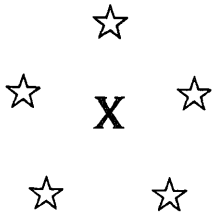

Trident

CURRENT battles occupied only a limited part of the deliberations of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Although the individual members were charged with providing manpower and supplies to their forces fighting in distant theaters and were ever alert to the effectiveness and needs of their commanders in the field, their corporate gaze was centered beyond the action at hand. Thus in January 1943 while the battle in North Africa remained at a standstill, they had looked toward further advances in the Mediterranean, with Sicily as the probable point of assault. Before that attack, HUSKY had been launched; they met again to discuss where they would go after Sicily was won.

Churchill had proposed this meeting to the Americans almost as soon as the final offensive began in Tunisia, in the early spring of 1943. Time was short for making the final decision on Sicily (Sardinia still remained as an unlikely alternative) and for deciding if the next victory should take the Allies to the Italian mainland. In the Far East, Chiang Kai-shek was again asking pointedly about future operations in Burma. Roosevelt agreed that a meeting was due, and Washington was chosen as the site. The conference, first in a series with nautical names, was christened TRIDENT.

Still weak from a recent bout with pneumonia, Churchill acceded to his doctor's urging that he come by ship rather than by plane. On the afternoon of May 5 he and a party of nearly a hundred set sail on the *Queen Mary,* which also carried a large bag of prisoners from North Africa being brought to the United States for safekeeping. Landing in New York six days later, the British leaders took the train to Washington, where they were met by the President.[1]

Aboard the British liner Churchill and his advisers employed their time in preparing for their coming confrontation with the Americans. There were some misgivings among the British. Inclined to be depressed by conferences, Brooke shuddered over the anticipated clashes with Mar-

shall and King and the impossible duty of keeping the Prime Minister on the right course. "It is all so maddening," he wrote.[2]

In Washington the Americans had also been busy attempting to establish a common front. As a first step, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed their advisers to consider plans for all reasonable courses of action that might follow victory in Sicily. In addition Marshall asked Eisenhower to draft plans for a full-scale invasion of Italy and an offensive effort in the direction of Crete and the Dodecanese islands with the object of encouraging Turkey to enter the war on the side of the Allies—recommendations that he expected the Prime Minister to make. But it was only an exercise. "You will understand that the operations outlined above are not in keeping with my ideas of what our strategy should be," the Chief of Staff wrote. "The decisive effort must be made against the Continent from the United Kingdom sooner or later." [3]

The big question of course remained: was it practical for 1943? Politically, as Marshall now realized, Roosevelt and Churchill could not allow their forces to stand still for a number of months. For operations in the immediate future, the central Mediterranean lay ready at hand. Clearing the Axis from the Mediterranean would assure the British of the shortest sea route to India, saving an estimated two million tons of shipping annually. It would provide a needed shot in the arm for Allied morale and would hearten the Russians and the people under German occupation. And it would weaken the Italians' will to fight while increasing pressure on the Germans. These arguments were conceded, sometimes grudgingly, by Marshall and his colleagues.

At the same time the Americans demanded a firm agreement on long-range strategy. They needed to set goals for military production and allot men and supplies for the various theaters. Even now Marshall did not know how many divisions and air groups would be needed to finish the job. More to the point, he feared that lack of a firm commitment on a 1944 invasion of the Continent would mean its postponement until 1945. And long postponement might bring new diversions of operations.

In March 1943 the U.S. Chief of Staff for the first time spoke of the political importance of going across the Channel. He suggested that serious problems might arise if the Allied drive from the west into Germany fell behind Russian advances from the east. If the Allies "were involved at the last in Western France and the Russian Army was approaching German soil," he warned, "there would be a most unfortunate diplomatic situation immediately involved with the possibility of a chaotic condition quickly following." [4]

Despite his fears over delays in the cross-Channel invasion, Marshall kept an open mind about the next phase of operations. He was willing to consider limited moves on the Italian mainland after attacks on Sicily or Sardinia. During the Casablanca meeting he had even suggested to Eisenhower that if they could advance into Sicily from Tunisia on the heels of

withdrawing Axis forces, they might cash in on the resulting confusion to gain a great success very cheaply.[5] He was equally receptive to exploiting a Sicilian victory. In his willingness to grasp a sudden advantage, the Chief of Staff showed that he was not wedded exclusively to an early cross-Channel attack.

Although Marshall's experience was as a staff planner rather than as a field commander, he favored a bold approach to operations. Several times in the course of the war he urged Eisenhower and other commanders in the field to consider the unorthodox and the unexpected—a lesson he had taught long before at Fort Benning to officers now applying some of his teachings. But he respected the problems of the man on the spot. Unlike the much bolder Churchill, he recognized fully the logistical barriers to grand designs, and he declined to override planning groups merely because they were cautious. It was the duty of planners, he once declared, to outline for their chief the problems in his path and the steps needed to overcome them. But it was the commander's duty to decide, within the limits of his capabilities, how far he dared go. In 1956 he commented on the difficulties the commanders faced: "Staffs are very cautious. Eisenhower was largely influenced by his staff and particularly by [Bedell] Smith. He had a huge responsibility. With a mixed staff he was almost certain to have a group opposed to nearly any action. [His staff] proceeded on a very conservative basis in Italy in contrast to the chance they [took] in TORCH. The British were conservative, with the exception of Churchill. . . . You couldn't do dashing things with an Allied command set-up for national or international reasons. Very probably Eisenhower's procedure was a sound one." [6]

Eisenhower, aware of Marshall's views on cautious staffs, tried to reassure him. In early May he wrote him that "the products of group planners always tend toward the orthodox and the mediocre and that commanders must at times kick the planners out the window and decide on these things for themselves." [7]

So far as future strategic planning was concerned, Marshall was firmly set on the cross-Channel attack. He told Roosevelt on May 2 that the Joint Chiefs of Staff opposed following the invasion of Sicily with an attack on the Italian mainland. Marshall did not go into all the reasoning that lay behind this conclusion at his meeting with the President. But it was the consensus of Marshall and his colleagues that in all future operations in the Mediterranean they wanted to emphasize aid to Russia and, except for air attacks, exclude operations east of Sicily.

