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Allied Strategy in World War II: The Churchill Era, 1942-1943

DE LAMAR JENSEN

One of the disillusioning, though awakening, shocks which comes to students of recent history is the discovery, after staggering through mountains of patriotic oratory and propaganda, that the British and American allies in World War II were not quite so united in "marching ahead together in a noble brotherhood of arms" as is generally supposed. The wartime alliance of the major powers of Great Britain, the United States, and Soviet Russia was undoubtedly the most spectacular and effective military team ever thrown together in modern times. But it was neither a simple nor a natural combination. The differences in traditions, motives, philosophy, organization, and resources were enormous, and at times appeared insurmountable. Yet the common threat of Nazism was so great and so immediate that a working coalition—or more correctly, several working coalitions—eventually brought an allied victory and an end to one form of totalitarian dictatorship.

This working alliance among the three principal allies was not achieved by a single major compromise but by a constantly shifting set of compromises and adjustments which in the overall view resulted in British military strategy predominating in 1942 and 1943,¹ followed by Russo-American strategy in 1944 and 1945. It is the purpose of this and a subsequent article to critically examine the nature, justification, and results of these policies, and particularly the factors responsible for the dramatic shift in strategy which took place late in 1943.

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*This study is in two parts, the second of which will appear in the next issue of *B.Y.U. Studies* in an article entitled, "Tehran, the Turning-Point in Allied Strategy."

¹Or as General Wedemeyer more descriptively put it, "the virtuoso Churchill led the Anglo-American orchestra, although we furnished practically all of the instruments and most of the musicians." General Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!* (New York: Henry Holt, 1958), p. 170.

I.

When the military events of 1941 caused Britain, Russia, and the United States to become active military partners in the war against the Axis powers, the sharp divergence of their respective philosophies of warfare soon became apparent. The British and American views, in particular, reflected two very distinct traditions of offensive strategy, each with impressive precedents dating back not only to Clausewitz and Napoleon, but even to Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great.

The British belief, as might be expected from their worldwide interests and involvements, was that primary attention should be given to softening up the enemy through indirect attacks upon supply lines, communications, and weak spots, before a direct frontal assault should be risked. Strength should be distributed, according to this view, between several different targets, with emphasis being placed upon flexibility and expediency rather than upon the classical imperatives of mass and concentration. The most outspoken proponent of this "peripheral warfare" was the Prime Minister himself, Winston Churchill,² although the majority of the Chiefs of Staff were generally of the same opinion.³ The disastrous experience of World War I, where Britain suffered 200,000 casualties in a single day in the attempt to meet the Germans head-on at the Western Front, certainly gave support to this view.

The American military experience and psychology had been very different. Without the worldwide commitments and frequent involvement in military action which the British Empire required, the Americans' attitude toward war was that it should be fought wholeheartedly and ended quickly. This American conception of all-out war or all-out peace was foreign to the British, who for centuries had never known either. The U.S. approach meant massing as many men and as much equipment into the battle as fast as possible and striking directly at the heart of the enemy. It required a concentration of effort

²See his summary statement on strategy in Churchill, *The World Crisis* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1923), Vol. II, pp. 18-28; also Harvey A. de Weerd, "Churchill, Lloyd George Clemenceau: The Emergence of the Civilian," in Edward Mead Earle (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 287-305.

³See Arthur Bryant's, *The Turn of the Tide* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957) and *Victory in the West* (1959), based on the diaries of Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, *passim*.

and the adherence to a specific well-prepared plan. This philosophy affirms that the total manpower loss will be less than in a drawn-out peripheral war and that the conflict will be considerably shortened. The American strategy was closely akin to that of Germany, and the Russian too was related to it in many respects, as we shall subsequently see.

