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## Very Special Relationship:

### Field Marshal Sir John Dill and General George Marshall [\[1\]](#)

By Alex Danchev

On 8 November 1944, flags throughout the District of Columbia were flown at half-mast: a memorial service was being held at Washington Cathedral. The service was conducted by the Bishop of Washington; the lesson was read by the U.S. Army Chief of Staff. Afterwards, a motorized cortège proceeded along a route lined by thousands of troops to Arlington National Cemetery. The coffin, folded in a Union Jack, with an unsheathed sword and a Field Marshal's cocked hat on top, was transferred to a gun carriage drawn by four grey horses. They were led slowly to the crossroads of Roosevelt and Grant Avenues. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) acted as honorary pall bearers. General Marshall, alone, stood at attention at one side of the grave. At the other was Admiral King. General Arnold faced a grieving widow; behind her, Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador. A simple service was held at the graveside. Salutes were fired, the Last Post and Reveille bugled. Dr. Foster Kennedy, President of the American Neurological Association, cousin, friend and physician, wrote afterwards: "I have never seen so many men so visibly shaken by sadness. Marshall's face was truly stricken . . . It was a remarkable and noble affair." [\[2\]](#)

Six years later, some of the mourners returned to witness an equally powerful ceremony. An equestrian statue, "erected to a great soldier-statesman by his American friends and associates," was dedicated by the same Bishop. Speeches were made by Marshall, by Halifax's successor Sir Oliver Franks, and by President Truman, unscathed after an assassination attempt at Blair House. Sir John Dill's American apotheosis was complete. Throughout, it had been Marshall's own conception. As he had written to Lady Dill, "I know that it is not necessary for me to tell you of my distress at this moment. Officially the United States has suffered a heavy loss, and I personally have lost a dear friend, unique in my lifetime, and never to be out of my mind . . ." [\[3\]](#)



Caption: Unveiling the Dill statue at Arlington National Cemetery, November 1, 1950. The memorial is near the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and is one of only a few statues in the cemetery.

Dill and Marshall first met at the Atlantic Conference in August 1941. There is some evidence to suggest that initially Dill, like [Field Marshall Sir Alan Brooke, later Lord] Alanbrooke, found Marshall wanting

strategically; [4] but indisputably, the two men discovered an immediate and "un-English" empathy, perhaps as surprising to the protagonists as it was to observers. Additionally, a clear-eyed awareness of their respective national interests may well have been stronger at this early stage, before they had any real foundation for the implicit trust that was to be the hallmark of their Washington association. [5] Be that as it may, the day after Dill's return to London, he wrote in most unusual terms to Marshall: "I sincerely hope that we shall meet again before long. In the meantime we must keep each other in touch in the frank manner upon which we agreed." A few days later, Marshall responded: "I feel greatly reassured by my conversations with you, and I propose writing to you personally and very frankly whenever any matters arise which I think merit such attention. I am depending on you to treat me with similar frankness, and I am quite sure you will do so."



Marshall and Dill, with President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill on HMS *Prince of Wales* in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, August 10, 1941, following church services during the Atlantic Conference. In January 1942, Dill was named head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, representing the British Chiefs of Staff, and he sat as a member of Combined Chiefs of Staff when the CCS met. It was an open secret that he represented Churchill in the latter's capacity as Minister of Defence.

This exchange inaugurated

a regular correspondence, an important channel of the flourishing but still illicit common-law alliance. In October, Marshall invited Dill to maneuvers in the Carolinas and "a respite of rest for yourself as my guest." On learning of Dill's remarriage, he offered "warmest congratulations." And, with characteristic formality, "Mrs. Marshall urges you to bring Mrs. Dill with you." The invitation was ruefully declined, owing to "pressure of work." In November, Dill appealed "for tanks to bolster British defences in face of a possible German attack through the Caucasus and Anatolia." Within twenty-four hours, Marshall agreed to supply the requested 350 medium tanks from his next three months' production—a diversion representing, in the words of the US official historians, "virtually the entire remaining medium tank production earmarked for the US Armored Force." In thanking him, Dill offered some strategic speculation and a prescient question:

Any success which we may have in Libya in the next few months may well bring to the fore again the problem of French North Africa. . . . At the Atlantic Conference you were very interested in developments [there], and I often wonder whether, in the event of a request for assistance from General Weygand, the United States would be likely (provided the political situation permitted) to take part. [6]

That question apparently received no answer before they met again at the Arcadia Conference of December 1941–January 1942. Meanwhile, Dill's "retirement" as Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) had been announced. It is one of the great ironies of Pearl Harbor that Dill celebrated 25 December 1941, his 60th birthday, and the rationale for his supersession—not in retirement in England, nor, contrary to Churchill's bizarre promise, with "a bodyguard with lances" in Bombay, but at a lunch party given by Marshall in Washington—whose proceedings were much enlivened when Dill discovered that the symbolic flags on his birthday cake were made, inevitably, in Japan.) [7] When the British contingent returned home, Dill remained, in an unprecedented if indeterminate position of enormous potential influence.

Dill's position in Washington is central to an understanding of his relationship with Marshall. It was regularized only after protracted Anglo-American negotiations about who exactly he should represent. The newly instituted Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) Committee met in Washington. Naturally, the British Chiefs of Staff (COS) could not be present in person. Each therefore had a permanent representative who headed his Service Delegation at the British Joint Staff Mission (JSM) in Washington and acted for him on the CCS. As Head of the JSM, Dill represented not a single Service but the collective British COS; as senior British member of the CCS, he acted as principal spokesman for the British side. Although he no longer formally sat with the COS, he, not they, dealt directly with the Americans from day to day and at the usually weekly CCS sessions. When the Chiefs did meet in person at Allied Conferences, he continued to sit with them. [8]

This constituted Dill's official position. It was an open secret, however, that he also represented Churchill in his capacity as Minister of Defence. At first, Marshall felt that a "British representative . . . at a higher level than the CCS . . . was bad even if Field Marshal Dill happened to be the best possible type of person to deal with." Propitiating Marshall was always a prime consideration for Churchill; he too began to have qualms about "difficulties arising from Dill's vaguely defined outside influence and special relationship with me." At this point, Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's frail Sancho Panza and already a firm friend of Dill, interceded with Churchill. Hopkins's argument was couched in highly significant terms:

Dill is making his way here extremely well and I hate to see you change his status. If it were another type of personality I think that difficulties might arise . . . The important detail in Dill's case is whether or not his presence can be useful.

