

**CHAPTER I**  
***The Roots of Strategy***  
***The Common Ground***

**OVERLORD, the cross-Channel attack which hit the German occupied coast of Normandy on 6 June 1944, was one of the last and by far the biggest of the series of amphibious operations by which the United States and the British Empire came to grips with the German-Italian-Japanese Axis in the course of World War II. But it was more than just another attack. It was the supreme effort of the Western Allies in Europe—the consummation of the grand design to defeat Germany by striking directly at the heart of Hitler's Reich. One of the last attacks, it was the fruition of some of the first strategic ideas.**

**The principles that eventually shaped OVERLORD were developed early but their application was discontinuous, interrupted by diffuse experimentation and improvisation. Neither ideas nor planning can be traced along a single line from a clear beginning to the ultimate action. OVERLORD was an Allied project. British and American planners worked together, but they also worked separately, particularly in the early years of the war. Sometimes their efforts paralleled each other; sometimes they were at cross-purposes. Within both the American and the British military establishments, furthermore, divergent opinions struggled for acceptance. The whole story of planning and preparing the cross-Channel attack is thus many stories which can be told only in terms of the planners and directors concerned, and the pragmatic organizations within which they worked.**

**At least a year and a half before the United States was drawn into the war, the groundwork for possible Anglo-American military collaboration against the Axis was being laid. The Navy Department took the lead in the summer of 1940 in establishing a permanent observer in London (Rear Adm. Robert L. Ghormley) whose job was specifically to discuss arrangements for naval co-operation in case the United States came into the war, and generally to provide a channel for the interchange of naval information between the two countries. Army observers also traveled to London during 1940 on special missions, but the War Department did not set up a permanent liaison body until the spring of 1941. At that time Maj. Gen. James E. Chaney, a veteran of twenty-four years' experience in the Air Corps, was sent to London as a Special Army Observer directly responsible to Gen. George C. Marshall, the U. S. Army Chief of Staff. General Chaney's headquarters became known as SPOBS (Special Observers). Admiral Ghormley's group at the same time was reconstituted and he was designated Special Naval Observer, reporting directly to Admiral Harold R. Stark, the U. S. Chief of Naval Operations.**

The establishment of Chaney's and Ghormley's groups stemmed from agreements with the British in early 1941 to exchange military missions in order to insure continuous co-ordination of ideas and techniques. The British, as a result of these agreements, set up in Washington the Joint Staff Mission, representing the British Chiefs of Staff. Heads of the Joint Staff Mission were co-ordinate representatives of each of the three service chiefs. Jointly the mission was responsible to the British Chiefs of Staff Committee as a whole. Originally the United States intended to establish a similar joint mission. But in the first place the United States had at that time no system of joint direction comparable to the British Chiefs of Staff. In the second place it was considered that a formally constituted military mission might lead to political commitments which, in view of U. S. neutrality, the government could not accept.

The co-ordination provided by the interchange of information through U. S. observers and the British mission was supplemented during 1941 by two formal Anglo-American military conferences. The first was held in Washington between January and March; the second took place in August on shipboard in the Atlantic. At both conferences principles of combined strategy in Europe were discussed and tentative agreements reached on the policy that would govern combined conduct of the war when and if the United States became Great Britain's ally. The agreement known as ABC-1, which was arrived at in the course of the first of these meetings, was especially important. Although its decisions were not binding on either nation and were not officially recognized by President Roosevelt, they were nevertheless accepted by the War and Navy Departments as a basis for planning in the event of U. S. participation in the war.

The observer and military mission period came to an abrupt end in December 1941 after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and Germany declared war on the United States. In January 1942 Anglo-American alliance became a fact and the British Chiefs of Staff came to Washington to reaffirm earlier informal agreements on combined strategy and to plan the combined conduct of the war. Their most important achievement was the establishment of permanent machinery for collaboration: the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The Combined Chiefs of Staff were defined as consisting of the British Chiefs of Staff or their representatives in Washington (the Joint Staff Mission) and the United States opposite numbers. Their duties as finally approved were to formulate and execute, under the direction of the heads of the United Nations, policies and plans concerning the strategic conduct of the war, the broad program of war requirements, the allocation of munitions, and the requirements for transportation.

The curious definition of the Combined Chiefs was compelled by the fact that there was no organization of United States Chiefs of Staff at that time equivalent to the British Chiefs of Staff Committee. It was primarily to

provide "opposite numbers" to the British for membership in the combined organization that the U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff came into being. Initially they consisted of Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, Lt. Gen. Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces and Deputy Chief of Staff for Air, Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, and Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief of the U. S. Fleet. In March 1942, the offices held by Stark and King were combined under King. Stark was sent to London as Commander of U. S. Naval Forces in Europe. The three Joint Chiefs then corresponded to the British organization, which in 1942 included Gen. Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, Chief of the Air Staff. The British Chiefs, however, met with the Americans only at periodic military-political conferences. In the interim they were represented on the permanent combined body in Washington by the Joint Staff Mission, the original members of which were Lt. Gen. Sir Colville Wemyss, Admiral Sir Charles Little, and Air Marshal A. T. Harris. In addition to the three service members of the mission, Field Marshal Sir John Dill sat as a member of the Combined Chiefs of Staff representing the Prime Minister, Winston S. Churchill, in his capacity as Minister of Defence. In July 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff also acquired a fourth member in Admiral William D. Leahy, appointed Chief of Staff to President Roosevelt in his capacity as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy.

The mechanics of joint and combined direction of the Allied war effort developed very slowly although most of the machinery was established in early 1942. Just as the Joint Chiefs of Staff themselves were formed to parallel the existing British organization, so they established their principal subordinate agency, the Joint Planning Staff, along the lines developed by the British. The U. S. Joint Planning Staff together with the British Joint Planners constituted the Combined Staff Planners, responsible to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. In theory, plans and studies of U. S. policy and strategy were to come up through joint committees to be coordinated by the Joint Planners and then submitted for approval to the Joint Chiefs. If approved, they became the official U. S. view to be placed before the Combined Chiefs for acceptance as Allied policy. British studies would develop along parallel lines. In case of important discrepancies between American and British views, the problem might be referred by the Combined Chiefs to their planning staff for adjustment. The Combined Planners, being more of a coordinating than a working body, seldom initiated planning papers.

By 1943 the practice of joint and combined planning closely approximated the theory. But in early 1942 most actual planning on the U. S. side was done in the War and Navy Departments and co-ordination between the services was effected largely outside the formally established joint

channels. As far as the European war was concerned, the War Department and particularly the Operations Division took the initiative in planning and General Marshall assumed personal responsibility for establishing and defending the U. S. view.

On the British side, the joint system had been worked out and was fully operative in 1942. The British Joint Planners directly responsible to the British Chiefs of Staff were throughout the war the chief planning body concerned with developing British strategy. Much of the operational planning, however, was done by various field commands. Especially important was the Combined Operations Headquarters, which was headed after September 1941 by Commodore Lord Louis Mountbatten. At the time that Mountbatten became chief, Combined Operations was charged with responsibility for planning and executing raids against the Continent. It was also primarily concerned with all the technical problems of amphibious operations, and in particular with the development of landing craft. In January 1942 Gen. Sir Bernard Paget, commander of the British Home Forces (the highest army field command in England), was brought into the planning picture by a directive from the Chiefs of Staff to study a cross-Channel attack plan written by the British Joint Planners. Paget was asked to study this plan in consultation with the designate Naval and Air Force Commanders-in-Chief (Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay and Air Marshal Sholto Douglas respectively). Beginning their association informally these three became in the course of the first six months of 1942 the nucleus of a formal planning body, the Combined Commanders. Later Mountbatten was officially added to their number and the Commanding General of U. S. Forces in the European Theater was informally included among them. The Combined Commanders held their first meeting in May 1942 and thereafter until early 1943 acted as the chief British planning agency concerned with the development of plans for a cross-Channel attack.

To sum up, the informal military rapprochement between the United States and Great Britain which began in 1940 culminated in January 1942 with the formation of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The Combined Chiefs were a coordinating agency at a very high level. The detailed work, not only of drawing up tactical plans but of outlining strategy, studying requirements, and testing principles against resources, was done very largely by separate U. S. and British bodies. At the strategy level, the most important in 1942 were the Joint Planning Staff and the Joint Planners for the Americans and the British respectively. On the other hand, the agencies most directly concerned with drawing up plans for European operations in 1942 were, in the United States, the Operations Division of the War Department, and, in England, the Combined Commanders. Finally, over and above all these formally constituted planning and directing bodies stood President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill,

**the ultimately responsible persons for all military decisions, who exerted a direct and vital influence on planning that cut athwart all the formal channels of co-operation.**

**In the period before the United States entered the war, the planning of offensive operations against Germany was naturally desultory and inconclusive. In view of British weakness and aloneness on the edge of Hitler's Europe, and in view of America's jealously preserved isolation, the interesting thing is that planning took place at all. The notion of a British attack across the Channel could have had little reality and no urgency during the days when the German armies were in the flood tide of their initial victories on the Continent. Yet the British Joint Planners before the end of 1941 had drawn up an invasion plan. They called it ROUNDUP, a name suitably reflecting the concept of an operation in the final phase of the war against only token resistance. ROUNDUP was a plan for an operation with very small resources and bore little relation to the attack against Normandy in 1944. Nevertheless it was a beginning and some of its ideas persisted far into the OVERLORD planning period.**

**ROUNDUP was planned to exploit German deterioration. As a condition for the invasion, it was assumed that the Germans had abandoned hope for victory, and were withdrawing their occupation forces to concentrate on the defense of the Reich. The purpose of ROUNDUP was to disrupt that orderly withdrawal. British forces would assault west and east of Le Havre on beaches from Deauville to Dieppe. The object would be initially to dominate an area between Calais and the Seine 75 to 100 miles deep. The invasion forces would then push north, take Antwerp and proceed into Germany across the Meuse River north of Liege. Total forces to be used were 6 1/3 infantry divisions, 6 armored divisions, 6 army tank brigades, and supporting troops. Preliminary bombardment to soften the coast defenses would require three naval vessels, including one capita ship. The diffuse, small-scale landings and the tiny dimensions of the total force at once underlined the basic condition of enemy weakness set for the operations, and reflected the military poverty of the British at the time.**

**The 1941 ROUNDUP was not taken very seriously and was never introduced officially into combined discussions. The immediate concern of both Americans and British was necessarily with basic strategic principles in the light of which long- range planning and production could be undertaken. The first Allied discussions of strategy took place when the war was still confined to Europe. It was clear, however, that Japan might at any time enter the conflict. In that event, if the United States was drawn into war with all three Axis members Allied military resources would be scattered and Allied strategy immensely complicated. A decision was urgently required as to where U. S. and British forces should first be concentrated. That decision was taken at the conference in early 1941**

when the U. S. War and Navy Departments agreed with the British to defeat Germany first while remaining on the strategic defensive in the Pacific. For Great Britain geography made the choice obligatory. American concurrence was dictated by reasons less obvious but scarcely less compelling. Germany was considered the dominant Axis member whose defeat would greatly weaken the war-making power of Japan. Only against Germany could the offensive power of both the United States and Great Britain be concentrated without uncovering the British Isles. Finally, the United States, desperately short of shipping, could not at first afford long lines of communication. "Time and space factors," wrote General Marshall in reviewing the early years of the war, "dictated our strategy to a considerable degree. To land and maintain American forces in Australia required more than twice the ship tonnage for similar American forces in Europe or North Africa." The decision to take the offensive first against Germany was reaffirmed at the ARCADIA Conference in Washington on 31 December 1941 after the United States entered the war. It was reaffirmed without question despite the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

In the very broadest sense, the groundwork for OVERLORD was thus laid. The early combined discussions tried further to explore ways and means of getting at Germany. But offensive plans necessarily remained vague so long as the needs for defense of the United Kingdom and, after Pearl Harbor, of American bases in the Pacific absorbed not only all resources on hand but the bulk of those immediately in prospect.

