



Of de Gaulle and the Ljubljana Gap

I THINK we have these Huns at the top of the toboggan slide and the full crash of the Russian offensive should put the skids under them." So wrote a jubilant Marshall with uncharacteristic slanginess to President Roosevelt on June 14. He was still glowing after his visit to the American landing area in Normandy.¹

Marshall, Arnold, and King had arrived over Scotland a few days earlier after an uneventful flight across the Atlantic, but heavy fog prevented their planes from landing at the intended destination, Prestwick. After an hour and a half of circling over the invisible airfield they were diverted to Valley, an Air Transport Command base in the northwest tip of Wales, where no preparations had been made to receive them. Colonel McCarthy, sent over several days before to help make arrangements, had gone on to Prestwick with the controversial special train furnished by the Services of Supply commander, General Lee. McCarthy had passed on Marshall's instructions that Lee was not to meet the party, since he undoubtedly had more important things to do in the first days of the landings in Normandy. To McCarthy's astonishment General Lee met the train, "booted, spurred, and replete with riding crop." But fog had spoiled his welcome. The fussy General, whose initials, JCHL, were sometimes interpreted as "John Court House Lee" or "Jesus Christ Himself Lee," stood lonely at the Prestwick station waiting for the VIPs who did not appear.

Bad weather, train delays, unforeseen changes in plans conspired in the first hours of arrival to remind the Chiefs of Staff that they, too, like ordinary soldiers, sailors, and airmen, could also "hurry up and wait." When they finally landed at Valley, they found that the best course of action was to flag down the Irish Mail, a London-bound express. McCarthy, who had

wangled a flight to Wales in a two-seater, managed with the aid of the local officials to get an extra car hooked on. The car was unheated, but the conductor provided a large tin container of strong, scalding tea, into which each officer dipped his cup.²

The tired, cold passengers were warmly welcomed at Euston Station in London by the British Chiefs of Staff. As cheering as their pleasant greeting was the appearance of blue skies and sunshine. Within a short time the guests were on their way to their billet in Stanwell Place at Staines, about twenty miles southwest of London.³

Meeting at the War Cabinet office on June 10, the Combined Chiefs of Staff examined the progress of the war on all fronts. King outlined plans for the Marianas and what would follow in the Palau, and the Chiefs considered operations in north Burma as well as flights over the Hump. Arnold reported that the Air Transport Command had carried more than 11,000 tons into China in the past month and that he hoped to reach 16,000 in July. More important, he said that airplane production was reaching a level at which "most of the theaters were becoming saturated, and the demands for airplanes were being met everywhere."⁴

The reports on the Pacific and Burma, normally important items of business, obviously were not now of overriding interest for the assembled Chiefs of Staff. The big show then in progress and the plans for a new front in the Mediterranean overshadowed everything else. Almost certainly the ANVIL operation was the main topic between Marshall and Churchill when the Prime Minister invited the Chief of Staff out to Chequers that evening. On the following day at Stanwell Place the Combined Chiefs of Staff moved at once to take up the landings in southern France, postponed in April and now back at the head of the agenda.

In the euphoria produced by the success in Normandy the opening discussions were amiable. The British did not object when the Americans suggested that the Italian advance stop at the Apennines or hold at the Pisa-Rimini line, although Brooke noted other possibilities in Italy. The Americans matched their colleagues' bonhomie when they learned that the British were prepared at last to consider proceeding with landings in southern France. They were momentarily startled when Brooke resurrected Churchill's plan for a landing at Bordeaux, in western France. But he did not press the point, nor did he argue strongly for an Isthrian Peninsula operation in northeastern Italy. Privately he commented that the Chiefs had at last put the operation in southern France in proper perspective. By the time the Allied forces reached the Pisa-Rimini line, Brooke thought they would have succeeded in diverting German resources from northern France. They could then consider landings in the south to win a beachhead where French troops from North Africa could be used.⁵

General Marshall argued for priority for the south of France, although he was willing to consider a landing at Sète and an advance northwest toward Bordeaux or northward up the Rhone Valley instead of in the

Toulon-Marseille area. He stressed the possibilities of extensive air transport, requiring bold decisions and fresh approaches to problems, particularly if the offensive that the Russians were about to open went well. Echoing this argument, General Arnold declared that the Allies could build up enough transport in three months to land four or five divisions with accompanying heavy guns in one night. This prospect, which Brooke said Montgomery had considered on a smaller scale, opened up opportunities of using long-range penetration groups, such as those employed in Burma, to foster and support the French underground.

While noting the role of air in weakening enemy resistance, Air Marshal Portal spoke of a possible amphibious operation, via the Istrian Peninsula, at the head of the Adriatic, if the Russian advance made such a move feasible. Although willing to consider such an operation, Admiral King reminded him that this move depended on Soviet ground operations. So far as Italy was concerned, he favored forcing the enemy to hold the Pisa-Rimini line in strength.⁶ Marshall agreed that the Allies should keep "the options open as long as possible" but urged that they prepare for an operation in the not-too-distant future.

At last the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that an amphibious operation should be mounted from the Mediterranean with approximately a three-division lift. They directed the Mediterranean commander, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, to draw up alternative plans for the original ANVIL operation (Toulon-Marseille), a landing at Sète, and an operation on the Istrian Peninsula. General Eisenhower was to plan a landing in the Bay of Biscay, with special attention to the area between the mouth of the Loire and Bordeaux. The final decision on the actual place of landing was to be made later; July 25 was suggested as the target date. After the heated controversy of February and March southern France was back in the running, apparently without acrimony.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff reckoned, however, without the Prime Minister, who would subject ANVIL to fiery trials before the summer ended. At the moment Churchill's chief interest was in the battle in Normandy. Denied an opportunity to watch the landings by the united efforts of George VI and the Supreme Commander, the British leader was impatient to get a look at the fighting front and, if possible, a crack at the enemy. He invited the British and U.S. Chiefs of Staff to accompany him to the far shore.

There was the unmistakable air of an outing about the expedition to the battle front. The irrepressible Prime Minister was exuberant and the others excited at the prospect of seeing the results of their deliberations and debates.

Joining the Prime Minister and Field Marshal Jan Smuts on the former's private train for the overnight trip from London to Portsmouth, the Chiefs of Staff were invited to a convivial meal around a long banquet table set up in one of the cars. Everyone seemed in a mood for celebration

except King. Finally after casting impish glances in the Admiral's direction, Churchill quipped, "Don't look so glum. I am not trying to take anything away from the United States Navy just now." ⁷

A grinning Eisenhower met them at Portsmouth. There the party broke into two groups, the British boarding one of their destroyers for British-held beaches and the United States contingent going on the U.S. destroyer *Thompson* to their sector. They moved out of a crowded harbor, jammed with warships and landing craft, under skies filled with roaring planes, marveling at the Allied control of sea and air, which ensured the safety of the Channel and made possible the uninterrupted flow of supplies and men to the fighting area. The great charts and loading tables, the tables of organization, the vast build-up of supplies under Operation BOLERO, the lines of transportation that, in Marshall's words, "stretched all the way back to central United States"—all these suddenly came to life for the Chiefs who had visualized that these miracles could come to pass. For Marshall, who had never let this cross-Channel assault be forgotten, it was a day of fulfillment.⁸

Transferring to a submarine chaser, the Americans, now joined by Rear Admirals John L. Hall and Alan G. Kirk, took a look at the invasion area from the sea. Shifting to a DUKW, an awkward-looking amphibious vehicle that could swim and also run on land, they moved ashore. Photographers caught Marshall and his associates clambering awkwardly over the side of the DUKW as they prepared to set foot on the soil of France. They had come to "Easy Red" on hard-fought Omaha Beach, where throughout D day it had seemed that Major General Leonard T. Gerow's V Corps elements, under murderous fire from prepared positions along the hillside or from guns on the heights above, would not make it ashore.

General Bradley and many of his chief commanders greeted the visitors from Washington, showing them the points of enemy resistance, the ugly beach obstacles now bulldozed aside, the improvised ditches, the bunkers, uncompleted minefields. Clearly the battle was still near at hand. Cameramen posed the officers against the cliffs near St. Laurent sur Mer, where one could see in the same sweep dozens of small craft coming into shore, ships unloading with great barrage balloons floating overhead, and up the roadway the stream of trucks and jeeps and men on foot pouring through the gap to enlarge the force that the enemy could not long contain in the tangled hedgerows a few thousand yards beyond.

