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JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

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

- References:
- a. C.C.S. 691
 - b. C.C.S. 174th Mtg., Item 3
 - c. J.C.S. 1079

Note by the Secretaries

1. C.C.S. 691 was referred to the Joint Staff Planners for comment and recommendation.

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

A. J. McFARLAND,
E. D. GRAVES, JR.,
Joint Secretariat.

OCT 20 1944



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

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CONFIDENTIAL

ENCLOSUREBRITISH PARTICIPATION IN V.L.R. BOMBING OF JAPANReport by the Joint Staff PlannersTHE PROBLEM

1. To report on the British proposal for participation in Very Long Range (V.L.R.) bombing of Japan and to include a proposed memorandum from the United States Chiefs of Staff to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

2. In the C.C.S. 174th meeting the Combined Chiefs of Staff "Invited the Chief of the Air Staff to put forward for planning purposes, a paper containing an estimate in general terms of the contribution the Royal Air Force would be prepared to make in the main operations against Japan."

3. In C.C.S. 691 the British Chiefs of Staff recommend 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 V.L.R. 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."

4. The British further state in C.C.S. 691 that the Lancaster bomber when flight refueled is expected to carry a load of 4000 lbs. of bombs over a safe radius of action of 1500 statute miles.

5. The earliest date of deployment of this force cannot be determined exactly until the date of availability of bases is known and the priority for the movement of the units is decided. Assuming that squadrons could start to be withdrawn from European operations on 1 October 1944, the British Chiefs of Staff estimated that the earliest date by which the first squadrons might be ready for operations is probably the early summer of 1945, the whole force being available by September or October 1945, provided the necessary priority is given to their movement.

6. In C.C.S. 691 the British suggest the most suitable areas for the basing of the Lancaster refueling bombers would seem to be Formosa, or the China coast opposite to or northward of Formosa.

7. J.C.S. 1079 (Tactical Air Forces Required to Accomplish Earliest Possible Conclusive Defeat of Japan) concludes that the fundamental limitations as to the size of air forces to be employed in the war against Japan are airfield availability and logistic capabilities.

DISCUSSION

8. R.A.F. participation in the main operation against Japan is desirable:

a. From the British point of view in order to maintain their prestige in the family of nations, particularly in the Orient.

b. From the U.S. point of view, to make use of British resources, thereby reducing our own commitments.

9. The British state that if squadrons were withdrawn from Europe as of 1 October 1944 the first few squadrons might be modified and deployed by early summer 1945 and the remainder by September or October 1945. At this time the United States will have 40-45 groups of B-29's available in the Pacific.

10. The B-29's are superior to the V.L.R. Lancasters for the following reasons:

a. The necessity for refueling Lancasters to obtain a 1500 mile radius of action reduces the effective strength of the force by one-half.

b. At a 1500 mile radius of action the Lancaster can deliver only 44% as great a bomb load as the B-29.

c. Lancasters will probably be limited to night bombing whereas B-29's will be capable of both night and day employment.

11. It would be undesirable to allocate United States Very Heavy Bomber (V.H.B.) aircraft to the British for the following reasons:

a. The United States training and reconversion program is already under way to utilize all V.H.B. aircraft as they become available, whereas no British program has yet begun. To set up a British training program will require considerable resources and time. Allocation of any of these aircraft to the British will thus seriously delay V.H.B. employment against Japan.

b. The British have no backlog of experience in precision or in day bombing. Their use of V.H.B. aircraft would thus either necessitate lengthening of their training program and result in still further delay in deployment, or necessitate the use as night bombers of aircraft designed for precision day bombing, with a consequent loss of efficiency.

c. The establishment of a service and supply system for British V.H.B. units would require British repair depots and stocks of parts and other supplies duplicating the existing maintenance facilities of the Twentieth Air Force. This would be inefficient, and wasteful in scarce maintenance personnel, spare parts and equipment.

d. Deployment of British day V.H.B. units would probably involve the control of all V.H.B. operations by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, thus unnecessarily complicating and slowing down the command procedure.

12. In C.C.S. 691 the British acknowledge the limitation of bases and agree that because of this or other considerations their force may be reduced to such a size as the Combined Chiefs of Staff may agree upon. The greater efficiency of B-29's might well be one of these "other considerations."

13. Lancaster equipped units require facilities similar to United States heavy bomber units and their employment will necessitate sharing of this type of airfield. Lancaster squadrons should be placed in the same category as United States strategic heavy bomber units so that they will not compete with the deployment of V.H.B. aircraft.

14. The specific operations leading to the invasion of Honshu are not yet determined. It is therefore not possible to determine the areas or numbers of bases which will become available for the deployment of U.S. or RAF strategic heavy bombers. Almost certainly, however, our advance will include one or more intermediate objectives between Luzon and the Tokyo Plain. As the advance continues towards Japan, the requirements for defensive and supporting aircraft on each intermediate objective will decrease, and these short-range units will to a large extent be displaced forward. The bases thus vacated will become available for strategic, heavy bombers. The allocation of a portion of these bases to the British would not be detrimental to the over-all U.S. effort, and in fact would somewhat assist U.S. strategic heavy bomber operations by providing a night-time counterpart to those operations.

CONCLUSIONS

15. The British offer for RAF participation in the main effort against Japan should be accepted.

16. In view of the superiority of the B-29 airplane to the Lancaster for very long range bombing, and as long as B-29's are available, they should not be displaced by refueling Lancasters.

17. RAF participation in the main air effort against Japan should be with British aircraft. Any action which might bring about a British request that they be allocated U.S. VLR aircraft should be avoided.

18. Since the sequence of Pacific operations is still fluid, no determination can now be made of the specific areas or numbers of bases which will become available for the deployment of strategic heavy bombers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. That the Joint Chiefs of Staff approve the foregoing conclusions.

20. That the attached memorandum be presented to the Combined Chiefs of Staff (Appendix).

A P P E N D - I XD R A F TCOMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFFBRITISH PARTICIPATION IN V.L.R. BOMBING OF JAPANMemorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff

1. The United States Chiefs of Staff welcome the offer of the British Chiefs of Staff contained in C.C.S. 691 to participate in the bombing of Japan, utilizing Lancaster aircraft.

2. The deployment of Lancasters either as heavy bombers or flight-refueling bombers against targets in Japan proper must, of course, be governed by the availability of air bases within effective radius of Japan. Determination of the 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.