

British and German military planning in World War II regarding the 'long-haul neutrals'

*Planificación militar británica y alemana en la Segunda Guerra Mundial
sobre los neutrales «a largo plazo»*

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to compare the military planning of the United Kingdom and the Third Reich regarding Spain and other European neutral countries (Ireland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey) throughout each of the phases of the Second World War. This required a systematic compilation of plans from primary sources in The National Archives in the United Kingdom and the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv in Germany. The main conclusion is that Spain's non-belligerent position was a key differentiating factor influencing the strategy adopted by each side towards the other European neutral countries.

Keywords: Neutrality, Non-Belligerence, International Relations, World War II, Spain.

Resumen

El objetivo principal es realizar un análisis comparado entre la planificación militar del Reino Unido y el Tercer Reich sobre España y la que elaboraron con respecto a otros neutrales europeos (Irlanda, Portugal, Suecia, Suiza y Turquía) en cada una de las fases de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Con este fin se ha realizado una recopilación sistemática de estos planes a partir de las fuentes primarias disponibles en The National Archives (Reino Unido) y el Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (Alemania). Como conclusión principal destaca que la no beligerancia española fue un factor diferenciador en la estrategia que siguieron ambos bandos hacia los neutrales europeos.

Palabras clave: neutralidad, no beligerancia, relaciones internacionales, Segunda Guerra Mundial, España.

1. INTRODUCTION

The vast amount of literature on World War II includes research on the relations between belligerents and neutrals. It is nonetheless a subject that has received less attention than others, frequently approached from national perspectives and devoid of a global comparative approach to the group of neutral states. One of the main overviews of the subject is the collective monograph edited by Louis-Edouard Roulet with general overviews of British (WATT, 1985) and German (MARTIN, 1985) policies about the European neutrals. More recently it's to be noted the collective monograph edited by Neville WYLIE (2002) which describes the situation of the 'long-haul neutrals' (Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Sweden, and Switzerland), among other neutral countries. The book edited by Wylie is one of the few that offers a broad vision of the neutral states. Yet a veritable comparative analysis of this subject still lacks as each country in Wylie's monograph is examined independently in separate chapters authored by renowned specialists. Christian Leitz a few years earlier addressed the issue of 'long-haul neutrals' (excluding Ireland but adding Turkey) through a comparative analysis of their links with the belligerents. While each country is analysed in a specific chapter, the comparative aspects are relegated to the conclusions (LEITZ, 2000: 175-191). More recently H. R. REGINBOGIN (2009) delved into the question of Swiss neutrality by comparing it to that of other countries. Another interesting comparative studies are the articles by Roberto RUSSELL and Juan Gabriel TOKATLIAN (2001), and Uğur SERÇE (2022).

The study of neutrality in Europe during the Second World War suffers from several research gaps. One of them is that none the numerous studies focusing on each individual neutral country has culminated in a comprehensive comparative analysis yielding a more complete perspective of their situation and actions during the conflict. There are many subjects to be compared, but in this article the issue is limited to a specific aspect: the military planning of the belligerents with respect to the 'long-haul neutrals', a topic that has received less attention than others such as economic relations. However, this subject likewise offers a broader vision of the strategy, beyond diplomatic relations, of the belligerents towards neutrals and paves the way to a clearer definition of the threats to neutrals. Hence the main objective of this article is to compare the military planning by the great powers with regard to the 'long-haul neutrals'. This is not an unknown question. German plans to occupy Switzerland have been widely studied by Ernst UHLMANN (1949), Hans Rudolf KURZ (1957 and 1972) and Klaus URNER (1990), among others. The more detailed study about German military planning about the Iberian Peninsula is the book by Charles B. BURDICK (1968), an old but essential reference for this subject. Other German plans have received less attention, but they have been traced by other researchers: the project for landing in Ireland has been discussed by Peter FLEMING (1957) and Robert FISK (1985); the study to invade Sweden is commented by John GILMOUR (2011); a plan for Turkey have been mentioned by Michael KERRIGAN (2012). British military planning on these neutrals has been studied by a wide number of researchers: Robert FISK (1985) and Eunan O'HALPIN

(1999) for Ireland; José António TELO (1987, 1991 and 1993) and DÍAZ BENÍTEZ (2023) for Portugal; Jukka NEVAKIVI (1976) and Patrick SALMON (1997) for Sweden; Luis Pascual SÁNCHEZ-GIJÓN (1984), Denis SMYTH (1986), Antonio MARQUINA BARRIO (1986), Víctor MORALES LEZCANO (1995), Enrique MORADIELLOS (2005), Pablo CUEVAS (2023), and Juan José DÍAZ BENÍTEZ (2024a), among others for Spain.

It is not a question, therefore, of exploring a topic of prior research or solving all the gaps with respect to European neutrality during the Second World War and, more specifically, that of Spanish non-belligerence but to respond to a specific research gap on this issue: the lack of a comparative perspective. It thus focuses on an issue, the military planning of belligerents with respect to neutrals, up to now treated in an isolated manner for each country, an approach that facilitates research stemming from prior findings but lacking comparative analyses to contextualise them into a broader interpretive framework. The interest of this objective stems from the need to resolve two historiographic gaps regarding European neutrality during the Second World War. The first is to settle the lack of comparative research on the different military plans of the belligerents regarding neutral countries. The second is to reconsider Spanish non-belligerence in a European context, avoiding the clichés of Spain as an anomaly in European history, while simultaneously identifying its specificities within a broader framework.

The investigation stems from a premise established by historiography, notably that neutrality did not prevent these countries from becoming targets of belligerent military planning. This threat, obvious in the cases of the neutrals that were ultimately invaded, was likewise extended to those that managed to stay out of the war. The current article, based on this standpoint, therefore attempts to demonstrate that the factor in the case of Spain that had the greatest influence on the military planning of the belligerents was the possibility that it enters the war alongside the Axis powers. To carry this out we analysed a series of primary documents housed in The National Archives (TNA) in the United Kingdom and the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (BA-MA) in Germany that record the main plans drawn up by the main actors of the events, the Allies and Axis powers. Many of these documents have been consulted by other researchers: this article doesn't pretend to discover new documents, but just support this research and to show where to find more information from primary sources, that it's not possible to describe in detail in these pages. The work of other authors served to gather information about other initiatives such as the North American plan to seize the Azores (TELO, 1993: 339-340), and the Italian plans to overrun Switzerland (ROVIGHI, 1987: 177-188).