It was General Marshall's first return to France since September 1919, when, as General Pershing's aide, he had said good-bye to Foch and his staff at Brest. That day was undoubtedly in his mind, as was the more vivid recollection of a June day in 1917 when he had been the second member of the 1st Division to come down the gangplank at St. Nazaire. On that earlier landing the Americans had arrived with a token force—so the French had viewed it—to raise morale. Marshall had been disturbed

to find that so much was expected by a weary people and so little was ready for the fight. Twenty-seven years later he came with the forces that had provided much of the power already to break Hitler's control of northwest Europe. Liberation of nearly all France was only three months away.

The U.S. Chief of Staff thought first of the wounded. An airstrip had been set up just back of Omaha Beach on ground hotly disputed five days earlier. Here Marshall, Arnold, and King visited a plane loaded with men ready to be evacuated to the United Kingdom for further treatment. Nearby they could see where the first dead had been temporarily buried, close to the site at St. Laurent sur Mer later chosen for the permanent cemetery, on the peaceful cliff looking calmly out to sea.

True to his policy of rewarding valor promptly, Marshall had already directed that special recognition be made of bravery performed in the landings. Hours before his arrival officers went out from army and corps headquarters to the lower units to get information for citations in order that he might personally make some of the awards. The General had also asked for names of officers and men who would be promoted for their actions in the landings. Nor did he forget those who were killed while coming ashore, those who died at the water's edge, and those who were struck down making their way through the narrow exits from the beaches.

Shepherded by Bradley and members of his staff, the Americans went inland, visiting Grandcamp and Isigny, towns taken in the early fighting in the V Corps sector. As they drove along in three reconnaissance cars, on narrow roads being beaten into heavy dust by the trucks and tanks that moved in a continuous stream, meeting troops and hundreds of prisoners, stopped at times by confused traffic or occasional roadblocks, they came to grips with the flow of battle, which could never be envisaged by use of even the most sophisticated visual aids in the Pentagon. Of the visiting party perhaps only General Marshall, recalling his own task in moving hundreds of thousands of men in and out of the Meuse-Argonne area in late 1918, could fully appreciate the massiveness of the task being executed here.

At times General Bradley's aide, Major Chester B. Hansen, had to act as a traffic cop to disentangle the vehicles carrying the visitors from the crush. Besides the traffic a whiff of danger was added as the officers neared Carentan, through which the party would have to pass to reach Utah Beach. Taken that day, the town was now under harassing fire from the recently withdrawn enemy artillery. Reflecting, as he had at nearby Isigny, on the damage to the Allied high command one German sniper could inflict, General Bradley decided that they should run no more risks.

Calling a halt in the busy morning, the First Army commander took his guests to his headquarters, a tented command post located in an orchard near St. Pierre du Mont. The visitors were proudly welcomed by Bradley's principal field commanders, Hodges, Collins, and Gerow. But the ameni-

ties were limited, marked by all the simplicity of an army in the field. They washed up in the open, pouring water from a jerrican, sharing the primitive facilities. The food, C rations and crackers, more palatable than the K rations carried by soldiers on the move, tasted good as they sat under apple trees reclaimed for France.

At the close of a full day Arnold flew back to England from the airstrip near the sea while Marshall and King hastened aboard their destroyer to rejoin the Prime Minister at Portsmouth. They were much too early—their third delay of the trip. Hoping for an opportunity to shoot at the enemy, Churchill had waited until he could fire a gun. This done, he joined them aboard the train in high spirits to serve victory champagne and an excellent dinner.

During the meal Marshall composed a message. As he finished, he showed the Prime Minister a radiogram for Admiral Mountbatten that he asked all around the table to sign. To a commander with whom he had worked since early 1942 he had written:

Today we visited the British and American armies on the soil of France. We sailed through vast fleets of ships, with landing craft of many types pouring more and more men, vehicles, and stores ashore. We saw clearly the maneuver in process of rapid development. We have shared our secrets in common and helped each other all we could. We wish to tell you at this moment in your arduous campaign that we realize that much of this remarkable technique and, therefore, the success of the venture, has its origin in developments effected by you and your staff of Combined Operations.

ARNOLD, BROOKE, CHURCHILL,
KING, MARSHALL, SMUTS⁹

Marshall's satisfaction with what he had seen was evident in the message he sent Roosevelt two days later. "Conditions on the beachhead are generally favorable . . ." he reported. "The Germans appear unable to muster a sizeable counterattack for some days to come. French Resistance good. Interruption of communications by air seems effective." Equally important, the morale of troops and commanders was excellent. The General was especially impressed "by the calm confidence of . . . Bradley and by the aggressive attitude of his corps commanders." In the midst of what appeared to be great confusion at the water's edge, he saw in the organization of the beaches "a remarkable scale of efficiency."¹⁰

As the visitors returned from the beaches, the Germans dropped their first robot bombs (V-1s; V for "vengeance") on London. Since the missiles hit at random, Stanwell Place, which had been selected for them because of its remoteness from a bombing target area, was rocked by explosions early on the thirteenth.¹¹ Although the war had been taken across the Channel, the enemy was still capable of striking back at London.

The fireworks created by the V-1s seemed mild in comparison to the emotional ones that flared up among the Chiefs of Staff when they

learned of the actions of General de Gaulle, head of the French Committee of National Liberation. Their wrath was understandable, but they should not have been surprised at de Gaulle's behavior. The trouble had been brewing for months.

Since his arrival in London early in 1944 General Eisenhower had sought to clarify his relations with the French Committee of National Liberation. An old problem that had harassed him in the Mediterranean became worse as the day of landing on French soil approached—dealing with de Gaulle. In numerous requests to the War Department for instructions the Supreme Commander conceded the difficulties presented by le Général but insisted that "he is the best we have." Although unfavorably impressed by de Gaulle's aloof imperiousness and perhaps overly influenced by Admiral Leahy's anti-Gaullist attitude, Marshall was inclined to go along with Eisenhower. As he heard of situation after situation made worse for lack of an Anglo-American agreement with de Gaulle and the French Committee, he grew even more sympathetic to Eisenhower's pleas for an official *modus vivendi*.

In May the Supreme Commander himself added fat to the fire. As a security measure he asked the British government to bar the sending of messages in code from the United Kingdom except by British, American, and Russian diplomatic representatives. Seeing in this action one more slight to the French Committee, de Gaulle ordered his representative in London, General Pierre Koeng, to break off discussions with Eisenhower's headquarters. Marshall shared Eisenhower's relief when Koeng agreed that American and British officials could pass on the security of information in French messages before permitting him to send them in French code with his assurance that they had not been changed.

More serious was determination of the degree of recognition Eisenhower should give the French Committee of National Liberation once the invasion was launched. At issue were French cooperation with the Allies in liberated France and the nature of civil relations. The President insisted that Eisenhower hold his dealings with de Gaulle's group to a minimum and that he make no decision that might be interpreted as recognizing the special position of the French Committee. He regarded the French people as shell shocked and not yet prepared to think through their political future. "We, as the liberators of France," he declared, "have no right to color their views" or give any group the right to impose its rule on them. Self-determination for the French people should be the true aim of the Allies. His point was valid, but his failure to recognize that he must choose either Gaullists or the people of Vichy showed a curious blind spot.¹²

Churchill had planned to invite de Gaulle to London before the invasion, but after receiving this message from the President he told General Bedell Smith that he had now decided to do so only if the French leader

would agree to remain in London until after the landings. Smith replied that de Gaulle would refuse any such invitation. He suggested instead that they issue the invitation just before D day.

Through long experience as a staff officer under Marshall, Smith had learned that he could depend on his Chief's careful consideration of an issue. On May 15 he therefore spelled out the difficulties confronting the Supreme Commander. "I am sure that nothing would suit General Eisenhower better," he radioed Marshall, "than to have his responsibility rigidly confined to matters of purely military concern, but no one who has dealt with a foreign government at close range, as we have, can fail to realize that when a military commander is operating on foreign soil there is no clear-cut line of demarcation between military and civil or political questions."

