“We Have Become Mediterraneanites”

Washington’s Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean, 1940–1945

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the

Graduate School-New Brunswick

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in History

written under the direction of

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October 2011
Abstract of the Dissertation

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From the Torch landings in North Africa in 1942 to D-Day in June 1944 the Mediterranean basin saw the largest overseas deployment of U.S. troops outside the Pacific. Moreover, the United States, in an adversarial alliance with Britain, enjoyed considerable success there: Axis forces were driven from North Africa; Mussolini was ousted and—eventually—a liberal government established in Rome, heading off potentially revolutionary upheavals; an American-equipped French army was returned to France. Other successes were less obvious, but nonetheless significant: American economic inducements helped keep Spain out of the war, and Washington, utilizing covert operations as a lever for diplomatic intervention, reached into the Balkans. Everywhere American money followed American arms, establishing networks of trade stretching from the oil-rich Middle East to the Western Basin. These economic relationships, interwoven with a permanent postwar military presence, gave Washington a commanding regional position in the early years of the Cold War.

Yet for all Washington’s success, American intervention in the Mediterranean has long been viewed as a mere adjunct to campaigns in France and Germany, at best a useful
preparation for the main event, at worst a protracted diversion from it. This perception is rooted both in contemporary divisions—particularly those between President Roosevelt and his chiefs of staff—and in Cold War renderings of debates between American leaders and their British counterparts. This study, based on a re-examination of the processes of Allied strategic decision-making and on a reappraisal of its relationship to broader military, political, and economic developments, reasserts the importance of the Mediterranean to the development Washington’s wartime grand strategy and to the realization of American hegemony in Western Europe. It also highlights the role of leadership, operating within historically determined circumstances, in shaping deep impulses towards the extension of national power. Particularly during the critical months of its inception, President Roosevelt carried the drive towards active American engagement in the Mediterranean virtually single-handedly, and in the face of fierce opposition from his military advisers. His drive, I argue, was informed not only by immediate strategic and political considerations, but also by a projection of “Americanism” that would ultimately shape the postwar capitalist world and America’s hegemonic position within it.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my dissertation director, Michael Adas, and committee members Susan Carruthers, David Foglesong, Warren Kimball, and Mark Stoler, for their constant support, encouragement, intellectual stimulation, and friendship, during this dissertation’s long gestation. I am also grateful to all my friends and colleagues in the History Department of the University of Vermont, whose constant low-level campaign to prod me to “get it done” helped keep me moving forward.

I am indebted to the staff at several archives and libraries for their unflaggingly generous efforts to help me navigate their various collections. These include staff at the FDR Library in Hyde Park, NY; the U.S. National Archives and Record Administration in College Park, MD; the British National Archives in Kew, London; the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale; the Seely G. Mudd Library at Princeton; the Hoover Institution at Stanford; the Special Collections department of Columbia University Library; the New York Public Library; the Imperial War Museum, London; and at my “home bases,” the Alexander Library at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, and the Bailey-Howe Library at the University of Vermont. In particular I would like to thank Amy Schmidt at College Park for generously sharing her insights on U.S./Yugoslav relations and for helping unlock the secrets of the “Shepherd Project.”

Special thanks are also due to Mark and Judy Nord, who provided accommodation (and climbing trips!) in Washington D.C. at short notice and for extended periods, and to Phil and Cecilia Lowndes and family, who put me up during my visit to Kew.
And last—but by no means least—I am forever grateful to Mary Nell Bockman, without whom none of this would have been possible.
To Angus and Brenda Buchanan
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Introduction

“We Have Become Mediterraneanites”

In the midst of an intense fight with British leaders over plans for an invasion of the South of France, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall observed wryly “we have become [the] Mediterraneanites.”\(^1\) The general was certainly well placed to appreciate the irony in this turn of events. For over two years before this February 1944 confrontation, Marshall and his colleagues on the Joint Chiefs of Staff had battled the British—and often President Franklin D. Roosevelt as well—in an effort to avoid committing American troops to extended campaigning in the Mediterranean. But now the United States, with its political and military leaders as one on this issue, was stepping forward to champion the last great strategic initiative of the war in the Mediterranean. And the British, the supposed champions of all things Mediterranean, were bitterly opposed to the American-led invasion, citing concerns that the assignment of troops to the South of France would weaken the main Allied effort in Normandy—an operation that until now had enjoyed, at best, only London’s lukewarm support. It all amounted, the normally humorless Marshall quipped, to a “great reversal of form.”\(^2\)

George Marshall’s observation was, if anything, both more accurate and more far-reaching than he himself may have cared to admit. In fact, by the summer of 1944 the “great reversal of form” applied not only to the debate over the proposed landings in the

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\(^2\) John Dill to Chiefs of Staff (COS), telegram Feb. 4 1944, Prime Minister’s Operational Papers, (PREM), microfilm, PREM 3/271/4.
South of France, but to Anglo-American relations throughout the Mediterranean. In the western basin of the Mediterranean, from North Africa and Italy to France and Spain, and particularly when measured in political and economic as well as simply military terms, American power and influence were on the rise as British strength waned. And in the eastern Mediterranean, where American policy lacked the backing of the powerful military force it enjoyed further west, Washington’s interest was also growing. Even in Greece, where American leaders were happy to let the British do the dirty work of re-establishing a conservative monarchy, the old imperial power could only act with the political and logistical backing of the new. The “great reversal of form” would finally be codified in the early years of the Cold War when the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 signaled, among other things, Washington’s acceptance of the role of leading power in the Mediterranean. But while Truman’s bold assertion of Washington’s intention to intervene anywhere it saw “freedom” threatened marked the formal transfer of imperial authority from London to Washington, the rise to regional hegemony that made such a seamless transition possible was the direct product of the strategic position established in the wartime Mediterranean.

If the United States only finally emerged as the predominant power in the Mediterranean at the end of World War II, the roots of American engagement with the region nevertheless run deep. In the last decade of the eighteenth century attacks on American merchant shipping by North Africa potentates—the so-called “Barbary Pirates”—prompted Washington to establish a blue-water navy and to engage in its first overseas wars. America’s final victory over the “pirates” in 1816, coming after a series of inconclusive conflicts and compromises, clearly established the new Republic as an
“emerging, though junior, power in the Atlantic world.”

During the nineteenth century, the Mediterranean offered important markets for American commerce, and American naval units operating from the British naval base at Port Mahon in Minorca cruised the inland sea to support and protect this trade.

With the increasing overseas projection of American power in the early twentieth century, the Mediterranean became a forum for displays of U.S. military might as Washington sought levers with which to influence the European state system. In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt used a visit to Marseilles by four cruisers to signal American support for France in its dispute with Germany over African colonies. The following year Washington underscored the gesture by having six battleships cruise the Mediterranean in the first overseas display of the new American battle fleet. In 1909 Roosevelt’s “Great White Fleet” passed through the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean on the penultimate leg of its round-the-world cruise, detaching units to assist victims of a major earthquake in Naples (and to garner good publicity) en route. American units operating from the British base at Gibraltar were reinforced when the United States entered World War I and, operating under British command, carried out anti-submarine patrols in the Western Mediterranean.

In the inter-war years, Washington continued to maintain a sporadic and modest naval presence in the Mediterranean, policing the eastern coast of the Adriatic prior to the consolidation of the Yugoslav state, evacuating Greek refugees from the Greco-Turkish

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3 Lambert 2005, 201.
war, and “showing the flag” in support of U.S. commercial interests in Syria, Lebanon, and Spain. But, while United States naval activity in the region represented an ongoing element in America’s military posture prior to World War II, and one that helped reinforce it’s diplomatic presence in Europe, its modest scale—and the equally modest significance of the region to the overall development of American overseas trade—hardly amounted to a coherent Mediterranean “strategy.” Insofar as they discussed the Mediterranean at all, prewar American strategists tended to view it primarily as a region of British influence, with London’s interests combining the defense of the great imperial “highway” running via Gibraltar and Suez to India and the protection of British influence in individual countries, particularly in the eastern basin. Until the late 1930s Washington remained relatively indifferent towards the looming Mediterranean conflict between Britain and Italy, an indifference reinforced by the positive appreciation Mussolini enjoyed in American ruling circles for most of the thirties. Even after the fall of France, Washington would offer Rome a preferential trade agreement, together with diplomatic recognition of Italian conquests in Ethiopia, in return for Italian neutrality.

Viewed in this light of America’s position in the region in 1940, Washington’s wartime accomplishments in the Mediterranean stand out in even sharper relief. Having begun the war enjoying only slight political influence, modest economic ties, and no

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means for the sustained projection of military power, the United States emerged five years later as the predominant power in the Mediterranean. By the end of the war, America wielded significant political and economic influence throughout the Mediterranean, and that influence rested in turn on the might of the United States military, its wartime operational experience in the “theater” underpinned by a network of airbases, friendly ports, and other military facilities. And behind all of this lay the often invisible but always critical networks of personal contacts forged by American diplomats, businessmen, aid workers, technical advisers, intelligence operatives and military officers with their counterparts in other countries that make international relations—and great power domination—work.

What follows is a study of this dramatic transformation. It is a study complicated (and necessitated!) by the fact that the notion that the United States had a Mediterranean strategy in World War II at all is unusual and somewhat heretical. While a great deal has been written on the profound shift in Anglo-American relations during the war, the place of the Mediterranean in this shift has never been fully explored, while many excellent studies of Allied policy in individual countries, such as David Ellwood’s Italy 1943–1945, continue to locate their narrative within a framework that conceptualizes the Mediterranean as a predominantly “British” theater. In both academic and popular writing, the Mediterranean is almost invariably described in as a “diversionary theater” and a mere adjunct to the main event in northern Europe. This narrative draws strength from its origins in the wartime outlook of American military leaders such as senior planner Albert Wedemeyer who, from the very first discussions on an invasion of North

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Africa in late 1941, tended to view talk of Mediterranean operations as the regrettable product of civilian intervention in military affairs and as the consequence of British prime minister Winston Churchill’s “baneful influence” on President Roosevelt.¹⁰ The official American account by Maurice Matloff and Edwin Snell, published in 1953, echoed this judgment.¹¹

After 1945, this version of the war in the Mediterranean, with its clear-cut narrative of struggle between American insistence on a direct knock-out punch delivered across the English Channel on the one hand and London’s pursuit of circuitous and self-interested “peripheral strategies” on the other, was incorporated into a number of semi-official American histories, including those by General Eisenhower, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and Secretary of War Henry Stimson.¹² As the Cold War deepened, the narrative of an Anglo-American struggle between D-Day and the Mediterranean was reworked to highlight the alleged prescience of the Churchill’s Mediterranean strategy in terms of the (untaken) opportunities it offered to confront Russian expansionism in the Balkans. In this version of events, developed most fully in Churchill’s own influential six-volume history of the war, American strategy appears as an over-simplistic and apolitical obstacle to the execution of canny and sophisticated British stratagems¹³

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Ironically, while the poles of the debate shifted the issues remained fundamentally framed in narrowly military terms. The sound and fury generated by this heated “historians’ war” served to blur and bury the actual contours of Washington’s own, highly successful, Mediterranean strategy.14 Even when calmer voices insisted that that both Britain and the United States had pursued strategies driven primarily by pragmatic considerations rather than by “national ways of war,” the notion that the Mediterranean was primarily a British concern remained fundamentally in place15

Kicking against this regnant interpretation, some recent writing, particularly that of Douglas Porch, has assailed the notion of the Allied war in the Mediterranean as a “diversion,” picturing it instead as a “pivotal theater” without which the final assault on Germany would have been impossible.16 Yet Porch’s revisionist effort, necessary though its challenge to the prevailing view of the Mediterranean as a strategic “cul-de-sac” is, remains fundamentally trapped within the parameters of an argument over military strategy. Even while drawing radically different conclusions, this approach maintains the bi-polar, Mediterranean-versus-cross Channel, framework of the argument first advanced by the Joint Chiefs in opposition to Roosevelt’s demands for action in North Africa and followed by most subsequent writers. But the problem, as Roosevelt himself well

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understood, was that America’s strategic orientation towards the Mediterranean was never an exclusively military question, but always combined military, economic, and political elements.

In this context it is useful to step back from purely military definitions of strategy and to look instead, as Paul Kennedy enjoins us to do, at a “complex and multilayered thing” in which the “nonmilitary dimensions” are as important as the military and the “longer-term and political purposes of [a] belligerent state” are primary. Kennedy’s purpose here was to provide a working definition of the notion of “grand strategy” in which, as British military theorist Basil Liddell Hart argued, war is prosecuted by both military and non-military means and waged with “constant regard for the peace you desire.” The potentially shocking corollary to this approach is that, contrary to popular wisdom (and to the early-war thinking of the Joint Chiefs,) grand-strategic wisdom does not necessarily lie in finding the shortest path to victory. With the postwar always in mind, Roosevelt understood that America had to secure the military defeat of the Axis powers while simultaneously preparing a new world order of capitalist nations and free markets structured under the leadership United States. In contrast to the failure of the Wilsonian project after World War One, no new retreat into isolationism could be allowed. From this point of view, a premature cross-Channel invasion would not only be a highly risky military undertaking but would also short-circuit critical opportunities to deal with pressing political questions in the Mediterranean, including the shaping of post-Fascist Italy.

Before the passing of the National Security Act in 1947, the United States lacked any formal executive body responsible for the elaboration of grand strategy. This was not an oversight: for a nation who’s military was tasked primarily with national defense and small-scale colonial intervention, such a body would have been an unnecessary encumbrance. By 1947, the pressing demands of leading the “free world” and of waging global Cold War with the Soviet Union—demands that by their nature required the complex coordination of a full spectrum of diplomatic/political, military, economic and covert elements—reposed the question, leading to the establishment of the National Security Council. In World War II, however, while the need for grand-strategic planning became ever more evident, but no body capable of providing such leadership was created. On the military side, co-ordination between the services had been improved by the strengthening of the Joint Army-Navy Board (JB) in 1919 and, after 1935, by limited and irregular contacts between it and the State Department.¹⁸ These arrangements fell far short of the grand-strategic challenge that would be posed by world war; even when the wartime establishment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in 1942 further strengthened inter-service collaboration, the primary focus was on military-strategic planning rather than on grand strategy.

The point here is not that a grand-strategic planning body should have been created earlier. It could not have been, precisely because the need for it had to be experienced and lived through before it could be acted on. But the consequences of the absence was that grand strategic decision making flowed instead through another body—

that of the President himself. “Political considerations,” as Clausewitz pointed out, may
not determine specific “operational details,” but since they must surely be “influential in
the planning of war,” it is both “unacceptable [and even] damaging” to reduce [grand]
strategy to a “matter of purely military opinion.”19 In practice, President Roosevelt held
fast to this Clausewitzian maxim, overriding “purely military” opinion when it was at
odds with his larger political goals and objectives. But political “plans” require much
less specificity and clarity than do military plans, particularly when they emanate from
the notoriously written-record-adverse Roosevelt Administration. Roosevelt himself
wrote virtually nothing down and tried to ensure that subordinates did likewise: at one
point the President “blew up” at General John Deane, secretary of the Joint Chiefs of
Staff, instructing him in no uncertain terms to put away his notebook.20

When I began this study I understood that Franklin D. Roosevelt was a “master
opportunist who disliked rigid planning,” but I did not fully appreciate the meaning of
this fact.21 In my naiveté I hoped—despite efforts by Warren Kimball to dissuade me—
that if I spent enough time at Hyde Park I would eventually find some statement or note
from President Roosevelt or perhaps from Harry Hopkins, his unofficial national security
adviser, urging broad and multi-faceted American grand-strategic engagement with the
Mediterranean. This quixotic quest foundered partly on the veils of secrecy and the lack
of clear and minuted decisions that are the bane of all scholars of the Roosevelt
presidency. But more significantly, it also foundered on a misunderstanding about the
nature of grand-strategic thinking as it developed in the Washington of the 1940s. An

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21 Ibid., 36.
example illustrates the point: by 1944 American engagement with Italy had a clear (if not always entirely transparent) military dimension, but it also included—among other elements—complex diplomatic, economic and political activity to some degree under the direction of the State Department and structured through the Allied Control Commission; the operations of the Lend-Lease and Foreign Economic administrations; the quasi-governmental efforts of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and of private charities; and the covert actions of the Office Of Strategic Services. But, outside of Roosevelt’s own thinking, perhaps shared with Hopkins and a handful of others, there was no overall plan and precious little high-level coordination.

Tracing the development of Washington’s wartime grand strategy therefore necessarily involves “walking back the cat,” seeking to deduce goals and intentions from results and outcomes. The specifically military element of grand strategy, because it is often the most clearly defined and precisely recorded, helps to provide a critical framework for understanding the whole. But, as the political and economic dimensions of American engagement touched on above indicate, the military-strategic approach is inherently incapable of providing an overall and multi-faceted understanding of Washington’s grand strategy. This study therefore aims to integrate the political, diplomatic and economic aspects of American engagement in the Mediterranean with the (much more well know!) military-strategic aspects in order to develop a rounded picture of the whole. The conclusions will point towards a thorough-going revision of our understanding of Washington’s grand strategy in the Mediterranean that rescues it from its traditional status as a diversionary also-ran and sets it alongside the American effort in
northern Europe not only in terms of its contribution to the military defeat of the Axis but also in terms of the structuring of postwar Europe and of America’s place within it.

This study of the development of American grand strategy has also—and to a degree that has surprised me—become a study of the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt. “Men,” as Karl Marx reminds us, “make their own history,” even if they do so “under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past,” and by the same token, and at certain historic conjunctures, the course taken by powerful social classes and entire nations rests in the hands of small groups of people or even of individuals.22 When American diplomat Robert Murphy observed in 1940 that Washington’s emerging policy towards French North Africa was very much the “President’s personal policy,” he pointed to an important truth: at that critical period, when the broad outlines of grand strategy were still in formation, Roosevelt held the reins of grand strategy tightly in his own hands and used them to exert constant pressure towards deeper American engagement in the Mediterranean.23 In the course of these long-running debates, Roosevelt was willing to overrule the advice of his top military advisers who, given their druthers, would have steered well clear of any American involvement in the Mediterranean. As America’s engagement with the Mediterranean advanced and built momentum, and as the number of government agencies with a stake in the region expanded, so direct Presidential intervention became less frequent and less important. But without it in the first place it is difficult to see the United States developing any significant presence in the region.

23 Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964), 68.
A study of American grand strategy in the Mediterranean must therefore also be, at least in part, a study of presidential leadership, and must ask both why President Roosevelt was so concerned with the region and how his approach to the region dovetailed with broader wartime aims. Since reins of American political, diplomatic and economic engagement with the Mediterranean passed through the President’s hands—or at least under his eyes—along with the chains of military command, a study of his leadership also helps elucidate the wider dimensions of grand strategy. This is not to argue that there was a clear Presidential master plan. There was not, and Roosevelt was too sophisticated a politician—and too accomplished an opportunist—to be bound by any a priori plan for long. But it is to suggest, as we shall see, that there was a powerful impulse towards what Warren Kimball has described as “Americanism” at work.\footnote{Warren F. Kimball, \textit{The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 186–187, 192.} This impulse, in part a liberal vision of American global leadership and in part straightforward drive to strengthen America’s military, economic, and political domination over entire sections of the world, is critical to understanding the entire course of American involvement in the Second World War. Its working out in the wartime Mediterranean runs throughout this study: it is the story of how the United States did indeed become “Mediterraneanites.”
Part One

The Long Road to *Torch*: The Development of Washington’s Mediterranean Strategy.

1.1) Setting the Stage: American Strategic Planning After the Fall of France.

Washington’s Mediterranean strategy began to take shape, piecemeal and pragmatically, in the context of the great readjustment in American strategic thinking necessitated by the fall of France in the summer of 1940. Before the war, as William Reitzel pointed out in 1948, American diplomacy worked to defend America’s modest trade relations in the Mediterranean, but the United States had nothing, a “even remotely” like a national interest in the region, and consequently, lacked any overall policy or strategic approach.²⁵ All this would change, and change rapidly, under the impact of war.

The defeat of France came as a terrible shock to American policymakers. Washington, like London and Moscow, had assumed that the large and well-equipped French army would be able to contain the long-anticipated German offensive, and that the war on the Western Front would consequently be a protracted one. More than a little self-interest fueled these assumptions; as long as France was fighting, President Roosevelt could avoid having to confront directly the specter of a German-dominated Europe, and could proceed with rearmament at a relatively leisurely pace while nudging public opinion cautiously towards the coming crisis.

The fall of France shattered these comfortable assumptions. And further aftershocks were anticipated. To American policymakers it seemed all too likely that Berlin would violate its armistice agreement with the new government in Vichy and seize French naval units lying at anchor in their metropolitan and North African bases. The prospect of Germany augmenting the modest strength of the *Riechsmarine* with French warships and then using this powerful new navy to challenge the United States power in the Atlantic generated deep unease that verged on panic. Under this pressure, the French defeat initially reinforced non-interventionist sentiment amongst much of America’s political and military elite. Military chiefs redrafted their strategic plans to emphasize “hemispheric defense,” and Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, convinced that Britain would quickly go down to defeat, opposed supplying it with weapons that might be needed for American defense.26 In May 1940, President Roosevelt, concerned that the German threat might soon require the deployment of American naval assets in the Atlantic, rejected British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s desperate request for “forty or fifty of your older destroyers” for convoy escort duties.27

Writing from Paris on May 28 as the French resistance collapsed, American ambassador and Roosevelt confidante William Bullitt underscored this argument. Arguing that the United States required the active “cooperation of the French and British fleets” to protect it from a German attack, Bullitt urged the immediate dispatch of the

U.S. “Atlantic Fleet” to the Mediterranean in a display of naval solidarity. All too aware that, with the bulk of its one-ocean navy tasked with the “maintenance of peace in the Pacific,” the United States had no “Atlantic Fleet,” the President demurred. Unable to mount an effective show of force, Washington was forced to rely on diplomacy. On June 17, Washington presented French government officials seeking refuge from the German assault in Bordeaux with a blunt ultimatum. If the French fleet fall into German hands, Washington declared, France would permanently lose American “friendship and goodwill,” calling the survival of the French Empire into question. In response the new French government gave the first of many assurances that the fleet would not, under any circumstances, be surrendered to Germany.

Through these exchanges, Washington’s policy towards the new French government of Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain in Vichy began to take shape. American diplomats—with the exception of Ambassador Bullitt, who remained in Paris—accompanied the French government on its peregrinations through France in the summer of 1940, moving into Vichy when it settled there in the fall. Washington was well placed to effect a seamless diplomatic transition from the Third Republic to Vichy: Marshal Pétain was seen as the head of the legal government of France, and American officials stressed that the maintenance of diplomatic relations thus rested on strict international legality rather than political approval. In his postwar apologia for American diplomacy, William Langer famously described this policy as a “gamble,” trading unenthusiastic

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29 Hull to Bullitt, May 30 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 454–455.
30 Hull to Waterman (Consul at Bordeaux), June 17 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 456.
toleration of an unsavory regime for the potential benefits of maintaining a listening post and diplomatic base in occupied Europe.\textsuperscript{32} Robert Murphy, the senior American diplomat in Vichy when the French government established itself there, offered a more convincing explanation, arguing that Washington saw no pressing reason to break diplomatic relations, and, in the shape of the French fleet, a powerful argument for maintaining the status quo.\textsuperscript{33}

Heartened by Pétain’s promise to keep the fleet out of German hands, American officials quickly came to see Vichy as an “arena” in which divergent political tendencies struggled for power and in which American influence might prove influential.\textsuperscript{34} The notion that the Vichy regime encompassed both a fundamentally “patriotic and anti-German” tendency led by Pétain, and a collaborationist and pro-German current led by Laval, was viewed with some contemporary skepticism, and has been discredited by historians of Vichy from Robert Paxton onwards.\textsuperscript{35} Far from shielding France from the worst excesses of German domination, as early postwar apologists of the regime maintained, \textit{all} the central leaders of the Vichy government actively sought to deepen collaboration with the Reich and to advance their own ultranationalist “National Revolution” in the process. Similarly, the credibility of the suggestion that Pétain himself was playing a complex “double game,” conducting secret negotiations to advance Allied interests while appearing acquiescent to German demands,


\textsuperscript{33} Murphy, \textit{Diplomat Among Warriors}, 65.


has also largely collapsed.\footnote{Paxton, \textit{Vichy France}, xvi.} Whatever contacts Vichy had with Allied governments were, it is now clear, reported in full to Berlin.

In the fall of 1940, however, American policymakers convinced themselves that these divisions within the Vichy regime were real, and, more importantly, susceptible to American influence. American diplomats in Vichy argued that Washington might tip the balance in the unfolding clash between Pétain’s quiescent conservatism and Laval’s pursuit of an overtly pro-German policy. Acting on these lines, President Roosevelt strengthened American representation in Vichy with the appointment of Admiral William Leahy as ambassador in November 1940. Leahy, a long-standing personal friend of the President, was recalled from his post as Governor of Puerto Rico by a November 16 message stressing his ability to “talk to Marshal Pétain in language which he would understand.”\footnote{Roosevelt to Leahy, Nov. 16 1940, telegram, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL), PSF, Box 29.} Roosevelt reiterated this typically personal approach in a two-hour White House briefing, and Leahy carried with him instructions urging him to counteract German pressure on the French government by cultivating a “close relationship” with Pétain.\footnote{Roosevelt to Leahy, Dec. 20 1940, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 426.}

As he worked to establish a personal rapport with Pétain, Leahy was instructed to reiterate that the surrender of the French fleet would result in the “permanent” loss of American friendship and to point out that a German victory in the war would result in the “dismemberment” of the French Empire. From the beginning of his ambassadorship, therefore, Leahy was to insist that the threat to the French empire came from the Axis powers, and that its salvation lay with the United States and Britain. In particular, Leahy
was to proffer American support for French efforts to “maintain its authority in its North
African possessions,” and to offer American aid to ameliorate economic conditions
there.\textsuperscript{39} As he outlined this approach, Roosevelt made it clear that, while serving as
American ambassador, Leahy would also function as his personal representative: on
important matters, Leahy recalled, he was instructed to correspond directly with the
President instead of going through normal State Department channels.\textsuperscript{40}

The strengthening of American relations with Vichy signaled by Leahy’s
appointment received a generally positive public reception, with the \textit{New York Times}
arguing that it would let people of France know that they had not been “abandoned” to
the Germans.\textsuperscript{41} Public approval reflected a growing consensus amongst American
opinion-formers that the shocking collapse of France was rooted in a paralysis of the
political elite and in the inherent weakness—and perhaps even the moral degeneracy—of
the Third Republic. The “simple people of the country,” William Bullitt opined in
concluding a long memorandum for the president, were as stalwart as ever, but the
“ruling class” had “failed completely.”\textsuperscript{42} These were not novel ideas. The apparently
inherent paralysis of successive French governments had been a staple of the American
commentary during the 1930s, and these notions now merged into a broad groundswell of
opinion that blamed the precipitate collapse of France on internal rot and moral decay.

Having initially praised the “unflinching” spirit of the French people, the \textit{New York Times

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 428.  \\
\textsuperscript{40} Admiral William D. Leahy, \textit{I Was There: The Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to
Presidents Roosevelt and Truman Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time}
\textsuperscript{41} Editorial, \textit{New York Times}, Nov. 24 1940.  \\
\textsuperscript{42} Bullitt to Hull, memorandum, July 1 1940, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 469.
soon began pointing to the popular “apathy,” governmental “incapacity,” and the “political dry rot” that were alleged to have corrupted the entire system.\textsuperscript{43}

French conservatives claims were quick to advance their own version of this explanation, arguing that the Popular Front had undermined the traditional values and military ardor of the French nation. Appointed commander of the French army as German tanks were completing their dash to the English Channel, the ultra-conservative General Maxime Weygand—a figure who would play a major part in the initial development of Washington’s Mediterranean strategy—ensured that his remaining reserves were detailed to maintain order in Paris. Even at this moment of national calamity, it seems, the threat of revolution was more dangerous than the Germans.\textsuperscript{44}

Striking a chord that would reverberate through American policy in the Mediterranean, American diplomats echoed conservative fears that war-generated social dislocation would result in popular revolution. Writing from Paris on May 28, Ambassador Bullitt urged the President to rush 10,000 Thompson submachine guns and one million rounds of ammunition to France. Raising the alarming specter of a modern-day Paris Commune, Bullitt explained that the weapons were not required to resist the onrushing Germans, but to enable the French police to deal with “Communist uprisings and butcheries.”\textsuperscript{45}

These notions helped shape the intellectual environment within which American policy was reformulated as the initial panic produced by the French defeat subsided. Exaggerated prewar estimates of France’s ability to resist German attack were now replaced by a conviction that, by its ignominious defeat, France had forfeited the right to

\textsuperscript{43} Editorials, \textit{New York Times}, June 18, July 26 1940.
\textsuperscript{45} Bullitt to Hull, May 28 1940, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 453.
be treated as a great power at all. This understanding of the defeat had the additional advantage that, by pointing the finger at the rottenness of the Third Republic, any guilty sense that France had been let down by its friends might be assuaged. This explanation of the fall of France, and the broad policy conclusions that flowed from it initially enjoyed very wide support in the United States. It was only later, as it became clear that the maintenance of relations with Vichy required a reciprocal policy of unbending hostility towards the “Free French” forces of General Charles de Gaulle, that liberal spokespeople became increasingly hostile to Washington’s policy.

In late 1940 and early 1941, de Gaulle was a relatively unknown figure, lacking the backing of any significant section of the French elite and supported and funded largely by the British. Moreover, London’s support for de Gaulle was at least partly a reflection of the fact that Churchill’s decision to attack the French fleet at Mers el-Kébir, Algeria, in July 1940 had permanently ruptured Anglo-Vichy relations. Washington had given its covert approval for the attack, which sank one French battleship, damaged two more, and cost the lives of nearly 1300 French sailors, but it was London that paid the price for the profound wave of Anglophobia generated within the French establishment. De Gaulle’s prestige suffered a further blow with the defeat of the Anglo-Free French assault on Dakar, French West Africa, in September 1940. De Gaulle’s failure at Dakar demonstrated that, despite rallying Equatorial Africa and Cameroun to the cause of Free France, the critical colonies and protectorates in West and North Africa remained loyal to Pétain and the government in Vichy.

46 See Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France.*
47 See Marvin R. Zahniser, “Rethinking the Significance of Disaster: The United States and the Fall of France in 1940,” *The International History Review* 14, no. 2.
In Washington, the period following the fall of France saw a decisive shift of elite opinion towards some form of intervention in the war in Europe. A German conquest of Europe, Roosevelt told a May 23 press conference, would remove the “buffer” formerly provided by the British fleet and the French army, leaving “nothing” standing between the United States and the rising power of a Nazi regime bent on global domination. The conclusion was obvious: America must prepare for war. In response to this shift, isolationist voices grew more strident, but they also were also increasingly marginalized.

In June 1940, President Roosevelt established a de facto coalition government by appointing Republicans Henry L. Stimson and Frank Knox to the War and Navy departments. In May the president announced an ambitious aircraft construction program, and in July the service departments were authorized to sign “cost plus” contracts with private companies, putting into place the beginnings of the collaborative relationship between government and business that would power American rearmament.

In August 1940, as immediate fears that Britain would succumb quickly to German attack receded, the administration felt able to proceed with the loan of fifty old destroyers in exchange for the use of British bases in the Caribbean. Advancing steadily down the road to military preparedness, on Administration secured the passage of the Selective Service Act in September, established the first peacetime draft in American history. These moves all received significant bi-partisan support, a development underscored by the selection of interventionist Wendell Wilkie as Republican candidate in the 1940 presidential election, and by the entry of Knox and Stimson into the government. Slowly but surely, the American elite was recomposing itself around an

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interventionist perspective. With both leading candidates in broad agreement on the
decisive question of intervention in Europe, and with both cagey—not to say downright
evasive—about the details the presidential election took on, as historian David Reynolds
has put it, a “slightly artificial air.”

In the context of this accelerating political reorientation, American military
leaders conducted a far-reaching strategic review. In October 1940, Chief of Naval
Operations Admiral Harold E. Stark spelled out the strategic consequences of the fall of
France in a memorandum known colloquially as Plan Dog. In it, Stark argued that in the
event of it joining the war—and the assumption was that it would join—the United States
should concentrate its initial effort in Europe, first ensuring the security of the British
Isles and then fighting alongside the British to overthrow Germany. The obvious
concomitant of this “Germany first” approach was that the United States should adopt a
defensive posture in relation to the crisis brewing in the Pacific and avoid provoking a
premature war with Japan. Stark linked the survival of the United Kingdom itself to the
preservation of the British Empire, explicitly making defense of the empire an American
“national objective.” Noting that a British “loss” of Egypt would open the entire
Eastern Mediterranean to Axis domination, Stark also stressed the strategic importance of
Gibraltar, and North and West Africa. Plan Dog’s implied willingness to join the British
in defending these areas against Axis penetration was reinforced by the suggestion that

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49 David Reynolds, From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt’s America and the Origins
of the Second World War (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 100.
Rienner Publishers, 2002), 56.
they might subsequently provide jumping off points for the “ultimate offensive” into Portugal, Spain, or France.

President Roosevelt appears to have approved the strategic course outlined in *Plan Dog* in January 1941, and the plan set the framework for American participation in staff discussions with senior British planners in late March. The strategic outline adopted at these talks, referred to as *ABC-1*, registered Anglo-American agreement on the critical question of dealing with “Germany first.” In addition to reprising the main elements of *Plan Dog*, *ABC-1* sketched out a plan taking the offensive against Germany, arguing for the exertion of economic pressure through a naval blockade, an escalating bombing campaign, and operations aimed at the “early elimination” of Italy.\(^{51}\) In the context of these operations, together with a series of “raids and minor offensives” to sap Axis strength, Allied forces would be marshaled for an “eventual offensive” against Germany itself. The Anglo-American conclusions of *ABC-1* were incorporated more or less verbatim into America’s own strategic planning with the adoption of *Rainbow 5*, approved in outline by the Joint Board and the Secretaries of War and of the Navy in April and May and finally adopted on November 19, less than a month before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. *Rainbow 5* reiterated the idea of forcing Italy out of the war and noted that the United States had an interest both in defending British positions in the Mediterranean, and in blocking German moves against North Africa.\(^{52}\)

Any claim to see a clear and consistent American orientation towards the Mediterranean in this sequence of strategic planning and decision-making would be something of an exaggeration. In particular, the “peripheral” approach evident in *ABC-1*

and Rainbow 5—conducting a naval blockade, bombing campaign, and offensive actions in the Mediterranean prior to mounting an offensive against Germany—was to some extent contradicted by American proposals presented to the British at the meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill at Argentia, Newfoundland, in August 1941. These plans, codified in the “Victory Program” in September, laid greater emphasis on the eventual deployment of a massive army in Europe. But, in the context of pledging themselves to the defense of Britain and of the British Empire, American strategists did explicitly recognize the importance of the Mediterranean. Moreover, the idea of pursuing the “elimination” of Italy prior to an invasion of Germany necessarily implied the commitment of substantial American forces to the Mediterranean. The reorientation in American strategic thinking reflected in Plan Dog, ABC-1, and Rainbow 5 clearly—and despite the assertions of legions of post-war commentators who claimed that the United States was “inveigled” into the Mediterranean by the British—allowed the possibility of a sustained American commitment in the Mediterranean. Even the Victory Program, with its vision of a 215 division army plunging into Germany, recognized that it was “out of the question” to undertake a land offensive against the “center” of German power in the “near future,” and authorized operations in “distant regions” where German forces were weaker.

The strategic plans adopted in late 1940 and 1941, with their permissive approach to American operations in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and Italy, may also reflect the first codification of President Roosevelt’s personal interest in the region. Given Roosevelt’s leadership style, this critical question can only be approached by

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circumlocutious means and circumstantial evidence: as Mark Stoler puts it, the President was a “master opportunist who disliked rigid planning” and who left only the barest minimum of written record. Throughout his Presidency, Roosevelt sought to keep his options open by avoiding binding and irrevocable decisions until absolutely necessary and by encouraging agencies and individuals to pursue parallel, and sometimes competing, courses. Consistent with this approach, Roosevelt avoided written records of critical meetings whenever possible, shrouding critical decision-making in informality and secrecy. Even General Marshall, despite his daily personal contact with the president, often learnt of Presidential decisions from his friend Field Marshal Sir John Dill, chief British representative to the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) in Washington.

On matters of crucial importance, Roosevelt often concentrated the threads of information and decision-making in his own hands. Important overseas missions were frequently entrusted to personal representatives like Harry Hopkins, and, even when key diplomatic figures such as William Bullitt in Paris, Joseph Grew in Tokyo, Averell Harriman in Moscow, and John Winant in London, were functioning in their official capacities, they were encouraged to maintain privileged informal contact with the President outside of normal diplomatic channels. Even relatively junior officials assigned to important missions might be accorded direct presidential access; Robert Murphy, for example, met with Roosevelt before setting out on his posting to French North Africa in

November 1940, and was instructed to ignore “State Department channels” and report matters of interest directly to the president.⁵⁷

These methods enabled President Roosevelt to concentrate significant decision-making power in his own hands. In other circumstances, the apparently dysfunctional character of the Roosevelt administration might have been a source of weakness and indecision. But, as the great potential power of the American war machine began to be unleashed, the operational methods of the imperial presidency furnished it with tremendous flexibility and an ability to respond rapidly to new and unexpected openings.

While these methods often allowed short-term and opportunist considerations to shape Presidential decision-making, these factors did not operate in isolation, but were themselves guided by much more fundamental considerations. Beneath Roosevelt’s opportunism—his “quick fixes, fire-fighting, and political balms and soothing oils”—lay a sustained and determined drive to promote a kind of internationalized version of the New Deal that Warren Kimball dubs “Americanism.”⁵⁸ Americanism, Kimball argues, was more than “crude imperialism”; it was the conviction that American ways and American values were “so very sensible, logical and practical” that other nations would adopt them if given the chance—and if prodded by “coercion and force” where necessary. Roosevelt’s attachment to the promotion of Americanism was hardly unique, as rising imperial powers have typically presented themselves as benevolent bringers of progress and enlightenment: America’s own imperial history had opened in precisely this way, with its champions justifying the conquest of the Philippines by pointing to their

⁵⁷ Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 70.
role in promoting the “development” of the “backward” and “undeveloped” islands.\textsuperscript{59}

But in the early 1940s, avenues for the expansion of Americanism on a far greater scale that ever before were going to be opened by war, and it was this prospect that captured Roosevelt’s attention.

Informed by a desire to advance Americanism, Roosevelt tended to view strategic issues as more than simply problems requiring narrowly military solutions. Strategic crises did demand military resolution, but they also offered the United States openings and opportunities for economic, political and diplomatic engagement in areas of the world in which it had hitherto been marginalized by the old imperial powers. If the promotion of Americanism furnished the underlying principle of Roosevelt’s foreign policy and the axis around which pragmatic and opportunist adjustments could be made, it also meshed with the notion that, as David Reynolds points out, the time had come to “assert America’s wealth and power on an international stage.”\textsuperscript{60}

Many of the president’s views on the muscular global projection of “Americanism” paralleled those of Life publisher Henry Luce. In his influential February 17, 1941 editorial on the “American Century,” Luce argued that in rising to the challenge of world leadership the United States could simultaneously advance its own power and lead forward the cause of global freedom and justice, neatly uniting self-interest and idealism in a “truly American internationalism.”\textsuperscript{61} Luce’s clarion call was echoed in statements by other leading policymakers and opinion-formers, including Vice

\textsuperscript{60} Reynolds, \textit{Munich to Pearl Harbor}, 122.
\textsuperscript{61} Henry Luce, “The American Century” (1941; reprint, \textit{Diplomatic History} 23, no. 2, 1999), 166.
President Henry Wallace, who insisted that the United States champion the “century of the common man,” and commentator Walter Lippmann, who advanced a vision of a postwar world governed by the morally just “evangel of Americanism.”

Reflecting on this process, historian Alan Brinkley concludes that the vision of an “American Century” that emerged at the beginning of World War II was characterized by the

[…] determination of many Americans to use the nation’s great power actively, and often very aggressively, to spread the American model to other nations, at times through benign encouragement, at other times through pressure and coercion, but almost always with a fervent and active intent.

Situating Roosevelt’s global outlook within this ideological framework makes it clear that he did not function simply as an opportunist and a “realist”—if indeed “realism” can ever float free of particular worldviews, however unacknowledged. Roosevelt could certainly be a hard-nosed pragmatist, recognizing the limits of American power and pressing for solutions based on a keen appreciation of the prevailing balance of power. But his pragmatism was always framed by an overarching drive to promote Americanism and hence by the strategic goal of establishing American leadership, values, and free-marker economics in the postwar world.

This combination of sweeping global vision and pragmatic opportunism shaped President Roosevelt’s interest in North Africa and the formation of America’s Mediterranean strategy. Roosevelt’s interest in the region formed at an “early date,” as

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William Langer noted in 1947, and, as we shall see, it remained constant at least until the summer of 1944, by which time a series of critical objectives had been accomplished.\textsuperscript{64}

This abiding Presidential interest was noted by numerous contemporary observers and, at a series of key turning points from the decision to commit American troops to North Africa to the subsequent agreements to proceed with invasions of Sicily and of mainland Italy, Roosevelt’s direct involvement was decisive. None of this makes complete sense if viewed in narrowly military terms. After all, every critical step was taken, to one degree or another, against the advice of American military chiefs, who consistently viewed the Mediterranean as a cul-de-sac and a diversion from the task of coming to grips with the center of German power. But when strategy is seen as Roosevelt saw it, which is as an instrument for integrating military, political, and economic elements in the service of far-reaching geopolitical goals, then his interest in the Mediterranean and the consistency with which he pursued American engagement there emerges with new clarity.

\textbf{1.2) Towards American Engagement in North Africa: Robert Murphy and the Murphy-Weygand Accord.}

In the crisis-laden atmosphere that followed the fall of France, the constellation of factors described above began to coalesce into a discernable Mediterranean strategy centered initially on North Africa. There were two main elements to this process. Firstly, American military planners recognized that, within the broad framework of dealing with Germany first, the forces for a direct frontal assault did not yet exist, and

\textsuperscript{64} Langer, \textit{Vichy Gamble}, 285.
that initial operations in “distant regions” would therefore be necessary. And secondly, American policymakers, viewing Vichy as the legitimate successor to the Third Republic, believed that a fight for the soul of the new regime was underway and that the United States might play a critical role in its outcome. These military/strategic and diplomatic/political considerations converged on French North Africa. Here was a “distant region” suitable for military operations and offering opportunities for follow-on efforts against Axis forces in Libya or in southern Europe. And here, too, was unoccupied, French ruled, territory where American intervention might, it was supposed, strengthen the anti-collaborationist wing of the Vichy regime. Both of these elements appealed to President Roosevelt who, with his own methods of executive policymaking, drove forward their fusion.

As France collapsed in the summer of 1940, the diplomatic reports flowing into the State Department from North Africa were hardly encouraging. From Casablanca, Consul General Herbert Goold saw no evidence that French colonial officials would offer any resistance to the Germans. They were, he reported, the “purest conventionalists” who would follow their orders to the letter, even if that meant fighting alongside the Germans.\(^{65}\) Goold concluded that the possibility that French officials might offer “serious opposition” to the collaborationist course of the Vichy regime could be effectively “ruled out.”\(^{66}\) But more encouraging reports were soon forthcoming. Writing from Madrid, Ambassador Alexander Weddell reported on discussions with Commander Roscoe Hillenkoetter, a former American naval attaché, who had just returned from Morocco. Contradicting Goold’s pessimistic assessment, Hillenkoetter reported the

\(^{65}\) Goold to State Dept., June 26 1940, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 571.
\(^{66}\) Goold to State Dept., August 12, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 577.
existence of a “strong movement” based in the armed forces, the French civilian community, and even amongst the “natives” that was willing to defend French Morocco “against all comers.” This putative resistance movement would, Hillenkoetter opined, “refuse to abide by the terms of the armistice” and would welcome a British intervention in North Africa with open arms.67

Hillenkoetter’s optimistic assessment was backed up by a report from the embassy in Vichy describing a meeting with Emmanuel Monick, recently appointed Secretary General of Morocco. Monick assured American officials that Pétain had given him a “free hand” in the administration of the protectorate and indicated that, given the difficulties in metropolitan France, he was keen to foster “closer economic relations” between Morocco and the United States.68 Sounding a note of gleeful economic opportunism, the embassy concluded that if the United States were to take advantage of the opportunity to develop economic relations with North Africa, then the longstanding French “monopolization” of regional trade could “no longer continue!” Clearly, United States officials in North Africa were quick to perceive in France’s discomfiture opportunities to extend America’s economic position in the region.

Policymakers in Washington developed the theme. In October 1940 French officials followed up Monick’s initial proposals for closer economic relations by sending A.G. Reed, manager of the American-based Socony-Vacuum’s operations in Morocco, to Washington. Meeting with J. Rives Childs of the State Department’s Division of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), Reed urged Washington to authorize the export of “small quantities” of petroleum to Morocco in exchange for shipments of manganese, cobalt and

68 Matthews to State Dept., Aug. 26 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 579.
other minerals. Reed assured officials that the petroleum would be consumed within the protectorate and would not be sold to Germany. Observing that Reed was acting both on behalf of French colonial authorities and “in the interests of his own company,” Childs noted that the expansion of American trade would have the “highly desirable end” of loosening Moroccan dependency on metropolitan France. In early November the embassy in Vichy reported that Monick had again emphasized the importance of American trade for the preservation of North African “independence,” adding threateningly that if the United States were not forthcoming the Maghreb might be “compelled” to turn to Germany.

At first, American diplomats in North Africa were divided over the issue of promoting closer economic ties with French North Africa. From Casablanca, Herbert Goold argued that it would be better to support the British naval blockade designed to keep consumer goods out of the region, since shortages of these commodities would stimulate “native pressure” for Morocco to follow Chad and Equatorial Africa into the ranks of de Gaulle’s Free French. Consul General J.C. White in Tangier advocated a very different course, urging the unfreezing of Moroccan government funds in American banks so that the protectorate could purchase much needed goods in the United States. From Tunis Consul Charles Heisler chimed in, arguing that dangerous “Arab disturbances” might result from the exhaustion of existing supplies of cooking fuel. Heisler, like most American officials, was inclined to view native protests and the anti-

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69 Childs memorandum, Oct. 25 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 602.
70 Matthews to State Dept., Nov. 6 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 613–614.
71 Goold to State Dept., Sept. 7 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 585.
72 White to State Dept., Sept. 23 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 588.
73 Heisler to State Dept., Sept. 26 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 593.
colonial dynamic that they were seen to embody movement as potentially damaging to American economic interests as well as to the maintenance of French rule.

The Secretary of State soon made it clear where the administration stood on the issue. Writing to White in Tangier, Cordell Hull prompted him to supply the facts and opinions necessary to refute Goold’s case for a blockade. In pressing to develop trade with North Africa, the State Department also rejected arguments by its own Office of the Economic Adviser opposing trade with Morocco on the grounds that American goods would inevitably find their way into German or Italian hands. In September 1940 the arguments of those in Washington who favored using economic levers to foster closer political relations with French North Africa—including Cordell Hull, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, and, of course, the President himself—were reinforced by the Pétain’s appointment of General Maxime Weygand as Delegate-General in North Africa.

General Weygand, who had had the unenviable task of leading the French Army in the last desperate stages of the Battle of France, was viewed in both London and Washington as an opponent of the pro-German faction within the Vichy government. Cordell Hull was particularly enthusiastic, seeing Weygand as the “cornerstone” upon which French opposition to Germany could be rebuilt, using North Africa as an area for the organization of French forces in preparation for a time when they could openly join the Allies. For his part, Roosevelt saw Weygand as an “honorable old soldier” who would not tolerate permanent French subservience to Germany. From Vichy, American

74 Hull to White, Oct. 25 1940, _FRUS 1940_, 2: 596.
75 Hull, _Memoirs_, 1: 853.
76 Murphy, _Diplomat Among Warriors_, 68.
diplomats reinforced this appreciation, reporting enthusiastically that the “free air” of North Africa had revived Weygand’s “spirit of resistance.”

American officials concluded that Weygand’s desire to keep the French colonies out of German hands would soon precipitate a clash with Vichy regime headed by rightist politician Pierre Laval.

Washington acted on these assessments, and in early November the embassy was instructed to inform Monick that the State Department was favorably impressed with his proposals, and that an “arrangement” for closer economic ties between the United States and French North Africa could be negotiated.

Five days later Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles ordered the Consul General in Algiers Felix Cole to meet with Weygand in order to assure him that the United States understood the difficulty of his position and was willing to provide the economic assistance necessary to support him.

This flurry of diplomatic activity culminated with the arrival of Robert Murphy in Algiers on December 18 1940.

Officially assigned to the embassy in Vichy, Robert Murphy was actually President Roosevelt’s personal representative in North Africa, charged with developing a close working relationship with General Weygand. Murphy’s assignment to North Africa overlapped with Admiral Leahy’s appointment to Vichy, and both reflected Washington’s drive to strengthen relations with the French government and its North African colonies. They were, in effect, a two-pronged effort to reinforce the perceived anti-collaborationist wing of the Vichy regime and indicate a willingness to use economic means to achieve political ends. Interestingly, these twin appointments also coincided

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77 Matthew to State Dept., Nov. 8 1940, *FRUS 1940*, 2: 614–615.
78 State Dept. to Matthews, Nov. 9 1940, *FRUS 1940*, 2: 615.
with the adoption of *Rainbow 5*, with its explicit commitment to the defense of British positions in the Mediterranean and to blocking German moves against French North Africa. It is not hard to see the unmistakable hand of President Roosevelt behind this knot of interlinked diplomatic and military decisions. While there is no direct record of Roosevelt’s thinking on North Africa at this point, there is no reason to doubt Robert Murphy’s account of his meeting with the president in September 1940, which revealed both the depth his interest in the region and the main lines of his policy. Recalled from Vichy to be briefed on his new assignment, Murphy was asked by Roosevelt to undertake an urgent fact-finding tour of French Africa. In particular, Murphy was to cultivate a relationship with Weygand, a task for which his Catholicism was considered most helpful; “you might,” Roosevelt quipped, “go to church with Weygand.”

Roosevelt insisted that Murphy report directly to him, circumventing official State Department channels; Murphy was left in no doubt that Washington’s emerging policy towards French North Africa was very much the “President’s personal policy.”

After arriving in France en route to North Africa, Murphy’s departure for Algiers was delayed by the deepening crisis of the Vichy regime—on December 13 1940 Pétain replaced the openly pro-German Pierre Laval with Admiral François Darlan—but by the end of the month he was on his way. Murphy finally caught up with General Weygand in Dakar, French West Africa, where he was discussing the situation following the failed Anglo-Free French attack in September with Governor-General Pierre Boisson, and perhaps planning a counterblow against de Gaulle’s forces in Equatorial Africa. As Robert Paxton shows, vigorous military retaliation against Anglo-Gaullist

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80 Murphy *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 68
81 Ibid.
“encroachment” on the empire was a staple of Vichy policy both before and after the removal of Laval, and was common to both the alleged “collaborationist” faction and their opponents.82 Exactly as Roosevelt had intended, Weygand and Murphy quickly established a rapport, with the French general telling the American diplomat exactly what both he and the President wanted to hear.

Based on a whirlwind series of meetings with French officials throughout North and West Africa, Robert Murphy presented a highly optimistic appreciation of the situation in North Africa and concluded that under Weygand’s unwavering leadership French forces were laying the groundwork for “substantial military action against Germany and Italy.”83 These preparations, Murphy reported, were being carried out with Marshal Pétain’s full knowledge and approval and with the idea that, should the Germans occupy the remainder of France, North Africa would provide the “springboard” for a rapid “military rebound.” To strengthen their position in preparation for such action, French officials were keen to strengthen their links with the United States, leading Murphy to conclude that their apparently unwavering determination to resist German domination merited American support in the form of shipments of gasoline, kerosene, and heating oil. Any American supplies arriving in North Africa would, Weygand promised Murphy, be kept out of German hands, and he offered to allow the deployment of an American control commission to monitor their distribution.

Even as they painted a glowing picture of resistance to any German incursion into North Africa, French officials also implicitly threatened that without infusions of American aid the French colonies and protectorates might quickly become ungovernable.

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82 Paxton, *Vichy France*, 97.
83 Murphy to State Dept., January 1941, *FRUS 1941*, 2: 207.
Underscoring earlier warnings that economic hardship might provoke “Arab disturbances,” Secretary General Emmanuel Monick noted that six million Arabs and Berbers lived in Morocco, compared to only 150,000 French settlers, and that the “reasonable contentment” of the native population was a necessary precondition for any effective French action against the Germans. The Germans, Monick warned, were “sow[ing] dissention” amongst the natives in order to “destroy their faith” in the French. To meet this threat, French officials insisted that shipments of American consumer goods that could act as “incentive[s] to Arab cooperation” should accompany their requested supplies of oil.

It is possible that in raising these concerns French officials were trying to probe American thinking on the potentially vexed question of the continuation of French colonial rule in North Africa. Did the oft-stated anti-imperialism within which American policy was customarily wrapped imply that Washington would favor the decolonization of French North Africa and the establishment of independent states on the basis of self-determination? On this critical question, Robert Murphy arrived in North Africa equipped with the guarantees necessary to soothe French concerns. Following the guidelines given him by President Roosevelt, Murphy assured French officials that American interest in the region was purely “strategic,” and that French relations with the “native peoples” of North Africa were entirely an “affair between them.” Despite occasional hints that Washington might favor some degree of Arab independence—including, as we shall see, those given by President Roosevelt to the Sultan of Morocco

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84 White to State Dept., Sept. 26 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 593; Pell (for Murphy) to Hull, Jan. 14 1941, FRUS 1941, 2: 208.
85 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 83.
86 Ibid., 64.
during the Casablanca conference in January 1943—this approach towards the preservation of French colonial rule in North Africa would guide American policy throughout the war.

Despite Murphy’s favorable assessment of the situation in French North Africa, the road to a formal agreement on economic aid was by no means a straight one. But the difficulties lay not in problems between Washington and Vichy, but rather in tensions in Anglo-American relations. Washington’s rapidly mounting interest in French North Africa presented British policymakers with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, London desperately needed increased American diplomatic, economic, and military, help in its struggle with Nazi Germany, and from this point of view Washington’s new-found interest in the Western Mediterranean was to be welcomed and encouraged. But on the other hand British officials feared that once the United States had established itself in North Africa, it would be there for good, thus posing a long-term challenge to Britain’s hopes of strengthening its own economic and political interests. In essence, the challenge posed to British policymakers by American involvement in North Africa encapsulated the central contradiction in the “special relationship,” highlighting the fact that London simultaneously needed and feared Washington’s deepening involvement in the war.

British leaders initially viewed Weygand’s assignment to North Africa as a sign that French forces there might be persuaded to re-enter the war, and early contacts with the new administration in Algiers carried out by Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) officer David Eccles appeared promising. But by early 1941 it was clear that Weygand

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was willing to offer little beyond vague promises to resist the expansion of German influence in North Africa. When the British Chiefs of Staff argued that “from a military point of view” it was desirable to supply Weygand with oil, Churchill shot back that “something better” than mere verbal assurances was necessary before “lavishing” scarce British resources on French North Africa. By February, Churchill’s patience—always a somewhat limited commodity—was exhausted. Noting Weygand’s obvious lack of enthusiasm for the “great offers” made to him by London, the prime minister concluded that the failure of French officials in North Africa to exhibit even a “scrap of nobility or courage” meant that they should be put on “short commons” by the British naval blockade until they “came to their senses.”

London’s pained reaction to Weygand’s failure to respond to British blandishments was heightened by the general’s obvious interest in developing a relationship with the United States. The Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) sounded the alarm, with MEW head Sir Hugh Dalton recoiling in horror from Murphy’s “impetuous” pursuit of an agreement with Weygand. Writing from Algiers Eccles reported that he had been shocked to hear Americans talking about Morocco as if it was “as much within their orbit as South America.” In early 1941 London acted on these concerns: in series of meeting with senior State Department officials, British diplomats insisted that, while the Britain had no intention of

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88 Churchill to COS, Jan. 27 1941, PREM 3/187.
91 Dinan, Politics of Persuasion, 146.
“discriminating” against United States trade, it nevertheless planned to maintain a tight naval blockade of North Africa.\textsuperscript{92}

In late January 1941, however, British opposition to American plans began to crumble. In the face of persistent American pressure for a trade agreement, and forced to admit that the overstretched forces of the Royal Navy were in fact unable to enforce a strict blockade, London beat a retreat. Meeting on February 5 1941 with the State Department’s chief of the Division of European Affairs Ray Atherton, British officials begrudgingly “welcomed” the “exercise of American influence” in North Africa and agreed to Washington’s proposal to “gamble” on a trade accord with General Weygand.\textsuperscript{93}

In exchange for withdrawing their opposition to Washington’s unfolding North African policy, London insisted that American observers be assigned to monitor the distribution of supplies in North Africa, that Washington press for the release of British merchant shipping held in Moroccan ports, and that London be kept appraised of future American negotiations with French authorities in North Africa.

London’s reluctant acceptance of Washington’s intervention in North African represented a significant political set back for the old imperial power. Initially confident that it would take all the critical decisions regarding an area it considered vital to its interests, London found itself forced to back down at the insistence of its non-combatant ally. It was an early intimation that, irrespective of British wishes, the mantle of junior partner would not sit easily on American shoulders. The British government, and the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economic Warfare in particular, did not take their

\textsuperscript{92} British Embassy Washington to Dept. of State., memorandum, Jan 28 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 242.

\textsuperscript{93} Ray Atherton, memorandum of conversation, Feb. 5 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 252.
defeat lightly, and Washington was forced to respond to a series of thinly disguised efforts to disrupt the establishment of economic relations with North Africa, including unsubstantiated British claims that Germany was infiltrating thousands of undercover agents into the region. Not for the last time, Winston Churchill found himself trying to soften the clash between the Foreign Office, with its suspicions of American intent and its staunch support for de Gaulle on the one hand, and Roosevelt’s marked tilt towards Vichy on the other.  

Perhaps with an eye to smoothing the way to joint military activities in North Africa, on February 20 1941 Churchill instructed the Foreign Office that the time had come to cease opposing American plans in North Africa and to “fall in” with the president’s wishes.

As it worked to secure London’s agreement to its plan to ship essential supplies to French North Africa, Washington also pressed ahead with negotiations with Weygand. On February 8 Cordell Hull instructed Robert Murphy to leave Lisbon, where he had been waiting pending the completion of Anglo-American talks, and to return to North Africa to conclude his discussions with Weygand. Negotiations proceeded quickly, and by February 26 Murphy and Weygand initialed a draft agreement committing the United States to a supply program designed to meet the immediate economic needs of French North Africa. The agreement was conditional on American-supplied goods being consumed entirely within the region and on American representatives being permitted to monitor the importation and distribution of all shipments in order to ensure that they did not end up in Axis hands. American supplies would be paid for with French funds

95 Churchill to Eden, Feb. 20 1941, PREM 3/187.
previously frozen in American banks. Not surprisingly, the draft accord contained no mention of the release of impounded British merchant shipping.

Weygand returned to Vichy for the official signing of the Franco-American trade agreement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Admiral François Darlan, on March 10, 1941. A list of urgent requirements, headed by sugar, gasoline, diesel fuel and lubricating oil, was appended to the accord. Despite constant repetition of the argument that the ongoing quiescence of millions of Arabs and Berbers rested on using American aid to ensure the maintenance of their living conditions, the great bulk of the initial shipments were clearly destined for French military consumption. In Washington, Paul Guérin, a representative of the French Moroccan Railways temporarily attached to the French embassy, was assigned to work with American authorities to oversee the implementation of the accords. Guérin began work in early April, and his first responsibility was to arrange for the establishment in North Africa of a network of diplomats assigned to monitor the distribution of American imports. As befitted what was essentially a ready-made spy network, Guérin insisted that the trade monitors, styled vice-consuls, travel on the tankers and merchant ships carrying American goods, and that only they enter North Africa in groups of two.

In the early days of the formation of Washington’s wartime approach to North Africa, a number of important themes that would inform American policy not only in the Maghreb but also in the Mediterranean as a whole quickly became evident. Firstly, there was an evident willingness to use economic and diplomatic levers to advance strategic goals, in this case limiting Axis control over the French fleet and over French North Africa; weighing into the fight believed to be going on in Vichy between pro- and anti-
collaborationist factions; and cultivating French leaders in the Maghreb with a view to developing future military operations in the Mediterranean and southern Europe.

Secondly, American policymakers were quick to note opportunities to advancing American business interests; American strategy and American economic self-interest could, it seemed, advance hand in hand. And thirdly, even in these initial stages the influence of the executive office in guiding the development of American policy quickly became apparent. At moments of great crisis, and within the overall framework imposed by objective circumstance, Roosevelt’s actions in pushing forward American engagement with North Africa reaffirm the importance of individual agency in shaping the development of events. As Robert Murphy observed, the orientation towards North Africa was at its inception very much the “President’s personal policy.”

1.3) On-Again, Off-Again: the Troubled Life of the Murphy-Weygand Accord

As its American authors had intended, the ratification of the Murphy-Weygand accord by the Vichy government in March 1941 opened the way to the rapid expansion of United States diplomatic and political activity in French North Africa. Robert Murphy returned to Algiers as the (self-described) “High Commissioner for French Africa” in April, and the first of his vice-consuls arrived in early June. Under the terms of the accord, the twelve vice-consuls were to monitor the distribution of American goods arriving in North Africa. It was a thinly-veiled secret that, in addition to overseeing the implementation of the trade agreement, their responsibilities included gathering military intelligence and developing networks of political contacts that might be useful in the

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96 Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 68.
97 Ibid., 88.
event of American military landings. As Murphy reported to Wallace Murray, head of the State Department’s division of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), the vice-consuls would be “promoting the cause” in a variety of ways. Weygand, he noted approvingly, understood and accepted the dual role that these officials would be playing, and had “played ball with us in all important respects.”

Chosen from the ranks of reserve officers, the vice-consuls were a rather motley collection of French-speaking businessmen, engineers, and lawyers, many of whom had lived in metropolitan France. None had experience of French North Africa; for them, as for Military Intelligence as a whole, the region was “almost another planet.” Similarly, Robert Murphy later admitted that during his own ten years in the Paris embassy, neither he nor any of his colleagues had paid serious attention to France’s “huge African empire.” In a clear indication that the political efforts of the vice-consuls would be directed towards the French population of North Africa, rather than the Arabs, none of them spoke Arabic. The use of Military Intelligence personnel for what was viewed as a “State Department enterprise” raised bureaucratic hackles, and Sumner Welles and other senior officials struggled to get military approval for the assignment of the vice-consuls. Opposition finally melted once it became clear that Roosevelt himself was keenly interested in the rapid deployment of the vice-consuls and that the operation would be financed from the “President’s defense fund.”

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99 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 90.
100 Ibid., 66.
102 Murray, Chief of Division of Near Eastern Affairs, memorandum, April 19 1941, FRUS 1941, 2: 313–314.
The vice-consuls formed an important component of a burgeoning American intelligence operation in North Africa whose covert activities would eventually furnish critical underpinning for the Allied decision to launch operation *Torch*. Before examining the decision for *Torch* in more detail, however, it is useful to look at the checkered career of the trade accord whose implementation the vice-consuls were ostensibly in place to monitor. Emerging from the complex parallelogram of relations between Washington and Vichy on the one hand and Washington and London on the other, the trade accord was buffeted both by the continued evolution of this highly unstable relationship of forces and by broader developments in the course of the war.

In the spring of 1941 Britain’s strategic situation in the Mediterranean worsened quickly and dramatically. In January, the deployment of the *Luftwaffe’s* powerful *Fliegerkorps X* to Sicily challenged British naval operations in the narrow seas around Malta, and in March the launching of a new Axis offensive under General Erwin Rommel quickly threatened the critical British position in Egypt. Meanwhile, German troops surged into the Balkans in April, reviving the stalled Italian invasion and throwing the British out of Greece. Exploiting their success, German forces captured Crete in a daring airborne assault in late May. In June, Madrid’s enthusiasm for the opening of Operation *Barbarossa*, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, renewed British fears that Spain would enter the war, seize Gibraltar, and close the western entrance to the Mediterranean. This cascading series of reverses in the Mediterranean also heightened London’s concern that the apparently unstoppable advance of German arms would allow Berlin to pressure Vichy into aligning itself ever more closely with the Axis powers, re-raising the troubling question of the disposition of the French fleet. If the French fleet joined Axis naval units
in the Mediterranean, then Britain’s eroding naval supremacy would surely be ended, with far-reaching consequences for Britain’s position in the Middle East.

Many of these fears appeared to have been realized on May 28 1941 when, following a series of meetings with top-level German officials that included a visit with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Vichy’s effective premier Admiral Françoise Darlan signed a new Franco-German agreement known as the Paris Protocols. Under the new agreement, Germany was promised access to French facilities in Syria, from which it hoped to succor Rashid Ali’s anti-British rebellion in Iraq; the use of the Tunisian port of Bizerte as a supply center for Rommel; and the establishment of a U-Boat base in Dakar, West Africa. In exchange, Berlin agreed to a modest reduction in the cost of the German occupation, a limited release of French prisoners of war, and easier movement between occupied and unoccupied France. In many ways, and while Berlin clearly benefited from the Paris Protocols, the drive to secure a new agreement came not from the Germans, but from the French. Like Laval before him, Darlan sought to establish France as an independent power within a German-dominated Europe, and to demonstrate France’s commitment to this project by facilitating German military operations against Britain.  

These developments, occurring in the context of a rapidly worsening strategic situation in the Mediterranean, prompted contradictory response in British policy towards Vichy in general and towards the Murphy-Weygand accord in particular. On the one hand, opposition to the trade accord from Anthony Eden’s Foreign Office and Hugh Dalton’s Ministry of Economic Warfare deepened. As we have seen, both were highly skeptical of the efficacy of aid as an inducement to anti-German activity and were

103 Paxton, *Vichy France*, 118.
generally hostile to broader American penetration of a British sphere of influence, and they had only agreed to the accord in the first place under pressure from Churchill. Foreign Office and MEW opposition to the accords had not ended with the signing, and rearguard efforts to block their implementation, including the detention of the French tanker *Scheherazade*, bound for Morocco with a cargo of American oil, continued throughout April and May. The support provided to German operations in Iraq by Vichy forces in Syria, and its codification in the Paris Protocols, further heightened the concerns of those British leaders already inclined to believe that Vichy was becoming more deeply integrated into the Axis war effort and that providing France or its colonies with economic aid was tantamount to supplying the enemy.

Despite mounting British concern over Vichy’s course, London’s options were limited. Even if Britain could tighten its naval blockade of North Africa—and it was becoming clear that it could not easily do so in the face of German airpower—it risked provoking an armed clash with France and damaging relations with the United States.104 The deepening crisis in the Mediterranean therefore strengthened the hand of those in London, headed by Churchill himself, who saw the engagement of the United States in the Mediterranean as an indispensable element in solving the worsening strategic dilemma. Churchill’s reasons for supporting the Murphy-Weygand accord—or, perhaps more accurately, for removing obstacles to its implementation—combined an appreciation of the fact that it gave Britain’s putative ally a lever with which to exercise pressure on Vichy with an understanding that the deal also helped encourage further American participation in the Mediterranean. After a long series of top-level discussions,

104 See Dinan, *The Politics of Persuasion*
Churchill finally broke the impasse by defeating active opposition to the agreement at a May 26 Cabinet meeting.\textsuperscript{105}

Churchill’s confidence in the capacity of American diplomacy to wring concessions from Vichy and his consequent willingness to back the trade accord had been strengthen by a significant American diplomatic victory earlier in the spring. When reports reached London in March 1941 that the French planned to move the battleship \textit{Dunkerque}, damaged in the British attack on Mers-el-Kébir, to Toulon for repairs, Churchill raised the matter with Roosevelt. Ever alert to the possible augmentation of German naval forces, Churchill urged Roosevelt to warn Pétain that such an action would result in France “finally forfeiting American sympathy.”\textsuperscript{106} Roosevelt, who, as we have seen, fully shared Churchill’s concern over the prospect of French warships falling into German hands, acted quickly to put pressure on Vichy. On April 11 he was able to report to Churchill that, as a result of American protests, Vichy had decided against moving the \textit{Dunkerque} to France. Churchill responded two days later, noting Vichy’s “remarkable” retreat and hailing the effectiveness of American “representations.”\textsuperscript{107}

Churchill appears to have been genuinely impressed by the success of these American diplomatic efforts. He quickly situated them within his overall strategic thinking, informing Roosevelt that, as part of an overall strategy in the Mediterranean, London was “more than willing” for Washington to “take the lead” in relations with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{105} Dinan, \textit{Politics of Persuasion}, 184.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Churchill to Roosevelt, April 2 1941, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 1: 158.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Churchill to Roosevelt, April 13 1941, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 1: 169.
\end{itemize}
Vichy. Churchill argued that Washington should use both “favors”—presumably supplies of oil and other goods under the trade accord—and threats to “get the best” from the French government. The British premier returned to the theme two weeks later, arguing that American diplomatic pressure offered the “only hope” of deterring closer Vichy collaboration with the Axis and in particular of choking off supplies of French trucks and fuel to German forces in Tripoli.

The apparent diplomatic efficacy of the trade accord was underscored in early June when the Vichy government voted against ratifying the newly negotiated Paris Protocols. The defeat for Darlan’s “new policy” followed a sustained American diplomatic intervention. On May 15, President Roosevelt had responded to initial reports of the Paris Protocols with a sharp message of protest to Vichy. The following day Murphy was instructed to inform General Weygand that the aid program would be permanently terminated if French forces in North Africa engaged in “collaboration” with the Axis beyond the bare minimum required by the armistice. As a demonstration of American intent, the trade accord was suspended pending clarification of the situation.

Buoyed by American support—or perhaps chastened by American threats—Weygand together with Pierre Boisson, Governor of West Africa, and Admiral Jean Pierre Esteva, Resident General of Tunisia, traveled to Vichy to confront Darlan at the critical June cabinet meeting called to ratify the Paris Protocols. Weygand prevailed, perhaps aided by Darlan’s own disappointment at the limited scope of German concessions, and the Protocols were shelved. In the meantime, Washington had secured

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108 Churchill to Roosevelt, May 1 1941, Complete Correspondence, 1: 182.
109 Churchill to Roosevelt, May 14 1941, Complete Correspondence, I: 186.
110 Hull to Leahy, May 15 1941, FRUS 1941, 2: 171.
111 Hull to Childs, May 16 1941, FRUS 1941, 2: 335.
British approval for a resumption of the accord, with presidential confidante Sumner Welles convincing British ambassador Lord Halifax that there was “much to lose” by not proceeding.\textsuperscript{112} But, as with much of the trade agreement, nothing ran smoothly, with the State Department reacting precipitously to an inaccurate report that Vichy had in fact ratified the Paris Protocols by informing Murphy on June 5 that the agreement had (again) been cancelled. Ignoring his instructions—he would later claim that he received Hull’s telegram too late to act on it—Murphy assured Weygand that the agreement would now go ahead regardless.\textsuperscript{113} American officials, including Secretary of State Cordell Hull, concluded that by supporting Weygand, American policy had secured the defeat of the Paris Protocols.\textsuperscript{114} Reporting from Tangiers, chargé d’affaires J. Rives Childs argued that American encouragement had given Weygand the “psychological support” necessary to stiffen his opposition to Darlan and the protocols.\textsuperscript{115} Many American opinion formers were less convinced of the efficacy of American policy, with a June 16 1941 \textit{Time} editorial arguing that Weygand’s resistance to the protocols was motivated by a fear that his men would desert if called upon to fight the British or the “de Gaullists.” Liberal commentary in the United States tended to be even more critical of American policy. On July 21 Drew Pearson’s influential “Washington Merry-go-round” suggested that State Department “appeasement” of Weygand was providing backdoor assistance to the Axis, and on August 2 \textit{The Nation} editorialized that since Vichy was simply “Berlin in

\textsuperscript{112} Welles memorandum, May 23 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 349.
\textsuperscript{113} Hull to Murphy, June 5; Murphy to Hull, June 6 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 366, 367 Hull \textit{Memoirs}, 2: 963).
\textsuperscript{114} Childs to State Dept., June 14 1941, \textit{FRUS}, 1941, 2: 378.
disguise,” the supply of American oil to French North Africa was dangerous and diplomatically pointless.\textsuperscript{116}

Historians have also downplayed the role of American diplomacy, noting that British successes in Iraq and, in conjunction with Gaullist forces, in Syria rendered concessions by Vichy moot; that French officials in North Africa were naturally inclined to resist an expanded German presence in the French empire; and that with the launch of \textit{Barbarossa} Berlin was in any case becoming less interested in the Mediterranean. These judgments seem overly harsh. Whatever one’s evaluation of the morality of American policy—and Pearson’s charge of appeasement does not seem misplaced—the threat of the withdrawal of American economic support was not an insignificant factor for a government struggling to assert whatever limited independence was open to it.

For its part, Vichy expressed satisfaction with the operation of the trade accord, and pressed Washington to extend it to French West Africa.\textsuperscript{117} The French government was also pleased to receive renewed guarantees of American support for the maintenance of French rule in North Africa with Cordell Hull publicly recognizing North Africa as an “integral part of the French Empire.”\textsuperscript{118} President Roosevelt personally underscored this message in a letter to Marshal Pétain in which he assured him that the continuation of French rule in North Africa was a matter of the “utmost importance” to the United States.\textsuperscript{119} These statements of top-level American support for French rule in North Africa may have been intended to reward Pétain for Vichy’s rejection of the Paris Protocols, and

\textsuperscript{117} Welles memorandum, July 1 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 387.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, June 7 1941, 4: 681–682.
\textsuperscript{119} Roosevelt to Pétain, August 21 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 417.
they took on particular significance in the wake of British/Gaullist invasion of Syria in June 1941, and the resulting establishment of Free French control there.

In the summer and early fall of 1941 Britain’s strategic position in the Mediterranean finally stabilized following the disasters in Greece, Crete, and at Rommel’s hands in Cyrenaica. Buoyed by the capture of Syria and the suppression of the pro-German rebellion in Iraq, British imperial forces held onto the key Libyan port of Tobruk despite being cut-off by Axis forces advancing on Egypt. With Tobruk unsecured in their rear, and with British air and naval attacks taking a heavy toll of Axis supply convoys, Rommel’s drive to the Nile ran out of steam. In July, London reorganized its forces in North Africa by setting up the Eighth Army under the command of General Claude Auchinleck, and, aided by President Roosevelt’s decision to reopen the Red Sea to American shipping, British troops were able to reequip with Lend-Lease tanks and other equipment arriving direct from the United States. Under constant pressure from Downing Street, Auchinleck prepared Operation Crusader, a major counter-offensive against Rommel that was finally launched on November 18.

Meanwhile, Berlin’s active interest in North Africa, and the consequent availability of German troops and equipment, had declined dramatically with the launch of the German assault on the Soviet Union in June.

Under these combined pressures, Berlin sought to solve its mounting supply problems in North Africa by demanding that Vichy allow the use of supply routes through French North Africa and that it make French military resources available to Rommel. As the draft Paris Protocols had indicated, Darlan and other Vichy leaders were keen to oblige: their problem was Weygand’s continued resistance to any increased Axis
presence in French North Africa. In July, Vichy moved against Weygand by appointing him Governor General of Algeria, thereby placing him under Darlan’s direct supervision, and, at the end of August, by recalling the general’s key lieutenant Emmanuel Monick. These developments troubled American officials, who saw in them a dire threat to their cherished vision of a “quasi independent North Africa nurtured by the United States.”¹²⁰ Even the ebullient Murphy noted Germany’s growing influence in Vichy, even as he expressed confidence in Weygand’s ability to obstruct Axis access to French bases in North Africa.¹²¹ By the end of September, however, Ambassador Leahy was reporting that, despite Weygand’s apparent willingness to resist German demands, American-supplied products were “leak [ing]” into German hands and French military vehicles were being provided to Rommel’s forces.¹²²

The crisis came to a head on November 18 1941 when, on the same day that the Eighth Army’s Crusader offensive got underway, Vichy removed General Weygand from office. This action, Ambassador Leahy surmised, stemmed from a German “diktat” issued in direct response to the British attack in Libya.¹²³ Leahy’s immediate response was that Weygand’s removal threatened not only the trade agreement, but also the continuation of Washington’s entire Vichy policy, and he recommended that he and Murphy be recalled for consultation and that the accord be suspended. Washington concurred with the second proposal, and Cordell Hull issued a brief statement blaming

¹²¹ Murphy to Hull, Aug. 2 1941, FRUS 1941, 2: 406–408.
¹²² Leahy to Hull, Sept. 25 1941, FRUS 1941, 2: 437.
¹²³ Admiral William D. Leahy, I Was There: The Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time (New York: McGraw Hill, 1950), 59.
Germany for the removal of Weygand and announcing the suspension of American economic assistance to French North Africa.\textsuperscript{124}

The American press was quick to comment on the crisis, with many seeing Weygand’s removal as confirmation of a failed policy and as a reason finally to end formal relations with Vichy. Even the \textit{New York Times}, often broadly supportive of administration policy, argued that although “far-sighted” American statesmanship had allowed the United States to play an active role in North African events, Vichy now had to be regarded as a German “partner.”\textsuperscript{125} Writing in the \textit{Nation}, Jay Allen argued that there could no longer be any illusions that Pétain was playing a “double game,” and that all “clear-headed people” therefore favored breaking diplomatic relations.\textsuperscript{126} Others were even more blunt, with \textit{Time} pointing out on December 1 that the removal of Weygand left the United States “out of a policy,” and the acerbic Drew Pearson blaming the crisis on opportunistic State Department “career boys” and the “charming Mr. Robert Murphy,” who had pursued relations with Vichy heedless of the “fascist” character of the Pétain regime.\textsuperscript{127} Typically, the well-connected Pearson intimated that this policy had been “hotly criticized” within the administration itself.

Despite this intense public criticism and the apparent vindication of those who had opposed “appeasing” the Vichy regime, Washington’s policy was soon back on its old tracks. In late November, Murphy reported that Weygand wanted the trade accord to

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, November 22 1941, 5: 407.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{New York Times}, 21 Nov. 1941.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{The Nation}, November 29 1941.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Time} December 1 1941; Drew Pearson, \textit{Washington Merry-Go-Round}, November 21 1941.
continue despite his own removal from the scene.\textsuperscript{128} Ambassador Leahy quickly reversed his stance; now arguing that he should remain in Vichy in order to exercise a “restraining influence” on Pétain, while from Morocco J. Rives Childs claimed that all American officials in the protectorate believed that the trade accord should continue.\textsuperscript{129} By the end of November, Murphy had fused these strands into the outline of what he described as a new “Mediterranean policy,” arguing that the trade agreement, and the diplomatic and espionage activities that rested on it, were critical to the cultivation of relations with “well disposed” French leaders throughout North Africa.\textsuperscript{130} Within days, and as if to prove his point, Murphy was reporting on the formation of a group of colonial officials who favored the establishment of an anti-Axis “provis\textsuperscript{i}onal government” in French North Africa.\textsuperscript{131}

Under Robert Murphy’s leadership, and with Leahy’s support and Roosevelt’s agreement, American diplomatic activity in North Africa moved seamlessly beyond a concentration on Weygand into a much more far-reaching search for potential French collaborators. It also began to take the shape of a regional policy reaching deep into the Mediterranean. At the end of December 1941, and with the United States formally entering the war in the wake of Pearl Harbor, the administration’s continued orientation to Vichy and to French North Africa was signaled by the resumption of the trade accord, despite a continued prohibition on oil shipments.\textsuperscript{132} From London, the continuation of American relations with Vichy and the resumption of the trade accord received

\textsuperscript{128} Murphy to Hull, Nov. 21 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 472–473.
\textsuperscript{129} Leahy to Hull, Nov. 22; Childs to State, Nov. 25 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941} 2: 474, 476.
\textsuperscript{130} Murphy to Hull, Nov. 25, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 479–480.
\textsuperscript{131} Murphy to Welles, Nov. 27 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 483.
Churchill’s support; as he remarked to Roosevelt, the Allies had no other “worthwhile connections” with the French government.\textsuperscript{133} Heading off potential criticism within his own government, Churchill informed Eden that it would be a “great mistake” for the United States to break contact with Vichy while the campaign in Libya was unresolved, noting that it is much easier to break contact than to renew it.\textsuperscript{134}

Remarkably, given the blows leveled against it by a hostile domestic press, by critics in London and by skeptics within the administration—not to mention by the actions of Vichy and Berlin—the Murphy-Weygand accord staggered on. As the Vichy authorities pointed out, actual shipments of American goods, fell well below promised levels, but the accord, and the diplomatic and undercover activities that rested on it, kept American contact with French North Africa. It is hard not to see the hidden hand of the President at work in the effort to sustain the trade accord. As ever, it is hard to offer precise evidence for Roosevelt’s thinking. But, as we have seen, the President was directly involved the assignments of Murphy and Leahy, in overseeing the negotiations that resulted in the trade accord, and in securing its implementation despite strong British objections.

It is particularly difficult to tell when President Roosevelt’s active interest in North Africa coalesced into a determination to invade, but he was certainly receiving reports encouraging him to move in this direction well before America formally entered the war in December 1941. In the summer of 1941 Roosevelt dispatched his friend and confidant Averell Harriman on a fact-finding mission to review the development of Lend-

\textsuperscript{133} Churchill to Roosevelt, Dec. 11 1941, \textit{Collected Correspondence}, 1: 287.
\textsuperscript{134} Churchill to Eden, Nov. 30 1941, PREM 3/187.
Lease operations in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Reporting back, Harriman noted the formation of a “strong anti-Vichy organization” in North Africa that was ready to “cooperate with any force [that is Allied force—AB] coming in.” With this end in mind, Harriman argued that American assistance was necessary to “nurse” the French along and to protect them from a “native uprising.” In December 1941, Roosevelt sent William Bullitt, the former ambassador to Paris and another close ally, on a swing through the “Near Eastern area” as his personal representative. Bullitt was charged with preparing a report that would make the President feel “as though he had been there himself.”

Bullitt was impressed with the already-substantial scale of American Lend-Lease operations, noting that in Egypt alone the military mission headed by General Maxwell was planning to spend over forty million dollars on infrastructural projects including the construction of salvage, maintenance, and assembly plants. In Cairo, William Bullitt discussed detailed plans for an Allied campaign in North Africa with Colonel Astier de Villatte, head of the Free French air force in the Middle East. The authorship of the written report Bullitt forwarded to Roosevelt is unclear, and the roving ambassador’s willingness to discuss such matters with the Gaullists must have raised eyebrows in Washington. But the plan itself was sophisticated and remarkably prescient, urging simultaneous American-led attacks on Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia in order to “assure

135 Harriman memorandum, Bullitt papers, Box 120, Folder 561, Yale University Library.
137 Ibid., 528.
138 Burns to Bullitt, December 1 1941, Bullitt papers, Box 120, Folder 565.
control of the Mediterranean,” to be followed by an “attack on Italy.” Given what we do know about Roosevelt’s interest in North Africa at this time, it is not hard to see this plan stimulating—or even confirming—a growing interest in an invasion.139

William Bullitt also met with senior British leaders in the Middle East. A telegram addressed jointly to Roosevelt and Churchill and summarizing discussions between Bullitt and Oliver Lyttelton, British Minister of State to the Middle East, was hurriedly dispatched in order to arrive in Washington while the Allied leaders were holding their first wartime summit there. In view of the unpredictable reaction of French forces in Tunisia to the imminent arrival of British troops then advancing westwards from Egypt, Bullitt and Lyttelton urged that an “immediate start” be made on the preparation of a “Casablanca expedition,” and that “propaganda and subversive activities” designed to ensure a friendly welcome for American troops be stepped up through out French North Africa.140 As in discussions with the Free French, the idea of American troops moving into the region was very much in the air.

1.4) The United States Enters the War: Arcadia and Gymnast.

In early December 1941, the question of American policy towards French North Africa was subsumed into the broader clarification of political, diplomatic, and military policy necessitated by America’s formal entry into the war following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The new situation had two major consequences for America’s North

140 Bullitt, For the President, 544.
African policy. Firstly, with public attention focused elsewhere, there was no significant
domestic debate on the rapid resumption of the North African trade agreement following
the removal of Weygand. While the Nation continued to warn against “appeasing”
Vichy, the great bulk of public commentary on North Africa in early 1942 was devoted to
optimistic assessments of the British advance into Libya. Secondly, and more
importantly, French North Africa quickly acquired a new significance in Anglo-
American strategic planning, and one that underscored the importance of ongoing
diplomatic and espionage activity on the region.

