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SHAEF FORWARD
STAFF MESSAGE CONTROL
INCOMING MESSAGE

383.6
381 Eisenhower
301 Eisenhower
334 CCS

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TOO 261210A Mar

SHARP INT 99/26
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CLASSIFICATION CHANGED
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TO...
By authority of GALA
By...
Date 14 SEP 1945

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PRIORITY

FROM : SHAEF MAIN SIGNED EISENHOWER
TO FOR ACTION : AGWAR FOR COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF
FOR INFO : AMSBO FOR BRITISH CHIEFS OF STAFF, SHAEF
FWD
REF NO : 3-83110; 26 March 1945

SCAF-248

FACS 145 and SCAF 222 are references.

The obscure and changing situation among Prisoners of War in GERMANY has necessitated continuous revision of plans at this Hqs. The following details are incorporated in plans which are well advanced and provide for special intelligence measures, relief, protection and evacuation of PW by land and by air. Planning and operations are being coordinated with USSTAF and RAF Bomber Command.

Of the 257,000 BR/US Prisoners of War held by the Germans, approximately 97,000 BR/US PW are in the SHAEF sphere, and some 70,000 additional are believed to be moving into this area as a result of transfers brought about by the recent Russian advances. AUSTRIA holds an additional 14,500 PW other than BR/US in the SHAEF sphere, number approximately 1,000,000. In most instances BR/US PW are held in camps or concentrations, containing various other nationalities.

To give priority of security for PW captured while under US/BR command is impracticable. It would entail, for example, giving priority in relief and evacuation to a French soldier captured in 1944 over a French soldier captured in 1959 or 1940. The only practicable solution is to give priority

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383.6/7

26 March

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REF NO: S-83110

SHAEP FWD 99/26

to US/BR PW; the majority of these PW are concentrated in 35 camps. It is concluded that priority of security should be given to those camps, and that other United Nations PW at these camps should be afforded the same measures of relief and protection. Considerations in this study apply equally to camps in the Russian sphere which may not yet have been uncovered by the Russians. This study does not consider displaced persons or foreign workers.

Inadequacy of German food rations have made Red Cross parcels main source of sustenance. During the last 3 months these have not been arriving regularly or in adequate quantities and the increasing confusion and congestion in GERMANY has aggravated the situation to the extent that PW will be debilitated and unable to assist in their own protection. It is concluded as a result of the mixture of nationalities and the disorganization and debilitation, which may exist among PW, that arms will not be dropped save in most exceptional circumstances.

Immediately before "ECLIPSE" conditions prevail, acts of violence may be perpetrated against PW and massacres might be instigated by SS troops or the Gestapo under cover of the general disorder. As present information is inadequate and unreliable, it is essential to augment this through use of parachute reconnaissance teams and air reconnaissance.

PW camps are well guarded and military forces may be in the vicinity, therefore protection of PW must be in force rather than in small detachments, if it is to be effective. Such relief can be provided by our Ground Forces to camps lying near our main axes of advance. Other camps can only be afforded protection by dropping Airborne forces. The provision of protective forces is dependent upon operations in progress when "ECLIPSE" conditions prevail.

Air threat demonstration flights in the vicinity of PW camps can be carried out by the Tactical Air Forces as a warning to German forces and civilians that reprisals will follow any hostile action against PW.

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