In the same message Smith detailed the delicate situation arising from lack of a formal directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to Eisenhower on the French problem. The Supreme Commander could not act on the basis of a unilateral statement from the President. Although the Prime Minister had stated, as recently as the night before, that he stood with the President on all questions concerning the French, "it must always be remembered that the one ministry which the Prime Minister does not control is the Foreign Office." As Smith had expected, the Chief of Staff promptly forwarded the message to Roosevelt. Marshall asked that the President not let the Prime Minister know of Smith's comments lest the disclosure "destroy his usefulness at a very vital moment."¹³

Eisenhower followed up Smith's careful preparations with a promise to Marshall to deal with the French Committee of National Liberation only in matters concerning military affairs and civil administration. Noting a choice of evils, he added that current information showed only two major groups in France—the Vichy "gang" and the group "with unreasoning admiration for de Gaulle." Since his was an Allied command, as he blandly phrased it, he hoped that he would receive Roosevelt's desires in the form of a joint directive from the two governments.¹⁴

The President had a habit of keeping unpleasant missives around for a time, perhaps believing that events would make a reply unnecessary. More than two weeks after receiving Eisenhower's message he instructed Marshall to inform the Supreme Commander "that I still think he does not quite get the point." More bluntly he laid it out: "He evidently believes the fool newspaper stories that I am anti-de Gaulle, even the kind of story that says I hate him, etc., etc. All this, of course, is utter nonsense. I am perfectly willing to have de Gaulle made President, or Emperor, or King or anything else so long as the action comes in an untrammled and unforced way from the French people themselves."¹⁵

Roosevelt reminded the Chief of Staff that his fair-haired generals were not always as well informed as they thought. "I do not agree when Ike says that there are only two major groups in France today. . . . I wonder

how he knows this because nobody else knows anything really about the internal situation in France." The President then hammered home a lesson: "It is awfully easy to be for de Gaulle . . . but I have a moral duty that transcends 'an easy way.' It is to see to it that the people of France have nothing foisted on them by outside powers. It must be a French choice—and that means, as far as possible, forty million people. Self-determination is not a word of expediency. It carries with it a very deep principle in human affairs."

The words were fair and did him honor. But Marshall and Eisenhower both knew from experience in North Africa that the President would cheerfully impose solutions if he felt they served American interests. They realized that he would have been less indulgent to French public opinion if de Gaulle had been his candidate.

Thus on his arrival in London, Marshall lacked the desired clear-cut directive, but he had firmly in mind presidential restrictions on dealing with de Gaulle. Already disturbed by reports of the French leader's actions in Algiers and his own unsatisfactory meeting with him months earlier in London, Marshall was not disposed to be charitable to de Gaulle.

There were of course strong reasons for de Gaulle's behavior in early June. Summoned to London at almost the last minute before an invasion in which his aid was solicited, he was asked to read a statement appealing to the French to obey the instructions of the Supreme Commander. Even had the contents been wholly acceptable, it is likely that one who considered himself—with justice—to be a master of the French language would have disdained a text prepared by other hands. The men in London who had written the words for him assumed mistakenly that gratitude for the liberation of France—a move that would cost American and British lives—would salve the pride of "the savior" of France. They had misread de Gaulle but not for lack of previous warnings.

Suspicious and hurt on his arrival in London, he grew icier by the hour as the plans were unfolded. Summoning all his natural hauteur and his resources of injured dignity, the French leader declined to participate. In an *opéra bouffe* routine, made tragic because of its implications for the future, de Gaulle debated his role with the Allied representatives until the early morning of D day. In the end he refused to speak until the evening of the landings. He refused to speak just after the Supreme Commander. He wrote a speech in which he mentioned Britain but not the United States and not the authority of the Supreme Commander. Making clear that he acted as a free agent, he called on Frenchmen to follow the instructions of the French provisional government and of the leaders authorized to give orders.¹⁶

Determined to bar any further action that implied an impediment to the sovereignty of France, as represented by him and the French Committee, de Gaulle challenged the Allies repeatedly in the week that followed. When he learned on the eve of D day that despite his previous disap-

proval the Allied commanders had issued invasion troops specially printed paper francs to be used in place of pounds and dollars, he ordered French officials in the liberated areas to treat the money as if it were counterfeit. For once he did not disturb Roosevelt. The President observed correctly that the currency had been devised to avoid the harmful effect on the franc of the circulation of American and British money in large quantities and that de Gaulle would bar it at his peril.

More maddening to the Allies was the French leader's handling of the French liaison officers. Realizing that there would be a shortage of officers with knowledge of the French language and with the administrative competence to handle liaison duties between local French officials and the liberating armies, the Allies trained more than 180 Frenchmen to accompany them to the Continent. To show his displeasure, worthy of the Sun King's wrath at those who insulted his ambassadors, de Gaulle stopped the transport of all but 20 of these officers in the early hours of the invasion. This act, again more likely to hurt him than the Allies, made his point even at the risk of poisoning relations with those who favored France's cause.

De Gaulle's highhandedness provoked one of Marshall's especially memorable explosions of anger. "I got hold of de Gaulle's chief officer [Lieutenant General Emile Béthouart, Chief of Staff of the General Staff of National Defense] and raised the devil," he recalled. To another French representative he raged that what the General had done was a "contemptible thing." He told Foreign Secretary Eden that de Gaulle's actions were "outrageous," and that "no sons of Iowa farmers would fight to put up statues of de Gaulle in France." ¹⁷ Shock waves of the explosion lapped at Washington, where Stimson noted that "when Marshall gets indignant it usually makes a profound impression." ¹⁸

Marshall was still angry about de Gaulle's moves years later. He declared: "We didn't dare tell de Gaulle too far in advance about the invasion. His people leaked. De Gaulle was furious. We had trained French officers for civil affairs, and he canceled every damn thing. The first thing Bradley told me in Normandy was that he had messed up their arrangements. They had fixed things up well and then, by God, de Gaulle had canceled it all." ¹⁹

Appalled at these developments, Eisenhower appealed to the United States Chiefs of Staff shortly after they arrived in London. He held no brief for de Gaulle, but he feared worsened relations at a moment when he most seriously needed French cooperation. He alarmed Marshall and his colleagues to the point that they urged the President to make some modification of his previous restrictions. Although the Prime Minister agreed with Roosevelt, they pointed out that foreign relations was one field in which Churchill could not dominate the War Cabinet—which favored de Gaulle. At best, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff said, the situation was

unpleasant and, in view of the possible unfavorable effect on French Resistance efforts, potentially dangerous.

Roosevelt radioed Marshall in reply that "we should make full use of any organization or influence that de Gaulle may possess and that will be of advantage to our military effort provided that we do not by force of our arms impose him upon the French people as the government of France. . . ." ²⁰

Marshall knew that ten days before the invasion Roosevelt—under pressure from London—had arranged for Vice Admiral Raymond Fenard, head of the French Naval Mission in Washington, to extend an unofficial invitation to de Gaulle to visit the American capital later in the summer. Here it was hoped that some meeting of minds could be reached on the role of the French Committee.

The Chief of Staff did not know the full details of a heated session Churchill had held with de Gaulle near Portsmouth on June 4. His effort to convince the French General of the need for closer accord with the United States had been diluted by expressions of pro-Gaullist sentiments by Foreign Secretary Eden and other members of the War Cabinet. ²¹

Without knowing all that had gone before Marshall had seen and heard enough to be deeply upset. In a transatlantic telephone conversation with Stimson on June 15 he outlined the disturbing situation. "And then he began to tell me," wrote Stimson, "of what he had observed of de Gaulle there and he was very hot; also of how violently Eden was fighting Churchill and the power that Eden had in the Cabinet and as leader of the House of Commons. The new thought that Marshall put into it was that all of this attack on the military effort, the troops, directly by de Gaulle, and indirectly by Eden's support of de Gaulle, was playing with the most dangerous kind of fire; that as soon as the American people learned that the cause which their boys were dying for was being obstructed by the French, there would be a tremendous explosive reaction against the French themselves which would play right into the hands of isolationism and make our people anxious to drop France altogether and drop her for good. . . ." If they could put this point across to the British, and to Eden in particular, it might do some good. ²²

After his return to Washington the Chief of Staff amplified his telephoned account. One evening at Chequers, Foreign Secretary Eden had urged that the Prime Minister grant full recognition to the French Committee of National Liberation as the provisional government of France. When Churchill raised objections, the Foreign Secretary pressed him harder. Marshall listened, growing angrier as the talk continued. Finally, as Stimson recorded the Chief of Staff's account, "Marshall broke loose. He said he couldn't talk politics but he said he knew more about the army and he knew more about the people of the United States than Eden did and that if Eden went on in this way and the things that had happened

from de Gaulle's course came out in the Press in full, how he had attacked our money and how he had refused to send over men who had been trained for the very purpose of helping us in the invasion it would make a wave of indignation in the United States which would swamp the whole damn British Foreign Office." Eden got very angry, his face flushed, and he left the room and went upstairs.²³

Marshall later explained that he had failed to realize that Eden was a great deal more than an appointee of the Prime Minister. He emphasized, as did Eisenhower, the special position that the Foreign Secretary had in the cabinet. Eventually he conceded that Eden was a strong, shrewd man. "I am ashamed to say that I was ignorant of his leadership in Parliament. I didn't appreciate him at full value. We had some difficult scenes, especially over de Gaulle."²⁴

Marshall's ire at de Gaulle was based on his disapproval of the French leader's personal tactics rather than on agreement with Roosevelt's conclusion that de Gaulle had no backing among the French. Despite his fury at the Frenchman's actions Marshall recognized the pointlessness of refusing to deal with the French Committee of National Liberation. For the success of the invasion he and the other U.S. Chiefs of Staff urged Roosevelt to make some arrangement with de Gaulle—even though this would involve a recognition of his special position as a representative of Free France.

