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7. On the other hand, whereas the Germans have at the moment an organised front between the Russians and the German frontier, in the West they have nothing but disorganised remnants incapable of holding an Allied advance in strength into Germany itself. We therefore cannot exclude the possibility that Hitler may increase the risks in the East and transfer some divisions from there to the West.

The Balkans

8. In Roumania the front has virtually ceased to exist. We do not know how fast, how far, or in what precise direction the Russians will advance. Their first consideration is likely to be the destruction of the German forces in Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece. They will also seize this opportunity of extending their political influence in the Balkans and particularly of making contact with Tito. It therefore seems probable that they will head straight for Belgrade.

9. The Russians will also probably try to break into Hungary through the Carpathians from the East with the help of some Roumanian divisions, and such an advance would probably be co-ordinated with a drive to the south from Poland across the Northern Carpathians. (See para. 3 above.)

10. There are indications that the Germans are already planning to withdraw from the Peloponnese and thin out their forces in Crete and the Aegean Islands. Under the pressure of the Russian advance through Roumania, this German withdrawal will probably develop into a belated attempt to evacuate the greater part of the Greek mainland.

11. The present German hope may be to hold on the line of the Carpathians-Transylvanian Alps - Bulgarian Frontier - Thrace until they have completed their withdrawal from Greece. Meanwhile, the German forces in Yugoslavia are having to take over the fresh commitment of protecting the all important railway line from Belgrade to Salonika, a duty hitherto performed by the Bulgarians.

12. The Germans will try to keep Hungary, their last fighting satellite, in the war as long as possible, in order to prevent the final disintegration of their position in South east Europe and to cover the approaches to Austria, gaining the support for this purpose of the Hungarian Army. The Germans, will, therefore try to hold first the line of the Carpathians and Transylvanian Alps. If this line is outflanked by a Russian drive from Poland into Northern Hungary, they would have to try to cover a front running approximately from the Tatra mountains in Slovakia through Budapest and then along the Rivers Danube and Sava to Istria.

13. In fact, however, the Russian advance towards Yugoslavia, intensified Allied bombing of communications and Partisan activity will make any orderly and complete withdrawal from the Balkans impossible. So slow, circuitous and difficult will be the German withdrawal that a large part of their forces in the Balkans will never arrive in time to take part in the final battle for the Reich. Moreover, during the withdrawal, the non-German units will probably disintegrate.

ITALY

14. Recently, the Germans moved two panzer grenadier divisions from Italy to France and in the last few days they have begun to withdraw some of their heavy equipment from North Italy. Now that the Allies have broken through the Gothic Line, the German armies in Italy will have to retreat as best they can, in the face of overwhelming Allied air superiority, across the Po to the Alps, possibly holding temporarily on the line of the River Piave in order to cover Trieste and Istria, but