To develop the comparative perspective, the following pages will focus on two questions. First, the necessity of military planning on neutral countries, and the distinction between defensive and offensive projects: sometimes to outmatch the enemy, and other times to counter enemy's moves. Second, the viability of the military planning on the 'long-haul neutrals': some operations were to be carried on, but others were just a theoretical exercise or an excuse to avoid a heavy commitment. To make the analysis easier, the military planning will be classified in three sections: the first one for British planning on the most of the 'long-haul

neutrals', the second one for British projects about Spain and Portugal, and the third one for German planning. The comparative between British and German planning will be developed in the Conclusions, completed by a final consideration about the military planning on each neutral country. Along the analysis, the main two sections include a short description of this planning: the high number of projects doesn't allow a more detailed view of each one, and there are more extensive studies on them. Finally, this military planning is related to projects for the deployment of military forces: operations by intelligence services, as the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and Abwehr/ Ausland, have been studied in other articles, so they haven't been included in these pages as part of the military planning.

2. BRITISH MILITARY PROJECTS ON THE 'LONG-HAUL NEUTRALS'

One of the reasons for military planning on neutral countries was the possibility to outmatch the enemy or indeed to force its defeat. That was the motive behind Allied planning on Sweden, a 'long-haul neutral' country that received the most attention from British military planning during the initial phase of the war. Support for Norway and Sweden in the event of a Soviet aggression was initially ruled out by the British Joint Planning Staff (JPS) due to lack of means¹. But the start of hostilities between Finland and the Soviet Union encouraged the hopes of the War Cabinet (CAB), and especially Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty, to interrupt shipments of Swedish iron ore to the Third Reich through Norwegian ports. The Royal Navy for this purpose deliberated between 1937 and 1939 options of mining operations and disrupting communications (SALMON, 1997: 340-344). Churchill in September advanced Operation *Catherine* which would place a naval force to prevent German imports of Swedish iron (ROBERTS, 2019: 630-631). However, it was not until December 1939 that preparations for an expeditionary force to Sweden began to prevent these exports under the pretext of guaranteeing its defence against the Red Army (GILMOUR, 2011: 41-43; LEVINE, 2002: 316-317). This intervention would have been triggered by a request of these Scandinavian countries. The Swedes nonetheless did not opt for this solution as it implied involvement in the war (NEVAKIVI, 1976: 74, 104-107). The Allies prepared two operations, *Stratford* and *Avonmouth*, to intervene in Norway and Sweden in February 1940 but discarded due to Finland's defeat.² The mining of Norwegian waters by the Royal Navy began that year on April 8. The *Avonmouth* operation was nonetheless pre-empted by the *Wehrmacht* as it invaded Norway the next day (NEVAKIVI 1976: 153-158).

Between September and October 1941, and after German invasion of Soviet Union, the JPS examined Operation *Ajax* whose objective was to seize the

¹ The National Archives (TNA), CAB 84/8, report JP (29) 70, 27 October 1939.

² TNA, CAB 84/2, JP (40) 2nd Mtg., 23 January 1940, and JP (40) 5th Mtg., 7 February 1940; CAB 65/12, WM (40) 68th Conclusions, Minute 4, Confidential Annex, 14 March 1940.

Norwegian port of Trondheim and whose execution required, besides the great difficulties in carrying it out, that Sweden join the war effort against the Third Reich.³ This operation was intended to promote a Norwegian uprising and to attract German forces from other sceneries, a less ambitious objective than *Avonmouth* and *Stratford*, intended to stop or at least decelerate German industry. *Ajax* was propelled by Churchill, but the view from the Chiefs of Staff (COS) and the JPS were less optimistic: the operation required too many forces and shipping to be detracted from other projects and commitments, and it had few chances to be successful. So, *Ajax* just remained on paper and didn't go further due to poor viability. The reasons for the cancellation of *Avonmouth* and *Stratford* were different: the Allied forces and commanders were designed for this task, but the lack of Swedish and Norwegian consent didn't let to implement these operations, finally surpassed by German operation *Weserübung* to conquer Denmark and Norway.

The *Apostle I* and *Apostle II* projects were drafted in the case of a total German surrender, or a surrender limited exclusively to Norway in which Sweden could intervene without the Allies having to re-equip their armed forces.⁴ Between 1943 and 1945 the Scandinavian country recruited, armed, and trained paramilitary forces among Danish and Norwegian refugees to implement order in their countries after the German surrender (GILMOUR, 2011: 101-103). Aside from the *Fortitude North* and *Graffham* deceptions to divert German attention from the Normandy landings (GILMOUR, 2011: 106), the JPS on November 30, 1944, prepared a draft on the advisability of involving Sweden in the war on the side of the Allies highlighting as the main drawback the limited capacity of the Swedish Army, its need of excessive air support and the absence of great repercussions on the German war effort. Despite these drawbacks it recommended initiating an unofficial approach to the Swedish Government.⁵ In fact, the reports of January and February 1945 ruled out enrolling Sweden into the war effort against Germany due to the disadvantages outweighing the advantages. Sweden, in fact, could only enter the war on the condition of military aid that could only be provided by the Soviet Union that the JPS, for political reasons, preferred not to solicit.⁶ The Swedish Government eventually agreed to initiate military talks in April to act against the German garrison in Norway (GILMOUR, 2011: 108-111). The JPS thus recommended on May 2, 1945, that the Allied mission to Sweden include Norwegian participation and the acceptance that the Allies not be obliged to re-equip the Swedish Armed Forces. This mission was not pursued as a few days later the war in Europe came to a halt.⁷ Although less ambitious than *Ajax*, and moreover *Stratford* and *Avonmouth*, *Apostle I* and *Apostle II* were aimed to take advantage on the last days of Third Reich and before Soviet Union could come

3 TNA, CAB 84/35, reports JP (41) 798, 29 September 1941, and JP (41) 847, 14 October 1941.

4 TNA, CAB 121/475, JP (45) 43 (Final), 20 March 1945

5 TNA, CAB 84/67, report JP (44) 284 (S) (Draft), 30 November 1944.

6 TNA, CAB 84/69, report JP (45) 27 (Final), 25 January 1945; TNA, CAB 121/475, report JP (45) (Final), 19 February 1945.

7 TNA, CAB 121/475, report JP (45) 109 (Final), 2 May 1945.

into Norway. These last military projects for Sweden were not simple exercises: the beginning of military talks between the Allies and the Scandinavian country suggests a real intention to implement these operations, finally cancelled by the end of the war.

