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1. Attention directed
to the letter of
Major Gen. J. C. Harbord
of 20 May 1941
and the attached
of 20 May 1941

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON



Merrill

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Basis for preparation of attached
outlined plan for Invasion of Western
Europe.

1. Western Europe has been selected as the theater in which
to stage the first great offensive of the United Powers because:

It is the only place in which a powerful offensive
can be prepared and executed by the United Powers in the near
future. In any other locality the building up of the required
forces would be much more slowly accomplished due to sea
distances. Moreover, in other localities the enemy is pro-
tected against invasion by natural obstacles and poor commu-
nications leading toward the seat of the hostile power, or by
elaborately organized and distant outposts. Time would be
required to reduce these and to make the attack effective.

It is the only place where the vital air superiority
over the hostile land areas preliminary to a major attack
can be staged by the United Powers. This is due to the exis-
tence of a network of landing fields in England and to the
fact that at no other place could massed British air power
be employed for such an operation.

It is the only place in which the bulk of the
British ground forces can be committed to a general offensive
in cooperation with United States forces. It is impossible,
in view of the shipping situation, to transfer the bulk of
the British forces to any distant region, and the protection
of the British islands would hold the bulk of the divisions
in England.

The United States can concentrate and use larger
forces in Western Europe than in any other place, due to
sea distances and the existence in England of base facilities.

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Copy of Letter of
Gen. J. C. Lammert
14 May 1942

Date 20 May 1942

- b. - Cross channel movement and seizure of beachhead between Le Havre and Boulogne.
- c. - Consolidation of beachhead and beginning of further operations.

4. An added feature of this plan is that, during the preparatory period it provides means to act promptly under either of the following eventualities:

- (a) If the imminence of Russian collapse requires desperate action, a sacrifice attack could be made.
- (b) If German forces are almost completely absorbed on the Russian front, a prompt movement to the continent might be undertaken with much smaller forces than would otherwise be justified.

Included, later in this paper, is an outlined plan for an attack about September 15, 1942.

5. Limitations as to time and as to strength of attack are imposed upon both plans by the shortage of shipping, and, secondarily, by the difficulty in the production of landing craft. Further limitations are imposed by the necessity for executing certain commitments and requirements, already of record, which absorb a certain amount of shipping. These include:

- 2 Divisions to Australia
- 1 Division to New Zealand
- Sufficient shipping to England to transport 40,000 troops and equipment to the Middle East.
- Continuance of material aid to Russia and to others of the United Nations.

PLAN FOR OPERATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE

6. Assumptions.

- a. That the line, Alaska - Hawaii - Australia will be held and Pacific garrisons increased from a present approximate strength of 175,000 to an approximate strength of 300,000.

CONFIDENTIAL
For the Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
12 May 1944
W. H. C. ...

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f. That present U. S. commitments will be executed. These include dispatch of the 41st and one additional division to Australia, one division to New Zealand, and the loan of sufficient shipping to the British to move 40,000 troops to the Middle East, and the building up of a small air force in China - India. Providing the British furnish the necessary planes from aircraft now allotted to them, two groups pursuit, one group medium bombardment and two groups light bombardment should be sent to the Middle East as the only additional U. S. commitment to theaters other than Western Europe. This will have a corresponding effect in diminishing the U. S. planes available for the offensive in Europe.

g. That Russia is still effective in the war to the extent that the bulk of the German forces are required on the Russian front.

g. That Axis forces in Western Europe remain at approximately their present strength.

7. From an examination of the hostile situation, it is concluded that a successful attack can be made only with combat power as follows:

a. Adequate air superiority over the enemy involving the use by the Allies of a minimum of 3,000 fighters and 3,000 combat planes other than fighters. (Combined British and U. S.).

b. Ability to land in the first wave the major combat elements of an infantry and armored force of at least six divisions. At the beginning of the actual invasion, U. S. land forces in England or en route should be approximately : six armored, five motorized, 18 infantry and one air-borne division.

c. An ability to land on the western coast of Europe behind the leading wave, a weekly increment initially of at least 100,000 troops, and, after the invasion forces have landed, a continuous flow of reinforcements from the United States at the maximum rate that shipping will permit.

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1st Lt. William H. H. H.
Lieutenant of the Army
Edward H. H. H.

21 May 1943

8. Plan.

a. This plan provides for the movement to the British Isles of U. S. air and ground forces comprising approximately one million men to participate with the British in an invasion of France between Le Havre and Boulogne. Logistic factors fix the earliest possible date for an attack on this scale at about April 1, 1943. Bottlenecks, as to time, will be shipping and landing craft, which will not be available in sufficient quantity by the time that aircraft, ground equipment and ammunition can be supplied.

b. The operation proper is divided into three phases:

- (1) Preparatory phase. (From now until April 1, 1943).
- (2) The cross-channel movement and seizure of the beach head.
- (3) The consolidation of the beach head with a view to further operations.

(1) Preparatory Phase.