In talking with Stimson the day following his discussion with Marshall, the President said that the Allies should go to Sicily but not be drawn into Italy. To Stimson's amusement the President added that he hoped that the Chief of Staff would go along with his views.

Stimson attempted to limit the extent of Mediterranean operations. Warned by Marshall that the President was toying with the idea of bring-

ing Turkey into the war, Stimson carefully reminded Roosevelt of the dangerous tensions created between Britain and Russia over Turkish policy in the late nineteenth century.[8]

On May 9, while the British party was still at sea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff outlined their strategic views in greater detail for the President and won his agreement that their principal objective would be "to pin down the British to a cross-Channel invasion of Europe at the earliest practicable date and to make full preparations for such an operation by the spring of 1944." Although pleased that the President accepted the proposals "in principle," Marshall admitted to Stimson that he was not certain exactly what this entailed. The Secretary of War agreed that they might have a repetition of 1942, when the Prime Minister had managed to sell the President on TORCH.[9]

Stimson even confessed in his diary some uncharacteristic doubts about Marshall's effectiveness in dealing with the Prime Minister. Depressed by General Arnold's heart attack on May 10, which would keep him out of the approaching conference, the Secretary of War recorded that he would miss him in arguments with the British since he was less diplomatic and less cautious than Marshall in dealing with them and was therefore a valuable counterpoise to the Chief of Staff.[10] In this judgment, which amazingly disregarded Admiral King's caustic powers in battling the British, Stimson was apparently impressed by Arnold's performances in recent Joint Chiefs of Staff meetings rather than in sessions with Churchill and his advisers. The minutes of the earlier Combined Chiefs of Staff conferences, which Stimson did not attend, gave no impression of Arnold's taking the ball away from Marshall. On matters concerned solely with air Marshall allowed Arnold to speak for the American delegation, but there is no indication that he was more outspoken than Marshall.

Stimson's concern about British influence on American policy was fully shared on Capitol Hill. In particular certain members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were troubled about possible political commitments at Casablanca. On May 8 Admiral King told his colleagues that Senator Tom Connally, the committee chairman, had questioned him on this point. King in turn had alerted Admiral Leahy, who informed the President of the query. Roosevelt blandly reminded Leahy that there were no political discussions at Casablanca of which the Joint Chiefs of Staff had knowledge. While conceding that this was correct, Leahy felt that they would have to appear on the Hill if summoned.[11] General Marshall then disclosed that General Wedemeyer had been asked to appear before a subcommittee of the Foreign Relations group, but that he personally did not believe questioning should begin at the planners' level. Instead Marshall himself offered—if they agreed—to go before the committee on the following Monday as the representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

For some time General Marshall had been worried about increasing

investigative activities in Congress. A few weeks earlier, in a letter to a friend, drafted but not sent, he complained that "Upwards of thirty committees have concerned themselves with duplicated and overlapping inquiry into War Department activities since January 1943 resulting in tremendous loss of time and effort and diversion from our military responsibilities." He feared that the Army and Navy would be deprived of control over procurement of military supplies and weapons. "Such involvement of civilian authorities directly in military decisions is based, by way of plausible argument," he continued, "upon the thesis that the Army and Navy have an inordinate ambition to control the civilian economy, this being the red herring which beclouds the basic issue." [12] He had just seen a new book on the Special Committee set up by Congress during the U.S. Civil War to inquire into military affairs, he told the Joint Chiefs. The author revealed that before they realized where their course was leading, the members of Congress had become deeply involved in military matters.

Somewhat apprehensively, therefore, Marshall appeared before the Senate subcommittee on the morning of May 10. He assured the senators that the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not discuss political matters at Casablanca. This did not mean that they were unaware of political implications, he added, since these were always in their minds. He pointed out that Washington was full of wartime agencies and committees and that the charge was continually being made that the Army was trying to get control of things. In fact this was one of his "most besetting problems and a very annoying one. He had very definitely informed the subcommittee that the needs of military strategy must dominate the situation as regards running the war . . . the attitude of the subcommittee was definitely in concurrence with this idea. He said the subcommittee was extremely cordial and seemed appreciative of his discussion with them." [13]

Apparently tipped off on disagreement between the Americans and the British, Senator Vandenberg pressed Marshall on that point. The Chief of Staff revealed that he and his colleagues had worked at some disadvantage at the January conference with the British because of "the completely integrated support of the British from Churchill down." Vandenberg said that he and some of his fellow senators were disturbed by the fact that the United States spokesmen were not similarly united and that the British usually ended up "on top." While the committee members were filled with pride about what Marshall had told them of the achievements of American troops and commanders, Vandenberg said, they were uneasy "about *who* makes our decisions and *how,* and about the British domin[at]ion."

