

## Introduction

Operation TORCH was the codename for the British and American invasion of North-West Africa which began on 8 November 1942. It involved landings in the Vichy French territories of Morocco and Algeria, and a subsequent overland advance into Vichy French Tunisia, with the ultimate objective of removing the Axis from North Africa. The British and American decision of 24 July 1942 to undertake TORCH is generally considered to be both a vital step in the development of Western Allied strategy, and a significant moment in the course of the war.<sup>1</sup> The TORCH landings occurred around the same time as the second battle of El Alamein in Egypt, American success on Guadalcanal in the Pacific, and the battle of Stalingrad on the Eastern Front. This is generally considered to be the period when the Grand Alliance of Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America gained the upper hand in the war with the Axis nations of Germany, Japan and Italy.<sup>2</sup> In this thesis I examine why Operation TORCH was chosen as the first large-scale combined British and American military operation of the Second World War, and engage with the contrasting historical analyses produced by scholars from both nations. The views of historians on Anglo-American strategy in World War II and the reasons why TORCH was chosen are quite well entrenched, and the time is ripe for a new approach. This thesis re-examines the primary sources and produces a new interpretation, rather than following one of the established points of view.

The decision to undertake TORCH was only arrived at after a lengthy and sometimes acrimonious debate between the British and American political and military leaders

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<sup>1</sup> Alex Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', in David Reynolds, Warren F. Kimball & A.O. Chubarian (eds), *Allies at War: The Soviet, American, and British Experience, 1939-1945*, New York, 1994, p.21; Keith Sainsbury, *The North African Landings, 1942: A Strategic Decision*, London, 1976, p.9; Richard W. Steele, *The First Offensive, 1942: Roosevelt, Marshall and the Making of American Strategy*, Bloomington, 1973, p.vii; Russell F. Weigley, 'The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell', *JMH*, Vol. 57, No. 5, October 1993, p.45

<sup>2</sup> Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.21; Anthony Eden, *The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning*, London, 1965, pp.345-346; Warren F. Kimball, 'Stalingrad: A Chance for Choices', *JMH*, Vol. 60, No. 1, January 1996, p.89; Mark A. Stoler, *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945*, London, 2005, p.72; Mark A. Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare, 1941-43*, Westport, 1977, p.64. Of these battles, Stalingrad was the largest and most costly in terms of personnel and material, Robert Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance: America, Britain, and Russia, 1941-1943*, New York, 1972, p.65; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.84

over what action in the war with Germany was needed in 1942. This debate involved the consideration and discussion of many significant political and military issues, and it was these issues that determined which operation, if any, would be best for the British and Americans in 1942. TORCH was just one of a number of operations considered. The complexity of the debate ensures that the answer to the question posed in this thesis – why TORCH was selected as the first major Anglo-American operation of the Second World War – is not a straightforward one.

The reasons for TORCH can be divided into two broad categories: political and military, although there is some overlap between the two. A number of factors ensured that President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill desired a large-scale Anglo-American military operation against Germany in 1942. These included: domestic political concerns; the need to improve the Allied war situation to boost Anglo-American civilian morale; and the need to provide military assistance to the Soviet Union in its vital struggle with Germany on the Eastern Front. With Churchill and Roosevelt determined to have action in 1942, the British and American military leaders had to reach consensus on a large-scale operation to be carried out in that year, and military reasons were most important in their decision. Military reasons determined which operations were desirable and feasible, and eventually all operations except TORCH were eliminated. Thus a significant Anglo-American operation was necessary in 1942 as a response to the political needs of Roosevelt and Churchill at home and abroad, and TORCH emerged as the preferred option primarily for military reasons. This thesis gives full consideration to the political and military reasons behind the TORCH decision, and discusses at length the various options available to the British and Americans, analysing the decision from both the British and American perspectives.

Operation TORCH was the result of a seven month debate between the political and military leaders of the United States and Britain, during which time the preferred timing and location of the first combined Anglo-American ground offensive in the war with Germany changed on a number of occasions. Anglo-American discussions

about combined strategy began tentatively in 1940 and 1941,<sup>3</sup> but the debate assumed great importance after the American entry into the war alongside Britain on 8 December 1941, because significant combined military action could now be undertaken. Although they were close allies, the American and British leaders were not always in agreement over combined strategy, particularly in the seven months from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor until the final decision to mount TORCH was made on 24 July 1942. This is the seven month period examined in this thesis.

Before proceeding further, though, a number of terms used in this study need to be defined at the outset, and some important distinctions need to be made. These terms are fundamental to an understanding of this topic.

It is first necessary to define what strategy is. Strategy is a very difficult term to define.<sup>4</sup> General Albert C. Wedemeyer defined grand strategy as “the art and science of employing all of a nation’s resources to accomplish objectives defined by national policy”.<sup>5</sup> Carl von Clausewitz called it “... the use of engagements for the object of the war”, and Basil Liddell Hart called it “... the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy”.<sup>6</sup> Michael Howard wrote: “Strategy concerns the deployment and use of armed forces to attain a given political objective”.<sup>7</sup> In this thesis, strategy is considered to be the military policy pursued by a nation, which is determined by the civilian and military leadership through compromise between military and political needs to achieve what is perceived as the

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<sup>3</sup> Tentative Anglo-American discussions began in mid-August 1940. The Anglo-American staff conversations of January to March 1941, known as ABC, saw deeper discussion of future Anglo-American strategy occur. The Placentia Bay conference of August 1941, when Churchill and Roosevelt had their first wartime meeting, saw further Anglo-American discussion about strategy, albeit still only tentative because the United States was not yet in the war, Mark M. Lowenthal, ‘Roosevelt and the Coming of the War: The Search for United States Policy 1937-42’, *JCH*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 1981, pp.426-427; Robert E. Sherwood (ed.), *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, Volume I, September 1939 – January 1942*, London, 1948, pp.271-273; Mark A. Stoler, ‘The United States: The Global Strategy’, in Reynolds, Kimball & Chubarian (eds), *Allies at War*, p.60

<sup>4</sup> Williamson Murray & Mark Grooms, ‘Introduction: On Strategy’, in Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox & Alvin Bernstein, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War*, Cambridge, 1994, p.1

<sup>5</sup> Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, New York, 1958, p.81

<sup>6</sup> Gordon A. Craig, ‘The Political Leader as Strategist’, in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986, p.481; Michael Howard, ‘The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy’, in Michael Howard (ed.), *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, London, 1983, p.101; Murray & Grooms, ‘Introduction: On Strategy’, p.1

<sup>7</sup> Howard, ‘The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy’, p.101

best possible outcome for a nation. As will be seen, the Anglo-American decision to undertake Operation TORCH was very much a product of both political and military factors.

The term ‘Grand Alliance’ applies to the coalition of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> The term ‘Western Allies’ applies to the United States and Britain alone, who formed an alliance within an alliance.<sup>9</sup> The terms Soviet Union and Russia are used interchangeably in this study.

The term ‘Axis’ refers to the alliance of Germany, Japan and Italy. Formally created on 27 September 1940, this alliance had existed unofficially for a number of years prior to that.<sup>10</sup> By 7 December 1941 Italy was a fading power, and consequently it features much less than Germany in this thesis.

This study uses the four levels of warfare normal in military analysis, namely tactical, operational, strategic, and grand strategic. ‘Tactical’ denotes the fighting at a campaign level, for example the Tunisian campaign, ‘operational’ denotes the theatre level, for example the Mediterranean theatre of war, ‘strategic’ denotes the Western Allies in the war with Germany in Europe and the Mediterranean, and ‘grand strategic’ covers the entire war commitment of the Grand Alliance, including the Eastern Front, the Pacific, the Mediterranean and Europe.

Two related terms used in this thesis are ‘peripheral strategy’ and ‘Mediterranean strategy’. These terms refer to a strategy purportedly advocated and used by the British in World War II, and strongly supported by the Chief of the Imperial General

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<sup>8</sup> The Grand Alliance began to form in 1940, as the United States grew closer to Britain. It began to unofficially exist in June 1941 when the Soviet Union entered the war against Germany and began to receive support from the United States and Britain. The Grand Alliance was formalised on 1 January 1942 with the signing by 26 nations of the Declaration by the United Nations, Stoler, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy: Flawed, but Superior to the Competition’, in Justus D. Doenecke & Mark A. Stoler, *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy, 1933-1945*, Lanham, 2005, p.148

<sup>9</sup> Maurice Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe, 1939-1945’, in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986, p.678

<sup>10</sup> Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, New York, 1979, p.134; Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II*, Cambridge, 1994, pp.30, 35

Staff (C.I.G.S.), General Alanbrooke, and Prime Minister Churchill.<sup>11</sup> The peripheral strategy is said to have been the traditional British way of fighting war. It involved an emphasis on conducting military operations on the peripheries of a conflict, avoiding confrontations where the enemy was strongest, and using mobility and sea power to wear down and weaken the enemy, while a continental ally engaged the bulk of the enemy's land forces.<sup>12</sup> Once the enemy was weakened, the British could try to defeat it in a more direct manner. In World War II the German periphery was the Mediterranean theatre, hence the term Mediterranean strategy. In this strategy the Germans were to be worn down by Allied operations in the Mediterranean and North Africa, as well as by economic blockade, strategic bombing, commando raids, support for European resistance movements, and the removal of Italy from the war.<sup>13</sup> In essence, a ring was to be closed and tightened around Germany.<sup>14</sup> Initially, all of North Africa had to be conquered, followed by invasions of Sicily and Italy, and then the Western Allies could carry out the decisive cross-Channel invasion of France and advance into Germany.<sup>15</sup> That this peripheral and Mediterranean strategy existed up to July 1942, or indeed that it ever existed, is not accepted by all historians, but the theory also has its supporters.<sup>16</sup> The possible influence of the peripheral strategy and Mediterranean strategy on the decision for TORCH is discussed in Chapter 5.

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<sup>11</sup> Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, New York, 1957, pp.16, 222; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.17; Trumbull Higgins, *Winston Churchill and the Second Front, 1940-1943*, Westport, 1957, p.199; Sainsbury, *The North African Landings*, p.10. In this thesis I use 'Alanbrooke' throughout, even though he was not created Viscount Alanbrooke of Brookeborough until after the war. He was not made Field Marshal until 1944, so is referred to as a General throughout this thesis.

<sup>12</sup> Tuvia Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History*, Boulder, 1992, p.127; Michael Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', in Howard (ed.), *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, pp.171, 175; Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.679; Richard W. Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', *MA*, Vol. 35, No. 2, April 1971, p.70

<sup>13</sup> Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', pp.15-16; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.44; Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War*, London, 1968, pp.1-2; Matthew Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, London, 1996, p.7; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.28

<sup>14</sup> Richard M. Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited: An Interpretation of American Strategy in the European War, 1942-1944', *AHR*, Vol. 68, No. 4, July 1963, p.926; Hew Strachan, 'The British Way in Warfare Revisited', *HJ*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 1983, pp.450-451

<sup>15</sup> Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.16; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', pp.15-16; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.70

<sup>16</sup> Those disagreeing include: Colin F. Baxter, 'Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?' *MA*, Vol. 47, No. 1, February 1983, p.9; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, p.69. Howard says the British decision for a Mediterranean strategy did not come until January 1943, Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy, Volume IV, August 1942 – September 1943*, London, 1972, pp.195, 197-198. Those who accept this idea include: Walter Scott Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now, 1943*, Tuscaloosa, 1980, p.1; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.70; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.38

To avoid confusion, in this thesis the term North-West Africa refers to French North-West Africa, which comprised Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. French North Africa is another term for French North-West Africa. West Africa refers to French West Africa, and it included Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, and a number of other territories. Dakar, the capital of Senegal, is the most prominent West African location mentioned in this thesis.

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The most valuable primary sources relevant to this topic are wartime government documents located in British and American archives. The two major repositories are the National Archives (NA) in the United Kingdom, and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the United States.

The British National Archives in Kew, London, have many records that are vital to this study. The papers of the War Cabinet (in the CAB series) are absolutely essential in illuminating the British political and military reasons for choosing TORCH, because they include the records of the War Cabinet and Chiefs of Staff Committee (C.O.S.), as well as the records of the British planning and intelligence staffs. Records of the Prime Minister's Office (PREM) contain much of Churchill's wartime correspondence, and have been accessed for this thesis. Records of the Army/War Office (WO), Royal Air Force/Air Staff (AIR), and Royal Navy/Admiralty (ADM) have also proved very useful.

The most important location for American documents is the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland, where there are a number of Record Groups containing documents relevant to TORCH and the 1942 debate over Anglo-American strategy. Of particular value to this thesis are the records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) (RG 38), the U.S. War Department Operations Division (O.P.D.) (RG 165), and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (J.C.S.) (RG 218).

The papers, diaries, and letters of most of the major figures involved in Western Allied strategy-making have been published, including those of Roosevelt's personal representative and closest advisor Harry L. Hopkins, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, British C.I.G.S. General Alanbrooke, and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, a U.S. strategic planner and later commander of Operation TORCH.<sup>17</sup> Also vital is the published complete correspondence of Churchill and Roosevelt.<sup>18</sup> The memoirs of many leading figures have also proved valuable.<sup>19</sup> These primary sources provide the views of contemporaries during the debates over TORCH and Western Allied strategy in 1942, and are indispensable. Unfortunately I have not been able to access the unpublished papers of relevant figures.

Two basic Russian primary sources have been used, these being the correspondence between Soviet leader Josef Stalin and his western counterparts, Churchill and Roosevelt, and the memoirs of the Russian Ambassador to London, Ivan M. Maisky.<sup>20</sup> Because this study focuses on how the Western Allies perceived and dealt with the Soviet Union, and not vice-versa, access to Russian language sources and other translated Russian primary sources was not essential.

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<sup>17</sup> Larry I. Bland (ed.), *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall, Volume 3: "The Right Man for the Job", December 7, 1941 – May 31, 1943*, Baltimore, 1991; Alfred D. Chandler (ed.), *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: I*, Baltimore, 1970; Alfred D. Chandler (ed.), *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: II*, Baltimore, 1970; Alex Danchev & Daniel. Todman (eds), *War Diaries 1939-1945, Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke*, Berkeley, 2001; Joseph Patrick Hobbs (ed.), *Dear General: Eisenhower's Wartime Letters to Marshall*, Baltimore, 1971; Robert E. Sherwood (ed.), *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, Volume I, September 1939 – January 1942*, London, 1948; Robert E. Sherwood (ed.), *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, Volume II, January 1942 – July 1945*, London, 1949; Elliott Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters, Being the Personal Correspondence of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Volume Three, 1928-1945*, London, 1952

<sup>18</sup> Warren F. Kimball (ed.), *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, Princeton, 1984

<sup>19</sup> For example: H.H. Arnold, *Global Mission*, New York, 1949; Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War Volume IV: The Hinge of Fate*, London, 1951; Anthony Eden, *The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning*, London, 1965; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, Melbourne, 1948; W.A. Harriman & E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946*, New York, 1975; Hastings Ismay, *The Memoirs of General the Lord Ismay*, London, 1960; William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, New York, 1950; Henry L. Stimson & McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, New York, 1947

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., *Correspondence between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the Presidents of the U.S.A. and Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Volume One and Two, London, 1958; Ivan M. Maisky (translated by Andrew Rothstein), *Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador – The War 1939-1945*, London, 1967

Some German primary sources have been consulted for this study, including ULTRA, the wartime German signals intercepted and decrypted by the British. These are useful, and are used when considering the military reasons for choosing Operation TORCH.

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Books and articles dealing with Anglo-American strategy began to appear immediately after the war ended, with a number of important early works that helped establish the basic views on this subject.<sup>21</sup> More detailed discussion of World War II Anglo-American strategy-making occurred in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, as official British and American documents became available to historians, the papers and memoirs of leading figures were published, and the British and American official histories were completed.<sup>22</sup> Studies continued to appear in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, albeit less frequently than in previous decades.<sup>23</sup> There have also been a number of relevant articles published in journals and books since the war.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For example: Ralph Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, New York, 1946; Elliot Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, New York, 1946; Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt & Hopkins: An Intimate History*, New York, 1948; Hanson W. Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War*, New York, 1949

<sup>22</sup> For example: Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War Volume IV: The Hinge of Fate*, London, 1951; Gordon A. Harrison, *United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations, Cross-Channel Attack*, Washington, 1951; Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, New York, 1952; M. Matloff & E.M. Snell, *United States Army in World War II, Volume III, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, Washington, 1953; R.M. Leighton & R.W. Coakley, *United States Army in World War II: Global Logistics and Strategy: 1940-1943*, Washington, 1956; Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, New York, 1957; Trumbull Higgins, *Winston Churchill and the Second Front, 1940-1943*, Westport, 1957; Samuel E. Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, Boston, 1958; Samuel E. Morison, *American Contributions to the Strategy of World War II*, London, 1958; Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, New York, 1958; Kent R. Greenfield (ed.) *Command Decisions*, London, 1960; Kent R. Greenfield, *American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration*, Baltimore, 1963; J.R.M. Butler, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part 2: June 1941 - August 1942*, London, 1964; J.M.A. Gwyer, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part 1: June 1941 - August 1942*, London, 1964; Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*, Princeton, 1966; Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, London, 1968; Robert Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance: America, Britain and Russia, 1941-1943*, New York, 1972; Richard W. Steele, *The First Offensive 1942: Roosevelt, Marshall & the Making of American Strategy*, Bloomington, 1973; Keith Sainsbury, *The North African Landings, 1942: A Strategic Decision*, London, 1976; Mark A. Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare, 1941-1943*, Westport, 1977; George Bruce, *Second Front Now! The Road to D-Day*, London, 1979

<sup>23</sup> For example: John Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, London, 1980; Walter Scott Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now, 1943*, Tuscaloosa, 1980; Alex Danchev, *Very Special Relationship: Field Marshal Sir John Dill and the Anglo-American Alliance, 1941-44*, London, 1986; Mark A. Stoler,

Despite these studies, there is no agreement on the key questions, and the vital question of why Operation TORCH was chosen as the first large-scale combined Anglo-American offensive in World War II has divided opinion amongst historians since the end of that conflict. This question fits into the larger discussion about which strategy was best for the Western Allies in the war with Germany: a direct strategy advocated by the Americans, with a cross-Channel invasion of France as soon as possible, or a peripheral strategy, advocated by the British, with an emphasis on operations in the Mediterranean, and an eventual cross-Channel operation.<sup>25</sup>

Two distinct national views have emerged from the published works, a British view and an American view, although there is sometimes overlap between the two.<sup>26</sup> These views generally reflect the wartime thinking of the British and American military and political leaders and military planners. The two national views are well entrenched, having been established soon after the end of the war. The two views were especially

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*George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century*, Boston, 1989; Tuvia Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy & History*, Boulder, 1992; David Reynolds, Warren F. Kimball, & A.O. Chubarian (eds), *Allies at War: The Soviet, American, and British Experience, 1939-1945*, New York, 1994; Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Roosevelt at War: The War They Fought and the Peace they Hoped to Make*, New York, 1994; William B. Breuer, *Feuding Allies: The Private Wars of the High Command*, Edison, 1995; Alex Danchev, *On Specialness: Essays in Anglo-American Relations*, London, 1998. In the 2000s there has been: Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and United States Strategy in World War II*, Chapel Hill, 2000; Mark A. Stoler, *Allies in War*, London, 2005

<sup>24</sup> For example, William Emerson, 'Franklin Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief in World War II', *MA*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Winter 1958-1959; Richard M. Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited: An Interpretation of American Strategy in the European War, 1942-1944', *AHR*, Vol. 68, No. 4, July 1963; Trumbull Higgins, 'The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945', *MA*, Vol. 34, No. 3, October 1970; Richard W. Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', *MA*, Vol. 35, No. 2, April 1971; Maurice Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited: Myths and Realities in Anglo-American Strategy for the Second Front', in *D-Day: The Normandy Invasion in Retrospect*, Lawrence, 1971; Mark A. Stoler, 'The "Second Front" and American Fear of Soviet Expansion, 1941-1943', *MA*, Vol. 39, No. 3, October 1975; Mark A. Stoler, 'The American Perception of British Mediterranean Strategy, 1941-45', in C.L. Symonds (ed.), *New Aspects of Naval History*, Annapolis, 1981; Mark M. Lowenthal, 'Roosevelt and the Coming of the War: The Search for United States Policy 1937-42', *JCH*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 1981; Joseph L. Strange, 'The British Rejection of Operation Sledgehammer, An Alternative Motive', *MA*, Vol. 46, No. 1, February 1982; Maurice Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe, 1939-1945', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986; Gordon A. Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986; Tuvia Ben-Moshe, 'Winston Churchill and the "Second Front": A Reappraisal', *JMH*, Vol. 62, No. 3, September 1990

<sup>25</sup> Stoler, 'The United States: The Global Strategy', p.73

<sup>26</sup> As early as 1963 Richard Leighton wrote that this "two strategies theory" was well established, Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited', pp.919-924. Higgins' view in 1970 that the two views were gradually coalescing has proved incorrect, Higgins, 'The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945', p.84

apparent in works written between 1945 and 1970, but they continue to appear in more recent works as well. There are also occasional compromise views.

The British view is generally based on the wartime thoughts of the Prime Minister and the C.I.G.S., General Alanbrooke.<sup>27</sup> Historians who support this view believe that the Anglo-American strategy actually followed during the war, including the decision for TORCH, was the best available.<sup>28</sup> TORCH is considered to be the necessary first step in this British-advocated strategy to win the war in Europe. TORCH helped clear North Africa of Axis forces, and led to further Anglo-American operations in the Mediterranean. It established conditions to remove Italy from the war, and badly weakened the Germans before an eventual invasion of north-west Europe when it was a safe proposition.<sup>29</sup> The British did not fear a cross-Channel operation, but were sensibly biding their time.<sup>30</sup> Supporters of this view dismiss the American plans for a cross-Channel invasion of France in 1942, and instead consider TORCH to be the only realistic option for the Western Allies in that year.<sup>31</sup> The feasibility of the American proposal for a cross-Channel invasion of France in 1943 is also questioned.<sup>32</sup> TORCH could assist the Soviets as effectively as any of the other options. Those supporting the British view see the American military and political

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<sup>27</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.viii; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, p.x. Churchill outlined this British strategy in his papers on future strategy to Roosevelt in December 1941, and the eventual strategy followed by the Western Allies was strikingly similar to what Churchill outlined, Churchill to Roosevelt, 16, 17, 18 & 20 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.294-308

<sup>28</sup> Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, pp.17-18; Higgins, 'The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945', p.86; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, p.71. Danchev wrote: "For a bona fide Second Front, the conclusion is plain as could be. The British were right: It was not only wise but essential to wait", Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.19

<sup>29</sup> Ben-Moshe, 'Winston Churchill and the "Second Front": A Reappraisal', p.503; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.39-40; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, pp.16, 347; Basil Collier, *The Lion and the Eagle: British and Anglo-American Strategy, 1900-1950*, New York, 1972, pp.358-359; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', pp.15-16, 19; Oliver Lyttelton, *The Memoirs of Lord Chandos*, London, 1962, p.176

<sup>30</sup> Baxter, 'Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?' p.9

<sup>31</sup> Baxter, 'Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?' p.9; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.404; Collier, *The Lion and the Eagle*, pp.353, 355; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.25; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.18; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, pp.32, 36; Basil Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, London, 1970, p.438; Sainsbury, *The North African Landings*, p.11. Danchev stated: "No other combined operation on a respectable scale offered comparable prospects of clear tactical success within a politically acceptable time-frame", Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.25

<sup>32</sup> Collier, *The Lion and the Eagle*, pp.353, 355; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', pp.18-19; Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, p.438. Leighton calls the American plan for a 1942 or 1943 cross-Channel operation "a dubious scheme", Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited', p.925. Danchev wrote that a 1943 cross-Channel operation "was rejected at the time and has not gained in credibility since", Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.19

leaders of 1942 as inexperienced and overambitious, while, conversely, the British leadership was experienced and understandably cautious.<sup>33</sup> Basically, the British view is that TORCH was the only sensible choice in 1942, and that the subsequent British-sponsored Mediterranean strategy was very desirable.

The American view generally reflects the wartime thoughts of General Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, along with Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and other prominent U.S. Army figures. The American view is that TORCH was a defensive operation that switched the focus of Western Allied strategy from the decisive invasion of France to the indecisive Mediterranean theatre, resulting in a costly large-scale and long-term American commitment there, and delaying Allied victory in the war by a year.<sup>34</sup> These historians argue that building up for an invasion of France in 1943 would have been better than TORCH and subsequent Mediterranean operations.<sup>35</sup> An early cross-Channel operation would have followed the traditional American direct strategic approach, aimed at securing quick and decisive victory.

Historians supporting the American view have suggested that TORCH was a political decision imposed by Roosevelt on his military men despite their understandable protests, in order to get American troops into action in 1942 to achieve domestic political goals and assist the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup> Roosevelt was seduced into TORCH and

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<sup>33</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.44-45; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.16; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, pp.32, 36, 71; Sainsbury, *The North African Landings*, p.11; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, p.109. In his diary, Alanbrooke wrote of General Marshall on 15 April 1942: "... his strategical ability does not impress me at all!!", Alanbrooke Diary, 15 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.249

<sup>34</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.2, 19; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.16, 121, 144, 200-201; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.21; Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited', p.928; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.72; Stoler, 'The United States: The Global Strategy', p.69. Stoler described TORCH as "by no means as effective militarily or diplomatically as a successful cross-Channel attack", Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.155

<sup>35</sup> Higgins, 'The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945', p.87. Stoler concludes that "the American [direct] plan appears more realistic on both military and political levels than Britain's [peripheral] approach", Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.165. Elsewhere, Stoler describes the British thinking behind the peripheral strategy to be dubious at best, Stoler, 'The American Perception of British Mediterranean Strategy, 1941-45', p.332. Supporters of a 1943 cross-Channel operation include: Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.4, 274; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.3; Trumbull Higgins, 'Winston Churchill and the Second Front', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs)*, Vol. 35, No. 2, April 1959, p.278; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.159; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.29, 161

<sup>36</sup> Stoler, 'The United States: The Global Strategy', p.64; Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.68-69

the Mediterranean by the British, and particularly by Churchill, and he was under the influence of the British.<sup>37</sup> The British are seen to have feared an invasion of France because of possible heavy losses at the hands of the Germans, and were trying to avoid such an undertaking, or delay it as long as possible.<sup>38</sup> Contributing to their fear were memories of World War I casualties, as well as the heavy defeats inflicted on them by the Germans in 1940 and 1941.<sup>39</sup> Protecting their Empire was also a strong motivation for the British strategy.<sup>40</sup> TORCH is considered to have offered no help to the Soviet Union, with a cross-Channel operation seen as the only way to provide them with assistance.<sup>41</sup> Basically, this American view argues that the U.S. Army strategy of a cross-Channel invasion as the first major Anglo-American operation should have been adopted, and the British and Roosevelt are blamed for imposing TORCH on the U.S. Army.

The Cold War influenced these views, with both sides stating that their strategy could have helped 'win the peace' against the Soviet Union. Some who follow the British view have stated that American failure to completely support the Mediterranean strategy resulted in the Western Allies not gaining more post-war territory and influence in Europe than the Soviets.<sup>42</sup> The American view is that General Marshall and the U.S. Army were not politically naïve in strategic planning in 1941, 1942 and

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<sup>37</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.3; Higgins, 'The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945', p.84; Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.3-9, 35; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', pp.68, 70-71; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.26, 29, 54; Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.154; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, pp.142-146, 158

<sup>38</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.1; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.77; Higgins, 'Winston Churchill and the Second Front', p.279; Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, p.253; Strange, 'The British Rejection of Operation Sledgehammer', pp.7, 9, 12, 13; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, pp.142-146, 175

<sup>39</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.1; Strange, 'The British Rejection of Operation Sledgehammer', pp.6, 12

<sup>40</sup> Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, pp.24-25, 116, 122; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', pp.68, 71; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.4-6; Stoler, 'The American Perception of British Mediterranean Strategy, 1941-45', p.331

<sup>41</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.91

<sup>42</sup> A revisionist view from the early Cold War, established by Baldwin and Wilmot, stated that the Americans did not have a politically motivated strategy, but instead had a narrow doctrinaire strategy, and because they did not follow the politically motivated British Mediterranean strategy the Western Allies lost the peace after World War II by not exploiting Mediterranean successes and placing forces in eastern Europe to block the Soviets, Baldwin, *Great Mistakes*, pp.1-2, 23-27, 31; Baxter, 'Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?' p.7; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.45; Higgins, 'The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945', p.84; Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited', p.920; Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.677; Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.105; Stoler, 'The "Second Front" and American Fear of Soviet Expansion', p.136; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, pp.12-13, 715

1943.<sup>43</sup> The argument is that the 1943 cross-Channel operation the U.S. Army so strongly advocated could have limited Soviet territorial expansion and allowed the Western Allies to reach Berlin before the Soviets.<sup>44</sup>

The British and American views are well represented in the literature, and even the most recent works have generally followed one or the other of the two well-established views.<sup>45</sup> There are few works that offer a compromise between the two traditional views.<sup>46</sup>

Various reasons are given by the British and American sides for TORCH being chosen as the first large-scale Anglo-American operation of the war. The decision to invade North-West Africa is generally seen to be a political decision rather than a military decision, made by Roosevelt and Churchill, with the Prime Minister and President understandably more sensitive to political necessities than their military chiefs.<sup>47</sup> Roosevelt is generally considered to be more important in ensuring TORCH occurred than Churchill.<sup>48</sup> A number of reasons are given for Roosevelt's desire for a 1942 operation. One of the most common reasons given is the need to assist the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup> Also considered important is the President's need to rally and focus

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<sup>43</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.xi; Stoler, 'The "Second Front" and American Fear of Soviet Expansion', pp.136, 140; Stoler, 'The United States: The Global Strategy', pp.74-75

<sup>44</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.1-2; Stoler, 'The "Second Front" and American Fear of Soviet Expansion', p.136

<sup>45</sup> Mark A. Stoler continues to champion the American pro-Marshall and U.S. Army view, while Alex Danchev puts forward the British view. This is seen in Reynolds, Kimball and Chubarian (eds), *Allies at War*, where they present the American and British views on World War II strategy, in Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', and Mark A. Stoler, 'The United States: Global Strategy'. Stoler does not press his case for the U.S. Army view as strongly in this essay as he does in his other works, but Danchev argues the British strategy of World War II was the right one to win the war.

<sup>46</sup> Greenfield, in *The Historian and the Army*, argued a "fusionist" theory that the British strategy in the Mediterranean, including TORCH, laid the foundations for the American direct strategy and Operation OVERLORD, with the two strategies complementing each other, Higgins, 'The Anglo-American Historians' War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945', p.85; Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited', p.923. Greenfield also argued this in *American Strategy in World War II*, pp.14, 15, 25, 41-42, 44. Morison in *Strategy and Compromise* argued a version of the fusionist theory, Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited', p.924; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.3, 25, 47, 57. So did Feis in *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, pp.57, 93, 115

<sup>47</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.38; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.21; Emerson, 'Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief', p.195; Leighton, 'Overlord Revisited', p.920; Sainsbury, *The North African Landings*, p.10;

<sup>48</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.4; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.117, 141; Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, pp.310-312; Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, pp.221, 283

<sup>49</sup> Martin Blumenson (ed.), *The Patton Papers, 1940-1945*, Boston, 1974, p.79; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.344-345; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.9, 14; Grigg, *1943: The*

American public opinion, to boost morale and ensure a strong war effort.<sup>50</sup> Roosevelt also had forthcoming elections to worry about, and he may have wanted a 1942 operation before they occurred.<sup>51</sup> The need for the President to focus American public attention on the war in Europe rather than the Pacific is sometimes mentioned.<sup>52</sup> Operation TORCH is considered to have offered Roosevelt the safest way for a quick victory.<sup>53</sup> Churchill and Roosevelt are sometimes given equal credit for wanting a 1942 operation, in order to assist the Soviet Union, while at the same time boosting public opinion and morale.<sup>54</sup> It is stated that Roosevelt had a persistent interest in an operation to North-West Africa, as did Churchill, and Roosevelt's interest in this undertaking was encouraged by Churchill.<sup>55</sup>

The military benefits of a North-West Africa operation receive some acknowledgement for contributing to the decision to choose TORCH. It has been said that in July 1942 the British were coming around to the idea that a North-West Africa operation would be a good offensive for military reasons.<sup>56</sup> A North-West Africa operation would help with the precarious situation of the British Eighth Army in North Africa, improve the shipping situation, and could also provide valuable combat experience for American troops.<sup>57</sup> Other military reasons have also been put forward. A more cynical view is that TORCH was carried out "to prevent the loss of British control over the Middle East".<sup>58</sup> TORCH and a 1942 Mediterranean strategy have also

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*Victory That Never Was*, p.21; Stoler, 'The United States: The Global Strategy', p.64; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.18, 35; Lowenthal, 'Roosevelt and the Coming of the War', p.431; R.A.C. Parker, 'Churchill and Consensus', *HJ*, Vol. 39, No. 2, June 1996, pp.565-566; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.viii

<sup>50</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.344-345; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.21; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.18, 35; Lowenthal, 'Roosevelt and the Coming of the War', p.431; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.viii

<sup>51</sup> Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.20; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.119, 146, 169; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.18

<sup>52</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.45; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.35; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.20; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.18; Lowenthal, 'Roosevelt and the Coming of the War', p.431; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.viii

<sup>53</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.35

<sup>54</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.38; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.15; Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.68-69; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, pp.100-101

<sup>55</sup> Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', p.503; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.19; Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.3-9, 35; Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.155

<sup>56</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.20, 22

<sup>57</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.14-15, 19

<sup>58</sup> Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History*, p.194

been said to have occurred due to British fear of a slaughter in France if an early cross-Channel operation had occurred.<sup>59</sup>

Some thought has been given to why TORCH emerged from the 1942 options to become the first large-scale combined Anglo-American military operation. One historian suggests that a North-West Africa operation prevailed almost by default, with an invasion of Norway rejected by the British and Americans, and Operation SLEDGEHAMMER, a 1942 cross-Channel invasion of France, rejected by the British.<sup>60</sup> The Americans had to do what the British wanted to do, because British troops and landing craft were vital to any 1942 operation.<sup>61</sup>

A basic summation of the general opinion of why TORCH occurred is that TORCH was the result of Roosevelt's insistence on a 1942 operation involving American ground forces, and the refusal of Churchill and the British C.O.S. to accept a 1942 cross-Channel operation.<sup>62</sup> As can be seen, certain reasons are commonly given for the TORCH decision, while other reasons receive little attention from historians.

This thesis takes issue with a number of aspects of the two traditional views. For example, the American view that a 1943 cross-Channel operation should have been chosen instead of TORCH ignores the fact that Roosevelt and Churchill had to have a successful operation against Germany in 1942. A 1943 cross-Channel operation was probably not the dubious and unfeasible scheme that the British view maintains, but due to the desires of Roosevelt and Churchill for early action, it was never going to be the first major Anglo-American undertaking. A compromise can be made between other aspects of the two views as well. For example, rather than seeing either leader as more responsible for TORCH, as is often done in the traditional views, both Roosevelt and Churchill played a large part in it occurring. TORCH was not simply Roosevelt's operation or Churchill's operation. The British charge of U.S. Army

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<sup>59</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.136, 188

<sup>60</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.32; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.10; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.21

<sup>61</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.32; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.38; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.73

<sup>62</sup> Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', p.506; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.152; Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.686. This was initially the conclusion of Stimson and Bundy, Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.425-426

inexperience in strategic planning in 1942 has much truth in it, but the British leadership was also very cautious in that year, just as the American view states. These and many other aspects of the two views will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis.

One area where this study differs from those that have previously appeared is that, along with a discussion of the various military and political reasons that determined why TORCH was chosen, it provides an in-depth analysis of the other possible 1942 operations, and considers their feasibility to determine if TORCH was militarily the best option. This has not been attempted in previous studies on Western Allied strategy in the war with Germany.<sup>63</sup> This thesis also provides a greater consideration of the impact of domestic politics on the TORCH decision than previous studies.

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The thesis consists of six chapters. After an introductory chapter outlining the course of the Anglo-American strategic debate up to the decision to undertake Operation TORCH, the next four chapters are divided into two distinct sections. The first section considers why the first major Western Allied military operation had to occur in 1942, and the second section determines why Operation TORCH emerged from the options available to the British and American military and political leaders in that year. The first section deals primarily with the political reasons, both domestic and alliance, for the decision, while the second section concerns itself mostly with the military reasons for TORCH. A final chapter considers the aims and achievements of TORCH at the tactical, operational, strategic and grand strategic levels.

Chapter 1 outlines the complex Anglo-American strategic debate from the tentative joint discussions in 1940 and 1941 to the serious discussions that occurred between American entry into the war on 7 December 1941 and the eventual decision to undertake Operation TORCH on 24 July 1942. This chapter touches on the major

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<sup>63</sup> Dunn, Jr. considers the feasibility of a 1943 cross-Channel operation, but he does not conduct a similar study of the various operations possible in 1942.

issues affecting Anglo-American strategy-making in the relevant period, and reveals the various options available to the Western Allies for their first significant combined operation of the war.

Chapter 2 considers the extent to which the Allied military situation affected the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt to have their armies undertake a major operation in 1942. The dire military situation of the Western Allies in the seven months after Pearl Harbor resulted in a serious loss of morale amongst the British and American people, as well as a loss of confidence in the British armed forces. Roosevelt and Churchill recognized this as a serious hindrance to their national war efforts, and realized that improving the war situation by successfully going on the offensive in 1942 would address this problem effectively. The military situation on the Eastern Front, where the Soviets fought their colossal struggle with Germany, was another potentially significant factor in the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt for action in 1942, and this is considered in the second part of Chapter 2. As the Western Allies discussed the nature and timing of their first major offensive, the Soviet Union was generally struggling in the war with Germany, and Stalin was urging assistance from Britain and the United States through a major military operation. This contributed to the eventual decision to undertake TORCH.

The influence of domestic political pressures on the desire of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to undertake a 1942 operation is considered in Chapter 3. The British and American governments faced a number of common domestic political problems between 7 December 1941 and 24 July 1942, including securing public support for their war policies, responding to demands from the public to go on the offensive, maintaining support for the government, and ensuring the approval ratings of the President and Prime Minister did not drop. Additionally, in the United States, President Roosevelt wanted to secure gains in the forthcoming mid-term Congressional elections. Chapter 3 examines the extent to which the decision to carry out a 1942 operation was a response by the British and American political leaders to these domestic political issues.

Having established the necessity of an operation in 1942 in response to the political factors outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, Chapter 4 considers the various operations

available to the Western Allies in 1942, including those given serious consideration, and others that were discussed but given less consideration. Each of these operations is described, with an emphasis on what it involved, the possibility of it being successful and achieving its objectives, and the reasons why it was not selected. In explaining why TORCH was chosen, it is very important to look at the options to TORCH to see why an invasion of North-West Africa was preferred by the Anglo-American military planners and leaders.

Chapter 5 discusses the military reasons for TORCH being chosen. There were some fundamental military reasons for an invasion of North-West Africa prevailing. Operation TORCH also offered the Western Allies a number of military benefits, especially for the maritime war and the war in the Mediterranean theatre and North Africa, and these benefits were recognized by the British in particular. These military reasons helped ensure that TORCH emerged from the options in 1942 to become the first major combined Anglo-American operation of the war.

A brief concluding chapter, Chapter 6, discusses the outcomes of TORCH at the tactical, operational, strategic and grand strategic levels, and considers the extent to which the operation achieved the objectives of Roosevelt and Churchill.

## **Chapter 1: The Anglo-American Strategic Debate**

A long and complex Anglo-American debate and discussion between 1940 and 1942 about future strategy eventually culminated in the decision on 24 July 1942 that Operation TORCH would occur in that year as the first large-scale combined British and American military operation of the Second World War. This chapter outlines the course of the discussion and debate, covering the various conferences and exchanges between British, American and Soviet military and political leaders. Joint planning of future Anglo-American operations did not begin in earnest until the United States entered the war on 7 December 1941, although up to that date all the major options had been considered by the British and Americans. In the seven months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the Anglo-American debate was intense and complicated, as both sides attempted to implement their preferred strategies. The course of the debate revealed several prominent options for the first major Anglo-American operation of the war. These were: a cross-Channel invasion of France in 1942 (Operation SLEDGEHAMMER); a cross-Channel operation in 1943 (Operation ROUND-UP); an invasion of Norway (Operation JUPITER); an invasion of North-West Africa (GYMNAST, SUPERGYMNAST, and later TORCH); or sending U.S. forces to fight alongside the British in the Middle East. Other options for the first major Anglo-American operation of the war also discussed at length between 1940 and 1942 included sending land and air forces to the Soviet Union, and invading or occupying the Atlantic Islands. However, it was to be TORCH that prevailed.

### **British and American Strategic Planning, 1940-1941**

Between 1940 and 7 December 1941 the United States was not a belligerent in the war. Even so, President Roosevelt considered carrying out an American military operation against Germany during that time, and both Britain and the United States gave much thought to what their first step should be once the United States entered the war. After the fall of France and the creation of the Vichy regime in June 1940, the British and Americans began to consider the two operations that would remain the most prominent up to 24 July 1942, a cross-Channel invasion of France and an invasion of Vichy French North-West Africa.

The British began planning a return to the Continent immediately after France was lost, although they saw it as a long-term option and initially focused their efforts and resources on securing the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean.<sup>64</sup> French West and North-West Africa were also soon given priority by the British and Americans as a destination for future operations. There was an early Allied landing attempt in French West Africa, when an Anglo-French force led by *Général de Brigade* Charles de Gaulle failed to take Duala and Dakar on 23 September 1940.<sup>65</sup> Another option for the first major Anglo-American operation of the war appeared in September 1940. In that month Roosevelt raised the possibility with the British of American troops occupying Dakar in French West Africa or the Atlantic Islands.<sup>66</sup> Planning for a future British or American landing in North-West Africa continued in the final months of 1940.<sup>67</sup> Tentative Anglo-American discussions about strategy had begun in mid-August 1940.<sup>68</sup> However, no planning was done on the nature of their first combined operation.

A vital step in the development of Anglo-American strategy, and one which helped determine their first major operation of the war, was the American adoption of the Germany-first policy in late-1940. American Plan 'Dog', composed in November 1940 by U.S. Navy CNO Admiral Harold R. Stark and partially endorsed by President Roosevelt on 16 January 1941, was a reorientation of American strategy in light of recent developments in Europe, and it called for full American support for the British in Europe, while staying on the defensive in the Pacific, because Germany was

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<sup>64</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.4

<sup>65</sup> Cadogan Diary, 16, 17, 18 & 23 September 1940, in David Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945*, London, 1971, pp.327-328; Sheila Lawlor, *Churchill and the Politics of War, 1940-1941*, Cambridge, 1994, pp.104-105; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.39

<sup>66</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.6. In October 1940 an American plan was developed to capture the Azores, NARA RG 38, Box 39, 'A Study of the Capture and Defense of the Azores', 18 October 1940

<sup>67</sup> In September Roosevelt began an American program of diplomacy and espionage aimed at minimizing German influence in French Africa, and creating conditions more suitable for a future American invasion or occupation of the region, Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.7. In December 1940 Roosevelt sent Robert Murphy to act as his personal agent in trying to secure more support in French Africa for a future American intervention there, Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.70. In late-1940 the British held six divisions ready to join the French to defend North-West Africa if *Maréchal* Pétain chose to fight the Axis again, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.50; George F. Howe, *United States Army in World War II, North-West Africa*, Washington, 1957, p.10

<sup>68</sup> Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, p.271

considered to be more dangerous.<sup>69</sup> Admiral Stark had also decided that large-scale land operations would be needed to defeat Germany, with the “ultimate offensive” being through Portugal, Spain and France.<sup>70</sup> Stark’s 1940 view was to become the major American strategic preference for their first significant operation on land. However, in the winter of 1940/1941, President Roosevelt still believed that Germany could be defeated without American troops landing in Europe, so he sought smaller operations in 1941 in which the United States could participate.<sup>71</sup>

On 16 January 1941 Roosevelt approved combined staff talks with the British.<sup>72</sup> This resulted in the Anglo-American Staff Conversations, which concluded in Washington in March. Resulting from these conversations was the ABC-1 document, in which the Germany-first policy was wholeheartedly agreed upon by both parties in the event of the United States entering the war. Consequently, even if Japan entered the war, Germany would remain the primary British and American enemy.<sup>73</sup> It was also agreed that if the United States entered the war it would follow the cautious British indirect or peripheral strategy centered on the Mediterranean, with an eventual invasion of France once Germany had been significantly weakened.<sup>74</sup> RAINBOW 5, a joint U.S. Army and Navy plan of April 1941 for possible war with the Axis, advocated this peripheral approach.<sup>75</sup>

With the war situation going badly for the British in April, May and June 1941, when they suffered some major defeats in the Mediterranean and North Africa, Roosevelt seriously considered a U.S. military commitment to support his unofficial ally, and the two options given priority were operations to occupy French West or North-West

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<sup>69</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.44; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.6; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.19-20; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.21; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, pp.29, 35-36; Mark A. Stoler & Melanie S. Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, Boston, 2003, pp.76-79. Roosevelt approved only those sections of Plan Dog that he agreed with, Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.36

<sup>70</sup> Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.685; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, p.271; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.7; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, pp.30-31; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.78

<sup>71</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.36

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35

<sup>73</sup> Craig, ‘The Political Leader as Strategist’, p.501; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.8; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.46; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.7; Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.683; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.22

<sup>74</sup> Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.22-23; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.8; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.39

<sup>75</sup> Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.23

Africa, or the Atlantic Islands.<sup>76</sup> In an April 1941 conversation between Roosevelt and General Marshall, about future strategy, the President talked about Dakar and West Africa “at considerable length”.<sup>77</sup> A plan was drawn up for an operation to West Africa, and Roosevelt informed the British of his interest in American troops taking part in the occupation of Dakar.<sup>78</sup> There was also much American discussion of an operation to the Atlantic Islands in April, May and June.<sup>79</sup> However, despite these American discussions in the summer of 1941, the United States did not undertake a military commitment. The diminishing of the crisis for the British in the summer of 1941, with the situation in the Mediterranean and North Africa stabilized as German focus switched to the Eastern Front, meant that American action was not needed so badly.<sup>80</sup>

Meanwhile the U.S. Army was developing its own ideas about the nature of the first major American offensive. In summer 1941 the U.S. Army strategic planners were talking of preparing “to fight Germany by actually coming to grips with and defeating her ground forces and definitely breaking her will to combat”.<sup>81</sup> By this they meant an invasion of France. This was a long-term plan, because the U.S. Army had to first be considerably expanded.

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10

<sup>78</sup> In early May 1941 War Plan BLACK was drawn up by U.S. Army planners, which dealt with an American operation to Dakar against French resistance. However, the W.P.D. found many problems with a Dakar expedition, Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.139-140; Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.12-13. On 29 May Roosevelt told British Ambassador Lord Halifax he would allow American troops to take part in the occupation of Dakar, and Churchill told the President on that day that the British would welcome American occupation of Dakar, and said plans should be prepared, Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 May 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.201; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.200

<sup>79</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.238, 241; Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.10-11, 13-14. In May 1941 WPL-47 was completed, a U.S. Army and Navy plan for capturing the Azores, NARA RG 38, Box 96, Letter from the CNO to Distribution List for WPL-47, 29 May 1941, p.1. On 22 May Roosevelt ordered Admiral Stark and General Marshall to prepare to move 25,000 troops to capture Eastern Atlantic islands, NARA RG 38, Box 96, Letter from Admiral Stark to General Marshall, 23 May 1941, p.1; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.55; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.14. On 27 May Roosevelt mentioned the importance of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands to the Battle of the Atlantic in his fireside chat to the American people, Frankfurter Memorandum for the President, 15 June 1941, in Max Freedman (ed.), *Roosevelt and Frankfurter: Their Correspondence, 1928-1945*, London, 1968, p.608; Russell D. Buhite & David W. Levy (eds), *FDR's Fireside Chats*, Norman, 1992, p.182

<sup>80</sup> Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.18-19

<sup>81</sup> Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.685

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Western Allied focus shifted to assisting their new ally, and this greatly influenced the British and American search for an operation, with each possibility now judged against the extent to which it could assist the Soviets. This factor became more significant as the Soviet military position worsened in the early months of the German attack. The Soviets themselves sought a significant British or American operation, but they most desired a British, and later an Anglo-American, invasion of France, which they considered to be a suitable Second Front (the first front being the Soviet-German front).<sup>82</sup>

The possibility of sending American and British land and air forces to operate in the Soviet Union was soon raised and discussed by all three nations.<sup>83</sup> Along with sending British and American troops and aircraft to the Soviet Union, an operation to Norway began to receive greater consideration after 22 June 1941. Churchill was a strong supporter of an invasion of Norway, and he ensured that from now on it remained a prominent option for the Western Allies. Stalin also showed an early interest in an Anglo-Soviet operation to Norway. In his first message to Churchill, on 18 July, the Soviet leader noted the need for an Anglo-Soviet front in the Arctic and northern Norway. He also requested an invasion of northern France in the same message.<sup>84</sup> After outlining the impossibility of a cross-Channel operation in his 21 July reply to Stalin, Churchill said: "It is however to the North that we must look for any speedy help that we can give." Despite this, he told Stalin that "it would be impossible to land troops, either British or Russian, on German-occupied territory in perpetual daylight without having first obtained reasonable fighter air cover."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.14; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.74

<sup>83</sup> On 21 July 1941 Churchill mentioned to Stalin the possibility of sending fighter squadrons and some anti-aircraft guns to Murmansk, Text of Personal and Secret Message from Mr Churchill to M. Stalin, Received on July 21, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.15; Richard C. Lukas, 'The Velvet Project: Hope and Frustration', *MA*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Winter 1964-1965, p.145. President Roosevelt's personal representative, Harry Hopkins, met with Stalin late in July 1941, and the Soviet leader expressed interest in British bombers being based in Russia to bomb the Rumanian oil fields. He also told Hopkins that American troops would be welcome "on any part of the Russian front ...", Edward M. Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory: American-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945*, Wilmington, 1990, p.31; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.293; Lukas, 'The Velvet Project', p.145

<sup>84</sup> Personal Message from Stalin to Mr Churchill, July 18, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.13; Martin Kitchen, 'Winston Churchill and the Soviet Union during the Second World War', *HJ*, Vol. 30, No. 2, June 1987, p.420

<sup>85</sup> Text of Personal and Secret Message From Mr Churchill to M. Stalin, Received on July 21, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.15

In summer 1941 the British also focused their attention on operations to occupy the Spanish and Portuguese Atlantic Islands.<sup>86</sup> Plans were created and forces assembled for such an undertaking, although it never occurred, with the forces being needed elsewhere, especially in North Africa. Another option that would become prominent in 1942 first appeared in autumn 1941. At that time President Roosevelt asked General Marshall to make contingency plans for sending American troops to serve alongside the British in the Middle East.<sup>87</sup>

Roosevelt and Churchill had their first wartime meeting at the Placentia Bay conference in August 1941. At this conference the British told the Americans of their strategy of focusing on the Mediterranean and Middle East, and they sought American troops for North Africa, with an invasion of French North Africa seen as important.<sup>88</sup> The U.S. Army felt that this was not a wise course, and did not want to carry out operations they felt were intended primarily to protect the British empire. However, they did not raise their concerns with the British at this time.<sup>89</sup> At the Placentia Bay conference the Germany-first policy was re-affirmed by the British and Americans, despite the spectre of Japanese aggression looming in the Pacific. Operations to the Atlantic Islands were also discussed during the conference.<sup>90</sup>

Another major step in the development of American strategy was the American “Victory Program” of late-September 1941, a report in which the U.S. Army and Navy estimated production requirements to defeat the Axis, and outlined future strategy. This report advocated following the British strategic approach due to lack of American resources. The U.S. Army recognized that building up to 215 divisions was a long-term aim, so Britain’s indirect strategy seemed best for the immediate future.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> On 21 July 1941 the British Defence Committee discussed an operation to the Canary Islands, and decided to do this in August 1941, with the codename Operation PUMA, Cadogan Diary, 21 July 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.393. Operation PILGRIM was a British operation planned in August and September 1941 to occupy the Canary Islands, NA ADM 116/4476, ‘Operation “Pilgrim”, General Outline of Operation’, p.1

<sup>87</sup> Doenecke, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy: An Ambiguous Legacy’, in Doenecke & Stoler (eds), *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy, 1933-1945*, p.36

<sup>88</sup> Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.23-24; Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.20-21, 24; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.9-10; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.46

<sup>89</sup> Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.24; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.10; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.46

<sup>90</sup> Cadogan Diary, 11 August 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.399; Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.253; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.64-65; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.28

<sup>91</sup> Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.30; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, pp.49, 51

In this Victory Program the Navy felt an American operation to West and North-West Africa was desirable, along with an operation to the Azores.<sup>92</sup> However, in the estimate the Army concluded that the British peripheral strategy might not work, and “that it may be necessary to come to grips with the German armies on the continent of Europe”.<sup>93</sup> In a separate estimate the Army advocated building up a large force for a major assault on German no later than July 1943.<sup>94</sup> Roosevelt told Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson he disagreed with this idea, and asked for a plan for a West Africa operation. When Secretary Stimson left the meeting with Roosevelt on 25 September, where he presented the Victory Program, he had a request from Roosevelt for a U.S. Army study of a French West African expedition.<sup>95</sup> Roosevelt subsequently informed the British of his interest in such an operation.<sup>96</sup>

Meanwhile, proposals to send British ground and air units to the Soviet Union, and an operation to Norway were prominent in September and October 1941, as the British search for a way to help the beleaguered Soviets intensified.<sup>97</sup> Two RAF squadrons actually transferred to northern Russia in September.<sup>98</sup> However, in late-October Churchill turned against the idea of sending troops to the Soviet Union, because the British were stretched to the limit.<sup>99</sup> Churchill pushed for a Norway operation to be

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<sup>92</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.69-70; Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.70; Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.30-31; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.28

<sup>93</sup> Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.31; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.11

<sup>94</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.68; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.12

<sup>95</sup> Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.70; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.32

<sup>96</sup> On 10 October the President informed Lord Halifax that he had told Secretary Stimson and General Marshall to prepare a study about sending an American Expeditionary Force to West Africa, NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Lord Halifax to Churchill, 11 October 1941

<sup>97</sup> Kitchen, ‘Churchill and the Soviet Union’, p.421; Martin Kitchen, *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union During the Second World War*, Basingstoke, 1985, p.95; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.18

<sup>98</sup> Personal Message from Prime Minister to Monsieur Stalin, Received on August 30, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.19; Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.145; Walter Scott Dunn, Jr., *The Soviet Economy and the Red Army, 1930-1945*, Westport, 1995, p.69. Stalin and Churchill both suggested possible locations for British troops to serve, including the southern flank and Archangel. A figure of 25 to 30 divisions was suggested by Stalin, but the British considered sending only two divisions, Prime Minister Churchill to Monsieur Stalin, Received on September 6, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.23; Personal Message from Premier Stalin to the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, Sent on September 13, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.24; His Excellency Monsieur Joseph Stalin, September 21, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.27; Eden, *The Reckoning*, pp.278-279; Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.146

<sup>99</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.27-28

examined by his military men in September and October, and suggested it to Stalin.<sup>100</sup> His military men soon informed him that such an operation was very unlikely to succeed.<sup>101</sup> However, Churchill would return to the Norway operation regularly in the next ten months.

In October 1941 the British were confident of success in their forthcoming offensive in North Africa, Operation CRUSADER, and Churchill hoped that success in North Africa could lead to Operation WHIPCORD, an invasion of Sicily, which was disliked by the British military men. However, with strong urging from the C.O.S., on 28 October he replaced WHIPCORD with Operation GYMNAST, a plan to send aid and military forces to *Général d'armée* Maxime Weygand, Delegate General in Vichy French North Africa, if he invited them.<sup>102</sup> On 3 November 1941 Churchill noted that GYMNAST was still “very hypothetical”, but British planning for the operation continued during that month.<sup>103</sup> In the event the British offensive in Libya did not succeed, removing the vital precondition to GYMNAST.<sup>104</sup> Roosevelt’s attention continued to be focused on French West and North-West Africa in October and November.<sup>105</sup>

In November and December 1941 the British considered a number of large raids to seize a temporary base in Norway.<sup>106</sup> This would provide assistance to the Soviets. Discussions about sending British forces to the Soviet Union also resumed, but were

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<sup>100</sup> Prime Minister Churchill to Monsieur Stalin, Received on September 6, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.23; Brian P. Farrell, ‘Yes, Prime Minister: Barbarossa, Whipcord, and the Basis of British Grand Strategy, Autumn 1941’, *JMH*, Vol. 57, No. 4, October 1993, p.609

<sup>101</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 3 October 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.187; Alanbrooke Diary, 9 October 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.189; Farrell, ‘Yes, Prime Minister’, p.610

<sup>102</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 October 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.253; Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 November 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.270; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.20; Farrell, ‘Yes, Prime Minister’, pp.610, 613, 618-620; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.77; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.35

<sup>103</sup> NA CAB 84/37, J.P.(41) 958, ‘Operation “GYMNAST”’, 12th November, 1941, pp.1-2; NA WO 193/8, CIGS/PM/192, Prime Minister’s Personal Minute Serial No. M.1027/1, p.2. Churchill again told Roosevelt on 20 November 1941 that he was hoping the French in North-West Africa would join the war once the British North African offensive had begun, and that divisions were being held ready to exploit this possibility, Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 November 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.270

<sup>104</sup> Farrell, ‘Yes, Prime Minister’, p.621

<sup>105</sup> Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.34-38

<sup>106</sup> NA CAB 84/37, J.P.(41) 956, ‘Operations “TRUNCHEON”, “ASCOT” and “STUMPER”’, 12th November, 1941, pp.1-3; NA CAB 84/37, J.P.(41) 957, ‘Alternative to Operation “ASCOT”’, pp.1-2; Alanbrooke Diary, 4 December 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.207

abruptly halted by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>107</sup> The successful Soviet counter-attack beginning near Moscow on 6 December 1941 also meant the need for an operation to assist them temporarily receded.

### **British and American Strategic Planning, 1941-1942**

After American entry into the war on 7 December 1941, the search for a combined operation began in earnest. Up to this point a variety of possibilities had been discussed and planned by the British and Americans, with a North-West Africa operation perhaps most prominent. Such an operation had found favour with Roosevelt and Churchill in particular. However, the U.S. Army had been developing its own idea of confronting Germany with a cross-Channel invasion of France, and this would soon emerge as a serious alternative to a North-West Africa operation as the first Anglo-American operation of the war. Another serious option also emerged soon after Pearl Harbor, when on 16 December 1941 an American plan estimated that 42,000 U.S. troops could be sent to the Middle East in around five months.<sup>108</sup>

Churchill and Roosevelt quickly arranged a conference, known as ARCADIA, to be held in Washington to discuss Western Allied strategy. Prior to the conference, President Roosevelt met with his major political and military advisors on 21 December 1941, and amongst the issues raised were operations to the Atlantic Islands and Dakar.<sup>109</sup> Roosevelt and his military and political leaders also decided that North-West Africa should be the foremost objective of a future U.S. expeditionary force.<sup>110</sup>

On his way to the Washington conference Prime Minister Churchill wrote three papers on future strategy. He included occupying French West and North-West Africa as the main Anglo-American operation against Germany, and wrote:

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<sup>107</sup> See: NA CAB 84/37, J.P.(41) 1016, 'Offer of Assistance to Russians in Caucasia', 29th November, 1941, pp.1-2; Alanbrooke Diary, 3 December 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.206; Alanbrooke Diary, 4 December 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.207; W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Received on November 22, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.34-35; Message from Premier Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill, Sent on November 23, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.36; Eden Diary, 3 December 1941, in Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.284

<sup>108</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 59, 'An American Expedition to the Middle East', 16 December 1941

<sup>109</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.275; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.90; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.44

<sup>110</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.275; Steele, *The First Offensive*, pp.43-44; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.42

A Campaign must be fought in 1942 to gain possession of, or conquer, the whole of the North African shore, including the Atlantic ports of Morocco. Dakar and other French West African Ports must be captured before the end of the year.<sup>111</sup>

He also pushed for confirmation of the Germany-first policy, an increase in the bomber offensive, and he emphasized the need to ensure the Soviet Union remained in the war. Eventual landings were to be made in 1943 to liberate “the captive countries of Western and Southern Europe”.<sup>112</sup>

At ARCADIA the Germany-first policy was confirmed as the primary strategy of the Western Allies, removing British fears that Pearl Harbor might see the Americans abandon it.<sup>113</sup> General agreement was also reached by Churchill, Roosevelt and their military leaders on carrying out a landing operation in North-West Africa in 1942, either with Vichy approval or without.<sup>114</sup> Various other possible operations were also discussed to various degrees at the conference. In essence, the United States again agreed to the British indirect approach to defeating Germany, clearing the Mediterranean and preparing for a 1943 cross-Channel operation.<sup>115</sup>

A North-West Africa operation was discussed in Roosevelt’s first meeting with Churchill on the evening of 22 December, and Churchill gained Roosevelt’s sympathy for such an undertaking, although Roosevelt needed little convincing because he continued to view the operation as important.<sup>116</sup> On the next day, the opening of the conference, Churchill and Roosevelt touched on a variety of options for the first major Anglo-American operation of the war. Churchill brought up the possibility of American troops going into Norway in 1943. Both men discussed the need for an

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<sup>111</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 & 18 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.294-298, 302-304

<sup>112</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 & 18 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.294-298, 302-304; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.20; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.39

<sup>113</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.32, 37; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.321; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.20; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.8; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.76

<sup>114</sup> Dykes Diary, 4 January 1942, in Alex Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance: The Second World War Diaries of Brigadier Vivian Dykes*, London, 1990, p.84; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.32-33; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.321; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.19; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.10; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.42

<sup>115</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, pp.65, 67

<sup>116</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.30; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.42; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.23

operation to North-West Africa and as Churchill later noted, with regards to a North-West Africa operation, “the discussion was not *whether*, but *how*”. Roosevelt noted the importance of the Azores and Cape Verde islands, and especially the latter. The President stated that he and Churchill agreed that it would be a mistake to send American troops to the Middle East at that point, and Churchill said that all he expected from the United States in that region was supplies and building up of bases.<sup>117</sup>

In early January 1942 Churchill gave Roosevelt a wide-ranging note on future Anglo-American strategy, in which he mentioned most of the serious options. He wrote of training American troops in Iceland for future “liberating operations in Scandinavia”, outlined his arguments for occupying all of North Africa, with SUPERGYMNAST a priority, proposed sending an American Army of six or eight divisions to the Middle East, “based on the Persian Gulf ports”, either to operate in the Middle East, or to “move forward to the Caucasus and even to the Russian southern front north of the Black Sea”, depending on events in Russia. A 1943 cross-Channel operation was also mentioned, as was increasing the bomber offensive.<sup>118</sup> The only major option not mentioned in this note was a 1942 cross-Channel operation.

W.W. 1, the paper emerging from the ARCADIA conference, called for the Germany-first policy to continue, despite the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. It called for tightening the ring around Germany, and capturing the entire North African coast. A 1942 offensive on the Continent was considered unlikely. A North-West Africa operation was accepted as part of this paper.<sup>119</sup> However, there were some reservations amongst the top British and American military leaders about this

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<sup>117</sup> Marshall Memorandum, ‘Notes of Meeting at the White House with the President and the British Prime Minister Presiding’, 23 December 1941, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.32-36; Notes Made by General Eisenhower after Conference with General Marshall at 7:45 P.M., 23 December 1941, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.19; Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.279-281; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.90. At the ARCADIA conference proposals were made that the United States should undertake the occupation of the Cape Verde islands, NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 83, ‘Operations “GYMNAST”, “PILGRIM” and “BONUS”’, 28 January 1942, p.4

<sup>118</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, [??] January 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.315-317, 319-320

<sup>119</sup> Craig, ‘The Political Leader as Strategist’, p.501; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.17; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.95; Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.683; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, pp.80-82

operation.<sup>120</sup> The U.S. Army in particular opposed a North-West Africa operation, on the grounds it would disperse meagre American resources.<sup>121</sup> Despite these military reservations, upon leaving the United States Prime Minister Churchill felt that President Roosevelt's thinking "about a large North African venture was moving forward on the same lines" as his own.<sup>122</sup>

Meanwhile other planning for future strategy had continued in Britain and the United States. On 24 December 1941 the British Joint Planning Staff (J.P.S.) completed a very detailed outline plan for a cross-Channel operation, noting the great difficulties faced.<sup>123</sup> In January 1942 General Bernard Paget, C-in-C British Home Forces, studied a cross-Channel operation, and concluded that such an operation could not occur in the spring, and he was doubtful that the operation, a large-scale raid, could even occur in the autumn.<sup>124</sup> The J.P.S. concluded that planning and training should be "concentrated primarily on 'ROUND-UP'", a 1943 operation, but that preparations for a 1942 operation should continue in case of a sudden drop in German strength.<sup>125</sup> This was to remain the British attitude towards a cross-Channel operation up to 24 July 1942.

From mid-December 1941 until March 1942 the British undertook much discussion and planning of operations to the Atlantic Islands.<sup>126</sup> The Americans also prepared

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<sup>120</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.20; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.60; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.24. On 9 January 1942 Alanbrooke felt that an operation to Tripoli should be connected "with the operation for occupying North Africa on the invitation of the French. But, first secure your invitation!", Alanbrooke Diary, 9 January 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.219. On 9 January 1942 General Marshall told Roosevelt that a North-West Africa operation could only work if the French invited them, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 9 January 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.51

<sup>121</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.92; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.25

<sup>122</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.23

<sup>123</sup> NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1028, 'Operation "ROUND-UP"', 24th December, 1941, p.1; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.31

<sup>124</sup> NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 124, 'Operations on the Continent', 11 February, 1942, p.1; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.5

<sup>125</sup> NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 124, 'Operations on the Continent', 11 February, 1942, p.2

<sup>126</sup> See: NA CAB 79/17, C.O.S.(42) 1st Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday, 1st January, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.3; NA CAB 79/17, C.O.S.(42) 22nd Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 20th January 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.5; NA CAB 79/18, C.O.S.(42) 37th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd February, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., pp.3-4; NA CAB 79/18, C.O.S.(42) 41st Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 6th February, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.3; NA CAB 79/18, C.O.S.(42) 54th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 17th February 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.2; NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1053, 'Atlantic Islands and Madagascar', 14th December, 1941, p.1; NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1069, 'Atlantic Islands and Madagascar', 17th December, 1941, p.1; NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1080, 'Operation "PILGRIM" – in Co-operation with the U.S.A.', 19th

plans for operations to the Atlantic Islands in the first two months of the new year.<sup>127</sup> At the same time, the British also considered Operation MARROW, a joint Anglo-Soviet operation to Petsamo.<sup>128</sup> However, nothing came of these plans and discussions.

In the months after the ARCADIA conference a string of serious Western Allied defeats, including the failure of the British offensive in North Africa, and serious reversals in the Pacific, Asia, and the Battle of the Atlantic, saw GYMNAST lose priority, as focus shifted to the Mediterranean and Pacific, and shipping was needed elsewhere.<sup>129</sup> Plans for other operations, such as sending a U.S. Army to the Middle East, also lost priority with the changing military situation.<sup>130</sup> The defeats in the Pacific made some U.S. planners, and especially Navy planners, want to focus more on the Pacific.<sup>131</sup>

However, the Americans gave serious thought to sending air and ground forces to the Middle East in March 1942, with the British seeking support there and the Americans recognizing the need for support.<sup>132</sup> On 19 March 1942 Field Marshal John Dill, Head

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December, 1941, p.1; NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1083, 'Operation "PILGRIM" – in Co-operation with the U.S.A.', 20th December, 1941, p.1; NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1088, 'Operation "PILGRIM" – Present Notice', 22nd December, 1941, pp.1-4; NA CAB 84/39, J.P.(41) 1112, 'Operations BREEZY and ADROIT', 30th December, 1941, p.1; NA CAB 84/40, J.P.(42) 34, 'Operation "ADROIT" – Directives', 7th January, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 83, 'Operations "GYMNAST", "PILGRIM" and "BONUS"', 28 January, 1942, p.3; NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 100, 'Operation "PILGRIM" with Assistance from the U.S.A.', 5th February, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 112, 'Madeira', 7th February, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 84/42, J.P.(42) 195, 'Operation "FLASHLIGHT"', 28th February, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 84/42, J.P.(42) 213, 'Operation "ADROIT"', 1st March, 1942, p.1; Alanbrooke Diary, 18 December 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.212

<sup>127</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 100, Letter from the CNO, C.O.S., U.S. Army & C-in-C US Fleet to the C-in-C, U.S. Atlantic Fleet & Commanding General, Field Forces, U.S. Army, 19 February 1942, p.1

<sup>128</sup> NA CAB 79/17, C.O.S.(42) 2nd Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 2nd January, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.3; NA CAB 79/17, C.O.S.(42) 6th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 6th January, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.2; NA CAB 79/17, C.O.S.(42) 27th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Saturday, 24th January, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., pp.2-3; NA CAB 79/18, C.O.S.(42) 41st Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held Friday, 6th February, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.2; NA CAB 84/39, J.P.(41) 1109, 'Operation "MARROW"', 29th December, 1941, p.1; NA CAB 84/40, J.P.(42) 16, 'Operation "MARROW"', 7th January, 1942, p.1

<sup>129</sup> Churchill to General Auchinleck, 11 January 1942, in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.20; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.8; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.100-101; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, pp.10-11; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.61

<sup>130</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 5 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.382

<sup>131</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.68

<sup>132</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 19 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda, 1940-1943, Washington, America, United Kingdom and Europe*, Nendeln, 1976, p.128;

of the British Joint Staff Mission (J.S.M.) in Washington, told the C.O.S.: “Marshall did discuss [the] possibility of sending an armoured division to Middle East” in the event of a crisis.<sup>133</sup> On 25 March 1942 Roosevelt met with Secretary Stimson and the J.C.S., and asked if U.S. troops could be employed in Syria and Libya, as well as other options.<sup>134</sup> However, this discussion came to nothing.

GYMNAST was officially cancelled in early March 1942.<sup>135</sup> The primary cause was lack of shipping due to the changing war situation.<sup>136</sup> Thus the search for a major Anglo-American operation had to re-commence, and now, for the first time, the Americans took the initiative.

In March and April 1942 a cross-Channel operation came to prominence in U.S. Army planning. The Army planners felt that adopting such an operation would focus American production on essential tanks and landing craft, intensify training of troops, and provide an objective for the movement of personnel and equipment to avoid dispersion.<sup>137</sup> They also recognized the need to carry out a significant operation to assist the Soviets. Army planners developed the idea in late-February 1942, and it soon had strong support from Marshall and Secretary Stimson.<sup>138</sup> On 5 March Stimson, Marshall and General Henry H. ‘Hap’ Arnold, head of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), advised Roosevelt that they should avoid dispersion, and

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Dykes Diary, 17 March 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.116; Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.70; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.22; Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.200. The C.O.S. discussed the possibility of U.S. forces serving in the Middle East on 20 March 1942, NA CAB 79/19, C.O.S.(42) 90th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 20th March, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.1

<sup>133</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 19 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.129

<sup>134</sup> Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.15

<sup>135</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 4 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.380; Roosevelt to Churchill, 7 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.391; Roosevelt to Churchill, 9 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.399; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.207; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.61

<sup>136</sup> As early as 25 December 1941 Alanbrooke had recognised that lack of shipping would not allow both a North-West Africa operation and sending adequate forces to the Far East, where the situation was worsening, Alanbrooke Diary, 25 December 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.214. At the C.C.S. meeting on 23 January 1942 Marshall and Admiral Stark noted the lack of American shipping in relation to SUPERGYMNAST, and said ships intended for the operation should be used to transport troops instead, NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 1st Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 23rd January, 1942, at 3 p.m., pp.4-5

<sup>137</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.105; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.37; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.28

<sup>138</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.28, 31-32; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.70

instead focus on “sending an overwhelming force to the British Isles and threatening an attack on the Germans in France ...”, to give Hitler two fronts to worry about.<sup>139</sup> Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Navy, initially disagreed and argued for Pacific-first, but was soon convinced by Marshall to support a cross-Channel operation, with some reinforcements to go to the South-West Pacific in return for his support.<sup>140</sup> On 6 March Roosevelt was “keenly interested” in a cross-Channel operation.<sup>141</sup> Once Roosevelt was convinced of the merits of such an operation it became the Americans’ desired first offensive.

