

THE STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL DEBATE OVER OPERATION ANVIL:
THE ALLIED INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE IN AUGUST, 1944

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In August, 1944, the Allies embarked on one of the “two supreme operations of 1944,” Operation Anvil/Dragoon. It is an operation that almost did not happen. Envisioned as a direct supporting operation of Overlord, Anvil soon ran into troubles. Other operations taking away resources away from Anvil in addition to opposition from the highest levels of Allied command threatened Anvil. This thesis chronicles the evolution of this debate, as well as shed light on one of the most overlooked and successful operations the Allies embarked on in World War II.

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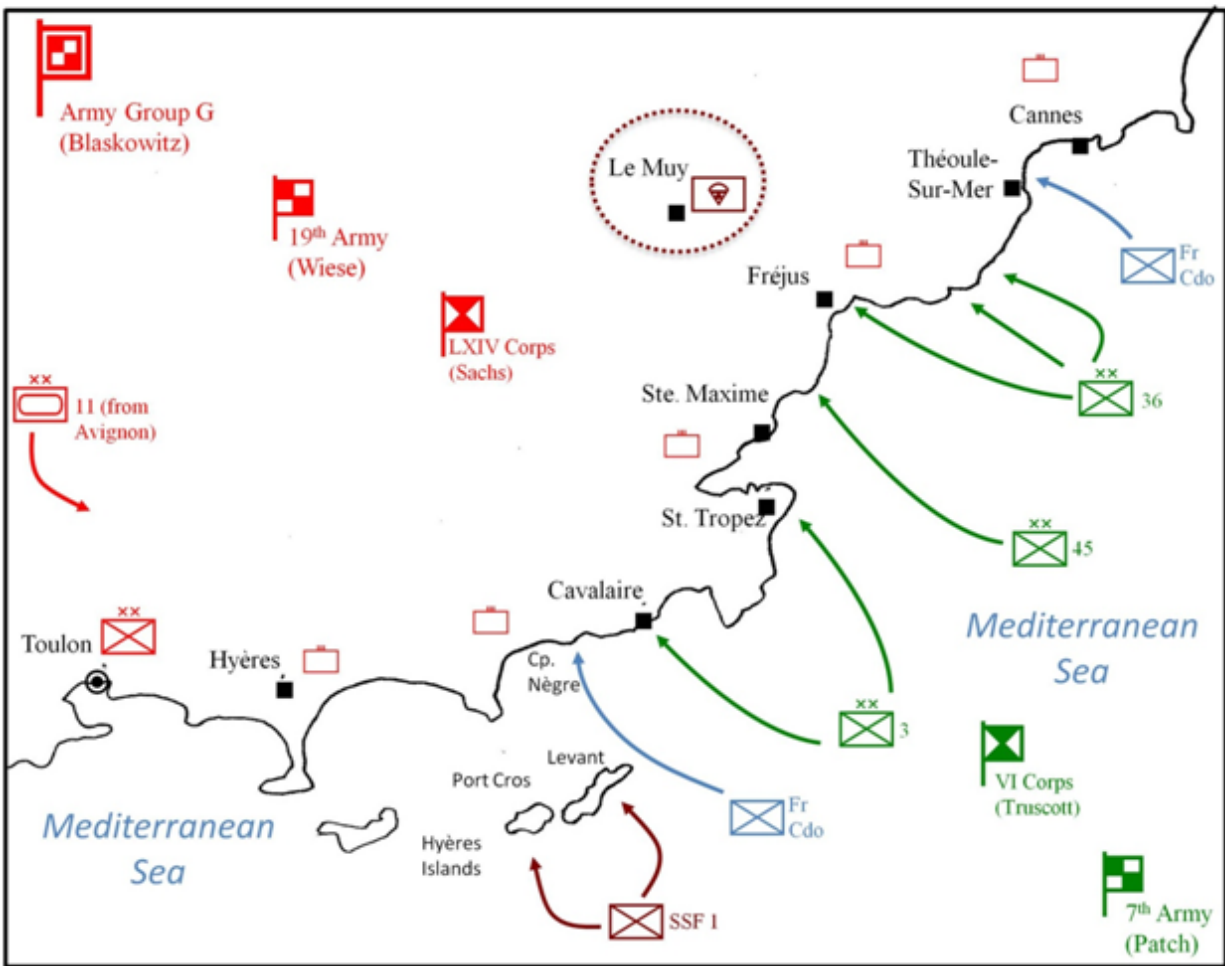
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFHQ.....	Allied Force Headquarters
BCS.....	British Chiefs of Staff
CCS.....	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
COS.....	Chief of Staff
COSMED.....	Chief of Staff Mediterranean
COSSAC.....	Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander
ETO.....	European Theater of Operations
JCS.....	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JSM.....	Joint Service Mission
JPS.....	Joint Planning staff
LCI.....	Landing Craft, Infantry
LCT.....	Landing Craft, Tank
LSD.....	Landing Ship, Dock
LSE.....	Landing Ship, Emergency Repair
LSH.....	Landing Ship, Heavy
LSI.....	Landing Ship, Infantry
LST.....	Landing Ship, Tank
MAAF.....	Mediterranean Allied Air Force
MATAF.....	Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force
MTO.....	Mediterranean Theater of Operations
SAC.....	Supreme Allied Commander
SACMED.....	Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean
SHAEF.....	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SOS.....	Supply of Service
TF 163.....	Task Force 163
WNTF.....	Western Naval Task Force



Map 1. Anvil: the Allied Landing on the Riviera, 15 August 1944

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Operation Anvil, later renamed Dragoon, has not received the attention it deserves in the historiography of World War II.¹ Academic works have seldom covered the operations in southern France. Mentions of the operation are usually made in passing. It is treated as though it was just a footnote in the war. Literature devoted solely to the operation is sorely lacking, and largely devoid of academic credentials.² A scouring of several prominent one-volume histories of the war exemplifies this oversight.³ This is a typical example of the perfunctory coverage of this campaign:

As this drive towards Paris began, Allied, air, sea and land forces launched Operation Dragoon, landing 94,000 men and 11,000 vehicles between Toulon and Cannes on the Mediterranean coast of France in a single day. Within twenty-four hours these troops had pushed nearly twenty miles inland. That day, in Paris, amid the excitement of the news of this fresh landing, the city's police force, hitherto a reluctant arm of German civic control, agree to put aside its uniforms, keep its arms and join the active resistance on the streets. But the revenge of the occupier was still not ended. That day, five French

¹In this thesis, the operation is referred to as Anvil, until the name change on 1 August 1944 occurs. It is also referred to as Anvil when speaking of the operation generically.

² There are few monographs dedicated to covering the breadth of the campaign. Some even cover only portions of it, such as the airborne operation or the initial landings themselves. See Jeffrey Clarke and Ross Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993); Alan Wilt, *The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press University, 1981); Mark Stout and Harry Yeide, *First to the Rhine: The 6th Army Group in World War II* (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2007); Robert H. Adleman, *The Champagne Campaign* (Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1969); Stephen Sussna, *Defeat and Triumph: The Story of a Controversial Allied Invasion and French Rebirth* (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2008); William B. Breuer, *Operation Dragoon: The Allied Invasion of the South of France* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1987); and Steven J. Zaloga, *Operation Dragoon 1944: France's Other D-Day* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009). One recent work that argues that Anvil should not have occurred is Anthony Jones-Tucker, *Operation Dragoon: The Liberation of Southern France 1944* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2009). Lesser coverage of the campaign can be found in Robert A. Miller, *August 1944: The Campaign for France* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1988) and Sir William Jackson, *Victory in the Mediterranean, Part II June to October 1944*, Vol. VI (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987), 173-200.

³ Some monographs that are referenced here and cover the spectrum of the historiography are: Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War: A Complete History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989); John F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45: A Strategical and Tactical History* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1954); Henri Michel, *The Second World War*, trans. by Douglas Parmée (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975); John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin, 1989); Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II*, 2005 ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000).

prisoners, among them de Gaulle's clandestine military representative in Paris, Colonel Andre Rondenay, were taken by the Gestapo to the village of Domont, twelve miles north of Paris, and shot. Their killers had then returned to Paris for an 'executioners' banquet', of champagne.⁴

Other accounts are similarly sketchy. And yet, the planning for Anvil was complex and lengthy. United States and Great Britain were the principal protagonists in planning. Discussions reached volatile intensity at times.⁵ And Anvil proved to be one of the most successful operations that the Allies executed during the war.

Numerous factors cause Operation Anvil to receive less attention than it deserves. The operation was planned in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO). Yet, it occurred in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). As a result, both theater commands assumed one part of the campaign. Unresolved was the synthesis between the two commands. Contrary to previous landings, this one went forward in a highly professional, almost systematic manner. Absent was the amateurishness of the landings in Africa, Sicily or Italy. Fighting was nowhere near as fierce as that in, say, Salerno or Normandy. There was no danger of the invasion force being thrown back into the ocean as at Anzio. Innumerable mishaps like those which occurred in Sicily were largely absent. As a result, the Riviera landings of 15 August were among the least contested in the war. Most of the historical debate centers around logistics, usually the most decisive aspect of warfare, but typically the least glamorous.

⁴ Gilbert, *The Second World War*, 568.

⁵ For strategic planning of the operation, see John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy: August 1943-September 1944* Vol. V (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956); Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959); Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1968); Mark Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993); Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1996); Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1968); Trumbull Higgins, *Soft Underbelly: The Anglo-American Controversy over the Italian Campaign 1939-1945* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968).

By this point in the war, however, tactics were replaced in importance by logistics. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, suggests as much.⁶ Eisenhower needed as many divisions as he could get on the continent at once, following his broad-front strategy. Acquiring additional ports away from Normandy was the most efficient way to do this. It is this aspect that most historians have tended to ignore. Armies in Italy were unfortunately rendered irrelevant to the operational outcome of the war. The British resented having their main focus in Italy weakened, but forces were transferred from there to Anvil, an operation in which the British had almost zero participation.⁷ Operation Anvil was, according to Eisenhower, the most decisive advantage given to the Allies in the struggle with Germany after the Normandy invasion.⁸ Its primary value was logistical, in addition to adding hundreds of thousands of troops to the front lines. Anvil was complimentary to Operation Overlord. Just as Batman needs Robin, so too did Overlord need Anvil.

What has emerged is an unbalanced narrative of the western European campaign. In regards to the Normandy campaign, there is a stunning lack of reference to the planning of Overlord in histories of the campaign. Most histories focus on a particular unit or individual segment of the battlefield. When planning is discussed, there is almost a universal lack of reference to Anvil.⁹ This was the operation from which Overlord borrowed to make up for a lack of resources. This incomplete picture of the operation is usually followed by a breakout and

⁶ See Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1948), 220-321.

⁷ For the full order of battle for Operation Dragoon, see Steven T. Ross, eds., *U.S. Army War Plans 1938-1945* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2002), 239.

⁸ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 294. The full quote reads, "There was no development of that period which added more decisively to our advantages or aided us more in accomplishing the final and complete defeat of the German forces than did this secondary attack coming up the Rhone Valley."

⁹ Antony Beevor, *D-Day: The Battle for Normandy* (New York: Viking, 2009); Victor Brooks, *The Normandy Campaign* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2002); William G.F. Jackson, *'Overlord': Normandy 1944* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1979); Cornelius Ryan, *The Longest Day* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959). The monograph which contains some discussion on Anvil and its effects on Overlord is Max Hasting, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 25-26, 57.

a race to the Rhine. Nazi Germany's Ardennes offensive in the winter of 1944 caused a setback from inevitable victory, which was achieved in May 1945. A few historians have addressed this imbalance of coverage in recent works.¹⁰ Operation Anvil needs to be properly integrated with the rest of the Anglo-centric narrative of the ETO.

There are a number of things that can be done to establish an equilibrium. First and foremost, there needs to be a full, scholarly account of the merits of Operation Anvil. This includes the full project, from inception to launch. Special emphasis needs to be placed on the role of the operation within the strategic situation of the Allies, as well as Germany. There are histories of the operation which cover some, but not all aspects of the operation, resulting in an incomplete picture. Too often histories which claim to be authoritative cover only one participant in the conflict. It does not suffice to see it discussed as an isolated event, excluding other developments in the ETO. Secondly, there needs to be a discussion of Operation Dragoon from the landings until the conclusion of the operation, one month later. In this way, the reader will more fully comprehend the origins, evolution and execution of one of the two "supreme operations" of 1944.¹¹

The fall of 1943 saw the United States repositioning itself among the Allies. For the first year of the war, the United States usually deferred to the British, who had been at war with the Axis for four years. It took until the end of 1942 before the United States began fighting in the ETO. As the Allies slowly advanced through North Africa, the Americans still relied heavily on the British for sound strategic, operational, and tactical advice. Generals Eisenhower and George C. Marshall followed Prime Minister Winston Churchill's lead on attacking peripheral territories

¹⁰ The most prominent example is Norman Davies, *Europe at War 1939-1945: No Simple Victory* (London: Pan Books, 2006).

¹¹ Combined Chiefs of Staff, *Sextant Conference: Papers and Minutes of Meetings Sextant and Eureka Conferences* (Washington, DC: Combined Chiefs of Staff, 1943), 282.

held by the Nazis, famously known as the "soft underbelly." Yet, the United States had the largest economy of the Allies, and its numbers were beginning to be felt across the theater. Increasingly the military makeup of the Allies was becoming more American. The decisive year of 1944 promised to be a year in which America would see its star rise higher than anyone else, and Anvil would be a part of that shift.

Conversely, Great Britain began to slow down throughout 1943. Its strategic commitments to the empire taxed every resource it possessed. The empire was near the end of its manpower reserves, having detached formations to every part of the globe. The Atlantic Charter held the promise of "self-determination," which burdened the empire further. Still, Great Britain was holding on. They had their charismatic leader in Churchill, a national hero, in General Bernard L. Montgomery, and hope from the Battle of Britain and El Alamein. Britain welcomed America's material wealth, and expected to dictate affairs, as they were accustomed to doing as a super power. America's leaders began to realize its contributions, and recognized they would only grow within the alliance. As such, they looked to contribute more in a primary way to the direction of the war. This would become clear at Cairo and Tehran, where the Sextant and Eureka conferences would take place. But Great Britain still felt like it should continue to be the driving force behind policy and implementation, and this would complicate Operation Anvil.

This thesis is the foundation for full coverage of the Anvil campaign. It covers the Allied debate over, and planning of, the operation. The story begins in August 1943, at the Quadrant conference with the conception of Anvil. It discusses the decisive opinion of Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin in favor of the operation at the Tehran conference in November. Subsequently from those talks, doubt is sown into the operation with the launching of Operation Shingle in January 1944, the Allied invasion at Anzio. Early supply problems concerning Anvil appear

here, and Anvil will be postponed in March 1944. Chapter 3 concerns the shelving of Anvil and the attempts to resurrect the operation. This discussion ranges from the end of March to the launch of Overlord. Chapter 4 discusses the resurrection and final planning of Anvil/Dragoon to D-Day, 15 August 1944. Schisms within the alliance will be a central theme. This thesis eschews judging President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), or General Marshall as Chief of Staff of the Army. They, along with Eisenhower and the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), were correct in their assertions that the campaign was necessary. Likewise, it does not seek to fault Churchill, the British Chiefs of Staff (BCS), General Harold Alexander or General Henry Maitland "Jumbo" Wilson for their opposition to Anvil.¹² Instead, an investigation analyzes the systemic factors surrounding the stances each side took. This transcends the traditional "right and wrong" approach many historians use when discussing plans and operations. This thesis shows that Anvil was a major factor in Allied success in the latter half of 1944, and it could have contributed even more had it not been delayed.

The contrasting and contradictory directions of the two principal Allies created a fissure in the relationship between the two. It was the planning of Operation Anvil that brought many of these issues to the surface. This thesis argues that the planning of Anvil forced Great Britain to accept the role of supporter, rather than leader, of the coalition. Britain's change in status became a permanent one, with the once great empire removed from super power status. Anvil

¹² Primary source material for opinions and debate surrounding Anvil are found in Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*; Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Enigma Books, 2007); Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953); Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953); Jacob L. Devers, "Operation Dragoon: The Invasion of Southern France," *Military Affairs* 10 (1946), 2-41; George C. Marshall, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall, Volume 4: Aggressive and Determined Leadership June 1, 1943 - December 31, 1944*, ed. Larry I. Bland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Henry Maitland Wilson, *Report by The Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Southern France August 1944* (Washington DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946); Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, *The History of the French First Army*, trans. Malcolm Barnes (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1952); Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West, 1943-1946: Based on Diaries and Autobiographical Notes of Field Marshal the Viscount Alanbrooke* (London: Collins, 1959) and Bernard Law Montgomery, *Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alaemin* (London: Collins, 1958).

marked the first time where the United States, politically and militarily, forged ahead with something Great Britain vehemently opposed. As much as Great Britain fought and disagreed, they had no option but to support America in whatever endeavors they wished to pursue. It is a story seldom told to completion, and is one that needs to be exalted and recognized for what it is worth.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTION AND PRELIMINARY PLANNING

With the end of the North African campaign in May 1943, the Allies could focus on the next phase of the war. That same month, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Washington D.C. as part of the Trident conference. The Allies were expecting to launch numerous operations in the next eighteen months, and one of the possibilities was a landing in southern France, possible only after Allied capture of Sardinia and Corsica. The Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) directed that future operations receive further analysis¹

The summer of 1943 was a contemplative time for the Allies. They recently completed their first successful campaign, in North Africa. They captured 250,000 weary Axis prisoners, along with 3,600 officers. The Allies then invaded Sicily through Operation Husky, which commenced on 9 July 1944.² The next target for Allied armies was the “boot” of central Europe, Italy. It was the easiest and most logical step to make. Beyond the immediacy of continuing operations against the Axis, however, it was time to consider long-term planning. The liberation of France, which was anticipated to follow that of Italy, needed concrete plans, as opposed to the flashy but unrealistic early outlines for Operations Sledgehammer and Roundup, the operational codenames for reentry into France in 1942. These considerations led to the Allied planning conference in August 1943 at Quebec, codenamed Quadrant. This conference decided the future of the Italian and Normandy campaigns. The Allies decided to invade the

¹ Combined Chiefs of Staff, “Trident Conference, May 1943: Papers and Minutes of Meetings,” *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences* (Washington DC: Joint History Office, 2001) [CD ROM].

² Robert M. Citino, *The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting A Lost War, 1943* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2012), 104-109, 175.

Italian mainland through its “toe,” and in addition the participants at Quebec discussed the possible invasion of southern France.³

As Husky was drawing to a close, the leaders of the United States and Great Britain convened for the first Quadrant sessions on August 14. The participants received preliminary conference papers as a basis to facilitate discussion. One of these preliminary documents outlined the situation of German forces in the Mediterranean theater for the remainder of 1943 into 1944.⁴ The Combined Chiefs established Germany's primary role as defending “Fortress Europe” (*Festung Europa*). It also outlined the Axis capabilities. The CCS also determined that the Axis had available fifty-three and a half divisions near southern France.⁵ Fourteen of these divisions were coastal divisions (i.e., poorly armed and static). Thirteen and a half were German field divisions. A further eighteen divisions stood in the Balkans. Estimated air strength of Axis air power in the central Mediterranean was some 1,995 aircraft.⁶ Finally, Allied planners believed there was a strategic reserve of eleven more divisions in France.⁷

The CCS released an additional report titled “Strategic Concept for the Defeat of the Axis in Europe.” It was determined that Overlord, the invasion of northwest France, together with the Combined Bomber Offensive “if given *whole-hearted* and *immediate support* would result in an early and decisive victory in Europe.”⁸ Also listed was an operation in southern France to

³ Combined Chiefs of Staff, “Quadrant Conference, August 1943: Papers and Minutes of Meetings”. In *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*.

⁴ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Quadrant Conference, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 45.

⁵ Ibid. These divisions include the areas of the French Coast, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily and Italy, 47.

⁶ Ibid, 43. 945 of these aircraft were German, and there were 475 fighter aircraft.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Quadrant Conference, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 71-90.

"establish a lodgment in the Toulon-Marseilles area...in connection with Overlord."⁹ The CCS envisioned a holding attack in Italy, to distract Axis forces. A subsequent invasion of southern France would follow with the ultimate objective of assisting Overlord by occupying as many German forces as possible.¹⁰ Marshall asked Eisenhower for his opinion on operations in Italy and beyond. Eisenhower believed that the invasion of Italy should be used to prepare for an invasion of southern France, although what he called the "annoying and limiting factor of shipping and landing craft" was going to limit any new operations. Eisenhower wanted to use the forces that recently occupied northern Italy, keeping ten divisions there as a defensive reserve; he planned to use the rest to attack westward into southern France.¹¹

How did such an invasion fit in strategically at Quadrant? Allied commanders accounted for numerous possibilities once the Italian campaign commenced. They calculated the Allied rate of advance up the Italian mainland. The general consensus was that the war in Europe would be finished by the fall of 1944. Upper echelons of command pictured Rome in the hands of the Allies a few months after landing at Salerno. Allied armies would advance into the Po Valley and could threaten to break out west into southern France, or east through the Ljubljana Gap. Planners projected enough shipping capacity for both Overlord and the southern France campaign. The calculations upon which these operations rested were very exact. Any alterations in the operational situation in Italy could cause serious modifications in the strategic sphere.

⁹ Ibid.; Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959), 228-229.

¹⁰ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Quadrant Conference, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 75-76.

¹¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, 12 Aug 1943, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: II*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1331-1333. Eisenhower, in this letter labeled "Secret," tells Marshall that due to his staff's commitments "examination of this possibility [is] rather sketchy."

Nevertheless, participants at Quadrant were so confident of a rapid advance that meetings were held to discuss whether Rome would be declared an open city.¹²

There was a larger, transcendent factor at work within these negotiations and plans. The Americans at Quadrant wanted to impress their plan for the war on the British. The British successfully deterred American officers from attempting an invasion of mainland Europe in 1942, but both Allies recognized that could not indefinitely remain idle while the Soviet Union battled the Germans alone on the Eastern Front. They compromised on Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa in November 1942. Trident went the same way, with the Americans agreeing to Operation Husky. By the time of Quebec, however, the Americans grew in confidence. United States military planners first began learning at Arcadia, the Allied conference held in Washington, D.C. in December and January, 1941-1942; by the time of Trident, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had learned the ropes and presented a unified front to the British. At Quadrant, they felt that they had become experienced enough to begin directing strategy in the ETO.¹³

Additionally, the United States was beginning to show its prowess materially. The American war economy and military branches were beginning to hit their stride. By September 30, 1943 (three weeks after the launch of Avalanche), the United States had 610,000 personnel in the Mediterranean Theater.¹⁴ It also shipped 2.5 million tons of cargo during the third quarter of

¹² Combined Chiefs of Staff, Quadrant Conference, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 432.

¹³ Matloff, *Strategic Planning 1943-1944*, 242-243.

¹⁴ Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy: 1943-1945* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1968), 836.

1943.¹⁵ The United States possessed the largest transport capacity of any country in the world. Additionally, American shipping supported its allies with copious amounts of material.

Great Britain in contrast, struggled to maintain its level of participation in the war. A report by Sir John Anderson of the War Cabinet had already identified a million-man personnel shortage in the armed forces. Great Britain had to reduce its military programs.¹⁶ Such a deficit existed despite having over ten percent of the population enlisted in the armed services.¹⁷ When the Battle of the Atlantic started to turn, Britain saw a net gain in supplies for the third quarter of 1943, but supplies from the United States remained essential to British continuation of the war.¹⁸ Britain had to balance its priorities meticulously in order to stay in the war. This need to ration war material limited its strategic thinking accordingly.

British strategic thinking revolved around how best to utilize its assets. After France fell, the British had adopted a strategy of attacking the German periphery. They knew they could not attack Germany directly. High casualties would cripple the Empire fatally. Britain hoped to wear down Germany by forcing it to defend itself on the fringes of conquered territory. This would weaken Germany enough to exploit once the Allies were ready to reenter the continent. The manifestation of this plan came to fruition with Operation Torch. Due to manpower restrictions, the British were hesitant to engage the Germans directly. Churchill advocated this

¹⁵ Ibid., 835. A total of 27.7 million tons of cargo were shipped to the Mediterranean theater between 1940-1945. 20.4 million tons were shipped between June 1943 and the end of the war.

¹⁶ W.K. Hancock and M.M. Gowing, *British War Economy* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949), 445 [<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/UK/UK-Civil-WarEcon/UK-Civil-WarEcon-15.html>] (accessed August 16, 2012)]. Ibiblio is an online project that aims to create digital reproductions of thousands of academic works. The complete British and American official histories of World War Two are currently being transcribed.

¹⁷ John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, August 1943 - September 1944, Volume V* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), 43.

¹⁸ Gowing and Hancock, *British War Economy*, 354.

strategy most fervently. As the discussion for Anvil and other operations intensified, so did Churchill's argument for this approach.

Continuation of this policy continued well into 1943, as the Allies prepared to invade Italy. The British launched operation Baytown and Slapstick, the invasion of Reggio Calabria and Taranto, respectively, on 3 September 1943. General Bernard L. Montgomery's 8th Army spearheaded the Baytown assault. Operation Avalanche commenced on 9 September, with American Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark commanding the United States 5th Army. Allied planners expected Italian collapse and a rapid advance from south to north. They got the first, but not the second. By 13 September, 5th Army was in trouble. It faced the real possibility of being ejected from the Italian mainland by Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's *OB-Süd*. German counterattacks failed, but only by the slimmest of margins. On 16 September, the British 8th Army and American 5th Army made contact and consolidated their position.¹⁹

Understandably the operational situation in Italy was the most pressing concern for the Allies in September. As such, the talk at the strategic levels of command did not contain much about additional operations. On 2 October, Eisenhower sent his Chief of Staff, Major General Walter Bedell Smith, to Washington. Smith was to brief Marshall on current strategy in the Mediterranean. In the brief, Eisenhower made clear that he was under the impression that

¹⁹ The Italian campaign has received an almost obsessive amount of attention from American and British historians. As a result, the historiography is rich and filled with many fine accounts of the campaign. See Citino, *The Wehrmacht Retreats*, 238-274; Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino* (Washington, D.C., Office of the Chief of Military History, 1969); Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007); Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operation in World War II*, Volume 9: *Sicily--Salerno--Anzio, January 1943-June 1944* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954); Carlo D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean 1942-1945* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1990); C.J.C. Molony, *The Mediterranean and Middle East, The Campaign in Sicily, 1943, and the Campaign in Italy, 3rd September 1943 to 31st March 1944*, vol. 5 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1973). Primary source material for the campaign can be found in Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948), 201-219; Lucian K. Truscott, *Command Missions: A Personal Story* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1954), 245-380; Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Enigma Books, 2007), 152-336; Bernard L. Montgomery, *Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein* (London: Collins, 1958); Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West, 1943-1946: Based on Diaries and Autobiographical Notes of Field Marshal the Viscount Alanbrooke* (London: Collins, 1959).

although the landings at Salerno had been tough, a vigorous fall and winter campaign might still lead to the capture of the Po Valley. From there, the Allies would be able to stage diversionary operations in southern France. This meeting focused on giving Overlord maximum assistance.²⁰

The Allied commanders thought a southern France operation was feasible. Official preparations and studies were soon underway, and in October the landing got a name: "Anvil."²¹ This complementary operation to Overlord could begin soon after the advance of the Allies into the Po Valley. They wanted to launch the operation in a few months, and began taking measures in this direction.