These were the opposing views which, after December 7, 1941, had to be reconciled into a working coalition.⁴ Prior to the American entry into the war, the military staffs of both countries had exchanged enough information and advice to be rather fully aware of the obstacles ahead, yet they had also reached substantial agreements as to the overall grand strategy and priority of theater operations.⁵ Both countries agreed that Hitler was the greatest immediate threat and that the safety of both Atlantic communities depended upon his defeat. When the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor, Churchill was fearful that the American reaction might be to turn full attention to the Pacific and leave Britain to face the European fortress alone. It was this fear, coupled with the apparent doom of Russia and the practical need to formulate concrete immediate plans, that sent Mr. Churchill speeding to the United States seven days after Pearl Harbor.

II.

The Arcadia Conference (22 Dec. 1941-14 Jan. 1942), as the first full-scale wartime meeting of the two powers was called,⁶ made some general decisions involving the overall conduct of the war, such as the reaffirmation of the priority

⁴A very fair and moderate description of the conflicting Anglo-American strategy in World War II can be seen in Hastings Lionel Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay* (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), pp. 248-52 *et passim*.

⁵See in particular Mark Skinner Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations. United States Army in World War II: The War Department*, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1950), pp. 367-410; Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-42. United States Army in World War II: The War Department*, Vol. III (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), pp. 32-62; and Louis Morton, "Germany First: The Basic Concept of Allied Strategy in World War II," in Kent Roberts Greenfield (ed.), *Command Decisions* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1960), pp. 11-47.

⁶See Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operation Division*, in *United States Army in World War II: The War Department*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1951), pp. 87-89; and Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning*, pp. 97-119.

of the European theater,⁷ the creation of a unified command,⁸ and the agreement that allied troops should launch some sort of major offensive against Germany in 1942. Beyond that, agreement was much more difficult to reach. When the two staffs moved from the realm of general pronouncements into the arena of specific plans of operation, their differences quickly came into focus. First the British presented their plan of operation, which included a naval blockade of Europe, strategic bombing of key cities and industries, and strengthening the ring around Germany, by "sustaining the Russian front, by arming and supporting Turkey, by increasing our strength in the Middle East, and by gaining possession of the whole North African coast." This was all to be followed by limited moves on the European continent itself in 1943, preferably from the Mediterranean into southern Europe or from Turkey into the Balkans; and finally, with its success guaranteed, an invasion of Germany.⁹

For their part, the American Chiefs of Staff could not accept the British plan and cautiously advanced their own belief that as soon as possible "we must come to grips with the enemy ground forces."

They agreed [reports Morison] that a tight blockade must be maintained, and that the sea lanes must be kept open But nobody could figure out how a succession of "hit and run" raids around the ring of Hitler's *Festung Europe*

⁷This was only reluctantly accepted by Admiral King, the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet (who three months later also became Chief of Naval Operations), and most of the naval staff who, especially after the humiliation of Pearl Harbor, were less than enthusiastic about maintaining only a holding action against Japan until Germany had been defeated. See Ernest J. King, *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1952), pp. 360-64, and Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1950), pp. 445-46, and cf. William Hardy McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict 1941-46*, Vol. III of *Survey of International Affairs, 1939-46*; ed. by Arnold Toynbee (London and New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, by Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 93 ff.

⁸This was a move considered vital by General Marshall, but which received stiff opposition and considerable modification before it was accepted. Cf. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 455-57, George C. Marshall, *The Winning of the War in Europe and the Pacific: Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army July 1, 1943 to June 30, 1945, to the Secretary of War* [Hereafter cited, *Biennial Report*] (New York: War Department by Simon and Schuster, 1945), p. 8; and Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper, 1947), pp. 413-15.

⁹Memo, Br CsofS (Amer CsofS), 22 Dec 41, sub: ABC 337 ARCADIA (24 Dec 41), 2, as detailed in Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning*, p. 101.

could bring victory any nearer. To us this seemed a strategy of weakness: something to be done to keep your spirits up when you could do nothing better. The American idea was to begin immediate planning and preparing for a massive assault aimed at the heart of Germany. This, incidentally, had been the American strategy in World War I, at a time when many British leaders preferred to get at Germany by some "back door."¹⁰

From Churchill's point of view the first major joint Anglo-American operation should be the invasion and occupation of French North Africa. General Marshall and his aides were emphatically opposed to such an obvious diversion of their forces away from what they considered the primary goal—the assault on Hitler's Europe.¹¹ But since no American counter-plan had as yet been prepared, Marshall was happy to have the conference adjourn without making any more binding commitment than the agreement that a North African operation would be studied logistically.

