lies in Loch Alsh.

France:

A German submarine was reported in error northwest of Cape Ortegal and three French and two British destroyers in the vicinity sent out on submarine chase.

Otherwise nothing special to report.

North Sea:

A minelaying unit off the Scottish coast, designated as PA 4-Forces, was ordered on 19 March to sail in the evening and commence minelaying at 0730 on 20 March. The assignment was, however, later postponed one day because of the weather.

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At 1800 on 19 March Commander, 2nd Cruiser Squadron informed the Admiralty, Commander in Chief, Home Fleet and Commanders, Scapa, Rosyth, Submarines and Destroyers that assignment (or plan) "DU" had been postponed a further 24 hours. It is not known what this assignment is. Escort is not impossible since transport escort duties were scheduled for Commander, 2nd Cruiser Squadron with the GALATEA and AURORA four days ago. The GALATEA, ARETHUSA, PENELOPE and AURORA left Scapa with six destroyers on the evening of 20 March; the SOUTHAMPTON will arrive there on 22 March.

The cruisers EDINBURGH and NEWCASTLE are to go into dock shortly; they arrived in Scapa on 18 March.

Unsuccessful bombing attacks on patrol boats during the forenoon.

Shipping Losses:

The British steamer BARSHELL (4,972 tons) was bombed southeast of Portsmouth; the Dutch steamer PHOBOS (7,412 tons) struck a mine 5 miles east of Goodwin. The Norwegian steamer SVINTA (1,260 tons) and the Swedish steamer UTKLIPPAN (1,600 tons) were sunk by bombs out of a convcy.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

No activity by surface forces. Various unsuccessful enemy bombing attacks on patrol boats.

Air reconnaissance led to various brushes with British trawlers on the Dogger Bank. One trawler was obviously sunk by a hit in its vicinity.

Torpedo patrol - nothing to report.

The 10th Air Corps attacked the convoy reported about 60 miles southeast of the Shetlands in the evening. Following reports

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by shadowing reconnaissance planes, 26 planes of the 26th Bomber Wing were sent out and attacked 14 vessels in the convoy. Several 250 kg. and 50 kg. bomb hits were scored. Convoy split up.

According to the 10th Air Corps' report, 6-8 ships were so severely damaged that it can be assumed they were sunk or destroyed. Further steamers suffered slight damage. Fighter and anti-aircraft defense from the convoy. Strong defense by medium and light anti-aircraft guns from anti-aircraft cruisers and minesweepers. One enemy fighter shot down. One of our own planes missing.

The 10th Air Corps has again achieved excellent results in guiding the bomber forces by good shadowing and by attacking with such great success.

The convoy was on its way from Norway to Great Britain. It can be assumed from the nature of the hits and from the explosions that there were steamers in the convoy carrying ammunition (taken over from U.S. ships in Norway).

A plane belonging to the 10th Air Corps' leading flight successfully attacked the steamer BARSHELL in the Channel south of Brighton.

For brief report from the 10th Air Corps see Air Situation 21 March.

The Admiralty admits the sinking or damaging of several neutral steamers (Swedish, Norwegian); it denies, however, any damage to or loss of British ships.

It is reported from Bergen that the transport which arrived there a few days ago with French troops - said to be about 300 men - carried 50-100 French officers and men (Chasseurs Alpains), who were bound for Finland and are now to be transported back to France.

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Baltic Sea:

Ice Situation:

Shipping route from Kiel to Swinemuende through the Fehmarn Belt and Gjedser Channel is free. There are still some ice difficulties on the route from Swinemuende eastwards, especially off Danzig Bay. The shipping route through the Sound and Belt is still only slightly impeded by ice; this is apart from the mine barrage situation which has not yet been investigated. Passage unimpeded through the Kiel Canal, double traffic possible in the eastern part.

The barrage pilot service in the Gjedser Channel has been resumed by pilot steamers. The use of pilot cutters is not possible yet because of the danger from ice.

Submarine Situation

Unchanged.

The submarines east of the Orkneys were sent out against the convoy reported and attacked by the Air Force.

Merchant Shipping

Foreign Shipping:

The Spanish press deals at length with the increasing refusal of neutral ships' crews to call at British ports. According to it, many ports in Portugal, Spain and other countries are said to be filled with sailors on strike.

Reports from Holland state that the stopping of coal transports to Italy via Rotterdam is having almost devastating results for Dutch shipping on the Rhine.

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Measures in the Economic War

The British Minister for Economic Warfare, Cross, stated in reply to a question in the House of Commons:

"It is not possible to prevent the transport of oil bound for Germany over the Black Sea, since there is no contraband control there. According to the regulations of the Montreux Convention, warships of belligerents may not pass through the Dardanelles to the Black Sea."

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Items of Political Importance

British reply to the Italian protest about the stopping of Italian coal imports from Rotterdam. For extract see Foreign Press (naval information).

Various reports from the Intelligence station, Kiel (9 March) show the following:

Coastal fortifications between Oslo and Stavanger are being reinforced at top speed.

The result of the frontier report is as follows:

Danish officers have been ascertaining from peasants living on the main routes frontier-Sonderburg and frontier-Apenrade the stocks of agricultural machinery they possess. When questioned by the peasants as to the purpose of this, the officers replied definitely that if German troops invaded, the machinery would be requisitioned for the construction of road blocks.

Strong pro-British statements by U.S. President Roosevelt, who is especially in favor of large-scale deliveries of planes to the Western Powers. No hesitation in exporting even the most modern types of planes to Great Britain and France.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

Special Items

Report by Oberregierungrat Dr. Ing. Hagemann on the assessment of British protective and defense measures against the German magnetic mine.

1. Protection of ships:

The enemy is undoubtedly on the right lines in placing cable loops around the hull. Roughly 50 per cent protection can be achieved with well set loops. There are, however, great difficulties in the way of large-scale use of this protective

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device. (Cable, electricity outputs, labor, specialists). The enemy cannot attain the German state of degaussing for about 1-1½ years.

The enemy is achieving the protective effect by means of over-compensation. The protective effect being built up with regard to the magnetic firing of the mine in use at present will, however, be rendered out of date by a possible German alteration of the "big" by reversing the polarity of the magnetic needles. The alteration can be carried out in about four weeks. The enemy will be confronted with great difficulties when forced to abandon the over-compensation.

2. Development of sweeping gear:

Possibilities: Strong magnets towed astern;
Cable gear;
Mine-exploding vessels.

According to intelligence available, the enemy is trying to manufacture magnets towed astern and fit up mine-exploding vessels. The British will most probably concentrate especially on defense by mine-exploding vessels.

Specially difficult to manufacture magnets and cable gear. Special cable (proof against towing), great navigational difficulties, special construction.

We must reckon on the possibility of the enemy's having developed a practical counter-device by the end of this year.

Simpler to fit up mine-exploding vessels by winding lengths of cable around suitable ships to attain a strong magnetic effect ahead and laterally. Any considerable sweeping effect would only be possible, however, with great expenditure (300 kilowatt, 10-12 km. cable with more than thumb size cross-section of copper).

In spite of this, we must expect there to be some practical mine-exploding vessels within a fairly short time (3-6 months).

German counter-measures: period delay mechanism
and time mechanism at first.

The enemy probably plans to use the sweeping gear off ports, the mine-exploding vessels in estuaries and in the open sea on shipping and outward routes.

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Since it is not known how far the enemy has progressed, November 1939 must be regarded as the latest date when the enemy began large-scale development of defense measures, since an aerial mine definitely fell into his hands then. In view of this date, the use of more or less effective enemy methods of defense must be expected in April or May.

Therefore conclusions reached:

1. For the present continue to lay as before, since degaussing can never be complete and in its present incomplete state will require some time longer before it is of practical use on a large scale.
2. At once, however, transfer to:
 - a) laying less deep and
 - b) more sensitive setting.
3. Commence reversing polarity of the "big" immediately.
4. As soon as the reversed "big" is available, use a mixture of different kinds of mines.
5. Permit the use of aerial mines at once, in order to make use of as many of the available mines as possible.

The question of the possibility of copying the magnetic firing and using such mines against Germany is answered to the effect that the enemy would require a whole year at least to manufacture a large number.

(For further details see War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.)

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

The battleship HOOD is probably to proceed to the Mediterranean at the end of March.

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The liners QUEEN MARY, MAURETANIA and QUEEN ELIZABETH have left New York with sealed orders. It is assumed that they will be put into operation as troopships for the Australian Army on the route to the Near East.

Mediterranean:

The netlayer PROTECTOR is to take on mines in Rosyth on 24 March, and to proceed thence on 4 April to Gibraltar and Malta. According to this - probably in connection with the general survey of the political situation in the Mediterranean - renewal of the barrages off Malta and Gibraltar is apparently scheduled in April.

France:

Nothing special to report, apart from convoy movements and submarine warning reports.

Neutrals:

Most of the Norwegian ships returning home from overseas are trying to escape the check at Kirkwall by passing close to the north of the Faroes.

North Sea:

The following vessels were still in the Scapa area on 20 March according to radio monitoring:

RODNEY, VALIANT, WARSPITE, RENOWN, REPULSE, BERWICK, YORK, NORFOLK, BIRMINGHAM, EDINBURGH, MANCHESTER, NEWCASTLE, AURORA, GALATEA, PENELOPE, ARETHUSA and about 30 destroyers.

On patrol duty: DEVONSHIRE, GLASGOW, SOUTHAMPTON.

In Rosyth: SHEFFIELD, BELFAST and a number of destroyers.

Constant British flights during the afternoon and evening. Bombs dropped and low-level attacks made. No successes. British propaganda represents the air raid on Sylt as the most important action in the air since the war began and describes it as a "lightning reply to the German air raid on Scapa Flow"; it is assumed that Sylt air base was completely destroyed.

For activities of enemy forces between 10 and 17 March according to radio monitoring, see Radio Monitoring Report No. 11/40.

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Shipping Losses:

The British steamer TUSSAN STAR (11,000 tons) was bombed near Beachy Head. The Danish steamer ALGIER (1,554 tons) was torpedoed in the Atlantic. The Danish steamers MINSK (1,230 tons), BOTHAL (2,100 tons) and WIKING (1,150 tons) were reported as having sunk off the east coast of Scotland. The following were announced as damaged through air attack: The British steamer NORTHERN COAST (1,200 tons), the Norwegian steamer ERLING LINDOE (1,280 tons).

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Nothing special to report, apart from enemy air attacks on patrol forces. Commander, Naval Air's reconnaissance carried out unsuccessful attacks on British trawlers in the Dogger Bank area. The crews of these wore steel helmets and defended themselves with machine-guns. Torpedo patrol had to be abandoned because of the weather.

Baltic Sea:

For ice situation, see Situation Baltic.

The route from Kiel to Swinemuende is free except for occasional difficulty with drift ice north of Arcona. The route from Swinemuende to East Prussia is free except for local difficulties off Gdynia and Memel. The route through the Great Belt and Sound is navigable, the position of the mines in the barrages has, however, not yet been clarified here. Merchant shipping will be permitted in the Baltic on 21 March.

The transfers of ships for "Weseruebung" are being continued.

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Submarine Situation

Nothing special to report.

Commenced return passage from Pentland Firth:

U "19".

On passage into the North Sea operational area:

U "21", "22".

Merchant Shipping

Loss:

The steamer HEDDERNHEIM (4,950 tons) was stopped at 2252 by a British submarine eight miles east of Skagen and sunk.

Items of Political Importance

New French Government under Paul Reynaud has been formed. For Government statement see Foreign Press:

"France is involved in total war. A powerful, well-organized and resolute enemy is using every means of warfare to gain his ends. He has the traitorous support of the U.S.S.R. and is carrying the battle into all areas with a destructive genius that we recognize and which is at the same time grandiose and hateful. This is a total war. Victory means to save all, defeat means to lose all."