In late December 1941, Roosevelt, Churchill, and most of their central military
leaders met in Washington to shape Allied strategy in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. The
Arcadia conference, the first of the Allies’ wartime summit meetings, established the
essential framework of the Anglo-American alliance, setting up the organization of the
Combined Chiefs of Staff and its associated joint planning committees, adopting the
principle of the unification of command in individual theaters, and appointing British
General Sir Archibald Wavell supreme Allied commander in Southeast Asia. At the level
of broad strategic planning, the Arcadia conference reaffirmed the “Germany First”
approach of the ABC-1 Anglo-American staff conversations and underscored the
importance of expanding the flow of war material to the Soviet Union. Given the
dramatic new threat posed by the Japanese offensive and the consequent pressure from
both American public opinion and the U.S. Navy to prioritize the war in the Pacific, the
reaffirmation of this strategic framework was no small matter. Despite constant, and at
times severe, pressure to adopt a Pacific alternative, the decision to maintain the

141 The Nation, Jan. 10 1942.
“Germany First” approach governed both Anglo-American strategy and the critical relationship between the western Allies and the Soviet Union for the entire war.

The devil, however, is in the details—or, in this case, in the distillation of specific operational proposals from a broad strategic approach. Working onboard the battleship *Duke of York* en route to Washington, Churchill and his military chiefs produced a the series of proposals known as *WW1* that would be discussed and adopted at *Arcadia*. Where *ABC-1* had talked in general terms of launching substantial operations in the Mediterranean prior to mounting a direct challenge to Germany in continental Europe, Churchill’s new strategic proposals aimed to flesh out and detail this approach. Churchill argued that the Allies should make every effort to “win over” the French authorities in North Africa by utilizing a combination of diplomatic and economic incentives. These measures, including the provision of “ample supplies” for the French and their “loyal Moors,” promises to restore France and the French Empire to their prewar glory, and offers of military support via an American landing in Morocco, would, Churchill believed, secure the “connivance” of Vichy and thereby facilitate an Allied invasion.142 The invasion itself, codenamed Operation *Gymnast*, would involve “considerable” Allied forces and be spearheaded by 25,000 American troops to be assembled in Britain and readied to sail at the “earliest moment.” The whole plan, of course, now rested on the continuation of the trade accord and of the diplomatic, espionage, and undercover political operations connected to it.

To some extent the strategy outlined at the *Arcadia* conference was, as Mark Stoler emphasizes, adopted in haste and without fully weighing the changed world

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142 Churchill, draft of *WW1*, *Complete Correspondence*, 1: 295–296.
situation after Pearl Harbor, and was therefore “more formal than real.”

It is also worth noting that Churchill’s plan for Gymnast was floated as London was forced to confront a new crisis in the Mediterranean. While the British leaders were crossing the Atlantic to Washington, a daring attack by Italian mini-submarines sank the Royal Navy’s last two battleships at anchor in Alexandria, and the same day a key force of cruisers was sunk in an Italian minefield. These developments, combined with mounting German air attacks on Malta, threw British command of the waters of the Mediterranean into the scales again. From this point of view, British proposals to involve American forces in action in the Mediterranean had a somewhat desperate edge to them. There is no question that, whatever misgivings the British harbored about Washington’s long-term interests in the Mediterranean, in late 1941 and early 1942 they urgently wanted America in.

Despite these qualifications however, the plans for North Africa adopted at Arcadia involved detailed and specific operational proposals that were openly discussed and decided upon by the assembled Allied leaders. There was no sleight of hand. Moreover, the outline plan for Gymnast formally adopted at Arcadia conformed closely to President Roosevelt’s emerging interest in an American intervention in North Africa, as well as to Churchill’s thinking. It also, as we have seen, responded to Bullitt and Lyttelton’s proposals for a rapid American-led landing in Morocco. For the Americans, and for the President in particular, Gymnast offered both a conclusion and a vindication of the entire tortured course of American relations with Vichy, sustained through every crisis at the insistence of the highest echelons of the Administration. The decision to prepare an invasion of North Africa, therefore, was not an aberration or a poorly thought

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143 Stoler, _Allies and Adversaries_, 67.
out reaction to American entry into the war, but represented the convergence of British strategic precepts, centered on Churchill’s notion of “closing the ring” around Germany, and of a specifically American strategic orientation that had been taking shape since the fall of France in 1940. Finally, this fusion of interests was spurred forward by Britain’s increasingly perilous situation in the Mediterranean.

In the light of the decisions made at the Arcadia conference, American diplomatic and covert activity in French North Africa assumed a new urgency and significance. Since an Allied invasion was held to be contingent upon securing a viable French “invitation,” the efforts of Robert Murphy and his cadre of diplomats and spies to secure such an invite, or at least to produce a viable simulacrum, became critical. With the removal of the doughty Weygand, American efforts came to focus, as Murphy had already noted, on an expanded efforts to cultivate “well disposed” French officials. In this process the trade agreements would continue to furnish a diplomatic lever, but the actual operational axis of American activity would center on burnishing the “patriotic” and anti-German credentials of right-wing colonial officials and business people.

American intelligence operations in North Africa would serve to provide the Administration with the evidence of French support necessary to assuage the concerns of the Joint Chiefs. Before returning to these matters, however, it is useful to turn to the rapid development of American military resistance to “peripheral” operations in general, and to Gymnast in particular.

The story of the long road from Arcadia to the actual Allied landings in North Africa, codenamed Torch, has been well told many times, and it is unnecessary to rehearse it in detail here. But the main outlines and themes are important to us, given that
the process culminated in the commitment of large numbers of U.S. troops to North
Africa, thereby initiating the series of sequential and interlocking campaigns that would
make the Mediterranean the focus of American operations in Europe until the summer of
1944.

In early January 1942, even as the Arcadia conferees were recommitting
themselves to a “Germany first” approach, much of the day-to-day attention of American
military leaders was riveted on the unfolding crisis in the Pacific. The rapid and far-
reaching successes of Japan’s “centrifugal offensive,” spiraling outwards into Malaya,
Borneo, the Philippines, and Dutch Indonesia, opened the disturbing prospect of further
Japanese advances, either westwards into Burma and India, southeast to Australia, or
eastwards into the central Pacific. Moreover, it raised the specter that China, isolated
from American support as supply lines over the Burma Road came under increasing
pressure, would succumb to Japanese arms. The scramble to organize reinforcements for
the Pacific dominated the thinking of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, newly assigned to
the War Plans Division of the War Department. Confiding in his desk pad, Eisenhower
dismissed Gymnast as a “sideshow” and an unnecessary interference with the urgent
movement of troops and war materiel to Australia.\footnote{Eisenhower, personal memorandum, \textit{Papers}, 1: 30.} Even more troubling from
Eisenhower’s point of view was the fact that “amateur strategists,” “prima donnas,” and
politicians seemed to be determining strategy, rather than professional soldiers.\footnote{Ibid., 39.} In this,
as Brian Linn points out in his perceptive work on American military leadership,
Eisenhower was an archetypal military “manager,” focused on the detailed mobilization
of material and human resources and hostile to attempts to extend “civilian authority”
over areas of professional “military expertise.”

Eisenhower was not alone either in his dismissive view of Gymnast or in his
annoyed perception that politicians were infringing on matters properly left to military
professionals. On January 4, General Joseph Stilwell, who had initially been slated to
command Gymnast, noted that both Army Chief of Staff George Marshall and War Plans
Division head General Leonard Gerow had come out strongly against the operation,
pointing to the possibility that a German assault on Gibraltar might close the
Mediterranean leaving American forces cut off inside. In typically acerbic fashion,
“Vinegar Joe” noted that American armies would then be trapped in a “rathole that is
under the guns, sure of punishment, and hard to supply.” Like Eisenhower, Stilwell
blamed the politicians, reserving particular venom for Roosevelt, a “rank amateur” who
had been “completely hypnotized” by the “Limeys.”

In early January, and with the Arcadia conference still in session, George
Marshall presented his own conclusions on Gymnast to the President. In carefully
measured language, Marshall delivered a verdict scarcely less damning than those of
Eisenhower and Stilwell. While American control of North Africa would undoubtedly
help to “protect the South Atlantic” and block any “extension of Axis influence to the
West and South,” operations there would labor under “important disadvantages.”

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149 Ibid., 15-16.
only “feasible” plan for action in North Africa, Marshall argued, was for a landing in Morocco—that is to say outside of the Mediterranean—made only after securing a definitive “French invitation.” Moreover, Marshall concluded, even this modest proposal was “problematical,” since it was unrealistic to expect any significant assistance from either the “opportunist French” or from the “natives.”\(^{150}\) Gymnast, in other words, was a risky military operation premised upon dubious political prospects.

Looking at the views of senior officers like Eisenhower, Marshall, and Stilwell, it is easy to demonstrate the rapid hardening of Army opinion against operations in North Africa in early 1942. What is more difficult is to explain why this process occurred, particularly in the light of the place of French North Africa, and of the Mediterranean more broadly, in Anglo-American strategy from \(ABC-I\) to \(Arcadia\). One element in this process was the undoubted influence of simple—and, one is tempted to say, simplistic—notions of mass and concentration in American military thinking. These principles, ostensibly derived, as Russell Weigley pointed out in his seminal work on the “American way of war,” from the Civil War campaigns of Ulysses S. Grant, called for the concentration of all available resources for a single, decisive blow.\(^{151}\) Initially, army opposition to the perceived dispersal of effort in North Africa was premised upon the necessity of checking the Japanese offensive, with Eisenhower jotting down a January 17 plan to “drop everything,” including Gymnast and the British offensive in Libya, in order to “scrape up” forces to reinforce Indonesia and Burma.\(^{152}\) Less than a week later, however, this premise had changed completely, and Eisenhower was arguing against

\(^{150}\) Marshall, Jan. 9 1942, memorandum, PSF, North Africa folder, FDRL.

\(^{151}\) See Russell Weigley, \(The American Way of War\) (Indiana University Press, 1977).

\(^{152}\) Eisenhower, Jan. 17 1942, personal memorandum, \(Papers\), 1: 61.
“wasting resources all over the world” and for launching a “land attack” in Europe “as soon as possible.”\textsuperscript{153} The rapidity of the shift suggests that, at least initially, opposition to \textit{Gymnast} was a more weighty consideration than attraction to any particular alternative.

Dwight Eisenhower would later claim that that the plan to mount a cross-Channel invasion of France had its origins in his laconic January 22 memorandum.\textsuperscript{154} Whether or not this is strictly true, it is clear that by late January 1942 Army opinion was hardening out rapidly in favor of a cross-Channel \textit{schwerpunkt} and against an both invasion of North Africa, as favored by the British and the “amateur strategist” in the Whitehouse, \textit{and} a concentration on the Pacific, as advocated by the Navy. Moreover, once formulated, this simple military notion—defined by General Wedemeyer as “going for the enemy’s jugular vein”—proved remarkably resilient.\textsuperscript{155} Justified on the grounds that it would open the royal road to Berlin, bring succor to the hard-pressed Russians, and end the war as rapidly as possible while avoiding wasteful and time-consuming British “periphery picking,” it furnished the lodestar of professional American military thought from early 1942 until it was finally realized on the beaches of Normandy in June 1944.\textsuperscript{156}

In addition to noting the obvious attractions of a strategic plan that appeared to conform closely to the most elementary of strategic principles, many authorities have also discerned an element of Anglophobia in the army’s aversion to Mediterranean operations. Certainly, one doesn’t have to look far in the writings and recollections of many American leaders to uncover a strain of acidic hostility towards Britain. The idea that Roosevelt’s insistence on action in the Mediterranean reflected his susceptibility to

\textsuperscript{153} Eisenhower, Jan. 22 1942, notes, Ibid., 1: 66.  
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
British manipulation was one expression of this line of thought: the results of *Arcadia*, Stilwell believed, demonstrated the “tremendous hold the Limeys have on Our Boy.” Other memoirs, such as those by future head of the War Plans Division General Albert Wedemeyer, are peppered with similar comments. Wedemeyer’s own deep distrust of British intentions would later lead him to make secret tape recordings of meetings with British planners in order to demonstrate their “unreasonable demands” to his superior, George Marshall.

American planners tended to believe that London’s interest in the Mediterranean stemmed both from the necessity of defending its “imperial lifeline” running the length of the sea from Gibraltar via Malta to Suez, and from an inherent imperialist urge to secure a dominant post-war position in the region. Outbursts of acerbic Anglophobia thus rested on a more generalized assumption that, as Eisenhower later put it, the “Britishers instinctively approach every military problem from the viewpoint of the Empire.” Rather than knee-jerk Anglophobia—although often complemented by it—the Army’s rapidly-emerging opposition to anything smacking of “peripheral” strategy was rooted in a hard-nosed appreciation that, beyond a shared interest in the defeat of Germany, there was no necessary conformity between the strategic and geopolitical interests of London and those of Washington. American military leaders, schooled in a strict separation of military and political spheres, expressed a constant and profound aversion to an imperial military strategy that they perceived as being driven by overtly “political” imperatives.

In many ways, the divisions between American military leaders and President Roosevelt that came to a head in the acrimonious arguments over *Gymnast* in the spring and summer of 1942 paralleled this army critique of British strategy. As George Marshall reflected after the war, during this period he had been constantly “fearful of Mr. Roosevelt introducing political methods, of which he was a genius, into a military thing.”\(^{160}\) At its most extreme, as expressed in the contemporary observations of Stilwell, Wedemeyer, and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and reflected in the post-war critiques advanced by Maurice Matloff and others, this view pictured the president being “inveigled” into the Mediterranean by the “deliberately-deceptive” British.\(^{161}\) In Marshall’s rather more even-handed treatment, Roosevelt’s “political” instincts and interests constantly threatened to disrupt the clinical strategic precision of the “military thing,” and thus to make Marshall’s job of ending the war as quickly as possible and with the minimum loss of American lives more difficult. Marshall’s concern that political considerations would distort the clarity necessary for successful military strategy found an echo in London, where Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir Alan Brooke struggled constantly to restrain the excesses of Churchill’s “amateur” strategizing. But it was a faint echo. Schooled in decades of imperial strategy and governance, the “political” and “military” sides of British policy formation demonstrated a degree of integration that their American colleagues would gradually acquire through the bitter school of war.

The attraction of the classical simplicity of a single knock-out blow, combined with an aversion to the apparently devious political machinations of British imperial

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\(^{161}\) Higgins, “Historian’s War,” 84.
policy, led to the emergence of a cross-Channel assault as the *idée fixe* of American strategic thinking. The fact, as many authorities have argued, that a successful large scale landing in France was in all probability beyond the capacity of inexperienced Allied forces in 1942 or even 1943, is beside the point: by early 1942, a uniquely American combination of naiveté, confidence, and strategic simplification had coalesced into a view that the cross-Channel invasion offered the one acceptable concretization of the broad principle of “Germany First.” *Gymnast*, and other potential peripheral diversions, would have to go. On March 3, with British planners focused on the deepening crisis in Burma in the wake of the fall of Singapore, the Americans carried their opposition to *Gymnast* in the Combined Chiefs of Staff and secured the operation’s indefinite postponement.

Writing to Churchill on March 7, Roosevelt suggested that the sidelining of *Gymnast* might be followed by a decision to shift the main American effort into the Pacific theater.\(^{162}\) Such a profound change of strategic priorities was, as Roosevelt well knew, unacceptable to the Army leadership, who viewed the Pacific as a Navy bailiwick. Under Marshall’s guidance and Eisenhower’s leadership, the newly formed Operations Division (OPD) quickly furnished their own alternative in the form of several options for cross-Channel operations. These included a rapid build-up of American forces in the United Kingdom (*Bolero*); an emergency attack on the Cherbourg peninsula, to be launched if a Soviet collapse appeared immanent (*Sledgehammer*); and a full-scale invasion of northern France (*Roundup*) projected for the summer of 1943. Marshall buttressed his case for a cross-Channel offensive by pointing to the possibility of

\(^{162}\) Roosevelt to Churchill, March 7 1942, *Collected Correspondence*, 1: 390-391.
relieving German pressure on the Soviet Union by opening what Roosevelt himself had described as a “new front this summer.” On April 1 Marshall won presidential approval for this package of cross-channel options, and quickly found himself dispatched to London with top presidential adviser Harry Hopkins to present the new plan to the British.

Given the lack of a clear written record, it is impossible to gauge Roosevelt’s actual feelings about the proposals for cross-channel operations carried to London by Hopkins and Marshall. In a note to Churchill to be hand delivered by Hopkins, he was enthusiastic enough, explaining that he supported the plan to “draw off pressure on the Russians” with “heart and mind.” But the numerous problems connected with launching Sledgehammer in the summer of 1942—an operation that would have to be largely British in composition, and which even American planners infelicitously described as a “sacrifice”—were hard to ignore. Moreover, there is plentiful evidence that, while the president temporarily ceded the field to the proponents of a cross-Channel invasion, his own interest in North Africa and consequently in some version of Gymnast continued unabated. On March 24, 1942, at a working lunch to formalize the plans Hopkins and Marshall would carry to London, Henry Stimson was alarmed by the president’s continuing attraction to the “Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin.” If uncurbed, the Secretary of War concluded, Roosevelt’s attachment to the “charming” Mediterranean basin would lead to the “wildest kind of dispersion debauch.”

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163 Roosevelt to Churchill, Apr. 3 1942, Collected Correspondence, 1: 441).
164 Stimson, On Active Service, 416.
In this light, it seems plausible that Roosevelt’s support of the Army’s cross-Channel plans in the spring of 1942 was never entirely wholehearted and that, in his “foxy” way (as Stimson put it) he may have had a hunch that the British would reject Sledgehammer, thereby opening the way for a revival of interest in North Africa.\textsuperscript{165} For their part, the British, after expressing an initial enthusiasm for the plans presented by Marshall and Hopkins—perhaps motivated by relief that the Americans were not proposing to overturn the entire framework of “Germany first” and to prioritize the Pacific instead—quickly set about undermining them. British planners drew particular attention to the obvious problems with Sledgehammer, the “sacrificial” attack on Cherbourg slated for 1942. By the time the second Anglo-American summit conference—called at short notice and without a codename—convened in Washington in late June, it had become clear to Henry Stimson and the Joint Chiefs that Roosevelt was getting ready to “jump the traces” and to reopen discussion on Gymnast.\textsuperscript{166}

It is worth noting that in the period between the Arcadia and Second Washington conferences, American combat units appeared in the wartime Mediterranean for the first time. In early April, responding to a direct request from Churchill to help ferry Spitfire fighters to beleaguered garrison of Malta, Roosevelt authorized the aircraft carrier Wasp to sail into the Mediterranean laden with British fighters.\textsuperscript{167} In dispatching the Wasp, Roosevelt had to overcome the opposition of Chief of Naval Operations Admiral King, who clearly feared that London was being less than honest about its own resources in

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 419.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
order to secure an initial American commitment to the Mediterranean. For his part, Churchill hailed America’s “generous” response—and quickly called for a repeat performance.\textsuperscript{168} Responding to Churchill’s statement that Malta was about to be “pounded to bits,” Roosevelt authorized another mission, and on May 9 \textit{Wasp} delivered a further forty-seven Spitfires to Malta.\textsuperscript{169}

Symbolically, Washington’s first military operations in the Mediterranean were carried out in response to British appeals for help, made in the context of the growing exhaustion of London’s military resources and the relative strengthening of the military capacities of the United States. And, in another aspect pregnant with significance for the future course of Mediterranean strategy, these operations were conducted over the objections of American military leaders and at the insistence of the President himself. Touching on the situation in the Mediterranean in his note to Churchill approving \textit{Wasp}’s second mission, Roosevelt underscored in his own hand the enigmatic observation that “time is definitely running in our favor just now.”\textsuperscript{170} In mid August, the well-connected \textit{New York Times} journalist Anne O’Hare McCormick commented on the crisis in the central Mediterranean, noting both the strategic importance of Malta—“Malta is a front in itself”—and the role of the United States in its defense, claiming, with some exaggeration, that the \textit{Wasp} had been “risked […] again and again” to ferry aircraft to the beleaguered island.\textsuperscript{171} With typical lucidity, McCormick stressed the overall strategic importance of the Mediterranean, arguing that whichever side dominated the lines of

\textsuperscript{169} Churchill to Roosevelt, Apr. 24 1942, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 1: 467–468.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 470.
\textsuperscript{171} \textit{New York Times}, August 17 1942.
communication running through the “central sea” had the “best chance of military
victory.” Perhaps not entirely coincidentally, McCormick had attended a Whitehouse
lunch with the Roosevelts in the week before this column appeared, and its contents may
at least in part have reflected the President’s own strategic outlook.172

While these events were unfolding, Allied leaders were preparing for the summit
conference to be held in Washington in late June. Writing to Roosevelt in late May,
Churchill appended an injunction not to let Gymnast “slip from our minds” to a highly
critical assessment of Washington’s cross-Channel plans.173 The note is indicative of
Churchill’s role both in the campaign to undermine plans for a cross-Channel effort in
1942 and in the effort to sustain presidential interest in North Africa. He knew, as
Stimson noted ruefully, exactly how to nurture the President’s “great secret baby.”174
But, contrary to the assertions of Stilwell, Wedemeyer, and a host of subsequent
commentators, Churchill was not the baby’s father. While it may have suited Army
leaders—and perhaps the British themselves, for different reasons—to think that the
“Limeys” had taken control of “Our Boy,” Roosevelt’s interest in the Mediterranean did
not require British prompting. On the contrary, and as Andrew Roberts points out,
Churchill later gratefully acknowledged Roosevelt’s leadership in the new push to secure
an agreement to invade North Africa.175

172 McCormick to Roosevelt, Aug. 6 1942, McCormick papers, NYPL
173 Churchill to Roosevelt, May 28 1942, Complete Correspondence, 1: 494.
175 Roberts, Masters and Commanders, 561.

President Roosevelt’s dogged—and, one could add, devious—adherence to his “secret baby” throughout the contentious debates that dominated the spring and summer of 1942 was constantly succored by the intelligence product of the covert network operating in North Africa under his personal oversight. The significance of this complex covert operation to the broader strategic discussions unfolding in Washington and London has been largely ignored, but without it there would have been no Allied invasion of North Africa. The political framework—or rather the cover—for this covert activity continued to be furnished by the on-again, off-again Murphy-Weygand trade accord. The agreement gave the twelve American vice-consuls, now in place in North Africa and tasked with ensuring that no U.S. supplies reached Axis forces, critical diplomatic cover for their clandestine activities. The accord also reassured French officials in North Africa that they remained central to American plans and had not been abandoned in favor of de Gaulle. Resumed in December 1941 after being suspended in protest over the removal of Weygand, American shipments were again cut to a bare minimum in February when U.S. agents corroborated British charges that Rommel was receiving American-supplied food and fuel from the French. Vichy authorities quickly halted shipments to Axis forces and on April 7 the State Department announced the resumption of trade.

Typically, the resumption was short lived. Even as the State Department authorized renewed shipments, Pétain sidelined Admiral Darlan on April 18 1942 and again gave control of the government to Pierre Laval, appointing him President of the
Council and minister for Foreign Affairs, the Interior, and Information. In the eyes of many American opinion-makers, this dramatic concentration of quasi-dictatorial power in the hands of the most openly pro-Nazi wing of the Vichy regime necessitated a demonstrative American response. The New York Times, having on March 29 praised the “wisdom” of “nursing” relations with Vichy, now bluntly stated that “Laval is Hitler.”\footnote{Editorial, New York Times April 15 1942.}

In a similar vein, the Washington Post argued that since the “appeasement” of Vichy had failed utterly, the “De Gaullists” should now be recognized as the “true government of the true France.”\footnote{Editorial, Washington Post April 15 1942.} The administration responded quickly to events in Vichy and to their reflection in American public opinion recalling Ambassador Leahy to Washington for consultation. Leahy would not return to France; in early July he was appointed Roosevelt’s chief of staff, serving as the contact between the President and the Joint Chiefs.

Admiral Leahy’s recall, however, did not signal a complete break in diplomatic relations with Vichy. Leahy himself, briefed on the covert operations underway in North Africa during a stopover in Lisbon on his trip home, argued strongly for the maintenance of diplomatic ties in order to facilitate the clandestine effort.\footnote{See Leahy, I Was There.} Senior administration figures including Adolf Berle, Wallace Murray (chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs), and, surprisingly given his opposition to Gymnast, Henry Stimson, concurred, citing the importance of the work being carried out by Murphy and his vice-consuls. Again, it is hard not to see the president’s own hand at work behind the scenes. Having
signaled American disapproval of Laval—and satisfied domestic public opinion—the State Department announced a resumption of the trade accord on June 11.

Amid press coverage of Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov’s surprise visit to the United States and of the dramatic American victory at Midway, the decision to resume the shipment of American supplies to North Africa so soon after Laval’s accession to power received little comment. In a short article, the New York Times noted that the State Department had received fresh assurances that American goods would not reach Axis forces, while the Washington Post simply reported that the reasons for the resumption of trade were “not disclosed.”\(^{179}\) The whole American effort, the Times concluded, aimed at making the “natives” “content” with French rule. Within the administration, the Board of Economic Warfare (BEW), whose role in approving specific items for export gave it significant weight in the implementation of the trade accord, opposed a resumption of trade, arguing that undernourished Arab subjects would blame Vichy for their plight and would therefore welcome American troops as liberators.\(^{180}\) Admiral Leahy, now the President’s Chief of Staff, considered liberal BEW staffers incapable of accepting the fact that that American strategy hinged upon an approach to French colonialists, and not to their Arab subjects. Abandoning attempts at persuasion, he simply ordered the BEW to implement the trade accord: “the President,” he stated bluntly, “says ‘do it!’”\(^{181}\)

\(^{180}\) See Dougherty, The Politics of Wartime Aid, 45.
\(^{181}\) Leahy I Was There, 113.
The resumption of trade eased the intelligence gathering and contact-making efforts of Robert Murphy’s North African network. This operation had been substantially reinforced by the assignment of former Marine Colonel William Eddy as naval attaché to the embassy in Tangiers in December 1941. As Eddy explained in an unpublished monograph—revealingly entitled “Spies and Lies in Tangier”—his real assignment, designated by Coordinator of Information (later Office of Strategic Services) head General William Donovan, was to coordinate covert operations throughout North Africa. Eddy, Arabic-speaker, war hero, and former head of English at the American University in Cairo, plunged eagerly into a Casablanca-esque a world of espionage, double-cross, and sexual intrigue framed by the fantasies of American Orientalism.\(^{182}\) Tangier, Eddy reported, was a “whirlpool” full of “escapees” fleeing anything from “income taxes” to the “hangman,” and a hive of intrigue where Allied and Axis agents “mingled freely” at social functions.\(^{183}\) Vice-consul Kenneth Pendar’s memoirs underscore this image, and in his account the heady atmosphere of the Maghreb prompted “normally sensible” Americans to start acting “like Arabs.”\(^{184}\) And there was a deadly reality beneath the spy capers: in April 1942, British agents uncovered two Axis plots to bomb Eddy’s car.\(^{185}\)

Prior to November 1941, American diplomatic activity in North Africa had centered primarily on fostering relations with General Weygand. With his removal, as we have seen, Robert Murphy quickly reoriented his activity in an effort to find political

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\(^{185}\) British Consul, Tangier, to Childs, Apr. 14 1942, RG 84, Morocco, Box 4, NARA.
collaborators willing and able to “invite” an American occupation. This drive was at the heart of what Murphy dubbed his new “Mediterranean policy,” and it quickly took American agents deep into the tangled webs of intrigue and conspiracy that dominated French colon communities in North Africa. As in its earlier phases, American efforts were directed entirely at French officials and businessmen: the United States, Murphy affirmed, considered relations between the French and their Arab subjects to be “purely an affair between them[elves].” ¹⁸⁶

American agents, vice-consul Pendar recalled, were cautioned against “preach[ing] democracy or independence,” irrespective of their private opinions or sympathies for Arab national aspirations.¹⁸⁷ As a result, American contact with the native population was largely restricted to efforts to gauge their opinions and likely reactions to events. When Arabs made overtures to the Americans, they were to be rebuffed: any “monkey business” with their Arab subjects might “enrage” America’s French “colleagues,” Murphy warned.¹⁸⁸ Despite these strictures, the more liberally inclined of the vice-consuls found it hard not to sympathize with Arab nationalism, and in May 1942, chargé d’affaires Childs felt compelled to call Pendar to order for his “ill-advised activities among the Moors” in Fez and Marrakech. With the French feeling “understandably sensitive” to America-Arab contacts, Childs argued, any hint of support for Moroccan independence would simply “play into the hands of the Germans.”¹⁸⁹ Pendar’s “impropriety,” coming on top of an attempt to smuggle a “de Gaullist” into Spanish Morocco in his car, made him a “menace to our work.”

¹⁸⁶ Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 92.
¹⁸⁷ Pendar, Adventures, 21.
¹⁸⁸ Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 92.
¹⁸⁹ Childs to Russell, June 16 1942, RG 84, Morocco, Box 4, NARA.
While the more liberal American agents were appalled by the right wing and anti-Semitic politics of French officials and colon settlers, many of whom had ties to the fascistic and anti-Republican Cagoulard conspiracy of the 1930s, the conservative Murphy felt at home amongst them.\textsuperscript{190} Results were quickly forthcoming. By March 1942, Murphy was sending Sumner Welles glowing reports on the prospect of working with the “able, fearless, young, and experienced” Colonel Jean Van Hecke, who led 26,000 “disciplined, trained, and hardened” young men in the North African branch of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse Français. Lest Welles balk at the prospect of allying with the Pétainist youth movement, Murphy assured him that the paramilitary organization was in fact the French equivalent to the Civilian Conservation Corps!\textsuperscript{191} In subsequent reports, Consul General Felix Cole wrote from Algiers praising the “physical and mental conditioning” and the French patriotism of the Chantiers, and requesting that the CCC send Van Hecke materials on their activities.\textsuperscript{192}

American interest soon settled on the “Group of Five,” a conspiratorial clique of “elitists, royalists, and right-wing industrialists” led by wealthy businessman Jacques Lemaigre-Dubreuil, that boasted numerous contacts within the Vichy administration, the military, and the colon community.\textsuperscript{193} These patriotic Frenchmen hoped for a “rightist and authoritarian regime without the Germans,” and saw organizing a coup in North Africa as the first step in that direction.\textsuperscript{194} Lemaigre-Dubreuil told Murphy that he had


\textsuperscript{191} Murphy to Welles, Welles papers, Box 162, FDRL.

\textsuperscript{192} Cole to State, Sept. 26 1941, RG 59, 851R, 20/13, NARA.

\textsuperscript{193} Vaughan, \textit{12 Apostles}, 111.

inserted a “carefully concocted” record of pre-war pro-Nazi activity into French police files in order to establish the necessary *bona fides* to travel freely between occupied France, Vichy France, and North Africa.  

Whether Lemaigre-Dubreuil’s earlier collaborationism was real or concocted, he was, as Pendar pointed out, “unquestionably [a] reactionary.”  

He also enjoyed an unparalleled freedom of movement that allowed him to function as an intermediary between the North African conspirators and their American backers on the one hand, and General Henri Giraud, their putative leader in France, on the other.

General Giraud had been captured by the Germans in May 1940 and imprisoned in Königstein Castle, near Dresden. Staging a dramatic escape in April 1942, he made his way to Vichy France, where he sought the protection of his old friend, Marshal Pétain. Unlike Pétain, however, Giraud was not reconciled to the defeat and partition of France and nor, by virtue of his imprisonment, was he implicated in the French surrender. Once in Vichy territory, Giraud quickly became involved in anti-German scheme centering on promoting an American-backed rebellion in unoccupied France. In early June 1942, after a series of discussions with Lemaigre-Dubreuil, Giraud agreed to shift the focus of his planning to North Africa and to serve as leader of the Group of Five’s planned uprising. Funding, Lemaigre-Dubreuil assured him, would come from American lend-lease, and the United States would “provoke” Germans actions that would then justify a request for American troops to defend the new regime.

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195 Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 116.
197 Solberg report, Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 2, Robert Solberg correspondence 1941–1951, Hoover Institution Archives.
The final critical link between Washington and Giraud was made by Robert Solberg, an OSS agent assigned as military attaché to the Lisbon embassy. In June, acting without OSS chief William Donovan’s approval but with Murphy’s assistance, Solberg traveled to Morocco where he met Lemaigre-Dubreuil. Solberg’s report on Lemaigre-Dubreuil’s announcement that Giraud had agreed to head the putative rebellion had an electrifying effect. To the Americans in North Africa, the conspirator’s plans now seemed complete and convincing. Solberg reported excitedly to OSS headquarters that “luck and daring” had finally opened channels to the last “white hope,” and that in Giraud a leader capable of “getting France into the war again” and of “inviting us to occupy North Africa” had at last been found. Solberg himself received little thanks for his efforts. Having carried out his mission without first securing Donovan’s approval, he succeeded in arousing the ire of the OSS chief, who “dropped” Solberg from the agency. Donovan’s fit of inter-service pique ensured that Solberg’s detailed memorandum of agreement with the North African plotters was filed away undiscussed. But the name of Giraud alone gave the conspiracy a new façade of seriousness.

By the early summer of 1942, it seemed to Murphy that the critical preconditions for an American invasion of North Africa were coming into place. His vice-consuls had gathered voluminous intelligence on the disposition of French and Axis troops, on the beach conditions at possible landing sites, and the condition of physical infrastructure. He and his agents were connected to what they believed to be an extensive and well-organized conspiratorial network. And now he seemed to have found and secured a charismatic and widely respected figurehead. None of this was a moment too soon: in

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198 Ibid.
199 Funk, Politics of Torch, 57.
May, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, deeply embroiled in their own campaign against Gymnast, had refused to authorize arms shipments to the North African plotters. The failure to supply arms had produced a marked cooling in relations between Murphy and the Group of Five. Now, with a suitable leader in place, Murphy thought that he could demonstrate the viability of the North Africa operation, and dispatched Colonel Eddy to Washington to do just that.

In Washington, the bemused Eddy presented a highly optimistic assessment of the political situation in North Africa and the prospects for Allied action to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on June 10 and the following day to the Intelligence Division (G-2) of the Army General Staff. Eddy was careful to emphasize the strength of underground French organization, claiming 35,000 men ready of “offensive action” in Algeria, and 5,000 organized for sabotage activities in Morocco. Noting that the covert operation was a “purely American” affair and that, following State Department orders, they had avoided all contact with the “Moors,” Eddy argued that American planners need not be “timid” about operations in North Africa. On the contrary, he argued, the great majority of the French population favored an Allied victory, and the Giraud organization’s ability to capture the port of Oran and key landing sites would make American landings “very easy.” With a French revolt ready to be set in motion on the orders of “one man”—presumably General Giraud—an American expeditionary force could confidently expect to face nothing more than “token resistance.”

Eddy’s report, delivered straight from the scene of the action by a recognized war hero, was everything Roosevelt might have hoped for when he first set the North African

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operation in motion. The French in North Africa, including government officials, military officers, and ordinary citizens, were said to be organized and ready to revolt. They had found a genuine leader in the incorrigible Giraud. And they planned to seek American backing and to invite an occupation by U.S. troops. The fact that these judgments all turned out to be gross exaggerations, if not outright falsehoods, has led some observers to conclude that the “false optimism” of the COI/OSS agents and the “amateur” diplomacy of the vice-consuls combined to produce a highly inaccurate intelligence picture that led to the American decision to invade North Africa being taken under false pretenses.201 Different authors identify different culprits—Walker points to General Donovan’s desire to demonstrate the importance of the new Office of Strategic Services, while Borden Blair blames Murphy’s right-wing and pro-French bias—but the conclusion is the same: faulty intelligence produces a flawed invasion.

These assessments, picturing blundering intelligence missteps drawing the United States into a North African imbroglio, miss the point. Perhaps today, when “sexed up” intelligence estimates and “dodgy dossiers” are known to have prepared the road to war in Iraq, it is easier to see that plausibly useable, and not objectively accurate, intelligence was the desired product of the Murphy/Eddy network from the beginning. That is not to suggest that the intelligence reaching Washington from North Africa were entirely fabricated. On the contrary, the voluminous reports on beach conditions, troop deployments, and transportation infrastructure generated by the vice-consuls were the result of painstaking work and were often highly accurate. But they were essentially the

outer wrapping for judgments on the degree of political usefulness and military
preparedness of conspiratorial networks that were driven by wish fulfillment rather than
objective analysis. In this framework, even the most fantastical schemes could appear
real and well founded. The wishes, moreover, did not originate with Murphy, Eddy, or
the vice-consuls, but emanated from the very highest levels of the administration. Judged
by its capacity to deliver the product that it was set up to deliver, the covert operation in
North Africa was a resounding success.

The timing of William Eddy’s June 10 and 11 meetings in Washington is critical. It
demonstrates that, as the great debate over Allied strategy was moving to a
conclusion—on June 6 Roosevelt had invited Churchill to Washington for another
summit conference—the President had in his hands intelligence demonstrating the
viability of an American invasion of North Africa. In this light, the decision to resume
the trade accord, also taken on June 11, offered what amounted to a public declaration of
confidence in Giraud, the Group of Five, and their plans to “invite” an American
occupation. In many assessments of the discussions at Second Washington Conference,
however, these developments, perhaps due to their relatively modest weight when viewed
out of context, have been largely eclipsed by the military-strategic situations unfolding in
the Pacific, on the Russian front, and in Libya. But in terms of furnishing the president
with convincing arguments at the critical moment, their significance should not be
underestimated.
1.6) The Second Washington Conference, the “Transatlantic Essay Contest,” and the Decision for Torch

The second Allied summit conference to meet in Washington, called at short notice and without a codename, convened in June 1942 against the backdrop of a series of critical strategic developments. In the Pacific, American naval aviators had secured a decisive victory at the Battle of Midway on June 5, smashing the Imperial Japanese Navy’s aircraft carrier strike force and opening the possibility of going over to the strategic counter-offensive. In Russia, the German army, having survived Russian counter-attacks in the winter and early spring, was rearming and reorganizing in preparation for Operation Blau, a summer offensive on the southern steppes directed towards Stalingrad and the oilfields of the Caucasus. As the Wehrmacht assembled its armored spearheads, Allied leaders again feared for the survival of their Soviet ally. And in the North African desert, the military balance had again swung sharply against Britain. After the Eighth Army’s Crusader offensive had driven the Germans out of Cyrenaica in late 1941, Rommel rebounded, advancing over 600 kilometers in just two weeks in January 1942. After a brief lull, Axis forces opened a new attack on British defensive positions at Gazala on May 26, and by early June British forces were streaming back towards Egypt, leaving an isolated and under-strength garrison behind them in Tobruk.

These developments exercised a powerful influence on the ongoing Anglo-American strategic debate. The victory at Midway, and the enticing strategic prospects it opened up, reinforced the view of U.S. Navy leaders that the bulk of American resources should be allocated to the Pacific. With the British expressing profound skepticism over the prospect of any cross-Channel operation in the near future, and outright opposition to
the “sacrificial” Sledgehammer, Secretary Stimson and Army leaders were increasingly willing to countenance this abandonment of “Germany first,” if only as a negotiating tactic to put pressure on London. If American successes in the Pacific tended to pull resources in that direction, the looming crisis in Russia exercised powerful countervailing pressure. Despite the Soviet Union’s demonstrated ability to weather the German assault in 1941, American leaders remained deeply concerned for its survival in the face of coming Wehrmacht offensive. American concerns were exacerbated by the late May-early June visit to Washington of Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov. In a series of meetings with Roosevelt and key civilian and military leaders, Molotov painted a grim picture of the threats facing the Soviet Union, and one that elicited from the president a promise that the United States would open a “second front” against Germany before the end of the year.202

The President’s commitment to Molotov, made public on June 11, powerfully reinforced the “Germany first” approach and struck an implicit blow at those who favored giving the Pacific primacy. The details, however, were shrouded, as the New York Times editorialized, in a “cryptic” pledge simply to tackle the “urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe in 1942”: the question of where, and how, this new front would be opened were left unresolved.203 Prefiguring her comments on the dispatch of the Wasp to the Mediterranean, in mid June New York Times journalist and Roosevelt confidante Anne O’Hare McCormick probed this ambiguity in her editorial column “Abroad.”

Arguing that the Mediterranean was one of only two remaining “open gates” into Europe

(the other was Murmansk), she concluded that the fighting there already constituted a "second front."  

This Mediterranean front, McCormick concluded, was no mere "sideshow," even if events there were not as "definite and spectacular" as those on the Russian front. Moreover, the Mediterranean was destined to become increasingly important to the United States. McCormick underscored this point by highlighting the recently conducted raid on the Ploesti oilfield in Romania conducted by American heavy bombers based in Egypt. 

Alongside these military-strategic arguments for the importance of the Mediterranean "front," McCormick also raised a parallel political question when she noted that following the fall of France "old Europe" and its associated imperial system, once so "firmly planted" in the Mediterranean, had been "shaken beyond repair." McCormick left the question of what might fill the void was left unanswered, but the implications for American power are not hard to discern.

Anne O’Hare McCormick’s thinking on the “second front” in the Mediterranean did not, of course, necessarily or directly reflect that of the President. But it does illustrate the degree to which the Mediterranean basin was very much on the minds of both policymakers and opinion-formers in this critical period. Moreover, the ambiguities in Roosevelt’s June 11 pledge to Molotov were amplified by high-level figures in his administration. On June 22, for example, Harry Hopkins took time out from the summit conference to join Soviet Ambassador Maxim Litvinov on the stage of a massive Madison Square Garden rally in support of the Soviet war effort. After praising the resilience of the Russian people, Hopkins assured his audience that not only was a second

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front immanent, but that it would be quickly followed by the “third and fourth” fronts necessary to “pen the German Army” into a “ring of our offensive steel.”\footnote{New York Times, June 23 1942.} Hopkins did not speculate on the location of these putative fronts. But the thrust of his widely publicized comments was much closer to Churchill’s notion of “closing the ring” around Germany by a series of peripheral operations than it was to the Army’s concentrated cross-Channel blow.

A similar ambiguity is discernable in Roosevelt’s own thinking. Describing the fruits of the Molotov visit to Churchill on May 31, the president argued that the “precarious” situation in Russia demanded that Bolero (the build-up of American forces in Britain) “proceed to definite action” in 1942.\footnote{Roosevelt to Churchill, May 31 1942, Complete Correspondence, 1: 503.} This message has been cited to demonstrate Roosevelt’s attachment to a cross-Channel assault.\footnote{Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, 78.} But the president was careful to specify an acceleration of Bolero, rather than Roundup, the cross-Channel invasion itself. Exactly where the “definite action” should take place was left unspoken. Later, when discussing the June 11 announcement on the second front with Marshall, Roosevelt dismissed the general’s reluctance to specify that the new front would be opened in 1942.\footnote{Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 577.} For Roosevelt, it seems that at this point the \textit{timing} of an American second front was more important than the precise \textit{location}. Or, to put it another way, Roosevelt’s insistence on haste might serve to push the decision on location in a direction that Marshall and the Joint Chiefs found unacceptable.

These factors—the urgency of opening a second front to succor Russia and the changed strategic situation in the Pacific after Midway—were very much on the minds of
British and American leaders as the gathered in Washington. The third great strategic question bearing down on the Allies, the rapidly deepening crisis of the Eighth Army in the face of Rommel’s renewed offensive, would make itself felt in a dramatic, unanticipated, and decisive manner during the course of the conference itself. Initially, however, a very different crisis appeared to be in the offing. Meeting in Washington on June 19, British and American military leaders quickly formed a united front against Gymnast. While details on what they were for remained vague, George Marshall and Chief of the Imperial General Staff Alan Brooke were clear on what they were against, concluding that Gymnast “should not be undertaken in the existing situation.”

British and American leaders had their own, quite different, reasons for opposing Gymnast, with the British Chiefs of Staff focusing on the crisis in Egypt, and the Americans looking to plow ahead with Bolero/ Sledgehammer/ Roundup. But their opposition was firm and unanimous, and it included a discrete jab at the prospects of securing a French “invitation.” Noting that the success of Gymnast rested on “the existence of certain psychological conditions” in North Africa, the military leaders dismissed the glowing reports delivered by Murphy and Eddy with the blunt assertion that it was “impossible to predict” the French reaction to an invasion. With Brooke expressing his pleasure at finding such “complete unanimity of opinion between the U.S. and British staffs,” the full Combined Chiefs of Staff ratified these conclusions the following day.

210 Record of informal meeting of British and American military leaders, June 19 1942, FRUS 1941-1943, Washington and Casablanca: 428.
211 Ibid., 427.
212 Meeting of Combined Chiefs of Staff, June 20 1942, FRUS 1941-1943, Washington and Casablanca: 429.
While the Combined Chiefs sweated it out in the midsummer heat of Washington, Roosevelt and Churchill met in the relaxed setting of the President’s country home at Hyde Park, New York. It seems reasonable to conclude that their meetings, convened by the President and conducted without formal record, were at least in part intended to confirm and solidify the two leaders’ common preference for *Gymnast* prior to embarking on a showdown with their military advisors. This is certainly what the military leaders conferring in Washington feared. Henry Stimson, as we have seen, had already concluded that Roosevelt was ready to “jump the traces,” while Alan Brooke confided his dark fears of what Roosevelt and Churchill might be “brewing up” at Hyde Park to his diary. It was certain, he concluded, that North Africa would “loom large” in their plans.\(^{213}\)

The full scope of what was shaping up here, amounting to a highly charged and intractable confrontation that lacked any clear procedure for resolution, has often been underestimated. But in the event the crisis was averted by the intervention of a contingent event—the fall of Tobruk—that redirected the conference and, in doing so, the course of the war.

The news of the fall of Tobruk and the surrender of twenty-eight thousand British, Indian, and South Africa soldiers to Rommel’s advancing *Panzerarmee Afrika* arrived in Washington as the conferees were preparing to get down to business. It came as a shocking blow, particularly since the British commander in the Middle East, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, had assured London that the key port city was organized and provisioned to withstand an eighty-day siege. In the event, Rommel’s forces took barely

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three days to batter down the defenses and to open the road to Egypt, the Suez Canal, and the rich oilfields of the Middle East beyond. The blow fell particularly heavily on Churchill, reinforcing a nagging fear that had been building since the battles in northern France in 1940 and the surrender of Singapore to a numerically inferior Japanese army in February 1942 that the British Army was incapable of meeting the demands of modern war. “Defeat is one thing,” Churchill lamented, but “disgrace is another.” The American response to this moment of British crisis and acute embarrassment has become one of the mythic symbols of the wartime alliance: within minutes, Roosevelt and Marshall had offered to ship hundreds of brand-new Sherman tanks and self-propelled guns, together with American aircraft and aircrew, to reinforce the Eighth Army in Egypt. “A friend in need,” Churchill moralized, is a “friend indeed”

Given the broader context within which the Second Washington Conference was held, there was a great deal more going on than Churchill’s account—for long the regnant interpretation—would suggest. George Marshall, despite his implacable opposition to the large-scale commitment of American forces to the Mediterranean, recognized that Egypt could not be allowed to fall to the Axis. With hindsight, the notion that Rommel’s army, operating at the end of tenuous lines of supply, might have plunged deep in the Middle East seems almost absurd. But with Germany readying its summer offensive into the southern steppes of Russia and the Caucasus, and with popular opposition to British imperial domination of Egypt and the Middle East deepening, it did not seem so at the time.

215 Ibid.
The fall of Tobruk presented Marshall with the problem of averting a British collapse in Egypt without sending large numbers of American ground troops to the region, a move that would necessarily lead to a large and ongoing commitment. At the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) meeting prior to the arrival of Churchill and Roosevelt, Marshall had gone so far as to propose the dispatch of a single American division to Egypt, a move that the British, wary of any significant American presence there, had rejected.216 His new proposal in the wake of the capitulation of Tobruk, centered on supplying generous quantities of first-rate American equipment—the Sherman tank was qualitatively superior to British vehicles in service with the Eighth Army—together with easily-redeployable airpower, offered an elegant solution to the problem, even if it meant stripping the tanks from American units currently training with them. This approach, Marshall hoped, would save Egypt without having to abandon the cross-Channel invasion.

Roosevelt came at the problem from a rather different standpoint. He had, after all, arrived from Hyde Park ready to do battle for Gymnast: the fall of Tobruk and the crisis of the Eighth Army now offered an opportunity to take a major step towards securing American engagement in the Mediterranean without a bruising fight with the Joint Chiefs. Typically, the president bid high, throwing out ideas involving the dispatch of an entire American army to “cover the whole front between Alexandria and Teheran,” or, as Stimson noted gloomily, the deployment of a “big force” to Egypt.217 The final agreement to supply tanks, guns, and airpower, while falling far short of these fanciful

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projections, would, as Roosevelt no doubt guessed, be entirely adequate both to secure Egypt and to turn American strategy decisively towards the Mediterranean.

As Allied leaders discussed responding to the crisis in North Africa, President Roosevelt was well aware of the broader opportunities for expanding American influence in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East that were opening up. In April 1942, the United States had joined the British-organized Middle East Supply Center (MESC), a body designed to regulate the supply of commercial goods to Middle Eastern markets and to organize the necessary shipping without disrupting military priorities. Arguing persuasively for viewing the region as an integrated whole, Frederick Winant, who was later appointed Washington’s representative to MESC, pointed out that American participation would facilitate the development of “strong political influence over the affairs of the Near East as a sphere.”

Reports from consular officials and OSS operatives from across the region underscored the point: as the military attaché reported from Teheran, Britain’s “imperialistic design” was weakening and the Iranians “want our trade.” Moreover, as the reports filed by both Averell Harriman and William Bullitt following their missions to the region indicated, United States forces were establishing a substantial regional infrastructure for the transshipment and distribution of Lend-Lease materials. On June 16, just before the Tobruk crisis broke, the Army’s North African (Cairo) and Iranian missions were combined into a new command, the U.S. Army Forces in the Middle East (USAFIME) under General Maxwell. In addition to organizing the critical American

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218 Winant memorandum, April 17 1942, FRUS 1941-1943, 4: 11.
219 Szymanski to War Dept, Map Room, Box 92, FDRL.
bombardebra effort in support of the Eighth Army, USAFIME significantly strengthened the Army’s command and control organization throughout the Middle East.

Continued pressure from American military leaders to limit the commitment to the Middle East while driving ahead with the plans for a cross-Channel assault was reflected in the anodyne memorandum summarizing the decisions of the Second Washington Conference. But, despite adopting only the rather modest proposal to “explore” Gymnast “carefully and conscientiously,” the Second Washington Conference undoubtedly facilitated a decisive shift in American strategy towards North Africa and the Mediterranean. The fall of Tobruk, as Douglas Porch emphasizes, underscored the “enfeebled” nature of Britain’s position in the Eastern Mediterranean and thereby “triggered” Washington’s commitment to a “Mediterranean strategy.” Like Germany, the United States was drawn into the region by the military crisis of a weaker ally; unlike Germany, however, the United States had a great deal to gain from its strategic investment in the Mediterranean. As Anne O’Hare McCormick had noted even before the die was cast at Tobruk, the actual involvement of American combat units in the Mediterranean theater—or front—carried a weight and significance far in excess of their limited initial numbers. After Tobruk, that weight imposed itself irrevocably on America’s strategic choices. For Roosevelt, the fortuitous conjunction of the Washington conference and the fall of Tobruk resolved the critical question without a fight: by the end of the conference, the question was no longer whether the United States would get involved in the Mediterranean or not, but where, when, and for how long.

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220 Draft press release on Washington conference, June 25 1942, Map Room, Naval Aide’s File, FDRL.
221 Porch, Path to Victory, 280-281.
To argue that the Second Washington Conference was the critical turning point in the evolution of American strategy is not to conclude that the road from it to the final decision to proceed with *Gymnast* one month later was a smooth one. On the contrary, it passed through what Mark Stoler accurately described as the “worst civil-military […] clashes of the war.”\(^2\) While the minutiae of this tortured process need not concern us here, the overall picture is of importance because it illustrates, once again, the lengths to which President Roosevelt was prepared to go to secure a commitment to an invasion of North Africa.

In the immediate aftermath of the Washington conference, General Marshall again pressed for a major cross-Channel operation in 1942, noting in exasperation that *Gymnast* has been “studied and re-studied” but was still a “poor substitute” for a cross-Channel attack.\(^3\) Even worse, Marshall concluded, the diversion of resources to North Africa would “emasculate” the cross-Channel effort. As British opposition to a cross-Channel venture in 1942 stiffened—on July 8 Churchill reported to Roosevelt that no “responsible” British leader would “recommend” *Sledgehammer*—Marshall and Admiral King changed tack.\(^4\) Following a JCS meeting on July 10, the Army Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations drafted a memorandum to the president in which they concluded that if “whole-hearted” British support for *Sledgehammer* were not forthcoming, the United States should “turn to the Pacific and strike decisively at Japan.”\(^5\) This open challenge to the entire “Germany first” framework of Allied

\(^3\) Marshall memorandum, June 23 1942, Map Room, Box 165, FDRL.
\(^4\) Churchill to Roosevelt, July 8 1942, *Complete Correspondence*, 1: 520.
\(^5\) Marshall and King memorandum, July 10 1942, Map Room, Box 165, FDRL.
strategy, even if partly a bluff to force the British into backing *Sledgehammer*, forced the President to show his own hand more openly.

Replying to Marshall and King from Hyde Park, Roosevelt proffered support for a cross-Channel attack in 1943 but argued that the United States could not “wait” until then to “strike at Germany.”

Turning to the question of the critical challenge raised by the military leaders, he argued that whereas America was “doing well” in the Pacific, the Allies were “losing” in Africa and on the Russian front. Action against Germany was therefore urgent and critical, and could come either by “going into Africa through the Red Sea”—that is fighting alongside the British in Egypt—or, and as he preferred, by launching *Gymnast* with American forces in the lead. Although it would not win the war with one blow, *Gymnast* would “hurt Germany, save the Middle East, and make Italy vulnerable to our air forces.” Having clarified his own position and set his face decisively against any retreat from “Germany first,” Roosevelt moved quickly, if by his usual circuitous method, to resolve the deep and potentially damaging rift within the very highest levels of the American government.

On July 16 Roosevelt dispatched General Marshall and Admiral King to London with instructions to conclude a “definitive plan” of action with the British, noting “it is of the highest importance that U.S. ground troops be brought into action against the enemy in 1942.” Harry Hopkins was included in the delegation largely to give the President a back channel of communication to both the American representatives and their British interlocutors. The American delegation was instructed to probe again the possibility of

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226 Roosevelt to Marshall and King, July 11 1942, Map Room, Box 165, FDRL.  
227 Roosevelt, written instructions to Marshall and King, July 16 1942, PSF, Marshall, FDRL.
mounting *Sledgehammer*, but Roosevelt must have already known with absolute certainty that this could only be a pro forma exercise that would lead nowhere. In the anticipated event of a failure to get agreement on *Sledgehammer*, the delegates were furnished with a long list of alternatives that included holding onto the Middle East as “strongly as possible” and that pointed inexorably towards a drive against Rommel’s “backdoor” by way of French North Africa. The President’s proposals thus led unerringly towards *Gymnast*. To drive home the point, Roosevelt took the unusual step of issuing these instructions in the form of an order from the commander-in-chief, and he gave the delegation one week in which to achieve “total agreement” with the British.

At this critical conjuncture, President Roosevelt’s determination to secure agreement on *Gymnast* may well have been reinforced by a remarkable survey that reached his desk as he was drafting his instructions to Marshall and King. Conducted by American agents in North Africa under the supervision of Princeton professor Hadley Cantril, the survey, commissioned by the President himself and organized through the Psychological Warfare Branch of Military Intelligence, presented a review of public opinion in French North Africa. Despite the narrowness of the sample—agents were only able to conduct 142 “usable” interviews—Cantril concluded that ninety percent of Frenchmen living in North Africa favored and Allied victory, and over seventy percent would not resist an Allied invasion. Moreover, of those that did resist, the majority would do so “half-heartedly,” particularly if the invasion force was led by Americans and excluded Gaullists; over eighty percent apparently believed that the United States had no

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“imperialistic interests” in the region. However dubious its statistical methodology, Cantril’s survey added grist to the presidential mill as the process of strategic deliberation was finally pushed to a conclusion.

Squeezed between London’s refusal to agree to *Sledgehammer* and Roosevelt’s orders to secure a plan for action against Germany in 1942, the discussion between the American delegates and their British hosts unfolded along entirely predictable lines. On July 23, Roosevelt cabled his representatives to tell them, with no little irony, that their report that the talks had deadlocked over London’s continued refusal to countenance *Sledgehammer* had not “wholly take[n] me by surprise.”²²⁹ He then reiterated that “some other offensive” must “be worked out for American ground forces in 1942,” a demand that, in the circumstances, could only mean settling for some variant of *Gymnast*.

Marshall and King, trapped between the British and their president, were finally forced to concede. Harry Hopkins, fearing that an agreement without a clear timetable would leave room for backsliding, cabled Roosevelt to urge him to set a definite date, and the president shot back a proposal that the invasion be launched before October 30.²³⁰ On July 25th all parties agreed, and *Gymnast* was rechristened with the more uplifting code name of *Torch*.

Writing to President Roosevelt as the final push towards agreement on *Gymnast* was building momentum, Winston Churchill argued that the proposed invasion of North Africa was a “true second front” and one that would bring effective “relief” for the pressures building against Russia in the East.²³¹ It was also, he noted, the President’s own

²²⁹ Roosevelt to Hopkins, July 23 1942, PSF, Hopkins, FDRL.
²³⁰ Roosevelt to Hopkins, July 24 1942, PSF, Hopkins, FDRL.
²³¹ Churchill to Roosevelt, July 8 1942, Complete Correspondence, 1: 520.
“commanding idea.” While Churchill had good reason to know many inside details of Roosevelt’s strategic agenda, his observation was hardly unique. Both contemporary actors and historians have captured the president’s abiding interest in North Africa in graphic terms, from Henry Stimson’s “great secret baby” to Arthur Funk’s “magnet whose attraction never failed.”

Roosevelt stood at the center of the complex and intertwined strands of diplomatic, military, and covert, action that, dividing and uniting both within individual states and across national lines, finally culminated in the decision to invade French North Africa. Throughout this long process, Roosevelt exercised a constant presence and pressure, his hand sometimes hidden and manipulating, sometimes open and forceful, but always pressing in the same direction. Given the implacable hostility of the entire American military establishment to a “dispersion debauch” in North Africa, it is no exaggeration to say that, without the president’s constant attention and intervention, there would have been no substantial commitment of American ground troops to the Mediterranean. The bigger question, however, asks why did Roosevelt pursue his “secret baby” with such determination and at such potential cost?

Central leaders of great modern states rarely act alone. In the broadest sense, they spring from, and reflect, the outlook of specific social layers and classes, and they are surrounded by the apparatus of state, administration, and party. Yet in Roosevelt’s case there is at least the appearance of a man acting alone, an appearance reinforced by secretive work habits, delight in fostering bureaucratic competition and duplication, and a reluctance to enunciate a broad geopolitical vision. Certainly, several prominent figures were vouched safe at least parts of Roosevelt’s thinking. Sumner Welles, for example,

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232 Funk, Politics of Torch, 72.
was on numerous occasions key to the removal of bureaucratic obstacles to presidential policy within the administration, a task that demanded a significant understanding of, and agreement with, that policy. Other senior officials, such as William Leahy and William Bullitt, clearly shared a degree of political intimacy with the President that allowed them to contribute to the shaping of strategy. But neither had the whole picture, or, if they did, cared to record it. Unlike Churchill, who considered himself at least the equal of his service chiefs in matters of strategic insight, Roosevelt generally deferred to the professional judgment of the Joint Chiefs and their planning staffs. Yet over North Africa he not only fought them to the bitter end, but also set up the diplomatic and undercover operations that gave him the leverage to override them.

Two reasons have often been cited to explain Roosevelt’s enthusiasm for action in North Africa. The first is that his concern for developments in Russia and his pledge to Molotov to open a second front demanded urgent action, and that in the face of intransigent British opposition to Sledgehammer that meant action in Africa. The second is that Roosevelt needed the rapid engagement of American combat troops in Europe to shore up support for “Germany first” and to boost Democratic chances in the upcoming midterm elections. But while these factors were certainly present, it is easy to exaggerate their significance. Roosevelt, in common with the Joint Chiefs, did believe that it was necessary to mount an attack that would draw German forces away from the hard-pressed Russians. But, and particularly if Hopkins’ call for several new fronts to “encircle” Germany can be taken as an indication of presidential thinking, there is no reason to see this desire for action leading irrevocably towards Africa. Moreover, and as the Joint Chiefs never tired of pointing out, a cross-Channel assault would force a substantially
greater German response—and therefore draw off more forces from the Russian front—than would a similar blow landed in North Africa.

As a politician unusually attuned to shifts in public opinion, it is safe to assume that the fall elections were an element in Roosevelt’s thinking. It could hardly have been otherwise: however “imperial” the presidency was becoming, it was still needed solid support in Congress. In this light, as Stephen Casey argues, many of Roosevelt’s actions can be read as a “cautious crusade” mediated through a dialectical interaction with public opinion. George Marshall recalled that Roosevelt did urge him to get American troops ashore before the fall elections and to prevail on the British to postpone their offensive at El Alamein until after the election on the basis that “the limeys always foul things up.” But to recognize that Roosevelt had domestic considerations on his mind is not to concede the accusation, made by General Wedemeyer amongst others, that the president subordinated strategy to party politics. As Marshall noted, when told that the landings would have to take place after the election Roosevelt “never said a word about it.” Moreover, it is easy to exaggerate the public demand for action: an opinion poll in June 1942 registered that fully fifty-six percent of Americans believed that the United States was already “doing all we can do” to defeat Germany and Japan. Fifty percent also believed that Germany was the “number one enemy,” with a further twenty percent seeing Germany and Japan as equals, results that meant that Roosevelt was not under burning domestic pressure to validate the “Germany first” approach.235

234 Pogue, George C. Marshall, 593.  
So what was the source of Roosevelt’s long campaign for Gymnast? The most likely explanation is that, in contrast to the circumscribed and essentially apolitical thinking of his military leaders, the President adopted a broad, multifaceted, and political approach. Roosevelt’s approach grasped the essentials of “grand” strategy, in which “fighting power” is but “one of the instruments.” According to Clausewitz, strategy is the “art of using battles to win the war,” but in grand strategy economic and political means complement the purely military, even if they produce a more circumlocutious or “peripheral” approach. Moreover, the defeat of Germany and the advance of American interests—or of “Americanism”—went hand-in-hand: they were, that is to say, integrated and simultaneous goals, not separate and sequential ones. This approach was underscored by the particular geopolitical situation opened by the collapse of France, the power vacuum created in the Mediterranean (as accurately identified by Anne O’Hare McCormick), and the consequent question of France’s future status as a great power. This framework, of course, also rested on viewing North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Europe, if not necessarily as an integrated whole, then at least as “complementary” rather than “competing” theaters.

It is unlikely that Roosevelt would have pursued his “secret baby” with such determination if the cross-Channel approach advanced by Marshall had offered a plausible short-term prospect of success. Yet even the Army planners most closely associated with Sledgehammer were forced to admit that the operation would be both sacrificial and largely British. Both elements were surely unpalatable to Roosevelt, who aimed for victory, not sacrifice, and for whom a British-dominated invasion of France

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was both militarily and politically unacceptable. All this is not to argue that Roosevelt had a fully worked-out plan for North Africa, let alone a comprehensive “Mediterranean strategy.” He was too much of a politician, too aware of contingency, and too little restrained by rigid planning for that. But, backed by carefully cultivated covert operations and the intelligence they yielded, he pushed hard enough to set operations in motion, cognizant—as a good politician and a dynamic thinker—that they would then unfold with a logic and momentum of their own. The indeterminate phase, the critical period of confusion and indecision, was relatively brief, lasting from America’s formal entry into the war until the decision for Torch at the end of July 1942. But it was a moment in which the actions of the President, together with a very small group of advisers, played a decisive role, articulating, perhaps only partially consciously, the course of the rising American hegemon.

1.7) Keeping Spain Out of the War: Washington and the Appeasement of Franco

As Washington’s strategic interest in North Africa developed under President Roosevelt’s continual prodding, so Spain began to loom ever larger in the thinking of policymakers and military planners. Although not overtly involved in the war, General Francisco Franco’s marked pro-Axis sympathies—reflected in Spain’s self-proclaimed status as a “non-belligerent” rather than a neutral power—implied an ever-present threat that Madrid might seize the British outpost of Gibraltar and close the Western entrance to the Mediterranean to Allied shipping. If Spain was to make such a move whilst an American invasion of North Africa was underway, the potentially disastrous
consequences for troops cut off within the Mediterranean were self-evident. For American military leaders, already deeply skeptical about Mediterranean operations, the threat of Spanish intervention seemed to offer a substantial, and potentially decisive, argument against undertaking such operations at all. For Roosevelt, then, the question of fashioning a diplomatic policy designed to keep Spain out of the war assumed great importance both as an end in itself and as part of his broader effort to neutralize the opposition of the Joint Chiefs to Gymnast.

Few aspects of America’s wartime foreign policy aroused as much domestic controversy as did Washington’s effort to keep Spain out of the war. Opposition to Washington’s policy—widely viewed as “appeasement”—was magnified by the fact that it built upon the Administration’s earlier attitude towards the Spanish Civil War, a policy that many Americans already viewed as being deeply flawed and perhaps even partially responsible for the rightist victory. Washington’s decision to recognize the Franco government, taken in April 1939 in the immediate aftermath of war, had been seen by many as an act of betrayal and appeasement, and the Administration’s course in the early years of World War Two seemed to represent a continuation of this mistaken policy. The popularity of the Spanish Republican cause amongst liberals and radicals in the United States ensured that there was a permanent political groundswell against any rapprochement with Madrid. Spearheaded by the liberal journals the Nation and the New Republic, this sentiment was strongly reflected in mainstream liberalism and was shared by senior policymakers including Vice President Henry Wallace, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr., and Interior Secretary Harold Ickes. The fact that the political fault-lines over Spain ran right into the heart of the Administration serves to underscore
the fact that, as with North Africa, American policy was very much the President’s policy.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull expressed sympathy for the democratically elected Republican government. Both, however, were deeply troubled by the revolutionary potential of the struggle unfolding in Spain and in particular by Madrid’s policy of arming “irresponsible members of left-wing political organizations.” For this reason, and at least in the critical early years of the war, a victory for Franco’s Nationalists seemed, if unpalatable from the viewpoint of abstract democracy, to be less dangerous than a socialist revolution, and the Administration’s policy of ostensible neutrality was crafted to justify the avoidance of any steps that might have aided the Republic. The United States did not sign the international arms embargo initiated by London and Paris in July 1936, but it endorsed it in practice: when an American company challenged Washington’s policy of a voluntary or “moral” embargo by shipping airplane engines to the Republic, Roosevelt denounced its action as “unpatriotic” and urged congressional leaders to give the embargo the force of law. Congress obliged, passing the Arms Embargo Act in January 1937. The refusal of the western democracies to sell weapons to the Republic ensured that it was denied critical supplies of modern arms at a time when Germany and

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238 Hull, Memoirs, 1: 60).
Italy were backing the Nationalists with the arms and troops contingents that proved decisive to the outcome of the war.\textsuperscript{241}

As the war in Spain continued and it became clear that German and Italian intervention would facilitate a crushing Nationalist victory, Roosevelt became increasingly worried that a Franco victory might upset the entire European balance of power. This concern led to a new willingness to support the Republic, and the President himself initiated a belated and unsuccessful cloak and dagger effort to circumvent the arms embargo and to ship warplanes to Spain.\textsuperscript{242} Reversing his earlier position, Roosevelt informed the cabinet in January 1939 that the arms embargo should have applied only to American ships, leaving the Republican government free to buy arms on condition it shipped them in Spanish vessels.\textsuperscript{243} Roosevelt developed this argument further, suggesting that American companies should have been allowed to supply the Republican government with weapons for self-defense, and that blocking such shipments “indirectly helped the [Franco] revolution.”\textsuperscript{244} Ironically, perhaps, this candid admission now served to legitimize trade with the newly recognized government of General Franco, which was allowed to trade with the United States on a “cash and carry” basis.

Whatever Roosevelt’s regrets over the outcome of the Civil War, Washington’s approach to Madrid in 1939 and early 1940 was governed by its broader campaign to use diplomatic and commercial inducements to defuse the slide towards a general war in


Europe. Initial efforts to split Italy from Germany by offering preferential trade agreements and recognition of Rome’s imperial ambitions in Ethiopia came to naught when Italy invaded France on June 10 1940. Now, with Italy in the war alongside Germany, it became imperative to dissuade Spain from following suit, and Washington accelerated the course it had been on since the summer of 1939. If the word can be disentangled from the moral approbation that clings to it, then this policy of responding to a perceived threat by utilizing economic and political incentives to avoid undesirable consequences can fairly be described as one of appeasement.

In pursuing this course Washington broadly fell in line with British policy. London’s relations with Spain were governed by the need to safeguard British investments in the Iberian Peninsula, protect critical supplies of Spanish iron ore, and, above all, to keep Madrid out of the war. If Spain joined the Axis, or even if it simply allowed German troops to cross its territory, then the key British base at Gibraltar would become untenable. Without Gibraltar, British dominance of the Mediterranean would be undermined, the shortest route to India severed, and the entire structure of imperial rule imperiled. Faced with this dire prospect, and with its military stretched thin, London utilized its considerable economic influence in Spain to appease Madrid by offering commercial and financial incentives as a reward for neutrality. In September 1939 a wartime trade agreement was signed under which Britain allowed Spanish commerce to pass its naval blockade. A supplementary agreement in March 1940 adjusted Spanish debts and extended a £2 million loan for economic reconstruction. As France collapsed the following summer, London reinforced this effort by dispatching Sir Samuel Hoare, former foreign secretary and a leading proponent of “non-intervention” during the Civil
War, as ambassador to Madrid. Hoare understood his task in grandiose imperial terms, arguing that if Gibraltar fell then the entire “maintenance of the British Empire” would be rendered “impossible.”

Although Spanish belligerency did not pose such a direct threat to the United States as it did to London, Washington’s increasing effort to support Britain led it to step up its own effort to appease the Franco government. In late May 1939 Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles met with Madrid’s new ambassador to Washington, Señor Don Juan Francisco de Cardenas. It was a cordial affair, driven by a mutual interest in the establishment of “friendly and advantageous” relations. Welles agreed to back Cardenas’ request for a two-year Import-Export Bank credit to fund the purchase of 300,000 bales of American cotton, cautioning only that the full normalization of commercial relations was dependent upon Madrid showing due respect for American investments in Spain, and in particular on the ending of its harassment of International Telephone and Telegraph. IT&T was the major American company operating in Spain, and the former owner of the national telephone network. The Franco government had recently nationalized IT&T’s holdings, using allegations that American managers had favored the Republican side during the Civil War to justify the takeover and the exclusion of IT&T officials from Spain.

Over the next several months the gradual resolution of the intertwined issues of the cotton loan and IT&T’s Spanish operations laid the basis for closer Hispano-American commercial relations. But neither went smoothly. While Welles and the State

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246 Welles memorandum, May 29 1939, Welles Papers, Box 166, Folder 3, Europe Files 1933–1943, FDRL.
Department backed the cotton loan, pointing to Cardenas’ assurance that it would reinforce “moderate” elements in Madrid, opposition from Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, and presidential advisor Harry Hopkins almost derailed the deal. Finally, President Roosevelt’s personal intervention broke the deadlock, and the first cotton left New Orleans for Spain in August 1939.247 Presidential confidante Sumner Welles’ espousal of this cause and the direct Presidential intervention necessary to push it forward are both indicative of Roosevelt’s detailed interest in the direction of Spanish policy.

For its part, Madrid moved slowly to resolve the IT&T dispute as Foreign Secretary and anglophile Juan Beigbeder and other pragmatic “moderates” battled the pro-Axis Falange led by Minister of the Interior Serrano Suñer. Although the Falangists continued to demand German control of the telephone company, Franco, responding to Washington’s approval of the cotton contract, decided in August 1939 to allow IT&T officials back into Spain to contest the expropriation. As Roosevelt was putting his personal stamp on American policymaking so Franco, mediating between antagonistic factions within the ruling elite, was largely responsible for the direction of Spanish policy. He was, moreover, able to sublimate conflicting pressures and impulses, leaning politically towards the Axis but drawing economic sustenance from the British and Americans.

With the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, the Spanish government proclaimed a policy of “strict neutrality” and exchanged diplomatic notes with Washington in which both powers pledged to work to limit the scope of the conflict.

247 Welles memoranda, June 28 and July 28 1939, Welles Papers, Box 166, Folder 3, Europe Files 1933–1943, FDRL.
Behind the diplomatic hypocrisy—Cordell Hull embraced Franco’s “moving appeal” on behalf of the world’s “humbler classes”—the exchange signaled that, despite Madrid’s Axis sympathies and Washington’s pro-British stance, both would endeavor to foster their developing bi-lateral relations.248 Pushing further along these lines, Ambassador Cardenas proposed that Spain purchase a further 200,000 tons of American wheat, and Welles responded with a promise to help secure the necessary financing.249 As a neutral power itself, the United States did not attempt to regulate “private” trade with Spain, and Spanish access to American oil—the most important commodity it imported—was regulated only by its ability to pay and to secure passage through the British blockade. Under the terms of its own trade agreement with Spain, London was happy to grant the “navicerts” or commercial passports necessary for safe passage.

As German victories mounted in the summer of 1940, and despite the importance of Anglo-American trade to its economy, Spain came close to casting off the mask of neutrality and joining the war. Madrid had forged close ties with Berlin, and Rome during the Civil War and, while continuing to claim neutrality, Franco broadcast his support for the Axis loudly and frequently. Even before the end of the Civil War the Nationalists had facilitated extensive German intervention in the Spanish economy in exchange for receiving shipments of military equipment. Now Spain agreed to help organize the resupply of German U-boats and to open its airfields to Luftwaffe reconnaissance operations. German military intelligence agents operated freely in Spain, staffing observation posts and gathering high-quality information on Allied shipping

248 Department of State Bulletin, Sept. 9 1939.
249 Welles memo, Nov. 29 1939, Welles Papers, Box 166, Folder 3, Europe Files 1933–1943, FDRL.
passing through the Straits of Gibraltar. On the propaganda front the German embassy exercised considerable influence over the Spanish press, stamping it with a marked pro-Axis basis.\footnote{See Christian Leitz, *Sympathy for the Devil: Neutral Europe and Nazi Germany in World War II* (New York: NYU Press, 2001).}

The Franco regime hailed the progress of German forces in Northern France, and after Italy joined the war by launching its own modest invasion, Madrid abandoned neutrality for “non-belligerence.” This vague status implied active promotion of the Axis cause that fell somewhat short of actual war. But, with Falangist street demonstrators breaking the windows of the British embassy demanding the return of Gibraltar to Spain and the extension of Spain’s African empire, “non-belligerency” was widely viewed as a step towards war. On June 14, having reinforced its army in Spanish-ruled Morocco, Madrid annexed Tangier in the hope of strengthening its hand in the redistribution of colonial property in the Mediterranean that would surely follow an Axis victory. With this single bold stroke Franco overthrew the international protectorate of Tangier established by Britain, France, Italy, and Spain in 1928. Under different circumstances, Franco’s action would have caused a major international incident, but in the summer of 1940 it was barely noticed.\footnote{On the status of Tangier, see C. G. Fenwick, “The International Status of Tangier,” *The American Journal of International Law* 23, no. 1 (1929).}

When German troops reached the Pyrenees in June 1940, the stage seemed set for Spain to enter the war. The new British ambassador Samuel Hoare was greeted by rowdy pro-Axis demonstrations, and London advised him to keep an aircraft on hand for a rapid departure if Germany troops moved into Spain. Washington’s ambassador, career diplomat and Virginia gentleman Alexander Weddell, drew similar conclusions. Noting
rightist jubilation at the fall of France, Weddell feared that the Falangists were about to “overbear” the more traditionalist “conservative” elements within the ruling bloc. His fears were well founded. On June 19, 1940, acting on his conviction that a German victory was imminent, Franco proposed to Hitler that Spain enter the war. But the German leader, believing that the war was as good as won and fearing that last-minute Spanish involvement would complicate postwar relations with Vichy France in North Africa, demurred, taking over a week to dispatch an unenthusiastic reply. It was a decision he would soon come to regret.

As British resistance continued into the fall of 1940, German interest in Spain revived. In September, navy chief Admiral Raeder argued that the destruction of British power in the Mediterranean would help prepare a final assault on the United Kingdom, and, as the defeat of the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain ruled out an immediate cross-Channel assault, his views won a hearing within the German high command. An offensive into the Mediterranean would also allow Germany to maintain the strategic momentum built up in the heady months of early summer. The capture of Gibraltar appeared to offer particularly favorable opportunities for the rapid dislocation of British power in the Mediterranean, and plans for Operation Felix, an audacious dash across Spain by two army corps and an air armada, were soon complete. By late October detailed operational planning and the assembly and training of designated units were underway. Now at the center of their strategic thinking, German planners scheduled Felix for January 1941. This was, it is worth emphasizing, a serious and plausible plan

252 Weddell to Hull, June 17 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 798–799.
253 Leitz, Sympathy for the Devil, 122.
that offered Berlin a road out of the strategic impasse that it confronted following the enforced abandonment of plans for an invasion of Britain. The problem was that Felix could not be implemented without Madrid’s approval.

The very factors that impelled Berlin towards Felix now militated against its winning Spanish approval. Willing to jump into the war when victory seemed at hand, British resistance now gave Franco good reason to remain “non-belligerent.” At a series of leadership meetings culminating in a Hitler–Franco summit at Hendaye on October 23, the Spanish responded to German demands for action by arguing that the economic and social dislocation of the Civil War precluded their active participation in a protracted conflict. It was a hard case to answer. After three years of war the country was economically broken, with industrial production at barely 70 percent of its 1935 level and agricultural activity so disrupted that Spain was dependent on imported food. The Spanish suggested that they would join the war if Germany could meet their needs for food and fuel, but both parties knew that Germany neither had this capacity nor was likely to acquire it in the short term.

On top of these economic difficulties, Franco feared that, despite victory in the Civil War and the subsequent terror unleashed against supporters of the Republic, his rule was not yet fully consolidated. As Ambassador Cardenas put it to Sumner Welles, a German attempt to force Spain into the war would “unquestionably” lead to widespread “revolutionary outbreaks” as former Republican fighters seized the opportunity to reopen the Civil War. On December 10, 1940 Franco gave Admiral Canaris, the German

256 Welles memo, April 16 1940, Welles Papers, Box 166, Folder 3, Europe Files 1933–1943, FDRL.
intelligence chief who was in Madrid to oversee planning for *Felix*, the unwelcome news that Spain would not enter the war until Britain’s defeat was certain. The following day Hitler suspended preparations for *Felix* and in January 1941, with plans for the invasion of Russia proceeding apace, the operation was cancelled. Although Berlin continued to toy with the idea of an attack on Gibraltar, no subsequent plan received serious operational consideration.

With hindsight, it is clear that by the end of 1940 there was no possibility that Spain would enter the war prior to a British collapse. But none of this was obvious to contemporary observers, despite Admiral Leahy’s *post facto* claim to have believed from the fall of 1940 that Franco was attempting to “appear neutral” while actually being “on the side of the Allies.” On the contrary, reports of German U-boats resupplying in Spanish ports and the constant drumbeat of pro-Axis propaganda in the Spanish press created the impression that belligerency remained likely. Nor was Madrid eager to dispel this impression: Spain’s ability to extract the maximum benefit from its neutrality rested on encouraging the Allies to advance economic assistance in order to deter it from entering the war, and without the perception of probable belligerence this leverage would be lost.

Madrid’s outspoken enthusiasm for the Axis and its apparent lurch towards war in the summer of 1940 challenged American plans for sustaining Spanish neutrality. Trying to probe the meaning of Madrid’s “non-belligerence,” Ambassador Weddell noted that his instructions explicitly tied American exports of cotton and other agricultural products

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to Spanish neutrality.\textsuperscript{258} Did Spain’s new status require new instructions, he asked? In reply, Cordell Hull instructed Weddell to act in accordance with his existing instructions and to continue pressing for a comprehensive trade agreement. At the same time, Washington reinforced its own position by tightening the supply of oil, declaring that it was too dangerous for American-registered tankers to carry oil to Spain and having Sumner Welles meet with oil company executives to request that they keep Spanish sales within “customary limits.”\textsuperscript{259} The resulting constriction of oil supplies quickly yielded results, with Madrid finally settling the long-running dispute over the telephone company to the satisfaction of both IT&T and the American government in mid-August. Reporting the settlement, Weddell proposed rewarding Madrid by a resumption of unlimited gasoline shipments, and the State Department concurred.\textsuperscript{260} In addition to achieving their immediate goals, these exchanges demonstrated to American policymakers Spain’s acute sensitivity to the use of oil as a diplomatic weapon.

With the telephone company issue resolved, Ambassador Weddell pressed Washington to facilitate a rapid all-round expansion of trade with Spain. Painting a graphic picture of Spain’s food crisis, he proposed extending a further $100 million loan for the purchase of American wheat, gasoline, and cotton. Without this relief, Weddell warned, Spain could quickly slide into economic chaos, spurring “internal uprisings” that might threaten the Franco regime.\textsuperscript{261} Franco, Weddell implied, should be rewarded both for keeping out of the war, and for serving as a bulwark against popular insurrection. The

\textsuperscript{258} Weddell to Hull, June 13 1940, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 797.
\textsuperscript{259} Herbert Feis, \textit{The Spanish Story: Franco and the Nations at War} (New York: W.W. Norton, 1948), 45.
\textsuperscript{260} Weddell to Hull, Aug. 19 1940, and Hull to Weddell, Aug. 30 1940, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 896–897.
\textsuperscript{261} Weddell to Hull, Sept. 7 1940, \textit{FRUS 1940}, 2: 807.
State Department and the President embraced Weddell’s conclusions, again
demonstrating that a fear of revolution was never far below the surface, and negotiations
with Madrid proceeded rapidly. Talks centered on securing a large American loan and on
the possibility, floated by Roosevelt himself, of utilizing the Red Cross as a conduit for
substantial donations of American foodstuffs. The President intervened personally to get
a State Department demand that Madrid publicly reaffirm its neutrality downgraded to a
mere request for confidential and “personal” assurances of Franco’s good intentions.262

With President Roosevelt’s explicit support, Spain’s trade with the United States
now looked set for rapid expansion. But in the fall of 1940 the political climate in the
United States was quite different from what it had been a year earlier, and while the 1939
cotton loan had passed almost unnoticed—meriting just two one-line references in the
New York Times—the new round of commercial negotiations provoked a storm of
criticism.263 Negotiations on the new loan overlapped with the November presidential
elections and with Roosevelt’s campaign to prepare American public opinion for war by
presenting the unfolding world situation as an irreconcilable conflict between democracy
and totalitarianism.

Stepped-up aid to Franco’s Spain now appeared to contradict directly Roosevelt’s
loudly broadcast and sharply etched Manichean worldview. In this context, the carefully
crafted vision of the United States as the “arsenal of democracy” and the accompanying
campaign to send aid to Britain could not be easily squared with the dispatch of potential
war materiel to the openly pro-Axis dictatorship in Madrid. Roosevelt may have thought
that he could avoid a damaging public discussion—he was certainly no stranger to

262 Welles to Weddell, Nov. 20 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 838.
sublimating contradictions between public policy statements and well-veiled actions—but, if so, he misjudged the dynamics of a political situation largely of his own making.

Administration liberals—now increasingly refashioned as warhawks—led the charge, with Interior Secretary Harold Ickes scorning the State Department’s “appeasement bent” and its naïve notion that “Spain can be kept from adhering to Hitler if only we send some money in to feed the Spaniards.”264 Ickes urged Treasury Secretary Morgenthau to block the Spanish loan in the Export-Import Bank, forwarding him a letter from radical journalist Jay Allen that denounced the deal as “grotesque and criminal” appeasement.265 When muckraking journalist Drew Pearson called Morgenthau to announce that he planned to “pan hell” out of the State Department in his syndicated column, he hinted encouragingly that department officials were already concerned lest Export-Import Bank officials derail the loan.266 Pearson and Morgenthau agreed that the notion that American trade could keep Spain out of the war was “hog-wash.”