For the next two years Anglo-American relations were dominated by the issue of a Mediterranean vs. a European concentration of allied power, during which time the Prime Minister succeeded—through diplomacy, cajolery, and ultimatum—in making his strategy prevail.¹² In February and

¹⁰Samuel Eliot Morison, *Strategy and Compromise* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), p. 24.

¹¹General Arnold was among the American opponents of Churchill's African strategy. "The way to win the war," he insisted, "is to hit Germany where it hurts most, where she is the strongest—right across the Channel," H. H. Arnold. *Global Mission* (New York: Harper, 1949), p. 303. Secretary of War Stimson and others were equally strong in their opposition to the British plan. See Stimson's confidential letter to the President, 27 March 1942, in *On Active Service*, pp. 417-18.

¹²Churchill's ability to put teeth into his convictions soon became well-known to the Americans who negotiated with him. When Marshall, King, and Hopkins flew to London in July they informally talked with some of the British General Staff before calling upon Churchill at Chequers, and reaped, as a result, the now notorious tongue-lashing, described by Captain Butcher in the following words: "The PM [Prime Minister] had raised holy hell with Harry because the precise protocol of calling upon the Prime Minister first had for some reason not been followed, . . . the PM had declared in most vigorous language, as he strode up and down the room at Chequers, that he was the man to see first, that he was the man America should deal with and that the British Army-Navy staffs were under his command. And to emphasize his authority, he read from a British book of war laws, and . . . as he read each page, tore it from the book and threw it on the floor!" Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aid to General Eisenhower, 1942-1945*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1946), pp. 24-25. Hopkins described the event this way: "The Prime Minister threw the British Constitution at me with some vehemence . . . Winston is his old self and full of battle." Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 607.

March General Marshall and the American Joint Chiefs of Staff completed, with the War Plans Division (after March changed to the Operations Division and headed by General Eisenhower), their plan of attack against Germany. Briefly, this *Marshall Memorandum*, as the operational plan was popularly called, proposed a rapid and concentrated build-up of men and materiel in England (Operation BOLERO) for the purpose of a full-scale cross-channel invasion in the spring of 1943 (Operation ROUNDUP). This was to be supplemented by a previous probing attack in western France in September 1942 (Operation SLEDGEHAMMER) involving American as well as British troops. By this plan the allies would be able to strike at the heart of Germany much sooner and more effectively than if they followed Churchill's North African approach to Europe via the rugged mountains of either Italy or the Balkans.¹³ President Roosevelt was generally in agreement with the philosophy of his military advisers, but for some months there were also vigorous claims made by various groups and individuals for alternative operations, the most persistent on the American side being for the Pacific theater. By May, however, the president was convinced that the Marshall strategy was the one to pursue. Yet above all, he insisted, American forces must engage the German enemy in Europe before the year ended. "I regard it as essential," he affirmed in a strongly worded statement to his advisers, "that active operations be conducted in 1942."¹⁴ By then the *Wehrmacht* had launched its spring offensive on the Russian front, and it was not at all certain that it could be stopped. Stalin was desperately calling for a second front in Europe.

In the meantime, hopes for coordinating the American strategy with the British were growing slimmer. Early in April

¹³Marshall, *Biennial Report* (Report on the Army), 1 July 1941-30 June 1943 (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal, 1943), pp. 114-20; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948), pp. 42-47; Marshall Memorandum, 2 April 1942: Operations in Western Europe, Exec. 1, OPD Files, Dept. of the Army. The operational designations were not given to the American plan until later: the memorandum Marshall presented to Churchill contained the essence of these three "operations" without their code names; See Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, Vol. IV of *The Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), pp. 314-16. Also *Wedemeyer Reports*, pp. 97-98, 132-38, Stimson, *On Active Service*, pp. 416-20, and from the opposite point of view, Field Marshall Sir Alan Brooke in Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, pp. 277-80.