The vote of confidence was passed by only 268 votes against 156, with 111 abstentions.

A Council of War has been formed within the Cabinet, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for the Colonies, the Finance Minister, the Minister for the Blockade and the Minister of National Defense (Daladier), which is to meet three times a week.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items

1. The Fuehrer is resolved on the execution of "Weseruebung".

On the other hand, he acknowledges the difficulties arising for the Navy if it is postponed any further; the activities of naval forces are brought to a complete standstill.

Naval Staff is therefore to review the situation, in order to report to the Fuehrer on the possibility of carrying out naval operations despite the readiness for "Weseruebung".

The possibilities of any operations at all are very slight. Since the Fuehrer cannot name the date for "Weseruebung", Naval Staff does not consider itself in a position to use the destroyers - whose readiness can easily be impaired - for minelaying operations or for sorties in the war against merchant shipping, or to permit the submarines to resume operations against merchant shipping.

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Battleship sorties can also not be carried out at present since no destroyer escort is available and putting the British Home Fleet into a state of readiness would be unpropitious at the present moment.

On the other hand, Naval Staff considers the next new-moon period (beginning of April) the last chance to bring out the auxiliary cruisers and the cruiser LUETZOW into the Atlantic, and believes that the dispatch of these ships is the sole measure which can be executed while "Weseruebung" is postponed. The LUETZOW operation in this case would take a different course from that originally planned by Naval Staff.

Battleship escort for the LUETZOW's sortie, as was considered appropriate by Naval Staff, is out of question before "Weseruebung". The sortie will therefore have to fall into line with the operational plans of Group West, which wished the ship to sail alone without battleship escort.

Naval Staff's plans will be made the subject of a report to the Fuehrer.

Naval Staff's basic order that the auxiliary cruisers are to be brought out soon has already been issued.

2. Chief, Naval Staff submits for consideration whether it would be wise to announce the declared area in the Skagerrak and the laying of mine barrages before "Weseruebung" as protection against British sorties into the Skagerrak and defense of German shipping to Norway.

The subject is under review.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

The cruiser NORFOLK is to undergo repairs in the Clyde. Leave to last about four weeks. Radio monitoring concludes that repairs will last two months.

It can be assumed from this fact that the NORFOLK was one of the ships severely damaged by bombs in Scapa on 16 March.

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Convoy movements are detected by the Radio Monitoring Service.

France:

Nothing special to report.

Neutrals:

According to a Portuguese agent's statement, Portuguese captains have received instructions not to join British convoys. Officers are forbidden to pass on details of shipping movements to belligerents. The British Government is said to have issued a decree dismissing all officers of foreign nationality from British ships.

North Sea:

According to information telephoned by the Naval Attaché in Oslo and confirmed by wire from the Ambassador, a large number (about 18) of enemy warships (cruisers, destroyers) is said to have appeared near the coast west of Egersund at about 0930 on 22 March.

The report is confirmed to a certain degree by the appearance of two enemy destroyers between Lister and Lindesnes; these followed the steamer NEUENFELS, which was outward bound for Narvik in ballast, into territorial waters (one mile from land) and then turned away westwards. The steamer anchored in Ross Fjord and continued her passage when the destroyers had disappeared.

U "2" also reports sighting a heavy cruiser (or aircraft carrier) with several destroyers during the evening about 20 miles south of Kristiansand. High speed, easterly course. The submarine could not maintain contact.

The trawler NORDLAND reported by radio on 21 March the sighting of several British destroyers near Hustadviken (north of Molde), where she was also chased by a destroyer inside territorial waters. Further, the steamer DERINDJE was circled several times by a British plane on 21 March inside territorial waters near Obrestad. A Norwegian plane is said to have driven off the British plane.

Intelligence available still shows no clear picture of the movements of light enemy forces, especially since our air reconnaissance cannot take off because of the weather. There

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is obviously a sortie under way into the Skagerrak and along the south coast of Norway for operations against merchant shipping, in conjunction with the plan to make a strong demonstration. Since to date German steamers have only been harassed, but not captured or sunk by surface forces inside Norwegian territorial waters, there is the impression that the Admiralty has so far not issued definite orders for forcible measures against German shipping inside Norwegian territorial waters. The enemy's conduct must, however, be estimated as a "prelude" to such measures and to complete non-observance of Norwegian neutrality.

It is not impossible that, on the basis of some agents' reports, anxiety about German military measures in the Norwegian area or the expectation that the auxiliary cruisers or auxiliary ships are about to sail helped to determine the British forces' present operations and the apparently very lively R.A.F. activity along the Norwegian coast.

The sinking of the steamer HEDDERNHEIM by a submarine east of Skagen points to the fact that the British have at last made up their minds about the necessity and possibility of an operation against German ore shipping in the Skagerrak. Germany has been expecting this step for a long time, especially since all ore traffic has had to be diverted via the Skagerrak to the North Sea for more than two months as the result of the ice situation in the entrances to the Baltic and was therefore exposed to strong enemy attack. The enemy's previous complete inactivity has, therefore, been quite incomprehensible for a long time.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Owing to the weather it was impossible to send out air reconnaissance or bomber formations on the basis of reports received on the appearance of enemy surface forces at the southern tip of Norway. Seven submarines in all (U "1", "2", "3", "4", "21", "22", "52"), however, were assigned new attack positions between Skudesnes and Ryvingen.

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Baltic Sea:

Ice Situation:

Fehmarn Belt, Kiel Bay, Gjedser Channel ice-free. Route from Kiel to Swinemuende unimpeded. There are still thick ice fields east of Ruegen, so that a detour of at least ten miles from the coast must be made around the east coast of Ruegen. The route from Swinemuende to Pillau is unimpeded, the western part of Danzig Bay and Gdynia are at present blocked by pack ice. Double traffic has been resumed in the Kiel Canal from Holtenau to Brunsbuettel.

The supply ship ALTMARK sailed from Sande Fjord with the help of tugs. The ship passed Paternoster at 1745 under her own power and is to steer for the Great Belt via Kullen and then anchor north of the Danish mine barrages. The Danish barrage markings have not yet been relaid.

Air reconnaissance for the ALTMARK was not possible because of the weather.

The 13th Submarine Chaser Group left port to proceed through the Sound into the Laesoe-Skagen closed area.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

The submarines west of the Orkneys (U "44", "43", "49", "38", "47") are ordered to proceed at 10 knots and take up a patrol line from AE 9660 to AF 7870 (east of the Faroes - north of the Shetlands).

Off Narvik:	U "46", "51".
Off Trondheim:	U "30", "34".
Off Bergen:	U "52".
On return passage from the Atlantic:	U "28", "32".

North Sea:

East of the Orkneys:	U "57".
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Off the south coast of
Norway and in the Skagerrak
to attack British forces and to
protect our own merchant
shipping:

U "1", "2", "3", "4".

Proceeding into the
operational area:

South of Lindesnes:
On return passage:

U "21", "22".
U "19".

Merchant Shipping

Losses:

The Naval Attache in Copenhagen reports with reference to the sinking of the steamer HEDDERNHEIM eight miles east of Skagen:

"The steamer HEDDERNHEIM was sunk by the British submarine C "59". The submarine fired a warning shot across her bows and told the crew she would be sunk within 15 minutes. A second warning shot after 5 minutes, and after 15 minutes sinking by a torpedo at 400 m. range. When the steamer was stopped, the Captain radioed that he was being stopped by a British submarine. The signal was picked up by Skagen pilot station which then sent out a pilot cutter which towed the lifeboats to Skagen. The British tried to take the Captain on board but took the First Engineer, believing he was the Captain, as he was the only one in uniform." (Steamer HEDDERNHEIM, 4,947 G.R.T., 10 knots, built 1921, Unterweser Reederei A.G. Bremen, left Trondheim for Germany on 17 March with ore.)

Group West then issued the following directive to merchant shipping:

"Enemy submarine east of Skagen. Do not leave territorial waters to cross the Kattegat until south of Laesoe."

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Foreign Merchant Shipping

For survey of:

1. British merchant shipping in wartime, transport capacity, charters, state of new construction,
2. Scandinavian, Dutch and Greek merchant navies and their importance for Great Britain's imports and exports,
3. German measures according to Prize Regulations during the first five months of the war (under "Foreign Merchant Shipping"),

see report by Naval Intelligence Division No. 5/40 dated 21 March 1940.

Items of Political Importance

1. According to information available it is no longer assumed in Norway that the question of a landing by the Western Powers can become acute in the immediate future. It is of course recognized that the stopping of German ore imports from Sweden and Norway and of German shipping to Murmansk has been for a long time the subject of the Western Powers' deliberations. The Norwegian Government seems, however, to be of the opinion that the Western Powers would also hesitate at present about action violating Norwegian territorial waters, even if it was only a matter of more or less regular attacks in Norwegian territorial waters in order to disrupt German shipping. The Norwegians would moreover offer great opposition to any attempt to violate their territorial waters (??).
2. According to a report from the German Embassy in Bucharest, Prime Minister Tatarescu has again expressed the Government's firm resolve to carry out the economic treaty with Germany by means of legal measures.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items

1. Conference on the state of "Weseruebung". The LUETZOW's breakthrough to the Atlantic is adhered to in principle. The possibility of removing the LUETZOW from "Weseruebung" and replacing her by the BLUECHER is being examined. Naval Staff sees no objection to using the BLUECHER for this assignment.
2. The British main radio code procedure underwent a change of code on 22 March. We must expect no information from our radio monitoring for 10-14 days.

On 20 March a report was again made to Commander in Chief, Navy on the subject of the readiness of the second wave of

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auxiliary cruisers in connection with the necessity for deferring some auxiliary cruisers because of the repairs to the cruiser LEIPZIG.

After thorough investigations, three auxiliary cruisers will have to be given up in favor of the cruiser LEIPZIG, if on the other hand the submarine construction program is to be carried out without curtailment. Commander in Chief, Navy orders that the submarine construction program is to remain unchanged. Commander in Chief, Navy rejects the other solution - that of further deferment of the LEIPZIG in favor of the auxiliary cruisers, as considered desirable by Naval Staff, Operations Division, in view of the auxiliary cruisers' possible great effectiveness in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans as opposed to the very limited operational possibilities of the cruiser LEIPZIG. Commander in Chief, Navy takes a more unfavorable view of the auxiliary cruisers' possible effectiveness and the possibility of their breakthrough and operations than Operations Division, while on the other hand he estimates more highly the value of the small cruisers, especially with regard to a possible alteration in Germany's naval strategic situation.

Only the following of the second wave of auxiliary cruisers will definitely become ready according to this decision: (Ship "45") EMS (Captain Eyssen) and STEIERMARK.

The readiness of Ship "97" is still doubtful.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Nothing special to report. An agent in Las Palmas reports:

"The British steamer RICHMOND CASTLE was in port on 1 March. The ship was encircled with a strong cable which was said to serve as protection against mines."

France:

Nothing special to report, apart from convoy movements and air activity.

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Neutrals:

The U.S. liner PRESIDENT FILLMORE (15,575 tons) en route from Baltimore to Le Havre was partially swamped and ran aground. Unknown whether the cause was sabotage or accident. The ship was transferred to the Panamanian register of ships in February 1940.

North Sea:

At 0900 a German steamer southwest of Lindesnes reported six enemy destroyers on westerly courses. There is no further news about the enemy forces reported the previous night off the southern tip of Norway, especially since air reconnaissance could not be flown in the Heligoland Bight because of the weather.

According to reports from the steamer NORDLAND, she was several times harassed by the destroyers H "67" and H "64" (?) near Hustad within territorial waters as far as 700 m. from the coast. (See 22 March.)

The action of the Norwegian torpedoboat TROLL and the Captain's skillful maneuvers helped to prevent capture. The freighter EUROPA (southbound with a cargo of ore) was harassed at the same spot.