When Senator Guy M. Gillette of Iowa attempted to ascertain the all-out military objectives of the Chiefs of Staff, Marshall declined to answer on the ground that they were so secret he could not tell "anybody" outside of a few of his own staff members. In view of the guarded nature of his answers and his insistence that planners not be called, Marshall would

have been disturbed had he known of Vandenberg's comment on the hearing in his diary. Noting Marshall's replies on the relations between the Chiefs of Staff and the President, Vandenberg wrote: "It remains to be seen whether one of his general officers (General Wedemeyer), who heretofore has sought a chance to testify, will still come and still say that our *military* leaders totally disagreed with the commitments made by F.D.R to Churchill at Casablanca, and that they have little or nothing to say about grand strategy—their function being solely to work out the achievement of the military plans upon which F.D.R. and Churchill agree." [14]

The divergent British and American positions appeared clear cut at the first meeting of the TRIDENT conference, convoked at the White House on May 12. The Prime Minister reaffirmed his loyalty to the cross-Channel attack—ultimately—but pressed first for further efforts in the Mediterranean Holding that the "collapse of Italy would cause a chill of loneliness [to settle] over the German people, and might be the beginning of their doom," he set the defeat of Italy as the main prize to be sought after the taking of Sicily. Taking a leaf out of the American book, he stressed the need to aid the Soviet Union that summer and fall. This could best be done, he added, by knocking out Italy and forcing the Germans to send divisions from the eastern front to replace Italian units in the Balkans.[15]

In one breath the Prime Minister assured the Americans that his government favored a full-scale invasion of the Continent from the United Kingdom as soon as possible. In the next he added—provided a "plan offering reasonable prospects of success could be made." The qualification alarmed Marshall and Stimson, for Churchill predicated reasonable success on the virtual internal collapse of Germany. The Americans feared that his approach meant a lengthy pecking away at the fringes of Europe, while Allied airmen and Russian ground forces destroyed German will to resist. Marshall firmly believed that the Combined Bomber Offensive (devised at Casablanca "to [disrupt] the German military, industrial and economic system, and [for] undermining . . . morale") made an early invasion of the Continent possible, but he doubted if it alone could defeat the Germans.

For once the President took the lead in arguing the case of his military advisers. He insisted on a definite decision in favor of a return to the Continent in the spring of 1944, and he requested that this commitment be made promptly. Sir Charles Wilson (later Lord Moran), Churchill's physician, after discussing the Prime Minister's reaction with Hopkins, recorded that Churchill seemed surprised since he had been certain that he could again win Roosevelt to his point of view. Moran later wrote: "The Americans had done some very hard thinking, and Marshall was at the President's elbow to keep in his mind the high urgency of a second front. The results, according to Hopkins, were very satisfactory. The

President could now, Harry felt, be safely left alone with the Prime Minister." [16]

Not only was Marshall at the President's elbow in this conference, he was in fact floor manager for much of the American case. At the Chief of Staff's urging, Admiral Leahy presented the memorandum giving the views of the American Chiefs of Staff on the global strategy of the war at the first regular meeting of the Combined Chiefs, but Marshall assumed responsibility for the debate on the cross-Channel and Mediterranean operations that followed.[17]

The Chief of Staff had been impressed in recent weeks by the emphasis placed on air potentialities by members of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee He was especially interested in the belief of Major General Muir S. Fairchild, Air Forces member of the committee, that decisive operations could be mounted against Germany in 1944. The Allies could best support Russia in 1944, Fairchild added, by avoiding future commitments in the Mediterranean and by building up reserves in the United Kingdom [18] Unraveling the broad thread of this argument, Marshall urged that the Allies depend on air power as the principal means of harassing enemy forces in Italy. Allied air could contain the enemy in the Mediterranean and from that area direct crippling blows against Axis oil supplies in Rumania. A raid on Ploesti, he declared, seemed "well worth the gamble."

British opposition came promptly. General Brooke had made similar suggestions in connection with operations from the United Kingdom, and he was to do so again in regard to American activities in the Pacific, but he did not like the direction the discussion was taking where the Mediterranean was concerned. He emphasized the inexperience of Allied troops, the smallness of the forces, and the lack of other conditions favorable to a cross-Channel success.

Marshall saw in the British arguments a continuation of the old strategy. He feared that the proposed Mediterranean operations would, as always, ultimately far exceed initial estimates. He cited a current example: "The Tunisian campaign had sucked in more and more troops. . . . Once undertaken the [suggested] operation must be backed to the limit." He felt that the landing of troops in Italy "would establish a vacuum in the Mediterranean which would preclude . . . a successful cross-Channel operation and Germany would not collapse unless this occurred from air bombardment alone." He feared that continued expansion in the Mediterranean meant that Allied operations during the remainder of 1943 and virtually all of 1944 would be committed to that theater. This would mean stringing out the war in Europe and delaying the defeat of Japan. If they "were committed to the Mediterranean, except for air alone, it meant a prolonged struggle and one which was not acceptable to the United States."

Leahy joined Marshall in insisting that the Pacific was vital to the United States and that immediate action must be taken to keep China in the war. The conflict in Europe had to be brought rapidly to a decisive close.

Brooke took on both Americans. While agreeing on the need of a speedy termination to fighting in Europe, he denied that suggested operations in the Brest Peninsula would hasten Germany's defeat. He froze Marshall's hopes for a quick victory in Europe by declaring: "No major operations would be possible until 1945 or 1946, since it must be remembered that in previous wars there had always been some 80 French divisions available on our side."

Marshall could not believe this proposition. Assuming that this meant that the planned 1943 crossing—ROUNDUP—was still viewed as a vague concept, he asked, "Did this mean that the British Chiefs of Staff regarded Mediterranean operations as the key to a successful termination of the European war?

Despite Air Chief Marshal Portal's efforts to be reassuring, the delays envisioned by the British seemed to be interminable. Marshall thought that the way to begin was to begin. If the Allies proposed to re-enter the Continent by way of the Channel in 1944, then there must be a substantial build-up in the United Kingdom in 1943. Further adventures in the eastern Mediterranean would neither speed German defeat nor hasten a cross-Channel attack.[19]

At their meeting on the morning of the fourteenth the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked themselves where they stood. Admiral King felt that they had to get on with preparations for ROUNDUP or they would "fiddle-fuddle" along as before. He also saw a British disposition to "drift toward an incidental ROUNDUP." Marshall repeated his warning of the previous day against a vacuum in the Mediterranean. If the Mediterranean operation was "the proper way to defeat Germany, he wanted to do it that way." But he doubted that it was the proper way. On this point the Chief of Staff asked General Embick, who was present, for the views of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee. Still as suspicious of the British as he had been when he briefed Marshall in the spring of 1942, Embick asserted that adoption of the contemplated Mediterranean strategy would continue the war indefinitely. "He felt that the British proposals were predicated upon their desire to obtain a permanent control of the Mediterranean Sea. In this way the war would end in a manner favorable to the British." In passing, he warned that recent British proposals for operations in Sumatra might result in the early recapture of Singapore, "at which time they would probably let the United States conduct the remaining operations in the Pacific."

