

SECRET

TRANSLATION NO. VII/91

AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH

OPERATION MARITA  
BALKANS, 1941.

PART II

TRANSLATED BY

AIR MINISTRY, A.H.B.6

OCTOBER, 1949

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Berlin, 27 March 1941

Conference on the Yugoslav situation.

Present: The Fuehrer  
Reichsmarschall  
Chef CKW  
Chef WF St  
Gen. Lt. Bodenschatz  
Oberst Schmundt  
Freg. Kpt. v. Puttkamer  
Obstlt. Scherff  
Major v. Below  
Major Christian

Called in later:

Ob d H  
Chef Gen St d H  
Oberst Heusinger  
Obstlt. Sieverth  
Reichsaussenminister  
Gesandter Hewel  
Gen.Maj. v. Waldau  
Oberst Schmidt  
Gen.Maj. v. Rintelen.

The FUEHRER depicted the position in Yugoslavia since the coup d'etat. He stated that Yugoslavia was an unstable factor as regards the coming Marita operation and the much later Barbarossa operation. The Serbs and Slovenes were never friendly towards the Germans. Governments never firmly seated in the saddle owing to racial questions and the Officers Camarilla which inclined to coups d'etat. The country at present possessed only one strong man, Stojadinovitch, whom Prince Regent Paul dropped to his own disadvantage.

The moment both from the political and from the military viewpoint is favourable for us to realise the true position in the country and its attitude towards us. Had the collapse of the Government occurred during the Barbarossa operation, the consequences would have been much more serious for us.

The Fuehrer has decided, without waiting for any possible declarations of loyalty from the new Government, to make all preparations for destroying Yugoslavia both as a military power and as a State. No demands or ultimatums through diplomatic channels will be made. Assurances of the Yugoslav Government, which, however, are not to be trusted in future, will be noted. The attack will begin as soon as suitable means and troops are ready.

It will be a question of dealing with the matter as quickly as possible. Endeavours will be made to give the neighbouring States a suitable part to play. Military assistance against Yugoslavia itself is to be asked of Italy, Hungary and, in certain respects, of Bulgaria. Rumania's main task will be to cover the Russian front. The Hungarian and Bulgarian ambassadors have already been informed. A message will be sent to the Duce later in the day.

Politically, it is especially important that the blow against Yugoslavia be struck with inexorable severity and the military hammering be carried out in a "blitz" operation. Thereby a great enough shock can be administered to Turkey and the later campaign against Greece be influenced in a favourable manner. We can count on the Croats coming over to our side when we attack. Appropriate political treatment (later autonomy) will be assured them. War against Yugoslavia ought to be popular in Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria, since territorial gains are to be offered to these States, the Adriatic coast for Italy, Banat for Hungary, and Macedonia for Bulgaria.

This plan presupposes that we make all preparations as speedily as possible and employ such strong forces to ensure the collapse of Yugoslavia in the shortest time.

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In this connection, the start of the Barbarossa operation will have to be postponed for four weeks.

Military operations are to be conducted as follows:

1. If possible an earlier start of the Marita operation with objective restricted to conquering Greek Thrace and the Salonica basin until the mountainous country by Edessa has been gained; for this out across Yugoslav territory.
2. A thrust from the neighbourhood south of Sofia in the direction of Skoplje to ease the strain on the flank of the Italian front in Albania.
3. A thrust with stronger forces from the Sofia area in the direction of Nis (Nish), thence towards Belgrade in cooperation with
4. the penetration of a stronger group of German forces from the Graz and Klagenfurt areas in a south-easterly direction with the aim of destroying the Yugoslav army.

For 2. and 3. the forces of the group covering the Turkish front, superfluous formations on the southern front and the Army reserves are to be utilised. Cover towards the East must be undertaken on the one hand by Bulgarian forces, reinforced by a Panzer Division brought from Rumania, and on the other by Rumanian forces, with whom only one Panzer Division is to remain.

For 4. forces can be taken from the Barbarossa Aufmarschstaffel (acceleration of these to take priority). Sufficiently strong forces must be assigned.

The main task for the Italians will be first of all to suspend offensive action against Greece, to set up adequate cover on the Yugoslav front and to operate with the Army of the Po from Istria to protect the German right flank.

5. The main task of the Luftwaffe will be to break up the Yugoslav Air Force ground organisation, commencing as early as possible, and to destroy the capital Belgrade in continuous attacks, and also to support the advance of the Army. For this, use may possibly be made of the Hungarian ground organisation.

C. in C. Army

The Fuehrer's plan of operations coincides with his own deliberations. The date for starting Marita can remain the 1st April provided the weather is suitable. It will be possible for the other striking forces to start between the 3rd and 10th April, according to how they are deployed.

The question as to whether the southern attacking group, if it arrives quickly at its objective, is at liberty to continue with the Marita operation, received the Fuehrer's assent in principle, but he insisted that the operation does not get out of hand but is kept closely under control.

The C. in C. Army will submit his plans in writing by 3 a.m.

C. in C. Luftwaffe reports that air raids by Fliegerkorps VIII from Bulgaria can start at once, but that the Luftwaffe will require 2 or 3 days for heavier flying operations. It is intended to bring stronger bomber and dive-bomber formations into the Vienna, Graz and Hungarian areas. If necessary, units of Fliegerkorps X will be brought in from their bases in southern Italy.

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Steps will be taken to strengthen the anti-aircraft defences of Vienna, Carinthia and Styria.

The FUEHRER ordered work to begin at once on all preparations. He awaits the plans of the branches of the Armed Forces during the course of the evening of the 27th March. General von Rintelen was ordered to come during the late evening of the 27th March to collect the message and verbal directions of the Fuehrer.

Fuehrer Headquarters,  
27 March 1941

Directive No. 25

1. The military coup in Yugoslavia has changed the political situation in the Balkans. Yugoslavia is to be regarded as an enemy. Even if she were to affirm her loyalty to us she would still have to be destroyed as quickly as possible.

2. It is my intention to attack Yugoslavia with a pincer movement moving in the general direction of Belgrade and the south, one force attacking from the Fiume-Graz area and the other from the area around Sofia. The aim is to inflict a crushing defeat on the Yugoslav Armed Forces and further to isolate the southernmost portion of Yugoslavia and use it as a base for continuing the German - Italian offensive against Greece.

The early reopening of Danube traffic and the seizure of the copper mines at Bor are important to the war economy.

We must attempt to induce Hungary and Bulgaria to participate in the operations by extending to them the hope of regaining Banat and Macedonia.

Political promises made to the Croats will render the internal tension in Yugoslavia more acute.

3. My detailed orders are as follows:

(a) As soon as sufficient forces are available and the weather permits, the Luftwaffe is to destroy the city of Belgrade and the ground organisation of the Yugoslav Air Force by means of continuous day and night attacks.

(b) As far as possible at approximately the same time and on no account earlier, operation "Marita" is to begin, with the limited objective, for the time being, of occupying the Salonica basin and getting a foothold on the heights of Edessa (Vodena). XVIII Army Corps can concentrate for this attack via Yugoslav territory.

In order to prevent the enemy from establishing an organised front between Mount Olympus and the heights of Edessa, we must make use of any favourable opportunities which offer themselves.

(c) All forces still available in Bulgaria and Rumania may be utilised for the attacks which are to be launched toward the north-west from the region around Sofia, and toward the west from the region of Kynstendil - Gorna Dzhumaya, except that a force of the approximate size of a division (in addition to air defence forces) must remain for the protection of the Rumanian oil fields.

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For the time being, the protection of the Turkish frontier is to be left to the Bulgarians. A German formation, a Panzer division if possible, is to be kept in readiness behind them as a reserve.

- (d) The attack coming from the general direction of Graz and moving southeastward is to be launched as soon as the necessary forces have been assembled. The decision as to whether Hungarian soil will be used for the push against the Yugoslav frontier will be left to the Army.

Defence measures on the Yugoslav frontier are to be intensified at once.

Important points may be seized on the Yugoslav side of the frontier just as on the Bulgarian side, even before the general attack begins. These actions should be timed to coincide with the air attack on Belgrade.

- (e) Two attack groups of the Luftwaffe are to support the operations of the 12th Army and those of the new striking force to be formed in the Graz area, concentrating these forces according to the progress of the Army operations. The Hungarian ground organisation can be utilised for assembly and for the actual operation.

It is to be investigated whether Fliegerkorps X should be employed, based on Italian territory. However, escort of transports to Africa must be assured.

Preparations for the occupation of Lemnos island are to continue; however, it should not be executed until I issue the order.

Adequate anti-aircraft protection is to be provided for Graz, Klagenfurt, Villach, Leoben and Vienna.

4. Basic agreements with Italy will be reached by the Armed Forces High Command in the initial stages.

The Army is to provide liaison staffs for the Italian 2nd Army and for Hungary.

The Luftwaffe is empowered to reach agreements at the present time with the Italian and Hungarian Air Forces concerning borders of the air operation areas. Preparations can be made at once to set aside the supplies for the Hungarian ground organisation.

5. The Commanders-in-Chief will report to me through OKW concerning the planned operations and the related command questions.

signed: Adolf Hitler

Berlin, Tirpitzufer 72-76  
28 March 1941

To: 2nd Army H.Q.  
12th Army H.Q.  
Panzer Group 1

For information of:  
OKH (with extra copies for Genst d H/Heerwesenabt. and Genst d H/Gen Qu).

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Reich Minister for Air and C.in C. Luftwaffe  
OKM.  
L.  
WNV.

Directions concerning Propaganda policy in Jugoslavia.

1. The final and complete propaganda policy to be directed against Jugoslavia cannot yet be given, since it is quite possible that even before the outbreak of hostilities the next few days may furnish us with a particularly effective line of propaganda.

Additions to the propaganda lines laid down below may therefore follow.

In principle it can now be said:

- (a) The sole enemy of Germany is the Serbian Government who in Britain's service has unleashed the war against Germany in spite of the vast concessions and comprehensive guarantees that Germany has given the State of Jugoslavia.
  - (b) Since the Serbians, in contrast with the non-Serbian peoples of Jugoslavia, especially the Croats and Macedonians, have set up an insolent dictatorship, these latter are to be told that the German Armed Forces are not coming, into the country as enemies of the Croats, Bosnians and Macedonians. On the contrary, the German Armed Forces want to save them from pointless slaughter on the battlefield by Serbian chauvinists in the interests of Britain. However, should the non-Serbians under the influence of Anglo-Serbian propaganda offer resistance, the German Armed Forces will be compelled to break this resistance wherever it is encountered.
  - (c) The German Armed Forces will be compelled to punish with the full rigours of Military Law all who attempt by espionage and sabotage or by taking up arms contrary to International Law to harm the German Armed Forces and thereby help our enemy, Great Britain.
2. All propaganda units are authorised to make war reports of all kinds as soon as hostilities against Jugoslavia start. Above all, it is of the highest importance that the first reports on the campaign reach OKW as quickly as possible.
  3. The Propaganda Liaison Offices already set up by the OKW in Bucharest and Sofia will continue to function. A further Propaganda Liaison Office will be set up at once in Graz. It is the duty of the Propaganda units to arrange for the conveyance of dispatches from the unit to the nearest Propaganda Liaison platoon to pass on reports from the Propaganda Liaison Offices to Berlin. In addition direct courier services of the Army and the Luftwaffe are also to be made use of as far as possible for carrying dispatches.
  4. All available telephone circuits are to be used to pass through verbal reports, especially from the Propaganda Liaison Offices to Berlin. Telephoned reports are however to be confirmed in writing at the earliest opportunity, at the same time pointing out that they have already been telephoned.  
  
Vienna and Graz are available as transmission points for radio reports.
  5. From the commencement of the campaign, the method and extent of the use of all propaganda means in order to attain a definite military objective, is left to the Armies and Panzer Group 1.

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Where propaganda texts contain anything more than purely tactical matters governed by place and situation, they must in every case conform to the propaganda lines laid down in paragraph 1.

6. The dropping of leaflets for the Yugoslav troops and population by the Luftwaffe will be authorized direct by OKW if necessary.

7. It would be advantageous were the Armies to prepare posters addressed to the population, conforming in substance with the propaganda policy mentioned in paragraph 1 and suited to their various districts; these can, furthermore, contain in the briefest form the most important orders from the C.in C. to the population.

In addition to German, these posters are to be published only in the Serbian, Croat, Slovene and Macedonian languages.

8. Loudspeakers are to be employed, not only as the situation requires for propaganda warfare against the enemy, but also for influencing the populations of the occupied districts by means of propaganda. Method and extent of such employment is left to the Armies and Panzer Group 1.

Texts used over loud speakers are to conform to the propaganda lines laid down in paragraph 1.

9. OKW will send pamphlets about the State of Yugoslavia and directions for the behaviour of the German troops in Yugoslavia to the Armies, etc.

The pamphlets are to be distributed down to division level in addition to Propaganda units, and the instructions therein down to company level inclusive.

10. Deliveries of home newspapers, information for the troops, etc. and the supply of other welfare material of all kinds will be effected through the Armed Forces Propaganda Department's branch office in Vienna.

11. Wherever it is possible to keep a check on the press in the occupied parts of Yugoslavia, publication may continue subject to German censorship. This applies especially to Croatia. The main duty of the censorship is to ensure that reports and comments are in no way detrimental to German interests. It is to be impressed upon the Press that their main duty is to exercise a calming influence on the population.

Where it is not possible to control the press, the publication of newspapers and periodicals and the functioning of Yugoslav News Offices are to be suspended.

12. It is of particular importance to capture undamaged the Yugoslav Broadcasting Stations. As soon as complete censorship of a station has been assured, broadcasts are to be resumed on a limited scale. Suitable announcements are to be made, repeatedly warning the population against participation in the fighting and exhorting them to maintain quiet and order.

News for the Broadcasting Stations is to be supplied by the German News Service receiving stations set up for that purpose by the Propaganda units.

signed: Keitel

Chief of Staff, OKW

/Fuehrer

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Fuehrer Headquarters,  
29 March 1941

Special Orders relating to Directive 25.

(Operation Twentyfive)

I. Operational zone and executive

1. In Carinthia and Styria the authority applying to an operational zone of the Armed Forces and the regulations for its maintenance will come into force with immediate effect.

A declaration that this district is an Army operational zone will not be issued. On the contrary, the Ob d H is authorized, by the Fuehrer's decree of 29 March 1941, to issue the necessary orders for the execution of his military task and for the protection of the troops. He may delegate this authority to the C.in C's of the Armies. Such orders will take priority over all other duties and instructions issued by the civil authorities.