A Norwegian torpedoboat sent the signal QEL - you are in territorial waters - upon which the British vessel turned away.

The German steamer EDMUND HUGO STINNES 4 was attacked during the night of 23 March by a British submarine, apparently in Danish territorial waters, and sent an S.O.S. Further reports are still outstanding.

The news of the constant appearance of British forces along the Norwegian coast and the reports about their conduct inside Norwegian territorial waters tally with enemy press statements, in which attention is drawn to the Western Powers' necessity of and plans for no longer respecting Norwegian territorial waters in view of alleged constant violations of neutrality by Germany.

During the events of the past days British forces have not yet captured any German steamers. In Naval Staff's opinion, however, this is doubtless the prelude to non-observance of Norwegian neutrality in the immediate future. The date for

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which the British are planning such a step cannot yet be ascertained. Naval Staff is reckoning on the possibility of British action in the aforementioned direction very soon and considers the several cases in which German steamers were harassed in Norwegian territorial waters as political, military and propaganda measures to prepare for British warfare.

Since the Fuehrer is determined to adhere to "Weseruebung", in Naval Staff's view speedy execution of the operation is necessary.

Flights into the Heligoland Bight by British planes during the afternoon and evening. No bombs dropped.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Operations by Ships "18" and "37" from 20-23 March in the area west of the declared area resulted in the capture of two Dutch trawlers on the western edge of the declared area off the entrances to routes 1 and "1 alpha". Vessels are being taken into Borkum with prize crews. Danish fishing smacks and other suspicious vessels were not encountered.

Baltic Sea:

Shipping unimpeded in the Western Baltic. Central Baltic between Rügen and the south coast of Sweden not navigable for small vessels. Severely impeded by icefields near Arcona. Danzig Bay as good as impassable. Kiel Canal only passable for submarines with aid from tugs, otherwise unimpeded.

After attempting to get through the ice in the Great Belt for several hours the supply ship ALTMARK anchored near Revsnaes at 1830.

Because of fog it was not possible for Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic to sail as planned with the 15th and 19th Minesweeper

Flotillas and the 11th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla to check sweep the Great Belt.

Submarine Situation

5 submarines in patrol line between the Faroes and the Shetlands:

U "38", "47", "49", "43",
"44".

6 small submarines off the south coast of Norway:.

U "1", "2", "3", "4", "21",
"22".

1 submarine east of the Orkneys:

U "57".

5 submarines off the west coast of Norway as before:

U "46", "51", "30", "34",
"52".

Returned from operations:

U "28", "32".

In view of the appearance of enemy forces off the Norwegian coast, Commanding Admiral, Submarines considers it advisable to move the Faroes-Shetlands patrol line as a reconnaissance line in an easterly direction. Naval Staff does not agree to this proposal, since there is no exact information about the positions of the enemy forces and the present disposition is considered appropriate and has so far not taken full effect.

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Easter Sunday

Items of Political Importance

The German Ambassador in Oslo made representations to the Norwegian Foreign Minister on 23 March in connection with the harassing of German steamers by British forces in Norwegian territorial waters; referring also to numerous flights over German steamers by British planes in Norwegian territorial waters he stated that if Norway could not guarantee adequate protection against these partly attempted, partly achieved violations of International Law, this would make necessary the most serious deliberations.

The Norwegian Government sent a very sharp note of protest to London on 23 March. In addition, the Foreign Minister has drawn the attention of the British consul in Oslo to the extraordinary seriousness of the situation in which Norway has found herself because of the British naval and R.A.F. actions contrary to International Law. He has also informed the British Government that Norwegian forces have received strict orders if there is any repetition to open fire on any foreign warship or plane which is guilty of actions contrary to International Law or which violates Norwegian territory.

(For particulars see Report from the Ambassador, War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.)

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

It is reported from Las Palmas that enemy submarines are constantly being sighted even inside territorial waters. The Naval Attache in Madrid informs us that the British Vice-Consul in Santa Isabel (Fernando Po) gave the following data about the position of a British mine barrage off Freetown (Sierra Leone) to neutral merchantmen:

Latitude:	8° 31' N	Longitude:	13° 15' W
	8° 34' N		13° 30' W

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According to a reliable report, 19 ships carrying planes are said to have arrived in Le Havre from the U.S.A. on 15 March. The nationality of the ships is not certain; the planes have been unloaded.

France:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

There were six submarines in the North Sea area on 23 March. One of these torpedoed the steamer EDMUND HUGO STINNES during the night of 23 March inside Danish territorial waters.

The sinking of the steamer HEDDERNHEIM was carried out by the submarine URSULA.

According to a statement from the Attache in Oslo, the enemy surface forces which have appeared several times off the Norwegian coast are said to be searching for a definite ship, in the Norwegian Navy's view the ANTONIO DELFINO; the Norwegians are afraid of a fresh incident; the boats escorting the DELFINO allegedly have orders to fire. (The DELFINO is at present stopped in Haugesund.)

According to an agent's report, large contingents of British troops were waiting in Dunkirk and Le Havre to cross for leave before Easter.

Shipping Losses:

The British trawler LOCH ASSATER struck a mine. The Danish steamer BRITTA (1,200 tons) was torpedoed northwest of the Orkneys. The British steamer BECHEVILLE reports an explosion east of the Orkneys.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

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North Sea:

No air operations because of the weather.

The torpedoing of the steamer EDMUND HUGO STINNES during the night of 23 March by an enemy submarine south of Bovbjerg inside Danish territorial waters must be attributed largely to radio traffic in clear, contrary to regulations, between the steamer DIETER HUGO STINNES in Nordenham and the steamer EDMUND HUGO STINNES over the Danish coastal radio station Blaavand-Radio. At the instigation of Director Bette in Nordenham the DIETER HUGO STINNES requested the EDMUND HUGO STINNES "radio position" and the latter radioed her position in clear at 2142.

At the instigation of the Naval Control Service Officer, Nordenham the radio station of the DIETER HUGO STINNES has been sealed.

(For first report from the First Officer about the sinking see War Diary, Part B, V, 124.)

Baltic Sea:

The route from Kiel to Swinemuende is impassable at points around Ruegen. The route from Swinemuende to East Prussia is unimpeded. Severe ice hindrance in Danzig Bay off Gdynia. The route to the Sound is not yet navigable because of ice hindrance and doubtful mine situation. Still ice hindrance in the Great Belt. Not possible at present to pass through because of doubtful position of mines in the Danish barrage.

The supply ship ALTMARK with the tug ATLANTIK passed Korsoer at 1200 on 24 March.

Minesweeper "11" is lying at anchor at the southern pilot station of the Sound barrage in order to check the barrage gap. The projected minesweeping activity was still not possible because of the ice situation.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:)
) Unchanged.
North Sea:)

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For brief report from U "32" (Lieut. (j.g.) Jenisch) see Part B, IV.

Minelaying assignment off Liverpool carried out according to plan. The mines laid adjoin those laid by U "30". Otherwise the boat sank only one steamer of 2,818 G.R.T.; further attacks were unsuccessful, since 5 out of 7 torpedoes were failures (4 prematures, 1 non-detonator).

Merchant Shipping

The steamer ANTONIO DELFINO put in to Trondheim on 23 March. (Left Bahia on 21 February.) Because of a report from Norway that British forces were sent out against the returning ANTONIO DELFINO, the following message was radioed to her in code:

"Remain in Haugesund or return there. Await further orders. Signed Navy."

The same was sent via the Foreign Office to the Embassy in Oslo, the Vice Consul at Haugesund, the Vice Consul at Kristiansand and Group West, also to the Ministry of Transportation with the footnote:

"Other Norwegian traffic to carry on."

At Group West's instigation, all German steamers on the Norway and Holland runs have been informed of the following:

"The following short signals are to be used in clear on the 600 m. wave when attacked or stopped by enemy forces inside and outside territorial waters: for submarines - 3-5 times the letter "U"; for surface forces - the letter "G"; for planes the letters "FL", with latitude and longitude. Signature call-sign. Effective immediately. Sighting reports on enemy forces in code H 404, if possible outside territorial waters."

For report of the captain of the German trawler NORDLAND on harassing and attempted capture by British destroyers inside Norwegian territorial waters see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V, 125. (See also 23 March.)

Easter MondayItems of Political Importance

The question of a re-formation of the British Government is being discussed in the foreign press. The inclusion of representatives of the Opposition in the Cabinet and the formation of a War Council are regarded as probable developments.

The possibility of closer cooperation between Germany, Italy and the U.S.S.R. is being reviewed by French public opinion.

Special Reports on the EnemyAtlantic/MediterraneanGreat Britain:

The Commander of the Mediterranean Squadron is aboard the cruiser DELHI.

France:

French vessels in the Dunkirk area are informed about minelaying in the Straits of Dover. They are also ordered to divert the Dutch steamer DRECHTDIJK (9,338 tons) to Dunkirk. The steamer was stranded near Varne. There were part-convoys east of the Gironde on westerly course and south of Brest on southerly course on the evening of 25 March.

North Sea:

Bearings were obtained to the northwest on Commander in Chief, Home Fleet who appeared several times as the addressee of priority radio messages. He is obviously at sea.

During the night of 25 March the enemy submarines detected at sea (SWORDFISH, THISTLE, SEAL, URSULA, L "23") received numerous priority messages. (Possibly some connection with the return of the ANTONIO DELFINO.)

Penetrations by enemy planes during the day and at night between 2000 and 0100. During these a steamer was unsuccessfully bombed at 1430 on Cuxhaven roads.

It is reported from Bergen that the convoy has not sailed as expected and that 62 ships are lying at the assembly point in Bergen at present.

For activities of enemy forces and their disposition during the week 17-24 March see Radio Monitoring Report No. 12/40.

Special Items:

1. British activity lately indicates the following possibilities:

- a) General striving towards more active warfare with a strong tendency to pacify the British people.
- b) Prevention of the expected sailing of German merchant raiders and auxiliary ships.
- c) Preparatory measures for stopping German ore imports from Norway, with non-observance of Norwegian and Danish neutrality imminent.

This increased activity showed itself in the following:

- a) Operations by light forces against German merchant shipping in the Skagerrak and harassing of German steamers inside Norwegian territorial waters.
 - b) Very lively R.A.F. activity against the Heligoland Bight and the German coast.
 - c) Special, well-prepared single operations such as minelaying operations in northern Scottish waters.
2. There have been no heavy forces in Scapa Flow since 19 March. There are about 18 submarines constantly in the operational area, principally in the Skagerrak.
3. Since the abandonment of the shipping of troops to Norway Finland, the 1st Cruiser Squadron seems to have resumed patrol south of the Denmark Strait and between the Faroes and Iceland.

Small cruisers and destroyers are on escort and patrol duty between North Scotland-Shetlands-Norway.

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Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

No operations by us; no air reconnaissance because of the weather, so that the situation off the Norwegian coast cannot be clarified.

It is reported from Gothenburg that the steamer BUTT was harassed by a British destroyer in Norwegian territorial waters on 22 March.

Baltic Sea:

The route from Kiel to Swinemuende is unimpeded except for local ice fields; those near Arcona can best be avoided by proceeding close to the shore. The route from Swinemuende to the east is unimpeded except for the Danzig Bay area where there is still severe ice hindrance. The route through the Sound and Belt is navigable for strong ships; the position of the mines in the barrages, however, has not been checked yet and at present this prevents the use of these routes.

Naval forces have resumed exercises. Minesweeper "11" is still at the Sound barrage. The 13th Submarine Chaser Group has so far tried in vain to break through the Sound into the Kattegat.

Passages through the Great Belt are being checked on 26 March by Commander, Minesweepers.

The supply ship ALTMARK is still at anchor north of the Danish barrage. According to a report from the Group, she is to be brought in behind a mine-exploding vessel through the gap in the Danish mine barrage and west of our own barrage at 0600 on 27 March.