To which Roosevelt added, ". . . to the Staff but also especially to me personally." "I am sure it can," concluded Hopkins. The importance of personality could not have been plainer. [9]

Dill is perhaps best seen as an amateur ambassador, complementing and to some extent supplanting Lord Halifax because of the extraordinary circumstances. His success in this role was achieved in the absence of what has always been considered essential for a British Ambassador in Washington: the confidence of the Prime Minister. Such an imperious incumbent as Churchill only serves to deepen the mystery. So far from enjoying that confidence, Dill had been superseded as CIGS precisely because he had forfeited it. [10] The paradox of Dill's sojourn in Washington was that the tension between them became creative. To "official America," above all to Marshall, Dill quickly came to be seen as a guarantor: a guarantor of the British, against their notorious and incorrigible duplicities; and, of especial concern to Marshall, a guarantor of Churchill himself against the "fatal lullaby" of his imperial pretensions and strategic prejudices. A fresh gloss was put on a function only too familiar to Dill. In his own splendid aphorism as CIGS: "I live a very hectic life. Most of it is spent trying to



prevent stupid things being done rather than in doing clever things! However, that is rather the normal life of a Chief of Staff."

In Washington he found himself doing the quintessential ambassadorial work of attempting to prevent Churchill "doing stupid things," whilst simultaneously attempting to persuade Marshall that he was, in fact, "doing clever things." Dill's fear, shared by Alanbrooke in London, was that the itch to do *something* would prove too strong for Churchill, particularly if he achieved his insistent purpose of caballing with Roosevelt, of whose "wild ideas" Marshall was equally fearful. "I have so many battles to fight," he once told Dill in great confidence, "I am never quite sure whether I am fighting you, the President, or the Navy!" [\[11\]](#)

As his intimacy with Marshall deepened, Dill virtually came to be defined as a guarantor in official American circles, as much for what he was, or was perceived to be, as for what he did. [\[12\]](#) So solicitous was Marshall of this relationship that by late 1943, a double paradox was obtained. Not only did the known tension between the Minister of Defence and his representative actually enhance Dill's value in the US; it also provoked the Americans themselves to demonstrate that value to Churchill. Thus, the spate of honorary degrees awarded Dill in early 1944, with maximum attendant publicity, was inspired by Marshall as part of "a regular campaign . . . to have Dill honored in this country." American anxieties seem to have been quickened by the unusual spectacle of sharp public clashes between Dill and Churchill at the Cairo/Teheran Conferences of November-December 1943. Among other things, Churchill resented Marshall's suggestion of Dill as Supreme Commander for OVERLORD (the landings in northwest Europe). Dill spoke "very bluntly" to him, saying (in Hopkins's words) "he was free, white and 21 and was going to tell him what he thought whether he liked it or not." [\[13\]](#)



Marshall (left) and Dill on the steps of the Soviet Embassy in Teheran, Iran, November 29 or 30, 1943, during the Big Three Conference.

During February-April 1944, further differences between them were exposed by the bitter Anglo-American controversy over ANVIL (the landing in the south of France). At this time, Churchill certainly gave credence to the notion that Dill had "gone native."



Marshall feared his recall. The recrudescence of the ANVIL controversy in June-July 1944 found

Dill recuperating from a bout of the illness that was soon to kill him. A hard-pressed JSM wondered what to do. They consulted Marshall, in itself an interesting comment on their relationship, who at once said that "on no account should we worry the Field Marshal . . . as he thinks there is a big part played by the Prime Minister in the present affair and is most anxious that the Field Marshal should not become involved." Marshall must have relished a curious coda to Dill's non-involvement in this affair. Ambassador Winant reported a conversation with the Foreign Secretary, Eden, at a 4 July lunch in London:

He told me he felt that the failure to have minds meet [over ANVIL] would have been avoided had Sir John Dill been well enough to come on here or be present at the later conferences in Washington. He said that, for the first time, he thought that the Prime Minister had come to appreciate the contribution that Sir John Dill had been making in his Washington assignment.

[14]

Dill's function as guarantor linked closely with that of educator. In this Marshall fully reciprocated. After the Quebec Agreement of August 1943, Dill acceded to membership of the Combined Policy Committee (CPC) of the atomic bomb project. The Deputy Director of the project on the British side remembered: "The whole atmosphere was changed . . . [Dill's] contribution was of real value *because* of his standing and reputation in Washington and his connection with the "top brass" in the US Army. Here was a classic statement of the guarantor function. "His membership of the CPC would be a very acceptable sign that Churchill was serious in the terms of the Quebec Agreement." The project's British directors had come to recognize the futility of attempting to influence their American opposite numbers at one remove, with scant reference to those who knew the "reefs and shoals" of Washington politics. In the first place, "we have not touched the Generals"-with whom it was rightly suspected immediate powers of direction lay. In the second place, private messages from Churchill to Roosevelt or Hopkins aroused characteristic suspicion that "once again . . . Mr. Roosevelt had been precipitated into a matter on which he was not fully informed." [15] It mattered little to artfully circumvented advisors whether wild ideas were the President's own or whether he was suborned by "one whose powers of persuasion they are not disposed to underestimate," as Dill delicately phrased it.

Dill and his coadjutors were introduced to "square" Marshall and dispel such suspicions. The evidence, though mixed, suggests some success. [16] Dill brought to this task an approach to Anglo-American relations quite different from that of those he represented. Churchill tended to cling to secrecy and to his carefully cultivated personal relationship with Roosevelt, both increasing untenable positions, brutally dissected by James Gould Cozzens. "Except as a piece of politeness, he did not even sit as an equal. His real job was to palter." [17] It may be objected that Dill occupied an analogous and subordinate position. In brief moments of depression he himself seemed almost ready to acknowledge as much. "One trouble," he wrote to Wavell in November 1942 "is that we [the British] want everything from them [the Americans] from ships to razor blades and have nothing but services to give in return-and many of the services are past services." Yet, the Dill-Marshall relationship was both more infrangible and more equal than the Churchill-Roosevelt one; more infrangible because Dill's subtle appreciation of increasing British dependency led him successfully to adopt mitigatory strategies; more equal because Marshall committed himself fully and unswervingly in a way that Roosevelt never did. [18] The character of the relationship made possible their reciprocally educative function, the most obvious manifestation of which was the quantum jump in information available to each side.

