

## Plan FORTITUDE

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### Introduction

1. With the object of inducing the enemy to make faulty strategic dispositions in relation to operations by the United Nations against Germany in 1944, Plan BODYGUARD outlined the cover and deceptive policy for the European Theatre as given in paragraph 2 below.

2. The enemy should be induced to believe:

(a) That forces are being held in readiness in the United Kingdom for a return to Western Europe at any time in the event of a serious German weakening or withdrawal.

(b) That an operation would be carried out in conjunction with Russia in the spring with the immediate object of opening a supply route through Northern Norway to Sweden, thereafter enlisting the active co-operation of Sweden for the establishment of air bases in Southern Sweden to cover an assault on Denmark from the United Kingdom

(c) That a large-scale cross-Channel operation with a minimum force of fifty divisions and with craft and shipping for twelve divisions would be carried out in late summer.

3. Plan BODYGUARD also indicated that a tactical cover plan designed to deceive the enemy as to the timing, direction and weight of NEPTUNE should be executed when the imminence of Cross-Channel operations indicated that invasion was likely to take place before late summer.

4. Within the framework of BODYGUARD, Plan FORTITUDE outlines the cover and deception policy for North-West Europe, based on the following assumptions:

- (a) That the target date for NEPTUNE will be 1st June, 1944.
- (b) That No real operations, other than RANKIN, will be carried out in Norway before D Day NEPTUNE.

5. To induce the enemy to make faulty dispositions in North-West Europe before and after the NEPTUNE assault, thus:

- (a) Reducing the rate and weight of reinforcement of the target area.
- (b) Inducing him to expend his available effort on fortifications in areas other than the target area.
- (c) Lowering his vigilance in France during the build-up and mounting of the NEPTUNE forces in the United Kingdom.
- (d) Retaining forces in areas as far removed as possible from the target area before and after the NEPTUNE assault.

## CONSIDERATIONS

### *Areas*

6. Plan BODYGUARD indicates Scandinavia as the most suitable area against which to maintain a long-term threat, Northern Norway being an intermediate objective to the establishment of air bases in Southern Sweden. Sweden would be unlikely to concede her Southern airfields to the Allies with Germany still in occupation of Southern Norway. An assault on Denmark demands the prior occupation of the Stavanger-Oslo area, therefore the target for a deceptive operation should be extended to include this area.

7. As the NEPTUNE preparations proceed, the significance of the threat against NORWAY will tend to decrease and, for the sake of plausibility should not be over-emphasized. At this stage the character and location of the NEPTUNE forces will become increasingly evident to the enemy and a cover target area, as far removed as possible from the real assault area, should be threatened. The Pas de Calais best fulfils the conditions of plausibility.

### *Timing*

8. Climatic conditions do not normally allow operations in Southern Norway before 1st April and in Northern Norway before 1st May. As it would take at least three months to occupy Southern Norway and to establish air bases in Southern Sweden, the enemy would expect us to assault Norway as early as possible if Denmark were to be invaded in the same year. Furthermore, to contain German forces in Scandinavia, a threat should be fully developed about one month before the target date of NEPTUNE. It would further assist NEPTUNE to continue the threat for as long as possible after D Day NEPTUNE. The amphibious training essential to an assault on Northern Norway cannot be completed to enable an assault to be undertaken before NEPTUNE D minus 17.

9. The threat to Southern Norway should therefore be developed by NEPTUNE D minus 30; the threat to Northern Norway and the full development of the Scandinavian threat being achieved by NEPTUNE D minus 17 and maintained thereafter.

10. It would be plausible for the enemy to believe that the hazards of a cross-Channel operation demand the maximum assistance from all other fronts and in particular from the Russian front. As the enemy might well be led to believe that large enough forces cannot be assembled in the United Kingdom in time to take advantage of the Russian winter offensive, the cross-Channel operation should be timed to take advantage of the summer offensive. Climatic conditions on the Southern Russian front allow this offensive to start early in May and be extended to the whole front by the end of May. The enemy should be led to believe that we intend to allow this offensive to develop for six weeks until about NEPTUNE D plus 45, before launching large-scale cross-Channel operations.

11. By NEPTUNE D minus 30, the movement and administrative preparations and the concentration of air forces will be nearly complete and the concentration of craft and shipping will be between 70 and 80 per cent complete for NEPTUNE. These preparations, and the type and location of the forces will begin to threaten the NEPTUNE area only, unless preparations for the concentration of similar forces are made in East and South-East England. In order, however, to minimise our state of preparedness as a whole, the long-term preparations in the East and South-East should indicate a later target date.