Submarine Situation

Unchanged.

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Merchant Shipping

According to a report from the Consulate in Bergen, the steamer ANTONIO DELFINO, returning home from overseas, left Bergen at 2300 on 24 March to proceed to Kopervik.

The Ambassador in Oslo reports by telegraph on 25 March:

"Since there is reason to assume that the reported encroachment into Norwegian territorial waters by British warships after German steamers on 22 and 23 March concerned the search for the ANTONIO DELFINO, I request, before the steamer sails, instructions to urge and to oblige the Norwegian Government to provide special protection."

Steps are being taken accordingly.

The Danish Government has been requested to lay a wreck buoy at 57° 32' N, 9° 50' E, since three German ships (ESCHERSHEIM, APOLLO and OSTPREUSSEN) have lately reported damage at this spot from contact with a submerged obstruction. A warning is being issued to German shipping.

Coastal Defense Commander, North Friesland reports:

"Bombs dropped by enemy planes at 1430 on 24 March over "die alte Liebe" (Tr.N. the jetty at Cuxhaven) 20 m. astern of the German steamer SONNENFELDE."

This is the sixth bombing attack on German merchantmen in the North Sea area. To date no hits and no damage.

Items of Political Importance

With regard to German announcements about attacks made by British planes on unarmed merchantmen, the B.B.C. states that British planes have never received instructions to attack unarmed merchantmen and that they never will.

Reliable reports from Belgium state that Reynaud's new Government is not regarded as a good solution at all in France. Neither has national unity nor a strong independent War Cabinet been attained, much less a veiled dictatorship. The composition of the Cabinet has disclosed the weak spots in the French conduct of the war. Only dependence on Great Britain has now become complete.

In view of the Soviet attitude to a Scandinavian defensive alliance, its prospects must be regarded as nil.

At the wish of the French Government, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, Suritz, is withdrawn from his position as Ambassador in France.

(See Foreign Press.)

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items

1. "Weseruebung": State of readiness of naval forces favorable at present. Fourteen destroyers and "export" unit ready. 1st sea transport unit (15 steamers) ready to sail. 2nd sea transport unit will likewise be ready to sail at the appointed time.

2. Report by Chief, Operations Branch on Group West's operational order for bringing out Ship "16": Passage either east or west

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of the declared area. Camouflaged as Russian, later re-camouflaged as Norwegian in northern waters. Comprehensive air reconnaissance scheduled. Three merchant trawlers are being dispatched to Iceland to reconnoiter the situation regarding the ice and the enemy.

U "37" is scheduled to operate in conjunction with Ship "16" on the outward passage. She is to protect Ship "16" as close escort. Chief, Naval Staff consents to the planned course of operations.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

According to an agent's report from Brussels, a number of small enemy submarines ("light submarine flotilla") is said to have sailed on 24 March with the assignment of carrying out operations against merchant shipping between Hirshals and Skagen.

The cruiser NEWCASTLE arrived in the Clyde as planned; the submarines URSULA and L "23" put in to Blyth on 25 March from Skagen and from the Heligoland Bight.

According to a report from Trondheim, two British submarines are said to have been seen in West Fjord on 20 March.

These are possibly our submarines U "46" and "51".

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Air reconnaissance had to be abandoned again because of the weather; there were, however, single enemy flights into the Heligoland Bight.

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No activity by surface forces.

Baltic Sea:

The route from Kiel to Swinemuende and Swinemuende to East Prussia is unimpeded; favorable conditions close to the German coast during present weather conditions. Ferry traffic from Sassnitz to Trelleborg is suspended on the morning of 26 March because of ice difficulties on the Swedish coast. Passage through the Kiel Canal unimpeded; tugs still required for submarines.

A unit of Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic is scheduled to escort the supply ship ALTMAK through the Great Belt on 27 March. The Danish mine (electric, Tr.N.) barrages are to be switched off for this purpose.

Minesweeper "11" had to leave the southern pilot station at the Sound because of pack ice. The gap in the Sound barrage is still impassable.

Submarine Situation

The submarine disposition has been altered in view of a possible date for "Weseruebung". Some of the submarines were withdrawn by Commanding Admiral, Submarines after a telephone conversation with Naval Staff, so that they can be ready for fresh operations as quickly as possible after refuelling and a short overhaul:

U "30", "34" (Trondheim submarine), U "44", "47", "49" (Shetlands submarines) were ordered to return at maximum cruising speed, sparing their engines.

Permission to attack as per standing war orders.

The remaining submarines are given new dispositions:

Area off the entrances to Trondheim: U "51".

West Fjord, off Narvik: U "46".

Attack dispositions west of the line Hebrides-Shetlands, with permission to attack warships, troopships and merchantmen over 5,000 tons: U "43", "38", "52".

North Sea:

Since there are no further reports of British forces on the south coast of Norway, U "1"- "4" were ordered to return; U "21", "22" were ordered to proceed onwards to the east coast of Scotland. U "57" was also recalled.

On returning, U "19" reports sinking 11,000 tons (4 steamers) east of Pentland Firth.

Merchant Shipping

It was reported from Haugesund that the ANTONIO DELFINO's stock of oil is still sufficient for four days' sailing. Speedy sailing orders advisable as it is difficult to obtain oil in Norway. Naval Staff, via the Foreign Office, has requested safe escort by Norwegian naval vessels at first as far as Sande Fjord or Oslo.

It is planned to continue passage from there as soon as the ice situation permits entering the Baltic.

The Embassy in Oslo reports on 25 March:

"A British torpedoboat has attempted to stop the German herring steamer BUTT (left Haugesund for the south on 22 March) inside Norwegian territorial waters by firing a warning shot. As the Naval Attache learnt from the Naval Staff, the shell fell on Norwegian soil."

Foreign Merchant ShippingSinking of Danish ships:

According to a statement from the Embassy in Copenhagen, the Maltese Cross steamers MINSK and CHARKOW, sunk a short time ago, were to have gone to the east coast to fetch bunker coal after unloading their cargoes of foodstuffs in Manchester. The steamers ALGIER and CHRISTIANSBORG were on return passage from the U.S.A. with animal feeding stuffs.

It must be assumed for the present that some of these Danish steamers were victims of the torpedoes fired by U "19". Investigations have been started. The Danes are again advised to have their ships returning from the U.S.A. keep to the north of the American closed area.

The necessity for sparing Maltese Cross steamers if possible is again pointed out to Commanding Admiral, Submarines. Commanding Admiral, Submarines finds fault with the insufficient illumination of markings at night.

Afternoon

Conference between the Fuehrer and Commander in Chief, Navy

Points under Discussion:

1. "Weseruebung": Commander in Chief, Navy reports the state of readiness of the Navy, and states that, though at present and for the immediate future no British landing in Norway need be expected, the British will attempt to harass German trade in neutral waters and to suppress it completely sooner or later. In Commander in Chief, Navy's opinion, Germany will sooner or later have to face the question of carrying out "Weseruebung". Commander in Chief, Navy therefore is in favor of its execution as soon as possible, possibly utilizing the next new-moon period.
2. Short review of the situation in the North Sea and the present submarine situation - Report on bringing out the auxiliary cruisers.
3. Aerial mine warfare: As opposed to Commander in Chief, Air Force and Chief, Armed Forces High Command, Commander in Chief, Navy proposes the immediate commencement of aerial minelaying operations, at least off the Thames, Humber and French ports, since the blockade has at present relaxed greatly. The Fuehrer is fundamentally-inclined to permit aerial minelaying operations and will give a decision in a day or two. Commander in Chief, Navy points out the necessity for the closest cooperation during aerial minelaying operations between formations of Commander Naval Air and Group West, which is responsible for the conduct of warfare in the North Sea.

The Fuehrer fully agrees with this viewpoint. (For particulars see memorandum of conference by Commander in Chief, Navy, War Diary, Part C, Vol. VII.)

Items of Political Importance

According to a reliable special report from Norway (conversation between Director Hagelien (Quisling supporter) and Commander in Chief, Navy on 26 March) the Norwegian Naval Staff assumes that Great Britain plans to take over the official protection of Norwegian territorial waters herself within a short time and fears imminent British action. Some incidents are possibly to be manufactured or provoked beforehand to justify the British action.

By taking over the protection of neutrality Great Britain is said to have in mind not only the suppression of German iron ore imports but also a plan to limit to a great extent the danger of German air attacks on Great Britain (by erecting air bases in Sola, Kristiansand and on the island of Storfosna) and to take over air defense in coastal waters.

According to the agent's statement, the Norwegian Government is not yet in complete agreement about its own procedure if Great Britain should take action. A part favors the issuing of clear orders to fire - which in any case only permits "firing in the air" - in order to save their face as neutrals. Another part demands previous resignation of the Government in order to be relieved of responsibility.

(For further details of the conversation see memorandum dated 26 March, "Weseruebung" reference file, War Diary, Part B, Vol. V, 120.)

Considering the state of British preparations, Naval Staff considers intelligence regarding an imminent British action against Norway under the pretext of assuming protection of Norwegian neutrality to be credible. Facts gained from the statements are passed on to Groups Baltic and West, Special Staff Boehm and Commanding Admiral, Submarines.

(See 1 Skl. I op 530/40 Gkdos. chefs.)

It is reported from Paris that the western neutrals are expecting an attack by Germany, because of alleged troop movements along the frontiers of Belgium and Holland.

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For developments in Japan, see Political Review No. 71, para. 7. Formation of the new Chinese Central Government under Wang-Ching-Wai. Anxiety lest the U.S.A. participate in the European conflict, as this would also affect the situation in East Asia. Since all Japan's endeavors to promote better relations with the U.S.A. have failed, Japan now seems inclined to approach Great Britain. Unconfirmed reports state that this attitude is already having its effect in that the Japanese are making difficulties in the shipment of important raw materials for Germany via Siberia.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

Special Items

1. Discussion on various questions regarding "Weseruebung". Report on directive to Groups, Commanding Admiral, Submarines and Fleet. (I op. 516/40, see reference file "Weseruebung", War Diary, Part B, V, 120.)

Next new-moon period probable date for "Weseruebung". No further operations by surface forces until this date, in view of the necessity of maintaining all forces in operational readiness.

With regard to the disposition of the submarines, the order is given that in the interval 1 boat is to be off "Nienburg", 1 boat off "Detmold" and 3-4 boats always in the Orkneys area. Assignments as before.

Ship "16" is still to sail; Ship "36" is to be made ready quickly to sail. If possible, Ship "36" is to have crossed the Shetlands line by 8 April.

The principle of dispatching the cruiser LUETZOW into the Atlantic is adhered to. The LUETZOW is withdrawn from "Weseruebung" and replaced by the cruiser BLUECHER with regard to assignment "Oldenburg". The LUETZOW is to sail for operations in the Atlantic during the course of "Weseruebung".

Naval Staff sees the following possibilities for this:

1. The LUETZOW to sail approximately in conjunction with groups "Nienburg" and "Detmold".
The NORDMARK to sail approximately in conjunction with group "Bremen".

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The ships to join up north of the Shetlands line or to proceed onwards and break through into the Atlantic separately.

2. The LUETZOW and NORDMARK to sail approximately in conjunction with group "Bremen", if necessary, however, before the Bremen group.

With regard to operations by the cruiser LUETZOW in the Atlantic, Naval Staff is aware that the April new-moon period will probably offer the last opportunity for a break-through until the autumn. If "Weseruebung" is postponed further, a decision is necessary that in spite of this the LUETZOW will in any case be dispatched to the Atlantic at the beginning of April, since the strategic effect of war in the Atlantic cannot be foregone.

The final decision cannot be taken until the date for "Weseruebung" or the degree of its postponement is fixed, since, in spite of the urgency of the LUETZOW's departure, the British forces must on no account be given cause for alarm by this a short time previously, thus endangering "Weseruebung".