These views were always hotly denied by the British, and some British historians in recent years have chided the Americans for being men of little faith. At the moment the seeming reluctance of the British to come

to grips with the cross-Channel concept for 1944 made the Americans more determined than ever to make their fighting position in the Pacific and the Far East secure.

Dismayed by Brooke's uncompromising attitude toward the cross-Channel operation, Leahy, Marshall, and King were agreed that, as King said, "we ought to convert our forces into the Pacific" if the British will give no "firm commitment" about ROUNDUP. As they left to meet the British that morning at ten-thirty, Marshall summed up the matter: the only way to handle global strategy was to outline American alternative action in the Pacific "unless the British Chiefs propose to do something concrete and effectual in Europe." [20]

As matters worked out, Marshall got no chance to give this warning. At the outset of the meeting Brooke told the Americans that it was the "firm intention" of the British Chiefs of Staff to carry out ROUNDUP at the first moment conditions warranted that the operation would contribute to the decisive defeat of Germany. These conditions might possibly arise in 1943, but it was the "firm belief" of the British that they would definitely arise in 1944. The conditions Brooke had in mind were familiar; they depended upon the success or failure of the Russian Army on the eastern front. The Western Allies therefore must intensify their bombardment of Germany and draw off as many forces as possible from the Russian front. This was hardly a firm commitment, but it blunted any American warning.[21]

Clearly it was time for a pause to examine differing viewpoints rather than a time for a showdown. For the British, the crucial decision to be made was whether a German defeat would be brought nearer by pushing Mediterranean operations at some expense to BOLERO, or by shutting down future operations in the Mediterranean for a maximum build-up for the cross-Channel attack. The Americans would continue to stress a full-scale assault from the United Kingdom against the Continent in the spring of 1944.

The Joint Chiefs recognized that the still-untested potential of intensive air bombardment in support of land operations in France might prove to be decisive in bringing the British back from the Mediterranean to the English Channel. Should General Eaker's plan for the build-up of the Eighth Air Force—SICKLE—be accepted as fundamental to Allied strategy? Discussion brought general agreement that it was too early to accept SICKLE as fundamental, though its possibilities were so obvious that it should not be reduced without critical examination. "Great faith," said Marshall, "was being pinned to the results of the bomber offensive." A delay in the build-up of forces in the United Kingdom, he added, would leave the Allies unready to take advantage of these results.[22]

Sir Charles Portal, the British Chief of Staff for Air, later praised Marshall's foresight regarding the importance of Allied air power. Portal said in 1947: "Marshall emphasized the fact that Anglo-American air superior-

ity could offset German air power, and we could go into the Continent with less divisions than otherwise needed. He deserves great credit for seeing this early and pushing it." [23] Conceding that it might have been suicidal to land Allied troops in an emergency assault on France in 1942, for which he had once argued, Marshall asserted that Allied air domination of the lodgment area would eliminate the high degree of risk by 1944. With a successful cross-Channel assault in prospect he warned against committing the men and landing craft needed for it to further Mediterranean operations. Without additional forces in Great Britain, General Morgan's careful plans were useless; unless the Allies concentrated now on a build-up in the United Kingdom, they would lack the winning "punch" in the coming spring.

The Allied Chiefs of Staff had reached a good point for a break in their deliberations. As they adjourned at midday Saturday, the fifteenth, they gave their planners a taxing assignment: two plans for the defeat of Germany were to be ready for the meeting on Monday morning. The American plan would concentrate on assembling the biggest possible invasion force in the United Kingdom as soon as possible, while the British plan would be predicated upon the elimination of Italy as a necessary preliminary. And, significantly, the planners were directed to take "cognizance . . . of the effects of a full-scale SICKLE." [24]

The weekend gave Roosevelt and Hopkins a chance to whisk the Prime Minister away to the presidential cottage, Shangri-La, in the Catoctin Hills of Maryland. Marshall took the American Chiefs of Staff and their British counterparts to Williamsburg for a respite from the war.

Before the British arrived in Washington, Marshall had thought of the brief diversion and had worked out details with Kenneth Chorley, president of Colonial Williamsburg, and Frank McCarthy. In addition to mobilizing his own staff, Chorley enlisted the aid of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who was responsible for the city's restoration. Rockefeller did his substantial best to make Marshall's party a success. He helped draw up the wholly American menu, which included terrapin à la Maryland, cooked in his club in New York City, crabmeat, fried chicken, and Virginia ham. Special fruits and cheeses were sent down from New York shops, and the rich cream needed for some of the dishes was hand-carried from his farm at Pocantico Hills by his New York butler. In the end to Marshall's embarrassment, Rockefeller declined to permit the Army to pick up the check.[25]

Marshall entered with great zest into planning the entertainment. The visitors were met at Langley Field, twenty miles from Williamsburg, by members of the Colonial Williamsburg staff and local dignitaries and brought to the former colonial capital of Virginia by way of Yorktown. Marshall urged his guests to forget the current war for the moment and turn their minds toward the earlier Anglo-American meeting in the area. Bearing no grudges over the remote unpleasantness at Yorktown, the Americans and their British guests reviewed the battle. In a spirit of

levity—for he had served many years in India, where, as Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis retrieved some of the prestige he had lost in Virginia—General Sir Hastings Ismay minimized the defeat by exclaiming, "Let's see, what was the name of that chap who did so badly here?"