A flurry of articles in the liberal press denounced the proposed loan, arguing that, since Franco was Hitler’s puppet and would enter the war when ordered, appeasement was doomed to fail. The Nation, describing the loan as a “criminal betrayal” of democracy, asked whether Roosevelt had forgotten his stirring election-time “repudiation” of appeasement.267 Drew Pearson delivered his promised “panning” of the State Department in his widely read “Washington Merry-Go-Round” column on December 13 and 20, 1940. Beyond its sneering references to “State Department career

264 Ickes, diary entry, Nov. 23 1940, Ickes, Secret Diary, 373.
265 Allen to Ickes, Oct. 21 1940, Morgenthau Diary, 324, 204–208, FDRL.
267 Editorials, The Nation, Oct. 26 and Nov. 23 1940.
boys” the column got its bite from the implication that it was based on detailed inside
information. Pearson indicated that Weddell and Hull were responsible for the loan, that
Ickes and Morgenthau opposed it, and that under political pressure Welles and Roosevelt
might block it. This admixture of inside dope, half-truth and speculation hit a sensitive
nerve. Calling a special press conference on December 21, Cordell Hull scored Pearson’s
“wholly inaccurate” article, stating implausibly that he had never heard of the loan until
questioned by a reporter in early December. Sumner Welles followed suite, denying
that the State Department was considering loan to Spain and making his own implausible
assertion that there wasn’t the “slightest important difference of opinion” between him
and Cordell Hull.

This storm of opposition to the “appeasement” of Madrid, breaking just as
President Roosevelt was stepping up his cautious crusade to win public support for
America’s entry into the war, effectively derailed the loan. Modest food relief efforts
organized through the Red Cross continued, but the administration felt compelled to
bring policy into line with rhetoric and to drop, at least for the time being, the pursuit of
closer ties with Madrid. “You have no idea of the difficulties we are facing […] by
reason of […] terrific criticism,” Hull complained in a note explaining the decision to
Ambassador Weddell. Undeterred, Weddell continued to press Washington to organize
substantial food shipments to Spain. Again, the ambassador raised the specter of
communism, arguing that widespread hunger might “provoke” the Spanish people to

268 Department of State Bulletin, December 21 1940.
269 Department of State Bulletin, December 28 1940.
270 Hull to Weddell, Dec. 27 1940, FRUS 1940, 2: 852.
launch an anti-government “upheaval.”\textsuperscript{271} As well as supporting the “general cause of British victory,” Weddell continued, American aid would advance a “calculated policy of supporting the Spanish government […] in its efforts to continue as a nonbelligerent.”

London also urged Washington to “help” Spain by facilitating trade and providing relief supplies of food.\textsuperscript{272} But, stung by public criticism that honed in on the contradiction between articulating a global struggle between democracy and totalitarianism while actively appeasing the dictatorship in Madrid, the Administration temporarily backed away from its efforts to expand trade with Spain. In the early months of 1941, Washington stressed the ideological dimensions of the looming world war, typified by Roosevelt’s articulation of the struggle for the “Four Freedoms” in his January 6 State of the Union Address; at this critical moment the demands of a globalist vision outweighed the expediency of appeasement. This approach translated into diplomacy, with Hull instructing Weddell to support the “struggle against totalitarian world aggression.”\textsuperscript{273} The row resulting from Weddell’s attempt to explain his new mission to Spanish Foreign Minister Serrano Suñer led to the near-rupture of diplomatic relations and to the embassy being frozen out of contact with senior members of the Spanish government for the next six months.

Within weeks, the State Department recognized the problem it had created by responding so demonstratively to domestic political pressure, reversed course, and authorized Weddell to restart talks on “broadening and liberalizing” trade.\textsuperscript{274} Alert to the danger of arousing domestic opposition, Washington proposed to circumvent the

\textsuperscript{271} Weddell to Hull, Jan. 29 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 880–81.
\textsuperscript{272} Welles memorandum, March 20 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 886.
\textsuperscript{273} Hull to Weddell, Apr. 19 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 888.
\textsuperscript{274} Hull to Weddell, Apr. 30 1941, \textit{FRUS 1941}, 2: 893.
contentious issue of an American loan by resorting to barter. But the damage had been done, and Madrid, where Falangists officials had taken advantage of the opportunity to strengthen their hand against the “pragmatists”, refused to respond to Washington’s new overtures. The position of the Falange was further strengthened by the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, with the dramatic initial successes of *Operation Barbarossa* reinforcing Franco’s faith in an Axis victory. In a fiery address to the National Council of the Falange on July 17, the dictator presented the war as a global struggle against communism, expressed contempt for the “plutocratic democracies,” and predicted a rapid German victory. For good measure, Franco accused Washington of blocking wheat shipments that Spain had already paid for. In this new situation, Serrano Suñer hinted, Spain would follow a policy of “moral belligerency.”

The fruits of “moral belligerency” were quickly apparent, with Madrid sanctioning the establishment of an ostensibly unofficial and all-volunteer force to fight alongside the Germans in Russia. Formed from Falange members as well as regular soldiers, the first units of the *División Azul* (Blue Division) began arriving on the Eastern Front in August 1941. Eventually comprising some 20,000 men and joining the *Wehrmacht* order of battle as the 250th Infantry Division, Spanish volunteers took a personal oath of allegiance to Hitler. In the months that followed, the *División Azul* made a significant contribution to the fighting around Leningrad. The thin disguise offered by the division’s unofficial, volunteer, and non-national status permitted Madrid to claim that its presence on the Eastern Front did not breach Spanish non-belligerency. More

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importantly, it allowed Moscow to overlook the potential *casus belli*: a Russian declaration of war against Spain, tempting though it may have been for ideological reasons, would have embarrassed the Allies and wrecked their efforts to appease Madrid. By passing on the opportunity to broaden the war and sharpen its ideological character, Moscow gave Anglo-American policy vital backhanded endorsement.\(^{277}\)

Despite dropping its proposed loan in the face of domestic criticism, Washington continued to allow virtually unimpeded Spanish trade with the United States throughout early 1941. The sole conditions were that Spanish businesses purchased American goods on a “cash and carry” basis in the open market, and that they organized to ship them to Spain. In the summer of 1941, however, the administration responded to Madrid’s enthusiastic support for the German invasion of Russia by tightening controls over private trade and in particular by limiting shipments of gasoline. Demonstrating that it could utilize trade to punish as well as to reward, Washington enacted measures that were piecemeal but effective. In June Sumner Welles informed the head of the State Department’s Western European Division that Spain would be allowed no further imports of tin plate until it showed “greater friendliness,” while oil shipments would be restricted to the “usual pre-war quantities.”\(^{278}\) Welles ensured that these moves were widely publicized, encouraging laudatory articles in the *New York Times* and elsewhere in an effort to counter liberal arguments likening Washington’s Spanish policy to a matador


\(^{278}\) Welles to Atherton, June 23 1941, Welles Papers, Box 166, Folder 04, Spain, 1941–1942, FDRL.
fighting a bull with a “basket of flowers and a curtsey.” These sanctions quickly curtailed Spanish oil imports and restricted supplies of other critical commodities. Ambassador Weddell reported their economic consequences, arguing fearfully that a tough line would push Spain into the arms of the Axis. But Madrid, recognizing that Germany could not meet Spain’s basic economic needs while waging war against Russia, was not about to sever its ties to the United States. While in Spain for consultations in September 1941, Ambassador Cardenas persuaded Franco to resume discussion with Ambassador Weddell on a new trade agreement. In late October, Madrid received its reward when Roosevelt signed off on the State Department’s proposal to resume oil shipments to Spain. In exchange for exports of oil, the United States would import cork, zinc, and olive oil—goods that, as Sumner Welles’ accompanying memorandum explained, “we wish to keep out of German hands.” Underscoring Roosevelt’s personal involvement in shaping Washington’s Spanish policy, the President endorsed Wells’ note with a laconic “S.W. O.K. F.D.R.” Significantly, despite a note from Hull suggesting that Spain might be pressed to exchange wolfram (tungsten ore) for oil, this critical commodity was omitted from Welles’ list.

Over the next several months, and despite Washington’s public opposition to Madrid, a comprehensive new trade agreement was slowly hammered out. Washington proposed to supply enough oil to meet Spain’s essential domestic requirements and, in a move that paralleled the deployment of Murphy’s vice-consuls in French North Africa, to establish a network of American agents in Spain tasked with ensuring that it was not re-

280 Welles to Roosevelt, Oct. 31, 1941, PSF, Box 9, State Department 1941–1942, FDRL.
281 Hull to Roosevelt, Oct. 10 1941, PSF Box 9, State Department, 1941–1942, FDRL
exported to Germany. Other American goods would be made available as the domestic supply situation permitted and on condition that they were not sold on to the Axis.\textsuperscript{282} Madrid initially balked at accepting the petroleum agents, but by January 1942 increasing economic difficulties forced their acquiescence. Washington quickly cleared two tankers to load gas for Spain.

Trade negotiations with Spain in late 1941 and early 1942 were concluded in the new conditions created by America’s formal entry into the war. While Cordell Hull continued to express reservations about trade with Spain, arguing that Washington had only agreed to the trade deal at London’s insistence, Roosevelt pressed for the rapid development of commercial relations, working closely with Sumner Welles to finalize the terms of the agreement. When Welles complained that “subordinate officials”—presumably at Morgenthau’s Treasury Department and the Import-Export Bank—were intent on blocking “any program which involves the shipment of commodities from the United States to Spain,” the President responded by initiating a thorough-going reorganization of the bodies responsible for economic relations with Spain.\textsuperscript{283} To streamline economic relations with Spain and to minimize the ability of those within the Administration who opposed the “appeasement” of Franco to disrupt them, the Iberian Peninsula Operating Committee (IPOC), an interdepartmental body involving the State Department, the Bureau of Economic Warfare, and the United States Commercial Corporation (USCC), was set up under Herbert Feis in late March 1942.\textsuperscript{284}

\textsuperscript{282} Hull to Weddell, Jan. 8 1942, \textit{FRUS 1942}, 2: 248.
\textsuperscript{283} Welles to Roosevelt, Mar. 21 1942, \textit{FRUS 1942}, 2: 284.
\textsuperscript{284} See Feis, \textit{Spanish Story}, ch. XXV.
President Roosevelt’s interest in developing commercial relations with Spain in early 1942 was directly tied to his rapidly forming plans for an American invasion of North Africa. As the trade agreement was being finalized, Roosevelt asked Ambassador Weddell to write an appreciation of the probable Spanish response to an American landing in North Africa. While Weddell offered little beyond the platitudinous observation that the Axis would let out a “howl of moral indignation,” Roosevelt’s asking of the question shows the degree to which offensive operations in the Mediterranean were already on his mind. Earlier Allied military plans in relation to Spain, prepared by London and endorsed by Washington, had centered on punitive operations against the Azores, the Canaries, and Cape Verde islands in response to any Axis moves against Gibraltar. But by the spring and summer of 1942, offensive operations dominated Allied strategic thinking, and, as we have seen, the vexed question of an invasion of North Africa, pitting the President against his top military leaders, assumed center stage. In resolving this strategic debate, estimates of Spain’s response to American-led landings in North Africa would be of critical importance, and in the early months of 1942 Roosevelt sought to shape those estimates by the use of diplomatic and economic levers.

The possibility of an Axis attack on Gibraltar either during the preparations for Torch or during the operation itself weighed heavily on Allied leaders. From Madrid Samuel Hoare warned that an Allied incursion into French Morocco would block Spain’s hopes of colonial expansion in Africa and push Franco into supporting a German attack on Gibraltar. Captain Harry Butcher, a senior member of Torch commander General

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285 Weddell to Roosevelt, Mar. 24 1942, PSF Box 50, Spain, FDRL.
Eisenhower’s staff, raised similar concerns, noting bluntly that the “prospects of the North African invasion depend on continued Spanish neutrality.” Summoned to London for a planning conference, the Governor of Gibraltar General Mason MacFarlane described the vulnerability of the hundreds of aircraft and millions of gallons of fuel packed into the peninsula. An artillery bombardment, he noted, would cause the “whole damn Rock” to burn. American planners sought to mitigate the danger of Spanish intervention by insisting on a landing outside of the Mediterranean at Casablanca, by limiting the eastward reach of the initial landings, and by planning to invade Tangier and Spanish Morocco in the event of Madrid moving against Torch.

As his questioning of Ambassador Weddell indicates, President Roosevelt was aware of these difficulties—both the actual strategic dangers and, perhaps even more importantly, the degree to which they would furnish the Joint Chiefs with arguments against Torch—from early in the planning process. Typically, he pushed for a diplomatic solution, utilizing trade as the leading edge of a renewed effort to appease Madrid and thereby ensure Spanish neutrality. In April, Roosevelt appointed a new ambassador to Spain to spearhead this effort. Typically, he entrusted this critical mission not to a career diplomat, but to a man whose standing and experience he judged to have equipped him for the specific task at hand. As a result, Columbia history professor Carleton Hayes effectively functioned as the President’s personal representative in Spain. At their first meeting, Roosevelt emphasized that Hayes’ appointment was directly connected to plans

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288 Butcher, My Three Years, 71.
289 CCS 103/13, Oct. 27 1942, Records of JCS, Operational Plans, Microfilm Reel VI, 0305, 0310.
for Allied landings in “North Africa close to Spain” and to the concomitant necessity of going to “unusual lengths” to prevent Spain acting against them.  

Hayes was the ideal candidate for this difficult assignment. Although critical of the fascist-inspired Falange, he had backed the Nationalists during the Civil War and was a fervent supporter of the Catholic hierarchy in Spain. In 1936 Hayes coauthored an open letter championing Franco’s battle against the “anti-religious” Republicans and their “corruption” of Spain’s “national soul.” As with his half-joking proposal that Robert Murphy attend mass with Weygand, Roosevelt hoped that Hayes’ Catholicism and his support for the Nationalists in the Civil War would help his efforts to persuade Madrid to remain neutral in the coming crisis. The President gave Hayes unusually broad latitude in the execution of this commission, including the authority to offer the “most sweeping commitments” that the United States would not interfere in the internal affairs of Spain or of its overseas territories. He also encouraged Hayes to utilize his pro-Nationalist record to develop social and cultural relations with Franco and his government. Far from choosing Hayes because he expected him to be “pliable,” as one biographer has suggested, Roosevelt valued and encouraged his independence and initiative, as he did that of similar figures such as William Bullitt and Myron Taylor. Hayes was ably

assisted by chargé Willard Beaulac, a career diplomat and a man whose sympathy for the Spanish regime exceeded even his own.\textsuperscript{294}

Arriving in Spain in May 1942, Hayes reported that the Madrid government was quite different from those in Berlin and Rome and that, in contrast to Hitler and Mussolini, Franco was a “taciturn and untheatrical” man who bucked the dictatorial “norm.” Not surprisingly, perhaps, Hayes found the Spanish dictator to be a “bigger and more able” man than he had expected.\textsuperscript{295} Acting on Washington’s assumption that the Spanish government was susceptible to economic pressure, Hayes set out to build upon the existing lines of American economic policy. Addressing the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce in July, the new ambassador sketched out the alluring possibility that “normal commercial relations” might flower despite wartime restrictions.\textsuperscript{296} Unlike his predecessor, who could never be sure that his trade talks would not be spiked by policy shifts in Washington, Hayes moved confidently in the knowledge that he enjoyed the full backing of the President. In August, concerned that American oil shipments were still being delayed for political reasons, Hayes appealed directly to Roosevelt; despite Herbert Feis’ objections, bureaucratic obstacles to Spanish tanker sailings were quickly removed.\textsuperscript{297}

Carleton Hayes’ position in Madrid improved further in September 1942 when Franco appointed Count Francisco Jordana as Foreign Minister in place of Serrano Suñer.


\textsuperscript{295} Hayes to Roosevelt, June 30, Sept. 3 1942, Hayes Papers, Box 3, Columbia University Library.

\textsuperscript{296} Hayes speech, July 30 1942, Hayes Papers, Box 1A.

\textsuperscript{297} Feis, \textit{Spanish Story}, 178–79.
Serrano Suñer’s dismissal reflected a broader shift in Spanish policy, often described as the *chaqueteo* and involving a waning of confidence in an eventual Axis victory and, as a result, a new openness towards relations with the Allies. Hayes was pleased to note the disappearance of Falangist trappings from the foreign ministry, and he quickly formed a positive appreciation of the conservative Jordana. After Myron Taylor, Roosevelt’s personal representative to the Vatican, met with Jordana during a stopover in Madrid, he and Hayes agreed that the new minister was committed to “real,” and perhaps even to “benevolent,” neutrality. The numerous letters penned by the ambassador to Catholic dignitaries in the United States in an effort to secure American employment for Jordana’s son attests both to the warmth of their personal relationship and to Hayes’ eagerness to cultivate their friendship—exactly as Roosevelt had proposed.

By October 1942, having convinced Washington to drop an invasion of the Canary Islands from the plans for *Torch*, and having offered Franco guarantees that no Spanish territory would be occupied, Hayes was convinced that Madrid would not impede Allied operations. His confidence was well founded. Despite the misgivings of American commanders, Madrid made no moves to oppose the *Torch* landings on November 8: when Hayes visited Jordana in the middle of the night to announce the landings and to present a message from Roosevelt promising to respect Spanish neutrality, the flustered foreign minister simply expressed his “intense relief” that no Spanish territory was involved. The following morning Franco confirmed Jordana’s reaction, applauding Allied strategic acumen and thanking the president for his

298 Hayes to Taylor, Nov. 13 1942, Hayes Papers, Box 5.
299 Hayes to Ford, Houget, Paulding, Ready, Rockefeller, Rogers, and Van Renssalaer Wyatt, October 9 1943, Hayes Papers, Box 5.
message.\textsuperscript{301} With the *Torch* landings successfully completed, the first and most critical part of Hayes’ mission in Spain was substantially accomplished, and he received a fulsome message of presidential praise.\textsuperscript{302}

\textsuperscript{301} Hayes *Wartime Mission*, 89–92.
\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., 95
Part Two

The United States in the Maghreb.

In July 1942, Allied leaders finally resolved the acrimonious disputes that had marked their relations in the first half of the year and agreed to mount an invasion of French North Africa in the coming fall. These disputes were a complex and multi-layered affair, pitting American leaders against British while at the same time revealing deep divisions between military officers and their political masters in both countries, and in the United States in particular. In the critical days prior to the Washington conference in June, Churchill and Roosevelt seemed ready to confront directly the common opposition of their chief military commanders to an invasion of North Africa. This battle royal was only avoided by the British surrender at Tobruk and the consequent and inevitable shift in strategic attention that it facilitated. At least at the level of outward appearance, and as codified in Churchill’s own popular and influential narrative, Britain and the United States would now move in lockstep towards North Africa.

In reality, of course, both the resolution of the long-running debate on Allied strategy and the political alliances upon which it rested were episodic and temporary. Churchill was certainly correct to mark the American decision to reinforce the British in Egypt as a high point of Anglo-American cooperation, but it was also only a moment in a shifting relationship marked by the rising military power of the United States and the weakening of Britain. If it played to Churchill’s imperial vanity to see Roosevelt and the Americans as geopolitical naïfs guided by British experience, the course charted by the
American President actually advanced American interests in an American manner and, ultimately, in ways that were detrimental to London’s standing in the Mediterranean. Embedded in the decisions that would lead American forces into the Mediterranean were the seeds that would lead within the next two years to Washington first challenging, and then supplanting, British power in the region.

The agreement to march towards an invasion of North Africa also simply registered a temporary truce in the strategic debate between Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Despite the decision to invade North Africa, American military leaders did not end their opposition to engaging in operations in the Mediterranean; on contrary, and until the invasion of France in the summer of 1944, they took every opportunity to protest America’s continued presence in such a “diversionary” theater. The Joint Chief’s vigorous and vocal opposition to a the Mediterranean “suction pump” and their protracted clashes with the British Chiefs of Staff over questions of Mediterranean strategy, however, have tended to mask the fact that from November 1942 to June 1944 the Mediterranean saw the largest overseas deployment of American combat troops. It was President Roosevelt, not the Joint Chiefs, who won the fight in the spring of 1942, and it was his strategic vision, and not that of his military leaders, that shaped American strategy.

President Roosevelt’s great contribution to American strategy—or perhaps, more properly, to grand strategy—was to understand that the road to victory in the World War was not, and could not be, a narrowly military affair, but that it had also to involve the broader projection of American political and economic influence, or of “Americanism.” The postwar and the economic and political arrangements that might prevail after the
fighting had, in Roosevelt’s view, to be part of the war and of wartime strategic planning from the very beginning. Many of the details of the Presidents thinking are obscure, and will likely remain so. But the broad outlines are clear, and the results indisputable: America did turn towards the Mediterranean because Roosevelt insisted that it do so. That is not to argue that Roosevelt had some kind of a master plan. He didn’t, not because he didn’t want one, but because he didn’t need one. Backed by the bountiful product of the American war economy, Roosevelt could advance along a general line of march by fighting and then adjusting to the results of battle. From this point of view the decision in July was critical: having won an initial commitment to invade North Africa—a commitment buttressed by an extensive covert operation and by a diplomatic drive to appease Franco and thereby secure Spain’s non-interference—Roosevelt could be confident that initial military successes would necessarily draw American military, diplomatic and economic forces deeper into the Mediterranean.

This process began to unfold in the immediate aftermath of the July decision to proceed towards an invasion of North Africa. Passing firstly through the renewed divisions that emerged as the strategic decision to invade was transformed into an operational plan, and then through the resolution of the at least partly unanticipated political consequences of the invasion, one can chart the accelerating drive towards deepening American engagement in the Maghreb. In the context of the war, this process culminated in establishment of a substantial American economic presence, in the rearmament of the French army, and in the reinforcement of French colonial rule throughout the region.
2.1) Operational and Political Planning for Torch

American commanders faced considerable difficulties when they came to turn the strategic concept of Torch into an operational plan, many of which reflected the inherent ambiguities and compromises built into the strategic decision itself. Once the decision to invade North Africa was taken, President Roosevelt demanded that military leaders move quickly to action. At an August 1 White House conference attended by Admiral Leahy, air force chief “Hap” Arnold, and Eisenhower’s chief of staff General Bedell Smith, Roosevelt noted that since Torch was now our “principal objective,” he had determined “as the commander-in-chief” that the landings should be undertaken at the “earliest possible date.” But, despite both the agreement to proceed with Torch and the Presidential pressure to do it quickly, the question of exactly where Allied troops might land in North Africa remained unclear. Moreover, even if all of Robert Murphy’s assurances materialized and Allied troops were welcomed ashore by French troops eager to get back into the fight, it was by no means self evident how the landings might lead to fighting German troops. In fact, beyond the idea landing in North Africa, the military goals of Torch remained remarkably unclear. This absence reflected the ongoing division between Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs—while the President could insist on a general course of action, he could not turn it into an operational plan, and the Joint Chiefs, who were responsible for detailed planning, were not yet fully on board.

The British faced no such difficulties. With the Eighth Army struggling to hold Rommel’s drive on Egypt, Torch’s strategic function seemed straight-forward: Allied landings in North Africa, and particularly in Tunisia, would expose the rear of Rommel’s

303 Leahy to JCS, Aug. 1 1942, RG 218, Box 325, NARA.
Panzer Armee Afrika to attack, and offered the enticing prospect of trapping the Axis armies in North Africa in a giant vise. Cloaking himself in the notion that Torch was designed to relieve German pressure on Russia (the very argument that American planners had used to underpin their cross-Channel projects!), British Admiral Andrew Cunningham informed the Combined Chiefs that the “early” capture of Tunisia was the very “essence” of the operation. Taking Tunisia, Cunningham argued, would “ensure a satisfactory outcome of the battle for Egypt” and thereby establish a “point of departure” for a subsequent “entry into Europe.”

The obvious operational conclusion was that the initial Allied landings should take place as far to the east—in eastern Algeria or Tunisia itself—as was practically possible.

Fighting a rearguard action against a large-scale commitment of American forces to North Africa and wary of being drawn into an open-ended commitment to the Mediterranean, American planners favored landings well to the west, on the long Atlantic coast of Morocco and at Oran in western Algeria. The Americans pointed to dangerously long lines of supply, shipping shortages, and the danger of a German move into Spain in order to justify opposition more easterly landings. General Marshall noted peevishly that Torch had not been designed to help the Russians—that was the job of the cross-Channel assault—but was intended to “relieve” convoy routes to the Middle East and to “deny” Germany naval bases from which they might disrupt South Atlantic convoys. Pointing to the potential dangers faced by convoys passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, Marshall observed ironically that the British, who had “strongly emphasized” the dangers of

304 CCS #38, Aug. 28 1942, RG 218, Box 169, NARA.
Sledgehammer were silent about the “similar hazards” faced by Torch.\textsuperscript{305} American leaders concluded that a failure of Torch would produce a disastrous “loss of confidence” in America, with “appalling” consequences for Allied standing in Russia and China.

These testy inter-Allied exchanges, barely weeks before the launch of the operation, attest to the profound issues that remained fundamentally unresolved. Having been effectively forced into Torch, American military planners now sought to limit both scope and duration of operations in North Africa. As General Eisenhower’s naval aide Captain Harry Butcher noted, the supreme Allied commander continued to express a strong dislike for Torch, and he was particularly dismayed at the prospect of launching forth onto a “dangerous political sea” upon which military skill would be of only limited help in “charting a safe course.”\textsuperscript{306} The deep hostility of American military leaders to operations in North Africa was further illustrated by the draft proposals for operations in 1943 approved by the Joint Chiefs in December 1942, six weeks after the Torch landings. Here American planners argued for simply turning Allied-occupied North Africa into a giant base area for launching a “large-scale air offensive” against Italy, deploying only the minimal ground forces to “consolidate and hold” the necessary airbases while returning “excess” troops to Britain in preparation for a cross-Channel attack in the summer.\textsuperscript{307}

The thinking of the Joint Chiefs during the planning of Torch therefore was governed by a strong desire to put America’s excursion into the Mediterranean and North

\textsuperscript{305} CCS #38, Aug. 28 1942, RG 218, Box 169, NARA.
\textsuperscript{306} Butcher, My Three Years. 84.
\textsuperscript{307} JCS 167/2 “Basic Strategic Concept for 1943,” Dec. 23 1942, RG 218, Box 324, NARA.
Africa behind them as quickly as possible. Having been forced into what they saw, and would continue to see, as a diversion, military leaders hankered for a rapid return to the royal road of a cross-Channel invasion. In operational terms, this stance translated into a determined effort to limit how far into the Mediterranean American forces would penetrate. For his part, having already stretched civilian-military relations thin in the push to get *Torch* adopted, Roosevelt may have felt that it was impossible now to challenge the chiefs’ obstinate refusal to countenance a landing in Tunisia. There was a limit to the degree to which he could side with the British against his own top military leaders, particularly in matters that bore directly on operational judgment and competence. The President may also have felt that having won the battle with the Joint Chiefs over launching *Torch*, a compromise over the precise location of the landings was a small price to pay to reknit collaborative relations and that, in any case, time and the unfolding of events could be counted on to draw the United States deeper into the Mediterranean.

President Roosevelt therefore focused his attention not on the location of the landings, but on their composition, and he picked a fight not with the Joint Chiefs, but with Churchill. While both leaders concurred on the need for haste, Roosevelt responded to Churchill’s opposition to JCS proposals to restrict landings to Casablanca and Oran by stressing that, at least in its initial phases, *Torch* should be conducted “exclusively” by American ground forces, backed by British naval and air power. Given the Anglophobia of many French officers in North Africa, Roosevelt argued, the inclusion of British forces in the initial landings would be likely to provoke “full resistance by all French in
Africa.”308 This exchange opened a heated exchange described dismissively by Eisenhower as the “transatlantic essay competition.”309 But, by the time Roosevelt concluded the “competition” on September 6 with a cheery “Hurrah!” London had acquiesced to the President’s insistence that United States troops should lead the landings and that Washington should take “sole responsibility” for all relations with French “civil and military authorities” in North Africa.310 As a sweetener for the British, an attack on Algiers had been added to the plan, thereby moving the center of gravity of the whole operation deeper into the Mediterranean—a conclusion that Roosevelt may have had in mind all the time.

In his seminal analysis of these deliberations, Arthur Funk argued that Roosevelt “bargained away” an assault on Tunisia for the “dubious advantage” of overall American responsibility.311 But Tunisia was never really Roosevelt’s to bargain with in the first place. Given the opposition of the Joint Chiefs to any landing east of Oran, the final inclusion of a assault on Algiers, and the plan to drive rapidly overland from there into Tunisia, represented a substantial expansion of American engagement in North Africa over and above the geographically and temporally limited operation favored by the military. Moreover, the incorporation of plans to drive eastward from the initial landing sites ensured that Torch could have met the basic political requirement of bringing American forces into action against German forces. And, by agreement with London, all of this would be carried out under an American supreme commander, by forces spearheaded by American troops, and under American political leadership! By carefully

308 Roosevelt to Churchill, Aug. 30 1942, Complete Correspondence, 1: 583.
309 Butcher, My Three Years, 83.
310 Roosevelt to Churchill, Sept. 2 and 5 1942, Complete Correspondence, 1: 589, 592.
311 Funk, Politics of Torch.
picking his battles with both the British and the Joint Chiefs, Roosevelt had secured an operational plan that conformed to his drive to advance a multi-layered American engagement with French North Africa. Far from merely securing a “dubious advantage,” Roosevelt had reason to feel that the entire North African effort was unfolding more or less as he might have hoped.

Once plans for *Torch* included a landing at Algiers and a ground push towards Tunis, then the question of the role of North African landings in the liquidation of Rommel’s forces, stalled in front of the strong British position at El Alamein, naturally assumed greater prominence. To discuss co-coordinating their efforts, *Torch* planners met in late October with their British Eighth Army counterparts, then busy finalizing their own plans for Operation *Lightfoot*, the long-awaited counter-attack at El Alamein. Blithely assuming “complete French acquiescence or even active assistance” in the *Torch* landings and follow-up operations, planners projected that Tunisia would be under complete Allied control by mid-January 1943, and that armored forces moving farther east from there would crush Axis base areas in Tripoli by early February.\(^{312}\) The big unresolved question in the minds of these planners was whether the assumed success of *Torch* should be exploited primarily by a thrust eastwards along the North African coast towards Tripoli, or by combined operations in the Mediterranean aimed at Sardinia. Even before a shot had been fired, the military logic that would see *Torch* opening the door to an extended American commitment to the Mediterranean was beginning to gather momentum.

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\(^{312}\) Joint planning meeting, Oct 23 1942, RG 331, Reel 70 Special, NARA.
If Allied operational planning for *Torch* had a rushed and hand-to-mouth character, American thinking about the political side of affairs stood, at least in theory, on much firmer foundations. President Roosevelt’s interest in North Africa as a potential site of American intervention reached back to the fall of France in the summer of 1940, and active political preparations had begun with the dispatch of Robert Murphy to the region in November of the same year. Murphy’s work in North Africa, from the negotiation of the Murphy-Weygand trade accord, to the deployment of the vice-consuls and the protracted search for French forces capable of offering an “invitation” to the Americans, had furnished the President with powerful arguments in support of his push to win approval for an invasion of North Africa. With the development of relations with Jacques Lemaigre-Dubreuil’s “Group of Five” and their putative leader General Henri Giraud in the spring of 1942, Washington appeared to have found a group with the standing to issue an invitation to the Americans and to form a pro-Allied government in North Africa in the aftermath of the landings.

The idea that Giraud and his supporters would constitute a civil administration in French North Africa was particularly important. There were two critical elements here. Firstly, the policy of the American government, as established by the President himself, reinforced in numerous messages to General Pétain and other Vichy leaders, and spelled out publicly in press conferences, was grounded on maintaining the “integrity of France and of the French empire.” As Roosevelt assured Pétain in late 1941, the United States was not interested in seeing “French sovereignty over French North Africa” pass either into the hands of any other nation or, presumably, into those of its majority population.

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While Washington’s stance towards the postwar continuation of French colonial rule in other parts of the world, and in French Indochina in particular, shifted several times during the war, its support for ongoing French rule in the Maghreb remained absolutely consistent.

The second critical element of Washington’s political approach to Torch was based squarely on this unwavering defense of French sovereignty in North Africa. Since the agreement to proceed with Torch was premised on the assumption that American troops would enter North Africa by invitation of the French authorities, or at least of an authoritative group acting in that capacity, there would be no need to establish military governments in areas under Allied military control. Once they were in North Africa, it was assumed that American forces would work with and support French civilian authorities and, as far as possible, the existing structures of civil government. This approach was popularized in the proclamation to be distributed by American forces on arrival in North Africa which simply explained in French and Arabic that the “officers and employees of your government […] will continue their duties as usual.” 314 Civilians were likewise urged to follow the “usual habits and customs” of your lives and the business of your community.”

As preparations for Torch advanced, however, it became apparent that these simple and apparently straightforward assumptions masked serious complexities and contradictions. The notion of maintaining French sovereignty was fine as far as it went, but in whose hands — Pétain’s, de Gaulle’s, or those of some group of French officials in North Africa—did the exercise of that sovereignty lie? In early September, while back in

314 Proclamation issued as leaflet to population of French North Africa, RG 218, Box325, NARA.
the United States for a final round of briefings, Robert Murphy was whisked off to Hyde Park to meet with Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins. Over a long afternoon of discussion, the President reviewed the progress of Murphy’s political work in North Africa, touching on two particular aspects of the problem of sovereignty. Firstly, reports from Vichy made it clear that Allied landings in French North Africa, even if conducted exclusively by American forces, would not receive Pétain’s backing, and that some degree of French military resistance therefore had to be anticipated. And secondly, Roosevelt reiterated his opposition to “imposing] a government on the French people,” a statement that Murphy interpreted, no doubt correctly, as a reaffirmation of Washington’s refusal to recognize the “de Gaulle movement” as an alternative site of French sovereignty.315 To minimize the danger of de Gaulle laying claim to the exercise of French sovereignty in North Africa, American officials excluded the Free French from all pre-invasion planning.

Having recognized that there was no possibility of maintaining any seamless continuity of Vichy French control in North Africa, and deeply hostile to recognizing de Gaulle’s Free French as the legitimate trustees of French sovereignty, Washington set out to organize the direct intervention in the internal affairs of the Maghreb that would be necessary to produce a French regime conducive to its purposes. While avoiding the direct assumption of political power implied by the establishment of a military government, Washington would, in the words of Stephen Krasner, simply “decouple” their actual behavior from the norms of Westphalian sovereignty that had been held to govern it in an effort to determine the form of the ostensibly sovereign French regime.316

315 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 101–102.
This approach was codified in General Order #5 issued by the new Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) in early October. This order outlined the responsibilities of AFHQ’s Civil Affairs Section and established that the occupying army would “retain” the “existing form or forms of government” in areas under its control while simultaneously authorizing its officers to “supplant” officials deemed to be out of line with the “war aims of the United States.”317

In mid October, having briefed General Eisenhower and the Torch planners in London, Robert Murphy returned to North Africa. As the President’s personal representative, and acting on the understanding that he would become head of the Civil Affairs Section once AFHQ was established in Algiers, Murphy enjoyed considerable freedom of action. He would need it. As the powers to “supplant” recalcitrant officials contained in General Order #5 hinted, the problem was not simply one of maintaining an existing French administration, but of determining who, of numerous competing groups, might constitute the legitimate and sovereign French government. To military officials the details of civil affairs tended to appear as a burdensome and unwelcome diversion from the business of fighting the war: when Murphy briefed Eisenhower in mid-September, he noted that the senior Allied commander listened with a “kind of horrified intentness” as he enumerated the “bewildering complexities” of French politics.318 But, secure in London, Eisenhower could push French politics to one side, at least for the time being. In Algiers, Murphy enjoyed no such luxury, and the task of shaping a suitable French governmental authority became increasingly urgent as the date of the invasion approached.

317 AFHQ General Order #5, Oct. 12 1942, RG 218, Box 325, NARA.
318 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 104.
As soon as he returned to Africa, Murphy resumed negotiations with Lemaigre-Dubreuil’s Group of Five and with General Charles Mast, chief of staff of the French army’s XIX Corps in Algiers, who acted as General Giraud’s representative. As he was pursuing discussions with Giraud and the Five, Murphy was approached by an emissary from Admiral François Darlan. After serving as the effective head of the Vichy government from February 1941 to April 1942, Darlan had been pushed aside when Pétain had replaced him with the more reliably pro-Nazi Pierre Laval. Darlan, who enjoyed the support of the French offer corps, retained command of the armed forces. Following his removal from power, and at least partly because of it, Darlan became increasingly skeptical of the prospects for an Axis victory and open to a rapprochement with the Allies. In the late summer, he became convinced that an American invasion of North Africa was imminent, and, ever the shrewd opportunist, set out to probe the prospects for collaborating with it.

Murphy quickly realized that an agreement with Darlan, possibly the most authoritative figure after Pétain among French officers in North Africa, would carry far greater weight than his existing relationship with Henri Giraud and the conspiratorial Group of Five. In the absence of clear instructions from Washington, however, and faced with the implacable hostility of General Mast and the Five to any collaboration with the “double-faced” Darlan, Murphy did not pursue contact with the admiral. Nevertheless, Darlan’s approach to Murphy, even if it failed to bear immediate fruit, served to alert both Eisenhower’s headquarters and Washington to the fact that, under certain circumstances, Darlan might become a willing collaborator. It is also important to note

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that Murphy’s decision to privilege relations with Mast, Giraud and the Five over developing links with Darlan was taken for practical rather than ideological reasons. If Darlan, despite his collaboration with Berlin and his authorship of the Paris Protocols, could prove useful in the coming invasion of North Africa, then neither Murphy nor his masters in Washington had any principled objection to doing business with him. In the short term, however, the solidly conservative and apparently well-connected conspirators seemed a safer bet that the notoriously mercurial admiral.

Having rebuffed Darlan’s approaches, Murphy struggled to consolidate relations with General Mast and the Group of Five. But time was running short. On October 21, and with the Morocco-bound invasion force already at sea, Eisenhower’s deputy General Mark Clark was landed by submarine on the Algerian coast for a meeting with Mast. For all the daring-do—which was widely publicized after the landings—the meeting was a comedy of organizational errors and political unclarity in which both sides succeeded in deceiving the other. For their part, the French convinced the Americans that Giraud, with Mast acting in his stead, was the indispensable key to rallying French forces in North Africa to the Allies. At the same time the Americans were able to perpetuate the illusion, originally created by Murphy, that a gigantic and unstoppable armada was heading for North Africa and that they would be willing to place command of the entire operation in General Giraud’s hands. This was all skating on very thin ice, since American military leaders had not the slightest intention of relinquishing operational command to a French general. The inevitable clash erupted after Giraud had been extracted from France and brought to AFHQ at Gibraltar. On the very eve of the landings the Allied Supreme Commander found himself locked in a grueling “4-hour struggle” and irresolvable battle
with Giraud in which the French general had insisted, “Either I’m Allied C-in-C or I won’t play!”

2.2) The Torch Landings and the Deal with Darlan

American and British troops began landing in North Africa before dawn on November 8 1942. An all-American task force under General Patton, having sailed directly from the United States landed on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, while a second, sailing from Britain, aimed for the Algerian port of Oran. Farther east, a combined Anglo-American task force struck at Algiers. Ashore, OSS agents and Murphy’s vice-consuls carried out a series of “subversive tasks” in support of the landings, providing effective support for the inbound landing forces. The critical political side of the undercover network’s mission, however, quickly proved to be substantially less successful. With the partial exception of Algiers, where resistance fighters—ironically, a majority of them supporters of de Gaulle—temporarily secured a key facilities, French forces conspicuously failed to welcome the Allied forces. Despite months of effort to secure an “invitation,” Allied troops faced heavy French resistance and suffered nearly 500 casualties.

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321 Instructions to OSS Representatives in North Africa, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 9, NARA.
Back in Gibraltar, Eisenhower continued his tortured negotiations with Giraud even as the first American soldiers were splashing ashore. Giraud’s reluctant (and to him generous!) proposal to allow Eisenhower to retain control of “base and administrative arrangements” while he took care of combat operations graphically demonstrated the unbridgeable gulf between the two sides.\footnote{Eisenhower to Marshall, Nov. 8 1942, \textit{Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower}, 2: 670-671.} Meanwhile, as Giraud was negotiating for supreme command in Gibraltar, the guerilla operations organized by his supporters in North Africa proved almost entirely ineffective. The forces that Mast and the Five claimed to have assembled, including the much-vaunted \textit{Chantiers de la Jeunesse Français} refused to act without direct orders from the Vichy authorities, which—not surprisingly—were not forthcoming. Throughout North Africa French forces remained loyal to Vichy and to Pétain. While many awaited developments, in Morocco French forces under Vichyite governor-general Auguste Noguès fought tenaciously, with naval units launching a brave if ultimately futile sortie against the invasion forces.

It is hard to overestimate the extent of debacle that now confronted the American-led invasion. On the military front, the Allies risked becoming locked in a protracted struggle with French forces, while on the political front ongoing fighting would quickly unravel the whole notion that the Allies had been “invited” into North Africa. American arms would undoubtedly have subdued the poorly equipped French, but by then the Axis would have been handed a major propaganda victory, vindicating the Joint Chiefs opposition to \textit{Torch} and undermining Roosevelt’s leadership. In this context, and as it became clear that Giraud—the “Kingpin” as the Americans had dubbed him—was utterly incapable of enforcing a French ceasefire, Robert Murphy and General Mark Clark began
a desperate search for an alternative French leader with the authority to halt the fighting. In one of those remarkable historical coincidences that ever after fuels conspiracy theories, Admiral Darlan had arrived in Algiers to visit his dangerously sick son just two days before the invasion. American leaders quickly opened discussions with him, but he drove a hard bargain. On November 13, after three days of discussion, Darlan finally agreed to call a halt to French resistance in exchange for recognition as High Commissioner for North Africa and the leading representative of French civil authority.

Darlan does not appear to have come to Algiers ready to switch sides: as the American consul reported to Washington, he had given a pep talk to French officers denouncing the threat of “Anglo-American aggression” and calling on the army to be ready to defend the empire “at any moment.” But he was nothing if not a quick-thinking opportunist and, even as Vichy officials were rounding up the Gaullist fighters in Algiers, Darlan was responding to American overtures. Once the deal had been done, General Eisenhower paid a flying visit to Algiers to put his seal of approval on it by announcing Darlan’s appointment as head of the “North African state.” By this time it was clear that political power in French North Africa remained firmly in the hands of former Vichyites. In Morocco, Auguste Noguès would remain Governor General, while General Alphonse Juin continued as head of the army. The deeply demoralized Giraud was compensated by being given nominal control of all French forces in the region, but the new Darlan regime dismissed many of the old general’s supporters, including General Mast, from their posts and imprisoned many as traitors. All the ambitious schemes for

324 Cole to State Dept., Nov. 6 1942, RG 59, 851R.20/46, NARA.
constituting a provisional government around Lemaigre-Dubreuil’s “Group of Five” simply evaporated.

Darlan had strengthened his authority with French officials in North Africa by claiming that his negotiations with the Americans were being conducted with Pétain’s knowledge and approval. In fact, Vichy vigorously denounced the deal but, with the exception of some forces in Tunisia, the overwhelming majority of French troops in North Africa followed Darlan’s lead. Berlin’s response to the Allied landings in North Africa and to the deal with Darlan was rapid and decisive. By November 10, German forces began to execute the long-planned Case Anton, an operation designed to bring the “unoccupied” territory of Vichy France directly under German control, thereby preventing any rapid Allied move into the South of France. Vichy protested the new German offensive, but offered no effective resistance, and by mid-November any semblance of an independence French government had been extinguished. In Toulon, French naval officers rejected the demand to set sail to join the Free French coming from many sailors, electing instead to scuttle the fleet to prevent it falling into German hands. By November 27, over seventy seven ships, including three battleships, had been sunk by their crews, thereby neutralizing the French Navy and ending at a stroke the danger of its coming under German control.

From the beginning, Eisenhower stood solidly behind the deal with Darlan negotiated by his subordinates. Explaining the arrangement to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the supreme commander argued that a “strong French government” under Darlan was the only alternative to direct military rule, for which the Allies were neither militarily
or politically prepared.\textsuperscript{326} With a wary eye on Arab nationalism, Eisenhower claimed that it would require at least 60,000 troops to “hold the tribes quiet” in Morocco alone. But, while Eisenhower’s defense of the deal rested on an appeal to military necessity, it is important to note that nothing done by him or his subordinates violated their pre-established political remit. Roosevelt’s oft-reiterated insistence on the maintenance of French sovereignty in North Africa did not imply a judgment on which Frenchmen should rule. Moreover, while refusing to recognize the Free French on the basis that their legitimacy had not been put to an electoral test, Washington had continued to view the Pétain regime as the legitimate government of France. And, if the Vichy forces had fragmented, Darlan could now be construed as the bearer of political legitimacy in North Africa.

If Darlan’s presence in Algiers was unplanned and unanticipated, his interest in arriving at an accommodation with the Allies was hardly unknown in Washington. Robert Murphy had alerted the President and the State Department to Darlan’s pre-invasion overtures and, while time pressures and pre-existing ties to the “Five” led the Americans to stick with Giraud, the notion of the admiral as a potential collaborator was in the pre-invasion air. The choice between them, moreover, was made on pragmatic rather than ideological grounds: there appeared to be no time to develop the relationship with Darlan in the short window between his initial overture and the date set for the invasion, and effort to do so might have ruptured established arrangements with Lemaigre-Dubreuil and Giraud. Beyond these practical considerations, it would indeed have been hard to find any significant political difference between the French leaders

vying for American support—the fascist-minded Lemaigre-Dubreuil could hardly be construed as a more “progressive” figure than the conservative and opportunist Darlan. Roosevelt’s own indifference to the choice between Giraud and Darlan can perhaps be judged by his dismissive reference to the struggle between them as a “catfight.”

Despite the essential pragmatism of Washington’s decision making, firstly in favoring Giraud over Darlan and then in reversing course in order to make a deal with Darlan, significant ideological and political questions arose as the events in North Africa provoked intense domestic debate within the United States. The initial public reaction to Torch in the United States was overwhelmingly positive. Anne O’Hare McCormick noted that the landings had produced a marked change in the popular mood; “suddenly,” she concluded, the torpor of America’s “phony war” had been ended and Americans everywhere were “animated and expansive.” As ever, McCormick drew broad conclusions, arguing that popular support for the invasion justified Washington’s strategy of viewing Germany as the “principal enemy.” Linking the landings in North Africa to the British victory at El Alamein and to the Soviet counter-attack at Stalingrad, opinionmakers echoed Roosevelt’s optimistic claim that the “turning point of the war has at last been reached.”

News of the “Darlan deal” sounded a sour note amidst this adulatory outpouring, with many commentators wondering aloud how the first blow in the war against fascism had produced a government headed by an ultra-conservative Vichy politician with a long

327 Roosevelt to Churchill, November 11 1942, Complete Correspondence, 1: 669.
record of collaboration with the Germans. It is important not to exaggerate the degree of public criticism of the Darlan deal, which in its most vocal form emanated largely from liberal journals like the Nation and the New Republic. Particularly after the President had explained that in his view the deal was a “temporary expedient” concocted by military leaders under “the stress of battle,” mainstream opinionmakers rallied behind the official line.\(^\text{330}\) Influential columnist Walter Lippmann, for example, reversed course after initially criticizing the deal and welcomed it as “unplanned but wisely improvised.”\(^\text{331}\) Administration efforts to defend the agreement were reinforced by direct censorship, with War Department staffers blocking the release of newsreel footage showing Admiral Darlan in relaxed conversation with Eisenhower, Clark, and Murphy at the signing of the agreement.\(^\text{332}\)

Despite their success in limiting public opposition to the new political arrangement in North Africa, the Administration nevertheless felt stung by the criticism of the deal with Darlan for two reasons. Firstly, and as Office of War Information (OWI) polls indicated, many Americans remained unsure about the government’s war aims and uncertain who their country was allied with and against whom it was fighting, and the murky political compromise in Algiers did little to clarify matters. And secondly, the voices raised in criticism represented an important component of the President’s political coalition, and their arguments were reflected by veteran New Dealers within the Administration like Henry Morgenthau and Harold Ickes. Moreover, their criticism of the deal rested not on tactical considerations—New Republic conceded that as a

\(^{330}\) Press conference, Nov. 17 1942, Complete Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 20: 244-245.

\(^{331}\) Washington Post, November 19 1942.

\(^{332}\) Casey, Cautious Crusade, 114.
“temporary” measure it was probably a “wise move”—but on a fear of what the agreement with Darlan might imply for the overall course and conduct of the war. The liberal critique of the Darlan deal was perhaps most clearly expressed by CBS journalist Edward R. Murrow, who argued that the critical issue was not one of expediency, but of “high moral principle”; the very “principles for which the war is being fought” were at stake.333 If allowed to stand, Murrow concluded, the deal would signal to “Quislings” everywhere that they could “rally to our side” in order to avoid military defeat. At worst, Murrow warned with remarkable prescience, this course would lead to Washington “turning over” Italy to the House of Savoy, with dire consequences for the “political complexion” of the postwar world.

In the short term, these criticisms were not hard to deal with. On November 18 Roosevelt met personally with Morgenthau and mollified him by repeating the expediency argument. As Sumner Welles had told him the previous day, the deal was not a matter of principle, but was simply a “military question,” decided upon by “military commanders on the spot” who had acted out of “military necessity.” 334 The ideas of “military necessity” and “temporary expediency” had a similarly soothing effect on the Nation and New Republic. The editors of both journals accepted that political leaders in Washington had no direct responsibility for an agreement negotiated by military officials in far-away Algiers, and were therefore willing to accept the military justifications for the deal with Darlan while maintaining that it was a “political blunder.” 335 The Communist Party-influenced PM went a step further, embracing Roosevelt’s pragmatic justification.

333 Morgenthau diary, November 16 1942, FDRL.
334 Morgenthau diary, November 17, 18 1942, FDRL.
of the deal and urging its readers not to get too “finicky” about the politics of fellow members of the “United Nations.”

At a broader level, however, the idea that the war might resolve itself into a series of sordid pragmatic compromises with fascist-minded politicians posed a significant challenge to the presentation of America’s war as a moral crusade. It was, to say the least, hard to square the deal with Darlan with the ringing democratic sentiments of the Atlantic Charter and the “Four Freedoms.” At first contact with harsh reality of war, pragmatic necessity had brazenly shouldered aside democratic idealism exposing, for all with eyes to see if, the hard-edged pragmatism at the heart of American policy. While the Administration sought to justify the deal on the grounds of short-term military necessity, many officials fretted that the long-term consequences for the domestic perception of American war aims—and therefore ultimately on popular support for the war effort—might be incalculable.

The question of the political and moral presentation of American war aims also had significant implications beyond the creation and maintenance of domestic support for the war. As we have seen, President Roosevelt saw the war—amongst other things—as a vehicle for the promotion not only of American political and economic interests, but also of “Americanism.” These elements were inseparable: as Henry Luce had spelled out in “The American Century” nearly two years earlier, only America could effectively articulate the “war aims of this war” because only America combined economic strength, military might, and politico-moral sanctity. A new world order with the United States

336 PM, December 3 1942.
at its center could only emerge where military, economic, and political power, were wedded to a moral vision.

These question assumed even greater weight when, on Darlan’s recommendation, the Allies facilitated the appointment to governor generalship of Algeria the former Vichy interior minister and notorious anti-Semite Marcel Peyrouton. By the time Peyrouton arrived in Algiers, Darlan himself was dead, gunned down by an anti-Vichy Frenchman assassin on Christmas Eve 1942. But Peyrouton’s appointment, followed by the widespread arrests of Gaullist, leftist and royalist figures on suspicion of Darlan’s murder, made it clear that former Vichyites were consolidating their grip on power in North Africa. There was now no question of justifying these developments on the grounds of military necessity and nor, following the scuttling of the French fleet in Toulon, was there any chance that the navy might rally to a Vichy-style regime in North Africa. Moreover, far from being a “temporary expedient,” the regime—even without Darlan himself—was clearly becoming increasingly permanent. In this context, the public response to the Peyrouton affair was both sharper and broader than that to the Darlan deal.

Predictably, the Nation attacked Peyrouton’s appointment, describing him as the “very model” of a “Vichy collaborationist,” and the author of “savage repression” against anti-Vichy “fellow countrymen.” But now the Washington Post joined the chorus, denouncing Peyrouton as a symbol of “all that is bad in the Vichy regime” and describing his appointment as the “last straw.” Exempting General Eisenhower from blame—he had his “hands full with military problems”—the Washington Post decried “hopeless

“mismanagement” by American civilian officials and demanded the dismissal of Robert Murphy. From within the administration, Office of War Information head Elmer Davis urged Peyrouton’s removal, arguing that his appointment was “extremely difficult to explain to the American people.”340 This mounting mainstream criticism of American policy may, as Steven Casey argues, have convinced Roosevelt to affirm that the Allies were aiming for the complete overthrow of the Axis powers, not a series of deals with malleable local rightists. The President took the opportunity of the final press conference of the Casablanca Conference on January 24, 1943 to make just this point, announcing that the Allies sought the “unconditional surrender” of their enemies. On his return to the United States Roosevelt drove the point home, asserting to the press that the Allies had “not the slightest idea of helping Quislings or Lavals in power anywhere on this earth.”341

Roosevelt’s proclamation of unremitting hostility to all “Quislings and Lavals” began to patch up the ideological damage done to the image of the war as a great moral crusade by the Darlan and Peyrouton affairs, Washington still had to deal with the reality of the regime it had established in North Africa. In the aftermath of Darlan’s assassination, Washington appointed General Giraud High Commissioner for North Africa in his place. But the regime that he presided over remained essentially an unreconstructed Vichyite government, complete with anti-Semitic laws and prison camps full of anti-Vichy French and Spanish Republicans. If this situation remained unchanged then new political crises and new affronts to America’s moral vision of its war would inevitably arise. Fortunately for Washington, the assassination of Darlan opened the door

340 Quoted in Casey, Cautious Crusade, 118.
to a modest political reorganization in North Africa; it was, as Nation editor and publisher Freda Kirchwey pointed out, a “free gift to the United States” and the opportunity for a “second chance.” Whether or not the gift was entirely “free” remains a contested question. Darlan’s assassin Bonnier de la Chapelle was railroaded to execution within 24 hours, but his bold claims to have acted alone convinced few, and significant evidence points to British and Gaullist plots. Ultimately, the authorship of Darlan’s assassination is of little import: what is certain is that there were few tears shed for him in the Allied camp, and that Washington jumped on its “second chance” to reorganize the regime in North Africa.

2.3) The Politics of Occupation from Giraud to de Gaulle

The political struggle to put a more acceptable face on the French regime unfolded in the context of a protracted and difficult military struggle in North Africa. Ironically, the Joint Chiefs insistence on concentrating the Torch landings in the western Maghreb now militated against their cherished hopes of putting the whole Mediterranean theater behind them as rapidly as possible. Starting from Algiers, rather from the more easterly port of Bône as the British had proposed, Allied forces faced a long slog into Tunisia, and delays caused by initial French resistance to the landings, the political confusion in Algiers, and the modest forces assigned to the offensive, all combined to slow the advance. Meanwhile, the willingness of French leaders in Tunisia to continue

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cooperating with the Germans facilitated the rapid build-up of Axis reinforcements. By late November, Berlin was able to form the Fifth Panzer Army in Tunis under General Hans-Jürgen von Arnim. Well-equipped, well-led, and reinforced by Rommel’s forces as they outpaced their British pursuers on the coast road from Egypt, Von Arnim’s troops waged an effective defensive campaign, that, interspersed with violent counter-attacks, kept the Allies out of Tunis until mid-May 1943.

With the final capitulation of the garrison of “Tunisgrad” on May 13, over 275,000 Axis soldiers were marched off into captivity. A mere 800 escaped to Sicily. These enormous losses, coming hard on the heels of the surrender of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad, are often taken as evidence of Berlin’s pursuit of a delusional strategy characterized by efforts to hold onto every inch of captured territory. But, as Rick Atkinson points out, the tenacious Axis defense of Tunisia also succeeded for six months in keeping the Mediterranean closed to Allied shipping, holding Italy in the war, and buying time to build up German defenses in southern Europe.344 Moreover the protracted struggle in North Africa shifted the focus of Anglo-American strategy and effectively ensured both the continuing commitment of large-scale Allied resources to the Mediterranean basin and the postponement of the cross-Channel assault until the summer of 1944. At the Casablanca conference (Symbol) in January 1943, and despite continued resistance from the Joint Chiefs, Allied leaders recognized that the strategic and operational logic of the North African campaign would take Allied forces deeper into the Mediterranean and—much as early Allied war plans had hypothesized—on towards Italy.

344 Atkinson, Army at Dawn, 539-540.
In the context of this deepening strategic commitment to the region, the vexed question of the political complexion of French rule in North Africa assumed even greater importance. Whatever regime they sponsored, the Allies were going to have to live with their decision for a protracted period. At the end of December 1942, London approved Washington’s appointment of Henri Giraud as High Commissioner following Darlan’s assassination, but Churchill also grasped the opportunity to for the inclusion of de Gaulle in the new set-up. “We ought,” he cabled Roosevelt, “to try above everything to bring them all together” and to establish a “solid and united […] French nucleus.” President Roosevelt’s inclination was to head in exactly the opposite direction: as Harry Butcher noted in early January, the “President doesn’t want the French to create a single, well-established central government before the French people can elect one of their own choice.”

In reality, Roosevelt’s opposition to a unified French regime rested less on notions of popular sovereignty—Darlan, after all, had enjoyed no such legitimacy—and more on antipathy to de Gaulle who he saw, as Admiral Leahy put it, as being “British-sponsored.” Responding to Churchill’s proposal for a joint Giraud/ de Gaulle regime, Roosevelt floated the idea of establishing direct Allied military rule. Rather than sponsor an inclusive new regime in Algiers, the President argued, the Allies should recognize that since they were in “military occupation of North Africa,” they should also exercise “complete charge of all matters civil as well as military.” Until the French were free to elect a government, Allied military forces should deal with “local Frenchmen on a local

345 Churchill to Rooswevelt, Dec. 27 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 90.
346 Butcher, My Three Years, 233.
347 Leahy, I Was There, 167.
348 Roosevelt to Churchill, Jan. 1 1943, Complete Correspondence, 2: 104–105.
basis” and eschew establishing of an overarching regime that would inevitably be seen as a provisional government.

The President’s suggestion that the United States should exercise military rule in North Africa sent a tremor through AFHQ Algiers, where Eisenhower was hoping to get out of the business of government entirely. The commanding general responded quickly, defending the efficacy of cooperation with the French achieved through the “‘Allied’ principle” and warning of dire consequences if active French support was undermined.

Eisenhower repeated these arguments to General Marshall, stressing the impossibility “controlling the population by force” and extolling the benefits of cooperation with the French. To Butcher, Eisenhower intimated that he would resign if ordered to impose a military government. Eisenhower’s resistance was buttressed by the argument, articulated in December by New York Times columnist Arthur Krock, that the establishment of an American military government would dramatically “complicate” the postwar disposition of French territory. Any break in the continuity of French rule, Krock argued, would “wash[ed] out” French sovereignty and fuel the “aspirations” of the “native majority.”

While President Roosevelt mused over the potential benefits of direct military rule, London pressed the case for a broad regroupment of French forces that would encompass de Gaulle and Giraud. As we have seen, the British government, and Anthony Eden’s Foreign Office in particular, had long suspected that Washington’s hostility to de Gaulle and the Free French rested on a desire to see a weak and

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349 Eisenhower to Smith, Jan. 3 1943, Papers of Dwight D Eisenhower, 2: 888.
351 Editorial material, Chandler, Papers of Dwight D Eisenhower, 2: 895.
subordinate post-war France. Moreover, while forced to recognize their short-term utility, Washington’s pursuit of relations with Vichy had never sat well with London. Despite continual clashes with de Gaulle himself, the British government had recognized him as the legitimate leader of French resistance to Germany since the summer of 1940, and had collaborated militarily in the failed attack on Vichy Dakar and the successful invasions of Syria and Madagascar. Churchill had only acceded to Roosevelt’s demand that the United States take “sole responsibility” for political relations with the French authorities in North Africa in the context of the debate with the Joint Chiefs over the decision to invade North Africa, and the American decision to exclude de Gaulle from all participation in Torch continued to stir deep unease in Whitehall.

As Torch got underway, London had felt compelled to agree to the Darlan deal on the grounds, as Churchill informed General Ismay, of not “hampering” Eisenhower in his effort to “stamp out” Axis forces in Tunisia. But while endorsing a temporary deal with Darlan, London probed ways both to advance de Gaulle’s cause in North Africa and, in so doing, to strengthen its own political influence in the region. The wave of public opposition in Britain to the Darlan deal facilitated this process. Churchill defended the Darlan deal before an unusual secret session of parliament on December 10, but he was careful to place responsibility for the whole affair squarely on the Americans: “Not since 1776,” he noted disingenuously, had London “decide[d] the policy of the United States.” Popular opposition to the deal allowed the old imperial warhorse to strike a positively liberal note, warning Roosevelt that any “permanent arrangement” with Darlan would “not be understood by the great mass of ordinary people whose simple loyalties

353 Churchill to Ismay, on Nov. 21 1942, PREM 3/442/10.
are our strength.” Churchill returned to the attack in early December, warning that “fascist organizations” and “elements hostile to the United Nations” were consolidating their grip on the regime in North Africa.

To many in Whitehall, the deal with Darlan was seen as the sorry and inevitable outcome of American political leadership, the product of Murphy’s pro-Vichy sympathies and Eisenhower’s hopeless naïveté. London’s concerns were heightened by the fact that Henry “Hal” Mack, the Foreign Office official assigned as Political Liaison Officer to AFHQ, lacked the standing to press London’s view and, to make matters worse, was seemed to be going “all Eisenhowerish.” In an effort to strengthen British political influence, Churchill attempted to insert senior Foreign Office official Sir Alexander Cadogan into a mid-November conference of Allied leaders meeting in Gibraltar to discuss the North African situation. Eisenhower, Churchill assured Roosevelt, would surely welcome the inclusion of a British official with a strong grasp of the “political aspect.” The President firmly rebuffed Churchill’s proposal, welcoming Cadogan’s participation, but insisting that the conference would “not (repeat not)” discuss the “political aspects” of the situation.

Churchill continued to look for ways to strengthen London’s hand in North Africa and, after Washington announced the promotion of Robert Murphy to the rank of Minister, he proposed sending Colonial Office Undersecretary Harold Macmillan out to

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355 Churchill to Roosevelt, Nov. 17 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 7.
356 Churchill to Roosevelt, Dec. 9 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 69.
357 Quoted in Matthew Jones, Britain, the United States, and the Mediterranean War, 1942–44 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 76.
358 Churchill to Eisenhower, Nov. 18 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 18).
359 Roosevelt to Churchill, Nov. 18 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 18).
Algiers to “work with him.” Roosevelt approved Macmillan’s appointment and his having “precisely the same status” as Murphy, but he insisted that the British official be attached to Eisenhower’s staff. This proposal triggered a protracted exchange over Macmillan’s title that, despite its Monty Pythonesque tone—at one point Churchill proposed styling him “His Majesties (sic) Government’s Political Representative at General Eisenhower’s Headquarters”—contained a serious kernel: would the new British minister report directly to London, or would he, as a member of Eisenhower’s staff, report to the American general? At the end of December, after attempting to delay Macmillan’s appointment until the North African situation “stabilized” after the assassination of Darlan, Roosevelt finally accepted his appointment as “Minister Resident at Allied Headquarters,” with the proviso that Eisenhower would retain “full veto over all civil officials.”

Harold Macmillan flew out to Algiers in early January 1943. Ironically, the arrival of this British Tory was enthusiastically welcomed by American liberal Freda Kirchwey, who saw in Macmillan’s appointment signs of a shift from “Darlanism to republicanism” and an “omen of better days” to come. This turned out to be an accurate prediction. While Macmillan’s arrival coincided with President Roosevelt’s floating of the idea of direct military rule, it soon became clear that the removal of Darlan had indeed opened the way for a de Gaulle/Giraud administration in North Africa and a broad reorganization of French politics along lines favored by London. When Britain’s

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360 Churchill to Roosevelt, Dec. 11 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 71.
362 Churchill to Roosevelt, Dec. 23 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 87.
363 Roosevelt to Churchill, Dec. 29 1942, Complete Correspondence, 2: 89, 93.
ambassador to Washington Lord Halifax had raised a Free French proposal to send a mission to North Africa in mid-November, both Admiral Leahy and Secretary of State Hull had informed him that it was “undesirable to inject another element of discord” into an already complex situation.\footnote{Halifax to FO, Nov. 11 1942, PREM 3, 442/11.} But when he presented London’s view on the establishment of a “single authority” in North Africa at the beginning of January, he received a very different reception.\footnote{Halifax to FO, Jan 1 1943, PREM 3, 442/14.} Eden was now able to point to de Gaulle’s appeal to Giraud for the establishment of a “provisional center of power on a broadened basis” following the assassination of Darlan; to Giraud’s warm, if non-committal, response; and to Eisenhower’s assertion that “King Pin” might serve as the “medium” through which the “desired rapprochement” could be effected.\footnote{Eden to Halifax, Jan. 2 1943, PREM 3, 442/14.}

Faced with British pressure, Eisenhower’s refusal to countenance a military government, and continuing domestic criticism of the administration, Roosevelt changed course and set in motion the process that would ultimately unify the Giraudists and the Free French. George Marshall and Cordell Hull—long de Gaulle’s most vociferous opponent within the Administration—concurred, cabling Eisenhower on January 8 to express support for a single civilian authority in North Africa based on the integration of Giraud’s administration and De Gaulle’s French National Committee.\footnote{G. E. Maguire, 	extit{Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 72-73.} The rapprochement amongst French forces in North Africa was pushed ahead by a thankful
Eisenhower, who reported that even Peyrouton was keen to see an “accord” between de Gaulle and Giraud. 369

Washington’s volte face was eased by the mounting evidence that, contrary to the pre-invasion estimates of Robert Murphy and his agents, de Gaulle commanded significant support in North Africa. From Oran, for example, Murphy’s vice-consul John Boyd reported that hostility to Washington’s policy of keeping Vichy officials “in the saddle” had swung public opinion behind de Gaulle and the British. 370 The United States, Boyd concluded, was now running a “poor third” behind the British and the Free French. The new course also found favor at home, with the Nation hoping that a Giraud/de Gaulle regime might yet rescue “our first adventure in occupation politics” from “total disaster.” 371

In this context it is—as ever—difficult to determine Roosevelt’s own intentions. Did he raise the issue of direct Allied military rule out of frustration with the political scene in North Africa in the wake of Darlan’s assassination, or did he make the suggestion, which he must have known would be unpalatable both to London and to AFHQ, in order to force progress towards a Giraud/de Gaulle reconciliation which he himself, for longstanding political reasons, could not articulate openly? The latter course would be unusually devious, even for Roosevelt, but the idea of setting up a military government was itself, as Eisenhower explained, a virtual non-starter for sound military, political, and organizational reasons. In all probability, this question will remain unanswered. But what is absolutely clear is that President Roosevelt’s close personal

370 Boyd to Eddy, Jan. 13 1943, RG 226, Box 97, NARA.
interest in North Africa, so critical to the launching of Torch in the first place, continued unabated in the months following the invasion. Moreover, as Roosevelt pushed forward American engagement in North Africa in early 1943, his chief military officer in the region began to undergo a profound change, if not exactly of heart, then at least of understanding. By early January 1943, it is clear from his attitude towards effecting reconciliation between Giraud and de Gaulle that in rejecting direct military government, General Eisenhower was simultaneously embracing the fact that his own job necessarily included a substantial political component.

Even with London and Washington both backing some form of united front between de Gaulle and Giraud, the road of rapprochement was by no means a smooth one. Both French leaders were invited to Casablanca, where Allied leaders began meeting January 13, with the intention of forcing their collaboration: as Roosevelt put it, the “banns [must] be read and the marriage concluded,” even if it was a “shotgun wedding.”

Despite this unusually unified Anglo-American effort, the “marriage” almost fell apart when de Gaulle refused to travel to French territory at the invitation of the British government, only embarking for Morocco when Churchill threatened to withdraw London’s support for his French National Committee. Even then, as Macmillan reported wearily, hours of “arduous debate and considerable pressure” lay ahead.

On January 22 the two leaders were finally cajoled into shaking hands for the cameras, but their joint declaration, announcing their “entire agreement” on the “end to be achieved” was a model of vague brevity despite numerous more expansive drafts prepared for them by British and American officials.

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If the road to Casablanca was tortuous, that leading from it and to the actual establishment of a unified French authority in North Africa was even more so. In Algiers, supporters of Free French and Giraud engaged in seemingly endless negotiations while back in London de Gaulle eyed Anglo-American intentions with suspicion and doubted the loyalty of General Georges Catroux, his own representative in North Africa. Behind the scenes, however, one increasingly important figure worked to reconcile the factions. Businessman and scion of great cognac producers, Jean Monnet had been responsible for the coordination of Anglo-French arms production at the start of the war. Traveling to the United States after the fall of France, Monnet worked in Washington for the British Purchasing Commission, developing a reputation as a “single-minded apostle of all-out production” and forging close relations with leading Administration figures, including Harry Hopkins and Henry Morgenthau.374

After Darlan’s assassination, Jean Monnet sent Harry Hopkins an urgent memorandum on the political crisis in North Africa outlining a series of steps to overcome the “disorder inherent in the present French situation” on the basis of “principles and law” and of the defense of French sovereignty.375 Mindful of the need to overcome the public relations damage done to the Allied cause by the deal with Darlan, Monnet sought to “set at rest the minds of Frenchmen and of Allied public opinion,” but he also stressed that a successful resolution of the crisis did not lie within the purview of any individual French leader or faction and that it had to be pursued “irrespective of the fate of the persons involved.” Amidst the circumlocution, Monnet clearly pointed towards a liberalization and civilianization of the new Giraud administration, breaking

374 Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, 288.
375 Monnet to Hopkins, Dec. 27 1942, Hopkins papers, Box 330, FDRL.
from “notion[s] of the legitimacy of the Vichy regime,” while avoiding a wholesale capitulation to de Gaulle. There was much here to appeal to Roosevelt, particularly when combined with Monnet’s assertion that only the President of the United States had the moral and political authority to resolve the crisis; a presidential intervention, the Frenchman concluded, was the “cornerstone of the whole edifice.”

Roosevelt responded positively to Monnet’s arguments and, we can suppose, to his articulation of a Franco-American relationship that recognized America’s moral, political, and—through Lend-Lease—economic, leadership. Here, it seemed was a French leader who, it seemed, understood the emerging power of the United States and sought to situate the new French government in North Africa in a suitably deferential position to it. Faced at Casablanca with the intractable realities of French politics, Roosevelt wrote to Cordell Hull urging that Monnet be dispatched to Algiers to help resolve the crisis. Monnet, he argued, had “kept his skirts clear of political entanglements” and was well placed to help liberalize the Giraud regime while mediating with de Gaulle. Hull demurred, fearing that Monnet was too sympathetic to de Gaulle, but Roosevelt insisted, and in February 1943, Monnet returned to Algiers. Under Monnet’s guidance, Vichy legislation was repealed, Vichyite officials purged, and the Giraud administration generally cleaned up.

In the course of this work Monnet became convinced—if indeed he hadn’t been convinced all along—that no permanent solution in North Africa was possible without overcoming the divisions between Giraud and de Gaulle, and his influential voice was added to those greater urging unity between the two factions. In the early summer de

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376 Roosevelt to Hull, Jan. 19 1943, in Sherwood Roosevelt and Hopkins, 678.
Gaulle recognized the favorable situation developing in Algiers and, evading Eisenhower’s expressed instruction that he not return to North Africa until the military situation stabilized, inserted himself directly into the negotiations going on there. With de Gaulle’s presence forcing negotiations forward, a unified French Committee for National Liberation (FCNL) was finally formed on June 3 1943 under the co-chairmanship of de Gaulle and Giraud.

Jean Monnet’s role in the establishment of the FCNL was certainly a critical one, but had he, as Julian Hurstfield argues, been forced to depart from “Rooseveltian premises” in order to bring about unity between the French factions. Roosevelt’s continuing hostility to de Gaulle would imply that Monnet’s endorsement of rapprochement between the factions did indeed involve a break with Washington’s broadly pro-Giraud stance. But, as we have seen, Roosevelt frequently avoided being tied to one policy option, often sponsoring competing policy courses and allowing time and experience to determine which was superior. By the Casablanca conference, Roosevelt, along with senior American officials in North Africa, was well aware that Giraud “lack[ed] administrative ability” and that his government would have to be drastically overhauled. Moreover, while Monnet’s immediate course may not have sat well with Washington, he did not abandon the recognition of American leadership so evident in his December memorandum to Hopkins. This, ultimately, was the critical question for Roosevelt, and his fear that the stubbornly independent de Gaulle would spurn American leadership was surely the taproot of his abiding animus towards the French leader. It does not seem too far-fetched to suggest that, even as he pursued other policy options,

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Roosevelt hoped that Monnet and his allies might succeed in aligning the new French Committee in a suitably deferential relationship to the United States.

In weeks following the establishment of the FCNL President Roosevelt—as if acting to confirm de Gaulle’s suspicions—took the Committee’s intractable wrangling over the question of who should exercise military command over French forces as his cue to argue that the whole process should be abandoned and to re-raise his proposal for direct Allied military rule.\(^{378}\) Predictably, this suggestion aroused strong opposition from Eisenhower and it was finally beaten back by the combined efforts of British and American officials at AFHQ Algiers.\(^{379}\) Again, it is difficult to determine if Roosevelt was entirely serious, or if the proposal for a military government was a stick waved to move affairs in Algiers along by making clear to French leaders that they were not considered indispensable.

Following the formation of the FCLN, the question of the committee’s relationship to the Allied governments quickly and inevitably arose. In Algiers, Macmillan joined Eisenhower and his chief of staff Bedell Smith in arguing for the extension of some form of political recognition to the FCLN.\(^{380}\) With typical arrogance, Macmillan was convinced that the whole thing was his idea—the old Balliol man famously pictured himself as a clever “Greek” manipulating the “big, vulgar, bustling” and politically unsophisticated Roman-Americans—but Eisenhower’s correspondence


\(^{379}\) Jones, *Mediterranean War*, 83.

indicates clearly that he had been moving in this direction for some time. Not for the last time, the British would seriously underestimate Eisenhower’s political savvy.

By early July even Robert Murphy had come around on the question of recognizing the FCNL as the leading body of anti-Vichy France, joining Eisenhower and Smith in Macmillan’s camp of the “absolutely sound.” The challenge now was to “convert” Washington. Here Murphy himself deployed a new argument, suggesting to Cordell Hull that “early recognition” of the FCNL offered the best possibility of preventing de Gaulle from extending his “personal leadership.” The case for recognition drew further strength from evidence of deepening of popular support for FCLN throughout North Africa. Reporting on a Franco-American military parade in Casablanca in early May, American officers noted the participation of a five hundred Gaullists singing patriotic songs, booing General Noguès and other Vichy officials, and parading to the British and American consulates. Drawing on this and other experiences, the OSS concluded that while pro-Vichy sentiment remained strong in the navy, elsewhere numerous groups “claiming to be Gaullists” were emerging.

The issue finally came to a head at the highest level. In early July, Churchill urged Roosevelt to recognize the FCNL, disingenuously noting that Macmillan, Eisenhower, and Murphy were all in agreement with the proposal. Roosevelt replied protesting the use of the word “recognition”—which might imply approving the FCNL as the “government of France”—and arguing instead for “limited acceptance” subject to

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384 Joint Intelligence Center report, May 11 1943, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 5, NARA.
385 Political Situation in North Africa, June 2 1943, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 5, NARA.
“military requirements.” Despite its grudging tone, however, Roosevelt’s note reflected acceptance of the fact that the FCNL had in practice established itself as the accepted political authority amongst the French population of North Africa, and that it would have to be dealt with as such. Formal recognition finally came during the Quadrant conference in Quebec at the end of August. The tone of the British and American statements differed, with the former using markedly more friendly language, but both recognized the FCNL as the legitimate French administration in “those territories that recognize its authority.” By this rather circumlocutious formulation Roosevelt sought, by pointing to the fact that it was impossible to determine whose “authority” the people of metropolitan France might “recognize,” to keep Washington’s options open. When presented with these divergent texts by Macmillan and Murphy, René Massigli, the FCNL’s Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, wisely declined to parse the differences, electing to view them as “living, not legal, documents” describing a relationship that was a work in progress.

Anglo-American recognition of the FCNL overlapped with the gradual consolidation of de Gaulle’s authority within the committee. In July, while Giraud was in the United States working on plans for the rearming of the French army, de Gaulle won several members of the committee, including Jean Monnet, to his effort to subordinate Giraud’s military authority to his own political leadership. With Monnet’s backing, de Gaulle secured a decision to separate the functions of the co-presidents, assigning Giraud command of the military, while he would assume overall political control. Monnet’s

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388 Macmillan War Diaries, 193.
389 Ibid.
support for de Gaulle rested on pure pragmatism: having liberalized his government under Monnet’s guidance, the old general had no further raison d’être. Matters now headed towards a predictable dénouement. In September, after securing Allied approval but—critically—not that of the FCNL, Giraud led French troops into the island of Corsica. Taking advantage of Giraud’s egregious violation of the principle of civilian control, de Gaulle established himself as sole president of the FCNL on October 2.

In some ways, the establishment of the unified French Committee, its ultimate recognition by the Allied governments, and de Gaulle’s consolidation of his leadership within it, could be seen as a triumph of British policy over American. This was certainly the British view: Robert Murphy recalled British officials at AFHQ celebrating the establishment of the FCNL with an exclusive Anglo-French “victory lunch.” Many American opinion formers concurred. The Washington Post, for example, argued that the formation of the FCNL marked the “sad” final “collapse” of Washington’s “French policy” and registered the price to be paid for having attempted to deal with France as a “minor or nonexistent power.” In the Nation, Freda Kirchwey described the establishment of the FCNL as the “final end of America’s Vichy policy.” Kirchwey was not exactly right—in November 1943 President Roosevelt would made a final, failed, effort to shield Peyrouton and other former Vichy officials from imprisonment and prosecution—but she was substantially so; having fought tooth and nail against dealing with de Gaulle, the Administration had been forced to recognize the FCNL under his leadership.

390 Jackson France: The Dark Years, 459.
391 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 180.
392 Editorial, Washington Post, June 8 1943.
393 Editorial, The Nation, June 12 1943.
Despite these steps, however, Liberal opinion in the United States was only partially mollified by what journalist I.F. Stone described as the “grudging, cold, and ambiguous” decision to recognize the French Committee. This long-delayed step, Stone fretted, reflected a “steady drift to the right” in American foreign policy. But Stone and his fellow liberals were mistaken. Roosevelt’s foreign policy was not drifting to the right, but was simply hewing to the pragmatic lines upon which it had always run. What had happened, however, was that harsh contact with the abrasive realities of war in North Africa had shredded some of that policy’s carefully crafted ideological packaging, exposing its pragmatic core. The problem was that in the light of fighting a war presented as a Manichean struggle between democracy and dictatorship, the pragmatic alliance with authoritarian and quasi-dictatorial figures in North Africa seemed particularly unpalatable.

Washington’s pragmatic approach to Darlan and Giraud was reinforced by its concerns about de Gaulle. Unlike the cases of Holland, Norway, or Poland, where defeated governments decamped to London leaving only unrepresentative “Quisling” regimes behind, the great majority of the French elite initially rallied to Pétain and Vichy. In 1940 de Gaulle, who initially commanded virtually no bourgeois support and even less from the military hierarchy, had little to offer Washington beyond a handful of colonies and the potential ideological benefit of backing a declared anti-fascist fighter. The complete failure of the British/Free French assault on Dakar in 1940, moreover, demonstrated the resilience of the Vichy regime, the solidity of its hold on critical French colonies, and the political and military weakness of de Gaulle.

394 The Nation, September 4 1943.
Despite de Gaulle’s lack of purchase amongst the French elite, however, his patriotic call to resist the German occupation met a growing popular response both within France and amongst liberal opinion in Britain and the United States. In this process, de Gaulle became, almost despite himself and rather alarmingly for Washington, “a man of the Left.” As he explained in an interview with the *New York Times*, his movement included “every shade” of opinion from “avowed Communists to Catholic priests” and his aims included regulating the operations of big business and ensuring a “wider distribution of the national wealth.”\(^{395}\)

De Gaulle’s ability to project himself as a populist leader rested very substantially on the political support extended to him by Moscow, the French Communist Party (PCF), and the small communist factions in French North Africa. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, the PCF dropped its equal-handed opposition to both Pétain and de Gaulle and came out in support of the Free French, placing its extensive undercover network at the disposal of the Resistance. When London and Washington finally recognized the FCNL in August 1943, Moscow welcomed the committee in far more expansive terms than either, noting that it represented the “state interests of the French republic.” This formulation, as the *Washington Post* noted, signaled Moscow’s view of the FCNL as the “repository of French sovereignty” and as an “equal partner” rather than a “ward of the Allies.”\(^{396}\)

Following this line, small organizations aligned with the French Communist Party rallied to the Free French throughout French North Africa. Dropping any notion of fighting against French colonial rule, articles on Africa in official Communist journals

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\(^{395}\) *New York Times*, July 20 1943.

\(^{396}\) *Washington Post*, August 28 1943.
focused entirely on the “creation of broad anti-fascist fronts rather than anti-colonial revolution.” American officials in North Africa noted this development. In a review of the political situation in North Africa penned in the summer of 1943, OSS officers noted the participation of Communists in efforts to build popular support for de Gaulle. The Communist Party in Algeria, the report noted, had maintained considerable “prestige” due to its unbending opposition to the Vichy regime in the face of “ferocious persecution.” In Tunisia, Communist Party officials protested the FCNL’s arrest of nationalist leaders of the Destour Party. While denouncing the nationalists as “traitors” in the battle against the German occupation, the Communists complained that the arrests threatened relations between the Tunisian people and the Allies at a time when the unity of the “anti-Hitlerian coalition” was paramount.

From Washington’s point of view, these reports offered further evidence of the dangerously unpredictable and potentially radical character of the Free French. For the British, such reports seemed less troubling. The entire British war effort, after all, rested on the active support of the Labour Party, and would have to be paid for with a sweeping postwar program of social reform. De Gaulle would have to make a similar alliance in order to rebuild France: as Foreign Official William Strang put it in February 1943, Washington hoped for an “anti-Communist and pro-American” government in France, whereas Britain sought to promote a French regime that was “generally speaking” left-wing and willing to work with the Soviet Union to “contain Germany.”

398 OSS Report, July 2 1943, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 5, NARA.
399 Cole to State, October 14 1943, RG 59, 851S.00/288, NARA.
400 Jones, *Mediterranean War*, 82.
While Churchill was frequently infuriated by de Gaulle’s seemingly high-handed behavior, London had no alternative French leaders in the wings. And, while Churchill himself was markedly less enthusiastic about de Gaulle than the Foreign Office, the eventual recognition of the FCNL was, as we have seen, widely viewed as a triumph of British policy.

Despite the apparent set-back to its policy Washington was neither chastened nor defeated by being forced to recognize the FCNL, while London, despite its seeming success at “managing French affairs,” would reap few long term advantages.  Sloughing off its long and unpopular attachment to Vichy, Washington would, with all the assurance of a rising superpower, simply reorganize its political relations with the French Committee, using its enormous productive capacity to gain leverage by rearming the French army. Significantly, this policy shift took place as sections of the French elite were modifying their own relations with de Gaulle. As Jean Monnet’s move away from Giraud and towards de Gaulle during the summer of 1943 signaled, sections of the French elite were beginning to turn towards the Free French as the probable outcome of the war became clear. As de Gaulle began to lead a movement with real support within the French elite as well as amongst the population as a whole, he also began a veiled reorientation towards the United States. Meeting with de Gaulle in June 1943, Robert Murphy was surprised to hear him explain that the “future of France” depended on the United States, and that Americans, rather than Britons, were best able to help meet the aspirations of the “new France.” In the short term, French aspirations centered on securing the weapons with which to rebuild the military, and the civilian supplies

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401 Ibid., 84.
402 Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 182-183.
necessary to sustain the sagging North African economy. The United States was well placed to meet both needs.

2.4) Rearming the French and Sustaining the Economy of French North Africa.

As the Allied campaign in Tunisia continued during the spring of 1943, and as the political relationships between the Allies and the various French factions shifted, concrete and powerful evidence of American influence was literally pouring into North Africa in the form of commodities and military equipment. Much of this torrent flowed directly into the Allied offensive and into the constructing the ports, base areas, and distribution networks necessary to keep large modern armies in the field. But American resources also flowed in two other directions: firstly, into re-equipping and rearming a large French army in North Africa; and secondly, into providing the civilian supplies necessary to ameliorate the hardships produced by the dislocation of the colonial economy. Initially, both projects were justified in terms of helping the French maintain a stable administration in the face of any potential challenges from the Arab majority. In both areas, however, the distribution of American material quickly allowed Washington to reinforce its own influence in French and North African politics, to lay the basis of durable networks of business contacts, to and augment its position vis-à-vis that of London.

