> The attempt to form a bridgehead at Cherbourg seemed to me more difficult, less attractive, less immediately helpful or ultimately fruitful. It would be better to lay our right claw on French North Africa, tear with our left at the North Cape, and wait a year without risking our teeth upon the German fortified front across the Channel. (107)

The Chiefs of Staff Committee had earlier considered the possibilities of a "SLEDGEHAMMER" operation in the Cherbourg area and had reached the unanimous conclusion that "the Pas de Calais Area was the only place in which the military object could be achieved. In no other area could this be done and operations in other areas were not practical military propositions" (108). Their conclusion was based principally on the difficulty of ensuring adequate air support over the Cherbourg area.

51. It is important to remember that throughout this period both the British and American planners were subject to powerful influences from other theatres of the war. In a message which Mr. Churchill sent to Mr. Roosevelt after the important Anglo-American meeting of 14 Apr there occurred the following passage:

> We whole-heartedly agree with your conception of concentration against the main enemy, and we cordially accept your plan, with one broad qualification . . . . it is essential that we should prevent a junction of the Japanese and the Germans. Consequently, a proportion of our combined resources must for the moment be set aside to halt the Japanese advance. (109).

The rapid deterioration of the situation in the Far East, and the growing Japanese menace to India, were matters of grave imperial concern which the United Kingdom could not afford to ignore. Moreover, the fortunes of the North African campaign continued to fluctuate and to cause anxiety in London; two months later (June 1942) the British forces in that theatre were to suffer a critical reverse. Even at home the situation was not entirely reassuring -- the C.I.G.S. refused to agree that the danger of a German invasion "no longer existed" (110).

52. From the American point of view, developments in the Pacific area and increasing Russian pressure for a "Second Front" were the chief complicating factors. Even while Mr. Hopkins and General Marshall were discussing "ROUNDUP" and "SLEDGEHAMMER" with the British authorities, President Roosevelt was sending a cable to Marshal Stalin which contained this reassuring passage:

> I have in mind very important military proposal involving the utilization of our armed forces in a manner to relieve your critical western front. This objective carries great weight with me (111).

The pressure did not come from Russia alone. General W. Sikorski (Prime Minister of the exiled Polish Government), then in the United States, also urged the necessity of an Allied offensive against Western Europe (112). The cumulative effect of these representations was undoubtedly shown in a paper which President Roosevelt wrote early in May 1942:

> The Atlantic theater, he believed, called for 'very great speed in developing actual operations. I have been disturbed', he wrote, 'by American and British naval objections to operations in the European Theater prior to 1943. I regard it as essential that active operations be conducted in 1942.' He realized the difficulties, but ideal conditions could hardly be expected. Expedients must be improvised. 'The necessities of the case call for action in 1942 - not 1943'. (113)

So obsessed was the President with the necessity of early amphibious operations that during this period he was, himself, preparing sketches of landing craft (114).

53. In May 1942 Marshal Stalin sent M. Molotov to London and Washington for discussions with the British and American leaders. In both capitals M. Molotov pressed the Russian demand for the opening of a "Second Front". More specifically, he wanted to investigate the possibility of the Western Allies drawing off not less than 40 divisions from the Russian front. At London Mr. Churchill discussed the problem of amphibious operations against the Continent with his distinguished visitor, emphasizing that "bitter experience had shown that landing in the teeth of enemy air opposition was not a sound military proposition" (115). He pointed out that:

> Our choice was, in fact, narrowed down to the Pas de Calais, the Cherbourg tip, and part of the Brest area. The problem of landing a force this year [1942] in one or more of these areas was being studied, and preparations were being made. Our plans were being based on the assumption that the landing of successive waves of assault troops would bring about air battles which, if continued over a week or ten days, would lead to the virtual destruction of the enemy's

> air-power on the Continent. Once this was achieved and the air opposition removed, landings at other points on the coast could be effected under cover of our superior sea-power (116).

However, as the British Prime Minister was careful to stress, the "crucial point" in all this planning was "the availability of the special landing-craft required for effecting the initial landing on the very heavily defended enemy coastline" -- and Allied resources were still "strictly limited" (117). Mr. Churchill told M. Molotov that, even "with the best will and endeavour", any attempt by the Western Allies to launch an attack in 1942 would be unlikely to "draw off large numbers of enemy land forces from the Eastern Front".

> In the air however the position was different; in the various theatres of war we were already containing about one-half of the fighter and one-third of the German bomber strength. If our plan for forcing air battles over the Continent proved successful, the Germans might be faced with the choice either of seeing the whole of their fighter air force in the West destroyed in action or of making withdrawals from their air strength in the East. (118)

54. The Prime Minister cabled a report of his discussions with M. Molotov to the American President on 28 May. This cable threw more light on those "other alternatives" which, as already mentioned, continued to occupy Mr. Churchill's attention when he considered future amphibious operations against Germany and Italy. His message advised President Roosevelt that Lord Louis Mountbatten would soon be arriving in the United States "to present a new suggestion (known as JUPITER) for a landing in the north of Norway through which a junction could be effected by land with the Russians, thereby greatly simplifying the task of getting supplies through to the Soviet Union" (119). Mr. Churchill also stated: "We must never let GYMNAST [the North African operation] pass from our minds" (120). The significance of this communication to the planners in Washington has been assessed thus:

> This cable provided the first danger signal to Roosevelt and Hopkins, Marshall and King, that British thinking was beginning to veer toward diversionary operations far removed from the main point of frontal attack across the Channel. (121)

The Prime Minister's apparent digression from the agreement reached previously with Mr. Hopkins and General Marshall, in connection with "ROUNDUP", and M. Molotov's insistence on the opening of a "Second Front", were the principal factors in the situation which now confronted President Roosevelt and his advisers.

55. When M. Molotov reached Washington (29 May) he lost no time in presenting the Russian case to President Roosevelt. Emphasizing the dangers which would result from a German victory over the Red Army, Molotov said that "the decisive element in the whole problem lay in the question, When are the prospects better for the United Nations -- in 1942 or in 1943?" (122). As recorded by an American witness, the Russian emissary put this question:

> Could we undertake such offensive action as would draw off forty German divisions, which would be, to tell the truth, distinctly second-rate outfits? If the answer should be in the affirmative, the war would be decided in 1942. If negative, the Soviets would fight on alone, doing their best, and no man would expect more from them than that. He had not, M. Molotov added, received any positive answer in London. (123)

President Roosevelt's reply to this argument was to have far-reaching effect on subsequent planning for an invasion of the Continent. He authorized M. Molotov to inform Marshal Stalin that the United States expected "the formation of a Second Front" in 1942 (124). Moreover, this commitment was afterwards reaffirmed in a public statement issued in Washington on 11 Jun which contained this sentence: "In the course of the conversations [with M. Molotov] full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942" (125).

56. It was not surprising that, when M. Molotov returned to London after his visit to Washington, he was "full of the plans for creating a second front by a cross-Channel operation in 1942" (126). Mr. Churchill's professed view of the communiqué of 11 June was that "there could be no harm in a public statement, which might make the Germans apprehensive and consequently hold as many of their troops in the West as possible"; but he was careful to hand to M. Molotov the following aide-mémoire:

> We are making preparations for a landing on the Continent in August or September, 1942. As already explained, the main limiting factor to the size of the landing-force is the availability of special landing-craft. Clearly however it would not further either the Russian cause or that of the Allies as a whole if, for the sake of action at any price, we embarked on some operation which ended in disaster and gave the enemy an opportunity for glorification at our discomfiture.
>
> It is impossible to say in advance whether the situation will be such as to make this operation feasible when the time comes. We can therefore give no promise in the matter, but provided that it appears sound and sensible we shall not hesitate to put our plans into effect. (127)

As the year 1942 was already half over it was obvious that the British and American Governments would be compelled to take an early, firm decision on the matter of a large-scale operation across the English Channel.