The conclusion was that direct offensive action against Germany was unlikely at least until 1943. At the ARCADIA Conference, the following agreement was reached:

"In 1942, the methods of wearing down Germany's resistance will be . . . ever increasing air bombardment by British and American forces . . . assistance to Russia's offensive by all available means . . . [and operations] the main object [of which] will be gaining possession of the whole North African coast.... It does not seem likely that in 1942 any large scale land offensive against Germany, except on the Russian front, will be possible . . . [but] in 1943, the way may be clear for a return to the continent across the Mediterranean, from Turkey into the Balkans, or by landings in Western Europe. Such operations will be the prelude to the final assault on Germany itself."

The program thus outlined was to a remarkable degree carried out. But it was not carried out without prolonged and searching re-examination of each step of the prelude. In the course of that re-examination the American and British Chiefs of Staff discovered an important difference of opinion in their approach to the problem of defeating Germany. The difference was adumbrated in an exchange of views in the fall of 1941 called forth by a

**Review of Strategy submitted by the British Chiefs of Staff for American consideration. In reply, American joint planners criticized the indirection of the British approach to offensive action. They noted "only minor attention" in the Review to possible land operations and expressed the opinion that although naval and air power "may prevent wars from being lost, and by weakening enemy strength, may greatly contribute to victory, . . . dependence cannot be placed on winning important wars by naval and air forces alone. It should be recognized as an almost invariable rule," they added, "that wars cannot be finally won without the use of land armies."**

**That point, of course, had not escaped the British. The first British ROUNDUP plan was in itself a recognition of the need for ground action on the Continent and specifically admitted that "operations on the Continent will in some form be inevitable." Further, in reply to American objections to their Review, the British Chiefs of Staff explained that the indirect offensive methods which they had listed, including blockade, bombing, and the encouragement of subversive activities in German-occupied countries, did not preclude an eventual large-scale landing on the Continent when the time was ripe.**

**If there was, at this time, any real disagreement, it was over a question of emphasis. Neither operations, nor plans, nor even strategic principles were immediately at issue. The ARCADIA formula, cited above, outlined a program to which both British and American military leaders could subscribe without reservation, and it did not contradict anything in either the British Review or the American reply to it. The American protest was nevertheless significant for the future. It foreshadowed an American impatience to get on with direct offensive action as well as a belief, held quite generally in the U. S. War Department, that the war could most efficiently be won by husbanding resources for an all-out attack deliberately planned for a fixed future date. American impatience was opposed by a British note of caution; American faith in an offensive of fixed date was in contrast to British willingness to proceed one step at a time molding a course of action to the turns of military fortune. This opposition was by no means clear in 1941. It is sketched here in order to provide a vantage point for the understanding of Anglo-American strategy, and as a guide through a necessarily condensed and selective account of the debate on how to fight the war against Germany.**

**The complex bases for American and British strategic views will appear in the course of the narrative. At the risk of oversimplification, however, it may be useful here to generalize that the prime difference between those views derived from the fact that the British, close to the scene of the war, tended to focus on the difficulties of assault, and the tactical and logistical problems involved, while the Americans, some 3,000 miles away, found it easier to start with the large view of the strategic problem. British planners**

were deeply and continuously conscious that to attack northwest Europe armies had to get across an ugly piece of water called the Channel, that this crossing took boats and special equipment, that when the troops landed they had to storm fortifications and fight a German Army that had all Europe by the throat. Americans were aware of these problems only at second hand and at a distance. They worked from maps. Each perspective, it should be noted, had a distinct contribution to make. If the British saw the tactical problems more clearly, the Americans were enabled to give freer rein to their imagination and to arrive at bolder offensive concepts.

These views need not necessarily have been opposed. They were opposed largely because the strategic problem as it developed in early combined discussion was not one of developing and carrying out the ideally best plan for defeating Germany. It was rather a problem of tailoring an ideal strategy to the changing political and military shape of a war in which the enemy at first had the initiative. The difference of opinion as to how the tailoring should be done was called forth primarily by the cry for immediate action.

That cry was taken up by many voices for a number of different reasons. In the first place, it was recognized that the sooner the Allies could wrest the initiative from the Axis the sooner they could stop dissipating resources to plug holes in the defense and start concentrating them for the defeat of the enemy. The combined Chiefs of Staff discussed at the ARCADIA Conference one plan for immediate action, called GYMNAST, which looked as though it might have a chance of success even when carried out by the relatively tiny forces then available to the United States and Great Britain. GYMNAST, a plan for the invasion of North Africa, was a highly speculative operation. For success it gambled on the nonresistance of the colonial French, and even if successful it was doubtful whether it would materially contribute to the offensive against Germany except in strategically tightening the ring around her. What it clearly would do, however, would be to put U. S. ground troops in action against the Germans. This consideration was particularly important to President Roosevelt, who thought that immediate action would stiffen American morale and have the reverse effect on the Germans. Strongly championed by both the President and the Prime Minister, GYMNAST was accepted by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in January 1942. But the more pressing need to send immediate reinforcements to the Southwest Pacific to check Japanese expansion toward Australia forced postponement and at last in March drew from the Combined Planners a declaration that the project had become academic.

In the meantime, both U. S. and British planners were independently investigating the possibility of being forced into action in 1942 in order to assist the Soviet Union. When Hitler attacked the USSR in June 1941, many observers felt that the Russians would fall before the German blitz as

quickly as had most of the rest of Europe. Then the Red Army tightened and held in front of Moscow and, when the snows came, struck back. Despite this success, however, neither American nor British military leaders were sanguine about the ability of the Russians to withstand a new German offensive in 1942. U. S. planners wrote: "Although Russia's strength was greatly underestimated by military authorities, including the Germans, a true test of Russia's capacity to resist the enemy will come this summer." The outcome of that test, they believed, was the key to the European and possibly to the world situation. Defeat of the USSR would enable the Germans to dominate the whole of Europe, complete the blockade of England, and probably force England to capitulate. If so, then it followed that every possible effort should be made by the Western Powers to insure that Russia was not defeated.

At the end of February 1942, Brig. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Assistant Chief of Staff, War Plans Division, wrote: "The task of keeping Russia in the war involves . . . immediate and definite action. It is not sufficient to urge upon the Russians the indirect advantages that will accrue to them from Allied operations in distant parts of the world . . . {Russia's problem is to sustain herself during the coming summer}, and she must not be permitted to reach such a precarious position that she will accept a negotiated peace, no matter how unfavorable to herself, in preference to continuation of the fight." The two ways of assisting Russia, General Eisenhower noted, were Lend-Lease aid and early operations in the west to draw off from the Russian front large portions of the German Army and Air Force. He was dubious whether a sizable ground attack from England could be mounted soon, but at least, he thought, air operations could be initiated.

The U. S. Joint Planning Staff, studying the whole question of U. S. troop deployment, went much further. They believed that a considerable land attack could be launched across the English Channel in 1942. Although it would have to be done at first largely by British forces, American participation would build up rapidly, and the prospect of such reinforcement should enable the British to mount the attack on a slimmer margin than would otherwise be possible. On this basis, the planners outlined what they thought would be a possible operation to take place in the summer of 1942 with a D Day between 15 July and 1 August. The operation was to open with a fifteen-day air attack, the strategic purpose of which would be to divert the German Air Force from the east. The immediate tactical objectives were to establish control of the air over the Channel and at least a hundred kilometers inland between Dunkerque and Abbeville, and to inflict the maximum damage on German military installations and lines of communication. During the air offensive, commandos were to raid the coasts of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Normandy. In phase two, beginning about D plus 30, major land forces

were to cross the Channel with the mission of securing the high ground north of the Seine and Oise Rivers, and of destroying enemy ground and air forces in the general area Calais-Arras-St. Quentin-Soissons-Paris-Deauville. The plan did not go into operational detail. The critical problem of landing craft received little attention beyond a listing of the barge requirements and a notation that both Americans and British would have to construct special craft.

The British Joint Planners had come to the same conclusion as the U. S. War Department-that the approaching summer campaign of 1942 in Russia was likely to be critical and might require support by diversions in the west if Russia was to be kept in the war. On the other hand, the British were much more pessimistic about what could be done. The maximum feasible operation, they thought, would be a limited-objective attack-something like a large-scale raid-the main purpose of which would be to tempt the German Air Force into a battle of destruction with the Royal Air Force under conditions favorable to the latter. For that concept, Prime Minister Churchill coined the code name SLEDGEHAMMER, and the Combined Commanders were directed to study and report on it. They found at once that the name was far more aggressive than the plan could be. They faced a tactical paradox. They were asked to strike where RAF fighters could engage the Luftwaffe on favorable terms. There was only one such area, since effective fighter cover from British bases extended at that time only over the beaches between Dunkerque and the Somme. This area, called the Pas-de-Calais, had the strongest German defenses of any portion of the French coast. It also had flat beaches unsuitable for British landing craft. The beaches furthermore had too few exits to pass the required number of vehicles inland to maintain the forces landed. Finally the ports in the area were too small to supply a force large enough to hold a bridgehead against the probable scale of German counterattack. In short, the one area where the RAF could supply fighter support and achieve the main purpose of defeating the Luftwaffe was precisely the one area which, from every other point of view, was unsuitable for assault.

The problem seemed insoluble and the planners first concluded that no cross-Channel operation was possible in 1942 unless the Germans showed signs of collapse. This conclusion, however, was modified by a second report submitted by the Combined Commanders early in April. Assuming then that they might disregard requirements for the security of the British Isles and that "the maintenance problem" could be "successfully overcome," they calculated that an invasion of the Pas-de-Calais could be carried out. But, they added, if the Germans countered in force, the beachhead probably could not be held and, if lost, it was doubtful whether the bulk of the men and equipment could be evacuated. The British Chiefs of Staff did not wholly endorse this analysis, but they did tacitly accept the conclusion that establishment of a permanent bridgehead on the Continent

would probably be impossible in 1942.