2. The regulations for Rumania and Bulgaria laid down in Special Orders No. 1 relating to Directive 20 remain in force. The regulations laid down for Bulgaria will be similarly applied to Hungary.

3. The part of Yugoslavia to be occupied as a result of the operations of the German troops will be an Army operational zone. The Ob d H has authority to exercise executive powers in this district and is empowered to pass this authority on to the C.in C's of the Armies.

It is imperative that raw materials found in the areas occupied by German troops are quickly seized and guarded.

Further directions on this point will be sent to the Ob d H through the Commissioners for the Four Year Plan.

II. Traffic of persons, goods and communications.

1. The following is to be carried out on the commencement of hostilities and the Luftwaffe raid:

- (a) An embargo on traffic of persons, goods and communications (including railway traffic) over the German-Yugoslav frontier. This embargo will be laid on by OKH, with the exception of the long-distance telegraph circuit, which will be interrupted by OKW (WFSt/WNV). An embargo has already been placed on German shipping on the Danube in the area of Yugoslavia.

- (b) Independently of paragraph (a), an embargo on communications traffic from Germany to all foreign countries including the occupied areas. To be carried out by OKW (Ausl/Abw Department) in cooperation with the Foreign Office.

2. OKW (Ausl/Abw Department) in cooperation with the Foreign Office will cause preparations to be made for a frontier embargo similar to that in 1(a) to be imposed by Italy, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria on their frontiers with Yugoslavia in such a way that it can be imposed by a code-word at short notice and ensuring the element of surprise. Authority is given for discussions about this with these countries and OKW/WFSt will determine the moment that the code-word is to be sent out.

OKW (Ausl/Abw Department) will cause the embargo on communications mentioned in 1(b) to be raised as soon as possible. At the same time the Ausl/Abw Department must ensure that until further notice this communications embargo can be reimposed from 2000 hours to 0700 hours on specifically determined days.

3. After the entry into Yugoslavia, the embargo on the German-Jugoslav frontier will remain in force for all non-military traffic of persons, goods and communications.

The frontier embargo will extend to leading personalities and members of the Supreme Reich Authority and Party offices. OKW/WFSt will inform the Supreme Reich Authority and Party offices accordingly at the right time. Exceptions to this embargo will be decided by the Ob d H and Headquarters authorised by him.

Applications for entry permits are to be made exclusively to C.in C. Army.

### III. Prisoners-of-war.

The evacuation of prisoners taken by the German troops in the operational zone of the 2nd Army H.Q. will be effected by OKH as far as the German-Jugoslav or German-Hungarian frontiers, where it will be taken over by the OKW (POW Dept). The permanent camps to be set up by the OKW (POW Dept) in Wehrkreis XVII (Vienna) are to be ready to receive prisoners by the beginning of the operations. OKH (Chief of Armaments and Replacement Army) will arrange for the necessary rations to be available in Wehrkreis XVII.

Prisoners taken by the German troops in the operational zone of 12th Army will remain to begin with in the custody of 12th Army H.Q. OKH will make arrangements for their further evacuation with OKW (POW Dept).

### IV. Propaganda

1. To carry out propaganda duties Propaganda Company 649 will remain under the command of 2nd Army H.Q. Propaganda Company 690 under 12th Army H.Q., and Air War Reporting Company 8 under Fliegerkorps VIII. Panzer Propaganda Company 691 will be transferred and attached to Panzer Group 1.
2. For the attainment of a definite tactical objective the method and extent of the employment of all propaganda means will be left to Army H.Q. and other H.Q.s.
3. OKW will set up propaganda liaison offices in Graz, Sofia and Bucharest. All propaganda units will at all times despatch their news reports to the nearest Propaganda Liaison Office.

In order to accelerate by all means the despatch of reports to the rear, the Army and other Headquarters will take all steps to allow the use of their despatch and communications services, including courier aircraft.

4. Instructional pamphlets on Yugoslavia, which are to be issued down to divisional level, in addition to Propaganda units, as well as directions for the behaviour of the German troops in Yugoslavia, which are to be distributed down to company level, will be sent by OKW to the Army and other Headquarters direct.
5. The supply of all kinds of welfare material for the troops will be made through the branch office of the Armed Forces Propaganda Department in Vienna.

### V. War Economy.

The liaison staffs and technical units necessary to start up at an early moment all installations, important to the war economy (bauxite and copper mines) and public utilities will be transferred to the Army Commands by OKW (Economics and Armaments Department).

signed: Keitel  
Chief of Staff, OKW

/OKH

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OKH H.Q.  
30 March 1941.

Assembly instructions for "Operation 25"  
and additional directive for "Marita"

1. As a result of the change in the political situation in the Balkans caused by the military coup in Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia is to be regarded as an enemy even if she affirms her loyalty.

The Fuehrer and Supreme Commander has therefore decided to destroy Jugoslavia as quickly as possible.

The operation will be known under the code-name "Operation 25".

2. The OKH plans to attack Yugoslavia by means of a pincer movement from the Klagenfurt - Graz district and around Nagy Kanizsa on the one hand (2nd Army) and from the district around Sofia on the other (12th Army) in the general direction of Belgrade and southwards and to engage and destroy the Yugoslav armed forces. Furthermore to occupy the southern part of Yugoslavia as soon as possible so as to establish a link with the Italian Army Group in Albania and to use it as a base for the continuation of the German-Italian offensive against Greece.

The early opening up of traffic on the Danube and the occupation of the copper mines at Bor (near Krivelj) are important to the war economy.

3. Enemy position

Defensive action by the enemy is to be expected in northern Yugoslavia. Racial differences may cause the Yugoslav Command to restrict defence to the Serbian districts. In which case a large number of delaying obstructions are to be expected in the Slovene and Croat parts of the country.

In southern Yugoslavia it must be assumed that the enemy will defend his eastern frontier by copious use of obstructions and will at the same time try to clear his rear by invading Albania in collusion with the Anglo-Greek forces.

When the German attack has split the Yugoslav defence by seizing the main connecting roads, it is to be expected that the Yugoslav troops will put up a tough resistance and fight resolutely in the mountainous country as long as they have ammunition and food. Racial questions may play a decisive part in the duration and toughness of such resistance.

For details of the enemy position see supplement 1.

4. The rest of the orders issued for the operation against Greece remain in force, including those for the seizure of the islands in the northern Aegean - the Fuehrer himself, however, will issue the order to take the island of Lemnos. Defence on the Turkish frontier is to be left to the Bulgarians for the time being. One Panzer Division is to be available as support.

5. Time schedule for the operations

On the 5th April, as soon as sufficient Luftwaffe forces are ready and the weather permits, attack by the Luftwaffe on the Yugoslav ground organisation and on Belgrade by continuous day and night attacks.

Simultaneously, on no account earlier, commencement of the attack by the 12th Army (except the northern group, Panzer Group 1) on Yugoslavia and Greece.

Arrangements are to be made so that, in the event of unfavourable weather, the Army Command can postpone the attack up to ten hours before the scheduled start of the air raids.

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## 6. Cooperation by other States

### (a) Cooperation by the Italians

The Italian 2nd Army drawn up east of Trieste will have to tie up the enemy forces in front of it. It will then link up with the advance of the 2nd Army in a general south-easterly direction, as soon as the advance of the 2nd Army has shaken the ranks of the enemy opposing the Italian 2nd Army. A demarcation line will then be laid down.

On the Greco-Albanian front the Italians will go over to the defensive, and will block and defend the frontier at the most important crossing points from Albania to Yugoslavia near Scutari, Kukës, Debar and Struga.

Liaison officers are to be appointed:

by the 12th Army to the Italian Army Group in Albania (order already issued),

by the 2nd Army to the Italian 2nd Army (order follows).

### (b) Cooperation by Hungary

Hungary will take part in the operations against Yugoslavia and will advance into the district north of the Save and Danube as far as the confluence of the Theiss (Tisa) and the Danube.

To this end the Royal Hungarian Army Command plans to have the following ready on the frontier by approximately the 14th April:

In the district west of the Danube - the 3rd Army with 3 brigades to begin with;

In the district between the Danube and the Theiss - the 2nd Army with 12 brigades;

East of the Theiss (Tisa) under the 2nd Army - 1 brigade.

For the forthcoming operation the Royal Hungarian Army Command has placed itself under the command of the OKH. OKH will despatch a fully authorised officer of the General Staff as liaison officer with the Royal Hungarian Army Command.

Demarcation lines

### (c) of Rumanian cooperation

Active participation by Rumania in the move against Yugoslavia is not expected. Nevertheless, the Rumanians will establish reinforced frontier patrols along her frontier. Rumania's main task continues to be defensive cover against Russia.

### (d) of Bulgarian cooperation

In case Bulgarian force takes an active part in the move against Yugoslavia, AOK12 is to make any necessary arrangements for this with the Bulgarian Army Command. Any Bulgarian forces employed against Yugoslavia are to come under the command of the German headquarters.

## 7. Cooperation by the Luftwaffe

Air raids are not to be made on Croatia, but units of Yugoslav troops in this area can be regarded as targets.

12th Army H.Q. are directed to cooperate with Fliegerkorps VIII and 2nd Army H.Q. with Luftflotte 4.

C.in C. Luftwaffe will ensure adequate anti-aircraft protection for Graz, Klagenfurt, Villach and Leoben as well as for Vienna.

signed: von Brauchitsch

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/Supplement

Supplement No. 1 to Assembly instruction for Operation 25

30 March 1941

Details of the enemy position

1. Total strength

Jugoslavia has the following forces available after a general mobilisation:

- 24 infantry divisions, of which 11 are reserve divisions.
- 20 infantry brigades (regular and reserve troops mixed).
- 3 cavalry divisions (regular).
- 3 cavalry brigades (reserves).
- 1 fortress division (Kotor = Cattaro).
- 1 fortress brigade (Sibenik).

In addition the following units are established.

about 20 battalions of garrison troops for the fortifications on the northern frontier (German and Hungary).  
10 regiments of frontier guards.

Jugoslavia has no major motorised or tank formations.

The forces are assembled in Armies (1st, 5th and Coastal Army).

A 7th Army is being formed on the northern frontier.

At present all regular formations are fully mobile, the bulk of the reserve formations are still in process of formation.

General mobilisation was publicly announced over the radio on the 28 March.

Attention should be paid to the preparations for carrying on guerilla warfare. The Yugoslav Defence Units (Sokols, Chetniks, and others) have been specially trained for this. They have already been equipped with weapons (as infantry, but without heavy weapons).

2. Fighting quality of the enemy

Training is backward. Field training and coordination of arms at higher levels in particular have been neglected. The best trained are the Serbian mountain troops.

The corps of Officers is composed of over-age Staff Generals, a General Staff laid out on French lines, with undoubtedly talented soldiers, but with badly trained regimental officers.

The men are good individual fighters. They are brave, tough and modest, but vulnerable to modern heavy weapons and air attacks.

The Air Force is still but little developed (at present there are 300 operational and 700 obsolete machines). There is only a small number of bomber formations.

To sum up it can be stated that the Yugoslav army is, at best, only in a position to carry on offensive warfare against an equal opponent.

The Yugoslav and especially the Serbian soldier will fight bravely and often stand up to severe hand to hand fighting.

The Yugoslav army will however soon be overcome when opposed by German troops.

/Supplement

Supplement No.2 to Assembly Instructions for "Operation 25"

Summary of Forces

I. 12th Army

Panzer Group 1.

HQ Staff to XIV Army Corps motorised.

" " XXXX " " "

" " XXXXI " " "

" " XI " " "

" " XXX " " "

" " XVIII Mountain Corps.

2nd, 5th, 9th, 11th and 16th Panzer Divisions.

60th and SS "Reich" motorised Divisions.

46th, 50th, 72nd, 73rd, 76th, 164th, 198th and 294th Infantry Divisions.

4th, 5th and 6th Mountain Divisions.

Infantry Regiment "Gross Deutschland",

SS "Adolf Hbler" Division,

Infantry Regiment 125,

"Hermann Goering" Regiment

and Bulgarian formations.

II. 2nd Army

HQ Staff XXXXVI Army Corps motorised

" " LI " " "

" " LII " " (+)

" " XXXXIX Mountain Corps.

8th and 14th Panzer Divisions.

16th motorised Division.

79th (+), 125th (+), 132nd, 169th (+), 183rd and 197th (+) Infantry Divisions.

1st Mountain Division.

(+) Translator's note: these presumably comprised the General von Briesen Corps, designed as a reserve, which did not arrive in the assembly area in time and took no part.)

Fuehrer Headquarters,  
31 March 1941

C.in C. Army, Operations Staff.

C.in C. Luftwaffe Operations Staff.

The Fuehrer has ordered the following:

1. The provisional time-table for the Balkan operation is as follows:

5th April: "Marita" attack,

Thrust towards Skoplje,

Attack by the Luftwaffe with all suitable forces on the Yugoslav ground organisation and on Belgrade.

(Time of attack to be determined by C.in C. Luftwaffe).

8th April: Thrust towards Nish.

12th April: Thrust from the Graz region with the forces then available.

2. The important group thrusting towards Skoplje in order to relieve quickly the Italian eastern flank in Albania - and also to provide cover for its northern flank - is to be reinforced. (SS "Adolf Hitler" Division, whose later employment with Panzer Group 1 may be decided later).

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3. The 22nd (Luftlande) Division will be temporarily seconded to the Army to reinforce the group thrusting towards Nish. Transfer to be arranged by C. in C. Luftwaffe. Details to be settled between the High Commands.
4. All steps are to be taken to strengthen the measures for protecting the Danube against sinking of shipping, drift-mines, etc. The forces of our allies are to be utilised to this end, as required. Directions will be given as to the possibility of seizing important points at the start of the operations.

For Chief of Staff, OKW  
signed: Warlimont.

~~Generaloberst~~ *Luft*, Rome  
2 April 1941

To: OKL Operations Staff

Re: Study of Yugoslavia.

The more important contents of the outline signed by General ~~oberst~~ Pricolo on the 29th March:

1. Contains prerequisites.
2. Theatres of war.
3. Remarks concerning deployment.
4. Demarcation line according to General Mattei as reported in talk between Italuft and C. in C. Luftwaffe top secret of 29 March and demarcation line according to General ~~oberst~~ Pricolo as reported in teletype Nr 1507/41 top secret of 31 March 1941.

The district between the two demarcation lines may be attacked by both air forces.