57. Reference has already been made to the British Prime Minister's intention to send Lord Louis Mountbatten to the United States on a special mission in connection with invasion plans. While in Washington during June 1942, the Chief of Combined Operations heard "some casual remarks" from President Roosevelt "about the possibility of having to make a 'sacrifice' cross-Channel landing in 1942 to help the Russians" (128). These remarks, which were naturally reported to Mr. Churchill, caused the latter much concern when he arrived in Washington later in June for another conference with President Roosevelt and his advisers.

58. The significance of the second Washington Conference (19-25 Jun 42), from the point of view of pre-invasion planning, is that it served to clarify still further the differences between the British and American points of view without, however, leading to a clear-cut decision on future operations. Part of the difficulty of reaching a decision may be attributed to a division of opinion between President Roosevelt and his advisers. The prospect of an amphibious operation against French North Africa continued to fascinate the President, while Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Stimson and General Marshall redoubled their efforts to concentrate the Allied effort on a cross-Channel attack. With the "unanimous endorsement of General Marshall and his staff", the Secretary of War addressed a long letter on this subject to the President (19 Jun) from which this extract is taken:

> The British Isles constituted the one spot (a) where we could safely and easily land our ground forces without the aid of carrier-based air cover, (b) through which we could without the aid of ships fly both bomber and fighting planes from America to Europe, (c) where we could safely and without interruption develop an adequate base for invading armies of great strength. Any other base in western Europe or north-west Africa could be obtained only by a risky attack and the long delay of development and fortification, (d) 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. (129).

The Hopkins - Stimson - Marshall group feared that, if operation "GYMNAST" were accepted, "adequate strength for a full-force invasion of the Continent could not be established in the United Kingdom in time for the spring of 1943" (130).

59. At the opening of the conference General Brooke stated that the British Chiefs of Staff had been considering certain operations for 1942 with the object of "relieving pressure on the Russians":

(a) A landing in the Pas de Calais Area.

A maximum of about six divisions could be employed but it was not thought that this force would be sufficient to divert appreciable German land forces from the Eastern Front. Subsequent maintenance of the force through the ports of Calais and Boulogne would be difficult. Purely air operations over the Continent had not achieved the hoped for air battles and a six divisional landing within range of fighter air cover seemed unlikely to achieve important results.

(b) Establishment of a bridgehead at Cherbourg or the Brest salient.

A bridgehead on the Brest salient had advantages in that it possessed good ports and a sufficiency of space. SIR ALAN BROOKE said he had studied this terrain after Dunkirk and had found the front through Rennes to be approximately 150 kilometres and would require a force of some 15 divisions. It was, however, a possibility worth further careful study.

(c) Large Raids.

Further raids on a large scale had been planned, including a raid to last two or three days, by one armoured division and one infantry division, but the difficulties of landing in the Pas de Calais Area would necessitate this raid taking place further to the westward on the outskirts of the area covered by fighter protection. In general, the policy of raids was proving successful in holding down considerable German forces in France.

(d) Operations in Northern Norway.

Consideration had been given to the possibility of a landing in northern Norway aimed at freeing the northern convoy route from attack by German aircraft. It had been thought that this might be undertaken by sailing a convoy containing troops and diverting it at a suitable moment to the northern Norwegian coast. Maintenance of the force, however, would be difficult north of Narvik and this front would require three

> divisions with an additional division and a half in reserve, which was more than could be put in the normal 35 ships of a Russian convoy. Operations in conjunction with the Russians from Murmansk had also been considered but the Germans themselves appeared to be launching an attack against this front. Any operation aimed at relieving the threat to the northern convoy route should take place almost at once as the dangerous period was during the short nights of summer. (131)

60. On the other hand, General Marshall reiterated his firm opposition to the proposal for an Allied entry into North-West Africa.

> GENERAL MARSHALL said that large scale operations on the Continent in 1943 would clearly not be possible unless all efforts were concentrated now on their preparation. If we changed our plan now, and opened up another front, we should probably achieve nothing. If we went ahead, we should at least ensure the safety of the United Kingdom, whatever happened in Russia, and any change of plan could be made in about September when we knew what the situation on the Eastern front was going to be. To defeat the Germans we must have overwhelming power, and North West Europe was the only front on which this overwhelming superiority was logistically possible. It was, therefore, sound strategy to concentrate on this front and divert minimum forces only to the other fronts. (132)

61. The British view of future operations against the Continent was amplified in a note which Prime Minister Churchill gave to President Roosevelt on 20 Jun:

> We are bound to persevere in the preparation for 'Bolero', if possible in 1942, but certainly in 1943. The whole of this business is now going on. Arrangements are being made for a landing of six or eight divisions on the coast of Northern France early in September. However, the British Government do not favour an operation that was certain to lead to disaster, for this would not help the Russians whatever their plight, would compromise and expose to the Nazi vengeance the French population involved, and would gravely delay the main operation in 1943. We hold strongly to the view that there should be no substantial landing in France this year unless we are going to stay.

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 become utterly demoralised, of which there is no likelihood. Have the American Staffs a plan? At what points would they strike? What landing-craft and shipping are available? Who is the officer prepared to command the enterprise? What British forces and assistance are required? If a plan can be found which offers a reasonable prospect of success, His Majesty's Government will cordially welcome it, and will share to the full with their American comrades the risks and sacrifices. This remains our settled and agreed policy.

But in case no plan can be made in which any responsible authority has good confidence, and consequently no engagement on a substantial scale in France is possible in September, 1942, what else are we going to do?

Can we afford to stand idle in the Atlantic theatre during the whole of 1942? Ought we not to be preparing within the general structure of 'Bolero' some other operation by which we may gain positions of advantage, and also directly or indirectly to take some of the weight off Russia? It is in this setting and on this background that the French North-West Africa operation should be studied. (133)

62. These views evidently exerted a strong influence on a meeting of the President, the Prime Minister and their principal advisers which was held at the White House on the morning of 21 Jun. The following extract from the British record shows the trend of the discussion.

1. Plans and preparations for the Bolero operation in 1943 on as large a scale as possible are to be pushed forward with all speed and energy. It is, however, essential that the United States and Great Britain should be prepared to act offensively in 1942.

2. Operations in France or the Low Countries in 1942 would, if successful, yield greater political and strategic gains than operations in any other theatre. Plans and preparations for the operations in this theatre are to be pressed forward with all possible speed, energy, and ingenuity. The most resolute efforts must be made to overcome the obvious dangers and difficulties of the enterprise. If a sound and sensible plan can be contrived, we should not hesitate to give effect to it. If on the other hand detailed examination shows that despite all efforts, success is improbable, we must be ready with an alternative.