### **General Marshall's Project**

The first look at the cross-Channel project discovered only a host of difficulties that seemed all but insuperable. So long as attention was focused on an attack in 1942 all plans were pervaded with the sense that to do anything at all would be to act in desperation, to accept abnormal military risks for the sake of avoiding ultimate disaster. If the view in London was more pessimistic than in Washington, that was in large part because the major risks of action in 1942 would have to be borne by the British. In addition the British, whose mobilization was already far advanced, were inclined to see operations through the glass of current resources which, in general, could be increased in one category only by reduction in another. The United States, on the other hand, even while struggling desperately to build up the stocks needed for defense in the Pacific, was still continuously aware of its huge potential resources. Although it was recognized that in 1942 American military power would only begin to make itself felt, plans even for that year reflected the Americans' basic optimism and recommended risks far greater than the British considered accepting.

It was in looking further ahead, however, that the American optimistic view made its chief contribution to strategy. Until mid-March, plans for 1942 had been considered without specific reference to long-range objectives. Except for the determination to attack in Europe, there were no specific long-range objectives. The general principles agreed to at ARCADIA did not form a concerted plan of action.

In March 1942, the Operations Division of the War Department (OPD) began work on an outline plan for a full-scale invasion of the European continent in 1943. It was to be projected as the basis for the deployment of forces and as a guide for strategy. The need for such a guide had become increasingly urgent as, despite the shelving of GYMNAST, President Roosevelt continued to press for immediate action. On 25 March, the President called the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to the White House to ask advice on future offensive operations. Specifically he wanted to know whether U. S. troops might profitably be used in Syria, Libya, and northwest Africa, as well as in northwest Europe. On 2 April, General Marshall gave the President the War Department's answer embodying OPD's outline plan for a cross-Channel attack in 1943.

The War Department and General Marshall were convinced that the main U. S.-British ground offensive should be undertaken against northwest Europe. They rejected the Mediterranean areas suggested by Roosevelt because commitment of U. S. troops there would be strategically

defensive. Although the conquest of North Africa would break Axis control of the Mediterranean and prevent an Axis move through West Africa, the victory would not in itself be decisive and could not be exploited for further decisive action against Germany.

The body of General Marshall's memorandum therefore, was concerned with exploring the concept of a cross-Channel invasion of France. The operation was conceived in three phases: a preparatory phase, the cross-Channel movement and seizure of bridgeheads between Le Havre and Boulogne, and, finally, consolidation and expansion of the bridgehead. Logistics set the earliest possible date for the beginning of phase two at 1 April 1943, except under emergency conditions. The preparatory phase would begin at once with the organization, arming, and overseas movement of the necessary forces. During the summer of 1942 small task forces would raid along the entire accessible enemy coast line. General Marshall attached great value to these preparatory raiding operations which he defined as the "establishment of a preliminary active front." He thought they might serve to draw German troops from the east and so "be of some help to Russia." They might also be useful for deception either in persuading the Germans that no all-out offensive would be attempted or else in keeping them on tenterhooks for fear that any one of the raids might develop into a full-scale invasion. Thinking of national morale, a consideration always important to both the President and the Prime Minister, he noted that raiding together with air operations would be "of immediate satisfaction to the public." But, he added, "what is most important" is that the raids would "make experienced veterans of the air and ground units, and . . . offset the tendency toward deterioration in morale which threatens the latter due to prolonged inactivity. "

The main attack in the spring of 1943 was planned to employ 48 divisions supported by 5,800 combat aircraft. Landings would take place between Etretat north of Le Havre and Cap Gris Nez with the object of seizing the lower valley of the Somme and the high ground forming the watersheds of the Seine-Somme river system. Two main assaults were planned, on either side of the mouth of the Somme. The bridgeheads would be expanded to the southwest in order to seize Le Havre and the line of the Seine River. Although U. S. planners made use of some detailed data on terrain and estimates of the enemy, they did not attempt to examine tactical problems even to the extent that British planners had studied them in working on SLEDGEHAMMER. The main purpose of the Marshall Memorandum was to pin down a strategic idea sufficiently so that production, training, and troop allocations and movement could be "coordinated to a single end." There was time for planning, but none for delaying the basic decision. For example, it was pointed out that under current production schedules only 10 percent of the tank landing craft required to carry U. S. troops in the assault would be available. Only a decision now could insure the required

resources in time.

The Marshall Memorandum shifted emphasis from 1942 to 1943 while retaining for 1942 some activity which might satisfy political requirements. In the event that an operation should be required in 1942 to save the Russians or take advantage of sudden German deterioration, preparations were to be made to permit a cross-Channel assault on greatly reduced scale in the fall of the year. The maximum U. S. forces which could be on hand for such an assault were three and a half divisions, and the operation would be justified only by prospects of marked deterioration of the German army in the west.

In the second week in April General Marshall and Mr. Harry Hopkins, special emissary of President Roosevelt, went to London to seek a firm decision from the British Chiefs of Staff on the form, location, and timing of the British-American main effort. As it turned out, that decision was quickly reached with general agreement on the project outlined in the Marshall Memorandum. Discussion then shifted to what could be done in 1942. General Marshall reported that by the end of August U. S. reinforcement of the Pacific, Iceland, and Northern Ireland garrisons should be complete and the United States could concentrate on pouring troops and supplies into England for offensive action. He thought two and a half infantry divisions, one armored division, and 900 U. S. aircraft could be in the United Kingdom by 15 September.

General Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, said his planners counted on landing seven infantry and two armored divisions if forced to attack the Continent in 1942, but he frankly did not like the prospect. Such a small force could not hold against German counterattacks and its loss would seriously weaken England's defenses. Also, he was worried about India and the Middle East, where the Japanese and Germans might join forces and capture the oil fields in Iran and Iraq on which, he thought, "the whole of our effort in both theaters depended."

Brooke and Air Marshal Portal, Chief of Air Staff, also raised objections to the September date. Brooke believed that the Operation would have to take place in August at the latest in order to capture a port before the third week in September, when bad weather was likely to prevail over the Channel. Portal thought that during the summer the German Air Force might win a complete victory over the Russians and so by autumn become a formidable enemy for the RAF. General Marshall agreed that an earlier target date would be advisable but felt he could not urge it since U. S. troops would not then be available. He clearly indicated that his main interest in a 1942 operation was to provide battle experience for the Americans in preparation for 1943. He was also concerned that, if something were attempted in 1942, it be an operation across the Channel in

order to avoid dispersion of forces. He did not want the main project-operations on the Continent-reduced to the position of a "residuary legatee" for whom nothing was left. Against this view, Brooke continued to stress the danger in the Middle East. He then reversed the American concept that SLEDGEHAMMER was a device to save the Russians. Operations in 1942, he said, depended on what success the Germans had against the Russians. "If they [the Germans] were successful," he believed, "we could clearly act less boldly. If, however, the Russians held the Germans or had an even greater measure of success, our object should be to detach air forces from the Russian front." In short, he rejected the emergency operation and accepted only the operation of opportunity. The opinion was in notable contrast to the U. S. Army view that a 1942 operation would be justified by the need for helping Russia in the war so that "an opportunity would be presented to us of defeating Germany next spring." The point, however, was not argued, and the whole problem of a 1942 operation was returned to the planners for further study.

General Marshall's scheme for invasion in 1943, on the other hand, was received with enthusiasm, qualified only by a note of caution from British planners. The planners observed again the two deficiencies which had already crippled plans for a return to the Continent: the lack of landing craft (particularly craft capable of landing on the flat-gradient French beaches) and the lack of long-range fighter aircraft. They did not imply, however, that these deficiencies could not be made up during the coming year.

For the rest, the British Chiefs of Staff and the Prime Minister found nothing in the plan to quarrel with. The U. S. commitment to deliver one million troops to the United Kingdom during the next year altered, in the opinion of Lord Mountbatten, "the whole picture of combined operations against the Continent. The plans, which we had been at present evolving, all fell short in one way or another for lack of essential resources. This would be all changed when the great flow of American forces began, and we should be enabled to plan that real return to the Continent, without which we could not hope to bring the war to a successful conclusion."

The meeting at which Mountbatten so expressed himself was the concluding session of the conference with General Marshall. The tone of optimism was echoed by all those present and the whole meeting was informed with an extra-ordinary enthusiasm. Mr. Hopkins said that although American public opinion would have preferred an offensive against Japan, "the American nation was eager to join in the fight alongside the British." Mr. Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, replied in kind. "The plan," he considered, "had much more than a purely military significance. It was, in fact, the great picture of two English-speaking countries setting out for the redemption of Europe." Forgotten for the

moment was the opinion expressed a month before that the Allies in 1942 were on the verge of defeat. Instead of anticipating the need for a "sacrifice" operation in order to save a chance to strike in 1943, the conferees looked forward to sharing in a victory not far off. Churchill closed the meeting by summing up the complete unanimity of opinion and adding a prediction that now "the two nations would march ahead together in a noble brotherhood of arms."

The morrow brought soberer second thoughts, but the strategic decision, destined to last less than two months, at least laid some groundwork for the future. One immediate outcome was the establishment of machinery to concentrate U. S. troops in England. The build-up operation, called BOLERO, was to provide a force of about one million men specifically equipped to carry out an air offensive in 1942, a major invasion of the Continent in 1943, and if agreed on, a continental operation in conjunction with the British in 1942. Special planning staffs, BOLERO Combined Committees, were set up in Washington and London to function under the direction of the Combined Planning Staff. The committees were not responsible for tactical planning but were to proceed on the assumption that the invasion would conform to the outlines drawn in General Marshall's memorandum.

The establishment of BOLERO planning formalized and intensified the process of preparing United Kingdom bases for American troops, but the process had begun long before. As a result of the ABC-1 decisions of early 1941 the War Department had drawn up deployment plans to be put into effect if and when America came into the war. One of the provisions was the MAGNET plan to move U. S. troops into Iceland in order to relieve British garrisons there and to send troops to Northern Ireland to establish and defend air and naval bases for the use of U. S. forces. In January 1942 the first contingent of troops under the MAGNET plan was shipped to Northern Ireland, although, as a result of the emergency reinforcement of the Southwest Pacific area, the shipment had to be cut from a planned 17,300 to 4,000. Three more shipments arrived in Ireland before the end of May, bringing U. S. ground strength there to more than 32,000, including the 34th Division, the 1st Armored Division, and V Corps headquarters.

