

April – June: allied intelligence.

Before war broke out on the 15th of June, both allied commanders gained all sorts of intelligence about the enemy's strengths and movements. A chronological survey of them will be given below, but before entering into it, a short sketch of the different intelligence departments is given.

Wellington's army. ¹

For the intelligence he needed, the duke of Wellington had not only ample means in the sense of funding, he also had a large network of diplomats, military men, civilians etc. to his disposal. There were those of the royalist and government circles with whom he had cooperated during the time he had spent as British ambassador. Apart from that, Wellington had his contacts within the court in exile in Ghent, which had in its turn contacts in France.

At Paris, Wellington had spies in for instance general Bertrand's cabinet. Bertrand was Grand Master of the Palace and a close advisor of Napoleon. His wife was a niece of colonel Henry Dillon, a serving British officer, who used this family connection to obtain sensitive information. Within the Ministry of Police, it was Fouché, the minister himself, who was in touch with Wellington about Napoleon's intentions. Further, it was through informants at Paris that Wellington almost on a daily base received information through express post, including the daily newspaper, the *Moniteur*.

In Belgium itself, the centre for the gathering of intelligence was at Mons, on the road from Paris to Brussels. Here, major-general Von Dörnberg, a Hanoverian Peninsular veteran, was posted. ² He gathered his intelligence through spies sent into France with special missions [³], scouts, farmers, travellers and French citizens. Further, he received newspapers which he forwarded to Wellington in Brussels.

All the reports which he sent on a regular base to Brussels also went through the headquarters of the prince of Orange at Braine le Comte. ⁴ Von Dörnberg was also in touch with general Von Zieten at Charleroi, in other words Zieten reported to Von Dörnberg. ⁵ In his turn, Zieten reported to Wellington as well. ⁶

In his turn, Wellington himself used the line through the army of the Netherlands as an information channel towards Zieten as he wrote to Zieten on the 9th of May: "Je vous ferai savoir par les postes des troupes des Pays Bas toutes les nouvelles que j'apprendrai." (see below) ⁷ It had been since somewhere late March that Von Dörnberg had been working at Mons for the intelligence for the prince of Orange and his military secretary, colonel Colborne.

Some days after Wellington had taken over the command, on the 16th of April, Von Dörnberg no longer reported to Colborne, but to the duke's military secretary, lord FitzRoy Somerset, in Brussels. ⁸

Not long after, on the 25th of April, it was sir Hudson Lowe who wrote a "Memorandum respecting the formation of an intelligence department to be attached to the head-quarters of the army." The main point in this proposal was the appointment of "an officer belonging or attached to the Quartermaster-general's department to be specifically charged with this duty." ⁹

The result was that four days later, Wellington wrote to major general Sir H. Torrens: "I had also desired lord FitzRoy Somerset to write to lieutenant colonel Grant of the 11th regiment, to beg him to come out with the intention of employing him at the head of the intelligence department, which he hoped would be approved of; and lieutenant colonel Scovell at the head of the department of military communications. It is quite impossible for me to superintend the

detail of the duties of these departments myself, having already more to arrange than I am equal to, and I cannot intrust them to the young gentlemen on the staff of this army.”¹⁰

Lieutenant colonel Colquhoun Grant had been Wellington’s head of intelligence in the Peninsula and as such had spent times behind enemy lines; he even was taken prisoner there, but escaped. He returned in Wellington’s service in 1813. Grant accepted the appointment and reached Brussels on the 12th of May.

From there he left for Mons, where he tried to organise a system of agents on the frontier, but Grant was not able to recruit anyone of the sort he wanted at all. Yet, Grant was able to involve an agent who was working at the ministry of war. From this position, he was able to deliver Grant information about the strengths, destinations, routes and tim-schemes of Napoleon’s forces.¹¹

Most of the intelligence covered by the Prussians was channeled to the duke by lieutenant colonel sir Henry Hardinge, Wellington’s liaison at Blücher’s headquarters. Hardinge had this post since the 12th of April, but it was after the meeting at Tirlemont (from the 4th of May onwards) that he reported – with very few exceptions - on a daily base to the duke of Wellington.¹²

At Mons, there was another man who was supposed to gain intelligence, but he was to report back to the prince of Orange and not to Wellington directly. This was baron Behr, the commander at Mons. About his role, the duke of Wellington wrote on the 8th of May to the prince of Orange: “I enclose a report received this morning from General Behr at Mons. It appears to me that the general has misunderstood the King’s order; at least, he has not understood it as I do. I understand that all reports are to reach me in the usual channel; that is to say, they ought to go first to Your Royal Highness, and Your Royal Highness would send me such as you would deem it necessary I should have knowledge of. It would be quite impossible for me to attempt to conduct the details of the Dutch army.

That which I would recommend therefore to Your Royal Highness is, that you should give an order explaining that of the King, in which you should point out in what channel the reports are to be made. You should submit it to His Majesty first, and let me see it.

Those reports then which I should beg your Royal Highness to communicate to me are those in which the British or Hanoverian troops may be concerned, or the permanent garrisons and ports of the country, or the enemy. The orders from the government will remain as directed by the King.”¹³

Yet, by the 5th of June, Behr’s role still doesn’t seem to have been that clear as at that date Constant Rebecque wrote to Behr about his request to gain intelligence and to report these on a daily base to the prince of Orange.¹⁴

Being in the outposts towards Valenciennes and Maubeuge, the cavalry-brigade of Van Merlen played a role in the intelligence for the army of the Netherlands, as well as for the Prussian army, and then the 1st corps in particular. This, in turn, had to do with the fact that there were also communications between Van Merlen and his Prussian counterpart in this sector, the brigade of Von Steinmetz. Von Steinmetz, obviously, communicated to his superior, Von Zieten, at Charleroi. And these lines also worked vice versa.

Additionally, the army of the Netherlands also had its own informant in Charleroi, the local commander De Wesener. Initially, De Wesener sent his reports to general Tindal at Brussels, but after the 22nd of April he did so to Constant Rebecque at Braine le Comte.¹⁵ De Wesener may have procured intelligence through general Von Zieten, but he also sent informants out into France, for instance to Condé, Maubeuge, Givet, Valenciennes, Philippeville, Chimay and Beaumont.¹⁶

Blücher’s army.

Obviously, the Prussian army had its own system of intelligence, but actual sources about it are lacking. There is a note, however, from colonel Hardinge who wrote from Hannut on the 12th of May: “The intelligence received by prince Blücher confirms your Lordship’s opinion of the enemy’s measures being defensive. The reports state that the enemy is destroying roads and bridges etc. In general the information which this headquarters receives is so scanty, and derived from sources so little to be depended upon, that your Lordship’s accounts are most acceptable, and alone have weight. The staff within these few days are very anxious to put this branch of the service on a more careful footing.”¹⁷

And to Lowe he wrote in a similar sense: “It is difficult in the situation of the armies to procure information to be relied upon, and the distance at which we have been from the front, together with the laborious political work which the King gives to the general officers of the staff, renders our intelligence of the enemy little to be relied upon and that much not well arranged. Our intelligence generally comes from Brussels or Ghent.”¹⁸

If this would be true, the quality of the way intelligence was gathered left to be desired. Anyway, the Prussian staff sent intelligence to Wellington, while Wellington also did so towards the Prussian leadership through colonel Hardinge. After the meeting at Tirlemont Wellington did so almost on a daily base (but with a slight decrease in June), in most cases as reactions to the reports of Hardinge.¹⁹ This could be in his own correspondence, but also through others.²⁰ Apart from that, he also communicated with general Von Zieten at Charleroi.²¹ One of the means Zieten used to collect information was to send men with missions into France.²² Whatever defective the Prussian system of intelligence may have been, general Zieten – at Charleroi - was right from the beginning a network, having lines towards Namur (Blücher), Fontaine l’Evêque (Von Steinmetz), the army of the Netherlands (Van Merlen) and Brussels (Wellington).²³

Based upon the available intelligence, by mid-April, Wellington had an impression of Napoleon’s forces as having two army corps in the north-west of the country (the 1st and the 2nd in the line Dunkerque to Lille), one at Mézières (3rd) and two others (4th and 5th) in the north-east, both supported by cavalry. There would also be reserves at Paris and garrisons in numerous towns. All in all, Napoleon would have a field army of about 98.000 strong (68.000 infantry, 18.000 cavalry and 12.000 artillery).²⁴

In the second half of April, the presence of strong French forces on the northern frontier was confirmed again: the presence of a corps (Reille’s) in and around Valenciennes and 60.000 men between Dunkerque and Givet. A rumour was spreading that Napoleon would attack Wellington near Lille by surprise, but at the same time there were reports that no further troops would be on the way to the north of France.²⁵

And according to the intelligence the duke received through viscount Castlereagh the situation for an invasion would be optimal as France would not be totally in the hands of Buonaparte; as there would be no army fit to contend with or resist the allies and that the army present was the sole base of power of the emperor. Other than that, the people would not rise in any case; the esprit militaire would be on the wane in France and there would be no public feeling, out of the troops, against the entrance of the allies.²⁶

On the 22nd of April, lord Stewart forwarded information about the strength of the French forces as they were prognosed for early May. He calculated the total to be about 430.000 men, to be decreased with 50.000 for units in formation, 70.000 for garrisons, 20.000 for the Vendée, 30.000 for the Midi and 30.000 for Paris – thereby leaving 230.000, to be opposed by 260.000 allies.

For the situation around 20th of May he calculated the presence of about 370.000 allied troops (200.000 Bavarians and Württemberg, 100.000 Prussians, 70.000 under Wellington) against 280.000 French.²⁷

Apart from a report on the detailed composition of the 1st French corps (d'Erlon), Wellington was supplied by a report of Von Dörnberg on French movements from Bavay towards Lille and by the duke of Feltre on the presence of numerous troops along the northern French frontier (30.000 men between Philippeville and Orchies and 50.000 men between Gravelines and Charleville).²⁸

A message from a dr. Macnab and coming from Paris, dated 21st of April, stated that Napoleon intended to attack by surprise near Lille [²⁹] did not impress Wellington as he wrote on the 23rd of April to Blücher: "J'ai reçu hier la lettre que votre Excellence m'a écrite de Liège le 21 [³⁰], et je me rejouis très fort de ce que vous y êtes arrivé, et que je dois avoir des relations si proches avec vous. Les lettres que j'ai déjà écrites au general Gneisenau vous auront démontré combien mes sentiments sont d'accord avec les vôtres, et combien j'apprécie l'honneur d'être en rapport avec la brave armée prussienne sous votre commandement.

Je n'ai rien de nouveau à vous dire. L'ennemi sur la frontière est toujours à peu près dans le même état, et les mêmes nombres. Leur mouvement est perpétuel, dont je crois que le but est d'empêcher les habitants du pays, qui sont généralement royalists, de répandre leurs opinions politiques. Il y a eu dans les derniers jours une augmentation d'officiers généraux, et de l'état major à Valenciennes, mais je ne crois pas qu'ils aient l'intention de rien faire.