Both Dill and Marshall took seriously their inaugural exhortations to frankness. Dill showed Marshall virtually all the COS telegrams he received, including those "for his own information;" many of the JSM and his personal FMD (Field Marshal Dill) series sent to London; and sundry private telegrams and letters from his regular correspondents, for example, Alanbrooke and Wavell. Churchill's "hot ones" were immediately discussed *à deux*, and in Dill's absence simply taken to Marshall's office by the senior Secretary of the JSM, rather as if the US Chief of Staff were on the regular British distribution list. In this way Marshall was "kept *au courant* with what was going on." Mindful especially of Roosevelt's proclivities, Marshall himself felt that he would not otherwise have received certain crucial information. Unarguably, he would not have received it so soon. Enclosing a private copy of a telegram from General Maitland Wilson to the COS, Dill explained: "The question dealt with in the attached is not ripe to put to you officially but I always like you to know the shape of possible things to come." Dill's approach was designed to forestall disagreement by allowing Marshall the earliest

and fullest insight into "how the Chiefs of Staffs' minds are working"-a favourite phrase. [19]

In return, Dill was privy to much of Marshall's correspondence with the other members of the JCS; with the President and Hopkins; and with commanders overseas, notably Eisenhower and Stilwell. He was similarly apprised in advance of, for example, the notorious Marshall/King *démarche* of July 1942. "My object," Marshall wrote to the President, "is again to force the British into acceptance of a concentrated effort against Germany, and if this proves impossible, to turn immediately to the Pacific with strong forces for a decision against Japan." It seems that Marshall himself drafted the telegram in which Dill first alerted London to the likely consequences of rejecting SLEDGEHAMMER (a 1942 landing in northwest Europe) in favor of GYNMAST (a landing in North Africa). In itself such appraisal was unremarkable: Dill and Marshall frequently drafted or re-drafted each other's telegrams, and occasionally colluded over a joint one. Whether it amounted, as Secretary Stimson thought, to "secret concurrence" is doubtful. Dill took the "Pacific alternative" seriously. This would appear to confirm that it *was* serious. [20]

Dill's perspective is clear not only from his repeated warnings to Churchill and the COS (which could be construed as concurrence) but also from internal JSM documents and the evidence of Brigadier Vivian Dykes, British Secretary to the CCS, whose close relationship with his opposite number General Bedell Smith paralleled and reinforced that of Dill and Marshall. [21] Dykes fully endorsed Dill's view; he too was impressed by the strength of American feeling that "Britain is going cold on BOLERO"-in other words, on the whole build-up for a direct cross-channel attack-and that "suggestions for sideshows [i.e., GYNMAST] are smoke screens to conceal this cooling off." The second point of departure for Dill was his realization that, politically, "there is a desperate need to get American soldiers and airmen into something big in the way of battles. The Americans feel that they cannot go on forming these large land and air forces and keep them unemployed." [22]

Dill's reports on the crisis of strategy in July 1942 well illustrate his function as educator. For his part, Marshall disseminated the information he acquired with typical prudence. To Stilwell in China he relayed succulent morsels from Wavell's dispatches, extensive summaries of Dill's exegeses of British policy in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater, and his own sage advice. Meanwhile, Dill did exactly the same for Wavell and the COS. That Wavell and Stilwell grew to have some appreciation of each other's problems and perspectives-that they conferred at all-was in large measure due to intensive conciliatory efforts from Washington in the latter months of 1942. [23]

Marshall regularly invoked Dill at JCS meetings. If he himself wished to broach or pursue an issue, Dill's views might be quoted with approbation, even at some length; for example, the pressing needs of the Middle East in March 1942. If, on the other hand, he wished to quash or postpone an issue, the bald statement that Dill was "looking into it" might suffice; for example, the allocation of landing craft in March 1944. [24]

A recapitulation of what Dill believed the British position to be served to clarify the American one-and vice versa. This was particularly efficacious in the pressurized circumstance of the great Allied conferences. Dill attended each of these and labored unobtrusively at "bringing the young things together," as he put it. His function as broker in the Anglo-American strategic market has been often applauded but never examined. The intractability of the written record is partly to blame. Not only are the CCS minutes proverbially anodyne; they are most wanting at precisely the times of greatest interest, when only the CCS themselves sat in "closed" sessions. [25] Further, from the evidence of the minutes, Dill might well have been absent altogether, for he almost never spoke at formal sessions. [26] And yet, at SYMBOL [Casablanca, January 1943] the most extravagant praise was heaped upon him, even as the conference proceeded, for his brokerage. It was sorely needed. By 18 January, after four days of conferring, Alanbrooke recorded: "From 10:30 to 1 p.m. a very heated Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting at which we seemed to be making no progress. King still evidently wrapped up in the war of the Pacific at the expense of everything else." Marshall himself went so far as to say that "the whole concept of defeating Germany first had been jeopardized by the lack of resources in the Pacific." This argument was anathema to the British. It was also a quite deliberate provocation. The JCS had already decided to acquiesce in a program of Mediterranean operations. Marshall and King continued to advance the Pacific alternative now, unlike the previous July, in order to rouse the British from their habitual strategic torpor in the Far East and provoke them to commit definite resources to definite operations. The point of decision was reached at the lunch-time adjournment of the 18 January CCS meeting. On resumption, the CCS agreed with almost indecent haste on a "bridge" paper drafted initially by Air Marshal Slessor. The central figure in this agreement was Dill. [27] In no aspect of allied grand strategy was he more finely attuned to Marshall's susceptibilities than in the war against Japan. Equally, no one was better able to urge compromise on an implacable Alanbrooke. So it was at SYMBOL; so it was at other conferences. [28]



Field Marshal Dill (left) and General Marshall inspect a parachute infantry unit at Pope Field, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, May 1 or 2, 1942. Brig. Gen. William C. Lee of Airborne Command is in the center.

Dill and Marshall in tandem made the CCS system work. This was their inalienable achievement. Neither conception nor execution of a war-winning strategy could be immaculate; indeed, getting "mixed up together" promised sin of a most

original kind. The indispensable mid-wife of victory was the CCS system. Both its novelty and its fragility have been rather underestimated. In early 1942, there was a real danger that it would be nullified. Influential figures on both sides proposed a Dill-Marshall-King inner council: in Eisenhower's words, "the three individuals, the only three, who can really make effective progress towards integrating our war effort." The idea even found some passing favor with Dill himself. [29]

Others continued to have serious reservations about "combined" practice or precept. This was true of Alanbrooke and, notoriously, of elements in the US Navy Department, especially successive Planners, Admirals Turner and Cooke. Brigadier Dykes's diary offers a trenchant commentary:

A spot of trouble over today's meeting - the Combined Planners' papers seem to have been bitched up by that bloody little man Cooke who doesn't attend CSP [Combined Staff Planners] meetings and then throws his representative overboard.