12. If before NEPTUNE D Day, however, it becomes evident that the enemy does not believe in the later target date, preparations in the East and South-East should be accelerated and the threat to the Pas de Calais be fully developed.

### *Strength of Forces*

13. A total of about fifty-eight divisions would be required for the deceptive operations; that is, two to Northern Norway, six to Southern Norway and fifty to the cross-Channel operation.

14. At the present rate of build-up in the United Kingdom there would only be about fifty-three divisions, with craft and shipping for twelve, available for operations by NEPTUNE D plus 45. We should, therefore, induce the enemy to believe that the deficiency of about five divisions will be made up from the United States during the operation. At the same time, in order to emphasize the later target date, we should minimise the state of preparedness of the NEPTUNE forces by misleading the enemy about their state of training, organisation, equipment and their location.

## STORY A

### From now until the NEPTUNE Assault

15. The enemy should be induced to believe that the Allies will carry out the following operations in North-West Europe in 1944.

#### *Occupation Operations*

16. From 1st February, 1944, balanced forces are being held in readiness to occupy any part of North-West Europe in the event of German withdrawal or collapse.

### *Southern Norway*

17. With a target date of NEPTUNE D minus 30 an operation will be mounted from northern ports to invade Southern Norway. The assault will be made in the Stavanger area by one infantry division supported by parachute troops and commandos, followed up by one infantry division.

18. The force will be built up to a total of six divisions within three months, a proportion of this force being mountain trained. An advance to Oslo will be made along the coast by a series of mutually supporting land and amphibious operations, involving the use of landing craft sufficient to lift one brigade group.

19. Allied naval forces will escort the convoys and support the assault and subsequent amphibious operations. The assault will also be supported by carrier-borne aircraft. Long-range fighters will be flown in from the United Kingdom as soon as airfields are captured.

### *Northern Norway*

20. With a target date of NEPTUNE D minus 17, an operation will be mounted in conjunction with Russian forces against Northern Norway to open road and railway communications with Sweden. The operation will be supported by Anglo-American naval forces, including aircraft carriers.

### *Change of target Date*

21. On or about NEPTUNE D minus 30, the enemy should be led to believe that the Southern Norway force is mounted and held in readiness to be launched at short notice; similar conditions will apply to the Northern Norway force on or about NEPTUNE D minus 17.

### *Denmark*

22. As soon as the Allies are firmly established in Southern Norway with Allied air forces operating from there and Southern Sweden, an assault will be launched on Denmark.

### *Pas de Calais*

23. With a target date of NEPTUNE D plus 45, a cross-Channel operation will be carried out by a total force of fifty divisions with craft and shipping for twelve divisions. The assault will be made in the Pas de Calais area by six divisions, two east and four south of Cap Gris Nez. The follow-up and immediate build-up will be a further six divisions. The force will be built up to the total of fifty divisions at the rate of about three divisions per day.

24. The first phase of the operation will be the establishment of a bridgehead which must include the major port of Antwerp and the communication centre of Brussels. From this bridgehead large scale operations will be conducted against the Ruhr with the final object of occupying Germany.

25. The operation will be mounted as follows:

Two assaults and one follow-up division from the Wash to Deal.  
Four assaults and one follow-up division from the south coast.  
One follow-up division from Bristol Channel.  
Two build-up divisions from the Humber and Tyr.  
One build-up division from the Mersey and Clyde.

### *Change of Target Date*

26. (If at any time before NEPTUNE D Day it is discovered that the enemy does not believe in the later cover target date, the threat to the Pas de Calais will be rapidly developed.)

## STORY B From NEPTUNE D Day

27. After D Day of NEPTUNE, and for as long as possible, the enemy should be induced to believe that subsequent operations will be carried out as given below.

### *Pas de Calais (Maintenance of the threat)*

28. The operation in the NEPTUNE area is designed to draw German reserves away from the Pas de Calais and Belgium. Craft and shipping for at least two assault divisions are assembled in the Thames Estuary and south-east coast ports; four more assault divisions are held in readiness in the Portsmouth area and will be mounted in craft and shipping from NEPTUNE. When the German reserves have been committed to the NEPTUNE area, the main Allied attack will be made between the Somme and Ostend with these six divisions in the assault.

### *Scandinavia*

29. The operations in Norway and Sweden (see STORY A) will be carried out against resistance as soon as sufficient shipping is available from NEPTUNE, the assault on Denmark being postponed until spring 1945. If, however, there is any weakening of the German forces in Norway these operations will be launched on a reduced scale to take immediate advantage of the situation.