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SOAME 10th MEETING

20 MARCH 1944

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Office of AG of S, G-3

Minutes of Meeting Held in the Conference Room
(04 - Room 8), at WIDEWING at 1100 hours, 20th March, 1944.

PRESENT

General Dwight D. Eisenhower ✓
Air Chief Marshal Sir A. Tedder
Admiral Sir B.H. Ramsay
General Sir B.L. Montgomery
Air Chief Marshal Sir T.L. Leigh-Mallory
Lt. General J.B. Smith
Lt. General F.L. Morgan
Lt. General Sir H.M. Gale
Rear Admiral J.L. Creasy
Major General H.R. Bull
Major General J.F.M. Whiteley
Air Vice Marshal H.E.P. Wigglesworth
Air Commodore S.C. Strafford
Brig. General A.S. Nevins

I. REPLY TO CABLE FROM GENERAL MARSHALL

Discussion was had on a draft cable in reply to Cable No. 314 from General Marshall to the Supreme Commander which requested General Eisenhower's views on matters arising on the 'ARVIL' decision and also requested data on landing ships and craft for 'OVERLORD'.

The Supreme Commander approved the draft reply with certain modifications to provide for a statement of SHAEF full requirements in additional landing ships and craft based on a cancellation of 'ARVIL'.

II. DIRECTIVE TO SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, MEDITERRANEAN

A draft directive to the Supreme Allied Commander, MEDITERRANEAN, based on the assumption that the 'ARVIL' assault is impossible of execution, was discussed.

The Supreme Commander directed that the draft directive be changed in respect to the method for assisting 'OVERLORD' to provide for maintenance of the highest possible tempo of offensive action, including the mounting of a positive threat against the SOUTH of FRANCE and the LIGURIAN coast and provision for taking immediate advantage of 'RAIEN' conditions should they occur.

III. 'OVERLORD' AIR REQUIREMENTS

General Montgomery presented a paper (attached at Appendix 'A') on the subject: " 'OVERLORD': Air Requirements as viewed by the Army".

This paper was agreed by the Commanders-in-Chief and approved by the Supreme Commander.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority Guidelines for Com Hqgr. 7/5/72

By ARK NLE DATE 11/5/73

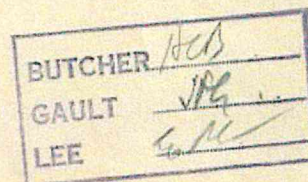
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APPENDIX 'A'

'OVERLORD': Air Requirements as viewed by the Army

1. Pre-D day

Air efforts in order to:

- (a) Destroy the enemy air forces.
- (b) Destroy and disrupt communications so as to impose delay on enemy movement toward the lodgement area.
- (c) Mislead the enemy as to the real point of attack.
- (d) Attack certain targets such as coastal batteries, oil installations, etc.

2. D day

- (a) The Army must be got on shore.

Therefore the first task must be such air action as will ensure this. Direct air assistance to the assault will be vital, and must be laid on up to the extent required by the Navy and Army.

- (b) Protection of the ships against air attack - also vital.
- (c) Action as in para 1 above.



(Signed) B.L. MONTGOMERY

H.Q. 21 Army Group,
20 Mar 44.

General,
Commander-in-Chief.

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Dir. 5200.9, 9-27-58.

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IV. NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT

Discussion was had regarding a draft cable, not circulated, to the War Department confirming telephonic conversation, Chief of Staff with General Handy, and explaining fully the position taken in respect to increased gunfire support for 'OVERLORD' by additional battleships and cruisers.

V. BOMBING OF ENEMY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Air Chief Marshal Tedder commented briefly on a JIC paper (JIC (44) 106 (0) Final, 18th March, 1944), which had been produced in response to a request for answers to certain questions on enemy rail requirements at the time of 'OVERLORD' pertinent to the subject of the planned air attacks on the enemy railway transportation system.

VI. INVITATION TO MEMBERS OF THE WAR CABINET

The meeting took note of the fact that it was not intended to invite members of the War Cabinet to attend the SCAEF conference on Monday, March 27th, but that the invitation extended would be for a luncheon after the regular meeting had been concluded.

VII. NEXT REGULARLY-SCHEDULED MEETING

The next regularly-scheduled Commanders-in-Chief Meeting will be held at 1100 hours on Monday, 27th March, in the Conference Room at WIDEWING.