Such behavior was often ascribed to the attitude of their Chief, the redoubtable Admiral King-"a man," Dykes once wrote in some exasperation, "of great strength of character with a very small brain." [30] Additionally, the professionals felt themselves beset by meddling and quixotic political masters, whose ready dispatch of "special representatives" threatened to supplant the CCS. [31] Later, there was the crucial imbalance of power. Dill maintained: "It is only by building up the authority of the Combined Chiefs of Staff that we can do anything to curb the tendency of the American Chiefs of Staff to take unilateral action." [32]

An excellent example of the way in which Dill and Marshall operated is provided by telegram FMD86 of 7 January 1944. [33] Ironically, this telegram was occasioned by the unilateral action of the British COS in recalling the LSTs in question from southeast Asia to the Mediterranean. The official record reveals only US disgruntlement and Dill's handsome apology. "If it was the desire of the US Chiefs of Staff to revoke the decision to recall the three LSTs he would be happy to transmit this to the British Chiefs of Staff." The telegram shows very clearly how such an offer could be made with impunity: how an issue over which even Churchill favored British retraction could be resolved without, as the Prime Minister feared, "running into dangers much larger than those from which we are seeking to escape."

The Dill-Marshall relationship was dedicated precisely to avoiding such dangers. It demanded, and received, an unusual commitment from both sides. Both men would undoubtedly have endorsed the maxim of another exemplar of special Anglo-American relations: "What is left to be understood is misunderstood." In this the fundamental element was personality, the imperative requirement personal. It is no coincidence that Ambassador Franks, whose maxim this was, and Secretary



Acheson developed just such a personal commitment through their unfailing empathy and close friendship. [34] Dill and Marshall did exactly the same. The outcome was a very special relationship indeed.

**CRRGPFKZ "C**

**HKGNF "OCTUJCN" UKT "LQJP" FKNN" \*3 : : 363 ; 66+**

◇

b. 25 Dec 1881 Lurgan, County Armagh, Ireland

Sep 1887 Methodist College of Belfast

Jan 1895 Cheltenham College

20 Aug 1900 Royal Military College Sandhurst

7 May 1901 Commissioned: 1st Battalion (100th of Foot), The Prince of Wales's

Leinster Regiment (Dover)

10 Sep 1901 Boer War (South Africa)

10 Nov 1902 Assistant Adjutant (Fermoy: Shorncliffe; Blackdown) (Lt)

15 Aug 1906 Adjutant (Blackdown; Devonport)

20 Feb 1907 m. Ada Maude le Mottée (d. 23 Dec 1940)

14 Aug 1909 Brigade Signal Officer (Devonport; Birr) (Capt)

22 Jan 1913 Student, Staff College (Camberley)

4 Aug 1914 General Staff Officer grade 3 (GS03) (E. Command)

5 Nov 1914 Brigade Major, 25th Infantry Brigade (France)

3 Jan 1916 GS02, 55th Division (Maj)

1 Nov 1916 GS02, Canadian Corps

5 Jan 1917 GS01, 37th Division (temp Lt Col)

29 Oct 1917 GS01 (Training), GHQ France



16 Dec 1917 GS01 (Operations), GHQ France

27 Mar 1918 Brigadier-General, General Staff (BGGs) (temp Brigadier)  
(Operations), GHQ France

1 Mar 1919 BGGs, Staff College (Col)

1 Sep 1922 Commander, Welsh Border (TA) Brigade

1 Nov 1923 Commander, 2nd Infantry Brigade (Aldershot)

1 Nov 1926 Army Instructor, Imperial Defence College (London)

19 Jan 1929 GSO, W. Command, India (Quetta) (Brigadier)

8 Jan 1931 Commandant, Staff College (Maj Gen)

22 Jan 1934 Director, Military Operations & Intelligence (DMO &I) (War Office)

8 Sep 1936 General Officer Commanding (GOC), Palestine & Trans-Jordan (Lt Gen)

12 Oct 1937 GOC-in-C, Home Command (Aldershot)

3 Sep 1939 Commander, 2st Corps, British Expeditionary Force (BEF) (Gen)

22 Apr 1940 Vice-Chief, Imperial General Staff (VCIGS)

27 May 1940 Chief, Imperial General Staff (CIGS)

8 Oct 1941 m. Nancy Charrington Furlong

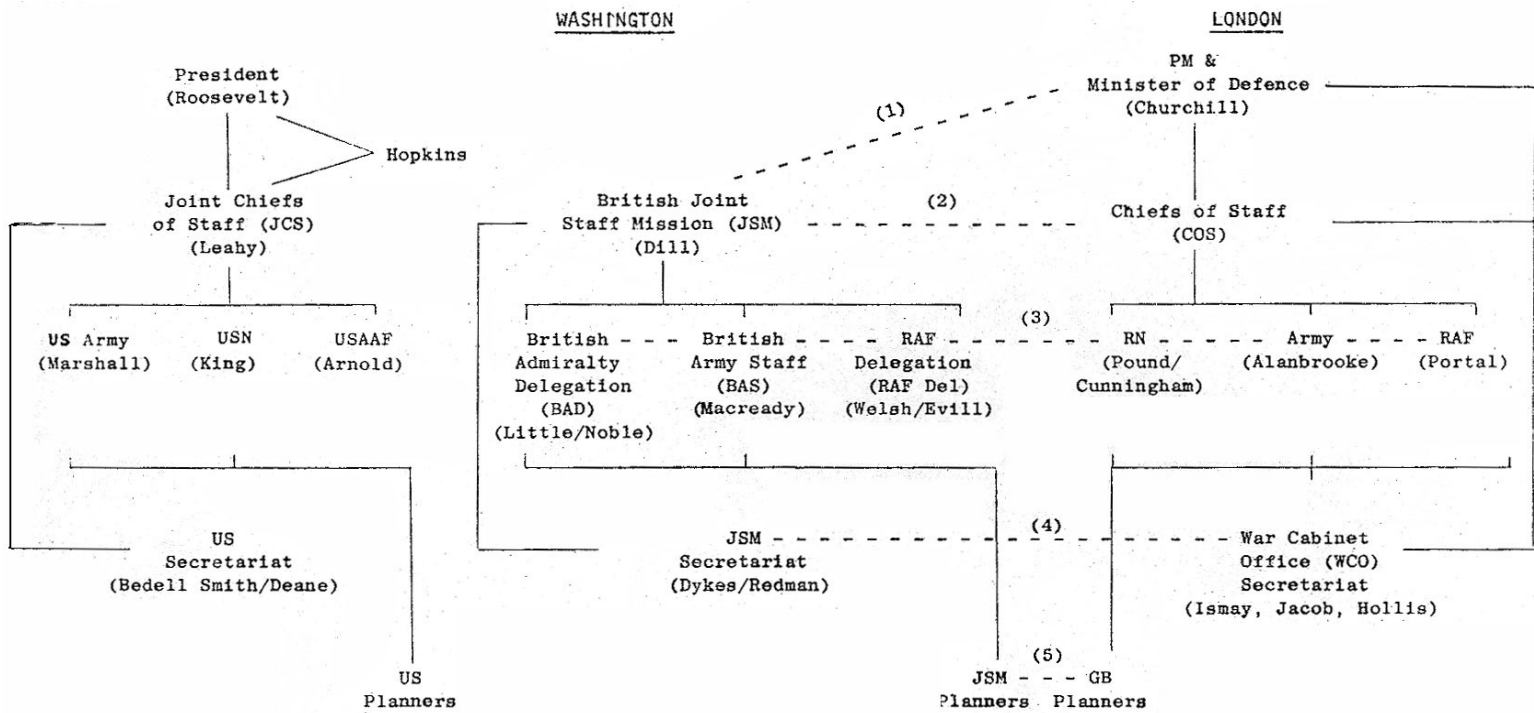
19 Nov 1941 Retirement as CIGS announced; Governor-designate, Bombay

