

ANNEX A

C247860

FINLAND AND NORWAY

The Finns have stated that the Germans have agreed to withdraw their forces from Finland by the 15th September. The Germans, on the other hand, are seizing all Finnish shipping in their control and German shipping is avoiding Finnish ports. There is, at present, very little German shipping actually in Finnish ports. If, therefore, either Finland or Germany intends to implement any agreement which they may have made about the withdrawal of German troops on Finnish soil, these must, for the present at least, be withdrawn by the North Norwegian route, irrespective of any previous plans which the Germans may have made for evacuation. When, however, the situation is clarified, the Germans may possibly be able to withdraw one of the four divisions in central Finland by the Baltic route.

2. Whether the Germans decide in the present crisis to evacuate their troops in Norway (including those withdrawn from Finland) or whether they continue merely to thin out their troops there, they will hardly be able during September to transport more than two divisions and make them available on some other front, particularly as most of the troops transports normally employed between Oslo and Danish ports are at present in the Eastern Baltic.

EASTERN FRONT

Baltic to Carpathians

5. The new Russian offensive in Poland is not likely to be long delayed. We have no knowledge of Russian intentions but we believe that they will probably make two main thrusts; one to take Warsaw and drive due East to Berlin, the other and larger thrust to take Cracow, invade Silesia and then drive northeast to Berlin. A third thrust southward from Poland over the Carpathian mountains into Hungary is also possible. (See paragraph 9 below). The Russians will also continue their present operations designed to clear the Baltic States and may make further determined efforts to break into East Prussia through the Insterburg Gap.

4. There is still no evidence that the Germans are trying to evacuate their armies from the Baltic States. Indeed, very recently, they were proposing to reinforce this sector of the Eastern front from Germany. In East Prussia the Germans have massed considerable forces in a country admirably suited to defence. They will try to hold East Prussia to the last.

5. In Poland, when the Russians have breached the present German line, they are likely to surround and destroy many, perhaps the majority, of the German forces. Those that escape will fight their way back in the hope of putting up a final stand on the River Oder. Once the defences covering that river are forced, Berlin will be lost.

6. The Russians possess such superiority in men and equipment that the Germans cannot be confident of holding their present line in Poland even with the forces which they now dispose there. They probably appreciate that if the Russians broke through in Poland, they would within a month be at the gates of Berlin. They also probably appreciate that any forces they released from Russia to the West could never be re-transferred to the East in time to take part in the battle for Berlin. It may be, therefore, that even though the Anglo-American forces are on the point of invading Germany itself Hitler will not order any forces to be moved from East to West.