5. Starting situation: The idea is to separate Yugoslavia and Greece and thus break Jugoslavian resistance and then Greece. The Italian Air Force has the following main tasks:

- (a) to attack the enemy air force and ground organisation within its operational sector,
- (b) to attack naval bases in Dalmatia and Yugoslav or any British naval units in the Adriatic,
- (c) to support the ground campaign first in the defensive and later in the offensive phase. In Croatia and Dalmatia attacks on dwelling-houses and civilian population must be avoided in all circumstances.

6. ~~Luftflotte 2~~ *2nd Squadra* will attack land and sea targets between Tarviso and the line Pescara - Spalato (Split) (excluding this).  
~~Luftflotte 4~~ *4th Squadra (Albania)* will attack

- (a) land and sea targets between the Pescara-Spalato line and the Albanian frontier,
- (b) targets around the borders of Albania from the sea to the Greek frontier. (Latter in cooperation with the Air Force in Albania.)

~~Luftflotte 4~~ *4th Squadra* and the Air Force in Albania will also continue the campaign against Greece as the situation demands, according to orders from the Superaerico and the requirements of the High Command in Albania.

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7. Direction: Considering the defensive operations of the Army and the position of Italy which lies in its whole extent within the range of the enemy air force, the first job will be to attack the enemy air force and its ground organisation. On X-Day all available aircraft are to be utilised, preferably for two or three sorties, with the purpose of destroying the enemy air force and preventing the British from using Yugoslav aerodromes.

Endeavours are to be made for continuous employment of the fighter formations in low-level attacks on airfields. It is, furthermore, important that the enemy naval forces are disabled and the use of their bases by the British prevented.

Detailed tasks for ~~Luftflotte 2~~ 2nd Squadron.

X-Day-1: Photo-reconnaissance over the naval bases on the Dalmatian coast.

X-Day: Bomb and machine-gun attacks on enemy ground organisations; bombing raid on Sebenico (Sibenik) naval base; fighter cover over Venice, Trieste and Pola; cover if necessary for own land forces.

X plus 1 and following days: Repetition of these attacks and extension to newly ordered targets.

~~Luftflotte 4~~ 4th Squadron.

X-Day minus 1: Photo-reconnaissance over naval bases Spalato (Split) and Cattaro (Kotor).

X-Day: Bomb and machine-gun attacks on ground organisations; bombing attacks on naval bases Spalato and possible Cattaro; in cooperation with the Navy seek out and attack enemy surface and submarine forces; support of the Army on the Albanian front, especially in the Scutari sector; fighter cover over Bari, Brindisi and Taranto.

X plus 1 and following days: repetition of these attacks and extension to newly ordered targets.

Air Force in Albania

X-Day and following days: Bombing raids on airfields along the frontier; fighter cover over Tirana, Durazzo and Valona; support for the Army, especially in the Scutari sector.

2nd Squadron

~~Luftflotte 2~~ will arrange night fighter patrols over Goerz (Gorizia), Ronchi, Treviso and Bologna.

Additions by C. in C. Luftwaffe in Italy

1. Railways, construction works (bridges, dams etc), traffic junctions will not be attacked in accordance with German wishes -
2. General Mattei promised to make the desired attacks on seaplane bases -
3. Question of the demarcation line not yet quite settled, since General Pricolo considers it possible that attacks may be made from the neighbourhood of Laibach (Ljubljana) and the area south of the Save and west of the Vrba river against Venice, Pola and Trieste, and from Mostar against Ancona and wishes to retain freedom of action against these. Fresh interview about to take place.

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The Chief of the German Liaison Staff with the  
Italian Army. (Military Attaché, Rome)

Rome,  
2 April 1941

General Roatta made the following statement to me on 1 April concerning the intended deployment of the reinforcements for the 2nd (Italian) Army on the Julian front.

"The five divisions and Alpine groups (Alpine Division 3 bis) which are at present on the Yugoslav frontier have to begin with the task of warding off any attack that may take place. The reinforcements will be deployed behind the intended break-through point in the neighbourhood of Monte Nevoso (Schneeberg). So far, the Littorio, Pasubio and 1 mobile Divisions are being moved in as the first wave; all movements should be completed by 15 April. In addition, fifteen field artillery Batteries (Abteilung) will be deployed at the break-through point, whose co-ordinated employment will be directed by Inspector General of Artillery Fautilli.

We will be ready to attack on the 15th; if the German Army at Graz goes in on the 12th, the pressure on the Yugoslav front will make itself felt by the 15th.

With our small supplies of ammunition that is essential, since otherwise we could hardly be successful.

As Chief of the Army General Staff only the 2nd Army will be under my command, whilst the Army Group in Albania will continue to be directly under the command of the Armed Forces General Staff. So with the start of the operation I shall move to the Julian front.

In addition, the Marche Division is to be transferred to the Army Group in Albania.

signed: von Rintelen.

12th Army Headquarters,  
2 April 1941

Army Order No.4

1. Developments in the political situation have led to the decision to smash Yugoslavia. The attack on Greece will be carried out simultaneously.
2. The attack on Yugoslavia will be made from the Bulgarian and Rumanian region (12th Army) and from the south-east German and neighbouring Hungarian region (2nd Army).

The co-operation of Italian and Hungarian forces has not yet been clarified.

3. Enemy

a. Greece

The Greeks relying on British and Yugoslav support will probably put up a determined resistance to the German attack.

The first defence in any strength is to be expected along the river Mesta (Nestos) and in the line of fortifications (Metaxas Line) which has been extended as far as the Bulgarian frontier.

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A withdrawal sector by sector from Eastern Macedonia in a south-westerly direction appears to be planned. At the same time stubborn resistance is to be expected on the river Strymon, with finally a determined defence in the positions occupied, together with British troops, on the forward slopes of the mountains on the general line:

Kaimakchalan - Edessa - Veria - Katerini.

Greek forces

There are 4 divisions (18th, 12th, 7th, 14th) in the Metaxas Line.

About 2 divisions and 1 newly-formed mobile brigade are assumed to be in the area north and north-east of Salonica, parts of these being along the river Strymon.

Parts of one reserve division have been reported in the Edessa - Katerini area.

15 Greek divisions are tied down on the Albanian front. 2 reserve divisions are being formed (Athens and the Peloponnese), and the formation of 2 more reserve divisions in southern Greece is reported.

British forces

The forward elements of about 3 motorised divisions, including probably one armoured division, have reached the Veria - Edessa region; the main body is assembled in the Katerini - Kozani - Larissa area; some units are still in Athens, where further troop disembarkations are reported.

The strength of the forces on the islands is not known. The occupation of Thasos, Lemnos and Lesbos is confirmed; it has not been established whether bases have been constructed.

b. Jugoslavia

Jugoslavia will probably make every effort to prevent a German breakthrough to the Italian front in Albania and to maintain contact with the Anglo-Greek forces.

Accordingly units with a preponderance of regular soldiers have been assembled in south east Yugoslavia, who will doubtless fight stubbornly from the beginning and will make their final determined stand behind the Morava and Vardar. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that Yugoslav forces, possibly reinforced by British motorised units, will advance towards Albania on the flank and in the rear of the Italians.

Full mobilisation is to be completed by the 3rd April. Since the 3rd and 5th Armies were mobilised earlier, they must be considered fully prepared.

To the 3rd Army have been added: at least one brigade of cavalry, one heavy artillery battery and one tank battalion. The transfer to the south of one division from the Drinaka (1st Army), one from the Suma (near Majdanpek - 5th Army) and one from the Timok (5th Army) is reported but not yet confirmed. At the most, therefore, the 3rd Army (Southern Serbia) has at its disposal at the moment:

3 infantry divisions } - a total of about 21 regiments mostly  
5 mixed brigades } regular troops.

together with 1 cavalry brigade  
1 tank battalion

/The

The 5th Army consists approximately of

- 5 infantry divisions
- 1 cavalry division
- 1 tank battalion

Field positions are under construction on the Bulgarian and Rumanian frontiers. Mines and road blocks must be expected in the neighbourhood of the frontier. Minefields are reported on the Rumanian frontier.

c. Air Force

(a) Greece

No appreciable reinforcement of the British Air Force on the mainland has been established. This is estimated at the moment at about 220 aircraft. The strength of the British Air Force on the islands, especially Crete, is not known.

(b) Jugoslavia

The Yugoslav Air Force is remarkably good. Its widely spread, well-trained ground organisation and the many airfields at its disposal, to which it moved its flying formations some time ago, make it appear remotely possible to destroy the Air Force on the first day. They fly German, Yugoslav and Russian types of aircraft.

In general in the mountainous and rugged country low-level attacks from the air are to be expected.

d. Turkey

Active intervention by Turkey from Thrace appears highly improbable. The forces there (some 28 divisions) are unchanged. Appearance of British troops so far not confirmed.

4. The 12th Army will make a surprise attack on X-Day over the Yugoslav-Bulgarian frontier from Kynstendil to west of Petrich as well as over the Greek-Bulgarian frontier and will smash the enemy forces in southern Serbia and Greek Thrace. The objective of this attack is to thrust through as swiftly as possible as far as the Albanian frontier west of Skoplje, over the Vardar to Edessa and Veria, towards Salonica and to the northern coast of the Aegean Sea, so as to pave the way for the final destruction of the then separated Yugoslav and Greco-British enemy forces.

It will be the further task of the 12th Army to break through with a pincer movement in the general direction of Belgrade, Panzer Group 1 starting on B-Day from the area northwest of Sofia and from the western end of Rumania (neighbourhood of Temesvar (Timisoara) on C-Day, so as to rout the enemy forces at Nish and Krusevac as well as those north-east of Belgrade, swiftly occupy the Serbian capital and open up for German use the railway and roads Belgrade - Nish - Sofia and the Danube.

5. For the operation I order the following:-

- (a) On X-Day XXXX Army Corps will make a surprise break out of the area around Kynstendil - Gorna Djumaya and thrust through via Kumanovo and Stip towards Skoplje, with the axis of attack along the Kynstendil - Skoplje road.

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At the same time the Serbian formations in the Kumanovo - Skoplje - Stip area are to be quickly defeated by concentrating forces, Skoplje is to be quickly occupied and finally they are without delay to push on further, as far as the Albanian frontier in the general direction of Prizren and Tetovo, so as to eliminate in good time any effects of Yugoslav army elements on the northern wing of the Italian front in Albania.

Precautions against a threat to the two open flanks will be taken from the outset, by depth in attack and by active reconnaissance.

How far XXX Army Corps can be later brought in for the operation against Greece will depend on the development of the situation.

- (b) On X-Day XVIII Army Corps will open up the Roupel Pass by surprise, and by a heavy concentration of its forces on the western flank will destroy the Greek frontier defences and advance as swiftly as possible, with fast moving forces (2nd Panzer Division, etc) driving west of Lake Doiran, to Salonica as well as over the Vardar to Edessa (concentration of attack at this point) and Veria. It is essential to cover the flank in the Stip direction.

Advantage is to be taken of every opportunity to prevent the planned setting up of an Anglo-Greek front between Mount Olympus and the high ground at Edessa.

The 72nd Division is to launch an attack on Seres (Serrai) so as to force a quick crossing of the Strymon and to protect the flank and rear: units of this division are to drive on to Drama and Kavalla.

- (c) The first task of XXX Army Corps is to push through as swiftly as possible on X-Day to Xanthi and Gumuljina (Komotini) and by driving forward with motorised forces to seize and secure the ports of Kara Agach (Pto Lagos) and Dede Agach (Alexandroupolis) without delay.

Finally XXX Army Corps without further delay is to force a crossing of the Mesta (R. Nestos) with closely concentrated forces and attack Salonica by way of Kavalla.

The demarcation line on the Turkish-Greek frontier must not be crossed by German troops without orders from H.Q. 12th Army (See Army Order No.3).

Bulgarian troops are forbidden to enter the district north of the Ortakoj - Demotika road.

Provision is being made for the surprise occupation of the islands Thasos, Samothrace and in certain circumstances Lemnos, under the command of XXX Army Corps in cooperation with the Fliegerkorps VIII and the necessary airborne troops and naval forces. The order for execution will follow.

- (d) Panzer Group 1 will make a surprise attack on B-Day over the Serbian-Bulgarian frontier from the area north-west of Sofia, will destroy the enemy forces at Piro (Concentration of attack at this point) and Leskovac, and break through as swiftly as possible to Nish and Krusevac.

From here on, a pincer movement is to be made on Belgrade, in conjunction with XXXI Army Corps which will break in from Temesvar on C-Day, so as to occupy the Yugoslav capital as quickly as possible and to open up for German use the railway and roads from Belgrade via Nish to Sofia, as well as the Danube.

- (e) The 16th Panzer Division, under command 12th Army, will hold itself in readiness in the Stara Zagora - Yambol - Sliven area so as to be able, in closest cooperation with the Bulgarian forces there, to ward off a Turkish advance against Bulgaria.

The line Turnovo-on-the-Maritsa (Simeonavgrad) - Yambol - Burgas must not be crossed or flown over by German troops until further orders.

#### 6. Boundary lines:

- (a) Between Panzer Group 1 and XXXX Army Corps:  
Sofia - Leva Reka (both inclusive to Panzer Group 1) - Pristina (inclusive to XXXX).
- (b) Between XXXX and XVIII Army Corps:  
Razlog - Simitli - Krivolac (south of Stip) - Bitolj (inclusive to XXXX).
- (c) Between XVIII and XXX Army Corps (for the first phase):  
Floudiv (XXX) - Kavalla (XXX) - Athos (XXX).
- (d) Between XXX Army Corps and 16th Panzer Division:  
Stara Zagora (16th Pz Div) - Harmanli (XXX) - Edirne (16th Pz Div).

#### 7. Army reserves

- (a) L. Army Corps with 46th Division under Command will, to begin with, extend to the Karlovo - Floudiv road and the Pazarjik neighbourhood, so as to be able to advance from there in the direction of Samokov or Razlog as the situation requires.
- (b) XI Army Corps, with the 76th Division and the 198th Division in reserve is to be brought forward along the Pleven - Lukovit - Botegrad road coming into the Novoseltsi (east of Sofia) neighbourhood. A further advance via Samokov - Dupnitsa to the Struma valley is intended.
- (c) 60th motorised Infantry Division will advance on X-Day along the Pazarjik - Ihtiman - Samokov road - as far as the Dupnitsa neighbourhood to be at the disposal of H.Q., 12th Army.

It is intended to employ this division either with Panzer Group 1 or XXXX Army Corps as required.