On parle en France de République, et, à juger de ce que j'entends de Vienne, et de Paris, je ne serais pas étonné si la partie se trouvait remise pour quelque temps. Mais nous l'aurons sûrement un jour ou l'autre, et je vous assure, mon cher général, que rien ne me sera en toute occasion plus agréable que d'être en rapport immediate avec vous."³¹

At the same time, Wellington arranged the more practical aspects of the communication with the Prussian headquarters by writing to colonel Hardinge: "I will hereafter send you copies of all I write to Blücher, or the original under flying seal.

Hint to Blücher that I have as yet nobody about me who can read the German character, and that it would be very desirable if he could write me in French, or order you to write me his wishes in English."³²

On the 4th of May Von Dörnberg informed lord FitzRoy Somerset about the recent forced march of 6000 men of the Imperial Guard towards Charleville, and that all the troops from Cambrai, Douai, Valenciennes all marched by Avesnes and Solesmes in the direction of Givet and Charleville, where 60.000 to 80.000 were supposed to be assembled. Nobody would remain at Cambrai, Valenciennes, Bouchain etc.³³

The same day, the prince of Orange wrote to Wellington that Napoleon's departure from Paris had been postponed and that the strength of the French army would amount to about 243.000, artillery included.³⁴

As far as intelligence was concerned it was on the 7th of May that Wellington wrote to sir Henry Hardinge: "From all accounts, the French appear to have collected all the troops they had in our front, with the exception of very small garrisons on, and in the neighbourhood of the Sambre. D'Erlon's corps from Lille has marched upon Valenciennes. Buonaparte was expected to leave Paris on Tuesday the 9th, according to a letter which the Duc de Feltre showed me this day.

It appears, by his account, that the French had 130.000 regular troops on the 30th of April, besides 25.000 Guards. Including national guards and gendarmerie, it was supposed that they would be able to produce 280.000 men, but no more than the number above stated of regular troops. The communication with foreign countries by land is forbidden on pain of death, which looks as if an attack was intended."³⁵

The 8th of May, Von Dörnberg reported from Mons that he had the impression that all communication from Paris had stopped and that the French movements on their right had stopped as no more troops arrived at Beaumont. The garrisons of Givet and Philippeville would have been withdrawn and replaced by conscripts.³⁶

The same day, colonel Hardinge reported from Liège on behalf of general Von Zieten (at Charleroi) that on the 5th of May troops at Givet and Philippeville had left for Maubeuge and Valenciennes, and were replaced at Philippeville by national guards.³⁷

The Duke of Feltre reported to Wellington on the presence of maximal 50.000 French between Maubeuge and Mézières and that he expected Napoleon to have 100.000 men more to oppose Wellington.³⁸

That day, the prince of Orange informed Wellington that there was nothing new from Mons.³⁹

On the 9th of May Von Dörnberg supposed Napoleon would have arrived at Condé; by that time the French didn't allow anybody to pass the frontier.⁴⁰

Most probably as a result of this intelligence, Wellington wrote to lord Hill on the 9th of May: "Matters look a little serious upon the frontier; the enemy have certainly got the greatest part of their force collected at Valenciennes and Maubeuge; and it is said that Buonaparte arrived yesterday at Condé. I was assured at Ghent on Sunday that he was to leave Paris on this day. It is certain that all communication is stopped since yesterday morning."⁴¹

The same day, Wellington wrote to Zieten: "Il est de mon devoir de vous avertir que tous les renseignements [sic] que je recois de la frontière donnent lieu de croire que les troupes Francaises sont rassemblées entre Valenciennes et Maubeuge, et plutôt sur Maubeuge que Valenciennes. La communication a été arrêtée hier; mais j'ai tout lieu de croire que Buonaparte avait l'intention de quitter Paris comme aujourd'hui.

Je vous ferai savoir par les postes des troupes des Pays Bas toutes les nouvelles que j'apprendrai."⁴² And to Hardinge he wrote at 1 p.m.: "There appears no doubt that the enemy's forces are collected at Maubeuge and Valenciennes, principally at the former. The communication was put an end to yesterday and it was said Buonaparte was at Condé. I was told at Ghent that he was to leave Paris on this day."⁴³

On the 10th of May, general Von Zieten reported from Charleroi that the French forces between Maubeuge and Beaumont (towards Avesnes) were not strong (about 4000 men).⁴⁴

That day, Lord Hill sent the intelligence to Brussels that "a considerable column is reported to have marched towards Lille from Valenciennes."⁴⁵

On the 11th of May Von Dörnberg informed lord FitzRoy Somerset that he felt certain that the French had collected the greatest part of their forces between Valenciennes and Charleville, and that they were forming a reserve at Laon.⁴⁶

Sir Augustus Frazer on the 11th of May was also aware of the possible danger: "We hear that Bonaparte is between Condé and Valenciennes, and in force; greater than that of the Allies in artillery, less in cavalry and infantry. We shrewdly suspect his intention of attacking us; if so, the rencontre may take place in a few days. The Duke's intention is to fight, which his Grace considers eligible, even if we should be beaten. We have two positions; one in front of Ath, from Leuze to Mons; the other near Hal. In the possible event of our being beaten from either, or both, Bonaparte could hardly advance, since the Prussians would menace, and indeed turn his right flank. So much for general speculation. Should the enemy remain quiet, we shall remain so too for a while. We are not ready, and can hardly conceive that he is; but his reinforcements are nearer, and his arrangements less shackled than ours."⁴⁷

On the 11th of May, baron Behr reported to the prince of Orange about the reinforcements in the town of Valenciennes.⁴⁸ The day after Zieten sent the information from Charleroi that the enemy was on the defensive; a large part of the forces which had been in and around Avesnes would have moved for Valenciennes.⁴⁹

Baron Behr wrote to the prince of Orange about the arrival of 45 guns at Péronne and of some infantry at Quiévrain.⁵⁰

Lieutenant colonel Hardinge wrote to Wellington, from Hannut on the 12th of May:

“The intelligence received by prince Blücher confirms your Lordship’s opinion of the enemy’s measures being defensive. The reports state that the enemy is destroying roads and bridges etc. In general the information which this headquarters receives is so scanty, and derived from sources so little to be depended upon, that your Lordship’s accounts are most acceptable, and alone have weight. The staff within these few days are very anxious to put this branch of the service on a more careful footing.”⁵¹

On the 12th of May Lowe reported to lord Bunbury: “[.] We have no positive intelligence as yet respecting Bonaparte’s movements. The principal French force is assembled at Maubeuge and Avesnes between that and Philippeville. There is also a strong corps at Valenciennes. They have inundated and so have we.

The French force is variously estimated. The duke of W. supposed it to be near 80.000 a few days since. No such rate, it now increased, for by every concurrent testimony, reinforcements have been sent in this direction; however, I do not well see how so large a force could be assembled, without a general dislocation of their newly organizing corps d’armées and collecting most of them opposite Belgium than what our previous information led us to expect.[.]”⁵²

And on the 13th of May, Zieten sent another report from two French officers confirming that in the early days of May there were no troops in the department of Oise and that one division of the 6th corps was in and around Laon. A force of about 25.000 men was forming between Givet and Charleville. National guards, coming from Champagne, the Ardennes and from the Aisne would form garrisons at Philippeville and Beaumont.⁵³

The same day, on the 13th of May, at Braine le Comte, Constant Rebecque was informed – through Van Merlen – about the presence of French forces at Maubeuge and Avesnes.⁵⁴

The day before he had got a note from general Collaert about the works carried out at Maubeuge and Avesnes. In the latter place there was artillery, a lot of cavalry, a garrison of about 300 men and the road from Solre-le-Chateau would have been blocked.⁵⁵

On basis of the information provided by Zieten early morning about the blocking of the road between Maubeuge and Givet, Blücher had the idea “hiernach schiene es als wollte der Feind sich bei Maubeuge in der Defensive aufstellen.”⁵⁶

Gneisenau wrote to his friend Gruner on the 9th of May: “Wenn uns Bonaparte nicht jetzt alsbald angreift, wollen wir wohl fertig werden.”⁵⁷

And on the 10th of May, general Von Zieten reported from Charleroi that the French forces between Maubeuge and Beaumont (towards Avesnes) were not strong (about 4000 men).⁵⁸

Based upon several French reports, it was on the 14th of May that Lionel Hervey, the British representative at the exile court in Ghent, sent the information to the duke of Wellington that there was a concentration of a great mass of troops in and around Maubeuge, but that there was no news about the whereabouts of Napoleon himself. The roads of the Ardennes, Sers, Philippeville and Givet would have been broken up.

Additionally, Hervey enclosed a detailed report on the situation of the fortress of Philippeville. Information from the 10th of May from Valenciennes indicated that the enemy would be breaking up all the roads on their right and that they were making preparations for the destruction of all the bridges at a moment’s notice. All the boats on the Sambre and Meuse were seized and sunk.⁵⁹

The same day, the prince of Orange wrote to Wellington about the presence of three battalions and a depot of dragoons at Maubeuge, of a numerous cavalry around Avesnes, of 10.800 men of Vandamme at Mézières-Charleville, of 750 men at Rocroy, 300 men at La Capelle, 150 men at Chimay and 650 men at Beaumont. 300 men would be at Pont Sambre.⁶⁰

On the 15th of May, general Zieten still mentioned the French concentration between Maubeuge, Givet and Avesnes, but gave no further strengths (only that of the corps of Vandamme between Rocroy and Charleville, of 30.000 men); at the same time, he confirmed a strong defensive attitude on the frontier.⁶¹

From Mons, Von Dörnberg reported then about the presence of about 20.000 French at Laon.⁶² It was on the 16th of May that a report of the prince of Orange dropped in at the duke's headquarters stating that there would be 30.000 men at Avesnes and near Beaumont. At Avesnes there would be 60 guns and at Maubeuge works would be carried out to defend it with 60.000 men.⁶³

And the same day, Wellington wrote to Hardinge: "I enclose a memorandum which I have drawn from intelligence I have recently received, from which the marshal will see the strength and disposition of the French army; and that with the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th corps, and the Guards, and the 3rd division of cavalry of reserve, we have a good lot of them in front. I should think not less than 110.000 men.

I heard yesterday that Vandamme's corps had moved to its left and had brought its right upon Givet. There are a great number of troops about Maubeuge, Avesnes etc.

I heard also that measures had been taken to move the Guards from Paris to Maubeuge in forty eight hours; and that an aide de camp of the Emperor was there on the 12th. It is reported, also, that Soult has accepted the office of major general, which is important, as it will induce many officers to serve Buonaparte; and I believe it to be true, as I see that Mortier is employed."

The memorandum Wellington refers to, and destined for the king of the Netherlands, Blücher, Wrede and Schwarzenberg, contains - in summary - the following information about the strength and positions of the French forces:

"-1st corps (d'Erlon), 19.200 infantry, 3600 cavalry – between Valenciennes and Condé

-2nd corps (Reille), 24.00 infantry, 5400 cavalry – at Avesnes etc.

-3rd corps (Vandamme), 14.000-15.000 men – between Mézières and Rocroi

-4th corps (Rapp), 14.400 infantry, 1800 cavalry – at Metz

-5th corps, not strong – at Strassbourg and on the Upper Rhine

-6th corps (Lobau), 19.200 infantry, 3600 cavalry- at Laon

-7th corps, 9600 infantry, some cavalry – at Chambéry

-8th corps (Clausel), 8400 infantry, 2400 cavalry – on the frontier of the Pyrenees

-9th corps (Brune), - at Aix, Toulon, Tarascon etc.

