

BOOK 2: APRIL 1944: MTO – Mediterranean Theater abcd

A. Chapter 18: OVERLORD Planning and Mediterranean Options; Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare Vol II* xyza April 1944

1. **Cancellation of a Simultaneous ANVIL.** It was unavailing, as Eisenhower became uneasy with unsettled OVERLORD plans. Wilson and Alexander appealed to British Chiefs to keep LST's in Italy generating a rift between British and U.S. Chiefs. Gen Somervell "stirred the pot" revealing new landing craft were sent to the Pacific not the Atlantic! But OPD accepted Navy claims all LST's went to the Atlantic, not the Pacific. 421 In a 17 March call, Gen Bedel Smith said to keep ANVIL alive, SHAEFE had shorted OVERLORD by 17 LST's. It meant troops would be squished into landing craft for OVERLORD. He needed a guarantee of ANVIL, but that was impossible because "ANVIL was being crushed." When the decision deadline arrived Gen Wilson and British Chiefs demanded a June ANVIL be dropped. Troops and landing craft were "stuck" at Anzio which Wilson said would not end before 15 May. ANVIL died and its landing craft would go to England. 422 It improved cargo shipping, combat aircraft, and U.S. assault divisions. U.S. Italian troops were battle-weary. U.S. planners were disappointed, but planning could proceed on firmer terms.

Nevertheless, service and replacement troop shortages continued as the War Department warned Gen Devers and Eisenhower to conserve labor especially service forces. This caused the African American 2d Cavalry Division to be disbanded to create SOS service units. 423 Yet, on 31 May the War Department had capped U.S. divisions in the Mediterranean to six divisions in December 1943.

2. **ANVIL Postponed Indefinitely.** Postponing ANVIL did not end the debate. All agreed the Anzio bridgehead had to join up, but the "what next?" was undecided – a matter of "fruitless discussion" and arguments reargued. The British wanted an all-out attack in Italy until OVERLORD; U.S. Chiefs said ANVIL had priority. It was heated -- the British wanted Italy to continue. Marshall offered Pacific landing craft for ANVIL if ANVIL had precedence over Rome. The English were angered by the "strings". The relationship of British Gen Dill and Gen Marshall is mentioned again:

... Dill reminded the British Chiefs of the strong (U.S.) pressures for greater action in the Pacific. The U.S. Chiefs ... (were) "shocked and pained to find ... how gaily we proposed to accept 424 their legacy while disregarding the terms of the will." How magnanimous an offer the Americans felt they were making could be understood "in view of the fact that the U.S. Chiefs of Staff are continually being abused for neglecting their theater."

U.S. ANVIL pressure arose from a fixation to quickly, decisively end WWII with few issues. Gen Roberts noted cancelling ANVIL meant a) political problems with the French; b) OVERLORD loses 10 divisions; c) the French and U.S. public may get "fed up"; d) French and U.S. forces faced a costly Italian advance; and e) U.S. troops would be "occupying" Southeast Europe, not Austria, Hungary and Germany. Transferring some craft to the U.K. became the "least-worst" U.S. choice. Churchill again asked Pacific landing craft to be sent ANVIL. Marshall refused without a definite ANVIL agreement.

Churchill retorted the British would be pained to lose these craft ... 425 (The) Allies did not reach Rome in January as planned ... The problem "only arises out of the absurd shortage of LST's. How it is that the Complete Military History.com 1 © Thomas R. Buresh 2022 All Rights Reserved

plans of two great Empire's like Britain and the United States should be so much hamstrung and limited by a hundred, or two of these particular vessels will never be understood by history." **It was a shot at the U.S. and its Navy!**

On 18 April ANVIL was off. On 12 May, DIADEM broke the stalemate, Rome was liberated 4 June. Then ANVIL was on!

3. Decline of the Turkey and Aegean Projects. To the good, facts killing ANVIL ended Churchill's hopes for Turkey and Aegean. Turkey's demands to make war were excessive; the U.S. had feared U.S. troops would be in Turkey. **426** British plans to aid Balkan guerrillas faded as FDR defeated Churchill's arguments. "Undoubtedly these ... made (Churchill) look more eagerly ... (to) Italy and the capture of Rome ... (to keep) alive his hopes for a more active course in the Mediterranean." Churchill's view of the Channel improved. He wrote Marshall in March: "I am hardening very much on this operation ... in the sense of wishing to strike if humanly possible even if the limiting conditions we laid down at Moscow are not exactly fulfilled." War Department saw a shift that Wedemeyer captured: "Both Eden and the P.M. [Prime Minister] reflect confidence ... The P.M. did state that if he had been able to persuade the Chiefs of Staff, the Allies **427** would have gone through Turkey and the Balkans ... and into Norway ... surrounding the enemy ... " He added, however, that the die is cast and that we must carry OVERLORD through vigorously to a successful conclusion.