#### 8. Task of the Army Mission:

- (a) Guarding the Iron Gate, with artillery support.
- (b) Protection on the Danube against monitors and drift mines.

#### 9. Bulgarian Army

The Bulgarian Armed Forces will mobilise further forces and above all strengthen defences against Turkey.

After the entry of 12th Army, the Bulgarian Armed Forces will not cross the Greek or Yugoslav frontiers until further notice, for political reasons.

The Bulgarian liaison officers with 12th Army and similarly, German liaison officers with the Bulgarian Armed Forces will return to their units when the frontier is crossed.

10. Fliegerkorps VIII will in cooperation with H.Q. 12th Army support to begin with the attack of XVIII Army Corps, in particular, in the opening up of the Roupel Pass, and finally in the main attack of XXXX Army Corps in its breakthrough along the Kynsten dil - Skoplje road. Further employment is intended, as the situation develops with XVIII or XXXX Army Corps and later, units of it with Panzer Group 1 as well.

Operations in detail are to be worked out in closest collaboration between Army G.H.Q. and Fliegerkorps VIII.

It will be the further task of Fliegerkorps VIII, in accordance with instructions from Luftflotte 4, to make an early attack on the Yugoslav ground organisation after completion of reconnaissance, and by attacks on Skoplje and Salonica to interrupt railway communications at these places.

The rearward limit for dropping bombs as well as the line beyond which air recognition marks (swastika flags) are to be displayed will be ordered by the Corps H.Q.s. for their sectors.

When the Luftwaffe goes into action the Italian Air Force will synchronise its attacks in cooperation with Fliegerkorps X and Fliegerkorps VIII.

11. Navy: see supplement No. 1.

12. Reconnaissance.

Panzer Group 1 and H.Q.s. of XXXX, XVIII and XXX Corps will carry out reconnaissance in their sectors from Y hours on X day as far as the line Belgrade - Pristina - Skoplje - Edessa - Katerini - northern coast of the Aegean Sea. Main objective for Panzer Group 1 the Nish - Krusevac neighbourhood, for XXXX Army Corps in the direction of Skoplje, for XVIII Army Corps Edessa - Salonica, for XXX Army Corps Kavalla.

Fliegerkorps VIII is requested to keep the southern Serbian and northern Greek areas (roads and railways) under observation.

In general the early confirmation of the following will be important; whether the Serbians are bringing up further forces from Northern Yugoslavia in the direction of Skoplje, whether British forces are moving forward into the southern part of Yugoslavia and whether the Greeks are moving forces from Albania or from within Greece in the direction of Edessa and Salonica or if they are evacuating eastern Macedonia.

Furthermore the immediate confirmation of any possible enemy landings on the north coast of the Aegean Sea is essential.

For the rest see special orders for reconnaissance.

13. Air Raid Precautions: see supplement No. 2.

14. Economy

I expect, in the interests of the whole conduct of the war, all units to refrain from making any inroads on the economy of the occupied areas and in particular on stocks of all kinds they find (for example tobacco, wine).

Stocks, offices, laboratories and other vulnerable industrial installations are, if necessary, to be guarded.

15. It is vitally important that plans for the operation are kept secret. The attention of all officers, officials, NCO's and men is again drawn to the "Fuehrer's Basic Order" of 11 Jan 1940.

The time (day and hour of the attack) in particular, is to be kept secret as long as possible.

All reconnaissance must be carried out with the greatest caution (whenever possible in Bulgarian uniforms).

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16. Express attention will be drawn to the necessity for the adequate protection of lines of communications, constructions works etc. (dams, bridges etc.), against sabotage and guerillas (especially in Serbia). Messengers, couriers, etc, are not to be sent out alone. Prisoners are to be properly guarded.

17. Battle Headquarters

12th Army H.Q.	Chankoriya
Panzer Group 1	Kynstendil
XVIII Army Corps	at present Sveti Vrac, from X-Day Marinopole.
XXX Army Corps	Kirdzali (Karjali), on X-Day Makaz (36 km south of Kirdzali).
XIV Army Corps	Gorna Banja (5 km west of Sofia).
XI Army Corps	Pleven
L Army Corps	Botevgrad
XXXXI Army Corps	Temesvar (Timisoara)
16th Panzer Division	Stara Zagora
60th Infantry Division	(motorised) Plovdiv.

Signed: List

Field Marshal, C.in C. 12th Army.

Supplement No.1 to Army Order No. 4.

Navy

I. Naval C.in C. South-East (Admiral Schuster, Chief of Staff Captain Heye), with headquarters in Plovdiv is appointed as C.in C. naval forces employed in the south-eastern theatre to cooperate with 12th Army H.Q. and Fliegerkorps VIII in that area.

Under his Command are included:

Admiral A (Rear Admiral v. Stosch), whose present location is likewise Plovdiv. His duties are:

- (a) Organisation of the places captured on the Aegean coast, including port installations and all shipping.
- (b) Preparation and execution of sea duties, transport and supplies into the area occupied by German troops from Dede Agach as far as the Isthmus of Corinth (final objective).

Efforts will be made to hand over suitable tasks to the Bulgarian Navy in the Kavalla - Dede Agach area and to transfer the above-mentioned duties to them, if necessary with German cooperation.

The subordinate commands (three Sea Defence Commanders and the personnel of two naval artillery batteries) are to man the most important ports. Of these 1 Sea Defence Commander and 1 naval artillery Battery (Abteilung) will be allocated to XVIII Army Corps for Salonica, 1 Sea Defence Commander and 1 naval artillery Battery (Abteilung) XXX Army Corps for the preparations for the capture of the islands of Thasos, Samothrace and Lemnos.

In addition, 5 stationary army coastal artillery Batteries (Abteilung) (each comprising 18 French 15-cm guns), due to arrive in Dupnitsa on or after 14 April, will be despatched and placed under Admiral A. Arrangements will be made to despatch these from Dupnitsa to Salonica and Kavalla.

- II. When ports, harbour installations and even the smallest coastal towns are captured, shipping of all sizes and harbour installations (batteries, signal stations, storage sheds, ships' equipment, etc) are not only to be preserved, but are also to be immediately secured for the Navy. It will be the duty of the Naval authorities on the spot to determine which material can be made available for other military or civil uses.
- III. The Naval Commands are to be connected up with the aircraft reporting service of the Luftwaffe and with the coastal reporting service which is to be set up by XVIII and XXX Army Corps.
- IV. With the opening of hostilities against Greece the German Government will declare the eastern Mediterranean inclusive of the Aegean Sea an operational zone, together with the waters already closed to neutral shipping by the Royal Italian Government. At the same time the German Armed Forces are authorised to carry out unrestricted warfare on all shipping.
- Excepted from the above are Turkish territorial waters, the Dardanelles and Sea of Marmara, which will remain open to neutral shipping. Ships in these waters must not be attacked. Turkish territory must not be violated by aircraft of the Luftwaffe, except in an emergency.
- V. When flying units are authorised to raid targets in Greece on the commencement of the "Marita" attack, shipping and construction works (bridges, etc) in the Corinth Canal must not be attacked, since it is vital that our own shipping has unhampered passage through the Canal after its capture.
- VI. The Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces has authorised immediate reconnaissance and attacks on all naval forces (including Greek) in Greek territorial waters of the island of Crete.

Supplement No.2 to Army Order No. 4

Air Raid Precautions

Anti-aircraft operations for the protection of the preparations and for the attack will be ordered by the Corps H.Qs. and Panzer Group 1.

The Staff of Flak Regiment 18 will be placed directly under command of XVIII Army Corps.

The anti-aircraft protection of Sofia by I/Flak 14 (directly under 12th Army command) has been ordered by AOK 12 Ia/Koluft Nr 741/41 top secret of 19 March 1941.

Light Flak 74 (60th motorised Infantry Division) will be placed temporarily under command of Fliegerkorps VIII. (Operational location Plovdiv).

The anti-aircraft units of Fliegerkorps VIII will be used for the protection of the ground organisation at Plovdiv and Krainici and in the southern Struma valley; some units will be prepared for intervention in the ground fighting by arrangement with XVIII and XXX Army Corps.

Protection of the Danube bridges and of the ports of Varna and Burgas will remain the task of the Luftwaffe Mission to Rumania.

Air raid protection for the troops and camouflage are to be especially strictly controlled when there are extraordinarily large concentrations in the deployment and assembly areas.

/Fuehrer

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Fuehrer Headquarters,

3 April 1941

Directive No. 26

Cooperation with our allies in the Balkans.

1. The military tasks intended for each of the south-east European nations in the campaign against Jugoslavia arise out of their political aims, which can be defined as follows:

Hungary, preferably, will occupy Banat, since it is to be awarded to her. However, Hungary has expressed her readiness to participate in the destruction of the enemy to an even greater degree.

Bulgaria is to receive Macedonia back; consequently she will be interested mainly in the attack in that direction, although no specific pressure will be exerted by Germany. In addition, the Bulgarians will have the duty of defending the rear against Turkey, with the assistance of a German armoured formation. For this purpose Bulgaria will also call upon the three divisions stationed on the Greek frontier.

Rumania is to confine her tasks, in her own as well as in Germany's interest, to securing her frontiers against Jugoslavia and Russia. The Chief of the German Armed Forces Mission is to work towards strengthening Rumania's preparedness for defence against Russia. At least two-way communications across the Hungarian-Rumanian border between the Hungarian and German liaison staffs must continue without interruption.

2. The following guiding principles will apply with regard to military cooperation and the organisation of command in the impending operations.

I reserve to myself the coordinated planning and direction of this campaign, as far as it has to do with laying down operational objectives for the Italian and Hungarian forces within the framework of the overall strategy. This must be carried out in such a manner to ensure that due allowance is made for the sensibilities of our allies and that the Chiefs of State of Italy and Hungary can still appear as sovereign military leaders in the eyes of their people and their armed forces.

Therefore I shall convey all military demands relating to the coordinated execution of operations (to be submitted to me by C.in C., Army and C.in C. Luftwaffe) to the Duce and to Regent Horthy in the form of personal letters as proposals and requests.

The G.O.C., 12th Army, is to use the same procedure in his relations with Bulgarian State and Military authorities. Should any Bulgarian divisions take part in the operations against Jugoslavia, they must be under command of the local Germany Military Authority.

3. A headquarters of the "German General attached to the High Command of the Hungarian Armed Forces" is to be set up in Hungary, and a Luftwaffe liaison staff is to be attached to its staff.

This headquarters will maintain my communications with the Regent, and will also maintain liaison between the branches of the Armed Forces and the Hungarian High Command.

All details of cooperation with the Italian and Hungarian forces are to be regulated by the branches of the Armed Forces and by the liaison personnel to be exchanged between the adjoining armies and air forces.

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4. The air defence forces of Rumania and Bulgaria will continue as integral parts of the German air defence of these countries, unless they should receive assignment under the Command of their own Armed Forces. Hungary is to protect her territory independently with the proviso that the German forces operating there and the installations important to them will be protected by the German Armed Forces.

5. Apart from the new regulation relating to coordinated command, agreements with Hungary remain in force. The Italian 2nd Army will be at liberty to move only when the attack of the German 2nd Army and XXXVI Army Corps mobile forces begins to have an effect. It may be necessary for this attack to move more southward than south-eastward for this purpose in the initial stages. OKW is to arrange that the Italian Air Force will restrict itself, first, to protecting the flank and rear of the Albanian front, second, to attacking airfields at Mostar and on the coast, and third, to cooperative missions ahead of the Italian 2nd Army, as soon as the latter's offensive begins.

6. Later I shall define the occupation duties to be allotted to the various nations after the end of the campaign. Meanwhile, we must emphasise in every way, in our manner of cooperating with our allies during operations, the feeling of brotherhood in arms for the purpose of attaining a common political goal.

Signed: Adolf Hitler

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Fuehrer Headquarters,  
3 April 1941

The Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces has ordered:

1. 12th Army to commence "Marita" and "Operation 25" on 6th April 1941 = M-Day, provided that local weather conditions permit support by Fliegerkorps VIII.

The time of attack is left to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

2. Start of air attack by Luftflotte 4 on Belgrade and the Yugoslav ground organisation on 6th April 1941 = M-Day, as far as weather conditions permit, otherwise, independently of the start of the 12th Army, at the earliest possible moment.

Time of attack is left to C.-in-C. Luftwaffe. As early a time as possible is desired.

C.in C. Luftwaffe will determine the appropriate time to launch the attack by the Italian Air Force and by Fliegerkorps X either co-incidental with or later than 12th Army attacks.

3. The Fuehrer reserves the right to order the cancellation of the operations until 1700 hours 5 April 1941.

Signed: Keitel  
Chief of Staff, OKW

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Teleprint message from AOK 12

4 April 1941

To: Military Mission to Rumania

Copy to: XXX Army Corps.

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Top secret - X-Day is 6th April 1941 for all arms.

Y-hour is 0520 hours.

This time is also the earliest moment for crossing the frontier and commencing hostilities.

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Teleprint message from Italuft

Italuft,  
Rome,  
undated (probably 4 April)

To: OKL Operations Staff.

Preliminary report.

1. Demarcation line: General Pricolo declared at first that he could not depart from the line he gave on 30 March. In the event of enemy bombing raids from this area, too much is at stake, especially in Trieste with its large amount of shipping. Neither his own people nor his troops would understand a passive attitude. In the course of the discussions General Pricolo made the concession that Italian bombing raids are only to be made on naval targets and seaplane bases. On the other hand he reserved the right to make fighter attacks on airfields west of the Pricolo line, especially on Agram (Zagreb), Sisak, Prijedor, Banja Luka.

2. Yellow identification sign: General Pricolo is giving the order for engine cowlings to be sprayed yellow. It will take some time to carry this out especially in Albania. For the first few days it cannot be counted on that painting will be carried out.

General Pricolo promised written confirmation of points 1 and 2. (Note at end says: 'please pass to Luftflotte 4 since we cannot get through to them).'

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Teleprint message from Luftflotte 4

undated (probably 4 April)

To: OKL Operations Staff.

Re: Operation 25, operational plans of Fliegerkorps.

1st sortie: attack on airfields at Sarajevo and Mostar.

2nd sortie: night operation, running attacks on Belgrade by two bomber Gruppen, time attack over target area 2200 hours until 2330 hours.

Operation on second day of the campaign: attacking the air forces in the area. Yugoslav - Albanian frontier up to Andrejevica - the river Lim as far as Uvac - Visegrad - Zavidovici - Petkovac (E. of Bos Novi) - Zara.