At the same time interest in a cross-Channel operation grew in Britain. The situation in the Soviet Union, with Anglo-American fears of the forthcoming German summer offensive, contributed greatly to their interest in such an operation. British discussion of a 1942 cross-Channel operation began in earnest in the first week of March 1942.<sup>142</sup> On 7 March Churchill told Roosevelt “I am by no means excluding an effort from here to take the weight off Russia ...”.<sup>143</sup> Similarly, Roosevelt told Churchill on 9 March that he was becoming very interested in creating a new front against Germany during the coming summer.<sup>144</sup> Discussion continued in Britain for the rest of the month, and the British began to develop a plan.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Stimson Diary, 5 March 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.416

<sup>140</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.32

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32

<sup>142</sup> For example, after dinner on 5 March 1942 Churchill, Alanbrooke, Eden and Lyttelton discussed an offensive to France to relieve pressure on Russia, Alanbrooke Diary, 5 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.236

<sup>143</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 7 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.394

<sup>144</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 9 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.399

<sup>145</sup> For discussion, see: NA CAB 79/19, C.O.S.(42) 87th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 17th March, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.5; NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 259, ‘Operation “SLEDGEHAMMER”’, 10th March, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 289, ‘Operation “SLEDGEHAMMER” – Aide Memoire and Draft Directive’, 17th March, 1942, p.1; Alanbrooke Diary, 10 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.237-238; Alanbrooke Diary, 17 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.240; Alanbrooke Diary, 28 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.242; Alanbrooke Diary, 30 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.243; J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 25 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.143; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.42-43. For the plan, see: NA CAB 79/19, C.O.S.(42) 91st Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Saturday, 21st March, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.3; NA CAB 79/19, Operation SLEDGEHAMMER, Draft Aide Memoire by the Chiefs of Staff, p.1; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.43

Meanwhile, in the United States a plan was also being developed. On 18 March Roosevelt told Churchill that in a few days he was going to send “a more definite plan for a joint attack in Europe itself”.<sup>146</sup> On 25 March Roosevelt met with Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, Stimson, Hopkins, Marshall, Arnold and King. The President began by concentrating on the Middle East and Mediterranean, to the disappointment of Secretary Stimson, but he was steered to the Atlantic by Stimson and Marshall, and Marshall made a good presentation regarding a cross-Channel operation. At the end of the discussion Roosevelt suggested turning a plan over to the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee (C.C.S.), but Hopkins “made a strong plea” to have the J.C.S. prepare it, then have someone take it directly to Churchill and the C.O.S. in Britain, to which Roosevelt agreed.<sup>147</sup> Also on 25 March, Brigadier General Eisenhower of the U.S. Army Operations Division (O.P.D.) stated the O.P.D.’s argument that if American forces were not concentrated in Europe, the United States should go “all out” in the Pacific instead.<sup>148</sup>

The U.S. Army plan created on 27 March 1942, known as the Marshall Memorandum, was for a cross-Channel operation in 1943, with provisions for a 1942 operation in case Russia was close to defeat or the Germans became badly weakened.<sup>149</sup> Stimson, with the approval of Hopkins and Marshall, wrote to Roosevelt advising him, as Hopkins had two days earlier, to send the cross-Channel plan to the British as soon as possible, avoiding the Washington-based British members of the C.C.S., who he feared would delay its acceptance by the British in London. He also advised the President to make every effort to ensure that the operation occurred, with preparations to be completed by September.<sup>150</sup> On 1 April Hopkins, Secretary Stimson, and the J.C.S. presented the plan to Roosevelt, who approved it, and

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<sup>146</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 18 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.421

<sup>147</sup> Stimson Diary, 25 March 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.416-417; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.34-35

<sup>148</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 25 March 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.207

<sup>149</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 52, ‘Plans for Operations in Northwest Europe’, March 27, 1942, pp.1-3; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.157-158; Breuer, *Feuding Allies*, p.22; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.46-47; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.15; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.105; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.35

<sup>150</sup> Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 27 March 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.417-418

Hopkins and Marshall were sent directly to Britain.<sup>151</sup> The Americans at this point chose to ignore the fact that a 1942 cross-Channel operation was unlikely to succeed.<sup>152</sup>

Hopkins and Marshall arrived in London on 8 April, and General Marshall presented his plan to the C.O.S. on the next day.<sup>153</sup> He stressed that the United States could not press the British for a 1942 cross-Channel operation because the Americans could not provide a large-scale commitment.<sup>154</sup> A major motive for the proposal was revealed when Roosevelt informed Stalin that he was thinking about “a very important military proposal involving the utilization of our armed forces in a manner to relieve your critical western Front.”<sup>155</sup> Churchill accepted the American proposal “in principle” on 12 April.<sup>156</sup> Two days later the British C.O.S. and Defence Committee (Operations) (D.C.(O)) also accepted the American plan for action possibly in 1942, and definitely in 1943.<sup>157</sup> However, Marshall recognized that “virtually everyone agrees with us in principle but many if not most hold reservations regarding this or that”.<sup>158</sup> Churchill’s message to Roosevelt on 17 April noted that the British “cordially accept your plan with one broad qualification”, this being the need to halt the Japanese in India.<sup>159</sup> He

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<sup>151</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 1 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.437; Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.305-306; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.47-48; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.281; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.10; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.108; Ismay, *Memoirs*, p.248; Matloff, ‘Wilmot Revisited’, p.108; Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.418-419; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.63

<sup>152</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.35, 39

<sup>153</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 8 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.245; Alanbrooke Diary, 9 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.246; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.158; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.51; Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*, New York, 1950, p.523

<sup>154</sup> Larry I. Bland (ed.), *George C. Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue*, Lexington, 1991, p.580; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.52; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.13

<sup>155</sup> Personal Message from the President to Mr Stalin, Received on April 12, 1942, in *Stalin’s Correspondence*, II, p.23

<sup>156</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 12 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.448; Marshall to Maj. Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, 12 April 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.159; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.41

<sup>157</sup> Marshall to Henry L. Stimson, 15 April 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.162; Alanbrooke Diary, 14 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.248; Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, p.132; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.41

<sup>158</sup> Marshall to Maj. Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, 13 April 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.161

<sup>159</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 17 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.459; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.163; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.449; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.524. A British J.P.S. report of 10 April 1942 emphasised the need to hold the Middle East and India, because this was essential to eventually winning the war and defeating Germany, NA CAB 84/44, J.P.(42) 386, ‘American Plans for Operations in Western Europe’, 10th April, 1942, pp.1-2

added that a 1943 cross-Channel operation was definitely agreed upon.<sup>160</sup> Thus a cross-Channel operation was now Western Allied policy, albeit with different British and American views on when it should occur. The British had quickly accepted an operation they disliked, and failed to share their misgivings with the Americans, because they feared that otherwise the United States would turn to the Pacific, and also because they felt pressure from the Soviets and the British public for a 1942 Second Front.<sup>161</sup>

At the same time, events in France saw a North-West Africa operation briefly return to prominence, even as general agreement was being reached on the necessity for a cross-Channel operation. It was reported on the morning of 17 April that the Vichy Head of State, *Maréchal* Henri Pétain, had resigned, and consequently Roosevelt turned to GYMNAST as a possibility, because he felt that French North Africa might not accept new Prime Minister Pierre Laval's orders.<sup>162</sup> The British C.O.S. and J.P.S. were instructed to examine future possibilities regarding Vichy France and its territories in North-West Africa.<sup>163</sup> On 20 April Churchill proposed that Roosevelt should make an offer to the Vichy leaders of Anglo-American support if they took the French fleet to Africa, but Roosevelt replied on the next day that they should wait and watch.<sup>164</sup> Nothing came of this, but it did give North-West Africa prominence again.

In April, May and June 1942 there were various proposals to send American air units to the Soviet Union.<sup>165</sup> This was in the ominous period before the Germans launched their summer offensive in the southern Soviet Union, when the Western Allies had serious concerns about future Soviet survival.

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<sup>160</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 17 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.459

<sup>161</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.41-42

<sup>162</sup> The President said: "I am not proposing revival of GYMNAST but only ask that you discuss [the] whole subject", Roosevelt to Churchill, 17 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.460; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.325. The escape of General Henri Giraud from German captivity to Vichy territory on 17 April 1942 also made Churchill hopeful the Frenchman would "play a decisive part in bringing about these things of which [FDR] had hopes", namely securing North-West Africa, Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.477

<sup>163</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 18 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.250

<sup>164</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.464; Roosevelt to Churchill, 21 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.465

<sup>165</sup> See: NA CAB 84/46, J.S.M. 271, From J.S.M. Washington to Chiefs of Staff, London, 15 June, 1942, p.1; Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.307; Lukas, 'The Velvet Project', p.146

In early May 1942 the possibility of the United States turning from a Germany-first policy to a Pacific-first policy received serious consideration at the highest levels, with Admiral King seeking more resources for his Pacific war.<sup>166</sup> General Marshall sent a memorandum to Roosevelt noting that Admiral King had stated that the mounting of a cross-Channel operation “must not be permitted to interfere with our vital needs in the Pacific”.<sup>167</sup> Marshall felt that Roosevelt had to decide “that our major effort would be to concentrate immediately for offensive action against Germany from the British Islands”. If the BOLERO project (the build up for a 1942 or 1943 cross-Channel operation) was not to be the main American effort, it should be abandoned, and the British informed.<sup>168</sup> Roosevelt replied immediately that he did not want BOLERO slowed down, and wanted a Second Front to help the Soviets “in 1942 – not 1943”.<sup>169</sup> This was only a precursor to a much more serious American proposal to turn to the Pacific in the summer, when British objections to a 1942 cross-Channel operation became clear. The British view on the possibility of a 1942 cross-Channel operation had not changed. The C.O.S. considered SLEDGEHAMMER on 8 May, and again deemed it not possible.<sup>170</sup>

Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov arrived in London on 20 May 1942, and then traveled to Washington, before returning home via London.<sup>171</sup> The main aims of his trip were to secure agreement from his allies firstly on a 1942 Second Front, which the Soviets considered to be an invasion of France, and secondly to settle post-war frontiers.<sup>172</sup> On 22 May Churchill told Molotov an invasion of France was very difficult in 1942. However, Churchill mentioned that when the Soviet Foreign

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<sup>166</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.77

<sup>167</sup> King went on: “Important as the mounting of BOLERO [build-up for a cross-Channel operation] may be, the Pacific problem is no less so, and is certainly the more urgent – it must be fixed now”, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 6 May 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.183-184

<sup>168</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 6 May 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.184-185. Brigadier Dykes of the C.C.S. saw this letter on 9 May 1942, Dykes Diary, 9 May 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.141

<sup>169</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.186; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.78

<sup>170</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 8 May 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.255; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.58

<sup>171</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.43

<sup>172</sup> Bennett, *Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, p.52; Kitchen, ‘Churchill and the Soviet Union’, p.423; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.42-43

Minister returned to London, the British would have a Norway operation ready to discuss with him.<sup>173</sup> As a result Churchill had his military men examine this again.<sup>174</sup>

In a letter to Roosevelt on 28 May, Churchill explained the problems with a 1942 cross-Channel operation, and prodded the President about a North-West Africa operation, stating: “We must never let GYMNAST pass from our minds”.<sup>175</sup> This was the precursor to a North-West Africa operation receiving priority once more, primarily at the behest of the British.

Molotov left London for Washington, where he received an assurance from Roosevelt on 30 May that an Anglo-American Second Front would be created in 1942.<sup>176</sup> The President told Churchill on 31 May: “... I am more than ever anxious that BOLERO proceed to definite action beginning in 1942”.<sup>177</sup> The public communiqué on Molotov’s American conferences included the statement that “full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942”.<sup>178</sup> Thus Roosevelt had committed the Western Allies to a major 1942 operation. It was now a matter of determining which one would be chosen.

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<sup>173</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.494-498; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.60. On 28 May 1942 Churchill told Roosevelt: “Personally I set great importance upon [a Norway operation] if a good plan can be made”, Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.494. At the War Cabinet on 26 May, after rejecting a 1942 cross-Channel operation, Churchill turned to Norway, Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.62. On the afternoon of 27 May 1942 General Alanbrooke visited Churchill and convinced the Prime Minister that a 1942 cross-Channel operation was not possible, but the Prime Minister was “inclined to transfer the scene of action to Northern Norway!” The C.O.S. were now to examine this, NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 549, ‘Operations in Norway’, 29th May, 1942, pp.1-2; Alanbrooke Diary, 27 May 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.261

<sup>174</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.494

<sup>175</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.494. Churchill intended this note as a warning to Roosevelt against promising Molotov a 1942 cross-Channel operation, Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.40

<sup>176</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.63; Robert A. Divine (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity: America, 1920-1945*, Reading, 1968, p.168; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.37; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.47; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.85

<sup>177</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.503

<sup>178</sup> Bennett, *Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, p.57; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.48; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.86

Molotov returned to London with his promise from Roosevelt, but Churchill rejected a 1942 cross-Channel operation, and suggested JUPITER instead.<sup>179</sup> The British *aide mémoire* to Molotov on 10 June promised that the British would carry out increasingly large raids in western Europe in 1942, but offered no promise of a major cross-Channel invasion of France in that year.<sup>180</sup>

In early June Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations (C.C.O), went to Washington to explain the difficulties of a large-scale 1942 landing in France to Roosevelt.<sup>181</sup> Mountbatten also discussed a Norway operation with the President.<sup>182</sup> During Mountbatten's meetings with Roosevelt, the President suggested sending six American divisions to fight in either French North-West Africa or the Middle East.<sup>183</sup>

In June the British military again considered two of the main options for the first major Anglo-American operation of the war. The C.O.S. discussed a Northern Norway operation on 5 June, which, according to Alanbrooke, "appears even more impossible, except possibly for limited operations to secure Petsamo in combination with the Russians".<sup>184</sup> Despite British military misgivings, over the next fortnight discussion and planning of this possibility continued in Britain, because Churchill was pushing for it to occur.<sup>185</sup> A 1942 landing in France was also rejected. On 8 June Churchill suggested that no landing occur in France unless the troops were going to stay there.<sup>186</sup> Three days later Cabinet discussed the prospects for establishing a Western Front and Churchill convinced his colleagues "that we do not land in France

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<sup>179</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.50

<sup>180</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 15 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.568; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.64; Brian L. Villa, *Unauthorized Action: Mountbatten and the Dieppe Raid*, Toronto, 1989, p.22

<sup>181</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.494; Churchill to Roosevelt, 1 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.504; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.65-66; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.46

<sup>182</sup> Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.138

<sup>183</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.123; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.49

<sup>184</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 576, 'Operations in the North', 5 June, 1942, p.1; Alanbrooke Diary, 5 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.263

<sup>185</sup> NA CAB 84/46, C.O.S.(42) 168(O), 'Operation "JUPITER"', 13th June, 1942, p.3; Message for Premier Stalin from Mr Churchill, Received on June 17, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.50-51; Message for the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, from J.V. Stalin, Sent on June 20, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.51; Alanbrooke Diary, 8 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.263; Alanbrooke Diary, 9 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.264; Alanbrooke Diary, 11 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.264; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.49

<sup>186</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.49

in strength except to stop there, and we do not go there unless German morale is deteriorating".<sup>187</sup> Thus the Western Allies were now officially divided, with the British against and the United States for SLEDGEHAMMER.<sup>188</sup> The tentative policy of April 1942 was no more. Consequently the British left for Washington on 18 June 1942 for another conference.

Other operations continued to be studied and considered by both the British and Americans. On 12 June General Marshall suggested to Oliver Lyttelton, British Minister of Production, that the United States should send an armoured division to the Middle East.<sup>189</sup> On 17 June both Churchill and Roosevelt offered Stalin air units to operate against the Axis, with Roosevelt warning of a possible attack by the Japanese on the Soviet Union.<sup>190</sup> On 21 June it was agreed that the British J.P.S. would consider a winter 1942 operation to Norway.<sup>191</sup>

Discussions prior to the British arriving in Washington for their June conference showed that three operations would be prominent at the conference: a cross-Channel operation urged by the U.S. Army, a North-West Africa operation supported by Churchill and Roosevelt, and the despatch of U.S. troops to the Middle East. On 15 June Hopkins told Dill that Roosevelt was considering the possibility of sending U.S. air and land forces to the Middle East.<sup>192</sup> Two days later, meeting with his military leaders and Knox and Stimson, Roosevelt mentioned three possibilities, including dispatching American troops to the Middle East and a North-West Africa operation, but General Marshall and Secretary Stimson strongly argued against the North-West Africa operation. The other option was a cross-Channel operation, which the U.S. Army still much preferred.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 11 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.264; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.64; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.50

<sup>188</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.64

<sup>189</sup> Dykes Diary, 12 June 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.156

<sup>190</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Telegram from Roosevelt to Stalin, 17 June 1942; Message from Premier Stalin from Mr Churchill, Received on June 17, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.50-51; F. Roosevelt to J.V. Stalin, June 17, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, II, p.26

<sup>191</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 626, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 22nd June, 1942, p.1; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.70

<sup>192</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.S.M. 271, From J.S.M. Washington to Chiefs of Staff, London, 15 June 1942, p.1

<sup>193</sup> Stimson Diary, 17 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.419; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.243; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.345; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.123. Stimson sent a strong defence of a cross-Channel operation to Roosevelt on 19 June

On 18 June 1942 the British party, including Churchill and Alanbrooke, arrived in Washington.<sup>194</sup> Churchill went to stay with Roosevelt at his home at Hyde Park, New York.<sup>195</sup> On 19 June, after meeting with Churchill on that morning, Marshall sent a telegram to Roosevelt saying Churchill was doubtful about a cross-Channel operation, but was “interested in August Gymnast” and Norway.<sup>196</sup> Churchill and Roosevelt began to discuss strategy the next day and, as Marshall had predicted, Churchill pushed Roosevelt for GYMNAST.<sup>197</sup> Churchill’s 20 June memorandum to Roosevelt strongly argued against a 1942 cross-Channel operation, saying the British believed “that there should be no substantial landing in France this year unless we are going to stay”. Churchill concluded: “It is in this setting and on this background that the operation GYMNAST should be studied”.<sup>198</sup> By the time they came to Washington, Churchill and Roosevelt were both in support of a North-West Africa operation.<sup>199</sup> Roosevelt had again required little convincing from Churchill about an operation that the President had always liked.

In the meantime the military men conferred in Washington. At the C.C.S. meeting on 19 June General Alanbrooke mentioned the “... possibility of economizing shipping by dispatching substantial American forces direct to the Middle East rather than by reinforcing the Middle East by British forces from the United Kingdom.”<sup>200</sup> Alanbrooke also said that if no Western Front could be established in France, “then some form of ‘Gymnast’ should be considered ...”.<sup>201</sup> However, on 19 and 20 June the British and American military leaders all came to agree that GYMNAST should not occur for numerous logistical and strategic reasons, and that build-up for a 1942

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1942, Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.420-423

<sup>194</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 18 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.266-267

<sup>195</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.338, 343

<sup>196</sup> Marshall Memorandum for Mr. McIntyre, 19 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.243

<sup>197</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.341; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.53

<sup>198</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.515; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.67

<sup>199</sup> Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.349

<sup>200</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 27th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, June 19, 1942, at 12:30 p.m., p.1

<sup>201</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 27th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, June 19, 1942, at 12:30 p.m., p.2

or 1943 cross-Channel operation should continue.<sup>202</sup> GYMNAST was rejected because it would disperse forces, and because it depended upon an uncertain political situation.<sup>203</sup> On 20 June, in a C.C.S. meeting, Marshall said he had examined the idea of sending substantial U.S. forces direct to the Middle East, “and saw no reason why this should not be done”, because a desert trained division was available, the 2nd Armored Division, which General George S. Patton was to command.<sup>204</sup> However, with Roosevelt and Churchill meeting at Hyde Park, the military men were fearful of what their political masters would decide.<sup>205</sup>

Full meetings with all leaders present began on 21 June. On that day Churchill and Roosevelt vetoed the military men’s proposal for inaction in 1942, and insisted that an operation in that year was essential.<sup>206</sup> Churchill attacked BOLERO and the idea of a sacrifice operation in 1942, but Roosevelt “stood pretty firm” on it.<sup>207</sup> After lunch on 21 June Marshall strongly argued for BOLERO, and towards the end they all agreed to push hard for BOLERO until 1 September, and then Churchill wanted a resume of the situation to see if an attack could be made without it being a disaster.<sup>208</sup>

On 21 June the news of the fall of Tobruk reached Washington.<sup>209</sup> After hearing this, Roosevelt ordered the 2nd Armored Division to leave for the Suez, which the British

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<sup>202</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 28th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Saturday, June 20, 1942, at 11:00 a.m., pp.1-2; Dykes Diary, 20 June 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, pp.158-159; Eisenhower Minutes of an Informal Meeting between General Marshall and Members of his Staff Representing the United States War Department and Sir John Dill, General A. Brooke and General Ismay, 2:00 PM, 19 June 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.346-348; Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.44; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.24; Stoler *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.53

<sup>203</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.14; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.124

<sup>204</sup> NA AIR 47/69, C.C.S. 28th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held Saturday 20 June 1942, 11:00am; Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.269; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.546; Blumenson (ed.), *The Patton Papers*, p.70

<sup>205</sup> On 20 June 1942 Alanbrooke noted that he and the J.C.S. were fearing the worst from the Roosevelt and Churchill discussions at Hyde Park, “... and are certain that North Africa or North Norway plans for 1942 will loom large in their proposals, whilst we are convinced that they are not possible!”, Alanbrooke Diary, 20 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.267

<sup>206</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.47; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.344-345; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.124, 131; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.68. General Ismay’s notes for the first meeting stated that plans and preparations were to be made for a 1943 cross-Channel operation, but: “It is however essential that the United States and Great Britain should be prepared to act offensively in 1942”, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.344

<sup>207</sup> Stimson Diary, 21 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.423-424

<sup>208</sup> Stimson Diary, 21 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.424; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.53

<sup>209</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.343

accepted.<sup>210</sup> The fall of Tobruk strengthened Churchill's case for GYMNAST, because the need to improve the situation in North Africa seemed more critical, and Tobruk made the British C.O.S. more open to a North-West Africa operation.<sup>211</sup> Late on the evening of 21 June Roosevelt "suddenly suggested that we might throw a large American force into the Middle East and cover the whole front between Alexandria and Teheran", but Marshall, according to Stimson, refused to talk about such an operation "at that time of night in any way".<sup>212</sup> Discussion of sending U.S. troops to the Middle East continued over the next few days.<sup>213</sup> This could have become the first major American operation of the war. However, on 23 June Marshall told Roosevelt in a memorandum that he and the Operations staff thought the United States should not pursue this option, the "controlling reasons being logistical, serious confusion of command ... and the indecisive nature of the operation".<sup>214</sup> Thus the idea of U.S. Army units going to the Middle East was temporarily shelved.

An Anglo-American agreement was reached on 24 June that build-up for a 1943 cross-Channel operation was to continue. However, the Prime Minister and President added clauses to the agreement, stating that it was "essential" that the British and Americans "be prepared to act offensively in 1942", and "the possibilities of operation GYMNAST will be explored carefully and conscientiously ..." if

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<sup>210</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 21 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.270; Butler, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part 2*, pp.607, 629

<sup>211</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.514; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.375; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.129; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.514

<sup>212</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.246

<sup>213</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 22 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.270; Alanbrooke Diary, 23 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.270; Dykes Diary, 24 June 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.160; Churchill to General Auchinleck, 25 June 1942, in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.349; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.347. Alanbrooke noted in his diary on 25 June 1942 that sending U.S. forces to the Middle East was a "project both Prime Minister and President were very keen on", Alanbrooke Diary, 25 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.271-272

<sup>214</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.248. Marshall did this because he did not want any cut in July 1942 movements of forces to Britain for a cross-Channel operation, Dykes Diary, 25 June 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.161. At the C.C.S. meeting on 25 June they discussed alternatives to sending the division, and eventually settled on sending to the Middle East 300 American M4 medium tanks and 100 self-propelled 105 mm guns, to be manned by British forces. The new plan was accepted by Prime Minister Churchill on 25 June 1942, Alanbrooke Diary, 25 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.271, 272; Dykes Diary, 25 June 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.161; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.333; P.J. Grigg, *Prejudice and Judgment*, London, 1948, p.67

SLEDGEHAMMER proved “improbable”.<sup>215</sup> Churchill and Roosevelt had ensured that GYMNAST was a priority, against the wishes of their military men. A tentative agreement had been reached, but the fundamental differences in British and American views on strategy remained, and were soon to be expressed openly.

On 28 June the long-awaited German summer offensive began in southern Russia, reinforcing the need for a British and American offensive against Germany in 1942. On 1 July the British C.O.S. again discussed establishing a Second Front in the West. Alanbrooke felt that “we are likely to be forced to undergo all the handicaps of taking up the necessary shipping and sacrificing the required training in order to prepare for an operation which we are convinced is impracticable”.<sup>216</sup> On 6 July the British C.O.S. agreed once more that a 1942 cross-Channel operation was impossible.<sup>217</sup> On 8 July Roosevelt was told that the Prime Minister and British C.O.S. felt “that conditions which would make Sledgehammer a practicable operation in 1942 were most unlikely to occur”. Churchill proposed GYMNAST instead. Churchill also told Roosevelt that the British were “studying very hard the possibility of an operation in Northern Norway or if this should prove impracticable elsewhere in Norway”.<sup>218</sup> Stimson and Marshall were very unhappy about this turn of events.<sup>219</sup> Marshall wanted a showdown to settle the matter, and Stimson endorsed this.<sup>220</sup>

With the U.S. military men growing tired of determined British opposition to a 1942 cross-Channel operation, the possibility of America turning to focus on the Pacific became very real.<sup>221</sup> Chinese threats of a separate peace with Japan also influenced American planners to push for a Pacific-first policy in July 1942.<sup>222</sup> At the 10 July J.C.S. meeting, Marshall read out the British C.O.S. message rejecting a 1942 cross-

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<sup>215</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.49; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.244-245; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.69-70; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.375; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.346-347; Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.128; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.53; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.67; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.78

<sup>216</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 1 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.275

<sup>217</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.71; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.138

<sup>218</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.520-521; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.379; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.12; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.68

<sup>219</sup> Stimson Diary, 10 July 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.424

<sup>220</sup> Stimson Diary, 10 July 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.424

<sup>221</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.73-74; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, pp.39-40; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, p.108

<sup>222</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.100

Channel operation, and he then proposed turning to the Pacific, a move backed by King and Secretary Stimson.<sup>223</sup> Marshall and King then proposed Pacific-first to Roosevelt, and Marshall said the Pacific option must now be put to the British, so that they could make a decision either way.<sup>224</sup> Roosevelt telephoned from Hyde Park: “In view of your Pacific Ocean alternative please send me this afternoon by plane, a detailed comprehensive outline of the plans ...”. Marshall, King and Arnold replied that no detailed plan had yet been prepared.<sup>225</sup>

This American Pacific option was seen by some contemporaries and by later historians as a bluff or American bargaining tactic, to scare the British into supporting SLEDGEHAMMER again.<sup>226</sup> However, if it was a bluff, there was a serious undertone of reality to it, as evidence like Stimson’s 10 July diary entry would suggest. Certainly, the British were very concerned about this Pacific option, and took the proposal seriously.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.73-74; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.269-270; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.68. Stimson recorded in his diary on 10 July 1942: “As the British won’t go through with what they agreed to, we will turn our backs on them and take up the war with Japan”, Stimson Diary, 10 July 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.424

<sup>224</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall & King Memorandum to Roosevelt, 10 July 1942, pp.1-2. Marshall told Roosevelt on 10 July 1942: “If the British attitude as to BOLERO must be accepted, it is our opinion that we should turn to the Pacific, and, using all existing and available dispositions and installations, strike decisively against Japan”, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 10 July 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.271; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.99; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.68; Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.172

<sup>225</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Memorandum from Colonel John R. Deane to Admiral King, 12 July 1942; NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall, King & Arnold Memorandum to Roosevelt, 12 July 1942, pp.1-3; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.272; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.74

<sup>226</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.282; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.68; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.348-349. On the evening of 14 July 1942 Brigadier General Bedell Smith told Dykes that perhaps Marshall had raised the Pacific “as a bogey to frighten us [the British], but didn’t really mean it. Now however he finds, rather to his surprise, that several people like the bogey!”, Dykes Diary, 14 July 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.166. Stimson wrote in his diary on 15 July 1942 that he told Roosevelt that “it was absolutely essential to use it as a threat of our sincerity in regard to BOLERO if we expected to get through the hides of the British and he agreed to that”, Stimson Diary, 15 July 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.425. On 15 July 1942 Roosevelt told Marshall he saw the Pacific alternative proposal “as something of a red herring, the purpose of which he thoroughly understood”, Marshall Memorandum for Admiral King, 15 July 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.276; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.69. After the war, Marshall, King and Stimson all said it was a ‘red herring’, Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.74-75; Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.172; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.100. After the war Marshall said it was a “bluff on my part” but not on the part of Admiral King, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.602. Bundy and Stimson describe it as a threat to make the British agree to BOLERO, and that there was no real intention of carrying out the bluff, Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.425

<sup>227</sup> On 13 July 1942 Brigadier Dykes noted: “Apparently the President has seized on the idea of a Pacific offensive and it looks very much as if BOLERO is going to be thrown out of the window altogether! London can’t say we didn’t warn them!”, Dykes Diary, 13 July 1942, in Danchev (ed.),

Roosevelt rejected the Pacific option in his scathing 14 July message to Marshall.<sup>228</sup> He also said he planned to send King, Marshall and Hopkins to London. He told his men the Pacific option was “exactly what Germany hoped the United States would do”, and that it would be like angry children “picking up their dishes and going home”.<sup>229</sup>

The J.C.S. realized the significance of this decision, with the British having ruled out a 1942 cross-Channel operation, and Roosevelt now ruling out the Pacific option. In the J.C.S. meeting on 14 July all U.S. Army and Navy men agreed that they preferred SLEDGEHAMMER or BOLERO, or the Pacific theatre, with GYMNAST rejected.<sup>230</sup> However, according to Lieutenant Colonel Albert C. Wedemeyer of the O.P.D., the J.C.S. concluded that “there was a stated appreciation of the fact that apparently our political leader would require major military operations *this year in Africa*”.<sup>231</sup>

On 12 July Churchill cabled Field Marshal Dill in Washington: “GYMNAST affords the sole means by which the U.S. can strike at Hitler in 1942 ...”.<sup>232</sup> The Prime Minister repeated his advocacy of a North-West Africa operation to Roosevelt on 14 July, telling the President that the British did not see SLEDGEHAMMER as feasible. Churchill also suggested JUPITER as an alternative to a 1942 cross-Channel operation.<sup>233</sup>

Discussion and consideration of an operation to Norway continued around this time, with Churchill seeking a way to help the Soviet Union, where the Germans were enjoying good early success in their summer offensive.<sup>234</sup> At the 13 July D.C.(O)

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*Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, pp.167-168. On 15 July 1942 Halifax noted in his diary that Churchill told him: “Just because the Americans can’t have a massacre in France this year, they want to sulk and bathe in the Pacific!”, Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.129

<sup>228</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.55; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.85

<sup>229</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.75; Craig, ‘The Political Leader as Strategist’, p.506; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.68. The “dishes” quote was to Secretary Stimson on 15 July 1942, Stimson Diary, 15 July 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.425

<sup>230</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.275-276; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.88

<sup>231</sup> Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.160

<sup>232</sup> Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.381

<sup>233</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 14 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.529

<sup>234</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 9 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.278

meeting Churchill again proposed a Norway operation to assist the Russians.<sup>235</sup> However, even the Prime Minister could see the difficulties inherent in such an undertaking. In his message to Stalin on 18 July, Churchill warned that a British operation to Norway was not possible at that time due to the current conditions, as shown by the destruction of Western Allied supply convoy PQ-17 sailing to northern Russia. However, Churchill was keen to have British and Soviet officers discuss possibilities “in or after October” when there was more darkness in the north.<sup>236</sup>

Around this time a serious proposal to send a large Anglo-American air force to the Soviet Union emerged, Operation VELVET. This was now not so much a candidate to be the first major Anglo-American operation of the war, but more a useful way to provide direct support to the Soviet Union, especially given the recent decision to halt the Anglo-American Arctic supply convoys to the northern Soviet Union.<sup>237</sup>

With stalemate reached over GYMNAST and SLEDGEHAMMER, Roosevelt sent Marshall, King, and Hopkins to London in mid-July to determine future strategy, with SLEDGEHAMMER to be considered first and foremost.<sup>238</sup> Part of the formal set of instructions issued by Roosevelt on 16 July to his emissaries stated:

It is of the highest importance that U.S. ground troops be brought into action against the enemy in 1942. ...

... you will carefully investigate the possibility of executing SLEDGEHAMMER ... SLEDGEHAMMER is of such grave importance that every reason calls for accomplishment of it ... If SLEDGEHAMMER is finally and definitely out of the picture, I want you to consider the world situation as it exists at that time, and determine upon another place for U.S. troops to fight in 1942.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 13 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.279

<sup>236</sup> W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Received on July 18, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.54

<sup>237</sup> For the discussion of Operation VELVET prior to the TORCH decision on 24 July 1942, see: W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Received on July 18, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.55; Thomas A. Julian, ‘Operations at the Margin: Soviet Bases and Shuttle-Bombing’, *JMH*, Vol. 57, No. 4, October 1993, pp.629-630; Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, pp.145-147

<sup>238</sup> Roosevelt Memorandum to Harry Hopkins, General Marshall and Admiral King, 16 July 1942, in Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, pp.605-606; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.277; Craig, ‘The Political Leader as Strategist’, p.506; Jones *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.20; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.56

<sup>239</sup> Roosevelt Memorandum to Harry Hopkins, General Marshall and Admiral King, 16 July 1942, in Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.605

Roosevelt initially provided his men with two options other than SLEDGEHAMMER, the first being: “sending aid and ground forces to the Persian Gulf, to Syria and to Egypt”, and the second being an invasion of North-West Africa. The Pacific option was again ruled out.<sup>240</sup> He told Harry Hopkins on the night of 16 July that if SLEDGEHAMMER was ruled out he wanted a North-West Africa operation in 1942 and ROUND-UP in 1943.<sup>241</sup>

Hopkins, Marshall and King arrived in London on 18 July 1942.<sup>242</sup> On that day the British C.O.S. had not yet formed a decision, with Air Chief Marshal Charles Portal, Chief of the Air Staff, wanting GYMNAST, Alanbrooke wanting BOLERO and planning for GYMNAST, and Admiral of the Fleet Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, having no opinion.<sup>243</sup> From 20 to 22 July the Americans tried to gain British acceptance of a new version of SLEDGEHAMMER, which would be a bridgehead for a 1943 cross-Channel operation, or would at least provide a psychological boost to the Soviets, even if it failed. However, the British resisted this, arguing that it would just waste six divisions.<sup>244</sup> On 20 July General Alanbrooke noted that the Pacific was preferred by American military men to a North-West Africa operation, and on 21 July the British again felt that the Americans might turn to the Pacific.<sup>245</sup> On 22 July the British War Cabinet voted against a 1942 cross-Channel attack.<sup>246</sup> On the same day the Americans finally, but very reluctantly, agreed that

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<sup>240</sup> Roosevelt Memorandum to Harry Hopkins, General Marshall and Admiral King, 16 July 1942, in Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.606; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.78

<sup>241</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.56

<sup>242</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.79

<sup>243</sup> Dykes Diary, 18 July 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.176

<sup>244</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 20 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.282; Alanbrooke Diary, 21 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.283; Alanbrooke Diary, 22 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.283; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.80; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.143; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.56

<sup>245</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 20 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.282. Brigadier Dykes believed that the Americans might “simply offer to secure the UK; send about two corps to the Middle East; and direct most of their attention to the Pacific”, Dykes Diary, 21 July 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.177. General Alanbrooke wrote about the meeting on 21 July: “We went on arguing for 2 hours, during which time King remained with a face like a Sphinx, and only one idea, i.e. to transfer operations to the Pacific”, Alanbrooke Diary, 21 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.283

<sup>246</sup> Butcher Diary, 26 July 1942, in Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, 1942-1945*, New York, 1946, p.33; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.144; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.610

SLEDGEHAMMER would not occur, and Roosevelt was informed.<sup>247</sup> On 23 July the President accepted that there would be no 1942 cross-Channel operation, was in favour of a North-West Africa operation, and “was influencing his Chiefs in that direction”.<sup>248</sup> He gave his military leaders five options, the first two priorities being West and North-West Africa operations, then a Norway operation, reinforcement of the Middle East by American troops, and finally American operations through Iran into the Caucasus.<sup>249</sup>

On 24 July the American J.C.S. accepted the British proposal for a North-West Africa operation, now called TORCH, albeit conditional upon the situation on the Russian front by 15 September 1942, with preparations for both SLEDGEHAMMER and TORCH to continue until then, when a final decision would be made.<sup>250</sup> However, Roosevelt told Secretary Stimson, Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to the President, General Arnold and Lieutenant General Joseph T. McNarney, deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, on 25 July that the United States was unconditionally committed to TORCH.<sup>251</sup> TORCH had emerged from the strategic debate to become the first major Anglo-American operation of the war.

## Conclusion

Between 1940 and 1942 the British and Americans carried out an extensive search for their first offensive, as they tried to determine a war-winning strategy. In that time various options were considered, with a few being particularly prominent, but it was a 1942 operation to North-West Africa that eventually prevailed, despite strong U.S.

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<sup>247</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.57

<sup>248</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 23 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.284. On 23 July, with a cross-Channel operation ruled out, Eisenhower saw only two potential operations for American troops in the European theatre in 1942: an invasion of North-West Africa, or the reinforcement of the Middle East by an American corps of 100,000 men, Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p. 412

<sup>249</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.80; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.406; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.610

<sup>250</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 32nd Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 24th July, 1942, at 12 noon, pp.1-5; Alanbrooke Diary, 24 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.284-285; Dykes Diary, 24 July 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.180; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.81; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.21; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.69

<sup>251</sup> Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.14. Roosevelt confirmed this to Marshall on his return from London on 30 July 1942, Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.12. The J.S.M. Washington confirmed it to the C.O.S. on 31 July 1942, NA CAB 84/47, Telegram from J.S.M. Washington to C.O.S., London, 31 July 1942, p.1

Army and Navy opposition. Emerging from this outline of the Anglo-American strategic debate are a number of important issues. One of these is the importance of Churchill and Roosevelt to the decision-making process, along with their great desire for action in 1942. The need to provide support to the Soviet Union is also clear from this outline. The contrasting strategic approaches of Britain and the United States are very evident, with the American focus on mass force and decisive action in a cross-Channel operation, and the British advocating a more cautious approach. These issues are all dealt with in detail in the following chapters, which will establish why Operation TORCH was chosen as the first large-scale combined military operation to be carried out by the Western Allies in the Second World War.

## **Chapter 2: The Allied Military Situation**

This chapter considers the extent to which the dire military situation of the Grand Alliance during the seven months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 influenced President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to want a significant Anglo-American operation against Germany in 1942. Britain and the Soviet Union had been in precarious military positions prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but the situation subsequently became much worse, as the Allies suffered defeats at the hands of the Axis in all theatres of war preceding the decision on 24 July 1942 to undertake Operation TORCH. This poor military situation caused two basic problems that needed to be addressed, namely a severe drop in British and American civilian morale and confidence in the progress of the war, and the very unwelcome possibility that the Soviet Union could be defeated by Germany, which would be disastrous for the continuation of the war by the Western Allies. Of these two problems, the situation in the Soviet Union was the more important reason for Western Allied military action. The Prime Minister and President recognized that a successful 1942 military operation could provide a response to both of these issues, and as a result the Allied military situation contributed to TORCH becoming the first large-scale combined Anglo-American operation of the Second World War.

### **The Allied Military Situation, 1940-1942**

A brief outline of the military situation and the defeats suffered by the British, Americans and Soviets up to summer 1942 demonstrates just how serious the Allied position was at that time. This military context helps demonstrate why a successful Anglo-American offensive in 1942 was so important to Roosevelt and Churchill. Britain suffered its first serious defeats at the hands of the Germans in 1940, followed by more heavy defeats in 1941. The Soviet Union struggled in the war with Germany after being invaded on 22 June 1941, and despite some successes over the winter of 1941 and 1942, the Soviets continued to struggle in 1942. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the military situation worsened considerably for the three members of the Grand Alliance.

The British war situation began to go badly in spring 1940, when they suffered heavy defeats in Norway and France. The Germans invaded Denmark and Norway on 9 April, and an Anglo-French force was dispatched to Norway, with the first British troops landing on 14 April. However, this force, outnumbered and outfought, had been evacuated by 8 June.<sup>252</sup> After Germany invaded France on 10 May 1940, the British and French armies were soundly beaten there, and British troops were forced to evacuate from Dunkirk in northern France between 26 May and 4 June. The French sought an armistice with the Germans on 22 June, and final hostilities ceased on 25 June.<sup>253</sup> At this point the German military seemed unstoppable, and the British had suffered two comprehensive defeats. However, there was a clear Royal Air Force (RAF) victory over the *Luftwaffe* in the ensuing Battle of Britain in the summer and autumn of 1940.<sup>254</sup> As a result of this British victory the proposed German invasion of Britain, Operation SEALION, was postponed until the next year.<sup>255</sup>

British attention then turned to the Mediterranean theatre and North African campaign. The war in North Africa began in June 1940, after the Italian entry into the war on the tenth of that month, and the British enjoyed early success against their new enemy. On 9 December a successful three month campaign began against the Italians in North Africa, and by February 1941 the British were on the border of Tripolitania.<sup>256</sup> Up to that point the British and their allies had done well in the Mediterranean theatre, with naval victories and success in a campaign in East Africa. However, for the remainder of 1941 the British forces in the region, and especially the Army, generally performed very poorly.

In February 1941 the Germans reacted to the Italian defeat in North Africa by sending land and air forces to reinforce their struggling ally.<sup>257</sup> *General* Erwin Rommel, the

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<sup>252</sup> Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War, 1939-1945*, London, 1967, p.63; R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History*, Oxford, 1997, p.25; Louis L. Snyder, *The War: A Concise History, 1939-1945*, London, 1960, pp.75, 79, 81; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.117

<sup>253</sup> Parker, *The Second World War*, pp.27, 35-36, 38-39; Snyder, *The War*, pp.88, 93-97, 110; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.122, 127-128, 130-131, 141

<sup>254</sup> Snyder, *The War*, pp.122-123; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.149-150

<sup>255</sup> Parker, *The Second World War*, p.51; Snyder, *The War*, p.125

<sup>256</sup> Cadogan Diary, 9 & 12 December 1940, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, pp.338-339; Lawlor, *Churchill and the Politics of War, 1940-1941*, p.130; Snyder, *The War*, pp.156-157; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.211; John G. Winant, *A Letter from Grosvenor Square: An Account of a Stewardship*, London, 1947, p.190

<sup>257</sup> Snyder, *The War*, p.158; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.215

German commander, successfully attacked the British in March, and by 17 April he had driven them back to the Egyptian frontier.<sup>258</sup> Meanwhile, the British were in trouble elsewhere in the Mediterranean. In March and April British forces were sent to Greece to assist their ally in the face of a German invasion threat. Hitler invaded Greece on 6 April, and the British forces were soundly defeated by the invading Germans, and had evacuated by 30 April, losing much equipment and 11,000 men.<sup>259</sup> The Germans subsequently invaded the island of Crete, which resulted in another serious British defeat and evacuation, which was completed by 1 June.<sup>260</sup>

In North Africa a new British offensive, Operation BATTLEAXE, began on 15 June, but it soon failed.<sup>261</sup> There then followed a quieter period in summer and autumn 1941, which provided relief for the British Army, as the Germans switched their attention to the Soviet Union.<sup>262</sup> On 18 November 1941 a new British offensive was launched in North Africa, Operation CRUSADER, which forced Rommel back and relieved the important besieged town and port of Tobruk.<sup>263</sup> Thus the year ended with the British in a reasonably good position in the Desert War, despite having suffered mostly defeat in the Mediterranean region in the early part of the year.

In summer 1941 a new and vital front opened up in Eastern Europe, when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, in an operation codenamed BARBAROSSA.<sup>264</sup> The Germans enjoyed great initial success along the entire Eastern Front, with thousands of Soviet troops captured or killed in the early weeks.<sup>265</sup> The Germans hoped for a short campaign, and early indications were that this would be the case. However, the Germans began to realize the difficulties they might face in late-July and August, as Soviet resistance stiffened. On 2 October a final German drive towards Moscow began, but it was halted by the winter weather, and more importantly, by determined

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<sup>258</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.222-223; Winant, *A Letter from Grosvenor Square*, p.191

<sup>259</sup> John Barnes & David Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay: Leo Amery Diaries 1929-1945*, London, 1958, p.653; Parker, *The Second World War*, p.56; Snyder, *The War*, pp.160, 162; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.220, 222

<sup>260</sup> Snyder, *The War*, pp.164-165; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.229

<sup>261</sup> Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', p.607; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.223, 284

<sup>262</sup> Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', p.599

<sup>263</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.29-30; Lyttelton, *Memoirs*, pp.265-266; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.60; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.232, 284

<sup>264</sup> Parker, *The Second World War*, p.65; Snyder, *The War*, p.172; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.264

<sup>265</sup> Parker, *The Second World War*, p.68; Snyder, *The War*, p.174

Soviet defence.<sup>266</sup> In the south the German drive was stopped at Rostov, at the mouth of the Don River, on 21 November. In December the German offensive in the north around Leningrad was also halted.<sup>267</sup> Then, on 5 December, the Soviets launched a large-scale counter-offensive against the Germans in the Moscow area, and succeeded in pushing them back.<sup>268</sup>

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor heralded American entry into the war. However, things went very badly for the Western Allies in the war with Germany in the months after Pearl Harbor.<sup>269</sup> On 21 January 1942 Rommel went on the offensive in North Africa, and pushed the British back to the Gazala position.<sup>270</sup> On 12 February three German capital ships successfully sailed from Brest in northern France up the English Channel past Dover and the British defences, an incident known as the Channel Dash, which was very embarrassing for the British government and armed forces.<sup>271</sup> The vital British island outpost of Malta in the central Mediterranean was pounded by Axis bombers day and night in March and April, and became almost non-existent as a military base.<sup>272</sup> On 26 May the Axis began a very successful North African offensive, highlighted by the fall of Tobruk on 21 June.<sup>273</sup> Tobruk had previously held out for eight months, but this time it succumbed after only a single day. The British in North Africa were pushed back to El Alamein in Egypt, placing Rommel in striking distance of the port of Alexandria.<sup>274</sup> In late June and early July the Anglo-American Arctic supply convoy PQ-17 sailing to northern Russia was very badly hit by German naval and air forces, with 26 out of 39 ships lost.<sup>275</sup> Meanwhile, the Battle of the

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<sup>266</sup> Parker, *The Second World War*, pp.68, 70; Snyder, *The War*, pp.178-181; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.266, 269, 272-274

<sup>267</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.272-272

<sup>268</sup> Parker, *The Second World War*, p.71; Snyder, *The War*, p.181; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.292, 348

<sup>269</sup> General Marshall later wrote that few people knew in 1942 “how close Germany and Japan were to complete domination of the world” and “how thin the spread of Allied survival had been stretched”, Snyder, *The War*, p.242

<sup>270</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.24; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.60

<sup>271</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 12 February 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.360; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.99-100; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.33; Snyder, *The War*, p.144; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.358

<sup>272</sup> The British J.I.C. noted on 24 May 1942: “Malta is virtually neutralized”, NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C.(42) 167 (O), 4th May, 1942, p.2

<sup>273</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.350

<sup>274</sup> Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, pp.31-32; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.60; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.351

<sup>275</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 14 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.528; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.379

Atlantic also went very much in Germany's favour in the first half of 1942.<sup>276</sup> German submarines enjoyed great success off the eastern seaboard of the United States in the first seven months of 1942, and in June alone the Western Allies lost more than 700,000 tons of shipping.<sup>277</sup>

The Western Allied military situation in Asia and the Pacific theatre quickly became very serious after 7 December 1941 as well. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor inflicted significant losses on the United States Navy.<sup>278</sup> The disaster at Pearl Harbor was quickly followed by other serious British and American defeats at the hands of the Japanese. On 8 December the Japanese landed in Malaya, and the loss of the Royal Navy (RN) battlecruiser *Repulse* and the battleship *Prince of Wales* to Japanese aircraft off Malaya two days later was a heavy blow for the British.<sup>279</sup> American-held Wake Island and Guam Island in the central Pacific were lost to the Japanese in December.<sup>280</sup> On 10 December Japanese advance landings were made in the Philippines, an important American territory, and the main landing on the Philippines began successfully on 22 December.<sup>281</sup> Hong Kong fell to the Japanese on 26 December 1941.<sup>282</sup> By the end of January 1942 all of mainland Malaya had been conquered.<sup>283</sup> In February and March there were more serious Western Allied defeats in Asia and the Pacific. Singapore island fell on 15 February, with 130,000 British and Allied troops captured, and this was a very serious blow to the prestige of the British armed forces, and to the British Empire as a whole.<sup>284</sup> Burma soon fell to the

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<sup>276</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.95-96; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, pp.32-33; Snyder, *The War*, p.133; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.60. In early 1942 the Allies lost an average of 500,000 tons of shipping per month, Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.60

<sup>277</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.60; Jean Monnet (translated by Richard Mayne), *Memoirs*, London, 1978, p.176

<sup>278</sup> Snyder, *The War*, p.209; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.34; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.261

<sup>279</sup> Snyder, *The War*, pp.220-222; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.57. See, for example, Channon Diary, 10 December 1941, in Robert Rhodes James (ed.), *Chips: The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon*, London, 1967, p.314; Nicolson Diary, 10 December 1941, in Nigel Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, London, 1967, p.196

<sup>280</sup> Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War Against Nazi Germany*, New York, 2001, p.49; Snyder, *The War*, p.218; Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.56-57

<sup>281</sup> Snyder, *The War*, pp.223-224; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.58; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.313

<sup>282</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 25 December 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.214; Snyder, *The War*, pp.228-229; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.57; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.315

<sup>283</sup> Snyder, *The War*, p.230; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.60; Stoler, 'The United States: The Global Strategy', p.64

<sup>284</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.94; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.506; Snyder, *The War*, p.230

Japanese as well, with the capital Rangoon falling on 6 March.<sup>285</sup> The battle of the Java Sea, from 27 February to 1 March, was another serious Allied defeat.<sup>286</sup> The Dutch East Indies were then lost to the Japanese, with Java falling and the final surrender there occurring on 8 March.<sup>287</sup> On 3 April the Japanese began a successful final offensive in the Philippines, and the remnants of the American force surrendered on the island of Corregidor on 6 May.<sup>288</sup> In April there was a serious Japanese threat to Ceylon in the Indian Ocean.<sup>289</sup> By May 1942 the Japanese had achieved most of their initial objectives, and in just six months large sections of Asia and the Pacific had been conquered.<sup>290</sup>

In May and June 1942 the war in the Pacific began to improve for the Americans. The American bombing raid on Tokyo on 18 April 1942, led by Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle, had brightened the war for the Americans.<sup>291</sup> The Battle of the Coral Sea on 7 and 8 May 1942 was a draw, with each side losing an aircraft carrier, but more significantly, it prevented a Japanese landing at Port Moresby in New Guinea.<sup>292</sup> The Battle of Midway, from 3 to 6 June 1942, was a clear American victory, with four Japanese carriers and one American carrier lost.<sup>293</sup>

On the Eastern Front the situation grew progressively worse in 1942. By February the Soviet counter-offensive in the Moscow area had been halted.<sup>294</sup> After initial success in that attack, Stalin had called for a more ambitious Soviet offensive, and as a result

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<sup>285</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.147; Snyder, *The War*, p.231. British troops began to completely withdraw from Burma on 26 April 1942, Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.456. American Lieutenant General Joseph Stilwell told the press: "I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell", Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.59

<sup>286</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.332-333; Snyder, *The War*, pp.227-228; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.320

<sup>287</sup> Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.725; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.133; Snyder, *The War*, p.234; Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.56, 59

<sup>288</sup> Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.514; Snyder, *The War*, pp.227-228; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.315

<sup>289</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 15 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.452-453; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, pp.530, 539. On 5 April 1942 the Japanese very successfully attacked British naval forces at Ceylon, Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.727

<sup>290</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.59; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.322

<sup>291</sup> Breuer, *Feuding Allies*, pp.24-25; Snyder, *The War*, pp.267-270; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.332

<sup>292</sup> Snyder, *The War*, p.234; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.334

<sup>293</sup> Snyder, *The War*, p.273; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.337-338

<sup>294</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.96

his army had attacked on the major areas of the entire front during the winter.<sup>295</sup> These attacks enjoyed some success, but they were all eventually halted, sometimes with heavy losses.<sup>296</sup> The Soviets wanted to retain the initiative, and an ambitious Soviet offensive at Khar'kov began on 12 May, but it was met by a powerful German counter-attack, and was defeated.<sup>297</sup>

The Germans now went on the attack themselves, securing important areas before their summer offensive began. The Crimean Peninsula was conquered by the Germans in May, June and early July 1942, removing a potential threat to the right flank of a German advance into the Caucasus.<sup>298</sup> The German summer offensive began on 28 June, and it enjoyed initial success. It was aimed at securing the Caucasus, although as it progressed seizing the city of Stalingrad on the Volga River assumed more importance as the objective of the offensive.<sup>299</sup> Between 28 and 30 June the Germans began their attack on Voronezh, a vital point on the Don River about 500 km north-west of Stalingrad, from where they would push southwards to the Caucasus.<sup>300</sup> In July there were two Soviet counter-strokes against German forces advancing in the region of Voronezh, but both failed.<sup>301</sup> By the end of July, when the decision for TORCH was made, the German offensive in Russia seemed to be going very well.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.294-295

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.295-296

<sup>297</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.72; David M. Glantz, 'Soviet Military Strategy during the Second Period of War (November 1942 – December 1943): A Reappraisal', *JMH*, Vol. 60, No. 1, January 1996, p.116; Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.325; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.590; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, pp.297, 412

<sup>298</sup> NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C.(42) 200 (Final), 1st June, 1942, p.11. By 18 May 1942 the Germans had conquered the Kerch Peninsula, the easternmost part of the Crimea, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.72; Glantz, 'Soviet Military Strategy during the Second Period of War', p.116; Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.325; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.413. The Germans attacked at Sevastopol on the Crimean Peninsula on 7 June 1942, and it fell on 3 July, having been besieged since December 1941, Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.325; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.590; Snyder, *The War*, p.311; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.413

<sup>299</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.411

<sup>300</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.325; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.413

<sup>301</sup> Glantz, 'Soviet Military Strategy during the Second Period of War', p.117; Snyder, *The War*, p.312

<sup>302</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.416. The situation on the Eastern Front continued to deteriorate after the TORCH decision on 24 July 1942, In August and September 1942 local Soviet counterattacks were launched against the German Don River flank. The struggle for Stalingrad began on 22 August 1942. The German offensive was only eventually halted by the Soviets in autumn 1942, Glantz, 'Soviet Military Strategy during the Second Period of War', pp.117-118; Snyder, *The War*, pp.313-314; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.449

### **The Morale of the Western Allies**

The military situation outlined above understandably caused significant morale problems in Britain and the United States. Churchill and Roosevelt had legitimate concerns about poor morale in their nations stemming from the war situation in 1942. There is much evidence that between 7 December 1941 and the decision for TORCH on 24 July 1942 civilian morale in both nations, and particularly in Britain, suffered badly as news was received of the regular military defeats outlined above. The morale of the general public was affected, and also the morale within the administrations of both nations. The problem was especially bad in Britain because by the summer of 1942 it had suffered a long and almost unbroken string of defeats stretching back to Norway and France in spring 1940.<sup>303</sup> The antidote to poor morale was news of victories. Therefore, there was a great need for a successful Anglo-American operation in 1942 to revive morale and restore confidence in the British and American armed forces.

It is very difficult to define what constitutes morale.<sup>304</sup> In this thesis morale is considered to be the effectiveness and attitude with which an individual or group approaches accomplishing a task, the effectiveness being based on the hope and confidence of the individual and group. In World War II the task was to win the war. Good morale meant a confident and resolute individual eager to complete the task, while poor morale meant an individual lacked confidence and participated less in completing the task.<sup>305</sup> National morale was determined by individual morale. In this thesis, public opinion polls, British Ministry of Information surveys, reports on American morale by British embassy staff in Washington, and the diaries of politicians and military men, have all been used to try to gauge morale.<sup>306</sup>

Poor British morale in 1942 had its origins in defeats that occurred earlier in the war. The defeats in Norway and France in 1940 reflected very badly on the British

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<sup>303</sup> Harold Macmillan, on 7 December 1941 the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Supply, wrote in his memoirs: "The perils of 1940 had not shaken the British people or its representatives. But the continued misfortunes of the winter of 1941 and the spring and summer of 1942 were harder to bear", Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, p.166

<sup>304</sup> Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*, London, 1979, pp.7-8

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.8-9

<sup>306</sup> The diary entries of politicians reflect not only their concerns, but often the concerns of their constituents as well.

military, and caused a great loss of confidence in it amongst the British people.<sup>307</sup> These defeats also led to a feeling in parliamentary circles “that there was something grievously wrong with the conduct of the war”.<sup>308</sup> The change of government on 10 May 1940, with Winston Churchill installed as Prime Minister, followed by the RAF victory in the Battle of Britain, saw negative sentiments reduced somewhat in Britain. However, the feeling established amongst the British people of the inferiority of their military, and particularly the army, by the defeats of summer 1940, would remain in Britain until El Alamein and TORCH in November 1942 dispelled it.

After the Battle of Britain, the focus of the British war effort switched almost entirely to the Mediterranean theatre, and it became the theatre upon which the morale of the British people and administration hinged. After the British defeat in Libya in March 1941 there were concerns in Britain that the British Army could beat the Italians, but not the Germans.<sup>309</sup> More public confidence was lost in the British armed forces after the defeats in Greece and Crete, and civilian morale in Britain dropped significantly after these defeats.<sup>310</sup> The Ministry of Information estimated that British civilian

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<sup>307</sup> Secretary of State for War Eden told the C.I.G.S., General Dill, in June 1940 that he “did not think that the army’s reputation or that of its leaders stood very high with the nation”, Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.124

<sup>308</sup> Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget*, London, 1955, p.268. Parliamentarian Leo Amery noted in his diary on 2 May 1940: “... the House [is] greatly worried”, Amery Diary, 2 May 1940, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.591. On the previous day Labour politician Hugh Dalton recorded that the Norway situation was bad, and that there “seemed a tide in the House against the P.M.”, Hugh Dalton, *The Fateful Years, Memoirs 1931-1945*, London, 1957, p.301

<sup>309</sup> Nicolson Diary, 4 April 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.161. Maisky expressed this sentiment to Nicolson on 31 March, Nicolson Diary, 31 March 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.155

<sup>310</sup> Comments by politicians reflected the general mood in Britain after these defeats. On 3 April Churchill wrote to Eden: “Far more important than the loss of ground is the idea that we cannot face the Germans and that their appearance is enough to drive us back many scores of miles”, Farrell, ‘Yes, Prime Minister’, p.607. On 13 April Harold Nicolson of the Ministry of Information noted: “I have no doubt we shall win in the end. But we shall have to learn the new technique, the secret of mobile warfare ...”, Nicolson Diary, 13 April 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.163. In June 1941 the British Expeditionary Force was being called “Back Every Friday” or “Back Every Fortnight”, after the defeats in Greece and Crete, Channon Diary, 1 June 1941, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.307; Nicolson Diary, 4 June 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.170. Further diary entries by politicians and members of the civil service in June confirmed the drop in British morale. See, for example: Headlam Diary, 4 June 1941, in Stuart Ball (ed.), *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Churchill and Attlee: The Headlam Diaries, 1935-1951*, London, 1999, p.253; Nicolson Diary, 10 June 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.171; Headlam Diary, 11 June 1941, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.255; Cadogan Diary, 18 June 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.389. The sinking of the *Bismarck* on 27 May 1941 provided a boost to British morale, but was offset by the *Bismarck* sinking the *Hood* and damaging the *Prince of Wales*, Channon Diary, 27 May 1941, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.307; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.196

morale fell from twelve on a scale of twenty on 7 April 1941 to six out of twenty on 5 May, and plunged to just three out of twenty on 2 June.<sup>311</sup> British morale recovered to fifteen out of twenty in early July and August 1941, thirteen out of twenty on 1 September, and ten out of twenty on 6 October. However, in early November it had fallen to seven, probably largely due to the situation in the Soviet Union, before recovering to eleven out of twenty on the first day of December.<sup>312</sup>

The entry of the United States into the war after Pearl Harbor temporarily boosted British morale.<sup>313</sup> However, the defeats suffered in the seven months after Pearl Harbor led to a serious reduction in morale amongst the British people and the members of the government and administration. Confidence amongst the public and government in the British military also reached new lows. Events in Asia and the Pacific seem to have had the greatest impact on British morale in the early months after Pearl Harbor, although judging by the evidence the North Africa reversals in early 1942 also contributed, as did events like the Channel Dash.

The sinking of the *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales* by the Japanese caused a serious slump in British morale.<sup>314</sup> On 19 December 1941 Harold Nicolson, a backbencher, was visiting his constituency in Leicester, and found that despite the recent Soviet victories on the Eastern Front, along with the American entry into the war and British victories in Libya, the loss of the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* had made people depressed.<sup>315</sup>

For much of January 1942 British public confidence remained steady, although there were concerns amongst politicians about future British prospects, especially in Asia

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<sup>311</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, endpapers

<sup>313</sup> Churchill recorded in his memoirs that he was now completely confident of Allied victory: “All the rest was merely the proper application of overwhelming force”, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.80

<sup>314</sup> On 11 December 1941 Nicolson noted: “The House is depressed. I have a feeling that our nerves are not as good as they were in July 1940, and that we are tired of defeat”, Nicolson Diary, 12 December 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.196. The Prime Minister was also affected. Churchill said to Averell Harriman in December 1941: “It is a sad business, the Prince of Wales and the Repulse ... it is a cruel thing”, Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, pp.113-114. Harold Macmillan wrote of the sinkings: “Our people are accustomed to setbacks, even disasters, on land. All through history we have had to bear them without flinching. But a defeat at sea is another thing. I well remember the gasp of agony – not despair, but humiliation and almost incredulity – when this news reached us on 11 December”, Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, p.141

<sup>315</sup> Nicolson Diary, 19 December 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.198

and the Pacific.<sup>316</sup> However, as seen earlier, February 1942 was a very difficult month for the British in all theatres of war, and there was a corresponding loss of confidence amongst the British public and those in the administration about the military, and the army in particular. Concerns first appeared in late-January, after the fall of Benghazi in North Africa.<sup>317</sup> On 5 January 1942 the Ministry of Information had estimated British civilian morale to be at twelve out of twenty, but on 2 February this had dropped to eight out of twenty.<sup>318</sup> On 4 February 1942 63 per cent of Britons surveyed felt that the war would last more than two years, and only 33 per cent thought it would be over within two years, a figure reflecting a lack of confidence amongst the British public.<sup>319</sup>

Worse was to come, most notably the fall of Singapore on 15 February. The loss of Singapore was perceived to be a major military disaster by the British public, and had a serious impact on morale. An entry in the diary of the C.I.G.S. on 11 February summarises the British mood in the dark days around the surrender of Singapore:

I have during the last 10 years had an unpleasant feeling that the British Empire was decaying and that we were on a slippery decline!! I wonder if I was right? I certainly never expected that we should fall to pieces as fast as we are and to see Hong Kong and Singapore go in less than three months plus failure in the Western Desert is far from reassuring! We have had a wonderful power of recuperation in the past. I wonder whether we shall again bring off a comeback?<sup>320</sup>

Henry Channon wrote in his diary on 13 February: “The capital seethes with indignation and were Londoners Latins there would be rioting”.<sup>321</sup> On 17 February Cuthbert Headlam talked to his fellow members of the House of Commons, and

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<sup>316</sup> See, for example: Amery diary on 6 January 1942: “useful talk with Maurice Hankey. He is much worried about the whole situation, thinks Singapore and Malaya have been badly let down ...”, Amery Diary, 6 January 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, pp.760-763. Amery wrote in his diary on 16 January: “Harold Macmillan is very much worried about the political situation and thinks the House of Commons is as badly disturbed as it was at the time of Norway”, Amery Diary, 16 January 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.763

<sup>317</sup> See, for example: Alanbrooke Diary, 30 January 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.225; Cadogan Diary, 29 January 1942, in Dilks (ed), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.430; Cadogan Diary, 31 January 1942, in Dilks (ed), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.430

<sup>318</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

<sup>319</sup> ‘Gallup & Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.314

<sup>320</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 11 February 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.228-229

<sup>321</sup> Channon Diary, 13 February 1942, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.321

noted: "... everyone has the same story to tell, and reports a feeling of disquiet and uneasiness amongst his constituents".<sup>322</sup>

The serious situation at this time affected Prime Minister Churchill as much as anyone in Britain. Churchill shared the lack of confidence and disappointment of the British public and many in his government about the military situation and apparent inefficiency of the British military.<sup>323</sup> Churchill told Roosevelt on 7 February 1942 "The Libyan setback has been both a shock and a disappointment ...".<sup>324</sup> On 11 February Violet Bonham Carter met with Churchill, and found him depressed and, despite a number of less serious concerns, "underneath it all was a dreadful fear, she felt, that our soldiers are not as good fighters as their fathers were".<sup>325</sup> Churchill's concerns were reflected in his order to General Archibald Wavell at Singapore on 10 February, when he mentioned the recent fighting efforts of his two major allies:

The honour of the British Empire and of the British Army is at stake. I rely on you to show no mercy to weakness in any form. With the Russians fighting as they are and the Americans stubborn at Luzon, the whole reputation of our country and our race is involved.<sup>326</sup>

The Americans recognized the British loss of morale. Roosevelt told Churchill in a message on 18 February: "I realize how the fall of Singapore has affected you and the British people".<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Headlam Diary, 17 February 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.297

<sup>323</sup> Paul Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front, 1900-1955*, London, 1992, p.350. General Alanbrooke recalled of British Cabinet meetings in early February 1942: "[Churchill] came out continually with remarks such as: 'Have you not got a single general in that army who can win battles, have none of them any ideas, must we continually lose battles in this way?' etc., etc. Such remarks lowered the confidence of other ministers in the efficiency of the army, and could be nothing but detrimental in the present crisis", Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.226. General Alanbrooke wrote in his diary on 24 February 1942 about Churchill at a Pacific Council: "PM very tired and gave very gloomy statement", Alanbrooke Diary, 24 February 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.233. On the same day Churchill gave a pessimistic statement in the House, warning of future disasters, Amery Diary, 24 February 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.779. Amery noted in his diary on 26 February 1942 that he thought Churchill was "really losing his grip altogether", Amery Diary, 26 February 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (ed.), *The Empire at Bay*, p.779

<sup>324</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 7 February 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.351

<sup>325</sup> Nicolson Diary, 12 February 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.211; Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.350

<sup>326</sup> Churchill to General Wavell, 10 February 1942, in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.88

<sup>327</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 18 February 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.362

At this time some in the British administration held very serious concerns about the ability of the British Army. The diary entries of a number of prominent men demonstrate these concerns.<sup>328</sup> General Alanbrooke wrote in his diary: “Burma news now bad. Cannot work out why troops are not fighting better. If the army cannot fight better than it is doing at present we shall deserve to lose our Empire!”<sup>329</sup> Clearly the British Army was held in very low esteem at this time, based on its performance in North Africa and Asia in January and February 1942, and victories were needed to revive confidence in it.

Early March saw no improvement in the British war situation or civilian morale, and diary entries continued to be gloomy.<sup>330</sup> On 2 March 1942 the Ministry of Information put civilian morale at just four out of twenty, one of its lowest points in the war.<sup>331</sup> Churchill was also still down. He confided to Roosevelt:

... I find it difficult to realize how gravely our British affairs have deteriorated by what has happened since December seven. We have suffered the greatest disaster in our history at Singapore, and other misfortunes will come thick and fast upon us.<sup>332</sup>

On the same day, Secretary Stimson recommended to Roosevelt a major Anglo-American landing in France in that year, and noted that one benefit of such an

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<sup>328</sup> Cuthbert Headlam wrote in his diary: “... one begins to feel that R. [Rommel] is too good for us ...”, Headlam Diary, 4 February 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.294. Cadogan wrote: “Our army is the mockery of the world”, Cadogan Diary, 9 February 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.433. Harold Nicolson noted: “A whisper is going around that our troops do not fight well”, Nicolson Diary, 11 February 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.211. He repeated these concerns about the British Army on a number of occasions in February 1942. In reference to the war with Japan, Leo Amery wrote on 21 February: “... I did what I could to back up the Dutchmen, who seemed to me the only people who have a positive fighting spirit in them ...”, Amery Diary, 21 February 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.777

<sup>329</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 18 February 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.231. The next day General Alanbrooke confided in his diary: “Troops don’t seem to be fighting well there either which is most depressing”, Alanbrooke Diary, 19 February 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.231

<sup>330</sup> See, for example: Cadogan Diary, 2 March 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.438; Cadogan Diary, 9 March 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.441; Amery Diary, 3 March 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.782; Amery Diary, 9 March 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.786

<sup>331</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

<sup>332</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 5 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.381. On the same day, Cadogan wrote in his diary: “Poor old Winston, feeling deeply the present situation and the attacks on him, is losing his grip, I fear. The outlook is pretty bloody”, Cadogan Diary, 5 March 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.440

operation would be to “heavily stimulate British sagging morale”.<sup>333</sup> Averell Harriman wrote to President Roosevelt on 6 March: “Although the British are keeping a stiff upper lip, the surrender of their troops at Singapore has shattered confidence to the core ...”.<sup>334</sup>

The idea of a major offensive in 1942 to improve the war situation was certainly considered by the British at this low point in the war. On 21 March a pessimistic Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, wrote in his diary:

We are in a period of awful – and perhaps disastrous – stagnation. I *hope* we are planning aggressive action (I believe so), but I haven’t been to Defence Committee lately and am not in the Inner Councils (I am all for their being kept secret!) so don’t know. I am personally convinced, in spite of all the obvious risks, and chances of disaster, that we must *do* something active in the next four months. I have said so to A. [British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden] (it is easy to say!) and he assures me that opinion in the highest circles inclines in the same direction.<sup>335</sup>

This piece of evidence shows that Churchill and his leading advisors felt they needed a successful operation in 1942 at least in part to go on the offensive, improve the war situation, and as a result restore British morale.