The Allies began diversionary measures against the Germans in late October 1943. Eisenhower sent Lieutenant General George S. Patton and French General Alphonse Juin to Corsica on 28 October to reconnoiter the island and make it seem as if it might be used as a base. The goal was to keep German forces dispersed, and to make them think that the depleted United States 7th Army was still at full strength.²²

Eisenhower briefed the CCS on 29 October, with an outline of an invasion plan for southern France. This was in response to a directive the CCS had previously given Eisenhower at Quadrant. Eisenhower analyzed two scenarios, each based on how far up Italy Allied armies advanced. The first scenario envisioned an invasion with Allied forces near the Pisa-Rimini line. It would be maintained as a threat, with forces readily available to land should a favorable situation arise. The objective was to make a landing in southern France landing seem more

²⁰ Eisenhower to Walter B. Smith, 2 Oct. 1943, labeled "Secret," *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: III*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler Jr. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1479-1482.

²¹ Winston Churchill, *Churchill at War: The Prime Minister's Office Papers, 1940-1945: PRO Record Classes PREM3 and PREM4* (Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1998) [Microfilm reel 118]; J.S.M. Washington to W.C.O. London, 21 Oct. 1943, PREM 3/271/2. A letter was sent to Churchill asking if he agreed with the given name. See Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill, 22 Oct. 1943, labeled "Most Secret," PREM 3/271/2

²² Harry Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 433-436.

apparent than that in Normandy, in order to draw forces away from northwest France. Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Command (COSSAC), Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan, wanted the threat to stay apparent until D plus twenty-one.²³

The second scenario saw the Allies in possession of the north Italian plains. Here the Allies would turn west overland to enter southern France. However, small enemy forces might be able to stop superior forces due to the mountains. An amphibious assault would therefore work in conjunction with the overland advance. This diversion of forces in the south of France would prevent the transfer of German forces to the north to contest Overlord. Eisenhower pictured either American or British forces spearheading the assault, but French forces would also take part.²⁴ French guerillas were expected to rise up in support, and Eisenhower anticipated having his air forces drop supplies to the resisters.

There was a weakness, however. Eisenhower could not acquire the types of serviceable landing craft that were needed for the landings.²⁵ Landing craft had strict distribution timetables. Overlord preparation required the withdrawal of landing craft from Italy. The Mediterranean theater was set to lose eighty percent of its Landing Ship, Tank (LST) and Landing Ship, Infantry (LSI) to England. Eisenhower argued for the retention of these shipping craft to reinforce Allied armies in Italy. By the end of October both the British and Joint Chiefs agreed to allow Eisenhower to retain his shipping craft for additional usage.²⁶ This previewed the looming donnybrook that consumed Allied strategic planners for the remainder of 1943 and throughout

²³ General Morgan disagreed with the idea of southern France operations constituting just a threat. He believed that an actual assault would be necessary. See Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. V, 105.

²⁴ Charles de Gaulle wanted French forces to participate directly in the liberation of France. This was not possible for Overlord, so participating in a southern France campaign was the compromise. It would satiate French desires without compromising the operational integrity of Overlord. See Marcel Vigneras, *Rearming the French* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1956).

²⁵ Cable W 3743/ #3858, Eisenhower to CCS, 29 Oct 1943, *Eisenhower Papers*, vol. III, 1538-1544.

²⁶ Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. V, 73-74.

much of 1944. Existing operations continued to demand resources, which adversely affected all future operations. General Morgan predicted a delay of the 1 May target for D-Day due to the shortage in landing craft.²⁷ Clearly, a finalization of the broad strategic approach in the west needed to occur.

During the month of October the Allied heads of state were polishing the details on a conference between the "Big Three": Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. It was to take place at Tehran in November or December, and was code-named Eureka. British and American officials made plans to meet in Cairo before Tehran. They wanted to present coherent ideas to the Russians. This preliminary conference would be designated Sextant. A lesser, but equally important conference convened before then, at Moscow on 18 October, 1943. Here, Allied foreign secretaries from the major powers met to discuss strategy.²⁸ Preliminary indications from Stalin suggested he favored an assault on southern France to support Overlord.²⁹ Churchill favored a Mediterranean-first approach. He was intent on securing Stalin's support for Balkan and Greek operations. The Prime Minister also warned the Soviets that a delay in Overlord might occur if the campaign in Italy was not progressing satisfactorily.³⁰ Soviet expectations were for the western allies to secure a second front during the spring of 1944.

The Soviets expected the naming of a Supreme Allied Commander for Overlord. Early talks in May 1943 between Churchill and Roosevelt leaned towards the appointment of Marshall

²⁷ Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1968), 266-267.

²⁸ The foreign secretaries from the United States and Great Britain met in Moscow. It was primarily a discussion of postwar ideas. It is well covered in Vojtech Mastny, "Soviet War Aims at the Moscow and Tehran Conferences of 1943," *The Journal of Modern History* 47 (Sept. 1975), 481-504.

²⁹ Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, Vol. VII: Road to Victory 1941-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), 543-544. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden kept Churchill abreast of events at the conference.

³⁰ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1951), 285-294.

as the commander.³¹ Roosevelt suggested that Marshall would receive command of the Overlord assault, as well as the Mediterranean theater. This way Marshall could more easily facilitate strategy and resources for the direction he wished to take. Churchill vigorously disputed this arrangement. He wrote Roosevelt's chief diplomatic advisor Harry Hopkins, "The control of all our combined operations and world strategy must rest with the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington under the final direction of the Heads of Government."³² Still, Roosevelt did not select Overlord's commander. Until a commander for Overlord was designated, planning for the operation could not continue. This issue constituted just one of many problems the three leaders faced as they assembled in Tehran.

The British and Americans as mentioned earlier, met in Cairo to reach a consensus on strategy before facing Stalin. En route to Cairo, President Roosevelt and his staff held two meetings to discuss the issues. Topics ranged from the occupation of postwar Germany to Pacific operations. One issue of particular importance to the ETO was the possibility of a Balkan campaign. The staff wished to secure Overlord and proposed they continue to follow a cautious approach to any new operations in the Mediterranean. Roosevelt agreed emphatically. He also raised the British proposal of having a British commander in the Mediterranean. The President thought this suggestion was influenced by possible Balkan ventures. His staff reminded him that those decisions would be subject to approval by the CCS, Churchill and himself. Roosevelt also suggested that General Marshall should be the Supreme Allied Commander (SAC) against Germany. The staff left the meetings ready to confront the British with a unified front.³³

³¹ It was agreed that the Allied commander leading Overlord would be an American. His deputy would be British.

³² Winston Churchill to Harry Hopkins, 26 Oct 1943, in *Closing the Ring*, 301-302.

³³ The two meetings occurred on 15 and 19 November 1943. See Matloff, *Strategic Planning 1943-1944*, 338-344.

Meanwhile Churchill also came to Cairo. He was sick, but he continued extensive discussions with Minister Resident in the Mediterranean Harold MacMillan. Churchill felt that the Allies had not fully exploited the Mediterranean. He thought there was potential for future operations, but the Americans were too rigid of mind to grasp it. Their insistence on removing landing craft and units from Italy was having a detrimental effect on morale. Churchill assumed that the majority of soldiers on the ground knew the Italian campaign was a road to nowhere and that ultimately, it was going to be used as a diversionary tactic while the grand assault occurred elsewhere.³⁴

Churchill was also very concerned about the Greek island of Leros, which was overrun by the Germans on 12 November, 1943.³⁵ The Italians had previously held several Dodecanese islands. Their collapse made for a potentially easy Allied capture. British troops landed on several of these islands soon after Italian surrender. However, Eisenhower refused to send troops there to assist. He thought those operations diversionary.³⁶ As a result, the Germans occupied them, and British soldiers fighting there suffered heavy casualties.

Churchill believed it was critical for the Allies to invest more men and material in the Mediterranean and further east. He lamented the inability of the Supreme Allied Commander of the Middle East, General Henry Maitland 'Jumbo' Wilson, to procure more supplies for his theater, which hindered him in the conduct of operations. Churchill reasoned that the lack of resources stemmed from an imaginary line that divided the Mediterranean theater from the Middle East. Because of this, there was a lack of coordination between Eisenhower's and Wilson's command. The British Chiefs of Staff concurred with the Prime Minister, and the

³⁴ Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, 558-559.

³⁵ Harold MacMillan, *War Diaries, Politics and War in the Mediterranean, January 1943-May 1945* (London: MacMillan, 1984), 293-294.

³⁶ Matloff, *Strategic Planning 1943-44*, 253-259.

British delegation arrived in Cairo more anxious and apprehensive than their American counterparts.

Sextant opened on 22 November 1943. In preparation for the meetings, the JCS displayed an estimate of the German situation for 1944. This report was the basis from which strategic discussions would take place. The conclusion of the report stated that Germany was going to remain on the strategic defensive throughout 1944. *Wehrmacht* forces were being brought up to strength by lowering their standards for admission. There were twenty-three German divisions in Italy and twenty-one in Yugoslavia.³⁷ German *Luftwaffe* numbers were deteriorating rapidly, with just 521 aircraft in southern France. German army units were stretched thin, as they made up for the disappearance of thirty Italian divisions. No strategic reserves existed. The Germans allocated reinforcements by withdrawing and transferring divisions from one front to another.³⁸ The situation for Germany began to appear bleak, and the Allies had to decide how best to deliver the decisive blow. Nevertheless, twenty-three divisions in Italy was more than enough to blunt Allied progress. The mountainous Italian terrain served as a force multiplier for the Germans. Kesselring was able to shift and balance his forces in Italy with good efficiency. Italy would cost the Allies dearly.³⁹

Before setting the strategic course, inter-Allied issues had to be settled. The most important decision was to appoint a SAC for Overlord. Churchill wrote to Roosevelt, espousing his fears of inter-allied rivalry and tension should a single commander be appointed for both the Overlord campaign and the Mediterranean. Churchill believed the new commander would

³⁷ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 21-39.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁹ Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 374-384.

supersede the CCS, while public opinion in one of the two primary nations was bound to be unhappy.⁴⁰ It is one of the few telegrams Churchill sent to Roosevelt during the conferences.

At a plenary session on 24 November, Roosevelt demanded an outline of operations in the ETO, including the Mediterranean. Eureka would settle these questions. Roosevelt's concern was whether Overlord could be sustained at its current pace while the Allies kept "the Mediterranean ablaze."⁴¹

The Prime Minister was more somber, remarking that all of 1943's achievements might be forsaken if the Allies failed to sustain progress in Italy and the Mediterranean. He reluctantly agreed to the transfer of seven divisions to England in preparation for Overlord. He also lamented German strength in the Aegean. By now, several islands like Leros had fallen to the Germans. Churchill thought that control of the Greek and Aegean islands would help motivate Turkey to enter the war on the Allied side.⁴² He emphasized that a strong advance up the Italian peninsula was necessary. The capture of Rome was of primary importance, since whoever held Rome held "the title deeds of Italy."⁴³

In the Balkans, Churchill was disappointed at the level of aid given to the Yugoslavs. The Middle East Command had responsibility for the region, but did not have any forces capable of providing assistance. Conversely, Eisenhower had the resources to provide assistance, but did not have the responsibility.

⁴⁰ Churchill to Roosevelt, 25 Nov 1943, in Winston S. Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence: Alliance Forged, November 1942-February 1944, Volume II*, ed. Warren F. Kimball (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 613-614.

⁴¹ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Quadrant Conference, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 383-388. Also see Matloff, *Strategic Planning*, 352-356; Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, 561-564; Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, 165-167; Coakley and Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945*, 272-277.

⁴² Turkey eventually declared war on Germany in January, 1945.

⁴³ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 383-388.

Churchill made some last remarks regarding Overlord. He stated that his zeal for the operation had not lessened in any way. Overlord was the most important operation, but "it should not be such a tyrant to rule out every other activity in the Mediterranean...a little flexibility in the employment of landing craft ought to be conceded."⁴⁴ The meeting ended with no consensus. Roosevelt and Churchill directed the CCS to study the problems presented and dates for operations in 1944. It was a disappointing result, and did not bode well for Eureka.

Both western leaders were uncertain as they headed to Tehran. They wanted Stalin to give his opinion on the separate British and American strategic ideas. Churchill and Roosevelt needed to present a unified front. They also needed to show Stalin progress in the face of these differences, so he did not think their contribution to the war effort lacking.⁴⁵ This was because both Roosevelt and Churchill knew that the Soviet Union received the brunt of the scathing German offensives up until this point in the war.

The first plenary session of Eureka began on 28 November, 1943.⁴⁶ Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill convened for the most decisive strategy talks of the war. The President began by laying out an overview of possible operations available for the upcoming year. Several operations in the Mediterranean were mentioned, along with a landing in southern France, but Overlord was still seen as the ultimate operation of 1944. Roosevelt finished by asking Stalin how the western Allies could best support the Soviet armed forces.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., 387.

⁴⁵ Stalin had one of two primary aims heading to Tehran. He first wanted the Americans and British to make a commitment to open another front to help shorten the war. Secondly, he wanted agreements that would be conducive to his growth of power in Europe after the war. See Mastny, "Soviet War Aims at Moscow and Tehran," 504.

⁴⁶ Coverage of the meetings can also be found in Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 257-271.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Stalin was candid in his remarks. He contended that continued operations in Italy were not of "great value" in defeating the Axis. Operations there should only continue to keep supply lines open. He stated, "In the U.S.S.R. it is believed that the most suitable sector for a blow at Germany would be from some place in France -- northwestern France or southern France." Stalin supported the American view to open up a second front in France. He then mentioned that he did not wish to imply that Mediterranean operations were unimportant.⁴⁸

It was a comment that could have been meant to assuage Churchill. The Prime Minister waded into the discussion, remarking that he and the President always considered Mediterranean operations as a "stepping stone" for the main effort against Germany. Preparations for Overlord had already begun. The Allies hoped to launch an offensive in Italy in January. It would include an amphibious landing, and would hopefully cut off the ten to twelve German divisions on the front line. However, defeating the Germans in Italy was not enough. Churchill advocated increasing support to the Yugoslav partisans.⁴⁹

President Roosevelt gave Churchill some unexpected backing. He mentioned that planners were considering offensive operations through the northeastern Adriatic along with an invasion of southern France. Churchill quickly exploited this opening. After the capture of Rome, the Allies could turn west towards southern France or east towards the Adriatic.⁵⁰ Stalin expressed interest in the southern France proposal. Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill could give additional information, as planners had not yet worked out the details.

After Stalin heard the British and American presentations, he offered some "comments." He thought the Allies were too scattered in their proposals. They needed to concentrate, and

⁴⁸ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 513-527. This particular quote is found on 518.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 520.

Stalin believed that Overlord and a southern France invasion were the best options. Overlord presented the best possibilities, especially if augmented by a southern France invasion. He said the Allies should "be prepared to remain on the defensive in Italy and thus release ten divisions for operations in southern France." The capture of Rome could wait. Churchill vehemently opposed this. He announced that the inability to capture Rome would be viewed as a crushing defeat in the eyes of the British people.⁵¹

Roosevelt remarked that operations in southern France were of "considerable interest." He even mentioned the possibility of staging such an operation a month or two before Overlord, which should not be delayed if at all possible. The Soviet dictator remarked that Soviet forces experienced the greatest success when attacking the Germans from multiple points. German forces would be unable to meet all demands at once. Churchill persisted in his advocacy for Yugoslavia, saying that it was not impossible to do both a southern France operation and one in Yugoslavia. It would only require "three or four divisions" and would not hamper Overlord in the slightest. Eureka's first plenary session was finished. It had been a whirlwind of activity, but one that was looking disadvantageous to British desires.⁵²

Those in favor of a southern France operation left happy after the first plenary session. Churchill's Balkan aspirations were struck a severe blow. Churchill requested to adjourn the meeting, unhappy at the course the talks had taken against his stance. It seemed that his concerns were subsidiary to those of Roosevelt and Stalin. The latter two conversed with little regard to Churchill's wishes. In response, Churchill made no secret of his distaste for Overlord.

The first military conference was held the next morning. The most prominent members were General Marshall, General Alan Brooke and Marshal Kliment Voroshilov. Brooke

⁵¹ Ibid., 521-22.

⁵² Ibid., 523-527.

emphasized the need to keep German units actively engaged. He planned to achieve this by launching attacks in Italy with landing craft assigned to the Mediterranean theater until they had to leave for Overlord. Brooke preemptively attacked a southern France operation, stating that operations in Italy left very little room for such an option. The British general argued that if such an effort was launched two months prior to D-Day, it was certain to fail. However, a smaller landing might be permitted to draw off reserves.⁵³ Additionally, the pincer movement that Stalin suggested would only cause further supply problems. They could not be mutually supporting until they linked up in mainland France.

General Marshall spoke next. He took a logistical view of such an operation, rather than an operational one. The United States had fifty divisions waiting to go to France for Overlord, an operation that was of the utmost importance to the Americans. LSTs were the only inhibitor; there were no lack of United States troops or supplies. His concerns were mainly about the details, "We are deeply interested in the length of voyages, the length of time required in ports, and the over-all time for the turn-around." Marshall challenged his British colleague, denying that any definite conclusions to future operations had been made. An operation in southern France was considered very important to Overlord, and should take place a maximum of two to three weeks before D-Day. If Mediterranean operations continued Marshall lamented, they would inevitably delay Overlord. American forces already started an irreversible buildup. Over a million tons of supplies and equipment were already in England.⁵⁴

Marshal Voroshilov questioned whether Britain viewed Overlord as being of "the first importance." Brooke replied with the typical British response in these debates. He said that Overlord was crucial, but that it could only be take place under the right conditions, where

⁵³ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 527-542.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 531-533.

victory was assured. Voroshilov reiterated Stalin's comments from a day earlier, that the Soviet position was that all Mediterranean operations were auxiliary in nature. Brooke agreed, but he stated his belief that unless these auxiliary operations took place, Overlord would fail. The participants discussed technical details of Overlord, and the meeting adjourned.⁵⁵

If the first plenary meeting the day before did not indicate what the Russians desired, the military conference answered the question. The Russians clearly favored the American approach of implementing Overlord first at the expense of all other operations. Despite British lip service to the contrary, they remained firmly in favor of continuing Mediterranean operations. Stalin and Voroshilov's harassment of Churchill and Brooke clearly discomforted them. The two larger powers were thwarting Britain's ideas. Britain's delegation needed to recover its poise and reassert its efforts.

The second plenary session occurred on Monday, November 29, 1943. In addition to the leaders of the three nations, Brooke, Marshall and Voroshilov were present. The President had no formal agenda; all discussions were impromptu. The two western Allied generals reiterated their points from the military conference the day before. Landing craft were the American focus, manpower the British, Overlord the synthesizing theme. Stalin asked about the Overlord commander, to which Roosevelt and Churchill as yet had no answer. The Marshal replied, "Then nothing will come out of these operations."⁵⁶ Stalin then lectured the others present about the value of having a commander.⁵⁷ His assessment had great validity. Until the western powers appointed a commander, Overlord continued to be a map exercise.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 534-536.

⁵⁶ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 543-556. This quote is found on 545.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 545.

Churchill quickly agreed before changing the subject. He wanted to know how to handle the large Mediterranean force currently in Italy. He also mentioned amphibious landings to cut off German units advancing into northern Italy. Turkey would enter the war if the Allies took Rhodes. If the Allies captured Rhodes, Turkey would have the operational and strategic security it desired. With the Allies soundly set in the east, they could use the entire force in six months to invade southern France in support of Overlord.⁵⁸

Stalin responded decisively. He wanted orders to give to the '*ad hoc* committee', the military counsel that consisted of Marshall, Voroshilov and Brooke. Stalin advocated giving a directive to the committee for firm planning for a southern France operation. He wanted it started earlier or simultaneously with Overlord. If not, it should take place shortly after Overlord. Stalin intimated that a southern France operation should be auxiliary in nature. It would be the only one that could directly assist Overlord operations as it developed. A supreme commander for Overlord needed to be made in the next week, Stalin demanded. Without a commander now, Overlord could not succeed.⁵⁹

Roosevelt moderated his response. He desired to hear all of the options from Overlord to Turkey. Diverting two or three divisions to the eastern Mediterranean would cause a delay in Overlord by a month or two. He wanted aid to Yugoslavia and the Balkans without impacting Overlord. Roosevelt suggested commando raids in enemy rear areas in that region. There were twenty-five German divisions in France, and Roosevelt said plans should be made to contain those. Stalin agreed. Roosevelt also asked for Overlord to occur no later than May 20, 1944.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 547-549.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 549.

Churchill interjected and refused that notion, although he believed that the various views were not far apart.⁶⁰ He stressed his dedication to Overlord, but added that the Allies should not discard the "many great possibilities in the Mediterranean" just to make D-Day happen a month earlier. Stalin forcefully countered, declaring that all other operations besides the southern France one were diversions, and that he "had no interest in any other operations"⁶¹ This upset Churchill, who remarked that the British army should not be inert in Italy for six months waiting for Overlord and a southern France operation. Stalin casually remarked that he did not "want the British to think that the Soviets wished them to do nothing." Churchill outlined his conditions for launching Overlord.⁶² He stressed that it was necessary to begin operations in Italy and the Balkans that would divert sufficient German forces to make the landings possible.

The only issues not yet decided from an otherwise productive meeting were the identity of the Overlord commander, the date of Overlord, and the supporting operations in southern France to support it. Stalin believed that all matters could be solved between the meetings between the chiefs of state and other committees were unnecessary. The three leaders agreed to meet the next day.⁶³ Talks between the three heads of state the next day were formal and brief.⁶⁴ At a luncheon on 1 December, they spoke of the political landscape after the war.

This penultimate meeting between the three leaders ended decisively in favor of America's plan for prosecuting the war. A southern France operation was now on the schedule.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 550.

⁶¹ Ibid., 551.

⁶² The conditions were that the Germans have no more than twelve mobile divisions be located behind coastal troops in northwest France, and that not more than fifteen divisions would reinforce their position within the first sixty days of the landing. After hearing this, Stalin sarcastically asked, "What if there are thirteen divisions, not twelve?" Ibid., 552.

⁶³ Ibid., 556.

⁶⁴ The transcript can be found at Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 557-561.

All other operations in the Mediterranean had become auxiliary in nature. If there were leftover resources, they would go to the eastern Mediterranean, but this did not look likely.

On 3 December, the Americans and British assembled in Cairo for the second round of the Sextant talks. The third plenary session took place on 3 December. Churchill wished to launch Overlord in July 1944, but with a May date firmly fixed for the Russians, he wanted it to succeed. In order for it to succeed, Churchill stressed that Anvil had to be as strong as possible, with an assault force of at least two divisions. General Brooke expressed concern that the first portion of the Sextant talks did not yield significant gains. The Allies still had many issues to resolve.⁶⁵

Among the questions was how to procure the necessary resources to start a successful Anvil. Chief of the British Naval Staff, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham, noted that there were only enough naval vessels to support two major amphibious operations simultaneously: Overlord and Anvil. It might be possible to take some of the vessels planned in Operation Buccaneer, the planned invasion of the Andaman Islands in south-east Asia.⁶⁶ The Andaman Islands are east of India in the Bay of Bengal. The Chinese would gain some relief if the Andaman Islands were captured. There were many individuals sympathetic to the Chinese plight, most notably General Marshall.⁶⁷ At the moment Buccaneer could not be launched, and it was suggested that resources from there could be transferred for Anvil.

President Roosevelt refused, saying the Allies were obliged to do something to help China. This could only be altered by some great and pressing need. Churchill slyly mentioned Overlord might be that need. Field Marshal Sir John Dill believed that both a strong Overlord

⁶⁵ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 389-396. Churchill's recollection of the meeting can be found in *Closing the Ring*, 408-411.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 392.

⁶⁷ The situation surrounding Buccaneer is found in Matloff, *Strategic Planning 1943-44*, 349-353.

and Anvil could not occur at the same time. The fear was that doing everything to ensure those two strong operations might have adverse political consequences. Other operations in other theaters would be sacrificed, thus altering the strategic situation. Ultimately, Roosevelt summed up the discussion of the plenary meeting with the following points:

- a. Nothing should be done to hinder Overlord.
- b. Nothing should be done to hinder Anvil.
- c. By hook or by crook we should scrape up sufficient landing craft to operation in the Eastern Mediterranean if Turkey came into the war.
- d. Admiral Mountbatten should be told to go ahead and do his best with what had already been allocated to him.⁶⁸

It was settled then. Overlord and Anvil would be the two major operations going forward. A draft by the Combined Chiefs that same day reiterated this, stating that Overlord and Anvil were to be "the supreme operations of 1944. They must be carried out during May, 1944. Nothing must be undertaken...which hazards the success of these two operations."⁶⁹ Additional meetings over the next three days made the Allied decisions concrete and binding. Anvil was nearly as important as Overlord. Later meetings discussed the assembly of resources, especially landing craft to conduct the two operations.⁷⁰

The Combined Chiefs sent Eisenhower a report by the Combined Staff Planners for amphibious operations against southern France. This was the culmination of the efforts of those in favor of the operation. It outlined the purpose of Anvil, and the current problems associated with launching the operation such as a lack of escort based fighter aircraft and a lack of sufficient escort vessels. The report contained two appendices that determined there would be about thirty-

⁶⁸ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 389-396. See Churchill's recollection of the meeting in *Closing the Ring*, 408-411.

⁶⁹ Memo from the United States Chiefs of Staff, subject: "Draft Agreement by the Combined Chiefs of Staff," 4 Dec 1943, United States Army, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Box 306, Record Group (RG) 218, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD.

⁷⁰ The additional plenary and Combined Chiefs meetings are: "Minutes, 4th Plenary Session, USA and Great Britain, 5 Dec 1943," "Minutes, C.C.S. 135th Meeting, 5 Dec 1943," "Minutes, C.C.S. 136th Meeting, 5 Dec 1943, in *Sextant and Eureka Conferences*, 397-404, 481-487, 489-495.

two LSTs available for Anvil, which would put a total of 40,000 men ashore on D-Day.

Eisenhower planned to have an outline for the operation, and assumed that forces in Italy had reached the Pisa-Rimini line. Another assumption was that Mediterranean forces "will not be engaged in offensive operations elsewhere."⁷¹

The first phase of the Anvil debate concluded. At Quadrant, the Allies laid out possible avenues for continuing the offensive against Germany. Operations in Africa finished, and Sicily was the next natural jump to make. After Sicily, it appeared that Churchill's assessment of Axis vulnerability in the Mediterranean might be correct. It was assumed that the Allies would land in Italy and be in the Po Valley by the end of the year. After that, a range of possibilities were available. They could turn east into the Balkans or west into southern France. A land campaign combined with an amphibious landing seemed most prudent. British leaders thought peripheral operations would be less taxing on their economy, which was already beginning to decline.