Raids on seaplane bases at Cattaro (Kotor) and Divolje (north-west of Split) and repetition of the attacks on the airfields at Sarajevo and Mostar.

If necessary, further night operation against Belgrade.

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Teleprint from Luftflotte 4

undated (probably 5 April)

To: OKL Operations Staff.

Proposal by Luftflotte 4:

Time of first raid on Belgrade - 0730 hours.

First formations to take off between 0600 hours and 0630 hours.

Fuehrer Headquarters,

5 April 1941

Copy of teleprint from General von Rintelen in Rome.

On 3 and 4 April 1941 I visited the troops in Albania, so as to get an idea of the measures which have been taken for the defence against Jugoslavia.

I had quite a long conversation with the Italian C.in C, General Cavallero, and his Chief of Staff, General Ferrero. General Cavallero was full of confidence.

The following orders have been issued for the defence of the Albanian-Jugoslav frontier.

(a) XXVI Army Corps' sector (General Nasci) between Lake Ochrid and Dibra (Debar):

Arezzo Division and Firenze Division reinforced by Alpine Battalion Intra and Cavalry Regiment Milano.

The line of the frontier will be held. There are permanent fortifications at the road junction near Librashe (Librazhd). The C.in C. expects a thrust here through Lia in the rear of the 9th Army.

(b) XIV Army Corps' sector (General Vecchi) between Dibra and the Grame sector north of Peshkopijs:

Cunense Alpine Division,  
Puglio Division (less 2 battalions),  
Cavalry Regiment Aosta.

In this sector the defence line leaves the frontier and lies on the Black Drin, since the frontier here runs along the mountain ridge.

(c) XVII Army Corps' sector (General Pafundi) continues to the coast.

A screen of border patrols along the frontier. The defence line lies behind the Drin as far as Skutari. Two infantry battalions and one artillery battery (Abteilung) of the Puglio Division posted at Kukes. Further west the ravine of the Drin will be patrolled by a Group of the Blackshirt Battalion. To begin with the Centauro Division has been stationed for the defence of Skutari since they are the only troops available.

As Skutari appears to me to be the weakest point of the front, I visited this part of the front and had talks with the General commanding XVII Army Corps in Miloti and with the G.O.C. Centauro Division, General Pizzolato, in Skutari. The Centauro Division is composed at the moment as follows: (8,000 men altogether).

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131st Tank Regiment, with 2 battalions equipped with 3-ton tanks and 1 company with 13-ton tanks (total 100).

1 Bersaglieri Regiment with 2 motorised battalions and 1 motor-cycle battalion.

Cavalry Regiment 'Guide',  
1 Artillery Regiment,  
2 Albanian Battalions.

This Division has been given the task by the Duce of defending the town of Skutari to the last man for reasons of prestige. The Divisional Commander has therefore grouped the bulk of the Division around the town, and is about to set up a forward defence line on the plain east of Lake Skutari (12 km north of Skutari). In addition the Tarabosh which dominates the town (from a height of 1897 ft on the south west - Tr) is occupied by 2 battalions. Had the Duce not ordered the town to be held at all events, the Divisional Commander would place the main defence line behind the Drin, since there seems no prospect of defending the town of Skutari in the event of the Tarabosh falling.

Whilst Italian G.H.Q. assumes the concentration of strong enemy forces opposite the Skutari sector and in the neighbourhood of Dibra, Generals Pafundi and Pizzolato do not believe a Yugoslav attack is imminent, since the enemy has, so far, shown no signs of one. The commander and troops of the Centauro Division, as far as I saw, made a good impression. Nevertheless the forces are in no way adequate to hold off a determined attack.

The Messina Division which is at the moment disembarking in Durazzo is to be transferred to this sector. Owing to the weakness of the Italian divisions, it seems to me that at least 3 divisions are necessary to defend this important point. Mines have so far only been laid on a small scale, since only a few are available. A few thousand of them recently arrived on 3 April 1941, and are to be laid near Skutari. There are permanent fortifications on the Skutari - Tirana road near Miloti.

The Marche Division which is following the Messina Division is to remain at the disposal of GHQ.

The Greek front has been weakened by 4 divisions. Moreover it must be held at that strength.

The supply position in Albania has been considerably improved, since now, according to a statement by General Cavallero, they have reserves to last 20 days - against 3 days in January - however only 4 days' issue of ammunition. Since the Julian Front must now be supplied with munitions, Albania will receive nothing for the time being.

The Commanders are on the whole but little informed about the main situation. As a result of the Duce's order to observe absolute secrecy, the troops know nothing so far about the operations planned by the Germans. Therefore a feeling of uncertainty and anxiety about future events prevails.

Even the Albanian population is said to be uncertain in parts, others are so hostile to the Serbs because of the World War that they fear for themselves.

To sum up: it can be said that the measures taken for the defence of the Albanian-Yugoslav frontier appear adequate, if the troops hold - with the exception of Skutari, which is still inadequately defended. Supplies of artillery ammunition are also insufficient.

An adverse factor also is the lack of ability of the troops to carry out defence instructions issued by the Command in a way suitable to the local conditions and terrain.

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In order to raise the morale of the Italian troops, which has been considerably lowered by the unsuccessful and costly offensive at Kelcyre (Klisura), any German influence would appear to be useful, since they have a great belief in the German soldiers. So a few German officers with the Divisional Staffs in the guise of Liaison officers for when they join up with German troops would certainly have a good effect. For this engineer officers are especially desirable, since the Italians are somewhat inexperienced in obstacle construction and demolitions and strengthening terrain.

However, most effective would be the early establishment of direct communications by troops of the 12th Army.

The Liaison Officer in Albania, Staff Lt. Colonel Speth, has received a very great welcome, both personal and official by the High Command and the troops. He will be given all the information he desires. He has however not yet succeeded in establishing radio contact with AOK 12. The Army General Staff Operations Section is therefore requested to pass on to the AOK 12 the Italian distribution on the Yugoslav frontier.

Lt. Colonel Graf Isenburg has been acting as Luftwaffe Liaison Officer in Tirana since 3 April 1941.

Signed: Rintelen

Fuehrer Headquarters,

6 April 1941

To: G.H.Q, Operations Staff.

Subject: Italy

Herewith the Army's requirements for cooperation with the Italians.

Signed: Warlimont

The campaign in the Balkans on the whole falls into three phases:

1st Phase

Union of the German forces in Bulgaria with the Italian Army Group in Albania, at the same time dividing the enemy into two groups; northern group the Serbs, southern group the Greeks and British.

The thrust to and beyond Skopje serves this purpose. At the same time a German group of forces from the south-western corner of Bulgaria has been sent in to attack with limited objective the Salonica basin and is thrusting further forces beyond Thrace towards the Aegean.

In this phase the task falling to the Italian forces in Albania will be to defend the other fronts and if possible to work from the west towards the Germans advancing on Skoplje.

2nd Phase

Destruction of the Yugoslav army by a pincer movement.

For this the following will be employed:

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the German group thrusting towards Nish on 8 April 1941,  
the Temesvar and Graz-Nagy Kanizsa assault groups on 12 April 1941,  
the Hungarians against the general line Gradiska-*Novi Sad* on 14 April 1941,

It is improbable that the Serbians are in a position to attack the Italian 2nd Army with any worthwhile forces. The German 2nd Army has in any case been instructed to demonstrate with part of its forces on the Wurzen Pass.

The Italian Julian Army is requested to advance in a general south-easterly direction as soon as possible after the entry of the German 2nd Army (12 April). It will be practical if a dividing line between the allied forces is immediately laid down by the two General Staffs.

At the same time the road from Celje through Novo Mesto to Karlovac is valuable to the German 2nd Army for the advance of its right wing.

In Albania there might be at this time still some danger to the northern front (Skutari), which, however, in view of the Italian reinforcements which have been moved up and owing to the strength of the Italian flying formations which if necessary can be concentrated on the focal point, is not considered too great. Nevertheless it is true that no strong offensive groups will be available on the Greek front before the Yugoslavs have been vanquished.

### 3rd Phase

Probably only when the Yugoslav Army has been annihilated and only remnants are still holding out in the mountainous country of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro will it be possible to launch a full-scale attack against the Greco-British forces. It is then desired that the Italian forces make this attack in the direction of Jannina mainly via Koritsa but also from Tepelene, while it will be the task of the German 12th Army to push through the Edessa-Olympus mountain chain to the Larissa basin and then further towards the south. It cannot yet be foreseen whether such an operation can commence any earlier if weather conditions are favourable.

The Italian Air Force is requested to attack the Yugoslav ground organisation in its area with as strong bomber formations as possible.

Besides adequate air defence in Albania, it is advisable that fighter units in North Africa are reinforced to protect and support the operations there, since the German forces available at the moment are very weak. Likewise the Italian Air Force must ensure that the route to North Africa is adequately protected.

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Fuehrer Headquarters,

6 April 1941

To: GHQ. Operations Staff.

Subject: Hungary

### Army proposals for military requirements from Hungary.

The whole operation against Yugoslavia has been so planned that by a pincer movement from the Sofia (8 April), Graz-Nagy Kanizsa and Temesvar (Timisoara) (12 April) directions an early collapse of enemy resistance in Croatia, Slavonia and the northern part of Old Serbia can be expected. At the same time it will be important to prevent if possible enemy formations capable of fighting from reaching the mountainous region of Bosnia-Herzegovina from this area.

Therefore it is considered that the Hungarian Army's primary contribution to the campaign will be to attack as early as possible on the general line Nova Gradiska (50 km west of Bred) - Novi Sad (important bridge) and defeat the

enemy here. The more energetically the enemy in this district is engaged the sooner will the Danube be open to traffic again and the better will be the chances of sending in the columns of tanks advancing from the north and east against the flank and rear of the Serbian front on the Save and Danube. Partly to allow freedom of movement to the German Panzer group at Temesvar (road conditions) and partly because of the concentration of Hungarian forces, the request is repeated that the earlier intention of sending parts of the Hungarian forces into battle east of the Theiss (Tisa) is abandoned.

As far as the forces employed west of the Danube are concerned, it will have to be settled by direct arrangement with the German 2nd Army that the routes running from the west to east south of the Drave are cleared in good time for the German fast-moving formations.

Finally it is pointed out that German transport movements through Hungary to Rumania must not be delayed by the Hungarian deployment and also that it is of the greatest importance to the German conduct of the war that oil-transports from Rumania go through according to schedule.

Fuehrer Headquarters,

12 April 1941

To: G.H.Q. Operations Staff.

Subject: Cooperation with Italy.

Enclosed herewith:

1. Luftwaffe requests regarding cooperation with Italians during the 2nd and 3rd Phases.
2. Proposals as foundation for a letter from the Fuehrer to the Duce.

Supplement No. 1

Luftwaffe requirements from Italy

(Telephoned information).

- A. Concentration of all available air attacking forces, as far as possible, in Southern Italy for operations against airfields occupied by the British in Greece and if still necessary against the west coast of Yugoslavia.
- B. Owing to the bulk of the Fliegerkorps X being tied down by operations against Greece, extended and increased cover for the German Airica Corps.
- C. Instructions to be passed to all Italian formations engaged, about German aircraft types and agreed markings. (Note: In spite of previous notifications of flights to the Italian High Command, it has already been reported four times that Italian fighters have attacked German Me 110's and Ju 88's, without, as it happens, doing any damage).

This request was particularly stressed by the Luftwaffe, but has however not been mentioned in the accompanying proposals for a note to the Duce since Abteilung L is of the opinion that difficulties experienced by the branches of the Armed Forces should not be taken up by direct correspondence between the Heads of State.

The Luftwaffe has had several consultations with the Italian Air Force about these difficulties through its liaison officer.

Supplement No. 2

To: Chief of the Foreign Branch, for transmission to the German General at the Italian G.H.Q., Major General von Rintelen in Rome.

The Fuehrer requests you to obtain the Duce's agreement to the following proposals for the notification of further operations against Yugoslavia and Greece.

1. To carry out the second phase of the operations (destruction of the Yugoslav army) it is requested that in the interests of the joint conduct of the war the Italian Armed Forces take over the following duties:

Occupation of the Dalmation coast by an advance from Albania on Ragusa (Dubrovnik) by the Italian forces released by the relief of the eastern front in Albania in conjunction with the advance from Fiume and by fresh transfers of forces to Zara.

At the same time measures for blocking and tying up enemy shipping in the Adriatic arc to be maintained and strengthened so as to prevent the escape of the Yugoslav Government or the removal or withdrawal of Yugoslav troops by sea.

2. The following division of tasks is necessary for the later joint operations against Greece (3rd phase) (Time of attack to be given later):

- (a) The main task of the Italian forces in Albania will be to destroy the Greek forces and then to advance west of the Pindus mountains as far as the Gulf of Patras, while the German forces carry out operations east of the Pindus mountains.

Agreement is requested to the following demarcation line between the Italian forces and the 12th Army.:

Eastern edge of Lake Prespa - ridge of the Pindus mountains.

If weaker Italian forces should be sent from Albania in a thrust towards the east in the Monastir direction, these would be placed under the German 12th Army for use in a further drive towards Kozani.

If German units should be temporarily employed west of the above-mentioned demarcation line after the collapse of the Greek front, their subordination to the Army Group Albania will be likewise ordered.

- (b) Operations by Italian naval and air forces in the Aegean Sea in order to disrupt a possible evacuation from Greece by the British.

3. For the continuation of joint air warfare the following is requested:

- (a) Concentration of all available air attacking forces, as far as possible in Southern Italy for operations against airfields in Greece occupied by the British and if still necessary against the west coast of Yugoslavia.

- (b) Owing to the bulk of Fliegerkorps X being tied down by operations against Greece, extended and increased cover for the German Africa Corps.

/Fuehrer

Fuehrer Headquarters,

12 April 1941

Preliminary directions for the Partition of Jugoslavia

I. The Fuehrer has issued the following directions for the partition of Jugoslavia:

1. Former Styria and Carniola districts

The former district of Styria, extended towards the south by a strip 90 km wide and 10 to 15 km deep, is transferred to Gau Steiermark (Styria).

The northern part of Carniola, with a boundary line running south of the Save but north of Laibach (Ljublijana) will be handed over to Carinthia.

The handing over of the districts occupied by German troops by the Army G.H.Q. to the appropriate Gauleiter will be effected by the heads of individual districts as soon as the country is sufficiently settled to permit it.

The handing over of the districts occupied by the Italians will be prepared by a note from the Fuehrer to the Duce and will be carried out in accordance with fuller orders from the Foreign Office. Until that time no steps at all are to be taken on the German side.