The first half of April saw British civilian morale and confidence in the military remain low. For example, the Ministry of Information put British civilian morale at just four out of twenty on 6 April.<sup>336</sup> Diary entries of those in the British administration and military continued to reflect the general pessimistic mood.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Stimson Diary, 5 March 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.416

<sup>334</sup> Harriman to Roosevelt, 6 March 1942, in Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, p.126

<sup>335</sup> Cadogan Diary, 21 March 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.442. Cadogan repeated these sentiments on the next day: “Awful feeling still persists, of a lull – no-one doing anything but losing time”, Cadogan Diary, 22 March 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.442

<sup>336</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

<sup>337</sup> On 31 March 1942 General Alanbrooke had written in his diary: “The last day of the first quarter of 1942, a fateful year in which we have already lost a large proportion of the British Empire, and are on the high road to lose a great deal more of it! During the last fortnight I have had for the first time since the war started a growing conviction that we are going to lose this war unless we control it very differently and fight it with more determination. ... It is all desperately depressing. ... I wonder if we shall muddle through this time as we have done in the past? There are times when I wish to God I had not been placed at the helm of a ship that seems to be heading inevitably for the rocks. It is a great honour to find oneself entrusted with such a task, and the hope of saving the ship a most inspiring thought and one that does override all others. But may God help me in my task”,

Churchill told Roosevelt: “I find it very difficult to get over Singapore but I hope we shall redeem it ere long”.<sup>338</sup> On 7 April Churchill’s Personal Assistant, Desmond Morton completed a report for the Prime Minister and the Minister of Information. Morton noted that “the strain of two and a half years of war has permanently reduced the automatic resilience of the British people”, and that good publicity was necessary to ensure that “loss of national unity of purpose” did not occur.<sup>339</sup> Morale had improved somewhat since “its recent depression”, but it was still low.<sup>340</sup>

There then followed a quieter period in the war, and consequently British civilian morale steadied again.<sup>341</sup> The Ministry of Information estimated British civilian morale to be eight out of twenty on 4 May.<sup>342</sup> However, the deputy leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Greenwood, summed up the mood of the British public in the House of Commons:

... perturbation exists in this house, and is very widespread in the country, regarding Malaya and Singapore, the loss of the ‘Prince of Wales’ and the ‘Repulse’ and the escape of the German warships through the Channel. Madagascar and Martinique, the Battle of the Coral Sea, and the developing air attack on Germany and other objectives, while welcome enough to all of us, have not wiped out of the public mind the earlier disappointments.<sup>343</sup>

The heavy RAF bombing raid on Cologne on the night of 30/31 May provided a considerable boost to British morale.<sup>344</sup> On 2 June the Ministry of Information

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Alanbrooke Diary, 31 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.243-244. See also: Headlam Diary, 4 April 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.306; Alanbrooke Diary, 7 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.245; Cadogan Diary, 8 April 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.445; Nicolson Diary, 10 April 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.221.

<sup>338</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 1 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.438. Harry Hopkins on what Churchill told him and General Marshall on 8 April 1942 about Singapore: “... there is no explanation of the lack of resistance on the part of the British. [Churchill] simply thinks they folded up and let him and the British Army down very badly”, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.528

<sup>339</sup> NA PREM 4/40/10, ‘Home Front Morale’, 7 April 1942, p.1

<sup>340</sup> NA PREM 4/40/10, ‘Home Front Morale’, 7 April 1942, p.1

<sup>341</sup> Churchill’s spirits also improved. Eden wrote in his diary on 27 April 1942: “Luncheon with Winston alone. He was in better form than I have known him for ages”, Eden Diary, 24 April 1942, in Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.326

<sup>342</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

<sup>343</sup> NA CAB 21/818, Extract from House of Commons Report, 19th May, 1942, p.68

<sup>344</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, pp.160-161

estimated that civilian morale had risen to fifteen out of twenty, but over the course of the next month that figure was to be halved.<sup>345</sup>

More British defeats and setbacks occurred in June 1942, most notably heavy Allied shipping losses in the Atlantic, and events in North Africa, culminating in the fall of Tobruk on 21 June. This saw concerns re-emerge amongst Britons about the war.<sup>346</sup> The fall of Tobruk was a most serious blow to British morale, and once more questions were raised about the ability of the British Army and its leaders. Cadogan confided:

I to F.O. to learn that Tobruk had fallen. It held out for eight months last time, and for about as many hours this [time]. I wonder what is most wrong with our army. Without any knowledge, I should say the Generals. *Most depressing.*<sup>347</sup>

General Alanbrooke, in Washington at the time, recalled after the war: “Neither Winston nor I had contemplated such an eventuality and it was a staggering blow”.<sup>348</sup> The fall of Tobruk was compounded by other problems, including bad news from the Soviet Union. On 22 June Cadogan noted: “Sinkings are still more frightful. Sevastopol seems to be going. Altogether pretty gloomy”.<sup>349</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by others in the government and military over the next week.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, endpapers

<sup>346</sup> Anthony Eden wrote in his diary on 7 June 1942: “[Churchill and I] were both depressed by extent to which Rommel appears able to retain offensive. ‘I fear that we have not very good generals,’ said W.”, Eden Diary, 7 June 1942, in Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.331. Cadogan recorded in his diary on 14 June: “We seem to be being completely worsted and outwitted, as usual, by Rommel”, Cadogan Diary, 14 June 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.458. Leo Amery noted in his diary on 15 June: “Cabinet, Winston rather glum over Libya on which he had set such high hopes”, Amery Diary, 15 June 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.815. On 15 June Cadogan wrote: “5.30 Cabinet – very gloomy. Libya bad, sinkings awful (tho’ P.M. doesn’t seem to think so). Malta convoys badly mauled. No good news from anywhere”, Cadogan Diary, 15 June 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.458

<sup>347</sup> Cadogan Diary, 21 June 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.458. A more reserved Leo Amery wrote on 21 June: “I am afraid after our defeat the other day we seem to have been completely disorganized and incapable of pulling ourselves together, either for the defence of Tobruk or for its evacuation”, Amery Diary, 21 June 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.815. Headlam wrote that the fall of Tobruk “makes one somewhat anxious both as to the capacity of our leaders and also of the fighting quality of our men ... It looks as if we had been out-generated, out-gunned, out-manoevred – it is all very depressing and one is extremely nervous as to what more in the way of disaster is ahead of us”, Headlam Diary, 21 June 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.320

<sup>348</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.269

<sup>349</sup> Cadogan Diary, 22 June 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.459

<sup>350</sup> Amery on 23 June: “Office, and then to the House which was in a definitely ugly mood”, Amery Diary, 23 June 1942, in Barnes & Nicholson (eds), *The Empire at Bay*, p.816. On 25 June Cadogan

Bad British morale continued in July 1942, and especially early in that month.<sup>351</sup> On 2 July the Ministry of Information put British civilian morale at eight on a scale of twenty.<sup>352</sup> Churchill was still very worried about the performance of the British Army. The same day as the Ministry report, Anthony Eden dined with Churchill: “Much discussion of war situation. Winston said repeatedly that we had not done as well as we should. ‘I am ashamed,’ etc., and we discussed the problems of the Army, its Trade Union outlook, paucity of talent etc.”<sup>353</sup> Concerns about the situation on the Eastern Front, with the commencement of the German summer offensive on 28 June, also appeared. Cadogan wrote on 13 July:

Cabinet 5.30. Outstanding news was sinkings for the week – 364,000 tons. This, of course, if continued, leads us straight to early disaster. Russian [situation] perhaps not so bad as might have been. But I have no great confidence in Egyptian situation. We have no initiative.<sup>354</sup>

Up to the decision for TORCH on 24 July 1942 there was great pessimism within the British administration and amongst the public about the war situation, and there was also a feeling that something positive had to be done.<sup>355</sup> There was a clear desire within British government circles for action to improve the war situation, and consequently boost public morale and confidence. The best way for the British to gain the initiative was to go on the offensive.

American civilian morale was not as badly affected by the war situation in 1942 as British civilian morale, but it was still an issue for President Roosevelt. The President

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noted: “We are now retiring out of chunks of Egypt. We have suffered one of the most decisive defeats ever inflicted”, Cadogan Diary, 25 June 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.459. On 29 June Cadogan wrote in his diary: “3.15 saw A., who said P.M. was in good form, though I don’t know why. Rout of our 8th army in Egypt seems to be as complete as any in history ... the news looks pretty sticky to me. Only sinkings not so bad”, Cadogan Diary, 29 June 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.459

<sup>351</sup> On 6 July Cadogan wrote: “5.30 Cabinet. Egypt seems better. The Russian convoy situation bad. I don’t know how we can keep this up. Russian front not too good. ... P.M. furious about Generals ordering surrender – and he’s quite right ...”, Cadogan Diary, 6 July 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.461

<sup>352</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

<sup>353</sup> Eden Diary, 2 July 1942, in Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.332

<sup>354</sup> Cadogan Diary, 13 July 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.462

<sup>355</sup> British civilian morale was to remain depressed until El Alamein and TORCH. The Ministry of Information put British morale at eight out of twenty on 4 August and 1 September, and ten out of twenty on 6 October, McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

himself does not seem to have been affected by the war situation to the extent that Churchill was. In the early war period American civilian morale tended to be brittle, changing quickly from optimism to pessimism, and it depended largely on events at the front, with defeats quickly causing morale to drop.<sup>356</sup> Roosevelt tried to keep American morale and public opinion on an even keel, so that it was neither too pessimistic nor too optimistic.<sup>357</sup> There is good direct evidence that Roosevelt equated a major Anglo-American operation in 1942 with improving morale. Roosevelt remarked to Churchill at the first official meeting of the ARCADIA conference on 23 December 1941 how it was “very important to morale, to give this country a feeling that they are in the war, ... to have American troops somewhere in active fighting across the Atlantic.”<sup>358</sup> The evidence about American morale in 1942 suggests that Roosevelt was correct about the need for American troops to engage German forces as soon as possible.

Pearl Harbor damaged American civilian morale, and there was a “sense of unsureness and loss of confidence immediately after December 7th”.<sup>359</sup> However, civilian morale soon bounced back, and it generally remained good in January 1942.<sup>360</sup> In early February American morale was reported by the British Embassy in Washington to be good, with a feeling that “America is doing all right”.<sup>361</sup> In the early months of the war there was even a sense of complacency or apathy in the United States.<sup>362</sup> However, a drop in American civilian morale became a real issue during February 1942, and continued for several months thereafter.

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<sup>356</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.xix, 73, 91, 93. Roosevelt told the press on 22 May 1942: “In a war public opinion – and news – goes up and down with things which look big at the moment that actually are merely a part of a war”, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.74

<sup>357</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.74

<sup>358</sup> Marshall Memorandum, ‘Notes of Meeting at the White House with the President and the British Prime Minister Presiding’, December 23, 1941, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.34; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.321

<sup>359</sup> NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Lord Halifax to Churchill, 11 January 1942, p.1. On 9 December Lord Halifax told Churchill: “They are terribly shaken here, as you can well suppose ...”, NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Lord Halifax to Churchill, 9 December 1941, p.3

<sup>360</sup> Halifax wrote to Churchill on 11 January 1942, and noted “the recovery of American morale” in the previous two or three weeks”, NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Lord Halifax to Churchill, 11 January 1942, p.1

<sup>361</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 4 February 1942, in H.G. Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945: Weekly Political Reports from the British Embassy*, London, 1981, p.15

<sup>362</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.52. On 8 February 1942 the *New York Times* noted that the United States was “too complacent, too overconfident about the war”, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.52. Sherwood argues that the period after Pearl Harbor was the American equivalent of Britain in the period after Dunkirk, when the British people had rallied behind Churchill, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins*

The British reverses in February 1942 seem to have reminded the United States of the seriousness of the war situation, and events like the fall of Singapore particularly bothered Americans. On 13 February the *New York Herald Tribune* stated bluntly: “The War Can Be Lost”.<sup>363</sup> After the British defeats in Malaya, Burma and North Africa questions were raised in the United States about British fighting spirit and competence.<sup>364</sup> The *Washington Post*, a newspaper friendly to Britain, noted that the Channel Dash, events in Malaya, and the collapse of the British Libyan offensive unleashed “a flood of indignation in this country”, and on 4 March the British Embassy reported that a critical attitude towards Britain remained amongst the American people, but it was not quite as bad as it had previously been.<sup>365</sup>

The British Embassy weekly report of 4 March noted: “[American] Public opinion is still very depressed over the situation in the Pacific and uneasy about the continued torpedoings on this country’s Atlantic seaboard”.<sup>366</sup> Public opinion figures confirm this. On 2 January 1942 Americans surveyed felt that the war would last 2.16 years, but by 10 March they felt that it would last 2.82 years, demonstrating a loss of confidence.<sup>367</sup> The number of Americans believing in Allied victory dropped from 68.5 per cent in late-December 1941 to 54.6 per cent in mid- to late-February 1942.<sup>368</sup> The loss of the Philippines in April and May 1942 was a major blow for the United States government, and damaged the prestige of the American military. However, the

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*Papers*, II, p.498. On 14 March 1942 Marshall wrote to a subordinate mentioning the “dangerous apathy of the public in the interior of the country to a full war effort ...”, Marshall Memorandum for General McNair, 14 March 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.132

<sup>363</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.51

<sup>364</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.17. Secretary of War Stimson received reports in March and April 1942 that if the British army did not attack soon, it would go stale and morale would drop, Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.17

<sup>365</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 19 February 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.19; Weekly Political Summary, 4 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.23. The British embassy in Washington noted “greatly increased criticism of Great Britain in this country”, Weekly Political Summary, 19 February 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.19. Roosevelt told Churchill on 22 February 1942 that “the first bad comments” about the Channel Dash had just died down, Roosevelt to Churchill, 22 February 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.369

<sup>366</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 4 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.22

<sup>367</sup> ‘Gallup & Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.483; Hadley Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, Princeton, 1951, pp.1095-1096

<sup>368</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.52

prolonged resistance at least turned the defeat into a partial psychological victory for the Americans.<sup>369</sup>

There then followed a period where American morale steadied, and even improved. On 23 April the British embassy in Washington noted “signs of certain rising spirits” in the previous week, due to the Doolittle bombing raid on Tokyo on 18 April, and the visit of General Marshall and Harry Hopkins to London, which it was thought by Americans would probably lead to an offensive in Europe.<sup>370</sup> Even the possibility that a decision had been made about a major 1942 operation against Germany lifted American spirits, demonstrating just how effective an Anglo-American operation in 1942 could be in improving American morale. The Doolittle raid was the first good war news in some time for Americans.<sup>371</sup> On 27 May Isaiah Berlin at the British embassy in Washington reported that American opinion “has been passing through an optimistic phase”, helped by the sending of American troops to relieve British troops in Northern Ireland, and the Doolittle raid.<sup>372</sup> This slight improvement in morale matched trends in British morale in late-April and May, and was the result of a quieter period in the war, with fewer Allied defeats.

Success against the Japanese in the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway in May and June further improved American morale, but events in the war with Germany soon counteracted this improvement.<sup>373</sup> American morale dropped in late-June 1942 because of the fall of Tobruk and other British defeats in North Africa, and Russian defeats at Khar’kov and in the Crimea. These events, according to the British embassy in Washington, “caused the kind of sudden collapse of morale to which the American

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<sup>369</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.58. On 16 April 1942 the British embassy in Washington told the Foreign Office: “The end of American resistance on Bataan was a severe blow, but it was generally felt that everything possible had been done and there was a certain tendency to contrast resistance here with that put up in British possessions in the Far East”, Weekly Political Summary, 16 April 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.31. Roosevelt stated in his fireside chat of 28 April 1942: “... this whole nation pays tribute to the Filipino and American officers and men who held out so long on Bataan Peninsula, to those grim and gallant fighters who still hold Corregidor, where the flag flies ...”, Buhite & Levy (eds), *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, p.222

<sup>370</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 23 April 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.32

<sup>371</sup> Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.546

<sup>372</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 27 May 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.40

<sup>373</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.72; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.546

public is peculiarly prone”.<sup>374</sup> The British embassy noted on 27 June that there was “a wave of anti-British talk and feeling in congressional and other political circles unknown since Pearl Harbor”, and British prestige fell lower than ever before.<sup>375</sup> American morale did not improve to any great degree in July. In the period 29 June to 18 July 51 per cent of Americans surveyed felt that the war was going badly and slowly, and only 19 per cent thought that it was going well and improving, with 30 per cent unsure.<sup>376</sup> In late- July 1942 the British embassy reported that American “public morale in general is not high at the moment”.<sup>377</sup> As was the case in Britain, American civilian morale was poor right up to the Anglo-American decision to undertake TORCH, and the evidence of Roosevelt’s statement at the ARCADIA conference shows that his desire for an Anglo-American operation in 1942 was at least partly because he wanted to improve American civilian morale.

Table 1 below reveals that between December 1941 and May 1942 the number of surveyed Americans expecting a long war of two to five years increased from 37.8 per cent to 51.4 per cent.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 27 June 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.48

<sup>375</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 27 June 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, pp.48-49. On 3 July 1942 the British embassy in Washington noted: “The depression caused by the British reverses in North Africa naturally continues and is reflected in much private anti-British talk”, Weekly Political Summary, 3 July 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.51

<sup>376</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.74

<sup>377</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 25 July 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.60

<sup>378</sup> Paradoxically, the number believing in a swift victory increased by nine per cent.

**Table 1: American Opinion: How long will the war last?** <sup>379</sup>

	December 1941	May 1942
	%	%
Less than 6 months	0.9	9.9
6 months to 1 year	4.6	
1 to 2 years	14.5	17.6
2 to 5 years	37.8	51.4
5 to 10 years	9.7	5.3
10 years and over	2.7	0.4
Depends on what the United States does	5.9	
Depends on what the Soviet Union does	1.4	
Depends on other factors	1.1	
Don't know	22.0	11.2

The following table shows initial optimism amongst the American public about the war in late-December 1941. However, by February confidence had slipped somewhat, and it remained about the same in July 1942.

**Table 2: American Opinion: Feelings about the outcome of the war** <sup>380</sup>

	26.12.41 – 30.12.41	16.02.42 – 23.02.42	07.42	late-11.42
	%	%	%	%
Allied victory	68.5	54.6	58	73
Qualified Allied victory <sup>381</sup>	22.4	30.8	28	19
Stalemate	3.9	6.5	6	3
Axis victory	0.9	3.9	3	0
Don't know			5	5

<sup>379</sup> 'Gallup & Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1942, p.152; 'Gallup & Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.483. Multiple answers by some respondents means there is more than 100 percent for December 1941. The reason for there being only 95.8 per cent in May 1942 is unknown.

<sup>380</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.52

<sup>381</sup> Original wording: "We will win the war all right, but the losers will be strong enough so we will have to make some concessions too"

The poor military situation of the Allies in the months after Pearl Harbor resulted in British and American civilian morale falling considerably in the first half of 1942, and there was also a loss of confidence in the British armed forces. Roosevelt and Churchill wanted to address this problem, to ensure a strong, unified war effort. A successful large-scale combined Anglo-American operation in 1942 would significantly improve the Allied war situation, and would consequently achieve the aim of Roosevelt and Churchill. There is good direct evidence that Roosevelt viewed improving morale as a reason for undertaking a 1942 operation.<sup>382</sup> There are also strong indications that Churchill saw it as a way to revive British confidence in the armed forces and restore morale.<sup>383</sup> Improving British and American civilian morale was not a decisive reason for the insistence of Roosevelt and Churchill on a 1942 military operation, but the evidence suggests that it contributed to their desire for such an undertaking.

### **The Military Situation in the Soviet Union**

A factor influencing the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt to carry out an Anglo-American military operation in 1942 was their fear that their indispensable Soviet ally would be defeated. They both recognized the paramount importance of continued Soviet involvement in the war with Germany. The Soviets barely survived the German onslaught in 1941, and the Western Allied leaders were very concerned that when the Germans renewed their offensive in the East in the summer of 1942, the Soviets would be defeated, or would make a separate peace with Germany.<sup>384</sup> This would be disastrous, and could possibly lead to overall Allied defeat, because the Soviets were engaging the bulk of the German forces. Compounding Western Allied fears of Soviet defeat were the regular Soviet demands for the creation of an Anglo-American 'Second Front', which the Soviets considered to be a cross-Channel invasion of France. Roosevelt and Churchill were also concerned that the Soviet Union was bearing the brunt of the fighting in 1942, and they wanted their nations to

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<sup>382</sup> Most notably his comment at the ARCADIA conference that it was important to American morale to have American troops fighting against the Germans in 1942.

<sup>383</sup> For example, Eden's assurance to Cadogan on 21 March 1942 that the Prime Minister was considering an operation in 1942 to regain the initiative in the war.

<sup>384</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.12. See, for example, Roosevelt's message to Churchill on 31 May 1942, when the President said that there was likely to be serious trouble on the Eastern Front in the near future, and that the Western Allies should make their plans accordingly, Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.504

take a more significant part in the war with Germany. Strongly held fears of Soviet defeat, a need to satisfy the Soviet demands for action, and the need to provide support for a vital ally in trouble and bearing the brunt of the fighting, resulted in Churchill and Roosevelt wanting to provide military assistance to the Soviets by drawing off German forces from Russia. For these reasons the military situation on the Eastern Front was a determining factor in the decision to undertake a large-scale Anglo-American military operation in 1942.

The survival and eventual success of the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front was the decisive factor in the war with Germany, because in 1941 and 1942 the Soviets were engaging a large percentage of the German army. If the Soviets were defeated or made a separate peace with Germany, not only would Western Allied interests like the Middle East oilfields be threatened by the German units released from fighting on the Eastern Front, but it could result in a renewal of the invasion threat to Britain, and could lead to German victory in the war.<sup>385</sup> Soviet survival meant eventual Allied victory in the war, but Soviet defeat would make Anglo-American victory very difficult.<sup>386</sup> The Western Allies recognized this in 1941 and 1942. For example, Churchill's 16 December 1941 paper on strategy noted: "Hitler's failure and losses in Russia are the prime fact in the war at this time", and in April 1942 Churchill told Roosevelt: "All now depends upon the vast Russo German struggle".<sup>387</sup> On 6 May 1942 General Marshall told Roosevelt: "The most pressing need, in the opinion of the Army General Staff, is to sustain Russia as an active, effective participant in the

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<sup>385</sup> NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C. (42) 232 (Final), 'Invasion of the British Isles', 17th June, 1942, p.1; Churchill to Roosevelt, [??] January 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.318

<sup>386</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.40; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.62; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.75. In Churchill's address on the evening of 22 June 1941, he concluded: "The Russian danger is, therefore, our danger, and the danger of the United States, just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the cause of free men and free peoples in every quarter of the globe", Kitchen, 'Churchill and the Soviet Union', p.419

<sup>387</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.294; Churchill to Roosevelt, 1 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.439. There are other examples of Anglo-American recognition of the great importance of the Soviets staying in the war. For example, as early as September 1941 a U.S. Joint Army-Navy Board estimate stated: "The maintenance of an active front in Russia offers by far the best opportunity for a successful land offensive against Germany", Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman*, Princeton, 1991, p.216. Churchill admitted to Molotov on 22 May 1942 that British and American "fortunes were bound up with the resistance of the Soviet Army", Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.499. Ensuring Soviet survival was one of three military tasks the U.S. Army Operations Division saw as truly necessary, along with securing the British Isles and Atlantic sea lanes, and holding India and the Middle East, Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.62

war”.<sup>388</sup> The Western Allies wanted to do all they could to support and assist the Soviet Union, to ensure Soviet survival, secure Western Allied interests, and ensure that the Grand Alliance defeated Germany. In 1942 this meant a large-scale offensive somewhere in the West.

The British were especially concerned about their possessions in the Middle East if the Soviets were defeated.<sup>389</sup> A successful 1942 German summer offensive in southern Russia could allow them to push south from the Caucasus and threaten British interests in the Middle East, including Egypt and the Middle East oilfields. The British were worried that the Germans would bomb the Middle East oilfields and refineries, or even capture them.<sup>390</sup> In 1942 Middle East oil accounted for only six per cent of total world production, but it was very important to Britain’s war effort.<sup>391</sup> If the Germans enjoyed great success in their 1942 Eastern Front offensive, even India could be threatened by advancing German troops, with the possibility of “the junction of Germany and Japan”.<sup>392</sup> This was a very real fear for the Western Allies, which first emerged in 1941.<sup>393</sup> It was even more of a concern in 1942, and was recognized by members of the administrations of all three members of the Grand Alliance, including Churchill and Roosevelt. For example, in Churchill’s summary of strategy to Roosevelt in early January 1942, the British Prime Minister noted that “continued successful Russian resistance in the south gives complete protection to us”, removing the danger to the Middle East from a German advance south from Russia.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> Marshall Memorandum for the President, 6 May 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.184

<sup>389</sup> As early as 22 June 1941 Nicolson noted in his diary that Soviet defeat meant the road to Persia and India would be open, Nicolson Diary, 22 June 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.174

<sup>390</sup> Daniel Silverfarb, ‘Britain, the United States, and the Security of the Sa’udi Arabian Oilfields in 1942’, *HJ*, Vol. 26, No. 3, September 1983, p.719

<sup>391</sup> D. Silverfarb, ‘Sa’udi Arabian Oilfields in 1942’, p.719. Alanbrooke described Persia and the Middle East oil fields after the war as “one of the greatest strategic prizes”, Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.305. The British J.I.C. warned on 4 May 1942 that it was the “principal remaining [source] of oil in the Hemisphere, on which the whole of their Middle Eastern position depends”, NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C.(42) 167 (O), 4th May, 1942, p.1

<sup>392</sup> NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C.(42) 167 (O), 4th May, 1942, p.1

<sup>393</sup> The British War Office noted on 31 October 1941 that there was now “the probability that German forces will be in Transcaucasia by the end of February, 1942”, and that without Turkish resistance, an attack could occur against the British in Syria and Iraq in the Spring of 1942, NA WO 193/8, ‘Review of availability and requirements of armoured formations’, 31 October 1941, pp.1-5

<sup>394</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, [7?] January 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.318. Churchill repeated this idea to Roosevelt on 5 March 1942, when he emphasized to Roosevelt the importance of Russian defence in the Caucasus, and told him that the “whole of the Levant-Caspian front now depends entirely upon the success of the Russian armies”,

This issue was also discussed by British and American military men. For example, General Alanbrooke noted at a C.C.S. meeting on 19 June that if the Soviets held out against the German offensive in southern Russia, the threat to the Middle East would be eliminated. However, if the Soviet Union collapsed reinforcements would be needed in that theatre.<sup>395</sup> After the fall of Tobruk there were even greater concerns about losing the Middle East to German forces converging from Russia and Egypt.<sup>396</sup> Thus right up to the decision for TORCH on 24 July 1942 the Western Allies feared a German threat to the Middle East if the Soviets were defeated.<sup>397</sup> This alone was a good reason for an Anglo-American operation in 1942 to assist the Soviets, but there were also British and American concerns that a Soviet defeat could have even more serious implications.

The British and Americans were worried that a Soviet defeat could result in a renewal of the German invasion threat to Britain. It was recognized that as long as Russia remained undefeated, a German invasion of Britain was not possible.<sup>398</sup> The threat to

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Churchill to Roosevelt, 5 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.381-382. Soviet Ambassador to London Maisky told Churchill in 1942 that if the forthcoming German offensive was successful, Germany would not stop at the Caucasus, but would advance to Iran, Turkey, Egypt and India, to join hands with Japan, Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.274. Roosevelt acknowledged to Churchill on 3 April that by carrying out a 1942 cross-Channel operation and relieving pressure on the Soviets, "Syria and Egypt will be made more secure, even if the Germans find out about our plans.", Roosevelt to Churchill, 3 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.441. Roosevelt told Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands on 6 April 1942 that "if Russia is driven to her knees this summer Germany will be able to release very large forces against the Near East and the Middle East and seek to join hands with Japan", Roosevelt letter to Queen Wilhelmina, 6 April 1942, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.424. On 22 May Molotov asked Churchill what he thought would happen if the Soviet Union was defeated. Churchill noted one possibility was a German attack through the Caucasus and Persia to the Middle East, Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.499

<sup>395</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 27th Meeting, June 19, 1942, at 12:30 p.m., p.1

<sup>396</sup> Marshall noted that the situation in the Middle East and Russia at this time "threatened a complete collapse in the Middle East, the loss of the Suez Canal and the vital oil supply in the vicinity of Abadan. It was a very black hour", Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.595. At a C.O.S. meeting on 23 July 1942 the British discussed "the necessary measures to guard against German attacks through Persia on Abadan oil field should Russian resistance break", Alanbrooke Diary, 23 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.284

<sup>397</sup> This continued to be an issue after the TORCH decision, as the Germans drove through southern Russia. While flying over the Caucasus region in August 1942, General Alanbrooke observed the lack of Soviet defences: "In fact the back door seemed to be wide open for the Germans to walk through for an attack on the Russian southern supply route, and more important still, the vital Middle East oil supplies of Persia and Iraq", Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.300

<sup>398</sup> NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C.(42) 232 (Final), 17th June, 1942, p.1

Britain if the Soviets were defeated was first recognized by the British and Americans in summer 1941.<sup>399</sup> The possibility re-emerged in 1942, especially after the German summer offensive had begun. This threat was taken seriously by prominent Western Allied leaders. On 22 May Churchill told Molotov that if the Soviet Union was defeated, Hitler would most likely move aircraft and troops to the West to invade Britain.<sup>400</sup> Stimson's memorandum to Roosevelt on 19 June mentioned the possibility of a German invasion of Britain if Russia was soon defeated, and advocated building up forces in Britain, avoiding dispersion of troops and shipping with operations like GYMNAST.<sup>401</sup> The possible renewal of the invasion threat to Britain continued to be mentioned after the TORCH decision.<sup>402</sup> Thus the Western Allies feared the grave implications a Soviet defeat could have on their own interests and survival, and it provided them with strong motivation to do all they could to prevent it, adding impetus to the need for a significant and successful 1942 operation.

The possibility of Soviet defeat weighed heavily on Western Allied minds after the German invasion. These fears were held at all levels of the British and American administrations, but most notably by the two leading men in Western Allied strategy-making, Churchill and Roosevelt.<sup>403</sup> In 1942 their correspondence regularly mentioned fear of Soviet defeat, and emphasized the great importance of preventing

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<sup>399</sup> See, for example: Roosevelt letter to Mackenzie King, 1 July 1941, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.378. In a paper prepared for the Prime Minister in late-August 1941 it was noted that if Russia was beaten the Germans could remount an invasion of Britain in six to eight weeks, NA WO 193/8, 'Reinforcements for Middle East. Prime Minister's Minute. Note on the Operational Aspect', August 1941, p.2. In a 15 October 1941 conversation with Harriman, Churchill expressed his concern that Hitler's plan was "Poland '39; France, '40; Russia, '41; England, '42, and, '43, maybe America", Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, pp.107-108. In his 20 October 1941 letter to Roosevelt, Churchill noted that "We must expect that as soon as Hitler stabilizes the Russian front, he will begin to gather perhaps fifty or sixty divisions in the west for an invasion of the British Isles." He felt the attack could come by March 1942, Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 October 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.253

<sup>400</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.499

<sup>401</sup> Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.422-423

<sup>402</sup> Stalin also recognised this possibility. In his 13 August 1942 memorandum to Churchill, Stalin emphasized the danger that the British refusal to carry out a cross-Channel operation posed to the military position of Britain and its Allies, J.V. Stalin to W. Churchill, Memorandum, August 13, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.61. In his letter to General Marshall on 17 August, General Eisenhower recognised that if the Soviet Union was defeated, the Western Allies would have to give some serious consideration to the "defensive necessities of England itself", Eisenhower to Marshall, August 17, 1942, in Hobbs (ed.), *Dear General*, p.36

<sup>403</sup> In 1941 Roosevelt was initially very concerned, but soon became more optimistic, especially after hearing the positive views of Harry Hopkins, who visited Moscow in July and August 1941. However, he still had fears of Soviet defeat, especially in 1942, as the evidence will show.

this by doing something positive in 1942, such as a major combined military operation.<sup>404</sup> The course of the campaign on the Eastern Front in 1941 and 1942 did little to alleviate the well-grounded British and American fears of Soviet defeat, and subsequent serious problems arising from the defeat, because the Germans generally held the upper hand in the fighting.

In 1941 fears of Soviet defeat were firmly established in Western Allied minds, as the Soviets seemed incapable of withstanding the German attack. The poor performance of the Soviet military in the war with Finland in the winter of 1939/1940 had much reduced its reputation with the Western Allies.<sup>405</sup> The reputation of the Soviet military was little enhanced between the invasion of Russia and the Soviet counter-offensive in December 1941, and in this period the British and Americans were generally very pessimistic about the chances of Soviet survival. Serious fears of Soviet defeat began in Britain and the United States in the weeks immediately after the German invasion, and the general view was that the Soviets would be defeated within a few months.<sup>406</sup> Stalin's first message to Churchill on 18 July 1941 was pessimistic, noting that "the position of the Soviet troops at the front remains strained", due to Hitler's surprise attack.<sup>407</sup> However, Hopkins in Moscow cabled Roosevelt on 1 August: "... I feel ever so confident about this front".<sup>408</sup> His was a rare voice of optimism, but Roosevelt

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<sup>404</sup> See, for example: Roosevelt to Churchill, 1 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.437; Roosevelt to Churchill, 6 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.508; Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.520

<sup>405</sup> Kimball, *The Juggler*, p.27; Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, p.149

<sup>406</sup> Bennett, *Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, p.28; Gabriel Gorodetsky, 'The Origins of the Cold War: Stalin, Churchill and the Formation of the Grand Alliance', *RR*, Vol. 47, No. 2, April 1988, p.156; F.H. Hinsley, E.E. Thomas, C.F.G. Ransom, & R.C. Knight, *British Intelligence in the Second World War; Its Influence on Strategy and Operations, Volume Two*, London, 1981, p.67; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.60. The early view of the U.S. War Department Intelligence officers was that the campaign would only last one to three months, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.304; Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.383. On 30 June 1941 Cadogan noted in his diary: "Dill v. gloomy about Russian prospects", and Eden was "also worried", Cadogan Diary, 30 June 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.390. On 23 June 1941 the United States Secretaries of War and the Navy both told Roosevelt that the chances of Soviet survival were very slim, Bennett, *Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, p.28. On 24 June 1941 Edward Grigg, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for War, told Harold Nicolson "that 80 per cent of the War Office experts think that Russia will be knocked out in ten days", Nicolson Diary, 24 June 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.175. In early July 47 per cent of American surveyed felt that Germany would win, 22 per cent believed the Soviet Union would win, eight per cent believed stalemate would be the result, and 23 per cent had no opinion, Ralph B. Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance 1939-1945*, Chapel Hill, 1976, p.45

<sup>407</sup> Personal Message from Stalin to Mr. Churchill, July 18, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.12

<sup>408</sup> Kimball, *The Juggler*, p.35

agreed with him.<sup>409</sup> Few others did in Britain or the United States. Worrying signs about the situation on the Eastern Front continued to appear as the year progressed, and Western Allied fears reached a peak in September and October 1941, especially after the Germans renewed their drive on Moscow on 2 October.<sup>410</sup> In late-1941 the Germans came very close to victory, but the Soviet counter-offensive on 5 December, and subsequent offensives throughout the winter of 1941 and 1942, temporarily assuaged Western Allied fears.<sup>411</sup> However, a real concern about Soviet defeat had been established in the minds of Western Allied leaders in 1941.

The concern about Soviet defeat returned in 1942, because the Western Allies feared that, despite the Soviet winter successes, when summer began Stalin's forces would again be placed under a great deal of German pressure.<sup>412</sup> Roosevelt's optimism about the Eastern Front in 1941 soon disappeared. In the first two months of 1942 the Western Allies were not as concerned about the Soviet Union, and Anglo-American attention became more focused on other theatres of war, especially the Pacific. However, fears of Soviet defeat re-emerged in March 1942, and this led to British and American thoughts in that month for a combined amphibious operation in 1942 to assist Stalin. At the C.C.S. meeting on 3 March it was noted that a German attempt to gain the Caucasus was probable, and that Roosevelt was to be informed of this.<sup>413</sup> Churchill told Roosevelt that he was worried that the coming German offensive would

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<sup>409</sup> Bennett, *Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, p.31; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.286

<sup>410</sup> Cadogan Diary, 9 September 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.405; Cadogan Diary, 8 October 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.408; Churchill to Roosevelt, 5 September 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.238; H. Hanak, 'Sir Stafford Cripps as Ambassador in Moscow, June 1941 – January 1942', *EHR*, Vol. 97, No. 383, April 1982, pp.335-336

<sup>411</sup> On 16 December 1941 Churchill told Stalin: "I cannot tell you how relieved I am to learn daily about your remarkable victories on the Russian front. I have never felt so confident of the outcome of the war", W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Received on December 16, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.37. The British and Americans even became accustomed to Russian success, and on 26 March 1942 Parliamentarian Harold Nicolson went as far as to say "even the Russians do not seem to be doing well", as if that were an unusual state of affairs, Nicolson Diary, 26 March 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.221. In January 1942 Harry Hopkins wrote: "There is a real possibility the Russians may smash them during the next year", Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.501

<sup>412</sup> In his summary of strategy to Roosevelt in early January 1942, the British Prime Minister said that the danger of Soviet defeat had been "staved off for perhaps four or five months till the winter is over", but that the danger could return in late spring 1942, Churchill to Roosevelt, [??] January 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.318-319. Similarly, In Churchill's note on strategy to Roosevelt on 16 December 1941, the Prime Minister wrote that "it would be imprudent to regard the danger of a German south-west thrust against the Persian, Iraq, Syrian front as removed", Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.295

<sup>413</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 9th Meeting, March 3rd, 1942, at 2.30 p.m., p.4

“be most formidable”.<sup>414</sup> On the same day General Alanbrooke confided in his diary: “Eden apparently nervous lest Russia should make peace with Germans”.<sup>415</sup> Churchill told Roosevelt on 7 March: “I should like to tell you, for yourself alone, that I am by no means excluding an effort from here to take the weight off Russia once Hitler is definitely committed to the attack.”<sup>416</sup> Thus by the first week of March 1942 Western Allied fear of Soviet defeat was again established as an issue, and had been given as a reason to carry out a combined Anglo-American offensive in 1942. Concerns continued for the rest of spring 1942, as did suggestions for an Anglo-American operation to assist the Soviets.<sup>417</sup>

The Western Allied fears of Soviet defeat peaked in the summer of 1942, especially with the initial success of the German summer offensive, launched on 28 June, and reports about a possible separate Soviet peace were common at that time.<sup>418</sup> Roosevelt had become particularly concerned about the military situation on the Eastern Front, and his concerns were very significant to Western Allied strategy-making in June and July, because they encouraged his interest in a major military undertaking in 1942. In his message to Churchill at the end of May, the President noted that the Soviet position would probably grow worse in coming weeks, and as a result he was anxious for an operation in 1942, which he hoped would draw the *Luftwaffe* from the Eastern Front. He finished by saying: “the important thing is that we may be and probably are faced with real trouble on the Russian front and must make our plans to meet it.”<sup>419</sup> A

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<sup>414</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 5 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.381

<sup>415</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 5 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.236

<sup>416</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 7 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.394

<sup>417</sup> On 30 March Alanbrooke and Churchill discussed some kind of offensive in northern France to assist Russia in the event that the forthcoming German attack was successful, “as it probably will be”, Alanbrooke Diary, 30 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.243. Roosevelt told Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands on 6 April that “the principal danger in the next six months is German success against Russia”, Roosevelt letter to Queen Wilhelmina, 6 April 1942, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.424. At the C.C.S. meeting on 21 April Admiral Stark “regarded the Russian army as our most valuable immediate asset and felt we must make every effort to guard against its defeat, which would be a catastrophe of the first magnitude”, NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 16th Meeting, April 21, 1942, at 2:30 P.M., p.4

<sup>418</sup> Kimball, ‘Stalingrad: A Chance for Choices’, p.106. A British J.I.C. report of 1 June 1942 was reasonably positive about Soviet chances, but concluded: “On the other hand the possibility of a Russian collapse cannot be ruled out”, NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C.(42) 200 (Final), 1st June, 1942, p.3

<sup>419</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.503-504

week later Roosevelt told Churchill: “I confess I view with great concern the Russian front ...”<sup>420</sup>

The worries of the Western Allies about the situation on the Eastern Front continued in July, as the British and Americans debated the timing and location of their first combined operation.<sup>421</sup> There were indications that the Russian military situation was deteriorating. For example, on the 22nd Brigadier Vivian Dykes of the C.C.S. Secretariat talked with a member of General Eisenhower’s staff, recently in Moscow, who “had been very much impressed by the Russians in Moscow, though he was struck by the gloom and fear in the place.”<sup>422</sup> In his message to Churchill a day later, Stalin stated that he never thought the British would deny the Soviets supplies when they were so badly needed due to “the grave situation” on the Eastern Front.<sup>423</sup> On the same day the British C.O.S. discussed the need to defend Persia “should Russian resistance break.”<sup>424</sup> Thus at the time of the 24 July decision to undertake TORCH there were very serious Western Allied concerns that Germany might prevail on the Eastern Front.<sup>425</sup> These fears added greatly to the desire of Roosevelt and Churchill for action in 1942.

The grave fears of the Western Allies about Soviet defeat were compounded by regular Soviet demands for Anglo-American military action. A brief summary of Soviet demands for a Second Front demonstrates the pressure placed on Roosevelt

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<sup>420</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 6 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.508. In a note to Churchill on the same day, Harry Hopkins wrote: “We are disturbed here about the Russian Front ...”, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.585

<sup>421</sup> Marshall told Eisenhower: “The present action in the Don Basin indicates Russia’s possible inability to halt the massed power of Germany and her allies ... it is evident that unless this German offensive is soon halted Russian participation in the war will become negligible in magnitude ...”, Marshall to Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, 13 July 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.273. Eisenhower described the situation on the Eastern Front to his staff as “desperate”, Butcher Diary, 16 July 1942, in Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, p.22. Alanbrooke later noted in his diary that General Marshall “missed the point that by September the Russians might be past requiring assistance ...”, Alanbrooke Diary, 21 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.283

<sup>422</sup> Dykes Diary, 22 July 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.179

<sup>423</sup> Message from Premier Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill, Sent on July 23, 1942, in *Stalin’s Correspondence*, I, p.56. Maisky recalled that this message made Churchill “depressed and offended”, Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.292

<sup>424</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 23 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.284

<sup>425</sup> After the TORCH decision fears of Soviet defeat or separate peace continued. See for example: Alanbrooke Diary, 9 December 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.347. No evidence has been uncovered for Russo-German peace feelers prior to 14 December 1942, and those from 1942 and 1943 were unofficial until 19 June 1943, H.W. Koch, ‘The Spectre of a Separate Peace in the East: Russo-German ‘Peace Feelers’, 1942-44’, *JCH*, Vol. 10, No. 3, July 1975, pp.533-534

and Churchill for significant action as soon as possible. Soviet demands on the British to open a Second Front began very shortly after the German invasion. The demands were initiated by Ambassador Maisky in London, but were soon taken up by Stalin.<sup>426</sup> By 22 July 1941 the Soviets had approached both the British and Americans about creating a Second Front, even though the United States was not yet in the war.<sup>427</sup> In September the Soviets pressed strongly for the establishment of a British Second Front.<sup>428</sup> Stalin was probably aware that a 1941 Western Allied Second Front was very unlikely, but he was desperate for something more than aid from the British.<sup>429</sup> Soviet demands for a Second Front temporarily ceased over the winter of 1941/1942, after their successful counter-attack began near Moscow on 5 December.

However, in spring 1942 the Soviet demands for a Second Front recommenced. On 28 March Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov had his first meeting with the new British Ambassador in Moscow, and immediately raised the question of a Second Front.<sup>430</sup> Molotov visited the United States and Britain in late-May 1942, with his primary aim being to secure a Second Front for the Soviets.<sup>431</sup> Churchill met Molotov on 22 May,

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<sup>426</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.161, 163; Derek Watson, 'Molotov, the Grand Alliance and the Second Front 1939-1942', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 1, January 2002, p.55

<sup>427</sup> Stalin's first message to Churchill on 18 July 1941 called for the establishment of a front in France or Norway, to divert German forces from the Eastern Front. Churchill replied to Stalin on 21 July that the C.O.S. could not see any way a cross-Channel operation could occur, and that a landing in force would "encounter a bloody repulse", Personal Message from Stalin to Mr Churchill, July 18, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.13; Text of Personal and Secret Message from Mr Churchill to M. Stalin, Received on July 21, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.13-14; Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.12; Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.177-178. On 22 July 1941 Ambassador Maisky met with Harry Hopkins and Ambassador Winant in London, and raised the issue of the Second Front. Both Americans proved supportive of this idea, Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.179

<sup>428</sup> For Second Front demands and discussion in 1941, see: Personal Message from Premier Stalin to the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, Sent on September 3, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.20-21; Prime Minister Churchill to Monsieur Stalin, Received on September 6, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.22; Personal Message from Premier Stalin to the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, Sent on September 13, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.24. Hanak, 'Sir Stafford Cripps as Ambassador in Moscow, 1941-1942', pp.334-335; Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.188. Stalin last raised the issue directly in that year on 13 September 1941.

<sup>429</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.290

<sup>430</sup> Watson, 'Molotov, the Grand Alliance and the Second Front', p.60

<sup>431</sup> On 12 April Roosevelt told Stalin he wanted to discuss a major military undertaking to relieve pressure on the Soviets. Roosevelt asked for Molotov and a general to come to Washington, Personal Message from the President to Mr Stalin, Received on April 12, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, II, p.23. Stalin wrote to Roosevelt on 20 April, and to Churchill on 22 April, and said that he would soon send Molotov to exchange views about a Second Front, NA CAB 65/30, W.M. (42) 52nd Conclusions. Minute 4. (24th April, 1942, 12 Noon.); J.V. Stalin to F. Roosevelt, Sent on April 20, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, II, p.23; J.V. Stalin to W. Churchill, April 22, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.44-45. Churchill noted that at the 22 May 1942 meeting "Molotov said that he had been charged by the Soviet Government to come to London to discuss the question of the establishment of a 'Second Front'", Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.),

and the Soviet Foreign Minister wanted to know how the British were going to draw “off some of the weight from Russia”.<sup>432</sup> Churchill once more outlined the great difficulties of a cross-Channel operation, but told Molotov it was “the earnest resolve of the British Government to see what could be done this year to give the much needed support to the valiant Russian armies.”<sup>433</sup> In a meeting in Washington at the end of May Molotov told Roosevelt that the Soviets wanted the British and Americans to land enough troops to draw off 40 German divisions from the Soviet Front, and wanted a straight answer from the President on this enterprise.<sup>434</sup> He was to leave Washington satisfied with Roosevelt’s response.

In July Stalin placed additional pressure on the Western Allies for a military operation, and Churchill and Roosevelt wanted to placate him. In Churchill’s message to Stalin on 18 July, the Prime Minister emphasized building up for “a really strong second front in 1943”, promising the Soviet leader that he and Roosevelt were doing as much as possible to help the Russians and overcome “the extraordinary difficulties which the geography, sea-water and the enemy’s air power interpose.”<sup>435</sup> Stalin’s reply to Churchill’s 18 July message was scathing, refuting the latter’s arguments. He felt that given the situation on the Eastern Front, a Second Front had to come in 1942, not 1943.<sup>436</sup> Thus Soviet demands for major Anglo-American military action were regular up to July 1942, and as will be seen below, they were effective.

Throughout the strategic debate of 1942 assisting the Soviet Union was a prominent reason given for the necessity of a major Western Allied operation as soon as possible. After the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, the British and Americans immediately pledged their full support to the Soviets, despite previous

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*Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.495. Molotov told Churchill on 22 May 1942 that “on the Russian front, operations of the greatest intensity and importance were now impending and the weeks and months which lay immediately ahead were fraught with the most serious consequences to the Soviet Union and their allies”, Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.495

<sup>432</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.496

<sup>433</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.495-497

<sup>434</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.62; Divine (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity*, p.166

<sup>435</sup> W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Received on July 18, 1942, in *Stalin’s Correspondence*, I, pp.53, 55

<sup>436</sup> Message from Premier Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill, Sent on July 23, 1942, in *Stalin’s Correspondence*, I, p.56

frosty relations between the 'Big Three'.<sup>437</sup> This pledge of support led eventually to the decision to carry out a 1942 Anglo-American operation, but only after a lengthy debate between the three Allies, outlined in Chapter 1. One of the most important background issues to this debate was the Anglo-American need to assist the Soviet Union, fuelled by Soviet demands, and British and American fears of Soviet defeat.

In 1941, with Britain still too weak and the United States not yet in the war, the Western Allies were unable to create a Second Front, and could only offer Stalin supplies. In the summer and autumn of 1941 the British and Americans promised and provided the Soviet Union with all the supplies they could spare.<sup>438</sup> However, a major land offensive to assist the Soviets received little serious consideration in 1941.

In the period from March to July 1942 there is much evidence that Roosevelt and Churchill felt compelled by fear of Soviet defeat, and by the Soviet demands for action, to carry out a military operation to assist the Soviet Union. The situation on the Eastern Front also affected the strategic thinking of their leading military men. General Marshall stated after the war: "There is no question that we reacted to the intense desire of the Russians to get a second front started. SLEDGEHAMMER was to get Russia on its feet again".<sup>439</sup> In the event, of course, it was to be TORCH, not SLEDGEHAMMER, that was chosen.

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<sup>437</sup> Roosevelt letter to Joseph C. Grew, 30 November 1939, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.290; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*, London, 1969, p.34; Bennett, *Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, p.3; Gorodetsky, 'The Origins of the Cold War', pp.152-153; Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, pp.3, 32

<sup>438</sup> Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p.288. Roosevelt promised all possible aid to the Soviet Union on 24 June 1941, and pushed for this to occur, using Hopkins to achieve his aim, Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.211; Kimball, *The Juggler*, pp.31-36; John D. Langer, 'The Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission and the Debate over Unconditional Aid for the Soviet Union, 1941', *JCH*, Vol. 14, No. 3, July 1979, p.467. Between 29 September and 1 October 1941 a three-power conference was held in Moscow to determine the supplies required by the Soviet Union, and it produced the 'First Soviet Supply Protocol', NA CAB 65/24, W.M.(41) 106th Conclusions, Minute 6; Dunn, Jr., *The Soviet Economy and the Red Army, 1930-1945*, p.67; Langer, 'The Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission', p.463; Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, p.135; Watson, 'Molotov, the Grand Alliance and the Second Front', p.56

<sup>439</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.589. General Marshall told Harriman that the TORCH decision was for three reasons, the first of these being "to relieve the Russian front by forcing the Germans to fight in North Africa", Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, p.146

In March 1942 the need to carry out a military operation to assist the Soviets that year came to prominence in Western Allied strategic thinking. In the first half of the month the British discussed such an operation on a number of occasions, considering a landing in France to relieve pressure on Russia.<sup>440</sup> With urging from his Army chief, Secretary of War, and U.S. Army planners, Roosevelt was also soon thinking about a 1942 cross-Channel operation to help the Soviets.<sup>441</sup> On 9 March Roosevelt told the Prime Minister that he was “becoming more and more interested in the establishment of this new front this summer, certainly for air and raids.”<sup>442</sup> He noted that “even though losses will doubtless be great, such losses will be compensated by at least equal German losses and by compelling [the] Germans to divert large forces of all kinds from Russian fronts.”<sup>443</sup>

In April Western Allied discussion of a military operation in 1942 to aid the Soviets intensified, and the U.S. Army, and notably Secretary of War Stimson and General Marshall, convinced Roosevelt of the need for action to assist the Soviets.<sup>444</sup> In early April Roosevelt gave his full support to the U.S. Army plan for a 1942 or 1943 cross-Channel operation, which was primarily intended to assist the Soviets.<sup>445</sup> It was clear to the British that the American plan of April 1942 to undertake a combined military operation that year was suggested primarily to consider “what help we could give the Russians this year”.<sup>446</sup> On 6 May General Marshall told President Roosevelt:

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<sup>440</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 5 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.236; Alanbrooke Diary, 10 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.238; Alanbrooke Diary, 17 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.240

<sup>441</sup> After the war General Marshall told an interviewer that “SLEDGEHAMMER was a desperate operation to save Russia”, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.580

<sup>442</sup> The President meant Anglo-American bombing raids and commando raid son German-occupied Europe.

<sup>443</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 9 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.399

<sup>444</sup> Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.525

<sup>445</sup> Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.437. Roosevelt told Churchill that the Americans had come up with a plan to help the Soviet Union with a cross-Channel operation, which Roosevelt hoped the Russians “would greet with enthusiasm”, Roosevelt to Churchill, 1 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.437. Harry Hopkins told Churchill when presenting the plan to the Prime Minister on 9 April 1942 “that the disposition of the United States was to take great risks to relieve the Russian front”, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.531. General Marshall told Harriman the main aim of the April 1942 plan was to draw German divisions from the Eastern Front, Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, p.133

<sup>446</sup> NA CAB 65/30, W.M.(42) 54th Conclusions. (29th April, 1942 – 6.15 p.m.). General Marshall told the British that a 1942 operation might be needed depending on developments on the Eastern Front, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, 541

... every possible effort, we think, must be made to draw off German forces from the Russian front. We believe this may be done by combined British and American operations in Western Europe.<sup>447</sup>

Soviet pressure and Western Allied fears eventually resulted in a promise to the Soviets by Roosevelt for action in 1942. In their meeting on 30 May Roosevelt told Molotov: “We regarded it as our obligation to help the Soviets to the best of our ability, even if the extent of this aid was for the moment doubtful.”<sup>448</sup> Molotov then raised the spectre of possible Soviet defeat, and said the Soviet Union would fight on, but wanted a straight answer on a 1942 Second Front.<sup>449</sup> The translator recorded that Roosevelt then asked Marshall if “developments were clear enough so that we could say to Mr. Stalin that we are preparing a second front. ‘Yes’, replied the General. The President then authorized Mr. Molotov to inform Mr. Stalin that we expect the formation of a second front this year.”<sup>450</sup> On Molotov’s return to London Churchill told him that the British could not promise a Second Front in 1942.<sup>451</sup> However, Molotov’s visit to Washington saw Roosevelt commit the Western Allies to a military operation in 1942 as a direct reaction to the situation on the Eastern Front. While Anglo-American debate would continue, in essence the decision had been made: the Western Allies would carry out a 1942 military operation in order to assist the Soviets.

In June 1942, with the German summer offensive imminent, the critical need for an Anglo-American operation later in the year was a major issue. For example, at the British C.O.S. meeting on 5 June they discussed how to help Russia by landing in France.<sup>452</sup> Roosevelt was especially concerned. On 6 June Roosevelt again told Churchill of his concern about the Russian front, and said he would wire Churchill

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<sup>447</sup> Marshall Memorandum for the President, 6 May 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.184

<sup>448</sup> Divine, (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity*, p.166

<sup>449</sup> Divine, (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity*, pp.166-167. On 31 May 1942 Roosevelt told Churchill that he felt Molotov’s worries about the coming few months on the Russian Front were “not put forward to force our hand”, Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.503

<sup>450</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.63; Divine, (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity*, p.168. The joint public statement of 11 June 1942 stated: “In the course of the conversations full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942”, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.582

<sup>451</sup> Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.330; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.67

<sup>452</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 5 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.263

with a proposal for an operation in a day or two.<sup>453</sup> At the C.C.S. meeting on 10 June, Lord Mountbatten outlined his recent meeting with President Roosevelt, in which the latter “emphasized his desire for early action, particularly for the purpose of relieving pressure on Russia.”<sup>454</sup> On 17 June Roosevelt told Stimson, Marshall and others that he wanted to take up a North-West Africa operation again, according to Stimson “thinking that he can bring additional pressure to save Russia”.<sup>455</sup>

The British C.O.S. and Prime Minister Churchill went to Washington on 18 June, and in the ensuing Anglo-American staff talks the need to assist the Soviets received much consideration.<sup>456</sup> The President’s wish to assist the Soviets was clearly outlined in a 20 June memorandum sent by Hopkins to General Marshall and Admiral King. Assuming the Soviet Army was in trouble in July 1942, Roosevelt wanted to know:

... at what point or points can (a) American ground forces prior to September 15, 1942, plan and execute an attack on German forces or in German-controlled areas which can compel the withdrawal of German forces from the Russian front; and (b) British forces in the same area or in a different area aid in the same objective?<sup>457</sup>

On 23 June Marshall replied: “In case of a threatened Russian collapse immediate and drastic measures will be indicated for the United Nations”.<sup>458</sup>

In July Churchill and Roosevelt achieved their aim, as their military men finally agreed on a 1942 operation to help the Soviets. In that month the main British leaders agreed on the necessity of some action in 1942 to assist the Soviets, and proposed

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<sup>453</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 6 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.508

<sup>454</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 24th Meeting, June 10, 1942, at 11:00 a.m., p.4

<sup>455</sup> Stimson Diary, 17 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.419; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.243

<sup>456</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.70; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.343. General Alanbrooke noted at the 19 June 1942 C.C.S. meeting that if it were impossible to create a front in France, then some form of operation in North-West Africa might be considered, NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 27th Meeting, June 19, 1942, at 12:30 p.m., p.2. In Churchill’s memorandum to Roosevelt on 20 June 1942 the British Prime Minister highlighted the need to support the Soviets, but because a 1942 cross-Channel operation was not in his view possible, “GYMNAST should be studied”, Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.515

<sup>457</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Captain John L. McCrea Memorandum to Marshall & King, 20 June 1942; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.591; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.156

<sup>458</sup> Marshall Memorandum for the President, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.246

options other than a cross-Channel operation, notably operations to Norway and North-West Africa.<sup>459</sup> Roosevelt's memorandum to Marshall, King and Hopkins as they went to London on 16 July emphasized that Roosevelt wanted a cross-Channel operation or an alternative to "sustain Russia this year", or to "save Russia this year". Roosevelt saw the main aim of a 1942 cross-Channel operation to be drawing German air forces from the Russian Front.<sup>460</sup> This memorandum reflected Roosevelt's deep concern about the situation in Russia at this time. At the C.C.S. meeting in London on 20 July Marshall and King pressed for a cross-Channel operation later that year "to take pressure off Russia".<sup>461</sup> However, after several days of debate a North-West Africa operation was eventually decided on as the most feasible operation to satisfy Roosevelt's desire to provide assistance to the Soviet Union.

The desire of Churchill and Roosevelt to undertake a significant operation in 1942 was also motivated to some extent by the guilt they felt about the Soviet Union bearing the brunt of the fighting against Germany in 1941 and 1942. As part of Stalin's effort to secure a Western Allied military operation, he often reminded the British and Americans of the grievous losses being suffered by his nation.<sup>462</sup> For example, in his 23 July 1942 message to Churchill asking for northern convoys to be resumed despite possible heavy losses, Stalin added: "You know, of course, that the Soviet Union is suffering far greater losses."<sup>463</sup>

The distribution of Axis forces strongly supports the idea of the Soviets bearing the brunt. In the first half of 1942 the Soviets were confronting around 200 Axis divisions on the Eastern Front, while the British faced less than fifteen in North Africa, and the

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<sup>459</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 & 14 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.520, 529; Alanbrooke Diary, 13 & 17 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.279, 281

<sup>460</sup> Roosevelt, 'Instructions for London Conference', in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.533; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.605. Roosevelt noted his fear that if the Soviet Union was defeated, a 1943 cross-Channel operation would not be possible, so 1942 action was needed, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.605

<sup>461</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 20 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.282; Harry Hopkins to Roosevelt, 20 July 1942, in Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.609

<sup>462</sup> Soviet propaganda often took up this theme of Britain and the United States not contributing enough to the war effort, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.501. In 1941 German propaganda also took up the theme that the British were fighting "to the very last drop of Russian blood", Lothar Kettenacker, 'The Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the Problem of Germany, 1941-1945', *JCH*, Vol. 17, No. 3, July 1982, p.438

<sup>463</sup> Message from Premier Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill, Sent on July 23, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.56

Americans were actively engaging none.<sup>464</sup> The Germans had land forces in France to counter a possible Western Allied landing there, but those forces were not being actively engaged. On 22 May Churchill told Molotov that the British were confronting eleven Axis divisions in North Africa, including three German, as well as the equivalent of eight German divisions in Norway, and 25 German divisions in France and the Low Countries.<sup>465</sup> However, in simple terms, up to 6 June 1944 the Soviet Union was engaging around 90 per cent of German ground forces, and between 1941 and 1944 the Soviets caused 93 per cent of German casualties.<sup>466</sup> The comparison was stark, and the Western Allies were acutely aware of this. Consequently, both Roosevelt and Churchill wanted to engage more German ground forces in combat.<sup>467</sup> In Roosevelt's message to Churchill on 3 April about the need for a 1942 military operation, the President pointed out that the British and American people were "wise enough to see that the Russians are today killing more Germans and destroying more equipment than you and I put together."<sup>468</sup> When talking to Molotov on 22 May Churchill said that the British intended to give support "to the valiant Russian armies, who were confronting so large a part of Germany's military might".<sup>469</sup>

While providing military assistance to relieve the physical pressure on the Soviet Union was a significant reason for an Anglo-American operation in 1942, there was also a need to show the Soviets that they were not alone in their struggle with the

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<sup>464</sup> On 1 June 1942 the British J.I.C. estimated that there were 182 German divisions on the Eastern Front, NA CAB 81/108, J.I.C.(42) 200 (Final), 1st June, 1942, p.1. From early 1941 to 6 June 1944 the British fought between two and eight German divisions, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.186. In December 1942 the Western Allies were engaging six German divisions, and the Soviets were engaging 183, Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.65

<sup>465</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.497-498

<sup>466</sup> Higgins, 'Winston Churchill and the Second Front', p.279; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.215. Dunn, Jr. summed it up concisely: "The Red Army was the major factor in the defeat of Germany in World War II", Dunn, Jr., *The Soviet Economy and the Red Army, 1930-1945*, p.1

<sup>467</sup> In Churchill's strategy paper he wrote to Roosevelt: "Russia has more than rowed her weight in the boat ...", Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.307. Harry Hopkins to General Marshall in January 1942: "The Russian fighting front is undoubtedly weakening Germany far more than all the theatres of war put together", Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.501

<sup>468</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 3 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.441

<sup>469</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.497

Germans, and to offer them encouragement to continue fighting.<sup>470</sup> A 1942 military operation by the British and Americans was essential as a gesture of support, and as a sign of good faith towards the Soviets.<sup>471</sup> The aid supplied to Russia by the Western Allies was partly a symbolic gesture to show support for the Soviets, and it was a gesture considered by Roosevelt to be very important.<sup>472</sup> Like the supply convoys, a 1942 military operation was to be of symbolic value as much as of practical military value.

There was great debate in 1942 over how much practical military assistance a 1942 operation, wherever it occurred, could provide to the Soviets. However, it was generally agreed by the Western Allies that a 1942 Anglo-American operation, including a landing in North-West Africa, would at least draw some German air forces from the Eastern Front, and possibly some land forces.<sup>473</sup> On 28 March General Alanbrooke emphasized at a British C.O.S. meeting “that it was impossible” to make the Germans withdraw land forces from Russia by establishing a Western Front, and that a Western Front could only be militarily useful if it forced the withdrawal of forces from Russia.<sup>474</sup> He was not willing to accept a sacrificial 1942 cross-Channel invasion of France, which might not actually achieve the aim of forcing German troop withdrawals from the Eastern Front.

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<sup>470</sup> In summer 1942 some in the American administration felt that encouragement to the Soviet Union, such as assurances of a 1942 Second Front, “even when based on false premises, would stiffen the Soviet will”, Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969*, New York, 1973, p.124

<sup>471</sup> Weigley, ‘The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell’, p.46

<sup>472</sup> See for example: Roosevelt to Churchill, 26 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.473, which stresses the importance of the Arctic convoys to Russia. The prominence the supply convoys to Russia received in the correspondence of the Grand Alliance leaders suggest just how important the Western Allies viewed them. However, as Kimball points out, from 22 June 1941 to mid-1942 all parties knew that Western Allied aid “could only be a gesture and a hint of things to come”, Kimball, *The Juggler*, p.39

<sup>473</sup> NA CAB 65/30, W.M.(42) 54th Conclusions. (29th April, 1942 – 6.15 p.m.); Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.497; Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.503. Churchill to Field Marshal Dill: “If ‘Gymnast’ were successful our resulting threat to Italy would draw important German Air Forces off Russia”, NARA RG 165, Box 1, Entry 422, Churchill to Field Marshal Dill, 12 July 1942. After the war General Marshall told an interviewer that a 1942 cross-Channel operation: “Perhaps would distract the Germans from their attacks on Russia”, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.580

<sup>474</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 28 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.242

In contrast, Roosevelt and other Americans considered that a sacrifice operation in 1942 could be very important as a gesture to the Soviets. Of course it would be Britain making much of the sacrifice for such a symbolic operation, and this concerned them.<sup>475</sup> Secretary of War Stimson thought a 1942 cross-Channel operation would be “a sacrifice for the common good”.<sup>476</sup> On 3 April Roosevelt told Churchill that a 1942 military operation was essential, and “even if full success is not attained, the big objective will be.”<sup>477</sup> The big objective was, of course, to show support for the Soviet Union. General Marshall’s planners considered a 1942 cross-Channel operation a worthwhile sacrifice operation, because it could possibly save the Soviet Union by diverting German troops, even if the invasion ultimately failed.<sup>478</sup> Thus the American view was that whatever the military results of a 1942 operation, it was important that British and American troops were in action against the Germans on land, to show support for the Soviets.

Another factor that may have influenced Churchill’s desire for a 1942 military operation was the halting of Anglo-American supply convoys to northern Russia, and the need to replace the convoys with some other form of assistance for the Soviets.<sup>479</sup> The convoys were halted after the destruction of convoy PQ-17 in late-June and early-July.<sup>480</sup> Churchill mentioned an invasion of Norway to Stalin as a possibility with the convoys cancelled, and he also spoke of sending Anglo-American air units to southern Russia.<sup>481</sup> However, a major operation would be a grander gesture of support in place of the suspended Arctic convoys.

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<sup>475</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.98

<sup>476</sup> Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, p.132

<sup>477</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 3 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.441

<sup>478</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.98

<sup>479</sup> Butcher Diary, 14 July 1942, in Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, p.19; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.13

<sup>480</sup> Churchill proposed not running convoy PQ-18 to Roosevelt on 14 July 1942, and Roosevelt concurred, Churchill to Roosevelt, 14 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.528; Roosevelt to Churchill, 15 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.533

<sup>481</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 14 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.531; Churchill to Roosevelt, 17 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.537-538

There is no evidence that in the period up to 24 July 1942 British and American concerns about Soviet post-war territorial ambitions directly affected Western Allied strategy-making, including the decision for TORCH.<sup>482</sup> In fact, the evidence is to the contrary.<sup>483</sup> This was despite the great difference between the political ideologies of the Soviet Union and the Western Allies, and also despite the fact that both Churchill and Roosevelt had a strong dislike of the Soviet regime.<sup>484</sup>

Some members of the British and American administrations were concerned about Soviet ambitions and the post-war world in the early period of the war up to 1942, especially in the United States and British militaries, in the British Foreign Office, and in the American State Department.<sup>485</sup> On 28 January 1942 a Foreign Office memorandum by Anthony Eden noted his concern that if Germany was beaten and France was still weak, “there will be no counterweight to Russia in Europe”, but he concluded that Britain should maintain cooperation with Russia for her own interests.<sup>486</sup> In summer 1942 there were serious concerns in the U.S. State Department

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<sup>482</sup> Some historians writing during the Cold War have suggested that Anglo-American fear of Soviet post-war power had a major effect on Western Allied strategy-making. The Wilmot thesis argued that the British wanted a Mediterranean strategy to forestall the Russians in Eastern Europe, Higgins, ‘The Anglo-American Historians’ War in the Mediterranean 1942-1945’, p.87. The exact date that Western Allied strategic thinking began to be influenced by concerns about Soviet post-war ambitions is generally given as October 1942 for Churchill and the British, and some time in early to mid-1943 for Roosevelt and the United States. See: Kimball, ‘Stalingrad: A Chance for Choices’, pp.91-92; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.10; Albert Resis, ‘Spheres of Influence in Soviet Wartime Diplomacy’, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 53, No. 3, September 1981, p.436; Stoler, ‘The “Second Front” and American Fear of Soviet Expansion’, pp.136-137

<sup>483</sup> When asked after the war if he “or any member of the American planning staff [had] political objectives in supporting the BOLERO-ROUNDUP idea; that is, in hoping to beat the Russians to Central Europe”, General Marshall replied: “If they did, I didn’t know it. I was trying to get the Russians to work with us”, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.593. Similarly, after the war Marshall said that there was not “any idea of trying to beat Russians to Central Europe with ROUNDUP”, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.602

<sup>484</sup> Langer, ‘The Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission’, p.464; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.305. In a State Department conversation on 22 January 1942, Averall Harriman told the Acting Chief, Division of European Affairs, that “Churchill did not like the Russians and would not wish to go further with them than absolutely necessary either in cooperation or commitments”, NARA RG 59, Box 31, Entry 373.8, ‘Remarks on Russia’, 22 January 1942, p.1

<sup>485</sup> Bohlen, *Witness to History*, p.121; Buhite & Levy (eds), *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, p.145; Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the Invasion of Russia*, New Haven, 1999, pp.10-11; Kitchen, ‘Churchill and the Soviet Union’, p.419; Langer, ‘The Harriman-Beaverbrook Mission’, p.464; Stoler, ‘The “Second Front” and American Fear of Soviet Expansion’, p.136; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, pp.2, 6

<sup>486</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.38; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.45; Doenecke, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy’, p.69; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.318; Kettenacker, ‘The Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the Problem of Germany’, p.442. Eden reported to Cabinet on returning from Moscow in December 1941: “It must be remembered that, if we won the war, Russian forces would probably penetrate into

about the ultimate aims of the Soviet Union clashing with the ultimate aims of the United States.<sup>487</sup>

Post-war issues such as agreements over Soviet frontiers were discussed by the members of the Grand Alliance in 1941 and 1942, and in those years the Western Allies were made very aware of the Soviet desire to secure new borders and more territory after Germany was defeated.<sup>488</sup> However, the British and Americans avoided any commitments regarding Soviet frontiers, and in the early war years they focused on winning the war and supporting the Soviets to the best of their ability.

Churchill and Roosevelt both felt that in 1942 the Soviets needed either an Anglo-American operation, or an agreement on post-war frontiers, as a sign of good faith from the Western Allies. Roosevelt preferred an Anglo-American operation rather than a territorial agreement. However, in March 1942 Churchill, encouraged by Anthony Eden and the Foreign Office, felt that recognition of Soviet frontiers might serve as a substitute for a Second Front and supplies.<sup>489</sup> On 7 March Churchill told Roosevelt he wanted a free hand to sign Stalin's proposed treaty regarding frontiers, and the Prime Minister noted how little else the Western Allies could do to assist the Soviets during the coming German offensive.<sup>490</sup> In contrast, in March and April Roosevelt saw the promise of a 1942 cross-Channel operation as a way to convince

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Germany, and that at a later date she might well want more than her 1941 frontiers", Peter Hoffmann, 'The Question of Western Allied Co-Operation with the German Anti-Nazi Conspiracy, 1938-1944', *HJ*, Vol. 34, No. 2, June 1991, p.455

<sup>487</sup> Bohlen, *Witness to History*, p.121

<sup>488</sup> For wartime discussion of Soviet post-war frontiers between the British, Soviet Union and United States up to the decision for TORCH, see: Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, pp.7-12; Doenecke, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', pp.68-69; Eden, *The Reckoning*, pp.289-191, 295-297, 328-330; Harriman & Abel, *Special Envoy*, p.110; Kettenacker, 'The Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the Problem of Germany', pp.439, 440, 442-444; Kitchen, *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union During the Second World War*, pp.67, 68

Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.231-232; Resis, 'Spheres of Influence in Soviet Wartime Diplomacy', pp.417, 424, 431, 434-435; Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.39, 66; Watson, 'Molotov, the Grand Alliance and the Second Front', pp.56, 57, 58-59, 61

<sup>489</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.37; Kettenacker, 'The Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the Problem of Germany', pp.438, 443; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.394

<sup>490</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 7 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.394; Kettenacker, 'The Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the Problem of Germany', p.443. Lord Halifax justified it to Washington as follows: "Great Britain is forced to conclude this treaty with Stalin as a political substitute for material military assistance. Mr Eden believes that this is of inestimable value", Kettenacker, 'The Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the Problem of Germany', p.443

the Soviets to drop their demands for a territorial treaty.<sup>491</sup> In the event President Roosevelt prevailed. The Soviets probably gave up their territorial demands during Molotov's visit to London and Washington in May 1942 because Stalin saw Roosevelt's promise of a 1942 Second Front as more valuable than a frontier agreement.<sup>492</sup> Thus TORCH was partly a substitute for a territorial agreement with the Soviets.