Another interesting area for the Allies at the beginning of the war was the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey that had signed a treaty of mutual aid with the Allies against the Axis in the Balkans and the Mediterranean (LEITZ, 2000: 85-87) that from October 1939 (and still in effect in May 1940) gave rise to a series of reports by the Joint Planning Sub-Committee (JPSC) on the assistance it would require in the event of an Axis aggression.⁸ Allied defeats in France and Italian belligerence in June 1940 advised against Turkish belligerence: it would be impossible to assist Turkey in a war against the Axis. In November 1940 the JPS recommended in a report approved by the COS that Turkey join the Allies, even though the United Kingdom was in no position to assist it in repelling a German attack,⁹ but the CAB didn't go ahead. Only since 1943, Great Britain tried to bring Turkey into the war, to stop Turkish chrome exports to the Third Reich, to distract German forces, and to menace German oil wells in Romania. Operation *Hardihood* in mid-1943 in fact aimed at strengthening Turkey's defences against an Axis attack and install air bases to bomb southeastern Europe.¹⁰ British diplomatic efforts on Turkey continued until to get the Turkish belligerence against the Third Reich at the beginning of 1945 (VANDERLIPPE, 2001: 69-80; DOCKTER, 2021: 882-889). Like *Stratford* and *Avonmouth*, *Hardihood* was intended to obstruct German war effort, although they were not directed against the neutral countries, and they did not suppose a menace against them or their neutral rights. On the other hand, bringing Turkey into the war implied a so heavy commitment on Allied resources that made it inviable in the first years of the war. However, this consideration changed since 1943, when the course of the war changed against the Axis, despite it implied a considerable effort for Great Britain. Finally, it wasn't realized because Turkish belligerence was declared in a short time before the end of the war and when there was no immediate German menace against Turkey.

These offensive plans were made to outmatch the enemy, but the Allies prepared defensive projects against a German move on neutral countries. One of the first examples is French collaboration with the Swiss Army between June and October 1939 to defend the alpine country against a German aggression in their potential attempt to outflank the French Army (KURZ, 1957: 19-24). There is no record of the signing of any military agreement (CHEVALLAZ, 1995: 145-152), although there is evidence of military contacts in the winter of 1939-40 in documents captured by the German Army.¹¹ Switzerland wasn't an objective for British military planners, although the SOE studied sabotage operations

⁸ TNA, CAB 84/8, report JP (39) 65, 21 October 1939, and CAB 84/13, report JP (40) 143, 7 May 1940.

⁹ TNA, CAB 84/22, report JP (40) 622, 13 November 1940, and CAB 84/2, JP (40) 131st Mtg, 13 November 1940.

¹⁰ TNA, CAB 84/54, report JP (43) 218 (Final), 21 June 1943, and note JP (43) 240 (Final), 20 July 1943.

¹¹ Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (BA-MA), RH 2/465, OKH, note by Fremde Heere West/IV to Operation Abteilung, 3 September 1940.

(WYLIE, 2003: 181-194). The unique report prepared by the JPS for an invasion of Switzerland was in January 1945, as a theoretical exercise: it foresaw the military drawbacks (without entering political considerations) that could arise from violating its neutrality. The objective of the Allies in invading Switzerland was to force a German withdrawal from the Upper Rhine to facilitate their advance into the Third Reich. However, this invasion would have provoked a reaction from the *Helvetians* who at that time could confront the Allies with nine divisions and twelve well-trained and equipped infantry brigades on a type of terrain more favourable for defence than attack. The same was true of southern Germany where an advance would have required between 40 and 50 infantry divisions, as well as a great logistics to maintain such as large force while the *Wehrmacht* could hold out with fewer numbers of troops to carry out attacks in other sectors of the Western Front.¹² This was an offensive plan, but too an inviable one, just to discard this idea from Allied strategy.

Ireland was the object of British military planning as even before the war had explored (albeit discarded) occupying Berehaven (O'HALPIN, 1999: 172-173). At the end of May 1940, after the defeat of the Allies in Europe, the CAB agreed to initiate a rapprochement with the Irish Government for access to Berehaven to protect its navigation and coordinate the defence against a potential German invasion, which represented a threat to Great Britain.¹³ The need to expand the number of its allies to counter the Axis Alliance led the British planning committees during this period to considered enlisting several European neutrals as belligerents. What was more worrying was a potential German invasion of Ireland which led to conversations with the Government of Eire in June 1940 (FISK, 1985: 186-219)¹⁴ and preparations that same month of an operation to deploy British forces to Ireland to counter the invasion (FISK, 1985: 233-244).¹⁵ Preparations continued throughout the second half of that year until at the end of 1942 when the JPS recommended reducing the forces concentrated in Northern Ireland as a German attack was deemed unlikely (FISK, 1985: 271-275).¹⁶ Unlike Allied plans on Sweeden and Turkey, British planning about Ireland didn't try to outmatch the Axis but to combat a possible German invasion of Ireland that could be a direct menace against Britain. So, military planning about Sweeden and Turkey could be convenient, but military planning about Ireland in 1940 and 1941 was necessary, at least until German menace of invasion disappeared. The defensive nature of the British project to deploy forces in Ireland was completed by its viability: it wasn't a theoretical exercise, but a plan to be implemented with forces and commander assigned, and with a clear air and naval superiority against German forces. However, the main handicap against the viability of this operation wasn't military, but political: British forces could only entry into Ireland

12 TNA, CAB 84/69, report JP (45) 3 (Final), 19 January 1945.

13 TNA, CAB 66/7, WM (40) 141st Conclusions, 25 May 1940; CAB 65/7, WM (40) 141st Conclusions, 27 May 1940; JP (40) 45th Mtg, 24 May 1940.

14 TNA, CAB 123/196, notes on the conversations between De Valera and MacDonald, June-July 1940.

15 TNA, CAB 84/15, report JP (40) 268, 22 June 1940.

16 TNA, CAB 84/50, report JP (42) 968, 26 November 1942.

when Irish Government ask for help or after the landing of German troops, but not before (Table 1).

TABLE 1. BRITISH MILITARY PROJECTS ON IRELAND, SWEEDEN, SWITZERLAND, AND TURKEY, 1939-1945

Country	Codename	Dates	Objective	Nature	Viability
Ireland	---	1940-1942	To combat a German invasion of the island	Defensive	Military viability, but political uncertainty
Sweden	<i>Avonmouth</i>	1939-1940	To interrupt shipments of Swedish iron ore to the Third Reich	Offensive	Military viability, but political unviability
	<i>Ajax</i>	1941	To size the Norwegian port of Trondheim	Offensive	Military and political unviability
	<i>Apostle I and II</i>	1945	To disarm German forces in Norway	Offensive	Military and political viability
Switzerland	---	1945	Invasion of the country to force the German withdrawal from Upper Rhin	Offensive	Unviable: theoretical exercise
Turkey	<i>Hardihood</i>	1943	To defend the country, after bringing Turkey into the war against the Third Reich	Offensive	Military viability, but political uncertainty

Source: Own elaboration based on the sources cited in the article.