General Brooke began at once to engage in his favorite pastime, bird-watching; Field Marshal Wavell took hundreds of photographs. Other visitors set out for long walks, some played croquet, and several took a dip in the pool. The most frequently recounted tale of the holiday concerned Sir Charles Portal. Furnished an overlarge bathing suit for a swim, he emerged from the pool, after making a spectacular dive, without the garment.[26]

In the quiet and peace of Williamsburg, a city more English than American, the Chief of Staff relaxed. While Brooke watched a robin, Marshall jokingly reproved Chorley for failing to provide an oriole for the British Chief's inspection. Later Marshall regaled the visitors with his account of his poor showing in pronouncing the names of the churches of Asia Minor when he had read the scripture lesson at church in Bermuda the year before.

The guests had tea at Raleigh Tavern and a little later drank juleps, served in handsome goblets fashioned at the local silvercraft shop and made with "the finest bourbon," which Marshall's assistant, Major Pasco, had brought down from Washington. Dinner was served by candlelight in the great dining room of the Williamsburg Inn.

After dinner, despite the late hour, the guests set out for the Governor's Palace, brilliantly lighted with hundreds of candles. As they moved about the grounds, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound got lost in the Maze, was rescued temporarily by other members of the party, who in their turn got lost and had to be led out by local guides. The timeless atmosphere of the palace impressed the visitors; Brooke imagined that the colonial governor might walk in at any moment.

As Marshall wandered about the palace, he noticed a small spinet. In a rare moment of relaxation he sat down and played one of the few selections in his extremely limited musical repertoire—"Poor Butterfly," a plaintive ballad he had heard in World War I.

In later years the participants recalled the magic of this outing in the midst of war in one of the early British colonial capitals, a few miles from the first permanent British settlement in the United States, a short drive from the spot where the British, in effect, had been forced to grant America independence. Actually aware of the part that the former colony was playing in the survival of Britain in the current war, they could better appreciate why Lord Bryce had once described Yorktown as "the greatest British victory."

The brief hiatus, which ended on Sunday afternoon, had seen an adjournment of debate—nothing more. The Chiefs of Staff had enjoyed a truce; the familiar arguments on strategy soon resumed. General Mar-

shall, late the boon companion, reminded his American colleagues "that the pressure would be terrific upon us to carry out operations in the Mediterranean." But perhaps, after all, the spirit of Williamsburg was still at work. In a statement indicating that he would take something less than he was demanding formally, Marshall suggested that "we shoot for something more than SLEDGEHAMMER and less than ROUNDUP." [27]

The discussion about how to defeat the Axis in Europe was slow in getting under way. Neither the British nor the American planning paper was ready (understandably perhaps) for the Monday morning meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. To save time the Combined Chiefs directed that the papers be circulated when finished without prior approval of the Joint and British Chiefs of Staff. The next morning, May 18, Marshall told his colleagues that he was unwilling to commit himself when they met with the British Chiefs. He was unsure whether they had yet accepted their planning paper. He said that the Americans must not give the British a "stepping stone" by a lack of "absolute unity" in everything they said.

Returning to cross-Channel operations, Marshall explained that since ROUNDUP would require an American force of one million men, which would take a considerable time to assemble, it was important to examine a smaller-scale operation—a "glorified" SLEDGEHAMMER—more carefully. "Then we would be in a position to maneuver." While willing to consider such an operation, Admiral King wanted to require a firm British commitment on the number of men to be in the United Kingdom by April 1, 1944. Marshall agreed but urged that members of the American delegation stick to agreed-on priorities—getting the British to accede to a cross-Channel operation. If the Americans would act as a unit, he argued, they could win and the President would back them.[28]

An hour later, talking with the British, the Americans did not focus on a build-up in the United Kingdom at the expense of the Mediterranean; instead they tried to obtain a firm commitment on ROUNDUP for the spring of 1944. Early in the session Marshall remarked that the British proposals just prepared by the planners seemed to indicate the belief that a cross-Channel attack would be impossible in the spring of 1944. On reading further in the British paper, with which Brooke had assured him the British Chiefs were in general agreement, he gathered that if additional Mediterranean operations were undertaken in the interval, a target date of April 1944 could be agreed upon for cross-Channel. The Americans were almost ready for horse-trading.[29]

Brooke nimbly countered that an attack in the spring of 1944 was not possible unless the Mediterranean operations were undertaken first. These would divert German reinforcements from the landing area and permit a successful assault in France. Knocking Italy out of the war would be "the greatest factor" in using up German reserves and enabling the Allied build-up to outnumber enemy forces. Marshall was aware of the

British view that continuation of the bomber offensive in northern Europe and operations in the Mediterranean would best create the situation permitting a successful cross-Channel operation the next spring. But he could not help being extremely doubtful, if Mediterranean operations exceeded those then foreseen, whether enough forces would be left in Britain to exploit any favorable situation created.

Brooke assured him that the estimated cost of Mediterranean operations on the United Kingdom build-up would be no more than three and a half to four divisions. Moreover the various Mediterranean operations that might develop were not interdependent and the merits of each one could be appraised as it came along. And as if to underline his commitment to the bomber offensive, he added that none of the calculations affected the SICKLE build-up

Marshall remained doubtful; the cost of Mediterranean operations could have been underestimated since "the wish might have been father to the thought." Both Leahy and Marshall wished to defer expressing definite opinions until the next day, when the American planning paper would also be available.[30]

Wednesday, the nineteenth, was the day of decision. In the end both sides sought a compromise on future action in Europe. The British agreed on the target date of May 1, 1944, for a cross-Channel assault on a basis of twenty-nine divisions. The Americans accepted such operations to follow the conquest of Sicily as were best calculated to eliminate Italy from the war and to contain the greatest number of German forces. But they retained a strong negative: "Each specific operation will be subject to the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff." More important from his standpoint perhaps, Marshall had wrung from his reluctant British colleagues the promise of seven divisions (four American and three British) to be ready for transfer from the Mediterranean to the United Kingdom from November 1 onward.[31]

Later some British critics charged Marshall with obstinacy on the Mediterranean. Reading the minutes, Secretary of War Stimson reached a different conclusion. The old lawyer had handled too many cases to assume that a firm statement of position closed the door to working out an agreement. Besides he knew Marshall. Through the verbiage of the reports he saw a line of reasonableness. Everything depended on the Chief of Staff's calm hand. Clearly "it is taking all Marshall's tact and adroitness to steer the conference through to a result which will not be a surrender but which will not be an open clash. The President seems to be helping us." [32] Stimson's judgment, though biased in Marshall's favor, was prescient.

For Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan, who had been appointed on April 1 as head of a planning staff for the cross-Channel attack (Morgan and his group were known as Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander, or COSSAC), there was at least now something on which to

work. The Combined Bomber Offensive was now also on a firmer foundation. The British Chiefs of Staff accepted an American proposal for a four-phase bombing attack from the United Kingdom to be completed by April 1944.[33]

In stormy passages at TRIDENT, Admiral King recorded in his memoirs, he faced the opposition not only of the British but of the Americans as well when he insisted on greater action in the Pacific and a greater share of resources. It was a case, he wrote, of "King contra mundum." While the official record indicates far less opposition to the Admiral by Leahy and Marshall than the phrase would suggest, King did take the lead in the fight for stepped-up operations in the Pacific, particularly in the Central Pacific area. By no means opposed to increased Navy efforts there, General Marshall, however, continued to strive to prevent MacArthur from being crowded out of the picture. Only in this sense could he be described as being against King. His attempts to strike a reasonable balance, in fact, brought him criticism from the Southwest Pacific, where, it seemed, the world was against MacArthur.[34]

The history of Allied conferences would be simpler if one could speak of an American case and a British case. In actuality one finds the Americans against the British, the Army and Air Forces against the Navy, and the Navy against MacArthur, with Marshall attempting to find a solution somewhere between. In the long run no one remained in isolation, and in the case cited in King's memoirs the official record shows that King's solitariness was exaggerated. As a literary device stressing his individualism and his basic concern for advancing the Navy position, especially against the British, "King contra mundum" sums up a fact of life with which Marshall, as well as his American and British colleagues, often had to struggle.

King was in a strong position because United States naval production was beginning to hit its stride. Six of the ten battleships authorized in 1940 were to be in service before the end of 1943. Carrier strength promised to increase even more dramatically: at the time of Pearl Harbor, the Navy had one escort and seven line carriers; by the end of 1943 there would be fifty of all types.[35] General Marshall, who often argued that it was hazardous to risk everything on naval power in the Pacific, was equally persuaded that the Joint Chiefs of Staff could not allow naval strength in the Pacific to remain idle.

At the Casablanca conference the British had reluctantly accepted the Americans' determination to maintain pressure on the Japanese, to keep the initiative, and to get into "positions of readiness" for the final assault on Japan. Now King would ask for a larger role. The American paper on global strategy, which Leahy read at the first meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff at TRIDENT, contained this clause: "2b. Simultaneously [with compelling the surrender of the Axis in Europe], in cooperation

with our Allies, to maintain *and extend* unremitting pressure against Japan in the Pacific and from China " [36]

Probably at Leahy's insistence that he wanted only a short paper, "somewhat less than a page," to read at the first meeting, the Casablanca phrases limiting the objectives of pressure in the Pacific were dropped, leaving an apparently open-ended extension of pressure. Brooke was ready with a preliminary statement of the British viewpoint the next morning. The extension of pressure against Japan, he said, went beyond the views expressed at Casablanca, to which the British still adhered, and it might well cause a vacuum into which forces would have to be poured. Action in the Pacific must not be allowed to prejudice the defeat of Germany, which, as the American paper also asserted, came first in the strategic concept of the war. Before the meeting on the fourteenth ended, Leahy read the longer paper prepared by the U S Joint Staff Planners on the conduct of the war in 1943–44. The abbreviated paragraph 2b now included a restatement of the Casablanca objectives: "to maintain and extend unremitting pressure against Japan with the purpose of continually reducing her military power and attaining positions from which her ultimate unconditional surrender can be forced." [37]

On the Monday after the Williamsburg bird-watching, Brooke and his colleagues offered an amendment that, in effect, would subordinate extended efforts in the Pacific to commitments in Europe. Rather awkwardly expressed, the British formula would alter the proposal to "extend" pressure against Japan to make it "consistent" with the preceding clause (2a) that the unconditional surrender of the Axis in Europe would be brought about "at the earliest possible date." [38]

Although Marshall and his colleagues had always carefully avoided any minimizing of the "Europe first" strategy, the talk of extended operations frightened Brooke Although not wishing to upset the British still further, Admiral Leahy reminded them that the defeat of Japan was a matter of vital importance to the United States. A situation might arise in the Pacific that would require the United States to increase its efforts to maintain the integrity of this nation and its Pacific interests, even at the expense of the European Theater. The British amendment, Leahy believed, would therefore be unacceptable to the American Chiefs of Staff. Undoubtedly Brooke realized that in an acute emergency, the United States would protect its national interests in the Pacific, but he wanted to keep operations there within bounds. The Allies, he warned, could not defeat Germany and Japan at the same time. It was essential to deal with Hitler's forces first. His statement made clear that they were back where they had started months earlier. It would be another week before the conferees returned to Pacific strategy.[39]

Brooke wrote sadly after this meeting: "The trouble is that the American mind likes proceeding from the general to the particular, whilst in

the problems we have to solve we cannot evolve any form of general doctrine until we have carefully examined the particular details of each problem. The background really rests on King's desire to find every loophole he possibly can to divert strength to the Pacific." He was restating the old clash of a rigid versus an opportunistic strategy. But the Americans felt that the British had a well-established general rule against coming to grips with the principal enemy. All the talk about general and particular—worthy of a scholastic disputation on the One and the Many —obscured the fact that each side wanted a loophole permitting it to carry on its own favorite sideshow while talking of the major effort against Germany.