¹⁴Memo, F.D.R. for SW, CofS, Arnold, SN, King, and Hopkins, 6 May 42, WDCSA 31 (SS), as quoted in Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning*, pp. 221-22.

General Marshall, accompanied by Wedemeyer and Chaney, and the president's chief civilian aide, Harry Hopkins, travelled to London to present the American plan to the Prime Minister and his Chiefs of Staff. "I recall vividly," General Wedemeyer later reported, "this initial joust with the British concerning definitive plans for a cross-channel operation, for it was the forerunner of many discussions, with the Americans always keeping uppermost in mind the basic idea of concentrating and making a decisive effort against the heartland of the enemy. The British, on the other hand, kept returning to a concept of scatterization or periphery-pecking, with a view to wearing down the enemy, weakening him to a point which would permit almost unimpeded or undisputed invasion of Fortress Europe by our forces."¹⁵ The Mission eventually seemed to be a success, though, ending in a tentative British acceptance of the *Marshall Memorandum*, yet skeptical of the means to carry it out.¹⁶

But the appearance of solidarity behind the BOLERO/ROUNDUP plan was shortlived. When General Eisenhower, formerly chief of the U.S. Operations Division and now Commander of the European theater of Operations, arrived in Britain in June, he found that little if anything had been done there to expedite the cross-channel assault,¹⁷ and learned furthermore that numerous other operations such as a Pas-de-Calais crossing, or a Norway invasion, were being considered instead. Soon Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations, was on his way to Washington to soften up the American president and the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the forthcoming announcement by Churchill that Operation SLEDGEHAMMER, at least, would have to be abandoned.

The sudden activity of General Rommel in Northeast Africa made consideration of a joint Mediterranean offensive imperative. In mid-June Churchill himself arrived at Hyde Park to discuss with the President the advantages of a North African operation in 1942 (which came to be known as

¹⁵*Wedemeyer Reports*, p. 105. "As 'Marshall's planner,' " Wedemeyer relates, "and as a personal believer in the principle of going for the enemy's jugular vein, I was continually called upon to challenge British periphery-pecking concepts of strategy." *Ibid.*, 132. Cf. Marshall, *Winning of the War in Europe and the Pacific. Biennial Reports*, 1943-45, p. 8.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 119. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 634-38.

¹⁷Eisenhower, *Crusade*, pp. 53-4. Trumbull Higgins, *Winston Churchill and the Second Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 136.

TORCH). Churchill, the master diplomat, was at his best as he expounded the merits and urgency of the operation.¹⁸ The inadequacy of landing-craft especially, he insisted, although there were many additional drawbacks, in effect eliminated any possibility of a cross-channel attack in 1942. Knowing how strongly Roosevelt felt about launching a major operation somewhere before the year had ended, and preferably before the general election in November, Churchill played persuasively upon the Mediterranean theme. The fall of Tobruk to Rommel on 21 June could scarcely have been better timed to give validity and urgency to the Prime Minister's words if it had been planned by the Combined Chiefs themselves.

The next few weeks were crucial as proposals and counter proposals filled the air on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁹ In the end, a combination of Roosevelt's anxiety to place American forces in action against Germany in 1942 and Churchill's vigorous championing of Operation TORCH carried the day. Roosevelt's capitulation to Churchill is anticipated in his informal instructions of July 15 to General Marshall prior to the latter's departure for London:

Even though we must reluctantly agree to no SLEDGEHAMMER in 1942, I still think we should press forward vigorously for the 1943 enterprise. I see nothing in the message from England to indicate any luke-warmness on their part for the 1943 enterprise. I am somewhat disturbed about this readiness to give up 1942. Will they also give up 1943?

