30 May 1945

COPY NO. 19
(SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION)

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

DECISION ON J.C.S. 1120/1

BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN V.L.R.
BOMBING OF JAPAN

Note by the Secretaries

By informal action on 29 May 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the recommendation in J.C.S. 1120/1. The memorandum in Appendix "A" thereto has been circulated as C.C.S. 691/4.

A. J. McPARLAND,

E. D. GRAVES, JR.,

Joint Secretariat.

DISTRIBUTION COPY NO.

Adm. Leahy 1
Gen. Marshall 2 & 5
Adm. King 3
Gen. Arnold 4
Gen. Handy 6
Adm. Edwards 7
Adm. Cooke 8
Gen. Hull 9
Gen. Kuter 10

COPY NO.

Adm. Duncan 11
Gen. Lindsay 12
Gen. Lincoln 13
Capt. Campbell 14
Secy., JCS 15
Secy., JPS 16
Secy., JSSC 17
Secy., JWPC 18

C.C.S. FILE COPY
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN V.L.F. BOMBING OF JAPAN

References:

a. C.C.S. 691 Series
b. C.C.S. 680/2
c. J.C.S. 581/12
d. J.C.S. 185th Mtg. Min.,
   (Annex) 2 February 1945

Note by the Secretaries

The enclosed report of the Joint Staff Planners is submitted for consideration.

A. J. McFARLAND,

E. D. GRAVES, JR.,

Joint Secretariat.

DISTRIBUTION

Admiral Leahy
General Marshall
Admiral King
General Arnold
General Handy
Admiral Edwards
Admiral Cooke
General Hull
General Kuter

1
2 & 5
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Admiral Duncan
General Lindsay
General Lincoln
Captain Campbell
Secy., JCS
Secy., JPS
Secy., JCSSC
Secy., JWPC

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

JCS 1120/1
ENCLOSURE

BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN V.L.R. BOMBING OF JAPAN

Report by the Joint Staff Planners

THE PROBLEM

1. To prepare a report and submit recommendations on the British proposals in C.C.S. 691/2 (that the Combined Chiefs of Staff approve allocation of the Cagayan River area in northern Luzon to the British V.L.R. bomber force), and C.C.S. 691/3 (that the United States Chiefs of Staff confirm their intention to capture Miyako Jima and that Miyako Jima will be allotted to the British for development as an air base, and that British engineers be permitted to arrive on the island as soon as practicable after the assault).

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM AND DISCUSSION


CONCLUSIONS

3. It is concluded that:

a. Allocation of bases in the Ryukyus should be offered for installation of a British air force.

b. Okinawa Island offers the best prospects for accommodation of a British air force initially on the order of approximately 10 squadrons.

c. Firming of plans regarding the British force should be accomplished through discussions between U.S. commanders concerned and the responsible British representatives.

RECOMMENDATION

4. It is recommended that the attached memorandum be presented to the Combined Chiefs of Staff (Appendix "A").
APPENDIX "A"

DRAFT

COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF

BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN V.L.R. BOMBING OF JAPAN
References:  a. C.O.S. 691/2
           b. C.O.S. 691/3

Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff

1. The United States Chiefs of Staff agree that development of the Cagayan Valley in Luzon as a base for Very Long Range (VLR) bombers is not practicable particularly in view of presently planned advancement of operations in the Pacific.

2. In view of the additional airfield sites on Okinawa revealed by ground reconnaissance and in order to meet airfield requirements in time to support OLYMPIC it has been necessary to defer indefinitely the seizure of Miyako, diverting the resources earmarked for that operation in order to accelerate the capture and development of Okinawa.

3. As a result, the available forward airfield areas on which to base the units being redeployed from Europe and the areas for the deployment of very heavy bomber groups remain limited. We are dependent on the Ryukyus for the only airfields which can base aircraft suitable for direct support of the initial operation against the Japanese homeland. In order to make the most timely and profitable use of British land-based air power against Japan, the United States Chiefs of Staff propose a British force of the order of 10 squadrons of some 220 aircraft to be based in the Ryukyus. Such a force might include not only British VLR types but also types having characteristics not available in U.S. aircraft (such as Mosquitos). We assume that this force will come under U.S. command.

JCS 1120/1 - S - Appendix "A"
4. Under present conditions the United States Chiefs of Staff regret that they are unable at this date to formulate firm plans for the entire 20 squadrons, but should later developments warrant, the United States Chiefs of Staff would welcome the employment in the Pacific of the remaining squadrons.