4. OVERLORD and the Unconditional Surrender Formula. Matloff and Snell provide a different perspective of Roosevelt's terms to end the war. Others state the Army thought the military would overthrow Hitler. In prior wars, only cities were on "front lines" were destroyed. WWII was the first war of "mass bombing". No one knew the effect but hoped it alone could force a "surrender" neared Germany, but "unconditional surrender" was a deterrent to ending the war before the "bitter end". Matloff and Snell provide insight into the plans to "end the war" in this section.

Before D-day a softening of "unconditional surrender" was appropriate and militarily wise. But German propaganda used it for a "fight-to-the-death" struggle to enhance Hitler as the better alternative to "enslavement" and retribution as the Nazi's portrayed their interpretation of the terms. Unconditional surrender cost more Allied casualties. The authors describe "sliding scaled" to define "unconditional". FDR rejected all; praised for the "strength of convictions". **428 429**

The last week in March, the JCS asked FDR "to retreat from his hitherto adamant stand ... (urging) a restatement ... (to) establish a favorable condition precedent to OVERLORD." The JCS version addressed the German "people" versus their "gangster overlords" to "reassure the there was no intention of destroying the German people and nation but rather the German capacity for military aggression." **430** He flatly refused further clarification explaining:

The ... memorandum presupposes a reconstitution of a German state which would give active cooperation apparently at once to peace in Europe.

A ... study and personal experience ... leads me to believe that German Philosophy cannot be changed by decree, law or military order. The change in German Philosophy must be evolutionary and may take two generations.

To assume otherwise ... (means) a period of quiet followed by a third world war.

... (The) simplest way ... is to stick to what I have already said, (a) that the United Nations are determined to administer a total defeat to Germany as a whole (b) that the Allies have no intention of destroying the German people ... I am not willing at this time to say that we do not intend to destroy the German nation. As long as the word "Reich" exists in Germany as expressing a nationhood, it will forever be associated with the present form of nationhood. If we admit that, we must seek to eliminate the very word "Reich" and what it stands for today.

To the State Department on 5 April the President informed Secretary Hull: "I understand ... but I want at all costs to prevent it from being said that the unconditional surrender principle has been abandoned. There is real danger if we ... (have) exceptions ... before a specific case arises ... I understand ... there will have to be exceptions ... to the application of it in specific cases. This is a quite different thing from changing the principle." SHAEF believed FDR handicapped propaganda appeals. Eisenhower and Smith stressed weakening their will to resist. But the President's "firm position ... tended to discourage the military ... 431 from pursuing the subject with any determination."

In the early months of 1944, Marshall and his staff felt able to mount OVERLOAD on "a reasonably secure basis" and satisfy British Mediterranean demands. The additional landing craft for a five division OVERLORD came by postponing ANVIL. Yet, the debate did not yield a conclusive decision on Mediterranean strategy. The final settlement would have to come after OVERLORD D Day. 432

B. Chapter 1: The Second Front and the Secondary War in the CBI: January-April 1944¹ Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare Vol II* xyza April

The Pacific war remained, but OVERLORD's top priority permitted Army planners to "regulate" the war against Japan which also depended upon how long it took to first defeat the Germans.

1. **The Consequences of SEXTANT. 433** At SEXTANT. FDR gave Chiang either the Burma (TARZAN) or Southeast Asia option. Chiang, instead, presented new demands on 9 December including a billion-dollar gold loan, doubling his air forces and increased Hump air cargo. FDR "firmly responded" with aid to build the land route to China and more "hump" cargo, but Chiang refused to commit his forces to north Burma. 434 Mountbatten had 30,000 troops for that Akyab operation. FDR impatiently urged the Generalissimo and the British cancelled SEAC amphibian action as Mountbatten returned three LST's. Without these, Myanmar (Burma) was limited to ground offensives.

The tiff between Mountbatten (and Wedemeyer) with Gen Stilwell continued. Stilwell demanded large Burma operations. 435 The War Department saw Chiang as "talk, not action" as Stilwell's stock fell to defending new B-29 bomber bases against Japan. China refused "any actual fighting. (It's) effort toward the defeat of Japan ... (was limited) support ... " as its Army was not ready to fight WWII. Keeping China in the war was worthwhile. 436 Losing FDR's support meant the CBI was "a losing proposition ... (and) China's role would be considered less and less important."

