

The British Military Expedition to Greece in 1941

Strategically effective or a diversion from the north-African front?

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This paper will discuss the way of thinking of the British decisionmakers regarding the sending of British and Imperial military forces to Greece in 1941 to intercept the German invasion of the country. In addition, it will examine the military effectiveness of this strategy and its implications in the north-African front.

It will pose the question whether the transportation of troops from Egypt to Greece was essential for the defense of the last and whether it deprived general Wavell (the Commander-In-Chief Middle East) of the necessary forces that would allow him to overpower completely the Italian armies in North Africa and in that way to preempt the arrival of the Africa Corps under general Rommel. In other words, it will be examined whether the British military intervention to Greece affected the developments in the campaign in North Africa and particularly if it prevented an early allied victory over the Italians and the consequent clearance of the whole of North Africa of Axis forces, before the military intervention of the Germans.

The matter will be seen under the strategical and military point of view, but additionally the paper will assess its political aspects and consider the different views on the issue, as they are expressed in the relevant bibliography. Moreover, the approach to the subject would proceed by examining archival sources, such as The National Archives of Great Britain and the Italian diplomatic archive (*Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*), which are partly accessible online. The political and military picture of the dispatch of the British expeditionary force to Greece, will also be formed by taking into account the memoirs of the protagonists of the relevant developments (military commanders, politicians etc.).