Following the fall of France, de Gaulle’s Free French had been equipped primarily by the British—who were also, of course, their major political sponsors. In November 1941, however, and as British resources were gradually exhausted,
Washington made a prudent side bet to main orientation to Vichy France by deciding to extended Lend-Lease to the Free French. Rather than open direct relations with the Free French, Washington insisted that they would receive Lend-Lease material from British allocations. Equipped with British equipment, and under the operational control of the Eighth Army, Free French forces under generals Jacques Leclerc and Pierre Koenig made a significant contribution to the campaigns in Libya, Tripoli: and Tunisia. This situation was formalized following America’s entry into the war when the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed in March 1942 that the relatively modest Free French Forces be assigned to continuing British “tutelage.” 403 The Americans, meanwhile, were eying the fourteen “poorly equipped, moderately well-trained, and professionally commanded” divisions of the Vichyite French African Army. 404 Universally referred to as “French,” these forces were, in their great majority, composed of Algerian, Moroccon, Tunisian and Senegalese soldiers with French officers. And, as we have seen, efforts to secure their cooperation, or at least their neutrality, formed a significant element of pre-Torch planning.

In discussion with General Clark and Robert Murphy during the secret meeting prior to the invasion, General Mast had made a formal request for American arms and equipment for the French “African Army.” Washington demurred, pointing out that meeting Mast’s request would require stripping twelve U.S. divisions, but the issue of re-equipping French forces with American arms was now very much on the table. By the end of November 1942, and with French forces fighting—and, at least partially due to poor equipment, suffering heavy casualties—in Tunisia, the Allies decided to move

404 Butcher, *My Three Years*, 58.
ahead with plans to rearm the African Army. As early as November 14, Roosevelt had facilitated this development by extending Lend-Lease to North Africa (while continuing to supply the Free French via the British), and on December 16 AFHQ Algiers formed the Joint Rearmament Committee (JRC). Its membership, comprising four Americans, four Frenchmen, and one Briton, underscored the fact that the rearmament of the African Army would, from the very beginning, be essentially an American sponsored project.

This relationship of forces was further reinforced during a private meeting between Roosevelt and Giraud during the Casablanca conference at which the President agreed to supply enough American equipment to rearm eleven French divisions, of which four would be armored and eight infantry. British hackles were quickly raised. Having raised the question with the Combined Chiefs, the British Joint Staff Mission (JSM) reported from Washington that, while Marshall seemed “embarrassed” by the President’s action, Leahy had insisted that promises made to Giraud had to be kept. Churchill, Leahy added, agreed with this arrangement.405 The following day Churchill assured the British Chiefs of Staff that he had not been consulted on this matter, that any “promises” had been made by Roosevelt alone, and that Leahy had “no right” to claim his agreement. But, cognizant of the relationship of forces in North Africa and unwilling to antagonize the President, he concluded with a plaintive question: “just what do you want me to say to the president?”406

The British continued to raise problems with the “Anfa Agreement” before the Combined Chiefs, arguing that there was not enough shipping available to meet all Allied supply requirements, that diverting resources to troops not needed for victory in Tunisia

405 JSM to War Office, Feb. 27 1943, PREM 3/441.
406 Churchill to Ismay, Feb. 28 1943, PREM 3/441.
was “militarily unjustified,” and that Roosevelt himself was simply “unaware” of the gravity of the supply situation.\footnote{COS to JSM, March 10 1943, PREM 3/441.} Behind this aggrieved barrage, two substantive issues can be discerned. The first, as Anthony Eden reported to the prime minister at the end of March, was that fulfillment of the Anfa Agreement would put “strong pressure on our imports programme,” threatening, in other words, the supply of American material to Britain.\footnote{Eden to Churchill, Mar. 26 1943, PREM 3/441.} The second question, surfacing in a March 13 draft telegram from Churchill to Roosevelt, was that shipping shortages were being exacerbated by supplying for French forces who would make “no contribution” to \textit{Husky}, the upcoming invasion of Sicily.\footnote{Churchill to Roosevelt, Mar. 13 1943, PREM 3/441.} The Joint Chiefs answered this issue at the end of March, hailing the “important part” French forces would play throughout the Mediterranean and in the “ultimate liberation of continental Europe.”\footnote{Quoted in Vigneras, \textit{Arming the French}, 55.} The issue here, put bluntly, was whether or not London wanted to see a large, American equipped French army, attached to American forces, and playing a major role outside the narrow confines of North Africa.

Naturally, none of this delayed the Americans who, confident that they could meet the demands of French rearmament in addition to their other commitments, pressed ahead with the implementation of the Anfa Plan without waiting the approval of the Combined Chiefs. With the arrival of convoy UGS 6 1/2 in early April the African Army received equipment for three infantry divisions and two armored regiments, effectively completing the first phase of the plan.\footnote{Ibid., 47–48.} When the Combined Chiefs returned to the matter on May 18, during the \textit{Trident} conference in Washington, they followed the Joint

\begin{itemize}
\item[407] COS to JSM, March 10 1943, PREM 3/441.
\item[408] Eden to Churchill, Mar. 26 1943, PREM 3/441.
\item[409] Churchill to Roosevelt, Mar. 13 1943, PREM 3/441.
\item[410] Quoted in Vigneras, \textit{Arming the French}, 55.
\item[411] Ibid., 47–48.
\end{itemize}
Chiefs in affirming the 11-division target, but they also agreed that achieving this goal should be subordinate to fulfilling British and American supply requirements. This formulation, as Marcel Vigneras points out, appeared to bow to British concerns but in fact, given their confidence in meeting all pressing supply demands, gave the Washington complete freedom of action. As Air Chief Marshal Portal pointed out gloomily, the “entire project” was now “in the hands of the Americans.” American domination of the process of equipping and training French forces in North Africa was further codified on August 7, when the Joint Rearmament Committee was assigned directly to NATOUSA, the overall command of American forces in the theater.

American confidence rested upon the remarkable productive capacity of the American economy and the competence and drive of American engineers. Arriving in Algiers mere days before UGS 6 1/2 began unloading, Colonel Ernest Suttles and a detachment of 40 American military engineers, assisted by the Chantiers de Jeunesse, quickly constructed five auto assembly plants. Soon one truck was rolling off the new General Motors assembly line every three minutes, while the Jeep plant was building 200 vehicles a day. By May 5 auto assembly operations, together with sprawling supply base at Casablanca, were formally handed over to the French authorities. A few days later French-led troops, decked out in American uniforms, manning American artillery pieces, and riding in American manufactured (and French assembled) trucks joined victory parades in Tunis, Algiers, and Casablanca. By the end of July, AFHQ was able to recommend that a substantial French force, to be commanded by General Alphonse Juin, be attached to the U.S. Fifth Army in the forthcoming invasion of mainland Italy.

412 Ibid., 57.
Roosevelt’s initial proposal to begin the large-scale rearmament of French forces in North Africa was at least partially driven by the hope that the demonstrative supply of American equipment would reinforce Giraud’s political standing. What is striking, however, is that American arms and equipment continued to flow into North Africa even as it became increasingly apparent that de Gaulle was capable of mounting a serious, and ultimately successful, challenge to Giraud’s leadership. As we have seen, even the consoling thought that Giraud might maintain military leadership of French forces proved relatively short-lived: by the time Juin’s troops deployed in Italy under the American Fifth Army, de Gaulle was consolidating his overall control of the FCNL. Again, it seems, a pragmatic effort to strengthen a suitable patron-client relationship with the French leadership in North Africa took precedence over Washington’s attitude towards particular French leaders. Moreover, and as the Joint Chiefs comments about the use of French troops in the “ultimate liberation of continental Europe” indicate, American leaders were already assigning these forces a role in the invasion of France and therefore, presumably, in post-occupation political arrangements established there.

The scope of Washington’s commitment to rearming French forces in North Africa should not be underestimated. In early 1943, and at the same time as they were approving ramping up the flow of American equipment to the French, American planners were moving away from earlier plans to field an army of over 200 divisions and towards what would become known as the “ninety division gamble.” In January 1943, the War Department circulated the first plans for a 100-division army; in this context, the near-simultaneous decision to equip eleven French divisions is particularly striking.413

413 See Matloff Strategic Planning, 368.
London’s initial resistance to, and eventual grudging acceptance of, the American-sponsored rebuilding of the French army is also striking, reflecting a dawning recognition that America’s economic preponderance was inevitably going to have profound political and strategic consequences in hitherto unanticipated areas. Despite early British sponsorship of de Gaulle and the Free French project, the large-scale arrival of American military munificence would inevitably shift lines of political influence away from London and towards Washington: as Jean Monnet had explained to Hopkins and Roosevelt, only the Americans were capable of restoring France.

Alongside the rapidly increasing supply of American arms to French forces in early 1943, the American goods necessary to meet basic civilian needs and to maintain a rudimentary level of economic functioning also began to flow towards North Africa. At the beginning, and while Washington recognized that a demonstration of American benevolence was necessary to the success of Torch and of future operations, American planners had made little provision for the supply of civilian commodities. On November 12 1942 Roosevelt announced “no one will go hungry […] if it is humanly within our power to make the necessary supplies available,” but there was little of the detailed planning necessary to turn this bold promise into a reality.414 True to form, American military leaders wanted as little to do with civilian affairs as possible, a stance codified in instructions to General Eisenhower not to concern himself with “economic questions” except insofar as they directly “affect your operations.”415 Economic affairs, the Combined Chiefs concluded, would be handled by the “Civilian Departments of the United States and United Kingdom governments.” In an effort to flesh out this vague

414 Dougherty, Politics of Wartime Aid, 68.
415 CCS to Eisenhower, Oct. 30 1942, RG 218, Box 379, NARA.
assertion, the Joint Chiefs wrote to Milo Perkins, head of the Bureau of Economic Warfare (BEW), urging that he work with the British Ministry of Economic Warfare to ensure the supply of food and other civilian supplies.

This approach, unfolding as American forces were already engaged in action, was remarkably haphazard even by the chronically ad hoc standards of the Roosevelt administration, and it drew a sharp rebuke from the President himself. “It is obvious,” Roosevelt insisted, that “all matters relating to economic measures in North Africa fall directly into the larger field of foreign relations,” and should therefore be handled by the State Department. To correct their error, the Joint Chiefs were instructed to withdraw their letter to Perkins, and to approach Cordell Hull instead.\footnote{Roosevelt to JCS, Nov. 11 1942, RG 218, Box 379, NARA.} It is not clear whether Roosevelt thought that the BEW, which had been less than enthusiastic about the supply of civilian goods to North Africa under the Murphy-Weygand agreement, would fail to rise to the challenge, or whether he simply concluded that the urgency of the situation required a centralized response headed the most prestigious civilian agency.

Whatever his precise motivation, President Roosevelt’s intervention established the necessary framework for the large-scale provision of civilian supplies. With the leading role of the State Department underscored, other civilian agencies could be brought into action, and Lend-Lease Administration head Edward Stettinius was soon able to report that the “relationship between BEW, State Department, and Lend-Lease […] is rapidly settling down in a satisfactory fashion.”\footnote{Stettinius to Hopkins, Nov. 17 1942, Hopkins papers, Box 330, FDRL.} The involvement of the Lend-Lease Administration was particularly important: on November 13\textsuperscript{th} Roosevelt issued a finding that “the defense of any French province, colony, protectorate, mandated area
other territory” was “vital to the defense of the United States” thereby authorizing Stettinius to “render more effective Lend-Lease aid to the French people,” particularly those in North Africa.\textsuperscript{418} But simply making North Africa eligible for Lend-Lease aid did not solve the problem. As Stettinius noted coyly, while previous authorizations had enabled the Free French to receive Lend-Lease supplies, it was “conceivable” that de Gaulle’s supporters would not be part of the new government in North Africa. It would be best, Stettinius concluded, to maintain a “fluid and flexible” attitude as to which French authority was responsible for the distribution of supplies and to leave the final determination on such matters in the hands of General Eisenhower.\textsuperscript{419}

As Washington deliberated, the economy of French North Africa, unhinged since 1940 by war in the Mediterranean and now further disrupted by the Allied invasion, plunged deeper into crisis. Reporting from Algiers, Robert Murphy sounded the alarm, warning that the “execution of a program of economic supply” had become a matter of “urgent necessity.”\textsuperscript{420} Cordell Hull replied the following day, informing Murphy that materials ordered under the old trade accord were being rushed to North Africa and explaining the State Department’s new role in coordinating the relief operation.\textsuperscript{421} With the State Department at the helm, the initial confusion evident in Washington’s response to the economic crisis in North Africa gave way to order and organization. On December 19, barely one month later, the North African Economic Board (NAEB), was established to oversee all aspects of Allied engagement with the North African economy, from the

\textsuperscript{418} Roosevelt to Stettinius, Nov. 13, RG 59, Box 5210, NARA.
\textsuperscript{419} Stettinius to Acheson, Nov. 13 1942, RG 59, Box 5210, NARA.
\textsuperscript{420} Murphy to Hull, Nov. 17 1942, \textit{FRUS 1942}, 2: 443.
\textsuperscript{421} Hull to Murphy, Nov. 18 1942, \textit{FRUS 1942}, 2: 444.
distribution of Lend-Lease imports to the collection economic intelligence, commodity purchase, and price control.

Established under military the authority of AFHQ Algiers and working under the joint chairmanship of Robert Murphy and British General H.M. Gale, the NAEB was inter-Allied body. But, with the Americans supplying a big majority of the NAEB’s civilian staff and, with the exception of coal, the great bulk of the goods it distributed, it quickly became a vehicle for what one historian had described as “American dominance of virtually every area of North African economic life.”\textsuperscript{422} The establishment of the NAEB also coincided with Roosevelt’s decision to appointment Robert Murphy as his personal representative in North Africa, and to promote him to ministerial rank. While continuing to function as Civil Affairs Officer on Eisenhower’s staff, Murphy would now also enjoy direct access to the President. In some ways a formality—Murphy had long had Roosevelt’s ear—the appointment of an American Minister marked both a strengthening of Washington’s commitment to civilian affairs in North Africa and a clearer separation between military and civilian spheres of American activity. General Eisenhower was “delighted” with the new Minister, a reaction that reflected his relief at the lessening of his civilian responsibilities.\textsuperscript{423}

The NAEB faced a daunting task. Reports from American field officers in the early months of 1943 complained of the “low priority” accorded to relief efforts and of a distressing tendency for various civilian agencies to continue to work at cross purposes, as was “so often the case in Washington.”\textsuperscript{424} With typical British disdain, Macmillan

\textsuperscript{422} Maguire, 120.
\textsuperscript{424} Patterson to NAEB, n.d., RG 169, NAEB, Box 3, NARA.
blamed the problems on the “extraordinarily low standard of efficiency” of American
NAEB staffers, whom he considered fit only generate “perfectly unintelligible” reports. Macmillan’s charges notwithstanding, the Board faced very real problems in organizing the import of civilian supplies. Military authorities were reluctant to initially unwilling to allocate dedicated ships to civilian supplies, and initial shipments arrived as “filler,” packed in around military equipment. Lend-Lease supplies were intermixed with the “barter goods” allocated to the army, and the whole picture was further complicated by “unreliable manifests” and confused unloading procedures. With no distribution system yet in place, unloaded goods often simply piled up dockside, subject to the depredations of weather and theft.

Gradually, order emerged from chaos. By mid-January, Lend-Lease officials projected importing 30,000 tons of civilian supplies per month, with shipments consisting largely of tea, sugar, rice, and cotton piece goods together with “consumers goods” including stockings, nail polish, and razors. Under the control of General Arthur Wilson, port operations were streamlined. Wilson outlined his approach in a meeting with Lend-Lease officials in December 1942, explaining that, when “treated firmly,” one could get adequate work out of the otherwise shiftless “natives.” The local population, Wilson continued, should not be given food handouts lest they lost the incentive to work: following the French example, he believed that a “good kick” instilled the necessary labor discipline, and he hoped to return to Africa with a “improved paddle” for issue to

425 Macmillan, War Diaries, 62.
426 NAEB to Stettinius, n.d., RG 169, NAEB, Box 3, NARA.
427 “Civilian Supplies Shipped to North Africa,” NAEB memorandum, RG 59, 851R24/27, NARA.
Given these attitudes it is hardly surprising that, even as port operations became more efficient, Arab laborers took every opportunity to avail themselves of American largesse.

As the inflow of American goods increased, NAEB officials tackled the problem of distributing them to the civilian population. Lacking their own channels of distribution and, as Wilson’s comments indicate, heavily biased towards the European section of the population, officials decided to utilize the existing French *groupements*. The *groupements* were guild organizations of merchants and industrialists established in 1938 as part of the increasingly corporatist structure of the Vichy state. American officials were under no illusions about their character. The American consul in Casablanca, for example, described the *groupements* as “real dictatorships” that were “controlling speculation, hoarding imports, and over-bidding prices,” while later reports described them as Vichy-inspired bodies designed to exclude “Jews and Gaullists.”

Despite their “fascist leanings” and open discrimination against the Arab population, however, NAEB officials considered that the *groupements* offered the only feasible channel for the distribution of American supplies, and even official who had been highly critical came to see them as “indispensable” to Allied relief operations.

In July 1943 the FCNL formally abolished the *groupements* as part of its effort to reform the most egregiously fascistic elements of the Vichy state. It was, however, as an NAEB report noted in August, a “de jure” abolition that left the essential structure and

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429 Brooks to NAEB, Jan. 22 1943, 37192, RG 169, Box 17, NARA.
430 Brooks to NAEB, Feb 19 1943, 37193, RG 169, Box 17, NARA.
functioning of the *groupements* intact. Given the overriding American commitment to the maintenance of French colonial rule in North Africa and the part played by the French business community in structuring and maintaining that rule, it is hard to see what other course American officials might have followed. And, for all its problems, the distribution system did eventually permit clearly marked American products to circulate throughout North Africa. As an OSS officer reported in April 1943 following an eight day trek across the Atlas Mountains, American supplied tea, sugar, soap and cotton cloth were in evidence—if short supply—in villages right across the region.432

Despite the gradual trickle down of American products to the Arab population, however, the utilization of the *groupement* system implicated the United States in the twin problems of inflation and the black market. At the end of December 1942, Robert Murphy concluded an agreement Commandant André Bataille pegging prices to their pre-invasion levels. But, as administered through the *groupements* and loosely policed by French authorities, it proved impossible to enforce the Murphy-Bataille agreement, and American diplomats were soon providing evidence, as vice-consul Gordon Browne reported from Fez in June, of an “uncontrolled traffic in American products” and a consequent spiraling inflation of black market prices.433 In a detailed report on the black market filed with the OSS, Browne blamed this state of “complete corruption” squarely on the “graft practiced by the French authorities,” and noted that it had become “practically impossible” for “Moslem” traders to remain aloof from the black market. By July NAEB economic advisor Henry Villard concluded that, for both Arab businessmen

431 Villard to NAEB, Sept. 15 1943, RG 169, Box 17, NARA.
432 OSS memo, March 30 1943, RG 169, 31428, NARA.
433 Browne to JICA, June 1943, RG 226, Entry 97 Box 3, NARA.
and individual consumers, participation in the black market had become both “regular and necessary.” Worryingly for American officials, he also reported that, in response to the continuing economic uncertainty, native farmers were withholding grain from French officials on a large scale.\(^{434}\)

Faced with these intractable problems embedded in the structure of French colonial rule, and fearing that close association with French authorities might damage American prestige, U.S. officials hoped to extricate themselves from the distribution business. In the late summer of 1943, Anglo-American the recognition of the FCNL created the possibility to doing just that. In late August, Ralph Watkins of the NAEB’s Import Division wrote to Office of Lend-Lease head Edward Stettinius proposing to shift responsibility for the ordering and distribution of civilian goods directly on to the shoulders of the newly recognized French Committee. Until this time, the Lend-Lease operation had in North Africa been anomalous in that the United States had retained control of supplies until they entered the local distribution network, whereas other Lend-Lease recipients took delivery of their supplies in the United States. Watkins now proposed to bring North Africa into line with standard OLL practice through the establishment of an FCNL-organized French Purchasing Mission capable of taking ownership of good “ship-side” in the United States. With the FCNL assuming full responsibility for its Lend-Lease aid, American officials would be able to withdraw from increasingly futile efforts to control prices. This move would also, Watkins noted, help resolve the fact that French officials were becoming “increasingly sensitive” about

\(^{434}\) Villard to NAEB, July 15 1943, RG 169, NEA, Box 17, NARA.
“American civilian operations.” For the State Department, Adolf Berle concurred with Watkins’s proposal, and in mid-November the French Supply Council was established in the United States.

As discussions leading to the establishment of the French Supply Council were going on, Robert Murphy concluded negotiations with René Massigli and Jean Monnet, now the FCNL leaders responsible for rearmament, civilian supplies, and reconstruction, on the adoption of the windily titled “Modus Vivendi on Reciprocal Aid in French North and West Africa.” Under the “Modus Vivendi” signed on September 27, French officials agreed to pay the landed costs of civilian goods shipped to North Africa and, more quixotically, to control their prices and ensure their equitable distribution. Despite this agreement—and unsurprisingly given the dislocation of the North Africa economy and of French government finances—actual cash payments were highly irregular, and “reverse Lend-Lease” exports of goods from North Africa to America did little to close the deficit. At the time Lend-Lease was terminated in July 1945, the French government still owed some $31 million on Lend-Lease imports totaling over $185 million.

Taken together, the signing of the “Modus Vivendi” and the establishment of the French Supply Council set the framework for the organization of economic relations between the United States and French North Africa for the remainder of the war. By their own lights, and particularly in relation both to Washington’s almost complete lack of planning for post-Torch economic affairs and to the chaotic economic situation that American forces found on their arrival in North Afrika. Widespread starvation had been avoided—and with it, at least in the minds of many Americans, the threat of Arab

435 Watkins to Stettinius, Aug. 31 1943, RG 169, Box 17, NARA.
436 See Dougherty, Politics of Wartime Aid, esp. ch 6.
rebellion. The economic functioning of the French administration in North Africa had been overhauled and its trade with America brought into line with those between the United States and its other allies. And, under the auspices of Lend-Lease and the supervision of the government, American commodities had penetrated deeply into the North Africa market: the fact that American-made cloth and sacks of American-grown grain, all stamped with a bold “U.S.A.” could be found in towns and villages across the Maghreb was a testament not only to Washington’s benevolence but also to the enormous capacity and reach of the American economy.

America’s economic presence in North Africa also advanced on other fronts and by other means. In addition to the organized, large-scale, importation of American civilian supplies into North Africa, the sheer scale of Allied military operations and of the logistical operation necessary to support them had a powerful, if large unplanned and unorganized, economic impact on the economy of the Maghreb. At the time of the invasion, Eisenhower had naively hoped to function with a headquarters staff of around 150, but within months AFHQ Algiers had ballooned into a “huge, chairborne force” of over 16,000 officers and men. 437

In Morocco alone, American forces constructed over thirty bases and airfields, including the sprawling logistical and assembly facilities at Port Lyautey and Casablanca. While American engineers organized construction, local workers hired by French subcontractors did much of the actual work. The resulting demand for labor—and the relatively high wages—had a significant social impact, encouraging migration from rural areas to the coastal cities, breaking down longstanding divisions between Arab and

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Berber, and forging a “Moroccan proletariat” for the first time.\textsuperscript{438} Huge shantytowns—or bidonvilles—sprung up around the American bases, their shacks often incorporating cast-off packing cases and skids in which aircraft parts and military vehicles had been shipped from the United States. In addition to housing Moroccan workers, the bidonvilles quickly became centers of black market trading and—in common with civilian townships adjacent to the bases of occupying armies around the world—of prostitution.

The direct social and economic impact of these sprawling American bases should not be underestimated, but nor should their role in simply introducing America to the native population. Nothing like it had been seen in North Africa before: “America,” Borden Blair points out, quickly came to symbolize energy and dynamism, while “Made in USA” signified quality and, above all, modernity.\textsuperscript{439} Even as the tides of combat flowed out of Morocco and Algeria and on into Tunisia and then Italy, U.S. forces maintained substantial bases in all the major port cities of the Maghreb. Over fifteen thousand American soldiers were stationed in Morocco until the end of the war, and Algeria provided a major jumping-off point and logistical base for the Franco-American invasion of the French Riviera in August 1944. By the end of the war, an incredible 850,000 tons of American weapons and equipment had flowed through America’s North African bases, much of it unloaded, assembled, and transported by Arab workers.

The American military presence in North Africa worked hand-in-hand with the distribution of American supplies to create a potentially substantial new market for American exports, and, not surprisingly, American businessmen were quick to spot the

\textsuperscript{438} Leon Borden Blair, Western Window in the Arab World (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1970) 110.
\textsuperscript{439} Ibid. 117.
“enormous” possibilities.\textsuperscript{440} By the end of the war, as we shall see, private business interests were pressing the American government to loosen the tight wartime regulation of trade with North Africa and, in turn, Washington was reminding the new government in Paris that it was the “traditional policy” of the United States to “foster the movement of trade through private commercial channels” and that it therefore expected private commerce to be “restored” rapidly and with official French cooperation.\textsuperscript{441}

As discussions on America’s ongoing economic relations with North Africa developed at the end of the war, so American planners became increasingly interested in maintaining a military presence into the postwar period. As early as the summer of 1943, planners and policymakers began to discuss the place of the Maghreb in America’s long-term strategic interests. Writing from Casablanca in August 1943, Consul General Earle Russell urged Washington to retain control of its military bases in Morocco in order to “lay the foundations [for] after-war air communications and commercial developments.” “The time has come,” Russell concluded with a flourish, “to look after our own interests first.”\textsuperscript{442} Russell’s superiors in the State, War, and Navy departments concurred, and on September 11 1943 the Joint Chiefs agreed on the importance of maintaining “control and/or retention of US air and sea bases on foreign territory.”\textsuperscript{443}

Ultimately, American forces withdrew from all but two of their Moroccan bases, maintaining an active presence only at a key naval communications facility at Port Lyautey. But Earle Russell’s strategic foresight was underscored in 1950 when the

\textsuperscript{440} Dougherty, \textit{Politics of Wartime Aid}, 140.
\textsuperscript{442} JCSET, Reel 2, JCS #497, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, microfilm..
\textsuperscript{443} Ibid.
Washington, now faced with the strategic imperatives of the Cold War, reactivated its wartime facilities in order to establish two Strategic Air Command bases, an early-warning radar system, and other support facilities. Negotiations for the new bases, seen as “vital links in the NATO chain of defense,” were conducted directly with Paris and without the involvement of Moroccan political leaders, but Washington was able to renegotiate their status with the newly independent government of Morocco in 1956.

2.5) Arab Nationalism, Promises of Independence, and American Support for French Colonial Rule.

It is a striking fact that the entire structure of America’s multi-faceted wartime engagement with the countries of the Maghreb rested on the fundamental assumption that France would continue to exercise colonial rule throughout North Africa for the foreseeable future. Moreover, Washington’s support for the maintenance of French colonial rule was neither concealed nor undocumented, and when the Administration turned to discussing the future of French Indo-China in early 1944, Cordell Hull was able to furnish Roosevelt with a long list of official statements in which American policymakers, starting with the President himself, had expressed clear and unambiguous support for the restoration of French sovereignty over its pre-war empire. The President’s own broadcast to the French people at the time of the Torch landings in North

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Africa had offered assurances that, once the “menace” of Axis occupation had been dealt with, American forces would “quit your territory at once”; at no point, in any public proclamation of the American government, was the idea that North Africa might not be French territory ever entertained. And nor, in the welter of liberal outcry against the Darlan deal, was any significant challenge made to the underlying assumption that French colonial rule in North Africa would continue.

The fact that these pledges of support for French imperial rule stood in egregious contradiction to the principles of self-determination adopted as Allied war-aims in the Atlantic Charter was not lost on American policymakers and opinion-formers. The problematic circle was squared by asserting that many colonial peoples were simply not yet “ready” for self-government and that benevolent colonial rule could play a positive role in continuing to prepare them for independence at some point in the future. The ideals of self-determination embedded in the Atlantic Charter were not, therefore, to be viewed as a one-size-fits-all proscription, but rather as a general approach to be applied selectively, conditionally, and according to the decisions of the American government.

Writing in defense of the deal with Darlan, New York Times columnist and Roosevelt confidante Arthur Krock made precisely this point. Krock argued that by putting Darlan in power Washington had facilitated the continuation of French rule in North Africa under circumstances in which a rupture in French sovereignty might, “if the Atlantic Charter was […] read in the light of its spirit,” have produced some form of majority rule and an end to French colonialism.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷ See Kimball, The Juggler, esp. ch. VII.
Along these lines, many American officials in North Africa registered broadly positive assessments of French colonial rule on the one hand and, on the other, a deep skepticism about the prospects for Arab self-government. The chargé d’affaires in Tangiers, for example, reported that the French had done a “great deal to develop the country,” in particular by imposing law and order on tribes that had been “at each others throats for countless generations”; in contrast the Arabs were capable only of a “crude and premature nationalistic fanaticism.” Some officials took this line of argument a step further, with one noting in a handwritten comment his belief that the “Four Freedoms didn’t apply to North Africa.” Comments of this kind were by no means limited to relatively lowly diplomats: on his return from Casablanca President Roosevelt himself praised the beneficial workings of French colonialism, telling reporters that the French were “doing well,” building roads, improving agriculture, and “putting in” education. For their part, Roosevelt concluded, the Moroccans “like” their French rulers because they “understand them,” and were not hankering after “any change” in the existing political set-up.

In private, Roosevelt’s comments reinforced the assessment that the states of the Maghreb were not ready for self-government; reporting to the cabinet on his trip to North Africa, he simply and dismissively noted that the Arabs “looked dirty.” Army officers in North Africa tended to couch similar observations in blunter terms. General George Patton, who led the American invasion of Morocco in November 1943 and whose troops remained in the country to block any attack from Spanish Morocco, used some of this

449 Childs to Hull, June 1943, RG 84, Box 5, NARA.
450 Russell to Childs, Oct. 12 1943, RG 84, Box 5, NARA.
452 Diary entry, Feb. 5 1943, Morgenthau papers, FDRL.
enforced break from campaigning to fill his diary with comments on Arab life. The general’s observations made him wonder whether “some sort of arrested [evolutionary] development” was at work, since everything about “the Arab,” spoke to his chronic “inefficiency.” Even their “quiet dignity,” Patton opined, while impressive at first turned out to be a manifestation “pure dumbness.” Against the backdrop of these deep-seated notions of Arab incapacity, it is hardly surprising that American policymakers easily embraced the notion that Washington should determine whether or not colonized peoples were capable of self-government: as the State Department’s special Advisory Committee charged with postwar planning put it, “entirely aside from the obvious fact that France will release its hold on Morocco only if compelled to do so by force […] the fact is that the Moroccans are not capable of governing themselves in a peaceful, orderly way.”

The perceptions of American officials and army officers were inevitably shaped by the sensibilities of American Orientalism. As Brian Edwards points out, the Maghreb was indeed “distant” to most Americans, whose perceptions were shaped by a mélange of “sheik and Foreign Legion films”; even after the Torch landings, North Africa was represented as a timeless, primitive, and unchanging backdrop against which the real, modern, and dynamic business of war was played out. Darryl Zanuck’s 1943 documentary At the Front in North Africa, with its images of American troops in armored vehicles racing by plodding and disinterested camel drivers, captured this sense precisely. Similarly, the Warner Brothers’ classic Casablanca, its release fortuitously coinciding

454 Minutes of State Department Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy meeting T-571, July 1945, Notter files, microfilm.
455 Edwards, Morocco Bound, 41.
with the Casablanca conference, projected the actions of its American, French, and German protagonists onto the exotic *tableau vivant* of its namesake city. And in Bogart’s next movie even these one-dimensional Arabs are stripped out of the picture; *Sahara* plays out against a backdrop of uninhabited and shifting sand dunes.

The point here is not that the sensibilities of American Orientalism directly determined government policy, but rather that policy was made within an ideological framework in which it seemed entirely natural and normal that American politics and strategy should proceed without reference to the great majority of the native population. The continuing strength of notions of the war in North Africa as a pristine “war without hate” fought out in uninhabited space speaks to the power of these perceptions. In this context, the fact that the fundamental question of whether or not French colonial rule in North Africa should continue was barely discussed in the United States becomes more explicable; infused with deep-seated notions of Arab incapacity, the issue became simply one of *which* Frenchmen should rule, not *whether* or not French rule should continue. In this context, Krock’s case for the deal with Darlan assumes its full force: the critical question was to avoid the break in French sovereignty implied by the establishment of an Allied military government, since such a break would inevitably create a “knotty post-war problem” when it came time to hand power back to a civilian authority.456 Better, it seemed, to back the fascist-minded Darlan today than to risk majority rule tomorrow.

Ironically, even as the United States was announcing its unwavering support for the continuation of French rule in North Africa, many of France’s Arab subjects viewed American intervention in the region in an entirely different—and much more positive—

light. Untainted by previous colonial involvement in the region and wrapped in the Atlantic Charter’s solemn declaration of support for self-determination, newly arrived American troops were widely seen as a harbinger of sweeping political change and as agents of anti-colonialism. American diplomats throughout the Maghreb reported enthusiastically on the positive reception accorded to American forces. From Fez, for example, a vice-consul noted that all of “Moslem society” had been suitably impressed by the display of American military power and was “united in praise of America.” Other reporters noted that the circulation of clearly marked American relief supplies reinforced a positive appreciation of U.S. power that many Arabs hoped might be translated into a weakening of French authority and the establishment of a greater degree of self-rule. American policymakers — including President Roosevelt himself — helped to foster the impression that Washington stood for a greater measure of self-government, and these efforts are critical to understanding the totality of American policy in North Africa.

On January 22 1943, President Roosevelt took advantage of a brief lull in the Casablanca conference to host a dinner for Mohammed V, Sultan of Morocco. With British premier Winston Churchill listening sullenly — his temper no doubt worsened by the host’s decision to defer to his “true Mohammedan” guests and eschew alcohol — Roosevelt engaged the Sultan in animated conversation. While there is no official record of their discussion, the accounts of other diners make it clear that the president used the occasion to express his support for Moroccan independence. “Sire,” the Sultan’s son recalled Roosevelt saying, “I can assure you that ten years from now your country will be

457 Browne to JICA, June 1943, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 4, NARA.
independent.”  Presidential advisor Harry Hopkins was a good deal more circumspect when he met Grand Vizier El Mokhri the following day, carefully balancing an assertion that “many peoples” would soon get their “rightful share of the good things of the world” with a warning that the United States saw “no reason to change the present government of Morocco.” The contradiction between these statements neatly encapsulates Washington’s policy towards Arab North Africa: behind the intimations of support for national self-determination, Roosevelt and Hopkins left the Moroccans with very little more than vague promises of postwar economic cooperation.

However slender the concrete proposals advanced by Roosevelt and Hopkins, their words convinced many in the Moroccan elite that Washington did indeed intend that the Atlantic Charter’s promise of self-determination should apply to North Africa. Washington, they hoped, would ensure that Morocco’s days as a French protectorate were numbered, and would support the economic development of an independent nation with generous financial, industrial, and educational aid. It would all mean, Elliott Roosevelt recalled the Sultan exclaiming, a “new future for my country!”

These expressions of hope in the anticolonial intentions of the United States were registered in the summer of 1943 with the formation of the Roosevelt Club. Initiated by Abdelatif Sbihi, editor of the leading Moroccan daily newspaper _La Voix Nationale_, the club’s membership included a broad cross section of the Moroccan elite, from businessmen to members of the royal family. The Roosevelt Club’s goals included promoting social

460 Elliot Roosevelt, _As He Saw It_ (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), 112.
461 See Blair, _Western Window_, 98–99.
contacts between the Moroccan elite and high-ranking American officers with the aim of
developing Moroccan understanding of American political and economic methods and at
the same time fostering American support for Moroccan independence.

Robert Murphy caught the new mood in the Moroccan elite, reporting in June
1943 on their “growing hope that the United States may intervene on their behalf to
relieve them from the French Protectorate.”462 Many Moroccan leaders hoped that their
country might at least be placed under international trusteeship overseen by Britain and
the United States as well as by France.463 By the end of 1943, however, many Moroccans
were becoming concerned that there was little substance behind America’s expressions of
support for even the modest steps towards self-government, and moderate nationalists
founded the Istiqlal Party to press the case for independence. A copy of the party’s
founding statement, basing its case on the Atlantic Charter and calling for an independent
Morocco under the leadership of the Sultan, and was presented to American officials for
transmittal to the President.464 Predictably, State Department officials in Washington and
in Morocco were “unanimous in deprecating the (nationalist) movement” and in
supporting for the French authorities, including by readying American troops to suppress
any nationalist uprising.

Even as they prepared to defend French rule, however, officials at the State
Department’s Division of African Affairs recognized that the United States had helped
foster the crisis by its espousal of the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Four
 Freedoms. This dilemma—one on the one hand seeming to encourage Arab nationalism while

462 Murphy to Hull, June 26 1943, FRUS 1943, 4: 742.
463 Advisory Committee, minutes of meeting T-571, Notter file.
464 Advisory Committee, minutes of meeting 600–T–476, June 17 1944, Notter file.
on the other underwriting French rule—bore down hardest on American diplomatic, OSS, and military personnel whose duties brought them into day-to-day contact with the Arab population and with the harsh realities of colonial rule. The reaction of these officers to the situation on the ground in North Africa and, in turn, the reaction of their superiors to them, adds an important contradictory cross-current within the overall unfolding of American policy. State Department officials, long steeped in the necessity of maintaining good relations with French officials and in avoiding any involvement in “native affairs” looked with particular suspicion on the activities of the vice-consuls and OSS agents assigned to Colonel Eddy’s covert operations network. Unschooled in diplomatic protocol and often liberal in political outlook, they were viewed as dangerously susceptible to pro-Arab sympathies.

The career of Gordon H. Browne provides a good case in point. Together with Carleton Coon, Browne was appointed vice-consul in Tangier, where the two men, who had explored the area as young Harvard archeologists and were fluent in Arabic and Berber, quickly developed contacts with tribal leaders in the Riff Mountains. While Colonel Eddy approved of their putative plans for a Riffian rising in support of the Allied landings, their activities soon aroused the opposition of Robert Murphy and his superiors in Washington. Schemes to promote native insurrection were carefully excluded from the final plans for Torch; there was, as undersecretary Adolf Berle explained, to be no “conspiracy” to “raise the tribes,” and the OSS was only authorized to maintain “native” contacts as insurance in case the “French turn against us.” But Browne’s actions continued to arouse State Department suspicions particularly after an incident in January

465 See Vaughan, 12 Apostles, 78.
466 Berle to Atherton, Dec. 16 1942, RG 59, 851R20/48, NARA.
1943 when, in conjunction with Fifth Army military intelligence, he facilitated the movement of a group of twenty Republican veterans of the Spanish Civil War into Spanish Morocco. Reassigned to Fez, his detailed reports on the corruption of French officialdom and the operation of the black market caused the consul in Casablanca to warn his superior in Tangiers that Browne brought a “definite anti-French and pro-Arab Nationalist slant” to his work. The danger, as the charge d’affaires explained in turn to his superior in Washington, was that Browne’s activities might encourage Arabs to believe that the United States supported their “nationalistic activities.”

These divisions reflected a deep divergence between young OSS officers, who saw no reason why the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms shouldn’t be applied to North Africa, and State Department officials who readily grasped the essential pro-French thrust of American policy. As long as the arriviste OSS agents were working directly with the Fifth Army they were shielded from State Department control, but once the focus of military operations shifted eastwards, Gordon Browne and others were subject to tighter supervision by the professional diplomats. A special report on OSS activities in Morocco prepared for the State Department noted that agents had frequently become involved with activities that were “not to the best interests of the United States.” A house rented by Browne in Fez, for example, had been used to entertain Arabs, and had come to be seen by them as an unofficial American consulate. The real problem, of course, was not that the “weaknesses” of the OSS agents damaged

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468 Russell to Childs, Oct. 13 1943, RG 84, Entry 350, Box 5, NARA.
469 Childs to Alling, Oct. 18 1943, RG 84, Entry 350, Box 5, NARA.
470 State Department memorandum “OSS Activities in Morocco,” Oct. 1943, RG 84, Entry 350, Box 5, NARA.
the image of the United States, but that their close links with the Arab population and their criticisms of French officialdom conveyed the misleading impression that the United States supported a movement towards self-determination.

Official American policy faced a significantly greater challenge in Tunisia, where criticism of Washington’s support for French rule and support for Arab political rights was voiced not by the amateur outsiders of the OSS, but by consul general Hooker Doolittle, a long-standing career diplomat. Doolittle had been assigned to North Africa since 1933, and he had developed close relationships both with French officials in Tunisia and with the Arab Bey and his Destour Party. Forced out of Tunis by the German occupation, Doolittle was shocked to learn that General Giraud planned to remove the Bey for allegedly collaborating with German occupation forces. Writing to Robert Murphy, Doolittle argued that the Bey was sympathetic to the Allies, and that the French only planned to depose him in order to “get rid of a sovereign with a mind of his own” and to “wipe out” Arab nationalism in Tunisia.  

Murphy brushed these concerns aside and, following the Allied occupation of Tunis on May 14, he assured Giraud that—as he put it in a telegram to Roosevelt and Hull—“American opinion would support any French action against those who had actively aided the Axis.”

Given the go-ahead by Murphy, French officials deposed the Bey after failing to persuade him to abdicate. They then installed a pliant new leader and proceeded to arrest several thousand Arabs, many of them members or supporters of the Bey’s Destour Party. Appalled, Doolittle appealed directly to Cordell Hull, protesting the “disastrous” policy of the French administration—which he characterized as a “reign of terror”—and

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471 Doolittle to Murphy, Apr. 17 1943, RG 59, 851S.001, NARA.
472 Murphy to Roosevelt, May 14 1943, RG 59, 851S.001, NARA.
criticizing the Allies for simply “avert[ing] their gaze.” Doolittle’s charges forced Murphy to file a long rebuttal in which he complained that the consul general had ignored Washington’s “general policy” of “cooperation with the French administration,” becoming instead an “active partisan” of the Destour Party and of its efforts to secure “increased Arab autonomy [and] better treatment of the Arab population.” Doolittle also—and in Murphy’s view quite wrongly—felt that the “four freedoms and the Atlantic Charter include the Arabs.” While acknowledging that the French might have been “too aggressive in some instances” and that “conditions in jails and temporary concentration camps leave much to be desired,” Murphy assured his superiors that Doolittle was the only person who thought that the arrest of “four to five thousand” Arabs amounted to a “reign of terror.”

Robert Murphy reinforced his case by reporting that AFHQ felt that, while French “methods” were “more drastic than ours,” there was “no cause for concern,” particularly since those arrested had acted “treacherously” during the German occupation. Murphy accepted that the Bey was not been “clearly proved to be actively pro-German,” but insisted that the French were “fully responsible for native policy.” With Murphy enjoying the backing both of Washington and of AFHQ, Doolittle’s position quickly became untenable. Faced with “informal protests” against Doolittle from General Mast and other French officials, Murphy recommended that the consul general not return to Tunis from a short visit to Algiers. From AFHQ Eisenhower amplified Murphy’s message, “insisting” that Doolittle not return to Tunis and suggesting that he be replaced.

473 Doolittle to Hull, June 6 1943, RG 59, 851S.001, NARA.
474 Murphy to State Department, June 6 1943, RG59, 851S.00/258, NARA.
475 Murphy to State Department, June 26 1943, RG 59, 851S.00/263, NARA.
476 Murphy to Murray, July 29 1943, RG 59, 851S.00/267, NARA.
by a “well-balanced and intelligent officer.” Washington responded by recalling Doolittle and appointing Felix Cole consul general in his place.

While Murphy’s stance, backed by AFHQ and the State Department, had prevailed in North Africa, Doolittle’s charges, and particularly his allegation that the French were conducting a reign of terror, had caused some concern in Washington. At the end of July 1943 State Department adviser on political relations Wallace Murray prepared a detailed review of the Murphy/Doolittle dispute. Noting that their dispute touched on fundamental political questions, Murray was favorably impressed by Doolittle’s assertion that the United States could not “escape responsibility” for French policy, pointing out that the “Arab question is vitally connected with methods of winning the war and with our professed post-war aims.” Murray expressed concern that Murphy’s uncritical support for the actions of the French administration might prove “not to be good enough in the long run,” warning that “this question may come home to haunt us.” Responding to Murray’s memorandum, Adolf Berle stressed that American forces were in Africa to “restore France and fight a war against the Axis,” not to “revamp the French colonial regime.” By refusing to get drawn into efforts to reform the French regime, therefore, Murphy was undoubtedly “looking at it from the correct angle.”

Even as he endorsed Murphy’s approach, however, Adolf Berle noted that the “treatment of the Arabs seems to have been anything but nice,” concluding “some kind of cleanup would appear to be in order” and suggesting that the French authorities be encouraged to establish a commission to discuss modest administrative reforms. Berle’s

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477 Murphy to Murray, July 30 1943, RG 59, 851S.00/268, NARA.
478 Murray report, July 26 1943, RG59, 851S.00/257, NARA.
479 Berle to Murray, July 30 1943, RG59, 851S.00/257, NARA.
comments on the need to “cleanup” French rule in North Africa, and his pursuit of efforts to produce “some amelioration” in conditions while avoiding “ill-considered” measures that might provoke an “Arab raising,” marked a new turn in American policy. Prompted by Doolittle’s stinging critique of French policy, the development of this new course paralleled, and to a great extent rested on, the successful completion of the military campaign in Tunisia and on the organization of the FCNL administration. This new combination of circumstances allowed American officials privately, and without undue pressure, to urge a further liberalization of French colonial rule.

What Washington was after here was, exactly as outlined by Berle, a “cleanup.” With American forces moving on into Sicily and Italy—and encountering complex and controversial political questions as they did so—the question of leaving a modestly liberalized North Africa behind them assumed new importance. Precisely as Wallace Murray had argued so cogently, this issue spoke directly to perceptions of the “method[s] of winning the war and […] our professed post-war aims.” The French authorities should be aware, Acting Secretary of State Stettinius explained in December 1943, that both the American government and the American public were now actively interested in the in the application of the “broad principles of the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter” to the “native situation” in North Africa—without, of course, challenging the overall structure of French rule.480

The actual liberalization of French colonial rule fell well short of even these modest goals. In early October 1943, the FCNL formed a “purging commission” to investigate the actions of former Vichy officials and in November four leading figures,

480 Stettinius to Childs, Dec. 1 1943, RG 84, Entry 350, Box 5, NARA.
including Marcel Peyrouton and Pierre Boisson, were arrested. Despite protests from both Roosevelt and Churchill, who felt obligated to the former Vichyites for their limited assistance to the Allied cause, neither Washington nor London interceded forcefully on their behalf, and the trials went ahead. It soon became clear to Allied officials, however, that the FCNL intended to conduct only the most limited purge necessary to defuse pressure from its own base in the resistance movement, and many former Vichy officials continued in office. Overhauling and liberalizing the colonial administration proceeded even more slowly. In October Felix Cole, the new American consul in Tunis, reported on French plans to open administrative positions to “native Tunisians (Mohammedans),” but added that he thought it unlikely that many Arabs would be capable of “patient routine labor” required. In a further report Cole noted the continuing “liberalization” of the French regime marked by the issue of a warning to colonial officials against “bullying” the native population. Nevertheless, Cole concluded, these modest reforms were a reflection more of French fears that native resentment might ultimately threaten their colonial rule than of any new liberal impulse.

Discussion on more far-reaching reforms of French rule, including critical questions of citizenship and democratic rights, quickly raised issues that were essentially intractable within the existing colonial set-up. In March 1943 General Giraud had upheld Vichy’s repeal of the 1872 Cremieux decree by which Algerian Jews had been accorded French citizenship, justifying this egregious piece of anti-Semitism on the grounds that the decree promoted discord between Jews and Arabs, who had been denied citizenship.

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481 See Maguire, 91.
482 Cole to State, Oct. 16 1943, RG 59, 851S.00/290, NARA.
483 Cole to State, Oct. 19 1943, RG 59, 851S.00/291, NARA.
Giraud’s stance was defended by the State Department and by Roosevelt, who cynically observed to General Noguès that the “Jews need not worry about the privilege of voting” since “there weren’t going to be any elections.” In July 1943, however, the FCNL proposed to reinstate the Cremieux decree as part of a general liberalization of the French regime. But there was an obvious problem with this move since, while reinstating citizenship for Jews, the FCNL would not consider extending it to the Arabs. Liberalization could not, therefore, be carried to what the *New York Times* referred to as its “logical conclusion;” if given the right to vote, Arabs might exercise it to produce “confusion” or—presumably—self government. “Whatever might be said for the theoretical democracy of such a step,” The *Times* concluded cynically, “it would scarcely help win the war.” While Washington reversed its earlier approval of Giraud’s anti-Semitism and endorsed the reinstatement of the Cremieux decree, it therefore refused to advocate an extension of the franchise to the Arab majority.

Washington’s lukewarm response to the restoration of the Cremieux decree shows clearly the strict limits American policymakers would place on their efforts to “clean up” the French administration—limits that were rooted in a common Franco-American understanding that any substantial extension of democratic rights to the native population could open the way to forms of majority rule that might bring the entire colonial set-up to a rapid end. As a result, Washington was extraordinarily cautious about proposing even modest reforms to any aspect of the colonial state, including its education system. When Office of War Information official and Roosevelt speechwriter Robert Sherwood returned

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from a trip to North Africa in May 1943, he submitted a memorandum to the President proposing the establishment of an American University in Fez. As well as advancing Arab education, Sherwood argued that such an institution would help create “strong and enduring pro-American sentiment throughout West and North Africa.”\textsuperscript{486} Asked for his opinion, Cordell Hull vigorously opposed the proposal, citing both its “doubtful practicability” and the “more cogent” argument that the French would not permit “foreign religious or philanthropic activity” in Morocco.\textsuperscript{487}

Sensitive to the most modest proposals for political reform, French colonial officials were quick to resort to open repression when faced with an actual Arab movements for democratic reform and national self-determination, even where independence was envisaged only as the conclusion to a long period of multi-national oversight. The most significant wartime challenge along these lines emerged in Morocco in late 1943 when leading Arab politicians, loosely allied with the Sultan, formed the Istiqlal Party. The new party’s manifesto explicitly based its case for self-determination on the principles of the Atlantic Charter and, in an effort to secure Washington’s backing for their efforts, party leaders discussed their draft statement with the American consul in Rabat. After explaining that Washington would not “look with favor” on any group whose efforts created a distraction from “all-encompassing absorption” in the war effort, the consul quickly revealed the nationalists’ plans to the French authorities.\textsuperscript{488}

Reporting from Tangier, chargé Rive Childs acknowledged the moderate character of the nationalist’s demands, limited as they were to seeking “greater

\textsuperscript{486} Sherwood to Roosevelt, May 5 1943, Official File, 203-E, FDRL.
\textsuperscript{487} Hull to Roosevelt, June 10 1943, Official File, 203-E, FDRL.
\textsuperscript{488} Mayer to State Department, Jan. 5 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 5: 528.
participation by the native population in the administration of the Protectorate at the close of the war.”

Despite the modesty of their demands, however, Childs went on to deplore “premature” nationalist talk of applying the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms in Morocco; such ideas, the chargé concluded, were inherently “dangerous” when voiced by a people “several generations behind Egyptians in political development.”

With these sentiments in mind, and having secured assurances from the French Resident General that he would avoid unnecessarily “harsh measures” and act “with justice but firmness,” American officials in Morocco looked on with approval as the colonial authorities launched a wave of arrests against nationalist leaders and then suppressed the ensuing street protests with grim determination.

For its part, the New York Times blithely repeated the official French line that the nationalist protests were the work of “Frenchmen in the pay of the enemy,” who had been parachuted into Morocco to “stir up rebellion among the Arabs.”

Washington’s stance towards the repression of the nationalist movement in Morocco in early 1944 demonstrates clearly that, except at the level of vague generalities, American policymakers did not believe that the democratic principles for which they professed to be fighting the war should be extended to the Arab population of North Africa and that, when forced to take sides, they would stand with the colonial masters and against the colonized subjects. Yet this policy would be carried out at the same time as Washington was trying to put a liberal gloss on its policy in the region. How could Washington’s actual course be reconciled with its democratic image? At the broadest

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489 Childs to Hull, Dec. 28 1943, FRUS 1944, 5: 525.
490 Childs to Hull, Jan. 14 1944, FRUS 1944, 5: 534.
491 Mayer to State Department, Jan. 5 1944, FRUS 1944, 5: 529.
level, American policymakers justified their actions by deploying the argument that nationalist agitation distracted from the war-effort and was therefore, at best, an unnecessary diversion or, at worst, either conscientiously or un conscientiously pro-Axis. Beyond this rather simple argument—if, for many liberals, one that was difficult to answer—a final coda to the Hooker Doolittle story helps explain how these potentially troubling contradictions were sublimated.

In November 1943, several months after his recall from Tunis for persistently championing the basic democratic rights of the Arab majority, Doolittle was suddenly summoned to a White House meeting with President Roosevelt. Roosevelt bombarded Doolittle with questions probing the condition of the “Moors” and their treatment by the French authorities, the character of the new Bey, the degree of popular support for de Gaulle, and the situation of Jewish and Italian communities in Tunisia. In reply, Doolittle argued that the French now felt themselves to be “under observation by foreign forces,” and that their actions had become markedly less oppressive as a result. Doolittle claimed that by acting “as a conscience” he had helped promote this shift, and argued that in any case he only been giving voice to Roosevelt’s own sentiments, if a little “too early.” The President thanked Doolittle—who might reasonably have expected his recall to be career-ending—for his “good work,” and went on to outline his own belief, based on his discussion with the Sultan of Morocco, that Moroccan independence might come about in “thirty or forty years.” In the meantime, Roosevelt argued, the “Moors” needed to “educate their young men to be doctors, engineers, and technicians,” perhaps under some form of international protectorate.

493 Doolittle, notes on interview with President Roosevelt, Nov. 9 1943, RG 59, 851S.00/257, NARA.
Roosevelt’s comments on Arab education might seem somewhat ironic in the light of his rejection of Robert Sherwood’s plan for an American University, and he was careful to differentiate between the prospects of the French protectorates, which might in time become independent, and those of Algeria, which would likely remain part of France. But the extended time frame the President projected did offer a way out of the apparent dilemma of American policy, allowing the United States to justify supporting French colonial rule under wartime conditions while holding out vague promises of independence at some undefined point in the future and once unspecified criteria of readiness were met. This squaring of the circle, combining an avoidance of the dangers of “premature” independence with the benefits of great power tutelage and the promise of eventual self-determination, seems to have satisfied Hooker Doolittle and, by extension, liberal opinion in general. As we have seen, even radical mouthpieces like the Nation and the New Republic were much more concerned with the liberalization of the French colonial regimes than they were with the promotion of decolonization.

2.6) Washington’s War in North Africa—Some Conclusions.

By the time Allied armies were finally able to bring their long campaign in North Africa to a successful conclusion in the early summer of 1943, Allied leaders had already, as we shall see in the next chapter, agreed to push on deeper into the Mediterranean. Perhaps as President Roosevelt had hoped and anticipated all along, operation Torch turned out to be not a limited operation in western North Africa, but a gateway opening onto Sicily, mainland Italy, southern France, and the Balkans. But, before turning to the
Allied advance through that gateway, what overall assessment can we make of Washington’s multifaceted wartime engagement with French North Africa?

Firstly, and from a narrowly military point of view, the American army went through a rapid and indispensable process of testing and battle hardening during the North African campaign. The New York Times’ triumphant proclamation that “Victorious Americans in Tunisia Now Veterans” turned out, in the light of experiences in Sicily and Italy, to have been somewhat premature. But its main argument—that American troops and their commanders emerged from the campaign with a much firmer grasp on the realities of modern mechanized warfare—was undoubtedly accurate. The campaign also allowed American commanders to begin to come to grips with a series of complex practical problems that would facilitate future operations in the Mediterranean and, ultimately, the cross-Channel invasion of France. The importance of this unforgiving process of learning through doing was registered in the fact that most authorities agree that without it American forces would have stood little chance of successfully accomplishing a cross-Channel assault against experienced and determined German resistance. For the Allies, this point alone justified Roosevelt’s insistence on Gymnast/Torch over the objections of George Marshall and the Joint Chiefs.

Secondly, the experience of North Africa helped forge what Mark Stoler has described as “a truly unified Anglo-American command […] whose members acted as if they belonged to a single nation.” While perhaps exaggerating the degree of Anglo-American amity, the unity of the AFHQ leadership consciously forged by General

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495 Mark Stoler, Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945 (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), 76.
Eisenhower had major consequences for the conduct of future operations in the Mediterranean not only at the level of operational and strategic planning and coordination but also—and arguably more importantly—at the level of politics. Eisenhower and those around him experienced a rapid and profound learning experience in North Africa, shedding naïve assumptions that military action could be disassociated from politics and increasingly integrating political and military questions. The integration of Robert Murphy and Harold Macmillan is critical here, and it gave the leadership at AFHQ a capacity to think in politico-military terms that was significantly more developed than that possessed by the Joint Chiefs in Washington. The most important consequence of this development was that AFHQ, with its American supreme commander, became an effective advocate for expanding the scope of Allied operations in the Mediterranean.

Thirdly, Washington was able through the course of the North African campaign to forge an extremely favorable relationship with the French elite as it regrouped around de Gaulle and the French Committee for National Liberation. Given the sharp clashes between Washington and de Gaulle that continued to mark Franco-American relations up to and through the end of the war, this might seem an exaggerated claim. But, setting aside so-called “personality” clashes and other secondary questions, America relations were able to move virtually seamlessly from Pétain, to Darlan, to Giraud, and finally de Gaulle. These shifts were aided, as we have seen, by the back-stage efforts of Jean Monnet, but they were fundamentally founded on two premises, the first being unwavering American backing for the maintenance of French colonial rule in North Africa, and the second being American support for the restoration of an independent France that would be beholden to the United States.
From this point of view, all the innumerable twists and turns of Washington’s relationship with de Gaulle and the FCNL must be read alongside the ongoing, persistent, and successful American effort to rearm and reequip the French. If narrowly political affairs are abstracted from the totality of American relations with the FCNL, a very distorted picture emerges. For without American arms, training, and transportation, de Gaulle would simply have had no modern, mobile, army, and the provision of these resources established a profound relationship between Washington and the new French regime as it emerged in the physical and political space cleared by Allied arms. The result was the emergence of a reciprocal relationship that, if still plagued by personality clashes, nevertheless laid the basis for the postwar re-establishment of French power, for American intervention in French domestic politics, and for a France capable of playing a key role in the new, American-sponsored, world order.496

Other consequences of the campaign for North Africa were less tangible, but no less important. American economic penetration of the North African market during the war years was organized through the large-scale importation of American goods organized through Lend-Lease and other official programs and administered by the North African Economic Board. Wartime aid paved the way for postwar trade; as the State Department’s Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations put it “greater familiarity with American goods resulting from Lend-Lease operations may stimulate the demand for American goods,” with “autos, rolling stock, farm machinery and tools” being in particular demand.497 This optimistic assessment was reflected in the actions

496 See Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France*. 497 Advisory Committee, minutes of meeting T-576, July 6 1945, Notter files.
American businesses that were quick to demand an end to Lend-Lease controls and a return to private trade at the end of the war.

In the event, the immediate postwar period saw only a modest increase in American economic activity in the Maghreb. The “gales of war” may, as Lloyd Gardner argued, have “blow[n] the door open,” but the French would scramble to push it shut.\footnote{Lloyd Gardner, \textit{Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 220.} The full fruits of America’s wartime economic engagement with the Maghreb, therefore, could only be reaped as French rule finally came to an end during the early 1950s. But they would be gathered. The sheer magnitude and vigor of American operations in North Africa, and the scale of their economic component, created an image of strength, prosperity, energy and modernity that contrasted favorably in Arab eyes with the obvious wartime weaknesses of the French colonial regimes. This simple equation of power allowed the United States to maintain good standing in much of the Arab world and to offer tantalizing promises of support for self-determination and eventual independence, even as the actual course of American policy offered steadfast support for French colonial rule.

This dual policy ultimately secured a strong position for the United States in North Africa and particularly in Morocco, where independence opened the way to increased economic penetration and to the establishment of critical military bases. But it also became clear during the early months of the fighting in North Africa that Washington intended that the principles of the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter should be viewed as conditional, rather than absolute rights, and that the United States should adjudicate on whether or not the conditions had been met. North Africa,
American policymakers argued, was not yet ready for self-government, and any steps in this direction would be “premature” and damaging both to the war effort and, presumably, to the Arabs themselves. While individual American officials like Hooker Doolittle were sympathetic to the plight of the native population, none proposed an end to French colonial rule. Whatever else the war was going to be, it was not to be a war for colonial freedom. American thinking along these lines was consolidated in the immediate postwar period: by 1948 State Department planners were arguing that wartime propaganda emphasizing the Atlantic Charter had given an unwelcome and unintended boost to national aspirations in the region, concluding bluntly that “Moroccans are not yet ready for independence.”

From all of these points of view and judged within its own terms, Washington’s war in North Africa—and the first critical step in its evolving Mediterranean strategy—must be judged a success. It was also a success that, from the standpoint of political realism and regardless of its moral implications, thoroughly vindicated Washington’s Vichy policy. As Arthur Krock explained in the *New York Times*, President Roosevelt believed strongly that, by “maintaining diplomatic relations with the Pétain government as long as possible, a strong foundation was laid for the successful and relatively inexpensive (in casualties) invasion of North Africa.” Without recognizing Vichy as the legitimate continuator of the Third Republic, without the Murphy/Weygand agreement and the work of the OSS and the “twelve apostles,” without Darlan and Giraud, and without underwriting French colonial rule in the Maghreb, there could have

been no *Torch* and no successful American engagement in the Mediterranean. And without that, the entire face of the war in Europe would have been markedly different, and its outcome, quite possibly, less advantageous from an American point of view. Given his insistence—at times virtually alone—on North Africa, the great weight of these critical politico-strategic questions fell very largely on Roosevelt’s shoulders.
3.1) After Torch: The Casablanca Conference and the Decision to Go Deeper Into the Mediterranean.

In mid-January 1943, and with fierce fighting still raging in Tunisia, Allied leaders met in Casablanca to map out the next steps in the war. Over ten days of intense discussion, conference participants achieved broad agreement on a number of vital questions, including the broad division of resources between the Pacific and European theaters; the launching of a combined bombing offensive against Germany; the intensification of the anti-U-boat campaign in the Atlantic; and the organization of the supply of Lend-Lease materials to the Soviet Union. As we have seen, Allied leaders also brokered a meeting between generals de Gaulle and Giraud that laid the basis for the organizational unification of the anti-Vichy French into the French Committee for National Liberation. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill congratulated their military leaders on their work, and hailed the adoption of the “most complete strategic plan for a world-wide war that has ever been conceived.” Critically, Allied leaders also resolved their thorniest strategic dispute, agreeing that Torch should serve as a springboard for further operations aimed at Sicily and possibly then at mainland Italy.

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Substantial Allied forces, the Casablanca conferees decided, would press deeper into the Mediterranean.

As the Casablanca conference convened, fierce fighting continued in Tunisia, but with German forces caught between American, British, and French, forces advancing east from Algeria and the Eighth Army driving west from Libya, the outcome was no longer in serious doubt. The question, therefore, was what to do after the successful conclusion of Torch. As they marshaled their arguments in preparation for the forthcoming conference, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reiterated their earlier insistence on conducting a “strategic offensive in the Atlantic-Western European theater directly against Germany.” Having cleared North Africa of Axis troops, the JCS proposed to transfer “excess forces” to the U.K. in preparation for an invasion of France in the summer of 1943. Meanwhile, in North Africa the establishment of “large scale air installations” would provide the basis for an aerial campaign aimed at “destroying Italian resources and morale, and eliminating her from the war.” In supporting material, American planners pressed this argument for strategic bombing, arguing that an “intense air effort” could be as effective against an “already tottering nation” as a “costly and dangerous” amphibious assault.

By the time the Casablanca conference concluded, these proposals had been unambiguously rejected and replaced by a series of plans for the conduct of the war in 1943 that centered on “offensive action” in the Mediterranean beginning with the

504 Ibid., 737.
invasion and occupation of Sicily. It was clear that, short of a dramatic weakening in German resistance, there would be no invasion of France in 1943. The rejection of the Joint Chiefs’ proposal for a substantial withdrawal from the Mediterranean and the elevation of plans for a strategic offensive directed against Italy has led many historians to view the Casablanca conference as a triumph of British strategic planning over American. The “better-prepared and coordinated” British, Mark Stoler argues, “consistently out argued and overwhelmed” their American allies, producing a “debacle” for American planners. The reality was somewhat more nuanced: while the efforts of the Joint Chiefs to avoid getting drawn deeper into the Mediterranean clearly failed, the final proposal to focus on Italy conformed not only to the outlook and wishes of British leaders, but also to those of the U.S. President.

What was at issue here, as indeed it had been in the intense arguments over Gymnast between Roosevelt and his military leaders, was the clash between a narrowly “military” view of strategy and a broader, more politically infused, concept of “grand” strategy. The narrow military-strategic nostrums advanced by American planners have been articulated most clearly in the public sphere by General Albert Wedemeyer who, as head of the Operational Plans Division (OPD) participated in the Casablanca conference. Wedemeyer was, as we have seen, a persistent advocate of a “direct” cross-Channel assault into France and an acerbic critic of those, including both the British and the President, who argued for what he viewed as wasteful and time-consuming “peripheral” campaigns. Summing up the Casablanca conference, Wedemeyer famously opined that

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506 Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, 103–104.
“we came, we listened, and we were conquered.” Wedemeyer offered two major reasons for the American defeat at Casablanca, pointing firstly to the well-coordinated assault by “swarms” of British staff officers advancing with unified purpose, and secondly to the baleful influence of civilian “drugstore strategists” on the President and hence on policy. In private, Wedemeyer took this critique a step further, adding “Jews who […] felt bitter against Germany” to the culpable ranks of civilian troublemakers.

Albert Wedemeyer’s bitter complaint that, in contrast to American disunity, the British team at Casablanca was the beneficiary of “generations and generations of experience in committee work” reflected an accurate appreciation of British practice and efficiency. But British preparedness and politico-military unity rested first and foremost neither on efficient committee work, nor on the War Office’s thoughtful provision of a well-equipped headquarters ship. Instead, the British leaders’ unified insistence on further Mediterranean operations reflected a fundamental lack of choice. On the one hand, faced with tightening economic and manpower constraints, British planners had long excluded a cross-Channel operation until German power had been significantly weakened, and, on the other, it was imperative that London secure its imperial lines of communication through the Mediterranean. While British leaders were forced to promise a limited offensive in Burma in order to smooth the path to American agreement on an invasion of Sicily, “peripheral” operations in the Mediterranean remained front and center throughout. Ironically, the very limited choices open to

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508 Ibid., 174, 180.
London, themselves the inevitable product of the decline in British power, gave the British arguments great force and weight in the specific conjuncture of January 1943. American leaders, on the other hand, faced a growing embarrassment of riches. With American war production moving into high gear, and with the Japanese offensive in the Pacific checked at the Coral Sea and Midway, the United States enjoyed a range of strategic options available only to a rising global power. American leaders were divided, but their divisions were the product of real strategic choices and not, first and foremost, of organizational weakness. Over the course of 1943 these divisions would be largely resolved both through a growing acceptance of politico-military integration and, from the summer of 1943 onwards, by a deepening agreement to concentrate on preparing a cross-Channel assault for the summer of 1944. In January 1943, however, this integration of military and political elements into a clearly defined strategic approach remained well in the future, and Roosevelt’s preference for exploiting the initial gains in the Mediterranean could be secured at Casablanca only by forming a de facto bloc with the British and by assuring the American Chiefs of Staff that success in Sicily would mark the end of Mediterranean operations. Given Roosevelt’s success in the protracted battle with the Joint Chiefs over Gymnast the previous spring—a battle that had established the broad strategic orientation to the Mediterranean upon which Casablanca would build—he could now adopt rather more discreet and low-key tactics. But, as Wedemeyer’s disgusted reference to “drugstore strategists” indicates, the President was instrumental in shaping the outcome of the conference.

British leaders at Casablanca understood quickly and thankfully that Roosevelt was exercising his powerful personal influence in favor of deeper involvement in the Mediterranean. Reporting to the War Cabinet on January 17, Churchill noted that while Admiral King seemed set on trying to prioritize the Pacific theater, and while General Marshall was insisting on a cross-Channel offensive, the President was “strongly in favor of the Mediterranean being given prime place.”\(^{512}\) For his part, Chief of the Imperial General Staff Alan Brooke noted that Roosevelt had spoken out “favoring operations in the Mediterranean.”\(^{513}\) The official conference record indicates that Roosevelt and Churchill held numerous unminuted meetings over the course of the conference, leading some historians to picture the British prime minister doggedly “working on” the American President.\(^{514}\) But, while the two political leaders may well have working out how to win agreement on a Mediterranean strategy, Roosevelt’s well-known and long-standing interest in the Mediterranean makes it quite unnecessary to view his bloc with the British as a product of Churchillian pressure.

As the conference advanced, and as the Joint Chief’s increasingly desultory opposition to extended Mediterranean operations was overcome, President Roosevelt himself intervened in the discussion to force the pace and to urge the rapid preparation of operational plans. Meeting with the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the President proposed the preparation of a “number of objectives” in order to conceal the intended attack on Sicily, and suggested giving the whole operation the codename \textit{Underbelly}.\(^{515}\) With its scarcely veiled allusion to Churchill’s concept of the Mediterranean as the “soft

\(^{512}\) Kimball, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 2: 118.
\(^{513}\) Brooke, diary entry, Jan. 15 1943, \textit{War Diaries}, 359.
\(^{514}\) Roberts \textit{Masters and Commanders}, 319.
\(^{515}\) Conference minutes, Jan. 18 1943, \textit{FRUS} Washington and Casablanca: 630.
underbelly” of Europe, it is hard to imagine a name more likely to gall the Joint Chiefs!
Pressing this line of argument in the final full conference session, Roosevelt urged the Combined Chiefs to launch the invasion of Sicily, now codenamed *Husky*, at a date earlier than either British or American planners envisioned. His reasons were entirely political. Noting reports that Italian morale was collapsing, the President observed that Germany might soon be faced with an “Italy in revolt,” a development that the Allies needed to be prepared to exploit rapidly. 516 It was critical, Roosevelt insisted, to maintain a “flexible mind” in order to take advantage of “every opportunity.”

In many ways, President Roosevelt’s drive to take advantage of “every opportunity” and his avoidance of fixed and restrictive frameworks neatly summarizes his entire approach to grand strategy. It also helps explain why he pushed so hard for continued operations in the Mediterranean. As with his earlier advocacy of *Gymnast*, there is no single, clear, and documented reason. But it seems safe to argue—especially given his comments on the potential collapse of Italy—that his reasons were first and foremost politico-strategic rather than narrowly military. In addition to his stated interest in the likely collapse of Italy, and therefore in the implied question of what form of government might succeed Mussolini’s, we have already seen that Roosevelt took advantage of his Casablanca meeting with General Giraud to initiate a far-reaching program aimed at rearming the French army. Neither of these “opportunities,” with their potentially far-reaching consequences for the post-war order in Europe, could be fully developed if the United States military withdrew from the Mediterranean, effectively abandoning the entire area to the British. This is not to suggest that President Roosevelt

had some hidden master plan for the Mediterranean “underbelly.” As the tortured course of the triangular relationship between the United States, Giraud, and de Gaulle, in the months following Casablanca demonstrates, he did not. But, and in contrast at this time to the Joint Chiefs, he did grasp where the main lines of American military-political advantage lay, and at Casablanca he kept pushing towards them.

Given the weight of the forces ranged against them it is not surprising that, in contrast to the battle royal pictured by Wedemeyer, the Joint Chiefs offered only modest resistance to the drive towards extended Allied operations in the Mediterranean. Early in the conference proceedings, George Marshall countered Brooke’s insistence on a campaign aimed at knocking Italy out of the war by questioning whether “operations in the Mediterranean” could ever deliver “advantages commensurate with the risks involved.”517 Neither then, nor at subsequent conference sessions, did Marshall advance a fully-realized proposal for a cross-Channel assault: on the contrary, boxed in by Brooke’s clear-cut presentation of the choices—either “close down” the Mediterranean or drive deeper in order to capitalize on the “many choices” that were opening up—Marshall quickly began to come round.518 By January 16, while continuing to picture the Mediterranean as a “suction pump” diverting resources from the “main plot,” Marshall noted that at the very least Husky offered “attractive” employment for the “excess troops” available in North Africa after the success of Torch.519 Largely for their own reasons, Admiral King, who wanted to avoid the large-scale shift of shipping resources to the European theater that would be demanded by a cross-Channel efforts, and General

518 Ibid., 567.
519 Ibid., 591.
Arnold, who was alive to the prospects for expanded strategic bombing from Mediterranean bases, concurred\textsuperscript{520}

The argument that Mediterranean operations could, as Marshall put it, be “financed” by the use of forces already in North Africa provided a bridge for the Joint Chiefs to concur with \textit{Husky} without necessarily accepting the broader politico-military perspectives of either the British or the President. As official Army historian Maurice Matloff pointed out, the forward “momentum” generated by the campaign in North Africa created a “telling argument” for a follow-up effort against Italy.\textsuperscript{521} Roosevelt himself was surely aware of this powerful military logic, and his insistence on holding the conference in North Africa—in a “comfortable oasis” rather than a “raft at Tilsit”—may have been motivated by a sense that proximity to the fighting would help drive that logic home.\textsuperscript{522} In the immediate aftermath of the conference, General Eisenhower, newly reappointed Allied Supreme Commander, also concurred with the military logic argument. In a letter to friend OPD member General Thomas Handy, Eisenhower argued that the “‘big bosses’” could not have “deviated very far from the general course of action they adopted” at Casablanca, given that the cross-Channel attack “could not possibly be staged before August of 1944” and that “inaction in 1943 could not be tolerated.”\textsuperscript{523}

This is a telling admission from Eisenhower who, in his time as head of OPD had been an ardent champion of the cross-Channel operation. His candid recognition that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{520} Jones, \textit{Mediterranean War}, 42.
\item \textsuperscript{522} Roosevelt to Churchill, Dec. 2 1942, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 2: 55.
\item \textsuperscript{523} Eisenhower to Handy, Jan. 28 1943, \textit{Papers of Dwight D Eisenhower} 2: 927–928.
\end{itemize}
“our original conceptions of the strength required” for the successful execution of
*Roundup* had been “too low” underscored his support for extended operations in the
Mediterranean as the most judicious use of available resources. If postwar political
concerns had not intruded, it may also have answered for all time the notion that a serious
cross-Channel assault was even a remote possibility in 1943, let alone the previous year.
Accurate as Eisenhower’s assessment may have been, however, the “momentum” and
“military logic” arguments for *Husky* have also served to crowd out the unfolding of the
poli-co-strategic “logic” that informed President Roosevelt’s initial interest in the
Mediterranean following the fall of France and that continued to shape his views. At
Casablanca Roosevelt may, as Richard Leighton observed, have been happy to “let
matters take their course.” But, while confident that it would be “increasingly
difficult” for American strategists to “deny the merits of further advances in the
Mediterranean,” he was not a disengaged observer but an active participant capable of
utilizing the logic of military momentum to advance a grand-strategic perspective of his
own.

3.2) AMGOT, “Senior Partners,” and Plans for the Invasion of Sicily

As American military leaders had feared, and as President Roosevelt well
understood, the pull of the Mediterranean “suction pump” would inevitably involve the
United States in a great deal more than simply military operations. During Operation

524 Richard M. Leighton, “Overlord Revisited: An Interpretation of American Strategy in
the European War, 1942–1944,” *The American Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (July 1963),
930.
Torch, American officers at AFHQ had quickly become deeply frustrated by the complexities of French and North African politics: even before the landings, Eisenhower was complaining bitterly at having to deal with “little, selfish, conceited worms that call themselves men.” But at least in North Africa the basic principles were clear. Except for a short period in January when Roosevelt’s own frustrations led him briefly to advocate direct military rule, Washington maintained that political power in North Africa would remain in suitable French hands, and that Anglo-American forces would not involve themselves directly in the business of government. Moreover, the French, for all their problems, could be counted on to keep the “natives” under control. None of this would apply in Italy.

As American planners turned their attention to Husky in the weeks after Casablanca, it became apparent that they would face a series of political problems in Italy that were, if anything, even more complex than those they had been forced to deal with in North Africa. Three issues stood out in relation to the impending invasion of Sicily. Firstly, and for as long as Mussolini remained in power, there would be no suitable and apparently legitimate regime with which the Allies might collaborate; deprived of the services of an Italian Darlan or Giraud, Allied forces would therefore have to establish some form of direct military rule. Secondly, there were already disturbing indications that the Italian people themselves would demand a voice in the post-fascist political settlement, and that their desires might not align with those of the Allies. And thirdly it quickly became clear to American planners that, while the British had been prepared to acquiesce to American leadership in North Africa, they would be much less willing to do

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525 Eisenhower to Bedell Smith, Nov. 9 1942, Papers of Dwight D Eisenhower, 2: 677.
so in Italy, a country that London considered critical to its entire position in the Mediterranean.

The danger that an anti-fascist insurgency in Italy might spill over into a communist-led revolution loomed large in American thinking. From September 1941, Myron Taylor, Roosevelt’s personal envoy to the Vatican, had been reporting—and endorsing—the Papal See’s concern that “communism might profit from the discontent of people in moments of difficulty.”526 The following year, Taylor relayed Cardinal Secretary of State Maglioni’s concern that there was a “grave danger” of “upheavals and revolutions” breaking out in Italy in the turbulent period that would follow an Allied invasion.527 Taylor did his best to assure Maglioni that American forces would take steps to ensure the “immediate establishment of order.”

These general fears were highlighted in March 1943 when over 100,000 workers in the industrial cities of northern Italy braved fascist repression to demand wage hikes and compensation for damage inflicted by Allied bombing in a series of strikes that quickly took on an overtly anti-government aspect.528 OSS reports reaching Washington via Berne in April and May indicated that the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) was giving direction to the protests and that Italian workers were increasingly receptive to radical politics.529

Against this backdrop, American policymakers led by the State Department’s Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations and working under the leadership

526 Taylor to Roosevelt, Sept. 1941, Box 10, Myron C. Taylor Papers, FDRL.
527 Taylor to Roosevelt, Sept. 25 1942, Box 10, Myron C. Taylor Papers, FDRL.
528 See Norman Kogan, Italy and the Allies (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).
529 OSS reports Apr. 23, May 15, and n.d. mid-May 1943, Box 72, Map Room Files, FDRL.
of Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles crafted extremely conservative guidelines for the post-Mussolini order in Italy. Welles himself had been deeply impressed with Mussolini when he had met him during his 1940 peace mission to Europe, reporting to the President that he was a “man of genius.”\textsuperscript{530} Welles’ enthusiasm for what was perceived as the modernizing anti-communist dynamism of the fascist regime was not unusual within the American elite during the 1930s, and fellow Advisory Committee member Anne O’Hare McCormick had commented on it favorably on numerous occasions in the pages of the \textit{New York Times}.\textsuperscript{531} It is not surprising, therefore, that the Advisory Committee proposed that the United States oversee the establishment of a new political order in Italy that, while shorn of Mussolini and overt fascist trappings, nevertheless retained significant elements of the existing regime.

On January 2 1943, the Advisory Committee met to discuss the Italian question. Given the timing of the meeting—immediately prior to Roosevelt’s departure for Casablanca—and its composition, it is reasonable to conclude that the President’s outlook going into the conference was at least partially shaped by the Advisory Committee’s deliberations. In addition to Sumner Welles, the committee included Presidential confidants Myron Taylor, Anne O’Hare McCormick and Adolf Berle; senior State Department figures Ray Atherton and Wallace Murray; Office of War Information leader Archibald MacLeish; and other political and business leaders.\textsuperscript{532} In preparation for their own meeting, committee members were able to review the work of several

\begin{footnotes}
\item[530] Welles to Roosevelt, Mar. 19 1940, Welles Report, PSF, FDRL.
\end{footnotes}
subcommittees that had spent the previous months preparing reports on aspects of the “Italian question” ranging from the character of the House of Savoy, to the nature of the opposition to the Fascist regime and economic and political conditions in the Italian empire. After spending some considerable time discussing possible territorial adjustments on the Austria-Italy border, Welles steered the committee towards a discussion of the possibility that Italy might, as was the “hope of this Government,” “detach herself from Germany and sue for a separate peace.” If this happened, Welles continued, a number of possibilities might open up, including having to deal with a new government based on the House of Savoy, on the army, on “some element of a revolutionary character,” or on groups of liberal Italians then in exile.

In the discussion following Welles’ remarks, both Myron Taylor and Anne O’Hare McCormick expressed themselves forcefully in favor of basing any successor to the Fascist regime on the House of Savoy. The monarchy, Taylor argued, could provide a solid anchor while “everything else” was in “confusion,” while McCormick added that the monarchy alone might be able to contain a “popular uprising.” Ultimately, she concluded, “you might have a good popular government under a weak constitutional monarchy.” Archibald MacLeish raised the only discordant note when he expressed his profound concern that an American deal with the House of Savoy would challenge fundamental notions of “what the war is about” and “what our war aims are.” Adolf Berle responded forcefully to MacLeish’s concerns, arguing that the critical question was winning the war, and doing that would require making political compromises with those who “in fact possess power.” While MacLeish made a feeble response to Berle’s

533 Advisory Committee minutes of meeting P#39, Jan. 2 1943, Notter Files, microfilm.
unvarnished pragmatism, the Advisory Committee as a whole endorsed the view that the United States should favor the establishment of a new Italian government based around the monarchy, at least as a bridge to a more liberal regime. A summary document produced after the full committee meeting took this analysis a step further, noting that a new regime headed by the monarchy might group around itself the “upper bourgeoisie,” the leadership of the armed forces, and the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{534}

What is striking about the political conclusions drawn by the Advisory Committee is not only their social conservatism, but also their explicit assumption that the Italian people themselves would not emerge as an active and independent factor in post-Fascist politics. While research materials prepared for the Advisory Committee are laced with discussion on the possibility of a “general revolution” breaking out in Italy, the committee as a whole concurred with Sumner Welles’ conclusion that there was “no reason to believe” that any “powerful organized group” of revolutionaries existed in Italy\textsuperscript{535}. Moreover, if the Advisory Committee saw no immediate threat of communism, it also saw no short-term prospect for establishing a liberal democracy. Historically, the committee argued, liberal democracy had “failed to take deep root” in Italy, and the majority of Italians therefore lacked the necessary “preparation” to “exercise their prerogatives under a liberal government.”\textsuperscript{536} These inherent weaknesses of Italian liberalism were compounded by the fact that, in Welles’ view, Italian liberals in exile like

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\textsuperscript{534} Advisory Committee document P170, Jan. 7 1943, Notter Files, microfilm.
\textsuperscript{535} Advisory Committee minutes P39, Jan. 2 1943, Notter Files, microfilm.
\textsuperscript{536} Advisory Committee document P170, Jan. 7 1943, Notter Files, microfilm.
Count Carlo Sforza lacked the “ability,” “prestige,” and “rationality of intelligence” necessary to form a government.\textsuperscript{537}

These considerations bore down particularly heavily when Americans turned to planning for what was seen as the potentially dangerous interregnum between the Allied invasion of Sicily—hopefully accompanied by the fall of Mussolini—and the establishment of a new regime in Rome capable of treating with the Allies. Here the issues of political legitimacy and continuity that had been deployed to justify Washington’s relations with Vichy and Darlan re-emerged in slightly modified form. After President Roosevelt’s proclamation of unconditional surrender as the key Allied war-aim at Casablanca, it appeared that a negotiated peace with the Mussolini government or with a direct successor regime would be politically unacceptable, and American planners therefore assumed that some form of direct military rule would be necessary until a suitably “legitimate” Italian government might emerge. The question was how this critical period of military rule might be organized and exercised.

Here, too, the Advisory Committee helped shape American thinking by outlining ways in which it might be permissible to co-opt existing Italian state bodies into the structure of military rule. It was unlikely, a December 1942 Advisory Committee paper argued, that the crumbling of the Mussolini dictatorship and the weakening of German control would result in all existing governmental bodies simply being “swept into the discard.”\textsuperscript{538} On the contrary, it was probable that many institutions, including the Catholic Church, the government bureaucracy, and the “agencies of local government,” might outlive Fascism and, the committee concluded, if purged of the most “culpable and

\textsuperscript{537} Advisory Committee minutes P39, Jan. 2 1943, Notter Files, microfilm.