Despite the concerns held by some in the British and American governments and administrations about Soviet post-war ambitions, after 22 June 1941 Churchill and Roosevelt were more concerned with the immediate issue of trying to prevent Soviet defeat.<sup>493</sup> President Roosevelt was not initially concerned about Russian post-war ambitions, and this remained the case until 1943.<sup>494</sup> At the time of the TORCH decision the Western Allies were much more worried about the Soviets collapsing under the weight of the German summer offensive, and wanted to do something to ensure that this did not happen.<sup>495</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that the possible growth of Soviet power and influence in post-war Europe affected the decision for a 1942 military operation.

## Conclusion

The military situation of the Soviet, British and American forces in 1942 contributed to the desire of Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt for a significant Anglo-American land operation against Germany in 1942. The poor Allied military situation, particularly in the seven months after Pearl Harbor, caused a significant drop in morale amongst the British and American people, and amongst prominent

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<sup>491</sup> Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.155; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.38

<sup>492</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.60; Eden, *The Reckoning*, pp.329-330; Resis, 'Spheres of Influence in Soviet Wartime Diplomacy', p.435

<sup>493</sup> Bohlen, *Witness to History*, p.121; Kitchen, *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union During the Second World War*, p.69

<sup>494</sup> In a 26 June 1941 letter to Admiral Leahy, the U.S. Ambassador in France, Roosevelt noted: "Now comes this Russian diversion. If it is more than just that it will mean the liberation of Europe from Nazi domination – and at the same time I do not think we need worry about any possibility of Russian domination", Roosevelt letter to Admiral William D. Leahy, 26 June 1941, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.377

<sup>495</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.125. Harold Macmillan summarized the overall Western Allied attitude to the Soviet Union: "Our chief anxiety in those decisive months was not over the long-term implications of our co-operation with Bolsheviks, but whether the Russians could survive", Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, p.149

members of the administrations and militaries of both nations, as well as a loss of confidence amongst the British public and government in their armed forces. Morale was badly hit in Britain, which had by summer 1942 seen two years of near-continuous defeats. To improve morale and restore confidence, a successful combined military operation against Germany was necessary as soon as possible, and the evidence suggests that both Churchill and Roosevelt recognized this.

The fate of the Soviet Union in its struggle with Germany also weighed heavily on the minds of Churchill and Roosevelt in 1942, and was a more important reason than maintaining morale for their desire for a Western Allied operation in that year. The Western Allies recognized that the survival of the Soviet Union was the vital factor in the war with Germany, and they realized that a Soviet defeat would be disastrous for them. After the German invasion on 22 June 1941, a fear of Soviet defeat was firmly established in the minds of the Western Allied leaders, and in 1942, as the German summer offensive ominously approached, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill became very keen to use their combined resources to carry out a significant operation to provide some degree of practical assistance to the Soviets. Aside from providing military assistance, an Anglo-American operation was also needed as a gesture of support and good faith to the Soviets, who were regularly demanding action from the Western Allies. Undertaking a 1942 operation would also address the concerns of Churchill and Roosevelt that the Soviets were engaging many more German forces than their own militaries. The pressing need to provide relief and assistance to the Soviets on the Eastern Front was an important reason why Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Western Allies, chose to undertake a military operation in 1942.

### **Chapter 3: Domestic Political Pressures**

The dire military situation of the Allies, and the severe loss of morale experienced in Britain and the United States in the months after Pearl Harbor, led to great domestic political pressure on Churchill and Roosevelt. In the first seven months of 1942 both lost popularity with their people, the approval ratings of their governments dropped, and popular campaigns developed in both nations calling for the immediate creation of an Anglo-American Second Front. In addition to these common domestic political issues, both governments had their own problems, especially the United States. This was primarily because Roosevelt had to contest regular elections during the war, whereas Churchill did not. The British and American governments, and the Prime Minister and President, closely monitored public opinion, and as a result both were very aware of domestic political pressures.<sup>496</sup> Churchill and Roosevelt needed to solve their political problems and silence their critics, and the best way to do this was by going on the offensive in 1942. There is direct evidence that both Roosevelt and Churchill held the view that a significant successful military operation in 1942 would address domestic political problems. While boosting British and American civilian morale and supporting the Soviets were important reasons for TORCH being chosen, domestic political pressure also added to the desire of Roosevelt and Churchill to undertake a major combined military operation in 1942.

#### **Domestic Political Pressures on President Roosevelt**

A number of domestic political issues placed considerable pressure on President Roosevelt in the period after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. These included: removing lingering isolationist sentiment; focusing the American public, the Roosevelt administration, and the military entirely on the war with Germany, in accordance with the government policy of defeating Germany before Japan; and increasing popular support for President Roosevelt and his Democratic Party in order to secure gains in the November 1942 mid-term Congressional election. There was also a nationwide campaign, fuelled by the media but with much public support, calling for the U.S. Army to go into action in 1942 to create a Second Front. Many of

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<sup>496</sup> P.M.H. Bell, *John Bull and the Bear: British Public Opinion, Foreign Policy, and the Soviet Union, 1941-1945*, London, 1990, pp.23, 187; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.17, 215; Michael Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947*, Westport, 1976, p.30

these issues were exacerbated by the bleak war situation in the months after the entry of the United States into the conflict. A successful major offensive against Germany involving American troops would go some way towards solving these domestic political problems by focusing the public on the war with Germany, improving the war situation, and increasing the popularity of the government. President Roosevelt recognized this fact, and his desire for an Anglo-American operation in 1942 involving the U.S. Army was in part a response to American domestic political issues and pressures.<sup>497</sup>

From President Roosevelt's early days in office he paid very careful attention to public opinion, and tried to react appropriately to it.<sup>498</sup> In April 1941 the British Ambassador to the United States, Lord Halifax, wrote to Churchill that Roosevelt, "with all his good intentions and desires to help, [is] perhaps ultra respectful of public opinion".<sup>499</sup> The President took regular soundings of public opinion from polls, newspapers, visitors, the White House mail, and his fellow politicians.<sup>500</sup> He also paid attention to opinion makers like journalists, editors and commentators.<sup>501</sup> The President was a little sceptical of public opinion polls in 1939 and 1940, but from August 1941 leading public opinion researcher Hadley Cantril helped him with the polls, and Roosevelt's press secretary told a researcher that the President saw most of the important Gallup and Fortune polls.<sup>502</sup> Roosevelt told George Gallup on 2 October

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<sup>497</sup> See NA WO 106/2773B, J.S.M. 386, 15 September 1942; Bland, *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.593

<sup>498</sup> Kimball, *The Juggler*, p.14; Monnet, *Memoirs*, p.152; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.47

<sup>499</sup> NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Lord Halifax to Churchill, 10 April 1941. Others have argued that Roosevelt was obsessed with public opinion, George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, Little, Boston, 1967, p.53

<sup>500</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.17, 215; Robert Dallek, 'Franklin Roosevelt as World Leader', *AHR*, Vol. 76, No. 5, December 1971, p.1508; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.30; Leila A. Sussmann, 'FDR and the White House Mail', *POQ*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Spring 1956, p.16. He liked to read a random sample of his daily mail to see what the people were thinking, Sussmann, 'FDR and the White House Mail', p.12. Roosevelt read a number of papers every day, before beginning his official duties, and from March 1941 he received a weekly summary of editorial opinion, which summarized more than 300 American newspapers, journals and magazines, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.17; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, p.206

<sup>501</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.16. Leading newspapermen like Walter Lippmann and James Reston were in the circle of Roosevelt's closest advisors, alongside the likes of Stimson, Hopkins, Justice Felix Frankfurter, and others, Monnet, *Memoirs*, p.155

<sup>502</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.18-19; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.16. On one occasion in October 1942 Cantril went as far as to ask the President what questions he would like asked in a poll, Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, pp.73-74

1942: “As you know, I feel that the majority of your reports are of definite value”.<sup>503</sup> He also paid great attention to reports from organizations within his administration about public attitudes and opinions.<sup>504</sup>

Up to the summer of 1942 the United States government had a number of organizations to monitor public opinion and undertake psychological and political warfare, but these were then consolidated into the Office of War Information (O.W.I.), which was established on 13 June by amalgamating the former Offices and Divisions dealing with the media, censorship, and intelligence.<sup>505</sup> The Office of Government Reports (O.G.R.), created by Roosevelt in 1939, was the major section of the O.W.I. that dealt with monitoring public opinion, and it was an administrative unit within the executive office of the President.<sup>506</sup> The O.G.R. was intended to serve “as a central clearing house for information concerning Federal activities, and report the opinions, needs, and desires of citizens”, according to Roosevelt’s letter establishing it.<sup>507</sup> It was aimed at bringing the American people in closer touch with the President, and keeping Roosevelt in closer touch with the American people.<sup>508</sup> Public opinion and newspaper content was analysed by the O.G.R. and O.W.I., and was passed on to Roosevelt, Congress, and government officials.<sup>509</sup> Thus Roosevelt had at his

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<sup>503</sup> Roosevelt letter to George H. Gallup, 2 October 1942, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.438

<sup>504</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.17. By February 1942 Roosevelt was receiving regular fifteen to twenty page reports from the Bureau of Intelligence, part of the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), which covered American public opinion and attitudes about many issues, including foreign policy.

<sup>505</sup> NA AIR 19/340, Viscount Halifax to Foreign Office, 22 June 1942; NARA RG 218, Central Decimal Files, Box 41, ‘Military Order of the Commander-in-Chief’, 13 June 1942; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.60-61; Elmer Davis, ‘OWI Has a Job’, *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1943, p.6; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.71. These included the Office of Facts and Figures, the Office of Government Reports, the Division of Information in the Office of Emergency Management, and the Foreign Information Service of the Coordinator of Information, which was renamed the Office of Strategic Services, Lester G. Hawkins Jr. & George S. Pettee, ‘OWI – Organization and Problems’, *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1943, p.16

<sup>506</sup> Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.63. The Office of Government Reports was created by Roosevelt in 1939 with a Division of Press Intelligence, the U.S. Information Service, a Division of Field Operations, and an Administrative Division, Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.63; Hawkins & Pettee, ‘OWI – Organization and Problems’, p.16; Margaret Hicks Williams, “‘The President’s’ Office of Government Reports”, *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1941, p.550

<sup>507</sup> Williams, “‘The President’s’ Office of Government Reports”, p.548

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.561-562. In 1937 there had been almost no institutionalized procedures to analyse public opinion and transfer it to American decision-makers, Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.19

<sup>509</sup> The O.G.R.’s Division of Field Operations had representatives who reported local sentiment to the White House, Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.63. By June 1942, 126 people were employed by the O.W.I. to analyze American public opinion, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.19; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.67. The O.G.R.’s Division of Press Intelligence gauged the reactions of the American public to government activities by analyzing newspapers from all around the United States daily. This information was then passed to the President, the Congress, and to government officials,

command all the available information he needed about domestic politics and the wishes of his people. As a result of the efforts to monitor American public opinion, President Roosevelt always thought he knew what the American people were thinking, and was therefore very aware of the domestic political problems he faced in 1942.

Domestic issues were especially worrying to Roosevelt because on entering the war, unlike Britain, the United States did not create a coalition government of the two major political parties, the Democratic and Republican parties, and there was no amnesty called on elections in wartime.<sup>510</sup> On 20 June 1940 Roosevelt appointed Republicans Frank Knox as Secretary of Navy and Henry L. Stimson as Secretary of War, although they both supported his policy of assistance to Britain.<sup>511</sup> With regular elections to be held in the United States during the war, President Roosevelt and his government had to pay heed to domestic politics and public opinion, because they knew that every policy and strategy they adopted was going to be judged every two years by the American public at the polling booths. This was particularly significant in the decision for TORCH, because 1942 was an election year, with mid-term Congressional elections to be held in November.

One of the major domestic issues that President Roosevelt could address by carrying out a military operation against Germany in 1942 was the need to ensure strong public support for his administration's Germany-first policy, which had been agreed with the British in April 1941.<sup>512</sup> This policy meant that the United States was committed to defeating Germany before Japan, and Roosevelt was its foremost advocate.<sup>513</sup> He also

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Williams, "The President's Office of Government Reports", p.551. In addition, the State Department monitored public opinion about American foreign policy, and the War and Navy Departments also had information units, Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, pp.61-62

<sup>510</sup> Thomas A. Bailey, *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy*, New York, 1948, p.84

<sup>511</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.232; Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.323-324; Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.130; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience*, London, 1968, p.77. Stimson had been Secretary of State (1929-1933) and Secretary of War (1911-1913) in previous Republican administrations. Knox had been a Republican Vice-Presidential candidate in 1936.

<sup>512</sup> Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', p.507; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.7. See Chapter 1 for more on the adoption of the Germany-first policy.

<sup>513</sup> On 29 July 1942 Roosevelt wrote to his main advisors: "It seems unwise to attempt a major offensive in the Pacific area because of the time involved – one to two years – and the total lack of effect on Germany of such a major offensive", Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.85. Similarly, in mid-July

recognized how important his British and Russian allies thought it was. In a message to Stalin on 19 August 1942 the American President mentioned the Pacific, and then said: “I well realize on the other hand that the real enemy of both our countries is Germany ...”.<sup>514</sup>

Until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the United States government’s Germany-first policy was sound and logical, given that Germany was engaged in war with America’s main ally, Britain, while Japan was not. Up to that date Americans wholeheartedly endorsed Germany as the main enemy and major threat to the United States, with Japan, still only a potential enemy, seen to be much less of a threat.<sup>515</sup> Throughout 1941 Roosevelt rarely referred to Japan and its war in Asia, to ensure that Germany was the most prominent threat in the minds of Americans, and his administration continued this policy in 1942, downplaying the capabilities and intentions of Japan, and referring to Japan as the junior Axis partner.<sup>516</sup> However, after Pearl Harbor the Germany-first policy was seriously questioned by the American people, and by American military leaders, because now there was an obvious alternative. The Japanese had demonstrated their ability to attack important American assets and territory. Germany was a distant enemy, while Japan now seemed more of a direct threat. There was also the problem that initially after Pearl Harbor the United States was only at war with Japan, but fortunately for Roosevelt, Hitler declared war on the United States on 11 December 1941.<sup>517</sup>

Roosevelt wanted to continue to support the British and Soviets and keep the Germany-first policy in place despite the fact that the reason for American entry into the war was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>518</sup> The President needed the

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1942 he said: “It is of the utmost importance that we appreciate that defeat of Japan does not defeat Germany and that American concentration against Japan this year or in 1943 increases the chance of completing German domination of Europe and Africa”, Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.160

<sup>514</sup> F. Roosevelt to J.V. Stalin, Received on August 19, 1942, in *Stalin’s Correspondence*, II, p.33. While this comment was undoubtedly meant to placate Stalin, it did reflect the President’s views. In a meeting with Molotov on 29 May 1942, Roosevelt assured the Soviet Foreign Minister that Hitler was the chief enemy, and that the United States should remain on the defensive in the Pacific until Germany was defeated, Divine (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity*, p.164

<sup>515</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.29. As late as July 1941 the United States press was not taking Japan seriously as a threat, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.29-30

<sup>516</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.68. On 9 December 1941 Roosevelt told the American people in his fireside chat that Germany was the main enemy, Buhite & Levy (eds), *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, p.204

<sup>517</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.34

<sup>518</sup> Craig, ‘The Political Leader as Strategist’, p.506

American people behind him and the major Anglo-American strategic policy of the war, so he had to find a way to convince his people that Germany was indeed their major enemy. If the U.S. Army carried out a major military operation against Germany in 1942, it would immediately focus the attention of the public on Europe, and would greatly increase public support for the policy.<sup>519</sup> A land operation against Germany would give the American people a much more tangible reason to support the war in Europe, because their troops would be actively engaged in fighting German troops. Thus a military operation in the European theatre in 1942 would help ensure that Germany-first was not only government policy but also a policy supported by the majority of the American people.

In 1942 the policy favoured by the American people often depended on the battlefield fortunes of American troops.<sup>520</sup> Thus prominent military events in the Pacific were an obstacle to public support for Germany-first, especially when there was American inactivity in the war against Germany for much of 1942. The American people viewed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as a treacherous blow, and there was a great desire amongst Americans for revenge.<sup>521</sup> Further Japanese successes in Asia and the Pacific in 1941 and 1942, including the seizure of Guam and Wake Islands, Hong Kong, Singapore, Java, Rangoon and the Philippines, all increased the importance of the Pacific in the minds of Americans.<sup>522</sup> Subsequent American victories and successes in the Pacific in spring and summer 1942, including the Doolittle bombing raid on Tokyo on 18 April 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea on 7 and 8 May, and the Battle of Midway from 3 to 6 June, also focused public attention on that theatre of war rather than Europe.<sup>523</sup> As a result of these events, there were times in the early months of 1942 when the Pacific dominated American headlines. On 26 March the British embassy in Washington noted that “the Australian front dominates the headlines.”<sup>524</sup> On 13 May it was reported that the news of the battle of the Coral Sea

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<sup>519</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.75

<sup>520</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.76

<sup>521</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.49, 67; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.25. Stimson told Churchill in July 1943: “... the enemy whom the American people really hated, if they hated anyone, was Japan which had dealt them a foul blow”, Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.430

<sup>522</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.49

<sup>523</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.217-219, 222-225; Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.64-66

<sup>524</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 26 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.27

“overshadowed all other developments of the week”.<sup>525</sup> What was needed was American troops fighting against the Germans, so that the headlines would focus on Europe, and for that reason Roosevelt needed a major military operation in that theatre of war in 1942.

American public opinion polls and other contemporary sources demonstrate that in the period after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Germany-first policy was challenged by events in the Pacific, and there is also evidence of President Roosevelt’s concern about this.<sup>526</sup> Roosevelt was immediately aware of this new domestic political problem, and recognized the importance of solving it. British Ambassador Lord Halifax met with President Roosevelt very shortly after Pearl Harbor. Halifax felt that the President was worried that a portion of American public opinion was not convinced that Germany and Japan were both enemies of the United States, and Halifax noted that the President felt he would have to “educate” the American public about Germany-first.<sup>527</sup> A swing away from Germany-first was not immediately evident in public opinion polls and other sources. On 17 December 1941 the British embassy in Washington noted that up to that date Germany was still seen as the main enemy by Americans, with Japan seen as a satellite.<sup>528</sup> However, this was soon to change.

The American press and public soon began to favour attacking Japan first, even though they saw Germany as the more dangerous enemy, because Japan was seen as an immediate threat, with its string of successes in January and February 1942, and

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<sup>525</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 13 May 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.36

<sup>526</sup> Stoler argues: “... the majority in public opinion polls considered [Japan] their primary enemy”, Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.69. He repeats this in another of his works, noting “most Americans saw Japan as their primary enemy ...”, Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.94. Others have made the same argument about the majority of American public opinion seeing Japan as the main enemy. For example, Dunn, Jr. talks of TORCH occurring to “direct American public opinion away from an overwhelming concern for the Pacific”, Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.35. Steele writes that in the early months of American involvement in the war, “what public enthusiasm for the war did exist was focused on Japan – not Germany”, Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.51. As will be seen, the situation was more complex than this, with Germany generally ranking higher in polls as the most dangerous enemy, but Japan seen as a more immediate threat.

<sup>527</sup> NA PREM 4/27/9, Lord Halifax to Churchill, 9 December 1941, pp.1-2

<sup>528</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 17 December 1941, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.5

there were also racial issues involved.<sup>529</sup> Between December 1941 and March 1942 editorial coverage of the Pacific began to outweigh coverage of the war with Germany, and some of the papers also began to state that Japan was more of a threat to the United States than was Germany.<sup>530</sup> Public opinion figures from February 1942 also demonstrated the challenge posed to the Germany-first policy by the war in the Pacific. In February 1942 Americans were asked what course of action should be pursued in the war. 15.6 per cent of those surveyed said all efforts should be concentrated on beating Japan. 46.8 per cent felt the main effort should be against Japan, but American aid should continue to Britain, 25.5 per cent favoured Germany-first, and 12.1 per cent did not know.<sup>531</sup> The Pacific coast of the United States was exposed to the Japanese threat, and as a result support for Germany-first was much less there than elsewhere in the United States.<sup>532</sup> In February 1942 only 15.5 per cent of Americans surveyed on the Pacific coast favoured the Germany-first policy.<sup>533</sup> The table below shows how support for a Japan-first policy rose from fifteen per cent on 23 December 1941 to 33 per cent in May 1942.

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<sup>529</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.49-50. There was much racist hatred of the Japanese in World War II. In February 1942 an opinion poll showed Germany was still considered much more of a menace, with 47.5 per cent viewing it as a greater menace, and only 10.2 per cent seeing Japan as more of a menace, with 32.3 per cent seeing them as equal, Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, pp.1155, 1177

<sup>530</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.49

<sup>531</sup> 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1942, p.311; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1174

<sup>532</sup> Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, p.108

<sup>533</sup> 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1942, p.311; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1174

**Table 3: Germany-first or Japan-first**<sup>534</sup>

Date	Japan-first %	Germany-first %	Equal %	Defend U.S. only %	No answer/ Don't know %
23.12.41	15	64	15		6
03.42 *	28	47	23		
28.03.42 **	62	21			17
06.05.42	33	22	27	7	11
17.06.42 ***	37	46	1		16
28.06.42 *	25	50	23		
01.07.42	22	34	28	7	9
18.07.42	21	40	23	8	8
29.08.42	24	32	31	7	6
03.11.42	32	23	32	6	7
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19.11.42	21	30	35	5	9
18.06.43	18	38	34	4	6

**Questions**

\* Who do you think is our No. 1 enemy in the war – Japan or Germany?

\*\* What is it most important for the United States to do right now? Both or equal was not an option

\*\*\* What is it most important for the United States to do right now?

Roosevelt and his main advisors were well aware of the shift in public support from Germany-first to Japan-first in the early months of 1942. At the 14 April meeting between the British D.C.(O), the British C.O.S., Prime Minister Churchill, General Marshall and Hopkins, the last mentioned noted “that if public opinion had its way the weight of American effort would be directed against Japan.”<sup>535</sup> The Office of Facts and Figures (O.F.F.) reported to Roosevelt that in April and May two-thirds of Americans wanted to focus American resources against Japan, even though Germany was still seen as the number one enemy.<sup>536</sup> By May 1942 Roosevelt felt that Germany was again considered to be the main enemy by the American people, and should be

<sup>534</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, pp.1155, 1177; ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.486; ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1942, p.310; ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1942, pp.151-152. Wording was slightly different for each question, but each basically asked who the main enemy was, or who the United States should concentrate on. The dotted line indicates when TORCH occurred.

<sup>535</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.285

<sup>536</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.85

attacked first.<sup>537</sup> However, poll figures, and other evidence, do not entirely confirm his view, because a large number of Americans still wanted to focus on Japan, as can be seen from Table 3 above, with Japan-first more popular than Germany-first on 6 May. On 22 June Lord Halifax warned the British Foreign Office that because of Pearl Harbor, and a “strong natural antipathy to Japanese, certain sections of United States opinion” wanted more action against Japan “as soon as possible”.<sup>538</sup> A week before the decision for TORCH, on 18 July, 40 per cent of Americans surveyed favoured Germany-first, but 21 per cent favoured Japan-first, and 23 per cent saw the two as equal threats.<sup>539</sup> Thus 44 per cent were not in favour of the Germany-first policy.

The figures and evidence above demonstrate that in the seven months after Pearl Harbor the Germany-first policy retained support amongst the American people, but it had come under threat. Opinion polls from that period of the war show that around a quarter of Americans surveyed, and at times up to a third, preferred Japan-first, while around a quarter to a third also viewed them as equal threats. This situation was unacceptable to Roosevelt, and an operation against Germany was needed to focus public attention back on Europe.

The American public was not the only group that Roosevelt needed to convince of the value of the Germany-first policy, because it did not enjoy universal support amongst the American military leaders either.<sup>540</sup> Some of the military men opposed to Germany-first were responsible for making decisions about future American strategy, so it was vital for Roosevelt to convince them of the value of the policy, or at least ensure they had accepted it. Most of the military opposition to Germany-first came from the United States Navy, and this opposition was led by Admiral King, who viewed the Pacific as the most important theatre of operations for the United States, and especially for the U.S. Navy.<sup>541</sup> In early 1942 he was pressing for a Japan-first

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<sup>537</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.85

<sup>538</sup> NA AIR 19/340, Viscount Halifax to Foreign Office, No. 272, 22 June 1942, p.5

<sup>539</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, pp.1155, 1177. Eight per cent wanted to defend the United States only, and eight per cent had no answer.

<sup>540</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.69; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.51

<sup>541</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.55; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.84; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.25, 32; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.61; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.118; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.158

policy.<sup>542</sup> King's preference was natural for a navy man, because the Pacific theatre was best suited to naval operations, while the European and Mediterranean theatres were much better suited to army operations. The U.S. Navy had traditional interests in the Pacific, and the Pacific had for years been considered the Navy's area of combat.<sup>543</sup> Roosevelt's Chief of Staff from July 1942, Admiral Leahy, was also a believer that the Navy should focus on the Pacific.<sup>544</sup> Some of the U.S. Navy dislike of the Germany-first policy sprang from "anti-British and anticooperation sentiment", amongst men like Admiral King and Navy War Plans Department Chief Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner. These men were committed opponents of Germany-first.<sup>545</sup>

General Douglas MacArthur, commander of U.S. forces in the Philippines until March 1942, and subsequently Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area, was the most prominent U.S. Army supporter of the Pacific as the priority theatre of war for the United States.<sup>546</sup> Roosevelt believed that MacArthur was a possible Republican nominee for the 1944 Presidential election, so he might have been reluctant to support the Pacific theatre, where MacArthur was in command of U.S. Army forces, and was seeking opportunities for combat and victories.<sup>547</sup>

Roosevelt did not need to convince all of his military men of the value of Germany-first. The U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Marshall, was a strong supporter of the Germany-first policy, and for him the major war aim of the United States was to carry out an invasion of France as soon as possible to remove Germany from the war.<sup>548</sup> TORCH was in line with Marshall's idea of Germany-first, although he much preferred a cross-Channel operation. As shown in Chapter 1, General Marshall briefly turned to the Pacific-first option in July 1942 in protest at what he considered wasteful

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<sup>542</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.96. By the end of March 1942 General Marshall had gained King's support for a cross-Channel operation, but only by allowing more resources for the Pacific, Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.97. In a message to Churchill on 15 July 1942, Dill noted simply: "King's war is against the Japanese", Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.166

<sup>543</sup> Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.699; Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.386

<sup>544</sup> Henry H. Adams, *Witness to Power: The Life of Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy*, Annapolis, 1985, p.115

<sup>545</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.69

<sup>546</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.84; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.28; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.95

<sup>547</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.86

<sup>548</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.19; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, pp.32, 35

operations in North Africa advocated by the British.<sup>549</sup> However, his heart was with Germany-first, a policy Secretary of War Stimson also firmly supported.<sup>550</sup>

President Roosevelt had to commit his military leaders to the Germany-first policy, because he needed everyone in his administration pulling in the same direction. One way for him to do this was to ensure that the first major Anglo-American military operation was carried out against Germany, because this would mean that regardless of their feelings about the Germany-first policy, American military and political leaders would have to focus on the war in Europe.

Another domestic political issue that Roosevelt had to deal with was the lingering vestiges of isolationism present in the United States after Pearl Harbor. These had to be removed to ensure that the United States fought the war as whole-heartedly as possible. Roosevelt felt that aggressive American action in the war would increase popular interventionist sentiment, because it would provide a more tangible American stake in the war.<sup>551</sup> Therefore, Roosevelt needed a successful military operation in 1942 to help remove this long-standing isolationist sentiment.

From the American War of Independence until World War II American foreign policy was largely based on the Monroe Doctrine and isolationism, as the United States defended North and South America and the Caribbean against any foreign powers, resisted any attempts by outsiders to gain influence, and isolated itself from events elsewhere in the world, and especially from events in Europe.<sup>552</sup> There were some exceptions to this, including major ones such as World War I. However, after participating in that conflict, America again reverted to isolationism in the 1920s and 1930s, as a “withdrawal mood” took over the nation.<sup>553</sup> This was United States

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<sup>549</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.84

<sup>550</sup> Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.408

<sup>551</sup> Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.69

<sup>552</sup> Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, pp.239-240, 256-257; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.33; Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.175; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.1. In 1801 Thomas Jefferson said: “Kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe ...”, Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.32; Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics*, p.76. From 1778 to 1947 the United States did not commit in peace time to any long-term political agreement with other nations, Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics*, p.77

<sup>553</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy*, New York, 1950, p.66; Divine (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity*, p.135

government policy, and was very strongly supported by the American people.<sup>554</sup> Roosevelt began to move away from isolationism in 1937 in response to the threat he felt Germany posed, but the American people moved more slowly, and the President had to be careful not to get too far ahead of public opinion.<sup>555</sup> Isolationism was strongest in the United States before war broke out in Europe. In February 1937, for example, 95 per cent of Americans surveyed felt that the United States should not take part in a future world war beginning in Europe.<sup>556</sup>

Despite the outbreak of war in Europe, most Americans did not want the United States to become involved.<sup>557</sup> Isolationism remained a very strong sentiment Roosevelt had to overcome if he was to help keep Britain in the war with Germany, and between 1 September 1939 and 7 December 1941 America was broadly divided into interventionists and isolationists.<sup>558</sup> A strong isolationist movement existed, and national hero Charles A. Lindbergh was a leading figure in this movement in 1940 and 1941.<sup>559</sup> Lindbergh summed up the isolationist attitude neatly: “We need not fear invasion unless Americans bring it through their own quarrelling and meddling with affairs abroad”.<sup>560</sup> Sections of the press pushed the isolationist viewpoint, and leading

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<sup>554</sup> Reasons for American isolationism in the 1930s included pacifism, hatred of war, political beliefs, and many others, Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.32

<sup>555</sup> Two speeches by Roosevelt, on 5 and 12 October 1937, aimed to raise awareness amongst the American people about the potential threat posed by the Axis dictators, but caused a great deal of controversy, Frankfurter to Roosevelt, 12 October 1937, in Freedman (ed.), *Roosevelt and Frankfurter*, p.427; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p.21; Buhite & Levy (eds), *FDR's Fireside Chats*, pp.97, 105; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.148-149; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, pp.33-34; Stoler, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy’, pp.125-126; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.64; Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics*, p.76. Up to September 1938 American general public opinion was barely influenced by events in the rest of the world. However, after that time the average American became more interested in world affairs, Philip E. Jacob, ‘Influences of World Events on U.S. “Neutrality” Opinion’, *POQ*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1940, pp.48, 63

<sup>556</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, pp.966, 968

<sup>557</sup> Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.18; Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.365

<sup>558</sup> Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p.4; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.14. Public opinion figures clearly reflected isolationist sentiment in this period. Between March and June 1941 76 to 83 per cent of Americans surveyed wanted to stay out of the war, ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 1941, pp.482-487. On 14 December 1939 Roosevelt wrote to William Allen White: “What worries me, especially, is that public opinion over here is patting itself on the back every morning and thanking God for the Atlantic Ocean (and Pacific Ocean)”, Roosevelt letter to William Allen White, 14 December 1939, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.293; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.211

<sup>559</sup> Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, p.141; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.225; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, pp.131, 154-155

<sup>560</sup> Monnet, *Memoirs*, p.152; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, p.155

isolationist newspapers included the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Daily News*.<sup>561</sup>

As Table 4 below demonstrates, the United States moved slowly away from isolationism in 1940 and 1941. The fall of France and the subsequent Battle of Britain reduced isolationist sentiment considerably during the summer and autumn of 1940.<sup>562</sup> This was because the German threat seemed much greater and closer at this time.<sup>563</sup> However, isolationism still remained an issue for Roosevelt throughout 1940 and 1941. He fought hard against isolationist opinion to push through Congress measures to assist the British, such as the Destroyers for Bases deal of September 1940, and the Lend-Lease Act of 11 March 1941.<sup>564</sup> On 10 October 1941 President Roosevelt told British Ambassador Lord Halifax:

... that his perpetual problem was to steer a course between the two factors represented by: (1) The wish of 70 per cent of Americans to keep out of war; (2) The wish of 70 per cent of Americans to do everything to break Hitler, even if it means war.<sup>565</sup>

Roosevelt was stranded between these two courses, and had to wait on events. He told Churchill at the August 1941 conference of his intention “to wage war, but not declare it, and to “force an ‘incident’ ... which would justify him in opening hostilities”.<sup>566</sup> Even the sinking of two U.S. Navy destroyers by German U-boats in October 1941

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<sup>561</sup> NA PREM 4/71/2, ‘Daily Survey of American Press and Radio’, 7 January 1942, p.1; Weekly Political Summary, 11 June 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.45

<sup>562</sup> Hadley Cantril, Donald Rugg & Frederick Williams, ‘America Faces the War: Shifts in Opinion’, *POQ*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1940, pp.651-652; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.24

<sup>563</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.71

<sup>564</sup> Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.358, 360-363

<sup>565</sup> NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Lord Halifax to Churchill, 11 October 1941; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.289. In September 1940 60 per cent of Americans surveyed saw aid to Britain as more important than staying out of the war, but only 20 per cent would actually vote for war if a national vote was taken, Stoler, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy’, p.131. Similarly, a Gallup poll of late-April 1941 found that three-quarters of those Americans surveyed would favour entering the war “if it appeared certain that there was no other way to defeat Germany and Italy”, four-fifths thought the U.S. would sooner or later enter the war, and four-fifths were opposed to immediate entry into the war, Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.374. Stimson felt that Roosevelt caused the contradictory attitudes by not leading the nation towards war more firmly, and instead trying to please the isolationists by promising no American involvement in the conflict, Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.375

<sup>566</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.29

did not greatly remove isolationist sentiment in America.<sup>567</sup> It took a much larger incident to do this.

**Table 4: Should the United States stay out of the war, or help England win, even at the risk of getting into the war?**<sup>568</sup>

Date	Aid even at risk	Stay out	No Choice
	%	%	%
05.40	36	64	-
07.40	39	61	-
09.40	52	48	-
12.40	60	40	-
01.41	68	32	-
04.41	67	33	-
06.05.41	54	41	5
29.05.41	58	39	3

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor went a long way towards reducing isolationist sentiment in the United States, with the nation generally uniting behind President Roosevelt.<sup>569</sup> The isolationist press and isolationist movement quickly came out in support of the war. Prominent isolationists like Lindbergh and Senator Burton K. Wheeler spoke in support of the war, and the isolationist America First Committee announced that it was dissolving itself.<sup>570</sup> However, even after Pearl Harbor, isolationist views were still held by some Americans, and throughout the war Roosevelt felt that many Americans remained isolationist.<sup>571</sup> Not all pre-war isolationists renounced their views in 1942, and as the year progressed these people

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29

<sup>568</sup> ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 1941, p.481; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.974

<sup>569</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 10 December 1941, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.2; Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, p.86; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.79; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, pp.1, 42. Secretary Stimson wrote in his diary on 7 December 1941: “... my first feeling was of relief that indecision was over and that a crisis had come in a way which would unite all our people”, Stimson Diary, 7 December 1941, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.393

<sup>570</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 10 December 1941, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.2; Weekly Political Summary, 17 December 1941, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.5; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.47

<sup>571</sup> Emerson, ‘Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief’, pp.202-204; John J. Sbrega, ‘The Anticolonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Reappraisal’, *PSQ*, Vol. 101, No. 1, 1986, p.68; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, p.442

became more vocal.<sup>572</sup> President Roosevelt needed to remove these remnants of isolationist sentiment, to ensure full support for the American war effort.

There is much evidence for the continued existence of isolationism in the United States in 1942. On 19 February the British embassy in Washington noted that after the recent British defeats in Asia and North Africa there was a danger:

... that the former isolationists will take the opportunity of this phase of opinion to engage as appeasers with [the] policy of retiring behind Hawaii and the Atlantic bases leaving the rest of the world to stew in its own juice.<sup>573</sup>

Roosevelt was concerned about this, and in his first fireside chat after Pearl Harbor, on 23 February 1942, he replied to “critics who had been spreading the view that United States forces should be used exclusively for the defence of the American continent”.<sup>574</sup> In March Roosevelt told Churchill that the “survivors of isolationism” were stating that the “American role is to defend Hawaii, our east and west coasts, do the turtle act, and wait until somebody attacks our home shores.”<sup>575</sup> In another private comment Roosevelt noted the existence of “a gang which unfortunately survives – made up mostly of those who were isolationists before December Seventh ...”.<sup>576</sup> In March and April 1942 there were more worrying reports that isolationism was returning.<sup>577</sup> This trend continued as the year progressed, and Roosevelt wanted to halt it.

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<sup>572</sup> Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p.80

<sup>573</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 19 February 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.20

<sup>574</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 4 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.23; Buhite & Levy (eds), *FDR's Fireside Chat*, pp.208-209

<sup>575</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 18 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.421

<sup>576</sup> Roosevelt letter to Russell C. Leffingwell, 16 March 1942, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.422; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.51. Some of these people were publishers, newspaper owners, columnists, radio commentators, anti-religious, anti-racial, or, in Roosevelt's words, “extreme nationalists like some of the wild Irish”, Roosevelt letter to Russell C. Leffingwell, 16 March 1942, in Roosevelt (ed.), *The Roosevelt Letters*, p.422

<sup>577</sup> On 20 March 1942 the British embassy in Washington told the Foreign Office that isolationist groups “are active underground”, Weekly Political Summary, 20 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.27. In April 1942 non-interventionists were adamant that American troops should not go overseas. They had a slogan: “First our arms, then our money, then our boys”, NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Anthony Eden to Churchill, 30 April 1942. On 8 April 1942 the British embassy in Washington reported that “the former isolationists ... are still uncurbed and very vocal in their advocacy of the new form of ‘America First’, which consists of concentrating on the defence of the American mainland and Hawaii to the exclusion of all else”, Weekly Political

On 11 June Isaiah Berlin at the British embassy in Washington told the Foreign Office: “The isolationists are definitely on [the] march again and are boasting of their successes in recent congressional primaries”. Berlin then noted that the Republican Party was “on [the] whole still inclined towards isolationism”.<sup>578</sup> Later in the month Halifax informed the Foreign Office that the isolationists were “by no means a spent force either in Congress or in the country”.<sup>579</sup> Public opinion polls from 6 May, 1 July, 18 July and 29 August all showed seven to eight per cent of those Americans surveyed wanted to defend the United States only.<sup>580</sup> This represented the hard core of the American isolationist movement. Thus in the months after Pearl Harbor isolationism was still a very serious issue for Roosevelt. It had been his aim since 1937 to remove American isolationism in the face of the German threat, and a 1942 military operation to create interventionist sentiment was another way to achieve this aim.

President Roosevelt also had concerns that those who had been isolationists before the war would become supporters of the war with Japan, and would oppose Germany-first. These former isolationists viewed Japan as a genuine threat to the United States that had to be addressed, while Germany remained too distant to be a real threat.<sup>581</sup> Formerly isolationist newspapers like the *Chicago Tribune* took up this line, on 14 January 1942 noting that “for the present, at least, our single war aim must be the crushing of the Japanese”.<sup>582</sup> These former isolationists needed to be converted to support the Germany-first policy, and a U.S. Army operation against Germany would help achieve this by focusing attention on Europe.

Aside from specific issues like Germany-first and isolationism, as the war situation worsened for the Allies Roosevelt also faced the fundamental domestic political

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Summary, 8 April 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.31. Also in April 1942, the O.F.F. noted that as many as a fifth of Americans were still willing to follow anti-Roosevelt men, and that this group was similar in composition to the former isolationist bloc, Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.50

<sup>578</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 11 June 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.44

<sup>579</sup> NA AIR 19/340, Viscount Halifax to Foreign Office, No. 272, 22 June 1942, p.5

<sup>580</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, pp.1155, 1177

<sup>581</sup> Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.22; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, p.449

<sup>582</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.49

problem of the declining popularity of himself and his Democratic government. As early as 13 January 1942 the British embassy in Washington reported: “The rapturous unity of the first weeks of the war is thus to some extent giving place to an atmosphere of criticism”, albeit criticism intended to “increase the efficiency of the American war effort”.<sup>583</sup> Similar concerns were noted again by the British embassy a week later.<sup>584</sup>

There is little public opinion poll evidence about the popularity of the wartime United States government. Table 5 below does show that in May 1942 74.4 per cent of those Americans surveyed thought Congress was doing a fair or good job, which was very similar to Roosevelt’s approval rating as President in that month.

**Table 5: Is Congress doing a good job or a poor job?** <sup>585</sup>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Good job</b>	<b>Only fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Don’t Know/No Opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
27.08.39	57	-	43	-
05.42	33.8	40.6	15.3	10.3
10.03.43	33	29	20	18
07.07.43	34	30	22	14

As Table 6 below demonstrates, before war broke out in Europe, President Roosevelt’s approval rating was reasonably low, but after 1 September 1939 it steadily grew, and reached a peak of 84 per cent in the first month after the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, as 1942 progressed his popularity began to decline. It seems likely that this was in part the result of the string of serious Allied defeats. His approval rating reached a low of 70 per cent in August 1942, and remained around there until after Operation TORCH had begun in November 1942.<sup>586</sup>

<sup>583</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 13 January 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.12

<sup>584</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 20 January 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, pp.12-13

<sup>585</sup> ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.476; ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1940, p.83; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, pp.929-930

<sup>586</sup> On 3 July 1942 the British embassy in Washington reported to the Foreign Office that criticism of Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief had died down recently, but this is not borne out by the public

**Table 6: Satisfaction with Roosevelt as President**<sup>587</sup>

Date	Approve %	Disapprove %	Undecided/ No Opinion %	Date	Approve	Disapprove	Undecided/ No Opinion
08.08.39	56.6	43.4	-	07.01.42	84	9	7
11.09.39	61.0	39	-	28.01.42	79	10	11
10.10.39	64.9	35.1	-	03.42	78	13	9
30.11.39	63.5	36.5	-	10.03.42	77	15	8
26.12.39	63.5	36.5	-	23.03.42	78	13	9
04.02.40	63	37	-	26.03.42	79	15	6
13.03.40	63	37	-	15.04.42	78	13	9
09.04.40	61	39	-	30.04.42	79	12	9
29.05.40	66	34	-	05.42	78	13	9
25.06.40	63	37	-	07.42	78	13	9
09.01.41	71	29	-	01.07.42	78	13	9
27.02.41	72	28	-	08.42	70	16	14
19.03.41	73	27	-	13.08.42	70	16	14
17.04.41	73	27	-	25.08.42	77	15	8
29.05.41	76	24	-	27.10.42	70	19	11
26.06.41	76	24	5	-----			
05.08.41	73	27	-	17.11.42	73	18	9
17.09.41	70	22	8	07.01.43	75	15	10
19.11.41	71	21	8	27.01.43	75	17	8
01.42	84	9	7	24.03.43	72	19	9

Roosevelt's loss of popularity in the months after Pearl Harbor was not considerable, but it was enough to place additional pressure on the President to undertake some positive action in the war, such as a major Anglo-American military operation. The decline was particularly worrying to Roosevelt given that 1942 was an election year.

In the mid-term Congressional elections of November 1942 one third of the U.S. Senate was due for re-election, as was the entire House of Representatives, so

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opinion polls, Weekly Political Summary, 3 July 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.52

<sup>587</sup> 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter 1942, p.650; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.475; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1940, p.85; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 2, June 1941, p.313; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1942, p.302; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.756. The line indicates when TORCH occurred.

domestic politics were especially important to Roosevelt in the months after Pearl Harbor.<sup>588</sup> The evidence suggests that the President believed that an improvement in American war fortunes was vital to Democratic Party success in November, and that a successful land offensive by the United States Army prior to the elections in early November was essential to achieve this improvement.<sup>589</sup>

In the recent past Roosevelt had demonstrated a willingness to overrule his military men when an election was approaching. Around October 1940 the Commander-in-Chief U.S. Fleet (CINCUS), Admiral James O. Richardson, was adamant that the American fleet should not be based at Pearl Harbor, because the base could not support the fleet for extended periods. However, Roosevelt insisted that the fleet should be based there to counter the Japanese, and to show the Japanese that the United States would oppose them. The CINCUS then informed Roosevelt that the senior U.S. Navy officers did not have confidence in the civilian leadership to fight a successful war in the Pacific. In reply, Roosevelt said: “Joe, you just don’t understand that this is an election year and that there are certain things that can’t be done, no matter what, until the election is over and won.”<sup>590</sup> Roosevelt was clearly willing to take a stand against military advice if he felt it would improve election results for his party. In 1940 Roosevelt also held back on providing the British with additional support and assistance until after the elections had occurred on 5 November, to avoid upsetting the many Americans who held isolationist and non-interventionist views.<sup>591</sup> A larger allocation of aid to Britain was announced just three days after the election.<sup>592</sup>

As 1942 progressed it became clear that Roosevelt had good reason to be concerned about the forthcoming elections. In March there were “signs of a revival of party politics in preparation for the congressional elections in November”, and the signs at

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<sup>588</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 11 July 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.54

<sup>589</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.89-90. In his memoirs Wedemeyer, in 1942 an important member of the U.S. Army W.P.D. and O.P.D., emphasised the 1942 elections as a reason why TORCH was chosen, Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, pp.157, 162

<sup>590</sup> Adams, *Witness to Power*, p.132

<sup>591</sup> Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, p.97

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*, p.97; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.28; Monnet, *Memoirs*, pp.152, 156

this point were not good for Roosevelt's government.<sup>593</sup> On 20 March Isaiah Berlin of the British embassy in Washington reported:

Wilkie [Republican Presidential candidate in 1940], whom I saw a few days ago, is doing all he can to prevent the inevitable reaction against the Administration in the forthcoming elections from accruing to benefit of isolationist groups ...<sup>594</sup>

In May Berlin reported to the Foreign Office that the Republicans could "expect a small addition to their strength" after the November elections.<sup>595</sup> Public opinion figures, presented in Table 7 below, confirmed the likelihood of a swing against the Democratic Party as 1942 progressed, with the number of predicted Democratic Party seats constantly diminishing. This trend was clear prior to the decision to undertake a major operation in 1942.

**Table 7: Predicted gains/losses for the Democrats if an election were held on these dates**<sup>596</sup>

Dates	Seats
10.05.42	+38
10.06.42	+10
09.09.42	-21
10.10.42	-20
24.10.42	-23

It is evident that the mid-term Congressional elections were a factor in Roosevelt's determination to carry out a military operation in 1942. The J.C.S. recognized on 14 July that both Roosevelt and "our political system would require major operations this year in Africa".<sup>597</sup> Brigadier Dykes of the C.C.S. in Washington noted in his diary on

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<sup>593</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 4 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.22

<sup>594</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 20 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.27

<sup>595</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 14 May 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.37

<sup>596</sup> 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter 1942, p.651; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, pp.476-477; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1943, p.162

<sup>597</sup> Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, pp.87-88. The quote was from a Wedemeyer note to General Thomas T. Handy of the O.P.D. about the 14 July 1942 J.C.S. meeting, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.276

21 July: “Beetle [Brigadier General Walter Bedell Smith, C.C.S. Secretariat] says that political pressure at home may *force* some action by American forces this year – and if it can’t be in Europe it will have to be in the Pacific”.<sup>598</sup> Roosevelt placed pressure on General Marshall to ensure that Operation TORCH occurred before the elections took place, as Field Marshal Dill informed the British C.O.S. in a signal on 15 September. Dill noted: “He [Marshall] suffers from political pressure to pull off some success before elections”.<sup>599</sup> On one occasion when General Marshall went to the White House to discuss planning for TORCH, Roosevelt jokingly “held up his hands in an attitude of prayer and said ‘please make it before Election Day’”.<sup>600</sup> It could also be argued that the insistence of Harry Hopkins early in the TORCH planning process that the operation should occur not later than 30 October was due to the 3 November elections.<sup>601</sup> In 1943 Roosevelt admitted to Eisenhower his disappointment that TORCH did not occur before the mid-term elections.<sup>602</sup> This evidence demonstrates that President Roosevelt felt that a successful military operation carried out before the November 1942 election would lead to an increase in support for him and his party at the polling booth in the mid-term elections, and it would seem that the elections were an influence on his desire for an operation involving the U.S. Army in that year.

In the event there was lower than expected voter turnout at the mid-term elections, and local issues rather than major national issues affected the outcome.<sup>603</sup> However,

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<sup>598</sup> Dykes Diary, 21 July 1942, in Cadogan (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.177. Stoler suggests that Bedell Smith may have mentioned this to Dykes informally as a negotiating tactic, Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, p.89. However, the other evidence presented here demonstrates that Bedell Smith’s view of a 1942 operation being essential due to political pressure was shared by others in Washington in summer 1942.

<sup>599</sup> NA WO 106/2773B, J.S.M. 386, 15 September 1942

<sup>600</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.593; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.90. Marshall also recalled: “When the President heard about Montgomery starting his attack on October 26, he said not to let him do that because they always got licked. Montgomery did start it on the 26th [sic], however”, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.594. Despite placing some pressure on General Marshall, ultimately the President trusted his military man’s judgement, rather than forcing a decision on him for political reasons.

<sup>601</sup> Breuer, *Feuding Allies*, p.32; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.25; Danchev, *Very Special Relationship*, p.54. In the event, of course, Roosevelt accepted his military men’s advice that TORCH should occur on 8 November 1942, after the elections.

<sup>602</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.169

<sup>603</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 8 November 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.107. It was the lowest voter turnout since 1930, Weekly Political Summary, 21 November 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.111. The President’s Assistant Secretary, William D. Hassett, noted on 2 November 1942 that the voters were “indifferent to the point of lethargy, as reflected in registrations ...”, William D. Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R., 1942-1945*, London, 1960, p.130. Undoubtedly a major Anglo-American operation would have seen more focus on major national issues.

the Republican Party did make gains, taking eight seats from the Democrats, and one seat from an Independent.<sup>604</sup> In the House the Democrats won 222 seats to the Republicans 209.<sup>605</sup> The British embassy in Washington reported to the Foreign Office that the Democratic Party suffered heavier losses than expected, and heavier than was usual in a mid-term election. The Democrats controlled the new House of Representatives by only thirteen votes, and for the first time since the New Deal in the mid-1930s the Republicans were close to control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate.<sup>606</sup> In a review of the elections the British embassy noted that depressing news from the Pacific caused dissatisfaction with the Roosevelt government, the people were unhappy with how the war was being conducted at home and abroad, and the “apparent absence of enterprise on European Front contributed further to a general sense of frustration”.<sup>607</sup> Roosevelt’s failure to campaign probably also contributed to the Republican gains.<sup>608</sup> In reference to Operation TORCH, Roosevelt’s press secretary, Stephen Early, told General Marshall: “You almost lost us control of Congress by the delay!”<sup>609</sup>

### **The Second Front Campaign in the United States**

Another problem Roosevelt faced after the American entry into the war was a strong desire amongst many Americans for the U.S. Army to create a Second Front against the Germans in 1942, and these demands reached their peak in the summer of that year.<sup>610</sup> Bailey argues that the number of Americans demanding a Second Front never reached a level where public opinion forced the hand of the United States government.<sup>611</sup> Even so, around 50 per cent of Americans surveyed wanted a Second Front in 1942, and it was a group that could not be ignored entirely by Roosevelt and his government.

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<sup>604</sup> Hadley Cantril & John Harding, ‘The 1942 Elections: A Case Study in Political Psychology’, *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1943, pp.222, 231; Claude E. Robinson, ‘Pre-Election Polls in the 1942 Elections’, *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1943, p.139

<sup>605</sup> Robinson, ‘Pre-election Polls in the 1942 Elections’, p.141

<sup>606</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 8 November 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, pp.105-106

<sup>607</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 21 November 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.111

<sup>608</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.361

<sup>609</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.15

<sup>610</sup> Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, p.143

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, p.144

Once America became actively involved in the war against the Axis, pressure on President Roosevelt for a major operation involving the U.S. Army in 1942 grew steadily and noticeably as the year went on. In its weekly summary of 19 February, the British embassy in Washington noted the concern of the American people that their troops “are not now actually fighting anywhere” except in the Philippines.<sup>612</sup> It was in March and April that demand for a Second Front from the American media and public really grew. This demand was fuelled by Soviet Ambassador Maxim Litvinoff, who first called for a Second Front in February.<sup>613</sup> Litvinoff was joined in the spring by two prominent Americans, 1940 Republican presidential candidate Wendell L. Wilkie, and Joseph E. Davies, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union.<sup>614</sup> In General Arnold’s meeting with Harry Hopkins on 1 April, Hopkins told the air force leader that “the temper of our people was for an all-out offensive with the least possible delay.”<sup>615</sup> U.S. Army inactivity was not the only reason the American public wanted a Second Front. Many Americans equated the creation of an Anglo-American Second Front with assisting the Soviet Union.<sup>616</sup> On 26 March the British embassy noted: “The possibility of some offensive action to assist Russia continues to attract much attention ...”<sup>617</sup> Roosevelt told Churchill in a letter on 3 April, “your people and mine demand the establishment of a front to draw off pressure on the Russians.”<sup>618</sup>

Pressure on Roosevelt and the U.S. government for a Second Front reached a peak in summer 1942.<sup>619</sup> In the week ending 9 April there were only fourteen American newspaper editorials calling for immediate offensive action, but in the week ending 25 June there were 27, and in the week to 16 July there were 43.<sup>620</sup> Molotov’s visit to the United States in May, and reference to a Second Front in the resulting public

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<sup>612</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 19 February 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.20

<sup>613</sup> Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, pp.67-68

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.68-69

<sup>615</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.305

<sup>616</sup> On 29 September 1942 18 per cent of Americans surveyed said that opening a Second Front meant supporting Russia, and this was the most common thing that Americans equated the Second Front to, Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1064

<sup>617</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 26 March 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.27

<sup>618</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.281

<sup>619</sup> Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, p.77

<sup>620</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.88-89

communiqué received great attention and support from the public.<sup>621</sup> On 21 June, the same day that Tobruk fell to the Germans, the Californian group Citizens for Victory published a large advertisement in the San Francisco *Chronicle* urging the creation of a Second Front.<sup>622</sup> On 3 July the British embassy in Washington noted that the general view of Americans was that the Soviet Union would hold out, and that a 1942 American invasion of Europe would then defeat the Germans.<sup>623</sup> Mass meetings were held in the United States in the summer calling for a Second Front, such as that held in Chicago on 19 July by the pro-Soviet Slav Congress, and another in New York on 22 July held by the Congress of Industrial Organizations.<sup>624</sup> On 25 July the British embassy in Washington noted that in the previous week “advocacy of a Second Front has increased largely as a result of the Russian reverses”, with the German summer offensive succeeding at this time in southern Russia.<sup>625</sup> By 29 July the O.W.I. described the agitation for a Second Front as “feverish”.<sup>626</sup> This campaign reached its peak at the same time as the decision for TORCH was made on 24 July, and it must have placed more pressure on Roosevelt for U.S. Army action against Germany in 1942. For the United States government the campaign for a 1942 invasion of France was not entirely an annoyance, because it aided support of the Germany-first policy. It was also beneficial to the U.S. Army, because it meant that there was popular support for the cross-Channel operation that it advocated so strongly.

Public opinion figures confirm the impression of a strong American demand for a large-scale attack against Germany in the summer of 1942, with 46 to 48 per cent of those surveyed desiring such an operation in July and August (see Table 8 below). On 31 July a poll asked if the Western Allies should try to land troops somewhere in Europe in the next two or three months. 62 per cent of respondents said yes, 16 per cent said no, and 22 per cent did not know.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, pp.79-80

<sup>622</sup> Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, p.143. On 22 June Hopkins and Litvinoff told a Russian War Relief rally in New York that a Second Front was coming, Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, p.81

<sup>623</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 3 July 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.51

<sup>624</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 26 July 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.58; Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, p.85

<sup>625</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 26 July 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.58

<sup>626</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.89

<sup>627</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1064

**Table 8: Should the Western Allies attempt a Large-scale attack on Germany in Western Europe?** <sup>628</sup>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Attempt Attack</b>	<b>Wait</b>	<b>Qualified Answer</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
01.07.42	48	34	-	18
29.07.42	48	38	4	10
13.08.42	46	36	4	14

The demands for a Second Front continued to grow in America after the decision for TORCH, maintaining pressure on Roosevelt.<sup>629</sup> Opening an Anglo-American Second Front in 1942 was considered important by around half of the American people, making it an important domestic political issue for Roosevelt. It was certainly not a minority pressing for this action, and the United States government had to take notice, especially because 1942 was an election year.

In summary, in the months after Pearl Harbor President Roosevelt faced a number of domestic political problems. These included removing the remnants of isolationist sentiment; securing support from the public and his military leaders for the Germany-first policy; maintaining the popularity of his government and himself; accommodating a widespread and popular campaign urging the creation of a Second Front in 1942 using the U.S. Army; and fighting a forthcoming mid-term Congressional election. The deteriorating war situation in the months after Pearl Harbor only made these problems worse, and increased pressure on Roosevelt for action. The evidence makes it clear that Roosevelt was aware of these problems, and that he was very concerned about them. There is also good evidence linking Roosevelt's concerns about domestic politics with his desire for a 1942 military operation, most notably his comments to General Marshall about ensuring a U.S. Army operation occurred before the November mid-term elections. General Marshall was convinced of the importance of these domestic political issues on Roosevelt's thinking with regard to a 1942 operation, telling his official biographer:

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<sup>628</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1064

<sup>629</sup> See, for example: Weekly Political Summary, 8 August 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.67; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1064; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.89; Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, pp.88, 90

We failed to see that the leader in a democracy has to keep the people entertained. That may sound like the wrong word, but it conveys the thought ... People demand action. We couldn't wait to be completely ready.<sup>630</sup>

Thus there is compelling evidence to suggest that Roosevelt's desire for a successful Anglo-American operation in 1942, and consequently the decision to undertake Operation TORCH, was influenced by American domestic political issues.

### **Domestic Political Pressures on Churchill**

While Roosevelt had to deal with a number of domestic political problems, the military disasters of 1941 and 1942 also placed domestic political pressure on Prime Minister Churchill and his government. Although the British coalition government did not have to be concerned about elections during wartime, the public and Parliament were very dissatisfied with the Churchill government's strategy-making and conduct of the war in 1942, had lost confidence in the government and, to a lesser extent, the Prime Minister. As had occurred in May 1940, a loss of public and Parliamentary confidence could lead to the fall of the government. Churchill was naturally very concerned about this situation, and it was clear that to ease the pressure a successful military operation was needed as soon as possible to restore both the fortunes of the British military and the Allied war situation. There are indications that Churchill wanted an Anglo-American operation in 1942 to fix some of his domestic political problems.<sup>631</sup>

Like his American counterpart, Prime Minister Churchill paid close attention to public opinion. Churchill read nine daily papers twice a day, and devoted at least an hour a day to this practice.<sup>632</sup> He was also on friendly terms with a number of newspaper proprietors and editors, most notably Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Camrose and Brendan

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<sup>630</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.622; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.69. Marshall made other similar statements after the war. For example, Marshall said: "Both Churchill and Roosevelt suffered because they had to take action. Public can't sit and wait", Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.614. In 1949 Marshall said in a public speech there was a consideration in war of "the political necessity of action. The public demands it. They must have action", Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.153

<sup>631</sup> Certainly, General Marshall felt that Churchill saw the political value of a 1942 operation. Marshall stated after the war that in July 1942 both Roosevelt and Churchill favoured a North-West Africa operation, and "both were aware of political necessities", Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.581

<sup>632</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.8; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.23

Bracken.<sup>633</sup> In May 1940 Churchill was an old-fashioned politician who had limited contact with journalists and rarely met the press or gave press conferences.<sup>634</sup> However, by February 1942 Churchill had realized the importance of broadcasting on the radio to boost morale.<sup>635</sup> On 4 April Churchill criticized the value of the Weekly Report by the Home Intelligence service of the Ministry of Information, but he was soon convinced by the Minister of Information that the report was of great value.<sup>636</sup> An indication that Churchill considered public opinion important to high-level policy-making was contained in his message to Stalin on 24 May, when the Prime Minister noted that one difficulty over a treaty regarding Soviet frontiers was “our own and American opinion”.<sup>637</sup> Although there is less evidence than there is for Roosevelt, it seems that Churchill was sensitive to public opinion and monitored it closely.

The British equivalent of the U.S. O.W.I. was the Ministry of Information. This was created in September 1939 to gauge public opinion, release official news, censor the media, and carry out propaganda in Britain and overseas.<sup>638</sup> To analyse public opinion, the Ministry of Information had a nationwide Home Intelligence service, which created weekly reports using a variety of sources.<sup>639</sup> Through these the Ministry of Information was able to establish a good understanding of public opinion, and consequently was able to inform other branches of the government.<sup>640</sup> The Minister of Information told a sceptical Churchill in mid-April 1942 that the Home Intelligence survey did not pretend to be “an accurate survey of the total opinion in the country, but it is looked upon as providing useful pointers to trends of feeling.”<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.8; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.243

<sup>634</sup> Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.334

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, p.348

<sup>636</sup> NA PREM 4/40/10, Major Desmond Morton to Churchill, 7 April 1942; NA PREM 4/40/10, Minister of Information Brendan Bracken to Churchill, 13 April 1942; NA PREM 4/40/10, Major Desmond Morton to Churchill, 13 April 1942; NA PREM 4/40/10, Churchill to Minister of Information, 4 April 1942; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, pp.258-259

<sup>637</sup> W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, received on May 24, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.48

<sup>638</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, pp.7-8; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.3

<sup>639</sup> The findings of British opinion polls conducted by the Gallup organization were regularly sent to the Ministry of Information. The Ministry of Information also used the findings of the BBC Audience Research Department. This Department carried out surveys to estimate how many people were listening to different wireless programmes, and used Honorary Local Correspondents to investigate opinion about broadcasting matters, such as public confidence in the news they were hearing, Bell, *John Bull*, pp.9-10; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.258

<sup>640</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.12; Kevin Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform: British Politics during the Second World War*, Manchester, 1994, pp.7-8; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.257

<sup>641</sup> NA PREM 4/40/10, Minister of Information Brendan Bracken to Churchill, 13 April 1942. Each of the reports was prefaced with a similar disclaimer stating that they were “not set out to record *facts*”,

These reports were a valuable source of public opinion used by various British Departments, although some found them to be of little use.<sup>642</sup> In 1942 a monthly digest of these Home Intelligence reports was presented to the War Cabinet.<sup>643</sup> Thus the Ministry of Information kept the upper echelons of the government, including Churchill himself, well-informed about British public opinion, so the Prime Minister knew the pressures on him in 1942.

On the outbreak of war the British political parties agreed to an electoral truce, as had happened in World War I.<sup>644</sup> In September 1939 the Conservative government had been in power since 1935, with a large majority from the final pre-war election.<sup>645</sup> However, when Churchill became Prime Minister in May 1940 he created a coalition government, which included members of the Labour Party.<sup>646</sup> As a result of the electoral truce and the creation of the coalition government, there was no need for concern about forthcoming elections, and party politics faded into the background for the duration of the conflict, although this did not mean that party politics were completely forgotten in wartime Britain.<sup>647</sup> Although Prime Minister Churchill could not be removed by election, he needed to maintain the confidence of Parliament, which could dismiss his government, and he wanted his own position to be secure.<sup>648</sup>

The catalogue of serious Allied military disasters in 1941 and 1942, which were outlined earlier, severely shook British confidence in Churchill's government. The figures in Table 9 below clearly demonstrate this.

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but were "a record and reflection of the public's views and feelings about the war in general", McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.257

<sup>642</sup> NA PREM 4/40/10, Desmond Morton to Churchill, 7 April 1942; NA PREM 4/40/10, 'Home Front Morale, 7 April 1942', p.2; Bell, *John Bull*, p.11

<sup>643</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.11; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.257

<sup>644</sup> Henry Pelling, 'The 1945 General Election Reconsidered', *HJ*, Vol. 23, No. 2, June 1980, p.399

<sup>645</sup> Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.1

<sup>646</sup> Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.331; Dalton, *The Fateful Years*, pp.313-314; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.1; Pelling, 'The 1945 Election Reconsidered', p.400. Neville Chamberlain had tried to form a coalition government on the outbreak of war, but the Labour Party refused his offer because they felt they would have no influence, Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.18. Sir John Anderson, Churchill's Lord President of the Council, was a National MP, so was not a member of either of the two main parties.

<sup>647</sup> See: Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.6

<sup>648</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.9

**Table 9: Satisfaction with the British government's conduct of the war** <sup>649</sup>

Date	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Undecided %	Stop the War %
11.39	61	18	18	11
02.40	59	28	13	-
06.41	58	30	12	-
10.41	44	38	18	-
12.11.41	44	38	18	-
-----				
03.42	35	50	15	-
04.42	50	38	12	-
05.42	63	24	13	-
06.42	57	26	17	-
-----				
07.42	41	42	17	-
22.08.42	45	38	17	-
20.09.42	41	37	22	-
16.10.42	41	37	22	-
10.42	49	35	16	-
-----				
11.42	75	17	8	-
27.12.42	75	19	6	-
01.43	75	17	8	-
24.01.43	72	20	8	-
26.04.43	76	15	9	-

Two events caused particular dissatisfaction with the British government and placed immense pressure on Churchill: the fall of both Singapore and Tobruk. The loss of the vital British naval base of Singapore on 15 February 1942 was one of Churchill's lowest moments of the war.<sup>650</sup> The fall of Singapore saw public satisfaction with the government drop to a wartime low of 35 per cent in March. Other polls clearly

<sup>649</sup> 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.489; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1943, p.176; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 1941, p.481; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1943, p.330; 'British Institute of Public Opinion', *POQ*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1940, p.82; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1108. The lines represent respectively the fall of Singapore and Tobruk, and Operation TORCH.

<sup>650</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.81; Grigg, 1943: *The Victory That Never Was*, p.32

indicated public dissatisfaction with the government. In February only 32 per cent of British people surveyed were satisfied with the personnel of the War Cabinet, while 41 per cent were dissatisfied, and 27 per cent did not know.<sup>651</sup> After reaching a low point in March, public support for the Churchill government began to rise again, reaching a high of 63 per cent in May. However, the capture of Tobruk by the Italo-German army in North Africa on 21 June greatly reduced public confidence in the government, and public opinion polls subsequently gave it more very low approval ratings, albeit not as low as figures after the fall of Singapore. These figures made it clear that British victories, especially by the luckless Army, were essential to maintain public confidence and satisfaction with the government.<sup>652</sup>

Although public satisfaction with the government decreased significantly in 1942, the Prime Minister himself maintained widespread support amongst the public. One historian says that this was because of the rapport Churchill established with the British public, especially through his broadcast addresses to the nation.<sup>653</sup> Churchill felt it was because they remembered the share he had “had in their survival in 1940.”<sup>654</sup> However, in 1942 Churchill’s approval ratings fell to their lowest levels during the war. As seen in Table 10 below, the fall of Singapore saw his popularity drop seven per cent. Parliamentarian Harold Nicolson noted in his diary on 16 February: “I fear a slump in public opinion which will deprive Winston of his legend”.<sup>655</sup> On 22 April Malcolm MacDonald, former Secretary of State for the Colonies, had lunch with Churchill, and Harold Nicolson recorded that the Prime Minister had “no illusions at all about the decline in his popularity”. Nicolson continued:

Malcolm is in fact rather appalled by the slump in Winston’s popularity. A year ago he [MacDonald] would have put his stock at 108, and today,

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<sup>651</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.79

<sup>652</sup> Cuthbert Headlam wrote in his diary: “... I don’t fancy that the Government’s stock is very high at the moment – nor is it likely to rise until we succeed in scoring a win somewhere or other”, Headlam Diary, 10 May 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.312

<sup>653</sup> Pelling, ‘The 1945 Election Reconsidered’, p.400. In August 1940 Churchill himself could not understand why he was so popular, because he had only presided over defeats and disaster, but it was his fighting spirit in the face of these disasters that made him popular, Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.334

<sup>654</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.54

<sup>655</sup> Nicolson Diary, 16 February 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.212

in his opinion, it is as low as 65. He [Churchill] admits that a success will enable it to recover. But the old enthusiasm is dead for ever.<sup>656</sup>

This piece of evidence makes it clear that Churchill realized the necessity of a military victory to regain his popularity. As with his government's, Churchill's popularity rallied in May 1942. However, shortly after the fall of Tobruk 78 per cent of the population surveyed were satisfied with Churchill as Prime Minister, lower than his usual rate in the eighties, and, indeed, as low as his rating ever was during the war.

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<sup>656</sup> Nicolson Diary, 22 April 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.223

**Table 10: Popular satisfaction with Churchill as Prime Minister** <sup>657</sup>

Date	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Undecided
	%	%	%
07.40	88	7	5
08.40	88	7	5
14.11.40	89	6	5
03.41	88	7	5
06.41	87	9	4
26.06.41	86	9	5
10.41	84	11	5
11.11.41	84	11	5
01.42	89	7	4
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02.42	82	11	7
20.03.42	82	11	7
04.42	82	13	5
05.42	87	8	5
06.42	86	9	5
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07.42	78	15	7
08.42	82	11	7
09.42	82	10	8
10.42	84	11	5

Churchill could lose his position as Prime Minister if Parliament decided he was not doing his job well enough, as had happened to his predecessor Neville Chamberlain in May 1940 after defeat in Norway.<sup>658</sup> Churchill's position was bound closely to British military fortunes. Military disasters in 1941 saw Churchill threatened for the first time

<sup>657</sup> 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter 1942, p.660; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.489; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1943, p.176; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 1941, p.157; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 1941, p.481; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1942, p.156; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1942, p.313. The lines indicate the fall of Singapore and Tobruk.