At the same time the U. S. Air Force was beginning to set up house in the British Isles. On 26 January 1942, General Arnold submitted to General Marshall a plan to base 4,648 American planes in the United Kingdom, including 54 groups of heavy bombers, 10 groups of medium bombers, and 10 groups of pursuit planes. The build-up was begun at once. Brig. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, with a portion of his staff, was ordered to England in January and by the end of February he had established the VIII Bomber Command. In June his command was subordinated to the newly arrived Eighth Air Force under Brig. Gen. Carl Spaatz.

The air build-up schedule in the mean-time was altered in a series of conferences in London in April between General Arnold and Air Chief Marshal Portal. The new basic plan, approved in June, drastically reduced the heavy bomber commitment: instead of 54 groups there would be 17. The force would include 10 groups of medium bombers and 6 of light, 12 groups of pursuit planes, and 8 groups of transports, a total of 3,262 aircraft.

On 4 July American air crews in six bombers borrowed from the RAF participated in a daylight attack on German airfields in the Netherlands. It was not until 17 August, however, that the Eighth Air Force carried out its first bombing in its own aircraft. By that time the whole European strategy had been profoundly altered and the build-up of air and ground forces in the United Kingdom abruptly ceased to be a first-priority task.

"Action in 1942-Not 1943"

The events between 1 April and the end of July 1942 produced, from the point of view of the U. S. War Department, a disturbing shift in Allied strategy. The April decision to concentrate on a build-up in the United Kingdom for a cross-Channel invasion in 1943 was supplanted in July by the agreement to ship U. S. and British forces into the Mediterranean to invade North Africa. The 1943 ROUNDUP, approved by acclamation in April as the first object of combined strategy in Europe, in July was laid aside in favor of extended preparatory and peripheral operations designed as prelude to a cross-Channel invasion of uncertain date. In General Marshall's view, this meant the dissolution of the strategy which had seemed so firmly established when he and Harry Hopkins left London in April.

Of the many circumstances that combined to overturn the April agreements, one of the weightiest was the continued inability of planners to see any way out of the difficulties posed by SLEDGEHAMMER. A draft plan for the operation was submitted at the end of April to newly appointed British force commanders, Admiral Ramsay, Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, and Lt. Gen. Edmond Schreiber. Their report on 4 May was that with current resources of landing craft SLEDGEHAMMER was not a sound operation of war. The British Chiefs of Staff accepted the conclusion but directed that the plan be kept in readiness in case German collapse should make it feasible.

In view of the new principle that SLEDGEHAMMER would take place only under conditions of marked German deterioration, planners now turned away from the uninviting prospect of a Pas-de-Calais assault. Air cover, they argued, would be less essential if the Germans were on the point of

collapse and it therefore might pay to look farther afield for an assault area containing a major port. They selected the Cherbourg and Le Havre areas, preferring the latter because it contained more airfields.

But problems multiplied faster than solutions. It was discovered that it would take twenty-one days to land the six divisions with available shipping. When Churchill was informed of this obstacle he replied, as one planner observed, in the manner of King Canute: he did not accept it. Investigation should be made, he continued, into the use of floating piers and other devices to speed the landings. This observation, important for the future, had no immediate issue, for the Prime Minister had also put forward and secured War Cabinet approval of a principle that, in effect, threw out the whole SLEDGEHAMMER idea. The principle was that "there should be no substantial landing in France unless we intended to remain." All planning to date had concluded that, whatever might be done in 1942, the establishment of a permanent bridgehead on the Continent was beyond British resources.

While planning for 1942 struggled vainly to solve the unbalanced equation between ends and means, simultaneous study of a 1943 cross-Channel assault was turning up its share of discouraging difficulties, and drawing conclusions that drastically modified the aggressiveness of the Marshall Memorandum. Planning for ROUNDUP was renewed for the first time on an organized combined basis even though arrangements remained informal. Col. Ray W. Barker, who had arrived in London about 1 April, was assigned shortly afterward to head the planning division of General Chaney's headquarters, which had been converted from SPOBS to United States Army Forces in the British Isles (USAFBI). Barker set up shop in Grosvenor Square. British planners under Brig. Colin McNabb worked near by. Colonel Barker's group received copies of all the planning papers which had been developed up to that time by the British. Almost daily conference were held between Americans and British and, about once a week, agreed-on papers were submitted to the Combined Commanders.

By the middle of June 1942 the planners had developed a new appreciation and outline plan for ROUNDUP to be mounted in the spring of 1943. The plan was accepted by the Combined Commanders and submitted to the British Chiefs of Staff. It did not go into tactical details and was limited in scope to the establishment of bridgeheads including necessary airfields and port areas. The approach was cautious and the tactical idea quite different from that which produced OVERLORD. If our invasion is to succeed," the planners wrote, "we must endeavor to disperse the enemy's mobile reserves on land and in the air. At the same time we must avoid such action as will allow the enemy to destroy isolated parts of our land forces in detail. It follows, therefore, that while we must endeavor to launch assaults on as wide a front as possible, the size of each assault and the

rate of subsequent development must, if possible, be sufficient to meet the anticipated rate of enemy reinforcement in each area . . ." How to dissipate the enemy's defense by a diffuse attack and at the same time be strong at each widely separated point was not fully explained.

The plan to make three "almost" simultaneous assaults in the Pas-de-Calais and on both sides of the Seine would leave a gap of some 10 miles between the northern and southern bridgeheads. In addition, subsidiary assaults were to be devised to lead to the early capture of Cherbourg and the Channel Islands. The planners did not go into this problem but merely noted that it was subject to further investigation. The first landings would require at least six divisions. "After the initial assaults the forces in each area are built up . . . as a preliminary to further offensive operations." No attempt was made at the time to foresee these. The Combined Commanders, in forwarding the plan, told the British Chiefs of Staff that they believed it was the only possible way of effecting a re-entry into France, but even that would not be feasible "unless the German morale was deteriorated by the spring of 1943 owing to another failure to defeat the Russians."

Churchill was dissatisfied with the planners' caution. He retorted with a memorandum of his own sketching an operation with "qualities of magnitude, simultaneity and violence," and involving six landings by at least ten armored brigades in the first wave, and the debarkation of 400,000 men in the first week. If in fourteen days, he wrote, "700,000 men are ashore, if air supremacy has been gained, if the enemy is in considerable confusion, and if we held at least four workable ports, we shall have got our claws well into the job." Churchill's object in sketching his impression of ROUNDUP in such terms was to give an idea of the "scale and spirit" which he felt necessary if the undertaking was to have "good prospects of success." In reality, however, his concept required resources which seemed so far beyond reach that planners could not regard it seriously. They did not alter their view that ROUNDUP could go in only against a weakened enemy.

Furthermore, even Churchill's concept, for all its vigor, remained academic in the absence of broad, formative decisions. Planners, without allotted resources, without a target date, and without a command organization, worked in a school-room, trapped in circular arguments and unable to make real progress toward preparing a definite operation of war. Recommendations by the Joint Planning Staff that commanders be selected at once to carry out the operation and that steps be taken to secure the appointment of a Supreme Allied Commander produced no results.

The truth was that the general approval of the ROUNDUP idea which

General Marshall had won in April 1942 did not reflect any general conviction that the 1943 cross-Channel attack was really the best way of carrying out Allied strategy in Europe. Skepticism remained on both sides of the Atlantic. In Washington President Roosevelt was wavering, and the U. S. Navy was lukewarm. Roosevelt, early in May, wondered whether more troops should not be sent out to the Pacific to reinforce Australia. Admiral King thought they should, and wrote that the mounting of BOLERO should not be allowed to interfere with Pacific plans. He called holding the Japanese "our basic strategic plan in the Pacific Theater." It was perhaps only a turn of phrase but General Marshall felt it necessary to remind the President that sustaining Russia, not holding the Japanese, was the basic strategy. The proposals to reinforce Australia would mean cutting in half the number of divisions that could be shipped to England for a SLEDGEHAMMER operation. Operations in 1942 from England, he pointed out) already depended primarily on the British, who would be accepting risks far graver than any run by the Americans. The British had agreed to BOLERO on the understanding that it was the prime U. S. project. If it was not, BOLERO should be abandoned and the British notified. President Roosevelt retreated. He told General Marshall that he had only asked if the Australian reinforcement could be done and he now agreed with him "and Admiral King" that it could not. He added: "I do not want BOLERO slowed down. On the same day, however, he expressed his impatience with continued inaction. The Atlantic theater, he believed, called for "very great speed in developing actual operations. I have been disturbed," he wrote, "by American and British naval objections to operations in the European Theater prior to 1943. I regard it as essential that active operations be conducted in 1942." He realized the difficulties, but ideal conditions could hardly be expected. Expedients must be improvised. "The necessities of the case call for action in 1942-not 1943."

The President's impatience may have been reinforced by a visit of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, to Washington at the end of May. Molotov came at the President's request primarily to discuss the Murmansk convoys of Lend-Lease war materials, but it was clear that he was still more vitally interested in the opening of a "second front." On his way he had stopped off at London to see Churchill, from whom he received only deliberately vague promises concerning the possibility of SLEDGEHAMMER. In Washington he tried to pin the Americans down to a more definite commitment. What the Soviets wanted was an operation in 1942 on a large enough scale to force the Germans to withdraw forty divisions from the Russian front. Such an operation evidently could not be promised. The most that General Marshall would say was that a second front was in preparation, that the Western Allies were trying to create a situation in which a second front would be possible. The President, however, significantly extended Marshall's answer and sent word through Molotov to Stalin to expect a second front in 1942. Roosevelt did not say

where or on what scale. Precisely what weight this promise carried in subsequent discussion is difficult to assess. Probably the promise was of more significance as a symptom than as a contributing cause of Roosevelt's eagerness for immediate action. In any case, other pressures built up after Molotov left Washington.

June 1942 marked the low ebb of British military fortunes. On the 13th, Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel at Knightsbridge in Libya defeated British armored forces in the last of a series of battles which had started 27 May. The British army retreated across the Egyptian border to El Alamein. On Sunday, 21 June, British and Dominion troops, isolated in Tobruk by the withdrawal, were forced to surrender. The rest of the army dug in at El Alamein for the defense of Alexandria.

That month also marked the opening of the expected new German offensive on the Russian front. Expected or not, the event was disheartening. The prevailing opinion among military leaders in America and Britain was still that they would be lucky if Russia managed to stay in the war through 1942. In London the official estimates of the Russian situation included only two hypotheses: that Russia had been defeated by October 1942 (hypothesis "A"), or that Russia was still in the war in 1943 "but had suffered heavily in manpower and materiel . . ."

The pressure was very great on Allied leaders to act at once wherever such action promised any fair chance of success. The pressure to act, moreover, coincided with an improved opportunity. Two decisive naval victories over the Japanese in May and June (Coral Sea and Midway) had relieved the immediate threat to Australia, and defensive requirements in the Pacific were thus no longer a sword of Damocles hanging over plans for European operations.