\textsuperscript{538} Advisory Committee document T195, Dec.17 1942, Notter Files, microfilm.
intransigent Fascists” they might be placed under new leadership and rendered “amenable to a new political orientation.” Local government, the paper concluded, might prove particularly “susceptible” to “rapid political conversion.” In this context, the Fascist Party was reconceptualized as the “stucco surface” of government, rather than as the “cement” binding it together. The conclusion was clear: strip away the stucco and the building itself could be rehabilitated and utilized.

In May 1942, the U.S. Army established a new School of Military Government in Charlottesville, Virginia, with the aim of training the civil affairs officers who would accompany combat units into enemy, or enemy-occupied, territory. Other than in the Philippines, Central America, and the Caribbean, where different rules were held to apply, the Army had had little recent experience of military government, and the new school’s curriculum reached back to the experience on post-Civil War Reconstruction to find relevant American examples.539 But whatever the deficiencies in the curriculum, the basic principles of Allied military government quickly became clear. Army Civil Affairs Officers would be attached to combat units moving into Sicily, ready to take charge in areas cleared of Axis troops. There, basing themselves on existing Italian state structures after a modest purge had removed those most “tainted” with fascism, they would assemble ad hoc local governmental coalitions drawn from the ranks of the Church, local landowners, and other elite figures.540 To maintain order—or to ensure civilian passivity—the Carabinieri would be reconstituted under the leadership of Allied police officers and charged with enforcing a ban on political activity. At least at the beginning

of the occupation, there would be no free press, and other democratic rights would be severely curtailed. As planning and training proceeded, AFHQ officially activated the Allied Military Government (AMGOT) on May 1, 1943.

While American policymakers discussed the possible shape and structure of government in post-Fascist Italy and the prospects for utilizing the existing administrative apparatus during the period of military rule, Allied leaders at AFHQ Algiers faced critical decisions concerning the overall command structure of the military government. As Dwight Eisenhower reported in early February, the forthcoming invasion of Sicily would be the first joint Allied operation against what was clearly enemy territory, and it would “inevitably establish precedents [and] set the pattern for later operations in Europe.”\textsuperscript{541} With this consideration in mind, Eisenhower cautioned Washington that the British, with their perceived “vital interests in the Mediterranean,” might argue that they should take “primary responsibility” for post-invasion governance. Eisenhower countered this potential British challenge with a firm proposal that there should be “joint Anglo-American responsibility” both for the invasion itself and for the subsequent “conduct of military government.”

Offering striking illustration of his growing confidence in his own political role, Eisenhower noted that he was sure that British officers at AFHQ Algiers would accept his plan for “joint responsibility,” not least because he had already discussed it in detail with Resident Minister Harold Macmillan.\textsuperscript{542} But it soon became clear that Eisenhower’s plans for “joint responsibility” found favor in neither London nor Washington. In London, Foreign Office officials saw an opportunity to press the case for British political

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\textsuperscript{542} Ibid.
leadership in Sicily, and when Macmillan warned them that such “old empire” thinking would threaten relations with the Americans, he received a crushing riposte from Churchill who insisted that he take a firm stand for his “country’s rights and the British Empire” and oppose any notion of joint Anglo-American leadership.\footnote{Jones, *Mediterranean War*, 85–86.} A parallel reaction took place in Washington. While Henry Stimson—no friend of an extended American commitment to the Mediterranean—was “rather for letting them [the British] do it,” he noted with alarm that President Roosevelt was pressing an “aggressively American plan” and wanted to “take the leadership of the whole thing” in Sicily.\footnote{Ibid., 87.} Not for the last time, Allied leaders in the field sought a policy of compromise and collaboration while their political masters, with broader geo-strategic questions in mind, championed sharply divergent policies.

Matters came to a head in mid-April 1943. Buoyed by evidence from Field Marshal Sir John Dill, head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, that George Marshall shared Stimson’s view that the “Mediterranean is a British sphere of strategic responsibility” and that London should therefore decide “what is to be done in occupied enemy territory,” Churchill attempted to exploit these signs of new military/political divisions in Washington.\footnote{Jones *Mediterranean War*, 88.} Cabling Roosevelt, Churchill proposed that since a British officer—General Harold Alexander—had been slated to command Allied operations in Sicily, the British should be the “senior partner” in the military government of “Husky-land.”\footnote{Churchill to Roosevelt, Apr. 13 1943, *Complete Correspondence*, 2: 188.} Although convinced by the Joint Chiefs to drop his own plan for American leadership, Roosevelt would not accept a British claim to primacy and he issued a tart
rejoinder insisting that the military government of Sicily be under “joint allied control” and that there be “no ‘senior partner.'”

President Roosevelt backed his rejection of London’s claim to political leadership in Sicily with the argument that since many Italians entertained “friendly feelings” towards the United States, and since this sentiment was reciprocated by a “large number of [American] citizens [of] Italian descent,” the United States was well placed to exercise political authority in Italy. Given that Britain enjoyed neither of these advantages the president concluded—rather paradoxically, given his rejection of senior partnership—that the military government should be staffed by a “large proportion of Americans” and given “as much of an American character as is practicable.” Faced with this Presidential intransigence, Churchill beat a hasty retreat, and the following day he cabled Roosevelt to explain that he had always envisioned *Husky* as a “joint enterprise” conducted on “terms of perfect equality” with “no question of a ‘senior partner.’” In this remarkably abject message, Churchill recognized the utility of “American ties with Italy,” conceded that “American preeminence” might be beneficial to the “common cause,” and concluded by asserting that he remained the President’s loyal “lieutenant” in North Africa. Churchill ended with the hope that his explanation had “given satisfaction.”

This mid-April exchange between Roosevelt and Churchill over the vexed question of “senior partnership” reveals a great deal about the shifting balance between the United States and Britain, highlighting in particular the prime minister’s appreciation that when push came to shove it was better to bend to the Presidential will than to risk a damaging rift. In a parallel development, London was forced to wage a long battle to

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defend Harold Macmillan against attempts by Washington to limit his ability to influence issues relating to the military government of Italy. In a mid-June telegram finally resolving this question, Roosevelt recognized that Macmillan and Robert Murphy would continue to enjoy equal status as political advisors to the Supreme Commander, but re-emphasized the point that Eisenhower would have the final say in the establishment of occupation policies and the appointment of officials.549 As established in May 1943, AMGOT would be headed by a British Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Lord Rennell (Francis Rodd), reporting to General Harold Alexander, the British commander of the invasion of Sicily. But an American officer, Colonel Julius Holmes, was appointed to head the Military Government Section of AFHQ, where he would serve as Eisenhower’s channel to Alexander on questions relating to the military government and, if necessary, as a conduit for the supreme commander’s orders on political questions.

By the time they were finalized in mid-June 1943, less than a month before the landings began, the arrangements for the establishment and running of the Allied Military Government of Sicily had thus acquired a Byzantine complexity. This complexity was a product of the inherent difficulties of establishing governmental authority in the wake of military conquest; of the awareness, as Eisenhower had noted, that the arrangements established in Sicily would establish important precedents; and, above all, of the shifting balance in Allied relations. The last factor was in many ways the weightiest. By reason of geography, historical precedent, and imperial interest, as well as by dint of previous Anglo-American agreements, London had every reason to feel justified in staking a claim to be the “senior partner” in the Mediterranean. For very specific reasons concerned both

with appeasing French sensibilities and with securing an American commitment to the
Mediterranean, London had voluntarily ceded senior status to Washington in North
Africa. But, as Churchill’s exasperated denunciation of Macmillan’s perceived
reluctance to fight for British interests at AFHQ demonstrates, British leaders saw the
opportunity to reestablish in Sicily the correct and natural relationship between the Allies.

President Roosevelt’s absolute refusal to countenance the reestablishment of
Britain’s “senior partner” status in Sicily and, when the point was put bluntly, Churchill’s
rapid and near-pusillanimous acceptance of this fact, marks how quickly and how
decisively the balance of power within the Alliance had shifted. At Casablanca, only six
months earlier, British leaders (and, for their own reasons the Joint Chiefs) envisioned
American forces lending powerful, perhaps even decisive, support in what remained
fundamentally a British sphere of interest. Now, as plans for Husky were readied,
Washington was staking its claim to—at the very least—an equal say in the post-Fascist
political set-up in Italy. And, with America’s war economy and its military mobilization
moving into high gear and with American goods and war material pouring into North
Africa, formal equality in fact masked the rapid augmentation of Washington’s influence
in the region and the equally rapid waning of London’s.

3.3) AMGOT and the Invasion of Sicily

On the night of July 9–10 1943, General Alexander’s Fifteenth Army Group,
composed of Patton’s American Seventh Army and Montgomery’s British—in reality
British imperial—Eighth Army, began landing on the southern coast of Sicily. The
Husky landings were by far the largest seaborne assault yet attempted, and were supported both by ships of the Royal Navy and by Vice Admiral H. Kent Hewitt’s newly-formed American Eighth Fleet.\textsuperscript{550} The American fleet, formed in March 1943, was itself a striking symbol of Washington’s increased commitment to the Mediterranean. Despite appalling blunders—Allied paratroops suffered heavy casualties from high winds and “friendly” anti-aircraft fire—the invading armies quickly established solid bridgeheads and began to press inland. While German forces mounted tenacious resistance to the Allied attack, their Italian allies quickly collapsed, and on August 16, after just over a month of heavy fighting, American troops rolled into Messina to complete the conquest of Sicily. Yet despite its dramatic and rapid success, the Sicily campaign bore ominous omens for Allied arms. Firstly, intra-Allied differences moved from planning and policy to the battlefield, pitting the Seventh and Eighth armies against each other in an undignified “race” to seize the victor’s laurels in Messina. And secondly, the Germans demonstrated their skill in defensive warfare, culminating in the withdrawal of 40,000 German and 70,000 Italian soldiers with their tanks and equipment, across the Straits of Messina to mainland Italy.

As planned, civil affairs officers arrived hard on the heels of advancing combat troops to establish the basic framework of Allied military government. Allied officers retained the great majority of Italian municipal officers in their posts, irrespective of their “fascist past.”\textsuperscript{551} Not surprisingly, the preponderance of officials carried over from the old regime gave the new AMGOT-led local governments a markedly conservative cast,

\textsuperscript{551} Harris, \textit{Military Government}, 33.
reinforcing their tendency to side with landowners against peasants seeking land reform and with employers against workers pressing for better wages and conditions. In the sulfur-mining district, Allied officials asserted their authority in the face of communist-led mineworkers who had taken advantage of the temporary breakdown of civil government to establish local self-rule. In the face of such challenges, Allied officials reached out for support to the Catholic Church the clergy and even to the Mafia. Citing the exigencies of ongoing military operations, AMGOT also suppressed all local newspapers, prohibited the holding of public meetings, and banned other forms of political expression including public protests and demonstrations.

While perhaps not posing such an egregious challenge to America’s stated democratic war aims as the “Darlan deal,” there was much here to trouble liberal opinion in the United States. In practice, however, domestic criticism of AMGOT was moderated firstly by the way that the experience military government was repackaged for domestic consumption, and secondly by the fact that developments in Sicily were rapidly subsumed into bigger questions posed by the surrender of Italy and the establishment of a successor regime. A New York Times editorial early in the occupation grappled with the challenge of putting a democratic face on AMGOT, arguing that the military government was “dedicated to the eradication of those political ideologies and their representatives that we fight against” while acknowledging that the new Allied-led administration would “utilize” those local officials “not too strongly tainted by the Fascist brush.”552 A news article the following week developed the theme, explaining that since the Allied military government would “operate” through existing local officials, it was not an “alien”

imposition on the Italian people: “towns and provinces” under Allied military rule would, the *Times* enthused, “virtually run themselves.”

*Time* journalist John Hersey drew many of these themes together in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Bell for Adano*. Hersey accompanied American troops into Sicily and drew on his experiences to write a thinly fictionalized account of the work of an American-led local government under Allied military rule. Rushed into print barely six months after the Sicilian campaign ended, this best-selling novel, together with the movie and stage play that followed it, offered an uplifting account of the work of Italian-American civil affairs officer Major Joppolo and his “wonderful zeal for spreading democracy.” Joppolo was, in truth, more benevolent dictator that democrat, but his decent, humanitarian, and deeply paternalistic attitude towards the feckless Italians placed in his care struck a chord in an America eager for confirmation of the justice of their cause and of their government’s actions. Whatever doubts about the character of American-sponsored “liberation” had been created by the Darlan affair and its aftermath, U.S. forces now seemed to the doing the right thing. Typically, Hersey, like the State Department’s Advisory Committee and the *New York Times* editorial board, presented Italian Fascism as a “stain” or “taint” on the body politic, a blemish that could be washed away, or a “stucco” surface that could somehow be removed without making—or allowing others to make—fundamental changes to the underlying social structure.

The approach to questions of military government and post-Fascist society in Sicily would, as both policymakers and opinion-formers well understood, have profound implications for the post-war reorganization of Italy, Germany, and Japan. As Harold

554 *New York Times*, February 6 1944.
Callender explained in the *Times*, Sicily offered a “working model” of what was “in store” for all the Axis powers.\(^{555}\) Quoting General Eisenhower, Callender pictured a “beneficent” military regime preparing a transition to an “enlightened and efficient” civil government. Hersey’s Major Joppolo, as the author argued in a foreword to *Bell for Adano*, gave striking fictional representation to this process. A thoroughly “good man,” Joppolo symbolized all that was positive in America’s deepening engagement with Europe and in its potential for liberal leadership Rejecting more boorish American characteristics, represented in *Bell for Adano* by the Patton-like General Marvin, Hersey concluded that the United States would need many “Joppolos” as its armies and “after-armies” pushed on into Europe, overthrowing repressive regimes and establishing liberal democracies under its leadership and guided by its example.\(^{556}\)

Washington’s concern over the ways in which the experience of military government in Italy be packaged for presentation to a domestic audience was reflected in the outlook of officers within the ranks of AMGOT itself. While the actual practice of British and American civil affairs officers on the ground in Sicily differed little, higher-ranking American officials soon began to argue that the more egregiously undemocratic aspects of the new order were a product of specifically British policies. In September 1943, for example, senior American civil affairs officer Charles Poletti (said to be the model for Hersey’s Joppolo) sent a sharply-worded report to the War Department arguing that AMGOT head Lord Rennell should return to “grouse shooting” since he was clearly not the “type” to “promote liberal democratic government.”\(^{557}\) In alluding to the


\(^{557}\) Poletti, quoted in Jones, *Mediterranean War*, 94.
aristocratic habits and lifestyle of Rennel and other British officers, American officials found in the overt conservatism of British officialdom a convenient excuse for the undemocratic actuality of policies that were in fact the product of mutual agreement and planning. These differences over the organization of military government in Sicily—if not over much of the actual experience on the ground—soon flowed into more substantial divisions over the character of the post-Mussolini regime in Italy as a whole.

3.4) The Ouster of Mussolini, the Invasion of Mainland Italy, and the Armistice

By the spring of 1942, significant sections of the Italian elite, including officials around King Victor Emmanuel III and others placed highly within the Fascist state, had come to the conclusion that an Allied victory was inevitable and had begun to explore options for getting out of the war with their own power and privileges intact.558 Reflecting both the conservatism of their authors and the unwarranted assumption that the British would be more favorable to a new regime based on the monarchy, initial Italian peace feelers were directed exclusively towards London. But British leaders, skeptical of the House of Savoy’s capacity to rally opposition to Mussolini, rejected these approaches. After the Torch landings in North Africa in November 1942, however, opposition to Mussolini within Italian ruling circles deepened rapidly, and by February 1943 London became convinced that former Army Chief of Staff and Viceroy of Ethiopia Pietro Badoglio was preparing to oust Mussolini. Despite some promising signs, however,

tentative contacts between the Allies and Badoglio did not bear fruit prior to the invasion of Sicily in July 1943.

The rapid and complete collapse of Italian forces in Sicily, combined with the increasing tempo of Allied bombing raids against the industrial centers of northern Italy produced a new political situation. The Italian elite saw danger on two fronts, fearing not only military defeat at the hands of the Allies but also the popular rising apparently presaged by mounting strikes and protests. Surrender seemed to be the lesser evil, and on July 24 the Fascist Grand Council, dormant since 1939, removed Mussolini from office and the following day Victor Emmanuel III imprisoned him and formed a new government headed by Marshal Badoglio. Anti-fascist forces played no part in these dramatic events: as Elena Agarossi points out, the coup against Mussolini was carried out by men who had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to “sacrifice” the leader in order to “maintain the regime he had created.”

The new government quickly abolished the Fascist Party and some of the most overtly repressive institutions of the Fascist state, proclaimed, “the war will go on”—and simultaneously opened talks with the Allies.

Not surprisingly, many Allied opinion-formers were deeply skeptical of the new government in Rome, viewing it as essentially a continuation of the Fascist regime without Mussolini. The New York Times scathingly described it as a “military dictatorship resting […] on the shadowy authority of a puppet king,” and its editorial writers hailed statements by Cordell Hull and Henry Stimson calling for an increase in Allied military pressure designed to force an unconditional surrender. Speaking in this

vein, an Office of War Information broadcast to Italy on July 26 denounced the new government, famously describing Badoglio as a “high-ranking fascist” and Victor Emmanuel as a “moronic little King.”

Top Allied leaders, however, adopted a more sanguine attitude towards the new government in Rome, with President Roosevelt publicly repudiating the OWI broadcast. Writing to Roosevelt, Churchill stated bluntly that “we should not be too particular in dealing with any Non Fascist Government, even if it is not the one we should like,” the only important issue being whether or not it could “deliver the goods.”\(^\text{561}\) The “goods,” Churchill indicated, included a rapid armistice; the surrender of the Italian fleet; the withdrawal of occupation forces from the Balkans and from France; the release of Allied prisoners of war; and the “surrender of the head devil.” Clearly Churchill was entirely willing to recognize an Italian regime shorn of the “head devil” as the legitimate representative of the Italian people.

In reply, Roosevelt expressed agreement with Churchill’s approach and added a note disparaging those “contentious people” who would “make a row if we seem to recognize” the King or Badoglio.\(^\text{562}\) One could argue that Roosevelt left a little ambiguity in his position, perhaps implying some difference between “seem[ing]” to recognize the Victor Emmanuel/Badoglio government and \textit{actually} recognizing it, and reminding the British prime minister that they should both “say something about self-determination […] at the proper time.” But in practical terms and at least in the short-term, Roosevelt, too, was ready to recognize the legitimacy of the new government. The President’s approach was enthusiastically endorsed by Arthur Krock, who used his regular opinion column to

\(^{561}\) Churchill to Roosevelt, July 26 1943, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 2: 348-349.  
argue that the Badoglio government could provide an indispensable “bridge” between Italy’s Fascist past and democratic future.  

Churchill soon added another critical item to the list of “goods” that the new Italian government should “deliver,” noting its capacity to “make the Italians do what we need” in the face of “chaos, bolshevization or civil war.” Churchill had good reason to be concerned about the “bolshevization,” at least with regard to the potential impact of mass working-class protest on the overall course and outcome of the war. While working people and anti-Fascist activists had been spectators in the final political convulsions of the Fascist regime, the ouster of Mussolini prompted tens of thousands of Italians to take to the streets in spontaneous celebrations that spilled over into protest marches, strikes, and factory occupations. Workers pressed for pay hikes, a purge of fascist officials and, above all, for “Peace Now!” and an immediate end to the war. OSS agents caught the mood of the protests, filing lurid reports of enraged peasants “killing fascists” and of factory workers seizing arms and forming militias in readiness for “anything.”

In the face of this wave of popular protest the Badoglio government declared martial law and, on July 26 the army was ordered to stop the street protests by armed force if necessary. Over the following days a series of bloody clashes between soldiers and protesters unfolded across the country, with the severity of the government’s actions reflecting both a justified fear that the political situation in northern Italy might quickly

564 Churchill to Roosevelt, July 31 1943, Complete Correspondence, 2: 369.
566 New York Times, August 1 1943.
567 OSS reports April 23, May 15, and n.d. mid-May, 1943 Box 72, Map Room Files, FDRL.
get out of control and an exaggerated estimate of the strength and preparedness of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). By early August government forces were getting the upper hand, and American intelligence reports indicated that Badoglio was “preoccupied” with dealing with these outbreaks of “public disorder.”

From August 7 until the middle of the month, British bombing directed at Milan, Genoa, and Turin effectively augmented Badoglio’s assault on the working-class protests in northern Italy. Hundreds of Italians, mainly residents of working-class districts, were killed, and thousands fled to the safety of the countryside. Cloudless skies made for accurate bombing, and returning aircrews reported starting “concentrated fires” that were still burning several days later. Under this barrage anti-government and anti-war protests collapsed. The British government justified this new wave of attacks on the grounds that they were necessary to “intensify [the] pressure on Badoglio” to sue for peace. On the rather spurious grounds of extreme urgency, British leaders decided not to waste time “going to Washington,” and the raids were conducted exclusively by the Royal Air Force and without consulting the Americans.

Writing from Rome, British Minister to the Vatican Sir D’Arcy Osborne challenged London’s justification for these attacks, pointing out that the Badoglio government was not subject to any “Anglo-Saxon democratic process” by which bombed
civilians might make their desire for peace felt. In the United States, exiled Italian academic Gaetano Salvemini took this line of argument a step further, pointing out that British bombing of northern Italy had had the effect of “mowing down and dispersing the crowds who were crying for peace.” Salvemini stopped short of openly asserting that London had deliberately lent its weight to Badoglio’s efforts to crush the working-class rebellion. But, given the target and timing of the British bombing, it is hard not to conclude that this question was not, at the very least, on the minds of British leaders when they ordered the attacks.

Winston Churchill underscored the relentless anti-Communist logic of the British position in a telegram to President Roosevelt endorsing a report on the political situation in Italy received from the Badoglio government. The Italian report argued that “every vestige” of Fascism been “swept away” and that the country had “turned Red overnight;” with twenty years of fascism having “obliterated” the middle class, “nothing” now stood between the “King and the patriots who have rallied round him” and “rampant Bolshevism” other than armed force. “Communist demonstrations” in Turin and Milan, the report concluded, “had to be put down by armed force.” It was clear where Churchill’s sympathies lay, and the RAF bombing of Milan and Turin began just three days later.

Nowhere in his voluminous correspondence with the British prime minister at this time did Roosevelt challenge Churchill’s lurid assessment of the political situation in Italy or his support for the use of force against working-class demonstrators. But neither

573 Osborne to FO, Aug. 18 1943, PREM 3/14/3.
575 Churchill to Roosevelt, Aug. 4 1943, Complete Correspondence, 2: 380.
did he fully endorse it, and it may well be that it was this absence of explicit approval that led London to launch the raids on northern Italy without first securing American approval. As Warren Kimball notes, Roosevelt was as “opposed to a communist-led government” in Italy as was Churchill, and he was equally open to recognizing and working with the government of Badoglio and the King. But their tone differed markedly, with Roosevelt laying emphasis not only on unconditional surrender, but also on the necessity of ensuring the “good treatment of the Italian people.” In these initial, slight differences can be seen the germs of a much deeper divide between Washington and London over the character of the post-Fascist settlement in Italy that would deepen as Allied troops moved into mainland Italy.

The complete and rapid success of operation Husky, combined with the new political situation created by the ouster of Mussolini, created a powerful argument for following the Allied victory in Sicily with an invasion of mainland Italy. Meeting in Washington in May for the Trident conference, Allied leaders had agreed that continued Mediterranean operations designed to “eliminate Italy from the war” should follow the successful completion of Husky, and final approval for the invasion of mainland Italy was given at the Quadrant conference, meeting in Quebec in mid-August. Despite the powerful military logic created by Allied victories in the Mediterranean, however, neither conference was plain sailing. Continued divisions over the relative importance of preparing a cross-Channel assault versus conducting extended operations in the Mediterranean combined with the political uncertainty created by the overthrow of Mussolini to impose a short but highly significant pause in major Allied military

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576 Roosevelt to Churchill, July 25 1943, Complete Correspondence, 2: 347.
operations in the weeks between the completion of the Sicilian campaign in mid-August and the first landings on the mainland in early September.

In contrast to both the Allies and the Badoglio government the Germans acted decisively in the weeks following Mussolini’s ouster. Rightly convinced that they could place no confidence in Badoglio’s claim that Italy would fight on, on August 1 Berlin began to move large number of German combat troops into Italy. By the time Mark Clark’s Fifth Army began landing at Salerno on September 9, the four original German divisions in Italy had been reinforced by sixteen more, and Field Marshal Albert Kesselring had established a defensive line south of Rome that was capable of defending both the capital and the strategically-critical complex of airfields at Foggia. In northern Italy, German forces completed the work begun by Badoglio and the British bombers, bloodily suppressing what they described as the “communist revolt” in Turin.577

The rapid reinforcement of German forces in Italy forced the Allies to press ahead with their invasion of the mainland before Kesselring could establish an impregnable position. The movement of Allied troops onto the mainland in turn necessitated the rapid conclusion of an armistice capable of neutralizing potentially troublesome Italian forces. Until this point, effective negotiations with the Badoglio government had been hindered both by differences between the Allies and by Italian evasion born of the hope of finding some room for maneuver between Berlin, London, and Washington. The division between London and Washington touched on their emerging differences over the character of post-Fascist Italy. For their part, the British insisted on using a comprehensive 44-clause civil-military surrender document—dubbed the “Long

Terms”—as the basis for negotiations with Rome, while the Americans favored using a shorter, purely military text—the “Short Terms”—leaving broader political questions to a later date. Moreover, London’s “Long Terms” were seen to have a punitive thrust whereas, as Roosevelt had insisted, the American approach allowed greater scope for “good treatment of the Italian populace.” Washington also favored giving considerable leeway to Allied leaders in the theater, imparting a degree of flexibility ruled out by the British approach.

London finally secured American approval of the “Long Terms” at the Quadrant conference in late August. But it was a hollow victory, honored in the breach. By the end of August Allied leaders in the Mediterranean—both British and American—were convinced that the rapid build-up of German forces in Italy made it imperative to secure an armistice before attempting a landing, and that in this time-dependent context the “Long Terms” were an impediment to securing Italian cooperation. Writing from AFHQ Algiers, Harold Macmillan urged the British cabinet to agree that if necessary an initial armistice could be concluded on solely the basis of the “Short Terms.” To his relief, London concurred, authorizing the use of the “shorter document” if “military exigencies absolutely required it.”578 Under pressure from both the Allies and the Germans, the Italian government finally signed the “Short Terms” on September 3, the same day that the British-led Eighth Army began landing in Calabria.

From the beginning, negotiations between the Allies and the Italians had not gone smoothly. Badoglio insisted that any armistice be kept secret, ostensibly to give the new government time to prepare a defense of Rome. In fact, beyond a wild scheme to fly

578 Macmillan, War Diaries, 197.
American paratroops into Rome (Operation Giant 2), there was no serious planning for
defense. The Badoglio government spent the next week planning their own flight and,
when it became clear that there would be no American airborne landing, trying to wriggle
out of the armistice altogether. With Allied forces already \textit{en route} to their landing
beaches at Salerno, south of Naples, Eisenhower forced the issue by publicly announcing
an armistice on September 8. The following day, and with the Fifth Army coming
ashore, Badoglio fled Rome for the Adriatic port of Brindisi, from where he issued a call
for a popular uprising against the German invasion—having, an OSS officer observed
bitterly, spent the previous forty-five days suppressing one.\footnote{Peter Tompkins, \textit{Italy Betrayed} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 190.}
Meanwhile, unprepared
and poorly-led Italian army units together with enthusiastic but untrained partisans
offered only token resistance to German troops moving into Rome.

At London’s insistence, the Italian government was finally forced to sign the
“Long Terms” on September 29. Allied leaders in the Mediterranean, including British
General Sir Noel Mason-MacFarlane, head of the new Allied military mission to the
“King’s Italy” in Brindisi, were convinced that the imposition of additional terms was
unnecessary, and Washington concurred with their view. The British, however, had kept
the Soviet government abreast of developments, and on September 25 Washington
received a strongly worded letter from Foreign Minister Molotov insisting that the “Long
Terms” be implemented. Faced with pressure from both major allies, Washington
relented and instructed Eisenhower to secure Italian agreement to the more punitive
terms—the text of which would remain secret for the rest of the war for fear of harming
Allied standing in Italy. Eisenhower continued to regard the “Long Terms” as
superfluous and even harmful to Allied interests and, with Macmillan’s approval, he sought to soften their impact. Eisenhower’s modifications to new terms included referring to them as “additional conditions” rather than “terms of surrender,” and deleting all reference to “unconditional surrender.” Significantly, President Roosevelt endorsed his actions.

The political crisis surrounding the negotiation of the Italian armistice saw the emergence of two new forces and alignments that would have long-term repercussions for Allied policy in Italy. Firstly, the leadership at AFHQ Algiers continued to develop as a semi-independent factor in the complex nexus of Allied policy making. As a military organization subject to direct chain of command, there were limits to AFHQ’s for independent action. But within these limits AFHQ—an amalgam of American and British officers and of military and civil officials—began to make its weight felt. This is particularly important because with increasing frequency AFHQ advocated policies much more aligned with Washington approach than with the more punitive course pursued by London. Secondly, Moscow began to make its voice heard in the formation of Mediterranean policy. While the issues of how much say the Russians would have, and how they would exercise it, were still to be resolved, both Western allies were favorable to Soviet involvement, not least because it held the promise of a reciprocal relationship in areas that might end the war under Russian occupation. Initially, as we have seen, Moscow sided with Britain on the question of the “Long Terms,” but over time the Russians, too, would come to align themselves broadly with Washington and against London.

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3.5) “Co-belligerency” and the First American Efforts to Broaden the Italian Government

With Mark Clark’s Fifth Army ashore at Salerno and Montgomery’s Eighth Army advancing slowly northwards from its landings in Calabria, the progress of Allied arms began to exercise considerable influence in the shaping of politics in Italy. There were no foregone conclusions. At Salerno, fierce counterattacks by German General Vietinghoff’s Tenth Army came close to crushing the beachhead, and it took several days of tenacious fighting to stabilize the situation. But by September 16, a week after the initial landings, the arrival of the Eighth Army convinced Vietinghoff to abandon his efforts and to fall back to a new defensive line along the River Volturno north of Naples. Allied troops now began to move out of the Salerno beachhead, entering Naples on October 1 and pushing up to the Volturno by October 6. However, even as Allied troops seemed poised to advance quickly towards Rome, the character of the Italian campaign changed dramatically. The near-success of Vietinghoff’s counterattack convinced Hitler to approve Kesselring’s plan to organize a substantial defensive line south of Rome and, as the Tenth Army regrouped on the Volturno, German engineers prepared a powerful series of defensive positions in its rear. These defensive lines, known collectively as the “Winter Line” and anchored on the Monte Cassino massif, offered formidable opposition to Allied plans for a rapid advance on Rome.

At the same time, the removal of German troops from southern Italy and the establishment of the Badoglio government in Brindisi created new opportunities for the organization of post-Mussolini governance. Eisenhower laid out the political alternatives
in memorandum to the War Department, arguing that the Allies could either “sweep this
government aside” and establish and establish military rule throughout occupied Italy,” or
else they could recognize the Badoglio government as a “co-belligerent” and work with it
under the terms of the armistice and the overall direction of AFHQ. Eisenhower
strongly favored the latter course, and the establishment of a military mission to Brindisi
under General Mason-MacFarlane on September 13 marked step in the direction of
implementing this policy. Eisenhower also decided that Allied military government
would not be established in the Apulian provinces around Brindisi—an area well behind
the front lines—thus establishing a nominally self-governing “King’s Italy” and giving
the King and Badoglio some territory over which to rule.

Eisenhower’s reference to “co-belligerency” was not an offhand comment, but
reflected a proposal initiated by Harold Macmillan to give the Badoglio government a
distinct—and unique—status. AFHQ’s plan to recognize Italy as a co-belligerent was
finely crafted, stopping short of accepting Italy as an ally but recognizing it as a partner
in the struggle against Germany whilst maintaining Allied oversight (and if necessary
control) over its domestic affairs. Despite opposition from the Foreign Office, Churchill
endorsed the idea of co-belligerency, arguing that it would help to “build up the authority
of the King and the Brindisi Administration” and allow Italy to start to “work her
passage” towards becoming an “effective national force against Germany” and a potential
ally. With London’s agreement, Italy was formally recognized as a co-belligerent
following Badoglio’s October 13 declaration of war on Germany. Given the effective
dissolution of the Italian army after the overthrow of Mussolini, the immediate military

582 Churchill Roosevelt, Sept. 21 1943, Complete Correspondence 2: 458.
consequences of co-belligerency were negligible, but recognition of the legitimacy of the Italian government established the entire political framework of the Allied occupation.

Co-belligerency effectively completed the Italian version of the Darlan deal. Having secured a viable Italian collaborator in Badoglio, AFHQ could limit “direct” Allied military rule to combat zones and adjacent areas while exercising only “indirect” control over areas cleared of German forces and handed over to an Italian civil administration. This key division was codified with the establishment of the Allied Control Commission (ACC) under the direction of Noel Mason MacFarlane on November 10 1943. Under the overall authority of the Allied supreme commander in the Mediterranean, the ACC was responsible both for direct military rule in frontline areas and, as the conditions for handing territory back to the Brindisi government developed, for overseeing the work of Italian governmental bodies on the national, regional and local levels. The ACC quickly developed a substantial bureaucratic apparatus that reached into every aspect of civil society from food distribution, finance and water supply, to press censorship, labor policy and “defascistization.” The ACC’s staff of over 1,500 officers, organized into 26 sub commissions and supported by a large secretariat, was established in the sprawling Bourbon palace at Caserta, outside Naples. Under this central administration, teams of Allied civil affairs officers and specialists both worked directly with Italian administrators and exercised ultimate control over their policies and actions.583

In contrast to North Africa where the Darlan regime and its successors presided over a relatively stable domestic situation, powerful popular protests continued to unfold

583 Harris, *Allied Military Administration*, 110.
in Italy. On September 9 an armed rising erupted in Naples, and while the rebels there faced a crushing German counter-offensive when Allied troops proved incapable of advancing quickly to their aid, the Neapolitan insurgency rose again at the end of the month. An OSS agent in Naples estimated that there were over 2,000 fighters under arms, organized loosely into what he described as “a revolutionary front.” After three days of fighting German troops pulled out of Naples on October 1, allowing Allied troops to enter a city already liberated by its own citizens. The “auto-liberation” of Naples and the political ferment that accompanied it marked the effective rebirth of open party politics in Italy. In the midst of the rising, six parties—the Communists, Socialists, Christian Democrats, Labor Democrats, Liberals and the Party of Action—formed the Committee of National Liberation (CLN) under the leadership of liberal philosopher Bernedetto Croce. Croce had earlier held out some hope for the monarchy, but after the German occupation had come to the conclusion that the king would have to go. The “Six” advocated solutions to the problem of the monarchy ranging from a regency to the demand for an immediate referendum, but all agreed that no democratic government was possible with Victor Emmanuel on the throne.

In the weeks following the invasion, Allied leaders at AFHQ Algiers quickly realized that popular struggles such as those in Naples and the related re-emergence of party politics would have a significant impact on the organization of political power in Italy. Close to the scene of action and sensitive to it, officials at AFHQ grasped that a government based simply on those sections of the Italian elite represented by the King and Badoglio could neither command broad popular support in the Allied cause nor, in

\footnote{Tompkins, *Italy Betrayed*, 259.}

\footnote{Ibid., 255.}
\textit{extremis}, reign in insurrectionary outbursts. In the same message to Washington in which he laid out the case for co-belligerency, Eisenhower noted that the importance of Badoglio government lay in its “unchallenged claim to legality,” but added that it was necessary to strengthen the administration’s “national character” by an “infusion of representatives of political parties” and by the abdication of the king in favor of his son or grandson.\textsuperscript{586} Acting on this line, AFHQ instructed Mason-MacFarlane to press Badoglio to build a “broad based anti-Fascist coalition” capable of collaborating with the Allies and fighting the Germans.\textsuperscript{587}

While hardly endorsing popular radicalism—Acting Secretary of State Edward Stettinius wrote to Robert Murphy expressing concern that the CLN might attempt to form revolutionary local governments in the “void” following the collapse of Fascism—Washington accepted AFHQ’s argument on the necessity of broadening and reforming the Badoglio government.\textsuperscript{588} In doing so, the Administration veered sharply away from the monarchy-centric plans drawn up by the State Department’s Advisory Committee—plans which, it turned out, had simply made no allowance for the entry of the Italian people into the political process. Increasingly, Washington came to see the King as an obstacle to the formation of a government capable of channeling pent-up popular anger into safe constitutional channels. President Roosevelt endorsed this change of emphasis, writing to Eisenhower to urge him to pursue the establishment of a “democratic

\textsuperscript{588} Stettinius to Murphy, Oct. 27 1943, \textit{FRUS 1943}, 2: 414.
government” in Italy, “whether the House of Savoy remains as a figurehead or not.” Secretary of State Cordell Hull added his support, noting that he was no longer “at all sympathetic” to keeping Victor Emmanuel on the throne.

As Washington shifted the axis of its policy towards the governance of Italy in response, it should be emphasized, to the situation unfolding on the ground rather than to any abstract democratic principles, so it placed renewed importance on its relations with liberal Italian exiles living in the United States, with former foreign minister Count Carlo Sforza foremost amongst them. When he arrived in America following the fall of France in 1940, Sforza had joined leftist exiles Gaetano Salvemini and Max Ascoli in the Mazzini Society, an anti-fascist front. State Department officials saw the importance of cultivating Sforza and other influential exiles, and accorded the Mazzini Society what left-wing critics dubbed “semi-official status.” The Administration expressed great interest in Sforza’s plans for a government-in-exile, co-sponsoring an international conference of Italian anti-fascists held in Montevideo, Uruguay in the summer of 1942. Sumner Welles championed Sforza’s case, describing him to Roosevelt as an “outstanding anti-Fascist leader” and endorsing his scheme for a 200,000-strong “Italian Legion” drawn from exiles and prisoners of war. Sforza, however, proved to be a demanding protégée, requesting substantial lend-lease supplies for his putative fighters and quickly convincing Welles that he had another de Gaulle on his hands.

589 Roosevelt to Eisenhower, Nov.9 1943, Map Room, Box 34, FDRL.
590 Hull, Memoirs, 2: 1550.
591 See Miller, United States and Italy, esp. ch. 1.
592 Fourth International, June 1943, 175.
593 Welles to Roosevelt, Feb. 24 1942, Welles papers, Box 151, FDRL.
As Italy’s war effort faltered, and as patriotic pressures mounted in the United States after Pearl Harbor, many leading Italian-American figures—the *prominenti*—who had previously supported Mussolini, abandoned *Il Duce* and declared their opposition to Fascism. Washington encouraged this development, offering back-stage encouragement for a move by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union’s to replace the existing leadership of the Mazzini Society by an alliance of Italian businessmen and moderate labor officials. With their extensive political contacts in Italy and their deep-seated anti-communism, the *prominenti* reinforced the most conservative aspects of Washington’s Italian policy, and their rise coincided with the pro-monarchical course advocated by Welles’ Advisory Committee. January 1943 marked the nadir of Sforza’s eclipse, with Welles observing that while he admired the count’s “inclinations and beliefs,” he clearly lacked the ability to be a successful leader.\(^{595}\)

In the fall of 1943, however, as the realities of Italian politics impelled Washington to develop its own campaign to liberalize the Badoglio government and to remove the King, Count Sforza suddenly found himself back in favor. At the State Department’s urging, Sforza called publicly for a broadening of the Badoglio government, and in the pages of the *New York Times* he argued that a liberalization of Italian politics together with “work, peace, and freedom” for the masses were necessary to head off a communist take-over in Italy.\(^{596}\) Addressing the Italian-American Labor Council, Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle struck a similar note, praising the

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\(^{595}\) Advisory Committee, minutes of meeting P39, Jan. 2 1943, Notter Files, microfiche.

“common and kindly folk of the streets” who had risen against Mussolini and quoting Sforza on the necessity of making a “common front against Nazi tyranny.”

The American effort to “broaden” the Badoglio government had the additional advantage that, as well as conforming to urgent necessity within Italy itself, it also helped assuage domestic criticism of Washington’s policy. In the period between the fall of Mussolini and Count Sforza’s return to Italy, it had become commonplace for liberal organs such as the Nation, the New Republic and PM to view American policy in Italy as an extension of the misguided course pursued in North Africa and to describe it as Italian “Darlanism.” New Republic suggested that Washington either had no Italian policy or, more troublingly, “none that they dared announce publicly”; the result, the magazine concluded, was a deluge of “pious platitudes” that covered actions designed to “build up the prestige of Badoglio and the King.” These criticisms were not restricted to the left liberals, but reflected a broader unease within the American elite. In early 1943, former Republican presidential candidate Wendell Wilkie published One World, and account of his world tour the previous year, in which he alleged that Washington was adopting “old power politics” by acting out of “expediency and apparent practicalities,” and that in the process it was losing sight of “what the war is about.” Articles in mainstream publications like Time made the same point, noting sarcastically that the United States was “prepared to traffic” with the “miserable little Italian King” and his “reactionary henchman Badoglio.”

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597 Department of State Bulletin, Oct.16 1943, 256-257.
599 Quoted in Casey, Cautious Crusade, 124.
600 Ibid., 125.
As we have seen, Roosevelt’s initial impulse had been simply to dismiss critics of Allied policy towards the King and Badoglio as “contentious people” whose views could be safely ignored. But the effort to broaden the Italian government offered a more politically satisfactory solution on the domestic front since it allowed the Administration to begin to harness American liberalism in active support of its Italian policy. For the Washington Post, Count Sforza’s return to Italy and his call for national unity against the Germans ended all “doubts about the wisdom of collaborating with Badoglio,” effectively justifying Italian Darlanism by putting a more acceptably liberal face on it.\(^{601}\) For its part, the New York Times saw Sforza’s call as a move that “promised well for a future democratic regime in a liberated Italy.”\(^{602}\) Sforza’s actions, the Times editorialized, would act as a powerful brake on the “political sectarianism”—read revolutionary dynamic—that was emerging in other occupied territories. Even acerbic critics like Gaetano Salvemini now conformed to Washington’s policy, with a November 8 article in New Republic arguing that it was ridiculous to view the King as a necessary “symbol of sovereign power” coinciding with the first American push to remove Victor Emmanuel.

Washington’s pragmatic adjustment to the realities of Italian politics brought it into ever-sharper conflict with London. Where AFHQ and the American Administration saw the necessity of accommodating popular protest in Italy by drawing oppositional figures into government and by seeking to revamp the monarchy by removing Victor Emmanuel, the British persisted in regarding the Italian people as “apathetic” bystanders to the great events unfolding in their country, and the liberal opposition as a gang of

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ineffectual “professors.” Despite claiming to favor the establishment of the “broadest based Anti Fascist coalition government possible,” Churchill’s intransigent defense of the King and his outright hostility to Sforza and other leaders of the CLN entirely negated this stance in practice. Moreover, as Washington began to push for a liberalization of Italian politics, London’s support for the King and Badoglio hardened in response, and by the spring of 1944 Churchill was describing Sforza as a “vain and ambitious old man” and Croce as a “dwarf professor,” neither of whom had any role in government.

Washington’s campaign to liberalize the Italian government proved to be a long and difficult one, passing through a number of intermediary stages and crises before its eventual triumph following the American capture of Rome in June 1944. Throughout, the American effort encountered vigorous British resistance. Since each discrete crisis ended with the King still on the throne and Badoglio still entrenched in office, they can be read as a series of victories for British conservatism over Washington’s liberalizing impulse. In this sense the entire occupation, at least until the conquest of Rome, appears as a triumph of British policy, and many historians, including Paul Ginsborg, David Ellwood, and James Miller, have drawn just this conclusion; Ellwood, for example, describes the British as being the “predominant external influence in Italy” during the war years. These conclusions mistake appearance for reality. Where Ellwood pictures the occupation of Italy as an “uneasy condominium […] dominated by the British,” the

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603 British Embassy to State Department, aide-Mémoire, Nov. 23 1943, FRUS 1943, 2: 395; Churchill to Roosevelt, Sept. 21 1943, Complete Correspondence 2: 458.
604 Ibid., 458.
605 Churchill to Noel Charles, Apr. 20 1944, PREM 3/241/2.
606 Ginsborg, Contemporary Italy, 10.
actuality was more complex.\textsuperscript{607} Even as Victor Emmanuel held on to the throne and Badoglio remained head of the government, their positions, and those of their British backers, were being gradually but irrevocably eroded. Washington’s policy was, as ever, flexible and pragmatic, but there is no evidence either that the Americans were “unwilling or unable to make precise political choices” in Italy or, more importantly, that they “undervalu[ed] the significance and weight of the Italian problem even as they were pouring large armies into the country.”\textsuperscript{608} On the contrary, having concluded that a liberalization of the regime was necessary and urgent, Washington pushed towards it was dogged tenacity.

3.6) The Political Consequences of Military Stalemate, November 1943–March 1944

In early October 1943 Washington brushed aside strenuous British objections and facilitated Count Sforza’s return to Italy after twenty-one years in exile. Tied closely to American interests, Sforza would function both as an intermediary in the interminable round of negotiations between AFHQ and the ACC, the six parties of the Committee for National Liberation in Naples, and Badoglio government in Brindisi, and as a \textit{de facto} agent of American policy. In this capacity Sforza championed a plan linking the abdication of Victor Emmanuel and the establishment of a regency on behalf of his ten-year-old grandson to the entry into the Badoglio government of representatives of the “Six.” Endorsed by Cordell Hull and promoted by AFHQ, Sforza’s plan offered an

\textsuperscript{607} Ellwood, \textit{Italy}, 47.
\textsuperscript{608} Ibid.
elegant solution to the political problems posed by the deep unpopularity of the King and the narrow base of support for the Badoglio government.609

The Sforza-Washington reform effort foundered on Victor Emmanuel’s refusal to contemplate abdication and on the consequent refusal of the “Six” to join the Badoglio government. The King, as Robert Murphy informed Hull, had become “the obstacle to the formation of a broad-based government.”610 Murphy’s assessment was not entirely accurate. Had Victor Emmanuel alone been the obstacle, Washington would surely have had no great difficulty in forcing his abdication, but the King’s intransigence was reinforced by London’s unwavering support. Writing to Roosevelt in early November during the first American effort to force Victor Emmanuel’s abdication, Churchill expressed his strong opposition to “breaking up the present King/Badoglio show” and argued against making any substantial changes to the Italian political set-up before the Allies were in Rome.611 Sforza, Churchill added contemptuously, lacked the qualities “that will make men kill or die.” Faced with London’s intransigence, Washington’s effort to force the King’s abdication collapsed. In November, Badoglio did form a new government but without the “Six”; its new members were former civil servants who joined a “cabinet of experts” deemed capable of working efficiently with the Allies.

This unsatisfactory solution to pressing political problems was understood by Italian politicians of all stripes to be an interim one, a holding operation until the capture of Rome facilitated a more comprehensive resolution. And in the fall of 1943 Allied leaders and Italian politicians alike assumed that Rome would soon be in their hands.

609 See Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 200–201.
610 Murphy to Hull, Nov. 2 1943, FRUS 1943, 2: 417.
611 Churchill to Roosevelt, Nov. 6 1943, Complete Correspondence, 2: 587.
Allied invasion plans had projected a rapid northward thrust from the initial landing sites and, after surviving the desperate early days in the Salerno beachhead, Allied commanders continued to believe that they would soon be in the capital. But in November the military situation turned against the Allies. Of the two Allied armies in Italy, the American-led Fifth was a “spent force” after its struggle in the Salerno beachhead, and the British-led Eighth, despite receiving Polish and French reinforcements, had lost much of its offensive drive after years of fighting in North Africa.\textsuperscript{612} The Germans, on the other hand, reaped the benefit of Hitler’s decision to make a stand south of Rome as they settled in to the strongly fortified Gustav Line in the hill country of the Rapido and Garigliano valleys. After forcing a crossing of the Volturno and pressing slowly northwards, the Allied offensive stalled in front of the Gustav Line. It would remain there, barring limited and local advances, for the next six months.

Even before three bloody assaults on the lynchpin of the German position at Monte Cassino and several attempts to force a crossing of the Rapido had failed to dislodge the defenders and open the road to Rome, Allied commanders decided to launch an amphibious operation to outflank the German positions by landing Allied troops at Anzio, between the Gustav Line and Rome. Churchill, who understood that with the cross-Channel invasion now scheduled for May 1944 and pulling resources from the Mediterranean, a protracted stalemate in Italy would put paid to his hopes for extended operations in the Aegean, was an early and enthusiastic proponent of the operation. But the Anglo-American force landed at Anzio in January 1944 was too weak and too poorly

led to unlock the strategic impasse, and instead of a rapid breakout towards Rome, General John Lucas’ Sixth Corps faced a desperate battle to hold the beachhead at Anzio followed by five months of deadlock. Churchill was bitterly disappointed: where the Allies had hoped to “land a wildcat” on the Italian shore, they had instead “stranded a vast whale.”

Evoking imagery of Western Front in World War One as a metaphor for hopeless deadlock, British diplomat Sir Alexander Cadogan observed that the frontline of the war in Italy now “looks like a Passchendaele.”

Despite the deadlock at the front, Italian politics continued to evolve rapidly in the winter and spring of 1944. Acting on an American initiative, the Combined Chiefs rescinded the ban on public political activity in Italy contained in the original AMGOT guidelines for Sicily on January 1 1944, agreeing that, at the discretion of the military authorities, the “Italian people may be permitted to participate in such political activities as do not lead to rioting and disorder.” Following this announcement, and acting with American encouragement, the Naples CLN overcame British opposition to organize a broad anti-fascist congress in Bari. Meeting at the end of January, the congress—described by London as the “so-called Committee of Liberation”—rejected a radical proposal that it assume immediate governmental powers but unanimously demanded the abdication of the King and the formation of a government based on the six parties of the Naples CLN. An executive Junta of the “Six” was elected to pursue these goals.

613 Brooke diary, Feb 29 1944, War Diaries, 527.
615 CCS to AFHQ, Jan. 1 1944, R363, FO 371/43836, National Archives (NA).
616 Foreign Office to Churchill, January 24 1944, PREM 3/ 240/ 5.
The Bari Congress signaled the rebirth of public political activity at the level of national politics, at it had a far-reaching impact on the course of Italian politics but also. It also made a profound impact on Allied civil affairs officers, both American and British, assigned to work with Italian officials and politicians through the ACC. It is striking that while London maintained its implacable hostility to the liberalization of Italian politics and to any short-term plans to “broaden” the Italian government, British officers on the ground were quickly caught up in the popular enthusiasm for radical political change unleashed by the collapse of Fascist rule. British Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) officer I.G. Greenfield, dispatched to run an Italian radio station in Bari, caught the mood. Noting “liberation filled us with hope,” Greenfield reported that his Italian co-workers believed that the defeat of fascism “meant the beginning of a new and better world in which democratic values would reign triumphant.”

Hauled before ACC head Mason-Macfarlane for attending the Bari Congress in violation of a military directive prohibiting attendance, Greenfield found himself the subject of a mild rebuke followed an assurance from the British general that “he would have done the same thing” in the circumstances. Mason-Macfarlane, Greenfield concluded in words pregnant with significance for the course of Italian politics, was a remarkably “liberal-minded man.”

The Bari Congress, combined with early optimism that the Anzio landings would unlock the military situation, convinced Washington to resume its pressure for political reform, and Cordell Hull instructed American officials at AFHQ that it was now “imperative” that the “reconstruction of the Italian government on a broad political basis

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617 Major I. G. Greenfield, “Memoirs of an Anglo-Italian,” Greenfield papers, IWM.
should be undertaken without further delay.” But British opposition and the rapid souring of the Anzio operation forced Washington to back down again, and on February 12 Roosevelt decided to halt efforts to reform the Italian government until the military situation improved.

In late February the Fifth Army’s assault on Monte Cassino stimulated fresh hopes for a breakthrough and triggered a new American effort at reform. This time senior British figures in the Mediterranean, including the new supreme commander General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, appointed to succeed Eisenhower in January, joined their American counterparts in advocating the liberalization of the Italian government. General Mason-Macfarlane, the “liberal-minded” day-to-day head of the Allied Control Commission, argued that the prospects of a “moderate solution” in Italy were slipping away and that Communist-led partisans would take radical action unless the Junta was incorporated into the government. Wilson endorsed this view in messages to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, concluding that the Allies now had to back the Junta and move against the King, or else prepare to repress the liberal opposition by force. The decision, he emphasized, could no longer be held “dependent on the progress of the battle for Rome.” Churchill reacted forcefully to this new push for reform, informing the House of Commons on February 22 that since the Junta lacked either “elective” or “constitutional” authority” there could be no new government until Rome was in Allied hands. His messages to Wilson were somewhat sharper, and Harold Macmillan had to

618 Hull to Reinhardt, Jan. 25 1944, FRUS 1944, 3: 1007.
619 AFHQ to CCS, 19 Feb. 1944, Map Room, Box 30, FDRL.
620 Wilson to CCS, 19 Feb. 1944, Map Room, Box 34, FDRL.
take the “poor general” aside to explain “all the trouble he had got himself into with the
P.M.” In the face of London’s public opposition, the reform effort stalled again.

Again, London appeared triumphant. But again the ground was slipping away beneath them and the “King/Badoglio show.” In late February the King bowed to mounting public pressure and agreed in principle to abdicate once Rome was in Allied hands, at which point the “Crown Prince would proceed to form a new government on a broad base.” More importantly, Italian working people responded to London’s opposition to political reform by again seizing the initiative. Deftly exploiting divisions among the Allies, the Socialist, Communist and Action parties in Naples called a ten-minute strike for Saturday March 4 to protest Churchill’s House of Commons speech opposing the Junta joining the government. The proposed strike was a somewhat tepid affair—workers were instructed to “work 15 minutes overtime in lunch hour to compensate”—but AFHQ nevertheless saw what it portended and banned it on the grounds of being “inimical to the war effort.” The workers’ parties agreed to cancel the strike, but called a mass rally in downtown Naples to launch a petition campaign demanding the King’s abdication and that the “Six” be allowed to join the government. For the ACC, Mason-MacFarlane argued that it was “essential” that the parties be allowed a “lawful and orderly” means of protest, while Macmillan noted with characteristic cynicism “a few public meetings are a source of innocent pleasure to the people deprived of these amusements for twenty years.”

622 Macmillan, War Diaries, 383.
623 Wilson to CCS, Feb. 29 1944, Map Room, Box 34, FDRL.
624 Wilson to CCS, Feb. 29 1944, Map Room, Box 34, FDRL.
625 Wilson to CCS, Mar. 5 1944, Map Room, Box 34, FDRL; Macmillan to Churchill, Mar. 21 1944, PREM 3/243/8.
As this political crisis was unfolding in Naples, the kind of insurrectionary developments Mason-MacFarlane had warned of manifested themselves in northern Italy as thousands of workers went on strike demanding wage hikes, increased rations, and an end to the forcible removal of Italian workers to Germany. Led by the Italian Communist Party, the strike wave demonstrated the growing confidence of the party’s cadres in the factories and was connected, for the first time, to urban guerilla attacks on German forces. The renewed combativey of the urban working class also overlapped with the growth of the partisan resistance movement in many parts of the north. Organized through local Committees of National Liberation under the overall leadership of the Milan-based National Committee for the Liberation of Upper Italy (CLNAI), by the spring of 1944 some 20,000–30,000 partisans were under arms.\(^{626}\) Where partisans confronted forces of the Italian Social Republic, the puppet government established by Berlin after the “rescue” of Mussolini by German paratroops in September 1943, the fighting increasingly took on the character of a brutal civil war. After years of isolation from the collaborationist “popular front” policies emanating from Moscow in the 1930s, many PCI cadres believed that strikes and urban protests would soon link up with the partisan resistance in the countryside and merge into a generalized insurrection against the German occupation, the Social Republic, and Italian capitalism.\(^{627}\) The power of the struggle unfolding in the north and its potential anti-capitalist dynamic was all too apparent to the Allies; while noting the scope and power of the strikes and cheered the “reckless courage” of the Italian workers, the *New York Times* warned darkly that the

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\(^{626}\) See Ginsborg, *Contemporary Italy*, 17.

\(^{627}\) See Behan, *Long Awaited Moment*. 
“Europe that will rise when Germany is defeated may have ideas for the future that will not always fit into the plans of the Great Powers.”

3.7) Enter the Russians

For Washington the rising militancy displayed by workers in northern Italy in the spring of 1944—the *New York Times* estimated that at least three million took part in strike actions—underscored the urgency of solving the political crisis by establishing a popular government that could accommodate and defuse the rising tide of protest. The alternative, as Roosevelt saw all too clearly, was that the “Allied authorities” would end up using “force against the anti-Fascist leaders and groups,” with unpredictable and potentially dire consequences for both Italian and domestic politics. In early March, and with strikes raging in Italy, the President reopened discussion with Churchill on the thorny question of reforming the Italian government. Roosevelt argued that the political crisis in Italy was now running so far ahead of any prospect for a military solution that “major political decisions” would have to be taken before the capture of Rome. Tellingly—and, to Churchill’s discomfort, accurately—Roosevelt pointed out that “both British and American” officials at AFHQ favored giving “immediate support to the program of the six opposition parties.”

At this critical juncture, Washington’s reform project received unexpected and decisive assistance from Moscow. On March 8 1944, the Soviet Union unilaterally and

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without prior discussion with the western Allies established limited diplomatic relations with Italy. In a closely related move, Stalin sent veteran Italian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti home from exile in Moscow with the explicit task of leading the PCI into the Badoglio government. In taking these to dramatic initiatives, Stalin was reacting to Allied efforts to exclude Moscow from any decisive say in Italian affairs by utilizing the local political leverage provided by the PCI to augment Russian influence on the Italian political scene. Bringing succor to Washington’s efforts to liberalize the government did not necessarily top Moscow’s agenda. But, as Washington’s anger at Moscow’s surprise diplomatic maneuver subsided, it became clear that these moves could break the logjam in Italian politics and open the road for a rapid political solution to the governmental crisis. By March 25, General Wilson was able to report that PCI members of the Junta had “completely changed their attitude,” abandoning efforts to organize a petition demanding the abdication of the King in favor of advocating that oppositionists join a “strong government,” even if led by Badoglio.

The Soviet Union’s decisive intervention into the Italian political crisis occurred within the framework of the evolving triangular relationship between London, Moscow, and Washington. From the summer of 1943 the Allies, led by Washington, had sought to involve Russia to a limited extent in the disposition of Italian affairs by making Moscow privy to secret discussions on the armistice: the obvious payoff was, as Ambassador Winant pointed out from London, that “we will want to influence the terms of capitulation and occupation” once the “tide turned” and Russian armies entered eastern

Europe. The Russian leadership approved the terms of the armistice and formally “empower[ed]” Eisenhower to sign on its behalf, thereby establishing the basis for the tripartite supervision of Italian affairs.

This relationship was codified in decision of the first tripartite conference of Allied foreign ministers held in Moscow in late October 1943 to set up the Advisory Council for Italy, originally known as the Military-Political Commission. The Council, composed initially of representatives of the British, American, and Russian governments and of the French Committee for National Liberation, was designed to offer overall political advice to the Allied Control Commission. But neither London nor Washington intended to grant Moscow a decisive voice in Italian affairs, insisting that the Allied Supreme Commander and AFHQ, acting through the Control Commission, would have the final say in all disputed questions. At best, the British Foreign Office argued, Moscow’s participation in the Advisory Council would burden it with a “share of the responsibility” for Allied policy in Italy, giving it little real influence but helping to blunt public criticism of Allied “abuses.” As Geoffrey Roberts notes, the Allies’ decision to exclude Russia from the centers of actual decision making in Italy “backfired” in the long run since it provided Moscow with a precedent for minimizing western influence in areas of eastern Europe under Soviet occupation.

At the same time, however, Moscow surely realized that the limit placed on its ability to have a decisive say in Italian affairs was simply the price of establishing what

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634 Winant to Hull, July 26 1943, FRUS 1943, 2: 335.
635 Hull to FDR, Aug. 29 1943, FRUS 1943, 2: 357.
636 Foreign Office to Macmillan, Jan. 22 1944, R1167, FO 371/43836, NA.
would eventually emerge as clearly defined spheres of influence in postwar Europe. Moreover, the exclusion of Russia from actual decision-making was at least partially offset by an outward show of intra-alliance co-operation that projected a powerful image of east-west collaboration. In this sense, diplomatic relations between the western Allies and Russia forged in Italy helped prepare the resolution of much bigger political questions. In the spring of 1943, Moscow had dispatched senior diplomat Alexander Bogomolov to Algiers to represent Russian interests to the French CFLN, and when the Advisory Committee was set up in October he was assigned to represent Russia on it. Robert Murphy quickly formed a positive appreciation of “Bogo” and of the prospects for collaboration; the Russians, Averell Harriman concluded after meeting with Bogomolov in Algiers, had “made up their minds to play ball.”638 In November 1943, Moscow strengthened its representation at AFHQ by assigning Senior Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs Andrei Vyshinsky to serve on the Advisory Council. At Roosevelt’s request, Murphy developed a close relationship with Vyshinsky and, although initially alarmed by Vyshinsky’s “ice-cold” reputation, he soon warmed to the former lead prosecutor of the Moscow show trials.639

The congenial relations established between American and Soviet diplomats in Algiers reflected in microcosm the emerging global strategic framework that was registered at the Tehran conference in November 1943. In many ways, as we shall discuss in more detail later, this conference was a watershed marking the relative decline of the Anglo-American relationship and the rise of a Washington–Moscow axis, setting a

638 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 207; Harriman to Eisenhower, Nov. 11 1943, Harriman Papers, Box 170, Library of Congress.
639 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, 210–211.
firm date for the invasion of France and rejecting British plans for action in the eastern Mediterranean. At Tehran Roosevelt, while expressing the pious hope that Moscow would permit a show of self-determination in the Baltic States and Poland, essentially acquiesced to the prospect of Russian hegemony in Eastern Europe. In relation to Italy, the conference authorized an Allied advance only as far north as the Pisa–Rimini line, and, over British objections, it projected shifting substantial forces out of the peninsula and into Operation Anvil, the invasion of southern France. With an eye to the post-war division of Europe and having concluded that Italy would lie in the American sphere, Moscow was prepared to help Washington secure a stable and pro-capitalist Italy. Stalin’s policy here, as Silvio Pons argues and as we shall discuss in more detail later, was directed not at “installing Communist regimes in Western Europe” but rather at establishing a “divided and docile continent.” From this point of view, the Soviet Union was prepared to help establish a “national” government in Italy capable of absorbing the revolutionary pressures that, as Moscow and Washington both saw, were building rapidly.

In recognition for its cooperation in Italy, the Teheran conferees agreed that Moscow should receive some of the spoils of Allied success in the form of a portion of the Italian navy. With typical acidity, Chief of the Imperial General Staff Alan Brooke observed that the deal over the disposition of the Italian fleet, struck “during moments of special friendship fomented by wine,” offered “nothing but disadvantages” for the

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640 On the Tehran conference from this point of view, see Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, 165; Mary E. Glantz, FDR and the Soviet Union; The President’s Battles over Foreign Policy (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 155–158.
British. But the vague agreement at Teheran gave Roosevelt an opportunity to demonstrate publicly his good will towards Moscow by announcing at a March 3 1944 press conference that the Russians would get one third of the Italian navy. To some, the President’s comments seemed to have been made “without forethought, and perhaps even inadvertently.” The British, who had not been consulted before Roosevelt made the announcement, were inclined to agree with this assessment. In fact, when British and American leaders had discussed the disposition of the Italian fleet after Teheran, it had quickly become apparent that the idea of actually giving Italian ships to the Russians was unworkable both on operational grounds—the ships were “quite unsuited for Northern waters”—and because it seemed likely to provoke a mutiny by Italian sailors. There was also, as Churchill reminded Roosevelt, “no mention” at Teheran of giving the Russians a full third of the Italian ships.

In January 1944, Churchill proposed sidestepping these problems by substituting Allied warships for Italian, and it was agreed to hand over to the Russians the “crewless” Royal Navy battleship Royal Sovereign, eight destroyers, and four submarines, together with the Americans cruiser Milwaukee and four merchant ships. The warships were old—the destroyers were former American ships sent to Britain in 1940—but, as Churchill put it, they could “steam and fight.” Stalin was dubious of the ships “fighting qualities,” but accepted the switch after an extended diplomatic exchange. In

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642 Brooke, diary entry, Jan. 11 1944, War Diaries, 28.
645 Churchill to Roosevelt, Jan. 8 1944, Complete Correspondence, 2: 655.
646 Churchill to Eden, Jan. 10 1944, PREM 3/240/5.
647 Churchill to Roosevelt, Feb. 3 1944, Complete Correspondence, 2: 699.
648 Stalin to Churchill and Roosevelt, Jan. 29 1944, Map Room files, Box 35, FDRL.
haste to conclude the deal, London and Washington issued operational orders for the ships to sail in early February.

Roosevelt’s public offer on March 3 to send one third of the Italian fleet to Russia therefore appeared to reopen an issue that had already been settled—so settled, in fact, that the Milwaukee was already at sea and en route to the Soviet Union. Churchill was incredulous when he received word of the Presidential press conference, dashing off a telegram to Roosevelt demanding, “can this be true?” and adding (in a paragraph struck out before dispatch) that “if so […] it is a complete departure from all our arrangements and agreements.” Under this fire, the President beat a hasty retreat, agreeing that no Italian ships would be sent to Russia “at present” and endorsing Churchill’s parliamentary statement reaffirming the substitution of Allied vessels for Italian. But the question of why Roosevelt raised this issue at a public press conference remains unanswered. To Churchill, the President implied that he had been flustered by “insistent questioning” at the press conference. But this seems unlikely. Roosevelt had been closely involved in the discussions on the Italian ships and was intimately familiar with the details—and he was also a passed master at handling the press.

It seems more likely, therefore, that Roosevelt’s announcement was a piece of political theater, either planned or impromptu, designed to show Moscow that Washington wished to meet Soviet demands in full but that London was blocking that generous impulse. This interpretation conforms to Roosevelt’s desire to strengthen the Washington–Moscow axis following Teheran and, within this framework, to

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649 Churchill to Roosevelt, March 3 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 15.
Washington’s interest in utilizing its developing relationship with Russia to strengthen its hand in Italy. Commenting on this question in late March, Harold Macmillan noted that, as Russian influence in Italy increased, the policy courses of Britain and the United States were “in danger of drifting apart”: in a caustic minute on Macmillan’s message, Foreign Secretary Eden scrawled “it is already far apart.”652

Within days of the resolution of the imbroglio over the Italian fleet, Moscow recognized the Italian government and proposed an exchange of diplomats. Taken by surprise, the Allies protested that Moscow had violated diplomatic procedure by failing to discuss its move with the Advisory Council and Control Commission. In response, the Russians patiently explained that their initiative was designed to help resolve the Italian impasse and that, since the western Allies could not agree to force the King’s abdication, Moscow would facilitate the Junta joining the existing government instead.653 Despite its disapproval of Moscow’s methods and its concern that Russia planned to establish military bases in Italy, Washington soon saw that the Russian initiative would indeed shift the entire framework of Italian politics in its favor. Moreover, while appearing to bolster Badoglio and the King and therefore to register another success for London, Moscow’s moves actually prepared a solution along the lines advocated by Washington. As Averell Harriman noted at a press conference in London, Russia’s support for Badoglio “solved our difficulty” in Italy by making possible the outcome “we wanted from the beginning.”654

652 Macmillan to Eden, Mar. 21 1944, R4999, FO 371/43836, NA.
653 Soviet Embassy to State Department, March 19 1944, FRUS 1944, 3: 1062–1065.
654 Harriman, press conference, May 4 1944, Harriman papers, Box 172, LC.
Palmiro Togliatti’s return from Moscow followed hard on the heels of the opening of diplomatic relations between Italy and the USSR. Arriving in Naples on March 27, and acting on explicit instructions from Stalin to advance the “intensification of the war against the Germans […] by unifying the Italian people,” the PCI leader immediately began pressing both his own party and the other members of the Junta to join the Badoglio government. Backed by the authority of the Kremlin and the prestige of the Red Army, Togliatti drove the new course through the PCI leadership in what became known as the “Salerno switch.” American observers noted with satisfaction that Togliatti took a “strong line” with the Italian left, preventing it from “dislocating” the government or “upsetting” the war effort. For Togliatti, Robert Murphy observed happily, “the war always [came] first.”

Many PCI members were somewhat less impressed with Togliatti’s new line than were Murphy and AFHQ. With “large masses” of Italians turning “towards communism,” as the American chargé to the Vatican reported on April 17, the party grew rapidly, leading many cadres to conclude that the socialist revolution was at hand. Confronted with Togliatti’s new anti-revolutionary line, many party members believed that it was all part of a crafty double policy or doppiezza, accommodating to capitalism in public while secretly preparing an insurrection. The Salerno Switch was equally unpalatable to the Socialists and the Party of Action, but the relationship of forces within

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655 Quoted in Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 176.
656 Reinhardt to Hull, March 29 1944, *FRUS 1944* 3; 1082.
657 Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 215.
658 Tittman to State Department, PSF, Italy, Box 41, FDLR.
the Junta soon forced them to drop their opposition to serving under the King and to follow Togliatti and the PCI into the Badoglio government.

Events now moved rapidly to a denouement. Acting on Roosevelt’s instructions, Robert Murphy led Harold Macmillan and General Mason-Macfarlane into an April 10 meeting with the King at which Victor Emmanuel finally gave a definitive promise to abdicate once Rome fell. In an aside that offers clear evidence that senior British leaders in the Mediterranean now broadly concurred with Washington’s policy, Macmillan told Murphy that in helping the Americans bring renewed pressure on the King he was acting on his own initiative and “without specific instructions” from London. In fact, of course, both he and Mason-Macfarlane were not only acting without instructions, but in clear contradiction to London’s long-standing support for Victor Emmanuel, and this realization surely informed the King’s actions. Once the King announced his impending abdication, Sforza, Croce, Togliatti, and other Junta leaders proceeded to join Badoglio’s cabinet, accepting the “Long Terms” of the armistice sight unseen. When a “beaming” Badoglio told Murphy that the PCI had played a decisive role in bringing about the new “broad-based Liberal government,” the American diplomat concluded, with some accuracy, that Togliatti functioned first and foremost as an “intelligent national patriot” rather than as a Communist. Strikingly, Togliatti’s adoption of this role was in complete conformity with Moscow’s plans and priorities.

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660 Murphy to Hull, April 14 1944, FRUS 1944, 3: 1100.
661 Murphy to Hull, April 22 1944, FRUS 1944, 3: 1103.

In the early summer of 1944 the pace of military developments in Italy accelerated dramatically, with Rome finally falling to Mark Clark’s Fifth Army on June 4. In turn, the American capture of Rome opened the door to a far-reaching transformation of the Italian political scene signaled by the abdication of the King and the establishment of a new, broadly based, and liberal government. But neither the way in which Rome was taken nor the political changes that followed it conformed either to British operational plans or, more importantly, to London’s hopes for maintaining a decisive say in Italian affairs.

At the headquarters of the Allied 15th Army Group, General Alexander’s plan for a summer offensive—codenamed *Diadem*—called for a renewed assault on Monte Cassino designed to breakthrough the Gustav Line, push into the Liri valley, and open the road to Rome. Once this attack was underway, the Fifth Army’s 6th Corps would break out of its beachhead at Anzio and drive into the rear of the German Tenth Army, trapping the Germans between to two Allied forces and annihilating them.\(^662\) Alexander’s operational orders did not state which force would take Rome preferring, one assumes, to allow that question to be answered as the battle unfolded. But there was absolutely no ambiguity about the basic plan, with the 6th Corps at Anzio clearly tasked with an offensive on the “general axis Cori-Valmontone” designed to block the “withdrawal of

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the Tenth Army.” Mark Clark, keen to secure formal approval for an American drive on Rome, disagreed with aspects of Alexander’s plan. But there is no doubt that both he and General Lucien Truscott, commander of 6th Corps in the Anzio beachhead, fully understood Alexander’s operational proposal and the parts their forces were expected to play in executing it.

Diadem opened on May 11, and with Monte Cassino falling to the Poles and with the Moroccan and Algerian infantry of General Juin’s French Expeditionary Corps plunging through the mountains to the south, Allied forces finally began to break through into the Liri valley. On May 23 Truscott launched his breakout from Anzio, and American armor began driving northwestwards across the rear of Vietinghoff’s Tenth Army as Alexander had planned. On May 25 however, and with Truscott poised to slam the door shut on Vietinghoff, Clark ordered him to halt his advance towards Valmontone and into the rear of the Tenth Army and to swing the bulk of his forces into the Alban Hills and on northwards towards Rome instead. A “dumbfounded” Truscott was unable to find Clark and have him personally verify these new orders, but he executed them nonetheless. Despite the difficulty of reorganizing their entire attack at short notice, and despite stiff German resistance in the Alban Hills, Truscott’s troops—now accompanied by Clark himself—entered Rome on June 4. Italian partisans blocked German efforts to sabotage roads, bridges and aqueducts, while in the city itself Communist and other CLN leaders ensured that, as the Germans pulled out, Rome passed

663 Alexander, Operational Order #15, May 15 1944, Alexander Papers, WO 214/33, NA.
665 Truscott, Command Missions, 375.
quickly and more or less peacefully into American hands. Unlike in Naples, there would be no popular uprising in Rome and no interregnum of “auto-liberation” before the arrival of American troops. Meanwhile, with Truscott’s troops heading for Rome the German Tenth Army extricated itself from the trap Alexander had set for it.

Alexander, who was not informed of the change in the axis of Truscott’s attack or of Clark’s drive for Rome until it was too late to stop them, was duly outraged. Many historians have echoed his anger, with Carlo D’Este bluntly—and entirely accurately—describing Clark’s action as “insubordinate” and Matthew Jones criticizing his “outright defiance” of Alexander. It is well known that Clark had long been determined to lead Allied capture of Rome: as Truscott reports, the Fifth Army commander considered it the “only important objective” and, despite Alexander’s repeated assurances that American troops would lead the way, he harbored deep suspicions that the British general would push the British Eighth Army out ahead at the critical moment. Alexander concluded simply that the “lure of Rome” had led Clark to violate his direct and unambiguous orders, and others have elaborated this line, stressing Clark’s vanity and hunger for publicity. There is no doubt Clark enjoyed being lionized in the American press—he held a command conference shortly after entering Rome that was essentially a photo opportunity—but it seems unlikely that this motive alone would justify the risk of defying a direct order issued clearly and properly through the well-established Allied chain of command.

Mark Clark himself explained his actions by asserting that the elite Herman Goring Division had blocked Truscott’s drive into the rear of the Tenth Army around Valmontone, and that the turn northwards towards Rome offered the only opportunity for advance. He also argued that the instructions issued to him from Alexander’s 15th Army Group were in the form of general “suggestions” rather than direct and binding orders. Both explanations are highly implausible. In fact, when Clark ordered Truscott to change the axis of his attack on May 25, only light elements of the Herman Goring Division were present around Valmontone. The division’s main force was on the move into the area, but it was under heavy air attack and was in no position to block Truscott’s advance. Valmontone, Truscott himself recalled, was “wide open” before his advancing troops.

A more plausible explanation for Clark’s action can be pieced together from his memoirs. During the planning of Diadem in mid-April, Clark reports that he was summoned to the United States for top-level discussions, and that the whole trip was to be kept secret. Meeting with Roosevelt in White Sulfur Springs, Clark reviewed plans for the upcoming offensive. The President, he noted, displayed a “surprising knowledge” of the campaign and offered his own ideas and “plans for reaching Rome.” Roosevelt, of course, never allowed a written record of such meetings, and the only other contemporary account is buried in a few off the record remarks made by the President at a May 16 press conference. Roosevelt acknowledged that Clark had “come down to see

669 Clark, Calculated Risk, 357–359.
671 Truscott, Command Missions, 375.
672 Clark, Calculated Risk, 335–337.
673 Ibid.
me” and that they had “talked the whole thing over,” but, not surprisingly, offered no further details. It is impossible to know exactly what passed between Roosevelt and Clark but, in the context of the ongoing crisis in Italy and of the forthcoming Allied offensive, it seems entirely possible that the President impressed on the general the political significance of having American troops capture and occupy Rome. He would not have had to issue an order to get his point across: Clark, as we have seen, already had a strong desire to be first into Rome. What he needed was political encouragement to do it and protection from the resulting fall-out.

At a secret meeting with senior politicians including Vice President Henry Wallace and House Speaker Sam Rayburn following his interview with the President, Clark seems to have explained exactly how he planned to take Rome. The events of the subsequent campaign would unfolded, he recalled with satisfaction, “in about the way I forecast” to the assembled politicians. This evidence, although circumstantial, points towards Clark being given strong political encouragement and backing for a direct move on Rome—a move that he was already strongly inclined towards for reasons of personal prestige. One vital consequence of acting at the President’s behest was that Clark could expect some political cover for his insubordination, enabling him to violate direct orders and get away with it. Moreover, if he had Presidential backing, the diplomatic strictures of the Anglo-American alliance would ensure that the real issues at could not be aired without causing a damaging rift in the Alliance. Thus Alexander would be left to fume,

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675 Clark, Calculated Risk, 337.
and Clark’s remarkable post facto transformation of specific orders into general “suggestions” would be allowed to go essentially unchallenged.

The political significance of establishing American—rather than Allied—military control of Rome quickly became apparent. With capture of the capital, Victor Emmanuel abdicated as promised and Crown Prince Umberto, together with Badoglio, his entire cabinet and ACC head Mason-Macfarlane, flew to Rome on June 8. Everything was done, Mason-Macfarlane recalled, with the “greatest possible speed” in order to prevent the “very much superior” leaders of the Rome CLN from making a bid to establish a “self-appointed” national government in Rome.676 London had concurred with Mason-Macfarlane’s plan to move the government to Rome on the grounds that it would be beneficial for Badoglio and Prince Umberto to “show themselves” to the people of the capital.677 But British officials were thin on the ground in Rome. On Mark Clark’s orders, no Allied civilians were allowed into the city, leaving Sir Noel Charles, London’s representative on the Advisory Council, stranded idly in Naples. As a post-mortem on the events in Rome prepared by Churchill’s Private Office noted, “Sir Noel Charles was not in Rome at the time of the crisis because General Mark Clark had refused to allow any civilians to go there.” 678 Noel Charles himself explained that he had been unable to get to Rome due to “General Clark’s interdiction,” but there is no evidence that he made any effort to mount a challenge to the general’s fiat.679

676 Noel Mason-Macfarlane, “Notes on Chapter XVIII of Badoglio’s Italy in the Second World War, Mason-Macfarlane papers, Reel 2, IWM.
677 Foreign Office to Charles, June 1 1944, R8617, FO371/43793, NA.
678 Memorandum by Churchill’s Private Office, June 14, 1944, PREM 3/241/12.
679 Charles to Foreign Office, June 10 1944, R9394, FO371/43793, NA.
When Badoglio’s cabinet sat down with the leaders of Rome CLN, Mason-Macfarlane made a few introductory remarks urging the assembled politicians to “sink [their] party disputes” and then withdrew, “leaving them,” as an exasperated Churchill complained, “to it.” In the general’s absence, the meeting took a dramatic turn as the Italian leaders circumvented the mechanism of Allied political control and took matters into their own hands. By the end of the day, the CLN leaders from Naples and Rome had effectively pushed Badoglio aside and established a new government under former Prime Minister and liberal anti-fascist Ivanoe Bonomi. Out maneuvered, Badoglio refused a cabinet post in the new government and tendered his resignation to Prince Umberto. Meeting with Bonomi the following day, Mason-Macfarlane endorsed the new government, intervening only to block Count Sforza’s appointment as foreign secretary and to ensure that the service ministries remained in military hands.

Any pleasure Churchill might have felt at Mason-Macfarlane’s action against Sforza was buried under the tidal wave of his mounting anger as it became clear that the Italian government had been reconstructed along lines long favored by Washington. Foreign Office officials were similarly stunned by this “very surprising development,” with Under-Secretary Alexander Cadogan arguing that Mason-MacFarlane should have “put the brake on hard,” blocking any public announcement of the new cabinet until London and Washington had approved the change of government. For his part, Churchill demanded that the Bonomi government be suspended while the Allies discuss the matter, and he tried to enlist Stalin’s support for this maneuver. “Since when,” the

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681 Cadogan minute, June 9 1944, R9122, FO371/43793, NA.
prime minister thundered, “have we admitted the right of the Italians to form any
government they please?”

Despite Churchill’s enraged blustering, the force of the fait accompli established
in Rome quickly became apparent. On June 13 Macmillan reported to London that he did
not think it was possible to “put Humpty Dumpy in his place again after our officers
MacFarlane and Sir Noel Charles have allowed him to tumble off” and two days later,
after talking it over with General Wilson, Mason-Macfarlane, and Robert Murphy, he
concluded that there was no way to “undo what has been done.”

At the Foreign Office, Under-Secretary Sir Orme Sargent added a sardonic minute to Macmillan’s message, notting that the “Americans have never shared our affection for Badoglio and will not be in the least bit sorry to see him replaced by a pre-Fascist politician like Bonomi.”

Sargent’s assessment was accurate. On June 15 President Roosevelt cabled Churchill to argue that, while Badoglio’s “withdrawal” was regrettable, it would be a “grave mistake” to block the installation of the Bonomi cabinet, particularly as it had already accepted the terms of the surrender signed by Badoglio. Moreover, the President noted, the governmental reorganization in Rome had the “distinct advantage” of “allaying criticism at home and abroad of our Italian policy”; any other course, he added disingenuously, would “be in direct violation of our announced policy” of allowing the Italian people to “choose their own government.”

The British cabinet may well have wondered how the new Bonomi government verifiably represented the choice of the Italian people, but they had no alternative but to

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682 Churchill to Charles, June 10 1944, R9289, FO371/43793, NA.
683 Macmillan to Foreign Office, June 13 and 15, R9397, R9424, FO371/43793, NA.
684 Sargent minute, June 15 1944, R9424, FO371/43793, NA.
685 Roosevelt to Churchill, June 15 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 188–189.
accept what Churchill described bitterly as the “untrustworthy band of non-elected political come-backs” now in power in Rome. 686 Churchill vented his spleen on Mason-Macfarlane and Noel Charles. Mason-Macfarlane, he fumed, should never again be allowed to hold “any post of the slightest military or political responsibility,” while Charles had shown himself to be a weak and “helpless kind of person,” sitting passively in Naples when he should have defied Clark’s order and gone to Rome. 687 None of this would have happened, Churchill sighed, had Macmillan been in Rome. There was no doubt in London that, by omission or by commission, leading British officials in Italy had allowed Washington to get the maximum political leverage from its seizure of Rome, and that by controlling of the capital during these critical days the Americans had secured the removal of Badoglio. Had London had a more substantial diplomatic presence in the Rome, it is unlikely that events would have been permitted to unfold as they did; in this sense Clark’s—and Roosevelt’s—“calculated risk” paid off in full.

The outstanding question is whether Washington directly organized the ouster of Badoglio, possibly in collaboration with Mason-Macfarlane and other British officials. This seems unlikely, as the pace of events in Rome, if not their overall trajectory, appears to have been taken the President and other American officials by surprise. For his part, Mason-Macfarlane insisted that he had been presented with a fait accompli by the Italians, and blamed “cumbersome” communications between Rome and the Allied capitals for allowing the situation to slip out of control. 688 These statements may be strictly true, but they are also somewhat disingenuous. No one familiar with Italian politics could

686 Churchill to Eden, June 20 1944, PREM 3/243/12.
687 Churchill to Eden, June 16 and 20 1944, PREM 3/243/12.
have doubted that the politicians assembled in Rome on June 9 1944 would produce some spectacular fireworks. By facilitating their meeting, Mason-Macfarlane and the Americans working with him knowingly set in motion the final act of a long-running political drama, even if the precise outcome was unknown was unknown to them beforehand. Mason-Macfarlane’s claim that speed was necessary to avoid the Romans setting up their own government also seems unwarranted. There are no indications that the Rome CLN were planning such a move, and nor would one have been possible without the support of the PCI—and that, as Mason-Macfarlane well knew, would not have been forthcoming. In contradiction to Mason-Macfarlane’s assertions, it seems more likely that haste was essential in order to take full political advantage of the window of opportunity opened by the American occupation of Rome. General Clark could not be expected to keep Allied civilians—that is to say British officials—out of Rome indefinitely. This was, in essence, Badoglio’s own conclusion, expressed in his insistence that events were pushed with “undue haste.”