> 3. The possibilities of operation Gymnast will be explored carefully and conscientiously, and plans will be completed in all details as soon as possible. Forces to be employed in Gymnast would in the main be found from Bolero units which have not yet left the United States. The possibility of operations in Norway and the Iberian Peninsula in the autumn and winter of 1942 will also be carefully considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. (134)

63. At this point in the great argument over future operations, the fortunes of war placed a decisive card in Mr. Churchill's hand -- although it was a card he was shocked to receive. For, later on 21 Jun, the news reached Washington that Tobruk, long a vital bastion in the North African campaign, had been captured by the enemy. Mr. Churchill afterwards stated: "This was one of the heaviest blows I can recall during the war" (135). However, the immediate effect of the news was to shift Allied thought from the problem of invading the Continent to the emergency in the Desert.

> Churchill poured out his matchless prose in opposition to the trans-Channel operation in 1942, and in favour of GYMNAST as a means of relieving the crisis in the Mediterranean. He was vigorously opposed by Marshall and Hopkins, and Roosevelt - for all that GYMNAST was 'his secret baby' - refused to depart from the previous agreement. Thus, there was no revision then of plans for BOLERO and ROUNDUP - but concentration of attention was forcibly diverted from the Northern French coast to the Valley of the Nile. (136)

As a result of the North African emergency, the second Washington Conference ended with an agreement that the decision on the cross-Channel operation would be postponed. The President and the Prime Minister agreed that the planning of operations in the North-West Europe theatre should be pursued with vigour; but that, if these "proved unlikely to succeed", there must be an alternative -- and that alternative was obviously "GYMNAST" (137).

64. Although the future of "ROUNDUP" and "SLEDGEHAMMER" still hung in the balance (138), a firm decision on these operations could not be long delayed. American impatience for early action, Russian insistence on the opening of a "Second Front" and the increasingly critical situation in the Mediterranean all combined to make the Allied position intolerable. Shortly after arriving in London (24 Jun) to assume the appointment of Commanding-General, European Theatre of Operations, United States Army (ETOUSA), General Eisenhower wrote to General Marshall that "although a lot of planning had been done at low levels most of the basic decisions

such as, for instance, the exact frontage of the ["SLEDGEHAMMER"] assault had still not been made" (139). In the background was the embarrassing commitment to Russia represented by the White House communiqué of 11 Jun.

65. From this time until the irrevocable decision to invade North Africa was taken (25 Jul 42) the tempo of events accelerated. On 6 Jul, Mr. Churchill presided over a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff and "it was unanimously agreed that operation 'SLEDGEHAMMER' offered no hope of success, and would merely ruin all prospects of 'ROUNDUP' in 1943" (140). Two days later the British Prime Minister telegraphed this conclusion to President Roosevelt:

> No responsible British general, admiral or air marshal is prepared to recommend 'Sledgehammer' as a practicable operation in 1942. The Chiefs of Staff have reported, 'The conditions which would make 'Sledgehammer' a sound, sensible enterprise are very unlikely to occur.' They are now sending their paper to your Chiefs of Staff.
>
> The taking up of the shipping is being proceeded with by us for camouflage purposes, though it involves a loss in British imports of perhaps 250,000 tons. But far more serious is the fact that, according to Mountbatten, if we interrupt the training of the troops we should, apart from the loss of landing-craft, etc., delay 'Round-up' or 1943 'Bolero' for at least two or three months, even if the enterprise were unsuccessful and the troops had to be withdrawn after a short stay.
>
> In the event of a lodgment being effected and maintained it would have to be nourished, and the bomber effort on Germany would have to be greatly curtailed. All our energies would be involved in defending the bridgehead. The possibility of mounting a large-scale operation in 1943 would be marred, if not ruined. All our resources would be absorbed piecemeal on the very narrow front which alone is open. It may therefore be said that premature action in 1942, while probably ending in disaster, would decisively injure the prospect of well-organized large-scale action in 1943. (141)

Mr. Churchill suggested that the Americans should plan for "GYMNAST" while the British investigated his "other [Norwegian] alternative", operation "JUPITER".

66. The reaction, in Washington, to the British decision was immediate and drastic. Both General Marshall and Admiral Ernest J. King (the United States Chief of Naval Operations) were strongly of the

opinion "that GYMNAST was indecisive, would prevent a SLEDGEHAMMER operation in 1942, and curtail or perhaps make impossible ROUNDUP in 1943" (142). They even went so far as to advise the President that:

> If the United States is to engage in any other operation than forceful, unswerving adherence to full BOLERO plans, we are definitely of the opinion that we should turn to the Pacific and strike decisively against Japan. (143)

Fortunately, President Roosevelt refused to consider so drastic a reorientation of American strategy. His next step was to send Mr. Hopkins, General Marshall and Admiral King to London for a further conference with the British authorities. The President's written instructions, dated 16 Jul, contained this passage:

> In regard to 1942, you will carefully investigate the possibility of executing SLEDGEHAMMER. Such an operation would definitely sustain Russia this year. It might be the turning-point which would save Russia this year. SLEDGEHAMMER is of such grave importance that every reason calls for accomplishment of it. You should strongly urge immediate all-out preparations for it, that it be pushed with utmost vigour, and that it be executed whether or not Russian collapse becomes imminent. In the event Russian collapse becomes probable SLEDGEHAMMER becomes not merely advisable, but imperative. The principal objective of SLEDGEHAMMER is the positive diversion of German air forces from the Russian Front.
> . . . 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.
>
> It is my present view of the world picture that
>
> (a) If Russia contains a large German force against her, ROUNDUP becomes possible in 1943, and plans for ROUNDUP should be immediately considered and preparations made for it.
>
> (b) If Russia collapses and German air and ground forces are released, ROUNDUP may be impossible of fulfilment in 1943. (144)

67. Any study of pre-invasion planning must recognize the tremendous significance of the second London Conference (18-25 Jul 42). For that Conference, after further argument on the highest level, arrived at the basic decision to reject all plans for the execution of the "SLEDGEHAMMER" operation in favour of "TORCH" -- the invasion of French North [illegible] (f

even greater importance was the fact that the launching of "ROUNDUP" (later "OVERLORD"), the large-scale attack in the North-West Europe theatre, was thereby delayed until the middle of 1944.

68. When the Conference opened in London it soon became apparent that the American representatives had reached a deadlock in their discussions with the British Chiefs of Staff. Mr. Hopkins and his colleagues had changed their ground in one important respect:

> A different SLEDGEHAMMER was now being advanced: the seizure of the Cotentin Peninsula to be held as a bridgehead on the Continent until ROUND-UP could be mounted. This changed it from an emergency 'sacrifice' operation into a permanent gain. (145)

However, the British Chiefs of Staff were unable to accept "SLEDGEHAMMER" in any form and, on 22 Jul, General Marshall told Mr. Churchill that it would be necessary for the American delegation to obtain further instructions from President Roosevelt. In Mr. Churchill's words:

> I replied that I fully shared the ardent desire of the President and his Service advisers 'to engage the enemy in the greatest possible strength at the earliest possible moment', but that I felt sure that, with the limited forces at our disposal, we should not be justified in attempting 'Sledgehammer' in 1942. I pointed to the number of ugly possibilities looming in front of us. There might, for example, be a collapse in Russia, or the Germans might move into the Caucasus, or they might beat General Auchinleck and occupy the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal, or again they might establish themselves in North Africa and West Africa and thereby put an almost prohibitive strain on our shipping. Nevertheless, disagreement between Great Britain and America would have far greater consequences than all the above possibilities. It was therefore agreed that the American Chiefs of Staff should report to the President that the British were not prepared to go ahead with 'Sledgehammer' and ask for instructions. (146)

After hearing the British case against "SLEDGEHAMMER", Mr. Hopkins wrote: "I feel damn depressed" (147).