But my main point is that I do not believe we can wait until 1943 to strike at Germany. If we cannot strike at SLEDGEHAMMER, then we must take the second best—and that is not the Pacific. There we are conducting a suc-

¹⁸On the military conclusions of this meeting see Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 383-84; and King, *A Naval Record*, pp. 395-96. The best defense of the American plan was presented in a brief to the President by Secretary of War Stimson on 19 June. See Stimson, *On Active Service*, pp. 420-23.

¹⁹See some of Churchill's communications to the President, in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 434-41. According to Stimson, General Marshall was so upset at the reopening of discussions that for a time at least, he almost favored shifting American priority to the Pacific. "I found Marshall very stirred up and emphatic over it. He is very naturally tired of these constant decisions which do not stay made. This is the third time this question will have been brought up by the persistent British and he proposed a showdown which I cordially endorsed. As the British won't go through with what they agreed to, we will turn our backs on them and take up the war with Japan." Diary entry of 10 July 1942, Stimson, *On Active Service*, p. 424. Stimson subsequently explains that neither of them really intended to do this; it was rather their feelings about what *ought* to be done to bluff the English into agreement with BOLERO. Cf. Marshall, *Biennial Reports, 1943-1945*, p. 9.

cessful holding war. Troops and air alone will not be decisive at once—it requires the increasing strength of our Navy—which takes time.

If SLEDGEHAMMER cannot be launched then I wish a determination made while you are in London as to a specific and definite theatre where our ground and sea forces can operate against the German ground forces in 1942. The theatres to be considered are North Africa and the Middle East.²⁰

By the end of July SLEDGEHAMMER had been scrapped in favor of a North African campaign and, although he consoled the Americans that ROUNDUP would not be affected, Churchill knew very well that any full-scale operation in North Africa would delay a cross-channel invasion at least six months, and perhaps much longer. The Prime Minister was right. As the commitment of men and equipment to the Mediterranean theater increased during the next year, BOLERO and ROUNDUP were both sacrificed on the North African altar.

Meanwhile, Russia was stepping up her appeals for the opening of a second front in Western Europe and by late spring had been given some reason to believe that it was forthcoming. In the course of conversations with Mr. V. M. Molotov in Washington at the end of May and beginning of June, "full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe in 1942," according to the official U.S. announcement.²¹ Churchill partially countermanded this assurance a few days later, however, when Molotov stopped at London on his return to Russia.²² But still, breaking the news to Stalin now, particularly after the recent conclusion of an alliance treaty between the Soviet Union and Great Britain, would not be an easy task.

Early in August, Churchill flew to Moscow to present the

²⁰From verbatim notes of the conversation taken down by Harry Hopkins, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 602. On the Marshall-King-Hopkins talks in London see *Ibid.*, pp. 602-12; King, *A Naval Record*, pp. 399-409; Butcher, *My Three Years*, pp. 25-33; and from the opposite side, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 441-48; and Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, pp. 341-47.

²¹Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961), Vol. II, pp. 559-61, 569-70, 575-77, and 582-83, [hereafter cited *Dipl. Papers, 1942*] and particularly the White House Press Release of 11 June, pp. 593-94. Cf. also, Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, p. 314.

²²Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 341-42. cf. Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London: H.M.S.O., 1962), p. 197.

new strategic plan to the Russian ruler and his military staff. Stalin's reception of the news was somewhat less than cordial. For two days the two were locked in heated debate as Stalin accused the Prime Minister of reneging on the Anglo-American promise to open a second front in Europe in 1942.²³ Churchill denied that he had made any such promise, and Stalin countered that the British army was afraid to engage the enemy.²⁴ In the end it seemed that the now notorious Churchillian salesmanship had won out. In spite of continued skepticism on the part of the Russian military heads, Stalin appeared satisfied with the possibilities of the new alternative in North Africa,²⁵ and, at a farewell banquet in Churchill's honor, the Premier himself was reported to have been enthusiastically summarizing the advantages of the plan to his subordinates. Wendell Wilkie cancelled out some of Churchill's success, however, by informing Stalin, during Wilkie's visit to Moscow in September 1942, that "the United States was in favor of a second front but Great Britain was not."²⁶ And in an *Izvestia* press interview, published 27 September, Wilkie further emphasized the basic American-Soviet agreement by saying, "I asked myself what can be the most effective method of winning our war by helping our heroic Russian ally. There was only one answer for me—to establish together with Great Britain a real second front in Europe and within the shortest time our military leaders will approve. Perhaps the American public will have to prod them a little."²⁷

III.