<>Jan 1942 Head, British Joint Staff Mission Washington, senior British member,  
Combined Chiefs of Staff (FM)

d. 4 Nov 1944 Washington D.C.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF ORGANIZATION**



TELEGRAMS

- (1) PM/FMD
- (2) COS(W)/JSM; COS(W)/FMD
- (3) ADMIRALTY/BAD: WO/BAS; AIR MIN/RAF Del
- (4) DOTE/LETOD
- (5) RED/BLUE

**APPENDIX C**

**MOST SECRET CYPHER TELEGRAM**

IZ 146

TOO 072035Z

TOR 072206Z

MOST IMMEDIATE.

From: — J.S.M. Washington.

To: — War Cabinet Offices, London

F.M.D. 86 [\*1] 7th January, 1944

Following Private for Chiefs of Staff from Field Marshal Dill.

Hope you will approve action taken as described in J.S.M. 1402. [\*2] I saw Marshall this morning before C.C.S. meeting [\*3] and he assured me that he would see that any offer to turn back the L.S.T's [\*4] would not be accepted by the U.S. Chiefs of Staff. We had in fact to rig the meeting a bit in more ways than one before it took place. King was the only stumbling block and his request was indeed that Mountbatten [\*5] should be asked if it was in fact the sailing of the L.S.T's which induced him to abandon PIGSTICK [\*6] but the other Chiefs of Staff modified the request somewhat. Needless to say, U.S. Chiefs of Staff were disappointed at having to abandon PIGSTICK and their feelings were hurt but, thanks to Marshall, not seriously damaged.

## CIRCULATION

Brigadier Jacob  
Foreign Secretary  
First Sea Lord  
C.I.G.S.  
C.A.S.  
C.C.O.

Danchev's notes to the document above:

**[\*1].** CAB 105/85, Public Record Office, London [PRO]. [\[Return to text.\]](#)

**[\*2].** 7 Jan. 1944, CAB 105/45, PRO. [\[Return to text.\]](#)

**[\*3].** CCS 140th meeting, 7 Jan. 1944, CAB 88/4, PRO. [\[Return to text.\]](#)

**[\*4].** Three fast tank landing-craft. [\[Return to text.\]](#)

**[\*5].** Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command [SEAC].

[\[Return to text.\]](#)

**[\*6].** SEAC's planned amphibious landing in the Mayu Peninsula of

Arakan, Burma. [\[Return to text.\]](#)

## NOTES TO THE ESSAY

**[1].** The author read this essay at the tenth annual meeting of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) at George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 2– 4 August 1984, as a contribution to the session "Anglo-American Relations: The Personal Equation" on 2 August. A longer version was read to the War Studies Discussion Group of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on 23 July 1984. I am grateful to the 1984 SHAFR Program Committee and Dr. Paddy Griffith respectively for these invitations; and to those present on each occasion for their comments. [Some minor technical changes have been made for this Web version.] [\[Return to note 1.\]](#)

**[2].** Dr. Foster Kennedy [FK] to Ben Wiesel and Charlie Patterson, 14 and 29 Nov. 1944, FK Papers, kindly made available by Katherine, Marchesa de Montoro (formerly Mrs. FK). The British Army Staff Officer organizing the funeral wrote of the honorary pall bearers: "As with all very senior officers they dithered like children, and just before the service I could have been seen drilling them all like a squad of recruits. I told them they were pretty poor, and much less intelligent than most recruits— which caused considerable merriment." "The Last Post and Reveille," he added, with effortless cultural superiority, "fairly harrowed the Americans who are a very sentimental people." Maj. Gen. A. W. Lee to family, 9 Nov. 1944, Lee Papers, 78/13/1, Imperial War Museum [IWM]. Order of Service. H. L. Stimson diary, 8, 9 Nov. 1944, Stimson Papers (microfilm), Cambridge University Library [CUL]. [\[Return to note 2.\]](#)

[3]. Lady Dill to Heather Dill, 24 Nov. 1944, Dill Papers, 5/3, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London [KCL]. Transcript of Proceedings, Unveiling of Memorial to FM Sir John Dill, 1 Nov. 1950; Gen. R. E. Lee journal, 1 Nov. 1950, *ibid.*, "Photos" box. Marshall to Ambassador J. G. Winant and R. Woods Bliss, 5 Jan. and 6 Mar 1945, Marshall Papers, 90/31 and 64/45, Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia [MRL]. F. C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall*, 4 vols. (New York, 1963–87), 3:481–83. [\[Return to note 3.\]](#)