Even assuming that there was no direct collusion between American officials and Mason-Macfarlane, it is clear that by the spring of 1944 ranking British leaders in the Mediterranean were in broad agreement with Washington’s approach to Italian politics, and moreover that they were prepared to act on these convictions. From the political crisis unfolding before their eyes, they had drawn the conclusion that it was necessary to make significant concessions to popular militancy in order to avoid even more deep-going social conflict. Wilson and Mason-Macfarlane had been advocating just such a thoroughgoing reform of the Italian government since February 1944, and by March even

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Harold Macmillan was confiding substantial agreement with Washington to his diary.\textsuperscript{690} Despite Churchill’s lament that things would have turned out differently had Macmillan been in Rome, it is striking that the resident minister made no effort to go to the capital or to otherwise involve himself in Italian affairs at this critical juncture. Instead of challenging Clark’s ban on travel to Rome and rushing to the city as the crisis unfolded, he busied himself with other matters before intervening after the event to smooth London’s acceptance of the Bonomi government.\textsuperscript{691}

While Macmillan remained in Churchill’s good graces, an “unrepentant” Mason-Macfarlane returned to Britain on medical leave in July 1944; as Macmillan noted, Churchill would undoubtedly have fired him had an old back injury not interceded. Despite the prime minister’s undying enmity, Mason-Macfarlane had many supporters among like-minded officials in Italy and in the United States. Harold Caccia, British head of the Control Commission’s Political Section, wrote to thank him for his work in “completing” the establishment of a “broadly based Italian government.” This, Caccia concluded, was “our monument”, even if it was sadly “[u]nappreciated by those at home.”\textsuperscript{692} Captain Ellery Stone, Mason-Macfarlane’s American second in command at the ACC, added gushingly that the British general was the “greatest man and leader I have served under.”\textsuperscript{693}

\textsuperscript{692} Caccia to Mason-Macfarlane, letter, Aug. 20 1944, Box 23, Mason-Macfarlane papers, IWM.
\textsuperscript{693} Stone to Mason-Macfarlane, letter, Aug 20 1944, Box 23, Mason-Macfarlane papers, IWM.
“outstanding service on behalf of this government”: tellingly, the phrase “as well as the British government” was deleted by hand before the note was sent.694

These testimonials to Anglo-American amity and collaboration at AFHQ also offer striking evidence of the degree to which leading British officials in the Mediterranean—the apparently quintessentially “British” theater, after all—were following a general policy course originating in Washington rather than in London. For all Churchill’s bluster and vengeful slaps at Mason-MacFarlane and Noel Charles, Clark’s bravura stroke, likely pre-approved and certainly covered for by Washington, allowed a political solution to the Italian crisis that opened the door to ever-greater American involvement in Italy and to a concomitant decline in British influence. On June 5 1944, Roosevelt broadcast to the American people welcoming the capture of Rome as an “investment for the future” enabling the “salvage” of the Italian people to begin in earnest.695 The President knew, although it wasn’t necessary to spell it out, that American resources and capital flowing into Italy under American leadership and direction would redeem the investment.

694 Hull to Mason-MacFarlane, Aug. 23 1944, 740.00119 Italy/8-2344, NARA.
695 Roosevelt, text of “Fireside Chat,” June 5 1944, FDRL.
Part Four
The “Great Reversal”:

Tehran, Dragoon, the Italian “New Deal”, and an Anti-Franco Policy in Spain.

The events in Rome in the summer if 1944 and their unfolding political and economic consequences underscore the fact that at this critical moment in the war the momentum of American engagement in the Mediterranean was continuing to build. To be sure, from June 6 much, although by no means all, of the weight of America’s military effort in Europe would be focused primarily on the cross-Channel invasion of France and on the subsequent drive into Germany itself. This fact, of course, has long underpinned the notion that from D-Day onwards a relieved United States turned decisively away from its diversionary jaunt into the Mediterranean. But once critical political and economic elements of American grand strategy are factored in the picture changes dramatically, and the Mediterranean—and Italy in particular—remains very much at the center of American concerns. In this sense, if in not narrowly military terms, the coincident occurrences of the capture of Rome and D-Day landings mark a broadening of American engagement with Europe on several increasingly interlocked fronts rather than a switch in that engagement from the Mediterranean to northern France.

The relationship between developments in Italy and France is of particular significance here. The capture of Rome marks the point at which Washington finally decided that significant military resources would be committed to operation Anvil/Dragoon, the long-mooted Franco-American invasion of the South of France. This operation, planned and conducted in the teeth of British opposition, marked the
Americanization of the final phases of Allied military activity in the Mediterranean. As well as providing important support for *Overlord, Anvil/ Dragoon* provided the avenue by which the now-substantial armed forces under the command of de Gaulle and the FCNL, laboriously rearmed in North Africa, could enter metropolitan France. These forces would make an important contribution to the final eviction of German troops from France but, even more importantly, they would also provide the armed force necessary to secure the new post-occupation government of France.

Alongside the America’s deepening economic and political engagement with Italy and the launching of the Franco-American invasion of the Riviera, Washington also shifted its approach to Franco’s Spain. American policy now veered away from the appeasement characteristic of the early years of the war, replacing it with sharp and public criticism of the Madrid regime, particularly with regard to its continuing export of wolfram (tungsten ore) to Germany. These policies—the economic rehabilitation of Italy, the landings in southern France, and the public criticism of Franco—can be seen as constituent elements of a broader liberal political turn in America’s Mediterranean policy, allowing it finally to put the period of political relations with Vichy, Darlan, Franco and Badoglio behind it. This shift brought American policy in the Mediterranean into conformity with the widely articulated ideological framework of a struggle between democracy and totalitarianism, resolving the troublesome contradictions that, as we have seen, had been the cause of substantial domestic criticism.

Commenting on the fierce Anglo-American divisions over *Anvil/Dragoon*, George Marshall noted with wry humor the “great reversal of form” that found Americans “trying to support the Mediterranean” over London’s intransigent
opposition. Marshall’s observation has a broader relevance, for it neatly describes the overall shift in the balance of power between London and Washington that became fully manifest throughout the region in the second half of 1944. This overall triumph of Washington’s Mediterranean strategy, and in particular the success of American policy in Italy and in France, could not have been achieved without the tacit support of the Soviet Union and the consequent compliance of national Communist parties. It is therefore appropriate to begin this survey at the Tehran conference in November 1943, where the spheres of influence upon which Russian-American cooperation rested were first tentatively established.

4.1) The Tehran Conference

As the battleship USS Iowa carried them across the Atlantic to conferences with British and Russian leaders in Cairo and Tehran, President Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff took advantage of their enforced idleness to hold a series of wide-ranging discussions in preparation for the forthcoming meetings. At the Casablanca conference barely ten months earlier, American officials had felt themselves outmaneuvered and overwhelmed by the well-prepared British delegation; this time, American leaders would be clear on their goals and, perhaps even more importantly, united amongst themselves. In order to forge this powerful “united front” the President and his key military leaders had overcome the deep divisions over strategy in European and the Mediterranean

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Dill to COS, Feb. 4 1944, PREM 3/271/4.
strategy that had stamped their relationship since the spring of 1942.\(^{697}\) With Russian forces advancing towards Poland after their decisive victory over the German *panzers* at Kursk in August, and with Anglo-American pressing northwards towards Rome, the war was heavily pregnant with the postwar and it was inevitable that the meeting of the “Big Three” in Tehran would also feature some initial discussion on the shape of postwar Europe. The concluding phases of Washington’s wartime Mediterranean strategy were shaped in this process, molded by the intersection of military strategy, the emerging outlines of the postwar settlement, and the internal dynamics of the relationship between Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs.

The unity of America’s political and military leaders cemented on board the *Iowa* was grounded on policies that the Joint Chiefs found most conducive. To their great relief, President Roosevelt finally seemed to have lost his enthusiasm for extended operations in the Mediterranean, and in their discussions on the *Iowa* American leaders agreed to make Operation *Overlord*, the new codename for the cross-Channel invasion, the “primary U.S.-British ground and air effort against Germany.”\(^{698}\) All other operations would be subordinated to the demands of the invasion of northern France, and American planners agreed that further operations in the Mediterranean would only be undertaken on the understanding that their “main objective” was to “ensur[e] the success of *Overlord.*” In Italy, Allied forces would advance only to a line from Pisa to Rimini, north of Rome—it was still assumed that the capital would soon be in Allied hands—but south of the major industrial centers. Their primary mission would be to support *Overlord* by tying


\(^{698}\) JCS Operational Proposals, Nov. 18 1943, *FRUS*, Conferences at Cairo and Tehran: 211–212.
down German troops and by organizing an invasion of southern France in concert with the “bulk of the re-equipped French army.”

In adopting this unambiguous focus on *Overlord*, American leaders were simultaneously deciding against conducting any substantial operations in the Balkans or the Eastern Mediterranean. These areas, American planners noted, were fundamentally “unsuitable” for large-scale operations aimed at Germany’s “European fortress,” adding warily that even apparently “limited objective operations” seemed inevitably to end up requiring substantial additional resources. They therefore proposed that Allied actions in the region be strictly limited to operations supplying Greek and Yugoslav guerillas with arms and equipment; “minor” commando raids on the coast; and bombing strikes on strategically important targets.699

After some discussion, President Roosevelt signed off on these proposals with an emphatic “Amen!”700 In fact, and in typical Rooseveltian manner, these questions were perhaps not quite as categorically resolved as it might have appeared. The following day, and despite George Marshall’s warning that a Balkan campaign could end up prolonging the war, Roosevelt seemed worryingly open to backing a thrust northwards from the Adriatic in support of Soviet troops then poised to enter Rumania.701 But, while the President’s residual attraction to further Mediterranean ventures would give the Joint Chiefs some worrying moments at Tehran, the overall thrust of American policy established during the *Iowa* discussions was clear and the united front between the President and his military leaders built around it unshakable.

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The strategic approach adopted by American leaders on the Iowa was itself the product of Washington’s increasingly forceful insistence on the centrality of a cross-Channel assault at the Anglo-American conferences in Washington (Trident) in May 1943 and in Quebec (Quadrant) in August. While these conferences had approved substantial Allied operations in the Mediterranean—the invasion of Sicily at the former and of mainland Italy at the latter—these decisions had been placed within the framework of a firm commitment to the cross-Channel invasion of France. As they approached the conferences at Cairo and Tehran, American policymakers now aimed to draw a firm line against any major new operation in the Mediterranean with the exception of the Franco-American invasion of the French Riviera. They anticipated that this would involve a stand-up fight with the British and particularly with Churchill, who had long advocated an offensive in the eastern Mediterranean. This time, however, and in sharp contrast to situation at Casablanca, the Americans would be aided by divisions within the British camp.

In the months before Teheran, divisions with the British camp deepened rapidly. After the surrender of Italy, London ordered General Maitland Wilson’s Middle East Command to occupy the Italian-held Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean. Churchill urged Wilson to make Rhodes his main target and to “improvise and dare” in the face of scarce resources. But after making a promising start, British troops were evicted from Kos in early October while German forces secured Rhodes, the key to the whole region. Churchill’s demand that AFHQ Algiers lend support to British operations in the Dodecanese was turned down by Eisenhower, who refused to divert resources from the

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702 Jones, Mediterranean War, 100.
campaign in Italy. The prime minister’s insistence on developing a campaign in the Eastern Mediterranean also ran into increasing opposition from the British Chiefs of Staff. In early October, Alan Brooke noted bluntly that “commitments” in Italy” precluded “serious operations in the Aegean,” and he lamented a day spent in acrimonious debate with Churchill over the issue as “another day of Rhodes madness.” An exasperated Brooke concluded that Churchill’s “frenzy of excitement” over Rhodes demonstrated that he was becoming “less and less well balanced,” a serious indictment and one that was surely emblematic of the prime minister’s profound frustration with Britain’s declining strength and influence.

Whatever conclusions one draws about Churchill’s mental state, it is clear is that by the early fall of 1943 the unity of British political and military leaders around a concept of a Mediterranean strategy that had carried them from ABC-I to Casablanca was beginning to fragment, and moreover that this was happening at the very time that American leaders were acquiring a new unity of strategic vision. Moreover, just as the outcome of the Casablanca conference had reflected both the real relationship of forces between the United States and the United Kingdom and the unfolding logic and dynamic of the military situation, so the results of the Tehran conference would reflect the emergence of a new relationship of forces. At Tehran, the main axis of Allied military affairs would—for the first time—move out of the Mediterranean, and the main axis of politics would shift from Roosevelt-Churchill to Roosevelt-Stalin. How much had changed in the ten short months since Casablanca!

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703 Brooke, diary entry, Oct. 6, 7 1943, War Diaries, 458.
704 Ibid., 459.
Two major factors underlay this changing reality, and together helped shape the outcome at Tehran. Firstly, 1943 saw the United States hit its stride in the mobilization of the economy for war production and the organization of men and materiel for war-fighting. The growing material preponderance of the United States within the Alliance, particularly in contrast to the increasingly over-stretched British economy, necessarily and substantially reinforced Washington’s voice in Allied decision-making. Secondly, the months between Casablanca and Tehran saw the successful Soviet counterattack at Stalingrad; the Red Army’s destruction of the offensive power of the German panzers at Kursk; and the rapid Soviet advance to the Dneiper. These decisive developments closed the “Second Period of the War” in the East and saw the strategic initiative on the Russian front pass firmly and permanently into Soviet hands.

By the time the “Big Three” assembled at Tehran, the question was no longer whether Germany would be defeated but when, where, and precisely how the victory would be accomplished. The question, as the post-conference declaration put it, of “concert[ing] plans for the destruction of the German forces” was therefore accompanied at Teheran both by initial discussions on the contours of power in postwar Europe and by an airing of Roosevelt’s vision for a new world order guaranteed by an international organization headed by the “four policemen.” As this process of discussion unfolded, it quickly became apparent that propaganda images of the three leaders in smiling amity concealed an emerging bipolarity in which Churchill was increasingly marginalized by

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706 New York Times, December 7 1943; on the evolution of Roosevelt’s thinking on the shape of the postwar world, see Kimball. The Juggler, esp. ch. V.
the “Big Two.” At the start of the conference, Foreign Office undersecretary Alexander Cadogan was aghast to find American diplomat Averell Harriman “lectur[ing]” Anthony Eden “on how to conduct international conferences”; “I’ve forgotten a great deal more about that than he ever knew,” the British official sniffed. But by the end of the conference British leaders had been forced to recognize that the Americans now held the whip hand, with a humbled Churchill picturing himself as a “poor little English donkey” squeezed between the “great Russian bear” and the “great American buffalo.”

Unfortunately for the British, Churchill’s belief that the donkey alone “knew the right way home” carried less and less weight. At Tehran, Stalin rejected Churchill’s speculative proposals for operations in the Eastern Mediterranean—now packaged as a way to ease neutral Turkey into the war—and instead threw his not inconsiderable weight behind the American plans, as clarified on the Iowa, for a cross-Channel invasion backed by supporting operations in Italy and the French Riviera. While rejecting any Allied operations in support of the Red Army in the Balkans, Stalin expressed enthusiasm for the projected landing in the South of France. The final determination on the overall course of Allied strategy in Western Europe thus rested firmly in American and Russian hands with, as Alan Brooke observed bitterly, “the President promis[ing] everything that Stalin wants in the way of an attack in the West.”

The outcome of the Tehran conference reflected what Mark Stoler has accurately described as an “extraordinary confluence of Soviet-American strategic interests.”

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707 Cadogan, diary entry, Nov. 27 1943, Diaries, 579.
708 Ibid., 582.
710 Cadogan, diary entry, Nov. 28 1943, Diaries, 580.
711 Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, 167.
This convergence saw, in effect, Russian promises of an eventual entry into the war against Japan and of an offensive on the Eastern Front in support of Overlord traded for a decisive commitment to the opening of the “second front” in Europe in the early summer of 1944 and an end to extensive operations in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. At the geopolitical level, this “confluence” was marked by a growing American acceptance of the emerging outline of Soviet predominance in Eastern Europe, while in return Moscow recognized that Washington would be the predominant postwar power in Western Europe. These mutual recognitions and the putative division of the continent into distinct spheres of influence that they implied were in many ways the absolutely critical, but always understated, core of the new United States-Russian axis at Tehran. During the conference President Roosevelt pursued this strategic and geopolitical confluence with Moscow with determination and to the detriment of Washington’s relationship with the London. Roosevelt refused to meet privately with Churchill prior to Tehran lest Stalin conclude that they were plotting against him (leaving Cadogan to lament that the “P.M. and President ought to have got together […] before meeting the Russians”), and during the lavish banquets that accompanied the conference proceedings Churchill frequently found himself the subject of humiliating Presidential jibes.712

Given the importance of the emerging accord on the broad postwar division of Europe for the development of Washington’s relationship to the Mediterranean, it is worth exploring this question in a little more detail. In conversation with Yugoslav Partisan leader Milovan Djilas in 1945, Stalin famously observed “whoever occupies a

712 Cadogan, diary entry, Nov. 28 1943, Diaries, 579.
territory also imposes on it his own social system.” Sometimes taken as evidence of Stalin’s crude realism, his statement reflected the simple reality that areas under Russian military occupation at the end of the war would in all likelihood come under Moscow’s political control and be integrated into its centrally planned “social system.” The reverse, of course, would also be true; areas under Allied military occupation would be politically oriented towards the West, and would be integrated into the American-dominated global capitalist economy. A broad—if not necessarily a detailed—recognition of a division of Europe that allowed Stalin a more or less free hand in Eastern Europe while reserving Western Europe and the Mediterranean for the Allies emerged during the long discussions that finally culminated in the Anglo-Soviet treaty signed in May 1942.

At Tehran, President Roosevelt’s entire approach to the Russians—encapsulated in his notion that Stalin was “get-at-able”—rested on accepting the division of Europe into respective spheres of influence. While the President expressed some concern over the domestic political consequences of Moscow’s domination of the Baltic states and Poland, he assured Stalin that Americans would only need to see some show of popular support for Russian rule and would not “go to war […] over this question. Talking to vice president Henry Wallace after the conference, Roosevelt went further, “defend[ing] Stalin’s attitude to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania” as well as Russian policy towards Finland and Poland. Roosevelt’s willingness to accept Russian domination of Eastern

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Europe, even if given behind closed doors, did not sit well with many in Washington, and it was particularly offensive to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the self-appointed guardian of Wilsonian idealism. But, while Hull would do his best over subsequent months to block the detailing out of the broad spheres outlined at Tehran, his views on this critical question commanded little support in the Administration. Hull’s standing on this issue can be gauged not only by his exclusion from the American delegation to the Tehran, but also by the fact that Roosevelt prepared for the conference by talking to Harry Hopkins—a firm advocate of Moscow’s “legitimate aspirations” in Eastern Europe—and without consulting any State Department briefing books.\footnote{Sherwood Hopkins and Roosevelt, 641-643; Keith Eubank, \textit{Summit at Teheran} (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1985), 238-239.}

If distinctly out of fashion within the Administration, Hull’s Wilsonian idealism, in synch with the liberal-democratic war aims articulated in the Atlantic Charter, remained popular in the country at large. Moreover, liberal opposition of spheres of influence agreements that smacked of the old order in Europe converged with conservative opposition to making any apparent concessions to Moscow. Faced with the prospect of substantial public opposition to the reality of the relationship with Moscow established at Tehran, Roosevelt simply declined to mount any public defense of the putative division of Europe, despite Stalin’s advice undertake substantial “propaganda work” along these lines.\footnote{Eubank, \textit{Summit at Tehran}, 484.} As a result, discussion on the shape of the postwar world remained wrapped in the “various vaguely formulated possibilities” for structuring an international peacekeeping organization advanced by the Big Three before, during and
after the Tehran conference.\textsuperscript{719} Where Roosevelt, based on the inescapable reality of the military situation on the ground, proved ready to “adjust to the reality of Soviet power,” the American people, as Alec Cadogan noted with disgust, evinced “an astonishing phobia about spheres of influence.”\textsuperscript{720}

In addition to the division of Europe along lines based on military occupation and “legitimate” aspirations, another critical question, and one of great importance in the Mediterranean, would shape the Allies’ discussions with Moscow on the establishment of spheres of influence. Unlike the Allies, who controlled no vehicle for political intervention within the Soviet Union, Moscow could potentially animate tens of thousands of Communist Party activists in key states within the “western” sphere, including France, Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece. As we have seen, London and Washington viewed the prospect of communist insurrection in Italy with particular concern. From this point of view, American efforts to secure a clear and stable division of Europe were at least in part premised on the notion that agreement with Moscow was necessary to prevent political upheaval in Italy and elsewhere. Thus Roosevelt’s belief that Stalin was “get-at-able” reflected an understanding that, as Herbert Feis put it, the Russian leader was “working for Russia rather than for the cause of international communism.”\textsuperscript{721} For his part, Stalin had made a substantial effort to signal that he was only interested in establishing the security of the Soviet Union within an international framework of “peaceful co-existence” with the capitalist powers. To this end, the

\textsuperscript{720} Eubank, \textit{Summit At Tehran}, 484; Cadogan quoted in Gardner, \textit{Spheres of Influence}, 188.
Communist International had been dissolved in May 1943 and local Communist Parties instructed to pursue “national tasks” rather than international revolution, remaking themselves as “radical patriots” in the process.\textsuperscript{722}

In reality, of course, the abandonment of world revolution and the dissolution of the Comintern simply codified the conservative and nationalist character Stalinist regime in Moscow that had been evident—despite occasional leftist binges—since its establishment in the mid-1920s. That is not to say that Moscow had abjured the use of foreign Communist Parties as instruments for applying political pressure or that the quixotic hope that there might be peaceful social transformations within the framework of an ongoing “Grand Alliance” between Russia and the capitalist West had been entirely abandoned. But it is to argue that a critical element in the grand accommodation that emerged in Tehran was the understanding that Moscow would use its controlling influence in foreign communist parties to ensure that they did not take advantage of wartime dislocation and popular hostility to widely discredited social and political systems to launch radical political efforts to transform their respective countries. Nor would this restraining hand be exercised simply out of respect for the Allies: as Geoffrey Roberts notes, Stalin viewed “Bolshevik revolution” in Europe as a threat to his own power as well as to that of his Allies.\textsuperscript{723}

At Tehran, the working out of the division of Europe and the Mediterranean into spheres of influence still lay in the future. But, once the basic deal had been struck, the consequences would begin to unfold with rapidity; as we have seen, by the spring of 1944 the return of Palmiro Togliatti from exile in Moscow would pave the way for a

\textsuperscript{723} Ibid., 222.
transformation in the political set-up in Italy that would, in turn, tie the country ever more firmly into Washington’s orbit. Moreover, while future events would flesh out the framework adopted in the fall of 1943—and in Yugoslavia pose a significant challenge to it—the lines established at Tehran would hold firm for the remainder of the war in Europe.

Not surprisingly given the military advances upon which it rested and the air of confidence the leading participants projected, the Tehran conference was generally well received in the American press, with the *New York Times* describing it as the “Victory Conference.”724 Walter Lippmann noted that the conference was marked by a new “tone” of confidence, quite different from the “nervous anxiety” that had formerly dominated Allied policy and resting on “ample and ever-growing resources,” on the “successful mobilization […] of American power,” and on the “victories which turned the tide of war at Stalingrad, El Alamein, Tunisia, and Sicily.”725 While several opinionmakers drew attention to the lack of detail in the conference statement on postwar arrangements, only formerly isolationist papers like the *Chicago Tribune*, with its constant warnings on the advance of “Red” power, sounded a seriously discordant note.

This generally positive portrayal of Tehran did not fare well in the early Cold War, with many commentators seeing in the Washington-Moscow confluence there the emergence of a new policy of appeasement. In this Cold War iteration, a naïve—or worse—President appeared willing to sacrifice both Eastern Europe and his British ally’s prescient plans for operations in the Balkans and Aegean in order to cozy up to Stalin.726

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726 See Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War*; Wilmott, *The Struggle for Europe*. 
In particular, conservative commentators like Hanson Baldwin and Chester Wilmot argued forcefully that the Roosevelt-Stalin lock on Allied strategy established at Tehran scuppered Churchill’s subsequent plans for a bold advance from northern Italy, through Yugoslavia and the Ljubljana Gap, and into the plains of the Danube valley. This move, the Cold War warriors held, would have enabled the Allies to block Soviet domination of the Balkans and to challenge Moscow’s hold on Eastern Europe. Churchill himself played no small part in muddying the historical waters. Writing in the early 1950s—by which time the cross-Channel invasion appeared amply vindicated—Churchill denied that he had ever sought to “abandon Overlord” or to deprive it of “vital forces” in order to support a “campaign by armies” in the Balkans.\(^{727}\) As David Reynolds points out, however, by advocating an extended campaign in Italy and operations in the Balkans and in the Aegean, Churchill did pose an implicit challenge to the centrality of Overlord.\(^{728}\)

The defeat of Churchill’s proposals for action in the eastern Mediterranean was thus held by conservative postwar commentators to have had far-reaching consequences for the shape of the postwar world. Later historians have rejected much of this. It is clear that in the fall of 1943 Churchill’s Balkan interests were actuated by a desire to support Tito’s Partisans rather than to confront the Russians and moreover the utter implausibility of Allied forces, bogged down for so long in Italy, suddenly sprinting off through the physically and politically complex terrain of Ljubljana Gap is easily demonstrated.\(^{729}\) But the allegation that Tehran saw a betrayal of western interests to the Soviet Union


continues to cast a long shadow over the interpretation of the conference, clinging pervasively to the simplistic notion that the conference marked the rejection of any Mediterranean strategy.

The reality was more complex. As Michael Howard argues, the fact that the “glittering vistas” opened by the collapse of Italy had already begun to dissipate in the long and difficult advance through Italy should not obscure the fact that the Allies had actually “achieved all of their agreed aims in the Mediterranean” by the time of the Tehran conference. By Teheran, Allied convoys could once again pass freely through the Mediterranean, permitting tremendous savings of shipping resources as vessels previously forced to detour around Africa once again utilized the Suez Canal. By the summer of 1944 over 800 convoys, comprising 12,000 ships, would transit the Mediterranean. In addition, much of the southern and eastern littoral of the Mediterranean was under Allied control, and the Italian and Balkan peninsulas were active battlefields. Allied bombers, based first in North Africa and later on the airfields around Foggia, were ranged against targets in southern Germany and Central Europe, and nearly fifty German divisions were tied down in Italy and the Balkans. Above all—and exactly as outlined in ABC-I back in early 1941—the “early elimination” of Italy from the war had been accomplished. By any measure, and notwithstanding the fact that Rome remained in German hands, these were substantial achievements.

The ever-perceptive Anne O’Hare McCormick registered these accomplishments, outlining the “decisive importance” of the Allied victories in the Mediterranean and

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730 Howard, Mediterranean Strategy, 48, 49.
731 Ball, Bitter Sea, 216.
732 ABC-I, Ross, War Plans, 70.
concluding, in an implicit swipe at the Joint Chiefs premature eagerness to launch a cross-Channel assault, that it was now as “clear as light” that “no full-scale expedition” could have been launched from Britain until the “Mediterranean was safe.” The surrender of Italy, as historian Simon Ball points out, also signaled the resolution of the “Italo-British rivalry” and the triumph of the “British Mediterranean” over the “Italian Mediterranean.”

The problem, of course, was that as the “Italo-British rivalry” had deepened, it had drawn powerful external powers into the region, the Germans on the Italian side, and the United States (and later the Soviet Union) on the British. While McCormick could celebrate the idea that the campaigns in the Mediterranean had effectively “welded together […] the British and American fronts,” it was equally true that new lines of cleavage and contest were emerging between the Allies themselves.

Parsing Michael Howard’s point, the fact that the agreed aims of the Allies had been accomplished by Tehran leaves open the question of the emergence of non-agreed, and often conflicting, aims. America’s deepening engagement in North Africa, Italy, Spain and France necessarily encompassed a combination of military, political, and economic interventions that implied, implicitly at first, a long-term challenge to the re-establishment of British hegemony in the region. In many ways, the Tehran conference reflected the accomplishment of Allied goals in the Mediterranean first outlined in late 1940 and early 1941—indeed, without that the Allies would have had precious little to bring to the negotiating table. But Tehran also marked the point not, as the simplistic Overlord-versus-Mediterranean interpretation would have it, of the exhaustion of

734 Ball, Bitter Sea, 217.
American interest in the region but rather of the *divergence* between the *different* Mediterranean strategies advocated by London and by Washington.

From this point of view it is easier to see that what was rejected at Tehran was not the notion of further Mediterranean operations *per se*, but rather was the idea of the extended operations in Italy, the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean favored by London. The fact that it was the British who came to Tehran divided amongst themselves underscores the point and bears witness to the deep crisis of imperial perspective that followed the initial advances in Italy. With Brooke and the British Chiefs of Staff looking primarily towards strengthening the Italian campaign, and with Churchill pursuing operations in the Balkans and the Aegean, David Reynolds is surely right to speak of deepening “turmoil” in the prime minister’s strategic thinking and hence in the British high command.735 But, while rejecting Britain’s Mediterranean plans, and forcing London to—as Admiral Leahy put it—“fall into line” with *Overlord*, the Tehran conference adopted a plan of action for the war against Germany that did in fact include a very substantial Mediterranean component.

Urged on by Stalin, initial American ideas for an invasion of southern France blossomed into Operation *Anvil*, a Franco-American landing on the Riviera to be followed by a northward advance up the Rhône valley. Tasked with supporting the cross-Channel assault by opening the ports of southern France to Allied shipping and by providing—literally—the “anvil” against which the Germans might be pinned and then smashed, *Anvil* also had a explicitly politico-military function. With the exception of General Leclerc’s 2nd Free French Armored Division, which would land on the Normandy

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beaches, the great majority of the French-led soldiery drawn from the colonies of North and West Africa and re-equipped by the United States in Algeria would enter to France from the Mediterranean. *Anvil* would thus be the conduit for the reintroduction of the armed power of the French ruling class to France and for the disarming and incorporation of potential rival centers of power in the Resistance. The fact that this critical last politico-military piece of the war in the Mediterranean would occur under American, and not British, leadership, is often simply overlooked by commentators on Mediterranean strategy.

The political issue of facilitating the reintroduction of French armed forces was central to American thinking on the invasion of southern France. During the Iowa discussions Admiral Leahy, who since his days in Vichy had been one of the most consistent opponents of American collaboration with General De Gaulle, expressed his concern that in organizing *Anvil* the Americans would be providing the French leader with a “lever with which to enhance his own position” and with the firepower to “take charge of the government of France by force.”

The official minutes provide little detail of the discussion, but Roosevelt countered Leahy’s comments by observing that, while London hoped to rebuild France as a “first class power” the reality was that it would not achieve great power status for “at least” another quarter century. In context, the President’s comment implies viewing a relatively weak France oriented towards Washington as preferable to a strong one allied with London, and hence suggests eventual approval for the formation of a De Gaulle government beholden to the Americans. In a subsequent discussions, and after Roosevelt had reassured the Joint

Chief that he did not favor the United States becoming directly involved in “reconstituting France,” Leahy conceded the point, accepting that “if we want to let De Gaulle have France, then all well and good.”  

American plans for a landing on the French Riviera complemented American opposition to any large-scale Allied involvement in the Balkans, and at Tehran Roosevelt joined with Stalin to put an end to Churchill’s Balkan cigar-dream. At Tehran and at the subsequent Anglo-American conference in Cairo the British offered rather half-hearted approval to the proposed landings in southern France and agreed to them being spearheaded by American troops withdrawn from Italy. But over the following months, and as it became clear that Anvil would necessarily both weaken the Allied campaign in Italy and scupper operations in the Balkans, London’s lukewarm approval curdled into bitter opposition. The ironic result of the Tehran conference was thus that the British, the long-time advocates of a Mediterranean strategy, now ended up waging a protracted struggle against the last major Mediterranean operation of the war, while the Americans, often seen as opponents of all things Mediterranean, championed it. In this sense, Tehran did not curtail Allied efforts in the Mediterranean so much as refocus and redirect, with the resulting campaign in the South of France signifying the triumph of Washington’s Mediterranean strategy amidst the dismal wreckage of London’s.

In the early months of 1944 the issue of Anvil was one element of a complex series strategic deliberations between the Allies, the unlikely currency of which was the tank landing ship, or LST. Capable of disgorging tanks and other heavy equipment directly onto a beach, LSTs were indispensable to large-scale amphibious operations and

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737 JCS minutes, Nov. 19 1943, FRUS, Cairo and Tehran: 254–255.
their availability became a critical element of operational planning, determining how many landings could be conducted at any time and how large the forces involved could be. While well over one thousand LSTs were built during the war, overwhelmingly by shipyards in the United States, there were never enough to support all desired operations. Control over the availability of LSTs therefore quickly became a form of strategic rationing, forcing Allied leaders to make hard choices between competing operational plans. Given that most LSTs were produced in the United States, the fact that their allocation was critical to strategic decision making naturally tended to reinforce Washington’s weight in discussions on Allied strategy.

The shortage of LSTs was not simply the result of objective limitations on their manufacture, but was the product of specific American decisions on war production priorities. Churchill raised this question in a letter to George Marshall in which he expressed his “deep concern” at the “strong disinclination of the American Government to even keep the manufacture of LSTs at its full height.” Churchill implied that the “absurd shortage” of LSTs was allowing Washington to force clear choices to be made on disputed operational questions, using their economic preponderance to resolve strategic questions. One example makes the point. At the Sextant conference in Cairo prior to Teheran, Roosevelt promised Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek an amphibious assault in the Bay of Bengal—operation Buccaneer—in support of the planned Chinese offensive into northern Burma. Then at Tehran the “shortage” of landing craft created by assigning LSTs to Buccaneer while maintaining the “island-hopping” offensive in the Pacific and the buildup for Overlord in Europe was used to validate American arguments against

Churchill’s cherished plans for new amphibious operations in the Aegean and the Adriatic.

At the Cairo conference after Teheran, however, the new Russian-American agreement to proceed with Overlord and Anvil forced a reconsideration of priorities leading to the cancellation of Buccaneer. Lord Mountbatten, the Allied commander in Southeast Asia was now told to “do his best” with the forces already allotted to him, while the Chinese would be left to fume at the relative deprioritization of the war in Burma. For London, the sweetener was that the LSTs released for Anvil by the cancellation of Buccaneer could be utilized in the interim to help unlock the stalemate in Italy, facilitating an end run around Monte Cassino and opening the road to Rome. At the end of December, Churchill made exactly this proposal when he met with Eisenhower in Tunis on his way home from Teheran. The prime minister, Eisenhower reported to Marshall, had “completely abandoned any thought of activity in Turkey and the Aegean Sea,” and was urging instead the use of the newly available LSTs for the “strong amphibious operation in Italy” that would materialize as Operation Shingle, the Allied landing at Anzio.

From this perspective it is clear that the simple image of Tehran as the point at which Washington leagued with Moscow to force a turn away from the Mediterranean in favor of the cross-Channel assault on France will not hold water. While Washington and Moscow did indeed combined to derail London’s Balkan “pipe dreams” and to force the British to fall in with Overlord and Anvil, Washington did not terminate its involvement in the Mediterranean after Tehran. On the contrary, in agreeing to Anvil the Tehran

739 CCS minutes, Dec. 4 1943, FRUS, Cairo and Tehran: 676.
conference set in motion the last major strategic offensive in the Mediterranean theater—an offensive conducted under American leadership and in the teeth of British opposition. Moreover, as we shall see in the next chapter, while eschewing direct and large-scale military intervention in the Balkans, Washington did not abandon either its interest in the region or its efforts to influence the course of events there by means other than the large-scale use of arms. In both instances, Tehran marked not the end of Washington’s Mediterranean strategy but its extension.

4.2) Planning for Anvil/Dragoon: Washington Takes the Initiative

Initial plans for an invasion of the South of France began to take shape in the summer of 1943 as American planners looked for ways in which anticipated Allied successes in Italy might reinforce the cross-Channel offensive projected for May 1944. The first of the invasion plans produced by the Joint War Plans (JWPC) and the Joint Strategic Survey (JSSC) committees for the Joint Chiefs of Staff projected land-based operations launched from northern Italy, with the latter suggesting that the campaign in southern France might even eclipse the Normandy landings. Both plans emphasized that operations in southern France would include the use of French forces rearmed by Washington and based in North Africa. Not surprisingly, the Joint Chiefs’ rejected the JSSC’s challenge to the fundamental structure of Overlord, but they nevertheless approved plans for a subordinate operation in the South of France designed to support the

cross-Channel attack by pinning down German forces and by opening the ports of Toulon and Marseilles to Allied shipping.

At the *Quadrant* conference in Quebec in August 1943 the British grudgingly accepted the American outline for an invasion of the South of France despite their concern that it might divert resources from the Italian campaign. It was agreed that the minimal preconditions for *Anvil* would include the surrender of Italy, the elimination of Axis forces south of Rome, and the successful occupation of Corsica and Sardinia. In the light of future Anglo-American divisions over *Anvil* however, it is striking that while the British expressed concern that a two or three-division assault in the South of France would siphon critical amphibious lift capacity away from *Overlord*, they did not openly attack the plan on the grounds that it would detract from operations in Italy or the Balkans.

As Allied officers worked on plans for *Overlord* in the weeks following *Quadrant* it quickly became apparent that, given major American commitments in the Pacific, the shortage of LSTs did preclude the prospect of conducting simultaneous large-scale attacks into northern and southern France. Moreover, in the fall of 1943 optimistic early projections of a rapid Allied advance on Rome had collapsed in the face of vigorous German resistance south of the capital. By October 1943, and with the possibility of achieving the necessary preconditions for *Anvil* in time to launch the operation in conjunction with *Overlord* receding rapidly, Eisenhower approved a new plan for *Anvil* that called only for a modest one-division “threat” designed to pin down German forces in the Riviera. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as evidenced by their discussions on the *Iowa*, continued to argue for operations in the south of France and to link them to the...
speedy return of French troops to France, operational planning for \textit{Anvil} had downsized it to a minor demonstration. As Jeffrey Clarke points out, \textit{Anvil} was not even on the agenda when Allied leaders met in Cairo before the meeting of the “Big Three” in Tehran.\textsuperscript{742}

Ironically, \textit{Anvil}’s prospects were revived at Tehran by Stalin’s enthusiastic support for the idea of simultaneous attacks in northern and southern France. The Russian leader’s desire for an effective “second front” in Europe was perhaps paralleled by a desire to keep Allied troops occupied in the western Mediterranean and hence out of the Balkans. Whatever his underlying motives, Stalin’s approval ensured that \textit{Anvil} was incorporated into the official decisions of the Tehran conference, and it duly took its place alongside \textit{Overlord} as one of the two “supreme operations” projected for 1944\textsuperscript{743}.

At the Combined Chiefs meeting in Cairo after the Tehran conference the Americans, as we have seen, acted to resolve the shipping crisis in the European theater by canceling operation \textit{Buccaneer} in the Bay of Bengal and reassigning its LSTs to the Mediterranean. In his last major act as Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, Eisenhower oversaw the production of a new plan for a three-division assault in southern France that was duly approved by the Joint Chiefs on December 23 1943 despite renewed opposition from London.\textsuperscript{744}

Despite being reinstated as a one of the “supreme operations” of 1944, \textit{Anvil}’s hold on life remained tenuous. In early January 1944 Allied planners assigned to the combined cross-Channel planning staff (COSSAC) in London argued strongly that the projected margin of success for \textit{Overlord} remained precariously slender and that it was

\textsuperscript{742} Clarke, \textit{Riviera to Rhine}, 11.
\textsuperscript{743} CCS #423/2, Dec. 5 1943, \textit{FRUS 1943}, Cairo and Tehran: 796.
\textsuperscript{744} JCS #639, Dec. 23 1943, Box 50, RG 218, NARA.
more “strategically sound” to strengthen the assault in northern France while once again reducing Anvil to a mere “threat.” With his own eyes increasing fixed on the projected landings in Normandy, Eisenhower concurred. The Supreme Commander’s draft plan for Overlord, submitted to the Combined Chiefs on January 23, noted that Anvil could make an “important contribution” to Overlord but concluded that the necessity of a five-division assault in the north meant that the southern attack could only be “maintained as a threat until enemy weakness justifies its active employment.” On February 7, with the difficulties of the Anzio landings placing their own heavy demands on shipping resources, Eisenhower lamented, “it looks like Anvil is doomed.”

Eisenhower’s pessimism over the prospects for Anvil did not sit well in Washington, with George Marshall in particular expressing concern that the Supreme Commander was bending to ongoing British hostility to the invasion of southern France. In early February Marshall wrote to Eisenhower to warn him not to allow the “localitis” generated by the “pressures” in London to “warp” his judgment. Eisenhower’s response to Marshall’s “implication” that he might be “surrender[ing]” his convictions in the “interests of local harmony” had the defensive and peevish tone of a man caught in the act. It seems reasonable to conclude that at this critical juncture it was Washington’s insistence that kept Anvil alive. Over the next several weeks Eisenhower and his planners juggled with the deployment of LSTs in the European theater in order to maintain at least a two-division assault in the South of France.

745 COSSAC memo, Jan. 8 1944, Box 50, RG 218, NARA.
746 Eisenhower to CCS, Jan. 23 1944, Papers of Dwight D Eisenhower, 3: 1675.
At the end of February Eisenhower approved a new plan for *Anvil* in which the invasion of the Riviera would be launched after *Overlord* instead of simultaneously with it, and on this basis he was able to persuade the British Chiefs of Staff to delay final judgment on the operation for a further month. Although pressed to cancel *Anvil* by London and by the continuing lack of progress in Italy, Eisenhower’s resolve was stiffened by a cable from the Joint Chiefs sent at Roosevelt’s behest. Pointing out that *Anvil* had initially been adopted in consultation with a “third power”—the Russians—the note concluded that the Allies had “no right to abandon this commitment […] without taking up the matter with that third power.” Yet again, Roosevelt’s timely intervention makes it clear that he had been following the strategic debate closely and that, when American officials in Europe appeared to be wavering, he was ready to interject directly to uphold the specifically Mediterranean aspect of American strategy. The parallel with his role in the adoption of *Gymnast* is striking; the difference is that now the President was aligned with the Joint Chiefs and against Churchill rather than the other way round.

Despite unwavering support for *Anvil* from Marshall, the Joint Chiefs, and above all from the President, the combined effects of a shipping shortage exacerbated by the loss of five LSTs; the repeated failure of Allied assaults on German positions south of Rome; and the necessity of establishing the largest beachhead possible in Normandy, continued to limit Eisenhower’s room for maneuver. On March 20, he felt compelled to tell Marshall “*Anvil* as we originally visualized it is no longer a possibility.” Two days later, the Supreme Commander placed these conclusions, accompanied with a vague assertion that the “abandonment” of *Anvil* should not “lessen [the] intention of operating

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offensively in the Mediterranean,” before the British Chiefs of Staff. Not surprisingly, the British embraced Eisenhower’s report, eagerly informing General Dill at the Joint Staff Mission in Washington that Anvil had been “cancelled.”

Two days later the Joint Chiefs fought back, informing Dill that Anvil should be postponed until July 10 rather than cancelled and backing their arguments by pointing to the importance of the operation to both the Russians and the French. To ease acceptance of the Joint Chief’s insistence on postponing Anvil rather than to canceling it, Eisenhower was authorized to make 26 LSTs and forty smaller landing craft, previously allocated to the Pacific, available for use in the Mediterranean. This unprecedented transfer to the Mediterranean of American resources deployed in the Pacific underscores the importance Washington attached to Anvil. The British Chiefs of Staff grudgingly accepted this “earnest and sacrificial” American offer, which was sufficient to win an agreement simply to postpone Anvil.

Despite Eisenhower’s optimism, the assignment of additional LSTs to the Mediterranean did not resolve the debate with the British, who now insisted that Anvil was only one of several possibilities that would open up after the capture of Rome. Privately, the British complained that Washington was using its “extra resources” to impose its own “Mediterranean strategy” and implying that the additional LSTs would “not be forthcoming” unless London acquiesced. The accusation that the Americans were using their material resources to impose their strategy on the British—and in the

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753 COS to JSM, Mar. 22 1944, PREM 3/271/4.
756 COS to JSM, Mar. 28 1944, PREM 3/271/4.
757 COS to JSM, Mar. 31 1944, PREM 3/271/4.
Mediterranean of all places—vividly illustrates the growing tensions within the Alliance.

In Washington, John Dill was acutely aware of the problem, warning London that the Americans, having made the offer of additional shipping in a spirit of “broadminded generosity,” had been “shocked and pained” at “how little we appreciated their magnanimity and how gaily we proposed to accept their legacy while disregarding the terms of their will.”

On April 12 Churchill entered the fray personally by means of a personal note delivered to George Marshall by John Dill in which he detailed his opposition to Anvil on the grounds that it was not “practicable” to mount an advance up the Rhone in time to “influence our main operations” in northern France. Instead, Churchill argued that the Allied drive to link up with the Anzio bridgehead and to open the road to Rome should be seen as the Mediterranean operation in support of Overlord, timed to “accord harmoniously” with the landings in Normandy and organized to ensure that “all available forces” would “be in heavy action on both fronts simultaneously.” Moreover, while German forces in the Riviera might be “fastened there by feints and threats,” the main line of Allied operation after the capture of Rome should be “a vigorous pursuit northward” complete with an “amphibious cats-claw” higher up the Italian peninsula.

It is worth noting that that this entire debate, increasingly framed as a simple and direct contest between pursuing extended operations in Italy or turning “left” into France, began well before Churchill began to espouse notions of a strategic drive from Italy through the Ljubljana Gap towards Vienna. To a significant extend the Ljubljana Gap

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758 Dill to COS, April 1 1944, PREM 3/271/4.
760 See Howard, Mediterranean Strategy.
plan, if it can be dignified with such a name, provided a convenient *post facto*
rationale for a much more straightforward clash of strategic priorities. At the time,
the primary British critique of *Anvil*, couched in language strangely reminiscent of earlier
American opposition to London’s Mediterranean policy, was that it represented a
diversion of forces away from the main tasks of securing and then exploiting a decisive
victory in Italy. Churchill’s later endorsement of General Alexander’s plan for
operations towards the Ljubljana Gap actually succeeded only in driving a further wedge
between the prime minister and his military chiefs, weakening the British leadership in
the face of united political and military American pressure. In the great division over the
invasion of North Africa in the spring of 1942, American military leaders had been
undone by their divisions with Roosevelt; the boot was now firmly on the other foot.

Unable to resolve their differences, Allied planners conducted a further
acrimonious exchange in mid-April as they struggled to produce a directive from the
Combined Chiefs to guide General Wilson’s planning for operations in the Mediterranean
theater. Finally, and as it became obvious that Rome would not be captured in the near
future, Eisenhower met with Churchill and the British Chiefs to hammer out a temporary
agreement that was incorporated into a new set of instructions to the supreme commander
in the Mediterranean issued on April 19. Wilson was now directed to launch an early and
all-out offensive on Rome; to develop an effective “threat” to pin German forces in the
south of France; and to make the “best possible use” of the available shipping either by
developing operations in Italy or by a landing in the Riviera.\(^{761}\) These were, to be sure, an
anodyne and open-ended set of instructions, but they served to defer final resolution of

\(^{761}\) JSM to COS, April 19 1944, PREM 3/271/4.
critical questions of Mediterranean strategy until the initial landings in Normandy were secure.

In the weeks after the opening of *Overlord* in Normandy on June 6 1944, the question of launching a supporting operation in southern France returned to the strategic agenda. American leaders, who had never agreed to the cancellation of *Anvil*, now deployed a powerful new argument in its favor. Faced with a difficult battle in the *bocage* country around the Normandy beachheads that gave the Germans time to do extensive damage to the ports of Cherbourg and Le Havre, Eisenhower and Marshall recognized that additional port facilities were urgently needed in order to meet the logistical demands of the invading armies. The temporary harbors towed across the Channel had been badly battered by storms shortly after D-Day, and this tenuous lifeline was already working at full capacity. American planners quickly concluded that *Anvil* could provide logistical support for the assault in Normandy by opening the ports of Marseilles and Toulon. At the same time the capture of Rome by American forces on June 4 and the subsequent installation of the Bonomi government meant that Washington’s immediate military and political objectives in Italy had been accomplished, allowing American units to be redeployed for *Anvil*.

On June 24, the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed that the post-Rome advances underway in Italy should be halted in front of the new German defensive position in Tuscany, the Gothic Line. Relieved of the responsibility for attacking the Gothic Line, Mark Clark’s Fifth Army would detach substantial forces for use in the South of France. Clark protested the decision, but General Wilson, the British supreme commander in the Mediterranean, agreed that if French ports had to be captured, *Anvil* was the right choice.
The Joint Chiefs were insistent in their demand for Anvil and, by explicitly posing the question as a choice between Italy and the South of France, they provoked a new round of intense and acrimonious debate would reach to, and be resolved at, the very highest levels.

The stakes soon became clear, with Churchill writing to Roosevelt in late June protesting that, while he accepted the necessity of taking “speedy and effective” measures to “help General Eisenhower,” he rejected the idea that this required the “complete ruin of all our great affairs in the Mediterranean.” Churchill’s note crossed with one from the President expressing his complete support for the Joint Chiefs’ proposal, registering his opposition to any suggestion of “moving into northern Italy and from there to the northeast,” and urging the “consolidat[ion]” of Allied operations rather than greater dispersal. With the alternative courses of action starkly laid out, Churchill penned an extensive exegesis of his view later the same day. Over several closely argued pages, the prime minister developed his opposition to the “bleak and sterile […] Toulon-Marseilles operation.” “Confronted with superior forces at every step we advance up the Rhone valley,” Churchill argued, Anvil would not only fail to succor Overlord but would also “wreck one great campaign [in Italy–AB] for the sake of another,” when “both can be won.”

Roosevelt replied with a detailed statement of his own, drafted by the Joint Chiefs but closely edited by the President himself. While Roosevelt’s messages, like Churchill’s, strove to maintain a degree of cordiality—“My dear friend, I beg you, let us

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Churchill to Roosevelt, June 28 1944, *Complete Correspondence*, 3: 212.
go ahead with our plan”—the tempo and overall tone of the exchange reveal the deep divergence at its heart. Roosevelt’s message underscored his endorsement of the views of the Joint Chiefs and his support for Anvil, but it also broadened the argument by pointing to commitments made to both the Russians and the French. Anvil, Roosevelt argued, had been approved by the Russians at Tehran and any fundamental change of plan would have to be discussed with Stalin “immediately,” while the French were unlikely to agree either to the continued use of their troops in Italy or to their deployment to the Balkans. While there was a certain legalistic formalism to Roosevelt’s argument, his belief that the Russians would oppose Allied operations in the Balkans and his proposal to submit any proposed changes of plan to them demonstrates his understanding of the utility of the spheres of influence that had begun to be hammered out in Tehran.

No doubt with this agreement in mind, Roosevelt brusquely rejected any notion of an advance on the Ljubljana Gap suggesting, somewhat patronizingly, that while Alexander was looking in this direction for “natural and very human reasons,” his ideas were at variance both with agreed-upon Allied strategy and with practical reality.

Churchill immediately drafted a reply that, while it remained unsent in the interests of Allied unity, reveals the central issues at stake with great clarity. After offering to resign “if my departure from the scene would ease matters,” Churchill repeated his understanding of the basic agreement established after Teheran, namely that “you would have the command in Overlord [...] we have to have command in the Mediterranean.” This division, with its implication of British primacy in the Mediterranean, was fundamental not only to British strategic thinking but also to its self-
image as an *equal* partner to the Americans. Churchill had already become concerned that General Wilson, like Mason-MacFarlane before him, was slipping under American influence, criticizing him for “contradicting my arguments and undermining my influence with the President” in the debate over *Anvil* and in relation to political developments in Italy.\(^{767}\) Not content with bending Wilson to their will, the Americans now seemed set on taking direct control of what would clearly be the last major strategic decision in the Mediterranean.

Despite these tremendously high stakes, by the end of June the British Chiefs of Staff had been forced to conclude that they had no choice but to accede to American pressure: “further discussion,” they told Churchill, “is useless.”\(^{768}\) In their memorandum to the prime minister, the Chiefs of Staff attributed American intransigence to domestic political pressure in the United States, noting Roosevelt’s own observation that “I would never survive even a slight setback in *Overlord* if it were known that fairly large forces had been diverted to the Balkans.”\(^ {769}\) But in his diary Alan Brooke probed the bigger underlying issue, noting that:

> The situation is full of difficulties. The Americans now begin to own the major strength on land, in the air, and on the sea. They therefore consider that they are entitled to decide how their forces are to be employed.\(^ {770}\)

Sir Alexander Cadogan, typically precise in his appreciation of power relationships, noted that “P.M. has had to give way to Americans, and we shall have to skin poor Alex

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\(^{767}\) Churchill to Wilson, March 7 1944, PREM 3/272/11.


\(^{769}\) Roosevelt to Churchill, June 29 1944, *Complete Correspondence*, 3: 223.

\(^{770}\) Brooke, diary entry, June 30 1944, *War Dairies*, 564.
for Anvil,” adding that Churchill “really had no alternative but to submit” in the face of Roosevelt’s “imperious” demands.771

On July 1 Churchill finally conceded. In another long note to the President, he reprised his objections to Anvil, mimicking (perhaps unconsciously) earlier American criticisms of British proposals for Mediterranean operations by describing the Rhône as a “cul-de-sac” and observing that the operation would help de Gaulle get his “talons pretty deeply dug into France.” Churchill bewailed the “first major strategic and political error for which we two have been responsible” before concluding weakly “we shall do our best to make a success of anything that is undertaken.”772 The following day, the Combined Chiefs issued operational orders to General Wilson to launch a three-division invasion of southern France by August 15. Churchill would offer a final, incoherent attack on Anvil in early August, attempting at the last minute to persuade Eisenhower to switch the assault from the Riviera to Bordeaux. He finally conceded defeat on August 11—just in time to arrive off of the coast of southern France in a navy destroyer as the assault troops headed for the shore and to confront the fact, as Marshall put it, that the Americans had indeed become “Mediterraneanites.”

4.3) Helping de Gaulle get his “talons pretty deeply dug into France”

Churchill’s warning that Anvil would simply help de Gaulle to get his “talons pretty deeply dug into France” points to another critical, if often overlooked, and deeply ironical aspect of the Anglo-American dispute over the invasion of southern France.

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771 Cadogan diary entries, June 30 and July 6 1944, Diaries, 644-645.
772 Churchill to Roosevelt, July 1 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 227-229.
Here was an American-planned and American-led operation that would, despite Washington’s long-standing animosity towards de Gaulle, facilitate the reintroduction of French forces under de Gaulle’s control to France in the face of warnings from London, de Gaulle’s long-time backer. Unraveling this question is of critical importance to understanding Washington’s unwavering enthusiasm for Anvil and for the involvement in it of significant French forces. As early as the Trident conference in Washington in May 1943, Allied leaders agreed that it was “politically […] of great importance” to have French forces “represented” in the effort to “reconquer French soil” and, as Harry Butcher noted, that the projected invasion of the Riviera would open a “gateway into France” for the forces rearmed in North Africa under the Anfa Agreement.773

This proposal carried great political weight; as Marshal Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, appointed head of the newly-organized French Army B in Algiers in December 1943, noted, his army was a “living representation of the whole empire” and one charged with “bringing freedom to the homeland and restoring it to its place in the world.”774 De Lattre’s army would also have the important politico-military responsibility of beginning the assimilation of the fighters of the Resistance—les Maquis—into the official armed forces of a reconstituted France state, a task critical to both the stability and popular legitimacy of the new post-occupation government775. There were a series of interlocking balances to be struck here. American policymakers did not want de Gaulle to be in a

773 Confernce minutes, May 24 1943, FRUS 1943, Conferences at Washington and Quebec: 191; Butcher, My Three Years, 471-472.
position to exert influence over the direction of the main Allied advance, and hence they wanted to keep him and his troops away from Normandy. But they also recognized the importance of enabling the new French state-in-becoming to defend itself against potentially serious threats emanating from the ranks of the PCF or the Maquis, and therefore favored finding another route for returning the French army, rearmed by the Americans, to France.

In addition to providing support for Overlord, the invasion of the South of France met these eminently political considerations, and this fact should caution us against adopting an over-narrowly “military” understanding of the inter-Allied debate over Anvil. The south of France was also of special political importance because resistance activity was particularly well developed there. Southern resistance fighters had been unified and brought under the general direction of the FCNL with the formation of the underground Conseil National de la Resistance (CNR) led by Jean Moulin in early 1943. Despite this unification of resistance organizations considerable tensions continued between the CNR in France and the FCNL leadership in Algiers and between the various political factions within the Council itself. Based on the cosmopolitan port of Marseilles, the southern resistance had a markedly left-wing slant, with the Communist Party’s Milices Patriotique being particularly active.\textsuperscript{776} In Marseilles itself, over 50,000 people had participated in a public demonstration against the German occupation on July 14 1943, and underground socialist and PCF organizers organized a wave of strikes protesting food shortages in early 1944.

De Lattre’s army would have to establish a firm political grip on this potentially volatile region. In overall command of the invasion of France General Eisenhower, with the experience of the political complexities of North Africa and Italy behind him, was well aware of these issues. Eisenhower’s political concerns pushed him towards establishing a close working relationship with de Gaulle and the FCNL. Just before Eisenhower left the Mediterranean to take command of SHAEF in late December 1943, Allied officers under his command presented the outline plan for Anvil to de Gaulle in a meeting that laid the basis for an agreement on the use of French troops under the overall authority of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and under the operational direction of the supreme commander. Eisenhower then met personally with de Gaulle. With Eisenhower observing that earlier “misunderstandings” blocking complete and effective FCNL/American collaboration had now been “largely eliminated,” the meeting, according to Butcher, was a veritable “love fest.” Butcher reported that de Gaulle’s motives for seeking closer military collaboration with the Allies included his own growing concern about the “radical and Communist elements” adhering to his movement in Algiers and in France.

Eisenhower’s efforts to establish collaboration with de Gaulle unfolded even as Washington continued to refuse to recognize the FCNL as a government-in-exile and therefore as the anticipated and legitimate political authority in post-occupation France. This uneasy dualism would characterize American policy throughout Overlord, Anvil, and their follow-up operations, and would be finally ended with Washington’s official recognition of de Gaulle’s Provisional Government on October 23 1944. The active

777 Butcher, My Three Years, 473.
consequences of this approach were spelled out to Eisenhower in a March 15 1944 memorandum from the President. As Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower would determine “where, when, and how the Civil Administration in France shall be exercised by French citizens,” and, subject only to the exclusion of officials who had “willfully collaborated” with the Germans, he was authorized to work with the FCNL on the selection and installation of civilian administrations in Allied-occupied area.\textsuperscript{778} He was not, however, to limit himself to “dealing exclusively with said Committee” and nor, more importantly, would his actions “constitute a recognition” of the FCNL as “the Government of France even on a provisional basis.”

Even this rather vague presidential directive, throwing the solution of the practical questions of political power in post-occupation France into the hands of the Supreme Commander but refraining from the official recognition of that power, was only issued in draft form. Eisenhower, who knew that the landings would need “very badly” the support of the Resistance fighters organized under the aegis of the FCNL, lamented the lack of clarity implicit in Roosevelt’s directive.\textsuperscript{779} But, while leading administration figures—including Cordell Hull, who gave a surprising April 9 speech suggesting that he was now “disposed” to see the FCNL “exercise leadership”—pressed the President to recognize the Committee as a government-in-exile, Roosevelt’s refusal to give ground on this question meant that, as Julian Hurstfield puts it, the entire Allied invasion of France would be conducted in a “diplomatic vacuum.”\textsuperscript{780} In case Eisenhower remained in any doubt. Roosevelt sent him further instructions on May 13 explaining that the FCNL could

\textsuperscript{778} Roosevelt to Eisenhower, March 15 1944, \textit{Civil Affairs}, 667-668.
\textsuperscript{780} Hull, \textit{Memoirs}, 2: 1429; Hurstfield, \textit{America and the French Nation}, 212.
not be recognized as a provisional government on the grounds that “no existing group outside of France” could be given “domination over the French people” that might prejudice their “free expression of a choice.” Yet again, and from yet another angle, Washington cited allegedly immutable principles of sovereignty and legitimacy to justify a particular policy course.

The dual character of American policy—seeking military collaboration with the FCNL but avoiding political recognition—created a particular problem in relation to the operational control of French forces. As we have seen, FCNL leaders welcomed Allied plans for Anvil and the inclusion of substantial French participation in the campaign, when they met with senior Allied leaders in late December. As a result of that meeting, the French agreed to place their forces under Eisenhower’s operational control and under the overall command of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. But problems arose when it came to fleshing out the precise terms of the agreement. On March 11, the Combined Chiefs instructed General Wilson to explain to the FCNL that French forces would be placed at the disposal of the CCS as the result of an agreement between these two committees. This stipulation was unacceptable to the French, who pointed out that the CCS had been established by agreement between the British and American governments, and that any agreement to place French troops at the disposal of the Combined Chiefs similarly necessitated a political agreement between the French Committee and the Allied governments.782

This French counter-proposal was, in turn, unacceptable to the Americans, who viewed it as another move by de Gaulle to force recognition of the FCNL as the

781 Roosevelt to Eisenhower, May 13 1944, Civil Affairs, 670.  
782 See Vigneras, Rearming the French, 149–151.
provisional government of France. On March 28 Roosevelt underlined to George Marshall his view that these command arrangements should be made simply on the basis of agreement between the Supreme Commander and the French Committee, and not as if between “one sovereign government in full possession of its sovereignty and another government that has no de facto sovereignty.” British members of the Combined Chiefs inclined, like the Foreign Office, towards recognition of the FCNL, and agreed with French proposals to establish that direct FCNL relations with London and Washington should provide the political basis for the inclusion of French forces in the Allied command structure. With the Combined Chiefs deeply divided it proved impossible to resolve the issue, and the invasions of Normandy and the Riviera took place without a formal agreement on the operational control of French troops being signed. This, no doubt, was the solution Roosevelt favored all along; when the Joint Chiefs again laid the matter before him in September in an extensive memorandum detailing the differences between the British, French, and American positions, the President returned it with a short note observing “I think this can be further delayed” on the grounds that it was still “premature” to resolve the question at the “political level.”

Much had been made of Roosevelt’s continuing personal antipathy towards de Gaulle, and there is no reason to doubt the depth of the animosity. Roosevelt’s correspondence with Churchill is dotted with sarcastic comments about the French leader; discussing de Gaulle’s planned visit to Washington in July 1944, for example, Roosevelt pictured him “performing in accordance with his previous record of lack of cooperation in our effort to liberate France” and concluded “I will do my best to attract

783 Quoted in Vigneras, Rearming the French, 150.
784 Roosevelt to Leahy, Sept. 22 1944, Box 50, RG 218, NARA.
his interest to the Allied war effort.” Yet great affairs of state are rarely determined by personal animosities, and Washington’s policy towards France was not driven by the President’s dislike of de Gaulle. On the contrary, de Gaulle represented—symbolized might be a better word—the restoration of a strong and independent France, a goal in sharp contrast to the relatively weak and American-oriented country sought by Roosevelt. British officials understood the basic thrust of Washington’s policy, with one Foreign Office summary noting in February 1943 that:

[...] what the Americans want to see after the war is an anti-Communist pro-American French government under strong American influence [...] and it is pretty clear that the people who would best suit them are the kind of people who congregated at Vichy and have now established themselves, with Mr. Murphy’s support, in Algiers.  

This general approach continued to inform American policy during and after the invasion of France and was reflected in Roosevelt’s stubborn refusal to recognize the FCNL-led Provisional Government. Non-recognition left open the possibility that other political forces, more conducive to the United States, might emerge during the occupation itself creating the possibility of blunting, if not avoiding all together, the perceived nationalist dangers of a de Gaulle administration. “Premature” recognition—and Roosevelt used the term as late as September 22—would foreclose this possibility, effectively locking the United States into supporting the establishment of a government headed by de Gaulle. In the event, of course, and due in no small part to the support for de Gaulle and the Provisional Government proffered by the PCF and its forces in the Resistance, public enthusiasm for de Gaulle proved greater than Washington had

785 Roosevelt to Churchill, June 9 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 173.
786 Quoted in Jones, Mediterranean War, 82.
anticipated. On October 23 1944 Roosevelt finally bowed to the new established reality, and recognized the Provisional Government.

The simple fact that events did not work out as Roosevelt had hoped does not necessarily mean that his policy, judged by its own lights, was erroneous. Washington’s refusal to recognize either the FCNL as a government-in-exile or the Provisional Government when it was formed certainly kept American political options open for as long as possible, and at no great cost. While de Gaulle chafed against the fact that Washington’s dual approach, combining non-recognition with military collaboration, effectively codified France’s second-class status, he was realist enough to recognize that without American assistance, offered on American terms, de Lattre’s army would be sitting in North Africa, largely unarmed, ill-equipped, and immobile.
4.4) The Unsung Accomplishments of Dragoon

With the great inter-Allied battle over strategy in the Mediterranean finally resolved, the operational aspects of Anvil—renamed Dragoon on the eve of the landings—unfolded quickly and effectively. With the benefit of overwhelming air superiority, American bombers of the 15th Air Force disrupted road and rail communications throughout southern France in a concentrated campaign beginning in early August. On the ground, French Resistance fighters, loosely known as the Force Françaises de l’Interior (FFI) and including both the PCF’s Francs-tireurs et partisans (FTP) and the Gaullist AS (Armée Scrète), intensified their guerilla attacks on German outposts and lines of communication. In May, the Special Project Operations Center (SPOC) was established at Algiers under the direction of AFHQ with the aim of coordinating and expanding Allied assistance to the Resistance.\(^{787}\) SPOC organized activities included the dispatch of three-man “Jedburgh” teams assigned to collaborate with the Resistance on specific projects and the deployment of platoon-sized OSS Operational Groups. Provided with weapons by Allied airdrops and by disarming German soldiers, FFI fighters provided valuable assistance to the invading armies throughout the Dragoon area: they would also, of course, play a crucial role in shaping post-occupation politics.

On August 1—barely two weeks before the landing—AFHQ established the 6th Army Group under Henry Wilson’s second in command American General Jacob Devers,

with the task of coordinating the American 7th Army and de Lattre’s Army B.\textsuperscript{788} By August 13 ten divisions were at sea, carried and protected in a fleet of nearly one thousand ships. Supported by the drop of a scratch paratroop division that included the only substantial British contribution to the land battle, the three experienced divisions of Lucian Truscott’s VI Corps began to come ashore early on the morning of August 15. Beating off a German counterattack, American and French troops quickly expanded their initial lodgment; the contrast with the desperate battles to secure the initial bridgeheads at Salerno, Anzio, and in Normandy, could hardly have been greater. With Allied troops finally breaking out of the Normandy bridgehead and driving towards the Seine, \textit{Dragoon} created a dangerous crisis for German troops throughout southern France, and on August 18 the German high command (OKW), after a discussion with Hitler, ordered Army Group G to begin a general withdrawal up the Rhône valley. Only the garrisons in Marseilles and Toulon would remain in place with order to delay Allied forces for as long as possible and to wreck the port facilities.

Thanks to \textit{Ultra} decrypts, the OKW order to retreat was quickly in the hands of Allied commanders, who could then advance rapidly confident that the Germans were in full retreat. In sharp contrast to Churchill’s gloomy prediction of a long and difficult struggle in a “cul-de-sac,” the broad valley of the Rhône offered the 6th Army Group an avenue up which to advance rapidly into central France. On September 10, having fought their way through several rearguard actions and captured over 100,000 German soldiers, advance elements of the 7th Army linked up with patrols from General Patton’s 3rd Army near Dijon. Meanwhile, as the American forces and French units attached to them had

\textsuperscript{788} See Jacob L. Devers, “Operation Dragoon: The Invasion of Southern France,” \textit{Military Affairs} 10, no. 2 (Summer 1946), esp. 11.
swung northwards up the Rhône, de Lattre’s Armée B turned west towards Toulon and Marseilles. These cities—and especially Marseilles—with their vital port facilities and their large, well-organized, and militant working classes, were critical to the overall strategic, military, and political goals of the entire campaign.

Washington’s dual approach to the FCNL, combining military collaboration with a refusal to recognize the committee as the legitimate government-in-exile, framed “civil affairs” in the aftermath of the Dragoon landings. It also gave American commanders on the spot considerable leeway in the exercise of military supervision over the reconstitution of French politics. The overall framework for post-invasion civil affairs was, as we have seen, spelled out in a March 15 note from President Roosevelt to General Eisenhower. As Supreme Allied Commander, Roosevelt argued, Eisenhower would exercise “ultimate determination as to where, when, and how the Civil Administration in France shall be exercised by French citizens,” collaborating with the FCNL to form new civil administrations at local level.789 The President’s insistence on rebuilding civil administration from the bottom up, combined with his injunction not to feel bound to the Committee if “some other course or conferee is preferable,” ensured that relations with the FCNL in the localities did not imply recognition at national level. “So far as possible” those who had “collaborated with the enemy” would be excluded from the new administrations but, beyond this rather elastic prohibition, the Supreme Commander and his subordinates on the spot were free to negotiate the establishment of French civilian authority with whomever they deemed fit.

789 Roosevelt to Eisenhower, March 15 1944, Civil Affairs, 667.
Above all, Roosevelt’s insistence on the rapid establishment of French civil administrations at local level was designed to obviate the necessity of establishing an Allied military government while at the same time avoiding any “premature” recognition of FCNL authority at national level. Again, concepts of sovereignty and legitimacy would be applied selectively to justify the new political set up. The general and permissive nature of the civil affairs orders based on the President’s directive and issued to Allied commanders ensured that military control over civil affairs in the SHAEF area of northern France would be distinctly “indirect,” while in the South of France it “came to resemble Allied administration only faintly.”

In the six-week interval between Overlord and the launch of Dragoon, several of the most vexatious issues in Allied-French relations had begun to be resolved, as the unfolding events in northern France tended to “force everyone together.” On June 14 1944, de Gaulle was finally able to enter France and, after a short meeting with General Montgomery, he went on to Bayeux and an enthusiastic popular reception. Seizing the moment, de Gaulle addressed the crowd in the main square, presenting himself as the President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic (GPRF.) De Gaulle appointed François Coulet regional commissioner and representative of the GPRF in Normandy, and returned to Britain: civil affairs officers with the 21st Army Group only found out about the proclamation of the new government after the event. Allied military commanders, faced with undeniable evidence of de Gaulle’s popularity and authority, quickly reconciled themselves to the fait accompli, even if their governments continued

790 Coles and Weinberg, Civil Affairs, 751.
791 (Maguire, Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French, 132.
to eschew formal recognition. In the wake of the proclamation of the GPRF other
civil conflicts between the Allies and the FCNL, such as French opposition to the issue of
“supplemental francs” via the allied armies, were, if not entirely resolved, at least
moderated.

The partial resolution of these critical political questions greatly eased the civil
affairs aspects of the Allied invasion of southern France. In contrast to the protracted
struggle to break out of the Normandy beachhead, in the Riviera American and French
troops were driving inland within hours of the initial landings. Moreover, as the German
occupation crumbled away a vast political vacuum opened up, into which stepped the
local representatives of the FCNL and fighters of the FFI. Right after the initial landings
the Civil Affairs Officer of the American 36th Division noted that the invading army was
“moving so fast we cannot set up all towns falling into our hands,” but added that the
“Forces of the Interior are doing a wonderful job of German collaborator and political
cleanup” and that the “political situation looks to be alright.”793 Similar assessments
multiplied in the following days, with a Seventh Army report to the G-5 (Civil Affairs)
section of AFHQ noting that “in each town the FFI was completely organized and was
prepared to take over the government, install a Marie, and care for civilian needs.”794
Throughout the region similarly seamless transitions were effected, placing local political
power in the hands of the FCNL. By mid-September Civil Affairs HQ felt able to wind
up its network of detachments and teams, replacing them, according to their official
history, with “a few small groups” of liaison officers at “key points.”795

793 CAO, 36th Div., n.d., Civil Affairs, 757.
794 7th Army to AFHQ, Aug. 18 1944, Civil Affairs, 757.
795 “History of CA Operations,” Civil Affairs, 754.
By mid-August the biggest outstanding political challenge facing the invading armies was Marseilles, a city noted for its political radicalism as well as its organized crime. The political importance of developments in Marseilles was underscored by events further north. On August 18, with the Dragoon landings underway and as Allied troops fought to close the last escape routes available to German forces in Normandy, a general strike broke out in Paris. The following day FFI militants launched an armed revolt against the occupation forces. Although largely unplanned and uncoordinated, the power of the uprising and the prominence of the PCF within it alarmed both Allied leaders and FCNL officials in Algiers. Promptly abandoning earlier plans to bypass the city, on August 22 Eisenhower ordered Leclerc’s 2nd Armored Division to advance directly on Paris. There was an urgency to Leclerc’s new mission: Resistance fighters in Paris had forced General Dietrich von Cholitz to sign a temporary armistice, but the pact was set to expire in two days, and a resumption of fighting in the capital would have unpredictable military and political consequences. As the 2nd Armored Division advanced, Leclerc met with de Gaulle at Rambuillet. The French leaders clearly understood the stakes: urging haste, de Gaulle insisted, “we can not have another Commune.”

On August 24, with German resistance crumbling, the 2nd Armored Division swept into Paris from the west, meeting a tumultuous popular reception as it pressed towards the center. The following day, acting in the name of the Provisional Government, Leclerc accepted von Cholitz’s capitulation, reluctantly allowing Parisian

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796 Footitt, War and Liberation, 102.
FFI leader to add their signatures to the articles of surrender. General de Gaulle arrived in Paris later the same day, and on August 26 marched in triumph down the Champs-Elysées to a mass in Notre Dame. Leclerc, defying an order from his American superior to move out of Paris in pursuit of the retreating Germans, instead followed de Gaulle’s orders to deploy his troops along the line of the parade. With his political position reinforced by his presence in Paris, de Gaulle moved rapidly to reestablish the city as the seat of governmental power, distancing himself from the local Resistance forces and making it clear that his authority derived not from their domestic insurrection but from the decisions of the PGRF in Algiers. Visiting Paris, Eisenhower readily agreed that the 2nd Armored Division should remain in Paris to help secure the new government against domestic challenges.

In Marseilles, Resistance leaders initiated a general strike on August 18—the day the insurrectional strike in Paris began—and FFI fighters, many wearing the armband of the PCF-led FTP, were soon operating openly. On the 21st the Vichyite regional prefect was arrested and a new Departmental Liberation Committee announced the success of the “general insurrectional strike” and that the collaborationist regime was no more. Two days later French regular forces, spearheaded by the gourmiers of the 7th Régiment Tirailleurs Algeriens, were in de Lattre’s words, “literally [...] drawn in” to the city by huge crowds.798 It took several more days of heavy fighting for the army and the FFI to defeat the last German units ensconced in strong waterfront bunkers, but by August 27—over a month ahead of schedule—Marseilles was in French hands. In Marseilles and throughout the Riviera as in Paris, the French “reconquer[ed] their urban space,” tearing

798 de Lattre, French First Army, 101.
down symbols of the occupation and establishing new organs of government.\footnote{Footitt, \textit{War and Liberation}, 99.} Even before the fighting was over, lively local newspapers, often with a strong left-wing bent and subject only to minimal censorship, began to appear, marking the reemergence of public political discourse.

As they had prepared for the forthcoming occupation of Marseilles, American civil affairs officers had been notably wary of the potential challenges posed by a city whose population, according to official army history, was composed of the “dregs of six continents” and the “flotsam of many races.”\footnote{Official History of CA Affairs, \textit{Civil Affairs}, 762.} In the event, the self-liberation of Marseilles reduced American civil affairs officers to virtual bystanders, reporting on unfolding events but unable to influence or control them. Entering Marseilles under small arms fire with a small detachment of the 2678th Civil Affairs Regiment on August 25, Colonel Parkman reported that the “Resistance elements seem to be in control of the departmental and municipal governments and appear to be working well.”\footnote{Parkman to Seventh Army, Aug. 25 1944, \textit{Civil Affairs}, 761.} As urban life returned to “normalcy,” with sidewalk debris cleared and stores reopened, American officials noted that law and order was in the hands of the FFI, and that “truck loads” of “Vichyites” were being “carried away to ‘imprisonment.’”\footnote{2678th CA Regt. To AFHQ, Aug. 27 1944, \textit{Civil Affairs}, 763.}

With the big questions of civil government settled for them, American officers concentrated on attempting to provide food and medical supplies and, in particular, in working to reopen the port to Allied shipping. As soon as German resistance in the Marseilles docks was overcome, American military engineers of the Continental Base Section (CBS) approached civil affairs officials to help hire 12,000 civilian workers to...
begin clearing battle damage and the effects of a comprehensive German sabotage effort. In the absence of a clear directive from AFHQ on the recruitment and payment of workers, however, efforts to secure an adequate civilian workforce ran into numerous difficulties. American officials complained bitterly about the “notorious laziness” of Marseilles workers who, they claimed, demanded two-hour lunch breaks and refused to work in the rain. For their part, French workers who had seen wage levels driven relentlessly down under the Vichy regime took the opportunity to join Communist-led Conféderation Général du Travail (CGT) and to press for better wages and conditions, resulting in a “worker unrest” and a number of “spontaneous stoppages.”

At the beginning of October, 6th Army Group’s Civil Affairs Headquarters finally issued a directive covering the hiring, payment, and work conditions of civilian labor. The new order emphasized the role of French authorities in the recruitment of workers, and made the fledgling French Office of Labor and Manpower primarily responsible for the payment of their wages. American officials also sought to counter French labor militancy by using 14,000 Italian prisoners of war in the Marseilles docks, a policy that many feared would spark further conflict with the French workers but which was finally approved by the new French authorities on the proviso that the existing French workforce would not be discharged. Despite these difficulties, and supported by Navy minesweepers and Army engineers who removed thirty tons of German explosives from the docks, efforts to reopen the port enabled Allied ships to begin unloading in Marseilles on September 15. By the end of the month 18 berths were operational, and vehicles,

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803 “History of CA Operations,” quoted Civil Affairs, 779.
804 Provisional Directive for Civilian Labor, Oct. 3 1944, 7th Army CAHQ, Civil Affairs, 781.
805 Regional Relief Officer, Marseilles, to AFHQ, Sept. 26 1944, Civil Affairs, 779.
military stores, and fuel were pouring into the port. Between September and November 1944, Marseilles and Toulon handled up to forty percent of the total tonnage of military equipment discharged in France, and while the percentage declined with the opening of the port of Antwerp in December, the southern French ports continued to make a major contribution to meeting Allied logistical needs.

After two months or so the broad popular enthusiasm that had initially greeted American troops in southern France was, as official history put it, “starting to wane.” Strained labor relations between American officers and French workers; delays in meeting civilian food needs; a burgeoning black market run by members of the Allied forces; resentment of the privileged purchasing power of Allied soldiers; and endemic complaints about dangerous American driving in French towns and on French country roads, all helped to turn a warm initial welcome towards tension and outright hostility. With American officers often regarding FFI fighters as little better than armed hoodlums, clashes between American soldiers and members of the Resistance developed, sometimes with lethal consequences. Despite these difficulties, however, American officers were generally satisfied with the progress of civil affairs and with the development of French civilian government. American officers had no desire to plunge into French politics, and throughout the Riviera the successful establishment of FCNL-led local governments allowed them to avoid doing just that. Even on the potentially problematic issue of Resistance attacks on former Vichy officials, by early October American officers were

806 History of CA Operations, Civil Affairs, 796.
807 See Footitt, War and Liberation, 111–121.
able to note that summary executions had ceased and that the number of collaborators arrested was “not excessive” in view of their numbers.\textsuperscript{808}

The rapid establishment of French civil authority in the weeks following \textit{Dragoon} and the overwhelmingly positive American assessment of this process owed a great deal to the stance taken by the French Communist Party and its armed wing, the FTP. At every step PCF and FTP leaders collaborated closely both with other French political groups and with the Americans; following the liberation of Marseilles, for example, the 7\textsuperscript{th} Army’s Civil Affairs (G-5) department was able to report “local Communist leaders have continued their policy of working with other political groups in the city and with the departmental and regional officials […] officers of the \textit{Sécurité Militaire} declare that the Communists are creating no problems.”\textsuperscript{809} Clearly and given the respective spheres of influence established between the Allies and the Soviet Union not surprisingly, PCF leaders evinced no interest whatsoever in harnessing the power of the popular uprisings in Paris and Marseilles to launch a bid for power at the national level. When PCF leader Maurice Thorez finally returned to Paris from exile Moscow in November 1945, it was with Stalin’s injunction to back de Gaulle and to work for the rehabilitation of the French capitalist economy ringing in his ears.\textsuperscript{810}

Without the large Allied military presence in southern France it is unlikely that the authority of the new post-occupation French government could have been established as quickly and easily as it was in this potentially turbulent region. Moreover, despite Stalin’s assurances, Allied leaders could never be entirely confident that local Communist

\textsuperscript{808} Quoted in Footitt, \textit{War and Liberation}, 108.
\textsuperscript{809} Seventh Army to SHAEF, Sept. 3 1944, \textit{Civil Affairs}, 772.
\textsuperscript{810} Roberts, \textit{Stalin’s Wars}, 176.
forces would abide by international agreements that they had little knowledge of and that put them in a disadvantageous position in relation to their own national elites. If German forces, instead of being driven out of the South by the Franco-American invasion, had simply been by-passed by Allied armies driving from Normandy to the Rhine, then southern Resistance forces might well have established potentially rival political centers as they cleared local villages and towns of occupying troops. Here, as American policymakers had speculated during the Iowa discussions on the way to Tehran, would be the makings of “chaos” and a post-occupation civil war.

_Dragoon_ effectively precluded this dangerous possibility, even if it meant—as Admiral Leahy had warned on the Iowa—strengthening de Gaulle’s claim to power. In the aftermath of the landings de Lattre’s Armée B moved to curb the independence of the Resistance, disarming some fighters and assimilating others directly into army. The Communist Party, as AFHQ reported in late August, participated fully in the process of “regularizing” the FFI.  

American officers continued to fear the disruptive potential of the FFI, its ranks swollen by enthusiastic young fighters during the risings in Marseilles and elsewhere, and isolated clashes between the _maquisards_ and American forces did occur throughout the south, but these problems abated as de Lattre pushed ahead with the process of “amalgamation,” bringing entire FFI units into Armée B’s order of battle en bloc. As well as taming the Resistance, this policy had the added benefit—from the new government’s point of view—of allowing the Arab and African soldiers who had borne the brunt of the fighting thus far to be withdrawn from the frontlines and replaced by native-born Frenchmen. The “whitening” of the army—the term unblushingly used in

811 Seventh Army to SHAEF, Sept. 3 1944, _Civil Affairs_, 772.
French accounts of the process—enabled de Gaulle to present the final struggle to drive German forces out of the country as an all-French affair and beginning a long marginalization of contribution of the colonial troops. By the time Armée B reached the German border it was possible, as de Lattre joked, to “search in vain for a black soldier” in regiments that still bore the title “Senegalese.”

For these critical political reasons, in addition to the rather more obvious military and logistical factors, Dragoon stands out as a rapid, dramatic, and unqualified success for Franco-American arms. German troops were driven from the south of France well ahead of the most optimistic American projections; the ports of Marseilles and Toulon were soon funneling indispensable supplies to the advancing Allied armies; the political authority of the new French government was established without major conflict or confrontation; and the threat of independent political action by the PCF and other radical working-class forces was avoided. Despite these achievements, Dragoon remains largely unknown and almost always unsung. The reason for this eclipse has a great deal to do with Churchill’s unrelenting hostility to Dragoon, a hostility that continued unabated during and after the actual operation’s triumphant execution. In Triumph and Tragedy, the final volume of his own highly influential history of the war, Churchill continued to defend his opposition to Dragoon. Grudgingly admitting that operations in the South of France “eventually” assisted Eisenhower’s advance to the Rhine, Churchill nevertheless insisted that a “heavy price was paid” for modest results and that the removal of Allied

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812 de Lattre, French First Army, 176–177.
troops from Italy for *Dragoon* had effectively prevented the Allied armies there from “reach[ing] Vienna before the Russians.”

In private, and particularly in correspondence with the South African leaders General Smuts, the only commonwealth leader Churchill held in any real respect and often a co-thinker in matters of grand strategy, the prime minister was more blunt. Churchill set the tone in a July 1944 note to Smuts in which he complained that “major hopes in Italy” had been “ruined by the American insistence on concentrating on a minor project.” A further note, written in late August and with Franco-American forces exploiting the precipitate German withdrawal from the Riviera, characterized the campaign as an “abortion” at the expense of “breaking [the] full career” of the Allied armies in Italy. Leaving aside the question of whether the Allied armies in Italy could ever have been properly described as being in “full career,” Churchill’s purpose was to elaborate the idea that *Dragoon* had destroyed the prospect of advancing on the “great city” of Vienna. Smuts played his part, agreeing that *Dragoon* was an “adventure” and warning that rapidly rising Russian influence in the Balkans could only be countered by rushing Allied troops to the region.

