  
U.S. SERIAL ABC-4/CS-1  
BRITISH SERIAL W.W.-1 (FINAL)

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It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WASHINGTON WAR CONFERENCE

AMERICAN-BRITISH STRATEGY

MEMORANDUM BY THE UNITED STATES AND BRITISH CHIEFS OF STAFF

NOTE: The circulation of this paper should be restricted to the United States and British Chiefs of Staff and their immediate subordinates.

#### I. GRAND STRATEGY

1. At the A-B\* Staff conversations in February, 1941, it was agreed that Germany was the predominant member of the Axis Powers, and consequently the Atlantic and European area was considered to be the decisive theatre.

2. Much has happened since February last, but notwithstanding the entry of Japan into the War, our view remains that Germany is still the prime enemy and her defeat is the key to victory. Once Germany is defeated, the collapse of Italy and the defeat of Japan must follow.

3. In our considered opinion, therefore, it should be a cardinal principle of A-B strategy that only the minimum of force necessary for the safeguarding of vital interests in other theatres should be diverted from operations against Germany.

#### II. ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF OUR STRATEGY

4. The essential features of the above grand strategy are as follows. Each will be examined in greater detail later in this paper.

a. The realization of the victory programme of armaments, which first and foremost requires the security of the main areas of war industry.

Note:-

\* For brevity the abbreviated A-B is used to denote American-British

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- UN
- b. The maintenance of essential communications.
  - c. Closing and tightening the ring around Germany.
  - d. Wearing down and undermining German resistance by air bombardment, blockade, subversive activities and propaganda.
  - e. The continuous development of offensive action against Germany.
  - f. Maintaining only such positions in the Eastern theatre as will safeguard vital interests (see paragraph 18) and denying to Japan access to raw materials vital to her continuous war effort while we are concentrating on the defeat of Germany.

III. STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN 1942 TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE  
ABOVE GENERAL POLICY.

THE SECURITY OF AREAS OF WAR PRODUCTION

5. In so far as these are likely to be attacked, the main areas of war industry are situated in:-



- a. The United Kingdom.
- b. Continental United States, particularly the West Coast.
- c. Russia.

6. THE UNITED KINGDOM. - To safeguard the United Kingdom it will be necessary to maintain at all times the minimum forces required to defeat invasion.

7. THE UNITED STATES. - The main centers of production on or near the West Coast of United States must be protected from Japanese sea-borne attack. This will be facilitated by holding Hawaii and Alaska. We consider that a Japanese invasion of the United States on a large scale is highly improbable, whether Hawaii or Alaska is held or not.

8. The probable scale of attack and the general nature of the forces required for the defense of the United States are matters for the United States Chiefs of Staff to assess.

9. RUSSIA. - It will be essential to afford the Russians assistance to enable them to maintain their hold on Leningrad, Moscow, and the oil-fields of the Caucasus, and to continue their war effort.

MAINTENANCE OF COMMUNICATIONS

10. THE MAIN SEA ROUTES WHICH MUST BE SECURED ARE:-

- a. From the United States to the United Kingdom.
- b. From the United States and the United Kingdom to North Russia.
- c. The various routes from the United Kingdom and the United States to Freetown, South America, and the Cape.
- d. The routes in the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, to India and Burma, to the East Indies, and to Australasia.
- e. The route through the Panama Canal, and the United States coastal traffic.
- f. The Pacific routes from the United States and the Panama Canal to Alaska, Hawaii, Australia, and the Far East.

In addition to the above routes, we shall do everything possible to open up and secure the Mediterranean route.

11. THE MAIN AIR ROUTES WHICH MUST BE SECURED ARE:-

- a. From the United States to South America, Ascension, Freetown, Takoradi, and Cairo.
- b. From the United Kingdom to Gibraltar, Malta and Cairo.
- c. From Cairo to Karachi, Calcutta, China, Malaya, Philippines, Australasia.
- d. From the United States to Australia via Hawaii, Christmas Island, Canton, Palmyra, Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia.
- e. The routes from Australia to the Philippines and Malaya via the Netherlands East Indies.
- f. From the United States to the United Kingdom via Newfoundland, Canada, Greenland, and Iceland.
- g. From the United States to the United Kingdom via the Azores.
- h. From the United States to Vladivostok, via Alaska.