2. Aerial minelaying operations: The Fuehrer has not yet given his final decision.

On 24 March Group West addressed a letter to the 9th Air Division, which is not in agreement with Naval Staff's viewpoint and is unfortunately calculated to increase the Air Force's previous resistance to immediate aerial minelaying operations.

In this letter Group West points out the great importance attached to laying aerial mines in Scapa Flow. The target will have been reached when all points of suitable water depth have been mined with the greatest possible number of L.M. mines.

Group's request therefore runs:

- a) Speedy mining of Scapa Flow. (Naval Staff is in full agreement with this.)
- b) Mining of the whole with a large number of mines is more important than intensive mining of individual, specially important points in the Bay. The whole Bay is to be mined by means of frequent high-altitude attacks.

This demand cannot be fulfilled in the near future. Therefore Naval Staff's opinion, contrary to the view expressed by Group West, is that it is now important to commence aerial minelaying operations as soon as possible, i.e. at once, and that it is therefore in order at first to concentrate aerial minelaying operations with available facilities (only 10-20 planes) on the most effective mining of the entrances and individual important points (Hoxa Souna, Narrows between Flotta and South Walls, western entrance, Scapa Bay anchorage and between Fara and Flotta).

3. Submarine warfare in the Mediterranean: Letter from Armed Forces High Command:

The Foreign Minister informed the Duce during their conversation in Rome of the German Naval Staff's plans to have some German submarines operate in the Western Mediterranean, exclusively against British and French ships. The Duce expressed no objections.

The Fuehrer then gave his permission in principle to submarine operations in accordance with the statement submitted to the Duce.

The Foreign Minister and the Duce did not discuss the subject of possible Italian aid for German submarines in the Mediterranean.

Naval Staff will commence submarine operations in the Mediterranean as soon as the accomplishment of "Weseruebung" permits submarines to be dispatched for this purpose.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

The FURIOUS planned to put in to the Clyde on 26 March.

War against Merchant Shipping:

United Press reports from Shanghai:

"The Russian steamer WLADIMIR MARJAKOWSKI, which was on her

way from America to Vladivostock with 4,000 tons of copper and 200 tons of molybdenum, was stopped by a British warship near Japan and taken to Hongkong. The U.S.S.R. have demanded her immediate release and reserved the right to claim compensation. The British Government has replied that the incident is still being investigated. Previous to the MARJAKOWSKI case, the Russian steamer SELENGA, proceeding from Manila to Vladivostock with tin and antimony, is said to have been stopped near Formosa and taken in to Hongkong. The SELENGA is still being held, despite repeated Russian protests."

France:

"Stefani" reports from Tangier that the French destroyer RAILLEUSE sank after an explosion when putting out from Casablanca on 23 March. About 100 dead and wounded. According to Daventry the French Admiralty admits only that there was an explosion on board the destroyer and that there are seven dead.

The seaplane tender CDT. TESTE arrived in Beirut on 26 March.

North Sea:

According to an agent's reports, a large number of British naval forces is said to be lurking near Hustad-Viken and Stadlandet in order to disrupt German trade.

The facts on which the report is based are out of date. It is obviously based on the appearance of the British forces off the Norwegian coast from 21-23 March.

The cruiser AURORA has put in to Scapa.

Shipping Losses:

The British steamer DAGHESTAN (5,750 tons) was sunk by a submarine in the northern Scottish area. The Norwegian steamer COMETA (3,800 tons) was torpedoed near the Orkneys. The British steamer ROSSINGTON COURT (6,922 tons) was rammed by an unidentified tanker and sank. The British steamer CASTLE MOOR (6,574 tons) is overdue. The Italian steamer ITALO BALBO (5,114 tons) was severely damaged in a collision with a Danish steamer.

The Admiralty announces that for the first time since the beginning of the war not a single Allied ship was sunk in the week ending 24 March. During the past week the enemy appeared to have concentrated his efforts entirely on unarmed neutral

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ships; 8 neutral ships had been sunk, 6 of them Danish. None of these ships was in convoy.

The Admiralty further states that up to 20 March, 26 ships in British convoys had been sunk out of a total figure of 13,673 British, Allied and neutral ships.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

While altering position as ordered, U "21" ran aground during the night of 26 March about 30 miles east of Lindesnes on the east side of the island of Odde (position originally reported as southeast corner of Lindesnes). First report was sent at 2300 on 26 March. Group West sent to her aid U "22", in the same area, and Ship "37", operating off the west coast of Jutland, the latter with instructions to maintain camouflage if possible. U "21", whose engines have become useless (starboard engines serviceable according to a later report), was ordered to defend herself against enemy attacks with all the means at her disposal. U "22" is to give aid until Ship "37" arrives and the submarine is then to carry out her protective assignment unseen but without regard to territorial waters. U "3" and "4" are assigned the same task of protection, but outside territorial waters. If Norwegian forces arrive, U "22" is to request a 24-hour stay, U "21" a longer period according to her condition.

The Attaché in Oslo was informed by telegraph and instructed to take what steps he considers fit with the Norwegian Navy.

Around noon Ship "37", which had been sent to the spot, towed the submarine off; signal was received in the afternoon. U "3" and "4" have meanwhile been instructed to occupy covering positions east and west of the spot, outside territorial waters. After receipt of the report that the submarine had got clear and was ready to proceed the steps taken to dispatch a salvage tug were canceled.

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During the afternoon there was a telephone call from Oslo that Norway had forced the submarine to anchor again and is refusing her permission to leave territorial waters immediately.

On Naval Staff's instructions, the German point of view was made clear to the Norwegian authorities via the Naval Attaché in Oslo and through diplomatic channels; according to this the submarine was forced by engine trouble and the heavy seas to put in to territorial waters, so that the ban on entrance as per para. 3 of the Norwegian Neutrality Regulations would therefore not apply. According to further information from Oslo, the submarine was directed to an anchorage in the outer harbor of Mandal. The negotiations with the Norwegian Naval Staff and Foreign Office were broken off at midnight and are to be resumed at 0900 on 28 March.

The German Consul from Kristiansand has gone aboard, and the Attaché is in communication with Mandal with the Consul's help.

Because of the situation arising from the delay in permission to sail, U "3" and "4" have been ordered to wait for U "21" off Mandal outside territorial waters. U "21" has been ordered by Commanding Admiral, Submarines to sail secretly or openly, if this appears possible without actions taking place.

Air reconnaissance operating in the direction of the Norwegian coast west of the line from Hanstholm to Ryvingen produced no report on the enemy.

Enemy air attacks with bombs and machine-guns on a patrol boat were unsuccessful, but anti-aircraft defense scored hits. An enemy plane (Bristol Blenheim) was shot down by fighters near Westerland.

Baltic Sea:

Ice situation unchanged. Still heavy drift ice at the southern entrance to the Sound. Ice drifting northward in the Great Belt, so that it is only navigable for strong ships.

The ALTMARK passed to the south of the declared area at the southern entrance to the Great Belt at 1415 and then put in to Kiel. .

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13th Submarine Chaser Group in the Kattegat on anti-submarine operations. Patrol at the southern pilot station in the Great Belt has been started.

The warship route in the Great Belt was checked on 26 March; laying of buoys and 100 per cent searching sweep as planned is still impossible because of drifting ice masses.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

Off Narvik:	U "46".
Off Trondheim:	U "51".
West of the Orkneys:	U "38", "43", "52".
On return passage:	U "30", "34", "44", "47", "49".

North Sea:

In Mandal:	U "21".
Protection off the port:	U "3", "4".
Outward bound into the area near Peterhead:	U "22".
On return passage:	U "1", "2", "57".

Items of Political Importance

1. According to a Reuter report, the question of Norwegian neutrality and the German "violations" of Norwegian territorial waters are to be the subject of proceedings at the next meeting of the Allied Governments.

The "Temps" reports from competent circles that because of systematic violation of Norwegian territorial waters by German ships the Allies now consider themselves justified in no longer respecting the neutrality of these waters.

"Havas" says in another publication that the Allies are resolved to play the role of police themselves.

2. Great unrest among the Scandinavian people. Lively discussions in the foreign press about reports from Paris and London concerning alleged imminent action by the Western Powers against German ore transports in Norwegian territorial waters.
3. Sixth meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council in London: Communiqué issued in which both Governments mutually pledge themselves - in the present war - neither to negotiate nor to conclude an armistice or peace treaty which has not previously been agreed upon between them.

(For text of the communiqué see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V, 126.)

The issue of this communiqué, which pursues foreign and internal political propaganda aims, is striking and leads to conclusions that there have been certain differences of opinion and mutual distrust between the two Governments.

4. The Foreign Minister has received verbal assurance from Russia that the Russians will not attack Bessarabia for the present, in order to avoid any possible disturbance to the German conduct of the war by this action.
5. The German Ambassador in Moscow has attempted to sound Foreign Minister Molotov on the U.S.S.R.'s attitude to the re-fortification of the Aaland Islands. There is the impression that Russia wishes to keep a free hand in this matter and she has not committed herself in any way.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items

1. Discussion of individual aspects of "Weseruebung": Letter from Naval Attache in Oslo to Chief, Naval Staff (see file of Commander in Chief, Navy).

Group West states its intention of allocating only four PT boats each to groups "Bremen" and "Carlshafen", even though more PT boats may be available. The Group considers it most desirable to retain a number of PT boats in the Heligoland Bight.

The Group's proposal is refused; in Naval Staff's opinion all available boats must be used for "Weseruebung". All spheres must concentrate definitely on the execution of "Weseruebung". Operation "Gelb" is only a subsidiary assignment for the Navy. If it becomes necessary later to use the PT boats for this, they must be transferred. For the present, "Weseruebung" demands the services of all available forces.

2. Group West plans to use the camouflaged trawlers, Ships "9" and "18", for "Weseruebung". (See Group's operational order.) Execution on code word "Barmen".

Assignment: Transfer of Ships "9" and "18" within "Weseruebung" until further notice to "Bremen" at the disposal of Commanding Admiral, Scouting Force and later at the disposal of "Admiral, West Norwegian Coast".

(For particulars see operational order.)

Chief, Naval Staff consents to the use of the vessels as scheduled.

3. In a teletype to the Group as follows, Naval Staff states its attitude to Group West's letter to the 9th Air Division on the question of aerial minelaying operations over Scapa (see War Diary 27 March):

"The fixing of focal points to be mined as per Skl I op 411/39 gkdos ch. dated 20 Nov. 1939 aims at the greatest possible effect with the least expenditure. With the present limitations of carriers and mines, mining the whole Bay would achieve less effective results than concentration of minelaying. Speedy

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minelaying necessary, however. Mining the whole Bay can, therefore, only be considered as an emergency solution if the concentration aimed at cannot be achieved for tactical flying reasons."

In his reply, Commanding Admiral, Group West again points out that he expressly refrained from limitation to focal points, since the fixing of such would have made the execution of mine-laying doubtful altogether for tactical flying reasons.

Chief, Naval Staff adheres to his original views. Group West is informed accordingly.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Great Britain:

Nothing special to report except auxiliary cruiser movements detected in the Faroes area.

France:

Nothing special to report.

North Sea:

Movements of forces:

The cruisers GALATEA, ARETHUSA and PENELOPE put in to Rosyth on 23 March.

The cruiser MANCHESTER put in to Scapa on the morning of 28 March.

The cruiser SOUTHAMPTON in the Northern Patrol on 28 March.

Bearings were obtained during the evening on unidentified vessels east and south of the Shetlands, possibly connected with the attack made by our air forces on a reported convoy.

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According to an agent's report:

1. The RODNEY was severely damaged by a bomb hit in Scapa on 16 March. The ship is said to have been towed to Liverpool.
2. A destroyer struck a mine and sank in the Straits of Dover on 14 March.