[4]. Lee journal, 4 Sep. 1941, quoted J. R. Leutze, ed., *The London Observer* (London, 1972), 388. Maj. Gen. Sir John Kennedy, *The Business of War* (London, 1957), 160–61. Dill to Alanbrooke, 28 Dec. 1941, Alanbrooke Papers, 14/38/A, KCL. Cf. Alanbrooke diary, 9 Apr. 1942 and *Notes on My Life*, 31/V/381, KCL; Sir Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide* (London, 1957) [Bryant, 1], 354. [\[Return to note 4.\]](#)

[5]. Kennedy, *loc. cit.* K. T. Marshall, *Together* (London, 1947), 74. Stimson diary, 10 Oct. 1942, Stimson Papers, CUL. T. A. Wilson, *The First Summit* (London, 1969), 129. Pogue, 2:143. Gen. Sir Frederick Morgan found the relationship "un-English." *Overture to Overlord* (London, 1950), 202. Lord Halifax diary, 10 Oct. 1941, Halifax Papers, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York [BIHR]. [\[Return to note 5.\]](#)

[6]. Dill to Marshall, 20 Aug., 16 Oct., 12 Nov. 1941; Marshall to Dill, 9 Sep., 13, 15 Oct. 1941, Marshall Papers, 64/25, MRL. The tanks exchange (6/7 Nov.) is in R. M. Leighton and R. W. Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy*, vol. 1 (Washington, 1955), 104–5. For Dill's views on the "parlous" British tank situation see British Chiefs of Staff (COS) meetings COS(41) 374th and 379th, 3 and 7 Nov. 1941, CAB 79/15, Public Record Office, London [PRO].

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[7]. *Together*, 77–78. Dill to FK, 26 Dec. 1941, FK Papers. [\[Return to note 7.\]](#)

[8]. Tels. Boxes 92, (Amended) COS Directive to JSM, 6 Sep. 1941, CAB 122/23; COS(W)38, Churchill to Dill, 6 Feb. 1942, CAB 105/43, PRO. [\[Return to note 8.\]](#)

[9]. *London Gazette*, 30 Dec. 1941; *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 1942. Gen. P. M. Robinett diary, 11 Jan. 1942, Marshall Papers, 21/28, MRL. Stimson diary, 8–11 Jan. 1942. Churchill to Hopkins, 20 Jan. 1942, Hopkins Papers, Sherwood Collection, BOOK 5, "Establishment of Joint Boards," Index, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York [FDRL]. Roosevelt MS note, Hopkins draft, 30 Jan. 1942; Roosevelt to Churchill, 31 Jan. 1942, Roosevelt Map Room [MR] Papers, box 2, FDRL. The nature and scope of Dill's duties in Washington are explored more fully in A. Danchev, "Field Marshal Sir John Dill and Anglo-American Relations 1941–44" (PhD Thesis, King's College London). [\[Return to note 9.\]](#)

[10]. Interviews, Lord Franks (Ambassador in Washington 1948–52), 7 Apr. 1983; Lord Sheffield (Roger Makins), (1953–56), 5 Oct. 1982; Lord Harlech (David Ormsby-Gore), (1961–65), 12 Apr. 1983; J. Freeman (1969–71), 1 June 1983; Sir Nicholas Henderson (1979–82), 5 May 1983. Churchill's relationship with Dill and perceptions of that relationship are analyzed in A. Danchev, "Dilly-dally, or Having the Last Word: Field Marshal Sir John Dill and Prime Minister Winston Churchill," *Journal of Contemporary History*. [\[Return to note 10.\]](#)

[11]. "When we got an opinion from Sir John, we knew it was Sir John's not the Prime Minister's." Gen. T. T. Handy (US Army Asst. Chief of Staff) quoted L. Mosley, *Marshall* 19 Sep. 1941, MM Papers, 160/19b, KCL; to Alanbrooke, 18 May 1942, 12 Sep. 1943, Alanbrooke Papers, 14/38/F, P, KCL; to Portal, 30 June 1942, Portal Papers, Box A, File III, No. 8, Christ Church, Oxford. "The fatal lullaby of a majestic style:" Philip Guedalla on Churchill's historical writing. [\[Return to note 11.\]](#)

[12]. J. J. McCloy (Asst. Sec. for War) makes a similar general point about Dill's importance in a short unpublished memoir (1974). Dill family papers, kindly made available by Ms. Rosanne Dill. [\[Return to note 12.\]](#)

[13]. Dill was awarded the prestigious Howland Memorial Prize by Yale (Feb.) and honorary degrees by the College of William & Mary and Princeton (Apr.). He also addressed the American Academy of Political Science. Marshall to Winant, *loc. cit.* Stimson diary, 16 Feb. 1944. H. H. Bundy oral history [OH], Columbia OH Collection, New York City; W. P.



Bundy letter, 13 July 1981. Halifax secret diary, 19 Dec. 1943, Halifax Papers, BIHR. McCloy to A. Krock, 14 Feb. 1944, ASW 336–4, McCloy General Corresp. 1941–45, RG 107, National Archives, Washington, D.C. [NA]. Pogue, 3:337, 642. [\[Return to note 13.\]](#)

**[14].** Tels. OZ 2133, Churchill to Dill, 22 Apr. 1944, CAB 120/1; FMD 194, Dill to Churchill, 24 Apr. 1944, CAB 120/1; draft, Churchill to Dill, 25 Apr. 1944, PREM 3/271/7. All PRO. LETOD 151, Redman to Hollis, 28 June 1944, Marshall Papers, 61/43, MRL. No. 921, Winant to Roosevelt, 4 July 1944, Roosevelt MR Papers, BOX 11, "President–Winant 1944" folder, FDRL; shown to JCS by Leahy. Cf. memo, Gailey to Handy, 4 July 1944, Item 71, OPD Exec. 10, RG 165, NA. [\[Return to note 14.\]](#)

**[15].** Sir Michael Perrin letters, 27 May, 5 June 1982 (emphasis in original). Sir John Anderson to Churchill, 26 July 1942, PREM 3/139/8A, PRO. Lt Gen. L. R. Groves, *Now It Can Be Told* (London, 1963), 133–36. M. Gowing, *Britain and Atomic Energy 1939–45* (London, 1964), 166–69. [\[Return to note 15.\]](#)

**[16].** Sir Ronald Campbell and Dill to Anderson, 31 May 1944, PREM 3/139/11A, PRO. Gowing, 236–38. The British Official historian Prof. Gowing's analysis of this aspect of Anglo-American relations—"confidence was especially dependent on personal considerations and familiarity"—accords well with the analysis offered here. In particular her conception of Prof. J. Chadwick and his relations with Gen. Groves offers a striking parallel with Dill and Marshall. It is disputed, however, by Groves himself and by the US Official historians. Groves in US Atomic Energy Commission, *In The Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (Washington, 1954), 197; "Comments on the *New World*," 85, Groves Papers, RG 200, NA. R. G. Hewlett and O. E. Anderson, *The New World* (University Park, Pa, 1962), 280–85, 288.