Between the two North African disasters, on 18 June, the Prime Minister and the British Chiefs of Staff came to Washington to discuss the desirability of reorienting strategy. Churchill came because he had been greatly alarmed by reports from Admiral Mountbatten that the President was pressing for a 194 operation. It was clear to the War Department that Churchill's visit foreboded an eloquent attack on the April commitment to BOLERO. Secretary Stimson prepared for the President a strong defense of the BOLERO idea. He pointed out that all the reasons for adopting BOLERO were still valid and that no other operation could achieve the same end. No other operation, furthermore, should be allowed to interfere with it. It was of prime importance, he believed, to press unremittingly forward with BOLERO not only because it was the best plan but because any deviation from it would be taken as "evidence of doubt and vacillation."

At the same time General Marshall was again defending the idea before the Combined Chiefs. At an informal meeting with General Brooke and Field Marshal Dill the reasons for having made BOLERO the main effort were discussed and reaffirmed. Marshall's defense was at the moment completely successful and General Brooke agreed that BOLERO should be pushed and that the North African invasion should not be undertaken. The generals further accepted the principle that any operations in 1942 would adversely affect operations in 1943, and should therefore be contemplated only in case of necessity.

On Sunday, 21 June 1942, at the White House this decision was significantly modified. Churchill vigorously attacked the BOLERO idea and urged GYMNAST, with the knowledge (Stimson believed) that "it was the President's great secret baby." In the midst of the discussions at the White House came the dramatic news of the surrender of Tobruk. The news greatly strengthened Churchill's arguments for diverting the Allied effort from BOLERO to North Africa and correspondingly weakened General Marshall's efforts to save what he regarded as sound strategy from being upset by political considerations. While arguing for BOLERO, however, General Marshall was deeply conscious of the gravity of the situation both in Egypt and in southern Russia, where German successes "threatened a complete collapse in the Middle East." To meet that threat, Roosevelt and Marshall agreed to rush reinforcements of planes to the Middle East and tanks to the British armies in Egypt. Marshall hoped that these reinforcements would ease the pressure of the immediate emergency without disrupting basic strategy. The final upshot of the White House meeting was a compromise which left BOLERO the priority task but noted that it was "essential that the U. S. and Great Britain should be prepared to act offensively in 1942." The President and Prime Minister agreed that "operations in France or the Low Countries in 1942 would, if successful, yield greater political and strategic gains than operations in any other theater." Such operations would therefore be planned and prepared with all vigor, but if they proved unlikely to succeed, "we must be ready with an alternative." The best alternative was GYMNAST, which should be "explored carefully and conscientiously" and plans completed in detail as soon as possible.

Although in form these conclusions reaffirmed the priority of BOLERO in Allied European strategy, against the background of the pessimistic reports of planners in England they actually yielded precedence to GYMNAST. This fact became increasingly clear as planners engaged in the last futile struggle with SLEDGEHAMMER. On 24 June General Eisenhower arrived in London to take command of all American forces in Europe, as Commanding General ETOUSA (European Theater of Operations, U. S. Army) . He spent a week looking around and then wrote General Marshall that although a lot of planning had been done at low levels most of the

basic decisions such as, for instance, the exact frontage of the assault had still not been made. He reported General Paget's complaint of the lack of effective organization. Paget told him: "If we could only have the organization you have here, we could settle these matters in a morning. As it is we constantly go over the same ground and no real progress has been made."

Lack of organization was a reflection of lack of conviction in high places that existing plans were practicable. A few days after his letter to Marshall, Eisenhower talked to the Prime Minister and found him "quite averse to attempting anything in Western Europe.... He believes it would be slaughter," Eisenhower noted, "because we are not strong enough." On the other hand, Churchill was perfectly confident about the northwest Africa operation—a confidence that Eisenhower at this time did not share.

The Prime Minister's mind was, in fact, made up. On 6 July 1942 he presided over a meeting of the British Chiefs of Staff at which "it was unanimously agreed that operation SLEDGEHAMMER offered no hope of success, and would merely ruin all prospects of 'ROUNDUP' in 1943." The next step was to inform the Americans. This was done by two cables on 8 July, one to the Joint Staff Mission in Washington and the other a personal message from Churchill to Roosevelt. Both reported the unfeasibility of SLEDGEHAMMER and recommended that the Americans proceed with planning for GYMNAST, while the British investigate the possibility of attacking Norway (Operation JUPITER). Field Marshal Dill had a preliminary talk with General Marshall. He found the latter's reaction so strong that he contemplated cabling a warning to his government that to press acceptance of GYMNAST at the expense of BOLERO would "drive U. S. A. into saying 'We are finished off with West and will go out in Pacific.'" As Admiral King was out of town, official U. S. reaction was delayed. When King returned on 10 July, the Joint Chiefs met and General Marshall proposed just the step he had evidently discussed with Dill: turning from Europe to undertake an offensive in the Pacific. Admiral King approved, and remarked that the British, in his opinion, had never wholeheartedly supported BOLERO. Further, he believed, the Japanese were not going to sit tight much longer but were planning new attacks in the South and Southwest Pacific. Marshall and King then sent a joint memorandum to the President stating their view that GYMNAST was indecisive, would prevent a SLEDGEHAMMER operation in 1942, and curtail or perhaps make impossible ROUNDUP in 1943. They concluded: "If the United States is to engage in any other operation than forceful, unswerving adherence to full BOLERO plans, we are definitely of the opinion that we should turn to the Pacific and strike decisively against Japan."

The memorandum went to Hyde Park. The next day General Marshall heard rumors that he and King and Harry Hopkins would be sent to London but

he still had no indication of the President's views. On 14 July the President telegraphed: "I have definitely decided to send you, King and Harry to London immediately.... I want you to know that I do not approve the Pacific proposal." In conversation with Marshall the next morning in Washington, Roosevelt called the proposal "something of a red herring" and was concerned lest it appear that "we had proposed what amounted to abandonment of the British." General Marshall did not think so, but in any case the matter was dropped.

General Marshall's vehement defense of BOLERO stemmed in part from his feeling that the world situation was extremely critical. He was fearful, in particular, of a Russian collapse. The German summer offensive toward the Caucasus had broken through the Kharkov front and forced the Russians into a general withdrawal. "The present action in the Don Basin," General Marshall wrote on 13 July, "indicates Russia's possible inability to halt the massed power of Germany and her Allies. Considering the distribution of population in regard to density and race, the location of primary agricultural and industrial areas, and the railroad and road net of Russia, it is evident that unless this German offensive is soon halted Russian participation in the war will become negligible in magnitude, with the inevitable result of rendering all planning concerning ROUNDUP and all BOLERO movements (of ground troops at least) vain." The emergency for which SLEDGEHAMMER was planned was at hand, he believed, and failure to meet it would doom the chances of a cross-Channel attack in 1943. Invasion of North Africa, in his view, would not achieve the necessary diversion to save the Russian armies from collapse. He cabled his views to General Eisenhower and asked Eisenhower to prepare a specific plan on how SLEDGEHAMMER might be carried out.

It was with these convictions as to the desperate urgency of SLEDGEHAMMER that General Marshall on 16 July left for London. With King and Hopkins, he went as a personal representative of the President with large powers to settle strategy. The President's instructions required that SLEDGEHAMMER be strongly urged as the most important and perhaps imperative task for 1942. If it were found impossible, then Marshall should review the world situation with King and Hopkins and determine "upon another place for U. S. troops to fight in 1942."

At the first London meeting, on 20 July, Churchill outlined his views and set the framework for subsequent staff discussions. The first question, he said, was the feasibility of SLEDGEHAMMER. Although the British had failed to devise a satisfactory plan, they would all listen sympathetically to any U. S. proposals. However, he went on to question the urgency of SLEDGEHAMMER. Might it not be argued that ROUNDUP depended only on what the Russians did, and not on what the Western Allies might do? He wondered whether the ROUNDUP concept need be confined to an attack on

the western seaboard of France. He then discussed the value of invading North Africa and suggested that if the battle for Egypt went well it might be possible to attack even Sicily or Italy. In a written review the next day-the Prime Minister made his own conclusions clear, at least by implication. There were two main facts to be recognized, he believed: first, the immense power of the German military machine, which even without a defeat of Russia could still shift to the defensive in the east and move fifty or sixty divisions to France; second, the race in the west between attrition of Allied shipping and development of Allied air power. "It might be true to say," he wrote, "that the issue of the war depends on whether Hitler's U-boat attack on Allied tonnage or the increase and application of Allied air power, reach their full fruition first." Emphasis on these two facts as the key to strategy meant postponing decisive land operations against Germany while carrying out a preliminary policy of attrition, chiefly through an increasing air offensive.

Although General Marshall was adamantly opposed to the concept, he found himself on weak ground in attempting to preserve the sanctity of the ROUNDUP idea while carrying out the President's mandate to take action somewhere in 1942. General Eisenhower was unable to defend SLEDGEHAMMER as an operation offering even a fair chance of tactical success. Eisenhower personally estimated that the chances of a successful landing were one in two and of being able to build up on the Continent to a force of six divisions about one in five. Still, he did point out that "if we are convinced that the Russian Army is now in a desperate situation . . ." the question of the tactical success or failure of SLEDGEHAMMER was of little moment, and "the only real test of SLEDGEHAMMER'S practicability is whether or not it will appreciably increase the ability of the Russian Army to remain a dangerous threat to the Germans next spring." He admitted that the desperateness of the Russian situation was a matter of pure conjecture, in which there was "considerable difference of opinion." His conclusion, therefore, was that SLEDGEHAMMER should be kept alive until the first of September when a decision could be made on the basis of the Russian situation at that time.

On the other hand, General Eisenhower strongly recommended against accepting GYMNAST as an alternative to SLEDGEHAMMER. GYMNAST, he wrote, "is strategically unsound as an operation either to support ROUNDUP or to render prompt assistance to the Russians. Its execution now may be a logical alternative to 1943 ROUNDUP, but it is not a logical operation to insure execution of ROUNDUP. If undertaken now, {it should be done on the theory that the Russian Army is certain to be defeated} and that, consequently, we should take advantage of the relatively favorable situation now existing to improve the defensive position that will be forced upon us in Europe and western Asia by a Russian defeat."

Eisenhower's analysis anticipated in large measure the conclusions of the July conference. The British Chiefs of Staff were unalterably opposed to SLEDGEHAMMER as an operation without reasonable chance of success. Since the SLEDGEHAMMER force would necessarily be largely British and under British command, their opposition was decisive.

Marshall reported to the President the failure of his first task. The President replied, asking for study of GYMNAST as the next most desirable operation, and concluding with a request for "speed in a decision." Even with SLEDGEHAMMER ruled out, General Marshall was still reluctant to commit U. S. strategy irrevocably to the Mediterranean. He therefore arrived at a compromise with the British which began with agreement "that no avoidable reduction in preparation for ROUNDUP should be favorably considered so long as there remains any reasonable possibility of its successful execution before July 1943." That possibility depended on the Russians, and it was further agreed that "if the situation on the Russian front by September 15th indicates such a collapse or weakening of Russian resistance as to make ROUNDUP appear impracticable . . . , the decision should be taken to launch a combined operation against the North and Northwest Coast of Africa at the earliest possible date before December 1942."