-Imperial Guard, 20.000 men, - at Paris

These forces are divided into four principal armies and three corps of observation:

-army of the North, consisting of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th corps and three divisions of the reserve of cavalry

-army of the Moselle, consisting of the 4th corps

-army of the Rhine, consisting of the 5th corps

-army of the Alps, consisting of the 7th corps

-corps of observation de Jura (Lecourbe), to observe the *débouchés* from Befort to Geneva

-corps of observation of the Var, for the defence of the Var

-corps of observation of the Pyrenees, for the defence of the Pyrenees

Additionally, the national guards to join the army in the field and to form the garrisons of the strong places. For the cavalry, 21.250 horses were produced, of which it was expected that they would have reached their regiments in the first week in May, and will increase the cavalry to 41.300 men. "⁶⁴

Von Dörnberg wrote to lord FitzRoy Somerset on the 16th of May about the possible presence of 20.000 men at Laon and about the fortification of the position there. ⁶⁵

It was probably in this period of May, that the duke of Wellington got the papers sent by earl Bathurst on the 12th of May about the organisation and location of the French forces in the country. According to these papers the 1st corps would then be between Valenciennes and Condé, the 2nd corps at Avesnes, the 3rd corps at Mézières and Rocroy and the 6th corps at Laon. ⁶⁶

Another report, dated on or after the 17th of May reported to Wellington about the military situation in and around Paris on the 10th of May and of the one of the 17th of May about the army of the Moselle, between Bitch and Longwy. ⁶⁷

On the 18th of May, lord Hill wrote to Brussels about the movements of French forces from Valenciennes and Maubeuge towards Lille and Dunkirk. ⁶⁸

And on the 19th of May the prince of Orange reported to the duke about the forces which were assembled about Avesnes and which would have moved towards Valenciennes. ⁶⁹

Information, forwarded by sir C.W.Flint to Wellington informed him about the absence of line-infantry in the places fortes (having been replaced by *gardes nationales*), and about the presence of about 130.000 men on the line Thionville-Dunkerque, to be reinforced in 14 days with another 50.000 men. ⁷⁰ Additionally, Von Dörnberg reported about the presence of Napoleon at Paris on the 17th of May, but that he was to leave soon from the capital, where works were carried out in great activity; troops would have been ordered north. ⁷¹

On the 19th of May, Wellington himself wrote to lord Uxbridge that the French cavalry now would count 16.000 men, of which 6000 cuirassers; they would get horses to mount 42.000 cavalry, heavy and light. ⁷²

It may have been on the 20th of May that an intelligence report as sent by Gneisenau reached Wellington. It was dated 19th of May and comprised information on the composition and force of the French corps. It contained the following information:

- it seemed that all roads leading from Beaumont into the interior have been blocked
- includes a list of troops in cantonments between Avesnes, Beaumont and Maubeuge: total about 6000 infantry, 340 cavalry and 72 guns.

- also includes a detailed report on the composition of the French army (dated 17th of May):

- 1st corps, d'Erlon, headquarters at Valenciennes, 24000-25000 men

- 2nd corps, Reille, headquarters at Marvilles, 35.000 men

- 3rd corps, Vandamme, headquarters at Mézières, 20000-30000 men

- 4th corps, Gérard, headquarters at Metz, 15.000-20.000 men

- 5th corps, Rapp, headquarters at Strassbourg – strength unknown

- 6th corps, Lobau, headquarters at Paris or Laon, - strength ?

- 7th corps, at Chambéry

- 8th corps, Clausel, at Bordeaux

In the British document a comparis is made with a report of the duke of Wellington, and the following differences are noted:

- 1st corps: Wellington 12.000 less

- 2nd corps: Wellington 5000 less

- 3rd corps: idem

- 4th corps: commander is Gérard and not Rapp; Wellington: 4000 less

- 5th corps: led by Rapp

Further, the Prussian report is more detailed as far as the composition of the units is concerned. ⁷³

To Prussian general headquarters, general Zieten on the 15th of May still mentioned the French concentration between Maubeuge, Givet and Avesnes, but at the same time he gave no further strengths (only that of the corps of Vandamme between Rocroy and Charleville, of 30.000 men); at the same time, he confirmed a strong defensive attitude on the frontier.⁷⁴

Two days later, Hardinge received Wellington's memorandum on the strength and composition of the French army (see above), whereas Gneisenau had drawn his on the 19th.

On the 21st of May Von Dörnberg reported about the presence of 8000 men infantry and 1200 men cavalry at Laon, with 37 field pieces. Between Laon and Landrecy were 20.000 to 25.000 men. Headquarters at Avesnes.⁷⁵

L.Hervey also reported from Ghent to Wellington on the 22nd of May about the state of some of the fortified towns from Montmédy to Philippeville, together with some details on the state of Paris on the 15th of May. It would appear that the French were not strongly fortifying Soissons, but that they would not have thrown up any works for their intended intrenched camp between that place and Laon.⁷⁶

The same day, sir C.W. Flint wrote from the Irish office about a very decided opinion in France that Bonaparte intended to make his great stand at Paris, suffering the allies to penetrate into France, with a view falling upon their weakest corps, and breaking their line.⁷⁷

Von Dörnberg wrote on the 23rd of May to Wellington about some French patrols which had appeared in front of Mons. All the French troops on the frontier would have orders, in case of an attack from the allies, to fall back upon Laon, where Napoleon was expected.⁷⁸

It was general Von Zieten who reported to the duke on the 23rd of May about the presence of 60.000 men in the area stretching from Givet towards the North Sea (the fortresses included), divided over three army-corps, one (led by Vandamme) around Philippeville, the second (led by Reille) at Avesnes and the third one (led by d'Erlon) at Valenciennes, and with a reserve at Laon of about 10.000 men. Wellington, in his answer, reported back to Von Zieten that this information matched other reports he already had.⁷⁹

Somewhere late May, Wellington got intelligence from Basle about the French army as it was on the 20th of May. It would stretch from Chambéry to Dunkerque and would have been formed into ten army-corps of which three were not completed.

Of these corps, the 1st would have its headquarters at Valenciennes, the 2nd at Avesnes, the 3rd at Mézières, the 4th at Metz, the 5th at Strassbourg, the 6th at Paris, the 7th at BÉfort, the 8th at Chambéry, the 9th at Antibes and the 10th to be formed at Perpignan.

The total force would be 250.000 men - of which 25.000-27.000 cavalry - including the garrisons at Marseille, Lyon, Bordeaux etc. The Imperial Guard was 20.000 men strong, to be increased to 35.000 without any serious problems. There would be no shortage in guns and their crews.

As an auxiliary army, in the whole of France the National Guard was called up, to guard and defend *places fortes* in particular. This would save Napoleon 100.000 men from the regular army, to be used in other *places fortes*. In the north, the regular army would be along the frontier, while the national guards were in the *places fortes*.⁸⁰

On the 25th of May Von Dörnberg wrote to the duke about the march of several regiments from Maubeuge and Laon to Metz. And while the works at Valenciennes, Condé and Le Quesnoy were carried on with great activity, those at Maubeuge and at the Camp de Rousies would have been finished. Laon, La Fère, Soissons, St.Quentin and Guise were also fortified. It was expected that Napoleon would join his army soon.⁸¹

The duke of Feltre wrote a report on the state of Napoleon's army late in May and according to his calculations the French forces would amount to about 155.400 men.⁸² Of these he reckoned 71.000 would be used in armies in Bordeaux, Lyon, the Alps, the Vendée, the Alsace, the Lorraine and on the coast in the north-west. Another 35.400 would be necessary to

defend the different places fortes, which would leave Napoleon about 55.000 against the northern frontier.⁸³

On the 25th of May, Lionel Hervey forwarded a report about the situation of the French corps of Reille, counting about 30.000 men and having its headquarters at Avesnes.

On the 26th of May Von Dörnberg wrote that the Champ de mai would be held the same day; the national guards from the interior were sent to the frontiers, while those from the frontiers were sent to the interior.⁸⁴

The same day, Wellington wrote to lord Stewart that Napoleon would have deferred the Champ de mai to the 28th of May.⁸⁵

Von Dörnberg again reported on the 27th of May. He wrote about the expected arrival of a division of the Imperial Guard at Compiègne, as well as of Napoleon late May, and then to continue to Laon where his headquarters were to be.⁸⁶

From Ghent, the same day, Lionel Hervey wrote that there was a belief from a French general (Gobrecht) that Napoleon would attack on the 4th of June. 80.000 rations of bread and rice (for 8 days) would have been ordered at Valenciennes for the 28th of may instant. The *Champ de mai* would be held on the 28th of May.⁸⁷

Another (undated) report of May 1815 reported about the French corps in positions on the borders in the north and northeast:

1st , at Lille (d'Erlon)

2nd , at Valenciennes (Reille)

3rd , at Charleville (Vandamme)

4th , at Metz (Gérard)

5th , at Strassbourg (Suchet)

And another (undated) report of May 1815 on the strength and spirit of the French garrisons (at Valenciennes, Douai, Arras, Dunkerque, Lille etc.): totalling 23.300 men.⁸⁸

It may have been around the 28th of May that Wellington received the report written by prince Wrede from Mannheim on the 25th of May: “En effet, tout énorme que les efforts qu’il [=Napoleon] fait pour organiser son armée échouent en partie, en général il parait qu’il a renoncé de prendre ou commencer l’offensive. Vue à vue de moi à commencer du Rhin jusqu’à la Moselle les forces que Napoleon a placé dans l’Alsace et la Lorraine ne sont pas très considérables, quoique entre Strasbourg et Landau elles ont augmenté depuis 8 jours, près de Hilden sont arrivé quelque renforts; mais en revanche mes postes le long de la Saar me rendent compte que plusieurs regiments d’infanterie, et le 6e de housards sont subitement partis de la Saar et des environs de Metz pour se rendre en Flandre.”⁸⁹

On the 30th of May, the duke De Feltre reported again about the French forces. The 1st , 2nd and 3rd corps would each have a strength about 20.000 men while the Imperial Guard and the 4th corps each would count about 15.000 men, as well as the 5th corps. For a possible campaign Napoleon could concentrate about 115.000 men. The duke De Feltre had no information on the strength of the forces in the Provence, near Chambéry, the Pyrenees and in the Vendée.⁹⁰

Wellington was far from complacent about Napoleon’s overall strength, for when ambassasor Brockhausen, hearing from Prussian sources of French retirements from the frontier, drew a too simple conclusion of French weakness, the duke replied: “On the contrary, the enemy is strenghtening daily.”⁹¹ That day, Von Müffling wrote to Von Boyen: “Ein Officier höhern Grades der französischen Armée, der im Einverständnis mit uns ist, hat gestern noch Mittel gefunden, uns zu benachrichtigen: wir möchten uns auf den 4 Juny gefasst machen, angegriffen zu werden.”⁹²

On the 31st of May Von Dörnberg reported to the duke of Wellington about French forces marching from the frontier to the interior and that there would be serious troubles in the Vendée and Bretagne. The Champ de mai would have been postponed.⁹³

The next day he wrote to the duke about the French strengthening their line in front Valenciennes, in what was in Von Dörnberg's view to mask the movement of troops towards the interior.⁹⁴