3. AN AMBIGUOUS PLANNING: BRITISH MILITARY PROJECTS FOR THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS

Ireland received attention in British planning for a longer time than Switzerland, but less than the Iberian Peninsula and the Atlantic islands, where it presented an ambiguous nature: some projects were to give military assistance to these countries, but others were to fight against Portuguese or Spanish forces. To understand this apparently confusing view it's necessary to let attention to the risk of Spanish belligerence since June 1940 and the subsequently menace on Gibraltar. The risk of the Third Reich taking Gibraltar with Spanish Government collaboration and the risk of a German occupation of the Atlantic islands led the British planning committees to draw up various preventive operations or at least actions to counteract the serious potential consequences on British strategic communications in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Analyses and preparation began in the summer of 1940 to occupy the Canary Islands (*Bugler/Chutney/Puma/Pilgrim*), the Azores (*Alloy/Brisk, Paradox/Fanweise, Truck and Thruster/Sparklet*), Madeira (*Springboard*) and the islands of Cabo Verde (*Shrapnel/Baseball*). These

would serve as alternatives to Gibraltar if it were to be lost or subjected to bombardment. This gave rise to plans persisting until 1943 contemplating both the conquest of these islands or their occupation by invitation (TELO, 1993: 308-315, 327, 331-332; DÍAZ BENÍTEZ, 2008: 70-86, 157-184)¹⁷. While they prepared for an occupation of the Atlantic islands by force, the British Government began talks with the Portuguese to collaborate in its defence against a German attack (TELO, 1987: 325-328).¹⁸ The British in the autumn of 1940 also contemplated the possibility of collaborating with part of the Spanish Armed Forces against a hypothetical attack on Gibraltar by the Germans, which meant planning operations in the south of the Peninsula and in Spanish Morocco. These were nonetheless discarded by early 1941 (MORADIELLOS, 2005: 188-195, 212-215; SMYTH, 1986: 104-105, 150-165, 176-177; SÁNCHEZ-GIJÓN, 1984: 67-88).¹⁹ The United States, concerned about the defence of the western hemisphere, prepared in May 1941 an operation called *Gray* to occupy the Azores which was later postponed when the Germans invaded of the Soviet Union (TELO, 1993: 339-340).

After German invasion of the Soviet Union, planning among the British continued its focus on the Portuguese Atlantic islands (TELO, 1993: 343-356) despite that the Canary Islands was its main objective (DÍAZ BENÍTEZ, 2008: 219-252). Currently the British continued military talks with Portugal (TELO, 1991: 82). Allied plans to seize both the Portuguese (*Ringcraft* and *Pressgang*)²⁰ and Spanish (*Tonic*, *Breezy* and *Adroit*) Atlantic islands (DÍAZ BENÍTEZ, 2008: 281-310) continued after the United States came into the war and even after the Allied landings in northwestern Africa. The preparations of this last operation contemplated the possibility of Spain being hostile or allowing German forces passage through its territory to attack Gibraltar. This led to planning for a new operation called *Backbone* to occupy the Spanish protectorate of Morocco²¹ and attack mainland Spain around Gibraltar.²² Moreover, the British, in anticipation of an invasion of Spain by the Axis powers, contemplated the creating of a bridgehead in the south of the Peninsula made up of Allied and Spanish forces (MARQUINA BARRIO, 1986: 64-68).²³ Finally, the JPS in mid-1942 planned for the Special Operations Executive (SOE) to interrupt exports of iron to Germany without counting on assistance from Sweden. Furthermore, at the end of that year it reflected on how to induce Turkey into the war on the side of the Allies.²⁴

In 1943 the Allies permanently cancelled certain plans they had set in motion over the years while simultaneously introducing new ones. British schemes to

17 TNA, CAB 84/15, report JP (40) 257, 20 June 1940.

18 TNA, CAB 84/26, report JP (41) 27, 1 January 1941, and CAB 84/28, notes JP (41) 193 (E), 9 March 1941, and JP (41) 194 (E), 10 March 1941.

19 TNA, CAB 84/22-28, JPS reports on several operations, 1940-1941.

20 TNA, WO 106/3060, report JP (42) 343 (E) (Revised Draft), 19 April 1942, and CAB 84/49, report JP (42) 855, 1 October 1942.

21 TNA, WO 106/2737, report JP (42) 770, 1 September 1942, and CAB 121/495, report JP (42) 887 (E).

22 TNA, CAB 84/49, note JP (42) 856, 1 October 1942.

23 TNA, CAB 84/51, report JP (42) 1941, 31 December 1942.

24 TNA, CAB 84/46, report JP (42) 568, 3 June 1942, and CAB 84/51, report JP (42) 1030, 23 December 1942.

occupy the Canary Islands persisted with the *Tonic* and *Adroit* plans designed to occupy them either by force or invitation. These options were maintained until their final cancellation in the autumn of 1943 after the surrender of Italy and when it became unlikely that Spain become belligerent or that Germany intervene in the Peninsula (DÍAZ BENÍTEZ, 2008: 345-353).²⁵ British planning with respect to the Portuguese Atlantic islands continued in 1943 with Operations *Brisk* and *Lifebelt* directed against the Azores and *Ripper* targeting Madeira.²⁶ In the case of the Azores, the British military also designed Operations *Vault* and *Alacrity* in the case they were extended an official invitation for their forces to land. The second was to come about in October of that same year (TELO, 1991: 154-163, 180).²⁷ The Portuguese Government consented to a British presence in this archipelago in exchange for the commitment of London to the defence of its peninsular territory against a potential Spanish attack, an option considered unlikely by the JPS. This commitment to defend the airspace of Lisbon and Porto against the *Luftwaffe* initially took the form of Operation *Lemonade* before evolving in October 1943 into an Anglo-Portuguese defensive plan against a Spanish invasion (DÍAZ BENÍTEZ, 2023: 173-192).²⁸ Until the middle of that year, plans to occupy Spanish Morocco were drawn up in the framework of Operation *Backbone II*, whereas those to reinforce the defence of Gibraltar against hostilities from Spain took the form of Operations *Bantam* and *Buffalo*.²⁹ The United States also opted throughout 1943 with bolstering Portugal with more than 30 divisions to face a potential German attack (MARQUINA BARRIO, 1986: 86-91).

During the last phase of the war the JPS considered the possibility of Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland entering the war in Europe during its last months, as well as intervening in Spain or in their African possessions. The JPS displayed a favourable view in December 1943 of a Portuguese declaration of war against Japan. It was not until November of the following year that an agreement was reached between Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States regarding a Portuguese participation in the reconquest of the Island of Timor. In fact, the JPS stated in February 1945 that a potential Portuguese aggression against the Japanese would increase pressure on the shipping capacity of the Allies without making any significant contribution either to the Allied war effort or to the interests of Portugal.³⁰ The perspective of the JPS as to Spain at the end of 1944 was not aimed at it joining the Allies, but of examining the potential of conquering bases in Spain and its North African territories, as well as recovering

25 TNA, CAB 84/56, note JP (43) 316 (Final), 6 September 1943.

26 TNA, CAB 84/53, report JP (43) 137 (Final), 21 May 1943; TNA, WO 106/2934, report JP (43) 200 (Final), 1 June 1943.

27 TNA, CAB 121/480, note COS (43) 319 (O), 18 June 1943, and note COS (43) 449 (O) (Revise), 10 August 1943.

28 TNA, CAB 119/31, reports JP (227) (Final), 28 June 1943, JP (43) 237 (Final), 8 July 1943, and JP (40) 370 (Final), 28 October 1943.