Avalanche did not prove as successful as the Allies hoped. Indeed, the Germans almost drove the landing force back into the sea. The line stabilized, but it was obvious that the fight would take longer than originally thought. The halt in Italy sowed the initial doubts that Overlord would launch at its tentative date of 1 May 1944. The ability to launch the operation depended with the strict availability of landing craft. Any slight deviation in the assigning of them would lead to delays not only for current operations, but for future ones as well. It was a concern many Americans eyed closely, and would continue to do so well into 1944.

Planning for 1944 was essential, as this was the final push for Germany's total defeat. American leaders and planners went through several conferences with their British allies. They were experienced, and confident of their ability to lead. America provided most of the men and

⁷¹ Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sextant and Eureka Conferences, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences*, 285-292. This quote is on 292.

material for the latter stages of the war, so it ought to lead. Great Britain sought to maintain its equal power status with America, but started to find its influence waning. Some resentment against its allies began to surface. Tehran seemed like it might be an even playing field, where the British might persuade the Soviets to support them.

Instead, the Eureka conference proved disastrous for the British. Stalin rejected extensive operations in the Mediterranean out of hand. He and Roosevelt considered an operation in southern France operation essential to the success of Overlord. While the Allies contemplated other avenues of advance, it was clear that Anvil would play a key role in 1944. The only query was how to balance the needs of Anvil and Overlord. There existed a shipping shortage, so operations like Buccaneer were postponed (and later canceled) to reallocate necessary resources. Operations in the Mediterranean were now considered auxiliary and therefore subsidiary to the two great operations in France.

British intentions seemed genuine at Eureka. They pledged wholeheartedly to support the operations, provided the correct conditions were met. Britain regarded the first meeting of the "Big Three" as one of equals. Although the Prime Minister was equal in international stature to Roosevelt and Stalin, he was a leader of a country in decline. Churchill sought to make Britain as prominent as possible militarily and politically. By maximizing the effort of the British armed forces in Italy, Churchill could point to their sacrifice as a reason for Britain's continued influence. As more American troops were introduced, the incentive and priority for the Americans to recognize British needs declined.

Entering Christmas and the New Year, Britain had to find a way to exert itself in its alliance with America. Central to this new exertion and reorientation of strategy was Operation Shingle, the Allied landing at Anzio. Shingle was an Allied attempt to end the Italian campaign

quickly, but it came with unforeseen consequences. British skepticism of the American strategy increased. For the next six months, Anvil would occupy center stage of the American-British alliance. Compromises would be necessary, especially over the familiar issue of landing craft. As Anvil began to dominate the American-British relationship, surprising opponents and supporters of the operation would appear.

CHAPTER 3

PROMISE AND PROBLEMS

The Allies went home from the Sextant and Eureka conferences in very different moods. American strategic plans concerning operations in 1944 received the backing of Stalin, and he disagreed with the British "Mediterranean first" policy. Operation Anvil became one of the two supreme operations of 1944, along with Overlord. The British promised solidarity and full cooperation with both operations. Operations continued in Italy, although the pace was slow. Allied armies in Italy needed to advance as far north as possible before valuable shipping departed for England and the Italian theater became a secondary one. To help move things forward, Prime Minister Winston Churchill championed a landing behind German lines in Italy. He hoped to force the Germans to retreat in the face of being surrounded, thereby opening the way up the Italian peninsula and letting the Allies sweep forward to Rome. Allied leaders underestimated the risk of this operation, however, with dire effects on the agreements made in Tehran and Cairo.

General Eisenhower cabled General Marshall on 17 December with his outline for Anvil's command structure. Eisenhower tasked 7th Army to carry out the landing in southern France. Possible commanders for 7th Army included Generals Mark W. Clark or Jacob Devers. Eisenhower's preference was Clark, "if we can work it out, because of his particular skill in that sort of work."¹ The command situation needed sorting quickly, due to the massive amount of

¹Eisenhower to Marshall, 17 Dec 1943, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: III*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1604-1607. It is worth noting what kind of skill Eisenhower is talking about, as Clark experienced a tremendously difficult time executing Operation Avalanche. This was in the midst of a general shakeup of the command structure throughout the entire ETO. Roosevelt and Churchill discussed it at length; see Roosevelt to Churchill, 17 Dec 1943 and Churchill to Roosevelt, 19 Dec 1943, in Winston S. Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence: Alliance Forged, November 1942-February 1944*, Volume II, ed. Warren F. Kimball (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 621-625.

work that awaited the Allied generals. Preliminary requirements for the operation imagined enough troops available to service an army corps headquarters and three to four divisions, in addition to a self-sufficient French corps.² Studies suggested that the initial landings required three divisions.³ Marshall concurred with this assessment, but warned that future Mediterranean operations might interfere with such plans.

The primary future Mediterranean operation to which Marshall referred was Operation Shingle, the Allied landing at Anzio. A message to Churchill from the British Chiefs of Staff (BCS) outlined the situation. Overlord and Anvil were the starting point for future operations. The capture of Rome was imperative. In order to hasten this, Eisenhower needed amphibious forces to launch Shingle.⁴ Shingle's success meant the dislodging of the German position in central Italy, and a possible rapid advance up the boot. Anvil's planned assault date was May 1944, so Shingle had to be over by then. This operation was the best hope for dislodging the Germans from the Gustav Line north of the Volturno River.⁵

Why did Operation Shingle occur? Churchill was a fervent believer in Shingle's ability to rupture the German line, and he actively participated in its planning after his recovery from a bout of pneumonia following the Cairo and Tehran conferences. He was so keen on the operation that he feared, "If this opportunity is not grasped, we must expect the ruin of the Mediterranean campaign of 1944."⁶ Churchill planned to meet with Allied planners in late

² Eisenhower to Brehon Somervell, 17 Dec 1943, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1607-1608. French manpower capabilities were uncertain.

³ *Churchill at War: The Prime Minister's Office Papers, 1940-1945: PRO Record Classes PREM3 and PREM4*. (Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1998) [Microfilm reel 119]. Air Ministry to M.A.C. Post, signed Eisenhower, 20 Dec 1943, PREM 2/271/2.

⁴ Cypher Telegram, Grand 806, Chiefs of Staff to Churchill, 24 Dec 1943, labeled "Most Secret," PREM3 2/271/2.

⁵ Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 381-382.

⁶ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, Volume V: Closing the Ring* (London: MacMillan, 1952), 437.

December to advocate the retention of fifty-six LSTs designated for Overlord.⁷ A Christmas Day conference in Tunis decided to launch Shingle on 22 January, 1944. All that was missing was Roosevelt's reply to Churchill's request. Roosevelt drafted his reply to Churchill, approving the delay transferring of the shipping craft for Overlord. Correspondingly, this meant the delay of Overlord. Roosevelt cautioned, "I cannot agree without Stalin's approval to any use of forces or equipment elsewhere that might delay or hazard the success of Overlord or Anvil."⁸ Roosevelt was adhering to the strategic obligations the British and Americans made to the Soviets at Tehran. He was shrewd enough to allow flexibility within those arrangements to take advantage of local opportunities.

There is plenty of evidence documenting Eisenhower's objections to Shingle. He was focused on the invasion of northwest France, and anything that hampered his planning he viewed with disdain. As he wrote to Marshall on Christmas Day:

From what I know of the Overlord plan I regard a successful Anvil as *sine qua non* to Overlord and I would be the last person in the world to rob this theater of the opportunity of doing the job properly. Moreover, I am well aware of the necessity of keeping a strong American command here [London], particularly in view of the fact that on the United States falls the burden of rearming the French, of feeding starving populations and of carrying on a number of other activities almost independently of our British Allies.⁹

Eisenhower no longer had jurisdiction over the Mediterranean, but he refused to allow it to interfere in his plans. Some generals in the Allied command were concerned about Shingle's affect on Anvil. However, most assumed that the Anzio landing would result in a short campaign. In that case, there would be no adverse affects on either Overlord or Anvil. Shingle advocates thought the chances for the operation going forward were slim. General Alfred

⁷ Eisenhower in November lobbied for and received permission from the Combined Chiefs to retain these landing craft until 15 January 1944.

⁸ Roosevelt to Churchill 27 Dec 1943, in *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, II, 636.

⁹ Eisenhower to Marshall, 25 Dec 1943, in *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower*, III, 1611-1615.

Gruenther, the 5th Army chief of staff, thought Clark needed to prove that Shingle would not interfere with Anvil. If he could not, the CCS would cancel Shingle.¹⁰

General Lowell Rooks, G-3 (operations) of Headquarters, North African Theater of Operations, submitted to Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) cooperation guidelines between Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean (SACMED), and Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). Rooks explained that it was essential that “AFHQ and COSSAC [Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander] be in close liaison in connection with detailed planning of Anvil and Overlord and that COSSAC be thoroughly familiar with the problems confronting us in the Mediterranean.”¹¹ Rooks stressed coordination with Overlord planners regarding Anvil. SHAEF planned Overlord, while AFHQ drew up plans for Anvil.

The Combined Chiefs would receive concurrent plans for both Anvil and Shingle from SHAEF and AFHQ and disseminate the information back to AFHQ. Planners in AFHQ were afraid that as SHAEF continued its planning for Overlord, they might miss vital information. An additional fear was that decisions would occur in London that did not take into consideration the requirements in the Mediterranean. There were also rivalries within the newly minted command structure that could potentially wreak havoc with Anvil planning. For instance, Clark held newly appointed deputy commander, SACMED, General Jacob Devers, in contempt. He referred to Devers as “that dope,” and their staffs reportedly “could not be in the same room for more than three minutes.”¹²

¹⁰ Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1969), 298-299.

¹¹ Lowell Rooks to Smith, 28 Dec 1943, United States Army, Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Box 294, Record Group (RG) 331, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD [Microfilm Reel 67].

¹² Mark Perry, *Partners in Command: George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2007), 244-245.

This acclimation to the new situation caused both commands to stutter as they found their footing in this new environment. The sheer number of changes implemented at the Allied conferences resulted in a temporary suspension of most planning.¹³ In relation to Anvil, Eisenhower decided that:

- (A) Devers will come here [Mediterranean] soon to take over the American theater.
- (b) Seventh Army will plan Anvil under supervision of Clark who will himself retain command of Fifth Army for a short time, probably until next major effort against Rome
- (c) Lucas will succeed to Fifth Army command provided his work continues to be good...the only alternative...could be Devers if you could send here a good man to take over Devers' job...¹⁴

These new assignments meant new proponents for Anvil, as well as new opponents. However, there remained some consistencies. Eisenhower favored Anvil immensely, and attempted to do everything he could to ensure its success. He had first proposed Shingle when he was SACMED, but in the following months he grew increasingly hostile towards the operation. By January 1944, he did not care for Shingle at all. Churchill championed Shingle as the operation that would break the German's back in Italy. COSSAC thought Anvil could distract as many German divisions as a diversion than as an actual assault, and so favored Shingle. The most fervent advocate for Shingle however, was General Clark. He relentlessly lobbied for the Anzio landing. Clark, like Churchill, viewed Rome as a grand prize. His pursuit of Rome has not endeared him to historians looking back on his career.¹⁵ But no matter who supported it, the efforts to cement Shingle still ran into a large snag. There were not enough landing craft to carry

¹³ The list of command changes in AFHQ and SHAEF can be found in Harry Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, 1942 to 1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 463.

¹⁴ Eisenhower to Marshall, 29 Dec 1943, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1,631-1,632. Shortly afterward, Eisenhower took leave to the United States before coming back to England to begin planning for Overlord.

¹⁵ See the endnotes of Robert M. Citino, *The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting a Lost War 1943* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2012).

out the operation. Clark maintained his determination. He intended to land at Anzio, even if it meant reduced carrying capacity for his troops.¹⁶

While the discussion lingered on whether to launch Shingle, planning for Anvil continued. AFHQ created Task Force 163 under General Benjamin Caffey Jr. to plan exclusively for Operation Anvil.¹⁷ Force 163 soon became a combined planning headquarters, with representatives from both navy and army. Eventually, a representative from French headquarters arrived to join the group.¹⁸ Initially, TF 163 encountered numerous issues. There was still no set plan for Anvil. There were a series of sketches and ideas from Eisenhower and others about the desired size and scope, but nothing concrete. This meant the planners had to plan for more variations in the logistical, tactical and organizational fields than they might otherwise.¹⁹

Some of the foggy specifications that hindered TF 163 cleared up soon. Operation Shingle planning was finalized. Clark still lobbied for the operation, provided it had sufficient strength. He even volunteered his veteran 3d Infantry Division for the assault. The main problem was still how to overcome the shipping limitations that Shingle faced. Admiral Henry K. Hewitt, Commander, United States Naval Forces, Northwest Africa Waters, went to Washington D.C. to help with the allocation of landing craft for the operation.²⁰ Eisenhower expressed his frustration in a memo to General Harold Alexander, in which he stated that there

¹⁶ Blumenenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 300-302.

¹⁷ T. J. Davis to All Concerned, 5 Jan. 1944 (Title: "Formation of Headquarters Force 163"), OOH Records, Box 1, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 48]. TF 163 did not become active until 12 Jan. 1944.

¹⁸ Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993), 30-31. For the document that outlines what the French role will be, see "Participation by a French High Command and Staff in Operation Anvil," J.A.N. Gammell, 11 Feb. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

¹⁹ Clarke and Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, 35.

²⁰ Henry Kent Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil/Dragoon," *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, 80(1954): 730-745.

would be six LSTs available after 20 February for Shingle maintenance.²¹ That same day, Alexander cabled Churchill, asking him to help secure more LSTs for Shingle. Churchill said he would guarantee the landing craft from Roosevelt and Marshall.²²

The scene was set for one of the most controversial campaigns of the war. Clark wanted to make sure the invasion had the proper backing before it began. He even accused the British of being overly optimistic in their intelligence reports, “in order to hearten the troops.”²³ He felt there was more political value than military value in Shingle, remarking “In the case of Anzio, political rather than military considerations dominated the decision made at Tunis; hence it became necessary to shape the military scheme to fit the political decision.”²⁴ Even General Wilson was convinced of this: “There was already adequate military reason to capture Rome... but it was agreed that the capture of Rome probably had even more political than military value.”²⁵ Major General John Lucas, the US Army VI Corps commander, added “I must keep from thinking of the fact that my order will send these men into a desperate attack.”²⁶ Confidence was lacking amongst the army commanders slated to carry out Shingle, yet they performed the good soldier’s duty to carry it out to the best of their ability.

The Shingle decision had a two-fold effect on the supreme operations for 1944. First, it delayed Overlord by a month, since it required LSTs to stay in the Mediterranean. Second, it left Allied planners in limbo regarding planning for Anvil. They did not know what exactly was

²¹ Eisenhower to Alexander, 5 Jan 1944, PREM 3/271/2.

²² Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 303.

²³ Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Enigma Books, 2007), 229.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.

²⁵ Henry M. Wilson, *Report by the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Southern France August 1944* (Algiers: Allied Force Headquarters, 1944), 8.

²⁶ Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy 1943-1944* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2007), 354.

available to them. Eisenhower was not happy, and wrote to Walter Bedell Smith that “I believe, in starting now to gather up and recondition all landing craft so as to produce the maximum number in May. This means the abandonment of Shingle, but entirely aside from Overlord-Anvil considerations, that operation is open to grave objections under present conditions.”²⁷ However, Alexander and Churchill opposed any transferring of landing craft from Shingle to Anvil. The first major strategic obstacle in the way of Anvil was arising.

In early January, COSSAC produced a memorandum for the personal use of the Prime Minister and the British Chiefs of Staff (BCS), detailing the merits of canceling Anvil. The memo stated that Anvil was wasting valuable men and landing craft. Anvil would not “pay the same dividend” that reentry of forces through northwest France would. COSSAC then stated:

12. I recommend, therefore, that the whole strategical conception be reconsidered on the following lines –

- (A) The assault against the south coast of France should revert to a threat on the basis of one assault division as originally conceived in the report of the C-in-C Mediterranean (NAF 492).
- (B) The additional requirements in landing craft and other resources which would have been allotted to him to convert the threat into a two or three divisional assault should be re-allocated as early as practicable to strengthen Operation ‘Overlord’ and a reduction of air forces in the Mediterranean theatre in favour of the air forces in this country should be urgently considered.²⁸

COSSAC engaged in a dangerous method of persuasion in his memo. He used outdated strategic and operational concepts to justify a current and newly established consensus. Morgan assumed that the assault against southern France would fail. However, the heads of states at Tehran agreed that this was the best operational way to achieve victory. His objections were moot, since Anvil was now regarded as essential to Overlord. At this early moment, however, the BCS were

²⁷ Eisenhower to Smith, 5 Jan 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1652-1653.

²⁸ COSSAC for Churchill, 6 Jan 1944, PREM 3/271/2. Two days later, Walter B. Smith became COSSAC, and Morgan became the deputy chief of staff.

not convinced about dropping Anvil. They believed that a landing in southern France would certainly bring additional German forces into the area. The best solution was to increase Overlord while maintaining a two or three division assault for Anvil.²⁹ Wilson, now SACMED, added that if Anvil were launched, it would be with a two-division assault. He did not voice an opinion, but rather stated the strategic atmosphere that surrounded Anvil.³⁰

Churchill echoed these sentiments in correspondence with Roosevelt, stating that he had “always hoped that the initial assault at Overlord could be with heavier forces than we have hitherto mentioned.”³¹ He was also quick to assure Roosevelt that the pending Shingle operation would not interfere with the agreements made at Tehran. He noted that “It should be possible to do this barring accident without conflicting with requirements of Overlord or Anvil on Sextant scale and X date, and still have sufficiency of landing craft to maintain the force up till the end of February weather permitting and God being with us.”³² It is generally a bad omen for an operation when one relies on weather and the supernatural to ensure success.

On 14 January 1944, the Prime Minister instructed the Joint Planning Staff (JPS) of the British War Cabinet to compile reports based on COSSAC’s memo concerning Anvil and Overlord. They went point by point over COSSAC’s recommendations, that Overlord be strengthened and Anvil reduced, and agreed with COSSAC.³³ At its conception, Overlord was a

²⁹ COS for the Prime Minister, 14 Jan. 1944, PREM 3/271/2. See also Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1996), 109-110.

³⁰ Wilson to British Chiefs of Staff, 15 Jan. 1944, PREM 2/271/2. Wilson also gave the average number of shipping craft required to “land one division shore to shore at assault scales with a high rate of discharge.” It was forty-six LSTs, fifty LCTs and seventy-five LCIs.

³¹ Churchill to Roosevelt, 7 Jan. 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, II*, 653-654.

³² Prime Minister to President, 8 Jan. 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, II*, 657-658. His statement hints that perhaps Churchill was not as confident in Shingle as he portrayed to his subordinates.

³³ War Cabinet Joint Planning Staff, “Anvil / Overlord,” 12 Jan. 1944, PREM 3/271/2. Also included in the report was the comment that “the cancellation of ‘Anvil’ will raise difficulties with the French, but we submit that this should not be allowed to influence the strategic decision.” This is ironic, because the Americans later in defending Anvil, could make the same argument against British objections.

three division assault. Eisenhower and Montgomery thought this was too narrow. JPS asked the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) to reduce Anvil to a one-division threat. The Combined Chiefs could not decide the fate of Anvil until Eisenhower, now the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force (SAC) made his opinion known. The day after JPS released their opinion, Eisenhower wrote to General Bernard Law Montgomery and General Smith, Chief of Staff of SHAEF. Eisenhower implored Montgomery not to “lose sight of the advantages to Overlord which Anvil brings...the abandonment of Anvil should be accepted only as a last resort.”³⁴ Eisenhower wrote to Smith on January 13 that Anvil could be kept. However Eisenhower was not sure how this could happen.³⁵

Roosevelt supported Eisenhower. He cabled Churchill his opinion, reminding him that they had promised Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin an operation in southern France in conjunction with Overlord. He reprimanded Churchill, saying, “I think the psychology of bringing this thing up at this time would be very bad in view of the fact that it is only a little over a month since the three of us agreed on the statement in Tehran.”³⁶

The debate over Anvil officially began, and there were now two camps. They essentially ran along national lines. Roosevelt favored Anvil because it was one of the basic promises made to Stalin at Tehran. Eisenhower favored Anvil because he believed it was the best way to supplement Overlord. Marshall favored Anvil largely because of the logistical factors in planning and preparing the operation. To the Americans, it had to happen concurrently with Overlord, which would ensure Overlord’s success.

³⁴ Eisenhower to Montgomery, 13 Jan. 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1654-1655.

³⁵ Eisenhower to Smith, 13 Jan. 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1655-1656.

³⁶ President to the Former Naval Person, 14 Jan. 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, II*, 662-663. The letter also says, “It is my understanding that in Teheran U.J. [Uncle Joseph] was given a promise that Overlord be launched during May and supported by strongest practicable Anvil at about the same time and that he agreed to plan for simultaneous Russian attack on Eastern Front.”

The opposing camp was largely British. Churchill wanted to maintain flexibility in order to strike the Germans in the most favorable location. This was consistent with the overall British strategy of conducting the war to preserve manpower. Morgan was insistent on reducing Anvil to a threat, because he believed it would tie down Germans as much as an actual landing would. Clark, the only American thus far in favor of reducing Anvil, believed that doing so would free up more landing craft for Shingle.

There are two noticeable factors when evaluating the reasons for supporting or disapproving of Anvil. There was a single unifying reason for the Americans supporting Anvil, the collaborative war effort. The American high command finally coalesced into a single working unit that acted as one when raising war issues. Roosevelt's clear ideas on his prosecution of the war trickled down to Eisenhower. The American war economy was large and bustling, but not limitless. American planners needed to carefully appropriate resources to fixed long-term objectives. Overlord was one, Anvil the other. America had the resources to prosecute a long, protracted campaign on mainland Europe.

The British did not. Churchill remained opportunistic to the most flexible operations that would inflict damage on German forces. Armed with the vast resources of the Americans, there seemed to be no limit to the aspirations of the Prime Minister. His primary focus for the rest of the war was making sure Great Britain survived. The agreements at Tehran fit the half-hearted cooperation that existed at Tehran, but now new opportunities beckoned. Capturing Rome, the capital of one of the three Axis powers, would be monumental. Morgan wished for the strongest possible Overlord, and by reducing Anvil, the strongest possible Shingle as well. This mirrored British commitments in the ETO, with the 8th Army in Italy under General Harold Alexander, and numerous British divisions in England training for Overlord. Clark naturally wanted to keep

5th Army as strong as possible and reducing Anvil and maximizing his resources was the best way to do this.

In this coalition, the large flaw that existed was the responsibility for maintenance of Anvil. The Mediterranean theater had responsibility to plan an operation that it would have no control over. It was draining the ability of SACMED to conduct operations in a satisfactory way. There was only a limited amount of time before these resources departed, so they decided to use them until they could not any further.

Despite the varying camps that emerged, there still needed to be an overall discussion to settle the issue. The BCS directed Field Marshal John Dill to refrain from issuing any directives in Washington until Eisenhower had a chance to discuss the Anvil and Overlord plan with his subordinates, as well as Marshall.³⁷ On 17 January 1944, Eisenhower cabled Marshall his belief that Anvil should not be reduced. In a confession of frustration concerning his British counterparts, Eisenhower declared, “I clearly appreciate – in fact much more than do these people [the British] – that the coming venture is the decisive act of the War from the viewpoint of the British-American effort.”³⁸ This statement reflected the absolute conviction that Eisenhower had in Anvil’s value in assisting Overlord.³⁹ The British were unwilling to attach further value to Anvil until they learned the results of Shingle.

D-Day for Shingle was nearing, and everyone was interested in how the situation developed. SACMED flew to Caserta to determine whether the operation would go ahead at that time. There was fair weather, and Wilson gave the go ahead.⁴⁰ The United States VI Corps

³⁷ Air Ministry to Britman, Washington, 17 Jan. 1944, PREM 3/271/2.

³⁸ Eisenhower to Marshall, 17 Jan. 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1661-1662.

³⁹ Further emphasis of this point is made in Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 471-472.

⁴⁰ Henry Maitland Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas 1939-1947* (New York: Hutchinson & Co., 1952), 194. The meeting itself is retold by Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 323-328.

under General John Lucas landed on 21 January 1944 to minimal opposition, and consolidated their position.⁴¹ This development was surprising. American intelligence officials thought the landings would experience more resistance. The Germans would have a “violent” reaction to the troops as soon as they appreciated the danger to their flank.⁴² The British press was gleeful at the success, with one newspaper reporting, “Infantry got ashore 'standing up' without immediate opposition, although land mines were numerous.”⁴³

By D-Day plus three, sixty-six thousand Allied troops were ashore at Anzio. There were sporadic encounters with retreating German patrols, and the mood in high command was ecstatic. Early indications showed that Churchill’s big gamble had paid off handsomely. However, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, the commander of German forces in Italy, was preparing his “violent” reaction to the isolated troops. The Germans had prepared numerous operational contingencies to various potential Allied landings. The Germans activated “Case Richard,” and reinforcements arrived near the Allied front.⁴⁴

Their presence was felt when Lucas decided to launch his first full scale assault on 30 January 1944. The 26th Panzer Division ambushed two Ranger battalions near Cisterna, and the Rangers suffered tremendous casualties. Of the 767 that set out to attack, only six returned.⁴⁵ Over the next week resistance continued to stiffen. Operations at Anzio ground to a halt, and

⁴¹ The force contained the US 3d Infantry Division, a regiment of Rangers, and two battalions of paratroopers. They were supplemented by the British 1st Infantry Division, the British 3d Brigade, and a regiment of commandos.

⁴² Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 354.

⁴³ Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 475. This was a dig at Eisenhower and other American generals, who struggled with the Allied landings during Avalanche (Salerno) the previous September.

⁴⁴ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 482.

⁴⁵ Their encounter is retold in Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 390-391; Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 387-397; Carlo D’Este, *Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 159-175; and John D. Eisenhower, *They Fought at Anzio* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 133-142. Blumenson, D’Este and Atkinson can all claim that their histories of the Italian campaign are authoritative. Each is immersing and poignant in its respective storytelling and analysis.

what initially promised to be a daring and audacious stroke turned into a morass. Churchill summed it up best when he thought the Allies were “hauling a wildcat onto the shore, but all we got was a stranded whale.”⁴⁶ The resulting stalemate on the beaches of Anzio required the retention of landing craft much longer than first anticipated. Already, Wilson noted that Anvil had a “cramping effect...as divisions badly needed to sustain our offensive were being held back in North Africa, earmarked for it.”⁴⁷ The invasion force was in danger of being driven into the sea if the Allied commanders did not sort out the strategic situation.

During the initial phases of Shingle, Eisenhower made his case for Anvil to the CCS and BCS. On 23 January 1944, he asked for an expansion of the Overlord beachhead, from three to five divisions. He regarded Anvil as “an important contribution to ‘Overlord’,” and he added that “‘Overlord’ and ‘Anvil’ must be viewed as one whole.” Eisenhower also accepted a one month delay in launching the operations, if it meant strengthening the landing force.⁴⁸

While Eisenhower and the Joint Chiefs were defending Anvil, TF 163 attempted to figure out command arrangements for the operation. On 26 January, General Rooks messaged Clark about security arrangements after the Anvil landing took place. Shingle was five days old at this point, and Clark devoted little attention to Rooks’ note.⁴⁹ Still, the task force plunged ahead. They released a document outlining potential aviation support for Anvil. It proposed to use 5th Army elements to support the invasion, which would further reduce the fighting capacity of the

⁴⁶ Trumbull Higgins, *Soft Underbelly: The Anglo-American Controversy over the Italian Campaign 1939-1945* (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1968), 150.