For the next fifteen months the British strategy continued to prevail in spite of renewed Russian demands for a "legitimate" second front and increasing American impatience and despair over the diversion of so large a quantity of men and equipment away from what they still held to be their primary objective. According to estimates following the North African landings in November, the German and Italian forces were to be elimi-

²³*Aide-Mémoire* from Stalin to Churchill and Harriman, *Dipl. Papers*, 1942, p. 621.

²⁴Harriman to Roosevelt, 14 August 1942, *Ibid.*; also Churchill, *Hinge of Fate*, pp. 478-80. Cf. Churchill's report of the meeting to General Clark in Mark Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Harper, 1950), pp. 48-49.

²⁵Churchill, *Hinge of Fate*, pp. 481-83.

²⁶*Dipl. Papers*, 1942, p. 639.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 647.

nated from North Africa inside of two months.²⁸ These hopes soon proved to be too sanguine, but while they were still held the chiefs of the two allied powers met again to determine the next step in "closing the ring."

The Casablanca Conference (14-25 January 1943) was another Churchillian victory in its decision to keep the committed troops in the Mediterranean, now that they were there, until further favorable action could be carried out.²⁹ Churchill's greatest fear in December had been that with the cancellation of SLEDGEHAMMER and the indefinite postponement of BOLERO and ROUNDUP the United States might elect to alter its original strategy and decide instead to concentrate on Japan in the Pacific until Britain had finished with its "playing around" in the Mediterranean. He therefore assured Roosevelt, Marshall, and Eisenhower that the cross-channel invasion had not been cancelled and that the arms build-up in England would continue at top speed. But in the meantime, he reasoned, the Mediterranean forces ought not be allowed to sit idle; they should be used in an invasion of Sicily since the allied occupation of that island would be of inestimable value to their cause.³⁰ Roosevelt hoped for the negotiating help of the Russians at Casablanca, and particularly of Stalin himself, who the President knew would also oppose any further delay of the actual European second front.³¹ Churchill emphatically opposed the idea of a Big Three conference, but was saved the embarrassment of a riff with Roosevelt by Stalin's refusal to attend the meeting.³²

Churchill's victory at Casablanca was almost complete. It now seems obvious that he never intended to return any of the Mediterranean troops to England for a cross-channel assault,

²⁸William D. Leahy, *I Was There, The Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time* (New York & London: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 166; Sherwood, *Roose. and Hop.*, p. 654.

²⁹See especially the diary entries of Sir Alan Brooke in Bryant *Turn of the Tide*, pp. 439-59, and Churchill, *Hinge of Fate*, pp. 674-95.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 692-93.

³¹Roosevelt to Stalin, 2 December 1942, transmitted by Ambassador Harderson, *Dipl. Papers, 1942*, pp. 665-66. Cf. U.S.S.R.: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the Presidents of the U.S.A. and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957), Vol. II, p. 42. [hereafter cited U.S.S.R. *Correspondence*].