Unmoved by Stimson's presentation of the Joint Chiefs' arguments, Roosevelt replied that de Gaulle's power would crumble if properly supervised elections could be held in France. Reflecting information that he had received from London, Stimson disagreed. The view there was that de Gaulle had become a symbol of deliverance to the French people. The President was still dubious. Citing Brigadier General William Donovan of the Office of Strategic Services as his source, Roosevelt asserted that other parties would spring up as the Allied armies moved forward.²⁵

In an effort to smooth out relations between the Foreign Office and the American political and military leaders, Stimson talked to the British ambassador, Lord Halifax, about the problems Eisenhower and Marshall faced at the moment in London. Halifax promised to advise Eden (1) that Eisenhower wanted some compromise, (2) that the President was willing to move toward some adjustment, and (3) that Marshall was worried over the dangers raised by de Gaulle's obstructionism.²⁶

Impressed by the strength of Marshall's convictions, Stimson next embarked on two courses—one to moderate strong pro-Gaullist sentiment in the American press and the other to moderate Secretary of State Hull's bitter anti-Gaullist views. Indirectly he appears to have inspired a column by David Lawrence and a *Washington Star* editorial criticizing de Gaulle's recent actions.²⁷

Stimson next tackled Secretary Hull directly. It was a matter of common sense, said the Secretary of War. Since de Gaulle had been invited to

Washington, they had the alternatives of "telling him he is a blank, blank, blank, or trying to get some working arrangement." ²⁸ As one familiar with Hull's brand of Tennessee profanity and his hot-tempered distaste for de Gaulle, Stimson recognized that the chief difficulty would consist of knowing how many "blanks" would be involved if they came to name calling

Within a few days the situation eased. Roosevelt arranged a friendly reception for the French leader, directing Marshall to handle many of the details Marshall was far from enthusiastic. He wrote Sir John Dill after de Gaulle's visit: "After exceedingly rough action on my part while I was in England I now find myself in the embarrassing position of being made seemingly the principal intermediary in the expression of General de Gaulle's desires on a large number of points I had rather supposed that I would be taboo after my emphatic language in London but it seems to have had the opposite effect. . . ." ²⁹

Marshall reacted to dealings with de Gaulle much the same as he had in regard to the 1942 accord with Darlan. He viewed the French problem solely in the light of its effect on Eisenhower's campaign and its effect on American public opinion. So far as the long-range political implications of recognition were concerned, he followed the President's lead

Before Marshall's return to the U.S. in late June he had attempted to clear up disagreements over future operations in the Mediterranean by flying to Italy for talks with Field Marshal Wilson, General Alexander, General Clark, and others. On his arrival he first flew over the Salerno beaches and up to Anzio. Then, accompanied by General Devers, chief of the U.S. Mediterranean Theater, he went to the Fifth Army, where General Clark, the commander, met him for a tour of his area. Nearly a hundred miles northwest of Rome, he observed a division that was chasing the Germans toward Pisa. A newspaper reported that "Driving past Grosseto under sporadic Nazi artillery fire, Marshall visited the sector on the west, and then with Clark went to a company command post east of the town where he watched U S artillerymen hammer a mountain pass through which German troops were travelling." He was near enough to the front to have a feel of the battle, but far enough behind that a correspondent had to rely on such tepid reports as this: "As Marshall's jeep approached Grosseto, the windshield was lowered to avoid reflecting the sun which would have attracted the attention of the Germans." As an indication of the General's daring, a reporter noted: "Marshall wore khakis, forbidden G.I.s at the front because they offer less camouflage than woolens. However, as his jeep came within enemy range, he slipped on a leather jacket but continued to wear his officer's cap, disdaining a helmet." ³⁰

At Clark's Fifth Army command post near Tuscania, north of Rome, Marshall met the corps commanders, among them General Alphonse Juin, whose French units were achieving great success. Clark proposed that Marshall include the Frenchman among the officers to receive the

Distinguished Service Medal. When Marshall protested that he had no authority to decorate a foreigner, Clark persisted. Finally Marshall agreed and pinned on Juin the first DSM awarded a Frenchman in World War II. The Chief of Staff formed a lasting respect for Juin, who became his favorite among high-ranking French officials.

Clark recalled later that he tried to win Marshall to a continued drive in Italy as opposed to landings in southern France. The Chief of Staff emphasized Eisenhower's desire for ANVIL in order to open Marseille as a port of entry. If that decision was final, Clark replied, he would do everything possible to back it. But he feared that the Allies were passing up an opportunity to strike hard at the Germans in Italy and that they could not be certain how fast they could proceed after the team in Italy was broken up. Of this meeting Marshall said later: "When we got to Rome, Alexander wanted to go up in the Balkans where he would be in command Clark said something about favoring it in his book. Like the others, he wanted something in his sphere. But he never said a word [publicly] at the time. He was a very good soldier and very loyal. . . ." ³¹

Before he left Italy, General Marshall had a personal pilgrimage to perform. He wanted to be able to tell Mrs. Marshall and Madge Brown that he had seen Allen's grave at the Anzio beachhead. Accompanied by his brother-in-law, Colonel Tristram Tupper, now Public Relations Officer at Devers's headquarters, Marshall went through the cemetery on June 18. In the field of 7,000 graves, in which the last interments were then being made before a new cemetery was opened near Rome, he found the young officer's resting place. Allen's plot lay on the main pathway through the cemetery a short distance beyond the main flagpole. After a short stay Marshall returned to the beach area, where he joined General Arnold for a visit to a nearby airstrip. There they found twenty ambulances with wounded lined up waiting to load their patients on departing planes. The two Generals went from vehicle to vehicle speaking softly to the men.

Marshall had paid his respects to Allen, but he wanted to know more of the action to fix its details in his mind. He next flew north in a small plane toward Velletri, twenty miles southeast of Rome, coming down to 300 feet so that he could clearly see the terrain over which Allen's unit had advanced. Still he was not satisfied. Later at Clark's headquarters, north of Rome, he interviewed Lieutenant Druckenmiller of Nazareth, Pennsylvania, who had a tank in Allen's company and had been just behind him in the final fight, and his stepson's tank driver and gunner, Technician Clifford A. Doherty of Pittsfield, Maine, and Private Wallace Bobo of Spartanburg, South Carolina. The lieutenant had Allen's map, "a much crumpled paper with the various lines and objectives noted in crayon," which he used to describe the action as the two enlisted men added their personal details.

Now knowing what he sought, the General drove to the Alban Hills and again boarded a small plane, from which, with the aid of the map, he

was able—as he told Madge Brown—“to identify the scene of Allen’s last action.” These facts, noted calmly and precisely, made his stepson’s last hours a part of his own experience, softening the pain of his death.

With his mind full of Allen’s final battle at the end of May, the General was attentive to the bearing and performance of other Americans he saw moving up into the current fighting. He wrote Madge: “These men looked in good shape and in high morale as they were engaged in a remarkably successful pursuit. The road north for forty or fifty miles was a litter of destroyed transportation, tanks, trucks, self-propelled artillery, etc., which the Air Corps had knocked out. Allen’s division was moving towards the front at the time, to deliver an attack. . . .”

To cheer the recent widow—it was three weeks since Allen had been killed—Marshall noted wryly that his stay in Rome had brought him unfavorable attention in the press. “I see by the papers here that I am being criticized because they turned on the hot water [in the Grand Hotel] in honor of my arrival. Also they apparently moved one or two newspaper men out of their rooms to accommodate our party, which did not please.”