29 TNA, WO 204/1801, G-3 Section, Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) to COS, 5 February 1944; TNA, WO 204/1890, Instruction No. 1 and Fortress Operation Instruction No. 2, 10 April 1943, and May 1943.

30 TNA, CAB 119/31, report JP (43) 413 (Revised Final), 10 December 1943; TNA, CAB 84/69, report JP (45) 34 (Final), 11 February 1945.

Tangier by force. It nevertheless reached the conclusion that at that time there were not enough forces available to carry out these objectives and that they would not equate with the benefits that could be obtained from a friendly attitude on the part of the Iberian country.³¹ These last reports about Spain and Tangier can't be considered as projects to be implemented, but arguments against military action in these sceneries.

British plans to seize the Atlantic islands show an offensive nature, but they were motivated by a defensive objective: to get an alternative to Gibraltar when Spain came into the war. There was no intention to outmatch the Axis in the Iberian Peninsula or the Atlantic islands, but only to be ready in the face of the possible loss of Gibraltar. For this reason, the CAB, the COS and the JPS didn't want to cause the belligerence of Spain and the Spanish or German invasion of Portugal, after the British seizure of the Atlantic islands: these projects would be worthy only if Spain went to the war. British interest to obtain facilities in the Azores in 1943 was to defend Allied shipping against German submarines, but this objective was accomplished by diplomatic agreement. The nature of the British plans about the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish Morocco is defensive: to combat a German invasion of Portugal and to defend Gibraltar. In these projects Portugal was regarded as an allied country, especially those designed for the Iberian Peninsula, although many of the operations to occupy the Atlantic islands were to fight against Portuguese troops. However, the attitude towards Spain was more ambiguous, as result of the uncertainty of the Spanish foreign policy, above all during the non-belligerence period (1940-1942): in 1940 and 1941 there were plans to cooperate with Spanish neutralist military, and, at the same time, to fight against the Spanish Army in the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco; later, in 1942 and 1943, there were projects to seize the Canary Islands and to occupy them by invitation at the same time (Table 2).

The viability of the military projects about Spain and Portugal wasn't the same for each one. The operations against the Atlantic islands were considered viables and, during long periods, there were forces and shipping attached to these projects. The retention of these forces wasn't always justified: at the beginning of 1942 some of the forces for *Pilgrim* were assigned to the operation against Diego Suarez (*Ironclad*), and the rest were attached to other operations in the summer of that year. The operations in the Spanish Morocco required bigger forces than those for the Atlantic Islands, but in 1942 and 1943 these forces were available from *Torch* and other military units available for North Africa. The less viable projects were those studied to help Portuguese forces to defend Lisboa and their Iberian territory, and the plans to collaborate with Spanish Army in the defence of the south of Spain and Gibraltar. From the British point of view, it was very difficult to defend Lisbon and Portuguese mainland: it required big forces, and they couldn't be deployed before the arrival of the Wehrmacht. In this sense, and although Portuguese Government tried to get British compromise in the defence of the mainland, British CAB and COS tried to avoid any commitment in a task

31 TNA, CAB 84/67, report 67 (44) 288 (Final) and JP (44) 289 (Final), 7 and 11 December 1944.

with so few chances of success. The same perspective was applied to the plans to collaborate with Spanish neutralist military, to be added to another relevant handicap: the uncertainty about the will or the ability of the potential Spanish allies, that could make fail these plans and loose British forces committed (Table 3).

TABLE 2. BRITISH MILITARY PROJECTS ON SPAIN, 1940-1944

Codename	Dates	Objective	Nature	Viability
<i>Dazzle</i>	1940	Support of Spanish forces in Morocco	Defensive	Military viability
<i>Grind</i>	1940	Seizure of Tanger	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Challenger</i>	1940	Seizure of Ceuta	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Blackthorn, Ballast, Sapphic</i>	1941	Support of Spanish forces in the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish Morocco	Defensive	Military unviability
<i>X.Y.Operations: Sprinkler</i>	1941	Destruction of port facilities and fuel depots in Spain with Spanish support	Offensive	Military viability
<i>X.Y.Operations: Sconce</i>	1941	Destruction of port facilities and fuel depots in Spain against Spanish forces	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Bugler, Chutney, Puma, Pilgrim, Tonic</i>	1940-1943	Seizure of the Canary Islands	Offensive	Military viability: forces assembled and trained for this task in 1941
<i>Adroit</i>	1942-1943	Occupation of the Canary Islands by invitation	Defensive	Military viability
<i>Backbone I and II</i>	1942-1943	Seizure of the Spanish Morocco	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Bantam, Buffalo</i>	1943	Destruction of Spanish artillery batteries near Gibraltar	Offensive	Military viability
---	1943	Support of Spanish forces in the Iberian Peninsula	Defensive	Unviable: theoretical exercise
---	1944	Seizure of Tanger	Offensive	Unviable: theoretical exercise
---	1944	Seizure of bases in Spain	Offensive	Unviable: theoretical exercise

Source: Own elaboration based on the sources cited in the article.

British military planning on 'long haul neutrals' was accordingly with British classification of these countries (WATT, 1985: 246-247). Portugal and Turkey were considered anglophile non-belligerents: CAB and COS considered to make them British allies in the war against the Axis, although they prepared at the same time operations against the Portuguese Atlantic islands. Switzerland and Sweden were

strictly neutral, but economic pressure could make them to move towards the Allies: British relations with these countries could be strained but they were no object for British military plans to conquer them; indeed, British COS and JPS studied military projects to cooperate with Sweden against the Third Reich. Watt makes no clear where can be situated Ireland, but it could be considered in the same place that Switzerland and Sweden: Irish Government tried to keep a strict neutrality, and British CAB studied an operation to fight the menace of a German landing but not to fight against the Irish. On the other hand, Spain was in the same place that Ireland until June 1940: strictly neutral but tied to the Third Reich. There was British economic and diplomatic pressure to keep Spain neutral, but there were also military projects to fight against a belligerent Spain.

TABLE 3. BRITISH MILITARY PROJECTS IN PORTUGAL, 1940-1943

Codename	Dates	Objective	Nature	Viability
<i>One, Alloy, Brisk, Truck, Ringcraft</i>	1940-1943	Seizure of the Azores against Portuguese forces	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Paradox, Fanweise,</i>	1940-1941	Seizure of the Azores against German forces	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Thruster, Sparkelt</i>	1941	Occupation of the Azores by fair dealing	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Lifebelt</i>	1943	Seizure of the Azores by deception	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Vault, Alacrity</i>	1943	Occupation of the Azores by invitation	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Two, Shrapnel, Baseball</i>	1940-1943	Seizure of the Cape Verdean Islands	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Ripper, Pressgang</i>	1942-1943	Seizure of Madeira	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Springboard</i>	1941	Occupation of Madeira by fair dealing	Offensive	Military viability
<i>Lemonade</i>	1943	Air defence of Lisbon and Porto	Defensive	Military viability
---	1943	Anglo-Portuguese plan against a Spanish invasion	Defensive	Military viability

Source: Own elaboration based on the sources cited in the article.