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**[17].** Cozzens, *Guard of Honour* (London, 1949), 394. D. Reynolds, "Lord Lothian and Anglo-American Relations 1939–40," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 73, 2 (1983): 45, 50, 58–59. Foreign Office [FO] tel. 2274, Churchill to Halifax, 28 Apr. 1941, FO 371/26253/17, PRO. There is a masterly analysis of the Churchill-Roosevelt relationship in C. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind* (London, 1978), 119–22. Cf. W. F. Kimball, "Churchill and Roosevelt: The Personal Equation," *Prologue* 6, 3 (Fall 1974): 169–82. [\[Return to note 17.\]](#)

**[18].** Dill to Wavell, 10 Nov. 1942, Wavell family papers, kindly made available by Lady Humphrys (Pamela Wavell); to Montgomery–Massingberd, 3 Sep. 1942, MM Papers, 160–21b, KCL. Dill took an increasingly jaundiced view of Roosevelt. "The President is as cheerful and as charming as ever. He has not got a tidy mind, and he does not like facing facts that are ugly." (To Churchill, 7 Mar. 1942, PREM 3/478/6, PRO.) "The better I get to know that man the more superficial and selfish I find him." (To Alanbrooke, 9 Feb. 1944, Alanbrooke Papers, 14/39/B, KCL.) Perhaps Marshall too partook of such a view, even more circumspectly. Marshall to Halifax, Halifax secret diary, 21, 31 May 1944, Halifax Papers, BIHR; interviews with Dr. Pogue, e.g., 5 Oct., 13 Nov. 1956, 11 Feb. 1957. I am grateful to Dr. Pogue for making available parts of the transcripts of these interviews and discussing them with me.

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**[19].** US Army OPD Executive files in the NA contain many COS(W) telegrams. They were "to be treated as a private message from the British COS to FMDill, but can be read by our *Army* planners." Marshall to Handy, note on COS(W) 1265, 7 Apr. 1944, OPD Exec 10, Item 65. The source of telegrams between Roosevelt and Churchill was closely guarded. "Don't let anyone disclose that Dill has given us this message." Marshall to Handy, memo with Churchill to Roosevelt No. 216, 2 Dec. 1942, OCS TS 381 Russia, RG 165., NA. Dill to Marshall, 18 Mar. 1944, enclosing COSMED 61, Wilson to COS, 15 Mar. 1944, OPD Exec 10, Item 66. Interviews, Lt Gen. Sir Harold Redman, 23 Oct. 1981; Capt. Lord Coleridge, 7 Nov. 1981. Pogue interviews, op. cit.; *Marshall*, 2:284–85. Mosley, 273–75. [\[Return to note 19.\]](#)

**[20].** Marshall and King to Roosevelt, 10 July 1942, OPD 381 Gen. (Sec. II), 73, RG 165, NA. Typed draft with Marshall's MS correction, "FM Sir John Dill's proposed tel . . .", 7 July 1942, Verifax 649, Research File, MRL. JSM 293, Dill to COS, 8 July 1942, CAB 105/39, PRO. Stimson diary, 10, 12 July 1942, Stimson Papers, CUL. Cf. M. A. Stoler, "The 'Pacific-First' Alternative in American World War II Strategy," *The International History Review* 2, 3 (July 1980): 432–52. [\[Return to note 20.\]](#)

[21]. The importance of the relationship has been grossly underestimated. Dykes was killed in a plane crash after the Casablanca Conference (Jan. 1943), honoured with a DSM, but historiographically ignored. Bedell Smith is only remembered for what he left Washington (Sep. 1942) to be— Chief of Staff to Eisenhower in Europe and later Ambassador in Moscow. Dykes diary, 1942 *passim*, Dykes Papers, Ministry of Defence (Army Historical Branch) [MOD (AHB)]; letters to Col. W. Stirling, 11 June, 23 Sep. 1942, CAB 122/1582, PRO. Bedell Smith to Mrs. Dykes, 30 Jan. 1943, Dykes family papers, kindly made available by Mrs. Evelyn Armitstead (Dykes's daughter). Interview, N. H. West, 5 Feb. 1982; Joan Mainprice, 9 June 1982; Lt Gen. Sir Ian Jacob, 12 Aug. 1981; Lord Broughshane (Maj. P. Davison), 19 Oct. 1981; Coleridge, 7 Nov. 1981. [\[Return to note 21.\]](#)

[22]. Tels. JSM 300, Dill to Churchill, CAB 105/39; LETOD 193, Dykes to Stirling, 10 July 1942, CAB 122/302, PRO. Dykes, "Note on development of American thought in favour of offensive action in Pacific Theatre," 15 Aug. 1942, Dykes Papers, MOD (AHB). Dill to Alanbrooke, 18 May 1942, Alanbrooke Papers, 14/38/F, KCL. [\[Return to note 22.\]](#)

[23]. Among many others: Dill to Marshall, 7 Oct. 1942, OPD Exec 10, Item 65; Marshall to Dill, 16 Oct. 1942 (enclosing CM-OUT-04877, Marshall to Stilwell, 15 Oct. 1942); Marshall to Roosevelt, 10 Oct. 1942, OCS(TS) 381 China, Chief of Staff Project Decimal file 1941-43. All RG 165, NA. Cf. M. Howard, *Grand Strategy* Vol. IV (London, 1972), 89-91; R. Callahan, *Burma* (London, 1978), 51. [\[Return to note 23.\]](#)

[24]. JCS 6th mtg., 16 Mar. 1942 (quoting tel. 1930 Q/11, Dill to Alanbrooke, 11 Mar. 1942, AIR 8/1072, PRO), CCS 334 JCS (2-9-42), RG 218, NA. Cf. memo Marshall to Roosevelt, 18 Mar. 1942, printed in O. H. Bullitt, ed., *For the President* (Boston, 1972), 550. JCS 154th mtg., 21 Mar. 1944, CCS 334 JCS (12-28-43), RG 218, NA. [\[Return to note 24.\]](#)