The Americans found the British more likely to approve specific offensive operations than broad strategic intentions. King, who was often at his disarming best in describing the operations he had in mind, did so in some detail a few days later. By explaining away the frightening connotations of the word "extend," King reduced much of the British opposition. When he included Central Pacific operations to seize the Marshall and Caroline Island groups, and "thence to the Marianas," the British made no objection. For the Marianas were the key to the situation, King pointed out, as they lay athwart the Japanese lines of communication. Brooke wrote after the May 21 session: "The work was easier and there was less controversy. We dealt with the Pacific and accepted what was put forward " [40]

The drafts of the final report to the President and Prime Minister were now ready for consideration, but the American Chiefs of Staff had still made no decision on the British amendment that would make extension of action in the Pacific "consistent" with the early defeat of the Axis in Europe. Before meeting with the British on the twenty-fourth, the American Chiefs at last reached a verdict. After a "prolonged" discussion they agreed to adhere "firmly" to their wording of the disputed paragraph 2b, "carrying the question to the highest level if necessary." The British amendment was, actually, as King noted apprehensively, "a lever which could be used to stress European action at the expense of our Pacific effort." [41]

The meeting with the British that followed was somewhat of an anticlimax. In low key Leahy explained why the British amendment was "in his opinion" unacceptable. The British did not demur at the decision. Air Chief Marshal Portal explained that he and his colleagues were not attempting to impose restrictions upon Pacific operations; they wished merely to ensure that any surplus resources that might become available would be concentrated on the early defeat of Germany. Marshall reminded him that the United States had already agreed to put in the United Kingdom the maximum number of air groups the British were willing to maintain there. If there was a surplus of air forces, they should be sent to the Southwest Pacific, which was operating "on a shoestring"

and where great results could be achieved by relatively small additions to the forces.

The session ended harmoniously with the acceptance of "certain words" offered by Admiral Pound amending the disputed paragraph 2b. The added sentence read: "The effect of any such extension on the overall objective to be given consideration by the Combined Chiefs of Staff before action is taken." This was a much weaker restriction than the British had initially sought. Clearly Admiral King, whether he had to stand against the world or not, was still holding his own in the Pacific.[42]

Sensing that they had found a basis for agreement, Marshall added that he believed that all the decisions of the conference must be reviewed at the next meeting—or earlier, should events make it necessary. If Russia should fall or make a separate peace with Germany, they might not be able to launch a cross-Channel attack but would find it necessary to reorient Allied strategy toward defeating Japan first. Brooke agreed that they must have a future review, but he had a different area in mind. The time was approaching, he suggested, when they should consider exploiting the situation in southern Europe.

Less amenable to accommodation was the vexing problem of Burma. After much contention at Casablanca, the operation to retake the whole of Burma (ANAKIM) had been, in Brooke's phrase, placed "definitely on the books." What operations could be carried out in the China-Burma-India Theater dominated the second day at TRIDENT, both at the morning session of the Combined Chiefs on May 14 and at a White House session in the afternoon Field Marshal Wavell, who had been charged with planning and carrying out this operation, was obliged to report that preliminary operations for an amphibious attack on Rangoon had failed. The success of the amphibious attack depended upon air cover from airfields on the Arakan coast to the west of Rangoon, but the Akyab airfields had not been captured. The lesson of the Arakan advance, Wavell said, was that the British troops were no match for the Japanese and would require careful and lengthy training. And as Chiang had warned before Casablanca, the Chinese divisions had not marched from Yunnan for a diversionary attack in north Burma.

Alternative operations in the rugged, wet, and nearly roadless country of northern Burma looked equally bleak to Wavell. Road, rail, and river communications in eastern India and Assam, which must support the bases at Imphal and Ledo and the airfields, were "very poor." Before leaving India he had requested another administrative survey; the report was that facilities were not available both to establish communications to maintain the large force necessary to invade Burma and to provide sufficient airfields for China's support. Wavell had left instructions to give top priority to airfield construction. At the end of his presentation to the Combined Chiefs, Leahy asked what he considered to be the best practicable action to keep China in the war. Wavell answered unhesitatingly

that the best way to help China was to increase the strength of Chennault's air forces and the volume of airborne supplies.[43]

Before Wavell could repeat his tale of difficulties at the White House, Churchill gave him an unexpected assist. He had looked at Wavell's plan for the capture of Burma and did not like what he saw. He did not like the idea of making four attacks from the sea, "to say nothing of the advance up the Rangoon River to Rangoon, subject to attack from shore defenses of various kinds." And he personally had little inclination to go into swampy, malaria-infested jungles when he could not see how such operations would help the Chinese. Would not the construction and defense of airfields be sufficient to ensure a flow of supplies into China? Churchill felt "that there should be a *passionate* development of air transport into China, and the build-up of air forces in China, as the objectives for 1943." [44]

Stilwell, who was presenting the case for opening land communications across northern Burma to China, felt by the time his turn came at the White House session "that the weight of opinion was apparently against him." The China-Burma-India theater commander said China was a base that the United Nations needed both for its geographic position and for its use of Chinese manpower. Stilwell declared that "ultimately the United Nations must meet the Japanese Army on the mainland of Asia." (Variations of this belief that the Chinese Army would play a key role in the defeat of Japan were held in Washington at this time, even by King, whose Pacific Fleet had not yet had a chance to show its decisive power.) Control of the province of Yunnan, Stilwell continued, was vital to keep China in the war. He had been worried for a long time about the possibility of a Japanese attack on Kunming—particularly one from Indochina. The Chinese divisions now in training there, numbering well over 200,000 men, would be capable of defending Yunnan when trained and equipped. But he would need to use the full capacity of the air-transport route between now and September to provide sufficient equipment. It was "absolutely essential" to open alternative land communications to China. As Marshall had said at the end of the morning session, "the whole problem of maintaining China in the war was one of logistic difficulties which must be linked to our capabilities of overcoming them." [45]