4. GERMAN MILITARY PLANNING ON NEUTRAL COUNTRIES

The Third Reich considered too the possibilities to outmatch the Allies in the most of the 'long-haul neutrals'. Military action in these countries was not necessary for the survival of the Third Reich but could be useful for German

strategy. After the rapid capitulation of France and the need to force a surrender of the United Kingdom (or at least accept a negotiated peace), coupled with their support of Italy in the Mediterranean, Germany had several strategic options which they ended up relegating due to Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union (KERSHAW, 2008: 93-137). In fact, the Third Reich's two invasion plans of Turkey dating to September 1940 to drive Great Britain out of the Mediterranean were ruled out due to the preparations for Operation *Barbarossa* (LEITZ, 2000: 91). The High Command of the German Army (*Oberkommando des Heeres*, OKH) prepared a plan against Turkey at the end of that year (JACOBSEN, 1963: 191, 276, 282 and 283), and again in 1941, thinking in new commitments after Soviet defeat:³² in July of that year there were two variants of a plan to advance towards the Near East and Caucasus with or without Turkish acquiescence (SCHREIBER, STEGEMANN, and VOGEL, 2015: 633). 1942 also saw planning for Operation *Gertrude*, the invasion of Turkey (KERRIGAN, 2012: 96-97), but never implemented. Another example was Ireland, where the Germans drew up plans for Ireland from August 1940 in the form of a diversionary attack to support Operation *Seelöwe*, the invasion of Great Britain. The plan of the German invasion of Ireland entitled *Grün*³³ was subsequently updated in 1941 and 1942 (FISK, 1985: 220-233), when was potentially the last German musings on an invasion of Ireland (FISK, 1985: 275-276). German military planning on Sweden was later, only when the Third Reich considered the possibility of Swedish belligerence. Between April and August 1943, German General von Schnell prepared a plan against Sweden should it enter the war alongside the Allies (GILMOUR, 2011: 229-230). This was preceded by a plan for the 25th Armoured Division to occupy Sweden if the Allies were to land there.³⁴ This planning about Sweden wasn't necessary for the survival of the Reich, and didn't require an imminent enforcement, so remained as a theoretical exercise. The invasion of Sweden didn't need too many forces, but the heavy attrition in the Eastern Front made it non-viable.

However, the Axis's greatest efforts in preparing operations in neutral territories focused on Switzerland and the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, the German Army between June and October 1940 explored schemes to invade Switzerland (KURZ, 1972: 36-65; HALBROOK, 2000: 129-153; URNER, 1990: 13-84).³⁵ To these were added two Italian initiatives to split Switzerland with the Third Reich (ROVIGHI, 1987: 178-184). In 1941, there was the so-called *Wartegau Plan* to invade the alpine country in July (Halbrook, 2000: 163). Throughout 1943 the Germans drew up new plans for operations in Switzerland, specifically one attributed to General Dietl in March and one drawn up by SS General Böhme at the end of that year (UHLMANN, 1949: 841-862). It's not clear the benefits of a German campaign in a mountain country against a stubborn resistance. The Axis used the alpine passes between Italy and the Third Reich: the invasion of Switzerland could

32 BA-MA, RH 2/446, timetable for operations after Operation *Barbarossa*, undated.

33 BA-MA, RM 35-II/340, RM 45-IV/673 and RH 24-80/24, Operation *Grün*, 1940.

34 BA-MA, RW 39/3, operative study by 25^a Panzer Division to occupy Sweden in the event of an Anglo-American landing, 31 March 1943.

35 BA-MA, RH 2/465, Operation *Tannenbaum*, 1940.

have made these passes blown by the Swiss. Anyway, in June 1940 there was a clearer objective: if France rejected the armistice agreement, an attack through Switzerland could force the surrender of the last French forces (URNER, 1990: 48-64). The rest of German military planning on this country has been discussed as a real menace (CHEVALLAZ, 1995: 411-54 and 301-319; HALBROOK, 2000: 129-153 and 189-213) or just as a theoretical exercise more than a real menace on Switzerland (KURZ, 1957: 28-61; KURZ, 1972: 27-73). In the case of Switzerland, it is noteworthy that Italy since 1927 put together plans contemplating the possibility of a German, Austrian, French, or Yugoslav attack through Switzerland. The Italian Army in the plans of 1928 and 1938 would advance into Switzerland to improve its defence. The possibility of a Franco-Swiss attack was also contemplated in plans dating to November 1939 with the Italian forces seizing the Simplon Pass and the Canton of Ticino (ROVIGHI, 1987: 170-178). Although this view could consider that these Italian plans were 'defensive', other historians had qualified them as offensive, because they implied a pre-emptive occupation of Swiss territory (SCHAUFELBERGER, 1989: 554-558).

In the case of the Iberian Peninsula, the German High Command from the end of July 1940 looked into the conquest of Gibraltar through an operation known as *Felix* (BURDICK, 1968: 25-29).³⁶ It was expected that this operation would help the Third Reich to force British surrender: for Admiral Raeder, commander in chief of the German Navy, was an essential action of the strategy to defeat Great Britain, but for Hitler was never an alternative to his main objective in Eastern Europe (KERSHAW, 2008: 120-126). The operation was difficult, but viable from a military point of view. The main handicap was that this plan required the Spanish belligerence: when Franco postponed his entry into the war, *Felix* had to be postponed too, especially after the German invasion of the Soviet Union and finally cancelled when the war in the Eastern front became a long attrition war (BURDICK, 1968: 97-130). Like British planning about Ireland, the main problem for viability wasn't of military nature, but a political question. To *Felix* was added Operation *Dwarsläufer* in September and November 1940 to occupy the Portuguese Atlantic islands (GODA, 1998: 115-121).³⁷ These islands could be used for Great Britain as an alternative to Gibraltar, and they were important for German colonial plans in Africa, so they should be occupied before the attack on Gibraltar. However, neither was ever carried out when Spain postponed its entry into the war on the Axis side (BURDICK, 1968: 102-105). German Naval High Command (*Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine*, OKM) and German Naval War Command (*Seekriegsleitung*, Skl) were worried too about the risk of an Allied occupation of the Spanish Atlantic islands, the Canaries. However, their approach to these islands was very different from the planning about the Portuguese islands. In September 1940 the Third Reich asked the Spanish Government for the transfer of one of the Canary Islands before attacking Gibraltar. The German desire was rejected, so Skl studied the reinforce of the Spanish garrison in the islands to resist a British landing. In fact, during 1940-1942 several German officers visited these islands, welcomed by

³⁶ BA-MA, RH 2/439-447, Operation *Felix*, 1940.