2. District beyond the Mura

The district beyond the Mura is ceded to Hungary along the line of the historical frontier. Emigration of Germans living in the north-western part of the district is being considered for a later date.

OKH will arrange for the district to be handed over to the Hungarians.

3. Banat

The district from the point where the Drave cuts the frontier of Hungary to where the Thoiss (Tisa) flows into the Danube is ceded to Hungary.

The district east of the Thoiss will be placed under German protection to begin with, likewise the district south of the Danube and east of the general line: Confluence of Morava and Danube - Pozarevac - Petrovac - Boljevac - Knjazevac - Kalna. This district contains the Bor copper mines and the south-eastern adjacent coalfields. The above-mentioned line will serve as a guide and temporary boundary. German Military Government under OKH is to be set up in this district to begin with.

4. Southern Serbia

The district inhabited by Bulgarian Macedonians will fall to Bulgaria corresponding to the boundary of these nationals.

Frontier to be temporarily drawn up by OKH according to military requirements. Military occupation by the Bulgarians up to the line Pirot - Vranje - Skoplje - Vardar Valley authorised.

5. Old Serbia

The area of Old Serbia comes under German Military Government under OKH.

6. Croatia

Croatia will be an independent state within its national frontiers. There will be no interference from the German side in internal political conditions.

7. Remaining districts including Bosnia and Montenegro

The political aspect of these districts is the concern of the Italians. Consideration may also be given to the establishment of an independent Montenegro.

II. Drawing up the Frontiers

1. Where boundaries are not laid down in Section I, these will follow through OKW in agreement with the Foreign Office, Commissioners for the Four-Year Plan and the Reich Minister for the Interior.

The Wehrmachtsfuhrungsstab will be the department dealing with the matter at OKW.

2. OKH will lay its military requests concerning the delincation of the frontiers - where not laid down by the Fuehrer - before the OKW Operations Staff as soon as possible.

3. OKW (Economics and Armaments branch) will lay its requests concerning the boundary of the Protectorate south of the Danube (Section I, paragraph 3) before the Wehrmachtsfuhrungsstab (Abt.L) as soon as possible.

4. As far as the Italians are concerned the tactical boundaries of the Armies will remain in force for the time being.

signed : Keitel

Chief of Staff, OKW.

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Fuehrer Headquarters,

13 April 1941

Directive Nr. 27

1. The Yugoslav Armed Forces are being dissolved. This, together with the elimination of the Greek Army in Thrace and the capture of the Valley of Salonica and Florina, makes it possible to begin the attack on Greece after sufficient forces have been brought up, with the object of annihilating the Greek-British forces there, occupying Greece, and thus finally ejecting the British from the Balkans.

2. I therefore issue the following orders for the continuation of the operations in the Balkans:

(a) Jugoslavia

The object of the operations continues to be the annihilation of the remaining Yugoslav forces and to mop up and occupy the country.

The German troops are to be used to occupy Old Serbia and Banat. The Protectorate between the Morava and the Danube is to be secured as quickly as possible. As few forces as possible should be sent in to Jugoslavia in addition to those already there.

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The Luftwaffe is to destroy the remainder of the Yugoslav Air Force and support Army operations in such a way that further serious resistance which may yet arise can be quickly broken. If necessary, bomber forces and anti-aircraft units not needed in operations against Greece may be withdrawn right away for use elsewhere, by consent of OKW.

It is for C. in C. Luftwaffe to reach the necessary agreements with the Italian Air Force concerning the demarcation line between the 2nd German and the 2nd Italian Armies.

The Italian 2nd Army has the task of mopping up and occupying the area south-west of the highway Karlovac - Bos Novi - Banja Luka - Sarajevo. It may be necessary for fast moving German forces to make occasional sorties across this line in support of the Italian advance.

The Hungarian 3rd Army will mop up and occupy the Yugoslav area west of the Tisa (Theiss) as far as the Danube and the Drave. Participation of the two Hungarian motorised brigades in further operations of the German 2nd Army has been requested and approved.

(b) Greece

As soon as sufficient forces are in the area of Florina and the Salonica Valley, the decisive attack on the British-Greek forces in northern Greece is to begin. The objective is to encircle and annihilate the enemy forces there, by an early break through towards Larissa, and to prevent the setting up of a new defence front.

Simultaneously the Italian break through the Greek front in Albania is to be supported by an advance of German forces towards the south-west.

Subsequently, fast moving troops pushing towards Athens should occupy the remaining Greek mainland including the Peloponnese. At the same time the Italian Army Group Albania will advance west of the line from Lake Prespa along the ridge of the Pindus mountains in the direction of the Gulf of Patras. If time and road conditions permit, every effort must be made to cut off the retreat of the main Greek force west of the Pindus mountains.

The Luftwaffe should support the new Army operations with strong forces and keep the advance of the German forces moving, in addition to fighting the Greek and British flying formations. The later occupation of the Cyclades Islands is to be supported.

C. in C. Luftwaffe is to arrange with the Italian Air Force the division between the operations areas.

All suitable forces of the Army and the Luftwaffe are to be assembled in order to prevent the possible evacuation of British troops. In particular, everything possible should be done by means of constant air attacks on Greek harbours and particularly on ship concentrations, as well as by mining of the approach routes, to prevent the British from escaping across the Mediterranean.

3. I myself shall issue the order for paratroop operations against Lemnos. The order will be issued at least 48 hours prior to the start of operations.

For this purpose the Army is to leave one division in Thrace, while the Bulgarians are to take over the occupation of the remainder of Thrace at a time to be determined by me.

4. After these operations have been carried out, the bulk of the Army forces used will be withdrawn for new tasks. One or two divisions should be left in Greece, one additional division in Salonica, and two or three divisions in Serbia.

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Following the operations against Greece, the most important tasks of the Luftwaffe (Fliegerkorps X) will be the support of the Africa Corps. In the near future renewed mining of the Suez Canal is of great importance, in order to prevent the enemy from bringing up reinforcements from East Africa, or at least to make this more difficult.

Air defences of the conquered territories are to be prepared.

The coastal defences are to be prepared for the time being on the basis that the northern Aegean coast including Salonica, will be in the hands of the Bulgarians, the adjoining eastern Aegean coast up to and including the Saronic Gulf in German hands, and the remaining Greek coastal areas in Italian hands.

Final decisions cannot be made until the end of the operations in the Balkans.

5. I expect the Commanders-in-Chief to submit detailed reports of their plans.

The principles laid down in Directive Nr. 26 of 3 April 1941 remain in force, with regard to possible requests made by the branches of the Armed Forces to our allies.

signed : Adolf Hitler

OKW, Foreign Branch

14 April 1941

The German General at Italian Armed Forces Headquarters telegraphed as follows on 13 April :

1. I laid the Fuehrer's plans and requests for the furtherance of joint operations before the Duce in the presence of General Guzzoni at 1130 hours on 13 April.

The Duce is in agreement.

The demarcation line given in OKW's telegram is on the whole accepted as the boundary, details are to be settled between the adjacent German and Italian armies.

The Duce further stated that the Italian forward troops have advanced along the Dalmation coast and may possibly have reached Sebenico (Sibenik) today. The Army Group in Albania are hoping for a chance to advance from Skutari towards the north-west on Cattaro (Kotor). At the moment however it appears that a Yugoslav attack against Skutari is being prepared.

On the Greek front the 9th Army has today begun to attack and has passed through Pogradec.

Belgrade,

15 April 1941

To the High Command of the Yugoslav Armed Forces

Having been commissioned by the Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces with the conduct of the armistice negotiations, my answer to your proposal to suspend all kinds of hostilities is as follows:

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1. As representative of the Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces I will only negotiate with a delegation from the Yugoslav Armed Forces led by a senior officer endowed with the necessary powers by the Yugoslav Armed Forces.
2. This delegation is to bring a declaration that the Yugoslav Armed Forces surrender unconditionally (unconditional capitulation) and that destruction of any kind will cease immediately.
3. The delegation is to appear without delay in Belgrade, which is hereby fixed as the place for negotiations, and is to bring with it all data from which ways and means are apparent as to how the demanded unconditional capitulation of all elements of the Yugoslav Armed Forces still under arms will be carried out.
4. Operations by the German Armed Forces will continue until the necessary fully-authorized delegation has accepted the unconditional capitulation and signed it in Belgrade.
5. The Yugoslav plenipotentiaries will at the same time make known the storing places where all documents missing from the Premier's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the War Ministry are to be found. They will cause without delay and at the latest within three days, these documents to be given up and will be responsible for handing them over complete and undamaged.
6. As a prelude to any negotiations all Germans, Italians and Hungarians held or interned are to be released immediately.

Signed : Frhr von Weichs.

C. in C. 2nd Army

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Radio Message

General Kalafatovic handed General von Weichs' note of the 15 April 1941, with this clause added in his own handwriting, to C. in C. 2nd German Army.

"As Commander-in-Chief of the Yugoslav Armed Forces and as plenipotentiary of the Yugoslav Government I hereby accept the aforementioned conditions for negotiating and concluding an Armistice.

I authorise Lt. General Jankovic and Dr. Mica Marcovic to conduct negotiations and conclude an Armistice."

General Kalafatovic declared that he had on 15 April 1941 at 0400 hours, ordered the troops to offer no further resistance.

Documents from the ministries presumably at Vrujatschka Banja and Azici (8 km west of Sarajevo); negotiators with full powers ask to be fetched at once by aeroplane from Sarajevo airfield.

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G.H.Q. 2nd Army

Belgrade, 16 April 1941

Protocol of the Armistice Negotiations between the German  
and Yugoslav Armed Forces

After a statement by the Yugoslav delegation that they were only authorized to negotiate an armistice, but not to sign one, the terms for an armistice between the German and Yugoslav Armed Forces were announced by

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the Intelligence Section of G.H.Q. 2nd Army. The Yugoslav delegation then withdrew for consultation. After about 15 minutes the Yugoslav delegation requested to be allowed to resume negotiations. This wish was immediately granted.

During the second interview the following questions were put and answered :  
The leader of the Yugoslav delegation - General Kalafatovic

"What were the delegates of the 2nd and 5th Yugoslav Armies informed yesterday?"

C. in C. 2nd German Army - General Frhr von Weichs

"The note handed to the Yugoslav delegates was in its essential points on the lines of the terms which have just been read out to you. I hand you herewith a copy of this note."

Kalafatovic : We have no knowledge of this note, since we set out from Sarajevo the day before yesterday for Belgrade. I request that hostilities cease immediately with honourable terms for the Yugoslav Armed Forces.

Weichs : Cessation of hostilities can only be considered when the Armistice has been signed and the Yugoslav Armed Forces have surrendered unconditionally.

Kalafatovic : I repeat once more the request to cease hostilities at once, since, as a result of the German air attacks, all communications between the Yugoslav High Command and the Yugoslav Government and between the High Command and the troops are considerably interrupted or destroyed.

Weichs : I myself am not allowed to depart from the conditions laid down. I am placing at your disposal radio and an aeroplane so that you can communicate very quickly with your High Command.

Kalafatovic : Owing to the development of the situation radio communication with my High Command is no longer possible. I therefore accept with thanks your offer of the use of an aeroplane, and although I am an old man and have never yet flown in an aeroplane, I will do it for my Fatherland.

Weichs : The aeroplane is ready to take off, when will you be back ?

Kalafatovic : That does not depend on me, we are interested in coming back immediately. I would like to put forward the following request from the Yugoslav High Command; that a restricted Yugoslav territory be set up similar to that in France.

Weichs : That request must be refused, the German Armed Forces are going to occupy the whole of Yugoslavian territory.

Kalafatovic : But we will also need a small army of 14000 to 15000 men. A Government without armed forces wields no authority.

Weichs : That point cannot be the subject of today's negotiations.

Kalafatovic : I request that the very numerous refugees may be allowed to return to their homes right away.

Weichs : That is impossible for the time being, since it would hinder the operations of the troops. Permission for this will be given immediately the military situation permits,

/Kalafatovic

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- Kalafatovic ; I request that the regular officers and non-commissioned officers are not treated as prisoners of war and that the men are not held as prisoners of war, so that they can be transferred to industry.
- Weichs : In accordance with the terms of the Armistice the whole of the Yugoslav Armed Forces will be held as prisoners of war.
- Kalafatovic : But I have seen cases where captured Yugoslav soldiers have been disarmed and then released.
- Weichs : That occurrence was not in order. For the time being they are all to be held prisoners. It will be seen later whether isolated groups of people can be released.
- Kalafatovic : Are the Italian and Hungarian Armed Forces also bound by these armistice terms ?

General Weichs asked the Italian and Hungarian military attachés present whether they had the necessary authority. Both military attachés declared that they had no authority to conclude an Armistice with the Yugoslav Armed Forces. General Weichs recommended to the leader of the Yugoslav delegation that the Yugoslav High Command applied at the same time to the Italian and Hungarian Armed Forces for armistice negotiations.

- Kalafatovic : Can you pass on to the Fuehrer the request to lighten the terms of the Armistice. We Yugoslavs have always been loyal to Germany even during the war.
- Weichs : Those are political questions which I am not in a position to answer.
- Kalafatovic : Nevertheless cannot these requests be passed on ?
- Weichs : We have strict orders for concluding the Armistice.
- Kalafatovic : So that all my requests and proposals are refused ?
- Weichs : That is so.

The C. in C. 2nd Army here terminated the interview. The Yugoslav delegation accompanied by a German officer started off immediately by the quickest route to the Yugoslav High Command.

Signed: Mallenthin,                      signed : Calzer  
Major (General Staff)                      Major

OKH Headquarters,  
30 April 1941

To : OKW Operations Staff.

Herewith a copy of the Armistice agreement concluded between C. in C. 2nd Army and the authorised representatives of the Yugoslav Armed Forces.

Herewith the text of the armistice agreement.:

Terms for the Armistice between the German and Yugoslav Armed Forces

1. Basic condition

On signing the armistice agreement, the Yugoslav Armed Forces surrender unconditionally and will be taken prisoners of war. Leaders

of formations will therefore report to the nearest German officer.

2. Organisation of evacuation of prisoners

Troops are to assemble by units in the proper place. Until handing over, the Yugoslav officers are fully responsible for discipline and order and therefore will remain with their units. Soldiers who leave their units after the conclusion of the Armistice and after the resultant assembly will be punishable by death.

3. Surrender of weapons and all war material

(See supplement for definition of war material in detail).