Not only did this agreement leave the door open for consideration but it made clear that the choice was between GYMNAST and ROUNDUP and that a decision to go into North Africa should be made only after ROUNDUP was discovered impracticable. To General Marshall, as to General Eisenhower, the choice of GYMNAST meant acceptance of a probable Russian defeat, which in turn would prevent Allied invasion of Western Europe. General Eisenhower, reviewing the strategic situation on the eve of the conference's decision, admitted that GYMNAST seemed to be the only feasible and strategically valuable operation open to the Allies in 1942, but he added, "Since it is too much to hope that the Russians can continue fighting unaided, all through 1943, the final effect would be the abandonment of ROUNDUP. The conclusion agreed to in conference with the British was only slightly less pessimistic. On American insistence, the agreement admitted that "a commitment to this operation [GYMNAST] renders ROUNDUP in all probability impracticable of successful execution in 1943 and therefore that we have definitely accepted a defensive, encircling line of action for the Continental European theater, except as to air operations and blockade . . ."

The door left open at the conference did not remain open long. On 5 July Harry Hopkins cabled Roosevelt urging an immediate decision in order to avoid "procrastination's and delays." The President made up his mind at once. He called in Secretary Stimson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, without discussion, read to them his decision to go ahead with GYMNAST.

He saw no reason why the withdrawal of a few troops to the Mediterranean would prevent ROUNDUP in 1943. He desired action. To Hopkins, Marshall, and King, the President cabled, "Tell Prime Minister I am delighted that decision is made."

The ambiguity of the "decision" which the President welcomed left the military leaders uncertain as to how definite the commitment to GYMNAST was. But it was perfectly clear that the North African project now had the inside track for planning and preparation. By agreement, ROUNDUP planning was to continue under the Combined Commanders and the ETOUSA plans section headed by General Barker. A separate U. S. staff would be sent to London to work on North Africa. Acceptance of the North African operation was sealed by baptism with a new code name: TORCH. It was also determined that all currently planned operations (TORCH, SLEDGEHAMMER, and ROUNDUP) would be under a United States Supreme Commander. Pending the formal appointment of such a commander, General Marshall and Admiral King directed General Eisenhower to take immediate control of planning for TORCH. If and when TORCH was finally decided on, the supreme commander of all operations in the theater would also command TORCH with a British deputy. The nationality of the commander for ROUNDUP was not determined. It was laid down, however, that he would not have operational control of ground forces in the United Kingdom, that his function would be training and planning, and that troops would "only come under his operational command when the operation was mounted."

After a week of uncertainty, the President on the evening of 30 July informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he wanted to do TORCH but, before he cabled the Prime Minister of his decision, he would like an estimate of the earliest practicable date on which the operation could be launched. The next day the British Joint Staff Mission was notified of the White House decision and cabled it to the British Chiefs of Staff for relay to General Eisenhower. General Eisenhower was to assume the position of Supreme Commander pending final decision on a permanent appointment.

In London, General Eisenhower took immediate steps to get the operation under way. As no new planning staff had arrived from the United States, it became necessary to employ American officers already in the United Kingdom. That meant denuding staffs which had been working on Continental planning. General Barker, selected as acting G-3 for TORCH, was one of the first to go. A TORCH planning committee was set up on a combined basis under Brig. Gen. Alfred W. Gruenther (U. S. A.), and the chief British planners who had developed ROUNDUP were also absorbed in the new adventure.

ROUNDUP planning came virtually to a standstill.

## **The Period of Indecision (July-December 1942)**

**President Roosevelt's decision to go ahead with TORCH meant the indefinite postponement of ROUNDUP. That much was clear. It was not clear what effect the decision would have on grand strategy. The April agreements had provided for a concentration on BOLERO in preparation for ROUNDUP in 1943. The July agreement rejected the principle of concentration and accepted instead a "defensive, encircling line of action." Regarding those two notions as contradictory, the U. S. Chiefs of Staff felt that strategy had been overturned. The British Chiefs of Staff, on the other hand, recalled the earlier ARCADIA principles which had emphasized preparatory operations (including attacks through the Mediterranean) in 1942 before the main attack across the Channel. The TORCH decision was clearly not at odds with those principles. Acceptance of "defensive, encircling action," they believed, meant only recognition of the need for a longer prelude to the final assault. They characterized the U. S. interpretation as heresy and were alarmed lest it take root. But that it should take root was inevitable. For the U. S. Chiefs of Staff, under constant pressure to get on with the war against Japan, any delay and, more particularly, any uncertainty in the mounting of the decisive attack on northwest Europe inevitably unsettled the whole program for waging the war. Moreover, the connection between TORCH and an eventual ROUNDUP was at best indirect. If a North African invasion might be regarded, in the long run, as preparatory to a cross-Channel attack, the immediate relationship between TORCH and ROUNDUP would be competitive. Instead of building up forces in the United Kingdom, TORCH, if successful, would concentrate them in the Mediterranean. What then would be the next step?**

**Lack of a long-range plan was particularly awkward for the United States in 1942 when mobilization was just getting started. The Army was in process of formation. Deployment had only just begun. Expanding productive capacity still had to be directed in accordance with priorities established to fit special military needs at least a year in advance; U. S. planners, studying the decisions of the London Conference, concluded that while they evidently abrogated the strategy implicit in the Marshall Memorandum of April they did not formulate any new strategy.**

**Through the summer and fall of 1942, the planners wrestled with the problem of calculating future needs in troops and materiel. In the weeks immediately preceding the July conference the Combined Planning Staff had drawn up two deployment papers, defining the basic combined strategy and translating it into terms of future commitments of troops and munitions in the various theaters of operations. The first study assumed that the present strategic concept was: "To conduct the strategic offensive**

with maximum forces in the Atlantic-Western European Theater at the earliest practicable date, and to maintain the strategic defensive in other theaters, with appropriate forces." The second study, based on this assumption and on its implementation by the Marshall BOLERO plan, forecast that in April 1944 the offensive on the continent of Europe would be in progress. Neither study had been approved by the Combined Chiefs when the TORCH decision forced reconsideration of the premises. There began then a series of attempts to explain what had been decided at the London Conference. Neither the planners nor the chiefs could agree. What, in particular, was the extent of commitment of ROUNDUP? The British Chiefs of Staff, anxious to have the build-up of U. S. forces in the United Kingdom continue at the maximum rate, wanted to hold to the assumption that in the spring of 1944 operations would be either in progress or immediately in prospect on the Continent. The Joint Chiefs could not see anything in the July decisions that would warrant such an assumption. The vague promise to consider crossing the Channel at some time when "marked deterioration in German military strength became apparent and the resources of the United Nations, available after meeting other commitments, so permit" seemed to them an invitation to tie up troops and resources in the United Kingdom indefinitely with no assurance that they would be used in decisive action. The Joint Chiefs were in the meantime deeply conscious of the need to prosecute the war against Japan. They were in fact again wondering whether they should not reverse their basic strategy. The big issue to be decided, General Marshall argued in August, was whether the main U. S. effort should be in the Pacific or in the Europe-Middle East area. The question which President Roosevelt a month earlier, before the London Conference, had called a "red herring" was now, at least, an issue of all seriousness. Discussion of it centered largely upon the deployment of aircraft.

By the agreement of July the U. S. Chiefs of Staff withdrew fifteen groups of aircraft from allotment to BOLERO with the avowed intention of using them in the Pacific. The clause was written into the agreement, General Marshall later explained, only in order to remove the fifteen groups from the realm of combined discussion. By assigning the groups formally to the Pacific, where by common consent strategy was primarily a U. S. responsibility, the Joint Chiefs reserved the right to dispose of them as they saw fit. When the whole question of future deployment was sent to the Joint Planning Staff, the fate of the fifteen groups uncovered a wide range of disagreement on basic strategy. Naval planners wanted the planes shown deployed chiefly in the South and Southwest Pacific as of April 1943, thus assuming a considerable reorientation of strategy toward increased offensive effort against the Japanese. Specifically they recommended deploying aircraft according to the priority TORCH, Middle East, South Pacific, Southwest Pacific, United Kingdom. Army planners, still insisting on the primary importance of the whole European area,

wanted equal priority for TORCH, the Middle East, and the United Kingdom. They pointed out that the Navy's deployment schedules would delay the arrival of planes in the United Kingdom by one to three months. General Arnold took up the cudgels to defend priority for the European theater. He pointed out that, of fifty-four groups of planes allotted to BOLERO-ROUNDUP by the Marshall Memorandum, only twenty-five remained for the air offensive against Germany. He believed that under the terms of the July agreements Germany was still to be considered the first objective of Allied strategy and that, therefore, no strengthening of the Southwest Pacific should be undertaken "until the modified BOLERO-TORCH plan has first been completely implemented." That modified plan, he believed, far from entailing a reduction of air build-up in the United Kingdom put the chief burden of maintaining pressure against Germany on the air forces. The European theater, he believed, had become an air theater. He further argued that it was specious to separate TORCH and the Middle East from the United Kingdom, since the bomber offensive from England in fighting the German Air Force and weakening the German military potential contributed directly to the success of TORCH. The debate between General Arnold and Admiral King on this subject continued into the fall without arriving at any resolution. Toward the end of October, planners reviewing the matter found that of the fifteen groups three had already been deployed: one to Hawaii, one to the Middle East, three squadrons to the South Pacific, and one squadron to Alaska. The remaining twelve groups the Joint Chiefs then decided should be held in strategic reserve. They were as far as ever from knowing what Anglo-American strategy was to be.

Although the Joint Chiefs did not agree on how far the BOLERO strategy had been or should be modified to step up the war in the Pacific, they were clearly pressing for some modification. Even before the TORCH decision, the concept of the "strategic defensive" in the Pacific had been defined to include "limited offensive operations." That definition was not at once accepted by the Combined Chiefs, but in the middle of August they did agree to a strategic hypothesis which for purposes of troop deployment assumed that by April 1944 there would be "an augmentation of forces in the Pacific by a readjustment of United States commitments in the European Theater . . . in order to further offensive operations against Japan." In context, however, this provision remained at least as vague as the earlier agreements. The same hypothesis also assumed that in 1944 preparations would continue for an invasion of the Continent as well as for deception purposes and in order to take advantage of a "favorable opportunity or emergency." Finally it was assumed also that North Africa in 1944 would be occupied by the Allies and "intensified operations" would be "conducted therefrom."