<sup>658</sup> Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.328; Eden, *The Reckoning*, pp.95-96; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, pp.1-4, 26; Macmillan, *The Blast of War*, p.65

as Prime Minister, resulting in him surviving a vote of no confidence in Parliament on 7 May in the wake of the British defeat in Greece.<sup>659</sup>

On a number of occasions in the months after Pearl Harbor it seemed possible that Churchill could lose his position because Parliament had lost confidence in him. These occasions coincided with serious military disasters, with the catalysts for the main challenges being the British defeats at Singapore and Tobruk.<sup>660</sup> January 1942 saw the first questions raised about Churchill and his government, and in that month the defeat in Malaya led to questioning of Churchill's leadership and talk of the need to reduce the burden on the Prime Minister.<sup>661</sup> Harold Nicolson noted in his diary that because of the military situation in the Far East, when Churchill returned from his trip to the United States, he would "meet a very different House from the one he left".<sup>662</sup> That same month R.A.B. 'Rab' Butler MP noted in a letter to a fellow Conservative that "feeling for once became aroused against the P.M. himself."<sup>663</sup> When Churchill returned he addressed the House and asked for a Vote of Confidence, which he won 464 to one.<sup>664</sup> Even so, Churchill had been openly criticized because of the war situation, and it concerned him. Of late-January 1942 Churchill wrote in his memoirs:

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<sup>659</sup> Nicolson Diary, 7 May 1941, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.164; Headlam Diary, 7 May 1941, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.251; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.251; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.65. Churchill prevailed in this vote, 447 to 3. Beaverbrook remarked on 28 April: "Winston had lost some ground in the country from our recent reverses ... Eden had lost more", Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.63. On 6 June Henry Channon noted: "On all sides one hears increasing criticism of Churchill. He is undergoing a noticeable slump in popularity and many of his enemies, long silenced by his personal popularity, are once more vocal. Crete has been a great blow to him", Channon Diary, 6 June 1941, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.307; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.67

<sup>660</sup> Grigg argues that Churchill's position as Prime Minister was seriously under threat in 1942, but that Churchill ensured that his potential replacements, such as Cripps, and especially Eden, were kept in their places, Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, pp.33-36. Churchill was concerned that Cripps was a real threat to his position, Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, pp.4, 70

<sup>661</sup> Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.347; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.318

<sup>662</sup> Nicolson Diary, 15 January 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.205. Henry Channon noted that Churchill's government was doomed when he returned, Channon Diary, 9 January 1942, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.316; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.70. Cuthbert Headlam wrote: "There is no doubt today a feeling of great unrest in the Party, and in the House generally, against the Government", Headlam Diary, 22 January 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.289

<sup>663</sup> Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.75. Channon wrote in his diary: "Everyone is in a rage against the Prime Minister [sic]. Rage; frustration. This is not the post-Dunkirk feeling, but ANGER", Channon Diary, 13 February 1942, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.321

<sup>664</sup> Channon Diary, 29 January 1942, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.319; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.57, 62; Grigg, *1943: The Victory That Never Was*, p.35

... the well-informed and airily detached criticism of the newspapers, the shrewd and constant girding of 20 or 30 able Members of Parliament, the atmosphere of the lobbies, gave me a sense of an embarrassed, unhappy, baffled public opinion, albeit superficial, swelling and mounting about me on every side.<sup>665</sup>

In early February Cuthbert Headlam wondered “whether we can win the war under the present regime ...”<sup>666</sup>

After the fall of Singapore and other simultaneous British military disasters in February 1942, Churchill’s leadership was again threatened.<sup>667</sup> James Ede MP noted in his diary: “Clouds still surround Churchill. A victory or two would disperse them but no early victories can be expected.”<sup>668</sup> In response to the situation, Churchill reshuffled his War Cabinet, to introduce the “new blood” being called for, and this move was generally well-received by the public.<sup>669</sup> There also emerged at this time a contender to replace Churchill as Prime Minister, in the shape of Sir Stafford Cripps, who returned from being Ambassador to the Soviet Union in late-January 1942, but soon gained popular support amongst the British people.<sup>670</sup> According to a report of the survey group Mass-Observation, in March 1942 Cripps briefly surpassed Eden as the man most people wanted to succeed Churchill as Prime Minister.<sup>671</sup> Public opinion figures confirmed the rise of Cripps. In November 1941 only one percent of Britons surveyed wanted Cripps as Churchill’s successor, but in April 1942 34 per cent wanted him to be the next Prime Minister, compared to 37 per cent for Eden,

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<sup>665</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.53-54

<sup>666</sup> Headlam Diary, 4 February 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.293

<sup>667</sup> Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.348; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.4

<sup>668</sup> Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.72

<sup>669</sup> Headlam Diary, 19 February 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, pp.297-298; Cadogan Diary, 18 & 19 February 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.435; Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.348; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.38; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.65, 78; Dalton, *The Fateful Years*, pp.382-384; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.322; Grigg, *Prejudice and Judgment*, pp.349-350; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, pp.4, 72. As early as 18 December 1941 Henry Channon MP felt that Churchill had to “reconstruct his Government”, Channon Diary, 18 December 1941, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.315

<sup>670</sup> Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.347; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, pp.70-72. General Alanbrooke wrote on 19 March that in a conversation he had with Lord Milne, Milne “thinks Winston is drawing near unto his end and that he won’t last much longer as PM. Predicts that Stafford Cripps will succeed him soon”, Alanbrooke Diary, 19 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.240. On 20 February Headlam recorded in his diary: “All the papers seem to be impressed by the Cabinet changes – but clearly the entry of Cripps into the Government excites most interest. He is regarded as the coming man, who may prove something extra special ...”, Headlam Diary, 20 February 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.298

<sup>671</sup> Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.72

who after March had soon resumed his position as the man most likely to succeed Churchill.<sup>672</sup>

Although the war situation stabilized somewhat in March and April, criticism of Churchill as Prime Minister continued. On 20 May there was another debate in Parliament once more criticizing Churchill. Harold Nicolson recorded in his diary on that day: "... I fear that Winston's position in the House (in spite of his triumph in the secret session [on 23 April 1942]) is not a strong one."<sup>673</sup>

The fall of Tobruk resulted in Churchill's position being seriously questioned again.<sup>674</sup> The Prime Minister had been in the United States when the event occurred, and returned to face a motion expressing "no confidence in the central direction of the war".<sup>675</sup> Churchill's position as Prime Minister was strongly criticized by a variety of Parliamentarians, from left-wing Labour backbencher Aneurin Bevan to Sir Roger Keyes on the right.<sup>676</sup> However, on 1 and 2 July Churchill survived the vote of censure quite comfortably, 475 votes to 25.<sup>677</sup> There would be no more serious questioning of Churchill's leadership, although deterioration in the military situation, such as a failed cross-Channel operation, could have seen a renewal of strong criticism in Parliament.<sup>678</sup> On 15 July Nicolson noted: "I very much fear that Churchill's own position will not survive a Russian defeat".<sup>679</sup> In August Ivor Thomas MP noted in a letter that in June and July 1942 "if Alexandria had fallen, Winston would have fallen also. As it is, he will hold his position until we get another major

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<sup>672</sup> 'Public Opinion Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1943, p.330. Cripps only briefly surpassed Eden in March 1942.

<sup>673</sup> Nicolson Diary, 20 May 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.226

<sup>674</sup> Anthony Eden recalled: "These new disasters caused a fresh outbreak of discontent with the Government's conduct of the war", Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.332. A very worried Churchill called Eden on 21 June because the New York newspapers were reporting "the impending fall of the Government", Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.331

<sup>675</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.17; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.516; Lyttelton, *Memoirs*, p.316. Channon wrote on 24 June: "Meanwhile the PM is flying back today I believe, to take charge of the crisis. It will be a battle, certainly, but one always gets back to the old problem, there is no alternative to Winston", Channon Diary, 24 June 1942, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.333

<sup>676</sup> Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.332; Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, pp.79-80

<sup>677</sup> Channon Diary, 2 July 1942, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.335; Headlam Diary, 1 & 2 July 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, pp.322-323; Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.349; Bell, *John Bull*, p.17; Lyttelton, *Memoirs*, p.316

<sup>678</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.50

<sup>679</sup> Nicolson Diary, 15 July 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.235

reverse.”<sup>680</sup> It seemed that Churchill would not survive any more challenges or British military failures.<sup>681</sup> These challenges to Churchill must have made clear to him the necessity of a successful British offensive in 1942. That Churchill recognized the need for victories to secure his position is confirmed by his wartime physician, Charles Wilson. He wrote: “my Diary for 1942 has the same backcloth to every scene: Winston’s conviction that his life as Prime Minister could be saved only by a victory in the field”<sup>682</sup>.

### **The Second Front Campaign in Britain**

While declining popularity for Churchill and his government, and questions about the Prime Minister’s leadership were serious domestic political problems, there was another source of pressure on Churchill for action and military success in 1942. This was the very strongly supported campaign in Britain for the Western Allies to create a Second Front by landing an invasion force in north-western France. This campaign was a clear effort by a number of groups and individuals to use public opinion to try to influence government policy- and strategy-making.<sup>683</sup> The campaign was successful to the extent that Churchill and his military men were all very aware of the demands.<sup>684</sup>

A coalition of groups and individuals combined to push for action in 1942. The Second Front campaign was fuelled by the British media, and after the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941, the Soviet leadership very vocally took up the cause, reminding Churchill, the British government, and the British public that the Soviet Union desired a Second Front in France more than any other form of aid. There was great popular support for Russia in Britain in 1942, and the Soviets seized on this with their Second Front demands.<sup>685</sup> The Soviet Ambassador to London, Ivan Maisky, decided within days of the German invasion to start enquiring about the possibility of

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<sup>680</sup> Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.81

<sup>681</sup> Churchill’s main rival, Sir Stafford Cripps recognised this, Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.349

<sup>682</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.348

<sup>683</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, pp.67, 80

<sup>684</sup> Alanbrooke noted in his diary the “universal cry” for a Second Front, Alanbrooke Diary, 30 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.243. He later also recorded that the Americans, Soviets and British press were all seeking the creation of a “Western Front”, Alanbrooke Diary, 1 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.275

<sup>685</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.298-299

Britain creating a Second Front.<sup>686</sup> He noted that throughout 1942 he put much effort into securing a Second Front, calling it “the main problem in Anglo-Soviet relations”.<sup>687</sup> He sought allies in influential positions, and found them in Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Beaverbrook.<sup>688</sup>

The most important British figure in the Second Front campaign was Lord Beaverbrook, a member of the Churchill War Cabinet from mid-1940 until resigning in February 1942.<sup>689</sup> He used his ownership of popular newspapers to gain more public support for a Second Front, and his resignation from the War Cabinet allowed him to campaign even more extensively for the Second Front. Sir Stafford Cripps, Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1940 to January 1942, was another prominent and popular politician who supported Beaverbrook and the Second Front campaign.<sup>690</sup> The fact he was considered as an alternative to Churchill as Prime Minister probably strengthened the pressure on the Prime Minister for a Second Front in 1942.

The Second Front campaign was also strongly supported by the Communist Party of Great Britain, which wanted to secure greater Anglo-Soviet co-operation and saw the Second Front issue as a way to associate itself more with the Soviet Union and the increasing pro-Soviet support in Britain in 1942.<sup>691</sup> The Communist Party had a small membership, but it had a well-organized press distributing daily and monthly newspapers and periodicals.<sup>692</sup> The influence of the Communist Party was so strong that the government wanted to ban the party itself, and carried out an official campaign against it.<sup>693</sup> The communists were a significant pressure group in Britain in 1941 and 1942.

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<sup>686</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, pp.6, 104; Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.160-161

<sup>687</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.246

<sup>688</sup> Maisky felt that Beaverbrook was more open to the idea of a Second Front in 1941 than Eden or Churchill, Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.161

<sup>689</sup> Beaverbrook was an old and close colleague of Churchill's from World War I. His resignation was on the grounds of ill health, Bell, *John Bull*, pp.77-78; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp.66, 74; Lytton, *Memoirs*, p.164. As early as 28 June 1941 Beaverbrook told Maisky that he felt Britain should “occupy parts of Northern France”, Gorodetsky, ‘The Origins of the Cold War’, p.158

<sup>690</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.6; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.38

<sup>691</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.88; Inderjeet Parmar, *Special Interests, the State and the Anglo-American Alliance, 1939-1945*, London, 1995, p.93

<sup>692</sup> Parmar, *Special Interests*, pp.93, 97; Bell, *John Bull*, p.13; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, pp.189-192

<sup>693</sup> NA PREM 4/66/1, House of Lords, Thursday 26th March, 1942, p.303; Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, p.343; Parmar, *Special Interests*, p.96

The British press also played a very important role in supporting the Second Front campaign. In 1941, 1942 and 1943 there was very strong pro-Soviet feeling in the British press, and this meant that the Second Front idea was a popular one with journalists and editors.<sup>694</sup> The main Second Front newspapers were Lord Beaverbrook's own, such as the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*, as well as the *News Chronicle*, *New Statesman*, and *Tribune*.<sup>695</sup> Together, this strange coalition of groups and individuals placed great pressure on Churchill and his government for a military operation against Germany in 1942.

After the fall of France in June 1940 it seemed clear that the British would one day have to return to the Continent with an invasion force. Demand from the British people for an invasion of France began in 1940, but grew very slowly.<sup>696</sup> Clamour for a landing in France became much stronger after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, and was now referred to as a Second Front. Within days of the invasion, the Ministry of Information found public opinion calling for a Second Front, and newspaper articles began to call for such an operation.<sup>697</sup> The Second Front campaign built up in September 1941, and reached a peak in October, but died away as winter arrived, the difficulties of such an operation were realized, the press campaign and communist agitation became too vocal for some, and the Pacific war began in December.<sup>698</sup>

The Second Front campaign re-commenced in Britain in February 1942, and gathered pace in March, April and May, with the Communist Party of Great Britain, the press, Lord Beaverbrook and the Soviets all playing important roles.<sup>699</sup> Public opinion

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<sup>694</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.7; Parmar, *Special Interests*, p.93

<sup>695</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, pp.59, 79-80; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.27

<sup>696</sup> In November 1940 four per cent of British people surveyed saw preparations for an offensive as the most important British war problem, 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 1941, p.480. In April 1941 "preparations for an offensive" was the most important war problem for seven per cent of British people surveyed, 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 1941, p.480

<sup>697</sup> As early as 6 July 1941 an article by John Gordon in the *Sunday Express* was headlined "Where's That Second Front?", although the Gordon article was not asking for an invasion, but rather for coastal raids and increased bombing, Bell, *John Bull*, pp.52, 62. On 19 July the *New Statesman* noted that what Stalin wanted most was "a second active front", Bell, *John Bull*, pp.58-59

<sup>698</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, pp.59, 63-64. On 19 September 1941 "invading the continent" was seen by the British public as the most important war problem to be solved by the British government in the next few months, 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1941, p.678

<sup>699</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, pp.77, 80; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.38. A speech by Maisky on 25 March 1942 referred to the importance of Allied action in 1942, and although he did not actually mention creating

figures confirmed the success of this campaigning. In March and April, 67 per cent of Britons surveyed said British chances of victory would be better if the nation went on the offensive during the year. Only 10 per cent said the government should stay on the defensive, and the remainder did not know.<sup>700</sup> In April twenty per cent of Britons surveyed felt that creating a Second Front was the most important war problem facing the government, and this was the problem listed the most frequently.<sup>701</sup> On 11 May invading the Continent was again said by those surveyed to be the most important war problem facing the British government in the next few months.<sup>702</sup> British public opinion surveys of May and June asked if a 1942 invasion of the Continent, even though it might be more costly than in summer 1943, would be worth the cost. Of those asked, 49 per cent agreed, 17 per cent disagreed, and 34 per cent did not know.<sup>703</sup> In the House of Commons on 19 May the deputy leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Greenwood, summed up British public sentiment: “It is, I think, undeniable that everybody is keenly desirous to see a great Western offensive against Germany and as soon as may be.”<sup>704</sup> Table 11 below demonstrates solid British popular support for a 1942 Second Front.

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a Second Front, it could be inferred, Bell, *John Bull*, p.77; Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.269. On 23 April while in the United States Lord Beaverbrook called for Britain to attack “even recklessly” to establish “somewhere along the two thousand miles of occupied coastline a Second Front”, a speech strongly supported by the *Daily Express*, *News Chronicle* and *Daily Mirror*. After returning to Britain he made greater efforts to push a Second Front on the British government he had so recently left. In May Beaverbrook created ‘The Centre of Public Opinion’, which advocated a Second Front, Bell, *John Bull*, pp.78-79; Levering, *American Public Opinion and the Russian Alliance*, pp.64-65

<sup>700</sup> ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.489; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1109

<sup>701</sup> ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.496

<sup>702</sup> ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.489

<sup>703</sup> ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter 1942, p.660; ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.489; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1062. The surveys were from an unknown date in May, 1 June, and 6 June 1942.

<sup>704</sup> NA CAB 21/818, House of Commons Report, 19 May 1942, Col. 70

**Table 11: How could Britain best beat Germany in 1942** <sup>705</sup>

Date	Invading the continent
	%
05.42	32
16.05.42	36
08.06.42	32

Greater pressure for a Second Front was to be placed on Churchill and the government in the summer of 1942, despite prominent events in North Africa, such as the fall of Tobruk. Mass rallies held in large British cities on 21 June 1942, the anniversary of the German invasion of Russia, had a theme of support for a Second Front, and Lord Beaverbrook spoke in Birmingham to a large crowd, with Maisky speaking in London alongside Sir Stafford Cripps.<sup>706</sup> After June Lord Beaverbrook stopped campaigning for a Second Front, and this left the campaign without a real leader.<sup>707</sup> As a result some momentum was lost in campaigning, although the idea of a Second Front had already become ingrained in the minds of the British people. Towards the end of June and in the first half of July campaigning for a Second Front intensified again.<sup>708</sup> The initial success of the German summer offensive in the Soviet Union increased public demand for a Second Front, and a peak was reached amongst the British public in July and August.<sup>709</sup> Alanbrooke wrote in his diary on 1 July: “Russia, USA, and the Press, all clamouring for a ‘Western Front’, without thinking what it means, or what its implications are!”<sup>710</sup> Ambassador Maisky decided on 21 July to make extra efforts to push for a 1942 Second Front.<sup>711</sup> Public opinion polls continued to confirm the strong desire amongst the British people for significant military action in 1942. In July 62 per cent of British people surveyed agreed that the

<sup>705</sup> ‘Gallup and Fortune Polls’, *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Autumn 1942, p.496; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1109

<sup>706</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.79; Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.293, 301. Henry Channon wrote in his diary on 21 June 1942: “... the public ... rants on about a Second Front”, Channon Diary, 21 June 1942, in James (ed.), *Channon Diaries*, p.332

<sup>707</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.80. It is believed that Beaverbrook did so at the request of Churchill.

<sup>708</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, pp.81-82

<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.82-83, 86

<sup>710</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 1 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.275. Similarly, on 15 July Cuthbert Headlam wrote in his diary: “All the wild men in the House of Commons keep calling for a ‘second front’ – but they don’t tell us where it is to be or how we are going to supply our invading forces”, Headlam Diary, 15 July 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.327

<sup>711</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.291-292. He decided to ask Stalin to prod Churchill about a Second Front and convoys, and Maisky decided to take up these issues himself with MPs and editors of London papers. Stalin’s message arrived in London on 24 July 1942, Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.291-292

Allies should try to invade Europe in that year; 12 per cent said they should not, and 26 per cent did not know.<sup>712</sup>

Unknown to those campaigning for a Second Front, on 24 July the Allies had made the decision to carry out an offensive in 1942. After the decision for TORCH, Second Front campaigning continued in Britain, as did public support, although both died away in the autumn of 1942.<sup>713</sup> There was always some opposition to a Second Front, from those fearing casualties, those who remembered events like the Dunkirk evacuation, and those who disliked the groups and individuals campaigning for a Second Front.<sup>714</sup> However, the public opinion polls and other evidence show that the British people became more and more supportive of a Second Front throughout 1942 as the campaigning strengthened.

The campaign in Britain for a Second Front, conducted by an alliance of politicians, the press, communists, prominent Soviets, and the British public, was very popular, and it placed a lot of pressure on Churchill and the British government to do something positive in 1942.<sup>715</sup> Public support for a Second Front reached its peak in the summer of 1942, at the very time that the Western Allies were discussing the possibility of carrying out a military operation later in the year. The British military and political leaders, including Churchill, were well aware of the campaign, and it seems very probable that pressure from this campaign influenced Churchill to press for a 1942 military operation.

## **Conclusion**

Great pressure was placed on Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt by domestic political problems in the months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, as the military situation progressively worsened for the Allies. The British and American leaders were very aware of the extent of these problems because of the

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<sup>712</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1064

<sup>713</sup> For further details on the campaign after the TORCH decision, see: Nicolson Diary, 29 July 1942, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, p.237; Headlam Diary, 2 August 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.330; 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1943, p.330; Bell, *John Bull*, pp.59, 79, 83-84; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1064; Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp.293, 301

<sup>714</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.86

<sup>715</sup> Bell, *John Bull*, p.87

great efforts made by their governments to monitor public opinion and convey this information to those responsible for policy- and strategy-making. There were differences between the wartime domestic politics of the two nations, most notably that Churchill had less domestic political pressure placed on him because his government did not have to fear electoral backlash. However, both Roosevelt and Churchill had a common goal of maintaining public confidence in themselves and their governments, and ensuring that the public supported the way the war was being conducted.

The obvious way for Churchill and Roosevelt to remove the domestic political pressure placed on them was to carry out a successful Anglo-American offensive against Germany as soon as possible. This would improve the war situation; satisfy those calling for an offensive; focus the American public on the war with Germany; secure the positions of Roosevelt, Churchill, and their governments; and remove remaining isolationist feelings in the United States. Roosevelt had previously shown that he was willing to overrule his military men and take action to achieve political purposes, and his exhortations to General Marshall about ensuring Operation TORCH occurred before the November Congressional elections demonstrated that he believed TORCH would help solve at least one prominent domestic political issue. Churchill was also well aware of the public dissatisfaction with his government and himself in 1942, and undoubtedly wanted a military operation to improve the situation. The Allied military disasters of 1942 created a number of domestic political problems and placed considerable pressure on Churchill and Roosevelt, and this contributed to their desire to undertake a large-scale combined Anglo-American military operation in 1942.

## Chapter 4: The Possible Choices

A large-scale combined Anglo-American military operation against Germany was needed in 1942 to help the Soviet Union, improve the Western Allied war situation, boost British and American morale, and address domestic political problems in the United States and Britain. As a result, the Western Allied military leaders had to reach consensus on which operation to undertake from a number of options. There were several criteria that the first Anglo-American operation had to meet. The operation had to occur in 1942; it had to be militarily feasible and likely to succeed; it had to be acceptable to Churchill and Roosevelt; it needed to be significant; it had to be against the Germans in accordance with the Germany-first policy; it had to provide as much practical assistance to the Soviets as possible; and it had to satisfy the British and American publics. The operation that best met all of these criteria would be chosen by the American J.C.S. and British C.O.S.

### **A 1943 cross-Channel operation**

The British and American military and political leaders all agreed that a 1943 cross-Channel operation, codenamed ROUND-UP, was both militarily possible and would provide significant military assistance to the Soviet Union. Such an operation was agreed upon as Western Allied policy on a number of occasions between the Pearl Harbor attack and the eventual decision for TORCH.<sup>716</sup> However, despite consensus being reached by the British and American military leaders about ROUND-UP, domestic political pressures and the urgent need to aid the Soviets convinced Churchill and Roosevelt that the first major Anglo-American military operation had to occur in 1942. Therefore, a 1943 cross-Channel operation satisfied most of the criteria for the first major combined Western Allied operation of the war, except the key requirement imposed by both Churchill and Roosevelt that it must occur in 1942.

### **The Pacific Option**

One purely American option that briefly came to prominence in the summer of 1942 was for the United States to abandon the Germany-first policy and focus American

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<sup>716</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 18 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.303; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.33-34, 50, 53, 55; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.9

resources almost entirely on the war with Japan. If this strategy had been adopted, the first major operation involving American troops would have occurred against Japan. The Pacific option arose due to the continued British refusal to undertake a 1942 cross-Channel operation, and it had very strong support from both General Marshall and Admiral King, as well as others in the Army and Navy. However, the Pacific strategy was not adopted by the Americans primarily because of Roosevelt's strict adherence to the Germany-first policy, which had been agreed upon before American entry into the war.

As seen in Chapter 1, the Germany-first policy was established in 1940 and 1941, with official agreement being reached at the ABC-1 Anglo-American staff conversations in Washington.<sup>717</sup> It was re-affirmed at the Placentia Bay conference and ARCADIA. However, despite the earlier Western Allied agreements, the possibility of the United States turning from Germany-first to focus on the Pacific grew stronger in the summer of 1942. The impetus for a change in policy came from the U.S. Navy, and especially Admiral King, but there were some in the U.S. Army who advocated it also.<sup>718</sup> In July 1942 the Pacific strategy became a genuine option for the first American offensive of the war.

No detailed plan for the Pacific option was developed by the American military men, although some basic planning was done. On 12 July 1942 Marshall, King and Arnold told the President that there could be an advance from the South and South-West Pacific area northward along the Truk-Guam-Saipan line, and/or north-west through the Malay barrier (that is, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and the islands stretching eastward to north-west Australia, and Borneo), to the Philippines. If Russia joined the war against Japan there could also be an offensive from Siberia.<sup>719</sup> Airborne troops intended for the cross-Channel operation would instead go to the Pacific, as would three Army amphibious divisions, and 34 of the 52 Air Groups

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<sup>717</sup> Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', p.501; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.8; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.46; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.7; Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.683; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.22

<sup>718</sup> Details to be found in Chapter 2

<sup>719</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall, King & Arnold Memorandum to Roosevelt, 12 July 1942, p.1; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.272

intended for BOLERO.<sup>720</sup> Thus the Pacific option did not involve a single offensive, but rather a major shift in American strategy.

The Pacific option offered some benefits to the Western Allies, although these were primarily for the Americans. On 15 July 1942 Marshall told Secretary Stimson that focussing on the Pacific would delay an Allied landing in Europe, but it would at least see the United States going on the offensive in an important theatre.<sup>721</sup> General Marshall felt that action in the Pacific would concentrate American forces, would please the Chinese and the Pacific Fleet, and aside from BOLERO, would provide the Soviets with the most relief by precluding a Japanese attack on Siberia.<sup>722</sup> The Pacific option would satisfy the American public's desire for action against the Japanese, which was great in 1942 due to the attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>723</sup> If successful, it might even remove the Japanese threat to India.<sup>724</sup> This was one of the few benefits this course of action offered the British.

The Pacific option was not pursued primarily due to Roosevelt's insistence on supporting the Germany-first policy. However, there were other important reasons. The British were naturally very opposed to this strategy, because although it would secure some important British assets, it would not address the principal threat they faced from Germany.

The Americans never developed any proper plans for the Pacific option, and this counted against it being chosen. On 12 July 1942 the American military leaders told Roosevelt that it would take some time to develop plans for this major shift in strategy.<sup>725</sup> Without a thorough and detailed plan to present to the President, there was no chance Roosevelt would support this move, even if he had any desire to turn from the Germany-first policy.

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<sup>720</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall, King & Arnold Memorandum to Roosevelt, 12 July 1942, pp.1-2; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.272; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.74

<sup>721</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.276

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.269-270; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.68

<sup>723</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.49, 67; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.25. See Chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>724</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.273

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid.*, p.272

The Pacific option would not allow the employment of a large land army, which was one major advantage of carrying out an operation against Germany.<sup>726</sup> The U.S. Army wanted its first significant operation of the war to be a major offensive using all possible strength. This was the kind of operation advocated by U.S. Army doctrine and the American way of war, which will be outlined later, and it was felt by the Americans that such a large-scale operation was the quickest way to win the war.<sup>727</sup> The smaller-scale nature of the Pacific war meant this type of offensive could not happen against Japan.

Marshall, King and Arnold told Roosevelt on 12 July 1942 that action in the Pacific would have “little direct or immediate effect” on the British war with Germany in the Middle East.<sup>728</sup> They also noted: “Turning to the Pacific would adversely affect the United Nations’ effort on the Russian-European front”.<sup>729</sup> Such a fundamental change in strategy almost certainly did not sit well with Roosevelt, who did not want to abandon his British and Soviet Allies, and promptly rejected the proposal.<sup>730</sup> As a result, the first Anglo-American operation had to be in Europe, much to the chagrin of Admiral King, General MacArthur and many other Americans eager to take the war to Japan.

### **Bombing as a Second Front**

Another option advocated by a vocal minority of British and American airmen was increasing and intensifying the Anglo-American bomber offensive against Germany to the point where it might become a ‘Second Front’, capable of defeating the Axis by itself. This was an option that only a few military leaders saw as realistic, although there was general agreement that the bomber offensive against Germany was an important part of a war-winning strategy. In the event, both intensification of strategic bombing and TORCH occurred in 1942. The supporters of this option included some very influential figures, most notably American General Arnold and British Air

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<sup>726</sup> W.A. Jacobs, ‘Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943’, *MA*, Vol. 50, No. 3, July 1986, p.135

<sup>727</sup> Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.69; Weigley, ‘The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell’, p.46

<sup>728</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall, King & Arnold Memorandum for Roosevelt, 12 July 1942, p.3; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.273

<sup>729</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall, King & Arnold Memorandum for Roosevelt, 12 July 1942, p.3; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.272

<sup>730</sup> Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.606

Marshal Portal, and this ensured that bombing as a Second Front was given consideration at the highest levels in 1942.

After World War I a number of military theorists argued that heavy bombing was potentially war-winning.<sup>731</sup> The theorists argued that nations should carry out powerful bombing attacks with waves of heavy bombers with massed defensive armament to ward off intercepting aircraft, attacking enemy population centres and industry to completely destroy the morale of the enemy's people and government, along with its industrial capabilities.<sup>732</sup> Thus strategic bombing would render armies and navies unnecessary.<sup>733</sup> The RAF became a strong advocate of this theory of bombing being potentially war-winning, and between the wars created a large Bomber Command. The major British supporter of strategic bombardment in this time was Air Marshal Hugh Trenchard, who in the 1920s had come to emphasize the importance of an air attack aimed at destroying the enemy's morale.<sup>734</sup> Before the war the RAF insisted on committing most of its resources to Bomber Command.<sup>735</sup> The United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) also focused on heavy bombers and the strategic role of the bomber in the inter-war period, especially after the development of the B-17 "Flying Fortress" heavy bomber in the mid-1930s.<sup>736</sup> The Americans focused on unescorted daylight attacks against vital industrial targets.<sup>737</sup> According to General Arnold, the first task of the USAAF was: "bombardment; large formations of

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<sup>731</sup> Chief amongst these theorists was the Italian Giulio Douhet. Douhet's theory was not wholly original, but he was the first to put it all together, these views being widely held at the time. Another important theorist was American "Billy" Mitchell, who argued for an independent air force to win a war, Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.93; David MacIsaac, 'Voices from the Central Blue: The Air Power Theorists', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986, pp.629, 631; Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.116; Clark G. Reynolds, 'American Strategic History and Doctrines: A Reconsideration', *MA*, Vol. 39, No. 4, December 1975, p.185; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.65; Kenneth P. Werrell, 'The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II: Costs and Accomplishments', *JAH*, Vol. 73, No. 3, December 1986, p.702

<sup>732</sup> MacIsaac, 'Voices from the Central Blue', p.630; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.109; Werrell, 'The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II', p.702

<sup>733</sup> Werrell, 'The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II', p.703

<sup>734</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.67; MacIsaac, 'Voices from the Central Blue', p.633; Werrell, 'The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II', p.702

<sup>735</sup> W.A. Jacobs, 'Air Support for the British Army, 1939-1943', *MA*, Vol. 46, No. 4, December 1982, p.174; MacIsaac, 'Voices from the Central Blue', p.633

<sup>736</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.155-156; MacIsaac, 'Voices from the Central Blue', p.634. For example, the Douhet theories were taught at the Air Corps Tactical School in the 1930s, Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.157; Reynolds, 'American Strategic History and Doctrines: A Reconsideration', p.185

<sup>737</sup> Werrell, 'The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II', p.704

bombardment planes must hit the enemy before the enemy hits us”, and the fifth was “strategic precision bombing” against key targets.<sup>738</sup>

With strategic bombing so important to the USAAF and RAF, naturally there were some important advocates of bombing as a way to win the war, and these men ensured that bombing was given due consideration as a possible Anglo-American Second Front. After the war Alanbrooke stated that in 1942 many in the RAF “held the opinion that, given sufficient heavy bombers, Germany could be brought to her knees by air action alone”.<sup>739</sup> Most prominent were Charles Portal, Lord Trenchard and Arthur Harris. Arthur Harris took over Bomber Command in February 1942, and was perhaps the most vocal supporter of Bomber Command and its war-winning potential independent of other services.<sup>740</sup>

Air Marshal Portal also saw bombing as the key to defeating Germany.<sup>741</sup> On a number of occasions in 1942 Alanbrooke battled with Portal about the British air policy, with Portal arguing for “bombing Germany at the expense of everything else”.<sup>742</sup> In the United States, General Arnold felt that the Anglo-American bombing offensive “was itself, of course, a Second Front”.<sup>743</sup> In June and July 1942 General Arnold felt that “direct strategic bombing of Germany” remained “the central road to Germany’s defeat”.<sup>744</sup> Arnold and his staff fought hard to defend the value of strategic bombing against demands for air resources from the U.S. Army and Navy.<sup>745</sup> Arnold, Harris and Portal, along with Trenchard, kept up constant pressure on their fellow British and American military leaders about the importance of heavy bombing and its potential to win the war.

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<sup>738</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.290-291. The other principles including defending the United States itself and helping to maintain the American position in the Pacific.

<sup>739</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.238

<sup>740</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.98; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.110

<sup>741</sup> Jacobs, ‘Air Support for the British Army, 1939-1943’, p.175; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.37

<sup>742</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 29 September 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.325; Alanbrooke Diary, 19 October 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.331; Alanbrooke Diary, 22 October 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.332; Jacobs, ‘Air Support for the British Army, 1939-1943’, pp.176-178, 180. Alanbrooke wrote in his diary on 23 October 1942: “... the divergence between Portal’s outlook and mine is still very great. He is convinced that Germany can be defeated by bombing alone ...”, Alanbrooke Diary, 23 October 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.332

<sup>743</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.322

<sup>744</sup> *Ibid.*, p.322

<sup>745</sup> Jacobs, ‘Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943’, p.133

The RAF began a bombing campaign against Germany as soon as war broke out, and it was this campaign that some wanted to intensify. It began as a daylight campaign, but due to heavy losses the British switched to night bombing, which was less accurate, but also less costly.<sup>746</sup> Arthur Harris took over Bomber Command in February 1942, marking a new phase in the RAF bombing campaign, with concentrated attacks now carried out against German cities.<sup>747</sup> On 30 May the ‘1,000 bomber raid’ was carried out against Cologne, the first such large-scale raid on a German city, setting a precedent.<sup>748</sup> After the TORCH decision an Anglo-American bombing campaign was initiated and gradually expanded, with the existing RAF night bombing campaign strengthened by daylight American raids.<sup>749</sup>

From the earliest Anglo-American discussions about future strategy, strategic bombing was an important part of their policy for the conduct of the war against Germany. Strategic bombing was included in the British-United States Staff Conversations (ABC-1) of early 1941.<sup>750</sup> ABC-2 covered air co-operation, and emphasized production of heavy bombers.<sup>751</sup> AWPD/1, the USAAF contribution to the Victory Program, had three missions for the AAF: defending the United States; strategic defence of Pacific interests; and carrying out an air offensive against Germany from Britain.<sup>752</sup> In RAINBOW 5, the American war plan current in December 1941, strategic bombing was seen as one phase in the “weakening of the

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<sup>746</sup> Werrell, ‘The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II’, p.704

<sup>747</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 11 February 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.355; Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.262; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.153

<sup>748</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.316; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.154

<sup>749</sup> American heavy bomber units began arriving in Britain in the summer of 1942, and the first USAAF VIII Bomber Command raid occurred on 17 August 1942, Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.376; Roger Beaumont, ‘The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front’, *JCH*, Vol. 22, No. 1, January 1987. At the Casablanca conference in January 1943 day and night bombing in Western Europe was made an important priority, as Operation POINTBLANK, with “the heaviest possible bomber offensive against the German war effort”, Beaumont, ‘The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front’, p.13; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.154; Jacobs, ‘Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943’, p.137; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.112. In 1943 USAAF bomber units arrived in large numbers in Britain, beginning an ‘around-the-clock’ bomber offensive, with British bombers operating at night, and American bombers carrying out daylight missions.

<sup>750</sup> NA AIR 75/66, B.U.S.(41)32, British-United States Staff Conversations, Minutes of Conference on Tuesday, 25th March, 1941, p.4; Jacobs, ‘Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943’, p.133

<sup>751</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.48

<sup>752</sup> Jacobs, ‘Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943’, p.133; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, pp.110-113

enemy's war-making powers", preliminary to invasion, but not a substitute.<sup>753</sup> The ARCADIA conference saw strategic bombing remain an important part of Anglo-American strategy.<sup>754</sup> The paper produced at ARCADIA, W.W. 1, called for a build up of heavy bomber strength in Britain to be used against Germany.<sup>755</sup>

March and April 1942 saw bombing assume more priority in Western Allied strategy, with various proposals to make heavy bombing more decisive in defeating Germany.<sup>756</sup> On 17 April Portal wrote to Arnold accepting the idea that a "second front on land if possible but otherwise in the air will do more than anything else toward making Germany crack this winter".<sup>757</sup> However, bombing was not seriously considered as a Second Front at any of the major Anglo-American staff conferences in the summer of 1942.

Intensifying the bomber offensive offered the Western Allies a number of benefits. Notably, the bomber offensive allowed the British to show the Soviets that they were doing something positive in the war with Germany.<sup>758</sup> In 1941 the British had little else to offer the Soviets aside from bombing and aid, and Churchill emphasized the campaign to Stalin and Maisky.<sup>759</sup> In July 1942 Ambassador Maisky made a direct request to Bomber Command to attack specific targets, and this showed Soviet

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<sup>753</sup> Jacobs, 'Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943', p.133

<sup>754</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.296-297; Churchill to Roosevelt, [?] January 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.315; Marshall Memorandum, 'Notes of Meeting at the White House with the President and the British Prime Minister Presiding', 23 December 1941, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.32; Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.278; Jacobs, 'Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943', p.133

<sup>755</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 20 February 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.68

<sup>756</sup> See, for example, NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 14th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, March 31, 1942, at 2:30 P.M., pp.4-5; J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, London, 5 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.104; J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.4; Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.435; Beaumont, 'The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front', p.8; Jacobs, 'Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943', p.134

<sup>757</sup> Beaumont, 'The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front', p.7

<sup>758</sup> Beaumont, 'The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front', p.16

<sup>759</sup> See for example: Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Monsieur Stalin, Received on July 8, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.11; Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to M. Stalin, Received on July 26, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.16; Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to M. Stalin, Received on July 28, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.16; Personal Message from Prime Minister to Monsieur Stalin, Received on August 30, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.20; Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.178

interest in the bombing offensive.<sup>760</sup> In 1942 Churchill often mentioned the bombing offensive to Stalin to show what was being achieved, and what he hoped would be achieved.<sup>761</sup> In August 1942 it was Churchill's discussion of the bomber offensive that thawed relations with Stalin when meeting with him in Moscow.<sup>762</sup> Thus it seems that bombing was appreciated by the Soviets, and a very strong combined bomber offensive in 1942 aimed at destroying German cities would probably have appealed to them greatly, but it would not have been a substitute for an operation involving Anglo-American land forces, and an invasion of France in particular.

Aside from being appreciated by the Soviets, the bomber offensive was very popular with the British and American people.<sup>763</sup> For example, in the first week of May 1942 more than 100 American editorials hailed the RAF bombing campaign as vital.<sup>764</sup> General Arnold believed that the target of the 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne on 30/31 May "was as much public opinion as Cologne, with a special eye on opinion in America", and the Cologne raid, and subsequent large bombing raids on German targets, alerted Western Allied public opinion to bombing "as the Big Thing".<sup>765</sup> Public opinion figures supported Arnold's view. On 16 May thirteen per cent of British people surveyed saw bombing as the best way to beat the Germans in 1942. On 8 June this had risen to 21 per cent, showing the impact of the Cologne raid.<sup>766</sup> On 13 August, Americans were asked whether during the next two or three months the Allies should concentrate on increasing bombing raids on Germany, or whether they should try to land troops in Europe. 41 per cent said increase bombing, 39 per cent said land troops, and 20 per cent did not know.<sup>767</sup> Further public opinion figures demonstrate how much the British and Americans valued heavy bombers, and show

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<sup>760</sup> Beaumont, 'The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front', p.9

<sup>761</sup> See for example: W. Churchill to Stalin, Received on March 12, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.40-41; For Premier Stalin, News, August 13, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.60; Personal and Secret Message from the Prime Minister, Mr Winston Churchill, to Premier Stalin, Received on September 13, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.66

<sup>762</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 13 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.561; Beaumont, 'The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front', p.11; Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.432; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.112

<sup>763</sup> Beaumont, 'The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front', p.9

<sup>764</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.104

<sup>765</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.317, 375

<sup>766</sup> 'Gallup and Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Autumn 1942, p.490

<sup>767</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1068

that an increased bomber offensive in 1942 would have appealed to many Britons and Americans.<sup>768</sup>

Bombing as a Second Front had significant supporters, but the supporters were all airmen. Most importantly, Churchill and Roosevelt did not count amongst those who believed bombing alone could defeat Germany. Churchill was a strong supporter of Bomber Command, but he was not convinced that bombing by itself could win the war.<sup>769</sup> A note from Churchill attached to papers by Harris and Trenchard, who suggested in August 1942 that the bombing campaign could win the war, stated: “I do not myself adopt or endorse the views expressed”.<sup>770</sup> Churchill sent Roosevelt a copy of Harris’ paper, noting: “Out of zeal he has no doubt overstated a good case”.<sup>771</sup> Previously, in March, Churchill had told the Chief of the Air Staff (C.A.S.) that bombing would not be “decisive, but better than nothing”.<sup>772</sup> Like Churchill, Roosevelt was a strong supporter of heavy bombers and the bomber offensive. Roosevelt had been a strident supporter of heavy bombing in 1941, but in 1942 he no longer viewed it as the central method for defeating Germany.<sup>773</sup> Others were also against the bomber offensive. For example, on 11 November 1941 Alexander Cadogan of the Foreign Office noted: “*Bombing does not affect German morale: let’s get that into our heads and not waste our bombers on these raids*”.<sup>774</sup> The U.S. Navy and Admiral King were also strongly against focusing on strategic bombing operations from Britain.<sup>775</sup>

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<sup>768</sup> On 22 August 1942 30 per cent of Britons surveyed felt that Germany could be defeated by bombing alone, 54 per cent said it could not, and sixteen per cent did not know, Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1068. On 6 October 1942 Americans were asked if Germany could be beaten by increasing air attacks, or if an invasion was needed. 60 per cent said an invasion was necessary, 28 per cent said air attacks, and twelve per cent did not know, Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1068

<sup>769</sup> Baxter, ‘Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?’ p.9. In July 1941 Churchill had stated that with an intensified bombing campaign kept up “year after year”, he believed the Nazi regime could be destroyed by the British, or “torn to pieces by the German people themselves”, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.67. This was hardly resounding support for bombing being a war winning second front, but rather a suggestion that bombing could eventually weaken Germany.

<sup>770</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.496

<sup>771</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 September 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.597

<sup>772</sup> Beaumont, ‘The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front’, p.6

<sup>773</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.105

<sup>774</sup> Cadogan Diary, 11 November 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.412

<sup>775</sup> Jacobs, ‘Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943’, p.135

Neither General Marshall nor General Alanbrooke thought that bombing alone would defeat Germany. Alanbrooke wrote in his diary: “I am only prepared to look on the bombing of Germany as one of the many ways by which we shall bring Germany to her knees”.<sup>776</sup> General Marshall felt that bombing might defeat “a trembling people, like in Italy”, but not Germany or Japan.<sup>777</sup> After the war he stated: “I never had any idea that we could settle the question in Europe by purely air offensive ... You’ve got to get down and hold things. You can’t treat them purely by air”.<sup>778</sup> The lack of support from Churchill, Roosevelt and other leading American and British political and military figures was a vital reason this option was rejected. There were good reasons for this lack of support for bombing as a Second Front.

Early RAF reports greatly overestimated the effects of Bomber Command raids. However, a study of August 1941 found that only one in five bomber sorties reached within five miles of the intended target.<sup>779</sup> A May 1942 report on bombing accuracy, analysing post-strike photos, found that less than a quarter of RAF bombs dropped landed within eight kilometres of their target, and only 30 per cent in partly built-up areas.<sup>780</sup> In a letter to General Marshall on 29 October 1942 General Eisenhower noted the shortcomings of daylight bombing at that time, and especially the problems with bombing accuracy caused by bad weather.<sup>781</sup> The poor bombing results of 1941 and 1942 indicated that intensifying the bombing offensive probably would not have worked as a way to defeat Germany by itself. Even the combined Anglo-American bomber offensive of 1943, Operation POINTBLANK, did not increase the likelihood of bombers winning the war single-handedly, because by the end of the year POINTBLANK was considered a costly failure.<sup>782</sup> Losses were heavy, targets were difficult to find, German morale was not affected as much as had been hoped, and the Germans had become adept at repairing bombed targets, and dispersing potential

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<sup>776</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 22 October 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.332. Similarly, Alanbrooke wrote on 23 October 1942: “... I consider that bombing can only be one of the contributory causes towards achieving that end”, Alanbrooke Diary, 23 October 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.332

<sup>777</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.615

<sup>778</sup> *Ibid.*, p.290

<sup>779</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.110. Werrell says 22 per cent overall, and only seven per cent for heavily defended targets like those in the Ruhr Valley, Werrell, ‘The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II’, p.704

<sup>780</sup> Beaumont, ‘The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front’, p.7

<sup>781</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 29 October 1942, in Hobbs (ed.), *Dear General*, p.54

<sup>782</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.113

targets.<sup>783</sup> The combined bomber offensive of 1943 demonstrated that a bombing offensive was no replacement for an invasion, despite the beliefs of some prominent British and American airmen.

This option would only achieve success over the long-term, not in the short-term. This was a serious problem given the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt for both action and success in 1942. The British J.S.M. stated that the “effect of a sustained night offensive was great, but comparatively slow acting and therefore not to be relied upon to prevent the enemy from concentrating temporarily superior forces in South Russia and the Middle East if they so determined”.<sup>784</sup> Field Marshal Dill commented to General Marshall on 15 March 1942: “The long-term growing effect of air offensive is vastly important, but that is not the immediate point”.<sup>785</sup> Arnold admitted in his memoirs that the Allied strategic bombing of Germany could not have begun to achieve results prior to when it did, in late 1943, and the bomber offensive only got into full stride in 1944.<sup>786</sup>

Significantly, in 1942 the bomber offensive would do little to assist the Soviet Union militarily. The British J.P.S. noted on 7 March: “... our Middle East operations and our air offensive are, to a limited extent, making Germany divert forces that might otherwise be thrown in to the Russian campaign. This is not enough”.<sup>787</sup> Field Marshal Dill wrote to the Prime Minister the following week:

I doubt whether any air offensive we can develop from United Kingdom within the next few months will divert enough German forces to have

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<sup>783</sup> Werrell, ‘The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II’, p.705

<sup>784</sup> J.S.M, Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, London, 5 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.104

<sup>785</sup> J.S.M, Washington, to the War Cabinet Offices, 15 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.121

<sup>786</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.304; Beaumont, ‘The Combined Bomber Offensive as a Second Front’, p.14. Losses to German fighter and ground defences were heavy in 1943, and it was not until long-range single engine escort fighters arrived, in the form of the P-51 Mustang, that operations over central Germany could be carried out with acceptable losses, Alfred Goldberg, ‘Air campaign OVERLORD: To D-Day’, in *D-Day: The Normandy Invasion in Retrospect*, Lawrence, 1971, pp.58-59; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.113; Werrell, ‘The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II’, p.706. Even then, the bombers did not come close to bringing German industry to a halt, nor did they destroy German morale.

<sup>787</sup> NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 243, ‘Offensive Operations’, 7th March, 1942, p.1

any decisive effect on the enemy offensive against Russia and the Middle East Command.<sup>788</sup>

Given the great importance of assisting the Soviet Union, this was another major reason why this option was not pursued.

Intensifying the Anglo-American bomber offensive to the point where it could defeat Germany was advocated by some British and American airmen as a 1942 Second Front. However, this possibility was not adopted for a number of important reasons. Most notably, it lacked support from Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt, General Alanbrooke, and General Marshall. Just as importantly, it would not have provided immediate practical support to the Soviet Union in the critical months of summer and autumn 1942. Thus the bombing campaign could not have been a Second Front in its own right.

### **An Operation to the Iberian Peninsula**

One potential military operation given only minor consideration by the British and Americans as a potential Second Front was an Anglo-American landing on the Iberian peninsula to secure Spain and Portugal. An operation to the Iberian peninsula was both possible and potentially successful in 1942, and would have been welcomed by the Soviets, and by the British and American publics, but there were good reasons it was not selected.

Occupying the Iberian peninsula was a realistic possibility. The Portuguese, as a traditional British ally, would probably have provided as much support as possible, and it is likely they would have welcomed Anglo-American forces, so long as the Allies were able to promise them support against German retaliation.<sup>789</sup> The Spanish under Franco were trying to avoid entanglement in the conflict on either side, and the Spanish military was very weak, so Spain would have provided little resistance to a landing.<sup>790</sup> German reaction to an Allied military presence in Spain or Portugal would

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<sup>788</sup> J.S.M, Washington, to the War Cabinet Offices, 15 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.121

<sup>789</sup> A report by the British J.P.S. on 1 October 1942 noted: "Portuguese hostility is very unlikely", NA AIR 20/2507, J.P.(42) 855, 1 October 1942, p.2

<sup>790</sup> Donald S. Detwiler, 'Spain and the Axis during World War II', *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 1971, p.49

have been slow, with Vichy France to be occupied first, then movement through Spain being delayed by the poor road and rail system. Meanwhile the Allies would be able to establish themselves ashore, ready to exploit their landings further inland.

There were a number of benefits offered by Western Allied occupation of the Iberian peninsula. For example, it would have provided valuable air bases and allowed easier access to targets in Europe and the Mediterranean. Greater air coverage could have been provided by British and American aircraft to Atlantic convoys.<sup>791</sup> Anglo-American occupation of Spain and Portugal would have meant that a Western Allied army could be based on continental Europe, poised to move into occupied France, from where it could threaten Germany directly.<sup>792</sup> Build-up of forces would not have entailed a sophisticated or complicated route. Ships could sail to Portuguese ports directly from the United States or Britain. The Americans were always fearful of a German push through Spain to North-West Africa, and this operation would have removed that fear.<sup>793</sup> Gibraltar was overlooked by Spanish military forces, so this operation could secure it, ensuring that the western end of the Mediterranean would always be open to Allied shipping. Supplying Malta would become a much less difficult task, allowing that small island to become an offensive asset once more. With Spain occupied, Spanish Morocco would probably be secured more easily, meaning that the Straits of Gibraltar were completely in Allied hands. Sending troops to the Iberian peninsula would probably create one new ally, Portugal. Faced by a full-strength Anglo-American army, navy and air force, the Spanish would possibly also be inclined to join them. The Iberian peninsula also provided important resources, which could be secured. In June 1941 Spain supplied Britain with 66,000 tons of iron ore monthly, and if these supplies were lost armament production would be very seriously affected.<sup>794</sup> Other important resources from Spain and Portugal included cork, potash, wolfram and pyrites.<sup>795</sup> This operation could secure these valuable resources.

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<sup>791</sup> NARA RG 218, Leahy Files, Box 10, Leahy Memorandum for Roosevelt, 'Operations to Assist Portugal', June 1943, p.2

<sup>792</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, p.3. Marshall mentioned the possibility of "limited attacks against the Germans in Occupied France".

<sup>793</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.612

<sup>794</sup> NA ADM 116/4420, 'Proposed alternative arrangements to be made in the event of iron ore supplies from Pepel (Sierra Leone) and South Spain being cut off', p.1

<sup>795</sup> NA ADM 116/4420, 'Memorandum', 14 June 1941, p.1

However, occupation of the peninsula did not progress beyond the initial concept stage for a variety of reasons. There was the major issue of invading a neutral state, although technically neutral territory was invaded in TORCH. An operation on the Iberian peninsula would probably require an invitation into French North Africa, so that forces could be built up there, and consequently moved to Spain and Portugal.<sup>796</sup> However easy the landing and establishment of bases might be, hereafter an operation on the Iberian peninsula would be logistically very difficult because of the rugged terrain and poor communications there.<sup>797</sup> Significantly, the J.S.M. noted on 1 April 1942: "... a comparatively small diversion of German land and air strength could hold our advance".<sup>798</sup> Furthermore, the J.S.M. believed that there were not enough shipping resources to move large forces to North-West Africa, which was considered an essential prelude to an operation to the Iberian peninsula. As a result the J.S.M. concluded: "This offensive is therefore impracticable during 1942".<sup>799</sup>

#### **Atlantic Islands operations, 1942**

While an operation to the Iberian peninsula was quickly dismissed by the Western Allies, there were various British and American plans for operations to occupy the Atlantic islands, including the Azores, Canaries and Cape Verde Islands. Plans had first been developed in 1940, and were given serious consideration over the next few years, including 1942. They received most consideration in the summer of 1941, as well as in the first two months of 1942, and this was primarily because of the benefits occupation could provide to the Allies in the vital Battle of the Atlantic.

Occupying some or all of the Atlantic Islands would be very beneficial to the Western Allies for a number of reasons. Most notably, the Atlantic Islands would provide a base for long-range anti-submarine aircraft, and Allied anti-submarine vessels,

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<sup>796</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.6

<sup>797</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, p.3; NARA RG 219, Leahy Files, Box 10, Leahy Memorandum for Roosevelt, 'Operations to Assist Portugal', 'Appendix "B"', 'Brief of Outline Plan for a Major Campaign in the Iberian Peninsula', June 1943, p.2

<sup>798</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.6

<sup>799</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.6

allowing more patrols in the danger areas where the German submarines operated.<sup>800</sup> On 28 January 1942 the J.P.S. noted that the British might be forced to take the Azores due to the German submarine situation.<sup>801</sup> The Azores could also be very important in transferring land-based aircraft from North America to Britain.<sup>802</sup> Capturing the Atlantic Islands would also remove Western Allied concerns about the Germans occupying them. Roosevelt had stated in his 27 May 1941 fireside chat to the American people: "... the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands, if occupied or controlled by Germany, would directly endanger the freedom of the Atlantic", with their potential as a base for German submarines, ships and aircraft.<sup>803</sup> Roosevelt was always concerned about the points from which Germany might try to cross the Atlantic to the Americas, and this included Atlantic islands like the Cape Verdes, Canaries and Azores.<sup>804</sup> Roosevelt warned the American people that if Germany occupied the Atlantic islands it would be a threat to "our own American physical safety".<sup>805</sup> This was particularly presented as an issue to the American people in the summer of 1941.

One very attractive aspect of these operations was that they were likely to succeed. Occupation of any of the Atlantic Islands was likely to meet only minor resistance. There were no German or Italian forces based on what was either Spanish or Portuguese territory, and only a few generally obsolete Portuguese and Spanish aircraft were present. In the Azores there were eighteen biplane fighters, three reconnaissance flying boats, and fourteen infantry battalions with 26 field guns.<sup>806</sup> On Madeira there were only three infantry battalions and no air forces.<sup>807</sup> On Grand Canary in May 1942 there was a garrison of 18,400, and eight field guns, along with just 27 fighter aircraft, six bombers and three flying boats.<sup>808</sup> Against small and weak forces like these, any Western Allied operation to the Atlantic Islands was likely to succeed.

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<sup>800</sup> NA CAB 84/42, J.P.(42) 195, 'Operation "FLASHLIGHT"', 28th February, 1942, pp.1-2, 4

<sup>801</sup> NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 83, 'Operations "GYMNAST", "PILGRIM" and "BONUS"', 28 January, 1942, p.3

<sup>802</sup> Kennan, *Memoirs*, p.145

<sup>803</sup> Buhite & Levy (eds), *FDR's Fireside Chats*, p.182

<sup>804</sup> Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.69

<sup>805</sup> Buhite & Levy (eds), *FDR's Fireside Chats*, p.182

<sup>806</sup> NA CAB 84/42, J.P.(42) 195, 'Operation "FLASHLIGHT"', 28th February, 1942, p.6

<sup>807</sup> NA CAB 84/42, J.P.(42) 195, 'Operation "FLASHLIGHT"', 28th February, 1942, p.6

<sup>808</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 591, 'The Canary Islands', July 3, 1942, pp.9-11

However, the Atlantic Island operations failed to meet the criterion of being significant enough. None of the Atlantic Island operations would have been on a large scale. For example, the British plan for Operation PILGRIM to the Canaries estimated that only a small British force was needed to seize Grand Canary.<sup>809</sup> The Americans had estimated in October 1940 that only 6,371 personnel would be needed to secure the Azores, and 10,299 to subsequently defend them.<sup>810</sup> In January 1941 the Americans had estimated 1,769 men could capture the Cape Verde Islands, and 2,980 could defend them.<sup>811</sup> Compared to a cross-Channel operation or an invasion of North-West Africa, this was a very small commitment for the British and Americans and unlikely to impress the Soviets, or the British and American publics.

Operations to the Atlantic Islands offered the Western Allies a number of military benefits, but they were not significant enough for Roosevelt or Churchill when compared to large-scale operations like an invasion of France. Also, occupying the Atlantic Islands would do little to help the Soviet Union by diverting German forces from the Eastern Front. These two reasons alone ensured that occupation of the Atlantic Islands would not become the 1942 Second Front, but there were others.

For example, in summer 1941 the American military ruled out an Atlantic Islands operation due to lack of resources.<sup>812</sup> This situation did not change in 1942. Lack of shipping in early 1942 counted against this option. On 28 January the J.P.S. noted that due to naval, air and anti-aircraft forces being stretched to the limits, no additional commitments should be undertaken, including PILGRIM, an operation to the Canaries.<sup>813</sup> In addition, the Atlantic Islands were neutral territory. In Churchill's note on strategy to Roosevelt in December 1941, he wrote that no Atlantic Islands operation could occur until Spain was invaded by the Germans, or the Spaniards gave

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<sup>809</sup> NA ADM 116/4476, 'Operation "Pilgrim", General Outline of Operations', 20th September 1941, p.1, 4, 5

<sup>810</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 39, 'A Study of the Capture and Defense of the Azores', 18 October 1940, Summary, pp.3-4, 7

<sup>811</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 40, 'A Study of the Capture and Defense of the Cape Verde Islands', 22 January 1941, p.7

<sup>812</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.56

<sup>813</sup> NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 83, 'Operations "GYMNAST", "PILGRIM" and "BONUS"', 28 January, 1942, p.1

passage to the Germans.<sup>814</sup> If the Western Allies attacked the Canaries without Germany attacking Spain, there would probably be Spanish resistance. Also, there would probably be Spanish retaliation against Gibraltar.<sup>815</sup> These various reasons all counted against an Anglo-American operation to the Atlantic Islands.

### **Anglo-American air or ground forces to the Soviet Union, 1942**

In 1942 there were a number of Western Allied proposals to send air and land forces to the Soviet Union to fight alongside Russian troops. As was seen in Chapter 2, keeping the Soviet Union in the war was an integral reason for a major Anglo-American operation in 1942, and putting Western Allied troops or aircraft there was the most direct way to help. Serious discussion of this option began soon after the German invasion, and continued throughout 1942. One of these plans, Operation VELVET, the dispatch of an Anglo-American air force to the Caucasus in 1942, came close to occurring, while other options, such as dispatching RAF units to northern Russia, actually did happen, although only on a small scale. Sending forces to the Soviet Union, especially air forces, was another smaller option that could occur at the same time as a more significant Second Front.

Sending Anglo-American land and air forces to the Soviet Union offered many benefits. One important benefit of an Anglo-American air force in the Caucasus was that it would help secure Persian oil.<sup>816</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, this was very important to the British. Churchill told Roosevelt that a Western Allied air force in the Caucasus would “form the advance shield of all our interests in Persia and Abadan”.<sup>817</sup> The J.P.S. also emphasized this benefit in its 29 November 1941 report on this possibility.<sup>818</sup>

Sending Anglo-American ground or air units to the Soviet Union would be one of the best ways to provide clear and obvious support to the Soviets, and would solidify the

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<sup>814</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.298

<sup>815</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 591, ‘The Canary Islands’, July 3, 1942, pp.5, 6

<sup>816</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.149

<sup>817</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 30 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.579

<sup>818</sup> NA CAB 84/37, J.P.(41) 1016, ‘Offer of Assistance to Russians in Caucasia’, 29th November, 1941, p.2

alliance.<sup>819</sup> In June 1942 Hopkins told Dill that Roosevelt liked the idea of offering U.S. air forces as a way to send direct help to the Soviet Union.<sup>820</sup> Churchill told Roosevelt in July that sending Allied air forces to southern Russia would be “something solid to offer Stalin”.<sup>821</sup> Roosevelt replied: “I have a feeling it would mean a great deal to the Russian people if they knew some of our air force was fighting with them in a very direct manner”.<sup>822</sup> One aim of the British squadrons sent to the Soviet Union in September 1941 was to give encouragement to the Russians by their physical presence.<sup>823</sup> On 30 August 1942 Churchill noted that the “moral effect of comradeship with the Russians” of an Anglo-American air force in the Caucasus would “be out of all proportion to the forces employed”.<sup>824</sup> Roosevelt saw sending an air force to southern Russia as a good way to assist the Soviet Union militarily, and told Churchill: “The Russian front is today our greatest reliance and we simply must find a direct manner in which to help them other than our diminishing supplies”.<sup>825</sup> This evidence suggests that Churchill and Roosevelt recognized the great potential value to the Grand Alliance of sending Anglo-American forces to the Soviet Union. From the early months of the war Stalin also showed an interest in Anglo-American forces being based on the Eastern Front.<sup>826</sup> It would not be a Second Front, but it seems likely he and the Soviets would have appreciated such an operation.

Militarily this option offered some benefits for the Allies. For example, sending air forces to southern Russia would bolster the Soviet military, by strengthening Soviet air power.<sup>827</sup> It would also wear down the *Luftwaffe*, as Churchill noted to Roosevelt:

As you know, I am very keen on this project because it will bring about more hard fighting between the Anglo-American air power and the

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<sup>819</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.145

<sup>820</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.S.M. 271, From J.S.M. Washington to Chiefs of Staff, London, 15 June, 1942, p.1

<sup>821</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 27 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.543

<sup>822</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 29 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.545

<sup>823</sup> Hanak, ‘Sir Stafford Cripps as Ambassador in Moscow, 1941-1942’, p.336

<sup>824</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 30 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.579

<sup>825</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 5 October 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.616

<sup>826</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.145

<sup>827</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 30 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.579; Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, pp.145, 149

Huns, all of which aids the gaining of mastery in the air under more fertile conditions than looking for trouble over the Pas de Calais.<sup>828</sup>

After the British were forced to cancel supply convoys to the Soviet Union in late-September 1942, Roosevelt and Hopkins wanted to offer an air force for the Eastern Front, to lessen the blow of this announcement.<sup>829</sup> Churchill had felt the same in July 1942.<sup>830</sup> On 14 September Churchill told Roosevelt: “Should the decision be adverse to PQ nineteen [an Arctic convoy] you will have to help me with Stalin, and here again the offer of air support on the Russian Southern Flank may be important”.<sup>831</sup>

There were various reasons why no American or British land or air forces were sent to the Soviet Union in 1942. Due to the very poor Western Allied military situation in the months after Pearl Harbor, British and American forces could not be spared for Russia. The situation in the Pacific and Middle East required most available troops and aircraft. On 5 March 1942 Churchill told Roosevelt: “You will realize what has happened to the army we had hoped to gather on the Levant-Caspian front, and how it has nearly all been drawn off to India and Australia”.<sup>832</sup> In December 1941 it was noted that deploying British ground forces to northern Russia would take up too much shipping.<sup>833</sup>

Another major problem was lack of co-operation from the Soviets, as was seen most notably with Operation VELVET, where they showed no great urgency and offered little assistance to the personnel sent to the Soviet Union to organize the operation.<sup>834</sup> The Soviets had not publicized the presence of RAF squadrons at Murmansk in late-1941.<sup>835</sup> If this was also the case with a larger Western Allied air force in the Soviet Union, it would defeat the purpose of providing a boost to Soviet morale.

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<sup>828</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 13 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.562; Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.149

<sup>829</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, pp.145, 151

<sup>830</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 14 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.531

<sup>831</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 14 September 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.595

<sup>832</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 5 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.382

<sup>833</sup> NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1025, ‘Combined Strategy with Russia – Draft Aide Memoire’, 2nd December, 1941, p.6

<sup>834</sup> Julian, ‘Operations at the Margin’, p.629; Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, pp.148-150

<sup>835</sup> Hanak, ‘Sir Stafford Cripps as Ambassador in Moscow, 1941-1942’, pp.336-337

Some of the proposals to send Western Allied forces to the Soviet Union could occur in 1942, but others could not. For example, Operation VELVET could not occur in 1942, which eliminated it as an alternative to TORCH, although it could still have been a useful adjunct. It would take two months from the decision for VELVET until the air forces reached the Eastern Front.<sup>836</sup> The earliest it could occur was mid-January 1943, and bad weather would limit operations until March 1943.<sup>837</sup> Bad weather over the winter of 1942 and 1943 would allow only a few months of continuous air operations.<sup>838</sup> A related problem was that British ground forces could not be sent to northern Russia because none were Arctic trained.<sup>839</sup>

Reinforcing the Soviets would not have been as large an operation as an invasion of North-West Africa or France. This was particularly so if only air forces were dispatched. For Roosevelt, a 1942 Second Front needed to involve the U.S. Army fighting the Germans. The scale of forces sent to Russia would be limited, so it is doubtful that the operation would have been significant enough to the Soviets.<sup>840</sup> In September 1941 Churchill told Ambassador Cripps that two British divisions to the Caucasus or north of the Caspian would “be only a drop in the bucket”.<sup>841</sup> His point was very true considering the scale of fighting on the Eastern Front.

The U.S. Army’s intense dislike of dispersing forces counted against Operation VELVET and other schemes to send forces to the Soviet Union. In late-August 1942 Marshall advised Roosevelt against sending an American air force to the Caucasus, noting that it would be a diversion from other more important operations.<sup>842</sup> On 18 September Marshall told Roosevelt he was even more strongly opposed to VELVET,

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<sup>836</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 704, ‘Air Assistance to Russia on the Southern Front’, 29th July, 1942, p.2

<sup>837</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.383

<sup>838</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.150

<sup>839</sup> NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1025, ‘Combined Strategy with Russia – Draft Aide Memoire’, 2nd December, 1941, p.6

<sup>840</sup> On 30 August 1942 Churchill mentioned the following force: eight short range British fighter squadrons, one long range British fighter squadron, three light British bomber squadrons, two medium British bomber squadrons, one American heavy bombardment group, and maybe later one American general reconnaissance squadron, as well as at least one American transport group. Most of this force was from Egypt, Most Secret and Personal Message from the Prime Minister, Mr Winston Churchill, to Premier Stalin, Received on October 9, 1942, in *Stalin’s Correspondence*, I, p.71; Churchill to Roosevelt, 30 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.580

<sup>841</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.21

<sup>842</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.150

noting that the aircraft could be better used elsewhere. He said it should become a strictly British undertaking.<sup>843</sup> Sending American troops would have been equally disliked by the U.S. Army.

Another important factor against this option, recognized by both the British and Americans, was that it would impact adversely on supplies to Russia. The Anglo-American air force or land force would need to be supplied via Iran, so this would reduce the amount of Lend-Lease supplies that were reaching the Soviet Union via that route.<sup>844</sup> On 22 November 1941 Churchill informed Stalin that due to limited shipping, the Soviet leader would have to choose between troops and supplies.<sup>845</sup> Finally, there were the immense logistical difficulties that would be created by placing British and American troops in the Soviet Union. A very long supply line would be needed, stretching from the United States and Britain to the Middle East, and then to the troops in Russia. With the shipping shortages of 1942 this was unacceptable to the Western Allies.

In summary, various Western Allied plans to send air and land forces to the Soviet Union were considered in 1941 and 1942 as a way to directly support the Soviets in their struggle with Germany. These operations were feasible; some could occur in 1942; they were likely to succeed; but they were not accepted as significant enough by Churchill and Roosevelt. Operation VELVET came the closest to occurring, but it faced the problems common to all other plans to send Anglo-American forces to Russia, namely lack of Soviet co-operation, the difficulties of supplying Anglo-American forces in the Soviet Union, objections from the Americans, the need for the Western Allies to focus on other fronts, and the fact that although Anglo-American forces operating on the Eastern Front would be welcomed by the Soviets, it would not be as significant as a landing by an Anglo-American Army in Norway, France, or North-West Africa.

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<sup>843</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 24 September 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.607; Lukas, 'The Velvet Project', p.150

<sup>844</sup> NA CAB 84/37, J.P.(41) 1016, 'Offer of Assistance to Russians in Caucasia', 29th November, 1941, p.4; NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 608, 'Employment of U.S. Forces', 17th June, 1942, p.3; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.383; Julian, 'Operations at the Margin', p.629; Lukas, 'The Velvet Project', p.150

<sup>845</sup> W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Received on November 22, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.34-35

With the rejection of the proposals discussed above, the Western Allies were left with four serious options to choose from, these being: a 1942 cross-Channel operation (Operation SLEDGEHAMMER); an invasion of Norway (Operation JUPITER); sending U.S. Army forces to the Middle East; and an invasion of North-West Africa (Operations GYMNAST and SUPERGYMNAST, and later TORCH).

### **An Invasion of Norway in 1942**

An Anglo-American invasion of Norway was an operation advocated primarily by the British, but Stalin at times also showed enthusiasm for such an operation. Norway had been an important part of British thinking since it was conquered by Germany between April and June 1940. Churchill had great interest in such an operation, and he pushed strongly for it in 1942, despite the protests of his military men that it was militarily unfeasible.

A 1942 invasion of Norway was to be on a reasonably large scale, and was planned for the autumn, when conditions would be best. It could not occur during the long summer days due to the threat posed by German aircraft. On 25 July Canadian General Andrew McNaughton asked for five divisions, twenty squadrons and a large fleet to undertake the operation.<sup>846</sup> Churchill had previously considered a much smaller one division landing in the Petsamo area.<sup>847</sup> In August 1942 he mentioned using two divisions, and Stalin offered three for the operation.<sup>848</sup> Thus an invasion of Norway would almost be on par with a 1942 cross-Channel operation in terms of size.

There were some definite advantages that could be secured by an invasion of Norway. One significant benefit was that it would allow the British and Americans to carry out a combined operation with the Soviets, in an area of mutual interest. Scandinavia was one of the few areas where troops of the Grand Alliance could fight alongside each

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<sup>846</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 25 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.285

<sup>847</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.4

<sup>848</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 22 September 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.602

other. Stalin and the Soviets showed an interest in such a joint operation on a number of occasions in 1941 and 1942.<sup>849</sup>

Norway was strategically very important, particularly for the maritime war, so capturing it would be very beneficial to the Western Allies. Norway was an important base for German surface ships, and it also provided vital U-boat bases. Airfields and ports in Norway were also essential to attack Allied supply convoys sailing to north Russian ports via the Arctic Sea. Securing Norway would make it easier for the Western Allies to supply the Russians via the northern convoy route, and avoid disasters like convoy PQ-17. Churchill told Roosevelt of this benefit on a number of occasions.<sup>850</sup> From northern Norway *Luftwaffe* operations could also be flown against targets in northern Russia, including the important port of Murmansk.