During the preparatory phase maximum effort to be made to complete the organization, equipment and training of the air and ground forces involved, and to coordinate all productive effort toward this objective. This includes the early establishment of additional air installations in England, and the movement to the British Isles of air and ground forces to complete their training in conjunction with the British. A continued air offensive against vital Axis targets on the mainland of Europe should be carried out prior to April 1, 1943. In addition to the destruction accomplished this will enable American and British air forces to work together and so develop a coordinated combat team. Likewise, participation of U. S. ground troops in raids against the coast of continental Europe from Norway to the southern limits of occupied France will not only harass the German occupying forces, but will aid materially in the training of U. S. and British ground forces, and will obtain information concerning the organization of the German defenses along the coast. Above all, it will produce the coordinated combat methods vital to success. During the final two weeks just prior to the land invasion, an intensification of air activities against the invasion front will be carried out with the view to neutralizing the Axis air forces on that front and to beating down the Axis defensive system.

(2) The cross channel movement and later consolidation.

The invasion itself will consist of a cross-channel movement and the seizure of a beach head between Le Havre and Boulogne.

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Walter H. H. H.
J. O. J. May '44
30 May 1944

strongly supported by combat aviation. The main landing should be made on a six division front. Parachute and air-borne troops to be employed in addition to combat aviation in assisting the ground forces in establishing the beach head and in preventing rapid movement of German reinforcements toward the coast. As soon as a beach head is established, strong armored forces are to be ferried across the channel to break the German resistance along the coast and to seize the line of the Oise-St. Quentin. A movement towards Antwerp will then follow to widen the salient and permit the movement of additional forces across the channel between Boulogne and Antwerp. (See Map A).

g. U. S. and British forces as follows should be in Great Britain or en route when the land attack begins:

<u>U.S.</u>			<u>British</u>
	(can be available)		(Numbers of British aircraft shown are minimum requirements. Information is not at hand as to how many the British can make available.)
1,490	Fighters	} Modified by any planes sent to Mid-Atlantic.	1,500
1,800	Combat other than fighters		1,000
400	Transport aircraft		200
18	Infantry Divisions		15
6	Armored Divisions		3
5	Motorized Divisions		1
1	Air-borne Division		3
11	Parachute Bns.		
30	A.A. Sqds.		

9. General Comments.

a. Some protective effect will be felt in the Atlantic Ocean as a result of a major attack against West Europe. The garrisons in the Atlantic will not require material reinforcement. This does not apply to the Pacific, to India, and to the Middle East, consequently our protective measures in those regions must be adequate.

b. U. S. troops will be equipped and trained in time for the operation.

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10. Modified Plan.

The following represents what can be accomplished to effect an invasion of France on or about September 15, 1943 should a decision be made to advance the date of execution of the operation.

a. U. S. troops that can be made available and arrive in England in time to participate. (Figures include 34th Division and 1st Armored Division).

Air Forces.

- 400 Fighters
- 333 Combat other than fighters
- 200 Transport

Ground Forces.

- 2 1/2 Infantry Divisions and 1 Armored Division, or
- 1 1/2 Infantry Divisions and 2 Armored Divisions, or
- 1 1/2 Infantry Divisions, 1 Armored Division, 4 Parachute Bns, and 10 Antiaircraft Regiments.

b. Inclusive of the above, a total of six Infantry, three Armored, and two Motorized Divisions, four Parachute Battalions, and ten Antiaircraft Regiments will be equipped and trained in the U. S. in time to participate in this operation. Shortage in shipping precludes transporting more than the number indicated unless shipping is diverted from another commitment.

g. British troops estimated to be available to participate.

Air Forces.

No data is at hand as to how many planes the British can make available. The minimum considered essential, exclusive of U. S. air forces, is 2,600 fighters, 2,400 combat other than fighters, and all available transport aircraft.

Ground Forces.

- 15 Infantry Divisions
- 3 Armored Divisions
- 1 Parachute Brigade
- 3 Antiaircraft Groups.

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*Copy to Office of War
2. Forwarded 4 pm May 1944
Walter R. ...
20 May 1944*

d. THIS LIMITED OPERATION CAN BE JUSTIFIED ONLY IN
CASE

(1) THE SITUATION OF THE RUSSIAN FRONT BECOMES DESPERATE, I.E., THE SUCCESS OF GERMAN ARMS BECOMES SO COMPLETE AS TO THREATEN THE IMMINENT COLLAPSE OF RUSSIAN RESISTANCE UNLESS THE PRESSURE IS RELIEVED BY AN ATTACK FROM THE WEST BY BRITISH AND AMERICAN TROOPS. IN THIS CASE THE ATTACK SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A SACRIFICE IN THE COMMON GOOD.

(2) THE GERMAN SITUATION IN WESTERN EUROPE BECOMES CRITICALLY WEAKENED.

11. The details of necessary Naval support are under study.

12. There is attached a paper commenting upon the employment of U. S. troops in Syria, in Libya, and in Northwest Africa.

Chief of Staff.



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