The report about damage to the RODNEY is considered credible despite certain doubts felt by the radio monitoring service, especially since the agent concerned has to date distinguished himself several times by very reliable reporting. It is reported by telephone from Kristiansand that on the afternoon of 26 March there was a British destroyer south of Kristiansand. Norwegian ships with cargoes for Germany hereupon postponed their sailings.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

U "21" was interned in Kristiansand by the Norwegian Government. The reason given is that the only grounds which justify putting in to territorial waters according to Norwegian neutrality regulations - damage or state of the sea outside the territorial waters - did not exist according to the commander's statements but that the submarine touched territorial waters because of faulty navigation and therefore unjustifiably.

While it was pointed out to the Norwegian Government through the Attaché in Oslo and the Foreign Office that the stranding of the submarine was caused only by engine damage and therefore by an act of God, the commander's statement showed a regrettable discrepancy. This discrepancy would no doubt have been avoided if Naval Staff had radioed instructions to him on what to say. Shortly after departure, however, the commander's attention was expressly drawn by Commanding Admiral, Submarines to the Norwegian neutrality regulations. Naval Staff did not consider transmission of detailed instructions appropriate, since further particulars of how the submarine had run aground were not known.

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The fact that the submarine ran aground inside Norwegian territorial waters creates special difficulties both for the Norwegian and for the German Governments. At the present moment the Norwegian Government must do everything to prove to Great Britain that she is willing and in a position to defend the neutrality of her waters herself, and must avoid everything which would enable Great Britain to construct out of the case of U "21" a very welcome incident for the British plans for action in Norwegian waters.

Germany has every interest in supporting the Norwegian Government in these efforts.

Germany's action against the Norwegian Government must, therefore, be taken with special caution and skill. Too severe pressure is to be avoided, especially with reference to the German Government's imminent strategic plans.

In the counter-steps taken against the internment to preserve German prestige, the German viewpoint was again made clear to the Norwegian Government on 28 March and it was pointed out, with reference to the commander's statement, that language difficulties probably led to a misunderstanding.

The Norwegian Government has agreed to examine the German viewpoint favorably. Negotiations are still in progress.

(See also War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.)

Air reconnaissance by Commander, Naval Air was carried out as far as the Shetlands-Norway channel in stormy weather.

In the course of this, an enemy destroyer on westerly course was reported 100 miles west of Sogne Fjord and a convoy on southerly course east of the northern tip of the Shetlands. The convoy was escorted by four or five destroyers and one flying boat.

Bomber forces of the 10th Air Corps (26th Bomber Wing) operated on the Naval Air Force's reconnaissance.

The following were attacked:

- a) 1 convoy 30 miles southeast of the southern tip of the Shetlands, effect not observed, probably 1 escort vessel.

sunk, 1 steamer (3,000 tons) severely damaged, sinking probable.

- b) 1 convoy about 50 miles off Noss Head, consisting of 30 steamers, 3 cruisers and 5-6 destroyers, northwesterly course. Probable hit on 1 steamer.
- c) 1 convoy of 7 ships. 1 cruiser. Cruiser attacked. Two 250 kg. bombs in the immediate vicinity of the ship's side. Damage may be assumed.

Two planes of 100th Bomber Wing also took off for operations against merchant shipping in the Thames and Scheldt estuaries. Two torpedoboats were attacked off Dunkirk, apparently without success.

Armed reconnaissance against Scapa had to be broken off because of the weather.

Two planes (Do 18) of the reconnaissance by Commander, Naval Air were lost, one north of the declared area and one 60 miles southwest of Egeroe after a forced landing.

Crash boats, planes and returning submarines were sent out on a search. (One plane crashed near List.) The crew of one Do 18 was fortunately saved by U "30" on 29 March.

Baltic Sea:

Shipping route Kiel-Swinemuende-Pillau unimpeded along the coast. Great Belt navigable. (Drift ice) - Sound still greatly impeded, southern entrance at present blocked.

The 13th Submarine Chaser Group in the Kattegat on the line Skagen-Paternoster. Still impossible to check the barrage situation in the Great Belt and Sound because of ice conditions.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic and off the Norwegian coast:

Unchanged.

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North Sea:

U "21" interned in Kristiansand. (See Situation, North Sea.)

In the operational area: U "22".
On return passage: U "30", "34", "44", "3", "4".
Returned from operations: U "57", "1", "2".

U "57" reports very strong patrols - also with echo-ranging gear - east of Pentland Firth and the sinking of the tanker DAGHESTAN (5,750 tons).

Merchant Shipping

Own Shipping:

A survey of German merchant shipping in Norwegian waters as on 28 March is given in the chart (see War Diary, Part B, Vol. VII). Altogether 77 ships totaling 256,136 G.R.T. are operating on the run from Norway, carrying ore and mixed cargo.

To date about 55 out of the German merchantmen on the Norwegian run have been equipped with demolition charges by the competent Navy offices. All other German merchantmen on the Norwegian run will receive demolition charges the next time they sail from a German port.

At 1700 on 27 March the steamer THESEUS was circled by a British plane northwest of Lindesnes half a mile from land.

Foreign Shipping:

The U.S. Navy Committee consented to the sale of 8 U.S. steamers abroad. It is reported that four of these ships were sold to Great Britain.

British Economy:

According to the figures published regarding British foreign trade, the following are the conditions regarding imports of individual groups of goods:

I. Increases in imports:

Iron ore and scrap metal	about	80%
Cotton	more than	100%
Wool	about	50%
Oils and fats	about	50%

II. Decreases in imports:

Iron and steel	about	10%
Rubber	about	30%

Fairly strong declines in both quantity and value of wood.

It may be assumed on the whole that the amount of British imports in January 1940 as compared to January 1939 has risen by about 20%.

Items of Political Importance1. The Norway Question:

- a) The Norwegian Embassy in Paris denies the French assertion that German naval forces are using Norwegian territorial waters.
- b) The Scandinavian press is very much influenced by reports of action by the Western Powers in Norwegian waters and fears that the Western Powers' attempts to incorporate Scandinavia in the blockade against Germany will greatly imperil the northern countries.
- c) The Fournier agency publishes the following:

"Following an apparently official notice published in the "Temps", according to which the Allies were from now on in no position to respect the neutrality of Norwegian territorial waters, we established on inquiry that no official statement has been made to this effect. British and French ships are entirely justified in themselves policing the waters of this or that country to the extent to which those waters provide a passage for German ships."

2. Statements in the Danish press maintain that within a short time the neutrals will be faced with grave alternatives by Germany. According to the German viewpoint neutrality is infringed by those who receive armed merchantmen in their ports. (Such a viewpoint has never been expressed by Germany.)
3. Discussions took place between Halifax and the Russian Ambassador in London on the subject of the two captured Russian ships.
4. The heads of the British missions in Turkey, Greece, Jugoslavia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria have been summoned to London for conferences at the beginning of April.
5. Molotov's speech before the Union Congress of Soviets contains sharp criticism of Franco-British war policy and acknowledgment of the friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Germany. (For particulars see Foreign Press.)

1000Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval StaffSpecial Items:

Discussion on the state of "Weseruebung". It must be concluded from intelligence from abroad, together with the actual movements of British naval and air forces, that British conduct regarding respect for Norwegian territorial waters will become more serious. We must at present expect constant repetition of the thrusts against the Skagerrak and the south coast of Norway by light British forces and that one day respect for neutral waters will lapse completely during further intensification of the war against merchant shipping.

The question as to whether it would therefore be advantageous to announce the Skagerrak declared area now and to lay the projected barrages is to be answered in the negative in spite of this. On the one hand, there is at present hardly any fear of the enemy's surface forces appearing in the inner Skagerrak; the area will on the contrary be mainly a sphere of submarine activity. On the other hand, proclamation of the declared area along the Norwegian coast, that is, in an area over which we at present have no mastery, will mean a convergence of all traffic, thus facilitating enemy action against traffic here by means of thrusts from the west, without Germany being able to oppose these thrusts effectively.

Conference between the Fuehrer and Chief, Naval StaffPoints for discussion:

1. Aerial mines: The Fuehrer is in agreement with Commander in Chief's viewpoint about commencing aerial minelaying operations now. L.M. mines are to be used in accordance with Naval Staff's view with the closest cooperation between Group West and the 9th Air Division.
2. "Weseruebung".
3. Question of Germany's oil supplies and economy's demands that a part of the stocks provided for the Navy should be relinquished.

4. Foundation of the Ministry of Shipping.

(For particulars see Memorandum of Commander in Chief, Navy, War Diary, Part C, Vol. VII.)

With regard to "Weseruebung", the Fuehrer again explains during this conference that he considers it necessary to leave naval forces behind in "Nienburg" and "Detmold". After a forcible statement by Chief, Naval Staff, the Fuehrer finally abandons the idea of leaving forces in "Nienburg", but adheres to his demand that warships should remain in "Detmold" and requests Commander in Chief, Navy to reconsider the matter.

Although Naval Staff is fundamentally opposed to any forces remaining in the ports, for strategic reasons already stated and thoroughly examined earlier (see reference file "Weseruebung", Part B, V, 120), Chief, Naval Staff decides on the advice of Chief, Operations Division (Naval Staff) to accede to the Fuehrer's express wish and to leave two destroyers in "Detmold".

In the directive issued to Group West, Fleet and Commanding Admiral, Submarines on the evening of 29 March, Naval Staff orders that such destroyers are to be considered for leaving in "Detmold" as cannot reach "Nienburg" or have to call at "Detmold" because of restriction of their sailing readiness, speed or range during the operation or such as would probably experience the greatest difficulty on the return trip from "Detmold". No destroyers are to be transferred from "Nienburg" to "Detmold". If no destroyers are damaged or have engine trouble, the senior Commanding Admiral will make the decision. (For directive see "Weseruebung" file.)

Special Reports on the EnemyAtlantic:Great Britain:

Commander, 1st Cruiser Squadron with the SOUTHAMPTON and YORK at present at sea with the Northern Patrol.

Otherwise nothing special to report.

France:

Radio monitoring intercepts reports of patrol activity in the Channel.

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Admiral, West informs forces under his command that three German steamers are to sail or have already sailed from Vincente de la Barquera for Gijon.

An agent reports from Casablanca that the harbor there is full of U.S. war materiel, specially for the Air Force.

North Sea:

The cruisers ARETHUSA, CALCUTTA and CAIRO are on escort duty in the north of Scotland area.

The Admiralty announced that the submarine URSULA had sunk the steamer HEDDERNHEIM and the TRUANT the steamer STINNES.

Norwegian coast:

According to agents' reports from Tromsoe and Kristiansand, no British forces have been sighted in those areas during the past 24 hours. The Naval Attache in Stockholm reports that the Swedes are greatly perturbed about London and Paris reports on anticipated intensification of action by the Western Powers against the transport of ore in Norwegian territorial waters.

According to reports from Rotterdam, lively British minesweeping activity is said to have developed between North Hinder and Fair Bank, and the area is alleged to have been swept 100 per cent clear (minelaying area of Ship "11").

According to reports from Antwerp, the rumor is said to be current that mines were laid between the Scheldt and Thames by a vessel flying the Belgian flag.

Shipping Losses:

The Norwegian steamer BURGOS (3,220 tons) sank off the east coast.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

No surface force activities. Unsuccessful search for missing Do 18. Torpedo patrol without results.

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Official Norwegian announcement on the internment of U "21". The submarine was interned because she ran aground as the result of faulty navigation.

With reference to the case of U "21", British propaganda points out that German submarines are operating inside neutral territorial waters contrary to International Law.

Baltic Sea:

For ice situation see Situation, Baltic, 30 March. The route from Kiel to Swinemuende is temporarily greatly impeded by the large masses of ice which have gathered between Dornbusch and Moen. The route through the Sound is blocked by masses of ice in the southern part. The route through the Great Belt will be navigable for large ships as soon as the mine situation is cleared up. Still fast ice in the southern part of the Little Belt.