⁴⁷ Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, 194.

⁴⁸ Eisenhower to the Combined Chiefs of Staff and British Chiefs of Staff, 23 Jan. 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1673-1677. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also officially delegated their authority to Eisenhower to represent them in all future discussions regarding Anvil. See “Recommendations of Supreme Commander, A.E.F. on Overlord and Anvil,” 28 Jan. 1944, JCS Records, Box 303, RG 218, NARA.

⁴⁹ Rooks to Clark, 26 Jan. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm reel 67-5 "special"]. See also Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 231-232.

army in Italy.⁵⁰ Another report outlined the railroad situation in the Marseille-Toulon area.⁵¹ Despite the strategic uncertainties, the planning section of Operation Anvil was doing its job.

This was not something that Churchill particularly cared for. He began preparations for his own invasion plan. Operation Caliph was the proposed invasion of Bordeaux in western France. Churchill thought it would be a good alternative to Anvil, and suggested as much to the Chief of Staff to the Minister of Defence, Lieutenant General Sir Hastings Ismay. According to Churchill, this operation would give the French a chance to come into France after British armor landed. The BCS thought it useless to continue evaluations until Overlord's demands were set. However, the idea intrigued them.⁵² Churchill decided to sideline Caliph for the moment, until the situation surrounding Italy and Overlord clarified.

Allied leaders saw some clarity in Italy; it was not good. It was now obvious that the surprise landings at Anzio failed. The beachhead required additional reinforcements, and increased shipping far past the date it was supposed to depart for Overlord and Anvil. Eisenhower messaged Marshall, expressing doubt that Anvil was doable in the face of these logistical facts. He stated on 6 February, "as long as the enemy fights in Italy as earnestly and bitterly as he is now doing, the action there will some degree compensate for the absence of an Anvil."⁵³ This line of reasoning sounded exactly like the British perspective in objection to Anvil. If Adolf Hitler ordered the Italian campaign reinforced, then the Italian campaign would

⁵⁰ Mathias to A.C. of S., G-3, HQ, TF 163, 3 Feb. 1944, Records of U.S. Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations (World War II and Thereafter), Box 3, folder "7th Army G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil – Air Support, Mar – Apr 1944," RG 338, NARA.

⁵¹ Pattison to A.C. of S., G-4, 3 Feb. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, folder "7th Army, G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil – French Outline Plan 16 May 1944," RG 338, NARA.

⁵² See Churchill to Hastings Ismay, 5 Feb. 1944, PREM 3/271/3; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 693-694; John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, August 1943 – September 1944, Volume V* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), 260-261.

⁵³ Eisenhower to Marshall, 6 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1707-1708.

take Anvil's place in occupying Axis forces. If the Italian campaign succeeded and broke into the Po Valley, the resulting situation would render Anvil unnecessary.

Marshall was appalled, and confused by the seeming reversal of position. His reply to Eisenhower was condescending and blunt. His message started, "British and American Chiefs of Staff seem to have completely reversed themselves and we have become Mediterraneanites and they heavily pro-Overlord." Marshall continued on the contingencies, which would cause Anvil's cancellation,

If we find ourselves in Italy in early April still unable to establish our lines north of Rome then Anvil would of necessity be practically abandoned, because we would have a good and sufficient fight on our hands for a considerable number of troops and the use for at least a 1-Divisional lift for end runs.⁵⁴

Otherwise, entry into the Po Valley would require an entire reevaluation of the operational situation. Marshall was concerned about Eisenhower's strategic mission, ending the letter saying, "I merely wish to be certain that localitis is not developing and that the pressures on you have not warped your judgment."⁵⁵

Eisenhower waited two days to respond. In that time, he made an entry into his diary, relieving his mind of troublesome thoughts regarding Anvil. In Eisenhower's mind, Shingle disrupted forever the original concept of Anvil-Overlord. The original plan envisioned five divisions total between the two operations, the newly revised number put that at seven. With Shingle floundering, additional landing craft were required that seemingly doomed Anvil. He

⁵⁴ Marshall to Eisenhower, 7 Feb. 1944, George C. Marshall, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall: Aggressive and Determined Leadership, June 1, 1943 – December 31, 1944, Volume IV*, ed. Larry I. Bland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 271-272.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

believed the hard fighting in Italy would compensate for not having Anvil. Eisenhower's letter to Marshall was to simplify and alternate commanders to reflect the politics of the situation.⁵⁶

After Eisenhower articulated his thoughts to himself, he rebuffed Marshall. Eisenhower defended himself and his views on Anvil. It provided the Allies with the best opportunity to engage all their forces. Eisenhower recounted his defense of Anvil over the past month. He assured Marshall that he came to his own conclusions, and that any alteration in feeling about Anvil was a result of analyzing the reality of the situation.⁵⁷ On 9 February, Eisenhower sent Marshall an additional telegram. In this one, Eisenhower reiterated that he did not succumb to local pressure. He touted his correct prediction that the Anzio venture would bog down, and outlined air preparations for Overlord.⁵⁸

Marshall did not respond, but he got his message across. Eisenhower was *the* Supreme Allied commander, not merely a coordinator. He dictated how he ran *his* campaign. Eisenhower led according to the guidance of Marshall, and Marshall wanted to ensure the British knew that the Americans were running this war now. He recognized that the British played the political game better than anyone else did. Marshall wanted Eisenhower to be wary of that. Eisenhower got the point, and thereafter Eisenhower redoubled his defense of Anvil with Marshall's advice in mind.⁵⁹

As this private debate between Marshall and Eisenhower continued, Marshall was busy persuading his British counterparts that Anvil was feasible. In a letter to Field Marshal Dill, Marshall backed the JCS up in their Overlord supply estimates. Those estimates were based on a

⁵⁶ Memo for diary, Eisenhower, 7 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1711-1712.

⁵⁷ Eisenhower to Marshall, 8 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1713-1715.

⁵⁸ Eisenhower to Marshall, 9 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1715-1719.

⁵⁹ Perry, *Partners in Command*, 286-287; Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959), 416-419.

LST and LSI operational rate of ninety-five percent. The British placed that number at ninety. The difference was a staggering 13,840 tons.⁶⁰ In addition to the landing craft problem, the Americans were experiencing a manpower shortage. Marshall addressed the issue with Secretary of War Harry Stimson.⁶¹ The difficulty of planning Anvil only continued to grow.

Yet, the members of Task Force 163 continued the planning process. On 11 February, a month after its creation, TF 163 released its first written outline of three different Anvil plans. Plan A featured the capturing of Hyeres, a small island to the east of Toulon. From there the Allies could capture an airfield and begin bombing Toulon. Planners faced significant disadvantages, which included the absence of surprise and a narrow landing front for the troops. Plan B was favorable because of the increased width in the landing area. The landing force would disembark and capture Saint Tropez, farther east of Toulon than Hyeres. That was one problem with Plan B. An additional problem was the increased defensibility of the landing area. Plan C envisioned a landing at Saint Maxime, forty-two miles east of Toulon. However, some of the beaches near there were excellent, and they offered the best chances for a combined assault. Drawbacks were the distance, the movement of supplies over longer distances, and the extended time which German forces would have to react to the landings.⁶²

⁶⁰ Marshall to John Dill, 9 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of George Marshall, IV*, 272-273. See also Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1968), 332-333, 826-829.

⁶¹ Marshall to Stimson, 10 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of George Marshall, IV*, 286-288. The shortage was caused by men who were sent to the Army Specialized Training Program after basic training. The Army was approximately 200,000 men short in February, and the number of men in ASTP amounted to the equivalent of ten divisions.

⁶² Headquarters Force 163, APO #512, memo, P. D. Harkins, 11 Feb. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, RG 338, NARA. Additional planning files related to the initial plan for Anvil are also in Headquarters Force 163, APO #512, 15 Feb. 1944, "Annex No. 4 to G-2 Outline Plan, Operation 'Anvil,' G-2 Auxiliary Agencies Plan," and "Outline Plan Anvil (Tentative)," OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, RG 338, NARA. The original assault divisions were the 3d, 45th and 85th US infantry divisions, as well as a Ranger force of three battalions in addition to British and French commandos. The 3d and 45th divisions were currently engaged in operations at this time, and the 85th would be committed to action in Italy in April.

The entire exercise might prove to be superfluous. On 12 February, Brigadier General Daniel Noce, Assistant Chief of Staff to G-3, SACMED, released his proposals on the retention of landing craft in the Mediterranean for the Anzio bridgehead. He estimated that the bridgehead required over 900 LST days to maintain its supply. Until April, Anzio would maintain twenty-five LSTs to supply the bridgehead.⁶³ This request became possible because of the official delay of Overlord to 31 May.⁶⁴ Eisenhower wished to withdraw these landing craft, but he was afraid that the British would say Anvil was impossible.⁶⁵

General Wilson convened a meeting of his staff on 18 February to discuss the future of Anvil. Key figures such as Devers, Alexander, and Gammell were all on hand. The immediate task was to relieve the bridgehead at Anzio. The objective of the Italian campaign was first to capture the politically valuable city of Rome, then continue an advance to the Po Valley. In regards to Anvil, the staff present agreed that a one-division landing would be worthless. One proposed alternative was a landing along the Adriatic coast, providing a threat to the Dalmatian coast, which some believed would "immobilize" German forces there. Another was to reduce Anvil to a threat only or to yet another leapfrog landing along the western Italian coast. The familiar issue of French political considerations arose. According to Wilson, Anvil's possible cancellation led to the possibility that "there would be some jealousy and backbiting by Senior commanders... [However] some of the French did not want France despoiled and might prefer to fight in Italy and despoil that country instead."⁶⁶

⁶³ Daniel Noce to C-in-C Med, 12 Feb. 1944 OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

⁶⁴ Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 490.

⁶⁵ Eisenhower to Marshall, 14 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1724-1725.

⁶⁶ "Minutes of Commander-in-Chief's Conference on Anvil," 18 Feb. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

The reasoning behind why AFHQ wanted to cancel Anvil is archaic and petty. It was nonsensical to believe that the French would feel compensated for not liberating their homeland by sacking Italy, which was now an Allied power itself. Therefore, as the Allies continued to advance up the Italian peninsula, they were in fact liberating Italy from its occupiers as well. Italy's destruction continued as the war waged on there. Additionally, AFHQ suggested that it might be possible to include a French division in the initial Overlord assault. Doing so would negate months of meticulous planning by SHAEF, as they would have to frantically work to make this possible.

SHAEF continued to work on manipulating landing craft arrangements in order to make both Overlord and Anvil occur at the same time. Eisenhower wrote to the BCS, intimating his desire for Anvil, and its feasibility based on the transferring of landing craft in the ETO.⁶⁷ The debate continued the next day (19 February) as Eisenhower held a meeting with the BCS. There he continued his argument for Anvil, while the BCS maintained that Anvil was hampering the Italian campaign.⁶⁸ Eisenhower realized this and relayed his fears to Marshall the same day. He was pragmatic enough to understand that Anvil might not be possible with the morass that existed in Italy.⁶⁹ This constant defense of Anvil weighed heavily on Eisenhower. He represented the Joint Chiefs in England, and consequently received the bulk of British arguments against Anvil.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Eisenhower to British Chiefs of Staff, 18 February 1944, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1732-1734.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Eisenhower to Marshall, 19 Feb. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1735-1736.

⁷⁰ Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 493. Butcher records that, "The fact that he represents the U.S. Chiefs of Staff in dealing with the British Chiefs throws a tremendous weight on his shoulders. It makes him the recipient of all the arguments and pressures which the British, particularly the Prime Minister, may wish to advance for or against any particular project involving the U.S. Joint Chiefs and affecting the European Theater. The Supreme Commander has wrestled continually to keep Anvil alive, but today it had a bad sinking spell."

The conclusions of the meeting were significant. They stipulated that the Italian campaign would have overriding priority on all resources and operations. The report concluded that the continuation of the Italian campaign would contribute to Overlord by occupying the maximum number of enemy forces. Anvil was scheduled to land with two divisions shortly after Overlord, eventually escalating to ten divisions. In addition, "Full consideration will be given to the maximum use of French forces."⁷¹ This would placate the French during this delay of Anvil.

Wilson met with his staff on 26 February, 1944 to discuss the implications of the Combined Chiefs meeting. Allied troops in Italy had fought continuously since September with little rest. Wilson insinuated that the Germans were at least as tired as the Allies, and probably more so. One more push, Wilson felt, would break them. His overriding priority was to make contact with the Anzio bridgehead. Flexibility in conducting operations was most important. This meant making Anvil viable should German forces block the passes advancing further north into Italy. Amphibious training for Anvil would take place in Italy, to help with the shipping problem.⁷² General Devers, Wilson's deputy, indicated that soon a decision would be made on the commander for Anvil, in addition to naval and air force commanders.⁷³ Accompanying the meeting was a report on how the Italian campaign affected Anvil. As it stood, Anvil would begin to affect the Italian campaign by the end of March. The report also assumed that the main Allied line connected with the bridgehead at Anzio. To compensate for the withdrawal of French

⁷¹ Chiefs of Staff to Joint Staff Mission, 23 Feb. 1944, "Recommendations of Supreme Commander A.E.F. on "Overlord and "Anvil,"" 24 Feb 1944, JCS Records, Box 303, Folder CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 2, RG 218, Box 303, NARA

⁷² Training for Anvil was schedule to occur in Corsica.

⁷³ "Minutes of Conference Held by the Commander-in-Chief with Admiral Cooke and General Hull at AFHQ, 26 February 1944," 26 Feb 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

forces, the entire strategic air force would support 5th Army in its offensive northwards.⁷⁴

Additionally, General Clark was relieved of responsibility for 7th Army and the planning of Anvil, due to the importance of the Italian campaign.⁷⁵

After this flurry of activity, the situation regarding Anvil still did not look any clearer. Numerous meetings, conferences, and compromises kept Anvil on the table, but just barely. TF 163 was the permanent planning committee created for Anvil. However, planning for the ad-hoc Operation Shingle subverted the integrity of Anvil. These two operations were in direct conflict for resources. One was a long-term plan designed to contribute to the final defeat of Germany, the other was a local operation that planned to gain one-hundred miles and take a political objective. BCS and Churchill suggested that Anvil be reduced to a threat to make Shingle sustainable. Individuals like General Morgan thought Anvil was more effective as a threat, since an actual invasion could end up stuck like Anzio. Yet somehow, Shingle was supposed to make the Axis position untenable, despite there being more and better-trained German troops in Italy.

The familiar issue of resource allocation arose yet again. American landing craft only supported so much at one time, and unforeseen shortages like combat losses and refitting further exasperated the situation. The British, in an attempt to conserve resources and take little bits out of the German position, thought a thrust at Anzio would help. They disguised it (albeit unknowingly) as a fail-safe package that would unlock the entire German position in Italy. Because of the quick victory, the operation required Anvil's resources for a short while.

Proponents of Anvil agreed to a delay and a transfer of resources for a limited campaign that had the expectation of wrapping up quickly. Shingle had no contingency plans; so when it

⁷⁴ "Implications on the battle in Italy of Mounting Operation Anvil," 26 Feb 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"]. Also included are tentative dates for the withdrawal of land forces from the front lines to begin training for the amphibious operation in southern France.

⁷⁵ Rooks to Clark, 28 Feb. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, Box 294 NARA[Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

bogged down, there was nothing left to do except support it. Anzio became an ulcer to the Allied effort, requiring ever more material and manpower already designated for other operations.⁷⁶

British commanders used this opportunity to attempt to make the Italian theater the main effort of operations in the Mediterranean on a permanent basis. Only pushback from Eisenhower and Marshall prevented them from getting their way.

Still, the situation for Anvil looked grim. Preliminary plans for the operation continued, but there was no knowing how long the bridgehead would be isolated from the rest of the main line. As the situation in Anzio continued to develop into March, more challenges faced planners and supporters of Anvil, as continued efforts to break out from Anzio stalled.

⁷⁶ Ulcer is used in reference to the "Spanish ulcer" that Napoleon dealt with from 1809-1814.

CHAPTER 4

CANCELLATION

Operation Anvil began as a promising addition to Operation Overlord for quickly liberating France. The procedure received the blessings of the Allied heads of state in Tehran. However, the fog of war intervened, and Anvil quickly faced other obstacles. The British were not disposed towards the operation for fear it would stagnate, as so many amphibious Allied operations before it did. Americans generally favored it, as it would bring the maximum number of soldiers and material into the decisive theater. February dragged on into March, and the beachhead at Anzio following Operation Shingle still drained Allied resources beyond expectations. The Allies seemed hopelessly stuck in Italy. However, the machine that was the Allied war effort in Europe continued to grind forward. One cog of that machine was Anvil, and the Allies had to decide what to do with it.

For the time being, Anvil was still on schedule with Overlord, whose D-Day was 1 June 1944. On 2 March 1944 Major General Lowell Rooks, the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Mediterranean (COSMED) wrote to General Alexander Patch, commander of the United States 7th Army, outlining the plan for Anvil.¹ This formal order tasked Patch with command of the Anvil assault forces on D-Day. The assault called for two divisions, with naval and air support elements commanded by Admiral Henry K. Hewitt and Major General John K. Cannon. General Sir Henry Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean (SACMED), expected Patch's outline and the corresponding support elements to have their briefing ready for him by 1 April.²

¹ The chief of staff to Henry Wilson was Lieutenant General Sir James Gammell.

² Lowell Rooks to Alexander Patch, 2 Mar. 1944, United States Army, Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Box 294, Record Group (RG) 331, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

The order reflected the current state of affairs with regard to the situation in the Mediterranean. The Anzio beachhead was still stagnant, but new offensives were in the planning stages, aiming to push the Germans back and establish contact with the main Allied body. This sequence of events could possibly delay Anvil even further, but would continue on largely untouched. However, if the planned offensives failed to disrupt the German line, Anvil was in serious jeopardy, as the Anzio beachhead would still require shipping craft to maintain its supply lines.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, head of the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) was painfully aware of the problem. On 3 March, he cabled General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, regarding his concerns on a two-division Anvil assault. There were twenty-six new Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) on their way to the European Theater of Operations (ETO) from America. Eisenhower wanted the LSTs directly sent to him, allowing the retention of twenty-six LSTs in the Mediterranean. Those twenty-six were originally designated for England, to bolster the five division Normandy invasion. In total, forty-one craft originally destined for England remained in the Mediterranean.³

To clarify exactly how these conditions affected Anvil, Wilson convened a meeting of his staff the same day that Eisenhower sent his telegram to Marshall. The Combined Chiefs of Staff wanted a thorough briefing on the updated plan of Anvil. They sent Rear Admiral Charles Cooke, who served as the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Earnest J. King's chief planning officer. Major General John E. Hull was also present as a planning officer and as the Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations Division in Washington. Additional personnel included Lieutenant General Jacob Devers, second in command in the Mediterranean, Gammell, Hewitt, and Rooks.

³ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, 3 Mar. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: III*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1758-1760.

Wilson presented a thorough outline of the information regarding Anvil, analyzing it point by point.⁴ The one hour and forty-five minute meeting held one important distinction for Anvil; those forces tagged for the operation must remain in Italy until the Allies established the main line north of Rome. Devers lobbied for an amendment to the phrase and suggested that the tagged units be withdrawn immediately after the bridgehead met the main force. Wilson overruled him, and his original idea remained intact.⁵ Copies of the summary of the meeting were sent to SHAEF and the British Chiefs of Staff (BCS).⁶ Despite the historical consensus to the contrary, the Italian campaign was in practice receiving priority over the two supreme operations of 1944, Overlord and Anvil.

The French were not present at the 3 March meeting, since neither General Charles DeGaulle nor Henri Giraud were invited.⁷ The present conception for Anvil dictated that the two French armored divisions in the operation would be broken up into "pockets for attachment to divisions."⁸ The French were only involved in the planning insofar as they had to ensure that their contingent was prepared to fight and coordinate French resistance. However, given that the French were liberating their home soil, Allied planners gave the French special consideration when planning the details. A French liaison was assigned to Task Force 163 (the planning staff for Anvil) to coordinate the readiness of the French contingent. Colonel Jean L. Petit led the

⁴ His notes are found in "Notes for the Commander-in-Chief's Meeting...Regarding Anvil," 3 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

⁵ "Minutes of Conference Held by the Commander-in-Chief with Admiral Cooke and General Hull at AFHQ, 3 March 1944," 3 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

⁶ Rooks to SHAEF, 7 Mar. 1944 Rooks to British Chiefs of Staff, 7 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

⁷ Wilson had notes prepared for General Charles DeGaulle and General Henri Giraud. They are found in Rooks to Brigadier G.S. Thompson, J.P.S., 3 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

⁸ Rooks to G-3 JPS, 28 Feb. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

deployed contingent.⁹ Wilson sat down with Giraud on 7 March to discuss his notes from the meeting held a few days prior.

Giraud immediately contested Wilson's conception of French participation in Anvil. Just as General John Pershing refused to allow the gradual insertion of American contingents on the Western Front in 1918, so too did Giraud refuse to break up French forces.¹⁰ He believed that the "two French Corps to be engaged should be under a French Army Command which would work alongside of an American Army Command, both Armies to be under an Army Group Commander." Wilson agreed, but stated at that time the Allies had "neither the staffs nor the organization for such."¹¹ SACMED also explained his belief that the assault forces must have combat experience, and that included the French troops.

They held another meeting the next day. Giraud continued to advocate for a strong Anvil, but recognized that until the capture of Rome, Anvil could not occur. The French general even proposed inserting the entire French army into Italy, if it brought about a more rapid decision. Giraud also believed that the longer the spring offensive was delayed, the less likely it was to succeed. Additionally, he stressed the need of an independent French corps command.¹² However, those details remained incomplete until the attainment of the objectives in Italy.

⁹ Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993), 31.

¹⁰ General John J. Pershing commanded the American forces that entered France in 1918.

¹¹ "Minutes of Meeting Held on 7 March 1944 Between the Commander-in-Chief, Members of Hist Staff, and General Giraud," 8 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

¹² "Minutes of Meeting Between the Allied Commander-in-Chief and the French Commander-in-Chief on Thursday, 9 March, at 1100 hours," 9 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"]. Also discussed in this meeting were preparations for the landing sites, including Corsica. In order to prepare for the invasion, Giraud said that he could have 50,000 natives working on constructing suitable ports and airfields for the invasion fleet. COSMED met with General Martin, the French Commander of Operations in Corsica to discuss preparations for making the island suitable for training and as the launch off point for the operation. This twenty-five-minute meeting is found in "Minutes of the Conversation Between Lieutenant-General Gammell, Chief of Staff, AFHQ and General of Army Corps Martin, French Commander of Operations in Corsica, 11 March 1944, 1130-1155 hours, in the office of the Chief of Staff," 14 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special"].

The great bane to Anvil's precarious existence, the Italian campaign, retained its vice-like grip on proceedings in the Mediterranean theater. Wilson had the Joint Planning Staff (JPS) look into future amphibious operations, and recognized that Anvil risked cancellation. These operations would occur with the leftover forces slated for Anvil. The first was an amphibious operation in the Fiume area (present day Rijeka, Croatia), to "hold German formations in [the] Balkans." Another operation aimed at the Venice area to "prevent German withdrawal from Italy."¹³ Both of these possible landings were contrary to the agreement made at Tehran between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin on the primacy of Overlord and Anvil in 1944. These reports were prepared because there was a showdown brewing between the American and British Chiefs of Staff on the direction of future campaigns in the Mediterranean and their effect on Overlord.

Nevertheless, Anvil was at this moment still on schedule. Gammell wrote to the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), in response to directives he received from them in February requesting the submission of a monthly report on the progression of operations. As of 15 March 1944, five French infantry divisions and two French armored divisions were available for Anvil. Three American divisions were also earmarked for the operation. In addition, there was a complement of special forces. Administrative personnel for the French formations were not available, so American personnel would have to make up the shortage.¹⁴

As the minds behind the Allied war effort convened for 15 March conference principally regarding Anvil, they also needed to address several other issues. LST allocation for Overlord was still arbitrary and uncertain.¹⁵ Marshall was concerned about sufficient reserves in England.

¹³ Wilson to AG War, HQ MAAF Caserta, 14 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 48-A].

¹⁴ Gammell to British Chiefs of Staff, 15 Mar. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"].

¹⁵ Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1959), 422-423.

He feared that the expected vigorous German contesting of the beachhead in Normandy would require withdrawing troops from other theaters. Marshall asked Eisenhower his opinion on the matter. Marshall was now leaning toward postponing Anvil or canceling it entirely. Postponing the operation would allow them more flexibility with immediate operations.¹⁶ This conclusion paralleled British thoughts on Operation Anvil. If Anvil occurred as scheduled, they would have to pull forces from the available pool for Normandy.¹⁷ Eisenhower shared the same pessimism as Marshall. In attempting to calculate the LST arrangement and the available lift for forces, Eisenhower stated, "I spend all of my time thinking on these very serious matters and will try to send you a full exposition by Monday."¹⁸ His full exposition came to Marshall two days later.

Eisenhower believed that the present conception of Anvil was no longer possible. Citing a need for more flexibility, Eisenhower stressed that at the present loading schedule, LSTs in Normandy would "use up all our LST's on the first three tides...will have no repeat no LST's reaching the beaches after the morning of D plus 1 until the morning of D plus 4. Any such situation was acceptable to me only as long as I felt reasonably sure of a strong and simultaneous Anvil."¹⁹ The Supreme Allied Commander saw sidelining Anvil as a temporary measure, with eyes on reinstating the operation "as rapidly as we can."²⁰ The following day, Eisenhower sent Marshall his intended position and remarks on Anvil. He was communicating this without having a recent opinion from Wilson on the situation. Eisenhower recommended the following:

¹⁶ Marshall to Eisenhower, 16 Mar. 1944, in George C. Marshall, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall: Aggressive and Determined Leadership, June 1, 1943 – December 31, 1944, Volume IV*, ed. Larry I. Bland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 348-350.

¹⁷ However, if Anvil achieved its purpose in being a flanking maneuver designed to disrupt and threaten (eventually) the German rear in northwest France, then the forces Marshall sought would already be in theater contributing to this final victory.

¹⁸ Eisenhower to Marshall, 18 Mar. 1944, in *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1772-1773.

¹⁹ Eisenhower to Marshall, 20 Mar. 1944, in *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1775-1776.

²⁰ Ibid.