¹ While this effort focuses more upon the ETO and OVERLORD, Matloff and Snell are used to provide the wider, strategic framework and corresponding information on other theaters up to D-Day Normandy.

2. The Fate of SEAC. The SEAC gained fame with its “long-range penetration groups” of British Gen Wingate and U.S. Gen “Merrill’s Marauders” who struck in the jungle in Japanese rear areas. Mountbatten wanted the forces for amphibious attack in 1945, but Stilwell used guerilla war **437** rejecting Mountbatten. U.S. chiefs liked Stilwell’s plan. Mountbatten sent his U.S. deputy, Gen Wedemeyer, to London and Washington to offset Stilwell. Churchill also disliked Stilwell’s campaign and to ask FDR “to wait until Wedemeyer had **438** presented Mountbatten’s side ...” Stilwell won. Marshall ordered “Vinegar Joe” to “make amends” and to stop souring British relations! Mid-March began the attack on the Burma Imphal Plain. With the Japanese on the Imphal front and Stilwell’s Chinese forces edging to Ledo, the War Department still failed to get Chiang’s Yunnan troops into battle as Chiang added more **439** conditions.

FDR finally threatened to cut-off Chiang if his forces didn’t get into Burma. Chiang ordered four Yunnan divisions to assault, and the War Department agreed to finish the Burma Road². But rapidly Pacific progress caused Handy to tell Somervell in mid-April: “... (The) strategic plan for the defeat of Japan has progressed ... where it now appears ... there will be no major land campaign in China ... (or any need for) a major amphibious operation from India ...”

Late March the JCS wanted Mountbatten on vigorous north Burma operations for the road, air route and pipeline. **440** Stilwell, instead, sensed a new British decision limiting Burma operations. Ignoring Churchill’s Chiefs, the JCS ordered Stilwell to give China air support against Japanese Formosa, Ryukyus, Philippines, and China so Chinese supplies could be delivered to U.S. forces and omitted British and Chinese concurrence. Stilwell built the China air link, his Pacific forces and completed the Burma Road only as a safety precaution for U.S. interests. **441** China’s role in the war plummeted to no more than “mopping up ... (and) reopening of ground communications with China.” Time ran out for China.

3. The Mounting of the B-29 Offensive. During this period came the questionable effort to fly B-29’s from India to advance bases in China from which to bomb Japan using the Tenth Air Force in India. The Fourteenth Air Force was in China, but the India-China Air Transport Command’s control was in Washington, then came the mega B-29 bombers to add the third command. **442** While Stilwell had command, he was mainly out of touch with his headquarters in a theater with a low priority. The new B-29 project was a stupendous challenge requiring new, extra-long and heavy load runways in India and China. The B-29 project impacted theaters. Fighters also had to be sent. Eisenhower and Churchill objected to the impact on the Mediterranean with **443** no results. The Navy shipped P-47’s from the MTO arriving in April. The project aggravated the Hump tonnage short falls with only 14,472 tons flown into China in January. Bombers became transports for the huge fuel needs all complicated by the Japanese Imphal assault. To be clear, the B-29’s staging attacks from China to bomb the Japanese each carried 8,200 to 9,400 gallons! The bombers had to be fueled for the attack and then to India -- about 16,000 gallons per bomber flown into China! From February to June, combat planes and even B-29’s carried freight and fuel to China. To the good, the Japanese were flummoxed when bombers at 30,000 feet hit Japan. Yet, costs of this MATTERHORN B-29 offensive were also indirect.

Originally adopted for China as morale boost and because Army staff guessed Chinese bases could be ready sooner than Pacific bases could be captured and built. By early 1944 doubts arose as to the efficacy of flying huge planes, bombs and their gasoline into China – a logistical Hell. 444 To the good, B-29s were much closer to Japan from China able to carry heavier bomb loads. By April bases were planned in the Mariana Islands for a 30 September bombing start.

Yet, once started all of the construction work in the CBI could not be halted nor could the extensive constructions forces be readily transferred. A mid-April a list of four “feasible” projects included the pipeline and road to Kunming and 445 pipeline extension to east China. Unable to foresee the end of the Pacific War, it was reasonable to bomb Japan from many directions. As questionable as “Flying the Hump” seemed, about 25,000 tons/month were flown or three merchant ship loads per month! In a mischievous twist to avoid “turf wars”, Gen Arnold in Washington DC commanded these B-29 forces in the Pacific! It was a brilliant solution, since no one in the Pacific had equal rank! Technically against rules, 446 it solved all command issues, so Japan’s inner zone was no longer out of bomber range!