It was on the 1st of June that general Von Müffling wrote to Gneisenau of the rumours of a considerable rise in the Vendée. The Champ de Mai would have been postponed.⁹⁵

On the 2nd of June Von Dörnberg reported to the duke about the presence of infantry in the villages along the frontier and about the presence of numerous troops at Chimay and Macon. Reports would also have been spread that 17.000 men would also have been sent from the line between Lille and Maubeuge towards the interior.⁹⁶ The same day, Hardinge wrote Wellington about the French cavalry as having moved from Avesnes to Landrecies.⁹⁷ On the 3rd of June, the following was published in the Oracle:

“Le grand quartier-général de l'armée du Nord étant établi à Laon, les administrations de l'armée qui étaient à Avesnes, l'ont rejoint. On a approvisionné avec abondance de nombreux magasins de réserve à Laon, Soissons, Guise et Avesnes. Le 4^e d'infanterie légère se rend de Paris dans cette dernière ville. Un corps d'armée imposant, commandé par le général Lamarque, se porte dans l'Ouest. Des troupes de la jeune garde sont parties en voiture de Paris, ainsi qu'un train d'artillerie, pour la même destination. Les troupes qui étaient à Orléans ont pris la route de la Bretagne. Le général Corbineau, aide de camp de l'empereur, va, dit-on, prendre le commandement de Nantes. Le général Miollis est nommé gouverneur de Metz.”⁹⁸

And from Charleroi, Constant Rebecque was informed on the 29th of May by lieutenant De Wesener through a report which had dropped in there at that day from an informant who had come back from Maubeuge, Landrecy and Avesnes, stating: “... qu'à Maubeuge la garnison est en ce moment composée de six mil hommes dont la plus grand partie sont des gardes nationaux, il s'y trouve quelques sapeurs qui dirigent les ouvrages que l'on fait à la fortification nommément en rempart qui donne vers la chaussée allant à Mons; environ quatre-vingt canons de differens calibres sont broqués, on en attend d'autres pour completer les batteries. On demolis les maisons avoisinantes la ville de Maubeuge. La Garde Nationale cantonnée dans les villages rapprochent journalièrement la frontière.

Chaque jour on travaille aux fortifications du camp de Rosier, trois redoutes sont établies en avant vers la frontière, jusqu'à ce jour il n'y a point de canon, cette troupe qui travaille aux fortifications.

De Maubeuge à Avesnes vers la moitié du chemin on y a élevé deux forts retranches du chemin. Les pionniers sont encore occuper à couper les grandes routes, et à faire de tout cotés des abbatis.

De Avesnes on y relève les ramparts, et l'on travaille à mettre les long a Lentour il y a un quartier général. En arrière de Landrecy il y a un parc d'artillerie composé de dix pièces de canons et de 12 caissons, la garnison est peu consequente, les lanciers qui s'y trouvoient (environ 300 h.) en sont parti hier pour aller vers Bossu, extrême frontière. A Sort sur Sambre sur la grande route de Mons à Beaumont les francais y ont préparé le pond, de facon qu'à la minute ils peuvent détruire le passage; ils viennent d'en faire de même des ponds situés a Jennond [?] et a Marpend. Les chevaux pour la cavalerie et artillerie manquent, l'on continue à prendre les chevaux de la gendarmerie. La Garde Nationale du départements du Nord persiste à refuser de marcher. Le militaire force les gens aisés des villes à aller travailler aux fortifications. De tout cotés en France l'on construit avec fassines, & ce que l'on appelle des fosses aux loups, afin d'empêcher le cavalerie &.”⁹⁹

On the 2nd of June, he reported to Constant Rebecque again in which he drew attention to the fact that French troops would have been withdrawn from the northern frontier. General Vandamme would have held an inspection of his troops and throughout the whole of France means were taken for the defence of the country.¹⁰⁰

By the 28th of May, general major Von Steinmetz had collected the following intelligence and sent it to Charleroi:

- the French headquarters would have left Avesnes, but where was unknown
- at Avesnes itself would be 2000 conscripts, but around Avesnes would be numerous units of infantry
- works would still be going on about the defence; in and around Maubeuge would not be that many troops
- in Beaumont would only be National guards”¹⁰¹

By the 1st of June, Zieten translated the intelligence he had to Gneisenau as:

“Vandamme hat am 26. Mai bei Philippeville Revue über 8-9000 Mann abgehalten. Dies hat das Gerücht von seinem Abmarsch ins Innere veranlasst. Die Wege Charleroi-Merbes-le-Chateau, die Strassen Avesnes-Maubeuge, Sobre-le-Chateau-Avesnes, Beaumont-Chimay sind an mehreren Orten verhaun und durch breite, tiefe Graeben durchschnitten. Mehrere an diesen Strassen gelegene Orte werden zur Verteidigung eingerichtet.

Vandamme hat seinen Truppen am 26. Mai die Abreise des Kaisers nach Maubeuge mitgeteilt. Franz. Hauptquartier ohne Napoleon soll in Laon eingetroffen sein.”¹⁰²

The very same day general Von Müffling wrote to Gneisenau of the rumours of a considerable rise in the Vendée. The Champ de mai would have been postponed.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, on the 29th of May, count de la Porterie wrote from Mons to Gneisenau that the *Champ de Mai* would have been postponed for an indefinite period of time, that there would be rises in Bretagne and the Vendée and that therefore garrisons from Condé, Valenciennes, le Quesnoy, Maubeuge, Landrecies, Avesnes had left for Paris and from there to these regions.¹⁰⁴

From Namur, colonel Hardinge wrote to Wellington on the 2nd of June about the French cavalry as having moved from Avesnes to Landrecies [¹⁰⁵], while the day after an anonymous source stated: “Junge Garde ist am 25. Mai auf Wagen nach der Vendée gesandt. Fast alle Linientruppen sind von Condé, Valenciennes, le Quesnoy, Maubeuge, Landrecies, Avesnes nach Paris abgegangen.”¹⁰⁶

Von Dörnberg wrote on the 4th of June about 10.000 national guards being at Maubeuge, though not all yet armed. At Ferrière la Grande would be a park of artillery. The Young Guard would have been sent from Paris to the Vendée. The Champ de may was to be held on the 1st of June.¹⁰⁷

Lieutenant colonel von Wissell reported to Lord Hill that the enemy would have evacuated Lille; all the troops would have taken the road to Maubeuge and Valenciennes.¹⁰⁸

On the 5th of June the prince of Orange reported back to the duke about the Champ de Mai as being held on the 1st of June and that immediately after Napoleon was to be expected at Laon, which was to be his headquarters and that the French army expected to attack the allies within a few days.¹⁰⁹

The same day, from Ghent, the duke De Feltre wrote to Wellington about the garrison at Valenciennes, consisting of national guards only. The rise against the government in the Vendée and several other regions in France would be very serious.¹¹⁰

It was Von Dörnberg again who reported on the 6th of June; he wrote about the rumour that Napoleon would be leaving the capital on the 6th for Laon, as being highly fortified. Von Dörnberg also had the report of forces of the line on the frontier near Valenciennes, numbering about 30.000, but which he felt exaggerated.¹¹¹

On the 6th of June, the prince of Orange forwarded a report of baron Behr from Mons, dated the 6th of June. Behr reported on the departure of Bonaparte from Paris on the 6th for Compiègne, where a lot of units coming from Paris moved to. He cited from information gathered by mr. Vilnoisy, a delegate from Louis XVIII. He also added that Napoleon, from la Compiègne, would go to Avesnes to carry out a feint against the allies near Maubeuge, while the main thrust would fall upon Flanders, i.e. between Lille, Tournay and towards Mons. The Young Guard would have left for the Vendée.

The prince of Orange himself also had a report from Collaert who got the information from the French general Albert who said that if the French would not attack on the 7th, they would do so on the 8th or the 9th.¹¹² Von Dörnberg, in his report of the same day, confirmed all this and interpreted the feint attack as one upon the Prussians.¹¹³

Also the same day, Zieten wrote to Wellington confirming the Champ de mai had taken place on the 1st of June and that the French corps of Vandamme would count 18.000 men, the one of Reille 25.000 and the one of d'Erlon 60.000 men (which Zieten thought was too strong).¹¹⁴ It was on the 6th of June as well that Wellington wrote to Hardinge: "All accounts which I receive from the frontier appear again to concur in the notion of a collection of troops about Maubeuge. Buonaparte was expected to be at Laon on the 6th, and there were on all parts of the road between Paris and the frontier extraordinary preparations for the movement of troops in carriages. The numbers of the latter collected are immense in some of the towns."¹¹⁵

On the 7th of June Von Dörnberg wrote about the expected arrival of Napoleon at Valenciennes on the 7th of June. The French of Vandamme on the line of Solre-le-Chateau expected to be attacked by Wellington any day.¹¹⁶

That day, Wellington wrote to Hardinge: "I have heard nothing new since I wrote you yesterday evening, excepting general reports of an intention to attack, which very possibly are circulated in consequence of the weakness in our front, and the fact that there are great many carriages for the transport of troops at every stage on the road."¹¹⁷

By the 7th of June the duke had also drafted very specific orders for the defence of the towns of Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, Ypres, Tournay, Ath, Mons [¹¹⁸] and Ghent. These orders, in all their detail, may have been based upon the reports of colonel Carmichael Smyth who had told Von Müffling two days earlier that these towns were the main strong points.

The main item for Wellington was, apart from all the organisational, technical and military arrangements to be made in the different localities, as soon as the enemy had entered the territory of the Netherlands, that all these places should be considered as being in a state of siege.¹¹⁹

Von Dörnberg made his report on the 8th of June detailing that Napoleon would go from Paris directly to Laon. Troops that were between Landrecy and Avesnes had made a movement on their right towards Solre-le-Chateau on the 4th of June. The existence of a park of artillery at Ferrière la Grande had been confirmed.¹²⁰

The very same day, Zieten wrote to Wellington about the withdrawal of the French posts in front of Maubeuge, back towards the fortress of this town. He enclosed a report from Charleroi dated 6th of June stating that the total French forces amounted to about 300.000 and that 102.000 of them were between Maubeuge and Sedan (of which 12.000 of the line). The garrison at Philippeville would consist of 2000 men; at Maubeuge would be about 3000. In the region between Beaufort and Landrecy the French would continue to cut up the roads.¹²¹

It was also on the 7th of June that colonel Hoyneck van Papendrecht, chief of staff of the cavalry division of Collaert, informed Constant Rebecque in extracts from the *Moniteur* that Napoleon would have held the Champ de mai on the 1st of June, that on the 3rd of June there would be a concentration of troops at Valenciennes and that Napoleon would have left Paris for Douai and Laon three days after.¹²²

On the 8th of June Von Dörnberg cited from a report that at Valenciennes there would be 6000 to 7000 national guards and 1500 troops of the line; another 4000 to 5000 men infantry would have reached the vicinity of Valenciennes. The Young Guard was expected the night before at Valenciennes and the Old Guard was marching to Maubeuge. At Condé would be 4000 national guards.¹²³

General Von Müffling also supplied intelligence on the 9th of June indicating that the garrison at Valenciennes was composed of 4000 men and 100 guns. Troops would be in cantonments around Valenciennes, stretching from the frontier towards Cambrai. Between this town and Paris there would be very few troops.