(1) abandonment of a two-division Anvil, (2) the withdrawing of some sixty-nine landing craft from the Mediterranean for use in England, (3) threats for operations in the Mediterranean to be a constant presence, in case Rankin [the emergency plan for reentry into the continent should Germany's positions become untenable or seriously weaken for any reason] occurs.²¹

Continuing the flurry of activity surrounding Eisenhower's meetings with the British Chiefs of Staff, he expressed frustration:

The arguments, pro and con, on Anvil prospects versus efficiency in our own loading programs are getting a bit wearing. We've been over the ground so often that more talk seems completely useless, while I must say that the past two months of argument have not, so far as I can see, changed the convictions of any single individual that has been involved.²²

Clearly, Eisenhower did not appreciate the seemingly bureaucratic deadlock that gripped the highest levels of the Allied strategic makers. In a letter to Marshall written on 22 March 1944, Eisenhower ruefully accepted the postponement of Anvil. His exasperation was summed up with this statement, "For two months I have been struggling in every possible way to provide for a real Anvil but I have come to the conclusion that we are simply striving for the impossible."²³ American planners shared this despair, as they thought Anvil was necessary for a quick, decisive victory against Germany. The political and military effects of not having an Anvil were grave, as one general explained:

²¹ Eisenhower to Marshall, 21 Mar. 1944, in *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1776-1778. The breakdown of the landing craft is as follows: 26 LSTs, 40 LCIs (Large), 1 LSH (Landing Ship, Heavy), 1 LSE (Landing Ship, Emergency Repair), 1 LSD (Landing Ship, Dock).

²² Eisenhower to Marshall, 21 Mar. 1944, in *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1779. During that day Eisenhower also wrote to Major General Alfred Gruenther about the death of a friend, Baron Edward F. L. Lawson about the undertaking of a history of the Italian campaign, Marshall once again for air command and control for Overlord, and Royal Air Force Chief of Staff Charles Portal. This furious day of messages and disappointment is curiously lacking the same fervor in Eisenhower's war diary. See Harry Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, 1942 to 1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 505-506. It was also obvious the British were master statesmen, versed in this art for hundreds of years. They were attempting to wear down Eisenhower, and his exasperation shows that their method of persuasion was clearly affecting the Supreme Allied Commander.

²³ Eisenhower to Marshall, 22 Mar. 1944, in *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1776-1782-1786.

If we cancel Anvil completely, the following will be true:

- a. We get into political difficulties with the French.
- b. Overlord will lose at least 10 fighting divisions
- c. Our service forces continue to support the western Mediterranean
- d. Our divisions and the French divisions will be committed to a costly, unremunerative, inching advance in Italy. The people of both the United States and France may or may not take this indefinitely.
- e. Once committed to Italy, we have our forces pointed towards Southeastern Europe and will have the greatest difficulty in preventing their use for occupation forces in Austria, Hungary and southern Germany.²⁴

How did Eisenhower and other American commanders come to experience such grief over these crucial issues in March? On 19 March 1944, Wilson sent the BCS his appreciation of the situation in Italy. Operation Dickens, the third Allied attempt to capture Cassino, was underway. Wilson was confident that General Harold Alexander would capture the town. Following the capture of Cassino, the most pressing objective for the Allies was Rome. Alexander planned a new operation for 15 April codenamed Diadem. He hoped to capture the ancient city and break the Axis position in Italy. Operations following the capture of Rome fell into four areas: (1) launching Operation Anvil, (2) an all out assault in Italy accompanied by an end-run assault behind enemy lines, (3) landing in the Gulf of Genoa or the Po Valley, and (4) a landing in Istria. With regard to Anvil, Wilson explained that the success of the operation would depend on both the rate of advance, and how quickly the Allies could repair the ports of Marseille and Toulon. In Italy, he hoped to "destroy some of the enemy's forces" while continuing to keep them occupied. Although a sound objective, the casualties sustained by many units in the Italian theater were turning any sort of success into a Pyrrhic victory. Ultimately,

²⁴ Maurice Matloff, *Command Decisions: The Anvil Decision: Crossroads of Strategy*, (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 391; Matloff, *Strategic Planning 1943-1944*, 425.

Wilson requested to maintain Anvil only under Rankin conditions, and to emphasize operations in Italy instead.²⁵

The BCS responded the same day. They largely agreed with Wilson's report. However, they recommended that instead of giving Eisenhower the complement of landing craft he requested, they would give him fewer, which would "reduce [the] present narrow margin of vehicle lift for which a few additional L.S.Ts and L.C.Ts would be of great value."²⁶ The British managed to convince the JCS to grant additional breathing space for Overlord and the Mediterranean. Previously tagged American divisions, like the 3rd and 45th, would stay in Italy to swing the campaign toward a decisive advantage for the Allies. LSTs and similar landing craft would ferry supplies and men into the morass of central Italy, all in the hope of providing a breakthrough. Wilson had the directives to proceed as he saw fit to produce the operations he desired.²⁷

The Combined Chiefs met on 24 March to go over the recommendations. Admiral King noted that Wilson's latest telegrams restricted Allied movement in the Mediterranean strictly to Italian ventures. Additionally, he questioned Wilson's wisdom in proclaiming that even after capturing Rome, mounting Anvil was unlikely. His third grievance with Wilson's memo was the

²⁵ *Churchill at War: The Prime Minister's Office Papers, 1940-1945: PRO Record Classes PREM3 and PREM4*. (Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1998)[Microfilm Reel 119]. Wilson to British Chiefs of Staff, 19 Mar. 1944, PREM 3/271/4. Wilson also added a note at the end notifying the BCS that he did not send this telegram to Washington for the purposes of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

²⁶ British Chiefs of Staff to J.S.M. Washington, 22 Mar. 1944, PREM 2/271/4. The number of LSTs given to Eisenhower would go down from twenty-six to nineteen.

²⁷ This mid-March debate is thoroughly covered in the historiography. See John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, August 1943 - September 1944, Volume V* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), 244-247; Matloff, *Strategic Planning 1943-1944*, 421-424; Trumbull Higgins, *Soft Underbelly: The Anglo-American Controversy over the Italian Campaign 1939-1945* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), 160-163; Henry Maitland Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas 1939-1947* (New York: Hutchinson & Co., 1952), 206-207; Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1968), 358-361; Clarke and Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, 15-17; Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1996), 115-117; Gordon Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2002), 171-173.

political ramifications of canceling Anvil. The French had a large investment in the operation, and the Soviets favored Anvil at Tehran. Attacked by King's arguments, Field Marshal Sir John Dill fired back, arguing that if the Germans fought for Rome, the results would be the same as Anvil. There would also be additional positive psychological effects.²⁸ The resulting full memo released by the CCS struck an air of compromise. The committee recognized the impossibility of launching Anvil with the current shipping realities. Planners abided by Wilson's assessment of the capture of Rome occurring at mid-June, though King and Marshall thought that was overly pessimistic. The memo also reiterated Overlord's primacy over all other operations. This meant all Italian operations commenced with Overlord in mind, rather than Rome. In fact, the main objective of the Italian campaign was to join the bridgehead with the main body of the Allies, thereafter to maintain pressure to occupy the most German units possible. Anvil's new-targeted operational date was 10 July. Eisenhower would get the sixty-six landing craft he requested, with the special types still undecided. The Allies diverted resources from the Pacific theatre to the Mediterranean explicitly on the promise to support Anvil.²⁹

While Marshall was exerting his influence in Washington, Eisenhower met with the BCS to discuss the recent rulings. In preparation for the meetings, Marshall briefed Eisenhower on his position with the CCS.³⁰ In the meeting, Eisenhower emphasized the transferring of landing craft from the Pacific to the ETO, a first during the war. General Brooke of the BCS argued that diverting resources from the Pacific for Anvil was tantamount to the "pointing of a pistol."

²⁸ Minutes, CCS 151st Mtg., 24 Mar. 1944, JCS Records, Box 303, Folder "CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 2," RG 218, NARA. Positive psychological effects included the capture of one of the Axis power's capitals.

²⁹ Memo, CCS 465/13, title "Overlord and Anvil," 24 Mar 1944, JCS Records, Box 303, Folder "CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 2," RG 218, NARA.

³⁰ Marshall to Eisenhower, 25 March 1944, *The Papers of George Marshall, IV*, 374-376; Eisenhower to Marshall, 27 Mar 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1792-1794. Eisenhower's assessment of the meeting was optimistic. He stated that "...it was clear that the British Chiefs of Staff were most grateful for the earnest and even sacrificial efforts that the American Chiefs of Staff are making in order to support the great venture of Overlord."

Brooke wanted to maintain operational flexibility for the future. He preferred to revisit the operational situation after Overlord began.³¹ The British turned down this offer for additional landing craft. This reaction infuriated the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who believed that the British were ungrateful at the sacrifice and disruption of plans the Americans were making on behalf of the Mediterranean theater.³² British planners would love to have the craft, but only if they were not earmarked for Anvil. A memo sent to Dill by the BCS was much more tame and complimentary of the American ideas. In the Mediterranean, Allied forces would advance as far and fast as they can. If an opportunity should arise to strike at the Germans, other than southern France, they would take it.³³

This flurry of activity reflected the chaotic nature of warfare. The American and British coalition, though forged in brotherhood, was still an alliance of expedience. Each side had to look to its own national interests, and figure out the best way that it could allocate the resources at hand. This underlying motivation expressed itself in the fervent arguments that derailed the cohesiveness of the two countries' common strategy. The British needed all the help they could get, because they could not help themselves. Great Britain had run out of men to fight the war. Even America's supreme material advantage, however, still carried limitations with it. American factories still produced a finite number of landing craft, trained soldiers and supplies. Individuals like Marshall and Eisenhower were always acutely aware of this fact. It is something the British took for granted. They assumed the Americans could produce anything they needed. This is all the more believable when one sees the exorbitant demands the British laid on the

³¹ Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, 424-425.

³² Ibid.

³³ Air Ministry to J.S.M. Washington, 28 Mar. 1944, PREM 3/271/4.

Americans. Accustomed to being the dominant voice in the alliance, their usurpation by the Americans in dictating the course of the war was hard to accept.

While the planners continued to mull the merits of Anvil, Task Force 163, the planning staff dedicated solely to Anvil, was still hard at work. TF 163 released the tentative plan at the beginning of March.³⁴ This report was a tactical breakdown of the planned invasion. Its schematics looked very similar to those of Overlord. A French parachute regiment would drop under cover of darkness on D-1. At sunrise on D-Day, the landing forces would come ashore with special units and three American divisions yet unnamed. The previously suggested units (3rd, 45th and 85th IDs) were all currently engaged in combat in Italy. The objective of the assault corps was the "blue line," to be reached on D+2. It stretched from La Napoule in the east, Le Luc in the north and ten miles short of Hyeres in the west. The next objective was to advance "at the earliest possible moment" to the west to capture Toulon, with Marseille as a subsequent objective. Attached was the tentative unit listing detailing a breakdown of troop requirements for the assault. Air Force and Naval plans expected to appear later.³⁵

The Air Force plans quickly assembled, and, on 1 April, a preliminary report detailed the expectations of bombing the landing area on D-Day. It was unrealistic, the note said, for heavy bombers to attack at first light in the assault area. Because of the hectic nature of the group assembly, the bombing missions could expect an abort rate of thirty percent.³⁶ A memo released shortly after dealt with the ground preparation portion of Anvil. The mission was to "reduce, if

³⁴ The order is referenced from footnote, two. Rooks to Patch, 2 Mar. 1944, title "Operation Anvil," OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special"]; the document with the tentative plan is at Caldwell to Commander-in-Chief, Allied Force, title "Tentative Army Outline Plan, Operation Anvil," 29 Mar 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, Folder "7th Army, G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil-Tentative Army Outline Plan, 29 Mar 1944," RG 338, NARA.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ HQ MAAF to HQ MAAF Algiers, 1 Apr. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, RG 338, NARA.

not destroy completely, the enemy's ability to oppose the landing operation and its subsequent development."³⁷ Already present were detailed expected avenues of approach for German reinforcements contesting the landing site. Once the landing sites were secured to support the expected advance, the plan included semi-permanent airfields.³⁸ However, the planning staff was acutely aware of the Anvil delay. It now had more uncertainty than ever as Allied leaders looked to untangle their strategy.³⁹

A directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to Wilson on 3 April dictated that he prepare an all-out offensive to link the Anzio beachhead with the main force in Italy. After the offensive was successful, Wilson had to develop a threat against the south of France. The deadline for this fully developed threat was Overlord D-5. Anvil still had a launch date of 10 July, and it was "...the most ambitious operation which can be undertaken in the Mediterranean." There was one caveat in the directive, which read "The undertaking of these preparations for Anvil will in no way preclude a change of plan by the C.C.S. should an undeniably better course of action be presented by changing circumstances."⁴⁰ This was a coy line inserted into the directive, and the British would be quick to exploit it.

Prime Minister Churchill, who was recently idle in the Anvil debate, now weighed in. He wrote to Field Marshal Dill after reading the directive to Wilson suggesting that if "...the

³⁷ Title, "Air Preparation for Operation Anvil," 1 Apr. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, RG 338, NARA. Underlined and bolded in the document. A handwritten note was attached labeled "Proposed Air Targets Pre D-Day. The list included targets such as Aspres sur Buechs, Giyors, Grenoble, Cannes and Alais. Also listed were Italian targets such as Torino, Alessandra, Genova, Novara and Milan. All of these proposed bombing sites were meant to hit railroad lines and facilities.

³⁸ There were problems with the establishment of these airfields based on the tentative outline for Anvil. To advance to the "blue" line, any airfield constructed within it would be subject to unobserved artillery fire from German emplacements. See TF 163 to G-3, Force 163, title "Airfield Construction in Anvil," 3 Apr. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, RG 338, NARA.

³⁹ Ibid., "With the delay now envisaged in the mounting of the "Anvil" assault, it has become necessary to cater for the construction of a number of semi-permanent airfields in the Toulon - Frejus valley."

⁴⁰ Air Ministry to J.S.M., Washington, 3 Apr 1944, PREM 2/271/7.

situation demands it we are free to consider other alternatives if these should seem preferable later without being accused of having got L.S.T.'s from the Pacific under any misunderstanding."⁴¹ The recent agreement to divert shipping from the Pacific to the Mediterranean for Anvil did not pacify the British. Field Marshal Brooke explained to the British Chiefs of Staff that operations in Italy would cease entirely while the great shifting of resources to Anvil occurred in late June to early July. It would be the "wrong time strategically" to begin Anvil.⁴²

Eisenhower met with Churchill on 4 April, and relayed back to Marshall that the British agreed for a specific target date for Anvil.⁴³ Armed with this information, the JCS desired to have the directive amended to establish the primacy of Anvil over other Mediterranean operations. They also believed that the force level after the withdrawing of Anvil troops was "...sufficient to maintain all the pressure on the enemy which will be effective."⁴⁴ By inserting a few other edits, the JCS essentially made the British proposal irrelevant to their goals. The BCS replied that these changes were "quite unacceptable."⁴⁵ Lieutenant General Hastings Ismay, a chief military advisor to Churchill, wrote to the Chiefs of Staff Committee that the Italian

⁴¹ Prime Minister to Field Marshal Dill, 3 Apr 1944, PREM 2/271/3.

⁴² Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, vol. VII: Road to Victory 1941-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, 1986), 728-729. Also see Air Ministry to J.S.M., Washington, 3 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/7. Also at this time of growing tension between the British and Americans, Churchill had an American Intelligence Mission delayed to the Balkans to aid partisans, at the same moment the British were withdrawing from that same location. He commanded them to delay the Americans' trip from Cairo "by every reasonable means," and to show the Americans "...the greatest courtesy being used...in every case, but no transportation." Gilbert, *Churchill vol. VII*, 729.

⁴³ Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 511.

⁴⁴ CCS 465/17, memo, JCS to CCS, title "Overlord and Anvil," 5 Apr 1944, JCS Records, Box 303, Folder "CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 2," RG 218, NARA.

⁴⁵ JSM Washington to War Cabinet Offices, London, 4 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/4; Ehrman, *Grand Strategy vol. V*, 254.

campaign was being ruined by General Alexander's delays in theater, and the "...shadow of Anvil, which will spoil all operations after May 14."⁴⁶

It was as though both sides were ramming their heads against a wall. The BCS wrote to Dill asking if he should approach the JCS and ask that they "...once more reconsider the situation in the light of the following arguments which we have evidently so far failed to explain or emphasize sufficiently."⁴⁷ The argument the British were trying to convey was essentially the same one they advocated since the beginning of Operation Shingle. First, they agreed that Wilson should continue *planning* for Anvil, but that beginning *preparations* for a 10 July D-Day would cause serious problems. The BCS argued that units earmarked for Anvil would have to come off the line before the bridgehead joined to the main body. Transferred units out of the theater would cause a minimum six week delay. This transfer would allow the Germans to retreat or reorient their units in order to contest more efficiently the Normandy landings.⁴⁸

The CCS met for one last meeting regarding the subject of Italy, Anvil, and the transferring of landing craft from the Pacific to the Mediterranean. The British still did not agree with the Joint Chiefs' recommendations. Marshall spoke for the JCS, explaining "...the course of action now being pursued in the Mediterranean was too weak to justify the interference with operations in the Pacific that withdrawal of landing craft in question would entail." Dill pleaded with Marshall, commenting that General Alexander's Italian offensive would go quicker and more efficiently if he had additional landing craft. The landing craft question in the Mediterranean was urgent.⁴⁹ Otherwise, further delays would occur during the planned fourth

⁴⁶ Ismay to COS Committee, 5 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/3.

⁴⁷ Air Ministry to Britman Washington, 7 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/4.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Minutes, CCS 154th Mtg, title "Overlord and Anvil," 8 Apr 1944, JCS Records, Box 303, Folder "CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 2," RG 218, NARA.

offensive for Cassino, Operation Diadem. Since neither side could reach an agreement, the Americans acquiesced to the British, despite their numerous concerns and objections.⁵⁰ A great irony of this decision, the JCS believed, was that although the British argued that they required flexibility in the Italian theater, setting Anvil aside meant there was no room for flexibility concerning future operations. In their dissenting memo, the JCS stated:

There could be no flexibility as to a decision at some later date between Anvil and operations confined to the mainland of Italy unless actual preparations, in addition to plans, for Anvil are undertaken now. In other words, we could divert from Anvil to some other operation in Italy, but we could not reverse the process. Under these circumstances, we do not feel justified in diverting landing craft from critical operations in the Pacific.

The British would maintain their existing resources to prosecute the next large offensive in Italy. LSTs and other supporting craft scraped from the Pacific would remain in Italy. The JCS believed that Anvil could no longer be a supporting operation to Overlord. If Anvil was to remain feasible, its launch date would be after 10 July. The British were dissatisfied, as they still longed to take the landing craft from the Pacific.

Churchill did not want to make a final decision on Anvil until he spoke to General Alexander about the Italian campaign.⁵¹ On 11 April, Alexander briefed Churchill and the BCS on the situation in Italy. They were eager to hear why Alexander requested a months' delay in beginning the spring offensive. Over the winter, the Germans constructed two additional lines to the one they already had surrounding Cassino.⁵² In an attempt to weaken the Gustav Line, the

⁵⁰ Memo, JCS, 8 Apr 1944, JCS Records, Box 303, Folder "CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 2," RG 218, NARA.

Some of their ideas to the dissatisfaction to the outcome of the meeting is as follows, "We believe the sound decision is to mount Anvil while maintaining strong pressure on the German forces in Italy...Because of its vital effect on overall strategy, the Italian situation calls for the most vigorous action by commanders on the ground...since there is urgent need for an immediate decision, we will accept the British view."

⁵¹ Churchill to General Hollis, 10 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/3.

⁵² Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. V, 255-257; Gilbert, *Winston Churchill* vol. VII, 736-737; Matloff, *Strategic Planning 1943-1944*, 424-426; Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History United States Army, 1969), 449-451; Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company), 512-513.

Allies used their seemingly limitless air force in Operation Strangle. The Gustav Line was one of the longest unbroken lines of fortifications the Germans built along the rocky spine of Italy. Strangle failed, as it amounted to little more than an annoyance. Destroyed roads were easily fixed, and interdiction was minimal.⁵³ Every position occupied favorable ground, often overlooking a valley or ridgeline. Additionally, the German commander in the Italian theater, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, had lines set up along the major routes of expected Allied advance. During the winter, the Germans constructed additional fortified networks, the Caesar and Adolf Hitler Lines. Approximately twenty-three German divisions existed in Italy, with the Allies possessing only twenty-eight. These numbers were hardly enough for an offensive army to establish attacking superiority. For Diadem, however, Alexander intended to position eighteen of his divisions west of the Apennines, most of the 5th and 8th Armies. The remainder consisted of the equivalent of three divisions east of the Apennines in the Adriatic sector.⁵⁴ For Diadem, Alexander would mass his armies at the point of attack to compensate for the parity in numbers in the theater.

Given this sober account of the delays that previously angered British command, this realization granted Alexander some time to prepare Diadem. First, he had to reorient two armies (the American 5th and British 8th) to prepare the attack without notifying German intelligence to their movements. Alexander commanded an army of seven nationalities, in comparison to the homogenous *Wehrmacht*. In addition, the extra time would permit the weather to improve, resulting in better conditions for attack.⁵⁵

⁵³ Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy 1943-1944* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2007), 494-501.

⁵⁴ Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. V, 255-256.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Out of this meeting, Churchill felt confident enough to explain his position to Marshall. First, Churchill mentioned the success of the armies in Italy, mauling the eight German divisions inserted into Italy. These successes benefited the advance of Soviet armies in the southern sector of the Eastern Front. Churchill doubted the success a future Anvil might have, commenting, "I do not believe an advance up the Rhone Valley is practicable in any period which will influence our main operations this summer."⁵⁶ He suggested an alternative; have the landing army advance to Bordeaux rather than up the Rhone Valley. The assault in Italy would roughly coincide with Overlord's beginning, thus engaging the Germans on two fronts simultaneously. Churchill then wrote his final opinion. The primary focus, as already agreed upon by the CCS, was to defeat the Germans south of Rome and join the bridgehead to the main line. On Anvil, he said the operation could be valuable as a feint indefinitely. However, if Anvil remained on its 10 July course, General Wilson would "...fall between two stools...we would be denied the exploitation of any victory gained south of Rome (and victories are wonderful things) or the power to pin down German divisions in Italy, and yet...not be able to make a major operation out of Anvil." Churchill commented that unless the Mediterranean received the LST shipment from the Pacific immediately, the most Anvil could hope for was a one division lift.⁵⁷

Eisenhower heard the same day that he was not to expect the landing craft from the Mediterranean he believed were already agreed upon. He stressed to Marshall the same ideas which Marshall himself was advancing to the British, specifically, that Anvil had the flexibility to support Italian operations if necessary, but that the reverse was not true. The risks were too great to lack the landing craft for the upcoming summer campaigns. Eisenhower, assured of the necessity of the landing crafts, ended by stating: "...I should submit to you personally my earnest

⁵⁶ Prime Minister to Field Marshall Dill for General Marshall, 12 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/4.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

conviction that no stone should be left unturned in order to achieve an understanding that will allow us to have this additional strength."⁵⁸

Marshall responded to Churchill, but tasked Eisenhower with delivering it to the Prime Minister. In requesting the delivery, Marshall could respond to both letters at the same time. He opened with, "We appear to be agreed in principle but quite evidently not as to method."

Marshall also reemphasized the critical need of landing craft in the Pacific. He was however, willing to shift the landing craft if Anvil received them.⁵⁹ He wanted the British's full assurance, as did the rest of the American command looking at this compromise.

Dill wrote to Churchill on 14 April, defending Marshall, who he saw as "...always under some pressure, Naval and Military as well as political, to agree to greater resources to the Pacific."⁶⁰ The fundamental question of the landing craft remained. Churchill and the BCS discussed this problem in a meeting the same day. Churchill implored the committee to make a final attempt at convincing the Americans to release the shipping. Sir Alan Brooke commented that the Americans strategy for the Mediterranean, to place the Italian theater on the defensive once the Anzio beachhead and the main army linked up to concentrate on Anvil preparations, was "absolutely wrong." Sir Andrew Cunningham, the British Naval COS voiced a harsher view:

[O]ur best course of action was to take a clear-cut decision now to abandon 'Anvil,' even if this resulted in the loss of landing craft...from the Pacific. This would, at least, ease the minds of Commanders and remove the shadow of the dead hand of 'Anvil,' which was at present exerting a serious influence on operations in Italy.

⁵⁸ Eisenhower to Marshall, 12 Apr 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower, III*, 1818-1819.

⁵⁹ Marshall to Churchill, 13 Apr 1944, *The Papers of George Marshall, IV*, 404-405.

⁶⁰ Dill to Churchill, 14 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/7.

Brooke reminded the BCS that the JCS accepted the British view. Churchill kept these notes in mind as he prepared his reply to Marshall.⁶¹ In the communication, he mocked the American position. "Halt here. Go over to the defensive. All aboard for Anvil."⁶² On 16 April, Churchill messaged Dill, showing him the directive the BCS prepared for Wilson in the Mediterranean.

The directive read:

Object

1. To give the greatest possible assistance to Overlord by destroying or containing the maximum number of German formations in the Mediterranean

Method

2. (a) Launch, as early as possible, an all-out offensive in Italy.
(b) Develop the greatest possible threat to contain German forces in Southern France. This threat should be fully developed by Overlord D - 5 after D day. Process of building up the threat should not start before D - 31.
(c) Make plans for the best possible use of the amphibious lift remaining to you, either in support of operations in Italy, or in order to take advantage of opportunities arising in the South of France or elsewhere for the furtherance of your object and to press forward vigorously and wholeheartedly with all preparations which do not prejudice the achievement of the fullest success in (a) above.

Command and Control of Forces Operating in France

3. If, in the course of operations, you should establish forces in France, you will continue to exercise operational control of these forces until the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, can assume this responsibility.
4. Instructions in respect of co-ordination with Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, on operational administrative civil affairs and S.O.E./S.O. matters will be transmitted to you by him.⁶³

Eisenhower accepted these conclusions, though he had very mixed feelings about the situation.⁶⁴

Essentially, the British had killed off Operation Anvil as a viable option to support Overlord.

⁶¹ COS (44) 123rd Mtg., minutes, Chiefs of Staff Committee, title, "Operation Anvil," 14 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/7.

⁶² Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 513-516.

⁶³ Chiefs of Staff to Dill, 16 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/4; also see Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, vol. V, 258-259; Pogue, *Supreme Command*, 117. Eisenhower's reactions to this are found in Eisenhower to Marshall, 17 Apr 1944, *Papers of Dwight Eisenhower*, III, 1827-1828. In it he says, "I will not give up hope that there may become available in the Mediterranean a sufficient lift to enable that Force to keep on the offensive no matter what happens. I had one or two rather rough sessions in insisting that planning and preparation for Anvil was the best way to assure that something positive would be done as early as possible."

The wording of the document left Wilson with the greatest possible leverage in deciding what operation he wished to conduct in the Mediterranean.

Though the operation was *kaput*, Task Force 163 kept preparing for Anvil. Air preparations continued, choosing bombing targets for the pre-invasion strike and personnel. TF 163 received its French liaison, Lieutenant Colonel de Chassey.⁶⁵ He had no power to negotiate on the French behalf, but was merely there for informational purposes. The geography of the southern French coastline was still a concern, and the Task Force had to weigh complex factors like terrain, beaches, elevation, and craft suitability, among many other details. Each possible landing site generated multiple reports.⁶⁶

Naval preparations also went forward. The naval outline plan appeared on 15 April, about three weeks after the initial assault plan.⁶⁷ The Navy's primary purpose in Anvil was to "establish firmly the Western Task Force in positions ashore in Southern France suitable to the capture of Toulon, Marseille, Lyon and Vichy..." Vice Admiral Hewitt commanded all naval forces participating in Anvil. It was vital for the navy to provide sufficient preliminary bombardments to soften up targets for the army's advance.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Eisenhower felt that he was in the middle of the scuffle between the JCS and the BCS. In his diary kept by Capt. Butcher, he notes "Ike is in the middle -- he feels as if the American Chiefs think he is trying to press for the British view and, at the same time, senses that the British thing he is wangling for the American view. As a matter of fact, all he is trying to accomplish is to keep fighting activity in progress in the Mediterranean to contain as much German force as possible." Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 524.