69. To President Roosevelt fell the task of cutting the Gordian knot. He was assisted by his conviction that "U.S. ground forces must be put into position to fight German ground forces somewhere in 1942" (148). Accordingly, upon receiving General

Marshall's report from London, he immediately replied stating that the British opinion of "SLEDGEHAMMER" should be accepted but that further consideration should be given to the possibility of other operations -- notably "GYMNAST". When developments in London suggested that a decision on "GYMNAST" might be postponed, he sent a further cable (25 Jul) stating that preparations should be made for landings in North Africa not later than 30 Oct 42 (149). In view of the far-reaching effect of the President's judgment on this matter it is interesting to recall that: "This was one of the very few major military decisions of the war which Roosevelt made entirely on his own and over the protests of his highest-ranking advisers" (150). His decision virtually ended the long period of Allied indecision with respect to North-West Europe.

70. Meanwhile, at a meeting held in London on 24 Jul, General Marshall outlined the new proposals of the United States Chiefs of Staff.

> They believe very strongly that no unavoidable reduction in preparations for ROUNDUP should be considered so long as there remains any possibility of its successful execution prior to 1st July, 1943. After that date the odds are definitely against ROUNDUP for the remainder of the year, unless the German army shows unmistakable signs of rapid deterioration. If ROUNDUP becomes impracticable of successful execution, GYMNAST as a combined operation seems the best alternative. However, they consider that a commitment to GYMNAST implies the definite acceptance of a defensive encircling line of action for the Continental European theatre, except as to air and blockade operations against Germany. (151)

General Marshall emphasized that, although the operation would not be carried out, preparations for "SLEDGEHAMMER" should be continued "as a measure of deception and in case some unexpected opportunity for it arose" (152). He was convinced that if large forces were poured into North Africa "ROUNDUP, as originally conceived, was no longer practicable at all" (153).

71. On the other hand, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal (Chief of the Air Staff) queried the suggestion that "GYMNAST" represented "a purely defensive line of action".

> It would, in fact, open up a second front and might commit Germany to the occupation of Italy and Spain. It was even conceivable that she might be so weakened by this that ROUNDUP might be undertaken in 1943.

SIR ALAN BROOKE said that the British Chiefs of Staff were fully determined to go ahead with preparations for an invasion of the Continent on a large scale. The troops in the United Kingdom must have their minds continually directed towards that object. (154)

72. The Combined Chiefs of Staff eventually proposed

That no avoidable reduction in preparations for ROUND-UP should be favourably considered so long as there remains any reasonable possibility of its successful execution before July 1943.

(1) That Allied air strength continue to be built up in U.K. to provide for a constantly increasing intensity of air attack on Germany.

(2) That, for purposes of deception and to be ready for any emergency or a favourable opportunity, all preparations for SLEDGEHAMMER continue to be pressed except as to concentration of landing craft or other details that seriously interfere with training for ROUND-UP, and that a task force commander be appointed with authority to organize the force, direct the training and maintain a contingent plan for execution. This Commander should be either the officer designated for supreme command of the final invasion of Northwest Europe or one of his subordinate commanders acting as his deputy . . .

That, if the situation on the Russian front by September 15th indicates such a collapse or weakening of Russian resistance as to make ROUND-UP appear impracticable of successful execution, the decision should be taken to launch a combined operation against the North and Northwest Coast of Africa at the earliest possible date before December 1942.

> That it be understood that a commitment to this operation renders ROUND-UP in all probability impracticable of successful execution in 1943 and therefore that we have definitely accepted a defensive, encircling line of action for the Continental European theatre, except as to Air operations and blockade; but that the organization, planning, and training, for eventual entry in the Continent should continue so that this operation can be staged should a marked deterioration in German military strength become apparent, and the resources of the United Nations, available after meeting other commitments, so permit. (155)

73. The Combined Chiefs of Staff discussed in some detail the problem of command relationships for the "TORCH" - "SLEDGEHAMMER" - "ROUNDUP" operations. General Marshall pointed out that "the Supreme Commander of ROUNDUP would not have operational command of ground forces in the United Kingdom which would be required for Home defence, neither would he exercise direct command or control over major units of the R.A.F."

> His function would be planning and training. The forces would only come under his operational command when the operation was mounted. Bolero movements would continue uninterrupted as long as possible until the requirements of TORCH interfered with them. (156)

In point of fact nearly a year and a half were to elapse before the Allied leaders reached firm agreement on the selection of the Supreme Commander for the invasion of North-West Europe.

74. The American acceptance of the British position on "SLEDGEHAMMER", and the resulting decision to launch the North African operation (which Mr. Churchill promptly renamed "TORCH") in 1942, necessarily implied "the abandonment of ROUNDUP as the primary objective for the time being" (157). These decisions meant, in fact, that the great Allied invasion of Normandy was postponed for at least a year. On the other hand, viewing the immense problem in retrospect, there are compelling reasons for believing that the right course of action was adopted.

> To begin with, there was in 1942 an extreme shortage of amphibious equipment and particularly landing craft. 'The vitally important 'lift' for a full scale invasion simply did not then exist', and the shortage of craft was a major factor in the decision not to try even a more limited assault in Europe.

> Nor had we established anything like complete control of the air above the Channel in 1942. To attempt to maintain a permanent bridgehead on the French coast would have meant committing every existing element of Allied air strength to a continuous battle against the Luftwaffe in which all the odds would have been in favour of the latter. (It may be recalled that we now know that in the Dieppe air battle we lost more than twice as many aircraft as the enemy). In the summer of 1942 the United States still had only very small ground and air forces deployed in the United Kingdom and available to take part. The scheme for an assault at that time might have produced disaster which would have set our preparations for the full-scale attack back almost to where they were after Dunkirk; at best, it would have been a bottomless pit into which the resources needed for that operation would have been poured without result.
>
> On this general question of the invasion of North-West Europe, it seems hard to question the judgment of Mr. John J. McCloy, the United States Assistant Secretary of War: 'The reasons both for the attack, and for its postponement until 1944, seem to be sound.' (158)

A review of the significance of the Allied decision of July 1942 would not be complete without reference to the opinion of the subsequent Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. Although, at the London Conference, General Eisenhower had argued for an "attempt to seize a small bridgehead on the north-west coast of France" in 1942, he afterwards wrote:

> Later developments have convinced me that those who held the SLEDGEHAMMER operation to be unwise at the moment were correct in their evaluation of the problem. Our limited range fighter craft of 1942 could not have provided sufficiently effective air cover over the Cotentin or Brittany peninsulas, against the German air strength as it then existed. At least, the operation would have been very costly. Another reason is that out of the north-west African operation flowed benefits to the Allied Nations that were felt all through the war and materially helped to achieve the great victory when the invasion actually took place in 1944. Only meagre advantages would have followed capture of Cherbourg; the desirable features of that project were merely that it would have initiated a small 'second front' at once and would have launched our first offensive effort in the direction and along the same line that would later be taken by our full-out assault. (159)

75. Although the Allied invasion of North-West Europe was considerably delayed by the decision in favour of "TORCH", planning for the great cross-Channel attack did not cease. This was evident when, on 31 Jul, Mr. Churchill cabled Mr. Roosevelt about the choice of commanders for the European theatre. The message contained the following, highly significant statement: "It would be agreeable to us if General Marshall were designated for Supreme Command of ROUNDUP and that in the meantime General Eisenhower should act as his deputy here" (160). In due course it transpired that General Marshall could not be spared from his heavy responsibilities in Washington, and it was not until the end of 1943 that General Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Allied Commander. Nevertheless, throughout the long period of nearly two years which intervened between the "TORCH" decision and the launching of "OVERLORD", high-level planning for the invasion of North-West Europe steadily continued. For even in July 1942 the Allied leaders clearly realized that the mortal blow to Germany must ultimately be delivered in that theatre of operations.