5. Upon acceptance in principle of this proposal, immediate steps can be taken to prepare and implement plans for the logistic support of this force by the British, including the time of deployment and utilization of British construction personnel.
APPENDIX "B"

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

1. In the final report of the Combined Chiefs of Staff at OCTAGON approved by the President and Prime Minister (C.C.S. 680/2), the British Chiefs of Staff were invited to put forward, as a basis for planning, an estimate in general terms of the contribution the Royal Air Force (RAF) would be prepared to make in the main operations against Japan.

2. In C.C.S. 691 (16 September 1944) the British Chiefs of Staff requested that the Combined Chiefs of Staff "agree that planning should be on the following basis:

a. British flight refueling Lancaster bombers will participate in the VLR bombing of Japan.

b. The scale of British participation should be 40 squadrons (half being tankers) it being understood that if limitation of bases or other considerations so require, this force may be reduced to such size as the Combined Chiefs of Staff may agree upon."

3. On 26 October 1944 the United States Chiefs of Staff, in C.C.S. 691/1, welcomed the offer of the British Chiefs of Staff to participate in the bombing of Japan, utilizing Lancaster aircraft, and stated further that deployment of these aircraft must be governed by availability of air bases within effective radius of Japan and that determination of specific areas, numbers and dates of availability of bases for the use of Lancasters must await developments of the situation in the Pacific and the firming of plans.

4. On 1 February 1945 (J.C.S. 185th Meeting) General Kuter, Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Plans, reported to the United States Chiefs of Staff that the British Chief of Air Staff (Sir Charles Portal) had indicated that the Lancaster, or its replacement the
Lincoln, had been improved to a point where it was hoped to be capable of carrying about 6000 pounds to an effective radius of 1500 miles. Sir Charles Portal requested that planning be initiated on the assumption that approximately four bases for heavy bombers be made available 6 months after the defeat of Germany.

General Kuter further stated in his message to General Arnold that:

a. He had cleared with Joint Chiefs of Staff a reply to Air Marshal Portal which inferred favorable consideration to the above proposal, and that he expected the British force would be 36 squadrons of VLR Lancasters or Lincolns.

b. All discussions would be based on condition that RAF unit would provide own aviation engineers and all services would build, maintain and operate own bases, and would provide all echelons of aviation maintenance and in general would be absolutely and completely self-supporting.

5. On 25 March 1945, the British Chiefs of Staff (C.C.S. 691/2), reported that:

a. Conversations on this same subject had continued at Washington following ARGONAUT.

b. The British had been informed by the United States Army Air Forces Staff that American bases both existing and planned would be fully occupied by American forces, but that the valley of the Cagayan River in northern Luzon which is suitable for airfield construction might be made available for deployment of the British bomber forces.

6. Following the Combined Chiefs of Staff's decision regarding British participation of bombing of Japan, exploratory staff conversations have included the following:

a. Mentions that the Cagayan Valley in Luzon might prove to be a satisfactory base site.

b. The proposed British VLR bomber force may include 20 Lincoln squadrons of 20 planes each with supporting squadrons
such as long range transport, air sea rescue, photographic reconnaissance, and pathfinder.

c. Tentative estimates of the characteristics of the Lincoln aircraft are that it will have an operational range of 3000 miles with 15% fuel reserve carrying slightly in-excess of 4 tons of bombs, that it can carry larger bomb loads at decreased ranges, and can operate on runways probably less than 7500 feet.

d. Present British planning envisages arrival in the area of operations of 9 squadrons at the end of October 1945, with build-up at the rate of 4 squadrons per month thereafter, the total proposed program to be completed by January 1946.

7. In reply to a request for comment General MacArthur has advised that development of the Cagayan Valley as a base for a large number of heavy bombers is not practicable and recommends that it not be further considered. The principal reasons are:

a. That Arraz is the only practicable port of entry and that it would be necessary to build an entire port there, including a breakwater. He estimates that this would require from nine months to one year.

b. That development of supply routes inland would require 26 engineer battalion months.

c. That construction of necessary base facilities would require 100 battalion months.