³⁷ BA-MA, RM 7/1002, Atlantic Islands and Operation *Dwarsläufer*, 1940.

Spanish military authorities, and a dozen of German naval guns were delivered for the defence of the main islands (DÍAZ BENÍTEZ, 2024b).

Felix was an offensive operation, that considered too the possibility of British counterattack in the Atlantic islands and the Iberian Peninsula. Although in March 1941 the plan was to execute the last version of the project against Gibraltar, Operation *Felix-Heinrich* on October 14, 1941, the date when the Soviet campaign was scheduled to end, Hitler ordered from May to prepare Operation *Isabella* to expel the British forces that could disembark in the Peninsula (BURDICK, 1968: 131-137).³⁸ There were two versions of Operation *Isabella* for Spain in August of that year depending on whether it received prior notice of a British landing (BURDICK, 1968: 143-149).³⁹ Unlike *Felix*, *Isabella* didn't pretend to outmatch Allied forces, but to avoid their presence in the Peninsula, and was a viable operation assigned to German forces in occupied France. However, the attrition in the Eastern Front made it inviable, so in 1942 *Isabella* was replaced by *Ilona*, later called *Gisela*. The aim was to occupy the passes of the Pyrenees and the ports of northern Spain in the event of an Allied landing (BURDICK, 1968: 148-177).⁴⁰ The objective of *Ilona/Gisela* was less ambitious than the task intended for *Isabella*, but the growing attrition against the Red Army made it non-viable, so it was replaced in January 1944 by *Nürnberg*, a less ambitious scheme as it was limited to preventing the Allies from crossing the Pyrenees (BURDICK, 1968: 191-193). The *Kriegsmarine* in April of that year was still contemplating Operation *Gisela*.⁴¹ The expulsion of the *Wehrmacht* from France in August 1944 ultimately ended Germany's military plans for the Peninsula initiated in 1940. The importance and viability of the planning against an Allied landing in the Peninsula decreased during 1941-1944: at the beginning it was a necessary plan with forces available against an imminent menace; since 1942 there weren't enough forces and, in the next years, the risk wasn't urgent, but a possibility, every time less important than Allied moves in other fronts (Table 4).

The plans drawn up by the Third Reich for Ireland, Portugal, Turkey, Sweden, and Switzerland were aimed at total or partial occupations, which did not prevent the sale of arms to certain (Portugal and Turkey) or maintaining key commercial relations, especially for the Third Reich, with all except Ireland. In fact, it was precisely the economic interests that discouraged the Third Reich from invading them. Other factors also played decisive roles in the Third Reich's preference for respecting their neutrality rather than occupying them as it had done with other nations in the first phase of the war. These included factors of strategic nature such as the transit of two million German soldiers through Sweden or the need to not jeopardise the safety of the Alpine passes connecting the Third Reich with Italy through Switzerland. Ireland was perhaps the least economically interesting target whose occupation was less viable as British air,

38 BA-MA, RH 2/452, Operation *Isabella*, 1941.

39 BA-MA, RH 20-1/126, RH 20-7/75-100 y RH 24-80/30.

40 BA-MA, RH 2/450, RH 20-1/117, 123, 126, 127, 133-144 y RW 4/574, Operation *Ilona/Gisela*, 1942-1943.

41 BA-MA, RM 7/1007 and RM 7/2335, Operation *Gisela*, 1943-1944.

and naval superiority rendered its invasion practically impossible. The only exception in this regard was Spain as the German plans did not contemplate its invasion but a collaboration to attack Gibraltar or to repel an Allied landing in the Peninsula. This is a key difference with respect to the other neutral states as the Spanish Armed Forces in the German plans did not appear as an enemy but an ally. But the most crucial difference with respect to the other neutrals is that Spain was the only neutral nation that attempted to enter the war alongside the Axis, specifically in the summer and autumn of 1940, when, after proclaiming itself non-belligerent, it offered and fruitlessly negotiated its entry into the war with the Third Reich abandoning its position of non-belligerence (DÍAZ BENÍTEZ, 2024c: 103-123).

TABLE 4. GERMAN MILITARY PROJECTS ON THE 'LONG-HAUL NEUTRALS', 1940-1944

Country	Codename	Dates	Objective	Nature	Viability
Ireland	<i>Grünn</i>	1940-1942	Invasion of the island	Offensive	Military uncertainty
Turkey	---	1940-1941	Invasion of Turkey	Offensive	Military viability
	<i>Gertrude</i>	1942	Invasion of Turkey	Offensive	Military viability
Switzerland	<i>Tannenbaum, Zimmermann, Warthegau</i>	1940-1944	Invasion of Switzerland	Offensive	Military viability
Sweeden	---	1943	Invasion of Sweeden	Offensive	Theoretical exercise: military unviability
Spain and Portugal	<i>Dwarsläufer</i>	1940	Seizure of the Azores	Offensive	Military unviability
	<i>Felix</i>	1940-1941	Seizure of Gibraltar and the Portuguese Atlantic islands, and support the Spanish forces in the Canary Islands	Offensive	Military viability
	<i>Isabella</i>	1941-1942	Defence of the Iberian Peninsula against an Allied landing, and the German-Spanish invasion of Portugal	Defensive in Spain and offensive in Portugal	Military viability until 1942
	<i>Illona, Gisela</i>	1942-1944	Defence of the coast of northern Spain against an Allied landing	Defensive	Military viability until 1944
	<i>Nürnberg</i>	1944	Defence of the Pyrenees against the Allies	Defensive	Military viability

Source: Own elaboration based on the sources cited in the article.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Military planning by the belligerents about the 'long-haul neutrals' presents significant differences in two key questions: the necessity and the viability of the different projects. Sweden was the object of military projects from the beginning of the war until the end, but this strategic value was very different for the belligerents. The Third Reich only studied the occupation of this country in 1943, just in the event of a Swedish belligerence, and with an operation that wasn't viable because of the lack of forces for the attrition war in the Eastern Front. Instead, the Allied military projects about Sweden were intended to outmatch the Third Reich or at least to waken it. At the beginning of the war, Franco-British operations to stop Swedish iron exports to Germany were militarily viable, but the slow planning and the lack of Swedish and Norwegian collaboration made them to be cancelled. British *Ajax* in 1941 was less ambitious, like *Apostle I* and *Apostle II*, but the last ones were viable: instead, the cost of *Ajax* and its limited chances of success made it not recommendable. Anyway, there is another relevant difference between German and Allied planning about Sweden. The German plan was designed to conquer the Scandinavian country, but the Allied plans didn't try to combat against the Swedish armed forces. In fact, the Allies tried to get Swedish consent for *Avonmouth* and *Stratford*, and at the end of the war, started military contacts for *Apostle I* and *Apostle II*.