Weapons and war material will remain fundamentally with the respective units. They are to be delivered, only when ordered, to the units of the German Armed Forces detailed for this.

4. Reports

Reports are to be sent in by 25 April on the following points :

- (a) In which places are the various assembled units to be found ?
- (b) Where are the ammunition, fuel-oil, rations and other depots located ?
- (c) In which positions have minefields been laid ?
- (d) Where have preparations been made to demolish bridges and other objects ?

5. Radio and Telegraph network (teleprinters, etc)

All communications circuits may only be used for carrying out the terms of the Armistice. In order to control wireless traffic, frequencies and wave-lengths have been allotted. Wireless messages may only be transmitted in plain language.

6. Rations and equipment

Until the surrender, the Yugoslav High Command is to be responsible for rations. Field kitchens and ration trucks will remain in principle with the units, and are to accompany these after the surrender. Furthermore, all soldiers are to bring with them proper clothing (greatcoats, blankets, mess kit). Rations, including fodder for horses, are as far as possible to be provided for 6 days.

7. Surrender of horses and Pack animals

These are likewise to be collected by units, so far as they are not required to draw field kitchens and ration wagons.

8. Health measures

The Yugoslav High Command is responsible for all health measures. In particular, the appropriate medical officers and personnel are to remain with every unit. The locations of field hospitals and casualty clearing stations are to be reported.

9. Danube Flotilla

The Danube Flotilla is to assemble in the port of Zemun by 25 April.

10. Release of prisoners of war, detained and interned persons

All German, Italian and Hungarian prisoners of war, detained and interned persons are to be released immediately.

11. Delivery of documents

All documents missing from the Premier's Office, the Foreign Ministry and the War Ministry, are to be delivered up within three days, wherever possible. Storing places are to be made known. They are responsible for handing over these documents, complete and undamaged.

12. Gendarmerie and Police

Members of the Gendarmerie and police who had to leave their peacetime posts with the retreating troops, are to return to them without delay. They are to report to the German occupational authorities immediately on arrival at their peacetime posts. If they are more than a day's march distant, motor vehicles may be used for the return journey, which is to be made without firearms. These vehicles must display a white flag and the drivers must be issued with movement orders.

13. Surrender of land and coastal fortifications

All land and coastal fortifications are to be handed over with weapons, ammunition, equipment and plans as well as installations of all kinds.

14. Guerillas

Military personnel are forbidden to leave the country. Anyone taking part in fighting against the Axis Powers will be treated as a guerilla. Furthermore it is forbidden to remove ships, weapons, equipment and aircraft to enemy or neutral countries.

15. The Yugoslav Fleet

The Fleet is to remain in port. Mines and obstructions in coastal waters are to be made known. Naval defence installations and obstacles are to be handed over. Merchant ships are forbidden to sail. Ships already at sea are to return to Yugoslav or Axis ports. The aircraft carrier "Zmaj" is to be handed over.

16. Aircraft forbidden to take off

Aircraft are forbidden to take off. Any take-off will be regarded as a hostile move.

17. General

All military and industrial erections and installations, including communications are to be handed over undamaged.

18. Commencement of the Armistice

The armistice agreement will come into force 15 hours after the terms have been signed, that is on 18 April 1941 at 1200 hours German Summer Time. The movements of German troops will not be affected thereby. If resistance recommences this agreement ceases to be effective and offensive action by the German Armed Forces will be renewed with the greatest severity.

Signed on behalf of C. in C. German Army. Erhr von Weichs,  
C. in C. 2nd Army

On behalf of the Yugoslav Armed Forces;

signed : Incar Markovic

signed : General Radivoje Jankovic.

/Supplement

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Supplement No.1 to the Armistice Agreement

Definition of War Material in detail

Absolute surrender of weapons and equipment, ammunition, horses, vehicles, motor vehicles, armoured vehicles, stocks of tyres, stocks of fuel oil, spare parts, repair shops, articles of clothing and equipment, especially boots, leather, etc. accommodation equipment, especially tents, tarpaulins, etc. stocks of rations, medical and veterinary equipment, aircraft and aircraft equipment.

Supplement No. 2 Belgrade, 17 April 1941

The same terms are valid for the Italian Armed Forces.

By order of the Duce, the Royal Italian Military Attache in Belgrade,  
Colonel Luigi Bonfatti.

Signed : Col. Luigi Bonfatti,  
Signed : General Radivoje Jankovic,  
Signed : Incar Markovic.

Fuehrer Headquarters,

18 April 1941.

The Fuehrer made the following basic decisions on 16 April 1941 concerning the Balkan problem :

1. The aim should be to withdraw the German Armed Forces from the Balkans as soon as possible with the following limitations :
  - (a) Bases and communications must be assured in Jugoslavia, on the Greek mainland, and in the Aegean Sea for the protection and supply of the Luftwaffe, so as to be able to carry on air warfare against England in the eastern Mediterranean with the greatest effect possible.

In particular the Salonica district will continue to be occupied by German troops (German occupational area between the river Struma and the line Edessa - Veria - Katerini). The other necessary bases will be determined by G. in C. Luftwaffe. Defence wherever necessary by Italian troops.

- (b) The copper area in north-east Serbia between the Danube, the Morava and a line still to be determined in detail, is to be secured as a German protectorate.
- (c) Shipping on the Danube is to be secured mainly under German control. Details will follow.
- (d) The Jugoslav district between the Tisa, the Danube and the Rumanian frontier is to be occupied by Germans for the time being.

2. The following German occupation troops are to remain in the southeastern area for this purpose :

4. Army

- (a) Approximately one division in the copper district and for occupation of the temporary protectorate (as laid down in 1b and 1d).

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- (b) Approximately two divisions in Old Serbia in the area which is not to be occupied by Bulgaria or Italy.
- (c) Approximately one division around Salonica, in the area mentioned in 1a.

According to Directive 27 paragraph 4, one or two further divisions were to be left in Greece. This order is revoked; the task will be taken over by the Italians.

B. Luftwaffe

The Luftwaffe can carry on aerial warfare in the eastern Mediterranean, and make attacks on the Suez Canal, also from the Greek mainland and the Aegean islands. The units needed for this purpose are to be left behind in Greece or transferred there.

The German flying units can make full use of airfields, airfield installations, communications, and supply installations in the area to be occupied by the Italian forces. Where necessary new airfields may also be constructed in this area.

The Armed Forces Supreme Command has made requests to this effect to the Italian High Command. The Luftwaffe is to arrange details with the Italian Air Force direct, giving due consideration to any Italian requests.

Beyond defences for German bases, only anti-aircraft guns need be left for the protection of the German Army forces. If necessary the German occupied area and the Aegean islands can be fortified as a southern protective area for air defence of the Rumanian oilfields. C. in C. Luftwaffe will make any necessary agreements concerning the remaining Greek area with the Italian Armed Forces direct.

Furthermore, it is to be considered whether air bases, at least for light planes, can be established on the islands in the Aegean Sea, in order to safeguard from the air, the sea supplies that must be pushed forward as far as the Dodecanese. Results are to be reported.

C. Navy

Italian forces are to be provided for coastal defence of the region under the jurisdiction of the Navy, including any islands, except in the area occupied by German forces.

- 3. Germany is not interested in the following in Yugoslavia:
  - (a) Croatia as an autonomous state;
  - (b) Italian spheres of interest (the Albanian part of Yugoslavia, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Carniola (Dravska), where not under German administration.)
  - (c) The former Hungarian districts, so long as they are west of the Tisa.
  - (d) Bulgarian spheres of interest (Macedonia).
- 4. In the States resulting from paragraph 3 Germany will assure herself:
  - (a) Economic privileges and exports - at least those formerly from Yugoslavia (Bauxite from Dalmatia, grains, meat, raw materials).
  - (b) Transit rights for transport and telegraphic circuits through the Greek area.

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- (c) Shipping rights on the Danube and protection thereof from Belgrade to be Bulgaro-Rumanian frontier.

5. The Fuehrer has now approved and desires the entry of Bulgarian troops into Thrace, in the district between the Struma and the line Dede Agach - Mustafa Pasha.

Bulgarian police forces or troops can also enter Yugoslav territory, but for the time being must not cross west of the line Pirot - Vranje - Skoplje - the Vardar as far as the Greek border. As far as German movements are affected by the Bulgarian occupation, the Bulgarian units are subordinated to the German Armies concerned.

6. The Fuehrer intends to allow any Greek prisoners who have fallen into German hands to return home after the end of fighting in Greece. This intention can be unofficially spread around so as to paralyse the Greek will to resist and to counter the English plan to use Greek forces in other theatres of war. It is therefore out of the question to hand over Greek prisoners to Bulgaria. British prisoners of war are to be sent to Germany. Of Yugoslav prisoners of war, only those of German extraction, Hungarians, Bulgars and Croats are to be released for the time being. A further ruling will follow.

7. Utilisation of captured material

- (a) Booty in Jugoslavia :

OKH and C. in C. Luftwaffe will determine what material they want to use to augment their own equipment. This material is to be taken first and stored separately. This includes in particular flying equipment, ground installations, aviation fuel dumps, motor vehicles, anti-aircraft and 4.7 cm anti-tank guns, and modern heavy artillery (Skoda). Captured tanks are to be set aside for forming salvage detachments which are later to patrol the Old Serbian area.

The rest of the captured material will be given later to Bulgaria and part to Hungary. Material which is in Croatia is to be left there for the time being.

C. in C. Navy will contact the Hungarian High Command direct, regarding securing and distribution of captured Danube vessels.

- (b) Booty in Greece:

Of the material captured in Greece, only what is of particular value for us should be taken. Otherwise the booty in Thrace is to be handed over to Bulgaria and that in the rest of Greece to Italy, and not taken to Germany.

(c) OKW (Economics and Armaments Branch) will issue a special ruling on the question of payment for captured material handed to our allies.

Signed Keitel

Chief of Staff, OKW

Fuehrer Headquarters

24 April 1941

Herewith a copy of the Capitulation Agreement signed on 23 April 1941 with the Greek Army of Epirus and Macedonia, for your information.

For the Chief of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces

Signed:

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Capitulation Agreement between the German Supreme Command of the Armed Forces and the Italian High Command in Albania on the one side, and the Greek Army of Epirus and Macedonia on the other.

The High Command of the Royal Greek Army of Epirus and Macedonia, represented by the C. in C. General Zsolakoglu, approached the High Command of the German Troops in Greece and the Italian High Command in Albania, with the request that they accept the unconditional capitulation of the Greek Army of the Epirus and Macedonia.

Point 1 : The German and Italian High Commands accept this unconditional surrender of the Greek Army of the Epirus and Macedonia.

Point 2 : Personnel of the Greek Army of the Epirus and Macedonia are prisoners of war. Out of consideration for the great bravery shown by the Greek troops on the battlefield, thereby preserving their honour as soldiers, the Greek officers will retain their swords and ceremonial belts.

All Italian prisoners of war in the area of command of the Greek Army of the Epirus and Macedonia are to be handed over to the Italian troops at once.

The Greek prisoners of war will meanwhile be collected in assembly camps. After the conclusion of hostilities on the Greek mainland and in the Ionian islands, it is intended to release all officers, non-commissioned officers and men.

Point 3 : The Greek High Command will ensure that the Greek forces remain under the leadership of their officers and will take all steps to carry out the capitulation in an orderly manner.

For the time being it is the business of the Greek High Command to provide food and medical attention for the captured troops.

Point 4 : The weapons, the entire war equipment and supplies of this Army including flying equipment and ground installations, are war booty.

Point 5 : The High Command of the Greek forces will endeavour with all means to cease hostilities without delay, to stop all wrecking and destruction of war equipment and supplies, and to repair immediately all roads in the Army Command area.

Point 6 : With immediate effect, sailings of ships of all kinds and all air traffic in the command area of the Army of the Epirus and Macedonia, is to cease.

The Greek High Command is responsible for seeing that all ships lying in port including their cargoes and all port installations are seized and remain under guard of Greek troops until a final decision about them has been taken.

Point 7 : The High Command of the Greek forces will appoint liaison staffs fully authorised to settle details about the execution of the capitulation with the German and Italian authorities, which will be named later. These liaison staffs will submit, as soon as possible, a detailed report on the strength, equipment and war organisation of the former Army of the Epirus and Macedonia.

Point 8. : The truce between the German troops and the Greek troops of the Army of the Epirus and Macedonia will remain in force as laid down in the surrender negotiations of 21 April. The truce between the Italian troops and the Greek Army of the Epirus and Macedonia does not come into force until 1800 hours on 23 April, but it is possible that the Greek troops on the Italian front will have already laid down their weapons before that time.

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Point 9 : With this treaty, the surrender agreement concluded on 21 April between the High Command of the German Troops in Greece and C.in C. Greek Army of the Epirus and Macedonia no longer applies.

For the Italian High Command in Albania

Signed : General Ferrero

For the German Supreme Command  
of the Armed Forces,

Signed : Jodl

Salonica, the 23 April 1941.

Signed ; Zsolakoglu.

C. in C. Greek Army of the  
Epirus and Macedonia.

Fuehrer Headquarters,

25 April 1941

Directive Nr. 28

(Operation "Merkur")

1. An operation to occupy the island of Crete (operation Merkur) is to be prepared with the purpose of using Crete as an air base against Britain in the eastern Mediterranean.

The plan will be prepared on the assumption that the entire Greek mainland, including the Peloponnese, is in Axis hands.

2. I delegate command of the operation to C.in C. Luftwaffe. The forces employed will be primarily the airborne corps and the air forces now operating in the Mediterranean.

The Army, in direct agreement with the C. in C. Luftwaffe will make available in Greece suitable reinforcements for the airborne corps, including a mixed tank unit, which can be transported to Crete by sea.

The Navy, will make preparations for sea communications, which must be assured as soon as the occupation of the islands begins. The C.in C. Navy will reach the necessary agreements with the Italian Navy concerning protection of communications and as far as is necessary the procurement of shipping space.

3. All means are to be utilised for bringing up to the assembly area specified by the C.in C. Luftwaffe the airborne corps, including the 22nd Division which has again been placed under his command. The Army and Luftwaffe High Commands are to furnish the Chief of Armed Forces Transport with the necessary trucks. The transport movements must not be permitted to delay assembly of the forces for operation "Barbarossa".

4. The C. in C. Luftwaffe can use the anti-aircraft units of the 12th Army for anti-aircraft protection in Greece and Crete. The C.in C. Luftwaffe and C.in C. Army will reach the necessary agreements concerning relieving or replacing these forces.