⁶⁵ Gammell to Patch, title "Attachment of Lieutenant Colonel de Chassey to 12th Air Support Command," 10 Apr. 1944, JCS Records, Box 3, Folder "7th Army G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil - Special Study of the River Argens, S. Fr, 4/10/1944," RG 338, NARA.

⁶⁶ Title "Possible Landing Points on Ile du Levant," 12 Apr 1944, United States Army, Records of Mediterranean Theater of Operations, World War II, Box 3011, Folder "Bigot-Anvil Beach Studies," RG 492, NARA.

⁶⁷ See footnotes 33 and 34, above.

⁶⁸ Title "Operation Anvil - Naval Outline Plan; submission of," OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, Folder " 7th Army, G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil - Naval Outline Plan, 15 Apr 44," RG 338, NARA.

Capping off its preparations, TF 163 planned a map exercise including the staff elements of the 7th Army.⁶⁹ They planned to simulate an Anvil landing with the forecasted strength requirements needed for the assault. Map plans from the G-2 (intelligence) were available in the outline plan.⁷⁰ By April 1944, Anvil still had a 10 July launch date. The preparedness of the staff at this time for such an undertaking was exceptional. The continued planning seemed superfluous following Anvil's cancellation, however, as the strategic direction of the Mediterranean campaign seemed set.

However, Mediterranean strategy still perplexed planners. A memo from of 20 April from AFHQ to COSMED posed some serious questions about the future of operations, once Operation Diadem's main thrust was exhausted. The memo described a meeting with Wilson and his command the previous day. A major conclusion of the meeting stipulated that "...in our opinion when the offensive in Italy...has shot its bolt, any new offensive in Italy would not assist Overlord. We must therefore be prepared to undertake an amphibious operation." Wilson accepted these views even though they contradicted what the Joint Planning Staff previously sent the JCS and BCS. Because of this, Diadem was haphazardly set to go forward. Recommendations to rectify this discrepancy included a total commitment in Diadem. An additional recommendation was to create a strategic reserve and to request assault and shipping craft, "...because the best course may turn out to be to engage in a major amphibious operation."⁷¹

⁶⁹ Title "Plan for Map Exercise - Operation Anvil," OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, Folder "7th Army, G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil - Naval Outline Plan, 15 Apr 44," RG 338, NARA. The plan was presented at the Ecole Normale on 29 Apr., "Summarizing, the Naval Plan, as briefly outlined, fully supports the Force 163 Plan." Capt. R.A.J. English, title "Naval Outline Plan, Operation Anvil," 29 Apr. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, RG 338, NARA.

⁷⁰ Title "Annex No. 5 to G-2 Outline Plan, Operation Anvil G-2 Map Plan," 17 Apr. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, Folder "7th Army, G-3 Sec. Opn Anvil - G-2 Outline Plan, 17 Apr - 14 Jun 1944," RG 338, NARA.

⁷¹ Thompson to Chief of Staff, title "Mediterranean Strategy 1944," 20 Apr. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special"].

Churchill had an amphibious operation in mind, but not Anvil. He suggested to Ismay, his personal military advisor, a landing on Bordeaux on the southwest coast of France. Churchill had fostered this idea for many months. The codename for this landing was Caliph. Very limited preliminary reports existed on the area. Churchill believed that a quick blow through Bordeaux three weeks after Overlord would have a "profound" effect on the Germans. The Prime Minister commented on the favorable tank country Bordeaux exhibited, citing how quickly German forces overran it in 1940. Of course, the Germans already overran much of France in 1940 by the time they reached Bordeaux. Churchill completely ignored Anvil. Bolstering his claim, he mentioned, "The French ought to have a show in France and not merely be made to send more divisions to Italy. This would of course all have to fit in with General Wilson's plans for amphibious feints etc. in the Mediterranean." Even 50,000 troops in a surprise landing could do a devastating amount of damage. Not doing so would incur "justifiable criticism."⁷²

Churchill's plan was radical, but flawed. First, the French already had a "show" to take part in: Anvil. Anvil could place ashore nearly 100,000 troops on D-Day and D+1.⁷³ Second, the resources required to perform such an operation were not available. If Overlord was anything like the experiences at Salerno and Anzio, then shipping would be required for months, not simply weeks. Third, and most importantly, the support for such an operation was nonexistent. The landings would lack fighter cover and close air support. The distances involved for the landing craft were *four* times those from England to Normandy or Corsica to southern France. Churchill's lack of focus in the Mediterranean in planning the aftermath of Diadem and Overlord was unsettling.

⁷² Churchill for COS Committee, 22 Apr 1944, PREM 3/271/3.

⁷³ Churchill petitioned that the unused Overlord shipping find use for Operation Anvil.

Wilson attempted to rectify this on 23 April. He laid out his vision for the future of the Mediterranean theater. According to SACMED, all military resources should concentrate on the success of Diadem. Wilson announced increased support for Tito and his partisans in Yugoslavia. This support came in the form of resources. Limited amphibious craft remained to support Diadem to its conclusion. Any "limited" amphibious capabilities remained in Italy, to either make an end run behind German lines, should resistance stiffen south of Rome after the bridgehead and main line meet. Ultimately, Wilson decreed, "It must be realised, however, that until additional resources in assault craft and shipping can be placed at my disposal, any major amphibious operation in this theatre is quite out of the question."⁷⁴ The threat of a southern France operation persisted, with French forces assembling in Corsica to capture Elba, sometime after 25 May.⁷⁵ Additionally, the diversionary air campaign in southern France must conform to the general bombing plan for Overlord.⁷⁶

Wilson informed the CCS on 27 April that after the main force met up with the Anzio bridgehead, he could begin to release sufficient shipping for an amphibious operation. It was Wilson's belief that, "...it would be neither profitable nor wise to decide on any one plan of operations for mid-summer, but there were a number of possibilities that presented themselves..." which included Churchill's western France landing, Anvil or a landing at the head of the Adriatic. He needed amphibious lift for a three-division assault, with another three divisions

⁷⁴ Wilson to BCS, JCS, Eisenhower, Churchill, 23 Apr. 1944, PREM 3/271/7.

⁷⁵ Ibid. "In support of these preparations State Department and Foreign Office should be asked to inquire of the Spanish Government whether they would be prepared to grant facilities for evacuation of casualties and entry of civilian food supplies through Barcelona."

⁷⁶ Information on the bombing plan and tactical doctrine surrounding the Overlord plan is found in Adrian Lewis, *Omaha Beach: A Flawed Victory*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 145-149. A report released 1 May dictated the priority of the MAAF (Mediterranean Allied Air Force) for the rest of 1944. The priorities were: 1. strategic bombing of Operation Pointblank (Combined Bomber Offensive) targets, 2. tactical support of armies in Italy, 3. air defense of the region, 4. Anvil, 5. Operation Hardihood (the Allied effort to get Turkey to enter the war on the Allies' side). General Wilson, label "Secret," title "Air Resources in Relation to Commitments, M.A.A.F.," 1 May 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67"].

following soon after.⁷⁷ After a meeting on the 28th with the CCS and Wilson, Dill relayed to the BCS that King could finagle some LSTs from the Pacific on the original offer for Anvil or a western France operation if he was the "sole arbiter" in such an event.⁷⁸ However, King and the rest of the JCS still clearly favored a southern France operation.⁷⁹

Churchill thanked the Americans through Roosevelt for allowing the possibility. He also said "everything not wanted for this battle is being prepared for the biggest amphibious operation we can mount."⁸⁰ Back in London, the BCS treated this possibility as a near mandate. They explored the alternative options, and preparations for them could commence "a very considerable extent without militating against Diadem or sacrificing future flexibility."⁸¹ The British were delusional in their expectations for future Mediterranean operations. They expected to receive additional landing craft from the Pacific. At the same time, the British thought they could persuade the Americans to let them use the shipping however they saw fit. This misunderstanding led to a false lightening of the mood regarding future operations in the Mediterranean.

On 9 May the JCS met to consider Wilson's proposal. King reported "the entire matter was the desire of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to keep Anvil alive." In order for the plan to survive,

⁷⁷ Henry M. Wilson, *Report by the Supreme Allied Command, Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Southern France, August 1944* (Algiers: Allied Force Headquarters, 1944), 13.

⁷⁸ JSM Washington to AMSSC, 28 Apr 1944, PREM 3/2/71/7.

⁷⁹ Clarke and Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, 18; Steve Weiss, *Allies in Conflict: Anglo-American Strategic Negotiations, 1938-1944* (London: MacMillian Press Ltd, 1996), 148.

⁸⁰ Churchill to Roosevelt, 29 Apr. 1944, Winston S. Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence: Alliance Forged, November 1942-February 1944*, vol. II ed. Warren F. Kimball (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 119-120.

⁸¹ AMSSO to Britman, Washington, 7 May 1944, PREM 3/271/7; see also Hollis to Prime Minister, 4 May 1944, PREM 3/271/7. One of the alternative invasion sites, the Sete area, was quickly ruled out due to "grave technical difficulties concerning beaches, exits and facility with which port can be blocked." See Wilson to Alan Brooke 10 May 1944, PREM 3/271/7. The response came the next day, and because of the LSTs offered by the Americans, the War Office told Wilson to "...make the best plans you can...do not...consider yourself tied by previous conceptions," The War Office to AFHQ, 11 May 1944, PREM 3/271/7.

the Pacific theater must provide LSTs. However, because of Anvil's cancellation, certain supply arrangements changed, and required ninety days to redirect. The meeting concluded with the sending of the LSTs from the Pacific to the Mediterranean. An evaluation of the situation in the Pacific had determined that these transferred craft could "be replaced in equal numbers from U.S. resources without seriously hampering Pacific operations."⁸²

Major General Lowell Rooks, Deputy Chief of Staff to AFHQ, assigned TF 163 the responsibility of examining these alternative plans with the additional landing craft. The responsibility for TF 163 was to continue planning for Anvil. The alternative plans were: first, an Anvil where the Germans were forced to retreat from a successful Neptune landing; second, a landing in the Sete area, with an advance through the Toulouse gap to Bordeaux; or third, an unopposed landing in the Marseille-Toulon area with demolished ports. All these plans were predicated on Rankin conditions.⁸³

Despite the strategic confusion, planners in the Mediterranean had to keep planning. Wilson's Chief of Staff, Gammell, wrote to General Antoine Béthouart, the Chief of Staff of the French Committee for National Defense on 6 May. In it, Gammell told Béthouart that the French would get their wish for their own independent army for Anvil. This army headquarters would consist of two corps, totaling five infantry and two armored divisions. The vision of this structure saw TF 163 retain operational control over the first French units until the second French corps landed in southern France. General de Lattre de Tassigny would command this French corps.⁸⁴ De Tassigny even forwarded his own plan for the invasion.⁸⁵ When the corps

⁸² JCS 162d Mtg, minutes, label "Top Secret," title "Operations in Support of Overlord," 9 May 1944, JCS Records, Box 304, RG 218, NARA.

⁸³ Rooks to Army, Navy, Air Task Force Commander, HQ 163, title "Alternative Plans," 13 May 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA, [Microfilm 48-A].

⁸⁴ Gammell to Béthouart, 6 May 1944, RG 331, Box 294, reel 67-5.

became operational, it would fall under the commander of the 7th Army and General Alexander Patch, underneath an army group commander to be determined. This message coincided with the outline of the Anvil plan sent to the French. The report stressed that the immediate landing objective was Toulon, and that all energies of the operation had to work to achieve this goal.⁸⁶

This development pleased the French. A meeting the next day with Wilson and his staff discussed French participation in Anvil. It recounted the developments of French involvement in the planning process with Anvil. French commanders repeatedly requested their own command in the invasion and made their own command arrangements. This arrangement granted the French more involvement in the planning of Anvil. However, "The position is further complicated by the fact that Operation Anvil as such is ruled out...this fact *must* be withheld from the French."⁸⁷ If Anvil became reinstated, then the issue of French involvement could arise again and be solved. Avoiding French outrage, should they find out Anvil's cancellation, was well worth the inconvenience of dealing with their repeated clarification requests of the organizational structure in the upcoming Anvil operation.

In addition to placating the French, the British and Americans also had to reassure the Russians. The British and the Americans kept much of the debate surrounding Anvil a secret from the Russians. There was no need for their Communist ally to be aware of the cracks in the Anglo-American alliance. However, President Roosevelt felt it prudent to send Stalin a joint message of the delay in Anvil. His message was succinct and relayed the reason for Anvil's

⁸⁵ See OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, Folder " G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil - French Outline Plan, 16 May 1944," RG 338, NARA. The plan is heavily criticized by one member of TF 163 as "not considered suitable, feasible, or acceptable." What de Tassigny was asking for was far beyond the material capabilities of what TF 163 had at the time.

⁸⁶ Title "Brief Outline of the Initial Maneuver in Operation Anvil," 6 May 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, Folder "G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil - French Outline Plan, 16 May 1944," RG 338, NARA.

⁸⁷ Title "Participation by the French High Command and Staff in Operation Anvil," 7 May 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special].

delay; to give maximum strength to Overlord on D-Day.⁸⁸ Stalin replied, "You can best decide how and in what way to allocate your force. The important thing, of course, is to ensure complete success for "Overlord." I express confidence also in the success of the offensive in Italy."⁸⁹ This courtesy was vital in order to ensure the Russians did not think the western allies were allocating maximum effort during the Soviet summer offensives.⁹⁰

Wilson analyzed the possible alternatives to Anvil and released his findings to the BCS, JCS and SHAEF. He expressed gratitude for the additional shipping granted to him. Wilson stipulated the most likely period for an amphibious assault in the Mediterranean to be the middle of August at the earliest. During the summer, only three divisions (two French armored, and the United States 91st ID) remained as an Allied reserve. The additional formations would only be available for battle following Diadem. The most promising area for an assault was the original Anvil landing site, a few miles to the east of Toulon. SACMED believed a flanking attack up the Italian coast after Diadem "can hardly be regarded as sufficient" because of assault craft limitations and the rough geography of Italy. Wilson requested:

- A. That such naval bombardment forces, as may be required for a specific operation, be made available on release from Neptune.
- B. That shipment to this theatre of all stores and supplies for initial Anvil assault be completed.
- C. That all administrative units and resources, previously allocated for operation Anvil, remain allocated for major amphibious operation, and that shipment be completed.⁹¹

Deliberately, Wilson omitted any mention for planning ventures in the Adriatic Sea. He wrote Churchill the following day, "In accordance with your suggestion I have not included possible

⁸⁸ Roosevelt and Churchill to Stalin, 14 May, 1944. *Stalin's Correspondence with Roosevelt and Truman 1941-1945* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1965), 140. See also, President to Former Naval Person, 10 May 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 126-127.

⁸⁹ Stalin to Roosevelt and Churchill, *Stalin's Correspondence with Roosevelt and Truman*, 141.

⁹⁰ See Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace they Sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 308-311.

⁹¹ Wilson to BCS, JCS, Eisenhower, AFHQ, 17 May 1944, PREM 3/271/7.

operations in Adriatic amongst projects submitted."⁹² Churchill pretended to support Anvil under the guise of procuring more assault shipping for Anvil. In reality, he hoped to use the additional shipping to finagle a way into the Balkans. Churchill recently told those present at a meeting of the Dominion Premiers that if he had his way, he "would have been in favour of rolling up Europe from the South-East...joining hands with the Russians."⁹³ The reports clearly state that Anvil was the most feasible option when the landing craft arrived. However, the British agreed amongst themselves that operations in Italy and possibly the Balkans were more desirable.

How did these frantic months of spring 1944 culminate with regard to Anvil? Planning for the operation began in March, with the intention being to run it simultaneously with Overlord. However, the continual failed assaults on Monte Cassino led to more resources being diverted to Italy. The reallocation of resources caused a delay not only in Anvil, but in Overlord as well. The chaos of Anzio delayed all future prospects in the ETO, and most critically, the two supreme operations of 1944.

To alleviate this, the British Chiefs of Staff recommended the cancellation of Anvil. Eisenhower did not favor this decision, as he viewed Anvil as a vital part of the liberation of France. The possibility of transferring landing craft from the Mediterranean arose. The JCS would ship LSTs in the Pacific to the Mediterranean conditionally on its use in Anvil. However, the British would not accept the arrangement. The CCS directed Wilson to launch an all-out assault in Italy, to join the Anzio bridgehead with the main Allied force, in the beginning of

⁹² Wilson continues, "should the general strategic situation develop so that an attack on the Dalmatian coast presents the best course of action, it would be difficult for American Chiefs of Staff to raise objections to the transfer of my resources in craft and shipping for this purpose." Wilson to Churchill, 18 May 1944, PREM 3/271/7. In a summation of the situation written for Churchill, a portion of the message reads regarding landing on the Dalmatian coast, "The Chiefs of Staff agree that such a situation may arise and that the U.S. Chiefs of Staff should not be approached regarding the transfer of American craft to such a project unless General Wilson finally decides what operations in Dalmatia will best achieve his object." See Ismay to Churchill, 25 May 1944, PREM 3/271/7.

⁹³ Gilbert, *Churchill vol. VII*, 765-768.

April. In completing this directive, Anvil was delayed again to 10 July, but it barely helped. Much to the Americans' chagrin, Anvil was canceled. However, the planning staff for Anvil, Task Force 163, industriously worked on the operation while Allied strategic commanders squabbled. Preparations for the operation continued. The result was that Anvil regained its footing in May, with the planning staff now discussing the possibility for a late summer launch.

The British continued to sense their growing weakness in the coalition. The Americans could impose their veto on planning and operations everywhere. Although a minority of the force in Italy, the Americans would have a significant advantage in numbers once the Normandy campaign began. Additionally, the Americans planned to land three more divisions on Anvil's D-Day. They produced most of the landing craft sent to the theater and overwhelmingly dominated the production of munitions and resources of every kind. The British saw their empire and relevance in future world affairs dwindle with each casualty. As Anvil regained prominence, it would only further empower the Americans. By late May, Allied planners were considering putting Anvil back on the schedule. The documents suggested that both sides viewed Anvil as the most pragmatic operation in the Mediterranean after Diadem, but the British continued to resist. The culmination of this resistance occurred in the last months before Anvil's D-Day, with irrevocable consequences for the now tenuous alliance.

CHAPTER 5

RESTORATION AND COMMENCEMENT

The air hung heavily as Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower looked at the forecast. Low clouds, high winds and heavy waves meant canceled air support. Additional support from the landings via naval gun fire would be inefficient. The ships themselves would not handle well. Eisenhower considered all of these factors and dozens of additional ones on 4 June 1944, when deciding whether to go ahead with Operation Overlord, the invasion of France.¹ Additionally on this momentous day, Allied forces were entering the Eternal City, Rome. General Mark Clark's United States 5th Army forsook the chance to cut off the retreat of the German 14th Army by racing to capture Rome.² There were many decisive decisions made that first week of June, although curiously one was missing. While the decision of whether or not to begin sending the great armada across the English Channel weighed heavily on Eisenhower's mind, he did not have to contend with Operation Anvil. This was supposed to be one of the two supreme operations of 1944, along with Overlord. However, the succeeding months since the Tehran Conference saw Anvil relegated to nothing more than a threat and a planning exercise. With the capture of Rome, the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean (SACMED), General Sir Henry Wilson could now release shipping for an amphibious assault somewhere in the Mediterranean.

Wilson assumed this assault would be Anvil. On 7 June, one day after the successful Normandy landings, Wilson informed the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) that he was now able

¹ Dwight Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1948), 249-250.

² Details of the battle for Rome and operations pertaining to its capture are found in Ernest F. Fisher Jr., *Cassino to the Alps* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1977), 203-223; Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millet, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 384-387; Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007), 564-576; Sir William Jackson, *Victory in the Mediterranean, Part II: June to October 1944* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office: 1987), 1-30.

to carry out an amphibious attack on 15 August with the shipping resources available to him.³ Wilson moved quickly, notifying the 15th Army Group commander in the Mediterranean, General Sir Harold Alexander, of his need to release the United States VI Corps, under Lieutenant General Lucian Truscott by 10 June for the anticipated amphibious operation.⁴ The capture of Rome remained a precursor to many events, and SACMED was also supposed to release divisions in Italy for operations in the Far East. Alexander objected to this, wishing to retain momentum in Italy.⁵ Wilson reassured Alexander however, telling him, "Do NOT consider preparations for Anvil will adversely affect your operations until July." Though he was required to release divisions for the Anvil assault, Wilson stated that July was when Allied planners would make the decision to launch Anvil. If they decided not to, Alexander would receive the forces to use for further prosecution of the Italian campaign.⁶

CCS meetings would dictate if Alexander received these resources, or if they would go to Anvil. The United States Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) agreed to fly to England for meetings to overview the current progress of Operation Neptune, the operational name for the Normandy landings. Additionally, the chief Allied planners would overview the strategic situation and discuss plans for a future summer operation. They met at the Stanwell Place in Middlesex,

³ Wilson released this information based on a request from the CCS "ask[ing] for shipping requirements on the assumption that an Anvil type operation is mounted at the earliest practicable date." See CG NATOUSA to Henry Wilson, 3 June 1944, United States Army, Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Box 294, Record Group (RG) 331, National Archives, Washington, DC (NARA) [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"]. See also Wilson to CCS, 7 June 1944, United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Box 304, RG 218, NARA; Henry M. Wilson, *Report by the Supreme Allied Command, Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Southern France, August 1944* (Algiers: Allied Force Headquarters, 1944), 14 (hereafter referred to as *Report by SACMED*).

⁴ Wilson to Alexander, 7 Jun 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm Reel 67-5 "special"]. A recent biography of Truscott can be found at Wilson A. Heefner, *Dogface Soldier: The Life of General Lucian K. Truscott Jr.* (Columbia: U of Missouri Press, 2010).

⁵ Wilson was supposed to release three Indian divisions for operations in the far east. See Wilson to BCS, 8 June 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special"].

⁶ Wilson to Alexander, 9 June 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special"].

England (northwest London) on 11 June 1944. This initial afternoon meeting lacked direction from all involved. Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), advocated for the continuation of Alexander's offensive in Italy to the Po Valley. From there, Alexander could turn east towards Austria or the Balkans, or west towards southern France. Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General George C. Marshall, curiously broached the topic of landing in the Certe (Sete, France, 125 miles to the west of Marseille) area, with the aim of quickly liberating Bordeaux. Marshall justified this idea by arguing that "the old Anvil operation was entirely too slow, and Wilson's dating of an amphibious operation in the Mediterranean was too late."⁷ However, the allocation of landing craft meant that a 15 August D-Day for whatever operation the CCS chose was about the earliest Wilson could manage. It was a point made by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham. Chief of Staff of the United States Navy, Admiral Ernest J. King declared that he knew a number of Eisenhower's staff who objected to Anvil. Additionally, he saw four possible outcomes for this summer operation. One was commencing with Anvil, another was an operation against the Istrian Peninsula, a third a landing west of Marseille targeting Bordeaux, and the fourth an operation in the Bay of Biscay.⁸ The CCS would direct Eisenhower to come up with these viable plans.⁹

⁷ CCS 163rd Mtg., minutes, title "Informal Notes of the Combined Chiefs of Staff 163rd Meeting," 11 Jun 1944, Records of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, , World War II, Box 304, RG 218, NARA. Also in the meeting there was some discussion on air and naval capabilities of Germany. Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Charles Portal commented that the *Luftwaffe's* decline was not as rapid as the Allies expected, and that a reduction of their aircraft in theater from 5000 to 3500 was an adequate number to expect for the summer. Also, *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW) had its oil reserves reduced to two months worth. For comparison, in Italy alone, the Allies had an estimated 6000 aircraft available. The German Navy had forty surface ships and 276 operational submarines. Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁹ The Joint Chiefs stayed in London from June 10-15, and included a trip to the Normandy beachhead. These meetings are known as the London Conference. They are covered in John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy, August 1943 - September 1944, Vol. V* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), 267-270, 345-348; Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959), 466-469; Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1996), 218-221; Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945*, (Washington DC:

This lack of focus on the part of the CCS, and especially Marshall, was unsettling. Not even two months prior, Marshall had rebuffed Churchill's approach about a similar landing on the west coast of France. Now, the Combined Chiefs were throwing out any number of ideas that had received minimal planning (except Anvil) and with little known about the conditions in which they would take place. The report that the CCS requested was released by the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) the next day. Among other conclusions, it stated:

6. The possibility of carrying out an amphibious operation against the west coast of France has been examined, and we are convinced that there is no operation which is likely to offer any prospect of success. The only operation which merits serious consideration is the seizure of Bordeaux. Bordeaux, however, lies some fifty miles up the River Gironde which would require some ten days' minesweeping to clear...our opinion is that the rate of build-up would be too slow to prevent our forces being overwhelmed...

9. The advantages of 'Anvil' are that the available forces in the Mediterranean, both land forces and tactical air forces, can be deployed much earlier against the enemy than by adopting any other course. Moreover, the operation will be in closest proximity to the present location of these forces...The base established for the 'Anvil' forces in southern France will eventually be available for reinforcing 'Overlord' when the Germans withdraw from southern France. After the capture of Marseilles it will not be necessary for some time, if at all, to open Bordeaux for the support of operations.

Conclusion

10. "It is concluded, therefore, that 'Anvil' or some similar operation against the South of France should be mounted at the earliest possible date and certainly not later than August 10th-15th, on the assumption that sufficient forces can be made available to make the operation effective."¹⁰

This report should have decisively ended any speculation of further debates of where an additional landing should take place. The operation's purpose was to provide maximum support

Office of the Chief of Military History, 1968), 374-381; Henry K. Hewitt, "Planning Operation Anvil/Dragoon." *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, Vol. 80 (1954): 730-745; Jacob Devers, "The Invasion of Southern France." *Military Affairs*, Vol. 10, (Summer, 1946): 2-41.