RAIDING POLICY AND THE CANADIAN ROLE,

JANUARY - JULY 1942

76. In the previous section an attempt has been made to describe the high-level developments during the first half of 1942 which, in effect, led the British and American authorities to postpone the invasion of North-West Europe. Although, as regards that theatre, "ROUNDUP" and "SLEDGEHAMMER" were the principal concern of the Allied planning staffs, these operations did not monopolize their attention. Considerable thought and effort were also devoted to a multiplicity of subsidiary operations against the enemy-occupied Continent, in particular, to those which involved raids across the Channel. "Whereas the war of 1939, 1940 and 1941 had been one of defence and security, assault and advance were now to be the order of the day" (161). The records of C.O.H.Q. show that more than 80 amphibious operations were planned to take place in North-West Europe during 1942 (162). Only a score of these operations were actually mounted and carried out -- yet the experience of planning <u>all</u> of them contributed to the growing fund of Allied information on the specialized technique of combined operations. It is also important to realize that the planning of several of these operations (including small-scale raids) frequently proceeded simultaneously. There was, therefore, a constant interaction of training, planning and designing of equipment. Most important of all, this developing technique was continually subject to the requirements of high-level policy as hammered out between the authorities in London and Washington. As will be seen, these developments in combined operations were to culminate, at a later stage, in a large-scale operation of particular significance to Canadians -- the Dieppe Raid of 19 Aug 42.

77. By the beginning of 1942, as already described (supra, paras 29-35), the Canadian Corps in the United Kingdom was able to combine its main defensive role with increased interest in amphibious operations against the Continent. The threat of a German invasion was gradually decreasing, although it was to remain a serious possibility throughout the spring and summer of 1942 (supra, para 51), and the Canadian striking force was steadily growing in manpower and equipment. On 26 Jan the Canadian Prime Minister announced at Ottawa that there would be created overseas "a Canadian army of two army corps: one army corps to comprise three infantry divisions and two army tank brigades; the other to consist of two armoured divisions" together with "all necessary ancillary units" (163). Headquarters First Canadian Army became a reality, under Lt-Gen A.G.L. McNaughton, on 6 Apr 42. At the same time the Canadian Corps (henceforth the 1st Canadian Corps) passed to the command of Lt-Gen H.D.G. Crerar, who had held the appointment of Chief of the General Staff at Ottawa.* Although the 2nd Canadian Corps, under Lt-Gen E.W. Sansom, was not actually formed until the beginning of 1943 -- and the remaining field formations, the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and the 2nd Army Tank Brigade, did not reach the United Kingdom until the autumn of 1942 and the summer of 1943, respectively -- the Canadian role became increasingly significant in relation to pre-invasion planning and raiding policy during the early part of 1942.

78. Even before the formation of Headquarters First Canadian Army, the desirability of Canadian participation in cross-Channel operations had been raised as a matter of high policy. Early in February 1942 General Crerar (as Acting Corps Commander) wrote to Lt-Gen B.L. Montgomery, then G.O.C.-in-C. South Eastern Command, with respect to small cross-Channel raids:

> . . . I consider that it would be in the general interest if a very high proportion of these prospective raids, if not the total, should be undertaken by detachments from the Canadian Corps. In this way, even if operations on a large scale continue, through force of circumstances, to be denied to the Canadian Army, an opportunity will be given to a considerable number of units to participate in actions against the enemy. In default of a reputation built up in battle the Corps undoubtedly would receive great stimulus if, in the near future, it succeeded in making

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*He had been "detailed temporarily to command" the Canadian Corps, with effect 23 Dec 41, during the absence of General McNaughton in Canada and the United States.

> a name for itself for its raiding activities -- a reputation which, incidentally, it very definitely earned for itself in the last war. (164)

At this time there appeared to be a possibility that the Canadian Corps might be able to use Newhaven as a base for cross-Channel raids.

79. General Crerar pressed his recommendation in a conversation with Lord Louis Mountbatten on 6 Mar. The Corps Commander emphasized the stimulating effect on the morale of Canadian troops which could be anticipated as a result of active employment in raiding operations. In his reply the Adviser on Combined Operations referred to the existing policy that "raids would be carried out by the Special Service Brigade ('Commandos') and that Army representation would take the form of 'dilution' of raiding Commandos, with a proportion of troops from the Corps of Home Forces" (165). However, he concurred in an arrangement whereby a detachment from the 2nd Canadian Division received training in combined operations.

80. It will be recalled that, only a few days after the Corps Commander's conversation with Lord Louis Mountbatten, General McNaughton was in Washington urging his conception of "the ultimate role of the Canadian Army" as "a landing and attack against Western Europe" (supra, para 43). The possibility of a resumption of offensive operations against the enemy had been previously strengthened, in the United Kingdom, by the Army Council's decision (20 Feb) to set up a permanent organization (the "Expeditionary Force") for overseas operations. In addition to a permanent commander and headquarters staff, this organization was to have a "permanent nucleus of formations and units specially trained in combined operations, and capable of adapting themselves to the special organizations which . . . [might] be necessary" for

> Operations of limited scope for which a specially organized and constituted force, highly trained in combined operations, will be required. Special forces for this type of operation will always be required, and it has been decided that there shall be included in this organization a number of formations and units permanently earmarked for such operations.
>
> Operations of wider scope, for which, apart from the forces mentioned [above], infantry and armoured formations which have been specially trained in combined operations and also, possibly, formations which need not be specially trained, may be required. (166)

This is a good illustration of the interdependence, in contemporary planning, of operations having a "limited scope" with those of a "wider scope". In short, raiding policy and planning for large-scale amphibious attacks were not developing in separate spheres, but were constantly reacting and influencing each other. The Expeditionary Force was to operate under the following system of Command:

> Except when nominated for an overseas expedition outside the sphere of operations of Home Forces, the Expeditionary Force would be under command of the Commander-in-Chief Home Forces (General Paget) for all purposes. Upon being nominated for a definte operation overseas, the Expeditionary Force Headquarters would 'work directly under the War Office in close consultation with Commodore, Combined Operations, for purposes of planning and preparation.' (167)

Subsequently, arrangements were made for an Expeditionary Force Planning Staff Committee, composed of General Paget, Admiral Ramsay, Air Marshal Douglas, Major-General James E. Chaney (then Commanding General, United States Army in the United Kingdom) and General McNaughton.*

81. The increased significance of raiding policy was shown by three small but successful operations carried out during the winter of 1941-42 against the northern and western coast of the Continent. In December a British-Norwegian expedition raided Vaagso; valuable lessons were learned about the suitability of "technique and equipment, particularly when used in a cold climate" (168). Later, in February, a small force of parachutists dropped at Bruneval and destroyed an important radar station before being evacuated by sea. In its small way this raid underlined the importance of the air aspect of cross-Channel operations -- an aspect which was to receive much attention during later planning for "OVERLORD". A third raid, against naval installations at St. Nazaire (28 Mar), was "the most ambitious so far undertaken by the Combined Operations Command" (169). The results of this operation also stressed the importance of the air aspect of such ventures -- but for a different reason. Bad weather necessitated the elimination of diversionary bombing by the R.A.F. and it was afterwards felt that this was at least partly to blame for the heavy casualties suffered by the raiding force (170).