When Stilwell made his bid for the entire tonnage of the air route to China, he was fully aware that Chennault was to be allotted the bulk of that tonnage. Less than two weeks before Roosevelt had at last yielded to the importunities of Chennault, Chiang, and Soong to give priority to Chennault's air operations. As the Chinese would not be informed of this decision for several more days, the President's apparent conversion to air power did not figure in these discussions. While the debate on Burma was edging toward a compromise between land and air, Roosevelt suggested that "a possible alternative solution would be to make use of the

forces designed for ANAKIM for an advance towards China, opening the Road as the advance progressed." Even Wavell insisted that he had never intended to give the impression that limited ground operations and full-scale air operations could not be carried out at the same time. Churchill saw no reason openly to abandon the operation at present Preparations could go on if they did not hamper the development of the air route. The President summed up the consensus thus for the staff planners: "the two objectives should be to get 7,000 tons a month by air into China by July; and secondly, to open land communication with China" It was for the military advisers to suggest the best way to carry out the second objective.[46]

A week later the Combined Chiefs of Staff met with Churchill and Roosevelt to go over their approved first draft of the final conference report. The secretaries had drafted well for the China-Burma-India Theater. As the President had directed, first priority was given to air operations. The air route to China was to be built up to a monthly capacity of 10,000 tons by early fall. Air facilities in Assam would be developed to intensify air operations against the Japanese in Burma and to maintain increased American Air Forces in China and the flow of air-borne supplies to support them. The provision for land operations read: "Vigorous and aggressive land and air operations from Assam into Burma via Ledo and Imphal, in step with an advance by Chinese forces from Yunnan, with the object of containing as many Japanese forces as possible, covering the air route to China, and as an essential step towards the opening of the Burma Road." A fixed date for the operations, felt essential by the Americans, was inserted in a later draft: land and air operations would start "at the end of the 1943 monsoon." [47]

Scanning the draft, Roosevelt noted an omission: Rangoon had not been mentioned. He felt that the Chinese would be much happier if Rangoon was included; it would be wise to do so if only for political reasons. Churchill quickly spotted a place for Rangoon. He would add to the section on "The capture of Akyab and Ramree Island by amphibious operations" the phrase "with possible exploitation toward Rangoon." Someone suggested that the Chinese would interpret this statement as a promise to take Rangoon; therefore the words "toward Rangoon" were deleted.

If Rangoon was unmentionable, operation ANAKIM could be inserted under another guise. The final report provided for the "continuance of administrative preparations in India for the eventual launching of an overseas operation of about the size of ANAKIM." [48]

In the end, while the meetings were marked by a number of stiff-necked sessions, the British were agreeably surprised at the concessions made by the Americans. Brooke counted it a triumph that the Americans had agreed to continue in the Mediterranean at all—a judgment that reveals a serious lack of understanding of United States strategy at the confer-

ence. From the beginning Marshall and his colleagues were prepared to make concessions if they could get positive assurances on the cross-Channel assault for 1944.

Brooke also showed that he misread Marshall by his comments on an off-the-record meeting on May 19. On this, "the most difficult day of the conference," the British Chief wrote, Marshall proposed to ease the acrimony of the meeting by chasing out the large crowd of advisers and turning the meeting into a small conclave of the Chiefs of Staff plus Dill. In the ensuing conversations they managed to build "a bridge across which we could meet." Brooke believed that the atmosphere had been cleared principally by the removal of Marshall's advisers since it seemed that "frequently Marshall did not like shifting from some policy he had been briefed in by his staff lest they should think he was lacking in determination." [49] In none of these conferences were Marshall's views imposed on him by his staff. He made the concessions that he and his staff had already agreed must be made. In fact some of his advisers at TRIDENT were prepared to go further than he had gone.

The chief impediment to final agreement at TRIDENT, in the opinion of both British and American observers, was Prime Minister Churchill. After accepting the statement of strategy presented by the military leaders on the twenty-first, he changed his mind on the twenty-fourth and, in Brooke's words, "repudiated" the paper to which they had agreed. In exasperation the British Chief burst out peevishly in his diary against Churchill's changeability. "And Winston? Thinks one thing at one moment and another the next moment." [50] Brooke was likely to be strongly upset at times and to imagine that most of the burden of Atlas rested on him unduly, but there was considerable truth in his complaint that the Prime Minister pushed strategic flexibility virtually to the point of chaos.

It was not the best time for disturbing an agreement drawn up after great difficulty. Current opinion polls in the United States showed that Americans were now interested in beating the Japanese more than the Germans and Italians, an attitude clearly reflected on Capitol Hill. Only after considerable effort were the Combined Chiefs of Staff, with Hopkins's aid, able to persuade Churchill to withdraw his main objections. Brooke believed that he had done "untold harm" by raising American suspicions "as regards ventures in the Balkans, which we have been endeavoring to suppress." [51]

The Prime Minister made temporary concessions on the agreed statement, but he was not finished with the fight. As he talked with the President about some final undecided items, he suddenly proposed that Marshall come with him to Algiers, where they could discuss future strategy with General Eisenhower. Churchill thought he could sell his views on the coming campaign to Eisenhower, and he wanted protection against U.S. charges that he had overinfluenced the American general. Therefore he asked that his chief antagonist at the conference be sent along. Mar-

shall, who had been planning for some weeks to accompany Admiral King on a long-deferred visit to the Pacific, was staggered by the suggestion that he should depart instead for North Africa. But he put up a brave front and agreed to the radical change in his plans. Stimson did enough grumbling for both of them: "To think of picking out the strongest man there is in America, and Marshall is surely that today, the one on whom the fate of the war depends, and then to deprive him in a gamble of a much needed opportunity to recoup his strength . and send him off on a difficult and rather dangerous trip across the Atlantic Ocean where he is not needed except for Churchill's purposes is I think going pretty far. . . ." [52]