After his journey to the scene of Allen’s death the General spent a busy day visiting other units, returning to his starting point for dinner with senior American and British officers. Next morning after early breakfast he left for Casablanca, had lunch there, dined in the Azores, and breakfasted in Newfoundland at five the following morning. He relaxed there on a brief fishing trip arranged by local officials and was back at his office on June 22 for the renewal of the debate on Operation ANVIL.³²

Stimson had avidly followed Marshall’s activities in Europe. Hearing his account of the trip, the Secretary of War admitted to himself for the first time that it was probably best that Marshall had stayed at his Washington post. “He is as a matter of fact keeping his hand on the control of the whole thing and his influence in driving ahead the war fast in the Pacific as well as in the Atlantic is a unique power nobody else could render.”³³ The Secretary’s delayed reassessment came in part from his appreciation of Marshall’s role in the renewed American effort to save the landings in southern France. Stimson now saw that Marshall, as a member of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, exercised an authority that he could never have mustered as Supreme Commander.

Determined finally to pin down Churchill and his staff on ANVIL, Marshall made that operation the main theme of his talks with General Wilson and members of the Mediterranean Theater staff on his visit to Italy in mid-June. The Chief of Staff had declared on June 17 that the activities of the Resistance forces in France exceeded expectations. Combined with the German need to be prepared for other possible landings in northern Europe, this factor seemed to have stretched enemy forces to the point where it was impossible for the Reich to move substantial reserves to the OVERLORD area. It would materially help Eisenhower if the Allies struck the overextended enemy forces from the south before autumn.

At the meeting with Wilson, the U.S. Chief of Staff questioned the alternative the British proposed—an attack at the head of the Adriatic. He insisted that the American Chiefs had no intention of going into the Balkans unless the Soviet Union did. General Eaker, U.S. Air Forces commander in the Mediterranean, replied that he gathered that the Russians had no current plans for going into the Balkans but that Allied penetration would bring them in. General Wilson stressed the importance of timing: ANVIL could not be mounted before August 7, but a drive northward from the Po Valley could be accomplished by that time.³⁴

After showing his willingness to discuss other possibilities, Marshall played his trump card for ANVIL. Convinced of American dependence on the opening of ports in southern France, he told Wilson that he had thirty to forty divisions still in the United States that could not be introduced into France through the ports of northwest France as quickly as they were needed by Eisenhower.

After the war Lord Wilson said of his meetings with Marshall:

We had a conference three days there. . . . We argued our case and General Marshall, in his masterly manner, argued the U.S. case. I must say, after he had finished, he convinced me that . . . our case . . . wouldn't stand up. The two points that struck me as the flaws in our case—the first one was that we in the Mediterranean had no idea how Eisenhower was hampered by not having the ports, you see, and the extreme importance that Marseille would be to his future campaign against Germany. . . . Another one was that the French wouldn't play on any operations across the Adriatic, and they were pressing, you might say, to go to France Once Marshall told me that, I knew that strategically [ANVIL] was the only way. We had to clear our sails and get those ports going. Alexander was visibly disappointed, because he said it was knocking the stuffing out of his offensive. None of us liked the offensive in Italy, really, against those mountains. It was a costly affair and we fought going that way instead of [the] way that was going to get us around it [apparently the Adriatic]. . . . Marshall I must say did impress me with the way he put his case, and I said, "Well General, after what you said, I agree. We will go for the landing on the south of France at the earliest possible date that we can do it."³⁵

Nonetheless Wilson loyally argued Alexander's case. Although he recognized that in stressing the need for ports, Marshall had brought out clearly "for the first time a point which seems to be of paramount importance to the whole consideration of the strategic problem," Wilson thought the Allies must still decide whether to make a major effort to finish the war in 1944 or work to ensure German defeat in the first half of 1945. If it was considered essential to have another major port—a decision that he obviously thought pointed toward a long-range build-up rather than an attempt at a quick thrust—then "I am convinced our only course is to carry out Operation ANVIL on the lines already planned."

If landings were to be made elsewhere in France, Wilson considered Churchill's Bordeaux venture unsuitable. It was too late for this opera-

tion to succeed. He also argued that a landing at Toulon was preferable to one farther west at Sète, where the beaches were the worst in the Mediterranean and the most heavily defended. In his opinion it would be possible with a three-division assault force and three divisions preloaded to take Toulon by D plus 10, Marseille a month later, and to build up the force in southern France to ten divisions by D plus 60. In the operation's favor were (1) the strong French Resistance movement in the area, (2) the excellence of Marseille as a port, and (3) the fact that a successful attack would virtually end the submarine menace to the Mediterranean. Against it was the danger that it would be impossible to attack until August 15 without prejudicing operations planned to destroy German forces south of the Pisa-Rimini line. He feared that a switch of Allied units from Italy to ANVIL would enforce a six-week pause on Alexander's operations.³⁶

In much of his report Wilson reflected Marshall's influence. But in deference to the Prime Minister's views he spelled out once more the case for a continued offensive in Italy. In the event of an effort to win the war in 1944, he considered it possible to gain decisive results in Italy by a drive across the Po and then an advance toward southern Hungary through the Ljubljana Gap. Later Sir John Kennedy, Assistant Chief of the Imperial General Staff, characterized this proposal as the "red herring" that was introduced "by Jumbo [Wilson] in his original project for the advance through the Julian Alps."³⁷

Dismissing the Mediterranean commander's arguments, Eisenhower remarked to Marshall that Wilson "seems to discount the fact that the Combined Chiefs of Staff have long ago decided to make Western Europe the base from which to conduct decisive operations against Germany." The Supreme Commander felt that "to contemplate wandering off overland via Trieste to Ljubljana is to indulge in conjecture to an unwarrantable degree at the present time." Eisenhower saw no point in waiting until mid-August to act, emphasizing to Marshall that "time is the vital factor, and the overriding consideration must be . . . to launch an operation in France, and nowhere else . . . at the earliest possible date. It is imperative that we obtain and maintain superiority over . . . [the Germans] and this must be done in France as quickly as we can. We need big ports." Marshall agreed fully with Eisenhower's diagnosis. There must be no delay in getting a firm decision, he insisted.³⁸

The question was far from settled, however. From Italy, General Devers warned Marshall on June 20 that Eisenhower's British political adviser, Harold Macmillan, had left hurriedly that morning for London "expressly to influence the Prime Minister to back the advance into the valley of the Po and then northeastward through the Ljubljana Gap, thence into Germany."³⁹

Macmillan had indeed departed on an undertaking that he cheerfully conceded was "far outside even the most liberal interpretations of my

functions"—somewhat to the annoyance of the Foreign Office, which was caught unawares. After a formal dinner party General Eaker had given for Marshall on June 17, Alexander had suggested that Macmillan fly to London with Wilson's Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Sir James Gammell, to put his plan before the Prime Minister. They assumed mistakenly, although it is difficult to see why, that Marshall was not "as hostile as might have been supposed." Perhaps on this point Alexander had been unduly influenced by General Clark's strong support, in which he was backed by General Eaker, for a continued major offensive in Italy. Macmillan may even have assumed that he had won Marshall's tentative acquiescence. Macmillan relates in his memoirs that at dinner one night during the visit Marshall had said, "'Say where is this Ljubljana? If it's in the Balkans we can't go there.' I told him it was practically in Austria and he seemed relieved." ⁴⁰

Actually, the General's views were unchanged. For Marshall, as for Roosevelt, Ljubljana—wherever it lay—was well east of the area to which he proposed to send American soldiers. Even then members of the Strategy Section of the Army's Operations Division were examining the implications of Alexander's proposal. They doubted if Wilson had troops to carry out his proposed operations against the Istrian Peninsula and the subsequent advance through northern Italy toward the Ljubljana Gap. Bad weather, poor lines of communication, French opposition to use of their troops for such an offensive, and the fact that the operation would not aid OVERLORD all constituted sound military arguments against these actions. On the political side the planners argued against movements that would involve the United States in Greece and Yugoslavia. The Chief of the Strategy Section noted: "Had we adopted a strategy to defeat Germany politically and economically then the suggested operation might be considered." But he warned, "Remember . . . the Austrians held off the Italians [in this area] for 4 years in World War I." ⁴¹

Macmillan's trip to London was not necessary to win Churchill to Alexander's strategy. The Prime Minister warmly welcomed his guest, adding that while the Foreign Office was ruffled at his coming, he was very pleased. He invited Macmillan to present Alexander's proposals to the British Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Secretary on June 22. The visitor found that Air Marshal Portal was attracted by the idea, that General Brooke seemed "more uncertain," and that Admiral Cunningham took little part in the proceedings.