Progress on the fortifications at Paris was slow; there would be numerous units of the regular army as well as of the Imperial Guard. The Old Guard was supposed to leave for Strassbourg. On the northern frontier there would be 40.000 men, to be increased to about 100.000

Though the rise in the Vendée would have suffered serious setbacks, numerous units of the regular army as well as the Young Guard would have been sent there.¹²⁴

On the 9th of June, Von Müffling also wrote to Von Gneisenau that Von Dörnberg had reported to him privately that Napoleon would arrive at Valenciennes on the 7th of June and that it would be his intention to destroy the allied armies in Belgium before the arrival of the Russian army.¹²⁵

From Mons, on the 9th of June, Von Dörnberg sent his report to lord Fitzroy Somerset indicating that Napoleon would have left that morning from Maubeuge for Valenciennes, and to go from there to Lille.

Another report indicated that Napoleon was at Avesnes on the 8th of June and yet another that 30.000 men were on the move from Paris to the frontier in the north.¹²⁶

The same day, colonel Hardinge wrote to Wellington that the French 4th corps was moving from Thionville towards Mézières, but he knew no date or numbers.¹²⁷

It was also on the 9th of June that the prince of Orange wrote to Wellington about the arrival of Napoleon that morning at Maubeuge, thereby basing himself upon a report of general Van Merlen. The prince also writes: "Napoleon having arrived, I think he is likely to attack in a very few days, if he means to attack at all."¹²⁸

And to his father he wrote that day: "Ik heb de eere aan Uwe Majesteit rapport te doen, dat ingevolgens alle ingekoomene berichten het zeker schijnt te zijn dat Napoleon op de linie is, en waarschijnlijk heden te Douay. De fransche armée heeft eene beweging gemaakt ten einde zig in de omstreken van Sar le Chateau te vereenigen, alwaar dezelve thans sterk is. Ik ben van mening dat wij in korten zullen geattaqueerd worden."¹²⁹

And also from Zieten came a report, who wrote about the French movements (whatever they may have been) to have been caused by his movements on the frontier. Other than that, the enemy would have moved 4000 men from Marienbourg to Maubeuge, but there had not been any French reinforcements at the frontier and its surroundings till the 8th of June. Napoleon would still be in Paris.¹³⁰

The same day, Chassé reported to Constant Rebecque that the garrison in and around Maubeuge would count 9000 men; at the Sambre would be 6450 men and the forces stretching from Maubeuge to Philippeville would be 18.000 men strong.¹³¹

And in the Oracle of the 10th of June was written: "Du 5 juin. S. M. passera aujourd'hui une revue de départ. Le grand-maréchal part ce soir pour Laon. On croit que l'empereur partira demain. Déjà le maréchal Soult, major-général de l'armée, est parti cette nuit. Ce matin, avant le jour, quelques corps de troupes sont partis pour nos frontières. Quelques mouvements parmi les troupes, sur les frontières, dit la Gazette de France, ne laissent aucun doute sur le prochain commencement des hostilités."¹³²

In Ghent, sir Charles Stuart gave a summary of the current available intelligence in a letter he wrote to lord Castlereagh on the 9th of June and which reads:

“Accounts have been received at Ghent from Paris to the 6th of June. Since the arrangements for the Assembly of the two Chambers have been completed it appears that Buonaparte has turned his undivided attention to the collection of the force necessary to resist the attacks of the allies, and make head against the progress of the insurrection in la Vendée.

Eight hundred carts have been distributed along the road from Saint-Denis to Maubeuge for the purpose of conveying that part of the guard to this frontier which has not marched towards la Vendée.

Marshal Soult quitted Paris on the 5th for Laon where the headquarters are at present established. It is expected that he will be followed very shortly by Buonaparte who will direct in person the first attack against marshal Blücher.

This conjecture is founded on the movement of a great part of the force cantoned near Philippeville to the right since the departur of Reille’s corps. No regular troops emain in Lille, and the garrison is entirely composed of national guards, three of the gates have been walled up.

Although all officers who have quitted the service have been directed to retire to a distance of 50 leagues from the frontier, and strong measures have been taken to awe the disaffected, the inhabitants in the departments du Nord and du Pas-de-Calais continue unfavourable to the government.

These feelings have given rise to partial movements at Cambray, St.Omers and Dunkirk, which are perhaps exaggerated by the accounts we receive from the frontier. On the 29th of May it is certain that the Vendean insurrection extended to Le Mans and letters from Alençon justify the expectation that before this time the white flag is displayed in that town. Letters from Bamberg state that marshal Berthier lately put an end to his own existence in that town by throwing himself out of a window, at the time a column of Russians were passing through.”¹³³

On the 4th of June, Blücher informed Von Thielmann that according intelligence received the 4th French corps had marched off from Metz and Thionville to join the 3rd corps.¹³⁴ He did the same to Von Kleist: “Da mir die Nachricht zugekommen ist, als marschierte das IV.französische Armeekorps von der Mosel nach der Maas zur Vereinigung mit dem III.Korps, so ersuche ich Euer Excellenz mir alle Ihnen über diese Bewegung zukommenden Nachrichten sogleich zuzuschicken.”¹³⁵

The same day, he wrote to king Friedrich-Wilhelm about his feelings on the invasion into France: [...] “Die lange Verzögerung des Anfangs der Feindseligkeiten halte ich für höchst nachtheilig. Der Feind verstärkt sich von jetzt an verhältnismässig weit mehr als wir, und Bonaparte gewinnt wieder Zeit, seine Macht im Innern Frankreichs fest zu gründen. Da ferner hier durch die nicht guten Anstalten der niederländischen Behörden die Verpflegung mit jedem Tage schlechter und die Last für das Land drückender wird, so muss ich Ew.Majestät allerunterthänigst bitten, den Anfang der Feindseligkeiten möglichst zu beschleunigen.”¹³⁶

The 6th of June brought some more intelligence. There was a message that “am 3. Wurde der Weg Mons-Chimay bei dem Orte Lecoq durchschnitten. Man erbaut dort ein Fort.”¹³⁷

Also the same day, Zieten wrote to Wellington confirming the Champ de Mai had taken place on the 1st of June and that the French corps of Vandamme would count 18.000, the one of Reille 25.000 and the one of d’Erlon 60.000 men (which Zieten thought was too strong).¹³⁸ It can be assumed that Zieten sent this information to Namur as well.

From Mons, count de la Porterie wrote to major Von Bardeleben, adc of Gneisenau, about the fact that Napoleon would make a feint attack on Charleroi, and the real one upon Mons or Tournay between the 7th and the 10th of June. His headquarters would be at Laon; near Valenciennes would be 80 guns and more would be underway from Vincennes.¹³⁹

The 7th of June was another day in which more intelligence dropped in. It may have been the reports written by the duke of Wellington to colonel Hardinge of the 6th and 7th of June:

“All accounts which I receive from the frontier appear again to concur in the notion of a collection of troops about Maubeuge. Buonaparte was expected to be at Laon on the 6th, and there were on all parts of the road between Paris and the frontier extraordinary preparations for the movement of troops in carriages. The numbers of the latter collected are immense in some of the towns.”¹⁴⁰

“I have heard nothing new since I wrote you yesterday evening [see above] , excepting general reports of an intention to attack, which very possibly are circulated in consequence of the weakness in our front, and the fact that there are great many carriages for the transport of troops at every stage on the road.”¹⁴¹

And it was Zieten again who wrote to headquarters: “Die Douaniers haben sich in die 2. Linie zurückgezogen und sollen sich bei Annäherung des Feindes sammeln und als Tirailleurs den Rückzug des Korps decken. Auch die Posten an der Sambre haben einen gleichen Befehl zum zurückgehen. Zwischen Beaufort und Landrecies fährt man fort, die Chemins travers zu verhauen und zu verderben.”¹⁴²

On the 8th of June a message reached Namur which stated: “General Bournonville schliesst aus dem bisherigen Verhalten Napoleons, er werde sich zwischen den Festungen zu halten versuchen, er fürchtet die Überlegenheit der verbündeten Kavallerie.”¹⁴³

The very same day, Zieten wrote Wellington about the withdrawal of the French posts in front of Maubeuge, back towards the fortress of this town. He enclosed a report from Charleroi dated 6th of June stating that the total French forces amounted to about 300.000 and that 102.000 of them were between Maubeuge and Sédan (of which 12.000 of the line). The garrison at Philippeville would consist of 2000 men; at Maubeuge would be about 3000. In the region between Beaufort and Landrecy the French would continue to cut up the roads.¹⁴⁴

It was again on the 9th of June that intelligence had come in again about the movements of the French 3rd and 4th corps.

In this context, colonel Von Clausewitz, chief of staff of the 3rd corps, wrote to general headquarters: “Vandamme habe sein Korps bei Couvin gesammelt, um nötigenfalls nach Philippeville marschieren zu können.”¹⁴⁵ And lieutenant colonel Hardinge wrote this day to Wellington: “I am informed by general Gneisenau that he has received intelligence, on which he relies, of the march of the 4th corps from the neighbourhood of Thionville, and of the arrival of part of it at Mézières. His report gives no date or numbers.”¹⁴⁶

Gneisenau himself reported then to Von der Knesebeck: “Durch zwei auf verschiedenen Wegen gekommene Reisende erhalten wir soeben die Nachricht, dass das 4. Armee-Korps nun ebenfalls mit dem 3. bei Mézières sich vereinigt. Die Reisenden haben die Truppen im Marsch gesehen.”¹⁴⁷

Von Steinmetz reported on the 9th of June to Von Zieten about a report which had come from Van Merlen (at St.Symphorien) that a French attack was to be expected soon, that he had alerted his outposts to be extra vigilant and that he had made the arrangements “dass des Abends die auf dem äussersten rechten Flügel gelegenen Truppen in Allarmhäuser sich sammeln.”¹⁴⁸

And it was also from Zieten who wrote to Wellington (so apparently to Gneisenau as well) about the French movements (whatever they may have been) to have been caused by his movements on the frontier; other than that, the enemy would have moved 4000 men from Mariembourg to Maubeuge, but that there had not been any French reinforcements at the frontier and its surroundings till the 8th of June. Napoleon would still be in Paris.¹⁴⁹

On the 10th of June, Zieten wrote to general headquarters: “Die Gestern bei Marienbourg vernommenen Kanonenschüsse haben der Ankunft Napoleons gegolten. Es scheint mir, dass das 4. Korps Gérard über Marienbourg auf Maubeuge gezogen wird.”¹⁵⁰

It was on the 9th of June that Von Müffling wrote to Von Gneisenau that Von Dörnberg had reported to him privately that Napoleon would arrive at Valenciennes on the 7th of June and that it would be his intention to destroy the allied armies in Belgium before the arrival of the Russian army.¹⁵¹

It was on the 11th of June that Wellington had received two reports from Mons through Von Dörnberg, who had written them the day before.

In the first one he reported that the French emperor would still have been in the capital on the 7th of June, but that he also had a report of him being at Maubeuge already and that both general Exelmans and Vandamme were there with their forces. Defensive redoubts were being built south of Maubeuge on the road to Avesnes. Later that day, he also learned Napoleon would be at Laon or that Napoleon would have left Paris on the 6th of June with 80.000 men (of whom 40.000 were national guards).