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*It will be noted that the United Kingdom representatives on this Committee were also engaged in contemporary planning as the "Combined Commanders". (Supra, para 28; infra, paras 191-206) General Chaney had been a "military observer" in London before the United States entered the war.

82. Early in April 1942 arrangements were made for Canadian participation in another small raid across the Channel (Operation "ABERCROMBIE") with an objective in the area of Hardelot, near Boulogne. A party from The Carleton and York Regiment had an independent role under Major Lord Lovat of No. 4 Commando. The raid was carried out on the night of 21-22 Apr without much success, the Canadian share in the operation having been rendered ineffective by the navigational difficulties of their assault craft. Yet even such negative results were not altogether without value to the developing technique of combined operations. As an experienced naval officer has feelingly remarked:

> The smaller the type of craft the fewer and less accurate are its aids to navigation, and there is no more helpless feeling than that of being lost on a dark night in the vicinity of rocks and reefs. In the past landing-craft have been lost or delayed due to faulty navigation, and valuable men and material have arrived too late to play their part in an operation. Confidence in ability to navigate, coupled with an exact knowledge of the capabilities of the craft, are only gained by constant practice; they are perhaps the most important aspect of seamanship in an assault landing. (171)

83. While preparations for "ABERCROMBIE" were still being made, Brigadier G.G. Simonds (then B.G.S. 1 Cdn Corps) raised with C.O.H.Q. (19 Apr) the question of further Canadian participation in raids and was advised that "at the moment they had no suitable objectives" (172). It was clearly established that the selection of troops for these operations rested with G.H.Q. Home Forces. As a result of a later conversation (5 May) between General McNaughton and General Paget the latter agreed to keep the Army Commander informed of plans for raids controlled by G.H.Q. Home Forces.

84. Behind all these plans for offensive action there was the overshadowing problem of producing sufficient landing craft. Reference has been made (<u>supra</u>, para 40) to the fact that, in February 1942, the Admiralty was producing only enough craft for raiding operations "if no L.C.T. were used for training or for net defences at Scapa Flow." At the end of March the Third Sea Lord and Controller reported to the Chiefs of Staff that, by the end of June, only 107 tank landing craft could be made available for operations (173). With the British construction programme already stretched to the limit, the only possible solution was to utilize the enormous productive capacity of the United States. Consequently, the Chiefs of Staff approved a proposal made by the Chief of Combined Operations that he should have a Combined Operations Liaison Officer in Washington. This officer was sent to Washington in March 1942 "to keep in touch with the large building programme then being implemented in the U.S.A. on British account, and also to keep the American departments informed of progress and developments both in technique and material in the U.K." (174).

85. Meanwhile, the British naval designers were coping with the Prime Minister's conception of a "mass produced 'great ship' of some 1,500 tons" suitable for landing tanks on "very shallow beaches" (175). Three hundred of these were ordered from the United States. Moreover, in April, the Chief of Combined Operations stated his requirement for another type of craft -- one which "could carry 200 men, cross the Channel at a good speed and land them on the beaches" (176). Here, again, it was necessary to seek American help. "The proposal was promptly tackled and no sooner had the design been completed than the first of 1,000 landing craft infantry (large) (L.C.I.(L)) was being built" (177). During this same month of April 1942 a representative of the War Plans Division, War Department, Washington, told General McNaughton that the United States Army had placed sufficient orders, for certain types of assault craft, "to float six divisions" and that it was believed "one-third of the requirements would be available by 15 Sep 42 and the remainder by 1 Apr 43" (178). A temporary solution had been found to the critical problem of producing sufficient assault craft for a large-scale invasion; but time was required for the great programme of construction to gather full momentum.

86. The increased significance of raiding operations had been recognized, in the United Kingdom, by an expansion of the duties and organization of C.O.H.Q. As previously mentioned (supra, para 28), Lord Louis Mountbatten became Chief of Combined Operations, with the rank of Vice-Admiral, on 18 Mar 42. In his new capacity, the C.C.O. also became a full member of the Chiefs of Staff Committee for the purpose of attending those meetings which were concerned with his organization (179). His expanded headquarters now had two principal functions: "the organization of raiding operations to do immediate damage to the enemy, and the development of equipment and technique for amphibious operations generally and for the ultimate full-dress invasion of North-West Europe in particular" (180).

87. It must be remembered that, throughout the spring and early summer of 1942, the British planning authorities were continually studying the possibilities of "SLEDGEHAMMER". On 9 Apr a detailed report on this operation, prepared by C.-in-C. Home Forces, A.O.C.-in-C. Fighter Command, and C.C.O. was circulated for the consideration of the Chiefs of Staff. A Joint Memorandum with the report contained the following recommendation:

> Raids on a scale larger than those hitherto carried out should take place during the assembly and training period and that small consequential loss of craft and equipment must be accepted. (181)

A later Joint Memorandum (14 Apr), prepared by the same authorities, contained the qualification that, "excluding air action alone", "a series of medium-sized raids" was "the only practicable solution" (182).

88. The scope of the present narrative does not extend to a detailed examination of the numerous raids which were planned during the first half of 1942. Many were planned, a few were mounted and fewer still were carried out -- and some of the potentially most important raids never got further than the planning stage. Thus, apart from the early planning of the Dieppe Raid (to be considered in the next section), a brief description will be given here of the preparations for only two of the many cross-Channel operations which were considered. As it happened, neither of these operations ("BLAZING" and "IMPERATOR") was actually carried out; but both deserve mention for the light which they throw on problems of raiding policy in the period immediately preceding the important raid on Dieppe.

89. The original object of "BLAZING" was "to capture and hold the Island of Alderney"; but this was later changed to " a short raid" with a withdrawal within 24 hours (183). C.O.H.Q. planned the operation in consultation with C.-in-C. Home Forces and G.O.C. Airborne Division. Detailed planning for the operation began on 20 Apr and finished on 4 May 42. The military force of 3,000 was to include 1,600 infantry and 550 "Commandos" of the Special Service Brigade together with 14 "Churchill" tanks and supporting arms. Naval and air support was also planned on a comparatively generous scale. Some training for the operation was carried out in the Isle of Wight -- later to be the scene of intensive Canadian training for the Dieppe Raid. Unfortunately, the Force Commanders were not able to assemble at the same time and could not plan together from the beginning, with the result that progress was retarded and misunderstandings were afterwards reported (184). Finally, on 6 May, the Chiefs of Staff Committee "agreed that the preparations for operation 'BLAZING' should not proceed, but that the plans should be kept in readiness for use should a more favourable opportunity arise" (185). That opportunity never came and, in the meantime, a more ambitious operation was being considered by a new planning body.

90. The developments which led to the origin of the Combined Commanders have been described in an earlier section (<u>supra</u>, para 28). During May 1942, at a time when the great British - American argument over "ROUNDUP" and "SLEDGEHAMMER" was alternating between London and Washington, this informal body held the first of numerous meetings to consider plans for securing either a temporary or a permanent lodgement on the Continent (186). Although they were primarily concerned with the implications of "ROUNDUP" and "SLEDGEHAMMER", the Combined Commanders were simultaneously studying the possibilities of

subsidiary operations. One of these, which came to be known by the code name of "IMPERATOR", was originally intended as "a large scale raid on the Continent, with the purpose of bringing our air operations under conditions advantageous to ourselves, so as to destroy the maximum of enemy aircraft" (187). There is some reason to believe that, in the opinion of the Chiefs of Staff, the requirements of such a raid would have made a "permanent" return to the Continent in 1942 impossible. Consequently, the preparations for "IMPERATOR" must be seen against the background of contemporary American arguments for "SLEDGEHAMMER".