Invading Norway would help lessen the impact on the Soviets of cancelling the costly Arctic convoys. Churchill recognized this in a message to Roosevelt, when he said: “It seems to me that simply to tell [Stalin] now that no more PQ’s till 1943 is a great danger, and I therefore wish to open staff conversation on JUPITER under all necessary reserves”.<sup>851</sup>

Occupying Norway would provide Allied access to important resources. Neighbouring Sweden was resource rich, providing Germany with much iron ore.<sup>852</sup> The other half of German iron supplies were lost when war broke out and the British blockade of Germany began, although the capture of France in June 1940 lessened the importance of the Swedish iron ore fields to Germany.<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> For example, on 20 June 1942 Stalin agreed with Churchill about the desirability of an Anglo-Soviet operation in northern Norway, Message for the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, from J.V. Stalin, Sent on June 20, 1942, in *Stalin’s Correspondence*, I, p.51

<sup>850</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.494; Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.521; Churchill to Roosevelt, 18 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.571; Kitchen, ‘Churchill and the Soviet Union’, p.424

<sup>851</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 22 September 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.603

<sup>852</sup> Donal J. Sexton, ‘Phantoms of the North: British Deceptions in Scandinavia, 1941-1944’, *MA*, Vol. 47, No. 3, October 1983, p.109. In the 1930s twenty million tons of iron ore used by the German steel industry came from Sweden, M. Gunnar Hagglof, ‘A Test of Neutrality: Sweden in the Second World War’, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs)*, Vol. 36, No. 2, April 1960, p.154

<sup>853</sup> M. Gunnar Hagglof, ‘A Test of Neutrality’, pp.154, 162

An invasion of Norway was a significant 1942 operation against Germany that would please Churchill and the Soviets. However, a number of issues combined to prevent it from being chosen. Most significantly, a workable plan was never created because Operation JUPITER was probably never feasible. A strong German army and air force defended Norway, and provided a major threat to any Allied landing. Such a strong force was based there due partly to Hitler's concern about an Allied landing.<sup>854</sup> He became particularly concerned about Norway in autumn 1941.<sup>855</sup> As a result, he increased troop numbers there from 150,000 to 250,000 in the first six months of 1942, and major warships were also dispatched to Norway.<sup>856</sup> The British J.S.M. in Washington concluded on 1 April 1942 that an invasion of Norway could only occur when the German garrison was much weaker.<sup>857</sup>

The major problem identified in all appreciations of this operation was the lack of air cover for the initial landing.<sup>858</sup> Churchill himself admitted this problem to Roosevelt on 8 July: "The difficulties are great owing to the danger of shore based aircraft attack upon our ships".<sup>859</sup> Previously the J.P.S. had reported that even if Norwegian air bases were seized, which would be difficult, it was very unlikely they could be held through the winter.<sup>860</sup> The operation would secure two important air bases in northern Norway, but the Germans had developed others, which could still attack convoys to Russia.<sup>861</sup> Also, the Germans could damage or destroy the airfields prior to them being captured by the Allies, meaning land-based air cover might be impossible to provide.<sup>862</sup>

Throughout 1942 Norway was home to a mix of *Luftwaffe* fighter, bomber and maritime units, including the *Luftwaffe* torpedo bomber units. These units would have

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<sup>854</sup> Sexton, 'Phantoms of the North', p.109. Hitler viewed Norway as a vital region in the war, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.82

<sup>855</sup> M. Gunnar Hagglof, 'A Test of Neutrality', p.163

<sup>856</sup> Sexton, 'Phantoms of the North', p.110

<sup>857</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.7

<sup>858</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, pp.3, 5; NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 588, 'Operation "VICEROY"', 9th June, 1942, p.8; Alanbrooke Diary, 3 October 1941, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.187; Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', pp.610-611

<sup>859</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.521

<sup>860</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 574, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 5 June, 1942, p.1

<sup>861</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.1

<sup>862</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.4

been a serious threat to an invasion force lacking adequate aerial protection. Churchill's minute on 2 June noted that there were 70 German bombers and 100 fighters on two airfields in Norway, and 10,000 to 12,000 "effective fighting men".<sup>863</sup> The J.P.S. estimated that the number of German aircraft opposing a landing could greatly increase in three days, from 350 to 550.<sup>864</sup> In northern Norway there were two mountain divisions fighting the Russians near Murmansk, one mountain division and one infantry division immediately available for operations in the Pestamo-Banak area, and one infantry division in the Narvik-Tromso area.<sup>865</sup> Within a month three divisions could reinforce these.<sup>866</sup> Thus an Allied operation would face very strong resistance from both land and air forces. Additionally, the Germans had mountain troops experienced in winter conditions, but the British did not.<sup>867</sup> It would be very difficult to extend operations after landing in northern Norway, with only one road from Banak to Narvik, so more landings would be needed to capture more southerly locations.<sup>868</sup> The nature of Norway made any large-scale operation there difficult, with only limited flat terrain near the coast.

In 1941 and 1942 JUPITER was considered primarily a British operation with British forces, and was of little significance to the Americans. They paid little attention to such an undertaking, and never treated it as a serious alternative to SLEDGEHAMMER, TORCH, or other possible 1942 operations. General Marshall and Admiral King simply saw this operation as dispersing American troops on the periphery.<sup>869</sup> A message from Roosevelt in September intended for Churchill but never sent, drafted by Marshall and King, noted that there would be "neither shipping nor suitably trained and equipped military forces available from the U.S. for the JUPITER operation within next few months" after TORCH and the Pacific.<sup>870</sup> This summed up the dismissive American attitude to an invasion of Norway.

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<sup>863</sup> NA CAB 84/46, C.O.S.(42) 155, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 2nd June, 1942, p.1

<sup>864</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 574, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 5th June, 1942, p.7

<sup>865</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.2

<sup>866</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.3

<sup>867</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.2

<sup>868</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.4

<sup>869</sup> Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.608; Roosevelt to Churchill, undated, not sent, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.610-611

<sup>870</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, undated, not sent, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.609

Another disadvantage was that this operation could not threaten Germany itself.<sup>871</sup> The J.P.S. noted on 7 June 1942: "... as a 'Second Front', operations in Northern Norway could not have more than a limited military value, since there would be no immediate threat to an objective vital to the Germans".<sup>872</sup> In addition, large German forces could not be engaged by this operation.<sup>873</sup>

Lack of shipping, a problem common to all 1942 operations, also counted against an invasion of Norway. Admiral Pound told Churchill at the C.O.S. meeting on 27 May that a Norway operation would probably take up all escort forces in the Western approaches.<sup>874</sup> A J.P.S. report from 5 June found that a Norway operation would require too many naval forces from elsewhere.<sup>875</sup> Another related problem was that this concentration of shipping in coastal waters would provide an excellent target for the strong *Luftwaffe* anti-shipping forces based in Norway.

An invasion of Norway failed to meet the most basic criteria, namely being militarily feasible and likely to succeed. Because of Churchill's strong interest, and Stalin's occasional support, an invasion of Norway was one of the few serious large-scale operations considered during the great strategy debates of the summer of 1942. However, the major military difficulties of such an operation against strong German land and air forces in Norway, along with logistical problems and American dislike of it, were the main reasons why an invasion of Norway was dismissed as a possibility in 1942.

### **U.S. Troops to the Middle East**

Sending U.S. troops to reinforce the British forces in the Middle East was another option that was seriously considered. Towards the end of the Anglo-American strategic debate in summer 1942 this was one of few options available to the Western Allies in that year. Both Roosevelt and Churchill supported the operation when it was

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<sup>871</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, p.3; J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.7

<sup>872</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.1

<sup>873</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.7

<sup>874</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 549, 'Operations in Norway', 29th May, 1942, p.2

<sup>875</sup> NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 574, 'Operation JUPITER', 5 June, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 578, 'Operation "JUPITER"', 7th June, 1942, p.1

proposed, although it had no strong backers amongst the American or British military leaders, a fact that would count against it. The operation offered many benefits to the Western Allies, most notably the fact that American troops would go into action against Germany in 1942. However, there were also important reasons why TORCH was preferred, with most of these being American reservations.

A number of plans for this operation existed. In mid-June 1942 a U.S. armoured division was promised for the Middle East.<sup>876</sup> In July 1942 a more ambitious plan was proposed, to move an entire American Corps to the Middle East, to arrive by 1 September at the earliest.<sup>877</sup> From then until the end of the year, 100,000 American troops could be moved to Egypt.<sup>878</sup> After it was decided that TORCH would be carried out, it was still hoped this operation could occur, and attention reverted to the original idea of sending a single American division to the Middle East. While it was generally planned that the American troops would fight in Egypt against the Axis, a proposal was also made for them to be used for defensive purposes in Syria.<sup>879</sup> The British also hoped to use an American division in Persia in the autumn of 1942 if the Germans broke through the Soviet defences in the Caucasus.<sup>880</sup>

The United States did send some forces to the Middle East to assist the British. In November 1941 American military missions were established in Egypt and Iran.<sup>881</sup> One American commitment in the Middle East was civilian personnel to keep open the supply route from the Middle East to Russia.<sup>882</sup> The Americans also sent air force units to the Middle East in the summer of 1942, and by the time the British offensive was launched at El Alamein on 23 October there was a strong American air presence in the Middle East.<sup>883</sup> The Middle East was also an important destination for

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<sup>876</sup> NA AIR 47/69, C.C.S. 28th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held Saturday 20 June 1942, 11:00am; Dykes Diary, 24 June 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.160

<sup>877</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.409; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.494

<sup>878</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.409

<sup>879</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.200

<sup>880</sup> Butler, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part 2*, p.655

<sup>881</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.187

<sup>882</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, pp.198-199

<sup>883</sup> In early 1942 two American pursuit groups were allocated to Egypt, but were not fully equipped until May 1942, J.S.M., Washington to the Chiefs of Staff, London, 10 February 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.42. The build-up of USAAF units in the Middle East intensified from summer 1942 onwards. After the fall of Tobruk a USAAF heavy bomber group, a

American supplies and equipment, and had been even before Pearl Harbor.<sup>884</sup> The Americans viewed sending aircraft, equipment and supplies as a good option, because it avoided the complications of sending troops.<sup>885</sup> After the war, Marshall said that although he was opposed to sending U.S. troops to the Middle East in June 1942, he was “very much in favour of sending tanks” to be crewed by the British.<sup>886</sup>

The plan to reinforce the British army in the Middle East with American troops in the autumn of 1942 was an attractive option, with a number of benefits. Because North Africa was already an active Anglo-American fighting front, many problems associated with an invasion could be avoided.<sup>887</sup> It involved no risk on landing, because the troops would come ashore in friendly territory. Strong and effective air support was guaranteed, because the Western Desert Air Force was a well-trained, well-led, and well-equipped force by the summer of 1942. Many logistical difficulties were avoided, because supply lines, centres and dumps were already in existence, and were entirely secure. Good port facilities were also ready to receive the troops and their equipment.

Reinforcing the Middle East with American troops would probably have hastened the Allied conquest of North Africa, possibly including French North-West Africa.<sup>888</sup> The arrival of American forces would ensure the safety of the Middle East, including the Iraq and Iran oilfields, it would restrain Arab collaboration with the Axis in North Africa and the Middle East, and it would secure the Suez Canal.<sup>889</sup> This operation

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medium bomber group and a fighter group were all promised to the Middle East, Butler, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part 2*, pp.607, 629

<sup>884</sup> NA AIR 75/66, B.U.S.(42) 32, British-United States Staff Conversations, Minutes of Conference on Tuesday, 25th March, 1941, p.3; Roosevelt to Churchill, 28 May 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.197. American equipment was very important in the Middle East in 1942. The British valued the American medium tanks, like the M3 Grant and M4 Sherman, because they were the equal of the German medium tanks in the desert, Butler, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part 2*, p.609. The M3 Grants were being sent to the Middle East by 31 October 1941, NA WO 193/8, ‘Review of availability and requirements of armoured formations’, pp.4-5

<sup>885</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.199. Indeed, Eisenhower noted in March 1942 that American mechanized units should be stripped to bare essentials, with equipment sent to the Middle East, along with all available spare American bombers and fighters, so long as it did not reduce the American air force’s ability to expand, Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.199

<sup>886</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.546

<sup>887</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 59, ‘An American Expedition to the Middle East’, 16 December 1941, p.5

<sup>888</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 59, ‘An American Expedition to the Middle East’, 16 December 1941, p.5

<sup>889</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.409

would establish a strong force on the Turkish border, and would therefore probably increase Turkish sentiment against the Axis.<sup>890</sup>

President Roosevelt would be satisfied because this option would ensure that a large number of American troops were fighting the Germans in 1942. Admiral King would also be pleased, because reinforcement of the Middle East would have had much less effect on the U.S. Navy's commitment in the Pacific, because there was no need for a large naval support task force of warships, unlike that required to successfully carry out an invasion like Operation TORCH or SLEDGEHAMMER.<sup>891</sup>

In the Middle East inexperienced American troops could gain valuable combat experience on the open desert battlefields of Egypt and Libya, rather than on the fortified coast of north-west France, or in the rugged hills of Tunisia. By the time they began arriving in the Middle East in September, the British Eighth Army they would be fighting alongside would probably be unified and well-trained. Thus the operation had less chance of inexperienced American troops being defeated, an important criterion for the first Anglo-American operation.

Conversely, there were a number of objections to committing American ground troops to the Middle East, most of which came from the American military men, led by General Marshall.<sup>892</sup> On 19 March 1942 Field Marshal Dill told the British C.O.S.: “[the] Americans are opposed to entry of American ‘ground troops’ in that theatre for a number of reasons, command and administrative”.<sup>893</sup> One reason was the U.S. Army policy that American troops were only to serve in areas where they would be under the control of an American theatre commander.<sup>894</sup> The Middle East was designated as a British-controlled theatre of war, so U.S. troops could only be sent there if they were in large enough numbers to justify an American theatre commander, but this was not possible due to lack of shipping. In March 1942 Marshall rejected sending American

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<sup>890</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 59, ‘An American Expedition to the Middle East’, 16 December 1941, p.5

<sup>891</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.412. Escorts would be needed for the longer transit to the Middle East, but this would not require major warships, including aircraft carriers and battleships.

<sup>892</sup> After the war Marshall said he “was vigorously opposed to sending troops” to the Middle East in June 1942, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.546

<sup>893</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 19 March 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.129

<sup>894</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.199

troops to the Middle East because he did not want to include American troops in what was a British and Empire theatre of war, and create supply and command problems.<sup>895</sup> He repeated this argument at the 24 July C.C.S. meeting.<sup>896</sup> Likewise, American troops were not sent to guard Sa'udi Arabian oilfields in April, May and June because the United States viewed the Middle East as a British responsibility.<sup>897</sup>

Lack of merchant shipping to transport and maintain troops was always a hindrance to the plan to send U.S. Army troops to the Middle East. Marshall considered the Middle East a distant theatre, which would result in the "leakage or wastage of strength logistically".<sup>898</sup> This was especially a problem because there were already numerous distant theatres for the Americans to maintain.<sup>899</sup> After the war Marshall said that he opposed this operation "because we didn't have the tonnage to go around the Cape ...".<sup>900</sup> The turnaround time from the United States to the Middle East was more than five months, and this compared poorly with other options.<sup>901</sup> The shipping used to send American troops to the Middle East could transport two-and-a-half times more to the United Kingdom for the build-up for a future cross-Channel operation.<sup>902</sup> Similarly, the turnaround time for supplying a landing in North-West Africa was half of that for sailing to the Middle East.<sup>903</sup> Thus reinforcing the Middle East with United States troops meant shipping was more exposed to enemy naval forces, especially submarines, in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.<sup>904</sup>

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<sup>895</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200

<sup>896</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 32nd Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 24th July, 1942 at 12 noon, p.3

<sup>897</sup> Silverfarb, 'Sa'udi Arabian Oilfields in 1942', pp.721, 723

<sup>898</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.248-249

<sup>899</sup> For example, the South-West Pacific (8,000 miles from the continental United States), central Pacific (3,000 miles), Alaska (2,000 miles), Greenland and Iceland (2,000 m), India, etc., Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.249

<sup>900</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.582

<sup>901</sup> It took 74 days for the first American M4s and 105 mm self-propelled guns to reach the Middle East after the decision had been made on 25 June 1942 to send them there. In a War Office paper in October 1941 it was noted that forces sailing from the United Kingdom to the Middle East would take just over three months from leaving the United Kingdom to being ready for action, NA WO 193/8, 'Review of availability and requirements of armoured formations', p.1

<sup>902</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.409-410

<sup>903</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.409-410

<sup>904</sup> NARA RG 38, Box 59, 'An American Expedition to the Middle East', 16 December 1941, p.5

A very important reason why this operation did not occur was the U.S. Army's aversion to dispersing forces, a factor counting against all other options except a cross-Channel operation. By sending troops to the Middle East, the U.S. Army would be supporting a peripheral campaign against the Germans, and this went against its mentality and doctrine of undertaking a decisive attack aimed at achieving the swiftest total victory over the primary enemy. In March 1942 one of the reasons Marshall rejected sending American divisions to the Middle East was that it would mean more dispersion of U.S. Army forces.<sup>905</sup>

The Americans were concerned that committing to the Middle East and creating a new American front would almost certainly rule out an Allied invasion of France in 1943. General Marshall emphasized this in his 23 June memorandum to Roosevelt, concluding: "A large venture in the Middle East would make a decisive American contribution to the campaign in Western Europe out of the question. Therefore, I am opposed to such a project".<sup>906</sup> After the war he said "... we didn't want the divisions tied up".<sup>907</sup> Similarly, on 15 July General Marshall told Secretary Stimson that American defensive operations in the Middle East would delay Allied landings in Europe until 1944.<sup>908</sup> In Eisenhower's appreciation of GYMNAST and the American reinforcement of the Middle East on 23 July, his first conclusion was that if extra troops were needed above the planned commitment for these operations, ROUND-UP could be postponed until 1944.<sup>909</sup> The British also recognized this problem.<sup>910</sup>

Some Americans also had a lack of faith in the ability of the British army in the Middle East, and consequently feared committing U.S. troops to a theatre where they might be defeated and suffer heavy losses.<sup>911</sup> These fears of defeat were unsurprising given that in the summer of 1942 the fortunes of the British forces in the Middle East

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<sup>905</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.200

<sup>906</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.249

<sup>907</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.582

<sup>908</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.276. General Marshall noted this problem in a signal to Eisenhower on 16 July 1942, in which he stated that reinforcement of the Middle East by American troops would delay ROUND-UP until the autumn of 1943, Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.391

<sup>909</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.412

<sup>910</sup> Alanbrooke wrote in his diary on 21 June 1942 that the acceptance of an American armoured division for the Middle East "may lead to a U.S.A. front in Middle East at expense of the European front", Alanbrooke Diary, 21 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.270. The J.P.S. also recognised this problem on 17 June 1942, NA CAB 84/46, J.P.(42) 608, 'Employment of U.S. Forces', 17th June, 1942, p.2

<sup>911</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.200

were at their nadir. Some American political and military leaders felt that the British military in the Middle East was incompetent, and that their tactical doctrine was not trustworthy.<sup>912</sup> In early July 1942 the British embassy in Washington reported: “There is some talk that no American soldiers would consent to serve in Europe under British command” because of this lack of confidence.<sup>913</sup> Even Roosevelt was fearful at times of a British defeat in the Middle East.<sup>914</sup> A defeat of U.S. Army troops in the Middle East would impact negatively on the morale of the American public, and would result in fierce criticism of American political and military leaders for allowing such a disaster to occur.<sup>915</sup> The first major U.S. Army operation in the European theatre needed to be successful.

Fear of Soviet defeat added to American concerns about dispatching forces to the Middle East. In his strategic thoughts to General Marshall on 23 July 1942, the day before the TORCH decision, Eisenhower noted that with Rommel still active in North Africa, American forces sent to the Middle East could end up “in a position subject to pincer attacks by converging movements of German forces”, from the Caucasus and Egypt.<sup>916</sup>

American anti-imperialism was another reason for their rejection of this option. Some American military and political leaders were convinced that the British were fighting in the Mediterranean purely for the interests of their Empire.<sup>917</sup> The American anti-imperialists were willing to defend the United Kingdom, but they did not want U.S. troops becoming involved in the Middle East or Balkans.<sup>918</sup> The commitment of American air force units to the Middle East was more acceptable than ground troops, because it was a less significant contribution.<sup>919</sup> In March 1942, when Marshall rejected sending troops to the Middle East, but offered to send American flying personnel there to operate British aircraft, Secretary Stimson remarked: “The Middle

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<sup>912</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.199-200

<sup>913</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.20

<sup>914</sup> Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.197

<sup>915</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.200

<sup>916</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 23 July 1942, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.409

<sup>917</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.21

<sup>918</sup> Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, p.24; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.16; Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.200

<sup>919</sup> Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, p.200

East is the very last priority of all that are facing us. We have foreseen for months that the British would be howling for help here that we really should not give them – and I think now is the time to stand pat.”<sup>920</sup> His attitude clearly reflects that of the American anti-imperialists, one of whom was the President himself.<sup>921</sup>

American public opinion and morale was also taken into consideration. The reinforcement of the Middle East with U.S. Army troops would certainly have resulted in a large-scale combined Anglo-American offensive in Egypt in October 1942, and with the combined strength of the two armies the result would very likely have been a significant Allied victory, despite the previously mentioned fears held by some Americans. However, it was not an invasion, and that was what the American public most desired in the summer and autumn of 1942.<sup>922</sup> Reinforcing the Middle East with American troops was a more gradual process than an invasion like TORCH.

The situation on the Eastern Front was at the forefront of Western Allied thinking in the summer of 1942, and this operation would probably not have provided the Soviet Union with great assistance, because it did not create a new front to draw Axis troops from the East, but simply added more troops to an existing front. Drawing German forces from the Eastern Front was considered vital by Roosevelt and American planners.<sup>923</sup> In contrast, TORCH and SLEDGEHAMMER created a new front, so were more likely to draw German troops from the Eastern Front, and this made them more attractive options. TORCH and SLEDGEHAMMER were also more obvious gestures of support to the beleaguered Soviet Union because they were invasions. Thus reinforcing the Middle East with American troops failed to meet the vital criterion of providing the Soviet Union with support and assistance.

American reinforcement of the Middle East was a genuine option, which offered many benefits to the Western Allies. It was given serious consideration in the summer of 1942, received support from Churchill and Roosevelt, and came close to being chosen. It met many of the criteria for a 1942 operation, except that it was not

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<sup>920</sup> *Ibid.*, p.201

<sup>921</sup> Kimball, *The Juggler*, pp.127-128

<sup>922</sup> Bailey, *The Man in the Street*, p.143; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.131

<sup>923</sup> Marshall to Lt. Gen. Eisenhower, 13 July 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.274; Roosevelt to Churchill, 9 March 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.399; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.589; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.131

significant enough for the Soviets, nor for the British and American publics, and it would not provide practical support to the Soviets. The American military men also had a number of objections to this operation. This ensured that the Western Allies did not carry out the reinforcement of the Middle East by American troops, and had to choose another operation instead.

### **SLEDGEHAMMER, a cross-Channel operation in 1942**

Operation SLEDGEHAMMER, a cross-Channel invasion of northern France in 1942, was the most notable alternative to Operation TORCH. SLEDGEHAMMER was favoured by the U.S. Army, the Soviet Union, and the British and American publics as the first major Anglo-American operation of the war. SLEDGEHAMMER was adopted as Western Allied strategy on a number of occasions in 1942, and was frequently discussed by the British and Americans, but eventually the sound argument of the British military leaders that such an operation was too risky in 1942 prevailed. The operation faced many potential difficulties, including lack of shipping, troops and landing craft, the strong and well-entrenched German army in France, and the lack of air superiority essential for a successful landing on a defended enemy coast. SLEDGEHAMMER was also rejected because the more efficient and experienced British command structure was better able to argue what direction Western Allied strategy should take. The costly failed raid on Dieppe on 19 August 1942 also demonstrated the serious risks of a 1942 cross-Channel operation. In essence, Operation TORCH was chosen because its main rival, Operation SLEDGEHAMMER, was shown by the British military men to be unfeasible, leaving TORCH as the only viable operation the Western Allies could carry out in 1942.

The plan for a 1942 cross-Channel operation underwent many changes, but the essentials remained the same. The landing was to occur by September 1942 at the latest, utilizing all available British and American land and air forces.<sup>924</sup> The operation had to occur within the Allied air umbrella, and therefore in the vicinity of the Pas de Calais, Cherbourg or Boulogne.<sup>925</sup> The best area for a landing was between the Rivers Somme and Seine, due to the suitable beaches in that area and the

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<sup>924</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.63

<sup>925</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 28 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.242; Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.496

availability of air cover.<sup>926</sup> A landing near Cherbourg could not be properly supported by fighters.<sup>927</sup>

Marshall's April 1942 plan for SLEDGEHAMMER stated that no more than five divisions, half from each nation, could be landed and maintained in France. The United States would provide 900 aircraft, including 400 fighters, 300 bombers, and 200 transport aircraft, and Britain nearly 5,000.<sup>928</sup> The operation was therefore only going to be on a small scale in terms of ground forces.

There was good reason for the American advocacy of this operation, because it offered many benefits to the Western Allies. The most important reason for the operation, in General Marshall's view, was "the diversion of German forces from the annihilation of Russia".<sup>929</sup> Marshall saw SLEDGEHAMMER as "a desperate operation to save Russia".<sup>930</sup> Stimson told Roosevelt on 19 June: "In establishing such a front [in France] lay the best hope of keeping the Russian army in the war and thus ultimately defeating Hitler".<sup>931</sup> Roosevelt felt the same. His instructions to Hopkins, Marshall and King on 16 July regarding SLEDGEHAMMER noted: "Such an operation would definitely sustain Russia this year. It might be the turning point which would save Russia this year".<sup>932</sup>

Of all the available operations in 1942, SLEDGEHAMMER would occur closest to Britain, and this made it much easier in many respects. SLEDGEHAMMER would start from a secure base, and could be well supported by land-based Allied air forces.<sup>933</sup> The considerable air and naval forces used to defend Britain could be used in a cross-Channel operation, but not in the other options.<sup>934</sup> The American planners

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<sup>926</sup> NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1028, 'Operation "ROUND-UP"', 24th December, 1941, p.8

<sup>927</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 28 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.242

<sup>928</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.50-51

<sup>929</sup> Marshall to Lt. Gen. Eisenhower, 13 July 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.274

<sup>930</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.580

<sup>931</sup> Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.420

<sup>932</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.277

<sup>933</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, p.2; J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.7; Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.421; Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.108

<sup>934</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.10. Mountbatten concluded the same in a 25 February 1942 report to the C.O.S., saying France was "the only area where we know we can give such an operation

concluded that Western Europe was “the only place in which a powerful offensive can be prepared and executed by the United Powers in the near future”. Elsewhere had long sea distances, and Western Europe was the only place where air superiority could be gained.<sup>935</sup> Stimson told Roosevelt: “By fortunate coincidence one of the shortest routes to Europe from America led through the only safe base not yet controlled by our enemies, the British Isles”.<sup>936</sup> Significantly, invading France was the shortest route to Germany, meaning ultimate victory could be achieved sooner, and this was a major American argument for the operation.<sup>937</sup> A cross-Channel operation would use less shipping than the other options, including an operation to North-West Africa.<sup>938</sup> After the war Marshall said: “It took a shorter time to accumulate a force in [the] UK”.<sup>939</sup> This was important given the Western Allies’ lack of shipping. On 7 March the J.P.S. noted: “Lack of shipping precludes the staging of such a diversion anywhere except across the Channel”.<sup>940</sup> Logistically, SLEDGEHAMMER was a wise choice.

The Western Allies believed that SLEDGEHAMMER would probably be successful in the air war with Germany, even if it failed on land. On 17 March the C.O.S. felt that a 1942 cross-Channel operation would not divert enemy land forces, but it would cause a large air battle on terms favorable to the Western Allies.<sup>941</sup> In Stimson’s 19 June memorandum to Roosevelt he advised the President that the British Isles were the one place “where we could safely develop air superiority over our chief enemy in northern France and force him either to fight us on equal terms or leave a bridgehead to France undefended”.<sup>942</sup>

Despite these benefits, SLEDGEHAMMER did not happen primarily because the British were able to present a strong argument against the feasibility of the operation, in the face of determined American attempts to have it become the first combined Anglo-American offensive of the Second World War. The number of Allied troops

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sufficient Naval and Air support ...”, NA CAB 84/42, C.O.S.(42) 126, ‘World-Wide Disposition of Tank Landing Craft’, 25th February, 1942, p.2

<sup>935</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.157

<sup>936</sup> Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.420

<sup>937</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.49; Matloff, ‘Wilmot Revisited’, p.108

<sup>938</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.277; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.107

<sup>939</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.584

<sup>940</sup> NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 243, ‘Offensive Operations’, 7th March, 1942, p.1

<sup>941</sup> NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 289, ‘Operation “SLEDGEHAMMER” – Aide Memoire and Draft Directive’, 17th March, 1942, p.1

<sup>942</sup> Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.421

available was vital to the potential success of SLEDGEHAMMER, and there were not enough based in the United Kingdom in 1942. In March and April, when General Marshall proposed a September operation, all the United States could offer was two-and-a-half infantry divisions and one armored division.<sup>943</sup> The American plan also stated that there would be only 933 American aircraft in Britain by mid-September.<sup>944</sup> On 23 June there were 50,000 American soldiers in Britain, including just one infantry and one armored division, and a parachute battalion, with the 1st Infantry Division assembling in the north-east of the United States ready to embark for Britain.<sup>945</sup> By August the 1st Division, two more parachute battalions, 20,000 air force personnel and 40,000 other troops would be sent to Britain.<sup>946</sup> Up to 18 July there were 42,996 Americans in Northern Ireland, 21,226 U.S. Army personnel in Britain, and 17,846 of the USAAF.<sup>947</sup> On 1 August the United States had an Armored Division, an Infantry Division, and 7,311 Service of Supply (S.O.S.) personnel in Northern Ireland. In England the United States had a parachute battalion and 19,124 S.O.S. personnel.<sup>948</sup> The table below shows that the number was expected to grow steadily, but most of the troops would arrive only after the invasion had begun in early September. This still did not represent a large enough force for a successful invasion.

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<sup>943</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 52, 'Plan for Operations in Northwest Europe', March 27, 1942, p.4. "No great contribution" Alanbrooke dismissively wrote in his diary, Alanbrooke Diary, 9 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.246; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.63

<sup>944</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 52, 'Plan for Operations in Northwest Europe', March 27, 1942, p.4; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.158

<sup>945</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.247

<sup>946</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.247

<sup>947</sup> NA AIR 8/869, C.S.A.(42) 14(O), 20th July 1942, p.1

<sup>948</sup> NA WO 193/2, 'Forces in U.K. and Northern Ireland as at 1 Aug 42', p.2

**Table 12: Cumulative Totals of American troops in Britain and Northern Ireland, estimated 20 July 1942** <sup>949</sup>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Total</b>
7 August 1942	91,700
12 August 1942	138,000
30 August 1942	171,000
5 September 1942	181,500
10 September 1942	192,000
28 September 1942	264,000
5 October 1942	274,500
10 October 1942	285,000
15 October 1942	327,600

The British also lacked forces for a cross-Channel operation in 1942, and this concerned them. As General Alanbrooke confided to his diary: "...what can we do with some 10 divisions against the German masses?"<sup>950</sup> In April Alanbrooke told Marshall that in 1942 they might be able to land seven infantry divisions and two armoured divisions, but that this force could not hold a bridgehead.<sup>951</sup> Churchill emphasized the difficulties of maintaining a bridgehead to Roosevelt on 8 July, stating that all British "energies would be involved in defending the Bridgehead", and if a 1942 landing was defeated, it would rule out a large scale 1943 operation.<sup>952</sup>

Britain needed a large force to defend itself in case the Germans defeated the Soviet Union and the German invasion threat to the British Isles was renewed. On 1 August 1942 there were only seven armoured divisions in the United Kingdom, with one of those still forming. There were 21 infantry divisions, of which nine were lower establishment (that is, units not of first-line quality). There were three armoured brigades, five army tank brigades, fourteen independent brigades and brigade groups, one marine division, one airborne division, one parachute brigade, and one Special Services Brigade. This added up to 40 1/3 divisions.<sup>953</sup> Most of these units were

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<sup>949</sup> NA AIR 8/869, C.S.A.(42) 14(O), 20th July 1942, p.3. This includes all troops, not just combat troops.

<sup>950</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 30 March 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.283

<sup>951</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.51

<sup>952</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.520. He told Stalin the same in mid-August 1942, Churchill to Roosevelt, 15 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.568

<sup>953</sup> NA WO 193/2, 'Forces in U.K. and Northern Ireland as at 1 Aug 42', p.1

needed for home defence, and could not be spared for a potentially unsuccessful 1942 cross-Channel operation.

**Table 13: Allied Troops in the United Kingdom, 21 July 1942** <sup>954</sup>

1 Corps  
7 Corps Districts, 6 British and 1 Canadian  
7 Armoured Divisions, 5 British, 1 Canadian, 1 Polish (a)  
5 Independent Armoured Brigades (a)  
3 Army Tank Brigades, 2 British, 1 Canadian  
23 Infantry Divisions, 20 British (b), 3 Canadian  
1 Airborne Division (a)  
1 Polish Parachute Brigade (a)  
3 Independent Brigade Groups, 1 Guards, 2 Allied  
11 Independent Infantry Brigades, 1 Guards, 9 Infantry, 1 Allied  
2 Independent Infantry Brigade H.Qs  
1 Special Service Brigade  
2 Unbrigaded Tank Battalions  
21 Unbrigaded Battalions, 19 British, 2 Allied  
Various home defence units  
1 U.S. Parachute Battalion

(a) Forming, not completely equipped

(b) Nine lower establishment, five new model, five old model

Facing the six invading British and American divisions would be a considerable German force under *Feldmarschall* von Rundstedt, who became *Oberbefehlshaber West* (Commander-in-Chief West) in March 1942.<sup>955</sup> His preferred anti-invasion strategy was to have mobile reserves inland, ready to move against an Allied landing.<sup>956</sup> Churchill explained to Stalin in August 1942 that the Germans had enough troops in the West to contain any cross-Channel landing on the Cherbourg Peninsula.<sup>957</sup> The same was true of a landing elsewhere in northern France. Throughout 1942 there were approximately 25 German divisions in France, of which around half were combat-fit.<sup>958</sup> In July there were 28 divisions on the Channel Front,

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<sup>954</sup> NA WO 193/13, 'Distribution of Imperial Forces at Home and Abroad and Certain Allied Forces', as at 21st July, 1942, pp.2-3

<sup>955</sup> Dieter Ose, 'Rommel and Rundstedt: The 1944 *Panzer* Controversy', *MA*, Vol. 50, No. 1, January 1986, p.7

<sup>956</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.65-66; Ose, 'Rommel & Rundstedt: The 1944 *Panzer* Controversy', p.8

<sup>957</sup> W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Aide-Memoire, August 14th, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.62

<sup>958</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.26, 61; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.139. In July 1942 there were ten combat-fit divisions in France, and eleven in August 1942. In September 1942 there were fourteen combat ready divisions in France, Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.237

and this increased to 36 divisions by October.<sup>959</sup> In August there were 33 German divisions in the West, none of which were first line, and the 10. *Panzer-Division* was the only quality unit. However, the 10. *Panzer-Division* was at Amiens, close to any potential Allied landing location.<sup>960</sup> On 19 March the J.P.S. noted that eight German divisions could be concentrated against any Western Allied bridgehead in France within a week or ten days.<sup>961</sup> After the war Alanbrooke wrote that “the Germans could reinforce the point of attack some three to four times faster than we could ...”.<sup>962</sup> Thus the evidence indicates that a Western Allied landing in France would be quickly outnumbered by German defenders.

In the air the situation would be little better for SLEDGEHAMMER than it would be on the ground. In the summer and autumn of 1942 neither side dominated the air over Western Europe. Having successfully defended Britain from the *Luftwaffe* in 1940, the RAF began to go on the offensive over France in 1941, flying many daytime sweeps to draw up the enemy and destroy it, but these operations had generally met little success, and were often costly. On 3 November 1941 Churchill felt that the British had “Command of the Air over the Pas de Calais.”<sup>963</sup> This proved to be very premature. In 1942 the *Luftwaffe* had only two *Jagdgeschwadern* (Fighter Wings), consisting of 20 squadrons, based in France, yet these two Wings were keeping more than 50 RAF fighter squadrons occupied. By the summer of 1942 the Allied air force could very adequately defend British air space, and could also project itself over France. USAAF units had by then begun to arrive in numbers as well.<sup>964</sup> However, by September 1942 the Western Allies had not gained the air superiority essential as a preliminary for a cross-Channel operation. General Arnold admitted in his memoirs

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<sup>959</sup> John P. Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited: A Documentary Investigation*, London, 1993, p.113; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.32

<sup>960</sup> Denis Whitaker & Shelagh Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, Toronto, 1992, p.16. This Division had only arrived in France in May 1942 to rest and refit after fighting on the Eastern Front.

<sup>961</sup> NA CAB 84/43, C.O.S.(42) ‘Operation SLEDGEHAMMER’, March, 1942, p.2

<sup>962</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.281

<sup>963</sup> NA WO 193/8, CIGS/PM/192, Prime Minister’s Personal Minute. Serial No. M.1027/I, p.2

<sup>964</sup> On 23 June 1942 Marshall told Roosevelt that by the end of August there would be five Heavy Bombardment Groups, five Fighter Groups, and two Transport Groups in England, Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.247. By 15 September 1942 there would only be 700 U.S. combat aircraft in the United Kingdom, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.158. The first B-17 arrived for VIII Bomber Command on 4 July 1942. At that time the only other USAAF unit was a squadron of A-20s, along with a single AT-6 trainer, Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.374. On 1 August 1942 the USAAF had four bomber and six fighter squadrons based in the United Kingdom, NA WO 193/2, ‘Forces in U.K. and Northern Ireland as at 1 Aug 42’, p.2

that the Allied air force available might not have been able to secure the air over a 1942 invasion.<sup>965</sup>

The figures presented above suggest that a 1942 cross-Channel operation would have faced serious German resistance in the air and on land, and probably would have resulted in heavy Western Allied losses. This was the point constantly put forward by the British.<sup>966</sup> SLEDGEHAMMER was to be primarily a British operation, because the Americans could not provide the majority of forces, and the British did not want to take the risk.<sup>967</sup> Because the British would bear the burden, the Americans basically had to accept the operation preferred by their ally in 1942.<sup>968</sup> This was a major reason why SLEDGEHAMMER, the only real alternative to TORCH, did not occur.

There is plentiful evidence of British concern about this operation failing due to the lack of Allied troops and resources, and the strength of the German defences and other factors. For example, in mid-March 1942 the British J.P.S. said a landing in the Pas de Calais would be hazardous, because the area had the strongest German defences, flat beaches unsuitable to British landing craft, too few beach exits, and ports that were too small. An operation to the Channel Islands and Cherbourg would see unfavorable air fighting. They concluded that “no sustained land operation can be staged on the Continent in time, and in sufficient force to achieve our objective”, namely assisting the Soviet Union.<sup>969</sup> General Alanbrooke wrote in his diary after a 1 July C.O.S. meeting about a cross-Channel operation: “Nobody stops to think what you can possibly do with some 6 divisions against a possible 20 to 30!”<sup>970</sup> This was the crux of the British argument. On 20 June Churchill told Roosevelt:

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<sup>965</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.304

<sup>966</sup> See, for example: W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Aide-Memoire, August 14th, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.62; Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.498; Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.515

<sup>967</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 55, Marshall & King Memorandum to Roosevelt, 10 July 1942, p.1; Jacobs, ‘Strategic Bombing and American National Strategy, 1941-1943’, p.134; Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.541

<sup>968</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.32

<sup>969</sup> NA CAB 84/43, C.O.S.(42), ‘Operation SLEDGEHAMMER’, March, 1942, pp.2, 4; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.13

<sup>970</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 1 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.275

No responsible British military authority has so far been able to make a plan for September 1942 which had any chance of success unless the Germans became utterly demoralized, of which there is no likelihood.<sup>971</sup>

Lack of shipping and landing craft was also a major issue for SLEDGEHAMMER. This problem was recognized early. In February 1942 the British C.O.S. informed the J.S.M. Washington that they were worried there would not even be enough tank and vehicle landing craft for a 1943 operation.<sup>972</sup> A British admiral found that landing craft were only tenth on the American priority list of naval construction.<sup>973</sup> By the end of the 1942 fair weather period there would only be 73 British tank landing craft available, and 66 of those were needed for Army training, which Mountbatten felt should not be suspended.<sup>974</sup> This would allow an assault force of just one Armoured Brigade Group.<sup>975</sup> Mountbatten wrote: "... if interruption of army training cannot be accepted, there are no craft readily available for operations throughout the summer and autumn of 1942".<sup>976</sup> In the event, few large landing ships were available for TORCH, so it had to be done as a ship-to-shore operation. Ship to shore meant transporting the forces to an offshore area, removing the landing craft from ships, then moving the troops to shore.<sup>977</sup> This would be very dangerous in the Channel, where there was a much greater risk of air attack against ships anchored off the coast.

There are many examples of British and American concerns about lack of shipping for a 1942 operation. For example, Churchill told Roosevelt on 2 April that "... everything turns on availability of naval forces and shipping".<sup>978</sup> On 7 April the J.S.M. informed the C.O.S. that the Americans had decided to give utmost priority to

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<sup>971</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.515. Likewise, on 8 July 1942 Churchill told Roosevelt: "No responsible British General, Admiral or Air Marshal is prepared to recommend SLEDGEHAMMER as a practicable operation in 1942", because the necessary conditions were "very unlikely to occur", Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.520

<sup>972</sup> The Admiralty to B.A.D., Washington, 20 February 1942, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.68

<sup>973</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.60

<sup>974</sup> NA CAB 84/42, C.O.S.(42) 126, 'World-wide disposition of Tank Landing Craft', 25th February, 1942, pp.1, 3

<sup>975</sup> NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 227, 'Tank Landing Craft: Distribution', 3rd March, 1942, p.2

<sup>976</sup> NA CAB 84/42, C.O.S.(42) 126, 'World-wide disposition of Tank Landing Craft', 25th February, 1942, p.1

<sup>977</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.64. Shore-to-shore operations involved the ships taking the forces directly to the beach, and much less risk than ship-to-shore operations. The occupation of Pantelleria in June 1943 was the first shore-to-shore operation, Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.64

<sup>978</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 2 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.440

landing craft construction.<sup>979</sup> In early May British Home Forces and the C.C.O., Mountbatten, studied SLEDGEHAMMER and concluded “that the landing craft were insufficient for the operation”.<sup>980</sup> Paget noted at a War Cabinet meeting that lack of landing craft limited an operation to 4,300 men and 160 tanks in the first wave.<sup>981</sup> Worryingly, Mountbatten said it would take 21 days to put ashore six divisions (100,000 men and 18,000 vehicles).<sup>982</sup>

The Americans also recognized the problem. Marshall informed Roosevelt on 27 April that the British “... were especially concerned as to availability of landing craft and transport planes”.<sup>983</sup> On 15 May Marshall, Roosevelt, Hopkins, King and various others met and discussed landing craft, and the delays in building them.<sup>984</sup> At this meeting the President was told that 21,000 men, only a fraction of the planned invasion force, could be landed in France by September.<sup>985</sup> Marshall estimated that the following would be available for a 1942 operation: 199 tank lighters and tank landing craft of various sizes, 583 personnel carriers, 311 vehicle and AA-carrying craft, and 30 support craft of different sizes. These could carry 20,000 men, 1,000 tanks, and 300 light vehicles, and could carry at least a reinforced division. However, the number of vehicles assigned to divisions would be reduced, and only the lightest types used, so that the combat elements of two divisions could be taken by sea.<sup>986</sup> By 1 August there would be 383 landing craft available, and 566 by September.<sup>987</sup> On 11 July Eisenhower told Marshall the main British objection was lack of landing craft to undertake and maintain a 1942 landing.<sup>988</sup> This evidence clearly demonstrates the problem of lack of shipping.

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<sup>979</sup> J.S.M., Washington, to the Chiefs of Staff, London, in *Principal War Telegrams & Memoranda, 1940-1943*, p.21

<sup>980</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 8 May 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.255-256. This was a separate study to Mountbatten’s study of 25 February 1942 about landing craft mentioned above.

<sup>981</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.61. Alanbrooke discussed a 1942 operation with Churchill on 27 May 1942, and told the Prime Minister “it is impossible to establish a front with landing craft only capable of lifting 4,000 men [in] first flight”, Alanbrooke Diary, 27 May 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.261

<sup>982</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.61

<sup>983</sup> Marshall to Roosevelt, 27 April 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.172

<sup>984</sup> Marshall Memorandum for Gen. Somervell and General Eisenhower, 16 May 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.203

<sup>985</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.204

<sup>986</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.247

<sup>987</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.497

<sup>988</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.274

There was also a shortage of transport aircraft to carry airborne forces for a 1942 invasion of France, and Churchill drew this to Roosevelt's attention.<sup>989</sup> Roosevelt replied on 16 May that: "Plans are being pushed to train, equip and move air transport units to the United Kingdom as rapidly as possible".<sup>990</sup> Airborne forces were essential to a 1942 cross-Channel operation, so the means had to be made available to allow them to be used.

Alanbrooke was concerned that American planning for the operation they so firmly advocated was inadequate. The British C.I.G.S. wrote in his diary that General Marshall's plan of April 1942 did not "go beyond just landing on the far coast!"<sup>991</sup> A day later, he wrote: "The plans are fraught with the gravest dangers". He continued: "The prospects of success are small and dependent on a mass of unknowns, whilst the chances of disaster are great and dependent on a mass of well established military facts".<sup>992</sup> This was the basic British view of the prospects of an invasion of France in 1942, and this view eventually prevailed.

It was felt by the British that a 1942 cross-Channel operation might assist the Soviets, but was not worth the probable high losses.<sup>993</sup> With 25 German divisions already based in France, it was unlikely that German forces would need to be withdrawn from the Soviet Union to engage an Anglo-American landing.<sup>994</sup> Churchill told Molotov on 22 May that one key point against a cross-Channel operation was that "it was unlikely that any move we could make in 1942, even if it were successful, would draw off large numbers of enemy land forces from the Eastern front".<sup>995</sup> The J.P.S. had earlier concluded, on 7 March, that despite a cross-Channel operation in 1942, "it is doubtful

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<sup>989</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 12 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.485

<sup>990</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 16 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.485

<sup>991</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 15 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.249. Alanbrooke continued: "Whether we are to play baccarat or chemin de fer at Le Touquet, or possibly bathe at Paris Plage is not stipulated! I asked him this afternoon – do we go east, south or west after landing? He had not begun to think of it!!" Alanbrooke Diary, 15 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.249

<sup>992</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 16 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.250

<sup>993</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.159

<sup>994</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.69, 76

<sup>995</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.497

whether [the Germans] could actually be induced to withdraw divisions from Russia”, and Eisenhower later noted that SLEDGEHAMMER might have “no effect whatsoever on the Russian front”, except a “beneficial effect on Russian morale”.<sup>996</sup> One British objection to SLEDGEHAMMER was that they believed “it would have no beneficial effect on the Russian situation ...”.<sup>997</sup> The British felt that some air forces might be withdrawn.<sup>998</sup> Thus, even in the unlikely event that SLEDGEHAMMER was a tactical success, it would probably still fail to achieve the bigger objective of assisting the Soviet Union. TORCH seemed likely to draw as many forces from the Eastern Front as SLEDGEHAMMER, with much less risk.

The American troops were not yet completely ready for operations, and certainly not for a landing on the well defended beaches of France. Some British units were also not ready to land in France. On 6 and 7 July General Alanbrooke inspected American troops in Northern Ireland and noted in his diary: “It is evident that the USA troops have excellent material, but that they require a great deal more training”.<sup>999</sup> After the war Alanbrooke wrote that General Marshall “never fully appreciated what operations in France would mean – the different standard of training of German divisions as opposed to the raw American divisions and to most of our new divisions”.<sup>1000</sup>

The weather was another factor that counted against SLEDGEHAMMER, because it restricted the times the operation could occur. The British maintained that a 1942 operation had to occur before August.<sup>1001</sup> Alanbrooke felt that by September the weather “was such as to make cross-Channel operations practically impossible!”<sup>1002</sup> Alanbrooke stated at a C.O.S. meeting in April that a 1942 operation had to be done by August if a port was to be captured by the third week in September, when bad weather would become a problem.<sup>1003</sup> Roosevelt agreed, writing to Churchill: “We all

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<sup>996</sup> NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 243, ‘Offensive Operations’, 7th March, 1942, p.2; Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, 21 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.404

<sup>997</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Harry Cecil Butcher, 22 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.405

<sup>998</sup> NA CAB 65/30, W.M.(42) 54th Conclusions. (29th April, 1942 – 6.15 p.m.); NARA RG 165, Box 1, Entry 422, Churchill to Field Marshal Dill, 12 July 1942; Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.497

<sup>999</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 7 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.277

<sup>1000</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.281

<sup>1001</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.162

<sup>1002</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 21 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.283

<sup>1003</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.53

realize that because of weather conditions the operation cannot be delayed until the end of the year”<sup>1004</sup>.

The British were also concerned that a failed 1942 cross-Channel operation would result in German reprisals against the French population, and especially against those who rose up against the German occupiers.<sup>1005</sup> Churchill warned Roosevelt about this possibility in a letter on 20 June 1942.<sup>1006</sup>

The British had a strong argument against Operation SLEDGEHAMMER, but even so, it was only the more effective and unified British command structure that allowed them to dissuade the Americans from it. The British had a clear chain of command, and inter-service cooperation between the RAF, RN, and Army was excellent at all levels. Churchill provided firm guidance from the top as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. The links between the civilian administration and the military were clear and effective, and Churchill and his military leaders cooperated very well to create a unified strategy. The British also had truly joint planning and intelligence bodies to assist with strategy-making.<sup>1007</sup> Because of this, the British were able to represent their interests and ideas very well in debates with the Americans. The contrast between the British command structure and the American command structure was stark.

When the United States entered the war, its command structure and machinery of war was outdated and inadequate to deal with the global war it faced. The major problems, which helped ensure that the British argument against SLEDGEHAMMER prevailed, were Roosevelt’s general ignorance of his service chiefs in 1941 and 1942, and strong rivalry between the U.S. Army and Navy, which resulted in disunity and lack of coordination between various departments and groups. The result was an inability to create a strong enough case to overcome the British objections to SLEDGEHAMMER.

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<sup>1004</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.503

<sup>1005</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.67; Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.345

<sup>1006</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.515

<sup>1007</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.21

Between September 1939 and December 1941 the United States had realized that the British model of command structure and military machinery was a good one to emulate, and attempted to do so.<sup>1008</sup> Chief among the reforms was the creation of the J.C.S., a body set up along the lines of the British C.O.S.<sup>1009</sup> Despite the American reforms, in the summer of 1942 the British still viewed the American apparatus in Washington very critically.<sup>1010</sup> In June Lord Halifax noted that the “American machinery in many cases is practically non-existent or of very doubtful efficiency in others”.<sup>1011</sup> It was not until the second half of 1942, and especially in 1943, that the American organization improved and U.S. strategic planning matured, as the much needed reforms of 1941 and 1942 began to take effect.<sup>1012</sup> As a result, during the debates over Operation TORCH and other options up to July 1942 the Americans were not able to argue their case as strongly as the British could, and this contributed to the rejection of SLEDGEHAMMER.

Problems with the American command structure were many and varied, and started at the top. In April 1941 Air Vice-Marshal Slessor believed that Roosevelt had too many duties to cope with.<sup>1013</sup> Field Marshal Dill wrote to General Alanbrooke on 3 January 1942: “The whole organization belongs to the days of George Washington who was made Commander-in-Chief of all the forces and just did it. Today the President is Commander-in-Chief of all the forces but it is not so easy to just do it.”<sup>1014</sup> Communication between Roosevelt and the J.C.S. was “uncertain and *ad hoc*” in the initial months after Pearl Harbor, and it was often left to Hopkins to do this job.<sup>1015</sup> Marshall wanted Admiral Leahy on the J.C.S. partly because he felt that Roosevelt had too many duties.<sup>1016</sup>

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<sup>1008</sup> NA AIR 75/66, B.U.S.(42) 32, British-United States Staff Conversations, Minutes of Conference on Tuesday, 25th March, 1941, p.7; NA AIR 75/66, Untitled Document, April 1941, p.3; Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.217, 248; Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.91

<sup>1009</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.283; Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, pp.23-24; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.41; Danchev, *Very Special Relationship*, p.12; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.3

<sup>1010</sup> NA AIR 19/340, Viscount Halifax to Foreign Office, No. 272, 22 June 1942, pp.1-6

<sup>1011</sup> NA AIR 19/340, Viscount Halifax to Foreign Office, No. 272, 22 June 1942, p.1

<sup>1012</sup> Matloff, ‘Wilmot Revisited’, p.110

<sup>1013</sup> NA AIR 75/66, Untitled Document, April 1941, p.1

<sup>1014</sup> Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.234; Craig, ‘The Political Leader as Strategist’, p.505

<sup>1015</sup> Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.69

<sup>1016</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.431

There was a real problem with lack of co-ordination between different bodies and departments, and this was still an issue as late as February 1943.<sup>1017</sup> This made it harder to agree on a common U.S. strategy. In his diary in October 1941 Stimson noted the “topsy-turvy, upside down system of poor administration” that created many problems at the War Department.<sup>1018</sup> On 7 December 1941 General Marshall had great responsibilities, but he did not have a central staff to support him, and he was assisted by a U.S. Army organization and procedures dating from 1921.<sup>1019</sup> There were no regular meetings of the U.S. J.C.S.<sup>1020</sup> In early 1942 most U.S. planning was done in the War and Navy Departments, and co-ordination was done outside the formally established joint channels.<sup>1021</sup> As late as February 1943 the J.C.S. “were spending much of their time on problems of administration or miscellaneous planning, many of which could probably have been settled below the Chiefs of Staff level.”<sup>1022</sup> Another major problem still present in February 1943 was that the work of the various future planning groups was rarely co-ordinated.<sup>1023</sup>

Traditionally there had been great rivalry between the U.S. Army and Navy over priorities and strategies, and this continued during World War II, especially over the question of the Germany-first policy.<sup>1024</sup> There was not so much inter-service rivalry in the British command structure. Air Vice-Marshal Slessor noted in April 1941: “... in the United States ... the Army and Navy really seem to hate each other more than they do the Germans”.<sup>1025</sup> As late as February 1943 there was still a lack of co-operation between Army and Navy future planning groups, with current plans not

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<sup>1017</sup> NARA RG 218, Central Decimal Files, Box 41, ‘The Joint Chiefs of Staff Organization. Report to the Joint Deputy Chiefs of Staff’, Paper No. 16, 10 February 1943, p.2

<sup>1018</sup> Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.69

<sup>1019</sup> Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division*, Washington, 1951, pp.22, 28. Air Vice Marshal Slessor noted in April 1941: “... he is attempting to combine the duties of C.I.G.S., C.A.S. and C-in-C Home Forces, and that in a country where the land and air forces are scattered over an area three times the size of India”, NA AIR 75/66, Untitled Document, April 1941, p.6

<sup>1020</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.41

<sup>1021</sup> Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.5

<sup>1022</sup> NARA RG 218, Central Decimal Files, Box 41, ‘The Joint Chiefs of Staff Organization. Report to the Joint Deputy Chiefs of Staff’, Paper No. 16, 10 February 1943, p.2

<sup>1023</sup> NARA RG 218, Central Decimal Files, Box 41, ‘The Joint Chiefs of Staff Organization. Report to the Joint Deputy Chiefs of Staff’, Paper No. 16, 10 February 1943, p.6

<sup>1024</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.91; Danchev, *Very Special Relationship*, p.60; Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.68; Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.506. On 4 May 1942 Brigadier Dykes noted in his diary: “The US Army and Navy are completely divided, the latter going all out for the South-West Pacific and the former for BOLERO. Until they can reach a clear-cut decision one way or the other, we shall get nowhere!” Dykes Diary, 4 May 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.139

<sup>1025</sup> NA AIR 75/66, Untitled Document, April 1941, p.2

being developed as joint plans.<sup>1026</sup> This compared very badly with the British J.P.S., which saw the three services working together to create plans. The appointment of Admiral Leahy as Roosevelt's Chief of Staff in July 1942 was urged by Marshall partly to lessen inter-service rivalry in the J.C.S.<sup>1027</sup> The rivalry meant that the United States did not present a truly unified front in the 1942 strategic debates. However, between late-1941 and late-1943 Marshall and King gradually managed to unite their services, to allow them to better counter the influence they believed the British exercised on Roosevelt.<sup>1028</sup>

There were a number of examples that show how the superior British command structure and organization allowed them to win strategic debates with the Americans. For example, the Americans went into the Placentia Bay conference in August 1941 relatively unprepared, while the British were thoroughly prepared.<sup>1029</sup> General Arnold concluded that the British C.O.S. came to Placentia Bay with a definite plan, and with common thoughts on all matters likely to be discussed. In contrast the American Chiefs of Staff had not previously met, and had no prepared agenda.<sup>1030</sup> The British also had more advisors present to assist Churchill and the C.O.S., and to prepare for conferences.<sup>1031</sup> The Americans learnt important lessons from Placentia Bay. Prior to the next major conference at Washington, President Roosevelt assembled his major political and military men on 21 December 1941, to ready them for the forthcoming talks.<sup>1032</sup> Even so, there were still problems for the Americans at that conference. Brigadier Dykes noted that the Americans had too many people on their side at Washington conferences.<sup>1033</sup> They needed more men to prepare prior to the conference, and fewer men to attend the conference and argue a stronger case. The British coordinated staff planning was much better than that of the Americans at ARCADIA.<sup>1034</sup>

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<sup>1026</sup> NARA RG 218, Central Decimal Files, Box 41, 'The Joint Chiefs of Staff Organization. Report to the Joint Deputy Chiefs of Staff', Paper No. 16, 10 February 1943, pp.6, 7

<sup>1027</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.432

<sup>1028</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.26

<sup>1029</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.248; Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.285

<sup>1030</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.256

<sup>1031</sup> Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, p.26. General Arnold did not even have an assistant to take notes at meetings, Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, p.26

<sup>1032</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.274-275

<sup>1033</sup> Dykes Diary, 4 January 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.84

<sup>1034</sup> Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', p.498

Problems continued throughout 1942 as well. Wedemeyer recalled the situation in April: “The British were masters in negotiations – particularly were they adept in the use of phrases or words which were capable of more than one meaning or interpretation”.<sup>1035</sup> In the April meetings, Wedemeyer noted how the British did not openly oppose General Marshall’s proposals for a cross-Channel operation, but made “polite suggestions that there might be difficulties in undertaking this task or that”.<sup>1036</sup> Privately, however, Alanbrooke was scathing of Marshall’s underdeveloped SLEDGEHAMMER plan.<sup>1037</sup> The April 1942 plan appeared to the British to have been very hastily created. Matloff argues that the American plan for a 1942 cross-Channel operation was “spontaneously generated by the War Department planners outside the regular J.C.S.-C.C.S. system”.<sup>1038</sup> This meant it skipped important and necessary steps in the development of a sound plan. In contrast, the British were able to present strong, well thought-out, reasoned and properly developed arguments against SLEDGEHAMMER at the Anglo-American conferences in the summer of 1942.

As late as the Casablanca conference in January 1943 the British arrived with a large number of military planners and aides, to face the ill-prepared and much smaller American party, which was divided over future strategy.<sup>1039</sup> As a result the British achieved almost all of what they wanted at the conference.<sup>1040</sup> After Casablanca the Americans decided to reach closer understandings with Roosevelt prior to future Anglo-American conferences.<sup>1041</sup> Consequently, in 1943 the Americans began to exercise a dominance over Western Allied strategy-making, much more in proportion to their contribution of troops, equipment, and money.<sup>1042</sup>

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<sup>1035</sup> Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.105

<sup>1036</sup> *Ibid.*, p.105

<sup>1037</sup> He wrote in his diary on 15 April 1942 that Marshall’s plan did not “go beyond just landing on the far coast!!”, Alanbrooke Diary, 15 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.249

<sup>1038</sup> Matloff, ‘Wilmot Revisited’, p.109

<sup>1039</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.92; Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, pp.80-81

<sup>1040</sup> Brigadier Ian Jacob wrote about the results of the Casablanca conference: “Our ideas had prevailed almost throughout”, Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.32

<sup>1041</sup> Matloff, ‘Wilmot Revisited’, p.109

<sup>1042</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.26

The American inability to influence the early strategic debate was also limited by the lack of Soviet input into the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee. The C.C.S. was the main element in the overall direction of the Western Allied war effort, including strategy-making, and the production and distribution of war materials.<sup>1043</sup> In 1942 no Russian military or political figure attended any C.C.S. meetings, or had any direct input into the making of Western Allied strategy.<sup>1044</sup> Lack of Soviet representation on the C.C.S. meant that the Americans had less support in the strategic debate than they otherwise would have had, because the Soviets were strong supporters of a 1942 cross-Channel operation. One reason for this lack of Soviet representation was that no single Russian would be vested with enough authority by Moscow to speak frankly and make decisions on behalf of the Soviet government.<sup>1045</sup> A J.P.S. report of 28 February 1942 said that the Russians would not welcome combined planning like that of the British and Americans.<sup>1046</sup> Also, the Eastern Front was distant and independent from the Western Allied war effort.<sup>1047</sup> In addition, the Russians were not fighting the Japanese.<sup>1048</sup> Major-General Hastings Ismay, Chief Staff Officer to the Minister of Defence, noted that the Soviet Union only needed to be informed of the broad sweep of Western Allied strategy, and the general timing of operations, and vice-versa.<sup>1049</sup> These were all reasonable arguments against a Soviet representative on the C.C.S. However, in coalition warfare each partner could be expected to have a say in

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<sup>1043</sup> NA AIR 19/340, Viscount Halifax to Foreign Office, No. 272, 22 June 1942, p.2; Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.285; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.36; Danchev, *On Specialness*, pp.14-15; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, p.2. The C.C.S. was composed of the members of the American J.C.S. and British C.O.S. committees, along with Field Marshal Sir John Dill as representative of the Minister of Defence, and as Head of the British J.S.M., on the British side, and any necessary planners and experts. Because the C.C.S. was based in Washington, the British C.O.S. were usually unable to attend, so were represented by members of the British delegation in Washington, NA AIR 19/340, Viscount Halifax to Foreign Office, No. 272, 22 June 1942, p.2; Dykes Diary, 7 February 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.102; Churchill to Roosevelt, 1 February 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.339; Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.282, 286, 289; Danchev, *Very Special Relationship*, pp.10-15

<sup>1044</sup> There was a suggestion at ARCADIA for a multilateral Supreme War Council, but this came to nothing, Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.293. Stalin, Foreign Minister Molotov, and the Soviet Ambassadors in Washington and London gave their opinions to the Western Allies about future strategy, but this was indirect.

<sup>1045</sup> Ismay, *Memoirs*, p.246

<sup>1046</sup> NA CAB 84/42, J.P.(42) 208, 'Combined Strategy with Russia', 28th February, 1942, p.1

<sup>1047</sup> Ismay, *Memoirs*, p.246

<sup>1048</sup> Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.293

<sup>1049</sup> Ismay, *Memoirs*, p.246. Marshall noted on 4 September 1942: "... the fact is that the Russians do not desire a place as they proceed more or less independently", Marshall Memorandum to General Surles, 4 September 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.344

decisions about strategy that affected their future, particularly when the ally was playing as significant a role as the Soviet Union was in 1941 and 1942.<sup>1050</sup>

If the Soviet Union had held some degree of direct influence on Western Allied strategy in 1942, such as representation on the C.C.S., it seems very likely that the Soviets would have supported the American-backed plan for SLEDGEHAMMER, because they viewed an Anglo-American landing in France as the most important form of Western Allied aid.<sup>1051</sup> Support for a cross-Channel operation by Soviet strategy-makers in the C.C.S. would have greatly boosted the American voice. With two allies against one, the British would have found it very difficult to continue to resist a cross-Channel operation. However, this was not the case.

### **The Example of Dieppe**

In the summer of 1942 there was a major landing operation on the shores of north-west France, which occurred a month after the decision for TORCH. This was Operation JUBILEE, a large raid on Dieppe on 19 August 1942 involving some 6,000 troops and a large air force commitment. The tactical results of this operation showed the immense difficulty of an invasion of France in 1942, and demonstrated that TORCH was probably the right decision.<sup>1052</sup> There were some indications from the operation that troops could be established ashore, but the overall result of Operation JUBILEE indicated that a 1942 cross-Channel operation would have been a very risky undertaking. Operation JUBILEE was only intended to be a temporary lodgement on enemy territory, but nevertheless it was a large-scale operation, and it encountered many of the problems that SLEDGEHAMMER would have faced had it occurred, so can be used to show the serious risks of a British and American landing in France in 1942.

The Dieppe landing was the brainchild of the C.C.O., Lord Mountbatten. He raised the possibility of an attack on Dieppe in April 1942.<sup>1053</sup> The Dieppe raid was first proposed to the British C.O.S. on the morning of 13 May, as Operation RUTTER, and

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<sup>1050</sup> Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.293

<sup>1051</sup> This Soviet view is very clear from Stalin's correspondence with Churchill and Roosevelt, as seen in Chapter 2.

<sup>1052</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.84

<sup>1053</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.2

they approved it.<sup>1054</sup> The raid was confirmed on 1 June to occur in that month. However, Operation RUTTER was postponed on 5 July, and was cancelled two days later, due primarily to bad weather, although an unpromising training exercise and a successful German fighter-bomber attack on some of the landing vessels probably contributed to the decision.<sup>1055</sup> It was soon decided to remount Operation RUTTER, now to be known as Operation JUBILEE, and the operation was then revived, although the reasons for this and the timing of the decision are very controversial.<sup>1056</sup>

Originally, the Dieppe raid was to have involved six battalions of infantry, airborne troops, and a regiment of tanks.<sup>1057</sup> The outline plan for RUTTER on 13 May stated:

A force of Infantry, Airborne troops and Armoured Fighting Vehicles will land in the area of Dieppe to seize the town and vicinity. This area will be held during daylight while the tasks are carried out. The force will then re-embark.<sup>1058</sup>

The original plan was gradually modified. The planned heavy bombardment by British aircraft was eliminated, naval fire support was reduced, and airborne landings were deleted so that bad weather would not cause the operation to be cancelled. The paratroopers were replaced by Commandos.<sup>1059</sup> The JUBILEE plan was more ambitious, because it was to occur in a shorter time span. Operation JUBILEE was to be a 'one-tide' operation, with disembarkation and re-embarkation to occur in a single

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<sup>1054</sup> NA CAB 79/20, C.O.S.(42) 149th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th May, 1942, at 10.30 a.m., p.3; NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.3; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.300; David Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, London, 1982, p.256

<sup>1055</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.2; Ronald Atkin, *Dieppe 1942: The Jubilee Disaster*, London, 1980, p.34; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.695; Bernard L. Montgomery, *The Memoirs of Field Marshall Montgomery*, London, 1958, p.75; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.177

<sup>1056</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.8. For the debate over why the operation was revived, see: Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, pp.37-38; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.86; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.192-193; Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited*, p.xiv; Ken Ford, *Dieppe 1942: Prelude to D-Day*, Botley, 2003, pp.9, 11; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.696; Villa, *Unauthorized Action*, pp.35, 46, 48, 60, 72, 163, 189, 192; Brian Loring Villa, 'Mountbatten, the British Chiefs of Staff, and Approval of the Dieppe Raid', *JMH*, Vol. 54, No. 2, April 1990, pp.211-212, 222-223; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.89

<sup>1057</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.93

<sup>1058</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.3; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.92

<sup>1059</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, pp.6, 8; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, pp.177, 183. Heavy bombardment was eliminated because the Air Force Commander felt it would alert the Germans, and the Military Commander felt destroyed buildings would hinder the movement of tanks. Airborne operations were cancelled because bad weather might prevent them.

tide, with troops to land at the main beach at 05:20, and to be re-embarked at 11:00. RUTTER was to have been a two-tide operation. Despite the change from two-tide to one-tide, the objectives of the raid did not change significantly.<sup>1060</sup> There were eight assault points located at Dieppe and on either side of the town.<sup>1061</sup> Before dawn there were to be surprise attacks by Commandos, targeting a number of batteries to the east and west of the town.<sup>1062</sup> The frontal assault was to occur at 05:20 in daylight, 30 minutes after the attacks on the batteries, and was to be carried out by two battalions with tank support.<sup>1063</sup> This was to be the first time tanks were used in an amphibious assault.<sup>1064</sup>

The Dieppe raid was officially a reconnaissance in force, which was intended to capture and hold Dieppe, before the landing force returned to England.<sup>1065</sup> It was hoped that the raid would reveal much about how to carry out a full-scale invasion, and to test coastal defences.<sup>1066</sup> It was also hoped that the raid would result in large air combats, causing the *Luftwaffe* heavy losses.<sup>1067</sup> It seems that there were a number of unstated reasons for the operation. It was hoped that the raid would give the untried Canadians some battle experience. Improving Canadian civilian morale was probably also an aim. Inter-service cooperation was to be tested in battle conditions.<sup>1068</sup> The stated tactical objectives of the operation were: installations at nearby St. Aubin airfield; rail facilities; German headquarters; barracks; ammunition and petrol dumps; coastal defences; radar and power stations; gasworks; the post office (which was also

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<sup>1060</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.7; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, pp.15, 177

<sup>1061</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.4

<sup>1062</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.9; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.5

<sup>1063</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.8

<sup>1064</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11

<sup>1065</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.86; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.396; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.695

<sup>1066</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.33; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.86; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.396; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.65; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.695

<sup>1067</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.93. However, there was not a single mention of this objective in any Operation Orders or planning documents for JUBILEE, even though the Combined Report saw it as one of two "pre-eminent" purposes of JUBILEE, NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.33; Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited*, p.186. Instead, the R.A.F. was intended to protect Allied naval and land forces, and to delay the movement of enemy reinforcements, Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited*, p.186

<sup>1068</sup> Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, p.29

the main Telephone Exchange); dock facilities; and the seizure of invasion barges in the harbour. The Allies also hoped to capture prisoners and documents.<sup>1069</sup>

The Allied forces involved were quite considerable for a raid. The main part of the force was the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, with 4,961 Officers and Other Ranks. 50 American Rangers took part, and the rest of the landing force was composed of 1,507 British Commandos.<sup>1070</sup> Commanding the ground forces in the raid was Canadian Major-General John Roberts.<sup>1071</sup> British and American air cover included three American fighter squadrons and 56 RAF fighter squadrons, along with seven RAF light bomber and fighter-bomber squadrons, one American heavy bombardment group, and four tactical reconnaissance squadrons.<sup>1072</sup> In support of the land forces were numerous light naval forces, including eight Hunt class destroyers, with four providing direct support for the initial assault wave, and other smaller warships. There were thirteen separate naval groups, comprising 252 ships and landing craft in total, not including minesweepers.<sup>1073</sup> No capital ships were made available for the operation, because of the risk of air attack when operating in the Channel.<sup>1074</sup>

The Dieppe area was defended by a regiment of the 302. *Infanterie-Division*, a second-rate unit stripped of many of its German troops due to the demands of the campaign on the Eastern Front, and with much foreign and obsolete equipment.<sup>1075</sup> However, it was well entrenched, and this to some extent negated the standard of troops and equipment.<sup>1076</sup> There was also strong artillery in the Dieppe region.<sup>1077</sup>

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<sup>1069</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, pp.1, 3; Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited*, p.124; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.695

<sup>1070</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.11; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.397; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.484; Montgomery, *Memoirs*, p.75; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.3

<sup>1071</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.95

<sup>1072</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.11; Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, p.77

<sup>1073</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.11; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, pp.3, 12

<sup>1074</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.24; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.45

<sup>1075</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, pp.54-55; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.194; Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, p.28; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.16. The German nationals were replaced by Poles, Czechs, Belgians and Russians, Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, pp.54-55; Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, p.28; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.16. Three of the four army prisoners taken to the United Kingdom by the Allies on 19 August 1942 were Poles, NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.35

<sup>1076</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, pp.54-55; Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, p.28; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.16

Aside from the defenders at Dieppe itself, there were significant German reinforcements nearby. The 10. *Panzer-Division* was only four hours drive away, at Amiens.<sup>1078</sup> The beach at Dieppe was a natural anti-tank obstacle due to its slope of 15 to 20 degrees, and the fact that it was composed of stones, boulders and rubble, with the shingle slowing the tanks on the beach.<sup>1079</sup> However, to make it more formidable the Germans built anti-tank barricades, and also dug an anti-tank ditch.<sup>1080</sup> The German defenders were assisted greatly by the topography of the Dieppe area. Dieppe was located in a horseshoe, with high headlands commanding the approach to the port and beach, and the Germans sited guns on and in these headlands.<sup>1081</sup> The road from the beach up to the town was difficult for tanks, and they also had to negotiate the seawall.<sup>1082</sup> The conditions, and the number and quality of the German defenders at Dieppe was typical of the Channel coast in the area where Allied air cover could be provided, and would have been similar to those encountered during SLEDGEHAMMER. In the air the Germans could call on just two fighter wings, *Jagdgeschwader 2* and *Jagdgeschwader 26*, comprising twenty squadrons. There were also a number of twin-engined bomber groups available in Holland, which were in flying range of the Dieppe area.