Brooke was far more than "uncertain," and it is hard to understand why he failed to make his opposition clear to Macmillan. In his account of the meeting Brooke disparaged Churchill's support of Alexander's advance on Vienna: "I pointed out that, even on Alexander's optimistic reckoning, the advance beyond the Pisa-Rimini line would not start until after September; namely, we should embark on a campaign through the Alps in winter. It was hard to make him realize that, if we took the season

of the year and the topography of the country in legion against us, we should have three enemies instead of one. . . ." ⁴² Brooke's assistant, General Kennedy, recorded at this time: "the right course seems to be to give Alexander a free hand *South* of the Alps, then he can threaten the Julian front with small forces." The surplus forces could be used for an amphibious operation against France and reinforcing Normandy. ⁴³

On these points Brooke and Kennedy were saying privately much of what Marshall and Eisenhower were thundering publicly against the Alpine operation. Brooke and Kennedy held to the earlier British strategy of intensifying the campaign in Italy to compel Hitler to reinforce his line there. Brooke was certain, Bryant wrote, "that so long as he was subjected to pressure in Italy, Hitler would reinforce his troops there. . . ." As always, Brooke was baffled by the American Chief of Staff's inability to see what a trap, given Hitler's congenital inability to yield ground, Italy constituted to the German Army Marshall, on the other hand, continued to maintain that the Germans, if strongly attacked in the Apennines, would "withdraw to the Alps without contesting the Po Valley," and so leave Alexander "beating the air." ⁴⁴

American interest in additional ports in the south of France was intensified by the great Channel storm of June 19 that destroyed the American artificial harbor off Omaha Beach, wrecked hundreds of vessels, and prevented nearly all landing activity for a period of four days. As a result Eisenhower on the twenty-third stressed to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that his advance was slowing down and that he had been forced to postpone the second phase of his build-up. Fearing a stalemate, he urged the launching of ANVIL not later than the end of August and preferably by the middle of the month. ⁴⁵

The United States Chiefs of Staff of course agreed. On the twenty-fourth Marshall, in an informational memorandum to Eisenhower, ticked off the points in ANVIL's favor. After providing this reinforcement, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff asked that a directive be issued to General Wilson setting the date for the operation at August 1 at the latest. ⁴⁶

Divergences between the various British advisers and the Prime Minister now began to appear. Kennedy and Brooke returned to the argument that Alexander must finish off Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's forces south of the Alps, after which they would send their surplus forces either to ANVIL or around to the Channel coast to reinforce Eisenhower. They focused solely on Italy, while Churchill clung to a drive to Vienna by way of the Julian Alps as a thrust of a dagger "under the armpit." Kennedy wrote gloomily in his diary that these operations were impossible "unless the Germans are finished." Three days later as he worked with Brooke on the reply to Washington, he noted that the Prime Minister had produced a long memorandum on the Vienna operation. "This last, I think," he wrote, "should be kept to ourselves for the moment." Brooke was inclined to agree. "He said," Kennedy wrote, "we had led the Americans by the

nose from Casablanca to Florence, and it would not be easy to put this policy over on top of all that. They are so inclined to regard fresh ideas, to match new situations, as breaches of contract." Neither man saw that it was not the fresh idea but the extremely old pattern—their holding something back—as old as the TORCH concept, that worried Marshall. As a result, although the Ljubljana Gap concept was muted, the Americans were anxious about what came next in Italy beyond the Alps.⁴⁷

The British opponents of ANVIL now used growing concern over Eisenhower's need for ports as a basis for attacking the operation. They favored continued priority for OVERLORD and exploitation of its successes. Eisenhower, they argued, should retain all the landing craft he needed for further amphibious assaults and for developing port facilities along the coastline, as he captured it. The critical port area was along the Channel coast and not in the south. ANVIL's role of diverting the enemy from the OVERLORD area could be achieved by French Resistance forces in the Rhone Valley combined with a threat from Italy provided by Alexander's drive northward.⁴⁸

The American Chiefs of Staff fired back a sharp reply: "British proposal to abandon ANVIL and commit everything to Italy is unacceptable." They denied that Alexander would lack sufficient troops for his operations. They slapped at the British statement on the lack of air resources for both operations: "The U.S. Chiefs of Staff consider this comment proposes a condition of war-making on the Allied side which is a most serious reflection on the fighting ability of our ground forces. . . . 5,500 Allied operational planes are at present opposed by 300 enemy planes in Italy." Conceding that the Italian campaign had profited the Allies, they held this must be attributed in part to Hitler's "ill advised determination to fight south of Rome."

Marshall had shown at times a considerable capacity for bluntness—or, in Brooke's opinion, rudeness. This quality, evident in the conclusion, indicates the Chief of Staff's hand: "It is deplorable that the British and U.S. disagree when time is pressing. The British statements concerning Italy are not sound or in keeping with the early end of the war. . . . There is no reason for discussing further except to delay a decision which must be made."

The Chiefs' reply may have also been intended to stiffen Eisenhower's resolve. But there was no danger that the Supreme Commander would repeat his April decision to postpone ANVIL or that Montgomery would press him as he had in the spring. In late June, Allied troops were still held up in the hedgerows; Eisenhower believed that the British Chiefs of Staff had about reached the point of accepting ANVIL. Explaining to Marshall that while the British were honestly convinced that they could best aid OVERLORD by a drive toward Trieste, Eisenhower noted that they were well aware of Washington's fixed intention to mount ANVIL and of his own firm sponsorship of that operation. He added: "I have the further

impression that although the British Chiefs of Staff may make one more attempt to convince you of the value of the Trieste move, they will not permit an impasse to arise and will, consequently, agree to ANVIL." 49

Events proved Eisenhower right. The British did make a strong final effort to scuttle ANVIL before capitulating. Impressed by a recent intelligence report that Hitler had decided to hold fast in the Apennines, thus proving the correctness of Alexander's estimate of probable enemy action, they demanded continuance of the Italian campaign. Allied strategy, the British Chiefs of Staff persisted, "should be the continued use of maximum forces, wherever the enemy may be induced to fight." Dramatically they warned of the consequences of American policy: "History will not forgive commitment of substantial forces to an operation which will not mature for three critical months and may pay small dividends for three more." Under the circumstances they did not see how they could advise His Majesty's government to accept the American views.⁵⁰

His Majesty's government, as represented by the Prime Minister, needed no coaching. Churchill argued the British case with the President, Eisenhower, Marshall, and Hopkins. On June 28 he reminded Roosevelt that in choosing places to attack the Allies had to emphasize first the relation of the assault to the main effort and second the strain produced on the German high command.⁵¹

Then taking up specific proposals for southern France, Churchill knocked them down in turn. The proposed landing at Sète, directed toward Bordeaux, was a "heavy-footed method of approach." "We are therefore left," he lamented, with the "bleak and sterile" Toulon-Marseille operation. This landing, he warned, could not begin until the end of August.

Returning to the theme he had so consistently pursued, he declared that there was a grave question "Whether we should ruin all hopes of a major victory in Italy . . . and condemn ourselves to a passive role in that theater. . . ." He did not want to see Alexander deprived of much of his offensive strength in Italy for a march up the Rhone that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had described as unprofitable

In a much debated passage the Prime Minister raised anew the argument of the project for an attack across the Adriatic and the possible capture of Trieste by September. He was looking toward political considerations, he noted, "such as revolt of populations against the enemy or the submission and coming over of his satellites . . ."

Marshall and his associates, ready for this and the more familiar arguments, drafted a reply to which the President added two major paragraphs before sending it to London. Political considerations were important, the Chiefs conceded, "but military operations based thereon must be definitely secondary to the primary operations of striking at the heart of Germany."

Roosevelt agreed that Sète and Bordeaux were out of the picture but he

was equally unconvinced by Alexander's advocacy of a drive toward Trieste. In talking of Istria the British disregarded "two vital considerations: the grand strategy firmly believed by us to be necessary to the early conclusion of the war and the time factor as involved in the probable duration of a campaign to debouch from the Ljubljana Gap into Slovenia and Hungary." The President could not see the French using their troops in that role.

Although Churchill called the Toulon area "sterile," it offered suitable beaches and communications. The Rhone corridor, Roosevelt added, "is better than the Ljubljana Gap and certainly a lot better than the terrain over which we have been fighting in Italy."