¹⁰ SHAEF/17101/1/Plans, memo, title "The Employment of Mediterranean Forces in Aid of 'Neptune,'" 12 Jun. 1944, JCS Records, Box 304, RG 218, NARA.

for Overlord. Instead, the Combined Chiefs concluded on 14 June that in lieu of the success of Operation Diadem, the operation to crack open German defenses near Rome and reunite the main body with the Anzio bridgehead, the primary purpose of forces in Italy was the destruction of German forces south of the Pisa-Rimini Line. Until the Allies breached the Pisa-Rimini Line, no forces would be withdrawn from Italy. They doubted a southern France operation because of the "strength of the coast defenses" and the "unpredictable lines of advance up the Rhone Valley."¹¹ In their opinion, the CCS also believed that the French resistance would be greater in Bordeaux than the Marseille area. Therefore, plans to prepare for an operation in the Certe area must begin immediately. It is curious, that upon landing near Certe, the Allies would attack to the west, *away* from Germany and quite frankly, away from any relevant operations at all. Ironically, on this same day, Task Force 163, the planning section of Operation Anvil, released its next outline plan, nearly twenty pages in length.¹²

Wilson remained convinced that Anvil was the definitive operation. He ordered the release of the HQ of the United States VI Corps, for assignment to the United States 7th Army.¹³ On 16 June 1944, Eisenhower sent Wilson a letter over the merits of a Bordeaux-centered operation versus a Marseille one. He mentioned the difficulties in landing in Bordeaux, but mentioned that it was preferable to Marseilles only because "one of the objects of Certe was to meet what was regarded as an imperative requirement to open Bordeaux for Overlord purposes."

¹¹ Chiefs of Staff to AFHQ, 14 Jun. 1944, JCS Records, Box 304, RG 218, NARA.

¹² Title "G-2 Outline Plan, Operation Anvil," 14 Jun. 1944, US Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations (OTS), World War II, Box 3, RG 338, NARA. Included in the plan were among the mission and general information: Combat Intelligence Plan, Air Tactical and Photo Reconnaissance Plan, Counterintelligence Plan, Maps, Models and Maps, Models and Charts. AFHQ asked TF 163 what the expected date captures for Toulon, Marseille and how fast they could expect to build up to ten divisions once landed. TF 163 responded with Toulon's expected capture at D+10, Marseille D+30 and the buildup of ten divisions at D+25. Found in HQ MAAF to HQ MAAF Algiers, 18 Jun. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 4, RG 338, NARA; White to Joint Planning Staff (JPS), 18 Jun. 1944, Box 4, RG 338 NARA. The force number estimates are in Berry for G-3, title "Estimated Build-Up," 20 Jun. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 4, RG 338 NARA.

¹³ Wilson, *Report by SACMED*, 15.

However, Eisenhower noted that southern France was more likely to keep away German forces from the Allied lodgment in Normandy. Based on that, Eisenhower was inclined to favor Anvil.¹⁴ Wilson replied with his own views to the BCS, which were forwarded to the JCS. He wanted to continue Alexander's advance to the Po Valley and then east towards the Ljubljana Gap, accompanied by an amphibious landing against Trieste in September. This was the best way to assist Eisenhower in France.¹⁵

Eisenhower had a strong rebuff to this idea. In a letter to Marshall, Eisenhower laid out a fundamental premise which the Allies had operated by the entire war, "the Combined Chiefs of Staff have long ago decided to make Western Europe the base from which to conduct decisive operations against Germany." Any departure from this basic principal of the Allied war effort was "ill advised and potentially dangerous." He mentioned Wilson's idea of going through the Ljubljana Gap as "wandering off." The establishment of a bridgehead in Normandy did not automatically ensure victory in France, and so the Allies needed to find a way to draw German attention away from Normandy. Anvil was the best way to do this, Eisenhower believed. It was also the only operation that would allow ports to open sufficiently in order to bring forty to fifty fresh divisions waiting idly in the United States. It was necessary for the Allies to acquire large ports as soon as possible.¹⁶ At the moment however, storms in the English Channel were delaying unloading of supplies and as a result, the armies in France were already five days behind schedule.¹⁷ Eisenhower was anxious to release the earmarked Landing Ship, Tanks (LSTs) for Anvil, but it was literally impossible to do this for the time being. If Anvil did not

¹⁴ Eisenhower to Wilson, 16 Jun 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: III*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1930-1931.

¹⁵ Wilson, *Report by SACMED*, 16.

¹⁶ Eisenhower to Marshall, 20 Jun 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1938-1940.

¹⁷ Eisenhower to Marshall, 21 Jun 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1941-1942.

take place by the end of August, Eisenhower believed it might be necessary to remove the Anvil forces and introduce them through Normandy to support the effort there.¹⁸ Marshall in his response agreed with Eisenhower's assessment.¹⁹ With supplies having to be unloaded directly on to the beaches once again, Eisenhower's advocacy for Anvil would take on a new urgency.

The Supreme Allied Commander released his recommendations to the CCS on 23 June, forwarding a lengthy manifesto outlining why Anvil was necessary. An operation against western France could not take place in time to help Overlord. The Rhone Valley was the most direct route through France to the decisive theater. Resistance forces in France would greatly increase the value of Anvil. With regards to Italy, Allied forces there "do not directly threaten any area vital to the enemy...an advance on Ljubljana and Trieste would probably contain a considerable amount of German strength, but there would be no guarantee that it would divert any appreciable number of German divisions from France."²⁰ Eisenhower thus formally recommended Anvil. Wilson only understood Eisenhower's urgency after his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Sir James Gammell visited SHAEF and the BCS. Gammell stated that "Eisenhower wants Anvil and wants it quickly."²¹ Almost immediately, Major General Sir

¹⁸ Coakley and Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943-45*, 378.

¹⁹ Marshall to Eisenhower, 22 Jun 1944, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall: Aggressive and Determined Leadership, June 1, 1943 – December 31, 1944, Vol. IV*, ed. Larry I. Bland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 486-487. Marshall was concerned that Wilson's recommendations might have more of an influence than Eisenhower's because Wilson released his dispatch to the CCS before Eisenhower did.

²⁰ Eisenhower to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 23 Jun. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1943-1946. The same document is found in OOH Records, Box 304, RG 218, NARA. For a conjecture on the proposed course of a Ljubljana Gap offensive, see Thomas M. Barker, "The Ljubljana Gap Strategy: Alternative to Anvil/Dragoon or Fantasy?" *The Journal of Military History* 56 (Jan 1992): 57-86. Barker assesses the historiography of the Mediterranean theater, especially those segments dealing with the Anvil/Dragoon debate and the Italian campaign. He surmises that an operation through the gap could have lengthened the war by several months or seen the Soviets reach the Rhine.

²¹ MAAF Algiers SSO to HQ MAAF SSO, 23 Jun. 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 48-A].

Lowell Rooks, Deputy Chief of Staff in the Mediterranean, requested an updated outline from Task Force 163 with the precise shipping allocations.²²

TF 163 was busy finishing preparations for Anvil. On 24 June, the 36th Infantry Division was tagged to replace the previously earmarked 85th. This was the last and final D-Day division slotted in for the operation (the previous two were the 3d and 45th).²³ An AFHQ estimate of enemy buildup stated that the Germans could not reinforce the landing area from northwest France or Italy, unless they were willing to abandon all of southwestern France.²⁴ Additionally, Lieutenant General Lucian Truscott, commander of the United States VI Corps, attempted to make some amendments to the organization of the Anvil command. Until this time, the air and naval echelons of the planning staff had been separate. Truscott wanted all of them united under his direct command. After all, VI Corps was solely responsible for the success of the initial assault. Lieutenant General Alexander Patch, the United States 7th Army Commander, did not agree. The XII Tactical Air Command and the Western Naval Task Force had already developed extensive plans prior to Truscott's arrival.²⁵ Patch did not believe that the VI Corps staff could handle all of these assignments efficiently. That was the last major command decision in the planning phase of Anvil.

General Jacob Devers, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean, fought tenaciously to preserve Anvil. He would eventually become the commander of the 6th United

²² Rooks to G-3, 25 Jun. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-A "special"].

²³ Hewitt to Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, title "Invasion of Southern France: Report of Naval Commander, Western Task Force," 15 Nov. 1944, (Unknown: United States Eighth Fleet, 1944), 16. Hereafter referred to as Hewitt, *Invasion of Southern France*.

²⁴ Title "Estimated Enemy Build-up to meet Operation Anvil," 25 Jun. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special"].

²⁵ Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert R. Smith, *Rivera to the Rhine* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1993), 45.

States Army Group.²⁶ Since TF 163 was created in January, Devers ensured that the Supply of Services (SOS) diverted resources to Anvil. Devers hoped to freeze these materials, making them unusable for any other operation. However, Clark's 5th Army used emergency requisitions in May to shrink that supply. By June, SOS estimated that seventy-five percent of the supplies could be used to sustain a two-division Anvil assault at its current state.²⁷ Devers managed to succeed despite the constant waxing and waning fortunes of Anvil throughout 1944. Additional exertions by Devers included organizing a full airborne division, the 1st Airborne Task Force under Major General Robert T. Frederick. The Deputy SACMED assembled this force from a hodgepodge of units from the Italian theaters, with donations made by SHAEF.²⁸

Yet for all this work, the BCS still made one last attempt to scuttle the mission. They recommended that "absolute priority" be given to the support of Overlord via continuing operations that were already underway, like those in Italy. In fact, they explicitly recommended that Alexander continue to develop his offensive, and if need be, Wilson would prepare the divisions earmarked for an additional offensive (Anvil) to be sent to Normandy as soon as shipping restraints permitted. SACMED would continue to develop the threat of an assault against southern France.²⁹ If Anvil took place, the balance of air resources in the Mediterranean would severely hinder Alexander's ability to conduct operations.

²⁶ Though Devers would eventually command the 6th Army Group, Eisenhower had reservations about his appointment. In a letter written to Marshall in July, Eisenhower expressed that he overcame his doubt regarding Dever's appointment. "I well know that such things are not my business, but I do want to make clear that I have nothing in the world against General Devers...I have never known him well--and any doubts I had about his ability were based completely upon impressions and, to some extent, upon vague references in this Theater...I understand that Devers has been on the battle front a lot and he has demonstrated a happy faculty of inspiring troops. That is enough for me..." Eisenhower to Marshall, 12 Jul. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 2000. Also see Clarke and Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, 28-29.

²⁷ Clarke and Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, 45; Coakley and Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-45*, 376.

²⁸ Ibid., 38-39. See also Title "Supreme Allied Commander's Conference: Airborne Requirements for Future Operations," 25 Jun 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 67-5 "special"].

²⁹ BCS (W) 130, Memo, 26 Jun 1944, JCS Records, Box 302, "Dragoon (Anvil)," RG 218, NARA.

Eisenhower's reply to BCS was, essentially, to ignore it. He mentioned again that he would depart with twenty-four LSTs if he could have Anvil by 15 August. Above all, Eisenhower believed, "I will entail certain sacrifices to Overlord, but these will be made gladly because we are convinced of the transcendent importance of Anvil."³⁰ The Joint Chiefs found the BCS recommendations "unacceptable." They found that the BCS arguments were "...not logical and appear out of keeping with the existing military situation and requirements." With regards to the air situation in Italy, the JCS insinuated that the BCS were insulting Allied soldiers on the ground:

4. The comment regarding grave doubts as to the sufficiency of the air resources in the Mediterranean to give simultaneous support to an Anvil as well as to operations in Italy, is completely opposed to the view of the United States Chiefs of Staff and in effect proposes a condition of war-making on the Allied side which is a serious reflection on the quality of our ground troops. There are in Italy, including the strategical bombing force, approximately 5500 operational planes at present opposed by 350 German planes. To say that from this tremendous Allied force a sufficiency of plans cannot be detached to support Anvil without severely prejudicing the operation in Italy is not a view acceptable to the United States Chiefs of Staff.³¹

The JCS did however pay gilded homage to the Italian campaign: "We feel that the campaign in Italy has profited us greatly. Its success has been at least in part made possible by the ill-advised determination of Hitler to continue a strong defensive action south of Rome."³² Like Eisenhower, the JCS were clearly dumbfounded by the continued haggling over Anvil, calling it "deplorable."³³

These arguments became so worrisome to Marshall that he had Major General Thomas Handy, the Assistant Chief of Staff in charge of Operations Division, send President Franklin D.

³⁰Eisenhower to CCS, 26 Jun 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1954-1955.

³¹ JCS for CCS, title "Operations to Assist Overlord," 27 Jun 1944, JCS Records, Box 302, Folder "Dragoon (Anvil)," RG 218, NARA.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Roosevelt the preceding messages from the JCS and BCS, with a summation of the situation included.³⁴ Marshall even helped the president draft a letter to send to Churchill, urging the prime minister to support Eisenhower in his recommendation³⁵ It was evident that the Combined Chiefs were no longer capable of making sound and timely strategic decisions.

Churchill prepared a long message for Roosevelt on 29 June.³⁶ Leading up to the message, Churchill asked Roosevelt to recall a conversation at Tehran, where Roosevelt had mentioned the possibility of a landing near Istria. Apparently the idea "sunk very deeply into my [Churchill's] mind" and he wished to discuss that, among the other details of Anvil further.³⁷ Roosevelt's opening salvo put him decisively on the side of his Joint Chiefs. Citing Eisenhower's support for Anvil, Roosevelt declared, "He [Eisenhower] is definitely for Anvil...it is vital that we decide at once to go ahead with our long agreed policy to make Overlord the decisive action. Anvil...is the only operation which will give Overlord the material and immediate support from Wilson's forces."³⁸ It seemed as though the debate between the two great leaders of the western democracies would proceed about as smoothly as the CCS debates.

Churchill's message contained four parts. Part one contained the considerations for strategic decisions, including sufficient ports to get troops into the theater and political considerations like satellite populations under Nazi rule rising up in revolt. In part two, Churchill argued for looking towards other, smaller ports, as they could handle capacity quite

³⁴ Marshall to Handy, 27 Jun 1944, *The Papers of George Marshall, IV*, 496-497.

³⁵ Roosevelt to Churchill, 28 Jun 1944, *The Papers of George Marshall, IV*, 498.

³⁶ He warned Roosevelt he was sending a long memo. See Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 Jun. 1944, Winston S. Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence: Alliance Forged, November 1942-February 1944*, vol. III ed. Warren F. Kimball (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 212-213.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ President to the Former Naval Person, 28 Jun 1944, Churchill and Roosevelt, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 213-214.

well for incoming American troops. Part three used parts one and two as a reference to address Anvil. Churchill expressed his trepidation about the operation. "The more I have thought about this [Anvil], the more bleak and sterile it appears." Churchill cited the possibility of OKW transferring troops from Italy to the Toulon-Marseille area, and if German forces in Normandy withdrew even a single division, "we could be confronted with superior forces at every step we advance up the Rhone valley." To Churchill, it appeared that the Anvil operation had no tactical relevancy to Overlord. It was 600 miles from Cherbourg to Marseille, and 400 from Marseille to Paris. To conclude this part, the prime minister stated, "It would seem clear that, even with great success, neither of these operations would directly influence the present battle in 1944." Part four expressed Churchill's desire to keep Alexander's forces in Italy. In this way, instead of ruining two campaigns for one which would fail anyway, both current operations would succeed.³⁹

Roosevelt drafted a similarly long reply to Churchill's letter. He had the JCS create the message, with minor alterations from the president. This fifteen point memo contained the familiar themes of the JCS, and a few new rationales. One of the president's new reasons was that the transfer of forces from the Mediterranean to Overlord would create a bottleneck because of limited facilities to handle traffic. The result would be fewer troops in the theater! Additionally, Roosevelt was impressed by two factors. One was Wilson's declaration that he could immediately withdraw five divisions from Italy to prepare for Anvil, and that Eisenhower held Anvil in transcendent importance. With regards to an Istrian or Balkan invasion, Roosevelt felt that the difficulties Churchill expressed about Anvil were modest compared to the difficulties faced by the Allies should they land in that area. Anvil's plans were fully fleshed out and

³⁹ Prime Minister to Roosevelt, 29 Jun 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 215-219.

developed, and could commence with no delay. Without first consulting Stalin, a change of the strategic situation should not occur. Roosevelt expressed his satisfaction with the direction of the war. "At Tehran we agreed upon a definite plan of attack. That plan has gone well so far. Nothing has occurred to require any change." In conclusion, Roosevelt let it be known that the American people would never allow Roosevelt to stay in office if there was a setback in Overlord, while it was known that he had sent forces to the Balkans.⁴⁰

Eisenhower continued to show concern for the sensitivities of the BCS. He cabled Marshall the same day that Roosevelt wrote Churchill, warning his Chief that though the BCS would attempt to convince him "of the value of a Trieste move, they will not repeat not permit an impasse to arise, and will, consequently, agree to Anvil." Eisenhower was optimistic that the British would eventually give their blessings to the operation, and even vouched to have Alexander command those forces. He reasoned that eventually, "France is going to be more the business of Great Britain than ourselves."⁴¹ The Supreme Allied Commander was returning to his usual inclusive behavior.

The British, however, were still not done. Though they acquiesced to Anvil, they attempted to procure as many troops as possible for future operations in Italy under Alexander. Churchill took exception to a directive proposed for Wilson that Anvil in the buildup be at least

⁴⁰ President to the Former Naval Person, 29 Jun 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 221-223. As Roosevelt sent Churchill that letter, a simultaneous meeting with CCS occurred. In this meeting, Marshall, and especially Admiral King, stressed the need for a prompt decision on Anvil. King noted, "While discussions on the Anvil operation are continuing, time is being lost which never be regained." Marshall stated that if a decision were delayed much longer, Anvil would become impossible. See title "Informal Notes of the Closed Sessions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff Held at 1430, Thursday, 29 June 1944, in Room 240, The Combined Chiefs of Staff Building, to Discuss Operations to Assist 'Overlord,'" 29 Jun. 1944, JCS Records, Box 304, Folder "CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 5," RG 218, NARA. Churchill defends himself in his memoirs saying, "No one involved in these discussions had ever thought of moving armies *into the Balkans*; but Istria and Trieste were strategic and political positions, which, as he saw very clearly, might exercise profound and widespread reactions, especially after Russian advances." Winston Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), 65.

⁴¹ Eisenhower to Marshall, 29 Jun 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1958-1960.

ten divisions. Churchill inquired, "the super-priority given to Anvil will completely ruin any plans Alexander can make. Can we not now fight to get him at any rate a fixed force?"⁴² Still, Eisenhower expected Churchill to accept the go ahead for Anvil.⁴³ Time was urgent, and it appeared that everyone finally was coming together, even if there were some bruised feelings amongst the Allies.

Except this was not the case at all. Reading Roosevelt's letter from 29 June, Churchill drafted an angry response, which he did not ultimately send. He was exasperated: "The whole campaign in Italy is being ruined, and ruined for what...I really do not know where I am or what orders should be given to the troops. If my departure from the scene would ease matters, by tendering my resignation to The King, I would gladly make this contribution." He concluded, "There is nothing I will not do to end this deadlock except become responsible for an absolutely perverse strategy."⁴⁴

A revised message was significantly tamer, yet still contained some bite. He began, "We are deeply grieved by your telegram."⁴⁵ Churchill managed to get the War Cabinet and the BCS behind him in the cause. Churchill was afraid of the stalemate he predicted would arise in southern France if Anvil went ahead. The prospects of the invasion loomed over the heads of the commanders in Italy, paralyzing them from accomplishing anything. If continued to be pressed to participate in Anvil, "[H]is Majesty's Government, on the advice of their Chiefs of Staff, must

⁴² Churchill to Ismay for COS Committee, 2 Jul 1944, PREM 3/271/9. The memo Churchill is replying to is AMSSO to JSM Washington, 1 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁴³ Eisenhower to Marshall, 1 Jul 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1967.

⁴⁴ Churchill to Roosevelt, 30 Jun 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 225-226.

⁴⁵ Churchill to Roosevelt, 1 Jul 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 227-230.

enter a solemn protest."⁴⁶ Field Marshal Brooke, CIGS, affirmed Churchill's position by saying in his diary, "All right, if you insist on being damned fools, sooner than fall out with you, which would be fatal, we shall be damned fools with you...[and] perform the role of damned fools well!"⁴⁷ However, Churchill's concern about the operational merits of Anvil was just a guise over his real concern, the Soviet advance from the east.

Roosevelt responded with sensitivity towards his colleague's wounded feelings. The president was optimistic, as he felt that the Italian campaign, even with reduced forces, could still make great strides. With regards to an Istrian venture, Roosevelt stressed that he was thinking of "a series of raids in force," should it look like the Germans were about to collapse there, not a new theater of operations. Roosevelt declared himself "compelled by the logic of not dispersing our main efforts to a new theater."⁴⁸

Now that Roosevelt decisively leaned in favor of Anvil, Task Force 163 began putting their months of preparation into practice. Upgrades arrived for the tank battalions earmarked for Anvil.⁴⁹ Additional divisions were procured to replace battle-fatigued ones once the operation began.⁵⁰ Rooks anticipated that 15 August was the best start date for Anvil, and directed Devers to prepare specific directives for Patch.⁵¹ Logistics planners made technical requests, like spare parts for ships and vehicles to stockpile from the French Navy.⁵² Objectives were given to the

⁴⁶ Churchill to Roosevelt, 1 Jul 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 230.

⁴⁷ Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West: Completing the War Diaries of Field Marshal Viscount Alanbrooke* (London: Collins, 1959), 168.

⁴⁸ Roosevelt to Churchill, 1 Jul 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 232. A succinct summary of these telegrams is in Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-44*, 470-472.

⁴⁹ Fairbanks for Fairman, 3 Jul. 1944, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm #67-5 spec.].

⁵⁰ Rooks to Devers, 4 Jul. 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 48-A].

⁵¹ Rooks to Devers, 5 Jul. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm #67-5 spec.].

⁵² Devers to AGWAR, 5 Jul. 1944, OOH Records, RG 331, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm #67-5 spec.].

Commander, Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force, Lieutenant General Ira Eaker for planned Anvil targets.⁵³ Eisenhower told Wilson his views on the immediate Anvil objectives:

As I see it the objectives of Anvil are:

- (a) To contain and destroy enemy forces which might otherwise directly oppose Overlord.
- (b) To secure a major port in South France for the entry of additional Allied forces.
- (c) By advancing to the North to threaten the South flank and rear communications of enemy forces opposing Overlord.
- (d) To develop lines of communication for the support of the advancing Anvil forces and of the additional force which will be introduced through the port to reinforce the Allied Expeditionary Forces.⁵⁴

In short, the efficiency with which Anvil proceeded after the higher-ups decided on it is something that only the intense level of prior planning could have pulled off.

There still remained hurdles in Anvil's preparation process, however. Wilson sent Eisenhower a telegram expressing his delight that a decision was finally reached, but he also revealed concern about the amount of airlift available for airborne operations at the beginning of the operation. He requested 225 glider pilots as well as additional airborne lift.⁵⁵ Wilson also asked Alan Brooke to approve the transfer of the 78th Infantry Division from the Middle Eastern theater to the Mediterranean.⁵⁶ Both of these requests were approved.

While Wilson moved ahead with preparations, the British high command still felt it was being overpowered by American demands. Churchill was determined to find a way to divert Anvil. He ordered his Chief of Staff to create a compilation of all correspondence regarding Anvil from 14 to 28 June.⁵⁷ Churchill wrote to Ismay, furious at the treatment received:

⁵³ Patch to Commanding General, MATAF, title "Request for Bombing Missions, Period D - 35 to D day," OTS Orgs. Records, Box 3, RG 338, NARA.

⁵⁴ Eisenhower to AFHQ, 7 Jul. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm #67-5 spec.].

⁵⁵ Wilson to Eisenhower, 5 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁵⁶ Wilson for CIGS, 6 Jul. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm #67-5 spec.].

⁵⁷ Title "Operation 'Anvil,'" 4 Jul 1944, PREM 3/271/5.

I fully realize that we have to bend before the stronger power...I realize all along how great campaigns and designs have been frustrated. The question now is what can we save from the wreck...all our landing craft have been stolen for the tomfoolery of Anvil, where three months hence they will be found sprawling in the suburbs of Marseilles...I am prepared to break the Allied Command in the Mediterranean and have it settled with the American sphere playing the fool at Anvil and the British sphere doing the best it can towards Trieste.⁵⁸

He continued his fury at the perceived mistreatment of the British, as he blasted the JCS in a private note to the BCS,

The one thing to fight for now is a clean cut because Alexander knows what he has and we know what we have a right to give him...Let them monopolize 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 hope you realize 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 smirching cover up this fact. After a little, we shall get together again; but if we take everything lying down, there will be no end to what will be put upon us. The Arnold, King, Marshall combination is one of the stupidest strategic teams ever seen. They are good fellows and there is no need to tell them this.⁵⁹

To the Prime Minister, his partners across the pond were utterly incompetent. This frustration was felt by almost everyone in the British high command. A toxic atmosphere was brewing in London, and soon to spill over into British dealings with the Americans.

The BCS held a meeting which Churchill attended, to discuss further operations in the Mediterranean theater. To strengthen Alexander in Italy, Churchill suggested the British might withdraw a division from Persia to send to the Mediterranean. Brooke cautioned Churchill, stating that if it appeared that the British could sustain forces in Italy by replacing them as the Americans withdrew them, they might inadvertently encourage the Americans to "predatory" behavior. Churchill rightly proposed that he draft a memo to Roosevelt, warning him that operations in Italy could not proceed until he had guarantees of sufficient resources. It was a

⁵⁸ Churchill to General Ismay for COS Committee, 6 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁵⁹ Churchill for Ismay, 6 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

frustrating meeting, as the British clearly felt their hands were tied. The Minister of Production, Sir Oliver Lyttleton, best summed up the British frustration with the Americans. "Many of our difficulties with the Americans had arisen from their tendency to treat agreements on strategy as lawyers' contracts, and therefore regarded them as binding, irrespective of changing circumstances."⁶⁰

Taking this into account, Churchill appealed to FDR's closest advisor, Harry Hopkins. Hopkins was battling stomach cancer, but had recently returned to work after taking a leave of absence at his Georgetown townhouse. Churchill filled in Hopkins with details regarding the breakdown of communication between the Allies. The British clearly felt ignored by the JCS in deliberations. Churchill implored Hopkins, "Surely we ought to treat each other as equals... We have submitted not by conviction but under duress, but I am trying to repair the evil to our war effort as much as possible." Churchill asked for a guarantee that Alexander would suffer no more units withdrawn from his theater.⁶¹

The Prime Minister concurrently messaged Roosevelt with similar views. He complained again of one-sided control by the JCS. Echoing Lyttleton's comments, Churchill said, "there is a complaint that we entered into an agreement at Tehran to perform the Operation Anvil. This is interpreted as if it were a legal document."⁶² To Churchill, the entire situation had changed in the Mediterranean, and had therefore rendered Anvil irrelevant. He, too, requested no further withdrawals from the Mediterranean. It was the typical British line of argument during the summer of 1944.

⁶⁰ COS (44) 225th Mtg, min, 7 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁶¹ Churchill to Hopkins, 7 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁶² Churchill to Roosevelt, 7 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

Eisenhower, not surprisingly, took a different view. He wrote to Marshall, asking if it was possible to send new United States divisions to the Mediterranean to replenish Mark Clark's 5th Army. If these newly blooded units were then needed for either Overlord or Anvil, they could be shipped to the appropriate front. Eisenhower stressed that these units would be available to Alexander, but "must be constantly prepared at a moment's notice to ship out of Italy at an equivalent number of American divisions."⁶³ That could either be those same divisions, or different American ones.

What Eisenhower proposed was the exact situation the British feared would arise. The British had two lines of argument. First, that Anvil was not set in stone, and that the strategic situation had changed so completely it warranted Anvil's cancellation. Second, because they could not delete Anvil from the Allied agenda, the manpower losses to sustain Anvil would render the Italian theater worthless and stagnant.