91. At various times different scales of attack were suggested for "IMPERATOR"; but the size of the expedition was necessarily limited by the availability of landing craft (188). There was similar uncertainty over the selection of the objectives: one possibility was a raid on the German Air Force Sector Control at St. Omer and neighbouring aerodromes; another was an attack on German installations at Boulogne, and a third actually contemplated a raid on Paris. The latter proposal was firmly opposed by Air Vice-Marshal T. Leigh-Mallory, who suggested that the planning be concentrated on the capture of Boulogne, either for "permanent retention" or as a "limited operation" (189). Planning continued during the early part of June and the necessary landing craft were moved into position; but it is scarcely surprising that the Chiefs of Staff were reported to be "somewhat hesitant about the feasibility of raiding Paris" (190). The date when "IMPERATOR" was finally cancelled is not certain. However, it is safe to assume that plans for the operation ended about the same time as those for "SLEDGEHAMMER" -- and for the same reason. At one stroke, the Allied decision to invade North Africa had destroyed all possibility of mounting cross-Channel raids on the scale, and with the objectives, of "IMPERATOR" and "SLEDGEHAMMER".

92. At this point the views of Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay on contemporary raiding policy may be mentioned. They were contained in the following memorandum which he sent to Lord Louis Mountbatten on 25 Jul.

> The invasion of the Continent (Second Front) is being prepared for by the Service Departments and actively canvassed in the Press. From the German point of view any intelligence upon the areas for our attack or our methods of attacking, is of great value.
>
> 2. Within the last twelve months we have made a number of small and ineffective raids on the French Coastline South and West of Cap Gris Nez. Circumstances suggest that we are using these raids either to train our own forces or to employ our own forces. If the

former, there is some justification, despite the fact that we are training the enemy, but if the latter, there can be no justification.

3. The Germans no doubt welcome these raids, for nothing shows up weaknesses in the defence more than an attack with a very limited objective. Every time we find a weak spot on the enemy's coast we point out his weakness, and there is ample evidence that he has taken and is taking full advantage of this information to increase the strength of his defences both at sea and on land. If it is our intention at some future date to make an attack in force upon the enemy's coast, we are now doing, or proposing to do, our best to make that attack less likely to achieve success.

4. It is considered that if we continue the present policy of raiding in the English Channel it will seriously prejudice the success of operation 'ROUND UP' in this area and may necessitate abandoning this theatre for operations in 1943 and attacking elsewhere. On the other hand, should a decision be reached to attack elsewhere, there would be every justification for maintaining our present policy of raids in the channel for they would then consist of an extended feint which might have extremely valuable results. (191)

The decision "to attack elsewhere" was, of course, taken by the British and American leaders on the same day that Admiral Ramsay's memorandum was despatched to the C.C.O. (supra, para 69). Thereafter, apart from its main value in terms of pre-invasion training, the Channel-raiding policy undoubtedly did represent "an extended feint" in the West. It was, however, a feint which was primarily intended to relieve the pressure on the Russian front, rather than to deceive the enemy about the "TORCH" operation.

93. In an earlier section (supra, paras 50, 54) reference has been made to the British Prime Minister's interest in an operation ("JUPITER") with the object of liberating Northern Norway as a "direct aid to Russia". Such an operation, if successful, would relieve the almost intolerable pressure of German attacks on the convoy routes to Russia. The Chiefs of Staff Committee had rejected the suggested plan; but Mr. Churchill remained keenly interested in the possibilities of the operation and it was revived, in July 1942, under the code name of "JUPITER REVIEW". Although the planning of this operation involved many considerations not applicable to cross-Channel attacks, it was not without significance in pre-invasion planning. Moreover, it was an operation which was to have a special interest for the Canadian authorities.

94. Previous Reports* have described in some detail the Canadian aspect of planning for "JUPITER", therefore the present narrative will give only a brief summary of these developments. On 9 Jul General McNaughton attended a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee and heard that "he had been invited by direction of the British Prime Minister and War Cabinet to review the possibilities of a Combined Operations project in northern Norway which was aimed primarily to protect the convoy routes to Russia" (192). A minimum force of five divisions was "to seize enemy aerodromes in northern Norway from which Allied convoys to north Russia were being attacked"; "it involved the conquest and retention of such parts of northern Norway as were suitable for aerodromes" (193). At Chequers (12 Jul) Mr. Churchill, himself, told General McNaughton that the latter's review of "JUPITER" would be "a study without commitment to employ Canadian Troops"; but the Prime Minister added that Canadians "naturally knew about cold climates" (194). Throughout succeeding developments, General McNaughton and the Canadian Government never lost sight of the probability that a Canadian force would be involved if the Norwegian venture received official approval in London.

95. General McNaughton's review of "JUPITER" (4 Aug) was, of necessity, based on purely military considerations -- although it was obvious that the British Prime Minister's interest in the problem was primarily political, namely, sustaining Russia in her titanic struggle with Germany. Furthermore, the Army Commander was not commissioned to study "JUPITER" in its relation to other Allied operations (for example, "ROUNDUP" and "SLEDGEHAMMER") and he was not able to have the benefit of consultations with the Russian military authorities. Yet, in his review, General McNaughton described Russian co-operation as "essential" (195). There was the additional handicap of obtaining adequate meteorological information for the operation -- a problem which was to assume serious proportions, in the later planning of "OVERLORD", for a much less remote area. However, apart from these considerations, General McNaughton was of the opinion that there was "little chance of strategical surprise or tactical surprise in respect of the objectives" (196). His conclusion, which reinforced the earlier advice given to the British Prime Minister by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, was that "the risks would only be acceptable if politically the results to be achieved were judged to be of the highest importance" (197).

96. For the purpose of this outline of pre-invasion planning, it is perhaps unnecessary to recount the sequel to "JUPITER REVIEW" -- of how Mr. Churchill still refused to accept the military objections to the

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*See Hist Sec (C.M.H.Q.) Report No. 167, paras 2-19, and Report No. 182, paras 60-69.

plan, of how he proposed that General McNaughton should go to Moscow and, if necessary, see Marshal Stalin in order to concert plans for the operation, and of how the Canadian Government rejected this proposal (198). The end of the matter, from the Canadian point of view, occurred when Mr. Mackenzie King sent a message to Mr. Churchill on 25 Sep which contained this passage:

> I need scarcely say that we have had very much in mind the critical importance of every thing practicable being done to encourage and sustain Russia at this time and are most anxious to give every possible assistance towards that end. Aside altogether from any question of commitment on Canada's part it seems to us that to have McNaughton undertake a mission of the kind contemplated without a realistic plan in which he himself has confidence offering at least a reasonable prospect of success upon which military discussions could be based would be to risk results prejudicial to relations with the Soviet Union as well as to McNaughton's own future usefulness. (199)