5. On 2 May 1945, the British Chiefs of Staff (C.C.S. 691/3), reported that:

a. Their examinations indicated development of the Cagayan River area to be a very expensive constructional undertaking, and the area of limited military value on account of distance from Japan.

b. Washington conversations had mentioned Miysko Jima, an incomparably better proposition, as an alternative proposal.
5. If Miyako Jima were allotted to them, they proposed to withdraw engineers from France and to have 3600 ready to leave for the Pacific on 14 May.

The British Chiefs of Staff requested U.S. confirmation of intention to capture Miyako Jima and to allot it to them for development as an air base, and that British engineers be permitted to arrive on the island as soon as practicable after the assault.

9. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff have approved indefinite postponement of the Miyako phase of the Ryukyu operations and diversion of resources therefor to Okinawa in order to expedite its capture and development.

10. After the end of the war in Europe the United States will have more than sufficient air strength available for employment in the Pacific in the war against Japan. Present estimates as reflected in the strategic deployment of U.S. forces (J.C.S. 521/12) show that all needs for strategic or tactical air forces in the Pacific can be filled entirely from U.S. resources. It follows that if units of the Royal Air Force are to be deployed to the Pacific a commensurate reduction could be made in the U.S. air forces presently planned for redeployment.

11. On a plane for plane basis the Lincoln (Lancaster) is inferior to the B-29 in range, bomb load, defensive armament, and ability to accomplish precision bombing. The British bombers would, however, compare favorably with our heavy and medium bombers in area and night bomber missions, and would occupy about the same space required for U.S. heavy bombers.

DISCUSSION

12. Considering that the war against Japan would probably have passed the stage where long range strategic bombing against the home islands would be necessary by the time the basing of VLR bombers in Cagayan Valley could be accomplished, and British
concurrency in our views that the effort to develop the valley would require expenditure of resources far beyond the benefits to be gained, it is clear that the project should be dropped.

13. As a result of increased potentiality of Okinawa Island for airfield sites and consequent indefinite postponement of the Miyako operation, discussions concerning allotting Miyako to the British are not now realistic.

14. At the commencement of conversations regarding this subject, the basic idea, accepted by the United States Chiefs of Staff, was that the British would participate in the air bombing of Japan. At that time bases considered to be prospectively available were far enough removed from Japan to require employment of VLR aircraft. As a result, the scope of subsequent negotiations has been narrowed to involve only British participation in VLR bombardment of Japan, with no consideration for employment of other types of British aircraft.

15. Further reconnaissance of the Okinawa area reveals that sufficient airfield sites exist to take care of the aircraft which were planned for Miyako; therefore the seizure of Miyako has been indefinitely postponed and the resources earmarked for that operation diverted to accelerating the capture and development of Okinawa. Thus the maximum range to the Tokyo area from the most distant bases in the Nansei Shoto is reduced to about 800 nautical miles.

16. As a result, the available forward airfield areas on which to base the units being redeployed from Europe and the areas for the deployment of very heavy bomber groups remain limited. We are dependent on the Ryukyus for the only airfields which can base aircraft suitable for direct support of the initial operation against the Japanese homeland.
17. In view of the foregoing it is considered that employment of British aircraft from bases in the Ryukyus offers the greatest possibility for economical use of these aircraft. Further, it is considered that Okinawa Island provides the best solution of the bases prospectively available in the Ryukyus. Adoption of this solution would result in reducing requirements for deployment of U.S. aircraft to the Pacific and would place the British force in an island manned predominantly by U.S. personnel, thus lessening the likelihood of questions being raised as to U.S. sovereignty or other territorial rights, or of command.

18. While exact determination of size and composition of the British force must necessarily await later detailed conversations between the British and the commanders concerned, it is possible now to approximate the force size, determination of which would permit more realistic planning. The British first proposed a force on the order of 40 squadrons and later staff conversations have reduced this to 20 squadrons plus miscellaneous units. It is believed that the British would probably consider inappropriate any force smaller than about 10 squadrons. Since this group would be operating from an area already operational with U.S. units, most of the miscellaneous units such as air/sea rescue, etc., would not be needed.

19. Timing of the proposed move cannot be firmly determined at this time. However, it would appear that December, 1945-January 1946 offers the best possibility. During this period it is expected that U.S. tactical units will be displaced forward and the bases vacated would be immediately available. It also should agree fairly well with expected availability of British units in the theater.

20. The question of utilization of British construction personnel can be resolved in discussions between U.S. commanders concerned and responsible British representatives.