³²Stalin's negative reply to Roosevelt's invitation was delivered by Molotov the following day. *Ibid.*, p. 43, and *Dipl. Papers, 1942*, p.666.

but such a disclosure at the time would surely have caused the Americans to withdraw their forces as soon as the campaign then raging in Tunisia was finished. Instead, the Prime Minister proposed only the invasion and occupation of Sicily, saying nothing of Italy itself until May, when planning for the Sicilian operation was nearing completion, and even then he said nothing of a continued operation into northern Italy.³³ The only significant concession to American demands was his agreement to begin a series of offensives in the south Pacific and in Burma against the Japanese.³⁴

Stalin received the news of the decisions at Casablanca with grave misgivings and disappointment as he again appealed to both Churchill and Roosevelt for an immediate second front.³⁵ On March 15 Stalin wrote to Churchill:

It appears from your communication that Anglo-American operations in North Africa are not being hastened, but are, in fact, being postponed till the end of April. . . . Meanwhile, Germany has succeeded in moving from the West 36 divisions, including six armoured ones, to be used against Soviet troops. . . . I still regard the opening of a second front in France as the important thing. . . . I have studied the arguments you set out in paragraphs 8, 9, and 10 as indicative of the difficulties of Anglo-American operations in Europe. I grant the difficulties. Nevertheless, I think I must give a most emphatic warning, in the interest of our common cause, of the grave danger with which further delay in opening a second front in France is fraught. For this reason the vagueness of your statements about contemplated Anglo-American offensive across the Channel causes apprehension which I cannot conceal from you.³⁶

But now the Western Allies were becoming seriously concerned over the Tunisian campaign, which in the final phase had become unexpectedly difficult. Another five months were still to pass before it would be successfully concluded.

³³Eisenhower, *Crusade*, p. 167; Marshall, *Biennial Report*, 1943-1945. pp. 9-11.

³⁴Ismay, *Memoirs*, p. 287. The deployment of U.S. troops in the spring of 1943 vividly indicates the degree to which Churchill's strategy still prevailed at that date. Whereas TORCH originally called for 185,000 U.S. soldiers in North Africa, there were by then 295,000 engaged there, while at the same time instead of the 250,000 Americans called for in Britain there were only 70,000. *Wedemeyer Reports*, pp. 212-13.

³⁵U.S.S.R. *Correspondence*, Vol. I, pp. 94-96.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 105-106. Cf. Stalin's letters of 16 February and 16 March to Mr. Roosevelt, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 55-56, 58-59.

In the middle of May 1943 Churchill again met with Roosevelt in Washington at the important Trident Conference, for the purpose of working out strategy for the summer and fall, particularly involving the North African forces. The essence of Churchill's proposals were (1) the formal cancellation of Operation ROUNDUP on the grounds of insufficient Anglo-American strength in England and lack of landing craft (as well as the late date), (2) the immediate invasion of southern Italy with the North African troops as soon as the Sicilian campaign was completed, (3) and finally the attempt to bring Turkey into the Mediterranean war on the side of the allies.³⁷ Churchill, however, reluctantly agreed to begin preparations for a new cross-channel offensive in the spring of 1944 or later (Operation OVERLORD),³⁸ but insisted—on the boldly declared assumption that Italy could be knocked out of the war by the end of summer—that for the immediate future the Mediterranean remained the principal objective.³⁹ Sir Alan Brooke probably expressed Churchill's sentiments when he told Eisenhower that he would prefer eliminating the cross-channel project entirely.⁴⁰

Before the Sicilian venture was completed Churchill had succeeded, by the astute use of pressures and appeals to the Mediterranean commanders, in winning tacit acceptance of his

³⁷Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 784-811 *et passim*, esp. pp. 808-11; Marshall, *Biennial Report, 1943-45*, pp. 10-11; and Ismay, *Memoirs*, pp. 296-98. Also cf. Brooke, in Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, pp. 502-16, with Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports*, pp. 228-34, and Eisenhower, *Crusade*, pp. 166-67.

³⁸Lt.-General Sir Frederick Morgan was put in charge of planning the operation. See Morgan, *Overture to Overlord* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1950); also Leahy, *I Was There*, pp. 158-62; and Gordon A. Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, in *United States Army in World War II: The European Theatre of Operations*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1951), pp. 46-82. This had actually been decided upon at Casablanca, but progress was still slow. By July the outline plan was ready for presentation to the Combined Chiefs and in August it was approved. At the Quebec Conference detailed tactical planning was initiated. *Eisenhower's Own Story of the War* (New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1946), p. 1.