Very large magazines would have been formed at Maubeuge; 60 guns would have arrived there. Three strong redoubts would have been built near Beaufort, on the road from Maubeuge to Avesnes.¹⁵²

On the 10th of June, information coming from the duke De Feltre – who had it from a person who left Paris on the 4th of June - was forwarded by L.Hervey from Ghent to the duke of Wellington. This intelligence about the French army comprised strengths of the different corps, totalling to 227.000 men with 500 guns (which is decreased to an apparent more realistic 182.000), stretching from Lille to Rocroi. In this, the main army in the north would be formed by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th corps, plus the imperial guard, in all numbering about 120.000 men.¹⁵³

The impression of some was that Napoleon would advance from Rocroi towards the 10th of June. The *places fortes* would be in a bad shape, except for those of Lille, Valenciennes and Condé – they would be all garrisoned by members of the national guards, the invalids and retired soldiers. 150.000 national guards to be raised would be the maximum, in stead of the 400.000 as mentioned. For instance, for the north 54.000 were planned and there were only 11.000¹⁵⁴

The same day, Von Müffling had a conversation with the duke of Wellington which was based upon reports which had been sent by general Von Zieten from Charleroi. Von Müffling reported back to Gneisenau that day: “Auf die von mir dem Herrn.Herzog Wellington vorgelegten Nachrichten des Generals von Ziethen, sagte mir der Herr Herzog, er habe sichere Anzeigen, dass Napoleon noch am 7. Juni in Paris gewesen sei.”¹⁵⁵ Auch ergibt sich dies aus dem Moniteur vom 7. Juni.

Beiliegende Nachrichten sind mir von dem Herrn. Herzog übergeben, um sie Seiner Durchlaucht dem Fürsten Blücher von Wahlstatt mitzuteilen; sie sind wichtig in hinsicht der Quelle und als Bestätigung, dass die Kräfte Napoleons nicht so übermässig sind.

Nach allem, was uns bis jetzt über die Massregeln Napoleon’s zugekommen ist, glaube ich annehmen zu müssen, dass er nicht zuerst angreifen wird, aber vielleicht in demselben Augenblick, als er die Nachrichten von Eröffnung der Feindseligkeiten am Oberrhein erhält, sein Glück gegen uns versucht, da er alsdann noch immer Zeit behält (wenn seine Unternehmung gegen uns glücken sollte) sich der grossen Armee entgegen zu setzen.

Ist dies jedoch nicht sein Plan, so hat er wahrscheinlich von Laon einen Marsch gegen den Oberrhein bereitet und fällt auf den Fürsten Schwarzenberg mit allem was er entbehren kann. Ich halte es deshalb für wichtig, dass jemand nach Rheims oder, womöglich, gar nach Laon gesendet wird, der daselbst bleibt, bis die Feindseligkeiten angefangen haben und Bonaparte eine Partie ergriffen hat.

Der Herzog hat mir gesagt, dass nach seinem heute erhaltenem Rapport 180 Stück Belagerungs-Geschütz bereit wären. Es ist also anzunehmen, dass das Belagerungsgeschütz von 200 Stück bis zur Eröffnung der Feindseligkeiten hier seyn wird. Einige englische Regimenter der Armee aus Amerika sind wieder in Ostende angekommen. ¹⁵⁶

And the same day he wrote to Gneisenau: "Euer Excellenz habe ich die Ehre nebst beyligenden Rapport die meldungen des General lieutenants v.Ziethen zurückzusenden. Wegen der Sachsen hat der Herzog mir noch nichts weiter gesagt; ich vermuthete, es wird geschehen, sobald sich der General Lieutenant Lecoq meldet. Die Entstellung der Sachsen Geschichte im Rheinischen Merkur, als ob die Sachsen durch uns gereizt worden wären, hat mich veranlasst dem Regierungs Rath Sack zu Coblenz eine Rectification zu übertragen. Was mit der sächsischen, zu uns übertretenden Cavallerie zu thun ist, wird sich, glaub ich, am besten zeigen, wenn Euer Excellenz die sächsisch bleibende Cavallerie in die Cantons Gülpfen, Herlé und Eisden über die Maas rücken lassen. Bleibt dann der preussische Theil ruhig, so bin ich unbesorgt, er wird sich ferner gut betragen. Das sächsische Gouvernement giebt übrigens durch seine neue Formationen deutlich zu erkennen, dass es ambitioese Absichten hat. Es gelingt ihm dadurch, eine Menge Officiers zurückzuhalten, welche zu uns übertreten wollten, die es indessen bald bereuen werden. Was Herzog Wellington dem Herrn.v.Brockhausen gesagt haben soll – wie er versichert – glaube ich nicht recht, da mir vorkömmt, dass B. manches erfindet, um sich wichtig zu machen. Ich habe ihn einigemal auf diesen Punckt nicht rein gefunden.

Herzog Wellington sagte mir noch vor eine Stunde, als Ich mit ihm von den Operationen sprach, er sehe einem Angriff Napoleons mit der grössten Ruhe entgegen, da er mit seinen Anstalten so wohl als wir fertig sey.

Ich erwiederte ihm, nach meiner Ansicht gäbe es jetzt für die Coalition keine glücklichere Begebenheit, als wenn Napoleon uns angriffe. Der Herzog tratt meinen Gründen völlig bey und theilt meine Ansicht, dass wir bis an die Aisne keine bedeutende Affaire haben werden, wenn wir die Franzosen nicht überraschen.

Uebrigens erwartet der Herzog eine nicht unbedeutende Verstärkungen, ohne das geringste zu ihrem schnelleren heranziehen zu thun; z.B. 13.m. Dänen sind noch nicht abmarchirt. Ich fragte den general Waltersdorff, ob der Herzog nicht treibe, dass sie marchiren und ankommen? Er antwortete "nein", und doch hat er den Dänen versprochen, sie nicht vor einer Festung zu lassen.

Ich lege ein Schreiben des Generals Dörnberg bey, welches wegen der Räume zu Magazinen Ausschlüsse für p. Ribbentrupp giebt." ¹⁵⁷

That day, general Vincent wrote to prince Schwarzenberg: "J'attends cette occasion dans l'envoi de l'officier de Votre Altesse me fait l'honneur de me parler, porteur des notions militaires et politiques qui doivent déterminer la marche de Votre Altesse dans les opérations qui sont à la veille d'être entamées.

Le duc de Wellington connoit la franchise de Votre Altesse et le fond qu'elle peut faire sur son caractère. Il ne doute point, mon prince, que vous ne soyez disposé à agir dès que les russes se trouveront en ligne en nombre jugé suffisant; cependant, il n'y a pas de doute que de toutes les forces que Buonaparte a dans ce moment à sa disposition, les quatre cinquièmes ne soient échelonnés et disposés contre les Pays Bas; cette considération fait désirer au duc de Wellington que l'on puisse profiter de cette disposition de l'armée ennemie, soit pour s'emparer le plutôt possible des positions qui peuvent forcer l'ennemi à équilibrer ses forces et à tâcher de le faire désister d'un système au moyen duquel en rassemblant ses moyens contre une seule armée; il peut se trouver à même de faire successivement face à toutes avec des succès plus ou moins balancés." ¹⁵⁸

The letter Schwarzenberg had sent to Vincent is also mentioned by sir Charles Stuart in the letter he wrote to lord Castlereagh from Ghent on the 13th June. It reads: "I have the honor to acquaint your Lordship that the baron de Vincent has received letters from the head quarters of prince Schwartzenberg, in a great measure anticipating the answers which are expected by the duke of Wellington to state the probable period when hostilities are likely to commence.

Prince Schwartzenberg declares that, although the whole of the army under his command are already in a situation to take the field, he is unwilling to commence active operations before a body of sixty thousand of the Russians now in march through Germany, shall make him quite secure of the whole line between his right and the left Prussian army on the Upper Rhine.

The reports of the persons who have lately come through Germany to Brussels, concur in stating that the different columns of Russians which were passing through Wurtzburg on the 8th, will be in a line with the Austrian army about the 20th; so that the moment of action which has been fixed by the prince Schwartzenberg cannot well be delayed beyond that period."

On the 11th of June Von Dörnberg transmitted the news to lord FitzRoy Somerset that Napoleon was in Avesnes on the 10th of June and that on the 6th of June part of the Guards marched from Paris towards Strassbourg and the remainder towards the frontier in the north. In Valenciennes there would be a large park of artillery. General headquarters would be at Laon.¹⁵⁹

The same day, the prince of Orange noticed no changes along the French front in his sector.¹⁶⁰

It was also Vincent who wrote to Schwarzenberg again, and he added lists about the French strengths, one through intelligence from Paris and another from the duke of Feltre.

The first one indicated the Armée du nord being 140.000 strong and the second one 109.000, both indicating this army was between Paris, through Laon and the frontier.

Both sources give a total strength of 37.000 men for the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th corps, plus 50.000 in hospitals and depots and 500 guns.¹⁶¹

The news of Napoleon's situation led lieutenant the Hon. George Cathcart, a junior officer on Wellington's staff to write this day to his mother: "[...] I am going to a place 7 miles off to dine with an officer of horse artillery at which I shall meet Charles – I shall come back tomorrow to breakfast, for as Bonaparte is come to Maubeuge not above 60 miles from Bruxelles, it will not do to be long about.[...]"¹⁶²

According to Von Dörnberg's information of the 12th of June, the French posts along the frontier (between Valenciennes and Bavay roads) would have been strengthened with infantry. A part of the park of artillery at Valenciennes would have departed, as well as units which were moving, through Guise and Laon, towards the Vendée. The park remaining at Valenciennes would have numbered about 60 pieces.¹⁶³

Later on the 12th of June, at 7 p.m., Von Dörnberg issued another report containing the information that the corps of Reille would have reached Maubeuge and its vicinity on the 11th of June, while general headquarters would have been transferred from Laon to Avesnes. The forces between Philippeville, Givet, Mézières, Guise and Maubeuge could be estimated at more than 100.000 troops of the line. A very considerable corps of cavalry, being inspected by Grouchy, would have been at Hirson. The general opinion in the French army would be that they would attack and that the arrival of Napoleon at Avesnes would be the signal for the beginning of hostilities.¹⁶⁴

The same day, at 7 p.m., baron De Roisin, from his château de Rongy, near the frontier, sent a report to the duke of Wellington informing him that Soult would have arrived at Valenciennes on the 11th of June and that he shortly after would have traveled further to Maubeuge and Avesnes. Jérôme would be at Laon. The 1st corps would be at Valenciennes and all posts of the Imperial Guard at Paris would have been relieved by the National Guard. An attack would follow on the 14th of June, but this could be a mere feint upon Mons.¹⁶⁵

It was lord Uxbridge who wrote to Wellington from Ninove on the 12th of June. He reported to him that Napoleon would have arrived at Laon on the 10th of June and that the Imperial Guard would have made a two-days march from thence to the front and that it was Napoleon's intention to attack immediately. On the other hand, troops from Arras and its vicinity were making forced marches for the Vendée.¹⁶⁶

Despite all the news of French movements, Wellington was confident about his situation. In fact, he wrote to lord Lynedoch on the 13th of June: "There is nothing new here. We have reports of Buonaparte's joining the army and attacking us; but I have accounts from Paris of the 10th, on which day he was still there; and I judge from his speech to the Legislature that his departure was not likely to be immediate. I think we are too strong for him here."¹⁶⁷

At the same time, the duke was clear to earl Bathurst about the need for the completion of the works at Ostend, even though they would be much more expensive as they were calculated to be.¹⁶⁸

The prince of Orange, in a letter to his father dated 13th of June, showed the same sense assurance, but eventually didn't fully rule out a possible attack: "Ik heb de eere aan Uwe Majesteit rapport te doen dat er bij de armée niets van belang is voorgevallen, de tijding van de aankomst van Napoleon op de linie in mijn rapport van den 9^{de} vermeld, heeft zig niet bevestigd [sic] en schijnt veroorzaakt geweest te zijn door het lossen van het geschut ter gelegenheid van het aanneemen der consitutue en het ontfangen [sic] der adelaars bij de regimenten in verschillende vestingen op de frontières.