**12. THE SECURITY OF THESE ROUTES INVOLVES:-**

- a. Well-balanced A - B naval and air dispositions.
- b. Holding and capturing essential sea and air bases.

**CLOSING AND TIGHTENING THE RING AROUND GERMANY**

13. This ring may be defined as a line running roughly as follows:  
ARCHANGEL - BLACK SEA - ANATOLIA - THE NORTHERN SEABOARD OF THE MEDITERRANEAN - THE WESTERN SEABOARD OF EUROPE.

The main object will be to strengthen this ring, and close the gaps in it, by sustaining the Russian front, by arming and supporting Turkey, by increasing our strength in the Middle East, and by gaining possession of the whole North African coast.

14. If this ring can be closed, the blockade of Germany and Italy will be complete, and German eruptions, e.g. towards the Persian Gulf, or to the Atlantic seaboard of Africa, will be prevented. Furthermore, the seizing of the North African coast may open the Mediterranean to convoys, thus enormously shortening the route to the Middle East and saving considerable tonnage now employed in the long haul around the Cape.

**THE UNDERMINING AND WEARING DOWN OF THE GERMAN RESISTANCE**

15. In 1942 the main methods of wearing down Germany's resistance will be:-

- a. Ever-increasing air bombardment by British and American Forces.
- b. Assistance to Russia's offensive by all available means.
- c. The blockade.
- d. The maintenance of the spirit of revolt in the occupied countries, and the organization of subversive movements.

**DEVELOPMENT OF LAND OFFENSIVES ON THE CONTINENT**

16. It does not seem likely that in 1942 any large scale land offensive against Germany except on the Russian front will be possible. We must, however, be ready to take advantage of any opening that may result from the wearing down process referred to in paragraph 15 to conduct limited land offensives.

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17. In 1943 the way may be clear for a return to the Continent, across the Mediterranean, from Turkey into the Balkans, or by landings in Western Europe. Such operations will be the prelude to the final assault on Germany itself, and the scope of the victory program should be such as to provide means by which they can be carried out.

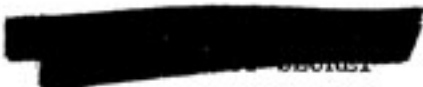
THE SAFEGUARDING OF VITAL INTERESTS IN THE EASTERN THEATRE

18. The security of Australia, New Zealand, and India must be maintained, and the Chinese war effort supported. Secondly, points of vantage from which an offensive against Japan can eventually be developed must be secured. Our immediate object must therefore be to hold:-

- a. Hawaii and Alaska.
- b. Singapore, the East Indies Barrier, and the Philippines.
- c. Rangoon and the route to China.
- d. The Maritime Provinces of Siberia.

The minimum forces required to hold the above will have to be a matter of mutual discussion.

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ANNEX 2  
to  
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December 31, 1941

REPORT

By

UNITED STATES - BRITISH

CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUPPORTING MEASURES FOR THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC  
(THE FAR EAST AREA AND ADJACENT REGIONS)  
UNTIL ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFIED COMMAND.

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December 31, 1941

The United States and British Chiefs of Staff approved the Joint Planning Committee report of December 29, 1941, on "Supporting Measures for the Southwest Pacific" as appropriate action to be taken in the interim prior to the establishment of the unified command of the forces in that region.

The United States and British Chiefs of Staff agreed to send immediately to the United States and British Commanders-in-Chief in the Far East Area the following telegram:

"The general strategic policy for operations in the Far Eastern theatre which has been agreed upon by the United States and British Chiefs of Staff is as follows:-

a. To hold the Malay Barrier, defined as the line Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, and North Australia, as the basic defensive position in that theatre and to operate sea, land, and air forces in as great depth as possible forward of the Barrier in order to oppose the Japanese southward advance.

b. To hold Burma and Australia as essential supporting positions for the theatre, and Burma as essential to the support of China, and to the defense of India.

c. To reestablish communications through the Dutch East Indies with Luzon and to support the Philippines' Garrison.

d. To maintain essential communications within the theatre.

In disposing of the reinforcements arriving in that theatre, you should be guided by the above policy and consider the needs of the theatre as a whole. To this end, close co-operation among the British, Dutch and United States Commanders is essential, and you should continue to concert measures accordingly.

The British Commander-in-Chief, Far East, will inform the Dutch and request their cooperation."

TELEGRAM

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