5. After the island has been occupied all or part of the airborne corps must be made available for new tasks. Therefore it should be planned to replace it as soon as possible by Army forces.

If necessary, Army captured coastal guns can be used by C.in C. Navy for building up the coastal defences.

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6. I request the Commanders-in-Chief to report the measures planned, and I also request C.in C. Luftwaffe to inform me when he expects to complete the preparations.

I myself will issue the order for carrying out the operation.

Signed : Adolf Hitler

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Fuehrer Headquarters,

12 May 1941

To : Head of the Defence Department

After the discussion of the 10th May, the Fuehrer has made the following decisions:

Our endeavours must be directed to removing the greatest number of troops from Greece as soon as possible leaving the defence of the whole area to Italy. After Operation "Mercur" (Crete) has been carried out the only Army troops to be left in Greece are those necessary for the defence of the bases of Fliegerkorps X and the area around Salonica.

It is planned to withdraw one mountain division later.

Where German troops have to remain to defend supply bases (Mercur) in southern Greece they are to be kept closely concentrated locally, since we are only responsible for these districts. There also, occasional assistance can be rendered to the local population.

Germany accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any Greek area occupied or to be occupied by Italian troops.

It is out of the question for Germany to play the role of arbitrator between Greece and Italy and for the Greek Government to turn to the German Commander-in-Chief concerning such questions.

12th Army H.Q. is therefore to move back to Salonica as soon as the situation permits.

In addition there is no "C.in C. Balkans" but only a "C.in C. German Troops in the Balkans",

Whether the Italian occupation troops accomplish anything with the Greek Government or not is not our concern. Military danger, which could result in German troops again being involved, no longer exists now that the Greek Army and its weapons have been removed.

All airfields which are not to be occupied by us are to be placed immediately at the disposal of the Italian Air Force.

Signed : Jodl.

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Fuehrer Headquarters,

17 May 1941

Directive Nr. 29

1. The objective of the German operation in the south-east, i.e. to drive the British from the Balkans and to lay the foundation for German air

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operations in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, has been reached, and is to be extended even further through operation "Merkur".

With certain exceptions (listed below), it will be Italy's task to guarantee the security of Greek territory in the future. Therefore German authorities will refrain from interfering with security and administrative matters of a general nature in Greece. In particular, German authorities are to refrain from acting as intermediaries if called upon to do so by the Greeks.

As for the delivery of supplies, an agreement is to be reached with the Italian Armed Forces with regard to supply routes and their protection.

2. The following will apply to the German Armed Forces :

Army.

The following German troops will remain in Greece;

(a) Those forces which are essential to guarantee the security of the supply bases for operation "Merkur". They are to be closely concentrated locally.

(b) A division near Salonica (see paragraph 3). This division will also be charged with safeguarding Lemnos and any other islands which are to remain occupied. The areas, including these islands, which are to serve as jumping-off points for operation "Merkur" must remain in German hands until the operation has been completed. All German forces no longer needed according to these instructions will be withdrawn as quickly as possible.

The Italian High Command is to be informed that all arrangements which will expedite taking possession of Greece are to be made with C.in C. 12th Army. As the "C.in C. German Troops in the Balkans" he will move his headquarters to Salonica as soon as the situation (operation "Merkur") permits.

Luftwaffe

Even after being transferred to Greece Fliegerkorps X will continue to be independent in carrying on air warfare, taking its orders from C.in C. Luftwaffe to whom it will remain directly subordinate. For the defence of the Balkan area it will cooperate with the 12th Army H.Q. (C.in C. German Troops in the Balkans), and for the campaign in North Africa it will cooperate with the Africa Corps. Orders on territorial matters which must be regulated in a uniform manner in the Balkans will be made by C.in C. 12th Army, for Fliegerkorps X as well.

The ground organisation for the flying formations in Greece and on the islands will be at the disposal of C.in C. Luftwaffe for air warfare in the eastern part of the Mediterranean. All airfields and installations not needed by us will be turned over to the Italian Armed Forces.

After Crete has been captured C.in C. Luftwaffe (Airborne Corps) will assume responsibility for the defence of the island. He will submit his suggestions as to when the Corps should be relieved. I reserve to myself the right to issue orders in this connection, and also with respect to the future occupation of Crete.

Navy

In addition to Salonica and the harbour of Athens, the coastal strip between the two ports, as far as it is needed for coastal traffic, will remain under the jurisdiction of the German Navy. C.in C. Navy will make the necessary arrangements for this with the Italians. Later on, the German Navy will be responsible for the coastal defence of Crete as well, if Crete is to remain occupied by German troops.

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As for questions of a territorial nature, the same principles governing Fliegerkorps X will apply to the Navy.

The German influence on the Bulgarian coastal defence along the northern coast of the Aegean Sea is to be maintained, as in the past.

Naval C.in C. South-East will carry out operations and sea-borne transportation in the Aegean Sea with the Italian naval forces assigned to him, in accordance with the orders of C.in C. Navy.

In all other matters Naval C.in C. South-East is directed to cooperate with the competent Italian authorities.

3. In the area around Salonica the German Armed Forces alone constitute the final authority with respect to all military measures. The Army High Command (C.in C. German Troops in the Balkans) will submit his proposal as to the exact boundary of this area.

4. The administration of the Greek territory remaining under the occupation of German troops will be regulated by the Army High Command, in agreement with the Plenipotentiary of the German Reich in Greece. For this purpose the Greek administration is to be utilised as much as possible, and the employment of German personnel is to be kept to a minimum.

5. The "Military Commander, Serbia" has important economic duties to carry out; therefore the Army High Command will give him full power and will furnish him with the security troops he requires in order to be able to accomplish his mission independently.

6. I await the reports of the Commanders-in-Chief on the measures taken in connection with this directive and on agreements made with the Italians.

Signed : Adolf Hitler

Fuehrer Headquarters,

23 May 1941

Re : Rumania.

Following the report of General Ritter von Schobert, the Fuehrer has reached the following decision :

Upon his arrival in Rumania, General Ritter von Schobert will be "C.in C. German Troops in Rumania". His tasks will be as follows:

- (a) He will make preparations for the defence measures ordered for operation "Barbarossa", and for later attack operations.
- (b) He is responsible for the protection of the entire Rumanian area, and can turn over the defence of Rumania to be handled independently by the Chief of the Armed Forces Mission, as soon as 11th Army takes the offensive and leaves Rumanian territory.

For this purpose the Chief of the Armed Forces Mission and the Chiefs of the Armament Missions are subordinate to him. (Cf. the regulations issued for the protection of the oilfields and the coasts.)

- (c) He will discuss with the Rumanian Chief of State all questions directly affecting his tasks.

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The Fuehrer has given the following orders for these discussions with the Rumanian Chief of State:

1. General Ritter von Schobert is to call on General Antonescu on his arrival and introduce himself as the successor of Field Marshal List in his capacity as "C. in C. German Troops in Rumania".

He is to tell General Antonescu that the Fuehrer is planning to ask General Antonescu to come to Germany for a personal conference.

2. The appointment of a new "C. in C. German Troops in Rumania" is to be explained to General Antonescu to the effect that the present concentration of exceptionally strong Russian forces in the western border area requires that measures be taken for the protection of the Rumanian territory. For this reason, the German Army forces in Rumania are also to be increased to 6 divisions, while the concentrations in the Balkan area are being dissolved.

3. The combined German-Rumanian task, to protect Rumanian territory against surprise attacks, necessitates corresponding Rumanian measures. General Antonescu is requested to submit suggestions in this connection, which General Ritter von Schobert is to integrate with the German measures.

A Rumanian mobilisation on a considerable scale is, however, undesirable.

4. Any questions as to whether Germany expects war with Russia, or perhaps might attack Russia, are to be evaded.

5. Should General Antonescu express fears that Hungary might become hostile to Rumania, it should be pointed out that this danger does not exist since Germany would not tolerate it.

6. Following his conference with General Antonescu, General Ritter von Schobert is to submit his suggested plans and regulations to the Operations Planning Section of OKW Operations Staff.

In addition, General Hansen (Cavalry) is to submit an appreciation of the Rumanian Army (fighting quality of the various divisions) and of its Commanders.

Signed : Keitel

Chief of Staff, OKW

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Fuehrer Headquarters,

9 June 1941

Directive Nr. 31.

In order to establish clear and coordinated command in the occupied Balkan area, I order as follows:

1. I appoint Field Marshal List "Military Commander, South-East", with headquarters at Salonica.

The Military Commander, South-East, will be the highest representative of the Armed Forces in the Balkans and will exercise executive power in the territories occupied by German troops.

He will be under my direct command.

2. Subordinate to the Military Commander, South-East, are the following Commanders:

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- (a) For the area of Old Serbia; the "Commander, Serbia" (General von Schroeder)
- (b) For the area of Salonica and the islands of Lemnos, Mitilene (Lesbos), Chios and Skyros ; the "Commander, Salonica-Aegean Sea" (to be appointed by OKW).
- (c) For the area of Athens, Crete, Cythera, Anticythera and Milos ; the "Commander Southern Greece" (to be appointed by C.in C. Luftwaffe).

3. The Military Commander, South-East, is to make all military decisions for all three branches of the Armed Forces as regards occupation, security, supply, transport and communications in the occupied south-eastern area (with the exception of questions concerning offensive air warfare). In making his decisions he will take into consideration the overall task of the Armed Forces in the South-East. Thus command will be simplified and the branches of the Armed Forces, as well as OKW will be relieved of many details and differences of opinion caused by the functioning of various headquarters of all the branches of the Armed Forces in the same area.

The duties of the Military Commander, South-East, in detail are as follows:

- (a) To ensure a coordinated defence against attacks and disturbances in the Serbian and Greek territories occupied by German troops, including the Greek islands.

In addition to the aforementioned Commanders, who are responsible for carrying out defence measures in their respective areas according to his instructions, the Naval C.in C. South-East and the Commander, Luftgau in the Balkans are also subordinate to him in these matters. The staffs of the latter two headquarters are to be incorporated in to his Staff. He himself will decide to what extent the staffs of the subordinate Commanders, Salonica-Aegean Sea, and Southern Greece are to be merged with those of the other branches of the Armed Forces.

- (b) To direct in a coordinated manner the extensive transport movements by water to and from Crete, which will be required in the near future, and to provide for their protection.
- (c) To regulate cooperation with the Italians, and, so far as is necessary, with the Bulgarian Armed Forces in the Balkans.
- (d) To direct supply by land and sea for all units of the Armed Forces present in the Balkans, according to their needs and to the extent permitted by the transport space available at any given time.
- (e) To supervise the Military Government of the Commanders, in territories occupied by German troops.

4. The Military Commander, South-East has all the powers of a territorial Commander in those sections of Serbia and Greece occupied by German troops, including the Greek islands.

The territories occupied exclusively by German troops will be operational areas, where the Military Commander, South-East will exercise executive power through the Commanders, subordinated to him.

Where German troops are stationed in territories belonging to Italian areas of occupation, he will exercise supreme military powers on behalf of all branches of the Armed Forces, so far as is required by the military duties of the German Armed Forces.

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5. For the definition of the powers of the Military Commander, South-East in relation to the Reich Plenipotentiary in Greece, see supplement attached.
6. The island of Crete will occupy a special position in the south-eastern area.

It will be the operational base from which to carry on the air war in the eastern Mediterranean, in coordination with the situation in North Africa. (see paragraph 7.)

Organising, strengthening, protecting and supplying this base are at present, the most important tasks in the south-eastern area.

As the base for the Luftwaffe operations, the "Fortress Crete" is to be put under a Luftwaffe commander, as special Commandant. He is to exercise executive power in conformity with the general instructions of the Military Commander, South-East, as the deputy of the Commander, Southern Greece. He will be responsible for the coordinated defence of the island, with all the troops stationed there and subordinated to him for this purpose. He will also have jurisdiction over the administration organisation of the Army.

The eastern part of the island, as far as the general line from the western edge of the Gulf of Mirabello up to and including the town of (H)Ierapetra is allotted to the Italian garrison. In all tactical matters referring to the common defence of the island, the Italians will be under the command of the island Commandant.

7. The air war in the eastern Mediterranean is to be carried out according to the orders of C.in C. Luftwaffe.

He is to make the required arrangements with the Italian Air Force directly.

8. Troops and supply transports by sea and their protection by naval or air forces will be regulated by the Military Commander, South-East through Naval C.in C. South-East in cooperation with the Italian Navy and Fliegerkorps X.

In case the Rumanian and Bulgarian navies should appear in the eastern Mediterranean C.in C. Navy will arrange directly with Naval C.in C. South-East the procedure to be followed in cooperating with them and in carrying out naval strategy.

9. Directive Nr. 29 of 17 May 1941 is revoked, so far as it is superseded by the above orders.

Signed : Adolf Hitler

Delimitation of the Powers of the Reich Plenipotentiary  
in Greece and the Military Commander, South-East.

- I. Relations between the "Reich Plenipotentiary in Greece" and the "Military Commander, South-East" and towards the Greek Government are based on the following:

- (a) Fuehrer's Decree of the 28 April 1941 for the "Reich Plenipotentiary in Greece".

1. I am arranging for a "Reich Plenipotentiary in Greece". He is to be stationed in Athens.
2. The Reich Plenipotentiary is to represent the political, economic and cultural interests of the Reich in Greece with the new Greek Government until formal diplomatic relations are resumed with Greece.

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3. The Reich Plenipotentiary is furthermore to maintain with the Italian occupation authorities the contacts necessary for carrying out his duties".
  - (b) The right of the "Military Commander, South-East" to exercise executive powers in the area occupied by German troops.
- II. The Military Commander, South-East, is to support the Reich Plenipotentiary in every way and to coordinate his own measures in Greece with him.
- III. Duties in political, economic and cultural spheres will in general fall to the Reich Plenipotentiary in Greece. He will be responsible for negotiations with the Greek Government as the representative of Reich interests in those spheres.
- Arrangements will be made there between the Reich Plenipotentiary and the Military Commander, South-East, to determine to what extent trade will be carried on in the area which is to continue to be occupied by German troops.
- The Reich Plenipotentiary in Greece will keep the Military Commander, South-East informed about questions of foreign policy, the knowledge of which is essential for the execution of his military duties.
- IV. The Military Commander, South-East, is to obtain the agreement of the Reich Plenipotentiary in Greece, provided the military situation permits, before issuing military decrees, which might have external political repercussions.
- V. Direction of propaganda in Greece is the task of the Foreign Office, which will cooperate with OKW (Operations Staff, Propaganda Department).

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