Den 10den deezes heeft er eene kleine affaire plaatsgehad op de voorposten bezet door het regiment ligte dragonders no.5 bij het Bois Bourdon op het kruispunt van de oude romeinsche chaussé [sic] met die van Mons naar Maubeuge; tot deze affaire is door een Franssche officier aanleiding gegeegeven en had ten gevolgen dat er drie Fransche hussaren gevangen zijn genoomen, van onze zijde is een wachtmeester geblesseerd geworden.

De Fransche commandant van de voorposten heeft mij bekenkende van hunner zijde ongelijk gehad te hebben de drie gevangene hussaren laten reclameeren, waarvan ik rapport aan den hertog van Wellington heb gedaan, dewelke om de goede verstandhouding op de voorposten niet af te breeken mij geauthoriseerd heeft deeze drie gevangene uit te leveren, waartoe ik de orders heb gegeeven. De laatste tijdingen van den grenzen ontvangen zijn volgende.

Napoleon wordt te Avesnes verwagt, waar men alles voor het groote hoofdkwartier in gereedheid brengt. Den maarschalk Soult, majoor generaal van de armée, is in de nagt van den 12den te Maubeuge gepasseert [sic], alwaar men order heeft de kwartieren voor de keizerlijke garde te maaken. De divisie van den generaal van Damme rigt zig ook naar de kante van deeze vesting, en alle beweegingen duiden aan dat men een groot aantal trouppens [sic] op dat punt wil vereenigen waar men Napoleon ook alle ogenblikken verwagtede is.

Volgens het zeggen van Fransche generaals worden alle voorbereidingen gemaakt om een aanval op Brabant te doen. De persoon welke deeze tijdingen heeft gebracht komt van Maubeuge waar hij de nagt van den 12^{de} is geweest, en verzeekert boovengemelde zelfs gezien te hebben."¹⁶⁹

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¹ This chapter has been partly based upon: Hofschröder, P. - 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.136-140

² On the 11th of May, Von Dörnberg asked Wellington for instructions: either to leave for his brigade which was stationed at Malines, or to stay in Mons. It became Mons. In: WSD, Vol.X p.274

Cf. Hussey, J. - The fog of war etc. p.15

³ Cf. Reports of Von Dörnberg. In: WSD, Vol.X p.408 and 436

⁴ Report of Von Dörnberg himself. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Vorgeschichte etc. p.291-292

⁵ WSD, Vol.X p.269, 439, 470

⁶ He did so on the 10th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 23rd of May, the 4th, 6th, 8th, 9th and 13th or 14th of June.

In: WSD, Vol.X p.269, 280, 283, 303, 348, 425, 429 and 437

The one of the 4th of June cannot be found amongst the Wellington papers, but there is a reference to it in the index of letters to the duke – March to December 1815. In: HL, WP 6.1.18 The content is only described as “intelligence”. Date of departure and arrival were both 4th of June.

⁷ WD, Vol.XII p.367

⁸ Von Dörnberg to Colborne, 9th April 1815. In: WSD, Vol.X p.52-53

Von Dörnberg to FitzRoy Somerset, 16th April 1815. In: WSD, Vol.X p.81

The reports written by Von Dörnberg to both colonel Colborne and lord FitzRoy Somerset can be found in the KHA (nr.A40 XIII 21) and the Supplementary dispatches

Hofschröder claims Von Dörnberg also reported to Von Müffling but this is highly improbable. Though Von Müffling writes in Hofschröder's reference (a letter dated 9th of June to Gneisenau) about Von Dörnberg's ideas, these were the same as those formulated in his report of the 6th of June for lord Fitzroy Somerset. Therefore, Somerset probably showed it to Von Müffling. It would not have been logical for Von Dörnberg to report to Von Müffling as well. Von Müffling to Gneisenau, 9th of June 1815. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von Vorgeschichte etc. p.327

Hofschröder does the same for a communication line between Von Dörnberg and Blücher, at least on the 14th of June at 9.30 p.m., but there is no proof for the existence of this report. He takes this claim from De Bas. In: Bas, F.de La campagne de 1815 Vol.I p.353

Hofschröder, P. - Grant's Waterloo intelligence p.4

⁹ BL, Add.ms.20.114 f.50-53

WSD, Vol.X p.157-159

¹⁰ WD, Vol.XII p.336

¹¹ Haswell, J. - The first respectable spy p.216-218

There is an expense-claim of Grant for the intelligence gained between the 30th of May and the 4th of July 1815. In: HL, WP nr. 1.492 f.3

¹² Hardinge to Wellington, 12th of April 1815. In: WSD, Vol.X p.79

Hardinge reported to Wellington on a daily base from the 4th of May onwards, except for the following dates: 11th, 14th, 15th, 17th, 20th, 23rd, 24th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th and the 31st of May, and in June he did not do so on the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th of that month. Cf. WSD, Vol.X

¹³ WD, Vol.XII p.363

Constant to Behr, 5th of June 1815. In: NA, 2.13.14.01 nr.6-156

¹⁴ NA, nr.2.13.14.01 nr.156

¹⁵ Cf. De Wesener to Constant Rebecque, 22nd of April 1815. In: NA, 2.13.14.01 nr.8

Baron Tindal became a lieutenant general in July 1814. He was to overlook all military matters in the new Belgian provinces and as such made inspector-general responsible with the administration for the ministry of war for the southern provinces in August 1814. Cf. Muilwijk, E. – From mobilisation to war p.43

¹⁶ Cf. De Wesener to Constant Rebecque, 2nd of May 1815. In: NA, 2.13.14.01 nr.8

¹⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.275

¹⁸ BL, Add.ms.20.114 f.96-97

¹⁹ The duke wrote to Hardinge on the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 24th of May and on the 6th, 7th and 10th of June. In: WD, Vol.XII

²⁰ At the bottom of a report of Von Dörnberg dated 11th of May for Wellington, the duke gives the instruction to his staff to extract information from it and to send it to Hardinge. In: WSD, Vol.X p.274

²¹ Cf. Dispatches, Vol.XII

²² Cf. Von Dörnberg to Lord FitzRoy Somerset, 9th of June 1815. In: WSD, p.436

²³ In this context fits the remark: “In einem wohl vier Finger starken Aktenstück betitelt: “Nachrichten vom Feinde und Meldungen von den Vorposten vom 24ten April bis 13ten Juni 1815”, woraus hervorgeht dass täglich Nachrichten eingingen, und dass das 1^{te} Armeekorps durch die vom general Von Dörnberg empfangenen und ihm mitgetheilten Nachrichten, in stetter Verbindung mit der Englisch-Niederländischen Armee war.” The writer here refers to the former Kriegsarchiv.

In: MWB, 1846 p.11-12 (footnote). It is most unfortunate that these records are unavailable.

²⁴ Intelligence from an anonymous correspondent and from the duke of Feltre. In: WSD, Vol.X p.57-58, 76-78

²⁵ Cf. information forwarded by lieutenant colonel Rooke to lord FitzRoy Somerset, dated 20th of April. In: WSD, Vol.X p.110-111

Reports of Von Dörnberg, dated 20th and 21st April. In: WSD, Vol.X p.112, 82

Letter from dr.Macnab to Wellington , dated 21st April. In: WSD, Vol.X p.128-129

²⁶ Intelligence forwarded from Paris by viscount Castlereagh, dated 19th of April. In: WSD, Vol.X p.100-105

²⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.135-138

²⁸ WSD, Vol.X p.152-154, 157, 166-167

²⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.128-129

³⁰ This letter from Blücher is not available, but must, in the context of Wellington's answer have dealt with his arrival in Liège and his wish to cooperate with the duke.

³¹ WD, Vol.XII p.323-324

³² WD, Vol.XII p.323

³³ WSD, Vol.X p.222

³⁴ KHA, nr.A.40.VI CW10

³⁵ WD, Vol.XII p.356

³⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.262

³⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.261

³⁸ WSD, Vol.X p.260

³⁹ HL, WP, 6.1.18

⁴⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.263

⁴¹ BL, Add.ms.35.060

WD, Vol.XII p.366

For what purpose Wellington was at Ghent on the 7th of May (Sunday) remains unclear.

On the 29th of May, a general order (nr.38) would be issued for the army of the Netherlands, in the field and in the garrisons, stating explicitly that it was forbidden to have any communication whatsoever with French troops or garrisons, without the explicit permission of the duke of Wellington or the prince of Orange.

⁴² WD, Vol.XII p.367

⁴³ WD, Vol.XII p.368

⁴⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.270-271

⁴⁵ BL, Add.ms. 35.062 and 20.192 p.358

⁴⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.274

⁴⁷ Sabine, E. (ed) - Letters of colonel Sir Augustus Frazer p.512

⁴⁸ KHA, A40 XIII-10

⁴⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.280-281

⁵⁰ KHA, A40, XIII-10

⁵¹ WSD, Vol.X p.275

⁵² BL, Add.37.052 f.142-145

⁵³ WSD, Vol.X p.283-284

⁵⁴ NA, 2.13.14.01, nr.7 nr.124

⁵⁵ NA, 2.13.14.01 nr. 7-8

⁵⁶ Blücher to the Prussian king. In: Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.176

⁵⁷ Griewank, K. – Gneisenau. Ein Leben in Briefen p.317

⁵⁸ WSD, Vol.X p.270-271

Of the Royal Horse Artillery, the one of Gardiner reached Ostend on the 13th of April. From there it moved through Gistel, Brugge, Eeklo and Ghent to St.Gillis near Dendermonde; on the 1st of May it reached Strytem. Cf. lieutenant Ingilby (Gardiner's troop) in his diary.

Captain Mercer's troop moved from Ostend on the 14th of April to Gistel, Eeklo and Lovendegem to Ghent, where it arrived on the 17th of April. From there it left on the 25th of April for Lochristi, Zeveneken, Lokeren, Zele and Dendermonde to St.Gillis. There it left on the 1st of May for Strytem through Lebbeke and Assche. Cf. Mercer, C. - Journal of the Waterloo campaign Vol.I

Mercer's presence on the 19th of April at Ghent and his departure on the 25th is confirmed by Sir Augustus Frazer. In: Sabine, E. (ed) - Letters of colonel Sir Augustus Frazer p.488

On the same day, captain Gardiner's troop of RHA, as well as the one of captain Rogers of the Royal Artillery left from there to Ghent and Dendermonde respectively.