97. Although "JUPITER" was not a cross-Channel operation, and although it was never carried out, it nevertheless had some significance in terms of pre-invasion planning. In the first place, the abortive planning for this operation emphasized the need for a close correlation of political and military objectives. It was recognized that, while the political aspect might be of very great importance, there were limits to the risks which could be run to satisfy that aspect. For the same reason it was obviously desirable that, in the planning of any large-scale amphibious operation there should be a sound combined plan which would ensure the confidence of the various commanders concerned. Greater emphasis was also thrown on the very important problem of obtaining adequate meteorological data for operations of this nature. Perhaps most important, "JUPITER REVIEW" must be seen in the light of "SLEDGE-HAMMER" as an operation which was primarily intended to relieve pressure on Russia by creating a diversion in the West. In the course of the review of planning for the Norwegian operation, the British Prime Minister told General McNaughton: "If Russia were to cease fighting, Germany would have perhaps one hundred Divisions now on the Eastern Front available for attacks through the Caucasus, through Turkey, Spain, Morocco and West Africa, or even for an attack on England" (200). In the same connection, "JUPITER REVIEW" demonstrated in the clearest possible way the need for close co-operation between the Allied Powers jointly concerned in an operation of this nature. It is interesting to note that all of these problems -- the relationship of political to military aspects, the desirability of a

Combined plan which would satisfy the naval, military and air commanders concerned, the meteorological aspect, and the need for assisting Russia and promoting closer co-operation among the Allied Powers -- continued to be major factors throughout the remaining period of pre-invasion planning.

98. As already described, a large number of amphibious operations were being planned in the United Kingdom during the spring and summer of 1942. Moreover, at times, planning was proceeding simultaneously for several of these operations. Of these the only large-scale attack actually carried out was the Dieppe Raid of 19 Aug 42 (Operation "JUBILEE"). Before attempting to estimate the influence of "JUBILEE" on pre-invasion planning, brief mention may be made of another significant cross-Channel operation which was considered by the Combined Commanders during this period.

99. In July 1942 the Combined Commanders produced a plan for an operation known as "WETBOB". Unlike the proposals for such cross-Channel raids as "BLAZING" and "IMPERATOR", "WETBOB" was intended to achieve "a permanent foothold on the Continent in the Cotentin Peninsula" during the autumn of 1942 (201). It was, in fact, an alternative to "SLEDGEHAMMER", to be carried out "in case of urgent political necessity"--that is, a crisis on the Russian front (202).

100. The "WETBOB" Appreciation favoured simultaneous assaults at the Anse de Vauville and the Petit Hameau - Pointe de la Madelaine beaches on the north-western and south-eastern coasts of the Cotentin Peninsula. As explained in the Appreciation:

> This would force the enemy to fight on two fronts, and would enable us to launch striking forces against both CHERBOURG and the Southern bottleneck from bridgeheads relatively close. Nevertheless, the improbability of favourable weather occurring simultaneously on both coasts, in conjunction with the tidal conditions required, makes it essential that the basic plan should offer success to assault from one direction only, and the prevailing winds dictate that this assault should be on the east. The ideal plan should therefore provide for a strong floating reserve with alternative roles, either to land on the VAUVILLE beach if weather permits, and to strike rapidly at the CHERBOURG area; or to act as striking force for the immediate follow-up of the eastern assault. In October, however, shortage of ships and craft will not permit more forces to be embarked than the minimum required for an assault on the MADELAINE beach. (203)

The choice of the beaches at the south-eastern end of the Cotentin Peninsula as the favoured assault area was significant in view of later developments in pre-invasion planning. In fact, as will be seen (infra, paras 402 ff) these beaches figured prominently in the last major alterations of the "OVERLORD" plan -- and, on D Day, American troops actually landed in the same general area, at "Utah Beach", between Varreville and the so-called Carentan estuary.

101. Another feature of the assault area chosen in the "WETBOB" plan was that it visualized an assault over open beaches and not, in the first instance, directly against a port. Reference has already been made (supra, para 25) to Mr. Churchill's suggestion, at the "ARCADIA" Conference, that landings could be made "not at ports but on beaches". The essential problem was, of course, how to maintain forces which landed over beaches without the normal dockyard facilities for quickly handling enormous quantities of essential supplies. The controversial question of whether an amphibious assault should be directed against a port, or whether normal marine installations could be (temporarily) ignored in the choice of an assault area, was to have a profound effect upon "OVERLORD" planning. At this point it is sufficient to note that the "WETBOB" Appreciation represented a further step towards those artificial harbours afterwards known as "Mulberries".

102. In drafting the "WETBOB" plan the Combined Commanders assumed that the participating force would be ready to carry out the operation by 15 Oct 42. As "BOLERO" (the administrative build-up of American forces in the United Kingdom for the invasion of North-West Europe) was only beginning to function during the early part of 1942, the Combined Commanders realized that British troops would compose the bulk of the assaulting force.* Their estimates were based on the expectation that a British Army, consisting of two armoured and four infantry divisions (together with seven Commandos, supporting and ancillary troops), would be available for the operation. The Combined Commanders also expected that an American Corps, consisting of one armoured and two infantry divisions (and a proportion of Corps and Service troops), would be available "for the initial stage of the operation" (204). In addition, a British brigade of four parachute battalions, together with at least one American parachute battalion, could be employed principally "to close the bottleneck to the Cotentin Peninsula, and disrupt communications in the Valognes Area" (205). Here, again, it is interesting to note that, when "OVERLORD" was ultimately launched, two American

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*Cf. Mr. Churchill's remarks on "SLEDGEHAMMER" problem, supra, para 60.

airborne divisions were dropped at the base of the Cotentin Peninsula. Lastly, in this brief analysis of the military aspect of "WETBOB", mention may be made of the role allotted to the "Commandos": as in the case of the Dieppe Raid, these troops were given the vital task of capturing flanking coast defence batteries which could enfilade the assault beaches.

103. It appears that the Combined Commanders' Appreciation for "WETBOB" was never submitted to the Chiefs of Staff (206). By the end of July 1942, when the planning for this operation had reached an advanced stage, the British and American authorities had agreed to give priority to "TORCH", the North African attack. Consequently it may be assumed that "WETBOB" suffered the same fate as "SLEDGEHAMMER" and for the same reason. Nevertheless, for the reasons already given, "WETBOB" represented further important progress towards the evolution of a satisfactory invasion plan. Although it was conceived as an alternative emergency operation to "SLEDGEHAMMER", "WETBOB" was designed to secure a permanent foothold on the Continent in an area not far removed from that in which the great attack took place two years later. There are, of course, severe limitations on any comparison of this earlier, rudimentary plan with that finally adopted for "OVERLORD". For example, by contrast with the latter's tremendous naval resources, the only "naval direct covering fire on beach defences during the assault" which "WETBOB" could provide was stated to be:

> (a) L.C.S.(M) [Landing Craft Support (Medium)] of which not more than 12 will be available.
> (b) Motor gunboats.
> (c) Such older destroyers, "LOCUST" type gunboat or similar vessels as the Admiralty may be able to make available. (207)

On the other hand, the "WETBOB" Appreciation revealed a clear realization of many of the special problems arising out of cross-Channel operations. What was now needed was practical experience to test the planning of these operations -- and, in large measure, that essential experience was shortly to be provided by a large-scale raid on the French resort town of Dieppe.

THE DIEPPE RAID

104. The Dieppe Raid, carried out on 19 Aug 42, was the largest and most important amphibious operation in the North-West Europe theatre prior to "OVERLORD". Detailed accounts are readily available on the planning, execution and lessons of this operation (208). Consequently, it is unnecessary in the present narrative to provide a detailed examination of the raid, other than to estimate the ultimate significance of the operation in the development of