4. The Battle of the Air Transports. In March the Japanese attacked the Imphal Plain on the India-Burma frontier producing a new form of warfare using transport aircraft. Air cargo was used in 1941 in Iraq, the 1942 Burma Campaign, for Kenney's airdrop in the Markham Valley of New Guinea in August and in the fall of 1943 48 Transport squadrons supplied Wingate’s long-range penetration groups and the American GALAHAD forces. 447 In March and April a tiff arose between over cargo planes for Mountbatten’s forces, including Wingate’s deep penetrations. In late March Mountbatten saw a chance to “turn the tide”. The “bickering” was substantial; the “day saved” but it was embarrassing and unprofessional. It was an inappropriate time for pedantic discussions! 448 But the transport planes reinforced beleaguered Allied troops “to turn the tide ... baffled the Japanese and ... timetables (which led to the) failure of the Japanese to capture Allied stores ... (that) forced them to retreat ... June 1944, though Stilwell forces were still embattled ... Japanese fortunes in Burma were on the ebb.”

5. The Decline of the CBI. By June the CBI had flagged. FDR’s hastiness, Chiang’s stubbornness, and Great Britain’s loss enthusiasm were causes. SEAC focused upon the Hump air route and clearing Japanese from Burma. China’s 449 value was an air base only. B-29’s in the CBI had attacked the Japanese “Inner Zone”, but plans were ongoing to shift these forces to the Marianas. 450.

C. Chapter 20: The Second Front and the Secondary War-The Pacific:

January-April 1944: Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare Vol*

// xyza April 1944

1. The American Preserve. Mounting OVERLORD “ultimately affected every theater of operations”. Little attention was paid to the Pacific war until early 1944 when U.S. military focused on Japan. The British sought a Pacific redemption for Malaya and Dutch Indies, but the U.S. wanted no Pacific “partners”, because 451 U.S. Chiefs already disagreed upon strategy themselves! Several factors were involved. In early 1944, the British planned to send MacArthur a naval task force. MacArthur was pleased, the Pentagon was not. Sharing the Pacific command was unwelcomed. Then the Japanese sent a naval force to Singapore. This rescued the U.S. Singapore was “perfect” for British efforts! Churchill asked FDR if the U.S. could succeed without the Royal Navy? FDR enthusiastically welcomed this aid so U.S. planners concluded the SWPA could use the British naval task 452 force.

In spring, the British asked how the Royal Navy could “assist” after Germany’s defeat? Expert in British ways by then, the JCS believed British Pacific aid “would only lead to endless arguments ... (so they delayed) combined planning until ... (U.S.) chiefs had settled upon the U.S. course of action.” How long the U.S. could avoid a showdown? By D-Day Normandy maintaining the American monopoly on future Pacific planning was requiring tactful handling. if it could be managed at all.

2. Options in the Pacific. The flexibility policy promised the advantage of surprise and shifts between different attack axis, but its weakness was lack of long-range plans. The debate was lengthy **453** and sometimes “underhanded”. At Cairo in late 1943 the U.S. proposed twin drives with the U.S. Navy forces heading through the Central Pacific per the old ORANGE plan, while MacArthur’s Army forces skip-jumped along the north coast of New Guinea. The SWPA (Southwest Pacific Area) had a “schedule” not a concrete plan. Flexibility was key. Opportunity or stubborn Japanese resistance permitted “end around” amphibious assaults to by-pass such “stubborn areas”. MacArthur’s axis was set because there were islands to conquer further to the south! North, the Navy could proceed west toward the Mariana Islands or veer southwest to the Philippines. The latter was selected so all U.S. Pacific forces headed toward liberating those islands in Operation GRANITE. **454**

Adm Nimitz submitted GRANITE in January while MacArthur had submitted RENO III in in October 1943. Resources lacked for both, so MacArthur pressed for the JCS (not the Navy) to take control of landing craft resources. It was a tussle with the Navy arguing it controlled the Pacific while the Army commanded in the Atlantic. A theater conference in Hawaii from 27-28 January produced surprising results, which was emphasis on MacArthur’s SW Pacific approach. The Navy Mariana’s plan did not provide islands B-29’s could use to attack Japan -- the ultimate object. **455** The massive Japanese navy base at Truk would be by-passed.