The 13th Submarine Chaser Group is west of Gothenburg. The 19th Minesweeper Flotilla is at the Great Belt barrage.

Investigation of the net situation in the Little Belt by the Net Defense Unit has shown that in general the nets are correctly placed for navigation. Little damage has apparently been done to the southern row. The northern row on the west flank has drifted very much together. The east flank has apparently suffered little damage.

Air reconnaissance in the Skagerrak as far as a line from Ryvingen to Hanstholm sighted no enemy forces.

Denmark:

According to a communication from the Danish Admiralty the armored coastal ship PEDER SKRAM and two torpedoboats will commence neutrality guard duty in the northern Kattegat on the afternoon of 29 March. The HEIMDAL is being stationed off the northwest coast of Jutland for the same purpose.

Submarine Situation

Unchanged.

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U "3", "4" put in to Wilhelmshaven.

Merchant Shipping

The ANTONIO DELFINO arrived in Sande Fjord. The Norwegian Government assisted the ship in every way during her passage.

The captain of the steamer HELENE RUSS reports:

"At 1215 on 21 March two British planes approached the ship inside Norwegian territorial waters at 57° 8' N, 8° 21' E (near Kristiansand). One of the planes flew away fairly low over the ship's bow. The planes came from the east and flew away again eastwards."

The planes are said to have been single-engined. Since the presence of aircraft carriers in this area must be considered extremely doubtful, it is possible that there was confusion with Norwegian planes.

The B.B.C. reports:

"The German steamers NORDMARK, RENDSBURG and VOGTLAND are making preparations to break through from Batavia to Vladivostock. The ships are painted gray, the names removed. Other German steamers lying in various ports in the Dutch East Indies are said to be making similar preparations."

The report shows the excellent results achieved by the enemy intelligence service and the regrettably small possibility of Germany maintaining secrecy. The Ministry of Transportation does not now wish the ships, whose seizure has moreover not been revealed, to sail for Vladivostock at present but to remain in readiness to sail until a favorable opportunity presents itself. The steamers are thus unable both to bring cargoes for the ships lying in ports in East Asia and themselves to traverse the north Siberian passage from east to west. There are now probably only four ships still available to use the northern sea route.

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Economic Warfare

For review of British blockade measures with special reference to the Navycert system, see report by Naval Intelligence Division, Foreign Merchant Marine Branch No. 6/40.

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Items of Political Importance

1. The first documents published in a German White Paper about the Western Powers' war guilt are causing a great sensation abroad (see Foreign Press)
2. Norway: The Rumanian Ambassador in Oslo reports to his Foreign Ministry:

The fact that France and Great Britain may possibly alter their attitude to Norway has made a great impression in that country. He gained the impression in a conversation with the British Ambassador that far-reaching decisions regarding respect for Norwegian territorial waters would not be taken for the present in London and Paris, especially since Norway herself seems resolved to prevent the use of Norwegian territorial waters by Germany in order to avoid more serious British steps.

The Scandinavian press is greatly influenced by the Western Powers' threatening attitude to the question of respect for Norwegian territorial waters and cessation of German ore imports.

It is confirmed that the traffic in ore, paper and cellulose to Britain and her Allies via Norwegian territory is much greater than that to Germany.

A decision by the Western Powers to control the Norwegian channel by means of their naval forces would mean war in that area.

The main motive of the Allied plans to extend the war is now recognized in the Scandinavian press as the British desire to suppress Germany's legitimate merchant shipping along the Norwegian coast and to gain new strategic bases in Norwegian fjords. Germany is prepared for Britain to change her threats against the neutrality of Norway and Denmark into force at any moment.

It goes without saying that Germany would react very strongly to the Franco-British plans.

3. Churchill's radio speech:

"Great Britain will no longer stand for a pro-German interpretation of the conception of neutrality. The Allies

will continue the war wherever it may lead but do not desire to extend the battle area."

(For particulars see Foreign Press.)

4. Roosevelt declared at a press conference:

"Welles has neither received nor passed on to me any peace proposals from any source whatever. Although there is at present little prospect of the foundation in Europe of a just peace, the journey by Welles was still of the greatest value for the instruction of the U.S. Government."

The President stated that in certain cases Welles' visit might contribute to better understanding and more friendly relations between the U.S.A. and the countries visited by Welles.

5. China: The Wang-Ching-Wai Government was convoked today. It has full powers to adjust Sino-Japanese relations. The new pro-Japanese Chinese Government is of course sharply repudiated by the Chiang-Kai-Shek Government. It is stated that the war will continue as before.
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Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff

Special Items

1. Discussion of general points in "Weseruebung".
2. The following directive is sent to Commanding Admiral, Submarines, in accordance with the Fuehrer's permission for submarines to operate in the Mediterranean:

"Submarines are permitted to operate in the Western Mediterranean only against British and French ships. Plans for such operations are to be reported as soon as submarines are available for these assignments. Any possibility of supplies from the Italian area is not to be considered for the present."

Special Reports on the EnemyAtlantic/Mediterranean:Great Britain:Disposition of forces:

In the area northwest of the Orkneys to Iceland the cruisers YORK and BERWICK are at sea in the Northern Patrol area.

According to a report from a Swedish merchant captain, British blockade vessels are said to be disposed in a zig-zag line, 5 miles from one another, between the Shetlands and Iceland.

Mediterranean:

The ARK ROYAL is probably also at present in the Mediterranean, besides the aircraft carriers GLORIOUS and ARGUS which have been there up to now. The cruiser CARLISLE has left the Mediterranean, westward bound.

The following cruisers are at present in the Mediterranean:

DELHI (Flagship)
 CALEDON CAPETOWN CALYPSO DRAGON
 also the auxiliary cruisers:
 CHAKLA FIONA VOLTAIRE.

France:

Radio monitoring intercepts convoy movements. Otherwise nothing special to report.

Radio intelligence intercepts a report from Admiral Commanding Orkneys and Shetlands from which it appears that the battle cruisers RENOWN and REPULSE, the old battleships RODNEY, VALIANT and WARSPITE and one other ship put in to Scapa on the morning of 27 March.

The following seem to be at sea with the Northern Patrol:

East of the Orkneys as far as the Norwegian coast:

Cruisers:
 DEVONSHIRE, GLASGOW,
 SOUTHAMPTON.

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Northwest of the Orkneys:

Cruisers:
YORK and BERWICK.

On convoy duty in the area northeast coast of Britain-Orkneys-Norwegian coast:

Cruisers:
GALATEA, ARETHUSA,
AURORA, SHEFFIELD,
CAIRO and CALCUTTA.

British submarine dispositions in the North Sea so far unchanged.

According to reports from a steamer, a collective passage or convoy, consisting of more than 50 ships and including 21 Finnish wood steamers with full cargo, was sighted off Yteroe.

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

During flights by enemy planes into the Heligoland Bight there were engagements with boats of the 11th Patrol Boat Flotilla. Neither side scored any successes.

Torpedo patrol had to be broken off because of good visibility and high cloud.

Reconnaissance against Scapa by 3 Ju 88's also had to be broken off because of the weather.

Group West reports the laying of a movable barrage between the moles of the third entrance and Wilhelmshaven.

For submarines see Submarine Situation.

Ship "16" put out but was recalled because of the weather forecast.

Baltic Sea:

Large areas of drift ice around Arcona, heavy pack ice between

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Arcona and Trelleborg. Icebergs up to 3 m. above the surface. Shipping route from Kiel to Swinemuende therefore greatly impeded near Arcona. Passage only by day advisable. Shipping route from Swinemuende to East Prussia is navigable at a good distance from the German coast.

Shipping unimpeded in the Sound and Great Belt, although light drift ice is still appearing there in places. The Little Belt is only navigable with icebreaker aid for the present. (For details of the ice situation and icebreaker activity see Situation Baltic, 31 March.)

Air reconnaissance in the Kattegat and Skagerrak as far as the Norwegian coast sighted no enemy forces.

The 13th Submarine Chaser Group was temporarily withdrawn south of Anholt for the purpose of ice reconnaissance of the Belts and Sound.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

The submarines formerly operating west of the Orkneys/Shetlands (U "38", "43", "52") were assigned new operational areas east of the Shetlands and east of Fair Passage.

Off Narvik: U "46".
Off Trondheim: U "51".

U "44" has not reported so far in spite of being called up. She was operating west of the Orkneys originally and on 22 March was ordered into the patrol line between the Shetlands and the Faroes along with U "38", "43", "47" and "49". There is, therefore, great anxiety as to her fate. (Commander: Lieut. (s.g.) Mathes.)

North Sea:

Returned from operations: U "30", "34", "3", "4".

For brief reports from submarines returned during the last few days, see War Diary, Part B, IV. The operations have not resulted in any special success. Particularly strong patrols and planned submarine chase by destroyers and trawlers with echo-ranging gear were encountered in the Pentland Firth area and in

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the vicinity of the Orkneys. The use of what appear to be new-type, very effective depth-charges by the enemy is reported.

Foreign Merchant Shipping

According to a report from Intelligence Center, Greece, the British assertion that an effective means of combatting the magnetic mine has been found is causing Greek seamen to be more willing to sign on for the passage to Great Britain. Pro-German circles in Greece regret the absence of a corresponding counter-action by the German radio.

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Sunday

Items of Political Importance

Reports from Great Britain speak of an imminent large-scale re-formation of the Government. The resignation of the Minister of National Defense, Chatfield, is probably to be expected.

30 March. Meeting of the French War Cabinet. Detailed discussions between Reynaud and General Weygand.

Intense world interest in the German publication of documents from the Polish archives. Great excitement in the U.S.A. Exasperation within the U.S. Government.

The Foreign Office is endeavoring to influence the Danish Government to assess the case of the sinking of the German steamer EDMUND HUGO STINNES inside Danish territorial waters not as a solitary mistake on the part of a British submarine but as a highly important political measure in the British conduct of warfare, and to resist it accordingly.

The first political and economic contact between Germany and Finland since the Russo-Finnish conflict has taken place.

Special Reports on the Enemy

Atlantic:

Nothing special to report, apart from some convoys detected and unfounded submarine warning reports.

North Sea:

A reliable agent reports from Belgium that during the air raid on Scapa on 16 March the battle cruiser RENOWN was severely damaged as well as the RODNEY. One of the French torpedoboats was damaged so badly during the air attack on these off Dunkirk that it had to be towed away.

Since unauthenticated reports were also received from the same source, further confirmation of this report is to be awaited.

Result of Air Reconnaissance (3 planes of the 1st Group of the 122nd Wing) over the Orkneys. Visual reconnaissance shows:

Holm Sound unoccupied. Enemy fighters took off from Earth House airfield immediately after our planes penetrated the clouds. Reconnaissance of Bay carried out at second attempt; no heavy ships detected, only cruisers and destroyers.

Anchorage northwest of Fara: 2 cruisers, 12 destroyers.
Anchorage southwest of Fara: 1 cruiser, 10 destroyers.

Heavy anti-aircraft defense by heavy and light shore and ships' anti-aircraft guns. (Later evaluation of photographic reconnaissance shows 3 cruisers (probably heavy), 20 destroyers, several auxiliary vessels and steamers.)

Shipping Losses:

Trawler (patrol vessel?) SOPHOS (217 tons) sent an S.O.S. east of Fair Isle.

For total French and British naval losses from the beginning of the war up to 31 March 1940, see special summary "Losses".

Own Situation

Atlantic:

Nothing to report.

North Sea:

Ship "16" (Commander: Captain Rogge) sailed for operations in the Atlantic as per Naval Staff's operational order (see War Diary, Part C, Vol. I).