[25]. Dykes habitually wrote of "fixing up" or "cleaning up" the CCS minutes with Bedell Smith. Dykes diary, 17 Feb., 3 Mar., 7 Apr., 18 Sep. 1942, Dykes Papers, MOD(AHB); C. E. Bohlen, *Witness to History* (New York, 1973), 137; Pogue, 3:20, 245, 305; R. E. Sherwood, *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins*, vol. 2 (London, 1949), 848. Roosevelt's contempt for the written record is well known. Pogue interview, 13 Nov. 1956; 3:69-70; Stoler, *op cit.*, 442. [\[Return to note 25.\]](#)

[26]. Like Prime Minister Attlee until very recently, Dill has suffered posthumously because his self-effacing personality found expression in a "reticent and impenetrable archival legacy." K. O. Morgan, *Labour in Power* (Oxford, 1984), 6, 47. In addition certain key documents (his British Embassy file) have been destroyed. H. D. Hall, *North American Supply* (London, 1955), 353; and unpublished source notes, 596 n. 37, CAB 102/21, PRO.

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[27]. JCS 52nd mtg. and US Staff Conf., 16 Jan. 1943; CCS 60th mtg., 18 Jan. 1943; Roosevelt at 2nd Anfa mtg., 18 Jan. 1943; Marshall and Alanbrooke at CCS 69th mtg., 23 Jan. 1943, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [FRUS], *The Conferences at Washington and Casablanca* (Washington, 1968), 578 ff. Jacob SYMBOL diary, 19-23 Jan. 1943, kindly made available by Sir Ian Jacob; letter, 22 Feb. 1983. Alanbrooke diary, 18 Jan. 1943 and *Notes*, 3AVIII/604, quoted Bryant, I, 549-51. Kennedy, 280-85, esp. 284. Slessor, *The Central Blue* (London, 1956), 445-47; memo, n.d., Slessor Papers, IL, MOD (Air HB). Cf. R. Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance* (New York, 1972), 82-84. [\[Return to note 27.\]](#)

[28]. Marshall and Dill continued to work together on "the China tangle." See Dill's post-SYMBOL travels with Generals Arnold and Somervell. Marshall to Roosevelt, 20 Feb. 1943, Marshall Papers, 80/42, MRL; Arnold to Dill, 20 Feb. 1943, Arnold Papers, BOX 11, "Dill" folder, Library of Congress; Wedemeyer to Marshall, relayed in Marshall to Roosevelt, 3 Feb. 1943, Roosevelt MR Papers, Box 167, "Naval Aide's Files: ME and E. Med.", FDRL.

Alanbrooke, a former protégé, was devoted to Dill. *Notes* 3/A/VI, 426, 3/A/VIII/700, 3/A IX/768, 3/B/XIII/36, 3/B/XIV/10, Alanbrooke Papers, KCL. [\[Return to note 28.\]](#)

[29]. Jacob ARCADIA diary, 23 Dec. 1941; interview, 12 Aug. 1981. Dykes diary, 11 Jan., 11-18 Mar., 12 May 1942, Dykes Papers, MOD (AHB). Eisenhower to Marshall, 16 Mar. 1942, printed in A. D. Chandler, ed., *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years*, 5 vols. (Baltimore, 1970), 1:188-89. Tel. 1903 Q/11, Dill to Alanbrooke, 11 Mar. 1942,

AIR 8/1072, PRO. Cf. Memo on workings of CCS, Coleridge to Dill, 21 May 1942, CAB 122/66, PRO. [\[Return to note 29.\]](#)

[30]. Turner to Stark, 11 Jan. 1942, Double Zero Files, 37/143, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard [NHC], Washington, D.C. Dykes diary, 11, 12 Jan. 11 Sep. 1942, Dykes Papers, MOD (AHB); to Stirling, 29 Aug. 1942, CAB 122/1582, PRO. Alanbrooke diary, 9, 22 Feb. 1942 and *Notes*, 3/A/V/355, 361, Alanbrooke Papers, KCL; tel. 69586 to Dill, 2 Oct. 1942, WO 193/334, PRO. [\[Return to note 30.\]](#)

[31]. In Apr. 1942 Roosevelt sent Hopkins with Marshall to London; in July, Hopkins, Marshall and King. The personal and secret Hopkins-Roosevelt correspondence, sent not through the Service Departments but via Ambassador Winant through the State Department, demonstrates how intimately Hopkins knew Roosevelt's mind; and how, as a consequence, he could initiate as well as enunciate Presidential policy. See Hopkins to Roosevelt, 23 July 1942, Roosevelt MR Papers, Box 167, "Naval Aide's Files: London War Council July 1942," FDRL; 26 July 1942, and related correspondence, FO 954/18B, PRO. [\[Return to note 31.\]](#)

[32]. Tel 7789, Dill to Alanbrooke, 4 Oct. 1942, WO 193/334, PRO. Cf. Dykes diary, 17 July, 10 Oct., 10942, Dykes Papers, MOD (AHB); Cunningham report, 10 Oct. 1942, circulated as COS(43) 319(O), 17 Oct. 1942, PREM 3/465/1, PRO. [\[Return to note 32.\]](#)

[33]. At Appendix C. Memos, "Cancellation of Op. Pigstick," CCS 381 Burma (8-25-42) Sec 6, RG 218, NA; tel. FROZEN 1146, Churchill to Ismay for COS, 6 Jan. 1944, CAB 120/123, PRO. Cf. G. P. Hayes, *The War Against Japan* (Annapolis, 1982), 569-72; J. Erhman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. 5 (London, 1956), 211-12, 222-23. [\[Return to note 33.\]](#)

[34]. Franks, *Britain and the Tide of World Affairs* (Oxford, 1955), 34; lecture, "American Impressions," 11 Dec. 1953; interview, 7 Apr. 1983. Cf. Sir Nicholas Henderson *à propos* Franks: "Shy by nature and speaking or acting only after due thought, he did not have the back-slapping bonhomie that helps popularity in some American circles; but the United States also has a heart for the good, the high-minded, the liberal and the serious." *The Times* 17 Jan. 1983; interview, 5 May 1983. Dill had an affinity with Franks, another "amateur" Ambassador. On Franks and Acheson see: D. Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (London, 1969), 323-24, 482, 679-80; A. C. Turner, *The Unique Partnership* (New York, 1971), 160-63; Franks interview, 7 Apr. 1983. [\[Return to note 34.\]](#)