It was to this last assumption that the British Chiefs of Staff and the Prime Minister were giving their principal attention. In September Churchill

outlined his conception of future strategy to the President. He was considering two possibilities after the assumed success of TORCH: attack into the "underbelly" by invasion of Sardinia, Sicily, or even Italy, and attack on Norway with the idea of giving more direct aid to Russia. ROUNDUP, he understood, was definitely off for 1943, but there still remained the possibility of an emergency cross-Channel operation and he believed that all the arguments advanced for SLEDGEHAMMER in 1942 would be even more valid in 1943-44. The President was particularly interested in exploiting success in the Mediterranean. In November he proposed to Churchill that "you with your Chiefs of Staff in London and I with the Combined Staff here make a survey of the possibilities including forward movement directed against Sardinia, Sicily, Italy, Greece and other Balkan Areas, and including the possibility of obtaining Turkish support for an attack through the Black Sea against Germany's flank." This was a welcome idea to the Prime Minister, who replied now that an attack against Sicily or Sardinia was an essential step following the cleaning up of North Africa.

The idea, however, was anathema to the U. S. War Department. Maj. Gen. Thomas T. Handy, Assistant Chief of Staff, OPD, expressed adamant opposition to the British views, toward which Roosevelt seemed to be leaning. He believed that the Mediterranean operations were not logistically feasible, and that in any case they would not bring an Allied force within striking range of Germany. He deplored the concept of an emergency cross-Channel operation. "Under no circumstance," he said, "can the U. S. agree to concentrate large forces in the U. K. there to be immobilized until the hypothetical break of German power as envisaged in- the British concept." The only sound alternatives in his view were ROUNDUP as originally planned with a specific target date, or abandonment of the whole idea of defeating Germany first and turning to the offensive in the Pacific.

In December 1942 Handy's views were echoed in a new strategic concept drawn up by a new committee, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC)-a body of three senior officers whose sole job was to maintain a large perspective on the major problems of combined direction of the war and advise the Joint Chiefs on matters of policy. The first task of the JSSC was to recommend to the Joint Chiefs a course of action for 1943. It was high time that such a course was settled. The North African invasion, launched on 8 November, met almost immediate success and raised with new urgency the question which the July decisions had left unanswered: What next?

The core of the strategy recommended by the JSSC was concentration on the build-up of a balanced force in the United Kingdom for a decisive cross-Channel attack before the end of 1943. In the meantime, an air offensive against Germany would be carried out from England, North

Africa, and the Middle East. The success of the North African operation would be exploited by air attacks on Germany and Italy "with the view to destroying Italian resources and morale and eliminating her from the war. This much of the JSSC policy was accepted by the Joint Chiefs. However, the committee's recommendations for the Pacific, which amounted to continuation of the limited operations for defense and the minimum support of China, the Joint Chiefs drastically revised after a discussion in closed session. The revision greatly enlarged the concept of the strategic defensive against Japan. The Joint Chiefs declared that in the Pacific limited offensive operations would be carried out not only to secure Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Alaska, and the lines of communication but also "to maintain the initiative in the Solomon-Bismarck-East New Guinea area with a view to controlling that area and involving Japan in costly counter operations." In Burma an offensive should be undertaken to open supply routes to China.

When these views were put before the Combined Chiefs, the British replied with their first fully developed statement of what may be called their peripheral strategy for the defeat of Germany. Germany, they argued, needed a period of rest and recuperation; Russia was preventing that. The Allies therefore should do everything possible to assist Russia. Although Germany had to be reoccupied eventually, the Allies were not yet ready to attack the Continental fortress. "To make a fruitless assault before the time is ripe would be disastrous to ourselves, of no assistance to Russia and devastating to the morale of occupied Europe." Even a maximum concentration on building up for a cross-Channel attack in 1943 would assemble only about twenty-five divisions in the United Kingdom by late summer, as compared to the original estimated requirement in the Marshall Memorandum of forty-eight divisions. In contrast to the unattractive prospect of a shoestring operation across the Channel, the British Chiefs of Staff sketched the rewards of pursuing operations in the Mediterranean. "If we force Italy out of the war and the Germans try to maintain their line in Russia at its present length, we estimate that they will be some 4 divisions and 2,200 aircraft short of what they need on all fronts . . ." The operations they had immediately in mind were the invasion of either Sardinia or Sicily. But their plans for the Mediterranean did not stop there. Following Italian collapse the next step would be the Balkans, although it was not clear just what action would be possible in that area. In the meantime, while concentrating offensive action in the Mediterranean, the British Chiefs wanted the United States to build up an air force of 3,000 heavy and medium bombers in England and also continue to send ground divisions. They believed that, without prejudice to other operations, the build-up in the United Kingdom could reach twenty-one divisions by the fall of 1943—a force sufficient to effect a re-entry into the Continent under favorable conditions. As for the Pacific the British approved operations to reopen the Burma Road, but they did not want any other expansion of the war against

**Japan. The reasons for tackling Germany first, they wrote, were still sound.**

**Although these views were in direct opposition to the strategic principles previously expressed by the U. S. War Department, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee found grounds for compromise. They believed that the ends sought by the British and the United States were the same: that is, to expel the Axis from North Africa, to eliminate Italy, and to do so by pressure rather than by occupation of the Italian peninsula. They thought the Combined Chiefs were further agreed that no large-scale operations should be undertaken against southern Europe with the ultimate view of invading Germany therefrom, and that, on the other hand, invasion of the Continent from the United Kingdom was essential to achieve decisive results. The chief disagreements seemed to be on the method of exerting pressure on Italy and on the timing of ROUNDUP. The U. S. Joint Chiefs wanted to force Italy's surrender by air bombardment from North African bases rather than by continued ground operations. The difference of opinion on ROUNDUP the JSSC thought might be due to misinterpretation. They criticized the British statement that concentration on the build-up for a cross-Channel attack in 1943 would interfere with the build-up of air forces for the bomber offensive. On the contrary, the JSSC believed: "The air offensive will of necessity hold precedence over the buildup for the land offensive, and continue to do so until the results of the air operations and the deterioration of the Axis situation in general can be better estimated in relation to prospective land operations." They concluded that this difference could probably be adjusted with the British without setting a definite date for ROUNDUP.**

**This was the last formal word on U. S. strategy before the meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff with Roosevelt and Churchill at Casablanca in the second week of January, 1943. In its glossing over of deep differences of opinion and its ambiguous stand on the cross-Channel invasion, it reflected the lack at this time of a strong united conviction in the U. S. War and Navy Departments on what U. S. strategy should be. General Marshall admitted this when the President asked whether it was agreed that they should meet the British at Casablanca "united in advocating a cross-Channel operation." Marshall replied "that there was not a united front on that subject, particularly among the planners." Even among the Chiefs of Staff conviction was not strong. In Marshall's opinion, they regarded an operation across the Channel more favorably than one in the Mediterranean, "but the question was still an open one."**

### **The Casablanca Conference**

**When the Casablanca Conference opened on 12 January 1943 the Allies for the first time felt themselves able to choose the time and place for carrying the war to the enemy. Rommel had been decisively beaten in North Africa.**

Although the fighting in Tunisia continued, it was clearly only a matter of time before the entire North African shore would be cleared. The Russians were already on the offensive after stopping the Germans in Stalingrad. Generaloberst Friedrich Paulus with more than 250,000 Germans was encircled and helpless before the city; the attempt to relieve him had failed. In the meantime the Russians had launched two other offensives to clear the Don Basin. In the Pacific, Japanese expansion had definitely been checked. The land and sea battles of Guadalcanal had both been won, although in January the island was still not entirely cleared. In the six months since the dark days of July Allied chances for victory had improved remarkably throughout the world.

In the generally brightening picture, however, there were still dark spots. Darkest was the German submarine menace in the Atlantic. Allied shipping losses had reached alarming proportions, and there was evidence that the German submarine fleet was steadily growing. The loss of shipping from all causes up to the end of 1942 exceeded new construction by about one million tons. During the year, 1,027 ships were sunk by enemy submarine attack. This was a threat of the first magnitude. Without control of the seas the great U. S. war potential could not even reach the theaters of war; the Allies could not undertake the amphibious operations that were necessary throughout the world in order to get at the enemy. At the first meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Casablanca, Gen. Sir Alan Brooke put the matter bluntly. "The shortage of shipping," he believed, "was a stranglehold on all offensive operations and unless we could effectively combat the U-boat menace we might not be able to win the war."

The other great weakness in the Allied position was a paucity of resources. Despite the large war potential of the United States, the troops, shipping, supplies, and material actually on hand at the beginning of 1943 were sufficient only for relatively small-scale offensive operations in one theater. The major strategic question before the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Casablanca was where and when these slender resources could be committed to make the maximum contribution to the defeat of Germany. The basic issue was (similar to the problem faced in July: granting that the ultimate aim was to strike the decisive blow at Germany across the Channel, could such a blow be struck in 1943? Put another way the question was: if the prospects for a successful ROUNDUP in the summer were dubious, was it not better to concentrate on the Mediterranean where immediate operations offering a good chance of success were possible?

Churchill had no doubt that this was the correct strategy. In November he had written the President: "The paramount task before us is first, to conquer the African shores of the Mediterranean and set up there the navy and air installations which are necessary to open an effective passage through it for military traffic; and, secondly, using the bases on the African

shore, to strike at the underbelly of the Axis in effective strength and in the shortest time." His opinion in January 1943 had not changed; he submitted then that "this surely remains our obvious immediate objective."

It was not, however, obvious to General Marshall. He felt that there was a danger of fighting the war on a day-to-day opportunistic basis, of taking a series of uncoordinated steps promoted by immediate tactical considerations without considering the over-all strategy by which the Germans could be defeated most efficiently and in the shortest possible time. Granted that the victory in Africa opened the way for exploitation in the Mediterranean, the question still had to be asked how such exploitation would fit into "the main plot." Unless it could be proved to fit somewhere and constitute, moreover, the best means of advancing the plot at that time, it should not be undertaken no matter how tempting was the prospect of an easy military victory.

In answer to General Marshall's question, there was one obvious approach. What else could be done? General Brooke developed the argument from necessity. He pointed out that, on the Continent, Russia was the only Ally with large land forces in action. Comparing the Russian effort with the twenty-one divisions that the Western Allies could hope to land in France in 1943, he urged that "any effort of the other Allies must necessarily be so small as to be unimportant in the over-all picture." He contended that with limited resources the Allies could not expect to engage any considerable portion of the German land forces. The forty-four German divisions estimated to be in western Europe, he said, would "overwhelm us on the ground, and perhaps hem us in with wire or concrete to such an extent that any expansion of the bridgehead would be extremely difficult." The argument on the relative futility of trying to influence the course of the land battle in Europe was lent considerable cogency by Molotov's prior request to General Marshall for the commitment in "the second front" of sufficient troops to draw off forty divisions from the Eastern Front. This was ludicrously beyond the capacity of the Western Allies at that time.