Anvil, as originally intended, was to occur a week before Overlord, to draw German divisions from the northwest of France that might contest the landing. Facing a weakened front, exploitation from the bridgehead in Normandy would be much quicker, threatening to slice the German armies in France in two as the separate landings raced to join one another. Even if resistance in Normandy was greater than anticipated, the advancing armies with Anvil would threaten to do the same thing to the German forces from the south. The Italian theater was expected to have already concluded, with Allied armies in the Po Valley at the very minimum.

The strategic reality in the second week of July was not all that different from the original conception. Though Anvil was gearing up, the Allies were still contained in hedgerow country. The British saw Anvil as the reason why the Allied assault up the spine of Italy halted. The

⁶³Eisenhower to Marshall, 8 Jul. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1986-1988.

removal of divisions from Alexander's army for Anvil meant that the Allies did not have sufficient strength in likely attack sectors to overwhelm their adversary. German formations in northwest France were still very vulnerable to an advance coming up from the south. To avoid being taken in the rear, the *Wehrmacht* would have to break off the fighting in Normandy and reestablish a defensive line further to the east. Also, the logistics of Marseille and Toulon were still invaluable to the Allies. The longer the British fought against Anvil, the less effective the operation would be, creating a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy.

With regards to Italy, British complaints have some merit. Though Italy was regarded as a secondary theater, the British still had most of their forces in the ETO there, and therefore placed more importance on the theater than they might otherwise. This form of "localitis" caused the British to view strategy in terms of their needs in Italy, rather than on the overall picture of the ETO. It was difficult to justify to the British people why irreplaceable men were dying in strategically minor combat in Italy. They had zero manpower reserves. Though Churchill implored Hopkins to have the Americans and British view each other in an equal light, the reality was not simply the case anymore. Churchill, for all his wit and guile, could not simply talk away the overwhelming flood of American men and materiel.

Also, the experience of several Allied landings created an air of skepticism about future operations. Why waste precious men, LSTs and other materials for an operation that could stagnate, like operations Avalanche, Shingle and Overlord already had? Churchill saw another stranded whale, just like Anzio. If the Americans could not see their folly, then perhaps Ismay had some valid points when he questioned the competency of top American strategists. How the British could reconcile these issues with their ambitions would determine how they reacted in the last month of the Anvil debate.

The British would make due as best they could, getting the maximum amount for their offensive. Assuming the losses of his force, Alexander was still to attack the Germans in Italy as previously directed. Wilson requested to the BCS that the two American divisions Eisenhower wanted to send to the Mediterranean be placed in a force pool, to relieve tired divisions on the line.⁶⁴ SACMED was happy to have a firm decision. However, Churchill was not so happy at Wilson's apparent eagerness to commence operations in his theater. Churchill attempted to persuade Wilson to be more tepid about the matter, "I hope in your delight at this 'firm decision' you will not overlook the far greater issues connected with the upkeep of Alexander's armies and the execution of his plans." Though acknowledging that they must support the Americans in Anvil, in no way did that diminish Churchill's plans for pursuing his independent campaign. He said as much to Wilson. "Having submitted, we must loyally endeavour to support the plan, but this does not, in any way, mean that we are not going to try to advance towards Trieste."⁶⁵ One can hardly blame Wilson however for getting excited over a decision finally made in his theater. Ironically, this was a decision Wilson had very little control over.

In continuing preparations for Anvil, Eisenhower, Devers, Marshall and De Gaulle were poring over the latter's idea for an airborne operation to support Anvil. Operation Caiman was designed to "liberate a portion of French territory using French Forces of the Interior (FFI)."⁶⁶ This plan involved parachuting French troops to assist resistance fighters in the Massif Central.⁶⁷ On 11 July, Devers cabled Marshall that after talking with Wilson and Eaker, the three wished to

⁶⁴ AFHQ to BCS, 8 Jul. 1944, JCS Records, Box 304, RG 218, NARA.

⁶⁵ Churchill to Wilson, 8 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁶⁶ Marshall to Eisenhower and Devers, 8 Jul. 1944, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 33, 1NARA [Microfilm #67-5 spec.]. Eisenhower's thoughts on the operation are in Eisenhower to Marshall, 10 Jul. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1992-1993; also see Wilson to Eisenhower, 10 Jul. 1944, RG 331, OOH Records, Box 294, RG 33, 1NARA [Microfilm #67-5 spec.].

⁶⁷ Massif Central is located approximately 130 miles to the west of Lyon in central France. It is also where the French Forces of the Interior had its strongest elements.

cancel the operation. The airlift for that operation would have to come from Anvil, and maintenance after the initial drops was not available. The Allies were able to assuage De Gaulle, but only by promising to consider a modified Caiman after Anvil was launched.⁶⁸

Minor agreements on operational details aside, the major conflict of Anvil still loomed over Allied planners. The BCS released a memo on 12 July stating their support for Anvil, although even this endorsement had a sense of veiled contempt. Ismay wrote Churchill that the BCS clearly state, "the Chiefs of Staff have set out...a clear statement of how we stand over 'Anvil' and the battle in Italy, without attempting to pin down the U.S. Chiefs of Staff into a 'lawyer's agreement.'"⁶⁹ This was a holier than thou moment for Ismay, who could tell himself that he took the high road in negotiations. It accomplished nothing, and only looked to further antagonize relations between the two allies. This attitude permeated the entire BCS, who wrote to Field Marshall Sir John Dill, the senior British representative on the CCS, "we think it important that the U.S. Chiefs of Staff should be left in no doubt as to our attitude towards operations in the Mediterranean. The position is that neither H.M.G. (His Majesty's Government) nor the British Chiefs of Staff consider that Operation Anvil is our correct strategy."⁷⁰ The statement Ismay referred to in the BCS memo stated, "the British Chiefs of Staff ask us to say that they will of course do their very utmost to make Anvil a success. They are confident in the same spirit that the United States Chiefs of Staff will do their utmost to ensure that every effort is made to make the campaign in Italy a success."⁷¹ It was the BCS's subtle way of telling the Americans that despite their maltreatment, they were willing to

⁶⁸ *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 1993.

⁶⁹ Ismay to Churchill, 11 Jul 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁷⁰ AMSSO to JSM Washington, 12 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁷¹ BCS, title "Operations to Assist Overlord," JCS Records, Box 304, Folder "CCS 381 (1-11-44) Sec. 5," RG 218 NARA.

overlook the American transgressions for the sake of victory. These responses give an aura of a victim mentality held by top British strategists. However, it appeared that Churchill finally was ready to concede Anvil. In his personal papers, he notes that after Eisenhower promised two American divisions to the Mediterranean, Churchill noted that he could allow the matter to be dropped for the present.⁷²

The final outline plan for Anvil was released on 13 July.⁷³ It included for the first time Rugby Force, or the provisionally named 7th Airborne Division under Brigadier General Robert T. Frederick.⁷⁴ It also finalized the units involved in the operation, initially the American 3d, 36th, and 45 IDs, along with the 1st French Armored Division. The follow-up force consisted of French Army "B," which consisted of the 1st French ID, 3d Algerian and 9th Colonial divisions. The First French Corps contained the 2nd Moroccan and 4th Mountain IDs, as well as the 5th Armored Division.⁷⁵ D-Day objectives included the Iles d'Hyères and an advance inland by a company of French commandoes to isolate the landing beaches.⁷⁶ To confuse the German defenders, planes loaded with steel rods and dummy parachutists would be dropped halfway between La Cictat and St. Maximin.⁷⁷ On D+1, four French divisions would begin to disembark,

⁷² Churchill to Mr. Martin, 16 Jul. 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁷³ Title "Anvil Outline Plan," 13 Jul. 1944, OTS Orgs. Records, Box 4, RG 338, NARA. The VI Corps outline plan is in title "Outline Plan for Operation Anvil VI Corps," 15 Jul. 1944, Box 5, RG 338, NARA.

⁷⁴ It would later become the 1st Airborne Task Force. Another airborne operation was conceived for Anvil. General Henry Arnold, an aviation pioneer, came up with the plan along with his staff. It centered around the town of Avignon. However it was ruled out because of the number of practical difficulties involved. Though Wilson and other Mediterranean commanders thought the plan "bold." *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, III*, 2017.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, V, 361.

⁷⁷ Sweeney to G-3, Seventh Army, 31 Jul. 1944, Box 3, Folder "7th Army. G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil - Support Pre D-Day & D-Day & D-Day, 27 Mar - 29 July 1944," RG 338, NARA.

and a full bridgehead should be developed by D+6. Toulon should be captured by D+20, and Marseille D+40.⁷⁸

With D-Day looming, 7th Army went into high gear. The United States 36th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General John Dahlquist, arranged for Operation Cowpuncher II, an amphibious landing exercise off the coast of the Bay of Gaeta, northwest of Naples.⁷⁹ The airborne force designated for Anvil received its outline plan on July 26.⁸⁰ The 3d Division under Major General John O'Daniel received Field Order #12, its official orders for Operation Anvil.

Marshall wrote to Devers that the plan for an army group was approved. He advised Devers to keep his headquarters small, and to focus primarily on commanding his troops, rather than administrative work. Marshall told Devers to dispense with perfectionist planning as he believed, "we are approaching the point in Europe where carefully planned and bold and rapid action in the application of our forces may reap successes which will shorten the war."⁸¹ Indeed, Marshall had reason to be optimistic when Allied intelligence gathered the entire German order of battle, as well as expected enemy build-up and movement tables.⁸²

Intelligence during the planning phases of Anvil was prodigious. In fact, intelligence gathering was so effective that there was a lack of personnel to handle the constant traffic of messages. Due to Overlord, German units stationed in southern France were constantly shuffled throughout France. The result was at times an incomplete picture of who exactly was in the

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ 36th Inf Div, title "Operation Cowpuncher II," 22 Jul. 1944, Records of Mediterranean Theater of Operations, World War II, Box 3011, RG 492, NARA. Cowpuncher II was set for 7 August.

⁸⁰ HQ Seventh Army, title "Outline Plan: Employment of Airborne Forces to Assist 'Anvil,'" 26 Jul. 1944, Box 5, Folder "Army. G-3 Sec, Opn Anvil - VI Corps Outline Plan for Opns, 15 July 44," RG 338, NARA.

⁸¹ Marshall to Devers, 16 Jul. 1944, *The Papers of George Marshall, IV*, 523-524.

⁸² HQ VI Corps, title "Operation Anvil," 16 Jul. 1944, Box 6, RG 338 NARA. See also, Carl R. Morin Jr., *Anvil Revisited: The Impact of Ultra on the Decision to Invade Southern France* (Carlisle: US Army War College, 1984).

assault zones at what time. However, the information provided was usually reliable.⁸³ For instance, 7th Army intelligence estimated the German forces from the Rhone eastwards to the Italian border at 115,000.⁸⁴ The German garrison at Toulon was about 10,000, and at Marseille 15,000.⁸⁵ Intelligence operations even collected the rank insignia and shoulder patches of Russian nationals serving in the *Ost Legionen* of the *Wehrmacht*.⁸⁶ Such thorough intelligence and knowledge could not be obtained by selecting a less prepared site, such as Cette or Bordeaux.

On 27 July, Lieutenant General Omar Bradley's 1st Army conducted Operation Cobra, designed to break the stalemate in the western sector of the Normandy line. Within a week, 1st Army (now under Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges) and Lieutenant General George Patton's 3rd Army broke through the entire German line and began to encircle and pursue the remnants of Field Marshal Günther von Kluge's Army Group B's left flank.⁸⁷ The battle for Normandy had ended with a decisive Allied victory. Eager to press their adversary, the Allied armies in northern France drove eastward with startling speed, changing the operational outlook in France dramatically.

⁸³ Clarke and Smith, *Rivera to the Rhine*, 85.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ HQ VI Corps, title "Notes on Foreign Units in the German Army," 3 Aug. 1944, Box 6, RG 338, NARA. Other nationalities represented in *Ost* units in the German army included: France, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Norway, Holland and Slovenia. There were also about 6,000 Indians serving in the *Wehrmacht* captured who were captured in North Africa. For more on foreign units serving in the German army, see Sanders Marble, *Scraping the Barrel: The Military Use of Substandard Manpower 1860-1960* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

⁸⁷ For further information on Operation Cobra, see Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1961); Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy: The Unwritten Story of Montgomery and the Allied Campaign* (New York: Dutton, 1983); Russell Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 144-170.

Cosmetically for Anvil, its name was changed. Because Anvil was in use since January, the British thought a new name was necessary.⁸⁸ The request met with approval from the JCS, and the resultant new moniker for the operation was "Dragoon."⁸⁹ With the new name came new opposition from an old source. Churchill was even more convinced of the futility of Dragoon. Now that Allied divisions were running rampant throughout the French countryside, Churchill saw an opportunity once again to thwart Dragoon. He wrote to Roosevelt on 4 August, just eleven days before D-Day. Churchill wished to switch the assault to western France which Churchill called, "the main and vital theatre where it [Dragoon forces] can immediately play its part at close quarters." However, his letter suggests very little forethought as even he admitted, "I cannot pretend to have worked out the details but the opinion here is that they are capable of solution."⁹⁰ The Prime Minister then convened the BCS for a meeting, where they formally endorsed Churchill's change of plans.⁹¹ He also wrote Harry Hopkins, in the hopes that he too could persuade Roosevelt to alter the direction of the operation.⁹² The British Chiefs of Staff cabled Wilson with the suggestion following the meeting, and directed him to investigate secretly how he would be able to finagle such an operation.⁹³

Eisenhower caught wind of Churchill's message to Roosevelt, and immediately sent a few of his own. He told Marshall that under no circumstances would he alter Dragoon. Eisenhower was so surprised by this revival of protests against Anvil, that he thought perhaps Churchill had

⁸⁸ AMSSO to JSM Washington, 27 Jul 1944, PREM 3/271/9.

⁸⁹ Henceforth the Anvil operation will be referred to as Dragoon. There is an apocryphal tale that Churchill had Anvil's name changed to Dragoon to signify the forceful way he felt the British were drug into the operation. It is repeated often, see Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 223. However, the author has not yet found a "smoking gun" that definitively proves this often told tale.

⁹⁰ Churchill to Roosevelt, 4 Aug. 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 263-264; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 66-67.

⁹¹ COS (44) 260th Mtg, minutes, title "War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee," 4 Aug. 1944, PREM 3/271/10.

⁹² Prime Minister to Mr. Harry Hopkins, 6 Aug. 1944, PREM 3/271/10.

⁹³ Chiefs of Staff to Wilson, 4 Aug 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 48-A].

misunderstood their previous conversations.⁹⁴ The Supreme Allied Commander then addressed the Combined Chiefs, AFHQ and the British Chiefs of Staff. He began, "I am strongly opposed to a cancellation or major modifications to Dragoon...A long delay in employing the Dragoon forces is quite unacceptable, and it is my firm opinion that the best interests of Overlord will be served by carrying out the Dragoon operation as planned."⁹⁵ He also noted his frustration at this new foray in his diary.⁹⁶ The American Joint Chiefs responded the next day, assuring Eisenhower and Devers that Dragoon would go ahead as planned. They argued that the strategic situation had not changed enough to warrant a change in operations.⁹⁷

Wilson reported back to the BCS with his preliminary findings on switching Dragoon to Brittany. He believed that the Allies could transfer the French contingent of the invasion force with little problems, but that "unless delay involved in complete reloading is acceptable," rearranging everything for a Brittany invasion would be a slow process, indeed.⁹⁸ SACMED also released a comprehensive summary of operations in the Mediterranean, and concluded that despite the diversion of some resources to Turkey, he had at his command, "adequate forces to afford a most formidable degree of support to the land operations in Italy and Southern France."⁹⁹ Wilson concluded his examination of the possibility of Dragoon, and released his findings to Dill and the BCS. Wilson commented on the logistics, "alterations of loading plans at this stage would result in complete disorganization and such delay as would evidently defeat

⁹⁴ Eisenhower to Marshall, 5 Aug 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years: IV*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 2055-2056.

⁹⁵ Eisenhower to CCS, AFHQ and BCS, 6 Aug. 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 48-A].

⁹⁶ Diary entry, 7 Aug. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, IV*, 2057-2058.

⁹⁷ US Chiefs of Staff to Eisenhower, Devers and Wilson, 5 Aug 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 48-A].

⁹⁸ Wilson to British Chiefs of Staff, 5 Aug 1944, OOH Records, Box 4, RG 331, NARA [Microfilm 48-A].

⁹⁹ Wilson to British Chiefs of Staff repeated for United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, 5 Aug 1944, PREM 3/271/10.

object of switch." The invasion fleet was prepared to embark on the evening of 12 August, so if the change in the operation were to occur, it had to happen by the morning of that same day.¹⁰⁰

All of the factors were against Churchill. Hopkins replied to Churchill's personal appeal. He assured Churchill that though Roosevelt was not available (he was in the Pacific at the time), the president's response was certainly a negative. Hopkins also added,

It seems to me that our tactical position today in Overlord is precisely as planned and as we anticipated it would be when Anvil was laid on. To change the strategy now would be a great mistake...I believe too the movement north from Anvil will be much more rapid than you anticipate. They have nothing to stop us...A tremendous victory is in store for us.¹⁰¹

Roosevelt replied to Churchill's appeal on 8 August, stating that after consulting the JCS, "[I am] unable to agree that the resources allocated to Dragoon should be considered available for a move into France via ports on the coast of Brittany."¹⁰² Churchill finally acquiesced, "I pray God that you may be right. We shall, of course, do everything in our power to help you achieve success."¹⁰³

Deterred, but not vanquished, Churchill made one last passionate appeal to Eisenhower. They met at 10 Downing Street on 9 August. The meeting took nearly all day. Because the JCS deferred on nearly all questions to Eisenhower, "...the Prime Minister unloose[d] on Ike all his art of persuasion." Driven to tears, Churchill threatened to "lay down the mantle of my high office."¹⁰⁴ Eisenhower listened intently, but said no to Churchill in every way he could imagine. Eisenhower checked in on his friend a couple days later, "To say that I was disturbed by our

¹⁰⁰Wilson to BCS, 6 Aug. 1944, PREM 3/271/10.

¹⁰¹Prime Minister to Mr. Harry Hopkins, 8 Aug. 1944, 3/271/10.

¹⁰²President to the Former Naval Person, 8 Aug. 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt Complete: The Complete Correspondence, III*, 267.

¹⁰³Prime Minister to President Roosevelt, 8 Aug. 1944, Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Harry Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, 1942 to 1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 638-639.

conference on Wednesday does not nearly express the depth of my distress over your interpretation of the recent decision affecting the Mediterranean theater." He pointed out that the British Chiefs had argued and gotten their way over many operations throughout the course of the war to this point, so Eisenhower did not understand why the Americans were considered "intemperate" for their longstanding support of Dragoon.¹⁰⁵ If Churchill approached Roosevelt with political reasons why Dragoon should be altered, then only the order needed to be sent down and Eisenhower would faithfully execute the change in directive. However, to do this on a whim would cause serious doubt in the mechanisms and organization of the strategic team set up by the Allies.¹⁰⁶ Field Marshal Jan Smuts sent Churchill what was essentially a consolation letter.¹⁰⁷ Dejected, Churchill traveled to southern France to witness the Dragoon launch personally.

It was finished. On 15 August Operation Dragoon commenced. After the first day, nearly 100,000 troops were ashore. By 28 August, Toulon and Marseille were in Allied hands, a full three weeks before Allied planners anticipated their capture. The first two weeks of the operation saw 57,000 German soldiers captured, compared to 6,700 total Allied casualties.¹⁰⁸ By mid-September, lead elements from the Dragoon force made contact with Patton's 3rd Army in central France. Marseille began receiving direct shipping traffic on 15 September and Toulon on 20 September. Soon they became the two largest ports in the ETO for Allied materiel, and would not be eclipsed by Antwerp until March 1945. With the looming oil crisis on the western front about to take center stage, one can only imagine how much worse it would have been had

¹⁰⁵ Eisenhower to Churchill, 11 Aug. 1944, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, IV*, 2065-2066.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Field Marshal Smuts to Prime Minister, 13 Aug. 1944, PREM 3/271/10.

¹⁰⁸ Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, 237.

Dragoon not taken place. Its vision for supplementing Overlord did not affect operations, Dragoon's logistical support alone as a gateway for supplies--and for the landing of an entire army group--proved more than enough justification for the operation.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Russell Weigley said of the Anvil debate in his seminal work *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, "Happily, the prolonged inter-allied debates over Anvil, the invasion of southern France, do not fall within the province of this narrative. They made a dreary and depressing subject."¹ To some degree he is right. The amount of tussle and turmoil over Anvil at the highest levels of Allied command would fatigue even the most dedicated counselor. But the debates were important. Not only did they reveal much about the individuals involved, they also mark the ascendancy of the United States over Great Britain in planning this global war. As much as any other operation of the war, Anvil provides a unique window into the convoluted process of strategic planning.

During the summer of 1943, the Normandy campaign was still over a year away. The Allies had little idea of what stalls, narrow escapes, and terrors they would face over the coming twelve months. The British still maintained supremacy in the alliance, with sage and experienced individuals like Prime Minister Winston Churchill directing strategy, and renowned generals like Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery espousing their visions for the future of the war. The Americans for their part still relied on their British allies for competent execution of their plans. However, at the Quadrant conference, the Americans became more aggressive about reentering the continent; something the British were in no rush for, due to their decreasing contribution in both men and material. Italy became the immediate objective.

The stalemate on the Italian peninsula gave the British something they could not tolerate by this point, a campaign of attrition. Multiple attacks broke down against German resistance on the Volturno River. The Americans impatiently looked ahead to a reentry into France. At the

¹ Russell Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 218.

Sextant and Eureka conferences, they had an opportunity to flex their muscles while Churchill began to show resistance to Overlord. There were still many prizes waiting to be won in the Mediterranean, according to British consensus.

This perpetual inflating of the importance of the Mediterranean beyond its limited value as a stopgap theater until the Normandy campaign was characteristic of the British. Gradually, as more British reinforcements saturated Italy, the emphasis of the British became how best to prosecute the war there while delaying Overlord. Even in Tehran, where Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Churchill agreed that Anvil and Overlord become the two major operations of 1944, the British still lobbied for operations in the Mediterranean. No doubt, they needed to maintain their lifeline to India via the Suez Canal. Controlling the Mediterranean was the safest way to guarantee this artery.

As Operation Shingle stalled in late January, however, the situation changed. The Anzio bridgehead became an insatiable consumer of supplies and men. Because the quickly assembled assault failed, and there were no other plans in the making that could immediately alleviate the situation, the Allied high command had to commit to Anzio far beyond original expectations. Perhaps the solution might consist of withdrawing troops from the bridgehead and reinserting them into the Italian main line to free up additional resources. Ironically, this is exactly what the British were suggesting regarding Anvil.

In March, when the British proposed a postponement of Anvil, they did so under the guise of operational flexibility. In reality, the strains that the Anvil proposal had on Field Marshal Henry Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, were self-inflicted. The stalemate in Italy itself was the biggest bar to operational flexibility. This constant back and forth between the British and Americans became very disruptive when it came to defining future

operations. Anvil was established as one of the two supreme operations of 1944. As such, any operation that impeded the progress of planning Anvil was denying it operational flexibility, rather than the reverse.

Still, during the summer, Allied planners at the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) were alarmingly aloof to the strategic situation. It was not that they did not have a plan for victory, but that they were so unstable, constantly shifting. For instance, the CCS insisted on maintaining certain guidelines for withdrawing troops from Italy to prepare for Anvil. Yet, the benchmark kept retreating further away. It appears that the hope of British planners was to delay Anvil to the point of irrelevancy. They created the desired delays, but also created much more confusion.

This is not to say the British were wrong to think that Anvil might become a bloodbath. Experiences on Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and Normandy all showed that amphibious operations were dangerous, and heavily dependent on resources. British fears that southern France would turn into another Anzio rested heavily on the mind of Churchill and his men. Even when intelligence about the weakened nature of German defenses surfaced, the British simply chose to incorporate those elements which best suited their agenda.

The Americans deserve their fair share of the blame. As late as June, Marshall recommended considering alternatives to Anvil because of the continuing arguments over whether it would ever take place. These possibilities led the British to believe that the American support for Anvil was less than it seemed. This misapprehension can be attributed to the relative American lack of experience with international diplomacy. An age of isolation swept the nation after World War I, and the United States was several hundred years younger than its British counterparts. This naivety is what Marshall had in mind when he warned Eisenhower about developing "localitis." However, they deserve the credit for having the foresight to anticipate the

success of Anvil, and the optimism to carry it out despite the reservations of the British and some of their own colleagues.

Task Force 163, the planning section for Operation Anvil, performed impeccably. It began as a small subsection of Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) in Algiers, but it soon grew exponentially. When Lieutenant General Alexander Patch took over command of the 7th Army in March 1944, he began organizing and bolstering the size of TF 163. Lieutenant General Jacob Devers, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, along with Patch, became the primary supporters of Anvil from within AFHQ. Their constant supervision and support of TF 163 and the accumulation of resources for Anvil ensured that when the CCS belatedly decided to launch the operation, everything was already in place.

The allocation of these resources proved to be more complex than anyone could have anticipated. The Americans liked the idea of fixed operations several months from the present because, although their industrial capacity was enormous, it still produced a finite amount of resources per month. This meant careful allocation, lest a shortage of material appear at a critical moment on the battlefield. The LST question--when to ship, how many, and from where--perplexed planners until Overlord was safely underway.

Operations are an extraordinarily complex task. At first dozens, and then hundreds of men and women have to coordinate the resources and soldiers at a specific location and a specific time, all with a degree of support that ensures success. The soldiers who did the fighting in southern France deserve praise. but the tireless individuals in Task Force 163 deserve an equal share of congratulations for taking an uncertain situation for many months and transforming it into the most successful Allied amphibious operation in the European Theater of Operations during World War II.

The Anvil story needs to be told more often. The landing in Southern France was at the center of the entire spring and summer campaigning season. While it complemented Overlord, it also undermined the Italian campaign. It drove the American and British alliance to the breaking point, much like the debates over Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa. It constituted a low point in American-Anglo relations. It marked the spot where the British had to realize their diminished status as a lesser power. Henceforth, the Americans would dictate the course of the war. Each of these themes could become a book unto itself.

Strategically and operationally, Anvil was vital to the Allied cause in the summer of 1944. Without it, the Allies would have been hampered operationally, forced to extend Eisenhower's right flank. In the absence of Anvil, the Allies would almost certainly have poured more forces into Italy. Either one of these possibilities could have led to what the British feared most at this point: the spread of postwar Soviet influence far beyond what actually happened historically. It is fair to say that, contrary to British claims that Anvil led to the spread of Soviet influence, this operation actually prevented further Soviet advances.²

The Anvil debate deserves increased exposure. Historians must see it for what it was (and what the Allies declared it to be at Tehran): one of the two supreme operations of 1944.

² There is one proponent of this idea, see Thomas M. Barker, "The Ljubljana Gap Strategy: Alternative to Anvil/Dragoon or Fantasy?" *The Journal of Military History* 56 (Jan 1992): 57-86.

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