The one of captain Webber Smith reached Ghent on the 4th of May; it was ordered to Erweteghem (about 1 kilometre south of Zotteghem) on the 25th of May. That same day, captain Whinyates' troop was ordered from Bierghes (between Hal and Enghien) to Oosterzeele (about 10 kilometers south-west of Ghent), while the one of captain Bull was then ordered to Steenhuyse (about 10 kilometers west of Ninove).

Captain Ross' troop arrived on the 31st of May and the 1st of June at Ostend, halted on the 2nd and moved on the 2nd of June to Brughes and the day after to Eeklo; on the 5th of June it marched through Ghent to Oostakker (about 8 kilometres north-east of Ghent), from there Ross moved on the 12th of June through Alost to Meldert (between Alost and Assche), from where he then moved to Perk, near Vilvoorde. Cf. Journal of captain Ross. In: Ross, H.D. Memoir of field-marshal sir H.D.Ross p.60

On the 12th of June, captain Beane's troop had arrived at Oostende and was from there ordered to Ghent.

Cf. Sir Augustus Frazer. In In: Sabine, E. (ed) - Letters of colonel Sir Augustus Frazer p.494, 502, 516, 519, 530, 533, 535

It was only on the 31st of May that the six troops of horse artillery were formally attached to the cavalry. Cf. Gurwood, lieutenant colonel (ed) - The general orders of field marshal the duke of Wellington p.375-376

There was a continuous flow of all sorts of troops on to the road leading from Ostend to Brugge. Cf. Staatscourant, newspaper, 3rd of May 1815.

⁵⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.288-294

⁶⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.295-297

⁶¹ WSD, Vol.X p.303-304

⁶² WSD, Vol.X p.311

⁶³ WSD, Vol.X p.311-312

⁶⁴ WD, Vol.XII p.394-396

⁶⁵ WSD, Vol.X p.311

⁶⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.277-280

⁶⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.313-315

⁶⁸ BL, Add.ms. 35.062 and 20.192 p.358

⁶⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.325

⁷⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.326-327

⁷¹ HL, WP nr.1.462

⁷² WD, Vol.XII p.403

⁷³ WSD, Vol.X p.736-740

⁷⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.303-304

⁷⁵ WSD, Vol.X p.336

⁷⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.338

⁷⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.337

⁷⁸ WSD, Vol.X p.344-345

⁷⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.348-349

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- ⁸⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.360-366
- ⁸¹ WSD, Vol.X p.367-368
- ⁸² 105.000 infantry, 25.000 cavalry, 15.000 artillery, 2400 engineers, 2000 gendarmerie and 6.000 guard. In: WSD, Vol.X p.373
- ⁸³ WSD, Vol.X p.373-374
- ⁸⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.379
- ⁸⁵ D, Vol.XII p.426
- ⁸⁶ SD, Vol.X p.386
- ⁸⁷ In: WSD, Vol.X p.387
- ⁸⁸ WSD, Vol.X, p.729-733
- ⁸⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.369
- ⁹⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.391-392
- ⁹¹ Von Müffling's report – dated 2nd June - of Brockhausen's discussion. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von – Vorgeschichte etc. p.316
- ⁹² Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Verrat p.370 From: KA, VI.D.119.II p.55
- ⁹³ WSD, Vol.X p.393
- ⁹⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.408
- ⁹⁵ Von Müffling to Von Gneisenau. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Die Vorgeschichte etc. p.313
The original came from the archive of Von Gneisenau in the chateau of Sommerschenburg, nr.A40
- ⁹⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.412-413
- ⁹⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.413
- ⁹⁸ Cf. l'Oracle, of the 3rd of June. Cf. www.1789-1815.com
- ⁹⁹ NA, nr.2.13.14.01 nr.8
- ¹⁰⁰ NA, nr.2.13.14.01 nr.8
- ¹⁰¹ MWB, 1846 p.22
- ¹⁰² Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang p.513

¹⁰³ Von Müffling to Von Gneisenau. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von Die Vorgeschichte etc. p.313
The original came from the archive of Von Gneisenau in the chateau of Sommerschenburg.

¹⁰⁴ GSA, VPH-HA, VI, nr.I nr.9 p.1-2 (from KA, VI.D.119.II p.83)

¹⁰⁵ WSD, Vol.X p.413

¹⁰⁶ Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.513

¹⁰⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.416

¹⁰⁸ WSD, Vol.X p.416

¹⁰⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.417

¹¹⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.417-418

¹¹¹ WSD, Vol.X p.421-422

¹¹² WSD, Vol.X p.422-423

¹¹³ WSD, Vol.X p.422-424

¹¹⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.425

¹¹⁵ WD, Vol.XII p.449

¹¹⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.426 Von Dörnberg claims in a later account that about 8 days before the war broke out, an French officer from the office of general Bertrand came to him to report that Napoleon would attack in about 8 to 10 days and that he would direct his attack between the armies of Blücher and Wellington. Yet, according to the reports available, this claim is unfounded.

In: Aus einem Manuskript etc. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Vorgeschichte etc. p.292

¹¹⁷ WD, Vol.XII p.453

¹¹⁸ A detailed report on the (insufficient) state of defence of this town was drawn up by general Van der Wijck for Constant Rebecque on the 4th of June. In: NA, 2.13.14.01. nr.7-8

¹¹⁹ Wellington to the prince of Orange, 7th of June 1815. In: WD, Vol.XII p.450-452
Von Müffling to Gneisenau, 5th of June 1815. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von – Vorgeschichte etc. p.323-324

¹²⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.428-429

¹²¹ WSD, Vol.X p.429-430

¹²² NA, 2.13.14,01 nr.7-8

¹²³ WSD, Vol.X p.432

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- ¹²⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.432-433
- ¹²⁵ Von Müffling to Von Gneisenau. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Die Vorgeschichte etc. p.327
In: GSA. VI.HA.NL.Gneisenau kt.23 nr.84
- ¹²⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.436
- ¹²⁷ WSD, Vol.X p.437
- ¹²⁸ WSD, Vol.X p.437
- ¹²⁹ Pécriaux, R. - La région du centre avant la bataille de Waterloo p.72-73 From: NA, Staatssecretarie, no.6568
- ¹³⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.437-438
- ¹³¹ NA, 2.13.14.01 nr.7-8
- ¹³² Cf. Oracle, 10th of June 1815. Cf. www.1789-1815.com
- ¹³³ Romberg, E. & A.Malet – Louis XVIII et les Cent jours etc. p.164-165
- ¹³⁴ Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang p.513
- ¹³⁵ Pflugk Harttung, J.von – Bundestruppen p.99
- ¹³⁶ Ollech, Von – Geschichte p.51
- ¹³⁷ Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.514
- ¹³⁸ WSD, Vol.X p.425
- ¹³⁹ GSA, VPH-HA, VI, nr.I nr.7 p.9 From: KA VLE.I.III
Von Lettow Vorbeck mentions just a few details of the said report. In: Napoleon's Untergang p.514
- ¹⁴⁰ WD, Vol.XII p.449
- ¹⁴¹ WD, Vol.XII p.453
- ¹⁴² Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.514
- ¹⁴³ Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.515
- ¹⁴⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.429-430
- ¹⁴⁵ Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.515
- ¹⁴⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.437

¹⁴⁷ Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.515 He cites from the report in the former Kriegsarchiv.

¹⁴⁸ MWB, 1846 p.22

¹⁴⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.437-438

¹⁵⁰ Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleon's Untergang Vol.III p.515

That day, a mission of a member of the 2nd Silesian Jäger Battalion nr.6 (brigade Von Steinmetz) from the outposts near Fontaine l'Evêque towards Beaumont resulted in the information that French camps could be seen in that direction. In: Otto, F.von - Geschichte des 2.Schlesischen Jäger Bataillons nr.6 p.77

¹⁵¹ Von Müffling to Von Gneisenau. In: GSA, VI.HA NL Gneisenau kt.23 p.84

Also in: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Die Vorgeschichte etc. p.327 nr.15

The original came from the archive of Von Gneisenau in the chateau of Sommerschenburg

¹⁵² WSD, Vol.X p.439

¹⁵³ The state reads:

Etat envoyé de Paris, 4 Juin 1815:

Supputations qu'on croit plus exacte

1st corps (d'Erlon), 25.000 – 20.000

2nd corps (Reille), 25.000 – 20.000

3rd corps (Vandamme) 15.000-10.000

4th corps (Gérard) 20.000-15.000

5th corps (Rapp) 20.000-15.000

6th corps (Lobau) 15.000-10.000

Imperial guard 20.000 – 15.000

Corps Lecourbe 8000-6000

Suchet 8000 – 4000

Brune (garrison at Marseille included) 6000-5000

Pyrenees 15.000-12.000

Hospitals and depots 50.000-50.000

Total: 227.000 – 182.000

In: WSD, Vol.X p.743

¹⁵⁴ 1st corps 25.000 (to the left) , 2nd corps 25.000 (in the centre), 3rd corps 15.000 (to the right), 4th corps 20.000 (at Metz), 5th corps 20.000 (on the Rhine, headquarters at Wissembourg), 6th corps 15.000 (at Laon), Imperial Guard 20.000, (to leave from Paris on the 5th June for Laon), corps of Lecourbe 8000 (around BÉfort and Altkirch), corps of Suchet 8000 (in the Savoie), corps of Brune (incl. the garrison at Marseille) 6000, corps at Bordeaux and the Pyrenees 15.000 and in the hospitals and depots 50.000. In: WSD, Vol.X p.449-451
And in: NA, 2.13.14.01 nr.7-8

¹⁵⁵ He told the prince of Orange the same. Cf. WD, Vol.XII p.458

¹⁵⁶ Pflugk Harttung, J.von – Vorgeschichte etc. p.327-329

Delbrück, H. - Das Leben etc. Vol.IV p.517-518

¹⁵⁷ Pflugk Harttung, J.von – Vorgeschichte etc. p.328-329

Delbrück, H. - Das Leben etc. Vol.IV p.517-518

¹⁵⁸ GSA, VPH-HA, VI – nr.VIII - copy files from Kriegsarchiv at Vienna. Nr.1815.VI.65

¹⁵⁹ WSD, Vol.X p.454-455

¹⁶⁰ WSD, Vol.X p.455

¹⁶¹ GSA, VPH-HA, VI – Copy of files from the Kriegsarchiv at Vienna, nr.1815.VI.65

¹⁶² Hofschroer, P. - 1815. The Waterloo campaign p.153, from Cathcart papers, folio C

¹⁶³ WSD, Vol.X p.455-456

¹⁶⁴ WSD, Vol.X p.456

¹⁶⁵ WSD, Vol.X p.457

¹⁶⁶ WSD, Vol.X p.463

¹⁶⁷ WD, Vol.XII p.462

This fits in with the statement given by Von Dörnberg about general Clinton telling him on the 14th of June that Wellington did not believe that Napoleon was concentrating his army and that he had arrived there. In: Aus einem Manuskript etc. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Die Vorgeschichte etc. p.292

¹⁶⁸ Wellington to earl Bathurst, 13th of June 1815. In: WD, Vol.XII p.462-463

¹⁶⁹ NA, 2.05.01 nr.772