The operation did not go according to plan. There was a chance encounter between the Dieppe flotilla and a German coastal convoy in the hours before the landing, and a naval battle began at 03:47 between the two forces.<sup>1083</sup> However, despite this encounter the landings achieved surprise.<sup>1084</sup> The troops came ashore at the main beach at Dieppe at around 05:20, but quickly became bogged down on the beaches.<sup>1085</sup> Some previously undisclosed gun batteries in overlooking headlands

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<sup>1077</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.57

<sup>1078</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.90; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.16

<sup>1079</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.24; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.151

<sup>1080</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.12

<sup>1081</sup> Villa, *Unauthorized Action*, p.7; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.93

<sup>1082</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.153

<sup>1083</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.12; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, pp.3, 4, 17, 18. On 20 August 1942 Hughes-Hallett admitted he got the warning, but several weeks later in a post-raid report he denied it.

<sup>1084</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.34

<sup>1085</sup> Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.701

caused serious problems for the landing force.<sup>1086</sup> Most of the main force of Canadian troops did not get past the Dieppe waterfront.<sup>1087</sup> The tanks of the Calgary Regiment were almost all halted on the beach, although three made it into the town.<sup>1088</sup> However, on the flanks the British Commandos enjoyed more success, eliminating some batteries and suppressing the crews of others.<sup>1089</sup> Some Canadian forces also landed on the flanks, and a few of them managed to push inland. At 09:40 the order was passed that evacuation of the main force would begin at 11:00, and this evacuation had concluded by 12:20, when Hughes-Hallett signalled: “If no further evacuation possible, withdraw.”<sup>1090</sup> At 13:58 German artillery fell silent at Dieppe, signalling the end of the land fighting.<sup>1091</sup>

When the last Allied troops had returned to southern England, it was clear that the Dieppe raid had been a very costly tactical failure. 907 Canadians were killed, including 56 Officers and 851 Other Ranks, 1,874 were taken prisoner, and several hundred were wounded.<sup>1092</sup> Sixteen British Commandos were killed, 43 wounded, and 188 missing.<sup>1093</sup> Of the 50 American Rangers involved in the operation, six were wounded and seven missing.<sup>1094</sup> In simple terms, of 6,086 men engaged, 3,623, or 59.5 per cent, became casualties.<sup>1095</sup> The Germans reported capturing 2,195 prisoners in total, 29 Churchill tanks, seven scout cars, a personnel truck, 1,300 rifles, 170 machine-guns, 42 anti-tank rifles, 70 light mortars and 60 heavy mortars.<sup>1096</sup> 29 Churchill tanks were committed on the kilometre long invasion beach, but most were

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<sup>1086</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, p.22; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.699

<sup>1087</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, pp.22-23, 25-27; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.397

<sup>1088</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, pp.23-24

<sup>1089</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, pp.14-17; Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, p.397

<sup>1090</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, p.28; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, pp.701-702; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, pp.263, 269

<sup>1091</sup> Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.270

<sup>1092</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.251; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.271

<sup>1093</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, p.35

<sup>1094</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, p.35; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.484

<sup>1095</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, p.36

<sup>1096</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.253

stopped on the beach by anti-tank fire or the shingle.<sup>1097</sup> The German army lost just 132 killed and missing, and 201 wounded.<sup>1098</sup> The Allied losses suffered at Dieppe showed the folly of a cross-Channel operation in 1942, because they were suffered at the hands of a weakened German division, without the need for significant reinforcements.

Allied naval losses were also heavy. Some 33 landing craft of various types were lost.<sup>1099</sup> A British fast steam gunboat, SGB9, was disabled by German fighter-bombers, but was repaired, the destroyer *Slazak* was hit and superficially damaged by a bomb, and the destroyer *Berkeley* was hit by bombs and sunk.<sup>1100</sup> The Germans lost submarine chaser 1404, and the German navy lost 78 dead and missing, along with 35 wounded.<sup>1101</sup>

The air fighting over Dieppe on 19 August also went very much in Germany's favour, despite the large number of Allied aircraft involved. The German fighter units first appeared over the bridgehead at 06:56, and throughout the day they enjoyed great success. Around 230 German fighters were involved, flying three to six sorties each.<sup>1102</sup> German bombers first appeared at 10:00, and they attacked shipping throughout the day at Dieppe, and as the Allied landing force withdrew across the Channel to southern English ports.<sup>1103</sup> The Allied air force provided constant air cover over the beachhead and invasion convoy, and flew 2,614 sorties, including 2,399 by fighters.<sup>1104</sup> 106 Allied aircraft were lost, including 88 fighters, ten reconnaissance aircraft, and eight bombers or smoke-laying aircraft. 14 aircraft were written off, and

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<sup>1097</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 95, The Dieppe Raid, 19th August, 1942. Contemporary appreciations by Headquarters, *Luftflotte 3*, p.2; NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.24; Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.174; Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited*, p.10

<sup>1098</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.254

<sup>1099</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.36; William Whitehead, *Dieppe 1942: Echoes of Disaster*, St. Martin's Press, 1980, p.12

<sup>1100</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, pp.26, 29; Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, pp.85, 90

<sup>1101</sup> Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.254

<sup>1102</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 95, The Dieppe Raid, 19th August, 1942. Contemporary appreciations by Headquarters, *Luftflotte 3*, p.3

<sup>1103</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, pp.31, 33; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.702. Ford says the first German bombers appeared at 09:00, Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, p.80

<sup>1104</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.33; Whitaker & Whitaker, *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, p.144

81 aircrew were killed, including 67 pilots.<sup>1105</sup> The Germans lost 25 bombers and 23 fighters to all causes, and 16 bombers and eight fighters were damaged, although the British believed that they had destroyed 91 (including 44 bombers), probably destroyed 44, and damaged 148.<sup>1106</sup> Within a day all German material losses had been made good, with 27 bombers and 18 fighters immediately dispatched from aircraft forwarding centres.<sup>1107</sup> Although the German losses of 19 August itself could quickly be replaced, the wastage inflicted on the *Luftwaffe* on that day could not long be sustained without flying in reinforcements from either the Eastern Front or the Mediterranean.<sup>1108</sup> Thus within a few days of air fighting over the SLEDGEHAMMER beaches, the Allies could count on securing some degree of air superiority through sheer weight of numbers, although Allied losses in gaining this superiority would be heavy.

Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory was very happy with the result of the Dieppe air fighting, claiming it to be “the greatest air victory of the war”, and believed his German counterpart would be replaced.<sup>1109</sup> However, his confidence was based on the over-optimistic British estimates of German aircraft losses. Dieppe demonstrated that in the air, SLEDGEHAMMER would probably have been a costly operation, even if air superiority was achieved. The Western Allied view of SLEDGEHAMMER probably being successful for them in the air even if it failed on land was disproved by the heavy aircraft losses suffered in Operation JUBILEE.<sup>1110</sup>

Although the Dieppe raid was a very costly tactical failure, there were indications from the raid that a successful invasion of north-west France was possible in 1942. Some Canadian troops made it into the town itself, but they were few in number,

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<sup>1105</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, p.36; Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.208; Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited*, p.188; Ford, *Dieppe 1942*, p.91

<sup>1106</sup> NA CAB 98/22, ‘Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid’, October 1942, p.33; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.271. The *Luftwaffe* lost 104 personnel dead and missing, and 58 wounded, Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, p.254

<sup>1107</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 95, The Dieppe Raid, 19th August, 1942. Contemporary appreciations by Headquarters, *Luftflotte 3*, p.3

<sup>1108</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 95, The Dieppe Raid, 19th August, 1942. Contemporary appreciations by Headquarters, *Luftflotte 3*, p.3

<sup>1109</sup> Campbell, *Dieppe Revisited*, p.187

<sup>1110</sup> For the Western Allied view on SLEDGEHAMMER resulting in a large air battle on terms favourable to the Western Allies, see: NA CAB 84/43, J.P.(42) 289, ‘Operation “SLEDGEHAMMER” – Aide Memoire and Draft Directive’, 17th March, 1942, p.1

generally in groups of less than 20.<sup>1111</sup> Much more significantly, on the western edge of the beachhead the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada pushed inland as far as Petit Appeville, 3.6 km from the coast.<sup>1112</sup> Similarly, elements of No. 3 Commando at "Yellow 2 Beach", north-east of Dieppe, pushed inland to the coastal road without meeting opposition.<sup>1113</sup> The other Commandos enjoyed similar success on the flanks.<sup>1114</sup> This shows that a landing on an open beach could succeed, and troops could push inland successfully. However, it must be remembered that at Dieppe the Western Allies encountered only a single poor quality infantry unit. The nearby reinforcements, including the 10. *Panzer-Division*, failed to arrive in time.

At sea, Dieppe had shown that an invasion force could sail across the Channel unhindered under the cover of darkness. The Allies had been able to build up a significant landing force in southern England, although German suspicions were aroused. However, none of the German intelligence sources had been able to detect the 6,000 troops and hundreds of ships. This suggests that the build-up for a cross-Channel invasion in 1942 probably could have been done successfully, although of course build-up for that operation would have involved many more forces and more shipping.

The raid on Dieppe demonstrated the great potential risks of a cross-Channel operation in 1942 both on land and in the air. Heavy losses were suffered in troops, equipment and aircraft, and most of the troops involved failed to get off the beaches. Historians rightly use Dieppe as an indication that an invasion of France by the Allies in 1942 was close to impossible.<sup>1115</sup> The C.I.G.S. himself is reported to have said: "It is a lesson to the people who are clamouring for the invasion of France!"<sup>1116</sup> Although there were some indications from the Dieppe raid that Allied troops could get ashore and push inland, the overall result of the landing demonstrated how difficult a full-scale 1942 cross-Channel operation could have been, justifying the British argument.

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<sup>1111</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, p.28; Whitehead, *Dieppe* 1942, p.123

<sup>1112</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, pp.20, 27; Whitehead, *Dieppe* 1942, p.109. Whitehead says 2.4 km, but the official report says 2 ¼ miles (3.6 km)

<sup>1113</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, pp.14-15

<sup>1114</sup> NA CAB 98/22, 'Combined Report on the Dieppe Raid', October 1942, pp.14-17

<sup>1115</sup> Collier, *The Lion and the Eagle*, p.355; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, p.30; Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1997, p.136

<sup>1116</sup> Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, p.294

Operation SLEDGEHAMMER met many of the criteria necessary for the first major Anglo-American operation of the war, and was strongly supported by the U.S. Army. However, the British believed that it failed to meet the most basic criterion, namely being militarily feasible. Dieppe demonstrated that their argument had been a sensible one. If SLEDGEHAMMER had occurred and been defeated, it would not only fail to boost civilian and government morale in Britain and the United States and shore up Churchill's and Roosevelt's positions, it would have worsened both situations. The superior British command structure allowed them to argue successfully against a cross-Channel operation at the crucial summer 1942 Anglo-American conferences, and as a result only one option was left to the Western Allies, Operation TORCH.

### **Conclusion**

Because of the dire Allied military situation in all theatres of war in the months after Pearl Harbor, the resulting British and American morale and domestic political problems, and the precarious military position of the Soviet Union, Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt strongly desired a successful major Anglo-American military operation in 1942. The Western Allied military leaders then had to reach consensus on which operation to undertake from a variety of options. There were four serious contenders, including an Anglo-American invasion of Norway, a cross-Channel invasion of north-west France, an operation to French North-West Africa, or sending U.S. Army reinforcements to serve alongside the British in the Middle East. Other less serious options were also discussed by the British and Americans in 1942, including the Americans switching their focus to a Pacific-first strategy, sending American and British army and air units to operate alongside the Soviets in Russia, occupying the Iberian peninsula, carrying out landing operations in the Atlantic Islands, or increasing the Anglo-American bomber offensive to the point that it became a war-winning Second Front. These operations were all the subject of Anglo-American discussion in 1942, but each of them was eventually eliminated because they failed to meet the criteria necessary for the first large-scale combined Anglo-American operation of the war. The only 1942 operation that met the criteria, and for which consensus could be reached by the British and American leadership, was Operation TORCH.

## **Chapter 5: The Military Reasons for TORCH**

TORCH emerged from the Anglo-American strategic debate of 1942 for a number of military reasons, which made it the most acceptable operation to all of the British and American leaders. The most notable military reason for TORCH being chosen was that it was militarily feasible, and was more likely to succeed than the other options. However, there were a number of other military reasons that also made it more attractive. As seen in Chapter 1, an operation to West or North-West Africa had long been under consideration by the British and Americans, and was popular with Churchill and Roosevelt, because they felt it offered a number of practical military benefits, particularly for the maritime war and the North African campaign. Other practical military reasons for choosing TORCH included: providing necessary combat experience for American troops against a less dangerous enemy and gaining more support from neutral nations for the Allied cause. TORCH was ultimately chosen from the various options as the first large-scale combined Anglo-American military operation in the Second World War for very sound military reasons, because it could positively contribute to the British and American war effort.

Before the more obvious and practical military reasons for TORCH being chosen are dealt with, some less obvious military influences will be outlined, including the degree to which British and American strategic preferences, and the preferences of Churchill and Roosevelt, affected the decision for TORCH. These preferences were largely based on military factors. TORCH suited the strategic preferences of the Prime Minister, the President, and the British military, and this was an important reason for the operation prevailing.

### **The British and American Ways of War**

The British and Americans had distinctly different theories on how war should be fought, and in World War II they sought to implement their own theories, because each side felt it was advocating the best way to defeat Germany. This was a military influence on TORCH being chosen because the theories were primarily based on military, not political, thinking. These theories were partly based on available

American and British resources, as well as being a legacy of previous conflicts.<sup>1117</sup> Historically, the Americans had preferred using massed forces and utilizing the quickest and most direct route to victory. The British historically favoured a peripheral and maritime strategy, and because they had predominantly been on the defensive since 1939 with few resources and troops available, they preferred more cautious operations in 1942.<sup>1118</sup> Operation TORCH, as an operation on the periphery, suited the British way of war, and given that the British C.O.S. had ruled against SLEDGEHAMMER in July 1942, it is unsurprising that the operation chosen by the Western Allies bore the hallmarks of traditional British strategic thinking.<sup>1119</sup>

The British felt that their way of war was the safest and best way to defeat the Germans in World War II. The British way of war involved a predominantly maritime strategy, which used sea power and mobility to attack a numerically superior continental enemy on the peripheries, avoiding a potentially costly head-on confrontation in Europe.<sup>1120</sup> A continental ally was very important to the British way of war, because the ally could engage the bulk of the enemy's forces.<sup>1121</sup> British troops could be committed at the main point of the fighting, but the British hope was that another front would provide the decisive victory, or would at least wear down the enemy before large forces were committed to the main front.<sup>1122</sup> It was a strategy of caution, designed to secure victory with the minimum of casualties, regardless of how long it took to do so. TORCH suited this way of war because it was an operation that

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<sup>1117</sup> Adrian R. Lewis, 'The Failure of Allied Planning and Doctrine for Operation Overlord: The Case of Minefield and Obstacle Clearance', *JMH*, Vol. 62, No. 4, October 1998, pp.787-788; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.23. For example, World War I had a significant impact on national approaches to strategy in World War II, Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.696

<sup>1118</sup> Secretary Stimson summarized his view of the two ways of war in a letter to Roosevelt on 10 August 1943: "The American staff believes that only by massing the immense vigor and power of the American and British nations [to attack the Germans in France] can Germany be really defeated and the war brought to a real victory. On the other side, the British theory ... is that Germany can be beaten by a series of attritions in northern Italy, in the eastern Mediterranean, in Greece, in the Balkans, in Rumania, and other satellite countries", Stimson letter to Roosevelt, 10 August 1943, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, pp.436-437

<sup>1119</sup> Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.109. There is debate over the validity of the existence of a British and American way of war, but I consider that they did exist, and were factors in the 1942 strategic debate. For details on the British way of war and whether it existed or not, see: Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.xiii-ix; Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', pp.171-173, 175, 179-180, 186

<sup>1120</sup> Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', p.171; Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.679; Reynolds, 'American Strategic History and Doctrines: A Reconsideration', pp.182, 185

<sup>1121</sup> Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', p.175; Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.679

<sup>1122</sup> Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', p.601; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.27

was intended to engage much weaker forces than those that would be encountered in France or Norway.

Caution shaped the British way of war for centuries prior to World War II.<sup>1123</sup> However, in World War I Britain did not fight as it usually did, and became heavily committed to the main fighting front in France. A number of options were tried on the peripheries, in the Middle East, Gallipoli, and elsewhere, as the British sought to win the war in those areas. Because of the slaughter in France, World War I seemed to confirm that the traditional British way of warfare remained the best.<sup>1124</sup> In World War II the British had not forgotten their World War I experiences and the heavy casualties of trench warfare, and this made them wary of a premature return to France, and more eager to use a peripheral strategy.<sup>1125</sup> Some in the U.S. administration were certain that this was the case, most notably Secretary Stimson, who made a number of comments to President Roosevelt about British memories of World War I shaping their preferred strategy in World War II.<sup>1126</sup> After the war General Marshall said that the British “never forgot those casualties” on the Somme.<sup>1127</sup>

Heavy British defeats in France, Norway, North Africa, Greece and Crete in the early years of World War II also affected their strategy-making throughout the remainder of the conflict, and made TORCH more appealing than the riskier Operation

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<sup>1123</sup> The Seven Years' War of 1756 to 1763 is seen as the best example of the British way of war, when Prussia was the Continental ally, and sea power was very effectively used by the British. The Napoleonic Wars were another good example of this type of warfare, Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', pp.171, 175-176; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.26

<sup>1124</sup> Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', p.601; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.27

<sup>1125</sup> Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance*, p.18; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.4; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.40; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.1; Gaddis Smith, 'The Nature of Wartime Diplomacy', in Divine (ed.), *The Age of Insecurity*, p.141; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.77; Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.106; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.27-28; Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.150; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.38; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.93; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, Bloomington, 1973, p.320

<sup>1126</sup> Secretary Stimson stated to Roosevelt on 10 August 1943: "the shadows of Passchendale and Dunkerque still hang too heavily over the imagination of the British", referring specifically to Alanbrooke and Churchill, Stimson letter to Roosevelt, 10 August 1943, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.436; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.110. For similar comments see: Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.423; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.21

<sup>1127</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.437. On one occasion when Marshall was urging a cross-Channel operation to Churchill, the Prime Minister's scientific advisor, Frederick Lindemann, said to the American: "It's no use – you are arguing against the casualties on the Somme", Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.27

SLEDGEHAMMER.<sup>1128</sup> Marshall said after the war the "... quick defeat of their few troops in northern France and Belgium had left an indelible imprint on their minds and in affecting their reactions".<sup>1129</sup> Similarly, after the war Portal stated: "You must remember that our army had met the Germans at their height, and after they had been pushed around, they began to feel in their heart that they weren't the equals of the Germans".<sup>1130</sup> For a British Army scarred not only by memories of severe World War I casualties, but by two years of regular military defeats inflicted by Germany, the prospect of carrying out a cross-Channel operation in 1942 for which they lacked resources, in the face of a strong German army in France, was daunting. A peripheral strategy and Operation TORCH was much more appealing, because despite the possibility that the Vichy French might fight, Operation TORCH was less risky than SLEDGEHAMMER.

The British peripheral strategy emerged after the fall of France, with Britain having lost its continental ally.<sup>1131</sup> A C.O.S. memorandum of 4 September 1940 argued for a peripheral approach, to wear down the Axis.<sup>1132</sup> It was outlined to the Americans on a number of occasions in 1940 and 1941.<sup>1133</sup> After the war Alanbrooke argued that during his time as C.I.G.S. he followed a peripheral strategy to defeat Germany, in which TORCH was an important first step:

... from the moment I took over the job of C.I.G.S. [in December 1941]  
I was convinced that the sequence of events should be:  
a) liberate North Africa  
b) open up Mediterranean and score a million tons of shipping  
c) threaten Southern Europe by eliminating Italy

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<sup>1128</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.588; Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.4; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.41; Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.106; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.29-30; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.40; Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.150

<sup>1129</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.437

<sup>1130</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.42

<sup>1131</sup> Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', p.600

<sup>1132</sup> Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History*, p.127

<sup>1133</sup> A U.S. military delegation in London had been informed of this strategy in late-August 1940, Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History*, p.127; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.44. The British peripheral approach was outlined to the Americans at the ABC-1 talks in spring 1941 in Washington. Churchill also briefly outlined it to Roosevelt on 25 July 1941, Churchill to Roosevelt, 25 July 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.224; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.62. Churchill wrote of first "intensifying the blockade and propaganda", then bombing, and if necessary, landing troops in occupied Europe. This strategy was again presented to the Americans at Placentia Bay in August 1941, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.65-66

d) then, and only then, if Russia is still holding, liberate France and invade Germany.<sup>1134</sup>

Alanbrooke's claim has been strongly challenged, with Danchev saying his strategic vision "was exaggerated in hindsight".<sup>1135</sup> However, there was some truth in what Alanbrooke stated, because in 1942 the British C.O.S., led by Alanbrooke, did focus on capturing all of North Africa and securing the Mediterranean. Whether the strategy was prepared as far in advance as Alanbrooke later claimed is debatable.<sup>1136</sup>

The British felt that an invasion of France could only occur after Germany had been weakened by economic blockade, strategic bombing, and commando raids; Italy had been removed from the war; the Soviets were sustained with supplies; European resistance movements were supported and strengthened; and strategic bases were secured, for example in the Mediterranean. With the enemy badly weakened, and its morale hopefully cracked, the final invasion of France might not require too many forces.<sup>1137</sup>

There were very practical military reasons for Britain's advocacy of a peripheral strategy in 1942. In the early years of the war Britain's lack of manpower required the British way of war and a peripheral strategy, until enough American troops were trained to allow a more direct approach.<sup>1138</sup> However, even when American troops and resources were available, the British did not abandon their cautious stance in the war with Germany.<sup>1139</sup> Britain's lack of manpower became particularly apparent after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, because they then had more commitments in

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<sup>1134</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.281-282

<sup>1135</sup> Danchev, 'Great Britain: The Indirect Strategy', p.17. See also: Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.28-29

<sup>1136</sup> Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.28-29

<sup>1137</sup> Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', pp.600-601; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.66; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.6-7; Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.28, 38-39; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.74

<sup>1138</sup> Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.106. This was a consistent message from Churchill to his allies. See: Text of Personal and Secret Message from Mr. Churchill to M. Stalin, Received on July 21, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.14; His Excellency Monsieur Joseph Stalin, September 21, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.27; Marshall Memorandum, 'Notes of Meeting at the White House with the President and the British Prime Minister Presiding', 23 December 1941, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.33; Maisky, *Memoirs*, p.276

<sup>1139</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.38. This was clear in Churchill's strategy papers of December 1941, which emphasised opening the Mediterranean and securing North Africa, and an eventual small-scale cross-Channel operation, Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.294-298; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.85

distant theatres of war.<sup>1140</sup> It was natural for a nation in Britain's position in World War II, as a traditionally nautical nation with limited manpower stretched by the demands of a global war, to avoid heavy manpower losses while exploiting its maritime power to attack the weak points of its enemies.<sup>1141</sup>

The American way of war was the antithesis of the British. It involved using weight of numbers and resources in direct attacks at the main fighting front, to overwhelm the enemy.<sup>1142</sup> In World War II this meant a landing in France and a subsequent drive into Germany. The United States felt that its way of war would defeat Germany quickly, and dismissed the British way of war as dispersing forces. The American way of war was much closer to Soviet thinking than the British way of war.<sup>1143</sup>

The American way of war emerged from the Civil War.<sup>1144</sup> World War I seemed to confirm the American direct approach and concentration of troops, because after they entered the war the large-scale offensives they conducted were generally successful.<sup>1145</sup> In that conflict the U.S. Army used a strategy of reliance on superior numbers and resources.<sup>1146</sup>

In World War II the U.S. Army wanted to concentrate forces for a cross-Channel operation as soon as practicable, to confront the enemy head-on and achieve a

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<sup>1140</sup> Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', pp.679, 696

<sup>1141</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.7; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, pp.25-26

<sup>1142</sup> Lewis, 'The Failure of Allied Planning and Doctrine for Operation Overlord: The Case of Minefield and Obstacle Clearance', p.787; Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.107; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.25; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, pp.93-94; Weigley, 'The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell', p.46. The U.S. Army leaders were disciples of von Clausewitz, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.113, 198

<sup>1143</sup> The Soviets and Americans found common ground in the doctrine of concentrating forces for victory, Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.116

<sup>1144</sup> Weigley, 'The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell', p.45. In the Civil War large-scale offensives by the Union Army proved to be successful in a continental policy, using a direct approach and large armies to overwhelm the enemy and remove entirely its capacity to resist, Reynolds, 'American Strategic History and Doctrines: A Reconsideration', p.185; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.41; Weigley, 'The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell', pp.39, 45; Russell F. Weigley, 'American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World War', in Peter Paret, (ed.) *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986, p.429; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, p.129

<sup>1145</sup> Matloff, 'Wilmot Revisited', p.115; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.41; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.94; Weigley, 'American Strategy from its Beginnings through the First World War', p.696; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, pp.202-203

<sup>1146</sup> Weigley, 'American Strategy from its Beginnings through the First World War', p.440

decisive victory.<sup>1147</sup> A cross-Channel operation provided the shortest route to “the center of our chief enemy’s heart”.<sup>1148</sup> The American desire became very apparent in the 1942 debates over Western Allied strategy, as Marshall and the U.S. Army pushed strongly for SLEDGEHAMMER or ROUND-UP.<sup>1149</sup> The highly industrialised United States had vast resources of men and material, and once it fully mobilized was capable of providing enough troops and equipment to undertake any operation it desired.<sup>1150</sup> Thus ambitious military operations aimed at the heart of the enemy were realistic, and the Americans could be much more offensively-minded in 1942 than their British allies.

As early as November 1940 Admiral Stark, the CNO, advocated defeating Germany by large-scale ground operations.<sup>1151</sup> However, in 1941 Roosevelt wanted to carry out smaller scale expeditions, such as landings in North-West Africa, and the President generally supported a strategy similar to the British peripheral strategy.<sup>1152</sup> His army planners disliked this dispersion of the few poorly trained and badly equipped American troops available at that time, and instead wanted to build up a large expeditionary force for a single massive invasion of Europe, to result in a decisive battle: the ‘single thrust’ approach.<sup>1153</sup> The U.S. Army’s contribution to the Victory Program of September 1941 disagreed with the British that German morale would eventually collapse, and instead concluded that American troops would have to be deployed in the Atlantic Islands, Africa and Europe, to achieve victory.<sup>1154</sup> In this program there was a U.S. Army plan that aimed for a 1943 cross-Channel

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<sup>1147</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.7

<sup>1148</sup> Stimson Memorandum to Roosevelt, 19 June 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.421

<sup>1149</sup> Matloff, ‘Wilmot Revisited’, p.107

<sup>1150</sup> Grigg, *Prejudice and Judgment*, p.365; Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, pp.679, 685; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.23; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.41. The U.S. system had an emphasis on “‘industrial’ production of firepower”, confronting the enemy with as much firepower as possible, Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-1945*, Westport, 1982, pp.46, 167. In the American Victory Program of September 1941 the U.S. Army sought eight million men and 215 divisions, Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.28; Weigley, ‘The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell’, pp.51-52. The reality was that the U.S. Army never actually expanded to the size it could have in terms of combat troops. In the event only around 90 divisions were ever mobilized, although this was still many more than Britain had, van Creveld, *Fighting Power*, p.46; Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.700

<sup>1151</sup> Matloff, ‘Wilmot Revisited’, p.107; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.78

<sup>1152</sup> Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.69

<sup>1153</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.69-70

<sup>1154</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.68

operation.<sup>1155</sup> In March and April 1942, President Roosevelt was convinced by the U.S. Army to support the American way of war and a cross-Channel operation, and he consequently approved the SLEDGEHAMMER plan. However, despite this temporary support for the U.S. Army doctrine, at heart he remained a supporter of the British way of war, and he turned back to it in the summer, which was very significant to the TORCH decision.

The U.S. Army and Navy had a strong dislike of a North-West Africa operation largely because of their strategic preferences. On 13 July 1942 General Marshall told Lieutenant General Eisenhower “GYMNAST would be indecisive and a heavy drain on our resources and if we undertake it we would nowhere be acting decisively against any of our enemies”.<sup>1156</sup> However, with their preferred cross-Channel operation ruled out, as well as the Pacific-first option, they had to decide on another operation. One reason TORCH prevailed was because the American military leaders saw it as the least diversionary of the remaining operations, such as sending American troops to the Middle East. After the war General Marshall recalled that on the morning of 24 July he sat down and wrote the GYMNAST memorandum thinking “... what was the least harmful diversion?” King accepted without argument the resulting memorandum advocating a North-West Africa operation.<sup>1157</sup> At the midday C.C.S. meeting on that day Marshall stated that if ROUND-UP “becomes impracticable of successful execution, GYMNAST as a combined operation seems the best alternative”.<sup>1158</sup> Thus with regard to the American way of war and dislike of diversionary operations, Marshall saw an operation to North-West Africa as the best alternative to a cross-Channel operation.

### **British focus on the Mediterranean and North Africa**

The firm British focus on the war in the Mediterranean and North Africa contributed to TORCH being chosen as the first major Anglo-American operation of the war. Their focus on the region was primarily for military reasons. After German occupation of France and Italian entry into the war in summer 1940, and once the

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<sup>1155</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69

<sup>1156</sup> Marshall to Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, 13 July 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.274

<sup>1157</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.581

<sup>1158</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 32nd Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 24th July, 1942, at 12 noon, p.2

threat of a German invasion of Britain had subsided in the autumn, the British government became predominantly focused on events and operations in the Mediterranean theatre and North Africa, with Churchill seeing it as an offensive theatre of war, and the only place where the British Army could engage Axis ground forces.<sup>1159</sup> Many British resources were sent to the region between summer 1940 and 1942, and it became Britain's major overseas commitment. This British focus on the Mediterranean theatre and North African campaign meant that they were very happy to see further operations there in 1942, such as Operation TORCH.<sup>1160</sup>

A vital consideration in British strategy-making, and an important reason for their focus on the Mediterranean and North Africa, was the Empire, and it has been argued that TORCH was preferred by the British because it would secure North Africa and help protect their imperial interests.<sup>1161</sup> Secretary Stimson wrote to President Roosevelt on 25 July 1942 that the British, although saying they wanted to defeat Germany and keep Russia in the war, were "... equally if not more insistent upon a present attempt to preserve [their] empire in the Middle East".<sup>1162</sup>

However, the British did not want to defend the Middle East simply due to imperialism. They had very sound practical military reasons for ensuring all of North Africa and the Middle East did not fall into Axis hands. The British feared defeat in these areas because they did not want to lose Gibraltar, Egypt, and the oil of the

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<sup>1159</sup> Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History*, pp.126-129; Farrell, 'Yes, Prime Minister', p.606; Lawlor, *Churchill and the Politics of War, 1940-1941*, p.118. Secretary of State for War Anthony Eden recalled after the war that one night in June 1940 he and the C.I.G.S., Dill, "agreed that it was in North Africa that our fighting must be done", Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.124. Howard argued that Britain fought in North Africa not as part of a way of war, but because it was the only place where it could fight, Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', p.180

<sup>1160</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.16

<sup>1161</sup> Ben-Moshe argues that TORCH "was to prevent the loss of British control over the Middle East" Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History*, p.194; Parker, 'Churchill and Consensus', p.565. Some Americans, for example Ingersoll and Baldwin, felt the peripheral strategy was because the British wanted to protect their Empire and eventually dominate the Balkans, Baldwin, *Great Mistakes*, pp.24-25; John D. Millett, 'World War II: The Post-Mortem Begins', *PSQ*, Vol. 61, No. 3, September 1946, p.330

<sup>1162</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.21. Likewise, Eisenhower wrote on 28 January 1943: "I am not so incredibly naïve that I do not realize that Britishers instinctively approach every military problem from the viewpoint of the Empire ...", Eisenhower to Thomas Troy Handy, 28 January 1943, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, II, p.928

Middle East, which was especially valuable to them.<sup>1163</sup> The Mediterranean Sea, along with the Suez Canal, was vital as the lifeline to the British Empire in India and the Far East.<sup>1164</sup> Also, in 1942 Egypt and the Middle East served as barriers to a potential German advance from North Africa or the Caucasus into India. The British equated occupying North-West Africa with protecting the Middle East because such an operation would help to win the war in North Africa. Another point was raised on 18 July 1942 by Brigadier Dykes, who told British and American military colleagues that “GYMNAST if successful ... would be the best insurance for the Middle East if things went badly with Russia.”<sup>1165</sup> Thus TORCH offered more security to the Empire than a cross-Channel operation, and this strengthened British advocacy of the North-West Africa operation.

### **The Strategic Preferences of Churchill and Roosevelt**

The strategic preferences of Roosevelt and Churchill, including their predilection for a peripheral strategy and an operation to North-West Africa, helped ensure that TORCH was chosen. This was a military reason for TORCH because their preferences were largely based on military thinking. Churchill and Roosevelt both liked an operation to North-West Africa a great deal, and had a long-term interest in such an undertaking. They believed there were very good military reasons to undertake the operation, and felt that landings in North-West Africa, as part of a peripheral strategy in the Mediterranean, were a sound way to defeat Germany. There are also indications that Churchill encouraged the President’s existing interest in this undertaking.

Winston Churchill’s views on strategy became apparent in the early years of World War I, when he was serving as Britain’s First Lord of the Admiralty.<sup>1166</sup> It soon became clear that Churchill favoured operations away from the main area of the fighting.<sup>1167</sup> His support for peripheral operations dated to before World War I, but

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<sup>1163</sup> NA AIR 19/340, Admiralty to B.A.D. Washington, 6 April 1942; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.16; Stoler, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy’, p.150

<sup>1164</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.16; Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.679; Weigley, ‘The American Military and the Principle of Civilian Control from McClellan to Powell’, p.47

<sup>1165</sup> Dykes Diary, 18 July 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.176

<sup>1166</sup> Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.684; Stoler, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy’, p.150

<sup>1167</sup> For example, in October 1914 he was meant to support the Belgians at the political level, but instead led the short-lived and failed defence of Antwerp, R.V. Jones, ‘Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, 1874-1965’, *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, Vol. 12, November

was strengthened by his experiences in that conflict. Most notable of Churchill's World War I operations on the periphery was the disastrous Gallipoli expedition of April 1915, in which he played a large part.<sup>1168</sup> These types of operations on the periphery of the fighting characterized Churchill's strategic thinking for the rest of his life, and he was a strong supporter of the peripheral strategy.<sup>1169</sup> Reasons for Churchill's belief in the peripheral strategy in World War II include his belief in the strategic importance of the Mediterranean, memories of World War I casualties, a desire to vindicate his World War I ideas, such as Gallipoli, and his staunch imperialism.<sup>1170</sup>

As could be expected of a supporter of a peripheral strategy, in World War II Churchill preferred operations in the Mediterranean, making a North-West Africa operation more attractive to him. Churchill had long viewed the Mediterranean as strategically very important and, as mentioned earlier, from the late summer and early autumn of 1940 he focused British attention there.<sup>1171</sup> It was also in late-summer 1940 that Churchill developed a keen interest in landing operations to Dakar in French

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1966, p.54. Prime Minister Asquith began to lose faith in Churchill after the First Lord of the Admiralty carried out a series of hit-and-run raids on the Flemish coast, which achieved little, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.193

<sup>1168</sup> Jones, 'Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill', p.56

<sup>1169</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.199; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.40; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.4. Churchill's World War I memoirs stated: "... no plan could be more unpromising than the plan of frontal attack ... [But] there were regions where flanks could have been turned; there were devices by which fronts could have been pierced", Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.126. There is debate over whether Churchill was a supporter of the peripheral strategy, See, for example: Baxter, 'Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?' pp.9-10; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.199; Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, p.31. Those who say he did not support a peripheral strategy include: John Ehrman, Michael Howard, and Colin F. Baxter. Those who agree he was a proponent of the peripheral strategy include: Basil Liddell Hart, A.J.P. Taylor, Paul Kennedy and Trumbull Higgins, Baxter, 'Winston Churchill: Military Strategist?' p.9

<sup>1170</sup> Baldwin, *Great Mistakes*, p.24; Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', p.497; Gwyer, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, Part I*, p.624; Lyttelton, *Memoirs*, p.178; Millett, 'World War II: The Post-Mortem Begins', p.330; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.68. After the war Marshall confirmed his belief that Churchill's aversion to the preferred U.S. Army strategy of a cross-Channel operation was due to memories of World War I. Marshall said: "He had a horror of bodies floating in the Channel", Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.588. During the war Churchill told American Ambassador William Phillips that he intended to fight a "cheap" war to avoid bleeding the nation white, as had happened to France in World War I, Millett, 'World War II: The Post-Mortem Begins', p.330. Marshall said that Churchill's focus on the Mediterranean was not due to his desire to vindicate Gallipoli, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.588

<sup>1171</sup> Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History*, pp.126-127; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.30-31, 35-36

West Africa.<sup>1172</sup> From then until the TORCH decision, a North-West Africa operation was always prominent in Churchill's strategic thinking.

Another reason for Churchill's interest in the Mediterranean was his staunch imperialism. He viewed British interests in the Mediterranean region as very important, and did not want to lose them to the Axis. Churchill was desperate to cling onto the British Empire.<sup>1173</sup> After the war, Harriman said Roosevelt saw the British Prime Minister as "pretty much a nineteenth-century colonialist".<sup>1174</sup> Probably Churchill's most famous statement on the Empire came on 11 November 1942: "I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."<sup>1175</sup> This view neatly encapsulated the attitude Churchill held throughout the war. This meant that an operation like TORCH in the Mediterranean region was more attractive to him than a cross-Channel operation, because it would better help secure some vital imperial interests in Egypt and the Middle East.

In the early war years Roosevelt and Churchill shared a number of strategic preferences, and this helped maintain a North-West Africa operation as an Anglo-American priority. For example, Roosevelt also showed a propensity for peripheral operations against Germany in those years, including operations to West Africa, the Atlantic Islands and North-West Africa.<sup>1176</sup> On 25 March 1942, after an American meeting about strategy, Secretary Stimson noted in his diary that Roosevelt "seemed to be quite charmed with" the Mediterranean basin.<sup>1177</sup> Prime Minister Churchill encouraged Roosevelt in these views.<sup>1178</sup>

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<sup>1172</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.38

<sup>1173</sup> Matloff, 'Allied Strategy in Europe', p.679; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.55

<sup>1174</sup> Kimball, *The Juggler*, p.66

<sup>1175</sup> Foster Rhea Dulles & Gerald E. Ridinger, 'The Anti-Colonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt', *PSQ*, Vol. 70, No. 1, March 1955, pp.8-9

<sup>1176</sup> Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.71; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.30; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.93. From September 1939 to December 1941 it appears that Roosevelt hoped the United States would not need to commit large land forces to the war. He still thought in Navy terms, and was a believer in the importance of air power, Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, I, p.272. He was worried about the heavy casualties that could result from a direct attack on Germany, Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.95

<sup>1177</sup> Stimson Diary, 25 March 1942, in Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.416

<sup>1178</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.95

Since the fall of France, President Roosevelt had an interest in possible American operations to West and North-West Africa, as was seen in Chapter 1.<sup>1179</sup> He liked the idea of American landings in the French territories because it would forestall German interest in the area, put American forces in what he viewed as a strategically important area, and would probably not face serious resistance.<sup>1180</sup> Roosevelt felt that American landings there might even be unopposed, because he believed that the United States was well-liked by the Vichy French.<sup>1181</sup> He was much more interested in a North-West Africa operation than his military advisors, and especially General Marshall.<sup>1182</sup> The American service chiefs and political leaders had long been aware of Roosevelt's interest in a North African operation.<sup>1183</sup> For example, in June 1942 Secretary Stimson called a North-West Africa operation Roosevelt's "great secret baby".<sup>1184</sup> After the war General Marshall felt that in July 1942 "Churchill was rabid for [North-West] Africa" and Roosevelt was also "for [North-West] Africa".<sup>1185</sup> The evidence demonstrates Roosevelt's long-term interest in American troops landing in French African territory, an interest based primarily on military factors.

Churchill influenced and encouraged Roosevelt's strategic thinking in the early war years, and especially in the period up to the decision for TORCH.<sup>1186</sup> After the war Marshall said: "The president shifted [on strategy], particularly when Churchill got hold of him". He continued: "The president was all ready to do any side show and Churchill was always prodding him".<sup>1187</sup> Stilwell noted in his diary soon after American entry into the war that Roosevelt had been "completely hypnotized by the British", and that they had "his ear, while we have the hind tit."<sup>1188</sup> Whether the Prime Minister had "hypnotized" the President is debatable, but Churchill certainly encouraged Roosevelt's strong interest in an operation to West or North-West Africa.

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<sup>1179</sup> Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', pp.69-70

<sup>1180</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69

<sup>1181</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69. On 3 April 1942 Roosevelt told Churchill that the United States was "the only nation that can intervene diplomatically with any hope of success with Vichy", Roosevelt to Churchill, 3 April 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.441

<sup>1182</sup> Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.13

<sup>1183</sup> Emerson, 'Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief', p.195

<sup>1184</sup> Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.425

<sup>1185</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.581

<sup>1186</sup> Emerson, 'Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief', p.198; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.68; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.21; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.26

<sup>1187</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.590

<sup>1188</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.322; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.92; Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.26

In their correspondence, and at each of the major Anglo-American conferences, the Prime Minister discussed a North-West Africa operation with Roosevelt and recommended such an undertaking. Churchill later wrote that as early as 1940 he had sensed Roosevelt's interest in Vichy French North-West Africa.<sup>1189</sup> Stimson felt that Churchill took up the GYMNAST project because he knew that Roosevelt liked the idea.<sup>1190</sup> At the Placentia Bay conference Churchill emphasized the region of Spain, the Atlantic Islands and North-West Africa to Roosevelt.<sup>1191</sup> At the ARCADIA conference Churchill again emphasized a North-West Africa operation to the President, and succeeded in gaining Roosevelt's approval of the operation, despite the contrary views of the American Chiefs of Staff.<sup>1192</sup> In his memoirs General Arnold suggests that Churchill had much influence over Roosevelt at that conference.<sup>1193</sup>

There is more evidence from the summer of 1942 that Churchill pushed Roosevelt towards a North-West Africa operation. On 28 May Churchill reminded Roosevelt: "We must never let GYMNAST pass from our minds".<sup>1194</sup> In June at the Washington conference Churchill again edged Roosevelt towards a North-West Africa operation.<sup>1195</sup> Stimson felt the Prime Minister showed at that conference that he knew of Roosevelt's "lingering predilection for the Mediterranean".<sup>1196</sup> In a prime example of Churchill encouraging Roosevelt's strategic views, after strongly recommending a North-West Africa operation on 8 July, Churchill told Roosevelt that GYMNAST was the President's "commanding idea", and that it had "all along been in harmony with your ideas".<sup>1197</sup> This was, of course, at a time when the American military leaders

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<sup>1189</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.41

<sup>1190</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.54

<sup>1191</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.64-65

<sup>1192</sup> Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.154

<sup>1193</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.304. Churchill's physician, Charles Wilson, wrote after the war that when the Prime Minister spoke to Roosevelt at ARCADIA, it was "always something likely to fall pleasantly on the President's ear", Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.65

<sup>1194</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 May 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.494; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.67

<sup>1195</sup> Craig, 'The Political Leader as Strategist', pp.502-503. During Churchill's stay with Roosevelt at Hyde Park prior to the conference the Prime Minister had gained the President's support for a North-West Africa operation, Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 June 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.515; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.349; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.128

<sup>1196</sup> Stimson & Bundy, *On Active Service*, p.425

<sup>1197</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.520. Historian Alex Danchev writes of this message: "Once again Churchill sang the siren song of North Africa", Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.24

were pushing the President hard for a cross-Channel operation. Despite a lack of evidence from Roosevelt himself about what shaped his strategic thinking, there are good indications that Churchill influenced Roosevelt with regards to a North-West Africa operation, with some success. Of course Roosevelt required little encouragement from Churchill about North-West Africa, because he had long favoured the operation. Thus Churchill's encouragement to the President about a North-West Africa operation being a good option militarily contributed to TORCH being chosen.

Having dealt with the reasons for TORCH that were largely military, but not perhaps obviously so, the following are the more obvious, practical military reasons that helped ensure an operation to North-West Africa was the only one on which all British and American military and political leaders could agree in July 1942. Most notably, TORCH emerged from the debate because it was militarily acceptable and more likely to succeed than the other options, and also because it could provide some degree of assistance to the Soviets. These two military reasons helped ensure that an operation to North-West Africa was chosen by the British and Americans to be their first large-scale combined operation of the war.

A North-West Africa operation was deemed the least risky option by all of the Western Allied military leaders, and especially by the British. The other prominent operations, to France and Norway, were considered to offer slim chances of success due to lack of British and American resources in 1942, and strong enemy defences. As a result these operations were opposed by some or all of the American and British military leaders. As Roosevelt remarked during the ARCADIA conference: "We can take no chances on the possibility of our first major expedition being a failure ... if the risk looks great, we must think twice before we go ahead".<sup>1198</sup> TORCH offered the best chance of success.

The main reason a North-West Africa operation was more military acceptable to the Western Allies was because the region was in Vichy French rather than German hands. This meant there were less formidable coastal defences than those that would

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<sup>1198</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.322

be encountered in France and Norway, and the quality of Vichy troops and aircraft in North-West Africa was much less than that of the German troops and aircraft in France and Norway.<sup>1199</sup> Of course German troops could be transferred to oppose TORCH, but initially the only forces that would be encountered would be Vichy French. The British were keen to emphasize how much safer a North-West Africa operation was than the American-preferred option of a 1942 cross-Channel operation. In early July Churchill told Roosevelt that a North-West Africa operation was “the safest and most fruitful stroke that can be delivered this autumn”. He said in the same message “... any resistance would not be comparable to that which would be offered by the German Army in the Pas de Calais”.<sup>1200</sup> In August Churchill told Roosevelt that TORCH was no Dieppe or SLEDGEHAMMER: “There we were up against German efficiency and the steel-bound fortified coasts of France. In TORCH we have to face at the worst weak, divided opposition ...”.<sup>1201</sup> Similarly, British Admiral Andrew B. Cunningham told the C.C.S.: “... a North African venture was far easier than a landing on the coast of France. In North Africa the country would be divided, some French forces might come in on our side, and the French Air Force had only antiquated aircraft”.<sup>1202</sup> It was difficult for the Americans to disagree with this British argument. Indeed, Marshall wrote during the war that TORCH was the only 1942 operation with a fair prospect of success.<sup>1203</sup>

However, TORCH was still a risky operation for a number of reasons. Moving the convoys to the invasion area exposed them to attacks from German submarines in the Atlantic. Once troops were landed there was a threat that the Vichy French might become an active Axis ally.<sup>1204</sup> Spain might also have allowed Axis forces to operate

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<sup>1199</sup> For example, on 23 July 1942 Eisenhower told Marshall that the 125,000-strong French Moroccan Army was “poorly supplied and equipped and is not a first class fighting force”, Eisenhower to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.407

<sup>1200</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.520-521

<sup>1201</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 26 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.575

<sup>1202</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.2

<sup>1203</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.152

<sup>1204</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.411. In January 1942 the J.P.S. felt a North-West Africa operation without French invitation was not practicable, NA CAB 84/41, J.P.(42) 82, ‘Operations “GYMNAST”, “PILGRIM” and “BONUS”’, 28 January 1942, p.2

from its territory once TORCH occurred.<sup>1205</sup> Bad weather was also a real risk for the TORCH landings on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, where there was suitable weather for landing on open beaches only once every five days.<sup>1206</sup> Marshall noted about TORCH: “Two great hazards: rough surf at Casablanca and being cut off by Germans at Gibraltar”.<sup>1207</sup> On 15 August Eisenhower told Marshall “the chances of effecting initial landings are better than even but ... the chances of overall success in the operation, including the capture of Tunis before it can be reinforced by the Axis, are considerably less than 50 per cent”.<sup>1208</sup> Alanbrooke confided in his diary on the eve of TORCH: “It is a great gamble for a great stake ...”.<sup>1209</sup> However, TORCH was considered by the British to be less of a gamble than SLEDGEHAMMER, and this was very important in it being chosen.

The necessary resources were available for an operation to North-West Africa, but as was seen in the previous chapter, they were not available for SLEDGEHAMMER, with lack of landing craft being a particular problem for the 1942 cross-Channel operation.<sup>1210</sup> TORCH could occur two months later in the year than SLEDGEHAMMER, allowing more British and American resources to be built up for the initial assault. Marshall stated after the war:

Our trouble was that we couldn't start in England for a long period of time, and the main thing about the Mediterranean operation [TORCH] was something occurring at an early date, and that was the only thing we could think of that could be done at an early date. It was the only thing the British could do and they had to furnish the bulk of the troops.<sup>1211</sup>

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<sup>1205</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.411. Eisenhower emphasised the danger of the Germans establishing themselves in Spain, Eisenhower to Marshall, 1 August 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.433-434; Eisenhower to the C.C.S., 23 August 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.488

<sup>1206</sup> Eisenhower to Hastings Lionel Ismay, 14 October 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.619; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.43

<sup>1207</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, pp.596, 601

<sup>1208</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 15 August 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.471

<sup>1209</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 7 November 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.339

<sup>1210</sup> Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.686

<sup>1211</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.594. Marshall conveniently ignores the cross-Channel operation so vigorously advocated by himself and the U.S. Army as being possible in 1942 or 1943.

Five-and-a-half divisions went ashore in the TORCH landings.<sup>1212</sup> This number was considered by the British to be insufficient for a successful cross-Channel operation, but it was adequate for landings in North-West Africa.

As seen in Chapter 2, one of the main reasons Churchill and Roosevelt desired a major operation in 1942 was to provide assistance to the Soviet Union, and this was both a political and a military reason to undertake a 1942 operation. The Western Allied military leaders generally agreed that TORCH would provide the Soviet Union with as much military assistance as any other 1942 operation, including SLEDGEHAMMER. It was hoped that TORCH would draw at least some German forces from the Eastern Front to the Mediterranean. At the C.C.S. meeting on 28 August General Marshall and Admiral King argued that TORCH was not originally designed to relieve pressure on the Soviet Union, but that this was now one of the operation's objects.<sup>1213</sup> Marshall felt that relief to the Russians was "a secondary consideration".<sup>1214</sup> However, as was seen earlier in this thesis, throughout the 1942 Anglo-American strategic debate, supporting the Soviet Union was a vital reason for Churchill's and Roosevelt's desire for Anglo-American action in that year.

As part of its strong opposition to a North-West Africa operation, the U.S. Army expressed doubts that such an undertaking would provide any help to the Soviet Union. On 23 June Marshall told Roosevelt that an "outstanding disadvantage" of GYMNAST was that even if it were successful, it "may not result in withdrawing planes, tanks, or men from the Russian front".<sup>1215</sup> On 17 July Eisenhower concluded: "GYMNAST would have no effect on the 1942 campaign in Russia".<sup>1216</sup> However, the general feeling was that TORCH might help the Soviet Union, and this view was expressed by many in the upper planning echelons of Britain and America. On 17 June Secretary Stimson noted: "[Roosevelt] wants to take up the case of GYMNAST again, thinking that he can bring additional pressure to save Russia".<sup>1217</sup> If not

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<sup>1212</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.69

<sup>1213</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, pp.1, 2

<sup>1214</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.2

<sup>1215</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 23 June 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.248

<sup>1216</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum, 'Conclusions as to Practicability of SLEDGEHAMMER', 17 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.389

<sup>1217</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.243

TORCH itself, it was felt that subsequent Mediterranean operations, such as landings in Sicily or Italy, might help Russia.<sup>1218</sup> Even the U.S. Army came to see that TORCH was the 1942 option most likely to help Russia. When arguing against sending more aircraft to the Soviet Union, because it would impact negatively on TORCH, General Marshall stated: “That operation [TORCH] will undoubtedly be the most effective aid within our power which we can extend to Russia at this time”.<sup>1219</sup> Eisenhower noted that in an informal meeting on 18 June the British and American army leaders discussed a Western Europe or North-West Africa operation in 1942 “as a means of assisting Russia”. However, they felt that the “... favourable effect on the Russian situation [of either operation] would probably be very slight”.<sup>1220</sup> On 8 July Churchill told Roosevelt: “I am sure myself that GYMNAST is by far the best chance for effective relief to the Russian front in 1942”.<sup>1221</sup> The British J.P.S. concluded on 23 July that by creating a threat to the Axis southern flank, TORCH might draw German forces to the Mediterranean from the Russian front.<sup>1222</sup> Thus there was an idea that a North-West Africa operation was likely to provide as much, or possibly more assistance to the Soviets than any of the other possibilities.

Western Allied occupation of North-West Africa offered great military benefits due to the strategic importance of the region, an importance recognized by both the Axis and the Allies. Tunisia in particular was vital to the war in North Africa, because Allied occupation of that country would threaten the Axis army. North-West Africa was also vital to the maritime war in both the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. The British J.P.S. highlighted the dangers of the Germans occupying Tunisia, believing that it would close western access to the Mediterranean and endanger Malta, as well as causing serious problems in the Battle of the Atlantic.<sup>1223</sup> From North-West Africa the Germans could intercept British shipping both through the Mediterranean and

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<sup>1218</sup> Roosevelt’s unsent message to Churchill, drafted by Marshall and King in September 1942, stated that Allied control of the Mediterranean would “increase our ability to conduct operations to improve Russia’s position”, Roosevelt to Churchill, September 1942, not sent, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.611

<sup>1219</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.153

<sup>1220</sup> Eisenhower Minutes of an Informal Meeting between General Marshall and Members of his Staff Representing the United States War Department and Sir John Dill, General A. Brooke and General Ismay, 2:00 PM, 19 June 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.346-348

<sup>1221</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 8 July 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.520

<sup>1222</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23 July, 1942, p.2

<sup>1223</sup> NA CAB 84/38, J.P.(41) 1058, ‘Tunisia in Axis Occupation’, 15th December, 1941, p.3; NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23rd July, 1942, pp.2-3

around the Cape.<sup>1224</sup> Ultimately, German occupation of North-West Africa would threaten the entire British position in the Mediterranean, and might presage defeat in the Middle East.<sup>1225</sup>

One very significant military benefit of a successful Anglo-American landing in North-West Africa was that if North Africa was secured, it could provide a new threat to Axis-occupied southern Europe, by allowing subsequent invasions of Sicily, Sardinia, southern France, Greece, or Italy.<sup>1226</sup> On 28 August 1942 Admiral Cunningham told the C.C.S. that one advantage of TORCH was that it “would provide a point of departure for a subsequent entry into Europe”.<sup>1227</sup> This, of course, was what eventually happened in the aftermath of TORCH, with invasions of Sicily and Italy in 1943. This benefit appealed more to the British, who wanted to secure the Mediterranean and carry out further operations there after TORCH, because of their Mediterranean focus.

A successful Operation TORCH would eliminate Axis influence in Vichy French Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, as well in Vichy French West Africa, and stymie German ambitions there. The Germans had attempted to increase their influence in North-West Africa since the fall of France. Although they occupied half of France, and dominated the Vichy regime, their influence in North-West Africa was not great, but they attempted to change this situation.<sup>1228</sup> In February 1942 Eisenhower told the U.S. State Department: “The prevention of further extension of Axis control in North Africa is of great interest to the United States ...”.<sup>1229</sup>

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<sup>1224</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.56

<sup>1225</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23rd July, 1942, p.3

<sup>1226</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23 July, 1942, p.2

<sup>1227</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942 at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.1

<sup>1228</sup> Adams, *Witness to Power*, pp.137-138. After the Armistice, the Germans could not base any forces in the French colonies, and supplies for the Axis could not be routed through them. However, in the first two months of 1942 the French did supply the Axis in Libya and Egypt with 1,191 tons of fuel and oil, and more later in that year, before this was stopped by American protests, NA HW 1/424, Signal from *Oberbefehlshäber Süd* to *Luftgaustab Afrika*, 17 March 1942; NA HW 1/425, Signal from *Luftgaustab Afrika* to *Oberbefehlshäber Süd*, 18 March 1942; NA HW 1/495, Signal from Quartermaster *Oberbefehlshäber Süd*, late, 12 April 1942; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, pp.10-11. The Italians received some aviation fuel from the French in September 1942, and paid them back, NA DEFE 2/2071, G-2 Intelligence Report No. 3, 25 September 1942, p.3

<sup>1229</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Orme Wilson, 25 February 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.141

The British and Americans made efforts to counter German influence in West and North-West Africa; for example, General de Gaulle's expedition to Dakar in September 1940.<sup>1230</sup> The Allies feared increasing German influence in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco throughout 1941.<sup>1231</sup> On 28 May Vichy French *Amiral de la Flotte* Jean Darlan signed an accord with the Germans, which offered assistance to the German armed forces in Africa.<sup>1232</sup> Events like this signing increased Western Allied concern about growing Axis influence in the region, and encouraged an operation to occupy the area. However, on 16 January 1942 the British J.P.S. noted that the Axis threat to North-West Africa had lessened in recent months, with American entry into the war hardening French resistance to German demands for use of French African territory, along with the German focus on the war in Russia.<sup>1233</sup> Despite this, British and American concerns continued into the summer of 1942.<sup>1234</sup> Although there were never any Axis forces in North-West Africa, the Allies wanted to ensure that the Germans did not gain more control of the region. A pre-emptive occupation of the Vichy French territories was the best way to do this.

Closely associated with preventing growing German influence in North-West Africa was an American fear that if French West and North-West Africa were conquered by Germany, the region would be used to try to gain more influence and control in the Americas. Thus the Americans, and President Roosevelt in particular, saw the region as vital to the security of North and South America.<sup>1235</sup> In fact, although Hitler did

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<sup>1230</sup> Lawlor, *Churchill and the Politics of War, 1940-1941*, p.104

<sup>1231</sup> See, for example: Cadogan Diary, 18 January 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.350; Dykes Diary, 28 February 1941, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.63; Churchill to Roosevelt, 14 May 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.186; Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.238

<sup>1232</sup> This accord allowed the Germans to use the port at Bizerta and the railway to Gabes, in order to supply Rommel in Libya and Egypt. This meant the shorter and safer sailing route from Sicily to Tunisia could be used by the Germans and Italians, avoiding a lengthy crossing of the Mediterranean. The accord also allowed German use of the naval and air bases at Dakar, but was cancelled by *Maréchal Pétain* so as not to anger the Allies, Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume II, Operations in North African Waters, October 1942 – June 1943*, Boston, 1950, p.8; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.56

<sup>1233</sup> NA CAB 84/40, J.P.(42) 57, 'West Africa – Strategic Appreciations', 16th January, 1942, p.1

<sup>1234</sup> On 23 and 24 April 1942 Alanbrooke wrote in his diary that a British invasion of Madagascar might result in Bizerta being handed to the Axis, or Dakar falling into their hands, Alanbrooke Diary, 23 & 24 April 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, pp.252-252. In June 1942 the American Consulate in Tunis reported that there were French concerns of possible Italian aggression against Tunisia, NARA RG 218, Geographic File, Box 204, Letter from the American Consulate at Tunis, Tunisia, to The Secretary of State, Washington, June 12, 1942, pp.1-4

<sup>1235</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, pp.10-11; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.18; Steele, 'Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942', p.69; Steele,

have vague plans related to securing North-West Africa, these never came close to fruition.<sup>1236</sup>

Before the Americans entered the war they were concerned that the Germans might occupy West or North-West Africa, and as a result threaten the “bulge” of Brazil.<sup>1237</sup> American war plans RAINBOW 1 and 4 from spring 1940 planned for German attempts to occupy the bulge of Brazil.<sup>1238</sup> In summer 1940 this possibility was one of Roosevelt’s greatest concerns.<sup>1239</sup> In the President’s January 1941 State of the Union address he mentioned the threat of the Axis seizing bases to serve as launching pads against the United States.<sup>1240</sup>

There were sound reasons for these American concerns, given that Brazil was sympathetic towards Germany until 1940, when a new Brazilian President and Minister of War came to power.<sup>1241</sup> Marshall noted that in the summer of 1941 an American operation to Dakar was considered “because it was the apex of the bulge of Africa toward Brazil, and we were very concerned about matters in Brazil in relation to the Panama Canal”.<sup>1242</sup> He noted that a German movement from Dakar across the South Atlantic could be done with very few troops, in cooperation with a South American revolution.<sup>1243</sup> The German threat to the Americas was considered to have

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*The First Offensive*, pp.5-7; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.41. German documents subsequently revealed that the threats had been exaggerated by the Americans, Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.235. Regardless, this fear was certainly an important influence on American strategy, and affected the decision for TORCH.

<sup>1236</sup> A book has been written about this topic. See: Norman J.W. Goda, *Tomorrow the World: Hitler, Northwest Africa, and the Path Toward America*, College Station, 1998

<sup>1237</sup> In September 1939 a widely held American view was that Germany would advance through Spain and Africa, and then cross to Brazil, thus creating a threat to the United States and its region, Adams, *Witness to Power*, p.122. As Admiral Leahy later recalled, when he became governor of Puerto Rico in September 1939 Roosevelt gave him extra instructions to ready military and naval installations, “to protect America against possible attack by any of the belligerent European nations”, Adams, *Witness to Power*, p.123

<sup>1238</sup> Adams, *Witness to Power*, p.115

<sup>1239</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.233. In May 1940 Roosevelt told Congress of the threat of the Germans developing bases in West Africa, then crossing to seize Brazil, subsequently sending ground troops to Mexico where a *Luftwaffe* base could be built from which American targets could be bombed. This scenario was strongly challenged by anti-interventionists and elements of the press, Doenecke, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy’, p.35

<sup>1240</sup> Doenecke, ‘The Roosevelt Foreign Policy’, p.35

<sup>1241</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, pp.202, 204

<sup>1242</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.386. Marshall said after the war: “... if Dakar were in German hands, it would pose a threat to South America”, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.584

<sup>1243</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, pp.285, 386

faded somewhat after BARBAROSSA.<sup>1244</sup> However, in October Roosevelt mentioned to Lord Halifax that the American people did not realize that Dakar was a jumping off point for a German approach to the United States.<sup>1245</sup>

American concerns about this possibility continued after they had entered the war. At the first full Anglo-American meeting of the ARCADIA conference on 23 December 1941 Roosevelt mentioned the threat to Brazil on two occasions, when he and Churchill were talking about operations to West and North-West Africa.<sup>1246</sup> Marshall told Roosevelt on 9 January 1942 that a North-West Africa operation would “prevent the extension of Axis influence to the West and South”.<sup>1247</sup> Defending the Americas remained an important part of American strategic thinking in the summer of 1942. Eisenhower’s memorandum to Marshall on 23 July stated that one benefit of TORCH was that it would: “Prevent Axis powers from extending their control of the Western Hemisphere”.<sup>1248</sup> On 28 August Marshall signalled Eisenhower regarding TORCH, and stated that Roosevelt was “... impressed with the necessity from the U.S. viewpoint for the safeguarding of the South Atlantic. This consideration should not at any time be communicated to the British”.<sup>1249</sup> However, the British understood American thinking. Brigadier Dykes noted: “The American Chiefs of Staff are clearly not interested in the Middle East aspect and look on the whole scheme only as a means of getting a bastion against the invasion of the USA from Africa.”<sup>1250</sup> From the fall of France until TORCH occurred, a German threat to the Americas from French West and North-West Africa was taken very seriously by the Americans, and this made a pre-emptive operation to occupy the area important to them, and especially to the President.

In July 1942 the British viewed a North-West Africa operation as a valuable offensive undertaking, while the Americans saw it as primarily defensive in nature.<sup>1251</sup>

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<sup>1244</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.57

<sup>1245</sup> NA PREM 4/27/9, Letter from Lord Halifax to Churchill, 11 October 1941

<sup>1246</sup> Marshall Memorandum, ‘Notes of Meeting at the White House with the President and the British Prime Minister Presiding’, 23 December 1941, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, pp.32, 34

<sup>1247</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 9 January 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.50

<sup>1248</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.410

<sup>1249</sup> Marshall to Lt. Gen. Eisenhower, 28 August 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.326

<sup>1250</sup> Dykes Diary, 28 August 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.195

<sup>1251</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.20-22

Eisenhower's memorandum to Marshall on 23 July stated that from "the standpoint of world strategy, this is considered as a defensive operation, designed to limit German exploitation in Africa and the Middle East, to relieve the situation in the Mediterranean, and to reduce the threat in the Atlantic".<sup>1252</sup> However, on 24 July Portal told the C.C.S., after an American criticism of a North-West Africa operation, that he questioned whether GYMNAST "could be correctly described as a purely defensive line of action", because it would open up a second front.<sup>1253</sup> On 1 August Eisenhower pointed out to Marshall that the British saw the operation not as the old Operation GYMNAST, directed at occupying West Africa, but as an operation "to seize control of the north coast of Africa".<sup>1254</sup> On the next day he noted that "the British are building up hopes of sweeping the enemy out of the entire North African region".<sup>1255</sup> The British saw TORCH not simply as the only operation possible in 1942, but as a very positive move towards defeating Germany.

There is much evidence that clearing North Africa of all Axis troops and thereby providing direct support to the British forces in the Middle East was seen as one of the most important military benefits of a North-West Africa operation.<sup>1256</sup> It was planned that Operation TORCH would hasten the defeat of Rommel's army in North Africa, by cutting off its line of retreat, and threatening its supply lines.<sup>1257</sup> The directive issued to Eisenhower for TORCH on 13 August described the objective of the operation as gaining control of northern Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.<sup>1258</sup> TORCH would also achieve the same objective as sending U.S. Army troops to the Middle East, namely "enhancing the security of the Middle East".<sup>1259</sup>

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<sup>1252</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.410

<sup>1253</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 32nd Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 24th July, 1942 at 12 noon, p.2

<sup>1254</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 1 August 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.435

<sup>1255</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 2 August 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.437

<sup>1256</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, 'Operation "TORCH"', 23rd July, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.1; Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.409-410; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.18; Millett, 'World War II: The Post-Mortem Begins', p.328

<sup>1257</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, 'Operation "TORCH"', 23rd July, 1942, p.1; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.20

<sup>1258</sup> NA CAB 88/7, C.C.S. 103/1, 27 August 1942, Enclosure A, 'Directive for Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force', p.1; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.16

<sup>1259</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.412

Operation TORCH would achieve the aim of conquering all of North Africa in co-operation with the British Eighth Army in Egypt. As was seen in Chapter 2, in 1942 the Axis occupied Libya and part of Egypt, and at the time of the TORCH decision in July, Rommel's army was within striking distance of Cairo and Alexandria. Thus when TORCH was chosen there were very real concerns about the British position in North Africa. The British were trying to regain the upper hand in the theatre, and an invasion of North-West Africa would help achieve this goal. There is good evidence that the British saw TORCH and an Eighth Army offensive as being linked, although the evidence dates to after the TORCH decision. On 14 August Churchill described the El Alamein offensive and TORCH as a combined effort to win the war in North Africa.<sup>1260</sup> A fortnight later Admiral Cunningham told the C.C.S. that TORCH would ensure "a satisfactory outcome of the battle for Egypt".<sup>1261</sup> On 23 October Alanbrooke wrote in his diary that El Alamein "may be the turning point of the war, leading to further success combined with the North African attack ...".<sup>1262</sup> Thus there was a link between TORCH and Eighth Army victory in securing all of North Africa for the Allies.

TORCH would also greatly improve the Western Allied position in the global maritime war. In 1942 the British and Americans had very limited shipping resources, despite the American entry into the war. It was not until August that monthly Western Allied shipping production finally outweighed shipping losses.<sup>1263</sup> A major benefit of TORCH to the maritime war was that control of the North African coastline would ensure that the Mediterranean was open to Allied vessels, therefore easing the shipping situation.<sup>1264</sup> After the war Alanbrooke noted that only with North Africa

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<sup>1260</sup> W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Moscow, August 14th, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.63

<sup>1261</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.1

<sup>1262</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 23 October 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.333

<sup>1263</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.48

<sup>1264</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, 'Operation "TORCH"', 23rd July, 1942, p.2; NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.1; Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.410; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.337; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.18

secured and the Mediterranean made safer could a major operation like an invasion of France be staged.<sup>1265</sup> He wrote:

We were desperately short of shipping and could stage no large scale operations without additional shipping. This shipping could only be obtained by opening up the Mediterranean and saving a million tons of shipping through the elimination of the Cape route. To clear the Mediterranean, North Africa must be cleared first.<sup>1266</sup>

Sailing convoys through the Mediterranean was very hazardous for the Allies, but a successful Operation TORCH would provide convoys a much safer passage. On 28 August Marshall told the C.C.S. he felt that TORCH was initially “designed to relieve the Middle East convoy routes ...”.<sup>1267</sup> With the Mediterranean secure, the longer convoy routes to India and the Middle East around the Cape of Good Hope could be discontinued, saving a lot of time and shipping tonnage.<sup>1268</sup> In January 1941 Brigadier Dykes wrote that using the Cape route instead of the Mediterranean meant using five times more shipping to deliver the same load.<sup>1269</sup> Opening the Mediterranean would save over 200 ships per month for convoys to the Middle East and India.<sup>1270</sup> A shorter route meant that more trips were possible, and there was less vulnerability to attack. Thus TORCH would free up a considerable amount of British and American shipping for other tasks.

A successful invasion of North-West Africa would finally secure Malta and relieve it from the danger of starvation, because it would become much easier and safer to supply the beleaguered island by sea.<sup>1271</sup> Convoys to Malta had been very costly until TORCH occurred, with losses exceeding 50 per cent. The mid-August 1942 convoy to

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<sup>1265</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.206

<sup>1266</sup> *Ibid.*, p.248

<sup>1267</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.2

<sup>1268</sup> On 22 September 1942 Churchill told Roosevelt that “saving some of the masses of shipping now rounding the cape” was their “first great prize”, NARA RG 38, Box 37, Churchill to Roosevelt, 22 September 1942, p.4

<sup>1269</sup> Dykes Diary, 8 January 1941, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, pp.28-29. From Britain to India the Cape route was 40 per cent longer, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.36

<sup>1270</sup> Matloff, ‘Allied Strategy in Europe’, p.686

<sup>1271</sup> NA CAB 84/7, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23rd July, 1942, p.1; NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.1

Malta saw only three of fourteen ships reach their destination.<sup>1272</sup> With Malta secure, it could again serve as an offensive base, with Allied aircraft and ships based within striking distance of Sicily and Italy.<sup>1273</sup> The existence of Malta as a British offensive base was vital to the North African campaign, because forces on Malta could attack the Axis supply routes to Rommel's army.