In another of the paragraphs added at the White House, the President declared: "At Tehran we agreed upon a plan. That plan has done well up till now. Nothing has occurred to require a change. History would never forgive us if precious lives and time are lost as the result of indecision and debate. My dear friend, I beg you to let us continue my plan." Roosevelt's closing statement has been much quoted since the war: "Finally, in addition to the military, there are political conditions here which must be considered. I would never survive even a minor set-back in Normandy if it were known that substantial troops were diverted to the Balkans."⁵²

To Brooke the explanation for American opposition to British strategy lay in this final declaration. Misreading it, he wrote, "Owing to the coming Presidential Election it is impossible to contemplate any action with a Balkan flavour on its strategic merits."⁵³ The history of the drafting shows that the arguments were made first along the line that Marshall and his colleagues had consistently held and that Roosevelt had added an argument that he knew Churchill, as an old political campaigner, would understand.

Churchill next tried his hand with Eisenhower. In reply the Supreme Commander repeated Marshall's argument that ANVIL would open up additional ports through which to bring American divisions. By seizing Marseille the Allies might gain twelve more divisions than currently scheduled. It was a fateful decision, the Prime Minister said, but he left Eisenhower more hopeful than he had been earlier. "I have been informally advised," the Supreme Commander radioed Marshall, "that the Prime Minister will probably telegraph the President today agreeing to ANVIL."⁵⁴

Ten days later Eisenhower discovered the full force of the Prime Minister's passion when he stopped by Chequers. At this encounter Churchill "gave him hell" for insisting on ANVIL when there were greater opportunities in Italy and the Balkans.⁵⁵

In short no matter could be regarded as finally settled where the Prime Minister had been convinced against his will. On July 6, between his first and second talks with Eisenhower, he lashed out furiously. In a highly

significant statement he told Sir Hastings Ismay, his personal representative on the British Chiefs of Staff Committee. "Let them take their seven divisions—three American and four French. Let them monopolise all the landing-craft they can reach. But let us at least have a chance to launch a decisive strategic stroke with what is entirely British and under British command. I am not going to give way about this for anybody. Alexander is to have his campaign." Although he later emphasized grand strategy and the need of a careful plan to stop the Russians, Churchill could never eradicate this evidence of his very human desire to do something purely British for a Britain already falling behind in the struggle. An extremely proud man, conscious of the Empire whose survival he was determined to preserve, the Prime Minister wrote resolutely to Ismay: "I hope you realise that an intense impression must be made upon the Americans that we have been ill-treated and are furious. Do not let any smoothings or smirchings cover up this fact. After a while we shall get together again; but if we take everything lying down there will be no end to what will be put upon us." ⁵⁶

Thus not in petulance but in pride he had proclaimed his challenge. Aware, as Brooke demonstrated, that the Americans were swinging the weight of a preponderance of men and materiel, Churchill still was defiant. He was repeating the claims of one who had borne the heat of battle. Later he and his advisers would suggest that he spoke as a prophet of the Russian menace; actually he spoke then for an all-British challenge.

However, on July 12 the Combined Chiefs of Staff directed Wilson to launch the operation at the earliest possible date. He was to make preparations for a three-division assault, an airborne lift of a strength yet to be determined, and a build-up to ten divisions. After months of struggling, the Prime Minister seemed to have capitulated at last ⁵⁷

On August 1 ANVIL was renamed DRAGOON for security reasons, lest the enemy finally light on the significance of the word. The American rose under another name smelled no sweeter to Churchill; sadly he spoke of being "dragooned." He continued to thrash about in frenzied efforts to divert, postpone, or strangle the operation. In early August he seized on a communication from Eisenhower that he interpreted as proposing a landing on the Brest Peninsula in preference to southern France. Whether he misunderstood or milked the statement for more than it was worth is not clear. Seeing one last chance to kill the operation, he telegraphed the President that he "backed up" the Supreme Commander's plan for a change in the landing place. Brooke also misinterpreted Eisenhower's proposal, calling it "by far the best solution" and "what we want." ⁵⁸

Eisenhower was uneasy over the British reaction. Knowing that Marshall had always felt that he had failed to stand firm on the earlier ANVIL, Eisenhower hurriedly assured his Chief: "I will not under any condition agree at this moment to a cancellation of DRAGOON." He explained that he believed that if there were sufficient port facilities elsewhere to support

unlimited forces, troops should be brought in wherever possible. The Prime Minister might have misconstrued these views, but "I have never wavered."⁵⁹ There was no assurance that the Brittany ports could be working before several weeks. The main point was that he needed more troops and soon.

A week before the DRAGOON attack Churchill had one last try at the Supreme Commander. In this case, as in many others, it is a question how much of his performance represented deep conviction and how much was histrionics. Eisenhower apparently took him at face value on this occasion. Churchill raged that the United States was acting as "a big strong and dominating partner" rather than one trying to see the British viewpoint on the Italian campaign. Eisenhower, who for his part failed to see the importance attached to the drive toward Trieste, had never seen him "so obviously stirred, upset, and even despondent." In a final dramatic appeal the Prime Minister cried out that he might have to go to the King and "lay down the mantle of my high office."⁶⁰

The familiar act was getting stale. Eisenhower assured him that the Americans had not disregarded British views nor had they used their strength as a bludgeon in conferences. In a kind understatement of the extent to which Churchill had used every means at his command to bulldoze the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Eisenhower recalled that British views had often prevailed and that he did not see why the Americans "should be considered intemperate in our long and persistent support of ANVIL."⁶¹

In last-minute efforts to stop DRAGOON Churchill next appealed to the President and to Harry Hopkins. Roosevelt, on his way to Hawaii to confer with MacArthur and Nimitz, merely confirmed his earlier decision. Hopkins, probably advised by Marshall, replied that it was too late to change.⁶² The Prime Minister still fought until his own subordinate, General Wilson, ruled against the switch of the operation to Bordeaux by saying that forward units of the DRAGOON force had already sailed.

Once he had surrendered, the Prime Minister proved gracious. On the eighteenth he radioed Eisenhower that he had watched the landings on the fifteenth from afar. "All I have seen there makes me admire all the perfect precision with which the landing was arranged and intimate collaboration of British-American forces and organizations." Expressing a view strongly shared by Marshall, Eisenhower replied: "I am delighted to note in your last telegram to me that you have personally and legally adopted the DRAGOON. I am sure that he will grow fat and prosperous under your watchfulness."⁶³

The landings went much more rapidly than predicted. Rather than influencing decisively the battle in Normandy, the southern landings were aided by developments on Eisenhower's front. Before the first troops had landed in the south, United States forces in northern France had broken out past St. Lô (July 25–August 1) and were sweeping into Brit-

tany. Within a few days the bulk of the Allied forces had reversed direction and were driving eastward against the enemy. Operation DRAGOON came as the Allies were closing in on the Germans near Falaise.

Along the Loire, U.S. tactical air forces and French Resistance forces harassed German units withdrawing from western France. With U.S. and French units pouring across the DRAGOON beaches, the Germans in the Rhone Valley and southern France could not be spared to interfere with Eisenhower's advance on the north. After short delays the Allied forces liberated Toulon and Marseille and moved northward in what at times were little more than road marches. To the British the ease of the operation, forecast by the Americans, was proof that it was not needed. To the Americans it was evidence that the Prime Minister and his advisers had frivolously delayed what could have been an important contribution to OVERLORD.

If the rapid clearing of France was important and if the cross-Channel concept was valid, Operation DRAGOON, while no longer crucial to Eisenhower's victory, was still worth the effort. It hastened the ousting of the Germans from most of France, it brought French forces back onto French soil, it started the rehabilitation of French industry and transport, it threatened the Ruhr and the Rhineland, it freed excellent ports for the introduction and support of additional American units, it eliminated a number of German units, and it opened up new air bases for attacks on the German homeland⁶⁴

Yet Churchill then and many British writers since have viewed DRAGOON as a mistake of almost disastrous proportions for British and, perhaps, Allied arms. Intent on victory for Alexander in Italy, Churchill viewed any diversion from that effort as folly. In the years that followed General Marshall held firmly to his wartime views on ANVIL/DRAGOON. In 1956 he declared: "I don't agree with the Prime Minister on ANVIL at all. In fact, I am in almost complete disagreement on every phase of it. He was intent on one thing and he sways all his arguments to justify that one thing. . . . Almost everything he said to deter us from that operation down there went exactly the other way with a tremendous success."