Switzerland was another country that received an unequal attention by both belligerents. France tried a military collaboration before the defeat of 1940: it was to fight with the Swiss against a German invasion, but there wasn't any military agreement, and the contacts ended after the French defeat. In 1945, at the end of the war British military planners studied the invasion of the Alpine country only as a theoretical exercise to avoid any action in this area. However, between 1940 and 1944, the Third Reich prepared a series of plans to conquer Switzerland. The risk was imminent in June 1940, when German High Command thought it could be necessary to force French surrender. The planning continued after French armistice, but the necessity of a plan to conquer Switzerland decreased, so these *Tannenbaum* plans have been discussed as a real menace or just a theoretical exercise, especially the last plans in 1943-1944. The viability of German projects about Switzerland was decreasing too. The conquer of the Alpine country required a great number of forces, sometimes too many for the German High Command. These forces could be available in 1940 and at least in the first half of 1941. However, after the invasion of the Soviet Union this availability decreased too, while Swiss defences were strengthened, and the risk of heavy casualties became higher. Switzerland received more attention from German planners than Sweden, and, in both cases, the objective was to conquer these countries. Nevertheless, the necessity of this planning diminished above all because of the growing attrition in the Eastern Front.

The occupation of Ireland was a project more interesting than Sweden and, during some months, Switzerland. The control of this island could let the Wehrmacht to deploy forces against Great Britain. The nature of the Operation

Grün has been discussed as a distraction or a real menace: the allocation of forces for this project and the training exercises suggests a real menace. However, the question was the viability of the operation: for Hitler were possible, but for Admiral Raeder was a high risk and had few chances of success because of British naval and air mastery. In other words, it wasn't considered impossible, but the balance of costs, high risk and few chances of success made it undesirable. On the other hand, the British plan to avoid German landing in Ireland was a defensive necessity, above all since June 1940 y during the last half of that year and during 1941: only at the end of 1942, after Axis defeats in every war front, the German invasion of Ireland was considered improbable. The British plan was militarily viable, but the main obstacle was politic: it wasn't intended against Irish Government, but to help Irish Army to defeat the German forces landed in the island. Like Allied planning about Sweden, Great Britain didn't try to conquer of fight against Ireland, but to get its acquiescence against the Axis.

Turkey was a neutral country until February 1945, when came into the war against the Third Reich. One of the reasons for keeping the neutrality for a long time was that the belligerents, mainly Great Britain and the Third Reich, didn't consider Turkish belligerence as an essential question, but just a possibility in some moment to outmatch the enemy. At the beginning of the war the Allies and Turkey had signed an agreement with military commitments for everyone, but, after Franco-German armistice, Great Britain didn't force Turkish belligerence: only since 1943 sought it and studied Operation *Hardihood* to strengthen Turkish defences and to menace Axis southeast Europe. However, German military planning about Turkey had an offensive nature: the objective was to pass through the country towards the Near East and the Caucasus. German projects on this country were considered between late 1940 and 1942: they could seem viable, but the attrition on the Eastern Front made them non-viable, like German planning about other neutral countries. Moreover, German occupation of Turkey wouldn't outbalance the advantages of Turkish neutrality as chromo imports. British aid was considered a difficult task at the beginning, but not an impossible one, and was viable too in *Hardihood* project in 1943. Nevertheless, the question was that British planning needed Turkish acquiescence: it wasn't addressed against this country.

The Iberian countries received more attention in the belligerent's military planning than any other 'long haul neutral', and during a long time: since 1940 to 1943. However, there are some differences about the nature and the viability of the military projects on the Iberian Peninsula and the Atlantic Islands. German Operation *Felix*, aimed to conquer Gibraltar, was designed to outmatch Great Britain: it was viable, and the *Wehrmacht* was ready to accomplish it, but the Third Reich needed the Spanish belligerence for this task like British planning on Sweeden, Ireland and Turkey required the acquiescence or the belligerence for these operations, and this political condition made it non-viable. The rest of the German projects for Spain and Portugal had a different nature: they were intended against any Allied force that could land in the Iberian Peninsula (*Isabella, Ilona/ Gisela and Nürnberg*) or to prevent the Allied seizure of the Portuguese Atlantic

islands (*Dwarsläufer*). Their viability was a different question: the occupation of the Portuguese islands for a long time was considered too expensive and impossible by the SkI, while the attrition of the *Wehrmacht* in the Eastern Front made the German planning on the Iberian Peninsula non-viable and led to less ambitious operations until 1944. British projects about these countries weren't studied to weaken the Third Reich, but to counter a German action, mainly the attack on Gibraltar. For this reason, British operations were conceived to support Portuguese or Spanish troops in the Iberian Peninsula or the Spanish Morocco, and to the occupation of the Spanish and Portuguese Atlantic islands as alternative to Gibraltar. The viability of these projects was reverse to the German ones in these countries: for British planners the operations to take the Atlantic islands were viable, but the plans on the Iberian Peninsula were more expensive and highly risky. Moreover, there were British forces assigned and ready to take the Portuguese Atlantic islands in 1940 and the Canaries in 1941.

Most of British and German planning about the Iberian countries was conceived to counter an enemy action, but there were significative differences between both belligerents. German planning about Portugal was addressed against Portuguese and Allied forces, but British planning on this country was a more ambiguous question: there were plans to cooperate with the Portuguese Army in the Iberian Peninsula, but there were too other projects to occupy the Portuguese Atlantic Islands with or without Portuguese acquiescence. This ambiguity was a difference with British planning about Ireland, Sweden or Turkey, but it was more evident in the military projects in Spain. The Spanish non-belligerence provoked uncertainty about Spanish neutrality, so there were plans to cooperate with the Spanish most neutralist officers against a German entry in the Iberian Peninsula, and other plans to conquer the Canary Islands and Spanish Morocco, and to defend Gibraltar. Plans for cooperation with neutralist officers were considered above all in the second half of 1940 and the beginning of 1941, but at the same time there were others against the Spanish Morocco and through this year there were developed plans to conquer the Canaries (*Puma/Pilgrim*); at late 1942 and the beginning of 1943 it was considered too the seizure of the Spanish Morocco (*Backbone*). The plans to cooperate and to fight the Spanish Army could be simultaneous: in 1942 and 1943 British planners studied operations to occupy the Canary Islands with (*Adroit*) or without (*Tonic*) Spanish acquiescence. This is a significative difference with the rest of the 'long haul neutrals': the Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Planning Staff considered them as neutrals and sometimes expected a belligerence against the Axis, but they didn't regard them as potential enemies. The intention of German planning about Spain was reverse to the British one: German projects were prepared to invade all the 'long haul neutrals', except Spain, that was expected to come into the war against the Allies. Spanish non-belligerence was a crucial difference respect the rest of these countries: Spain was the only one that tried to go to the war on the Axis side; then, it was the only neutral country considered as a friend in the German military planning and a menace in the British military projects.

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