This satisfied neither side. Adm King argued the Navy flexible island-hopping plan promised speed, where MacArthur’s “plodded along” to resist using Navy resources for the slower operation. Marshall argued the U.S. had a massive potential force if it employed the “basic principle of mass”. Both agreed to permit the JSSC to study the question. **456** In the end, the AAF carried the case with its update on the B-29 program and desire to use the Marianna Islands for the strategic bombing of Japan. “This carried the day” because the Navy central route became primary, and MacArthur’s team lost. Then the JSSC (senior advisors) agreed “... the Central Pacific route should be ... the primary effort and that operations should be carried out in the Marianas and ... and then ... on to Formosa or Luzon (Philippines).

On 15 February South Pacific forces landed in the northern Solomons, 100 miles from the huge Japanese base at Truk. This forced **457** the Japanese fleet out. The vulnerability of Truk confirmed that it would be bypassed. MacArthur was not pleased. Yet, on 5 March MacArthur announced he would skip ahead to Hollandia omitting Hansa Bay. On 8 March, Sutherland submitted RENO IV to bypass Truk with the Philippines Mindanao attacked in November and Luzon in January 1945. MacArthur planned to cross the Pacific faster than the Navy. The Navy rebutted. On 12 March the JCS, as usual, compromised. “Ostensibly, this was a setback for MacArthur, since his pleas for concentration on the New Guinea axis had been turned down ... But ... his greatest ambition was still on the agenda-he was still slated to lead the Allied forces back to the Philippines.”

3. End of a Mission. On 1 August 1944 a milestone passed as the South Pacific Command, created immediately after Pearl Harbor, was deactivated. With Alaska “pacified”, the two active Pacific Theaters

were in the Southwest and Central Pacific setting up a continual interservice tussle between the Army and Navy. 458 459 460

4. Of Troops and Transports. The lack of Pacific service forces became acute in early 1944 as OVERLORD drained resources. This drew protests from MacArthur who argued it would allow a Japanese consolidation of positions. "The great problem of warfare in the Pacific is to move forces into contact and maintain them. Victory is dependent upon the solution of the logistic problem," he stated. A problem that would soon become a critical factor in the ETO also. It began 461 in early 1944 when New Zealand and Australian Governments cut their forces amid food production shortages. The CCS released the 3rd New Zealand Division and two New Zealand brigade groups from the Solomons. Australians reduced forces to six divisions by late 1944 with another 30,000 Australians demobilized in 1944. It aggravated the U.S. shortage of service troops. Consolidation and new forces dispatched gave MacArthur 14 divisions by August 1944. The Central Pacific Navy zone had six divisions. With long "lines of communications" they were large forces. 462

Gen Somervell sought release of some of MacArthur's 76 Liberty ships. MacArthur's answer. "I need much more", was a forgone conclusion. Pacific shortages required an April ship conference. The JCS announced: "The shortage in shipping ... may affect the strategy of the war in both Europe and the Pacific ... (and requires) the most rigid economy ..." – old, trite and true. [463] The ETO suffered the postponement of ANVIL to help Pacific cargo through July. Yet, the assault and landing craft situation was still acute with no solution until after OVERLORD. Nevertheless, MacArthur and Nimitz could proceed with plans. By June the service troop issue was still poor, but shipping brightened.

5. Eve of Overlord. The war against Japan was "encouraging". MacArthur's forces reached Biak Island, New Guinea. The Admiralties were subdued, Bismarck's were by-passed with the Navy Central Pacific ready to thrust from the Marshalls to the Marianas isolating Truk and the Caroline's. In the CBI "small rays of light could be glimpsed". The Japanese were about halted at Imphal, but their drive into east China was serious. Six months after SEXTANT CBI declined, but core objectives remained as flexibility was key. Amphibious warfare improvements accelerated both SWPA and POA campaigns. Increasing air and naval power 464 caused the Japanese fleet to withdraw. B-29s were ready to debut while air transport emerged a potent jungle warfare asset.

The most serious obstacles were logistics: service troop, shipping and landing craft deficits. Until OVERLORD and the ETO clarified, the Pacific waited. To mount OVERLORD and everything else, mandated "delicate adjustments" and "calculated risks" and by early June

... all had come to hinge on the fate of OVERLORD ... After more than three years of planning, General Marshall and his advisers could only sit back and wait. In the predawn hours of 5 June, Eisenhower made his historic decision to go so on 6 June the ships and craft of the mightiest armada ever gathered headed through the rough waters of the Channel toward the beaches of Normandy. With them rode the hopes of the free world. 465