In the context of the early Cold War, Churchill’s insistence on confronting the Russians in Vienna instead of charging up the Rhône seemed to some to have been remarkably prescient. But it was, of course, a plan that benefited from never having to stand the harsh test of execution. More importantly, it was also something of a cover for the real issue at stake. In early July, and after finally being forced to accede to American

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814 Churchill to Smuts, July 5 1944, PREM 3/271/5.
demands for *Anvil*, Churchill vented his anger in an unsent telegram to Harry Hopkins. “Marshall, King, and Arnold,” Churchill complained, “run one part of the war through Eisenhower and run the Mediterranean part themselves without the slightest regard for the opinion of the British Commander there, or of the Chiefs of Staff or of His Majesty’s Government.”

In his anger and frustration, Churchill gets to the crux of the matter. The critical issue was never an imaginary march through the Ljubljana Gap to Vienna—a fantasy that appalled even the British Chiefs of Staff—but was the question of who controlled the overall course of Mediterranean strategy. With *Anvil/Dragoon* the Americans, not content with the direction of affairs in northern France, had clearly and unambiguously asserted their control in the Mediterranean as well.

Churchill chewed this theme over in discussions on his proposed note to Harry Hopkins with General Ismay. “I think that he [Hopkins—AB] ought to know that we consider they have done us a great wrong,” Churchill whined, “and that we will not tolerate their mastery of the Mediterranean.”

Angry with the Americans, Churchill oozed contempt for the French. “All our landing craft,” he complained, “stolen” for the “tomfoolery” of *Anvil*, will be found “sprawling in the suburbs of Marseilles.” Tellingly, the Prime Minister talked about the Americans taking “their” seven divisions from Italy—a force that actually comprised “3 American [divisions] and 4 Frog blackamoors,”—thereby explicitly recognizing the importance of the Franco-American axis and implicitly noting the declining influence of London in French affairs. After all London had done for de Gaulle—often in the face of American opposition—it now seemed that, courtesy of its ability to rearm the French and as a result of the “abortion”

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on the Riviera, the United States had positioned itself to exert a dominant influence in postwar France.

Alan Brooke and other British leaders feared that this powerful mélange of bitterness, foiled ambition, exhaustion, and strategic fantasy, might entirely unhinge Churchill. In his discussions with General Ismay in early July, Churchill went so far as to threaten to “break the Allied Command in the Mediterranean [up into an] American sphere playing the fool at Anvil [and a] British sphere doing the best it can towards Trieste.” Such a move would have had enormous and unpredictable consequences for the entire Allied command structure and for the unity of the Allies as they approached some of the most difficult military and political challenges of the war. In the end calmer voices prevailed, blistering telegrams were left unsent, and Churchill’s public effort to vindicate his strategic approach was relegated to the postwar battle of memoirs. But Churchill’s dogged opposition to Anvil/Dragoon, with its desperate grasping at apparent alternatives from the Bay of Biscay to the Balkans, did reflect a new and, from London’s point of view, unpalatable reality. What the fight over Anvil demonstrated with unambiguous clarity was that, even in the Mediterranean, Washington was no longer prepared to play the role of junior partner: by the summer of 1944 Washington’s Mediterranean strategy was winning out over London’s and Marshall’s “great reversal” was becoming a reality.

4.5) The “New Deal” and the Consolidation of American Influence in Italy

At the same time as the great fight over Anvil/Dragoon was demonstrating Washington’s increasing dominance of strategic decision-making in the Mediterranean, officials and policymakers were seizing new opportunities to expand America’s economic and political presence in Italy. On both fronts, the American capture of Rome in June 1944 marked the critical point of departure, allowing the redeployment of American forces from Italy into the invasion of the South of France and, by facilitating the installation of the Bonomi government, opening the door to the advance of American influence in Italy. Since both in Italy and in the South of France American advance was reciprocated in British retreat, the capture of Rome marked a decisive turning point in the Italian campaign, in the war in the Mediterranean, and in the wartime relationship between London and Washington. For London, the critical issue in the summer of 1944 appeared to be a choice between pursuing the campaign in Italy or jumping into the “cul-de-sac” of the Riviera, with American insistence on the one depriving it of the “glittering prizes” in the other. But for Washington, with growing economic resources at its disposal and with strong political alliance within Italy, there was no such choice: America could pursue the invasion of southern France and still press ahead in Italy.

In narrowly military terms, Washington’s insistence on Anvil/Dragoon led to seven American and French divisions being withdrawn from the order of battle in Italy in order to participate in the landings in the South of France. With its striking power significantly reduced, the Allied advance from Rome ground to a halt in the face of stubborn German resistance along the Gothic Line just to the north of Florence. No
significant new advances would be made until the spring of 1945. But the new slow-down in the pace of military advance did not mean that Italy became a backwater. On the contrary, with Rome in Allied hands and with a broadly-based liberal government in place, the fundamental divergence between the Allies over the character and orientation of postwar Italy could now emerge more fully. In essence, these were not new questions: the competing visions of a monarchical, conservative Italy firmly within the British sphere on the one hand and a more liberal polity oriented towards the United States on the other had underlain Allied deliberations since the summer of 1943. But until Rome the difficulties of the military situation had moderated the political debate. Now these constraints were removed.

In early July 1944, James Dunn, head of the State Department’s Office of European Affairs expressed this fundamental shift when he argued that now, with a “anti-Fascist, pro-United Nations and democratic” government in place in Rome, relations with Italy could “enter […] the post-war period.” This was a bold vision, given that much of northern Italy remained in German hands, but the critical notion that relations with Italy were now entering the “post-war period” rested on American confidence that the political relationships and alliances that would ultimately secure Washington’s position in Italy were now being put into place. This approach, filled out by American policymakers in Washington and in Italy, would emphasize the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Italy’s economy over simple wartime survival and the integration of the country into an American-led international order over punishment for wartime crimes.

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820 Dunn to Hilldring, July 6 1944, Civil Affairs, 497.
British policymakers did not agree. Writing from Rome in late July, ambassador Noel Charles lamented that the Americans were giving the new Italian government “full license” and urging London not to “slavishly” follow the American lead. London did not need much prompting on this score; at the Foreign Office Orme Sargent concurred with Charles’ memorandum, noting that Washington’s “attitude” ran contrary to “our long-term interests” and arguing that Britain, rather than the United States, should play the “predominant” role in Italy. The problem, however, was what to do about Washington’s increasing influence in Italian affairs. In October 1944, Harold Caccia, the British head of the ACC’s Political Section, wrote a long memorandum offering one solution to this problem. In a remarkable leap of logic, Caccia argued that since Britain was incapable of supplying aid on the same scale as Americans, it was in fact in Britain’s “own interests to see that the U.S.A. provides what we cannot” since in so doing “they [the Americans] will be indirectly serving our interests.” Britain should “welcome and encourage” large-scale American economic assistance rather than “contest” it, Caccia concluded, while seeking to offset American influence by the “loan” of British “brains” and “organizing ability.”

Caccia’s comforting fantasy of British brains offsetting American brawn—or even, judo style, of turning it to Britain’s advantage—was shared by other British officials, most notably Harold Macmillan, who pictured the British as clever “Greeks” manipulating the muscle-bound but inept American “Romans.” It may be that for Macmillan and other British officials a wartime sojourn in the Mediterranean helped

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821 Charles to Foreign Office, July 22 1944, R12663/53/22, FO371/43837, NA.
822 Caccia to Foreign Office, Oct. 26 1944, R19126/691/22, FO371/43915, NA.
them become comfortable with the “junior partner” status that awaited Britain after the war. But in the short term there was no doubting either the sheer weight of American economic aid to Italy or, increasingly, the political leverage it accorded Washington. Even before Rome, American aid vastly outweighed that provided by Britain: between August 1943 and March 1944 the United States supplied a total of over 414,000 tons of civilian relief supplies, in contrast to a paltry 49,000 tons from Britain, of which 32,000 tons were accounted for by a single commodity, seed potatoes. Building on this impressive start, in the whole period between 1943 and 1945 the United States would supply over four fifths of all civilian relief supplies shipped to Italy.

Buoyed by the enormous economic potential of the United States and with the establishment of the new government in Rome behind them, American policymakers began to argue for a radical reorientation of Allied policy towards Italy. Developing James Dunn’s argument that relations with Italy were now entering a “post-war” period, officials at the State Department’s Office of European Affairs pressed for a “demilitarization” of the Allied Control Commission and for the “infiltration” of American civilian experts into its complex committee structure. American officials in Italy took up the chorus, with Robert Murphy reporting “there is no doubt that the ACC should be demilitarized,” and the “civilianization” of much of the Allied effort in Italy quickly became a central organizing principle of American policy. Civilianization had a great deal to recommend it to American policymakers, since it would free the army

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824 Charles to Foreign Office, Apr. 28 1944, R7239/53/22, FO 371/43837, NARA.
826 OEA Memorandum, July 31 1944, Civil Affairs, 487.
827 Murphy to State Department, Aug. 22 1944, RG 59, 740.00119 Italy/8-2244, NARA.
from much of the business of governance and at the same time allow the full weight of both official and unofficial civilian aid agencies to come into play. It also, of course, conformed to Washington’s military priorities in the Mediterranean and to their shift in focus from Italy to southern France. Moreover, and as British observers quickly realized, officials in Washington linked demilitarization to a “new emphasis on rehabilitation as well as simply on relief” and to an American-led effort to rebuild the Italian economy.  

British officials attempted to resist Washington’s drive for demilitarization and rehabilitation, arguing that it was impermissible to rebuild the economy of a former enemy while allies were still suffering under German occupation; “The British people haven’t forgotten,” Anthony Eden snapped, “which country was our ally and which our enemy in the war that is not yet won […] and neither have I.”

London feared an influx of American civilian administrators into the Control Commission and, wary of Washington’s growing influence in Rome, blocked an American effort to invite representatives of the Italian government to the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods in July 1944. Interestingly, in the light of later divisions in the Balkans, the Russians and the Greek government in exile approved the proposal, while the British, French, and Yugoslavs united in opposition.

But despite such minor and temporary reverses, the Americans persisted. In Washington the War Department forced the pace, announcing in July that as of the fall of 1944 it would no longer fund civilian relief efforts outside of active combat zones under direct military government. The War department’s decision provoked an unseemly

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828 Campbell to Foreign Office, Aug. 11 1944, R12488/95/22, FO 371/43863, NA.
829 Eden memorandum, Charles to Foreign Office, July 10 1944, R11177/15/22, NA.
scramble as other government agencies competed to fill the vacuum and, as was often the case, interagency rivalry gave American policymaking a chaotic and seemingly unpredictable character; as one British observer to a particularly heated bout of bureaucratic infighting involving State Department, Foreign Economic Administration, and Lend Lease officials noted sarcastically, “what a party!”

A symptom of this infighting was Washington’s incapacity for much of 1944 to find a suitable candidate to fill the key post at the head of the ACC economic section. But despite these difficulties—and perhaps, given the eagerness of rival agencies to stake out their interest in Italy, even because of them—American policy did press forward. And, with the growing weight of America’s economic might behind it, it moved with irresistible force.

Facilitated by Washington’s military and political victory at Rome in June, this process reached a critical turning point at the Anglo-American *Octagon* conference held in Quebec September 12-16 1944. For American officials concerned with Italy this was a moment both of great danger and of great opportunity. The dangers were all too obvious: as Anne O’Hare McCormick reported from Rome, economic dislocation in Italy threatened to give rise to “large-scale rioting and social disintegration” that would have “repercussions throughout Europe” with detrimental effects for “the political position of the United States in the post-war period.” On the other hand, as head of the ACC economic section General O’Dwyer explained in a briefing paper for the President, if Washington acted decisively then these dangers could be averted and the basis of a new

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831 Marris to Treasury, Aug. 10 1944, R13019/95/22, FO 371/43863, NA.
832 See Ellwood, *Italy*, 129.
long-term relationship with Italy established.\textsuperscript{834} In preparation for the Quebec conference in September, a State Department briefing paper drew the necessary conclusions, noting the Army’s “wish to be relieved” of responsibility for civilian relief” and arguing for the “de-militarization” of the ACC; the “rehabilitation” of the Italian economy; rapid diplomatic recognition of the Italian government; an expansion of the Italian army; and the inclusion of Italy in international bodies such as the International Labor Office.\textsuperscript{835}

In these pre-conference briefing papers, State Department officials had also noted—with not inconsiderable understatement—that the “physical problems” in Italy had been “augmented by divergences in British and American views.” At the Quebec conference and during follow-up discussions between Roosevelt and Churchill at Hyde Park, these “divergences” were substantially resolved, with London finally and reluctantly acceded to the key elements of Washington’s new approach to the rehabilitation of Italy. The Hyde Park Declaration, issued jointly by Churchill and Roosevelt on September 26 1944 and quickly dubbed a “New Deal” for Italy, argued that the Italian people had “demonstrated their will to be free” and had thereby earned the right both to “an increasing measure of control” over their political affairs and to the receipt of substantial economic assistance to help rebuild the economy.\textsuperscript{836}

The two Allied leaders also agreed that, in order to relieve “hunger, sickness and fear,” the new United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) would be permitted to operate in Italy, while the Allied governments themselves would take steps to rebuild an Italian economy “laid low” by Fascist “misrule” and German

\textsuperscript{834} O’Dwyer memorandum, Sept. 8 1944, \textit{FRUS}, Quebec 1944: 210–211.
occupation. To facilitate this process, Allied governments would send civilian engineers, technicians and industrial experts to Italy. Finally, and to signify this radical new departure in Allied policy, the word “control” would be dropped from the title of the leading Anglo-American body in Italy, which would henceforth be known simply as the “Allied Commission.”

The Hyde Park Declaration marked a substantial turning point both in relations between the Allies and the Italian government and in relations between the London and Washington. On the one hand the declaration registered the advancing political and diplomatic rehabilitation of the Italian government under Allied tutelage, while on the other it marked the unambiguous ascendancy of Washington’s approach on the key political and economic questions. Only weeks after asserting its supremacy in matters of strategic decision-making in the Mediterranean by driving through the Dragoon landings, Washington now also claimed the mantle of “senior partner” in political and economic relations with Italy.

This bitter pill was made more palatable to London by the appointment of Harold Macmillan, the British resident minister at AFHQ, as acting president of the renamed Allied Commission. Further registering the advance of “civilianization,” Macmillan replaced Allied Supreme Commander Henry Wilson. Like Wilson, Macmillan generally pursued a policy of accommodation to American interests, and his appointment effectively put a British face on an increasingly American-inspired project. In December 1944 Macmillan issued a statement amplifying the provisions of the Hyde Park Declaration. Taking an implicit swipe at his masters in London, Macmillan argued that the dropping of the word “control” would only have “real meaning” if the Allies stuck to
the “path of generosity;” if they fell back on a punitive policy—as long advocated by London—then Italy might still slide back into “despair, anarchy, and revolution.”

The reformulated and American-inspired policy towards Italy registered by the Hyde Park Declaration continued to face considerable economic and political challenges. On the economic front, the Allies and the Italian government confronted the cumulative consequences of an overstretched Fascist wartime economy; German occupation; the destruction and dislocation wrought by combat and bombing; and occupation by enormous Anglo-American armies and their (relatively) well-paid soldiery. The result was an accelerating spiral of social and economic dislocation, unemployment, inflation, and, in much of southern Italy, a food crisis verging on outright famine. A digest of letters from home to Italian prisoners of war prepared by British intelligence in April 1944 contained graphic accounts of shortages of basic consumer goods, bread riots, and—pointing to the combined effects of the black market, prostitution, and the resurgence of the mafia—the repeated observation that “a good many people have given up living honestly.”

The same month Ambassador Charles reported that the average calorific intake in Naples had fallen to just over 600 per day, in sharp contrast to 1,378 under the German occupation. Rampant inflation added to the economic breakdown; American officials estimated that the cost of living in Naples had risen from 48 liras per week in July 1943 to over 360 liras by February 1944.

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838 “Conditions in Italy from Postal Censorship,” memorandum, April 3 1944, R5543/53/22, FO 371/43836, NA.
839 Charles to Foreign Office, Apr. 28 1944, R7239/53/22, FO 371/43837, NA.
840 FEA Intel. Memo #18, Sept. 12 1944, RG 169, Entry 179, Box 1, NARA.
Under these conditions—graphically described by Norman Lewis in *Naples ’44* and John Horne Burns in *The Gallery*—normal civilian life began to disintegrate, with potentially dangerous consequences for the establishment of stable postwar order. In August 1944, Allied military governor Col. Charles Poletti reported that Romans were “bitterly disappointed” by the Allies’ failure to deliver “freedom from want,” and by November American Ambassador Alexander Kirk was warning of civilian morale “spiraling downward,” leading to the emergence of radical groups “much more extremist” than even the “Russians may desire.” Here Kirk was pointing to the nagging fear deepening economic and social breakdown, combined with the fact that the old political elite was almost entirely discredited, might give rise to social revolutionary impulses beyond the control of even the compliant PCI and its masters in Moscow.

This grim economic reality and the political concerns that it engendered cast a pall over the cheerful American vision of moving smoothly into a “postwar world” in Italy. But it also reinforced Washington’s determination to press ahead with the civilianization of the AC and the overall demilitarization of relations with the Italian government. In this context, it had become apparent to American officials that the pre-occupation assumption of AMGOT planners that civilian relief should be calibrated simply to alleviate “disease and unrest” was woefully inadequate. This realization led American policymakers to advocate both increased levels of relief and the “rehabilitation” of the Italian economy—a conclusion, as we saw above, that meshed closely with Washington’s plans for a broader liberalization of relations with Italy and, not coincidentally, with the augmentation of American standing in Italy.

841 FEA Intel Memo #16, Aug. 29 1944, RG 169, Entry 179, Box 1, NARA; Kirk to State Department Nov. 27 1944, RG 59, 740.00119/11-2744, NARA.
It was far easier to discuss the rehabilitation of the Italian economy than actually to accomplish it. By the end of 1944, Macmillan had incorporated the interlinked notions that levels of civilian relief should be governed by a “liberal” interpretation of the “disease and unrest” formula, and that a program of “industrial first-aid” should be organized, into the official remit of the AC. But how this would all be organized and paid for remained unclear. What was clear, however, was that despite Macmillan’s earnest hope that “His Majesty’s Government will be willing to provide their share of the cost,” the parlous state of the British economy meant that British funding would be forthcoming from that quarter. In November, Foreign Office officials recognized that conditions in rural Italy were “similar to those of the Dark Ages,” but nevertheless concluded that Britain’s “capacity to assist Italy in the restoration of the economy is strictly limited.” By contrast, in Washington the Foreign Economic Administration was promoting itself as the agency responsible for the provision of “essential civilian items” to Italy and for supply of goods and equipment necessary to “promote economic rehabilitation.”

Initially, the FEA proposed to meet the cost of these new responsibilities by extending Lend-Lease to Italy, but in the summer of 1944 the administration decided against such a move. The reasons for this decision, as David Ellwood points out, remain obscure, but opposition to the proposal came both from the Treasury Department, where officials felt that “we need our supplies here,” and—as in North Africa—from business

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843 “Report on Situation in Italy,” Nov. 1944, R18758/691/22, FO 371/43915, NA.
844 FEA “Economic Program With Reference to Italy, July 25 1944, RG 169, Entry 172, Box 2, NARA.
interests concerned that the bureaucratic entanglements would create a barrier to the development of private trade. Even as the proposal to extend Lend-Lease was being debated and rejected, administration officials were elaborating a much more radical plan to support the Italian government by remitting to it the dollar equivalent of the lira it had spent funding the pay of American servicemen in Italy. The Italian government would then be able to use this money to purchase both short-term aid and capital goods from the United States. This proposal had the advantage of strengthening the Italian government’s finances and of giving it, under AC guidance, a greater say in the allocation of resources. But it also, and at a stroke, effectively scrapped the armistice requirement that Italy meet the cost of the occupation by paying the wages of Allied troops stationed in Italy.

Not surprisingly, Washington’s proposal to subsidize the Italian government in this fashion met with strong British opposition both on grounds of principle—the defeated enemy should meet the costs of the occupation—and on grounds of practicality—London simply could not afford to make equivalent Sterling remittances to cover the pay of British and Commonwealth troops. As Foreign Office officials pointed out, British remittances might lead to Italy accumulating large Sterling holdings, producing, given the parlous state of Britain’s own finances, an “intolerable conclusion” to the war. Yet again, Washington pressed ahead undeterred by British opposition, and on October 10 Roosevelt announced the plan to “make available to the Italian government the dollar equivalent to the Italian lire issued up to now and hereafter as pay

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845 Ellwood, Italy 1943–1945, 132-133.
846 Meeting. of Committee. on Armistice Terms, July 5 1944, R10999/95/22, FO 371/43862, NA.
to United States troops in Italy." The Presidential statement made it clear that the
Italian government was expected to spend the funds accruing to it on the purchase of
“essential civilian supplies” in the United States. With almost nonchalant ease,
Washington had utilized its financial power to reinforce America’s economic ties with
Italy, to strengthen it’s own standing with the Italian government, and en passant to
demonstrate once more to London who was now the senior partner.

As it pushed to demilitarize its relief effort in Italy and to strengthen the Italian
government’s capacity to partner in the rehabilitation of the economy, Washington also
utilized non-governmental organizations to advance its overall goals in Italy. Chief
amongst these was the United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
(UNRRA,) founded by forty-four Allied governments in November 1943. Fittingly,
given the decisive role of the United States in the leadership, organization, and funding of
UNRRA—the new organization was a direct outgrowth of Washington’s own Office of
Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFFRO)—the inaugural address was given
by President Roosevelt at a conference held in the White House. In his speech Roosevelt
outlined UNRRA’s priorities as being “first to assure a fair distribution of available
supplies among all of the liberated peoples, and, second, to ward off death by starvation
or exposure among these peoples.” With an eye to his domestic audience, the President
concluded “the more quickly and effectively we apply measures of relief and
rehabilitation, the more quickly will our boys overseas be able to come home.” At its

848 Quoted in George Woodbridge, UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and
first council meeting in Atlantic City, NJ, former New York governor and OFFRO head Herbert Lehman was appointed director general of UNRRA.

As the economic crisis in Italy deepened in the summer of 1944, the State Department proposed to British ambassador Lord Halifax that the two governments make a joint approach to Herbert Lehman with a proposal that UNRRA begin relief operations in Italy.\textsuperscript{849} In line with London’s general opposition to expanding relief efforts in Italy—and setting aside the absurdity of making an Anglo-American “approach” to what was in practical terms an arm of the U.S. government—Halifax was instructed to “stall on this” on the grounds that UNRRA was designed to help “liberated peoples” and that, as former enemies, the Italians did not qualify for its assistance.\textsuperscript{850} But, as on the question of pay remittances, London soon found itself waging a rearguard action in the face of relentless American pressure. Matters came to a head at the second UNRRA council meeting in Montreal in September where, following talks at the Octagon in Quebec conference earlier in the month, British leaders finally agreed to back UNRRA relief operations in Italy. Notifying British delegates to the council meeting of the change of line, the Foreign Office explained that on “political grounds” Churchill and Eden now agreed that it was “desirable to accord a greater measure of economic assistance to Italy.”\textsuperscript{851} Typically, Churchill’s own note to the Foreign Office on the issue got straight to the point, noting simply “the President agrees it should be done.”\textsuperscript{852}

\textsuperscript{849} Halifax to Foreign Office, June 30 1944, R10303/95/22, FO 371/43862, NA.
\textsuperscript{850} Foreign Office to Halifax, July 6 1944, R10303/95/22, FO 371/43862, NA.
\textsuperscript{851} Foreign Office to British delegation, Sept. 19 1944, R14371/95/22, FO 371/43864, NA.
\textsuperscript{852} Churchill to Foreign Office, Sept. 16 1944, R14888/95/22, FO 371/43864, NA.
This new Anglo-American front ensured that the Montreal council meeting would pass a resolution approving UNRRA operations in Italy, but not before the Yugoslavian delegate had expressed his disapproval on the grounds that that since Italy hadn’t been a “victim of the war,” measures designed to “improve the political status of the Italian government” were inappropriate.  

In response to opposition within the council, and no doubt out of sensitivity to continued British unease, initial American proposals were scaled back, and the final resolution limited UNRRA’s operation in Italy to $50 million worth of aid directed specifically to the care of displaced persons, children, and expectant mothers. The UNRRA mission arrived in Italy in November 1944, but protracted negotiations with the Italian government—which insisted that it participate as an equal in this United Nations undertaking—as well as extensive discussion with AFHQ and the AC were necessary before aid finally began to flow in February 1945. As historian Emily Rosenberg points out, Washington’s overriding influence in UNRRA ensured that, at least during these initial wartime operations, the Americans would benefit fully from the “political leverage that relief supplies provided.”

As it pressed for the extension of UNRRA operations to Italy, Washington acted unilaterally on another critical front by authorizing a rise in the civilian food ration in areas of Italy where food supplies were considered “below the standard necessary to maintain full health and efficiency.” The President followed this announcement with an October 31 instruction to Secretary of War Stimson to provide the resources and

853 UNRRA Council II, Doc. 246, Lot 52 D 408, Box 1, RG 59, NARA.
854 Woodbridge UNRRA, 2: 262-263.
856 Roosevelt statement, Oct. 4 1944, Civil Affairs, 500.
shipping necessary to raise the bread ration in all of Allied-occupied Italy from 200 to 300 grams per day. The lines of divide here were a little different from those over the issues of dollar remittances and UNRRA operations, with the Combined Chiefs, battling complex global shipping problems, opposing the increase while both AFHQ and the AC, under pressure from the unfolding social crisis in Italy and from widespread public protests, supported it.

Despite these cross currents London came out in clear opposition to increased food aid. In early November Churchill cabled Roosevelt to complain that he had “jumped a good many fences” in unilaterally deciding to raise the “grain ration” and to warn that it was “difficult to give our ex-enemies in Italy more than our Allies in Greece and Yugoslavia.”

Reflecting London’s growing exasperation at Washington’s increasing economic pre-eminence, one Foreign Office official minuted despairingly that Roosevelt’s decision had simply taken the whole matter “out of our hands.” In fact, London’s opposition to increasing the bread ration—Churchill’s “non-concurrence in the proposed directive to the theater” as Civil Affairs Division director John Hilldring coyly put it—effectively blocked the implementation of Roosevelt’s directive until March 1, 1945, at which time increased shipping capacity finally enabled a more “generous interpretation” of the “disease and unrest” standard. Clearly, while London retained the power to disrupt and delay Washington’s plans, it was no longer capable of blocking them entirely or of implementing a clear alternative of its own.

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857 Churchill to Roosevelt, Nov. 12 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 387.
858 Charles to Foreign Office, Nov. 5 1944, R18289/95/22, FO 371/43866, NA.
859 Hilldring to Stimson, Feb. 8 1945, Civil Affairs, 519; FEA Intel. Bulletin #40, Feb. 13 1945, RG 169, Entry 179, Box 1, NARA.
British policymakers were also alarmed by the flow of nongovernmental American aid to Italy, particularly that organized by American Relief for Italy Inc. This charitable fund, initiated by President Roosevelt and led by Myron Taylor, Washington’s Ambassador to the Papal See, was organized in an effort to circumvent bureaucratic obstacles to the mobilization of civilian aid. It also, as James Miller argues, had the not unwelcome effect of boosting the President’s support among Italian-Americans.\footnote{Miller, \textit{United States and Italy}, 105.} Over $6m in private donations was quickly raised, and total charitable disbursements eventually amounted to some $37, a not insignificant sum in comparison, for example, to UNRRA’s Italian relief budget of $50m. Reporting on conversations with Myron Taylor in October 1944, the British representative to the Vatican Sir D’Arcy Osborne noted sniffily that Taylor’s “charitable instincts” overlapped with the pursuit of publicity designed to win President Roosevelt the votes of Italian Americans.\footnote{Osborne to Eden, Oct. 6 1944, R15955/95/22, FO 371/43865, NA.} Taylor’s charitable efforts, Osborne added, had secured a Papal contribution of some 5m lira and had garnered widespread and favorable publicity within Italy. Osborne told Taylor that there would be no reciprocal British effort, since “all materials were needed at home” and because public opinion in Britain would “not tolerate contributions to an ex-enemy.”

On all of these interlocking fronts, Washington took advantage of the political opportunities opened by the establishment of the liberal government in Rome in June 1944, codified at the \textit{Octagon} conference in September, and publicized through the “New Deal” announced at Hyde Park, to move beyond the simple provision of aid designed to stave off “disease and unrest” and to press towards the economic “rehabilitation” of Italy. Given the relative strengths of the American and British economies, the resources
required for this project were necessarily drawn very largely from the United States, with the result that relief and rehabilitation advanced in tandem with increasing American economic engagement in Italy. It is important not to exaggerate the distance that this process could advance under wartime conditions; even by the end of the war, UNRRA and FEA programs in Italy were still relatively modest, and the Italian economy remained deeply scarred by the experience of war. Moreover, as the long delay between proclaiming an increased bread ration and actually implementing it demonstrates that the political, bureaucratic, and technical difficulties in executing even a relatively simple policy were considerable. But despite all the difficulties and delays American economic engagement with Italy did advance significantly and, as David Ellwood points out, it served to prepare the ground for the American business interests that were poised to move to take advantage of the economic opportunities created by war, occupation, and reconstruction once the fighting stopped.  

All of these American advances were made in the face of protracted British opposition. From dollar remittances for troop pay, to raising the bread ration, to the operation of UNRRA in Italy, London’s initial reaction to was to denounce the American proposals as “unacceptable” and “intolerable.” Moral, political, and economic considerations together shaped British policy, reflecting both a concern that a former enemy was being “rehabilitated” too rapidly and the shocking realization that Britain simply could not match American economic largess. British policymakers pinned a great deal on the assumption that their American counterparts would be too disorganized and internally divided to press their economic policies forward effectively, and on hopes that

Washington could be made to understand that its plans to rehabilitate the Italian economy would create an “open divergence” between the Allies. In fact, American policymakers understood this very well, but they also saw that the inevitably positive Italian response to their proposals for economic rehabilitation ensured that it would be the British who would be under pressure to close ranks in order to avoid a damaging public split. Both on the discrete issues and on the overarching policy of “rehabilitation” the British gradually, grudgingly, but inevitably were force to give ground.

As this process unfolded, British policymakers were forced to contend with the fact that American economic power gave Washington an increasing degree of economic leverage in Italy. In October 1944, Noel Charles could still hold on to the belief that the Italian government preferred British “commonsense and political judgment” to America’s “immaturity in international affairs,” but even he was forced to admit that the “enchantment of dollars” exercised a powerful countervailing pressure. But Charles and other British officials were increasingly out of touch with the realities of Italian politics, a field in which the United States was reaping the rewards not only of its economic primacy but also of its role—well known to Italian politicians of all stripes—in the ouster of Badoglio and the formation of the Bonomi government. The Italian government’s appreciation of this emerging Washington-Rome axis was signaled by Bonomi at the end of September when, during a meeting with Alexander Kirk to discuss the Hyde Park statement, he noted that while Italy had to “work out its own salvation” it would rely heavily on American aid and guidance to do so.

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863 Foreign Office to Halifax, Aug. 19 1944, R12994/95/22, FO 371/43863, NA.
864 Charles to Eden, Oct. 26 1944, R12126/691/22, FO 371/43915, NA.
865 Kirk to State Department, Sept. 30 FRUS 1944, 3: 1155.
As they worked to consolidate the relationship between Washington and Rome, American policymakers became increasingly hostile to what Ambassador Kirk, referring to renewed British efforts to block Count Sforza’s entry into the government, described unblushingly as “sporadic incursions from abroad into the internal politics of Italy.” 866 In December the new Secretary of State Edward Stettinius publicly rebuked London for this intervention into Italian politics, prompting Churchill to complain to the President about the “acerbity” of the State Department communiqué. 867 Despite highlighting his loyal support for Roosevelt during the crisis over the Darlan deal—a strange analogy for Italy in late 1944—Churchill’s telegram elicited only the most modest of Presidential apologies and a reminder that the prime minister’s efforts to block Sforza had been launched without American approval. 868 As with the political crises earlier in 1944, this division between the Allies ended up reinforcing Washington’s standing in Rome at London’s expense.

On December 14, the United States formally welcomed the establishment of a new cabinet led by Ivano Bonomi that, with the resignation of the Socialists and the Party of Action in protest over the slow pace of at which former Fascists were being purged from the state apparatus, saw increased representation of both the PCI and the Christian Democrats. With Togliatti in the post of deputy prime minister, the new cabinet was well placed to conclude negotiations with the substantially Communist-led resistance movement in northern Italy, and on December 26 the new government and the CLNAI signed the Protocols of Rome. Under these protocols, the resistance movement

866 Kirk to State Department, Nov. 28 1944, FRUS 1944, 3: 1158.
867 Churchill to Roosevelt, Dec. 5 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 438.
868 Roosevelt to Churchill Dec. 6 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 443.
in the North would receive Allied money and military assistance—but not formal recognition—in exchange for a promise to operate under Allied military command and to turn over to the Allied Military Government territory liberated from the Germans. As part of the agreement a senior Italian army officer was appointed supreme commander of the partisan forces in the north.

The Protocols of Rome created the political framework that would enable the Allies and the Italian government to absorb and contain the massive popular upsurge that greeted Allied troops as they finally pushed into northern Italy in early 1945. Here, too, one can argue that Washington’s strategic sense proved superior to London’s. If Allied troops had driven into northern Italy in the summer of 1944 as Churchill demanded, they would have arrived before political relations between the new government in Rome and the resistance forces in the North could be consolidated, with the possible consequence of provoking sharp clashes between Allied forces and resistance fighters engaged in “autoliberation.” As it was, the notion that local CLNAI committees might “set themselves up as an alternative government” during the “vacuum period” between the withdrawal of German forces and the arrival of the Allies concerned Allied planners. The stakes here were very high; as ACC head Ellery Stone pointed it was likely that the balance of power established during this “vacuum” would “affect the political future of Italy for a considerable period.” The solution, AFHQ decided, was that army civilian affairs officers would have to “persuade local committees and bands to preserve law and order

869 Stone to AFHQ, Sept. 29 1944, 331.1000/136/286, RG 331, NARA.
870 Stone to Alexander, Sept. 1 1944, 331.1000/136/286, RG 331, NARA.
pending the arrival of Allied forces and the AMG,” and it was this approach was now set on a much more solid foundation by the signing of the Protocols.871

The long-anticipated partisan rising—the “wind from the north”—would indeed blow fiercely in the spring of 1945, with resistance fighters, often led by the PCI, establishing their own political authority as German troops were driven out of area after area in northern Italy. In Genoa, Milan, Turin and other cities, striking workers and guerilla fighters fought running battles with Germans forces that culminated in the “auto-liberation” of these key industrial centers and in the establishment of local CLNAI civil governments. But in cities, towns and villages across the North, partisan fighters then peacefully turned their arms over to arriving detachments of Allied troops. The PCI, by remaining in the government even as the Socialist and the Action parties resigned in protest at Bonomi’s increasingly moderate, pro-Allied, and pro-capitalist stance, thus ensured that Allied fears of “irresponsible communist activities” erupting during the final struggle against the German occupation came to naught.872 Acting within the architecture of global division established between Moscow and Washington at the Teheran conference and consolidated at Yalta in February 1945, the PCI played a decisive role in preserving liberal democracy and capitalist social relations in Italy.

After the capture of Rome, President Roosevelt broadcast a “fireside chat” describing the long-anticipated event as an “investment for the future” that would enable the “salvage” of the Italian people.873 The unspoken assumptions were that a close relationship with the United States would furnish the means by which Italy might be

871 Stone to AFHQ, Sept. 17 and 29 1944, 331.1000/136/286, RG 331, NARA.
872 Stettinius to Roosevelt, Oct. 25 1944, PSF, Vatican, Box 52, FDRL.
873 Roosevelt, “fireside chat,” June 5 1944, FDRL.
“salvaged,” and that the “investment” would pay long-term dividends by advancing American diplomatic, political, and economic influence in Italy. No one in Washington envisioned this ongoing influence being structured around a long-term military presence; rather American arms would open the doors through which, as John Hersey put it so optimistically in the preface to *Bell for Adano*, the United States would get “on its way into Europe, […] full of knowledge and enthusiasm and ready to rebuild a shattered world on new foundations.”

This would be a project not of direct military domination—although that would be necessary at the start—but of liberal paternalism, rebuilding with American economic aid and under American tutelage, and integrating it into an American-dominated world order.

As with every other aspect of its Mediterranean strategy, Washington did not advance in a straight line towards these broad goals, but pursued a policy that unfolded through a series of opportunistic lurches and pragmatic adaptations that were themselves shaped by the contingencies of the military situation, the complexities of relations with Britain and the Soviet Union, and development of Italian politics. This method of operation reflected not the weakness of American strategic thinking, but rather the great and rising economic, military, and political strength of the United States. In Italy, as in the rest of the Mediterranean, Washington was feeling its way into a politico-military situation of great complexity without any but the most general of models and blueprints. The United States began its Italian campaign with a political approach that, like its initial policies towards Vichy, Madrid, and Algiers, was strikingly conservative and pro-monarchical. But within weeks of the Salerno landings this approach began to be

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874 Hersey, *Bell for Adano*, 2.
jettisoned as policymakers, prompted by those closest to the action, responded pragmatically to political developments in Italy, and in particular the mounting tide of popular rebellion. Once Washington grasped the urgency of the crisis in Italy, it pursued a thoroughgoing liberalization of Italian politics with determination and through a series of interim compromises to the eventual triumph, courtesy of American arms and Russian cooperation, in Rome in June 1944.

After Rome, the character of American engagement with Italy shifted, with less emphasis placed on the military aspects—the post-Rome campaigns in Italy took place in the military context of the withdrawal of seven American and American-equipped French divisions for the invasion of the French Riviera in August 1944—and more on the political and economic. The twin banners under which this shift occurred were those of “civilianization” and “rehabilitation” as Washington set out to demilitarize the occupation, put significant political power back into Italian hands, and begin rebuilding the Italian economy. As with the liberalization of Italian politics, this course was pushed forward in the teeth of British opposition and therefore it developed unevenly, pragmatically, and often without any clear and consistent overall plan. But advance it did, from the “New Deal”, via the reestablishment of Italian government finances by paying dollar remittances for troop pay and the decision to organize UNRRA operations in Italy, to the development of projects to rebuild Italian industry. Through this process, as Gabriel Kolko points out, Italy became the first former Axis power to be integrated into American schemes for a new liberal world economy.\footnote{Kolko, \textit{Politics of War}, 60.}
None of this could have been accomplished without the active agreement and support of Moscow and the actions of its Italian surrogate, the PCI. Togliatti, as Mason-Macfarlane noted, played an absolutely “indispensable” role in establishing a broadly-based civilian governance and, simultaneously, in buffering the potentially revolutionary crises attendant upon the end of Fascist rule and German occupation. Moscow’s diplomatic and political initiatives in Italy developed within the overall architecture of the Tehran agreements and, after some initial hesitation, they were welcomed and encouraged by Washington. Initial suggestions that London would be the beneficiary of Soviet recognition of the Badoglio government proved illusory, and the PCI’s entry into Badoglio’s cabinet in April 1944 marked a critical step towards the establishment of the Bonomi government in June. If anything, the importance of collaboration between Washington, Moscow, and Rome increased after the establishment of a liberal/anti-Fascist government. In late 1944, the PCI provided the critical link between Bonomi’s cabinet and the CLNAI, facilitating the Protocols of Rome and, more importantly from the viewpoint of Italian capital, the relatively harmless exhaustion of the “wind from the north” the following spring. As the potential insurrectionary shocks of the “auto-liberation” were buffered, however, the value the Americans placed on their alliance with Moscow waned, and Washington turned towards the more conservative forces around the Vatican and the Christian Democracy. In the immediate postwar period this course would result in a considerable, and highly successful effort, to block the PCI’s electoral challenge and to secure the victory of the Christian Democrats in the 1948 election.

876 Mason-Macfarlane, “Notes on Chapter XVIII of Badoglio’s “Italy in the Second World War,” Mason-Macfarlane Papers, Reel 2, 3, IWM.
4.6) Wolfram and the Turn Against Franco

The liberal impulse evident in American policy in Italy after the capture of Rome and in the participation of American forces alongside the French army and the Maquis in the South of France was paralleled by a substantial shift in Washington’s policy towards the Franco government in Madrid. With the success of the Torch in late 1942, the military rationale for the appeasement of Madrid vanished, the victim, one might argue, of its own success, and public pressure for a more critical stance towards the Franco regime mounted quickly. Washington did not respond to this pressure until well into 1943, but when it did change course it seized the opportunity not only to take new distance from the Franco regime but also to strengthen the liberal ideological construction explaining what the war as a whole was “about.” In this sense, therefore, and although the new critical stance towards Franco preceded the capture of Rome and the development of the political opportunities that flowed from it, the new policy towards Spain forms one element of a broader liberalization of American policy in the Mediterranean.

In the aftermath of the Torch landings, Washington’s relationship with Madrid came under renewed scrutiny; explicitly linking Darlan and Franco, for example, the Nation warned of a “Europe studded with Quisling governments” and suggested that “democratic elements all over the world” were becoming concerned lest they find themselves “marching’ […] side by side with their enemies.”877 With Allied troops safely ashore in North Africa, many liberals found it increasingly difficult to justify the

continued appeasement of Spain, and press criticism of Administration policy, which had been muted prior to the invasion, resumed with full force. Having given Ambassador Carlton Hayes the “benefit of some rather grave doubts” the Nation was alarmed by his assertion that the Franco government would be untouched by an Allied victory.\textsuperscript{878} If this was so, the editors argued, then the whole war was being fought for “strange and uncertain ends.”

While the success of Torch cleared the way for a new turn in Washington’s Spanish policy it nevertheless took some time for a new course to emerge. In the immediate aftermath of the landings, policy makers and editorial writers warned against “counting” on Spanish neutrality, and the momentum for economic appeasement continued.\textsuperscript{879} In December 1942 President Roosevelt overrode objections from Henry Morgenthau’s Treasury Department and agreed to Ambassador Hayes’ proposal to permit currency transfers into previously frozen Spanish accounts in the United States.\textsuperscript{880} A month later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved a State Department plan to use oil shipments to Spain as the basis for a “preclusive purchasing” campaign designed to price Germany out of the market for Spanish wolfram (tungsten ore) by buying up available supplies.\textsuperscript{881} This proposal for a “preclusive purchasing” effort rested on the assumption that Spain’s enormous demand for American oil would furnish Washington with considerable economic leverage but, naturally, the whole scheme required the maintenance of relatively amicable political relations between the two countries.

\textsuperscript{878} Editorial, The Nation, Jan. 23 1943.
\textsuperscript{879} Editorial, Christian Science Monitor, Dec. 10 1942.
\textsuperscript{880} Roosevelt to Morgenthau, December 4 1942, PSF, Box 50, Folder Spanish Diplomatic Correspondence, FDRL.
\textsuperscript{881} Hull to JCS, Dec. 22 1942; JCS to Hull, Jan. 14 1943, JCS 179, JCS Records, European Theater, Reel VI.
By February 1943, and less that a month after the start of the “preclusive purchasing” campaign, officials at the inter-departmental Iberian Peninsula Operating Committee (IPOC) became concerned that American oil exports to Spain were increasing rapidly, and concluded that the tide of accommodation with Madrid was “running too fast.”

Cordell Hull agreed with IPOC, concurred with their proposal to cut oil shipments to Spain from 135,000 to 100,000 tons per month, and the instructed the embassy in Madrid not to clear several Spanish tankers scheduled to load in May. Under the leadership of Carlton Hayes, the embassy failed to implement this order, whereupon Hull asked the Joint Chiefs if there were any “military considerations” necessitating the maintenance of the higher levels of oil supply. Informed that were no such pressing military considerations, Hull repeated his instructions to Hayes. In reply, Hayes’ notified the Secretary of State that he intended to ignore his instructions and authorize further tanker sailings. Arguing that Hull’s orders threatened “our entire policy toward Spain,” Hayes announced that he would appeal the matter directly to the President.

Buoyed by his relationship with President Roosevelt and by his apparent success at preventing Spanish interference with Torch, Hayes clearly felt able to ignore direct orders from Washington. The strength of his position can be judged by the fact that the State Department overlooked his insubordination and backed down. In early May, Assistant Secretary Dean Acheson notified the Joint Chiefs that the department considered it inadvisable to recall tankers already at sea under Hayes’ authorization for

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883 Hull to JCS, Apr. 24 1943, JCS 308, Records of JCS, European Theater, Reel VI.
fear of provoking “unwelcome political repercussions.” An exasperated Admiral Leahy reiterated the Joint Chief’s view that there were no military reasons preventing a cut in oil shipments, but added that the whole matter was more “political than military.” Hayes’ appeal to the President resulted in American Petroleum Attaché Walter Smith being recalled from Madrid for a round of meetings with the State Department and the Bureau of Economic Warfare that concluded with an agreement to maintain the higher schedule of oil shipments. Clearly, while there was increasing support in Washington for a tougher line towards Madrid, the White House was not yet ready to change course. Here, perhaps, we can glimpse a Presidential interest in moving beyond immediate military concerns towards using trade as an instrument to foster long-term relations with Spain. If so, it was an issue upon which Roosevelt and Hayes were in complete agreement.

Carlton Hayes’ efforts to maintain a high level of oil shipments to Spain reflected his conviction that good commercial relations could secure Madrid’s ongoing cooperation, perhaps leading even leading to winning Franco as a “potential military ally.” Addressing a meeting of Spanish businessmen in February 1943, Hayes explained that the United States was willing to underwrite the development of a “peace economy” in Spain that would be able to overcome the “set backs” inflicted by the Civil War. In April Hayes elaborated this thesis in near-identical letters to Myron Taylor and Sumner Welles. Hayes argued that by using American trade to support “moderates” within the Spanish government the United States could help Madrid withstand threats of

886 Acheson to Leahy, May 12 1943, Records of JCS, European Theater, Reel VI.
887 Leahy to Acheson, May 22 1943, Records of JCS, European Theater, Reel VI.
888 Hayes to Hull, June 22 1943, FRUS 1943, 2: 697.
889 Hayes speech, Feb 23 1943, Hayes papers, Box 1A, Columbia University.
“radical rioting and violent revolution” while simultaneously securing it as a valuable postwar “ally” (letter to Welles) or “satellite” (letter to Taylor).  

Carlton Hayes’ ability to continue to pursue a course of using American trade to help forge closer political tie with Madrid rested directly on President Roosevelt’s own interest in this policy and his continued willingness to back his ambassador to Spain. Hayes’ standing in Washington was also reinforced by a series of diplomatic successes that reflected the Franco government’s own recognition that Allied victories from North Africa to Stalingrad signaled a decisive shift in the military balance to the detriment of the Axis powers. Typically, Franco kept his options open by concluding a secret accord with Berlin in December 1942 but as Axis reversals in the Mediterranean mounted, he responded positively to American overtures on a number of disputed questions. In February 1943, Madrid permitted the repatriation of downed Allied airmen who had made their way to Spain, and later agreed to cooperate with the American embassy and the Red Cross to ease the passage through Spain of thousands of French refugees. Some 16,000 eventually left Spain for North Africa, where many joined the French forces being reconstituted there.

Building on these steps, Hayes met with Franco in late July 1943 for discussions in which the Spanish dictator indicated that Madrid was now willing to “alter” its policy on a number of substantive issues. These changes included dropping the policy of “non-belligerency” in favor of a return to neutrality, ending anti-Allied bias in the media, and withdrawing the Blue Division from Russia. For his part, Hayes assured Franco that

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890 Hayes to Taylor and Hayes to Welles, Apr. 29 1943, Hayes Papers, Box 5, Columbia University.
891 Hayes, Wartime Mission, 119.
892 Hayes to Hull, July 29 1943, FRUS 1943, 2: 612.
while he shared the dictator’s “repugnance” for Communism, he could not condone Spanish interference in Russia’s internal affairs. Madrid finally announced its neutrality on October 3 1943, and the Blue Division began pulling out of the front lines preparatory to repatriation.

Despite these successes, domestic criticism of Hayes’ ambassadorship continued to mount. Allegations in the Nation and other left-liberal journals that Spain was passing American oil onto Germany began to be echoed in the mainstream press, with a New York Times editorial arguing that Hayes had gone “a little far out of his way” in praising Franco. Madrid, the Times demanded, must now decide which side it was really on. An irate Carlton Hayes alleged that the American press was under the influence of an amalgam of American Communists and Spanish Republicans that his superiors at the State Department seemed “unable or unwilling” to challenge. But the shrill tone of his complaints suggests that Hayes was aware that, despite his victory in the battle over oil shipments and his relationship with the President, the tide was turning against him. He had reason for concern. As they reviewed strategic options in preparation for the Quadrant conference at Quebec in August, the Joint Chiefs raised with Roosevelt the idea of invading Europe via Spain. This scheme was shelved, but the JCS nevertheless concluded “the time is now ripe [to] adopt a stern and frankly demanding” policy aimed at forcing Spain to stop providing military and economic aid to Germany. Reflecting this new interest in breaking Madrid’s relations with Berlin, a British Quadrant briefing paper emphasized the critical role of tungsten in arms manufacture and concluded that

894 Hayes, Wartime Mission, 136.
895 Leahy, I Was There, 165–166.
German production of armor-piercing ammunition would grind to a halt within six months if shipments of wolfram from Spain and Portugal dried up.\footnote{CCS 321, Aug. 20 1943, PREM 3/405/4.}

In fact, by the time of the \textit{Quadrant} conference the American efforts to buy wolfram from Spain, organized as part of the “preclusive purchasing” campaign, had pushed the price to such heights that Germany had been virtually driven from the market. Intense competition for this scarce resource increased Spain’s income from wolfram sales from £73,000 in 1940 to £15.7 million in 1943, creating a super-heated bubble in an otherwise desolate economy. Madrid was understandably keen to maintain prices at this inflated level, and that meant ensuring continued competition. To this end, and motivated by economic pragmatism as much as by pro-Axis sentiment, Madrid facilitated Germany’s reentry into the market in the fall of 1943 by advancing Berlin a purchasing credit of RM 100 million.\footnote{Leitz, \textit{Sympathy for the Devil}, 130–135.} The resumption of Germany efforts to purchase wolfram qualified the success of the preclusive purchasing effort and led to mounting demands in the United States for the adoption of measures designed to force the cessation of all wolfram exports to the Reich. In mid-October the State Department instructed Hayes to offer Madrid wheat in exchange for a complete embargo on wolfram shipments to Germany. Hayes demurred, arguing for a less confrontational approach and suggesting, accurately, that London endorsed his approach.\footnote{Hull to Hayes, Oct. 15 1943; Hayes to Hull, Oct. 21 1943, \textit{FRUS 1943}, 2: 643–45.}

This time, however, Hayes’ efforts to deflect mounting American pressure for major changes in Madrid were undermined by a curiously maladroit diplomatic move by the Franco government. On October 18 1943 the Spanish government sent a telegram to

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\footnote{CCS 321, Aug. 20 1943, PREM 3/405/4.}
\footnote{Leitz, \textit{Sympathy for the Devil}, 130–135.}
\footnote{Hull to Hayes, Oct. 15 1943; Hayes to Hull, Oct. 21 1943, \textit{FRUS 1943}, 2: 643–45.}
\end{thebibliography}
Filipino politician José Laurel congratulating him on his appointment as head of the new Tokyo-sponsored government of the Philippines. The telegram, quickly reprinted in the German press, showed not only that Madrid recognized the new pro-Axis government but also, and more importantly, it suggested that Spanish enthusiasm for the Axis cause remained strong. Embarrassed, Hayes explained to Roosevelt that although “ill-advised and stupid,” the telegram was the work of a single disgruntled Falangist in the Foreign Ministry.\textsuperscript{900} That may have been so, but it didn’t alter the fact that the note had gone out over foreign minister Francisco Jordana’s signature. Those in the State Department and the JCS who wanted to press a hard line with Spain now had the \textit{cause célèbre} they needed and, by the time Cordell Hull finally closed the “Laurel Incident,” Washington was ready to force the cessation of wolfram exports to Germany. In particular, and although typically difficult to demonstrate conclusively, it appears that President Roosevelt himself was now willing to pursue a more critical policy towards Franco. What is clear is that Washington’s critical new policy towards the regime in Madrid unfolded in early 1944 in parallel with stepped-up efforts to liberalize the government in Italy, and as such can properly be viewed as one element of a broader shift in American policy.

Once begun, the campaign moved quickly, with the JCS approving an economic and political effort against Spain in November 1943 and the State Department following it in January 1944 by issuing instructions to Hayes to deny permission for any further tanker loadings.\textsuperscript{901} The oil embargo was on. Washington’s tough new line received

\textsuperscript{900} Hayes to Roosevelt, Nov. 15 1943, Hayes Papers, Box 3, Columbia University.
\textsuperscript{901} Leahy to Stettinius, Nov.14, 1943, JCS 538/1, Records of JCS, European Theater, Reel VI.
enthusiastic press support, with the *New York Times* hoping it might lead to the overthrow of Franco’s ‘totalitarian’ regime.\textsuperscript{902} Longtime opponents of Franco caught the changing wind, with Congressman John Coffee of Washington calling for America to back the efforts of the Spanish people to overthrow Franco and thereby facilitate their return to the “world family of democratic countries.”\textsuperscript{903}

Not surprisingly, Carlton Hayes proffered dire warnings that the oil embargo might provoke a reopening of the Civil War and lead to the overthrow of the Franco government.\textsuperscript{904} As oil shortages began to affect the Spanish economy, the ambassador intensified his efforts to find a compromise solution. As his notes of meetings with Count Jordana indicate, Hayes presented Washington’s demand for a cessation of wolfram exports in a most apologetic manner, promising to offset the loss of the lucrative German purchases by increased trade with American.\textsuperscript{905} But despite his best efforts, Hayes was unable to defuse American pressure or to find a compromise solution. Moreover, with Roosevelt swinging onto an anti-Franco tack—he even complained to Churchill that Hayes was overly inclined to “accept some compromise short of a complete embargo”—it was clear that the ambassador’s approach no longer enjoyed Presidential support.\textsuperscript{906}

The deepening divide between Hayes and Washington was mirrored within the Madrid embassy, where relations between the conservative ambassador and somewhat

\textsuperscript{903} John Coffee speech, Feb. 24 1944, *Congressional Record*, Vol. 90 Pt. 2, 78\textsuperscript{th} Congress, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Session, 2040.
\textsuperscript{904} Hayes to Hull, Jan. 28 1944, *FRUS 1944*, 4: 306.
\textsuperscript{905} Hayes, notes on meeting with Jordana, Jan. 3 1944, Hayes Papers, Box 3, Columbia University.
\textsuperscript{906} Roosevelt to Churchill, Feb. 15 1944, *Complete Correspondence*, 2:728.
more liberally inclined Office of Strategic Services agents were particularly bad. Hayes suspected the OSS Madrid station of plotting with Spanish Republicans to secure Franco’s overthrow, while for its part the OSS felt compelled to run many of its Spanish operations from Lisbon in order to circumvent the ambassador’s policy of identifying American agents to the Spanish authorities.907 Hayes, as he noted in his memoirs, was determined to “sedulously refrain from interfering, or giving the appearance of interfering, in the internal affairs of Spain.”908 To compound Hayes’ problems, Office of War Information officials in the embassy press office contrived to give official press releases a markedly anti-Franco slant.909

While Hayes’ standing in Washington, and his consequent ability to derail the new hard line policy, was waning, American policymakers also had to contend with British efforts to maintain close relations with the Franco government. During 1942, the preparations for Torch had ensured that the Allies had pursued what was essentially a common policy towards the appeasement of Spain, but after the landings divergent pressures increasingly came to bear. At the Quadrant conference in August 1943, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden expressed general agreement with American efforts to be “firmer with the Spaniards,” but noted that the question was “how and when?” London was torn between supporting Washington’s line and urging caution lest the Spanish respond by cutting trade with Britain and “deny(ing) us our iron ore.”910 Not surprisingly, the latter consideration prevailed. When initial efforts to persuade Spain to

908 Hayes, Wartime Mission, 17.
910 Churchill to Eden, Feb. 18 1944, PREM 3/405/7.
end its sales of wolfram to Germany collapsed at the end of February 1944, British
pressure to accept a “slight compromise” in order to escape the “present deadlock”
increased.911

By late April 1944, and with London’s obvious reluctance to press the issue
bolstering Spanish resistance, Roosevelt conceded and accepted a compromise that
limited Spanish wolfram shipments to Germany but did not halt them.912 Despite
Churchill’s offer to take responsibility for the compromise in order to ease Washington’s
“difficulties about public opinion,” Cordell Hull continued to press for a complete
cessation of wolfram exports, his resolve stiffened by the fear that a resumption of oil
shipments to Spain without a clear-cut victory would provoke a “press outburst.”913 Hull
finally accepted the compromise solution on April 29, and the State Department issued a
curt statement announcing that a deal to limit Spanish wolfram shipments to Germany
had been struck at London’s “urgent request.”914

On the surface it looked as if Carlton Hayes had emerged victorious once again.
While some liberals attacked both Hayes and the deal, mainstream media voices hailed
the agreement as a “signal victory” and heaped lavish praise on the ambassador.915 Over
the following months Carlton Hayes registered further diplomatic successes. With the
military situation making Madrid increasingly responsive to American approaches, Hayes
was able to negotiate the expulsion of German agents from Tangier and the regularization

911 Churchill to Roosevelt, Mar, 30 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 66–68.
912 Roosevelt to Churchill, Apr. 25 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 114.
913 Churchill to Roosevelt, Apr. 22 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 107–108; Halifax
to Foreign Office, Apr. 18, 27 1944, PREM 3/505/2.
914 “Agreement with Spain on Certain Outstanding Issues, Department of State Bulletin,
May 6 1944, 412.
of commercial airline services. But despite these modest successes there could be no return to the old policy of out-and-out appeasement. The wolfram crisis marked a definitive turn in Washington’s Spanish policy, and one characterized by increasing public hostility to the Franco regime. As Leo Crowley, director of the Bureau of Economic Warfare remarked excitedly to fellow liberal Henry Morgenthau, the wolfram crisis signaled “a new change of thought over there [at the State Department].” And, in addition to its own merits, the “new change of thought” also brought Washington’s Spanish policy into line with the overall direction of American engagement in the Mediterranean in the closing stages of the war in Europe.

In the midst of the wolfram crisis the State Department’s W. Perry George, assistant chief of the Division of Western European Affairs, visited Madrid to give Hayes a comprehensive briefing on the new line. In an extensive memorandum, George situated American relations with Madrid in the context Washington’s plans for the postwar world, explaining that the United States was aiming for a democratic “rehabilitation” of the world and that by its own actions Spain had placed itself beyond this pale. Franco’s removal from office, George continued, was a necessary precondition for Spain’s reincorporation into the international community. George concluded the briefing by explaining that the question of relations with Spain was the most sensitive question facing the United States and there was a “natural shortness of

916 “Agreement Between the United States and Spain Relating to the Operation of International Air Transport Service,” Department of State Bulletin, Dec. 3 1944, 674–76.
917 Transcript of telephone call, Crowley to Morgenthau, Apr. 28 1944, Morgenthau Diary 725: 39–41, FDRL.
918 Hull to Hayes, Apr. 4 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 377–78.
919 George to Hayes, Apr. 11 1944, Hayes Papers, Box 1, Columbia University.
“temper” in domestic public discussion on the question that made it imperative to avoid any further taint of appeasement.

Grasping the direction in which Washington’s policy was heading, and speaking as a “friend of Spain,” Hayes went to great lengths to try to convince Madrid to “reorient” “before it was too late.”920 The new Spanish foreign minister, José F. de Lequerica, was eager to cooperate, but Hayes proved unable to moderate Washington’s new anti-Franco tone. Reading the writing on the wall, Hayes resigned his ambassadorship in November 1944, arguing that his “wartime mission” was complete and pleading a desire to return to academia. Typically, Hayes spent his final weeks in Spain attempting to block operation Safehaven, a joint Treasury, State Department, and Foreign Economic Administration project to track and block the dispersal of German assets in neutral countries.921 Perhaps stung by an article on American diplomacy in Spain in Harpers Magazine, Hayes quickly took a sabbatical in order to write his own account of his ambassadorship. Unlike the Harpers journalists, he was not granted access to State Department files.922

Viewed in the context of the development of Washington’s thinking on the shape of postwar reconstruction, it seems clear that the real significance of the wolfram crisis had little to do with the actual quantities of tungsten ore shipped to Germany. Indeed, and as Allied leaders well knew, the pending invasion of France would soon render further Spanish exports to Germany physically impossible. Rather, the wolfram issue

920 Hayes, notes of meeting with Jordana, June 30 1944, Hayes Papers, Box 3.
provided a suitable focus for the redefinition of American policy, both in relation to Spain and to the broader postwar order. After Hayes’ resignation, Roosevelt took the opportunity of the appointment of his successor, career diplomat Norman Armour, to develop these themes. In a letter to Armour (later published to buttress Washington’s anti-Franco *bona fides*), Roosevelt argued that the Spanish regime was a product of German and Italian aid and was therefore “patterned” along similarly “totalitarian lines.” The defeat of Germany would necessarily bring with it the “extermination of Nazi and similar ideologies” and, while the United States normally eschewed interference in the internal affairs of other countries, there could be no place in the “community of nations” for those based on “fascist principles.” Hayes’ countervailing argument that Franco’s “cautious cleverness” had served the Allies well and that it would be a grave mistake to now press for his removal was politely ignored.

Washington’s newly confrontational stance towards Spain also became one element of the deepening political divide between the United States and Britain in the closing stages of the war. The compromise outcome of the wolfram crisis allowed Washington to place the blame for the failure to achieve a total embargo squarely on London, reinforcing images of the British as conservative defenders of the old order and of America as the driving force behind a democratic new world purged of all taint of fascism. Divisions deepened in May 1944 when Churchill addressed “kindly words” to Spain in the House of Commons, recognizing Madrid’s “services” to the Allied cause and looking forward to

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923 Roosevelt to Armour, March 10 1945, PSF, Box 50, FDRL; *New York Times*, Sept. 25 1945.
924 Hayes to Roosevelt, Feb. 1945; Roosevelt to Hayes, Mar. 29 1945, PSF, Box 50, FDRL.
“increasingly good relations” in the future.⁹²⁵ In an implicit sideswipe at Washington, Churchill suggested that the war had become less “ideological” as it had progressed; in pointed reply, Roosevelt noted on behalf of an administration bent on making the war more ideological that Spain’s neutrality had always been “less than satisfactory.”⁹²⁶

This clash underscores the fact that United States’ policy towards Spain was just that—a United States policy, neither derived from, nor subordinate to, British policy. Naturally, Washington paid close attention to London’s stance, particularly in the early years of the war and during the build up to Torch. But the history of Allied relations with Franco’s Spain cannot be reduced to a history of British relations with Washington appearing in an entirely subordinate role. While during 1942 British and American policy advanced in unison—if not, given the antagonism between ambassadors Hayes and British ambassador Samuel Hoare, always in harmony—the following year was marked by intensifying discord. Washington’s demand for a total embargo on wolfram exports to Germany was unpopular in London, where it was viewed as an ideological club rather than an instrument of economic warfare. Without Washington’s insistence, there would have been no campaign for an embargo on wolfram exports.

Despite its intensified polemical opposition to Franco, Washington carefully avoided giving any indication that it favored either a return of the Republic or a resumption of the Civil War. On the contrary, as a State Department position paper put it in early 1945, the United States ought not put “much faith” in the possibility of

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establishing a “successful republic” with its apparently inevitable “leftist tendencies.”

The utility of this approach became clear at the Potsdam conference in July 1945 where, by combining verbal hostility to Franco with actual opposition to intervention in the internal affairs of (some) sovereign states, Washington was able to steer between British support for the Franco regime—suitably augmented by a return of the monarchy—and Soviet insistence on taking coordinated international action against Franco. The final Potsdam communiqué noted that the Franco dictatorship had been established with the support of the Axis powers and opposed Spanish membership of the United Nations, but failed to back this criticism with any proposal for action. This balancing act enabled Washington to step forward as the champion of a democratic postwar order without either forcing a decisive break with London or having to take action against overtly undemocratic regimes in Spain and elsewhere.

The corollary of this policy was that while Washington maintained discrete relations with former Spanish Republican leaders, American officials never gave serious consideration to working with them to launch a struggle against the Franco dictatorship. On the contrary, throughout the war American policymakers worried that a popular revolt in Spain, perhaps triggered by a German invasion or by economic hardship, would create dangerous instability, military complications, and opportunities for communist advance. Washington also made it clear that the United States would underwrite Spanish capitalism, with Carlton Hayes assuring the Spanish government that American aid

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would help Spain solve the economic problems that might otherwise “encourage the growth of communism.”

On this critical question, Washington enjoyed the implicit support of the Russian government, reflecting Stalin’s view that Spain lay unequivocally within the American sphere of influence. Moscow’s stance was of vital importance in two instances. In 1942 Moscow turned a blind eye to the Spanish government’s involvement in the dispatch of the Blue Division to the Eastern Front, thereby avoiding the prospect of a Russian declaration of war on Spain with all of its disruptive consequences for Allied diplomacy. Then in late 1944, when thousands of Republican fighters crossed the Pyrenees into Spain, Moscow refused to back a renewal of armed action against Franco and, acting through the Spanish Communist Party, did its best to tamp down the revolt. The United States, meanwhile, stood aside as the Spanish army crushed the guerillas; the insurgents, many of whom had fought with the French resistance were, Hayes assured Roosevelt, no better than “cattle rustlers” and “thieves.”

4.7) The “Liberal Turn” and its Economic Consequences.

Washington’s policy towards the Franco government in World War II has been described as a series of lurches from “war-inspired idealism” (opposition) to “realism” (accommodation) and back again. Yet this study of American policy shows that “idealism” was by no means the only impulse “inspired” by the war, and that there was

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929 Hayes to Jordana, Oct. 21, 1943, FRUS 1943: 2, 623.
930 See Preston, Franco, 518; Hayes to Roosevelt, June 26 1945, PSF Box 50, FDRL.
more than one zigzag in its unfolding course. In an effort to limit the scope of the European war in 1939 and 1940, Washington attempted to use trade to appease the newly victorious Franco regime. Then in early 1941 this “realist” policy was terminated amidst a flurry of domestic criticism and, in the context of Roosevelt’s campaign to paint the world crisis in sharp ideological colors, replaced by trade sanctions and vocal anti-Francoism that came close to rupturing diplomatic relations. Another sharp turn to “realism” unfolded in 1942 as Washington prepared for the invasion of North Africa and was registered in a policy of unabashed appeasement ably executed by Carlton Hayes. Then, by mid-1943 the global turn in the military situation enabled the United States to begin sketching the lines of postwar reconstruction, projecting a new world order based on democratic values and free trade and with the United States at its center. This, in turn, necessitated drawing a clear line against the Franco regime. Given Carlton Hayes’ opposition to the new course, this policy transition was a long and difficult one, but it was finally signaled by efforts to stop the export of wolfram to Germany in early 1944 and cemented by Hayes’ resignations and the appointment of Ambassador Armour.

In this light, it is more accurate to see both “realism” (or “appeasement”) and “idealism” (or anti-Francoism) as different phases and successive aspects of a single evolving policy whose core was pragmatic, rather than ideological. While liberals both in the media and Washington maintained a constant critique of appeasement, their efforts alone were not responsible for the anti-Franco tacks adopted in early 1941 and mid–1943. Rather their critique served to popularize a course that the Administration, for entirely pragmatic reasons, had determined upon. When “realism” was in the ascendancy, in 1939–40 and again during 1942 and much of 1943, these domestic critics were
effectively marginalized. Moreover, this zigzag course makes it clear that “idealism” was not in some way the “real” character of Rooseveltian foreign policy, buried for periods by more pragmatic considerations but re-emerging when the administration finally won the “luxury” of “indulging” in it: “realism” and “idealism” were equally Rooseveltian traits, deployable according to specific circumstances.932

In broad outline, the evolution of Washington’s Spanish policy parallels the developments in relation to Italy and France. In Italy, initial State Department projections for a post-Mussolini regime built around the monarchy, the army, and the upper layers of the bourgeoisie, were progressively discarded as the large-scale re-entry into politics of the Italian people made it clear that a significantly more broadly-based and liberal political solution was necessary. The opportunity to implement such a course arrived—not coincidentally—with the capture of Rome in June 1944, an event that in turn opened the door to greater American political and economic involvement in Italy. In relation to France, Washington’s pragmatic appeasement, directed firstly towards Vichy and then to Darlan and Giraud, was only gradually replaced by a policy of support for the French Committee for National Liberation and, even more reluctantly, for its leader Charles de Gaulle. But, if Washington lagged in responding to the new political reality represented by the formation of the FCNL, it displayed no such reticence when it came to rearming and reequipping a substantial French army under de Gaulle’s command in North Africa. This dual policy of extending military support to the FCNL while withholding political recognition carried Washington into the invasion of southern France in the summer of 1944 and facilitated, courtesy of the enormous armed might marshaled

in the Mediterranean by the United States, the establishment of a post-occupation government in Paris beholden to America.

The broad evolution of American policy in the Mediterranean signaled by these parallel developments in Italy, France, and Spain can be loosely described as a “liberal turn,” and by the mid-1944 it had begun to impart a progressive ideological coloration to Washington’s approach to the entire region. With hindsight, and since the liberal turn brought the expression of Washington’s Mediterranean policy more into conformity with the ideological war aims presented in the Atlantic Charter, this might not seem so remarkable. But in contrast to Washington’s previous political relationships in the region, marked by the appeasement of Franco, relations with Vichy and Darlan, and support for Badoglio and Victor Emmanuel, the shift was dramatic and profound. The liberal turn thus enabled Washington to conclude its wartime engagement with the Mediterranean by putting the compromises characteristic of the early years of the war behind it and by seizing the moral high ground. The actual oscillation between pragmatism and “idealism” had not, of course, come to an end, as the escalating covert intervention in Italian politics and the rehabilitation of Franco in the name of “Western” security would soon reveal, but the place of the Mediterranean in the construction of the “Good War” was secured.

None of this would have been possible without the agreement of Moscow and, particularly in France and Italy, the active assistance of the local Communist Parties. Once the European continent had been divided into spheres of influence, tentatively at Tehran and with more assurance at Yalta, Washington could proceed more or less secure in the knowledge that it would not face the workers revolts it had feared and anticipated
for so long. This assurance was particularly important in Italy, where the anticipation that the “wind from the North” would be controlled by its own leaders allowed Washington to press ahead with the civilianization of Italian politics while releasing the combat units necessary to spearhead the invasion of southern France. In France, meanwhile, collaboration with the PCF was critical in enabling the FCNL to master potentially turbulent Marseilles and to integrate the fighters of the Maquis into its ranks, while in Spain the PCE played its part in preventing a resurgence in Republican activity at the end of the war.

The natural concomitant of the “extraordinary confluence of Soviet-American strategic interests” registered at Tehran was the declining influence of the Anglo-American axis.\(^{933}\) It is not surprising, then, that every aspect of the “liberal turn” was carried through in the face of British opposition: in Italy, the British sought to maintain a political setup centered on the King and Badoglio and, when this failed, to block “civilianization” and “rehabilitation”; in Spain, London strove to maintain closer ties with the Franco regime; and in France, Churchill conducted a desperate struggle against Anvil/Dragoon. As well as their failed efforts to block American policy in these key areas, London also saw its own hopes for the development of the war in the Mediterranean, from plans for extended operations in the Aegean to the fanciful “pipe-dream” of a drive through the Ljubljana Gap to Vienna, scuppered by Washington with the backing of Moscow. The fierce debate over Anvil/Dragoon in the summer of 1944 encapsulated several of these elements, and Washington’s complete and unambiguous

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\(^{933}\) Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 167.
victory in this critical battle with its British ally demonstrates the degree to which the Americans had indeed emerged as the “Mediterraneans” by the summer of 1944.

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The “liberal turn” in the overall tenor of Washington’s political relationship with the countries of the Western Mediterranean unfolded alongside and in connection with the beginnings of a profound shift in American economic relations with the region. From the summer of 1944, and in conformity with the political shifts described above, Washington began to press for a loosening of wartime controls over commercial activity and to advocate a return to its favored policy of free trade. This would not, however, be a simple return to the status quo ante. With the economies of both allies and enemies weakened by war, with the old structures of imperial control damaged beyond repair, and with American diplomats and businessmen reveling in a range of commercial contacts unavailable to them before the war, the United States was poised to emerge as the predominant economic power in the Western Mediterranean. Moreover, in this context, American-dominated “free” trade and “Open Door” market access would serve to help restructure the economics of the region under American leadership and for America’s benefit.

The immediate agent of this shift was American attorney, former diplomat, and expert on international trade William S. Culbertson, who arrived in Algiers on August 9, 1944 on the first leg of a Mission that would take him through French North Africa, the Middle East, Italy and France.\(^{934}\) Jointly sponsored by the State Department and the

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Foreign Economic Administration, Culbertson’s team included businessmen representing the National Foreign Trade Council and leading exporters in the drug, chemical, automotive, and steel industries. A State Department press release announced that the Mission’s brief was to review economic conditions throughout the Mediterranean and to make proposals on the necessary steps to “restore” trade to normal “commercial channels.” The barely-concealed subtext was that these steps would involve a rapid and decisive move away from the bureaucratically controlled and centrally planned trade organizations established earlier in the war and a return to unregulated free trade: throughout the Mediterranean, as in Italy, policymakers saw postwar conditions taking shape before the war itself was over. As an ardent free trader, Secretary of State Cordell Hull gave enthusiastic support to the Culbertson Mission, underscoring its importance by persuading President Roosevelt to accord its leader ambassadorial status.

The Culbertson Mission signaled the beginning of an important shift in America’s economic relationship with the countries throughout the region, and in doing so it registered the initial accomplishments of Washington’s grand strategy in the Mediterranean. In the first two years of fighting, the “gales of war” had indeed, in Lloyd Gardener’s memorable phrase, “blow[n] open the door,” paving the way for the emergence American-dominated systems of bi-lateral and multi-lateral “free” trade throughout the Mediterranean. But at the same time strategic and political imperatives had led Washington to participate in the most un-free of regulatory bodies, the Middle East Supply Center (MESC), the North Africa Economic Board (NAEB), and their

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935 *Department of State Bulletin*, July 30 1944.
various subgroups and offshoots, as well as in numerous bi-lateral Lend-Lease agreements and in tightly-controlled trade with Spain. In all of these areas, and in contradiction to what were often seen as the basic principle of American capitalism, the government itself had taken a leading role. That does not mean that American participation in these forms of centralized and planned economic activity was inimical to American business interests. It was not. In fact, and while individual businessmen chafed against the restrictions imposed on unfettered free trade, from the standpoint of America’s overall economic interest the contacts made and experience gained by participation in bodies such as MESC and the NAEB were invaluable when it came time to shift to less regulated relationships.

By 1943 the Middle East Supply Center had come, as its leading historian Martin Wilmington put it, to “dominate the entire Middle East economy.”936 Established in Cairo in April 1941, the original function of the Supply Center was to ensure that in addition to shipping assigned to the movement of soldiers and military supplies, sufficient bulk transport capacity was set aside to provide a bare minimum of civilian goods to the countries of the Middle East. London’s motives had little to do with philanthropy, stemming instead from a fear that food shortages would reinforce anti-British sentiment throughout the region. The United States joined MESC in April 1942, dispatching former head of the wartime Export Control Office Frederick Winant and a staff of three drawn from the Board of Economic Warfare, the Lend-Lease Administration and the Department of Agriculture to Cairo. While their representation would always be numerically limited—the British had over one hundred officers working

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at MESC headquarters—the Americans, backed by war economy that was beginning to hit its stride, had a substantial impact on policy. As well as filling orders for much-needed civilian goods with U.S. products, the Americans also promoted intra-regional trade and import substitution, establishing local manufacturing and assembly plants using American machinery and know-how.

As American participation in MESC expanded, American diplomatic posts throughout the Middle East got used to hosting delegations interested in economic matters from a broad range of government agencies along with a “proliferation of plenipotentiaries, roving reporters, and visiting Senators.” Their ranks included former textile executive, reserve officer with OSS connections, and personal friend of President Roosevelt’s Colonel Harold Hoskins, who headed an economic mission to a number of Middle Eastern capitals in the summer of 1942. The Hoskins Mission was initiated as part of a range of measures in response to the military threat to Britain’s hold on the Middle East posed by Rommel’s advance on Egypt. Discussion in Washington over the dispatch of the Hoskins Mission revealed what would become typical fault lines, with the War Department arguing against deeper American involvement in the region by pointing to the problem of operating in a nominally British theater, while the President insisted on going ahead. Yet again, American engagement was being driven forward from the White House. Having brushed aside opposition to the mission from both the War Department and the British, Hoskins’s brief was expanded to include the dissemination of OWI

937 Wilmington, Middle East Supply Center, 60.
material designed to demonstrate to the native population that American interest in the regions was not “tarnished by any material motives or interests.”\textsuperscript{939} “No other member of the United Nations,” Cordell Hull added pointedly, “could make such a claim.”

In September 1943, Washington further strengthened its diplomatic standing in the Middle East by posting former Dean of the Harvard Law School James Landis to Cairo as head new American Economic Mission to the Middle East, (AEMME) and as chief U.S. representative to the Middle East Supply Center. To emphasize Washington’s increasing engagement with the region, Landis was also accorded the personal rank of Minister, placing him on a diplomatic level with the powerful British Minster of State resident in Cairo. Over fifty American officials were assigned to work under Landis in Cairo, many of whom assumed leading positions within the expanding MESC organization. Yet even as Washington expanded its participation in MESC, officials were preparing to take American economic policy in the region in a new direction. Even as he arrived in Cairo to lead MESC, Landis announced, “all policies must have long-range objectives [that] go beyond immediate war objectives and into a period of peace.”\textsuperscript{940} Landis and his superiors in Washington clearly believed that as the tides of war ebbed away from the Middle East, the time was coming to move beyond the constraints of wartime planning and to return to unregulated free trade. As head of the American Economic Mission Landis was soon acting on this policy, working with Ambassador Alexander Kirk to set up a series of American-Egyptian joint ventures. To London’s chagrin, these ventures amounted to a veritable “New Deal” for Egypt, opening

\textsuperscript{939} Hull to Winant, Aug. 27 1942, \textit{FRUS 1942}, 4: 27.
\textsuperscript{940} Quoted in Gardner, \textit{Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy}. 221.
the doors to American investment while undercutting British plans to preserve a semi-colonial market for its own manufacturing industry. The change of course signaled by Landis’ appointment did not mean that American officials concluded that it had been a mistake for the United States to participate in the centrally-planned economic order established by MESC in the first place. On the contrary, American participation in MESC proved invaluable not only in helping to head off economic crises that would have been detrimental to the Allied war effort, but also—and as London had feared—in preparing the next steps in American economic penetration of the region. It was also lucrative: in Egypt alone American trade increased eightfold in this period. But as the direct Axis threat to the Middle East waned, private business interests could once again come to the fore, and American business could begin to edge the British out of what were becoming critical markets in a critical region. Moreover, as private business pressed forward into areas previously outside of American trade networks, it would, as in Egypt, receive a great deal of support from State Department and FEA officials who had acquired considerable local knowledge through their work in MESC and through the far-flung distribution of Lend-Lease supplies.

The first open break between the Americans and the British-dominated MESC came in January 1944 when the Foreign Economic Administration, citing practices that were held to discriminate against American goods, denied the Supply Center jurisdiction over the export of American textiles to Middle Eastern countries not under direct British

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control. Writing to James Landis in early March 1944, President Roosevelt underscored this approach. In a striking leap of policy definition, Roosevelt argued that the United States had a “vital interest” in the Middle East and that therefore the “special privileges” previously enjoyed by the British had “little place in the type of world for which this war is being fought.”943 In this context, the President reaffirmed Washington’s commitment to free trade, instructing Landis to oppose any “discrimination” in the “exchange of goods and resources.” With a nod to the importance of the MESC, the President also urged Landis to strengthen “warm and cooperative relations with our Allies” and to avoid giving the impression that the United States was “steal[ing] the economic position away from other nations,” but the overall thrust of his argument clearly implied a shift away from centralized planning and towards a regime of free trade in which the United States could be expected to enjoy significant competitive advantages.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Washington faced a broadly similar set of issues with the North African Economic Board (NAEB) in the Maghreb. Here American officials faced the double challenge of shifting responsibility for the receipt and distribution of Lend-Lease supplies onto the CFLN while simultaneously preparing for a return to unregulated free trade that would, given the relative health of the American and French economies, necessarily favor the former. Essentially the United States wanted to extricate itself from the business of directly underwriting French colonial administration—particularly, as one American official reported, as the French were becoming “increasingly sensitive to

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American civilian operations”—while leveraging the experience and contacts gained through the NAEB to strengthen American trade with North Africa and with France.⁹⁴⁴

Part of the problem that Washington faced in making the transition from regulation to free trade was that, as with all well-organized bureaucracies, both the Middle East Supply Center and the North African Economic Board had developed a life and momentum of their own that militated against making a clean break. MESC had its stalwart defenders, both in London, where officials saw it as a bulwark against unrestrained American economic penetration, and amongst its own staff members, many of whom cherished notions of ongoing regional planning in the Middle East. For its part, the NAEB had also evolved into a highly sophisticated moderator of regional trade. At its April 1944 meeting alone, for example, the NAEB’s Inter-Territorial Sub Committee discussed the export of Italian hops to Tunisia to brew beer for British soldiers; the import of chemical fertilizers and tartaric acid into Sicily for the “olive oil campaign”; the export from Corsica of oak bark and salt; the shipment of fishing nets to Sardinia; and the provision of drilling equipment for Tripolitania.⁹⁴⁵ These issues, discussed in minute detail, provide graphic evidence of the NAEB’s bureaucratic momentum, for here was a body that clearly saw itself as assuming responsibility for civilian trade throughout the western Mediterranean.

If this degree of economic micro-management was not enough to alarm free trade advocates with its implied challenge to—as Roosevelt put it— the “type of world for which this war is being fought,” then evidence of a convergence between MESC and the

⁹⁴⁴ Watkins to Stettinius, Aug. 31 1943, RG 169, NAEB, Box 17, NARA.
⁹⁴⁵ NAEB Inter-Territorial Sub Committee minutes, Apr. 5 1944, RG 169, NAEB, Box 14, NARA.
NAEB surely was. In June 1943 a top-level MESC delegation arrived at AFHQ Algiers to begin a series of discussions with NAEB officials with a view to integrating the work of the two bodies.\textsuperscript{946} The initial meeting consisted largely of an exchange of information on the functioning of the two bodies, but the underlying push towards integration implied an ever-greater degree of governmental oversight and planning of trade throughout the Mediterranean and into the Middle East. Moreover, as Allied military advances increasingly limited Axis capacity to interfere with shipping in the Mediterranean, the prospects for tying the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East into an integrated trade system would improve dramatically. To American business interests, and to many American officials steeped in the principles of free trade, this vision of sprawling networks of centralized economic planning stretching the length of the Mediterranean can hardly have been an appealing one.

The dispatch of the Culbertson Mission to the Mediterranean in the summer of 1944 signaled Washington’s determination to break from the strictures of wartime centralization and to prepare, as Culbertson’s instructions put it, for the resumption of “bilateral trade through commercial channels.”\textsuperscript{947} The State Department instructed its officials in the Mediterranean to support the work of the mission by facilitating Culbertson’s efforts to secure an immediate increase in trade with the United States while working on “long-range plans” for closer bi-lateral commercial relations.\textsuperscript{948} After a series of “mutually helpful and cordial” meetings with French officials in the Maghreb, Culbertson and his delegation moved on to Cairo and the Middle East in mid-

\textsuperscript{946} NAEB/MESC joint meeting, minutes, June 27 1943, RG 169, NAEB, Box 14, NARA.  
\textsuperscript{947} Draft orders to Culbertson Mission, July 14 1944, 033.1151R/7-1444 RG 59, NARA.  
\textsuperscript{948} State Department to Chapin (Algiers), Aug. 2 1944, 033.1151R/8-244 RG 59, NARA.
September. Reviewing Culbertson’s report on the situation in French North Africa, American officials there quickly embraced his conclusions, with J. Rives Childs writing from Tangier to endorse the “decentralization” of American trade with the region, the “liquidation” of the North Africa Economic Board, and a rapid and “orderly return to private trade.”

After completing his work in the Middle East and Italy (discussed below,) William Culbertson traveled to Paris to present his conclusions on the organization of American trade with France and French North Africa directly to the newly recognized French government. While the mission had been in the Middle East Washington had endorsed its proposals for North Africa, and Secretary of State Stettinius instructed the American embassy in Paris to work closely with the traveling ambassador. In particular, American officials were to prepare for Culbertson’s arrival by presenting an aide mémoire to the French government urging it to “assist in the resumption of private trade [by] promoting direct contact between U.S. and French buyers and suppliers” and by lifting travel restrictions on American businessmen operating in North Africa. Behind the felicitous language urging a restoration of “normal commercial relationships,” Washington made it clear that the provision of Lend-Lease civilian supplies to North Africa would end by June 30 1945, and that the promotion of dollar-earning exports from the French colonies was therefore a matter of some urgency.