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OUTGOING MESSAGE

Copy No. _____

From: SHAEF

Ref. No. B 320

TO : AGWAR

Dated: 211530A Mar

Precedence : URGENT

Security : ~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

Personal For: Marshall

From : Eisenhower

Cite : SHCOS

Authority JCS MEMOS

Date 1/7/73 S 1/4/74 3/25/77

By DTH, NARS Date



I will be asked to meet with the British Chiefs of Staff tomorrow on the final question of ANVIL. I have been giving constant thought to this subject together with the Staff and several Commanders during the past month. While I have no recent appreciation from General WILSON, yet I intend to present the following based on our own careful study and earnest conviction.

"To the Secretary, British Chiefs of Staff.

1. At the Conference on February 23rd, it was recommended and agreed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff that the decision with respect to operation ANVIL would be made on or about March 20.
2. It is now the firm opinion of the Supreme Commander that ANVIL, as originally visualized, is no longer a possibility, either from the standpoint of time in which to make the necessary preparations, or in probable availability of fresh and effective troops at the required date.
3. Accordingly, the Supreme Commander desires to bring to the attention of the Combined Chiefs of Staff the fact that during the past month detailed planning confirms that the landing ships and craft at present allocated to OVERLORD are barely sufficient to carry out the operation, even assuming the ships and craft arrive at planned dates, thereafter suffer no losses through enemy or other action, and the planned serviceability percentages are attained. The present allocation allows no margin of any sort, and, indeed, in the case of LSTs, is four short of the minimum on which we have been planning. Moreover, it entails an undesirable rigidity of tactical plan.
4. This fact has been constantly realized, and the Supreme Commander has been willing to accept the situation only so long as he felt reasonably sure of a strong and simultaneous ANVIL. With cancellation of a simultaneous ANVIL he considers it essential to strengthen OVERLORD and also to increase the flexibility of the buildup during the early critical days. *Our present loading schedule utilizes all allocated LSTs on the first three tides, and since the average LST turn-around is three days, we will have no LSTs reaching the beaches after the morning of D plus 1 until the morning of D plus 2.
5. The Supreme Commander, accordingly, is of the opinion that all serviceable landing ships and craft presently allocated to the Mediterranean and above those necessary to furnish ship to shore lift for one division should be re-allocated to OVERLORD.

* Original cable was corrected by Top Secret Cable Ref. No. S 50009 to read as indicated.

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6. Although convinced that ANVIL as at present conceived is no longer possible, the Supreme Commander feels that the abandonment of this project must not lessen our intention of operating offensively in the MEDITERRANEAN, initially in ITALY and extending from there into FRANCE as rapidly as we can. He believes that the forces in the MEDITERRANEAN must constantly look for every expedient, including threat and feint, to contain the maximum possible enemy forces in that region.

7. The Supreme Commander accordingly recommends:

a. That the decision be made to abandon ANVIL in its present conception of a two division assault building up to ten divisions, and that a directive for operations in lieu thereof, similar to the attached, be transmitted to the Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean Theater.

b. That there be withdrawn from the MEDITERRANEAN the following craft and ships for re-allocation to operation OVERLORD: 26 LST, 40 LCI(L), 1 LSH (the BULOLO), 1 LSE, 1 LSD. The above ships and craft to arrive in the U. K. by 30 April."

Following is directive referred to in paragraph 7 a. SHAEF/17101/Ops. Proposed Directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater.

GENERAL

1. The Combined Chiefs of Staff have previously directed that the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, shall coordinate operations from the Mediterranean Theater designed to assist OVERLORD.

OBJECT

2. To give the greatest possible assistance to OVERLORD by containing the maximum enemy forces away from the OVERLORD lodgement area.

METHOD

3. The highest possible tempo of offensive action must be maintained. Your plans will include the mounting of a positive threat against the SOUTH of FRANCE or the LIGURIAN COAST with provisions for taking immediate advantage of RANKIN conditions should they occur.

TIMING OF A THREAT

4. The positive threat should be fully developed by OVERLORD D-5 and fully maintained for as long as possible after D Day. The process of building up the threat should not start before D-31.

COMMAND AND CONTROL RANKIN

5. Subject to general direction by Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, you will continue to exercise operational control over your forces after landing until Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, can assume this responsibility.

6. You should recommend an area in which you wish to assume operational, administrative and civil affairs responsibility in the SHAEF sphere.

7. You should make recommendations if you wish the area of your responsibility for SOE/SO responsibilities altered.

8. On receipt of your recommendations referred to in paragraphs 6 and 7 preceding, instructions in respect to SHAEF coordination of operational, administrative, civil affairs and SOE/SO matters will be transmitted to you.

Annex ends

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