³⁹Churchill made enough trouble at this conference that his own Chief of the Imperial General Staff became rather exasperated: "And Winston," wrote Brooke in his diary, "Thinks one thing at one moment and another the next moment. At times the war may be won by bombing . . . At others our main effort must be in the Mediterranean directed against Italy or the Balkans alternately, with sporadic desires to invade Norway and 'roll up the map in the opposite direction Hitler did.' But more often than all he wants to carry out all operations simultaneously, irrespective of shortage of shipping. . . . There are times when he drives me to desperation." Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p. 513.

⁴⁰Eisenhower, *Crusade*, p. 167.

plan to invade southern Italy and move rapidly up the peninsula to Rome. The inference then was that after the fall of Italy the Mediterranean forces could be redeployed to assist in the invasion of France. This was in harmony with General Marshall's determination "to avoid the creation in Italy of a vacuum into which the resources of the cross-channel operation would be dissipated."⁴¹ It soon became apparent, however, that the Prime Minister had no intention of removing the men from the Mediterranean, but planned instead to use them in an invasion of the Balkans through Yugoslavia, the culmination of his cherished "soft underbelly" approach to Europe.⁴²

Thus through the summer and fall of 1943 Churchill's Mediterranean strategy was continued, though not without strong opposition from American planners and commanders who could see, by the time of the next major conference of the allies at Quebec (Quadrant Conference), in August, the very real possibility of a cancellation or postponement of the spring 1944 cross-channel offensive.⁴³ Operation OVERLORD was given first priority over future Mediterranean projects at the Quadrant Conference,⁴⁴ but with the slowing progress in Italy after the initial landings, Marshall feared that Churchill would use this situation to further delay OVERLORD. Therefore the American planners became more adamant in their insistence that more troops be released from Italy to take part in the invasion of France. It was also decided by Roosevelt and Churchill that the entire cross-channel operation should be commanded by an American general rather than a British.⁴⁵

⁴¹Marshall, *Biennial Report, 1943-45*, p. 11.

⁴²*Wedemeyer Reports*, pp. 228-34; Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), Vol. II, p. 1231. Ralph Ingersoll asserts that the decision to continue northward up the Italian boot was made solely by Churchill without consultation or conference. Ingersoll, *Top Secret* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946), p. 61.

⁴³Eisenhower, *Crusade*, p. 168. *Wedemeyer Reports*, pp. 235-43.

⁴⁴Ismay, *Memoirs*, p. 310; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, pp. 83-100; John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V, August 1943-September 1944. *History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Military Series*, ed. by J. R. M. Butler (London: H.M.S.O., 1956), pp. 8-10.

⁴⁵Stimson, *On Active Service*. In reference to the British attitude toward the second front, Stimson reported to the President: "Though they have rendered lip service to the operation, their hearts are not in it and it will require more independence, more faith, and more vigor than it is reasonable to expect we can find in any British commander to overcome the natural difficulties of such an operation carried on in such an atmosphere of his government." p. 436.

During September, and at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in October,⁴⁶ Churchill put up further arguments in favor of an extended operation in Italy north of Rome (which was still much further away from grasp than even the most pessimistic had anticipated) and the possible use of these same troops across the Adriatic.⁴⁷ The deadlock over this point of Mediterranean vs. European strategy was still unbroken when the three heads of state met together at Tehran on November 27, 1943, for their first, and most crucial, conference.

⁴⁶See *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. IX, No. 226 (23 October 1943), p. 271, No. 228 (6 November), pp. 307-11, No. 229 (13 November), p. 319, and esp. No. 230 (20 November), pp. 341-45.

⁴⁷Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, pp. 284-99; Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. II, pp. 1274-91; General John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance* (New York: Viking Press, 1947), pp. 13-26; Herbert Feis, *Churchill Roosevelt Stalin: The War They Waged, the Peace they Sought* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 223-34 and especially Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, pp. 53-121.