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E T O U S A

Action To : AGWAR Date: Feb 081415Z '44 Ref No. : W-10786
Information To : Originated by CG (ADC) (ERL) Precedence: URGENT
Subject : GENERAL MARSHALL EYES ONLY Security : ~~SECRET~~

Approved for transmission by CHARLES W. SOLE

To code room Encoded by Checked by To cable office

Reference: Cable No. 78 AGWAR - SHAEF

"EDITED LITERAL TEXT"

Interior Addresses: To : General Marshall, Eyes Only
From : Eisenhower



Thank you for your No. 78. You have placed your finger on the point that to me appears critical in the Mediterranean aspect of our spring campaign, which is that we must strive in every way to promote a battle there that engages efficiently all of the combat forces we can make available. This is the point I have stressed in local conversations. The great advantage of a successful ANVIL is that it would open up a certain channel through which all our forces could be engaged, and would have an earlier effect upon the enemy situation in France than would a continuation of the Italian campaign even on an intensive basis. As you pointed out, however, if we cannot soon achieve our aims in Italy we are committed to that battle and probably with everything we have down there.

The time element does not permit us to wait too long to make certain of what is going to happen in Italy, and we must soon make our estimate of what will occur and plan accordingly.

To disabuse your mind about my own personal approach to this problem, I must go back a little bit into history. The first time I heard any description of the OVERLORD plan was long before I knew I would have anything to do with it. This was subsequent to the experience we had gained in the Sicilian operation. A brief outline of the plan was given to me by Major General Chambers then visiting in Algiers. After listening to him I told him that I believed there had been some misinterpretation of our experiences in Pantellaria and in Sicily, and that the attack was being made on too narrow a front and with insufficient land forces. About the end of December when I knew I was going to the United States for a short visit, I had General Montgomery come to see me and General Smith and

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told him to go to England to study the plan in detail. I told him to seek for an intensification of effort to increase the troop lift in OVERLORD, which I told him in my opinion was necessary, but emphasizing also my desire to retain ANVIL on at least a two-division basis. I pointed out that in Sicily, where we attacked with six divisions, we had some bad moments at Gela, and that if we could have landed more motor equipment, including armor, in the first assault on the Eastern coast of Sicily, that in my estimation we would have overrun the island much more rapidly than we did. While I was in Washington I received the first analysis of OVERLORD made by Montgomery and Smith. That estimate agreed with my own views, except that their immediate answer was to abandon ANVIL but adhere to a target date of the first of May. I felt so strongly that ANVIL should be preserved while we were achieving the necessary strength for OVERLORD that I replied we would accept a date of 31st of May in order to get an additional month's production of every kind of landing craft from both countries. As a matter of fact I think the 31st of May date is in some respects a better one than the first day of the month because of the added time given to our Air Forces, upon which we are depending so heavily for success.

It was not until I had formed my own conclusions on these matters and had submitted a long telegram to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that I learned that the British Chiefs of Staff more or less went along with my own views, except that I believe some of them have never attached the same importance to ANVIL as I have.

In the various campaigns of this war I have occasionally had to modify slightly my own conceptions of campaign in order to achieve a unity of purpose and effort. I think this is inescapable in Allied operations but I assure you that I have never yet failed to give you my own clear personal convictions about every project and plan in prospect. So far as I am aware, no one here has tried to urge me to present any particular view, nor do I believe that I am particularly affected by localitis. I merely recognize that OVERLORD, which has been supported earnestly for more than two years by the U.S. Chiefs of Staff, represents for the United States and the United Kingdom a crisis in the European War. Real success should do much to hasten the end of this conflict but a reverse will have opposite repercussions from which we would recover with the utmost difficulty.

To give you a brief picture of what I believe necessary:

It is my personal conviction that we must assault in the first wave with five divisions heavily reinforced with Armor.

The assault must be preceded by two months of intensive air preparation.

We will drop at least one full Airborne Division and one and possibly even two additional R.C.T. at dawn of D. day. We have the necessary resources for this.

We will land two reinforced divisions on the second tide of D. day. These must be in landing craft but will be loaded so as to economize on craft.

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At the same time we must have the strongest possible support from the Mediterranean, so planned as to utilize the great bulk of the forces we have there.

From D day to D plus sixty this thing is going to absorb everything the United Nations can possibly pour into it. Thereafter it should assume the form of an operation for which the main requirements will be land forces, cargo shipping and Tactical air strength.



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1-3. General Eisenhower

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