Even if a landing on the Continent were feasible, it was likely to be much more costly than an assault in the Mediterranean. The British pointed out that the rail system of France would permit the simultaneous movement of at least Seven German divisions from the east to reinforce the Atlantic Wall, whereas only one division at a time could be moved from north to south to meet an Allied attack in the Mediterranean. Use of the argument also revealed that direct assistance to Russia, the dominant consideration in July, was no longer a primary concern. It was further argued that such assistance could not be given. ROUNDUP preparations could not be completed before the middle of August; it was more likely that the operation could not be mounted before early autumn. In that case, it would not support the Russian summer campaign. Finally, it was unlikely that the

relatively small force which the Allies could put on the Continent would require the Germans to shift troops to defeat it. For the same reason it was doubtful whether even the German Luftwaffe could be brought to decisive battle. In sum, the argument was that ROUNDUP in 1943 would do no good and would invite disaster.

The Prime Minister continued to think of a SLEDGEHAMMER attack against the Continent in 1943, and in order to make it possible advised planning a Mediterranean operation to be accomplished cheaply and quickly after the windup of the North African campaign. The chief arguments for continuing attacks in the Mediterranean, however, were the immediate strategic advantages to be gained from them. In the first place, since there were several plausible objectives in the Mediterranean, a skillful use of feints might well force the Germans to disperse a large number of troops to meet widespread threats to Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, the Dodecanese Islands, and the coasts of Italy and Greece before any operation was actually launched. In the second place, if Italy could be knocked out of the war (and that in the British view was the major immediate objective of any action contemplated in the Mediterranean), the Germans would not only have to take over the defense of Italy but would also have to assume Italian commitments for defense of the Balkans. The Prime Minister was also drawn to the possibility of tempting Turkey into the war. He felt that by clearing the Mediterranean a valuable selling point would be gained for negotiations with Turkey. If Turkey could be brought in, the British planned to use the country as a base from which to attack the Romanian oil fields and open the Black Sea route to Russia. They did not contemplate the use of Turkish troops in attacking outside of Turkey.

The British arguments in favor of the Mediterranean as the scene for 1943 attacks were, from a tactical standpoint, convincing enough, but they did not meet Marshall's objections that the Mediterranean could not be considered the main arena for meeting and fighting German military might. The Americans believed and consistently maintained that Germany's defeat "could only be effected by direct military action," and that that action must be directed against the main body of the German Army in the west. The British thought Germany might be defeated primarily by destroying the enemy's will to resist through air attack and encirclement. They reasoned that "Germany's will to fight depended largely on her confidence in ultimate success." Repeated victories by Russia and the Western Allies, even if on the perimeter of the German Lebensraum, would make Germany "realize that the prospects were hopeless." If despite that realization the Germans still refused to surrender, then direct attack from the west would be employed to deal the deciding blow.

The U. S. Chiefs of Staff did not discount the possibility of a sudden German collapse. On the whole, however, they held firm to the conviction

that neither the air offensive nor victories in the Mediterranean could so significantly weaken the German's will to resist as to justify prolonged delay in mounting the final attack. General Marshall stated the United States point of view in these terms: "It has been the conception of the United States Chiefs of Staff that Germany must be defeated by a powerful effort on the Continent, carrying out the BOLERO and ROUNDUP plans." Aid to Russia was important in order to absorb German strength, but "any method of accomplishing this other than on the Continent is a deviation from the basic plan." He then made it clear that if the Americans should agree to Mediterranean operations they would be accepting a temporary expedient compelled by immediate circumstances. They would not consider that they had thereby approved in principle any departure from their overall strategy. The question, Marshall submitted, was: "To what extent must the United Nations adhere to the general concept and to what extent do they undertake diversions for the purpose of assisting Russia, improving the tonnage situation, and maintaining momentum." That this distinction should not be missed, he asked pointedly whether the British Chiefs of Staff considered that an attack now against Sicily was a means to an end or an end in itself. Did they view it as "a part of an integrated plan to win the war or simply taking advantage of an opportunity"?

However, having drawn this line between strategy and expediency, the U. S. Chiefs of Staff then agreed that circumstances made a Mediterranean operation expedient. After some discussion the Combined Chiefs decided that, as between the two possible invasions (Sardinia or Sicily), Sicily was the more profitable attack with the resources available.

The principal grounds on which the Americans conceded the argument were that they had large numbers of troops in North Africa which could not be readily employed outside the Mediterranean and that the Sicilian operation would "effect an economy of tonnage which is the major consideration." Even in yielding, however, General Marshall said that "he was most anxious not to become committed to interminable operations in the Mediterranean. He wished Northern France to be the scene of the main effort against Germany-that had always been his conception.

To this Air Chief Marshal Portal significantly replied that it was impossible to say where they should stop in the Mediterranean since the object was to knock out Italy altogether. The difference of opinion had not been resolved. It had only been temporarily abated for the sake of arriving at a vital decision to maintain the momentum of the war against Germany.

The question of how to proceed against Germany was posed at Casablanca in the context of the global war. While devoting all possible energy and resources to defeating Germany, it was clear that the Allies could not afford simply to turn their backs on Japan. It has already been

pointed out that the U. S. Chiefs of Staff since July had veered toward a decision to increase substantially the effort in the Pacific. They spelled out their new point of view to the British for the first time at Casablanca. The United States desired to maintain pressure against the Japanese, General Marshall told the British Chiefs of Staff, in order to forestall another "series of crises," which had wrecked offensive plans in the early part of 1942. Maintaining pressure, of course, meant mounting attacks. Admiral King estimated that the attacks considered necessary would require roughly double the current U. S. forces in the Pacific. There was a danger, he pointed out, that without a great effort to assist Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek China might pull out of the war. General Marshall added that helping China carry the fight against Japan "might have a most favorable effect on Stalin." The U. S. Chiefs of Staff therefore especially recommended pushing operations in Burma.

The British frankly did not like this new attitude. In general they regarded the Pacific in much the same light as General Marshall regarded the Mediterranean—an invitation to diversions from the main effort. While admitting in principle the need for unremitting pressure against Japan, the British Chiefs of Staff feared it would mean weakening the offensive against Germany. General Brooke tried to force the issue by stating it as a problem of reviewing "the correctness of our basic strategic concept which calls for the defeat of Germany first." He believed that the Allies could not take on Germany and Japan at the same time. The Americans denied any intention of altering the basic strategy. On the contrary, "The whole concept of defeating Germany first," Marshall submitted, "had been jeopardized by the lack of resources in the Pacific." He recalled how the United States had nearly been forced to withdraw from TORCH because of the danger of reducing the slender resources in the Pacific. "A hand-to-mouth policy such as this was most uneconomical." It was essential to establish a sound position in the Pacific. That could not be done simply by defensive deployment. The Japanese themselves were busy consolidating and would certainly continue their attempts to advance if they were given a breathing spell. To forestall them the Allies must attack. Furthermore it would unduly prolong the war if the United States waited until after the defeat of Germany before securing positions from which the final offensive against Japan could be launched.

The British at last yielded the point. They had already agreed to operations in Burma to open the road to China. They now approved plans to mount both overland and amphibious attacks against the Japanese in Burma during 1943. They further agreed to the seizure of Rabaul and reserved decision on a proposed attack against Truk.

Casablanca focused attention on 1943 and concluded with a statement that the operations envisaged in 1943 were designed to bring about the defeat

of Germany in that year. This was for the record-but there were reservations. The Americans in particular were not sanguine about the prospects of victory in 1943. General Arnold asked for a decision on what might be done in 1944 so that production schedules could be planned in advance. General Brooke replied that "we could definitely count on re-entering the Continent in 1944 on a large scale."

The Combined Chiefs of Staff then proposed setting up a combined command and planning organization to plan for small-scale raids, a return to the Continent in 1943 under conditions of German collapse, a limited operation in 1943 to secure a bridgehead on the Continent for later exploitation, and last "an invasion in force in 1944."

Even though a 1944 ROUNDUP lay far ahead in a somewhat clouded future, the conference undertook to give preliminary shape to its ultimate command organization. Roosevelt proposed a British supreme commander, but on Churchill's suggestion decision was postponed. At the moment the Prime Minister believed it was necessary only to select a commander to undertake the planning. This commander, he agreed, should be British, but he enunciated the principle that "the command of operations should, as a general rule, be held by an officer of the nation which furnishes the majority of the force." At a later meeting the Combined Chiefs decided that it would be sufficient to select a British Chief of Staff, together with "an independent United States-British Staff." In examining this proposal the President questioned whether "sufficient drive would be applied if only a Chief of Staff were appointed." General Brooke thought that "a man with the right qualities . . . could do what was necessary in the early stages." It was left at that-a curiously vague and inauspicious beginning for the staff that would write the OVERLORD plan and then become the nucleus of the supreme headquarters that carried it out.

If Casablanca did little to erase the vagueness surrounding the ultimate ground operations in northwest Europe, it at least arrived at more vigorous decisions on an air offensive from the United Kingdom. The Combined Chiefs directed the initiation at once of a combined U. S.-British bomber offensive aimed at "the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial, and economic system and the undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally weakened."

Most of the big decisions of the Casablanca conferences were made during the first week. General Brooke undertook to summarize these for the President and the Prime Minister:

"Measures to be taken to combat the submarine menace are a first charge on the resources of the United Nations.... Our efforts in defeating Germany

will be concerned first with efforts to force them to withdraw ground and air forces from the Russian front. This will be accomplished by operations from North Africa by which Southern Europe, the Dodecanese Islands, Greece, Crete, Sardinia, and Sicily will all be threatened, thus forcing Germany to deploy her forces to meet each threat. The actual operation decided upon is the capture of Sicily. At the same time we shall go on with preparing forces and assembling landing craft in England for a thrust across the Channel in the event that the German strength in France decreases, either through withdrawal of her troops or because of an internal collapse . . . The maximum combined air offensive will be conducted against Germany from the United Kingdom. By this and every other available means, attempts will be made to undermine Germany's morale. Every effort will be made, political and otherwise, to induce Turkey to enter the war in order that we may establish air bases there for operations against Roumania . . ."

As an outline of a strategic concept for the guidance of planning, these decisions were not much clearer than the decisions of July 1942. Certainly the extent of commitment to an eventual cross-Channel operation was no more specific. But in providing for the establishment of a planning staff and in agreeing to push the BOLERO build-up despite continuing operations in the Mediterranean, Casablanca had, in fact, laid the groundwork for OVERLORD. During the next six months, planning and preparations in the United Kingdom would of themselves clear much of the academic mist from the face of the cross-Channel project and convert it from a map problem into a plan of action for which the necessary men and material were on hand or in prospect. And this would happen while the debate on strategy continued through a series of compromise decisions scarcely firmer than those with which the Casablanca Conference closed.