In 1956 Marshall insisted strongly, as had Brooke on other occasions, that Churchill's concepts of military strategy were deplorably unrealistic: "The 'soft underbelly' had chrome-steel sideboards. That was mountainous country. There was no question in my mind that the West was the place to hit. If we had accepted the Balkan thing, it would have scattered our shots. They are letting political considerations after the fact dominate the whole concept"⁶⁵

Again in 1956 Marshall demonstrated that his support of ANVIL derived from considerations of overall strategy and a sense of history that could give Churchill pause: "What we keep hearing about are aftermath performances. The operation in southern France is convincing on the basis of arithmetic and logic. Half of Patton's army was supplied from Marseille.



The Liberation of France

It was important in the Ardennes period. It helped to complete the Eisenhower operation in Normandy.

"We determined to go through with the big thing. We didn't want to have trouble like Haig did in the First World War. We wanted to keep to the main thing. The southern France operation was one of the most successful things we did." ⁶⁶ General Marshall recalled that he later had a paper prepared for possible use at the Malta conference in which the dire warnings of Churchill, Wilson, and others were listed and then followed by a statement of the turn of events which proved the critics wrong. "The differences were so great that it was almost facetious," said Marshall. He found that the paper, referred to as "The Castigation of ANVIL," was so bitter that he couldn't use it. Preserved in his files, the original copy was carefully sealed with instructions not to let it be circulated.

To a considerable extent Marshall saw British insistence as an example of "localitis." He said: "If you take a commander, say Alexander, in that place, of course he wants it [the operation] there. MacArthur was just as much opposed to ANVIL as Alexander was, for the same reason. He wanted the things . . . out there where he was. If you followed every commander, you'd just be lost, we'd be sunk, you'd be all over the place. Our hardest [task] was trying to keep to the things that we could do. . . ." ⁶⁷

Against Marshall the British have argued that ANVIL deprived Alexander of possible victory in northern Italy over Kesselring's forces. Undoubtedly the shift of units from the British front to ANVIL hampered the advance in Italy. To the British commander, as to General Clark, this development after months of maddeningly slow advances seemed doubly tragic. Now that the battle was shifting in the Allies' favor, it seemed that all-out victory in Italy and a possible speedy drive to Vienna were blocked only by the wrongheadedness of the Americans. Some British writers placed the decision at the door of a mulishly obstinate Marshall.

The first strong charge against American "folly" was made by Australian newsman Chester Wilmot and has since become virtually an article of faith for opponents of the landings in southern France.⁶⁸ It has been made into a special myth by anti-Soviet writers, who continually shift further back into early 1944 or late 1943 the date at which Churchill began to consider an Italian victory as a means of forestalling the Russians in Central Europe. It is a fascinating theory, but it will not stand up against the facts.

For convincing refutations of these statements one need not go beyond the British official historians and two of the chief British officers involved—Brooke and Wilson. True, Churchill was an old antagonist of the Russian bear clawing its way toward India or the Eastern Mediterranean or the marches of the old German Empire. Certainly he became disquieted as he saw a badly mauled and heavily scarred Red Army recover magnificently for a drive on Budapest and Warsaw and threaten Vienna, which had stood against the Turks. A successor of Castlereagh and Disraeli, he

feared the Eastern armies as they moved into Western preserves. Much as Metternich and Castlereagh had shivered as the horsemen of the steppes moved through Central Europe toward the streets of Paris, Churchill dreaded the coming of the Red Army. In later years it seemed to him and others that this fear, never fully dormant during the war, had been at the forefront of his insistence on Alexander's strategy.

John Ehrman, official British historian of this period, although wedded to some degree to the Italian campaign strategy, concedes that in the spring and summer of 1944 Churchill never presented his argument for pushing a drive toward Trieste as a means of forestalling the Russians. Unquestionably the Prime Minister and some members of the British Foreign Office became uneasy about the Russians in the summer of 1944. Churchill's physician, Lord Moran, records that one day in early August, Churchill burst out, "Good God, can't you see that the Russians are spreading across Europe like a tide; they have invaded Poland, and there is nothing to prevent them marching into Turkey and Greece."⁶⁰ Moran said that Churchill had got it into his head that Alexander might solve the problem by "breaking into the Balkans." Perhaps Russian power was behind his intense advocacy of the Italian campaign. If so, he made no mention of it in his arguments with Marshall; his main interest appeared to be ensuring that Alexander had his chance to score a major victory.

Whatever Churchill's intent, the question remains whether on tactical grounds he was right and Marshall wrong on the shifting of troops from Italy to southern France. Here there is no easy answer. If the Germans were ready to fold up—but one cannot forget their staying power around Antwerp and at Aynhem, in the step-by-step defense of the Roer Dam and the bridgeheads of the Rhine, and their counteroffensive in the Ardennes—then one could contend that a rapid drive to the northeast corner of Italy might conceivably have hastened the collapse of Germany.

In view of the rugged terrain beyond Florence, eloquently described by Alexander himself, there is considerable doubt that even if the British commander had been permitted to keep the seven American and French divisions that were taken from him, he could have made the drive to Trieste and through the Ljubljana Gap into the heart of Germany more quickly than Eisenhower ultimately pushed his forces eastward.⁷⁰

Had Churchill now urged an anti-Russian crusade on Marshall, the Chief of Staff might well have asked some searching questions: (1) Is it in our interest to create possible clashes with the Russians when the Germans and the Japanese are still undefeated? (2) Is it possible to prevent the Russians from keeping what they already occupy? (3) If the British were so intent on forestalling the Russians, why hadn't they backed the cross-Channel attack a year earlier?

Although Field Marshal Brooke grumbled unceasingly over Marshall's lack of strategic insight and Eisenhower's lack of generalship, he never

completely shared Churchill's fondness for the Ljubljana Gap and Trieste. In the postwar period he categorically denied that he had ever presented these measures to Marshall as a means of stopping the Russians. "I never supported Winston or Alex in that maneuver, because it didn't seem feasible . . ." he said in 1961. "There is no doubt," he continued, "that Winston had a Balkan liking . . . and he used to make matters rather difficult for me with Marshall with statements he would make, which Marshall would often think were inspired by me, and they were not inspired by me at all." ⁷¹

Field Marshal Wilson also had his reservations about Churchill's infatuation with the Balkans. Wilson said after the war that the "weakness really in our going over the Adriatic was the logistic one, and what it came to [was] if we had a pushover we would do jolly well, but if we got stuck in heavy battle, the question of the supply and maintenance would have become very difficult then, and perhaps the further we got, the more difficult it would have become. In that I think our people in Italy and the Mediterranean were more optimistic than the planners here in London. But I did have a talk afterwards with one of our planners and [he] said, 'You know you are on very thin logistic ice as regards maintaining a large force if you went beyond the Ljubljana Gap'" Wilson recalled how he had changed his mind and favored the landings in southern France after Marshall made his arguments about the need of a large port. He declined to do any second guessing about the decision. "As it happened, the way things worked in the south of France, the way we jumped the Germans in getting the road from the coast practically up to Lyons intact, really made all the difference in the world, and as it worked out, it [made] for the best. That really, I think, gives you the whole picture. . . . I have never altered my opinion I gave it and I have never gone back on saying it." ⁷²

Lord Moran records that he once asked Alexander if Churchill would have made a good general. The Field Marshal remained silent so long that Moran interjected: "Winston is a gambler. Marshall would make a big decision, but only after he had carefully removed every possible source of error." To which Alexander, half to himself, replied: "Yes, that's true. Winston is a gambler." ⁷³ The exchange may have some validity so far as the ANVIL operation was concerned. In the summer of 1944 the landings in southern France seemed to promise more certain advantages to Eisenhower's campaign than did Churchill's gamble, which might have brought the Allies to the gates of Vienna.

On this issue Marshall had no doubt of the rightness of his course. He had lost too many battles to Churchill and Brooke over Mediterranean operations to be broad-minded on this issue. He had happily carried home too many beribboned contracts only to find that there were serious reservations in the fine print. The Anzio landing, to which he reluctantly agreed, had brought grievous setbacks. In his grudging agreement to delay

ANVIL in the early spring of 1944, when he gave way to Eisenhower's arguments and the firm resistance of the British, he had made clear that it was his last concession.

When summer came, he refused to go further with the Prime Minister. He had commitments across the Pacific and he did not propose to put them in jeopardy. Only a clear decision by the President and Churchill that henceforth the main effort would be to forestall the Russians in Central Europe would have changed his view. And that decision not only was not made; it was not then raised in the Allied councils by any member of the Combined Chiefs of Staff or by Roosevelt or Churchill.