U "37" (Lieut. Cdr. Hartmann) is at Ship "16"'s disposal to protect her outward passage from the Heligoland Bight into northern waters as far as the Iceland passage. If contact is lost before the break through the Iceland passage, they will meet at a rendezvous near Jan Mayen. If unfavorable weather makes a fairly long stay in northern waters necessary, the submarine is to be dismissed off the Iceland passage.

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Ship "16" is sailing at present as the Russian auxiliary warship KIM (5,114 tons) UPAN, two decks, cruiser stern, oil-driven engines, built in 1932 at the Severney S.B. Yard, Leningrad. The ship is painted dull gray-green, superstructure white, boats and masts white, deckhouses brown, funnels as the exterior, red ring and black cap at the top. Light armament, four machine-guns and two 4-5 cm. guns made of wood.

Ship "11" (Lieut. Cdr. Betzendahl) sailed for a minelaying operation in the northeastern entrance to the English Channel camouflaged as a Norwegian merchant steamer.

Air reconnaissance produced no reports on the enemy.

Group West points out in a letter that the fighter forces at present available (3 fighter groups, 1 heavy fighter group and 2 night fighter squadrons) are not adequate for the protection of the German North Sea coast and the Heligoland Bight, especially as regards defense against attacks in waves, and will not be adequate in future either despite all precautions. The Group considers the following to be the minimum necessary for fighter protection in the North Sea area:

3 fighter groups, 1 night fighter group and 3 heavy fighter groups.

These forces should not be withdrawn from their important defense assignments for naval warfare, but should in Group West's opinion be stationary.

Naval Staff has brought the Group's views to the notice of Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff. Commander in Chief, Air Force is well aware of the great importance of air defense in the North Sea area and of his responsibility in this connection. He has given an assurance that the North Sea coastal area will, like the Ruhr, always be protected by fighter forces so that effective defense against the enemy is guaranteed.

The allocation of fighter groups cannot always be fixed definitely, as it depends on the developments in the situation. If the war situation changes, reinforcements can be rushed to the coast in a few hours.

Group West has been informed accordingly.

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Baltic Sea:

Ice Situation:

Still severe hindrance on the Kiel-Swinemuende route near Arcona. (Heavy pack ice and fields of drift ice north of Arcona to six miles south of Trelleborg.) Route from Swinemuende eastwards easily navigable. Passage through the southern entrance to the Sound still closed to shipping. Not impeded by ice in the Great Belt, apart from the mine situation. Passage through the Little Belt only with icebreaker aid.

The 13th Submarine Chaser Group in the southern Kattegat. Sub-chaser GUSTAV reports having destroyed a submarine by depth-charge attack 15 miles north of Skagen. Confirmatory details not yet available.

Air reconnaissance over the Kattegat and entrances to the Baltic. No reports on the enemy.

Submarine Situation

Atlantic:

U "37" sailed with Ship "16".

Unchanged off the Norwegian coast and near the Orkneys.

North Sea:

U "21" still in Kristiansand under flag and pennant. Damage appears to be greater than was assumed at first.

Off the east coast of Scotland: U "22".

Sailed into the operational areas
east and west of Pentland Firth: U "13", "58", "59".

The following directive is sent by teletype to Group West and Commanding Admiral, Submarines, with regard to submarine operations during the period previous to the execution of "Weseruebung":

1. The task of the submarines in the Orkneys-Shetlands area

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is principally: attacks on heavy forces and troopships.
Convoys as subsidiary assignment.

2. 3-4 submarines are to be on operation constantly. Whether large or small ones is left to Group West's discretion.
3. It is still important that as many submarines as possible should be available at the April new-moon period.

Merchant Shipping

Own Shipping:

Since the ANTONIO DELFINO can refuel neither in Sande Fjord nor in Oslo, the Embassy in Oslo enquires whether the ship may proceed to Copenhagen or Gothenburg. Naval Staff agrees to the proposed transfer. The Ministry of Transportation has ordered the ship to Gothenburg.

Enemy Merchant Traffic:

For information obtained about Norway-Great Britain convoy traffic and the convoy routes, see "Enemy and Neutral Shipping Routes", Report by Naval Intelligence Division, No. 7.

Special Items:

Convoy traffic during February and March has been carried out undisturbed and with great regularity, 4-5 day convoy schedule. The main rendezvous of the neutrals is Bergen. Enemy shipping gathers north of Bergen, roughly between Hellisoy and Kristiansand. The main point of departure is at present in the Floroe sector. Departure by night. It is fairly certain that the next convoys will sail on the following days:

Great Britain-Norway, from the
Firth of Forth:

31 March, 4 April, 8 April.

Norway-Great Britain, from
Norway:

3/4 April, 7/8 April, 11/12
April.

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Convoys consisted of 30-40 ships.

The information obtained from the above intelligence now provides a very clear picture of the Great Britain-Norway convoy service. The supplies reaching the enemy from the Scandinavian area on these convoy routes are considerable. Unfortunately neither German naval nor air force operations have had any success in preventing or substantially disrupting these, a step which would severely affect the enemy economy. This could only be effected by constant and extremely active battleship operations. Recognizing the great importance and the considerable effect of successes against the Scandinavian convoy traffic, Naval Staff had endeavored to make the battleship operations one of the chief factors in the conduct of warfare in the North Sea. Despite constant endeavor and orders, Naval Staff has so far not been allowed to attain this operational target. The reasons for this lay in numerous difficulties which stood in the way of the desired frequent use of the heavy forces. These were caused primarily by regrettable deficiencies in the readiness of the battleships and of the destroyers required as escort, and also by the unusual ice conditions this year. Partly, however, they were also the result of an assessment by Group West and Commanding Admiral, West of operational possibilities, of the enemy situation at the time, of the risk involved and of the prospects of success for such operations, which was divergent from Naval Staff's viewpoint.

Naval Staff is still of the opinion that German naval warfare will never be successful, considering the inferiority of forces, if it does not make a conscious effort to free itself from the psychological pressure of a much superior enemy.

We must attack the decisive pressure points of the British strategic position in order to attain successes; these assault areas, however, do not commence until the line Shetlands-Norway. Our battleships have nothing to seek in the southern North Sea and in the Heligoland Bight. Our own coastal waters and those of the enemy stretch over this area almost as far as the Shetlands line; the real operational area for our battleships begins outside this area.

The previous two battleship operations gave abundant proof of the possibilities and prospects of success of extensive operations

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by fast and powerful forces, even if the possibilities of success were not exhausted. So far, unfortunately, no blow has been struck against the convoys nor has an action taken place with a powerful opponent. An encounter between the battleships and the light and heavy enemy cruisers normally operating in the northern North Sea could only be desired for our sorties. Our battleships need have no fear of such a clash with enemy forces. Only an engagement with the enemy battleships is to be avoided. Thus only the 5 enemy battle cruisers (2 DUNKERQUE's, HOOD, 2 REPULSE's) can be regarded as really dangerous opponents for the battleships in the open sea.

Naval Staff does not share the misgivings continually expressed about passing through the Shetlands-Norway passage. The 200 mile wide Shetlands "strait" is no "curtain" which can be raised and lowered at will by the enemy to seal off the North Sea by disposing his heavy forces and with which he would be in a position to prevent access by our powerful fast battleships to northern waters or their return into the Heligoland Bight.

GLOSSARY

"Bremen"

Cover name for Bergen.

"Carlshafen"

Cover name for Kristiansand.

"Detmold"

Cover name for Trondheim.

"Elsflet"

Cover name for Egersund.

EMC

Standard mine, type C; a contact mine against surface vessels.

"Gelb"

Cover name for planned invasion of the Low Countries.

LMA

German aerial mine, type A. Weight 540 kg.

LMB

German aerial mine, type B. Weight 975 kg.

"Nienburg"

Cover name for Narvik.

"Oldenburg"

Cover name for Oslo.

SD (50)

Thick-shell high explosive bombs.

"Stadthagen"

Cover name for Stavanger.

TMC

Torpedo-tube mine, type C.

"Weseruebung"

Cover name for planned invasion of Norway.

"Weseruebung Sued"

Cover name for planned invasion of Denmark.

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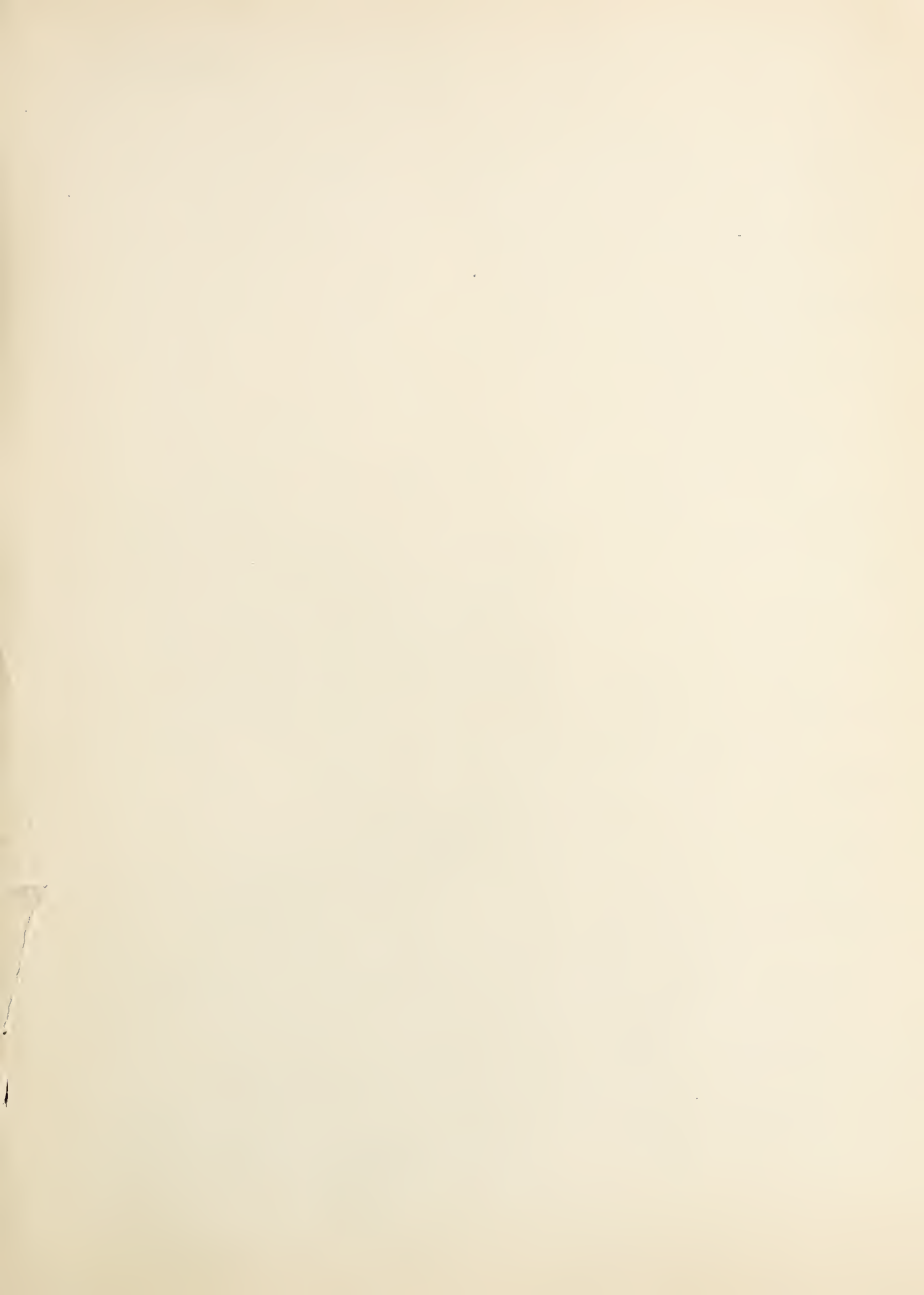
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