TORCH would also assist the Western Allies in the Battle of the Atlantic. New bases could be created in North-West Africa from which aircraft and ships could conduct anti-submarine patrols. A Marshall memorandum to Roosevelt on 9 January 1942 about a plan for a North-West Africa operation noted: "Control of North Africa would protect the South Atlantic sea lanes ...".<sup>1274</sup> Conversely, Axis control of ports like Casablanca and Dakar would "greatly increase [the] submarine threat in W. African and South Atlantic Waters".<sup>1275</sup> On 28 August Marshall told the C.C.S. he thought one of the reasons TORCH was chosen was to deny the Axis naval bases from which they could attack Allied convoy routes in the South Atlantic.<sup>1276</sup>

TORCH was also chosen partly because it would have less impact on the Allied shipping situation than some of the options. TORCH used less shipping than reinforcing the Middle East with U.S. Army troops, and two-and-a-half times more troops could be maintained for GYMNAST than in the Middle East.<sup>1277</sup> Similarly, the line of communications from the United States to North-West Africa was only one-third as long as that to the Middle East.<sup>1278</sup> In the June 1942 Washington conference the case for GYMNAST was also strengthened because Admiral King said he could

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<sup>1272</sup> W. Churchill to J.V. Stalin, Moscow, August 14th, 1942, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.63

<sup>1273</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, 'Operation "TORCH"', 23rd July, 1942, p.1

<sup>1274</sup> Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 9 January 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.50. Similarly, in Eisenhower's 23 July 1942 memorandum to Marshall, protecting sea communications in the South Atlantic was one of six benefits listed for a North-West Africa operation, Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.410

<sup>1275</sup> NA CAB 84/40, Telegram from Commander Sierra Leone Area to the War Office, Admiralty and Air Ministry, 7 January 1942, p.1

<sup>1276</sup> NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.2

<sup>1277</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, 'Survey of Strategic Situation', 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.412

<sup>1278</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum, 26 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.417

make enough ships available to support a North-West Africa operation.<sup>1279</sup> Thus TORCH would place less strain on the limited Western Allied shipping.

From the beginning of the war the British had maintained a blockade of Germany, but there were some notable gaps in this blockade. As early as June 1940 Hugh Dalton, British Minister of Economic Warfare, recognized the “Marseilles leak” in the blockade, where supplies - many of which subsequently went to Germany and Italy - entered France from French West and North-West Africa.<sup>1280</sup> The British recognized that a North-West Africa operation would stop the serious leaks in their economic blockade of Germany.<sup>1281</sup> This would make the blockade almost complete, placing more pressure on the Germans.

Operation TORCH would also have some positive effects on the air war for the Western Allies. Occupying North-West Africa would help to secure the South Atlantic air routes, from the Americas to West Africa, and from there to the Middle East, India, China or the Soviet Union. These routes were very important for ferrying aircraft.<sup>1282</sup> TORCH would also allow the creation of many new bases from which the Allies could conduct heavy bomber operations against Italy and other Axis targets in southern Europe.<sup>1283</sup> This would also allow more flexibility in employing Allied bomber forces, because they could easily be shifted to different fronts.<sup>1284</sup> The TORCH directive to Eisenhower stated that one of the ultimate objectives of TORCH was to allow intensification of air operations “against the Axis on the European

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<sup>1279</sup> Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.514

<sup>1280</sup> Dalton, *The Fateful Years*, p.355

<sup>1281</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23rd July, 1942, p.2. This problem was also recognised at the ARCADIA conference, Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.81

<sup>1282</sup> NARA RG 165, Entry 422, Box 52, Lt. Col. W.G. Wyman Memorandum to War Plans Division, 28 January 1942, p.4; NA CAB 84/40, Telegram from Commander Sierra Leone Area to the War Office, Admiralty and Air Ministry, 7 January 1942, p.1; Marshall Memorandum to Roosevelt, 9 January 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.50; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.40. On 23 December 1941 President Roosevelt stated that the west coast of Africa was of “supreme importance” in maintaining an Allied air route over the south Atlantic, Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.279

<sup>1283</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.410

<sup>1284</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.412

Continent”.<sup>1285</sup> It is evident that TORCH offered a number of significant benefits to the Western Allies in both the air and sea wars.

One military benefit that was probably on the minds of the British and American military leaders was the idea that an invasion of North-West Africa was a necessary prelude to a larger scale invasion of mainland Europe.<sup>1286</sup> In North-West Africa British and American troops, and the latter especially, could gain much-needed experience against a weaker opposition. TORCH could also serve in part as a training operation, to allow the Western Allies to sort out any problems and issues with amphibious operations, rather than learning harsh lessons on the more heavily defended shores of France.

In 1942 the American armed forces were very inexperienced, and most U.S. Army troops and officers had no combat experience at all.<sup>1287</sup> An easier campaign to introduce them to combat seemed wise in this situation, and TORCH could do this.<sup>1288</sup> Although training of individual soldiers in the U.S. Army was as good as that of any nation in World War II, the troops still required combat experience.<sup>1289</sup> As previously noted, the coast of northern France was heavily fortified, and the defences were often manned by good quality German troops, but the coast of North-West Africa was very lightly fortified, and was occupied by Vichy French and French colonial troops of dubious quality, who would not necessarily oppose an Allied landing. American airmen would also face less difficult opposition as they began their combat careers supporting TORCH, because the Vichy French air force in North-West Africa was not particularly strong.

The Americans were aware of the problem of their inexperienced troops. In May 1941 General Marshall recognized that an American operation against experienced German forces would be very risky. Although he did not want to undertake peripheral

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<sup>1285</sup> Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.16

<sup>1286</sup> It probably does not appear amongst official discussions because the United States would be unwilling to admit its inability and lack of preparedness to carry out a major landing operation against German opposition in 1942, and the British would not want to upset their ally by pressing the matter.

<sup>1287</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.38

<sup>1288</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.15; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.155

<sup>1289</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.113

operations like the invasion of North-West Africa, he was also cautious about carrying out a large-scale direct attack against the Germans in Europe.<sup>1290</sup> The Air Force also recognized this problem. General Arnold noted that in 1942 the Americans knew more of air warfare than they did in 1917, but even though the USAAF had “some solid theories of its own”, these had “been tested only in peacetime and by observation on the battle fronts abroad.”<sup>1291</sup> On 6 May in a letter to General Malin Craig, Brigadier General Patton at the U.S. Army Desert Training Center noted:

The chief trouble here, as I suppose everywhere, is with the younger officers who haven't been at the business long enough to have any self-confidence, but I believe that the vigorous [sic] use of a polished toe against their hind ends may eventually induce them to do something besides sit on their asses!<sup>1292</sup>

Other high-ranking Americans had concerns about the junior officers of the U.S. Army. On 7 October General Eisenhower wrote to Marshall of his serious concerns about “the extreme inexperience of many of our officers in grades up to and including Major.”<sup>1293</sup> On 20 October he again told Marshall that the ranks of Lieutenant, Captain and Major were the “glaring weakness” of the United States Army, and would only be corrected with time.<sup>1294</sup> He noted the lack of experience and trained leadership below the level of battalion commander.<sup>1295</sup>

The British were equally aware of U.S. Army inexperience, and the consequent dangers of a premature invasion of France. Churchill and Alanbrooke reviewed American troops in the United States on 24 June 1942 and the latter recorded his doubts: “... I am not so certain ... that they have yet realized the standard of training required”.<sup>1296</sup> After the war he noted: “... they still had a lot to learn, but seemed to prefer to learn in the hard school of war itself”.<sup>1297</sup> On the same occasion, Major-General Ismay commented to Churchill: “To put these troops against German troops

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<sup>1290</sup> Steele, ‘Political Aspects of American Military Planning, 1941-1942’, p.69

<sup>1291</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, p.52

<sup>1292</sup> Letter, George S. Patton, Jr., to Malin Craig, May 6, 1942, in Blumenson (ed.), *The Patton Papers*, pp.67-68

<sup>1293</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 7 October 1942, in Hobbs (ed.), *Dear General*, p.45

<sup>1294</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 20 October 1942, in Hobbs (ed.), *Dear General*, p.50; Eisenhower to Marshall, 20 October 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.627

<sup>1295</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall, 20 October 1942, in Hobbs (ed.), *Dear General*, p.50

<sup>1296</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 24 June 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.271

<sup>1297</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.271

would be murder”.<sup>1298</sup> The troops reviewed, from the 8th Infantry Division, the 30th Infantry Division, and the 77th Infantry Division, along with some airborne troops, had not yet completed their training, but the 30th and 8th Divisions had been activated as long ago as 1940. The Seventy-Seventh was only activated in February 1942.<sup>1299</sup> On 6 and 7 July Alanbrooke reviewed American troops in Northern Ireland, and witnessed an attack by the U.S. Armored Division. He felt the troops still needed more training before they could be committed to action.<sup>1300</sup>

TORCH and the subsequent Tunisian campaign confirmed the British and American fears. The green American troops generally struggled until the final weeks of the campaign, by which time they had gained some valuable experience. Thus committing them to France or Norway in 1942 could have been disastrous. They generally did not perform well in their first encounter with strong and experienced German forces at Kasserine.<sup>1301</sup> Marshall said after the war that the Tunisian campaign demonstrated that until American troops were thoroughly trained, they “were weak in the true fighting qualities of ground troops”.<sup>1302</sup> He went on: “Their training was only partially completed and Rommel’s people came at them in a very vicious way and rather surprised them it seemed”.<sup>1303</sup> American troops in Tunisia in November and December 1942 “proved to be tragically ‘green’ and quite unwilling to listen to advice”, according to General Kenneth Anderson, commander of the British First Army, writing to General Alanbrooke.<sup>1304</sup> In mid- February 1943 General Eisenhower wrote to General Marshall:

Our soldiers are learning rapidly and while I still believe that many of the lessons we are forced to learn at the cost of lives could be learned at home, I assure you that the troops that come out of this campaign are going to be battle wise and tactically efficient.<sup>1305</sup>

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<sup>1298</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.347; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.121; Ismay, *Memoirs*, p.257

<sup>1299</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, pp.115-117, 120-121

<sup>1300</sup> Alanbrooke Diary, 7 July 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.277

<sup>1301</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.198

<sup>1302</sup> Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.479

<sup>1303</sup> *Ibid.*, p.479. Similarly, he also stated after the war: “The first divisions we sent did very poorly. Their training had not been completed and their performance was quite understandable”, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.587

<sup>1304</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.31-32

<sup>1305</sup> Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 15 February 1943, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, II, pp.956-957

A letter from General Harold Alexander to General Alanbrooke on 3 April 1943 was very harsh, noting:

... they simply do not know their jobs as soldiers, and this is the case from the highest to the lowest, from the general to the private soldier ... In fact they are soft, green and quite untrained ... Unless we can do something about it, the American Army in the European Theatre of Operations will be quite useless and play no part whatsoever.<sup>1306</sup>

Despite British fears, the American troops did improve towards the end of the Tunisian campaign.<sup>1307</sup> Alanbrooke wrote after the war that the inexperienced Americans “learned a great deal more in North Africa!”<sup>1308</sup>

In 1942 the Western Allies had minimal experience in amphibious operations, and TORCH could be considered a necessary prelude to any successful future invasions of Axis-controlled territory. Some elements of the American and British military did have experience of amphibious operations. For example, the United States Marine Corps was an experienced force, with a well-developed doctrine for amphibious operations. However, the Marines were organized for smaller amphibious operations in the Pacific, not large-scale operations in Europe.<sup>1309</sup> American experiments in amphibious landings began in the 1930s, and divisions received training in them in 1940 and 1941.<sup>1310</sup> An amphibious training unit, the First Joint Training Force, was formed on the Atlantic coast in June 1941, and carried out training exercises, although results in July and August 1941 and January 1942 were poor.<sup>1311</sup> In March 1942 the first American amphibious force, the Atlantic Fleet Amphibious Force, was activated.<sup>1312</sup> However, despite these developments, by November 1942 the Americans were still inexperienced when it came to amphibious operations.

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<sup>1306</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.50

<sup>1307</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51

<sup>1308</sup> Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diaries*, p.271

<sup>1309</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Admiral Ernest Joseph King, 9 April 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.236

<sup>1310</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.66

<sup>1311</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.67; Raymond G. O'Connor, 'The U.S. Marines in the 20th Century: Amphibious Warfare and Doctrinal Debates', *MA*, Vol. 38, No. 3, October 1974, pp.101-102

<sup>1312</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.67; O'Connor, 'The U.S. Marines in the 20th Century', p.102

The British Army and RN had some practical experience of landing troops on hostile or potentially hostile shores, notably Gallipoli in World War I, and Norway and various commando raids in World War II.<sup>1313</sup> The British had paid particular attention to landing on a foreign shore since 1938.<sup>1314</sup> Special craft had been developed, and these were used in Norway in 1940, and at Dunkirk.<sup>1315</sup> The British had been planning their return to France via a cross-Channel operation since June 1940, with the Army and Combined Operations Headquarters devoting much time to the problem.<sup>1316</sup> However, before November 1942 few large-scale operations with the modern means for amphibious operations had been carried out.

The TORCH landings generally went smoothly, and demonstrated that the Western Allies were reasonably well prepared for amphibious operations in 1942.<sup>1317</sup> However, the operation provided some good lessons for Allied military leaders and planners, as did the Dieppe raid in August 1942. TORCH proved useful in developing Allied amphibious doctrine in the European theatre of war, and was probably necessary as preparation for more risky future operations.

Another reason TORCH might have been chosen, though rarely featuring in any official discussion, was because a successful operation in the Mediterranean theatre might have a very strong impact on Italian morale. At the time of the decision for TORCH Axis morale was high, with the recent fall of Tobruk, Japanese victories in the Pacific and Asia earlier in 1942, and the German summer offensive in Soviet Union enjoying initial success. However, Italian morale was not particularly strong, despite the success of its allies.<sup>1318</sup> A successful Operation TORCH would remove

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<sup>1313</sup> Howard noted that most British amphibious operations through history, although good and imaginative ideas strategically, failed tactically, for example the Dardanelles in 1915, Lisbon in 1589, Cadiz in 1595 and 1626, Brest in 1696, Toulon in 1707, Lorient in 1746, Rochefort in 1757, and Walcheren in 1880, Howard, 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal', pp.179, 186

<sup>1314</sup> Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.64

<sup>1315</sup> *Ibid.*, p.65

<sup>1316</sup> Lewis, 'The Failure of Allied Planning and Doctrine for Operation Overlord: The Case of Minefield and Obstacle Clearance', p.792

<sup>1317</sup> General Patton noted some problems during the landings, such as the need for coxswains in landing boats to be army and not navy personnel, the need for the first four waves to be almost all riflemen with a few mortars, the weakness of the naval gunfire support, and the need for heavily armoured landing boats with two machine-guns and "rocket guns", Letter, George S. Patton, Jr., to Handy, December 8, 1942, in Blumenson (ed.), *The Patton Papers*, p.135

<sup>1318</sup> Italian morale had never been particularly high from the time of their entry into the war in June 1940, due in large part to the string of embarrassing defeats they suffered, for example in Greece and North Africa in 1940.

some very valuable Italian possessions from their empire, such as Tripoli, and it would bring the war much closer to home for the Italian people, because it would result in one side of the Mediterranean being completely in Allied hands. Allied bombers based in Tunisia and Algeria would also be well-positioned to attack targets in Italy, and reduce civilian morale. Churchill told Roosevelt in autumn 1941 that if Operation GYMNAST was carried out it could have a profound effect upon Italy.<sup>1319</sup> It was possible that TORCH could erode the Italian readiness to wage war, an important aim in the British peripheral strategy.

### **Influencing the neutral nations**

One probable aim of TORCH, albeit not as important as those mentioned above, was to persuade important neutral nations (Vichy France, Spain, Portugal, and Turkey) to join the Allied cause, or at least to influence them. This was perhaps more of a political reason for choosing TORCH, but it would have a large impact on the military situation, especially in the Mediterranean. Active support from these nations could have had a significant impact on the course of the war if they declared for one side or the other, and there is some direct evidence linking TORCH to efforts to gain support from these nations.

The British felt that military success in the Mediterranean and North Africa made Turkey, Spain, Portugal and Vichy France more likely to join their cause, or at least less likely to join the Axis, and there is evidence that they held this view from 1941.<sup>1320</sup> Spain, Turkey and Vichy France all watched the performance of the British Eighth Army in North Africa closely.<sup>1321</sup> Thus a successful Western Allied landing in North-West Africa and subsequent success in clearing North Africa of Axis forces might help to sway the neutral nations. The Western Allies also felt that providing supplies and military equipment would gain them support from the neutral nations.

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<sup>1319</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.77

<sup>1320</sup> See, for example: Dykes Diary, 6 February 1941, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.50; Churchill to Roosevelt, 3 May 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.181; Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 October 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.253

<sup>1321</sup> Churchill told Stalin on 4 September 1941 that in the long term he hoped that British victory in Libya would “encourage Turkey to maintain at the least a faithful neutrality”, Prime Minister Churchill to Monsieur Stalin, Received on September 6, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.22-23. On 20 October Churchill told Roosevelt his hope that a victory in Cyrenaica might result in Turkish resistance to Germany, Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 October 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.255

Turkey, Vichy France, Spain and Portugal were all recipients of British and American aid between 1940 and 1942.<sup>1322</sup>

The neutral nations all had much to offer the Western Allies. Vichy France had valuable territories around the Mediterranean, important naval bases in West and North-West Africa such as Dakar, Oran and Bizerta, as well as an army, air force, navy, and merchant fleet, which might join the Allied cause after TORCH had occurred.<sup>1323</sup> Spain was able to provide plentiful natural resources, most notably wolfram.<sup>1324</sup> Spain was also strategically placed at the western end of the Mediterranean, and Spanish support for the Western Allied cause would probably secure the safety of Gibraltar and ensure the western Mediterranean was open to Allied shipping.<sup>1325</sup> The Canary Islands were also Spanish territory, and like the Portuguese Cape Verde and Azores Islands, were potentially of great value to the Western Allies, especially in the Battle of the Atlantic. Portugal also had wolfram supplies.<sup>1326</sup> Turkey was vital to prevent a German advance to the Middle East via the Balkans and Syria.<sup>1327</sup> If Turkey joined the Allies it could secure the British right flank in the Mediterranean, protecting the British Army in the Middle East from a

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<sup>1322</sup> For France, see: Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 December 1940, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.117; Churchill to Roosevelt, 3 January 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.125; Dykes Diary, 28 February 1941, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, pp.63-64; Martin Thomas, 'After Mers-el-Kebir: The Armed Neutrality of the Vichy French Navy, 1940-43', *EHR*, Vol. 112, No. 447, June 1997, p.656; David A. Walker, 'OSS and Operation Torch', *JCH*, Vol. 22, No. 4, October 1987, pp.667-668. For Spain, see: Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 December 1940, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.117-118; Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.298; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p.54; Detwiler, 'Spain and the Axis During World War II', pp.42, 51; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, p.188. For Portugal, see: Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 May 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.201. For Turkey, see: NA WO 193/8, 'Review of availability and requirements of armoured formations', 31 October 1941, p.3; Churchill to Roosevelt, [??] January 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.319; Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.407; Personal Message from Prime Minister to Monsieur Stalin, Received on August 30, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, p.19; Personal Message from Mr Churchill to Monsieur Stalin, Received on September 19, 1941, in *Stalin's Correspondence*, I, pp.25-26

<sup>1323</sup> Lawlor, *Churchill and the Politics of War, 1940-1941*, p.51; M. Thomas, 'After Mers-el-Kebir', pp.643, 647, 664-665. In French North Africa was an Armistice Army of 100,000 men under Pétain's proconsul, *Général d'armée* Weygand, Arthur L. Funk, 'Eisenhower, Giraud, and the Command of "TORCH"', *MA*, Vol. 35, No. 3, October 1971, p.103

<sup>1324</sup> Detwiler, 'Spain and the Axis During World War II', p.51. 95 per cent of Europe's wolfram came from the Iberian peninsula, Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p.53

<sup>1325</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 23 November 1940, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.86

<sup>1326</sup> Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p.53

<sup>1327</sup> Lawlor, *Churchill and the Politics of War, 1940-1941*, p.157

threat to the north.<sup>1328</sup> Churchill had long been interested in securing Turkey as a full ally, because he recognized the military benefits this would offer Britain.<sup>1329</sup> Thus there was good reason for the British and Americans to attempt to gain the support of these four nations.

There were always Anglo-American fears that these neutral nations would join the Axis. Fears about Vichy France joining the Axis began in June 1940, and continued until TORCH occurred.<sup>1330</sup> The Allies were also constantly concerned about closer Spanish relations with the Axis, but they generally felt that Franco was unlikely to offer Germany full support.<sup>1331</sup> Portugal was even less likely to turn against its traditional British ally.<sup>1332</sup> There were also some Anglo-American fears that Turkey would move closer to the Axis, although these were not so serious in 1942.<sup>1333</sup>

There is some evidence that a reason for TORCH was to secure support from these neutral nations. It was obvious that landings in North-West Africa would force the

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<sup>1328</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 20 October 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.255; Lawlor, *Churchill and the Politics of War, 1940-1941*, p.181. Eden described Turkey as “the buttress of our defence in the East”, Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.189

<sup>1329</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.51

<sup>1330</sup> For 1940, see: Churchill to Roosevelt, 24 October 1940, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.75; Roosevelt to Churchill, 24 October 1940, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.75-76; Churchill to Roosevelt, 27 October 1940, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.79; Nicolson Diary, 26 & 29 October 1940, in Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1939-1945*, pp.123-124; Adams, *Witness to Power*, p.5

<sup>1331</sup> See, for example: NARA RG 218, Geographic File, Box 204, Letter from American Consulate at Tunis, Tunisia to The Secretary of State, Washington, June 12, 1942, p.4; Churchill to Roosevelt, 24 April 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.173; Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 April 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.176; Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 May 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.201; Churchill to Roosevelt, 16 December 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.298. As TORCH approached Western Allied fears of Spanish intentions increased again. See for example, Eisenhower to Marshall, 15 August 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, pp.469-470; Cadogan Diary, 24 September 1942, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.478; Alanbrooke Diary, 6 November 1942, in Danchev & Todman (eds), *Alanbrooke Diary*, p.339; Roosevelt to Churchill, 7 November 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, pp.664-666

<sup>1332</sup> Kennan, *Memoirs*, p.146; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters*, p.188. A report by the British Joint Planners on 1 October 1942 noted: “Portuguese hostility is very unlikely”, NA AIR 20/2507, J.P.(42) 855, ‘Operation TORCH – State of Planning of Operations which may have to be mounted as a result of TORCH’, 1st October, 1942, p.2

<sup>1333</sup> There were particular concerns in the lead-up to the German invasion of Russia. See: Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 April 1941, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.176; Cadogan Diary, 14 June 1941, in Dilks (ed.), *Cadogan Diaries*, p.388; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.246. In early January 1942 Churchill was worried the Germans might persuade or compel the Turks to give them passage to the Middle East, but thought it unlikely, Churchill to Roosevelt, [??] January 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.319

Vichy French to choose to fight for one side or the other.<sup>1334</sup> Gaining French support through a landing in North-West Africa was recognized as a benefit of the operation by a number of the Allied leaders.<sup>1335</sup> Likewise, it was recognized that a North-West Africa operation could influence Spain. When Stalin was told of TORCH at Moscow on 12 August 1942, he noted that one of the four main reasons for TORCH was that it could “overawe Spain”.<sup>1336</sup> In December 1941 Roosevelt’s fears of a German advance into Portugal made him very keen on a North-West Africa operation in 1942.<sup>1337</sup> Churchill hoped that Allied landings in North-West Africa would have a positive impact on Turkey, encouraging it to cooperate more closely with the Allies. Indeed, in autumn 1941 Churchill told Roosevelt that GYMNAST might help eventually gain Turkey as an ally.<sup>1338</sup> Churchill also told Stalin this in Moscow in mid-August 1942.<sup>1339</sup>

Influencing the neutral nations, Turkey, Spain, Vichy France and Portugal, did not feature amongst the official reasons for undertaking TORCH, but there are indications that this factor was considered in making the decision. This seems even more likely given the strenuous efforts of the British and Americans to secure the support of all of these nations from the early days of the war. TORCH was another more effective way to demonstrate clearly to these nations that the Allies were winning the war, especially in the Mediterranean theatre.

## Conclusion

TORCH prevailed in the 1942 strategic debate for a number of important military reasons. Most notably, it was the only operation which the Western Allied leaders could agree met the key military criteria of being likely to succeed, while providing

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<sup>1334</sup> Walker, ‘OSS and Operation Torch’, p.670

<sup>1335</sup> On 15 March 1942 Admiral Leahy in France reported that an Allied landing in France would receive immediate support from the 100,000 French ex-soldiers in unoccupied France, Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.33. On 12 August 1942 Stalin noted that one of the four main reasons for TORCH was to produce fighting in France between Germans and Frenchmen, Churchill to Roosevelt, 13 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.561. On 27 August 1942 Churchill told Roosevelt that “enlisting French cooperation” was “one of the main objects” of TORCH, Churchill to Roosevelt, 27 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.578

<sup>1336</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 13 August 1942, in Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt Correspondence*, p.561

<sup>1337</sup> Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, p.26

<sup>1338</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.77

<sup>1339</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p.433

some assistance to the Soviet Union. A North-West Africa operation fitted neatly with the strategic preferences of Churchill, Roosevelt and the British, and offered a number of valuable practical military benefits to the Western Allies. The British in particular recognized these benefits, most notably the effect TORCH would have on the war in North Africa, and the advantages it would provide for the maritime war. The American military men reluctantly accepted a North-West Africa operation once their preferred cross-Channel operation was ruled out, but they too recognized some of the military benefits it offered the Western Allies. TORCH was chosen as the first large-scale combined Anglo-American operation of the war for military reasons, and because the Western Allies felt that it would provide them with a range of valuable military benefits.

## Chapter 6: The Aims and Outcomes of TORCH

After the lengthy Anglo-American debate over what should be their first large-scale combined military operation of the war, and several months of preparations following the 24 July decision, Operation TORCH finally occurred on 8 November 1942, when British and American troops landed at a number of locations in Vichy French Morocco and Algeria. The operation had a number of objectives at the tactical, operational, strategic and grand strategic levels, many of which have been discussed in earlier chapters. TORCH achieved many of these objectives, and fulfilled most of the aims that Roosevelt and Churchill hoped a 1942 operation would achieve.

### The Aims of TORCH

At the tactical level, Operation TORCH had to secure all of Vichy French North-West Africa, including Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.<sup>1340</sup> The basic aim of Operation TORCH at the operational level was to capture the entire North African coastline as quickly as possible, and to destroy Rommel's army.<sup>1341</sup> The directive for the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force, read as follows:

The President and the Prime Minister have agreed that combined military operations be directed against Africa, as early as practicable, with a view to gaining, in conjunction with Allied Forces in the Middle East, complete control of North Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.<sup>1342</sup>

The directive went on to list the initial, intermediate and ultimate objectives of TORCH:

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<sup>1340</sup> NA WO 106/2771, J.S.M. 346, 11 August 1942; I.S.O. Playfair, C.J.C. Molony, F.C. Flynn & T.P. Gleave, *The Mediterranean and Middle East Volume IV: The Destruction of the Axis Forces in Africa*, London, 1966, p.114. Eisenhower's second revised outline plan of 21 August 1942 noted the immediate objective of TORCH was as follows: "A Combined land, sea, and air assault against the Mediterranean Coast of ALGERIA, with a view to the earliest possible occupation of TUNISIA, and the establishment in FRENCH MOROCCO of a striking force which can insure control of the STRAITS of GIBRALTAR, by moving rapidly, if necessary, into SPANISH MOROCCO", NA CAB 88/7, C.C.S. 103, 25 August 1942, Enclosure B, 'Outline Plan, Operation "TORCH"', p.1

<sup>1341</sup> NA WO 106/2771, J.S.M. 346, 11 August 1942; NA WO 106/2773B, M.O.4 Comments on J.P. (42) 862 (S) Revised Draft; Eisenhower to Marshall, 1 August 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, p.435

<sup>1342</sup> NA CAB 88/7, C.C.S 103/1, 27 August 1942, Enclosure A, 'Directive for Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force', p.1

(1) Establishment of firm and mutually supported lodgements in the Oran-Algiers-Tunis area on the north coast, and in the Casablanca area on the northwest coast, in order that appropriate bases for continued and intensified air, ground and sea operations will be readily available.

(2) Vigorous and rapid exploitation from lodgements obtained in order to acquire complete control of the entire area, including French Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, (it will be necessary to be prepared to take similar action in Spanish Morocco in the event of hostile action by the Spaniards), to facilitate effective air and ground operations against the enemy, and to create favourable conditions for extension of offensive operations to the east through Libya against the rear of Axis Forces in the Western Desert.

(3) Complete annihilation of Axis forces now opposing the British forces in the Western Desert and intensification of air and sea operations against the Axis on the European continent.<sup>1343</sup>

It was hoped that the Allied forces would be in northern Tunisia by mid-December 1942, and could then threaten the rear of Rommel's forces in western Libya.<sup>1344</sup>

Complementing these basic tactical and operational aims were a number of other operational and strategic aims. The occupation of North-West Africa would finally remove the possibility of German control of the region, and would eliminate all German and Italian influence there. The Americans hoped that TORCH would ensure that the Germans could not threaten the Western Hemisphere from North-West Africa.<sup>1345</sup> It was intended that the operation would force a decision on the Vichy French, with the hope that a bold move might encourage them to join the Western Allies, and rally to General de Gaulle and the Free French cause.<sup>1346</sup> Influencing Portugal, Spain and Turkey was also an aim of TORCH at the strategic level.

By securing all of North Africa the Allied shipping situation would be improved, with the Mediterranean opened up to convoys. Malta would be secured, and important naval and air bases would become available to the British and Americans for the

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<sup>1343</sup> NA CAB 88/7, C.C.S. 103/1, 27 August 1942, Enclosure A, 'Directive for Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force', pp.1-2; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.114

<sup>1344</sup> NA CAB 88/7, C.C.S. 103, 25 August 1942, Enclosure B, 'Annex No. III of Outline Plan, Operation "TORCH", Eastern Task Force, Build-up and Operations Subsequent to Assault', p.2; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.114

<sup>1345</sup> Dykes Diary, 28 August 1942, in Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.195; Marshall to Lt. Gen. Eisenhower, 28 August 1942, in Bland (ed.), *Marshall Papers*, p.326

<sup>1346</sup> Eisenhower to Thomas Troy Handy, 7 December 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, II, p.811; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.77

Battle of the Atlantic.<sup>1347</sup> TORCH would also strengthen the Allied blockade of Germany.<sup>1348</sup> Another aim of TORCH was to aid the Western Allies in the air war in Europe, by creating new bases for heavy bomber operations, and securing vital aircraft ferrying routes.<sup>1349</sup>

One important strategic objective of TORCH, primarily sought by the British, was for it to lead to further Western Allied operations in Mediterranean, for example against Sicily and Italy.<sup>1350</sup> This aim was strongly disliked by the American military men, and particularly by the U.S. Army.

At the grand strategic level, Operation TORCH was intended to provide assistance of both a practical and symbolic nature to the Soviet Union. As was seen in Chapter 5, the general view of the British and Americans was that TORCH might provide the Soviets with practical military assistance, by diverting German forces from the Eastern Front.

### **Operation TORCH and the Tunisian campaign**

Operation TORCH began in the early hours of 8 November 1942, as 70,000 American and British troops came ashore in three Assault Forces – the Western, Central and Eastern – at a number of locations in North-West Africa, supported by very strong naval and air forces.<sup>1351</sup> Opposing them were 55,000 Vichy French troops in Morocco, 50,000 in Algeria, and 15,000 in Tunisia.<sup>1352</sup> These French troops initially chose to fight the invaders. However, within three days Vichy French forces had

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<sup>1347</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23rd July, 1942, pp.1-2; NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942, at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, pp.1-2; Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, p.410; Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.337; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War*, p.18

<sup>1348</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23rd July, 1942, p.2; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, p.81

<sup>1349</sup> Eisenhower Memorandum to Marshall, ‘Survey of Strategic Situation’, 23 July 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, p.410; Steele, *The First Offensive*, p.40

<sup>1350</sup> NA CAB 84/47, J.P.(42) 693, ‘Operation “TORCH”’, 23 July, 1942, p.2; NA CAB 88/1, C.C.S. 38th Meeting, Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, August 28, 1942 at 1530, Supplementary Minutes, p.1

<sup>1351</sup> Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.139

<sup>1352</sup> NA DEFE 2/2071, G-2 Intelligence Report No. 1, 11 September 1942, p.1; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.21; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.116

ceased fighting in Morocco and Algeria.<sup>1353</sup> Following the successful completion of this first phase of TORCH, the Allies consolidated and then began the vital drive east into Tunisia, where they engaged the arriving German and Italian land and air forces.<sup>1354</sup> On 9 November German land and air forces began moving into Tunisia, in order to gain a bridgehead.<sup>1355</sup> By 11 November the two major port cities in Tunisia, Bizerta and Tunis, along with a number of key airfields, were firmly in German possession, providing a serious obstacle to early Anglo-American victory.

An Allied offensive begun on 25 November came very close to capturing the vital city of Tunis, but was followed by a successful German counter-offensive on 1 December. After 7 December there was general stalemate in northern Tunisia for several months, largely because of heavy rain.<sup>1356</sup> The two sides settled down for a protracted, bitter and costly campaign, much to the disappointment of the Western Allies.

Meanwhile, the British army in Libya was steadily advancing westwards. On 23 January 1943 Tripoli fell to the British Eighth Army, and by 15 February all German and Italian forces had left Tripolitania and arrived in southern Tunisia.<sup>1357</sup> This meant that the Axis army in Tunisia was threatened on both sides. However, it also meant that it was augmented by the arrival of Rommel's forces, which were relatively intact despite months of retreat from El Alamein to southern Tunisia. On 14 February the

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<sup>1353</sup> Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.484; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, pp.121-122, 151, 167, 171-172, 192, 222, 224, 229; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.30-31; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters* p.33, 133-134; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, pp.126, 145, 146, 151

<sup>1354</sup> Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.165

<sup>1355</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 2, *The Luftwaffe in the Battle for Tunis*, a Strategic Survey, p.3; AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 15, *The Battle for Tunis November 1942 – May 1943*, p.3; AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, *The War in the Mediterranean Part II* by Field Marshal Kesselring, pp.2, 4; NA HW 1/1072, Signal from II. *Fliegerkorps* to *Korps* Command Elmas, morning, 9 November 1942; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, pp.486, 490; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, pp.254-255; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, pp.162, 170; David Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis: Destruction of the Axis Forces in North Africa: November 1942 – May 1943*, London, 2001, p.19

<sup>1356</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 2, *The Luftwaffe in the Battle for Tunis*, a Strategic Survey, pp.5-6; Eisenhower to Combined Chiefs of Staff and British Chiefs of Staff, 26 December 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, II, p.867; Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, II, p.777; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.504; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.318; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.184; Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, p.69

<sup>1357</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 15, *The Battle for Tunis November 1942 – May 1943*, p.12; Morison, *Operations in North African Waters* p.258; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.236; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.118

Axis launched a major offensive in the mountainous terrain of central Tunisia, in the region of Kasserine, which enjoyed great initial success against the inexperienced American troops.<sup>1358</sup> However, after the Allies had re-established order they were able to halt the Axis forces, and on 22 February *Feldmarschall* Albert Kesselring, the *Oberbefehlshaber Süd* (Commander-in-Chief South) and Rommel made the decision to withdraw their troops.<sup>1359</sup>

After Kasserine the possibility of an Axis victory in Africa no longer existed. The 14 February attempt to sever the Allied lines of communication and supply had failed, and as a result the British and American supply rate soon greatly outstripped that of the Axis. Further failed Axis offensives occurred in late-February and early March.<sup>1360</sup> From mid-March to mid-April the Allies secured gains in central and southern Tunisia.<sup>1361</sup> By mid-April the Axis forces in Tunisia were compressed into a small bridgehead based around Bizerta and Tunis, awaiting the final blow from their Anglo-American opponents. On 22 April the Allies began their final offensive, with overwhelming numerical superiority in air and ground forces. The Germans and

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<sup>1358</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 54, The Course of the War in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, January 1 – May 13, 1943, pp.5-6; AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, The War in the Mediterranean Part II by Field Marshal Kesselring, p.19; NA HW 1/1370, *Fliegerkorps Tunis* IA to *Fliegerführer* 2, 18:00, 14 February 1943; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.584; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, pp.291-292

<sup>1359</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, The War in the Mediterranean Part II by Field Marshal Kesselring, p.19; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, pp.592-593; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.469; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume IV, pp.300-301; Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, p.141

<sup>1360</sup> On 26 February a brief and unsuccessful offensive was attempted in the north, *Unternehmen Ochsenkopf*, AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 15, The Battle for Tunis November 1942 – May 1943, p.11; AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 54, The Course of the War in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, January 1 – May 13, 1943, pp.6, 9; AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, The War in the Mediterranean Part II by Field Marshal Kesselring, p.19; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, pp.502-509; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.594; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.327. Rommel launched an offensive at Medenine in southern Tunisia on 6 March, but because the British could read the German signals through ULTRA, Montgomery was able to prepare very thorough defences, which ripped apart the Axis fighting force. Rommel then departed Africa on sick leave, AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, The War in the Mediterranean Part II by Field Marshal Kesselring, p.21; Eisenhower to the Combined Chiefs of Staff and British Chiefs of Staff, 8 March 1943, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, II, p.1015; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, pp.593-596; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, pp.514-519; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.326

<sup>1361</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 15, The Battle for Tunis November 1942 – May 1943, p.20; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, pp.600, 604-605; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.531; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, pp.337-338, 353, 374-376

Italians were also suffering from a crippling lack of supplies.<sup>1362</sup> There was heavy fighting in the early stages of the final Allied offensive, but in early May they broke through, and on 7 May entered Tunis and Bizerta.<sup>1363</sup> On 13 May all Axis forces in North Africa surrendered, leaving the Allies with around a quarter of a million prisoners.<sup>1364</sup>

### **Outcomes of TORCH**

TORCH eventually achieved its most basic aims at the tactical and operational levels, securing all of Vichy French North-West Africa and the entire North African coastline after six months of tough fighting. This took much longer to achieve than had been hoped because of the quicker and greater than anticipated Axis reaction to the TORCH landings. Consequently, the objective of destroying Rommel's army also took much longer than expected.<sup>1365</sup> TORCH did not increase the pace of Rommel's westward retreat. Kesselring was vehemently opposed to Rommel retreating faster because of TORCH, because defensive positions had not been prepared at places in southern Tunisia like Mareth and Gabes.<sup>1366</sup> TORCH eventually destroyed both Rommel's army and the new army created to defend Tunisia after the TORCH landings.<sup>1367</sup> Some 170,000 prisoners were captured on the Cap Bon peninsula on 13 May, and 238,000 were captured in the overall Tunisian campaign.<sup>1368</sup> The decisions by Hitler on 7 April, and by the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (German Armed Forces High Command) on 16 April, to fight to the end in Tunisia, and the resulting failure to evacuate troops and material, proved very costly.<sup>1369</sup> Post-war writers have gone as far as to say that the failure of TORCH to secure a quick victory was a

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<sup>1362</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, *The War in the Mediterranean Part II* by Field Marshal Kesselring, p.26; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.431

<sup>1363</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 15, *The Battle for Tunis November 1942 – May 1943*, p.20; AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 54, *The Course of the War in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, January 1 – May 13, 1943*, p.17; AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, *The War in the Mediterranean Part II* by Field Marshal Kesselring, p.28; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.612; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, pp.452-453

<sup>1364</sup> Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.460. Estimates of the number of prisoners vary. Playfair quotes one source saying 238,243, and Howe, *Northwest Africa*, p.666, says 275,000.

<sup>1365</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, pp.76-77

<sup>1366</sup> AWM 54 423/4/103 Part 99, *The War in the Mediterranean Part II* by Field Marshal Kesselring, pp.3, 5, 7-8

<sup>1367</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.159; Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, pp.313, 316, 329-330, 341, 437, 712

<sup>1368</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.119

<sup>1369</sup> Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.606; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.393

blessing in disguise, because it meant that the Axis sent many more troops to Africa who were captured in May 1943.<sup>1370</sup>

Various other objectives at the operational and strategic levels were attained. The capture of North-West Africa eliminated any possibility of Germany using the region as a base to threaten the Americas. This removed an American fear that had been strongly held since June 1940, particularly by the President.

Many of the Vichy French in North-West Africa did join the Allies after TORCH. This process was aided by the Germans on 11 November, when they occupied Vichy France and Corsica.<sup>1371</sup> The French fleet was not captured by the Germans, and was scuttled when the Germans tried to seize it at Toulon on 27 November. Thus the operation was successful in making the French choose sides, and removed any chance of Vichy France becoming an active Axis partner. After TORCH occurred, the Turks, Portuguese and Spanish also proved more willing to help the Allied cause.<sup>1372</sup>

TORCH achieved the very important aim of opening up the Mediterranean to Allied shipping. However, it also had an adverse effect on the Allied maritime war. For example, because TORCH took up a lot of shipping, convoys to the Soviet Union via the northern route had to be reduced.<sup>1373</sup> The operation achieved its objectives in relation to the air war, such as creating new bases for heavy bomber operations.

TORCH was partially successful in achieving its main aim at the grand strategic level, providing practical support to the Soviets. After TORCH occurred the Germans were able to strengthen their army in Russia, because they knew that there was no immediate threat of an Anglo-American landing in France.<sup>1374</sup> Stalin estimated that some 27 fresh divisions were sent from Western Europe to Russia after TORCH had

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<sup>1370</sup> Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, p.341

<sup>1371</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.178-179; Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, II, p.485; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, pp.256-257; Playfair *et al.*, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, IV, p.162

<sup>1372</sup> For example, in summer 1943 the Portuguese gave the Western Allies access to their Atlantic Islands, Bland (ed.), *Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Pogue*, p.621; Kennan, *Memoirs*, pp.145-146

<sup>1373</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.180

<sup>1374</sup> *Ibid.*, p.279

occurred.<sup>1375</sup> However, TORCH did provide some practical assistance to the Soviets. A new German army was created in Tunisia after the TORCH landings, and although these were not forces drawn from the Eastern Front, it meant that they could not be committed to that campaign in the future. More importantly, significant German air forces were withdrawn to the Mediterranean theatre in October and November 1942.<sup>1376</sup> Some 500 aircraft were sent to the Mediterranean and North Africa, many of which came from the Soviet Union.<sup>1377</sup> This movement was due to German discovery of the TORCH convoy in late-October, the British offensive at El Alamein, and finally the TORCH landings themselves.

There were a number of other significant outcomes of TORCH and the TORCH decision at the strategic and grand strategic levels, which will now be outlined. The first of these was a renewal of American interest in turning to the Pacific. The Germany-first policy was badly damaged by the TORCH decision.<sup>1378</sup> The J.C.S., and especially Admiral King, felt that with SLEDGEHAMMER no longer a possibility, American resources should go to the Pacific, and as a result of the TORCH decision more American resources went to that theatre.<sup>1379</sup> C.C.S. 94, the paper on the TORCH decision, stated that fifteen USAAF groups were to be withdrawn to the Pacific, and some shipping would be needed to move an infantry or Marine division to the South West Pacific, “for the purpose of furthering offensive operations in the Pacific”.<sup>1380</sup> By the end of 1942 there were more U.S. forces in the Pacific than in the Atlantic.<sup>1381</sup> In that year nine of seventeen American divisions and nineteen of 66 air groups sent overseas had gone to the Pacific.<sup>1382</sup> As could be expected, the British strongly

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<sup>1375</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.180. Although it was Stalin’s estimate, heavy German forces were indeed transferred to the Soviet Union in the months after TORCH.

<sup>1376</sup> Lukas, ‘The Velvet Project’, p.161

<sup>1377</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.180

<sup>1378</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.22

<sup>1379</sup> Danchev (ed.), *Establishing the Anglo-American Alliance*, p.171; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.22; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.70; Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.101. This process began before the TORCH decision. On 2 July a Marshall and King directive authorised more offensive action in the Pacific. On the evening of 15 July 1942 Roosevelt told Hopkins that if SLEDGEHAMMER did not occur, he was prepared to consider “an appropriate amount of air and landing craft to the Southwest Pacific”, Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.17; Sherwood (ed.), *Hopkins Papers*, II, p.604

<sup>1380</sup> NA CAB 88/6, C.C.S. 94, ‘Operations in 1942/43’, July 24th, 1942, p.2; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.89; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.151

<sup>1381</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.101

<sup>1382</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.354

disliked this situation.<sup>1383</sup> Brigadier Dykes noted on 7 August 1942 that C.C.S. 94 had “changed the basic strategic concept of making Germany the main enemy”.<sup>1384</sup>

The decision for TORCH ruled out a 1942 cross-Channel operation, and virtually ruled out a 1943 cross-Channel operation as well.<sup>1385</sup> This was of vital importance to future Anglo-American strategy. C.C.S. 94 included the following phrase: “That it be understood that a commitment to this operation renders ROUND-UP in all probability impracticable of successful execution in 1943”.<sup>1386</sup> The British and American military men all accepted this, but Roosevelt and Churchill refused to admit that TORCH ruled out a 1943 invasion of France.<sup>1387</sup> Realization only gradually dawned on the Prime Minister and President.<sup>1388</sup> However, Churchill spent November and December trying to convince his military men that ROUND-UP was possible in 1943.<sup>1389</sup> Likewise, on 26 November Roosevelt told Churchill that the United States had “no intention of

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<sup>1383</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* pp.89-90; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.22. Pound noted on 24 August 1942 that the C.O.S. were surprised when the United States thought that C.C.S. 94 superseded the ARCADIA agreement stressing Germany-first, Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.22

<sup>1384</sup> Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.22

<sup>1385</sup> Higgins, ‘Winston Churchill and the Second Front’, pp.278-279; Matloff & Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, pp.307-308, 322; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.39. C.C.S. 94 kept alive the 1942 and 1943 cross-Channel operations. SLEDGEHAMMER was to be kept alive as deception, and “to be ready for any emergency or a favourable opportunity”, while ROUND-UP “should be favourably considered so long as there remains any reasonable possibility of its successful execution before July 1943”, NA CAB 88/6, C.C.S. 94, ‘Operations in 1942/43’, July 24th, 1942, p.1. However, if TORCH occurred it was very unlikely that either of these operations would occur.

<sup>1386</sup> NA CAB 88/6, C.C.S. 94, ‘Operations in 1942/43’, July 24th, 1942, p.2; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.35

<sup>1387</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.90; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, pp.23, 35; Morison, *Strategy and Compromise*, p.39; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, pp.162, 163. Roosevelt told Secretary Stimson, Admiral Leahy, and Generals Arnold and McNarney just after the TORCH decision that “he desired action and that he could see no reason that the withdrawal of a few troops in 1942 would prevent BOLERO in 1943”, Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.83

<sup>1388</sup> On 21 September Eisenhower told Marshall: “It appears that for the first time the Former Naval Person [Churchill] and certain of his close advisors have become acutely conscious of the inescapable costs of TORCH. ... the Former Naval Person ... expresses himself now as very much astonished to find out that TORCH practically eliminates any opportunity for a 1943 ROUNDUP”, Eisenhower to George Catlett Marshall, 21 September 1942, in Chandler (ed.), *Eisenhower Papers*, I, p.570. On 22 September Churchill told Roosevelt that after a conference with Eisenhower and the British C.O.S. it became clear to him that TORCH precluded ROUND-UP, NARA RG 38, Box 37, Churchill to Roosevelt, 22 September 1942, p.1. On 24 November Churchill told Roosevelt it might not be possible to build up forces for a 1943 cross-Channel operation, Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.173. By 14 December, after much discussion, Churchill was again almost convinced that ROUND-UP was not possible, Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.28.

<sup>1389</sup> Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, pp.428, 431-433; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.171-172; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.37. For example, on 2 December he wrote in a memorandum to the C.O.S. that some offensive action must occur in northern France in 1943, Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.27

abandoning the plans for Roundup. It is impossible for anyone to say now whether or not we will be given the opportunity to strike across the Channel in 1943".<sup>1390</sup> At the Casablanca conference of January 1943 Churchill and Roosevelt asked their military men to expand their plans to include a possible invasion of France in August 1943, Operation HADRIAN.<sup>1391</sup> However, the C.C.S. made it clear how unlikely such an operation was.<sup>1392</sup> The insistence of Roosevelt and Churchill on action in 1942, resulting in TORCH, ensured that their hope of an Anglo-American landing in France in 1943 was not realized. Prevention of a 1943 cross-Channel operation was perhaps the major outcome of TORCH at the strategic and grand strategic levels. This meant that other Anglo-American operations had to be considered in 1943.

Operation TORCH led to further Anglo-American operations in the Mediterranean in 1943, despite U.S. Army objections. In September 1942 Churchill began considering post-TORCH strategy. He wanted more operations in the Mediterranean as a follow up to the North-West Africa landings, with North Africa to be "a springboard and not a sofa".<sup>1393</sup> On 11 November Roosevelt told Churchill it was time to consider post-TORCH strategy, and the President was also considering possible operations to Sardinia, Sicily, Italy, Greece, and other Balkans areas.<sup>1394</sup> Churchill replied that he agreed, and on 18 November the Prime Minister sent Roosevelt his own strategic plans, as presented to the C.O.S., arguing that once North Africa was secured, the Western Allies should "strike at the soft underbelly of the Axis", namely Sardinia, Sicily and Italy.<sup>1395</sup>

The American military men were very unhappy about the possibility of further Mediterranean operations, with the Army especially unhappy that American forces were being drawn into what it felt was a diversionary theatre.<sup>1396</sup> General Marshall

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<sup>1390</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.173

<sup>1391</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.89

<sup>1392</sup> *Ibid.*, p.89

<sup>1393</sup> Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, p.432; Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.91; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.86; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.36. He told Roosevelt about this on 22 September 1942, mentioning possible operations against Sardinia, Sicily, "and even possibly Italy", NARA RG 38, Box 37, Churchill to Roosevelt, 22 September 1942, p.1; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.36

<sup>1394</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.366-367

<sup>1395</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.367

<sup>1396</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.91; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.39. In early December Field Marshal Dill wrote to Admiral Cunningham: "There are

wanted to shut down the Mediterranean and instead undertake a cross-Channel operation as soon as possible.<sup>1397</sup> On 25 November in a meeting with Roosevelt, Marshall expressed opposition to more Mediterranean operations, which he was worried might even jeopardize a 1944 cross-Channel operation.<sup>1398</sup>

These issues all came to a head at the Casablanca conference in January 1943, and TORCH had a great influence on the Anglo-American strategic decisions made there. The British came to the Casablanca conference with a plan for more Mediterranean operations, and stuck to it. They wanted to use troops based in nearby North Africa to secure Sicily, knock Italy out of the war, bring Turkey into the war, and build up for an eventual cross-Channel operation.<sup>1399</sup> They felt that a 1943 cross-Channel operation would be very difficult, and preferred waiting until 1944 before landing in France.<sup>1400</sup>

In contrast to the British, there was division amongst the American planners and J.C.S., with some wanting a cross-Channel operation, and others wanting to continue in the Mediterranean.<sup>1401</sup> As previously mentioned, Marshall wanted to focus resources on a cross-Channel operation. However, at an American meeting on 7 January prior to the conference, Roosevelt gave indirect expression that he preferred the British approach.<sup>1402</sup> Churchill and the C.O.S. exploited the divisions in the J.C.S., and seized on Roosevelt's interest in more Mediterranean operations.<sup>1403</sup> As a result, Roosevelt decided to follow the strategy advocated by the British.<sup>1404</sup> The American military men realized the situation, and decided among themselves early in the

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still a good many people in authority here, who feel that we have led them down the Mediterranean garden path and although they are enjoying the walk are fearful of what they may find at the end of it", Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.38. Similarly, Dill wrote to General Wavell on 25 November that there were American suspicions that the British "have led them down the Mediterranean garden path to a cul-de-sac. They don't see or they fear the vista beyond", Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.25

<sup>1397</sup> Bruce, *Second Front Now!* p.91; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-1944*, p.39

<sup>1398</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, pp.369-370

<sup>1399</sup> *Ibid.*, p.371; Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.36; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.184; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.87; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, p.179

<sup>1400</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.371; Danchev, *On Specialness*, pp.35-36

<sup>1401</sup> Danchev, *On Specialness*, p.35; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.30; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.87; Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!*, pp.180, 185

<sup>1402</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.370

<sup>1403</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.87

<sup>1404</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.186; Stoler, 'The Roosevelt Foreign Policy', p.156

conference to agree to the Mediterranean strategy and then to focus on securing a 1944 cross-Channel operation.<sup>1405</sup> Thus the Americans agreed to an invasion of Sicily in 1943, with forces to be built up in Britain for a later cross-Channel operation.<sup>1406</sup>

As a result of the decision for an invasion of Sicily Admiral King pushed for yet more resources for the Pacific. General Marshall also sought Operation ANAKIM, an operation in Burma to reopen the supply route to China.<sup>1407</sup> A compromise was reached, with “adequate” forces to be provided for offensives in Burma and the Pacific.<sup>1408</sup> Thus at the Casablanca conference Germany-first again lost importance as the primary component in the Anglo-American strategy for the conduct of the war.

The final conference memorandum of 23 January 1943 concluded that Sicily was to be taken; the U-boat menace was to be overcome; as many supplies were to be sent to the Soviet Union as possible; a heavy bomber offensive was to be conducted from Britain; ground forces were to be built up there; and operations were to be carried out in Asia and the Pacific to throw back the Japanese and help China.<sup>1409</sup> In essence, the British Mediterranean strategy had prevailed, at the expense of a further American move away from the Germany-first policy.

### **TORCH and the aims of Churchill and Roosevelt**

Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis outlined the reasons why Churchill and Roosevelt desired a major Anglo-American operation in 1942. In the event, the President and Prime Minister achieved much of what they wanted from TORCH.

One very significant aim that TORCH did not achieve was satisfying Soviet demands for significant Western Allied military action. Stalin was not satisfied by the Western Allies only carrying out TORCH in 1942, despite his initial enthusiasm when told of the operation by Churchill on 12 August 1942.<sup>1410</sup> In December Stalin told Roosevelt

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<sup>1405</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.371

<sup>1406</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.87

<sup>1407</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87

<sup>1408</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.372; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.36; Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.87

<sup>1409</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.372; Dunn, Jr., *Second Front Now*, p.32; Stoler & Gustafson (eds), *Major Problems in the History of World War II*, pp.88-89

<sup>1410</sup> Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, p.372; Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.161

that he felt the Anglo-American promises about creating a Second Front in 1942 and 1943 had been broken.<sup>1411</sup> Other results of TORCH also upset Stalin. For example, the lack of progress of British and American operations in North Africa over the winter of 1942 and 1943 disappointed him.<sup>1412</sup> TORCH meant no 1943 cross-Channel operation, which also made Stalin very unhappy when he was eventually informed.<sup>1413</sup> Although the operation provided the Soviets with some military assistance, TORCH was not the cross-Channel operation they desired as a Second Front.

TORCH had a very positive effect on British and American morale. The British embassy in Washington noted in its report to the Foreign Office on 15 November:

The news of the landing of United States forces in Africa was like cool water to a parched throat. It was badly needed to counteract the feeling of frustration and meaninglessness which has been a depressing feature in recent months.<sup>1414</sup>

A public opinion poll confirmed this observation. In July 1942 58 per cent of Americans surveyed felt that the Allies would win the war, but in late-November 73 per cent felt confident of Allied victory.<sup>1415</sup> In Britain the success in North Africa at El Alamein, and then days later with the TORCH landings, was a very welcome relief for the British people. The Ministry of Information estimated that British morale rose from ten out of twenty on 6 October to twelve out of twenty on 3 November after the opening of the British offensive at El Alamein, and then to eighteen out of twenty on 1 December after TORCH.<sup>1416</sup>

TORCH solved most of the domestic political problems faced by Churchill and Roosevelt. TORCH had a major impact on American public opinion and attitudes, and after the operation had commenced there was greater approval of Roosevelt and his

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<sup>1411</sup> Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, pp.172-173

<sup>1412</sup> Stoler, *Allies in War*, p.87

<sup>1413</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87. Churchill told Roosevelt on 22 September: "This will be another tremendous blow for Stalin", NARA RG 38, Box 37, Churchill to Roosevelt, 22 September 1942, p.2

<sup>1414</sup> Weekly Political Summary, 15 November 1942, in Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, p.108

<sup>1415</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.52

<sup>1416</sup> McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, endpapers

conduct of the war.<sup>1417</sup> Operation TORCH met Roosevelt's intent of securing stronger public support for the Germany-first policy, with support for Japan-first falling from 32 to 21 per cent between 3 November and 19 November, and support for Germany-first rising from 23 to 30 per cent.<sup>1418</sup> TORCH weakened isolationism in the United States. It made the war more significant and tangible to 'Roosevelt haters', because American troops were now involved in the fighting with Germany.<sup>1419</sup> TORCH also solved the problem of the Second Front campaign, as Roosevelt wrote to Josephus Daniels two days after the landings: "I am happy today in the fact that for three months I have been taking it on the chin in regard to the Second Front and that this is now over".<sup>1420</sup> TORCH saw Roosevelt's personal approval rating rise from a post-Pearl Harbor low of 70 per cent on 27 October 1942 to 73 per cent on 17 November, and 75 per cent on 7 January 1943.<sup>1421</sup> Roosevelt did not get the operation he wanted before the November 1942 elections.<sup>1422</sup> However, this was the only American domestic political problem that TORCH did not help the President with.

After El Alamein and TORCH Churchill would never again receive the kind of criticism he had received in the first half of 1942. These two events improved the popularity of the government and the Prime Minister, and secured Churchill's position for the remainder of the war with Germany. The British government went from a 41 per cent approval rating on 16 October to a 75 per cent approval rating in November.<sup>1423</sup> Headlam recorded in his diary two days after the TORCH landings: "Everyone one met was highly elated at the war news ...".<sup>1424</sup> James Ede, MP, noted in his diary on 31 December 1942 that after El Alamein and TORCH nothing could "shake the confidence newly reposed spontaneously in [Churchill] by the House ...".<sup>1425</sup>

<sup>1417</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.94

<sup>1418</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, pp.1155, 1177; Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.96

<sup>1419</sup> Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, p.96

<sup>1420</sup> Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, p.362

<sup>1421</sup> Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.756

<sup>1422</sup> Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, p.100. Stoler notes: "Roosevelt bravely accepted an invasion date after the November elections". After the war Marshall stated: "A man of lesser stature than Mr. Roosevelt, with the authority of Commander-in-Chief, might have insisted that the election be timed for a week after the action. But not Mr. Roosevelt", Higgins, *Churchill and the Second Front*, p.169

<sup>1423</sup> 'Gallup & Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1943, p.330; 'Gallup & Fortune Polls', *POQ*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1943, p.176; Cantril (ed.), *Public Opinion 1935-1946*, p.1108

<sup>1424</sup> Headlam Diary, 10 November 1942, in Ball (ed.), *Headlam Diaries*, p.341

<sup>1425</sup> Jefferys (ed.), *War and Reform*, p.87

## **Conclusion**

Operation TORCH had numerous wide-ranging objectives, from tactical aims like securing Vichy French North-West Africa to grand strategic aims like providing support to the Soviets. The operation was successful in achieving many of these objectives, but not all of them. Most of the tactical, operational and strategic objectives were attained. The most important objective in the eyes of Churchill and Roosevelt, providing some degree of practical assistance to the Soviets, was achieved, but the related objective of satisfying the Soviet demands for significant Anglo-American military action was not. In terms of improving American and British morale, and solving the domestic political problems of Roosevelt and Churchill, TORCH was almost entirely successful. Overall, Operation TORCH generally satisfied the desires of Churchill and Roosevelt, and achieved most of the objectives set for it by the British and Americans.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this thesis has been to explain why Operation TORCH was chosen as the first large-scale combined military operation carried out by the Western Allies in the Second World War. TORCH was the result of a number of predominantly political factors convincing Churchill and Roosevelt that significant Anglo-American military action involving ground troops against Germany was imperative in 1942, with TORCH emerging as the preferred option primarily for military reasons. The strong desire of Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt for a major military undertaking in 1942 was fuelled by three important concerns, which meant that they would not tolerate their armies remaining inactive in Britain and the United States throughout 1942. As the ultimate authorities in Western Allied strategy-making, the President and Prime Minister were able to ensure that their desire was fulfilled.

The three main concerns of Churchill and Roosevelt were: providing assistance to the Soviet Union to help ensure it was not defeated by the Germans, which was both a military and a political necessity; maintaining good civilian morale in Britain and the United States; and addressing the domestic political problems that confronted them in the months after Pearl Harbor. They believed that a significant and successful operation in 1942 would address these issues. Of these concerns, assisting the Soviet Union was the most important, but the other two contributed to the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt for action. If the Soviet Union was defeated the war could be lost, whereas low morale and domestic political problems might cause the downfall of the Churchill or Roosevelt governments, and result in a less effective Western Allied war effort, but would not necessarily result in Axis victory in the war. These three factors were interrelated, with British and American morale and domestic political problems hingeing on the Western Allied military situation, and depending to a lesser extent on the situation on the Eastern Front. The evidence demonstrates that Roosevelt and Churchill recognized how vital a successful 1942 operation could be in addressing their three principal concerns.

The Western Allies suffered a string of serious defeats at the hands of the Japanese and Germans in the months following the attack on Pearl Harbor, and this created significant problems for Churchill and Roosevelt. These defeats caused a slump in

morale in the United States and Britain in early 1942, although the problem was more acute in the latter country, because Britain had already suffered eighteen months of demoralising military reversals at the hands of the Germans prior to American entry into the war. Further military disasters in 1942, and most notably the fall of Singapore in February and Tobruk in June, had a very negative impact on the fighting spirit and morale of the British people, as well as those in the government and upper echelons of the armed forces. The President and Prime Minister both felt that the morale of their people could be stiffened by British and American troops conducting a successful offensive against Germany in 1942, and improving the Allied military situation.

Domestic political problems also contributed to the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt for a major Anglo-American military operation in 1942. As the military situation worsened for the Allies in all theatres of war in the early months of 1942, public confidence in the Churchill and Roosevelt governments decreased significantly. The President and Prime Minister also lost some personal popularity and support as 1942 went on. A strongly supported campaign for a Second Front developed in both nations, peaking in the summer of 1942, and this placed more pressure on Roosevelt and Churchill for significant military action in 1942. Roosevelt had his own political concerns, such as ensuring widespread support for his administration's Germany-first policy, and removing stubborn vestiges of isolationist sentiment. He also faced a mid-term Congressional election in November, and the polls showed support for his Democratic Party falling as 1942 progressed and no indications appeared of significant American participation in the war with Germany. The President and Prime Minister recognized that the solution to their domestic political problems was a successful large-scale offensive in 1942.

While domestic political problems and morale concerned Churchill and Roosevelt, and encouraged their interest in an Anglo-American operation in 1942, the military situation on the Eastern Front was an even greater motivation for their desire for British and American troops to go into action as soon as possible. Supporting the Soviet Union was essential for military reasons, but it was also a vital political reason for an undertaking by British and American forces. Roosevelt and Churchill viewed the survival of the Soviet Union as vital, and the evidence makes it clear that their desire for action in 1942 was largely motivated by the need to provide some degree of

assistance to their ally. They had well-grounded fears of possible Soviet defeat in summer 1942, particularly due to the German summer offensive in southern Russia. Fears of Soviet defeat were augmented by vehement demands from Stalin for a Second Front. Going on the offensive against Germany would not only provide the Soviet Union with some degree of practical support, it would also be a vital gesture of support, to encourage them to keep fighting. Also contributing to the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt for action was their concern that the Soviet Union was bearing the brunt of the fighting, a concern borne out by the distribution of Axis forces in 1942, with the vast majority engaging Soviet forces in the East.

With the need for Anglo-American action in 1942 firmly established by the President and Prime Minister, it was the task of the British and American military leaders to find an operation to undertake, to fulfil the desire of their political masters. Military reasons largely determined that TORCH should occur rather than one of the other potential operations discussed by the British and Americans in 1941 and 1942. There were several criteria that had to be met by the first significant Anglo-American operation of the war. It had to occur in 1942 to satisfy the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt for successful military action in that year; it had to be a militarily acceptable to the British and American military leaders, which meant it had to be likely to succeed; it had to be significant enough to satisfy the Prime Minister and President, yet realistic in light of the lack of Western Allied resources in 1942; it had to be carried out against the Germans, in accordance with the Anglo-American Germany-first policy; it had to provide practical assistance to the Soviets, while satisfying their demand for a Second Front as best as possible; and it also had to satisfy the demands of the British and American publics for military action involving their troops. All potential operations were tested against these basic criteria, but an invasion of North-West Africa proved to be the only one that met them all.

A cross-Channel operation in 1943, Operation ROUND-UP, was acceptable to all British and American military and political leaders, and in many respects it was the best choice to be the first major Western Allied operation of the war. However, it was eliminated because Roosevelt and Churchill would not settle for Anglo-American military inactivity in 1942. The firm adherence of President Roosevelt to the Germany-first policy ensured that there would be no American change of strategic

focus to the Pacific, even though this option was strongly advocated by the U.S. Navy and certain U.S. Army generals, and was briefly mooted as a possibility by the entire American military leadership in July 1942. Because the first major Anglo-American operation had to be significant enough to provide the Soviets with assistance, while satisfying Roosevelt, Churchill, the Soviets, and the British and American publics, a number of smaller potential operations discussed by the British and Americans in 1941 and 1942 were ruled out. These included: invading or occupying the Spanish and Portuguese Atlantic Islands; invading the Iberian peninsula; increasing the Anglo-American heavy bomber offensive to the point that it could win the war; and sending British and American air and land forces to the Soviet Union.

This left four serious options available to the Western Allies in 1942. These were: SLEDGEHAMMER, a cross-Channel operation; sending U.S. Army troops to serve in the Middle East alongside the British Eighth Army; JUPITER, an Allied invasion of Norway; or an invasion of North-West Africa, known as GYMNAST or SUPERGYMNAST, and later TORCH. Despite Churchill's strong advocacy of an invasion of Norway, it was correctly viewed by the British and American military men as being very unlikely to succeed in the conditions prevailing in summer and autumn 1942. Sending U.S. Army troops to serve in the Middle East met many of the basic criteria, and was generally an attractive option. However, such a move was opposed by the American military, and particularly by General Marshall, for a variety of logistical and strategic reasons, so despite serious consideration of this option, along with support from the President and Prime Minister, it was ultimately rejected.

This left just two options to fulfil the intent of Churchill and Roosevelt: the U.S. Army's preferred 1942 cross-Channel operation, or an invasion of North-West Africa. A cross-Channel operation was also preferred as the Anglo-American Second Front by the Soviets, and by the British and American people. However, the British C.O.S. were adamant that it failed the crucial criterion of being militarily feasible. The evidence presented in Chapter 4 suggests that their reasoning was very sound, because lack of troop numbers and landing craft made a 1942 cross-Channel operation a risky proposition at best. The disastrous results of the raid on Dieppe on 19 August 1942 confirmed the great difficulties faced by a cross-Channel operation in 1942. Although the British had a very sound argument against SLEDGEHAMMER, they still had to

convince their American ally. However, because at this stage of the war the British were better organized to plan strategy and better able to present their case at Anglo-American conferences, they were able to convincingly argue against the very strong U.S. Army advocacy of SLEDGEHAMMER in 1942.

There were a number of important military reasons why Operation TORCH prevailed, of which two were particularly important. TORCH was a militarily feasible operation that all British and American military leaders accepted was likely to succeed, or at the very least was more likely to succeed than the other options. This was primarily because TORCH was to be carried out against weaker Vichy French forces in neutral territory, rather than against German troops manning Channel coast defences. The second important reason was that TORCH seemed likely to provide as much military assistance to the Soviet Union as any other 1942 option. These two military reasons alone were enough to ensure that TORCH was chosen, but there were others.

There were a number of less obvious military reasons for TORCH being chosen. These included general British and American strategic preferences, and those of Churchill and Roosevelt; preferences which were based largely on military reasons. A North-West Africa operation was promoted to a very receptive President by the Prime Minister, although Roosevelt needed no convincing, because both men had long had an interest in the military benefits offered by landings in French West or North-West Africa. A North-West Africa operation was also favoured by the British due to their interest in the Mediterranean theatre, and a preference for operations on the periphery. Because the British prevailed in the 1942 strategic debate, an operation that suited their preferred strategy was chosen as the first significant Anglo-American military undertaking of the war.

There were a number of practical military reasons for TORCH being favoured, and the British were particularly aware of these potential benefits. TORCH could have a very positive impact on the maritime war. It could open up the Mediterranean and eliminate the lengthy convoy route around the Cape, and could provide new bases for anti-submarine aircraft and vessels to use in the Battle of the Atlantic. The British also recognized the potential importance of a North-West Africa operation to the war in North Africa, because it could threaten the rear of Rommel's army and result in

overall Allied victory in the campaign. Complementing these benefits were others, such as providing American troops with vital experience in 1942 in a safer environment than France, and potentially securing more support from important neutral nations like Turkey, Vichy France, Spain and Portugal. These military benefits made the operation an attractive choice, and helped ensure that it prevailed.

As noted in the introduction, this thesis has produced a compromise view with regards to the decision for TORCH. This thesis argues that Churchill and Roosevelt had both long recognized the benefits offered by an operation to North-West Africa. Therefore, the American view that Churchill seduced Roosevelt into TORCH is incorrect, because the President required little convincing of the merits of an operation to North-West Africa, and was as enthusiastic about it as the Prime Minister. This study argues that the British did have serious concerns, and perhaps even fears, about a cross-Channel operation, as the American view states, but in 1942 their legitimate caution counterbalanced the over-optimistic American belief that an early cross-Channel operation was possible. This thesis does not argue that a 1943 cross-Channel operation was impossible or unlikely of success, as the British view maintains. However, it does argue that the desire of Churchill and Roosevelt for action in 1942 meant that this American-advocated operation was simply not an option, regardless of its feasibility. This thesis acknowledges the American view that a 1942 cross-Channel operation was the best way to satisfy the Soviet demands for a Second Front, as well as the demands for action by the British and American publics. However, the military impossibility of such an operation meant that TORCH had to suffice. As the Americans argue, British imperial interests did affect their strategy-making, including the TORCH decision, but there were also very sound military reasons for their interest in TORCH and the Mediterranean. The reasons TORCH was chosen do not fit with either of the distinct British and American views on Anglo-American strategy-making in the early war period.

TORCH was chosen as the first major combined Anglo-American operation of the war because it was the best option available to fulfil the desire of Roosevelt and Churchill for action against Germany on land in 1942. Their desire was fuelled primarily by the pressing need to assist the Soviet Union, but was also influenced by Presidential and Prime Ministerial concerns about the British and American domestic

political situations, and the morale of their people, as the war situation turned badly against the Allies in the months following Pearl Harbor. TORCH was the only 1942 operation that the British and American military leaders could reach consensus on, because they felt it met the necessary criteria for the first major undertaking by their forces, while at the same time providing a number of significant military benefits to the Western Allies. As a result, Operation TORCH was chosen as the first large-scale combined Anglo-American military operation of the Second World War.

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