Culbertson’s meeting with Herve Alphand of the French Foreign Ministry on December 16 1944 necessarily touched on general questions both of Franco-American

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949 Cole (Rabat) to State Department, Aug. 30 1944, 033.1151R/8-3044 RG59, NARA.
950 Childs to State Department, Oct. 9 1944, 033.1151R/10-944 RG 59, NARA.
951 Stettinius to U.S. embassy in Paris, Dec. 1 1944, 033.1151R/12-144 RG 59, NARA.
economic relations and of direct American trade with the French empire and, as Washington no doubt anticipated, Washington’s proposals for a rapid liberalization of trade with the colonies served to pry open broader political issues. Alphand, Culbertson reported, displayed an “emotional concern” over the condition of the French economy, noting the devastating impact of war and German occupation and complaining at length about France’s disadvantageous economic position vis-à-vis that of the United States. Culbertson came away from the meeting deeply concerned about the new government’s plans for the French economy—he detected a dangerously socialistic impulse in plans for “government trade and government industry”—but heartened by Alphand’s assurance that Paris favored an “enlargement of the open-door regime in the colonies.” This stance, Culbertson concluded, reflected a “tendency [that] we should do all we can to encourage.”

Applying the same basic approach in the Middle East, Culbertson quickly concluded that the MESC had outlived its usefulness and should be disbanded forthwith. Having traveled extensively throughout the Middle East, mission members praised the Supply Center’s work in managing the distribution of scarce resources during the acute military crises of 1941 and 1942, and welcomed its provision technical support for agricultural, industrial, and public health, projects throughout the region. But Culbertson and his collaborators agreed that centralized economic controls were now becoming a break on American commercial interests, particularly in the increasingly critical areas of oil and civil aviation. Culbertson also warned that any continuation into the postwar period of the currency and exchange mechanisms managed by MESC would only serve

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952 Culbertson, memorandum, Dec. 18 1944, 033.1151R/12-3144 RG 59, NARA.
to tie the Middle East into the “sterling area,” and hence into British-dominated trade networks, to the detriment of American business. Addressing this question, the American petroleum attaché in Cairo warned Culbertson that the postwar maintenance of the sterling area would serve to reinforce British control over the great majority of Middle Eastern oil. Reviewing the long-term importance of Persian Gulf oil with great prescience, the attaché outlined a number of steps to weaken Britain’s hold on the region that may have contributed to Culbertson’s decision to press for the rapid dissolution of MESC.953

The Culbertson Mission was in the Middle East at a critical time in the development of American interest in the region’s vast oil reserves. In early 1944, a congressional committee headed by Senator Harry S. Truman had warned that with domestic reserves dwindling, Middle Eastern oil was destined to become increasingly central to American economic and strategic interests. Acting on this argument, Petroleum Reserves Corporation (PRC) head and veteran New Dealer Harold Ickes proposed the construction of a government-owned pipeline running over 1,000 miles from Saudi Arabia to the eastern Mediterranean at Alexandria. Ickes’ plan alarmed both the American oil companies, who saw in it unwarranted governmental intrusion in private business and, more importantly, the British government, which recognized it as a threat to their control of Middle Eastern oil. Ickes dropped the plan in June 1944, but not before a testy exchange between Churchill and Roosevelt that saw the British premier finally accepting the President’s assurances that he wasn’t “making sheep’s eyes” at British oilfields in Iraq and Iran. In exchange Churchill promised not to “horn in” on American

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953 Leavell to State Department, Nov. 2 1944, 033.1151R/11-244 RG 59, NARA.
interests in Saudi Arabia, thereby paving the way for the signing of the Anglo-American Oil Agreement in August 1944.\textsuperscript{954}

The Anglo-American Oil Agreement was an anodyne compromise, simultaneously and contradictorily recognizing both Britain’s preeminent position in the Middle East and the “Open Door” right of any American company seeking to operate in the region to be accorded “equal opportunity.”\textsuperscript{955} The agreement was in effect simply a way-marker registering the shifting sands of Anglo-American relations in the Middle East oilfields, and as such it failed to satisfy Congress, which refused to ratify it. The Oil Agreement’s importance in terms of the Mediterranean—and particularly in terms of the work of the Culbertson Mission there—was that it signified the growing interconnection between American interest in Middle Eastern oil on the one hand and the emergence American economic power in the eastern Mediterranean on the other. Moreover, “American” interests encompassed both the strategic and geopolitical concerns of policymakers who increasingly saw the Middle East—and its connection to the Mediterranean—as a pivotal region in world politics, and the aspirations of the American oil companies who wanted to ship Middle East oil—via the Mediterranean—to the fuel-starved European market.

In 1947 these intersecting interests would eventually result in the construction of the privately funded Trans-Arabian Pipeline, or “Tapline”, from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean port of Sidon, Lebanon. The construction of Tapline finally realized Ickes’s wartime vision of a direct link between the Gulf oilfields and the Mediterranean,

\textsuperscript{954} Roosevelt to Churchill, Mar. 3 1944; Churchill to Roosevelt, Mar. 4 1944, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 3: 14, 17.
\textsuperscript{955} See Douglas Little, \textit{American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 50–51.
and was designed to facilitate the export of American-controlled Middle East oil to Europe. This important development was prepared politically during the war by Washington’s August 1944 decision to recognize the independence of Syria and Lebanon from France. In turn, and as Lloyd Gardner points out, this decision was explicitly designed to limit the re-establishment of French control in the Levant and to jam open the door into the local economy blown in by the blasts of war. Culbertson’s Mission, and in particular his decision to press for the rapid dissolution of MESC, thus emerges as one element in a broader American effort to end wartime economic regulation in order to establish “open door” systems of free trade in which, as both Washington and American business leaders assumed, the United States would be preponderant.

Having completed their business in the Middle East, Culbertson and his associates flew on to Italy, arriving at AFHQ Caserta on November 15 and then establishing a temporary office in Rome. In an intense series of meetings over the next two weeks, Culbertson’s team met with Allied officers at AFHQ; American members of the Advisory Council and the Allied Commission; and Italian government officials and businessmen, before drafting a detailed fifty-page report on their findings. The speed with which the Mission drew its conclusions suggests that in many ways the brief of the Culbertson was to oversee, approve, and accelerate a course of action already underway as the economic consequences of the “New Deal” announced at Hyde Park in September began to unfold. Supplemental instructions to Culbertson from the State Department received on October 18 pointed in precisely this direction, ordering the mission to examine the steps necessary

956 Culbertson, “Report from Italy,” Nov. 30 1944, 033.1151R/12-1944, RG 59, NARA.
to secure a rapid “resumption of trade to and from the United States through commercial channels.”

As prompted by the State Department, the Culbertson Mission favored a transfer of the locus of economic decision-making away from the Allied Commission and into the hands of the Italian government. Drawing an explicit parallel with the MESC, Culbertson argued that the AC’s Economic Section had served as a “useful agency in a war economy” but that it would inevitably “develop difficulties upon the resumption of commercial trade.” Culbertson’s report concluded that the Economic Section should be dissolved as soon as political conditions permitted, and that in the meantime the civilianization of the AC should be accelerated. Observing that “other governments, and especially the British” were also taking an “affirmative interest in the economic activities of their nationals” in Italy, Culbertson also urged that a number of civilian specialists should be recruited to strengthen the economic aspects of the embassy’s work and to ensure that American economic interests were not shouldered aside. Culbertson had also been asked to investigate whether or not the U.S. Commercial Corporation should function in Italy in an interim capacity preparatory to a final peace agreement and the full resumption of free trade, but the Mission rejected this proposal, citing the danger of introducing yet another layer of bureaucracy.

With typical American brio, the Culbertson Mission’s report painted a picture of a postwar Italy, stripped of its Fascist “pretensions” to be a great industrial power and integrated into the American-dominated international economy on the strength of its

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957 Ibid., 1. 
958 Ibid., 4. 
959 Ibid., 50–51.
“agriculture and handicrafts.” While lacking the punitive dimensions of Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau’s contemporary plans for the deindustrialization of Germany, the familial similarity between it and the vision of an Italy producing handicrafts and agricultural produce and dependent on the United States for industrial goods is not hard to discern. This vision also conformed to a broader American narrative of Italian incapacity that imagined a nation more at home with singing and ice cream that with either war or industrial work. Acting on these lines, by the early December 1944 the State Department was already contemplating a temporary commercial agreement between the United States and Italy that would provide for “non-discriminating trade” between the two countries and pave the way for the full restitution of “normal” commercial channels. For Washington, at least, the postwar world was advancing apace.

Not everyone in the Allied command structure was enthusiastic about the work of the Culbertson Mission. After attending a reception for William Culbertson hosted by Ambassador Kirk in Rome, the ever-acerbic Harold Macmillan simply recorded meeting a “rather dreary old man on some vague mission here.” For once, however, Macmillan’s normally perceptive grasp of American policy seems to have failed him: while Culbertson proposed no dramatic new initiatives, his mission nevertheless signaled a broad turn in American economic policy throughout the Mediterranean, and one with far-reaching political consequences. From North Africa, to the Middle East, to France and Italy, by the summer of 1944 American policymakers were ready to move away from

960 Ibid., 6.
962 Macmillan, War Diaries, 588.
the highly regulated mechanisms of wartime trade and towards a forceful reassertion of the Open Door and of free trade. Despite their differences over whether to approach the countries of the Middle East on a regional or a bi-lateral basis, all policymakers agreed on the necessity of integrating the entire area into the newly-emerging and American-dominated world economic system. Given the new realities of power created in the Mediterranean by American arms, this effort would unfold under highly favorable conditions: Culbertson’s own assertion that his mission had left a “deep and favorable impression” that would help “substantially to build America’s economic future in this region” rested on Washington’s military, diplomatic and political accomplishments in the Mediterranean.\footnote{Culbertson to Stettinius, Nov. 15 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 5: 40.} Under these circumstances it is hardly surprising that Culbertson’s report was well received in both government and business circles and that it served to mark a major turning point in American policy.

The results of this shift soon became evident. In all the countries of the Mediterranean basin, the last years of the war and the first years of the postwar were marked by a significant expansion in economic relations with the United States. American exports to Italy, for example, rose from an average of just over $141 million in the years 1926–1930 (the last half-decade before the onset of depression and war) to $456 million in 1951.\footnote{\textit{Statistical Yearbook} (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1939, 1948, 1952).} Trade with French North Africa also posted significant increases over the same period, with exports to Algeria and Tunisia going from just over $8 million to nearly $29 million while those to Morocco jumped from $3.6 million to $31.7 million. A similar pattern could be traced in relation to Greece, Turkey, and, as we have already
seen, Egypt. Even in Yugoslavia, where Tito’s relative independence from Russian control permitted continued trade with the west, American exports leapt from just over $1 million in 1926–1930 to $119.6 million in 1951.

As elsewhere in Western Europe, throughout the Mediterranean the “soft power” of American goods and of American culture followed closely behind the tanks and aircraft of American hard power. And everywhere American aid provided the initial articulating link between them, with American supplies of food and fuel, the country of origin clearly emblazoned upon them, spreading from the Alps to the Atlas. America stood not only for a break with old-style European imperialism but also for modernity itself; in Italy, as Stephen Gundle notes, American soldiers appeared as representatives of a “more advanced and prosperous world that in its tangible aspects was immensely attractive.” For a while even the Italian Communist Party welcomed the “DDT, chocolate, chewing gum and nylon stockings” of Moscow’s American ally, and by the time it began to contest American influence in the “cultural sphere” in the late 1940s it faced an uphill battle against visions of capitalist progress and modernity driven by Hollywood and reinforced by the daily presence of American commodities.

In retrospect America’s economic penetration of the Mediterranean in the late-war and early postwar seems straightforward, even inevitable. American armies crushed the Axis powers and then, with its enemies devastated and its allies weakened, American business helped—as Nelson Rockefeller put it—to “raise living standards” while earning

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“substantial profits.”\textsuperscript{966} With the help of American diplomats and benefiting from the broad range of commercial contacts developed through the distribution of wartime aid, American business could simultaneously advance American commodities, culture, and the whole modernizing vision of Americanism. By way of an example, historian Victoria de Grazia details the efforts of Rockefeller’s International Basic Economic Corporation (IBEC), backed by American ambassador Clare Luce Booth, to establish a chain of supermarkets in Italy. IBEC’s bold and commercially successful project challenged long-established traditions of food purchase and preparation, representing the interlinked advance of American economic interests and American culture. But it is worth remembering that without the sustained deployment of American arms—that is, in its broadest sense, without a Mediterranean strategy—none of this would have been possible.

\textsuperscript{966} Victoria de Grazia, \textit{Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through 20\textsuperscript{th}-Century Europe} (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2005), 377.
Part Five

“Balkan-phobia?”: American Policy Towards Yugoslavia and Greece, 1941–1945

Most of Washington’s active wartime interest in the Mediterranean, and the great bulk of its actual military engagement, was concentrated in the sea’s western basin and the countries that surround it—Italy, the Maghreb, Spain, and France. This fact, combined with often-restated opposition of the Joint Chiefs to any American military involvement east of Italy—and hence deeper into the Mediterranean “suction pump”—led many contemporaries, like General Henry Wilson, to conclude that American policy was marked by “consistent Balkan-phobia.” Historian Richard Leighton underscored the point, arguing that Washington recoiled from the Balkans with “superstitious dread.” But, while it is true that beyond the deployment of airpower in support of the British in Egypt and in attacks on oil refineries in Rumania there were no substantial American operations in the eastern Mediterranean, when the diplomatic and economic aspects of American grand strategy are considered, a very different picture emerges. American wartime involvement in the eastern Mediterranean, if low-key and at least partially hidden from public view, was both persistent and effective. Moreover, while initially underwriting the re-establishment of British hegemony in the region, Washington’s wartime engagement simultaneously prepared the way for the postwar emergence of American power.

American strategy in the eastern Mediterranean, in common with that in the inland sea as a whole, did not begin with a master plan, but emerged piecemeal and pragmatically during the course of the war itself. Moreover, while hindsight plays a major role in shaping later perceptions of the limits on American involvement in the Mediterranean, until the Tehran conference it was by no means clear that there would indeed be no major U.S. military intervention in the Balkans. Before Torch, for example, President Roosevelt urged the Joint Chiefs to consider Mediterranean options for exploiting the anticipated success of the landings, including by a “forward movement” into the Balkans.\textsuperscript{969} In July 1943, as the crisis of the Mussolini government appeared to open up major new strategic options, Roosevelt endorsed comments by General Smuts pointing towards “offensives […] eastward to the Balkans and the Black Sea,” and later in the month he called for the dispatch of “agents, commandos, and supplies […] into Greece, Albania, and Yugoslavia” in preparation for the collapse of the entire Axis position in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{970} Given his role in shaping Washington’s Mediterranean strategy, Roosevelt’s interest—or “flirtation,” as Robert Dallek has it— in the Balkans should not be taken lightly.\textsuperscript{971}

President Roosevelt continued to canvass the possibility of large-scale American operations in the Balkans until at least September 1943, when he instructed George Marshall to dispatch seven additional divisions to the Mediterranean. This request, clearly made with an eye to Balkan operations, foundered on the Joint Chief’s reluctance to take any action that might prejudice the cross-Channel invasion. In the aftermath of

\textsuperscript{969} See Matloff and Snell, \textit{Strategic Planning}
\textsuperscript{970} Churchill to Roosevelt July 17 1943; Roosevelt to Churchill July 19 1943, Roosevelt to Churchill July 30 1943, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 2: 331–332, 362.
\textsuperscript{971} Dalleck, \textit{Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy}, 410–411.
this rebuff, and faced with the intransigent refusal of the JCS to countenance any substantial operations east of Italy, Roosevelt began to abandon the idea of large scale action in the Balkans. Yet even at Tehran the President’s interest in Balkan operations resurfaced. In the discussions on the *Iowa* on the way to Tehran, Roosevelt had argued that with the Red Army poised to enter Rumania, Moscow might welcome an Allied expeditionary force advancing from the Adriatic to help it “defeat Germany forthwith.”

While Marshall squashed this suggestion with a firm “we must see this Balkan matter as settled,” Roosevelt refloated the proposal at Tehran. Despite garnering Churchill’s backing and alarming his advisers—Harry Hopkins scribbled a despairing note to Admiral King asking, “who’s promoting this Adriatic business that the President continually returns to?”—the proposal was firmly rejected by Stalin. Roosevelt did not raise the question of substantial American operations in the Balkans again.

If Tehran marked the point at which President Roosevelt finally, and in the context of the emerging new U.S.-Soviet strategic framework, yielded to the determined opposition of the Joint Chiefs and abandoned the idea of American military action in the Balkans, it by no means signaled a broader withdrawal of American interest in the region. Not that American policy announced itself as such; as elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Washington’s approach was frequently half-hidden and wrapped in apparent ambiguity. President Roosevelt himself often presented a façade of studied indifference to Balkan affairs, telling Harold Ickes that the best solution to the struggle unfolding in Greece would be to “give every Greek a rifle and let them fight it out,” and joking with Robert Murphy that a wall should be built around Yugoslavia until the competing factions had

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973 Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 780.
fought it out, whereupon the United States would “do business with the winner.”

Beneath this cynical exterior, however, Washington was keenly interested in Balkan affairs. The problem was not lack of policy, but of an effective instrument for its execution: if the Americans were to forego the use of military power to vie for influence in the Balkans, then in the short term their interests would lie in ensuring that the British remained the predominant power in the region—or at least in those parts of it that might remain outside of Russian control.

The initial division of Europe into postwar spheres of influence at Tehran would frame American, British, and Russian policies towards Yugoslavia for the remainder of the war, and the fact that President Roosevelt finally stopped lurching back to some scheme for American intervention in the Balkans was itself a reflection of this new geopolitical reality. During the course of 1944 the initial discussions at Teheran were reaffirmed and codified, and in late May Churchill informed Roosevelt that “as a practical matter” the British government had proposed to the Russians that London should “take the lead” in Greek affairs while Moscow did likewise in Rumania. Noting that this division corresponded to the existing military situation, Churchill disingenuously assured the President that there was no intent to “carve up the Balkans into spheres of influence.” State Department concerns that Churchill was doing just that forced the prime minister to suggest that these “arrangements” be adopted initially only for a “trial

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974 Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 505; *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 220.
of three months,” and on this basis Roosevelt approved the proposed division of the Balkans.\textsuperscript{976}

Washington’s agreement to this implausible three-month trial period—were they supposed to take it back if it didn’t work—pointed inexorably towards American acceptance of a clearly defined division of the Balkans into spheres of influence. Not that everyone in the Administration was happy with this development, with ardent free trader Cordell Hull sounding repeated warnings against dividing the world into potentially rival spheres and arguing that the establishment of spheres of influence ran counter to the “fixed rules [of] our broad basic declarations of policy, principles, and practice.”\textsuperscript{977} For his part, President Roosevelt appears to have been more concerned about the language—“spheres of influence” was surely infused with more than a whiff of old Great Power diplomacy—than the actuality of divisions that, as Churchill pointed out, represented real lines of military control and influence. Moreover, the idea of establishing spheres of influence in which particular Allied powers would exercise primacy was not far removed from the President’s own favored notion of a postwar order structured by the “Four Policemen,” each of whom would assume overall responsibility for specific geographical areas and groups of countries.\textsuperscript{978}

From this point of view, Roosevelt’s hope that the division of the Balkans would not “extend into the postwar” at the end of his note approving the “trial” period was less a naively misplaced wish and more a cover for actual approval of a process that was

\textsuperscript{976} Churchill to Roosevelt, June 11 1944; Roosevelt to Churchill, June 12 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 180, 182.
\textsuperscript{977} Hull, memorandum, May 30 1944, FRUS 1944, 5: 113.
\textsuperscript{978} Warren Kimball notes the similarity between Roosevelt’s notion of the “four policemen” and traditional spheres of influence in his editorial comments in Kimball, Complete Correspondence, 3: 200–201.
deepening rapidly and that would quite clearly extend well into the postwar period. In fact, far from being “somewhat puzzling” and a possible product of presidential “weariness” as Lloyd Gardner suggests, Roosevelt’s endorsement of British plans for Greece bears the hallmarks of a deeper game, allowing for the maintenance of a certain distance from the language of power politics while embracing the actuality. It was in fact, as Hugh de Santis points out, a typically Rooseveltian “dual policy,” uneasily combining “realpolitik and principle.” In October 1944 Churchill and Stalin met in Moscow to push forward the division of the Balkans, agreeing in the (in)famous “naughty” or “percentages” document that London should have the decisive “say” in Greece, while Moscow dominated Rumania and Bulgaria. Only in Yugoslavia were the two leaders forced to recognize that the situation was too fluid, and the Yugoslavs themselves too willing to exercise their own say in the matter, to determine clearly who would have the predominant influence, and they settled for a 50–50% division.

5.1) Yugoslavia: Mihailovic, Tito, and the United States

Over the course of a mere eleven days in April 1941, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, cobbled together in 1918, disintegrated under the blows of invading Axis armies. In Croatia, Ante Pavelic, leader of the fascist Ustace, established a nominally independent state under Axis protection. German armies, driving into the country from neighboring Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria rapidly overcame Yugoslavian resistance, bombing and

979 Gardner, Spheres of Influence. 194.
then occupying Belgrade. The young King Peter II and his Royal Yugoslavian Government fled into exile, leaving Serbia governed by Milan Nedic’s collaborationist Government of National Salvation and under effective German control. With Italy dominating much of the Dalmatian coast, German forces occupying Bosnia, Herzegovina and parts of Serbia and Slovenia, and Bulgaria and Hungary both seizing chunks of former Yugoslav territory, the whole country was quickly and effectively brought under Axis control and integrated into the German-dominated economic system.

King Peter had come to the throne in March 1941 as a result of an army coup against the increasingly pro-Axis course of the Regency. From the beginning of his reign, Washington had backed the King, with President Roosevelt sending a personal message of support and a promise of lend-lease supplies. In the event, Peter’s government fell before any American military assistance could materialize, but Washington continued to support the royal government-in-exile and to forge close ties with Constantin Fotic, the Yugoslav Minister to the United States. These developments indicate that, despite the image of official disinterest in the Balkans, President Roosevelt and the administration in Washington would continue to take a close interest in Yugoslav affairs. And, in an early indication of the unusually weighty role that intelligence and covert operations would play in American policy, Roosevelt dispatched Colonel William Donovan to the Balkans in January 1941. Donovan, soon to be appointed Coordinator of Information and later head of the OSS, traveled as the President’s personal emissary to inform various Balkan governments that the United

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States intended to exert “all her enormous force [to] insure ultimate victory for England.”

Armed resistance to the Axis occupation began quickly, and the predominantly-Serbian Chetniks under the leadership of former Yugoslav Army Colonel Draza Mihailovic emerged as the first significant resistance movement in occupied Europe. Allied propaganda services quickly accorded Mihailovic legendary stature, and in September 1941 the government-in-exile promoted him to general and appointed him war minister. By November, Churchill was exhorting the British Chiefs of Staff to “do everything in human power” to help the Yugoslav resistance. Washington endorsed this position enthusiastically, and by the early spring of 1942, OSS agents newly based in Cairo were planning extensive operations to supply arms to the Chetniks. The situation on the ground in Yugoslavia, however, was not nearly as clear-cut as it appeared to be in London and Washington. Mihailovic, deeply enmeshed in the intricacies of Yugoslav politics, did not intend to launch a broad war of resistance but rather planned to ready an armed force that could either begin a rising once an Allied victory was assured or else link up with Allied forces landing in Yugoslavia. Until either of these eventualities materialized, the Chetniks would avoid large-scale conflicts with the Axis occupation.

The simple picture of heroic Chetnik opposition to Axis occupation was further complicated by the emergence of a second resistance movement. Initially based primarily in Bosnia and Montenegro and formed under the leadership of Josip Broz (Tito) and the Yugoslavian Communist Party, the Partisan movement consciously aimed to

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982 Earle to State Department, Jan. 23 1941, *FRUS 1941*, 1: 282.
draw support from all Yugoslavia’s nationalities. With Mihailovic rallying—as Churchill put it—the “surviving elite of Yugoslavia” and championing Great Serbian nationalism, and with the Partisans rooting themselves within the peasantry and advocating national equality within a federal Yugoslavia, resistance to the Axis occupation quickly became intertwined with deepening social and national polarization.⁹⁸⁵ Although admonished by Moscow to concentrate on the defense of Russia and to eschew revolutionary plans, the actual conditions under which the Partisan struggle unfolded tended to intertwine the battle against the Axis occupation with a struggle to transform Yugoslav society.

Meanwhile Mihailovic, whose vision of a Serbian-dominated state was deliberately fueled by the occupation forces, led the Chetniks into a brutal civil war with the Partisans in which his forces, aided by Axis arms, initially gained the upper hand.

These developments inevitably complicated Allied policy towards Yugoslavia. Viewing the Chetniks as the armed force of the exiled Yugoslav government, London established a military mission to Mihailovic in the fall of 1941 and began organizing aerial supply drops of arms and other equipment. By the spring of 1943, however, it was becoming clear to London that the Chetniks’s major military effort was not directed primarily against the Axis occupation, but rather against the Partisans. In a particularly vitriolic outburst in February 1943, Mihailovic explained to his British liaison officer that his movement was well supported by the Italians and was concerned “only with the interests of the Serbs.”⁹⁸⁶ These developments were of great concern to London, not only because they undermined resistance to the Axis occupation but also because Mihailovic’s greater Serbianism clearly threatened the strong, federal Yugoslavia that the British

⁹⁸⁶ Quoted in Ball, *Bitter Sea*, 199.
viewed as critical to the postwar stability of the Balkans. In May 1942, London dispatched a special mission to the Partisans headed by Oxford don and Churchill confidante Colonel William Deakin in order to get a clearer picture of the situation in the country. In October, inspired by Deakin’s positive assessment of Tito and the Partisans, the mission was expanded and placed under the leadership of another prime ministerial associate, the swashbuckling Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean.

The positive assessment of the Partisans formed by Deakin and Maclean, was reinforced by signals intercepts obtained through *Ultra* that clearly demonstrated collaboration between the Chetniks and the Axis occupation forces.987 Pulled by Deakin’s genuine enthusiasm for the martial ardor of the Partisans and pushed by signals evidence of Axis/Chetnik collaboration, London prepared a major policy switch. On June 6 1943, the British Chiefs of Staff concluded that the Chetniks were “hopelessly compromised,” and at the end of July Churchill wrote to General Alexander hailing the “marvelous resistance” being put up by the Partisans and condemning Mihailovic’s “cold-blooded maneuvers” with the Axis.988 In October, even as Churchill continued to complain to Roosevelt of the “vexatious broils” between the Partisans and Chetniks, the decision was taken to end arms shipments to Mihailovic and to throw British support fully behind Tito.989

This evolution came to fruition at the Tehran conference, with the Combined Chiefs of Staff approving Alan Brooke’s observation that there was “general agreement” on the situation in Yugoslavia and that “all possible help” should be given to the

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The Tehran decision to support Tito conformed not only to the reality on the ground in Yugoslavia, but also to the relationship between the western Allies and the Russians unfolding at the conference itself. Stalin, while downplaying the overall importance of the Balkans, welcomed Allied support for the Partisans. The general atmosphere of anti-Axis bonhomie is illustrated by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden’s comments at a Tehran luncheon with Harry Hopkins and Vyacheslav Molotov, at which the Foreign Secretary invited the Russians to send a military delegation to Yugoslavia to work with the joint mission being established by the British and Americans and to set up a Russian airbase in Allied-occupied North Africa from which to operate missions over the Balkans.

The Tehran conference decision to give, as Fitzroy Maclean put it, “all-out support to the Partisans” was put into effect by the Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting in Cairo in early December, and was given prominent place in the directives drafted to guide the new Allied Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean, General Henry Maitland Wilson. Churchill also wrote a fulsome personal note to Tito informing him and his “heroic patriot and partisan army” of the Allied decision to stop supplying Mihailovic and to “only give help to you.” Churchill’s letter was given to Maclean to hand deliver after he had parachuted back into the country. As a further token of the prime minister’s intent, and perhaps also of his genuine enthusiasm for the Partisan’s

990 CCS#132, Nov. 30 1943, FRUS 1943, Cairo and Tehran: 556.
991 Hopkins and Molotov, informal luncheon, Nov. 30 1943, FRUS 1943, Cairo and Tehran: 574.
“valiant efforts,” Churchill assigned his son Major Randolph Churchill to accompany Maclean to Tito’s headquarters.

As affairs in Yugoslavia and their reflection in relations between London and the various Yugoslav factions unfolded with bewildering rapidity during 1943, American policymakers struggled to form a clear assessment of the situation and to forge an independent approach to it. Washington shared London’s strategic understanding that a united, federal, Yugoslavia would be a key element for stability in the postwar Balkans, and therefore tended to recoil from the increasing Great Serbianism of Mihailovic and of his supporters in the government-in-exile, including Minister to the United States Constantin Fotic. Yet while the British government was able to act forcefully on this line during 1943, utilizing its first-hand knowledge of the situation on the ground within Yugoslavia and its physical proximity to the government-in-exile in London to purge the most ardent Great Serb forces from King Peter’s cabinet, Washington was forced to take a more detached stance.

To some extent, Washington’s inaction reflected a simple lack of information about the situation within Yugoslavia; until April 1943 British Special Operations Executive (SOE) officers based in Cairo and responsible for organizing intelligence operations in the Balkans had effectively excluded OSS agents from the region. This was a critical question. In contrast to Italy, where the presence of Allied troops gave heft to its diplomatic and political maneuvers, in the Balkans both London and Washington were forced to rely on covert operations. The virtual monopoly over operations in the Balkans exercised by the SOE severely limited Washington’s ability to intervene in the entire

994 See de Santis, “In Search of Yugoslavia.”
region, and the breaking of that monopoly—Colonel Lada-Mocarski, head of OSS Strategic Intelligence (SI) in Cairo, described it as the agency’s “declaration of independence”—was a precondition for effective American participation in Balkan affairs.  

As Lada-Mocarski pointed out, the integration of the OSS into Allied intelligence operations in the Balkans meant that it was now able to furnish Washington with “our own intelligence, originated with Americans, communicated through our own channels, and processed through our people.” An OSS report at the end of December 1943 pointed out that the organization’s new ability to function as the “sole American fact-finding agency […] in the Balkans” had transformed its relationship to the State Department. “The White House,” the report noted approvingly, “often consults General Donovan on the situation in Yugoslavia.” As it gained an appreciation of the usefulness of the new intelligence agency, the State Department interceded with London to resolve the crisis in Cairo and pave the way for the establishment of an independent OSS station there, signaling the dawning of a “new era of intra-agency cooperation” and a willingness to “assert American policy through the medium of the OSS.”

In these modest developments one can see the emergence of an independent American capacity for coordinated and sustained covert action—including both intelligence gathering and undercover operations—that could give American policy purchase in situations where neither conventional diplomacy nor military intervention were possible. From Iran to Guatemala such a capacity would, of course, prove

995 Lada-Mocarski to Sherpardson, Dec. 22 1943, Cairo SI Box 72, RG 226, NARA.
996 OSS memorandum on Yugoslavia, Dec. 24 1943, Cairo SI Box 72, RG 226, NARA.
indispensable to extending the effective reach and operational capacity of the rising
hegemon of the capitalist world; but in 1943 it was all quite new to the United States. It
is highly unlikely that Roosevelt could have grasped the long-term consequences of his
actions when he decided to establish the OSS in June 1942 and to place the hard-charging
William Donovan at its head. But, and as was often the case, the true genius of
Roosevelt’s leadership lay not in planning out every detail in advance but in opening up
the possibilities of responding forcefully and effectively to the unexpected.

As Washington broke the British monopoly on special operations in Yugoslavia,
many American officers came to share their British counterparts’ enthusiasm for the
Partisans.998 The first American officer to join the British mission to the Partisans, OSS
Major Linn Farish, spent six weeks with Tito’s National Army of Liberation in
September and October 1943, and his glowing report combined a positive appreciation of
the guerillas’ military capacities with enthusiastic support for the social revolution
unfolding in the wake of Partisan military successes. In the face of the combined forces
of the Axis occupation, the Chetniks, and the Croatian Ustace, Farish reported, Tito’s
supporters had carved out a “free community of no mean size” within which
“Mohammedans, Christians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Communist Party members, [and]
any person of any religion or political belief” could engage in “free and enlightened
discussion” on the political shape of the new state-in-becoming.999 Farish drew particular
attention to the large numbers of Italian soldiers, formerly part of the occupying army,
who now functioned in “organized units” of the National Army of Liberation. He was

998 See Smith, OSS.
999 Farish, “Preliminary Report on a visit to the National Army of Liberation,
also impressed by the enthusiastic reception accorded to the American mission and by the Partisans’ “implicit faith” that the “United States would come to their aid.”

Farish’s report was presented to Roosevelt just before Tehran, and American leaders appear to have been caught up in the general enthusiasm for the Partisans that dominated conference discussions on Yugoslavia. Farish’s conclusion was simple and straightforward: the United States should abandon Mihailovic—who “feared communism more than the common enemy”—and back Tito with supply shipments and direct air support for Partisan operations. Farish concluded by pointing out that decisions taken in the heat of the conflict would have significant long-term consequences; “Cold, hungry, and inadequately armed men,” he noted, “will surely remember from whence aid came when they were fighting for existence.”

President Roosevelt signaled his personal endorsement of this approach by presenting Stalin with a copy of Farish’s report. One can only wonder how Stalin responded to this remarkable document, whose vision of an unfolding popular and democratic revolution was surely as far from his plans for the postwar world as it was from those of the Allied leaders.

This striking convergence of great power interests at Tehran meant that, at that specific conjuncture and for purely pragmatic reasons, the Partisans were able to command the combined support of London, Moscow, and Washington. In many ways, Tito was the big winner at Tehran, and the fruits of his victory were soon to arrive in the form of rapidly expanding shipments of arms and other military supplies. Italy’s Adriatic coast quickly became the base area for operations into Yugoslavia, with the establishment of 334 Special Operations Wing of the Anglo-American Mediterranean Air Force at

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1000 Ibid., 614.
Brindisi in January 1944, and of a joint SOE/OSS supply base at Bari. Between them, these facilities enabled the Allies to move 500 tons of supplies per month into Yugoslavia by air and 2,000 tons by sea.1001 Between October 1943 and January 1944, even before the full impact of the Tehran decisions was felt, Tito’s forces received over 5,600 tons of supplies.1002 In the same period, Mihailovic and the Chetniks, surely the great losers at Tehran, received a mere 27 tons.

During the spring and summer of 1944, the Allied military effort over Yugoslavia was further expanded. In May, American and Russian aircrews mounted a daring operation to rescue Tito and his headquarters from attack by German paratroops, relocating the Partisan leadership to the Adriatic island of Vis. The following month, AFHQ established the Balkan Air Force (BAF), placing commando and naval forces assigned to the Adriatic under its command in addition to twenty-four squadrons of cargo, bomber and fighter aircraft. Aided by technological advances—including portable radio beacons—and the presence of liaison officers at Partisan corps headquarters, Allied commanders were able to integrate airpower into Partisan operations for the first time. This process culminated in September 1944, when the various air, land and sea elements under BAF command joined Partisan forces in Operation Ratweek, a carefully coordinated series of attacks on road and rail lines that disrupted the German withdrawal from Yugoslavia and trapped occupation forces between the Partisans and the advancing Red Army.


1002 CCS 489, Feb. 17 1944, RG 218, NARA.
Substantial Allied support for the Partisans in the shape of thousands of tons of supplies and of direct air support did not by itself determine the outcome of the struggle in Yugoslavia. On the contrary, the ultimate success of the Partisans rested fundamentally, as Chalmers Johnson argues, on the ability of Tito and the Yugoslav Communists to forge a movement that, by combining resistance to the Axis occupation with a deep-going program of agrarian reform, was capable of tapping into deep wells of “peasant nationalism” and thereby cutting across barriers of ethnicity and religion.1003 William Deakin, Fitzroy Maclean, Linn Farish, and the numerous other Allied officers who were so impressed by their contact with the Partisans did indeed see something different and extraordinary in Yugoslavia. If it was not, perhaps, quite the democratic utopia described by Farish, what these officers witnessed was the powerful unfolding of a popular revolution and, despite their often rather conservative preconceptions, it affected them deeply. Moreover, the support that they helped to orchestrate was of great assistance to the Partisan cause particularly because, before the fall of 1944, Tito’s forces had no direct contact with the Russians. In particular—and as the supply figures illustrate—Allied support helped to tip the balance within Yugoslavia against Mihailovic’s great-Serbian project. While not the decisive factor, the Tehran decision to throw Allied support behind the most effective anti-Axis fighter in Yugoslavia did have a significant impact on the outcome of the struggle.

In the weeks following Tehran, Washington moved quickly to upgrade its own relations with Marshal Tito. Noting that “Brigadier McLain” [sic] enjoyed “direct access

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to prime Minister Churchill on political matters,” William Donovan concluded in mid-January 1944 that OSS officers attached to Tito’s headquarters needed to function as an independent American Mission and not, as General Wilson and Harold Macmillan proposed, as part of a British-led joint delegation. At the State Department, Undersecretary Adolf Berle endorsed this conclusion. Noting that “McLain” was only “nominally a soldier but actually a foreign office man in uniform,” Berle expressed his opposition to Americans serving as “juniors with a British political mission” and his support for strengthening independent American political representation to the Partisans. In February, OSS Colonel Richard Weil was dispatched to head an independent American mission to Tito’s headquarters. The initial success of his mission was registered when he returned to Cairo bearing a letter from the Yugoslav leader to President Roosevelt thanking “your great democratic country [and] yourself” for supporting the “striving of the people of Yugoslavia.”

Despite this positive opening, however, plans for an American Mission headed, as were the British and Russian delegations, by a general officer did not come to fruition. On the contrary, as the prospect of a Partisan victory in Yugoslavia came into sharper focus during the spring and summer of 1944, so Washington’s early enthusiasm for the Communist-led movement began to wane. Even Linn Farish, the OSS officer whose glowing report of Partisan activity had helped secure American backing for Tito, was having second thoughts. After a maudlin discussion with New York Times reporter Cyrus Sulzberger in a Bari hotel, Farish submitted a report to his OSS superiors in July 1944.

1004 JCS 603/2, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
1006 Tito to Roosevelt, Mar. 15 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1356–1357.
1007 JCS memorandum, Mar. 22 1944, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
that registered his opposition to the anti-Chetnik offensive being waged by Partisan forces armed with American weapons. “At one time,” Farish mused, “I worried because America was not getting proper recognition for her participation in supply operations. Now I wonder—do we want it?” Farish’s disillusionment reflected a broader American concern over the consequences of a Partisan victory. This was not a universal shift—in August 1944, for example, Robert Murphy reported from AFHQ on his meeting with the “singularly attractive” Tito—but it did outline the overall direction in which American policy was heading.

Washington’s main concern here was not so much with a direct Russian intervention in Yugoslavia as it was with the potential consequences of a Partisan victory. In this regard, Richard Weil’s assurances from Partisan headquarters that Tito was first and foremost a “patriot and the liberator of his country” and only secondarily a “Communist” was hardly reassuring, since it implied a leader with a potentially dangerous independence of mind at the head of a powerful force that was not under Moscow’s direct control. American concerns began to take shape very quickly after Tehran. In a January 1944 memorandum, State Department analyst Carl Norden argued that the “old ruling cliques” in Yugoslavia had been “pretty thoroughly discredited,” and that the likelihood was that the Yugoslav people would be unwilling to return “to the status quo ante.” It is “unlikely,” Norden concluded, pointing to the rising “current” of the Yugoslav revolution, “that it can be stopped.” In a telling observation drawing a direct parallel between the revolutionary enthusiasm in Yugoslavia and that of the early

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1009 Murphy to State Department, Aug. 30 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1403.
1010 Norden, OEA memorandum, Jan. 19 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1339.
years of the Russian Revolution, Lincoln MacVeagh, American representative to the Yugoslav government-in-exile and personal friend of the President, noted that there was no evidence that Moscow was “directing or funding” the Yugoslav Partisans and that, on the contrary, the movement seemed to embody the “international Communism of 1917” rather than that of the “present-day Moscow.”

The idea that the Yugoslav Partisans might be significantly more radical than Moscow was hardly a comforting one. While it appeared that the Russians might be relied upon to abide by pragmatic spheres of influence agreements—and the evidence accumulating in Italy and France indicated that this was indeed so—the Partisans seemed quite capable of pursuing their national-revolutionary course to its logical conclusion, with unpredictable consequences for Yugoslavia, the Balkans, and the whole postwar settlement. Uniquely, Yugoslavia did not fall squarely into either of the emerging spheres, a fact that reflected a backhanded recognition that the strength of the Partisans meant that the Yugoslavian people themselves would have some say in their postwar geopolitical alignment. This unusual situation was formally codified when Churchill and Stalin met in Moscow in October 1944 to clarify the respective spheres of influence in the Balkans and agreed to divide great power “predominance” in Yugoslavia between them on a 50–50% basis. Neither side, in other words, was in a position to claim “predominance”; in contrast, and based on the actions of the Red Army, Moscow would exercise effective control in Rumania and Bulgaria, while London, acting “in accord with the U.S.A.,” claimed ninety percent of “the say” in Greece.

1011 MacVeagh to Roosevelt, Aug. 28 1944, Lincoln MacVeagh papers, Box 3, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton.
1012 Churchill, Second World War, 4: 198.
The radicalism of the Yugoslav Partisans caused at least as much concern in Moscow as it did in London and Washington. While Soviet leaders hoped to include Yugoslavia in a postwar pan-Slavic alliance and to incorporate the country into the defensive *glacis* separating Russia from Germany, they viewed the stubborn independence and revolutionary dynamism of Tito’s fighters with some apprehension. Indeed, a genuine and popular social revolution in Yugoslav, a development that would inevitably inspire emulation throughout the Balkans, was as unwelcome to Russian leaders as it was to the British and Americans. Given the problems of wartime communication, Moscow had little direct contact with the Partisans, but it used radio broadcasts and other indirect means to urge a “national” rather than a “socialist” course on the Partisans. This approach meant that Moscow, like its western allies, backed the unification of the Partisans and the government in exile in London under the figurehead of the monarchy. Stalin pressed this course on Tito when communications improved in late 1944, warning him that the “bourgeoisie in Serbia is very strong.”¹⁰¹³ This estimate of the political situation in Yugoslavia, flying in the face of evidence demonstrating that the collaborationist Serbian elite had been widely discredited, can surely only be read as a warning to Tito to abandon the path of social revolution. But Stalin’s “advice” carried little weight with the Yugoslav leader, who replied that, on the contrary, the Serbian bourgeoisie—and hence Serbian capitalism—was in an extraordinarily weak position.

In this context, London’s hope that Tito might, as Lincoln MacVeagh put it sarcastically in his note to the President, be “hitched […] to the car of British policy”

¹⁰¹³ Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 211.
seemed dangerously naïve to many in Washington. Worse, Churchill’s policy seemed to combine an affected disdain for the outcome in Yugoslavia—telling Fitzroy Maclean that since neither of them planned to live in Yugoslavia after the war, “the less you and I worry about the form of government they set up, the better”—with the forlorn hope that the exiled government of King Peter might somehow provide London with a lever with which to control the Partisans. This policy, as Carl Norden argued in his January 1944 memorandum, rested on the entirely unproven and fanciful assumption that the “moderate and national elements in the Tito camp will ultimately prevail,” while singularly failing to establish any mechanism by which such an outcome might be secured.

American worries about the emergence of a Partisan-dominated Yugoslavia were reflected in a series of policy documents drawn up by the State Department’s Country and Area Committee (CAC) in June 1944. Charged with helping prepare the postwar settlement, the CAC proposed to reaffirm Washington’s commitment to restoring Yugoslavia’s prewar boundaries—with a modest adjustment in Yugoslavia’s favor in the Venezia Giulia—while sketching out a plan for establishing a “representative government” that could build on the “trend towards decentralization” registered in the “Serb-Croat compromise of 1939.” The formation of a provisional government composed, somewhat ambiguously, of “representatives of all the groups which have opposed the Axis” would serve as an important stepping-stone towards a permanent settlement, and, policymakers concluded, the United States should sanction the establishment of a regency until the status of the monarchy could be determined. In the

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1014 MacVeagh to Roosevelt, Aug. 28 1944, MacVeagh papers, Box 3.
1017 CAC 218, June 8 1944, microfilm T1221, NARA.
context of establishing such a settlement, the United States would offer the resources necessary to promote “internal rehabilitation,” integrate Yugoslavia into an emerging system of global free trade, and support relief efforts organized by UNRRA.

This anodyne statement, more of a wish list than a plan of action, embodied at its core the hope that the strength of the Partisans might be effectively counterbalanced by promoting political leaderships judged to represent the major national groupings in prewar Yugoslavia, the Serbs and Croats. Here was the essence of the plan that—within the framework of the great power partition of the Balkans but in opposition to London’s all-out support for the Partisans—would frame Washington’s approach to Yugoslavia for the remainder of the war. The problem, of course, was that given the Joint Chiefs unwavering opposition to direct military intervention, American policymakers had little actual leverage on the ground in Yugoslavia. With few reliable assets to hand, Washington began an increasingly desperate search for Yugoslav forces capable of counterbalancing Tito’s influence—a search that led in the first instance to King Peter’s Serb-dominated government-in exile and to Mihailovic’s Chetniks.

In early 1944, London sought to square its own “chivalrous and honorable” commitment to King Peter and his government-in-exile with its actual material support for Tito and the Partisans by brokering a reconciliation between the two groups.\footnote{Churchill, \textit{Second World War}, 5: 471.} This inherently problematic process was further complicated both by Tito’s decision to form a provisional Yugoslav government (AVNOJ) at Jajce in November 1943 and by the evident fact that support for King Peter and his fractious and Serbian-dominated government-in-exile within Yugoslavia was waning rapidly. The first step, London
explained hopefully in January 1944, was to persuade the Peter to sever his relationship with Mihailovic, thereby creating the possibility that Tito “might” be prevailed upon to “accept the King.” But, with the Partisans increasingly buoyed by military success, Tito was in a strong position to spin this “reconciliation” process out indefinitely while continuing to avail himself of Allied arms. In February, as Ambassador MacVeagh reported to Washington, Tito acknowledged that the King “might be of value to the Partisan movement,” but stated that in order for talks to proceed Peter had first to break all ties with Mihailovic, dismiss his cabinet, and recognize the authority of the Partisan-led provisional government.

London’s apparent determination to force these harsh terms on Peter alarmed Washington; when the King and his Prime Minister Bozidar Puric were summoned to London for talks in late February, MacVeagh noted bitterly that the “talking to” they were about to receive would be “not unreminiscent of Hitlerite procedure with Satellite leaders.” MacVeagh’s intemperate tone reflected a broader American unease with British policy that was driven in part by the belief that Churchill was bullying the officially recognized government of Yugoslavia, in part by an underlying suspicion of Britain’s imperial interests in the Balkans, and in part by the fear that London’s support for Tito would simply open the door to Russian domination of the region. Secretary of State Cordell Hull made it clear that, despite British claims to the contrary, Washington did not endorse London’s heavy-handed efforts to persuade King Peter to break with

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1020 MacVeagh to Hull, Feb. 15 1944, FRUS 1944, IV: 1347.
1021 MacVeagh to State Department, Feb. 29 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1351.
Mihailovic.\textsuperscript{1022} Carl Norden’s extensive memorandum on Yugoslavia quoted above developed this point, arguing that while it was necessary to seek overall “unity of purpose with the British and Russians,” Washington should refrain from endorsing “specific British plans.” Arguing that the British had shown no definitive evidence of Chetnik collaboration with the Germans, Norden concluded that it would be a mistake to “disown Mihailovic” completely.\textsuperscript{1023}

Norden’s analysis of the situation in Yugoslavia demonstrates that the ink was barely dry on the Tehran accords before American policymakers began working to undermine the spirit, if not the actual letter, of the some of the key decisions taken there. The Tehran decision—as President Roosevelt put it—to give Tito all the aid “which could possibly be sent” did not necessarily demand breaking all ties with Mihailovic, but it certainly pointed strongly in that direction.\textsuperscript{1024} But in early 1944 the maintenance of relations with Mihailovic assumed new importance for Washington, particularly in the light of OSS reports that, while the Partisans were dominant in much of the country, the Chetniks continued to enjoy a “strong hold over the Serbian peasants.”\textsuperscript{1025} In early March, Washington followed London’s lead by withdrawing the American Mission to Mihailovic, but later the same month Roosevelt himself insisted that since the Americans now had “no source of intelligence whatever in part of the Balkans which may become important at some stage in the war,” a new mission to the Chetniks should be dispatched forthwith.\textsuperscript{1026}

\textsuperscript{1022} Hull to Harriman, Jan. 4 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 4: 1330–1331.
\textsuperscript{1023} Norden, OEA memorandum, Jan. 19 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 4: 1338.
\textsuperscript{1024} CCS minutes, Nov. 29 1943, \textit{FRUS 1943}, Cairo and Tehran: 546.
\textsuperscript{1025} OSS memo, March 4 1944, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
\textsuperscript{1026} Roosevelt to Donovan, March 22 1944, JCS #214, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
Washington’s renewed efforts to maintain relations with the Chetniks alarmed the British, who, as Harold Macmillan put it, feared that the Americans “inclined to Mihailovic” and would not “follow the P.M.’s pro-Tito policy.”1027 In early April, Churchill warned Roosevelt that the American mission to Mihailovic would “show throughout the Balkans a complete contrariety of action between Britain and the United States” at a time when London and Moscow were “throw[ing] all their weight on Tito’s side.”1028 Despite London’s opposition, Washington dispatched two OSS missions to Mihailovic, the first an aircrew rescue unit that organized the evacuation of 262 Allied fliers downed over Serbia, and the second a Secret Intelligence unit led by Colonel Robert McDowell.1029 A man of “violently pro-Chetnik prejudices,” McDowell arrived at Mihailovic’s headquarters in September 1944, just as a renewed Partisan offensive against the German occupation forces and their Chetnik allies in Serbia was getting underway.1030

By the time McDowell arrived at Mihailovic’s headquarters the central contradiction in British policy—backing Tito on the one hand while continuing to support King Peter’s government-in-exile on the other—was finally being resolved. In early September, Peter succumbed to British pressure and issued a statement condemning all collaboration with the Germans and calling on Yugoslavs to rally to Tito’s National Liberation Army. Having finally got Peter into line, the dispatch of the McDowell Mission alarmed Churchill, who cabled the President to warn of the “complete chaos” that would result from an American decision to “back Mihailovic” at the very moment

1027 Macmillan, War Dairies, 526.
1028 Churchill to Roosevelt, April 6 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 80.
1029 JCS memo, Sept. 16 1944, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
1030 Smith, OSS, 150.
when King Peter had finally been persuaded to “break decisively” with the Chetniks.\textsuperscript{1031} General Donovan, Churchill cautioned, was “running a strong Mihailovic lobby.” Wary of provoking a breach with London over Yugoslavia, Washington backed down; “in view of British objection,” Roosevelt told Donovan September 3, “it seems best to withdraw the mission to Mihailovic.”\textsuperscript{1032} The contrast with the situation in Italy where, backed by a powerful American presence on the ground, Washington felt able to advance its own agenda irrespective of British protests, is instructive.

McDowell’s OSS team was ordered out of Yugoslavia in mid-September, but due to ongoing fighting and poor weather, it was not actually evacuated until mid-November. It was not a moment to soon. By the time they were pulled out, McDowell had already held two meetings with German occupation forces in Belgrade who were seeking to surrender to the Americans and the Chetniks rather than to the Partisans and the Russians. As R. Harris Smith points out, with Russian troops poised to pour into the country a surrender of German forces in Serbia to America would have been a “diplomatic disaster” for Washington, establishing a principle of “separate surrenders” that would have had far-reaching consequences not only in the Balkans but also throughout Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{1033} Not surprisingly the Partisans were furious when they learnt of McDowell’s negotiations. Tito, Ambassador Kirk reported from Italy, simply could not understand American efforts to maintain relations with Mihailovic after his collaboration with the

\textsuperscript{1031} Churchill to Roosevelt, Sept. 1 1944, \textit{Complete Correspondence}, 3: 306.
\textsuperscript{1032} JCS Memo 307, Sept. 16 1944, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
\textsuperscript{1033} Smith, \textit{OSS}, 150–151.
Germans had been “generally accepted” and “even King Peter had publicly denounced him.”

Tito surely had a point. In terms of relations with Britain, Russia, and the Partisans, Washington’s long-standing pursuit of contact with Mihailovic was indeed so out of step with the unfolding reality of Yugoslav politics as to court disaster. Yet American policy was not accidental, and while undoubtedly driven partly by General Donovan’s desire to make the OSS an indispensable instrument of American foreign policy, the President himself sanctioned it at every critical turning point. Moreover, while assuring Churchill that he had cancelled the projected OSS mission to Mihailovic in April, Roosevelt had nevertheless personally approved the dispatch of the aircrew rescue and McDowell missions in July and August. American policy in this critical period is best understood as an effort to utilize whatever avenues were open to it to fashion an independent policy to counter the prospect of a Partisan-dominated Yugoslavia in the distinctly unfavorable context of the division of the region into spheres of Russian and British interest and without the deployment of any significant armed force of its own. By the time Washington embarked on this course Mihailovic was a very weak reed indeed and, while not entirely abandoning the Chetnik leader, the Americans had to beat a retreat in order to avoid the potentially disastrous consequences of being tied too closely to him.

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1034 Kirk to State Department, Oct. 31 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1415–1416.
5.2) Subasic and the Shepherd Project

Despite these setbacks American policymakers fashioned another important string to their Yugoslav bow, and one that for much of 1944 promised much more reliable results than those offered by an alliance with Mihailovic and the Chetniks. In early 1942, COI/OSS officers assigned to the Foreign Nationals (FN) branch office in New York had developed a close relationship with Ivan Subasic, a Croat working at the government-in-exile’s Yugoslav Information Center. Subasic was a leader of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), the largest political party in prewar Croatia, and in 1939 he had been appointed Ban (governor) of the Banovia of Croatia, a semi-autonomous entity within Yugoslav incorporating much of Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as Croatia proper. The assignment of such a prominent figure to a relatively lowly task in New York offers clear evidence of the Great Serb domination of the Yugoslav government-in-exile and of its operations in North America headed by Ambassador Fotic. But Subasic’s status as a Croatian leader and his stalwart defense of a united, federal, Yugoslavia quickly made him a person of interest to American intelligence officers. By the end of 1942, he had been introduced to Allen Dulles of OSS Strategic Intelligence, and he was rated as “among those who can always be relied upon to act in close contact with us.”

For the next two years Ivan Subasic worked closely with the OSS—at times receiving per diem expenses for his services—giving Washington unparalleled access to critical developments within Yugoslav politics. Yet, with the exception of an invaluable monograph written by National Archives and Records Administration researcher Amy Schmidt that has been published in Croatia but not in the English speaking world, this

1035 See Schmidt, “Croatia and the Western Allies,” 15.
important aspect of Washington’s Yugoslav policy—and indeed of its Mediterranean strategy—is largely unknown. After the Axis invasion in 1941, Vladko Macek and other Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) leaders were either imprisoned or driven underground or into exile by Ante Pavelic’s fascist Ustace; some sections of the HSS, as Fitzroy Maclean noted, “threw in their lot” with the Ustace, but others, responding to Tito’s pan-Yugoslav appeal, joined the Partisans. These divisions were reflected amongst Croatian exiles, and Subasic assumed prominence among those arguing for an alliance with the Partisans, organizing a Croat-American Congress in Chicago on this line in February 1943.

Subasic’s appeal to the OSS, and hence to American policymakers, lay precisely in his ability to combine a sense of continuity with the prewar Croatian and pan-Yugoslav political elite with the prospect of forging a fighting alliance with the Partisans in which, his American boosters hoped, non-Communist elements might have the upper hand. Subasic, it seemed to hopeful policymakers, could be both a bridge to King Peter and, with the apparently numerous forces of the HSS behind him, an effective counterweight to Tito within the Partisan movement.

In August 1943, Ivan Subasic entertained hopes that he might be included in a new Yugoslav government-in-exile formed by King Peter under British pressure. In the event the premiership went to Serb politician Bozidar Puric, and buoyed by the strengthening Great Serbism of the new cabinet, Ambassador Fotic closed Subasic’s “dissident” Yugoslav Information Center in New York. The unemployed and disillusioned Subasic was quickly drawn into closer collaboration with the OSS. After meeting with General Donovan at the end of August, Subasic and his OSS case officer

1036 Maclean report, Nov. 16 1943, JCS 603/2, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
1037 Schmidt, “Croatia and the Western Allies,” 16.
Bernard Yarrow drew up an extensive plan for the “penetration” of Yugoslavia codenamed the “Shepherd Project.” This top-secret plan called for the dispatch of a small mission to Yugoslavia headed by Subasic himself with the ambitious goal of “uniting all the resistance and fighting forces now operating in Yugoslavia” while simultaneously “winning over the regular army of the Croatian Puppet Government” and preparing, “at the propitious moment [to] swing [the forces of the Nedic regime in Serbia] into line.”

As its stated goals imply, the Shepherd Project rested on a great deal of wishful thinking. OSS officers consistently and grossly overestimated Subasic’s influence within Yugoslavia, arguing that the “overwhelming majority” of Croatians “revere him as their champion and leader” and that “his popularity is great throughout the whole of Yugoslavia.” Typically, American officers spoke of his appointment as Ban in 1939 as if he had won elected office. American officials also assumed that, through his longstanding relationship with Macek, Subasic would be able to mobilize the “exceedingly well organized” forces of the Croatian Peasant Party. With hindsight, it is hard to understand how this wildly implausible scheme ever came to be given serious consideration. Yet the fact that during the early fall of 1943 it was presented to—and approved by—Adolf Berle at the State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and finally the President himself speaks both to Washington’s concern with events in Yugoslavia and, in light of the decision not to commit American military forces to southeastern Europe, to the lack of effective instruments for policy execution.

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1038 “Penetration of Yugoslavia Project,” Sept. 21 1943, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
1039 Ibid.
Undersecretary of State Adolf Berle welcomed the Shepherd Project when it was presented to him in September 1943, but Cavendish Cannon at the Department’s Office of Southern European Affairs was more cautious. Cannon confessed to being “somewhat bewildered” by Yugoslav politics and, while recognizing a “measure of truth” in the accusations of collaboration leveled at Mihailovic, he was reluctant to “give the Partisans credit” for being anything more than “bandits, Communists, et cetera.” Under these circumstances, Cannon concluded, it would be a mistake to send Subasic, “good Yugoslav” though he may be, on a mission to forge ties between the Partisans and the Croatian Peasant Party. Cannon’s doubts were substantially resolved by a further meeting with Hugh Wilson, a former ambassador to Germany picked by William Donovan as OSS liaison to the State Department. Donovan’s own memorandum presenting the project to Roosevelt was carefully crafted to appeal to Roosevelt’s “great deal of interest” in the Balkans. Subasic, Donovan argued, was a “soldier and a patriot” and a firm supporter of a federated Yugoslavia who was willing to go into the country “for the OSS” in order to “persuade the military leaders of the Croatian Puppet Army to join us,” to establish close relations with Tito, and to serve as a conduit for intelligence gathering.

After the Tehran, the Shepherd Project assumed new urgency as the conference decision to throw Allied support behind the Partisans underscored the importance of finding a force in Yugoslav capable of counter-balancing and restraining Tito. In late December Bernard Yarrow and Hugh Wilson again “raised the Shepherd matter with

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1040 Cannon to MacMurray, Sept. 25 1943, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
1041 Donovan to Roosevelt, Oct. 21 1943, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
Adolf [Berle],” who agreed to present the case for Subasic’s dispatch to Yugoslavia to Tito and to the Russian government. Acting in accordance with the emerging spheres of influence in the Balkans, but without mentioning the OSS involvement, the State Department duly contacted Andrei Vyshinsky, Moscow’s representative at AFHQ Algiers. On January 31, department officials reported that the matter had been referred to the Russian embassy in Cairo, who had expressed “no interest in the visit of Subasic to Yugoslavia.” For obvious reasons, communications with Tito took a little longer, but by mid-February Linn Farish was able to report that Tito “will be glad to see the Ban at his headquarters for conversations.” Even the British, who were of course in the dark about Subasic’s OSS connections and who had delayed approval for the mission pending a response from Tito, now gave it the go-ahead. On February 19 General Donovan “expressed his desire to push the Shepherd Project without delay.”

At some point in late February or early March, and despite having all its major political elements in place, the plan to send Subasic into Yugoslavia was abruptly abandoned. The reasons for the cancellation are not entirely clear. Amy Schmidt points out that in March Partisan attacks on Macek and the HSS leadership as collaborationists increased sharply, leading State Department to fear that if Subasic entered the country he would be “completely at Tito’s mercy.” A more prosaic reason might lie in Linn Farish’s concern that Subasic might be “too well along in years” to withstand the rigors

1042 Yarrow report, Dec. 21 1943, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
1043 Yarrow, “Chronology of Shepherd Project,” June 24 1944, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
1044 Toulmin to OSS, Feb. 15 1944, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
1045 Yarrow, “Chronology of Shepherd Project,” June 24 1944, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
1046 Yarrow report, June 26 1944, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
of parachuting in to Tito’s headquarters. But it is likely that the overriding reason for the cancellation of the Shepherd Project as initially conceived was that in early 1944 State Department and OSS officials had begun to develop a new plan for utilizing Subasic. Instead of inserting “the Ban” directly into the fluid combat zone of Yugoslavia and into the even more uncertain waters of Yugoslav politics, Subasic would instead be sent to London in order to help lead a reorganization of King Peter’s cabinet with the aim of preparing a fusion between the government-in-exile and the Partisans.

An initial outline of this ambitious new project was laid out at an April 10 meeting between State Department official Cavendish Cannon and Subasic’s case officer, Bernard Yarrow. Cannon stressed the State Department’s view that London “had not succeeded […] in winning over Tito to a more moderate position,” but had only managed to bolster the Communist leader by propagating “inflated” estimates of Partisan strength. Despite its stated opposition to interference in Balkan affairs, Cannon argued that the United States had a strong interest in the establishment of a “stable, democratic regime” in postwar Yugoslavia and in ensuring that the region did not again become a “disturbing political factor.” Instead of sending Subasic into Yugoslavia and enabling Tito to claim him “as his supporter,” Cannon proposed that he go to London to participate in “consultations” with the King. Subasic himself was initially unenthusiastic about the new turn in the Shepherd Project—he felt that the King had slighted him the previous year—but, after the OSS secured a personal invite from Peter, he felt it was his “duty to proceed at once.”

1047 Toulmin to OSS, Feb. 15 1944, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
1048 Yarrow report, June 26 1944, RG 226, E160, NY-SI-PRO-17, Box 26, NARA.
At a final meeting with General Donovan prior to his departure for London at the beginning of May, Subasic outlined the plans for the reconstruction of the government-in-exile that he would present to the King. Yugoslavia, Subasic argued, needed a strong temporary government to unify the disparate forces of the Partisans, the Croatian Peasants Party, and the Chetniks until more stable postwar conditions would enable the Yugoslav people to make a democratic decision on the “system under which they would prefer to live.”

To assemble such a government, Subasic would urge the King to select “loyal and outstanding party leaders” who “enjoyed a high reputation among the people of Yugoslavia.” The loyal and outstanding leader Subasic and his American handlers had in mind was, of course, none other than the Ban himself. To underscore the point, Donovan proposed that Subasic’s case officer Bernard Yarrow should travel to London under diplomatic accreditation to be “on hand in connection with the formation of the new Yugoslav government.” Reports outlining the revamped version of the Shepherd Project were discussed by both the Joint Chiefs and the President in early May.

President Roosevelt was already well aware of Subasic’s importance to the forthcoming reorganization of the Yugoslav government-in-exile having received a telegram from Churchill informing him that the Ban was “essential” to the formation of a “broad-based government not obnoxious to the Partisans,” and asking the Americans to “find the gentleman and put him on an aeroplane as early as possible.” Given Subasic’s relationship with the OSS and the State Department, the Americans did not have to look very far to find him. The precise chain of causation here remains a little unclear, but King Peter’s memoirs describe Churchill telling him that “President

1049 Ibid.
1050 Churchill to Roosevelt, April 26, Complete Correspondence, 3: 116.
Roosevelt had suggested, through General Bill Donovan, that I should choose Mr. Subasic for my prime minister,” a choice approved by the British leader in place of his own candidate, General Mirkovic.\textsuperscript{1051} In this light, it is entirely possible that Churchill’s request to Roosevelt to find Subasic might have actually begun life in the Washington.

The developments in Yugoslav politics in London in May 1944 were the product of a striking conjunctural convergence of British and American interests. The British, concerned by the growing strength of Tito’s political position and keen to overturn the pro-Serb cabinet of Bozidar Puric in order to replace it with one that might give them greater leverage with the Partisans, saw Subasic as ideal prime ministerial material. And so, of course, did the Americans. Under considerable British pressure King Peter dismissed the Puric government on May 24, and on June 1 he appointed Subasic prime minister. Having failed to find any leading exiles willing to follow him into negotiations with Tito, Subasic was the chief and only member of the new government. Throughout the tortuous negotiations leading to his appointment, Subasic worked closely with Bernard Yarrow who, in turn, kept the OSS and the State Department abreast of developments. In return, the State Department forwarded proposals, including the names of potential cabinet members, to Subasic via Yarrow. And, as King Peter recalled, Donovan himself pressed him to make Subasic prime minister.

The appointment of Subasic as prime minister appeared to Washington to give it very substantial influence at the center of Yugoslav politics. But, as was often the case in Yugoslav politics, nothing was quite what it seemed to be. With Subasic in place, London and Washington set out to bring Tito under control. Believing the Partisan leader

\textsuperscript{1051} King Peter II of Yugoslavia, \textit{A King’s Heritage: Memoirs of King Peter II of Yugoslavia} (London: Cassell and Company, 1955), 147.
“chastened” by military reverses suffered in the face of the German Seventh anti-Partisan offensive and hence more susceptible to “British control,” London quickly arranged for a meeting between him and Subasic at the Partisan headquarters on the island of Vis. 1052

On June 17 Subasic and Tito signed an agreement promising a democratic federal Yugoslavia, a plebiscite on the status of the monarchy, and an effective merger between the Royal government and the AVNOJ. Subasic agreed to serve as foreign minister in the new government headed by Tito, but agreed that the actual formation of the government be postponed until Belgrade had been liberated. London welcomed the agreement, and Churchill participated directly in subsequent talks between Subasic and Tito in Italy in August, cabling Roosevelt that the deepening agreement between the two would “enable us with more confidence to increase our supplies of war material to the Yugoslav Forces.” 1053

Washington took a somewhat more jaundiced view of the proceedings. The Treaty of Vis, Cordell Hull argued, had been forced on Subasic by Tito and the British, and represented an “almost unconditional acceptance of Partisan demands.” 1054 The harsh reality, as American policymakers began to realize, was that Subasic—and his American boosters—had been brought face to face with the real relationship of forces in Yugoslavia. While Tito came to the table as the head of a growing revolutionary army, Subasic, his bold promise of leading the Croatian Peasant Party into battle evaporating like the mirage it was, represented little on the ground. In this situation, Subasic’s secret ties to Washington counted for little. For his part, Tito regaled Robert Murphy with his

1052 Murphy to State Department, June 11 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1378.
1053 Churchill to Roosevelt, Aug. 14 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 275.
1054 Hull to Murphy, July 8 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1387.
“enthusiasm” for the United States, his anticipation of American funding for the postwar reconstruction and his support for “democracy and the Four Freedoms.”

Despite Murphy’s favorable impression of Tito himself, senior American policymakers quickly concluded that Tito was acting in “bad faith” and that American-supplied arms were in fact being readied for use against “the Serbs.” Subasic appeared to have been politically entrapped by the Partisans, and, even more worryingly, London acted as if willfully ignorant of the fact, or worse, complicit in it.

Matters began to come to a head in mid-September when Tito abruptly vanished from his British-sponsored stronghold on Vis and turned up in Moscow to discuss plans for the Red Army’s pending entry into Yugoslavia with Stalin. Stalin promised that Russian troops would enter Yugoslavia in pursuit of retreating German forces and would support Partisan operations in Serbia but—in a unique concession to the strength and independence of the Partisan movement— agreed that they would not occupy the country.

In mid October and with the Red Army deep in the Balkans, Russian and Partisan troops joined forces to capture Belgrade, thereby providing a solid basis for the establishment of a Tito-led government. On November 1 the broad outlines of the Treaty of Vis were put into effect with the establishment of a national government comprising twelve members drawn from the AVNOJ and six from the royal government. The King, in an agreement made without his approval, would be represented by a three-member council of regents, and would not return to the country prior to a plebiscite on the future of the monarchy.

1055 Murphy to Hull, Aug. 16 1944, FRUS 1944, 3: 1396–1397.
Reporting from Belgrade in early November, officers of the Independent American Military Mission noted that the Vis agreement now laid the basis for a “firm government under his [Tito’s] command.”\textsuperscript{1058} The previous day an OSS memorandum on the situation in Yugoslavia noted gloomily that Subasic held only “relatively weak cards”—primarily the threat of withholding Allied relief and recognition—and, with Mihailovic “virtually eliminated as a military and political force,” he seemed destined to end up being “forced into a union on Tito’s terms and in a regime dominated by him.”\textsuperscript{1059} By mid-December, Subasic’s OSS case officer Bernard Yarrow was forced to conclude that the “Shepherd” was now “completely under the domination of Tito.”\textsuperscript{1060} From AFHQ Caserta, Alexander Kirk added that Subasic’s appointment as foreign secretary effectively rendered him “merely a subservient link [between Tito and] the outside world.”\textsuperscript{1061} These shocking diplomatic and political reverses—Kirk reported that when Subasic returned to Yugoslavia he was surprised to find that the “whole of the country including Serbia” was “behind Tito”—took place in the context of Partisan military success and of the entry of the Red Army into Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{1062}

The arrival of Soviet troops brought Partisan forces into direct contact with the Russians for the first time. Russian weapons, including tanks and other heavy equipment, could now flow freely to the Partisans, breaking Tito’s dependence on Allied supplies and air support. In late September Tito had begun preparing for this new situation by restricting the movement of Allied military missions. The Joint Chiefs concluded that the

\textsuperscript{1058} Thayer to State Department, Nov. 4 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 4: 1420.
\textsuperscript{1059} OSS memo, Nov. 3 1944, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
\textsuperscript{1060} Yarrow, quoted in Donovan, memorandum to JCS, Dec. 19 1944, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
\textsuperscript{1061} Kirk to State Department, Nov. 7 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 4: 1421.
\textsuperscript{1062} Kirk to State Department, Nov. 29 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 4: 1425.
Partisan leader now considered the “civil war all but in the bag” and that he did not want Allied observers seeing the consolidation of his victory “in the political and economic fields.” As the new government consolidated its position, Tito maintained friendly relations with individual Allied liaison officers, but political relations between Belgrade and the Allied governments cooled rapidly, particularly as the new government spelt out its intention to secure control of the formerly Italian territory of Venezia Giulia at the head of the Adriatic. “The switch” in attitude, one stunned OSS officer noted, “was a bit abrupt.”

By the end of 1944, the complete failure of the effort to “hitch” the Partisans to “the car of British policy” was apparent even to Churchill, whose “enthusiasm for Tito,” as Maclean explained to Kirk, had finally “diminished” amidst a welter of complaints about the Yugoslav leader’s “unsatisfactory and rude attitude.” With typical sarcasm, British undersecretary Alexander Cadogan likened King Peter’s futile efforts to resist being swept away by the Partisan triumph to those of a “twig defying an avalanche, and a rather rotten twig, too.” The only potential bright spot in an otherwise gloomy picture was Fitzroy Maclean’s prescient observation that Tito’s Yugoslavia did not intend to be anyone’s “puppet.” The immediate danger, however, seemed to be that the Yugoslavs might indeed turn out to be more revolutionary than the Russians; their very “asceticism,” as Alexander Kirk noted, made them “dangerous men” riding a tide of popular

1063 JCS Memo, Sept. 25 1944, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
1064 Smith, OSS, 156.
1065 Kirk to State Department, Dec. 9 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1429.
1066 Cadogan, diary entry, Jan. 15 1945, Diaries, 695.
1067 Kirk to State Department, Nov. 2 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1417.
revolution. The United States, Kirk continued, could not afford to close its eyes to the emergence of a “revolutionary and authoritarian regime […] led by an ambitious leader [with a] not inconsiderable capacity for cynicism and international blackmail.” As it drew these worrisome conclusions, Washington declined to follow London’s lead in recognizing the new government in Belgrade, only establishing diplomatic relations in March 1946.

In early 1945, Washington overcame London’s initial impulse towards a compromise solution and demonstrated steadfast opposition towards Yugoslav territorial demands in the Venezia Giulia. This stance put the Allies increasingly on a collision course with Belgrade. By the time the crisis came to a head in May 1945, two critical elements in the relationship of forces had shifted to Yugoslavia’s detriment. Firstly, in the first days of May troops of General Freyberg’s 2nd New Zealand division of the British Eighth Army advanced through northern Italy and into Trieste, establishing an uneasy condominium with Partisan forces already in the area. For the first time, the Allies were in a position to back their efforts to control Tito with real military force. And secondly, Moscow declined to risk a military confrontation with its erstwhile allies by backing Yugoslav territorial demands. Motivated by a desire to perpetuate the wartime alliance and to uphold the “50%-50%” division of influence in Yugoslavia negotiated with Churchill, Moscow may also have been eager to curb the potentially destabilizing influence of a confident and independent-minded regime on its southern border. In the first confrontation of the emerging Cold War, the confluence of these factors forced Belgrade to back down.

1068 Kirk to State Department, Nov. 2 1944, FRUS 1944, 4: 1432.
Given their long-standing skepticism of British policy in Yugoslavia, there was an unmistakable sense of *schadenfreude* in the reaction of American policymakers to the sorry collapse of British attempts to co-opt Tito in the fall of 1944. But American efforts to utilize first Mihailovic and then Subasic as counterweights to Tito fared no better, and, in hindsight, were hardly less risible. The fact is that while their solutions diverged both Allied powers were deeply concerned both about the extension of Soviet influence into the Balkans and, and more worryingly, about the rise of indigenous revolutionary movements in the region. The spheres of interest agreement with the Russians negotiated by London and—public declarations to the contrary notwithstanding—endorsed by Washington went some considerable way to assuaging the first fear. In this context, one must wonder whether Roosevelt gave Stalin Linn Farish’s graphic depiction of unfolding Yugoslav revolution in order to impress him or to alarm him! The problem was that, having effectively foresworn the direct use of military power, neither Allied government could exercise much purchase on the situation in Yugoslavia. Where London tried “flattery,” Washington sought to build up alternative centers of power to the Partisans. Neither course was very effective in the face of a Partisan movement at the height of its military strength and political popularity.

Despite its ultimate failure, the Shepherd Project demonstrates both Washington’s deep interest and involvement in Yugoslav affairs and its willingness to utilize whatever levers came to hand in an attempt to shape those affairs. In this effort, and for the first time in American history, Washington used strategic intelligence operations organized through a dedicated agency—the OSS—as a major instrument of policy. The close working relationship between the OSS, the State Department, the Joint Chiefs, and the
Presidency forged in this process prefigured the postwar establishment of the CIA as an integral part of the national security state. In its execution the Shepherd Project, with its promise of guiding the course of events through the insertion of well-placed surrogates, also prefigures significant postwar developments; there is surely an unbroken line running from the stories and promises of influence woven by Subasic to those peddled by counter-revolutionary Cubans before the Bay of Pigs or by Ahmed Chalabi prior to the invasion of Iraq in 1993.

5.3) Greece: Spheres of Influence and the Allies’ Freedom of Action

In the fall of 1943 the Allies faced a political and military problem in Greece that appeared to be even more threatening to their long-term interests in the Eastern Mediterranean than the parallel crisis unfolding in neighboring Yugoslavia. As the Partisans gathered strength in Yugoslavia, so too did the forces of the National Liberation Front (EAM) and of its armed wing ELAS in Greece.\(^\text{1069}\) Organized by the Greek Communist Party (KKE) in September 1941, by late 1943 the OSS estimated that the EAM controlled nearly 30,000 guerrilla fighters and, if the support of “fellow travelers” and “innocent bystanders”—a telling phrase—were included, commanded the allegiance of at least twenty percent of the population.\(^\text{1070}\) While Communist-led, both the EAM and ELAS drew on the support of broad layers of the population, including former government officials and army officers. Many Greeks, American officials noted, viewed

\(^{1069}\) For an overall account of events under discussion here, see Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943–1949* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982).

\(^{1070}\) OSS Report, Nov. 26 1943, RG 218, Box 220, NARA.
King George II as having been complicit in the establishment of the dictatorial
government of General Ioannis Metaxas in 1936 and in the Axis invasion of 1940. OSS
analysts were forced to conclude that while it would certainly be “desirable [to] root out
Communism in Greece,” the reality was that the EAM was a “dynamic, imaginative, and
fighting organization” that had won the support of “good people all over Greece.”

Allied concerns about the potential political consequences of a victorious
liberation struggle in Greece were underscored by fact that given its strategic location at
the southern tip of the Balkan peninsula and its historic pro-British alignment, Greece
always loomed large in their thinking about the postwar order. The British, as OSS
officials noted, regarded Greece as a key component in securing the postwar “stability” of
the Middle East, and they were determined to exercise a significant degree of political
control over the country while—naturally—leaving it formally “free.” This policy led the
British to advocate, organize for, and ultimately impose, a postwar government based
around King George II and the old ruling elite. The problem was that the King and his
government-in-exile, regrouped in Cairo under British protection, commanded only
modest support and virtually no active forces within Greece itself, allowing the
EAM/ELAS to establish itself as the undisputed leadership of the struggle against the
Axis occupation. In 1943 London finally goosed General Napoleon Zervas’s small
National Republican Greek League (EDES) into taking action against Axis forces but,
like the Chetniks in Yugoslavia, EDES would end up spending more time collaborating
with the occupying armies than fighting against them.1071 Unable to create a viable
opposition to the EAM within the country, London eventually decided to use its own

1071 Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, 3–4.
army to restore the Greek monarchy and to establish a non-Communist and pro-Allied regime in Athens.

In their November 1943 assessment, OSS analysts pointed out that in Greece London had resolved the “clash” between the “political” and the “military” aspects of policy in favor of the former, proffering unwavering support to the government of King George despite the evident military superiority of the EAM/ELAS. In contrast, of course, in Yugoslavia London would, for want of a better alternative, back Tito militarily despite the damaging political consequences. This divergent approach demonstrated the relative importance of the two countries in British strategic thinking; it was one thing to risk a Communist regime in Belgrade, but an EAM-led government in Athens was simply unconscionable.

At the level of broad strategic policy, Washington endorsed London’s approach to Greece. But the Americans were also content to let the British take the lead in the implementation of that policy; with the exception of extensive OSS Secret Intelligence and Special Operations missions, Washington did not follow London into direct and large-scale military intervention. This approach allowed Washington to distance itself publicly from the harsh realities of executing a pro-monarchical policy in Greece. While in camera American policymakers often insisted on even more pro-monarchical policies than those advocated by the British, they were simultaneously able to maintain a public façade mildly critical of London’s “conservatism.” So, when British forces mounted an overt and egregious counter-revolutionary intervention in Greece in late 1944, Washington was able to proffer back-door encouragement and logistical support while
upholding the public distance and critical commentary necessary for the maintenance of democratic appearances.

If Washington’s approach to the thorny problems of Greece was eased by London’s willingness to “take the lead,” so the essentially pro-monarchical and counter-revolutionary stance of both Allies was fundamentally facilitated by Moscow. In contrast to the considerable discussion on Yugoslavia at Tehran—and the resulting tripartite agreement to back Tito—Greece was barely mentioned. The implications of this apparent omission are clear; in the emerging division of the postwar world Greece would be consigned to the western “sphere.” In contrast to Yugoslavia and the northern Balkans, Moscow did not view Greece a critical to its postwar security, and it lay well to the south of the projected lines of advance of the Red Army. Moreover, Moscow was inclined by virtue of both geography and history to view Greece as part of the western-dominated Mediterranean rather than of the Russian-dominated Balkans. As American policymakers summarizing the discussion at Tehran noted, Moscow recognized that there should be “no reduction in the British Empire,” but that, on the contrary it should be strengthened by “turning over to Great Britain […] certain bases and strong points throughout the world.”

Since the next point in this conference summary dealt with Moscow’s desire to see the Montreux Convention revised to allow passage of the Dardanelles by “merchant and naval vessels both in war and in peace,” it seems reasonable to suggest an unspoken quid pro quo, acknowledging Allied domination of Greece in exchange for Russian access to the Mediterranean.

1072 Bohlen. memorandum, Dec. 15 1943, FRUS, Cairo and Tehran: 848.
The place of Greece in the emerging division was further clarified in May and June 1944 during the Anglo-Russian and Anglo-American discussions on the establishment of spheres of influence in the Balkans that led to the introductory three-month “trial.” But, irrespective of the precise formalities, by the summer of 1944 both British and Americans were acting on the assumption that they could operate in Greece without interference from the Russians, with London preparing and Washington approving plans for the dispatch of British troops to Greece to forestall the establishment of a “tyrannical Communist government” in the aftermath of the anticipated German withdrawal.\textsuperscript{1073} These steps were followed in October by the formal adoption in Moscow of a spheres of influence agreement for the Balkans negotiated personally by Churchill and Stalin. This agreement, which accorded the Allies ninety percent of “the say” in Greece, ensured that London would be able to go ahead with the deployment of the military force necessary to block the establishment of an EAM-led government without fear of Russian opposition.

Once firmly in place, the line of divide established between London and Moscow and endorsed by Washington proved to be one of the most stable elements of Balkan politics; “in all the long weeks of fighting the Communists on the streets of Athens,” Churchill would note, “not one word of reproach came from Pravda or Isvestia.”\textsuperscript{1074} If this framework had not been established and maintained—if, for example, Moscow had extended even the most limited political support to the EAM as it confronted British occupation forces in late 1944 and early 1945—then it is very difficult indeed to see how the Allies could have intervened in the Greek crisis in the way that they did. In Greece,

\textsuperscript{1073} Churchill to Roosevelt, Aug. 17 1944, Collected Correspondence, 3: 278–279.
\textsuperscript{1074} Churchill, Second Eorl War, 6: 255.
as in Italy, the price of Moscow’s craving for postwar security was the complete
subordination of the popular resistance movement, with all its aspirations for a more just
and democratic society, to the narrow interests of Russian foreign policy. And, whereas
this subordination was carried through relatively peacefully in Italy as the partisans
handed over their weapons, and with them their putative political power, to advancing
Allied troops, it was only accomplished with in Greece with great bloodshed.

5.4) Greece: London, Washington, and “Georgie”

If the emerging division of the Balkans provided the overall framework within
which the Allies could exercise a controlling influence in Greece, the actual road to
installing a viable, non-Communist, government proved to be both long and tortuous. In
the spring of 1943, important State Department figures including Adviser on Political
Relations Wallace Murray and Undersecretary Adolf Berle questioned the wisdom of
hitching American policy in Greece to London’s promotion of the government-in-exile
and King George II. Murray took particular aim at London’s claim that the
reestablishment of the monarchy offered the best chance of creating a stable, pro-Allied
government in the wake of a German withdrawal. Given popular opposition to the
monarchy, which many Greeks viewed as deeply complicit in the establishment of the
Metaxas dictatorship in 1936, George’s return “under the wing of an Allied military
occupation” would, Murray argued, deny the Greek people their choice of government as
promised in the Atlantic Charter and, more immediately, provoke “serious internal
disorders.” Murray cautioned that while the King might represent the legitimate legal government of Greece, the job of “selling” him to the Greek people was not one to be undertaken by a “foreign power.”

Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle underscored Murray’s concerns about the viability of the Greek monarchy, arguing that if George returned to Greece before the Greek people had been able to express their opinion on the future of the monarchy, significant “political and military problems” might be created. Berle also warned that an Allied-sponsored return of the King would create domestic difficulties for the United States, where the most of the Greek-language press favored the “non-return of the King” and the majority of its readership was “violently anti-monarchist.” Washington should be “very cautious” about supporting British policy, Berle concluded. Despite their concerns about the monarchy, however, both Murray and Berle remained boxed in by Washington’s general policy of recognizing the legitimacy of the governments-in-exile that had fled their countries in the face of Axis invasion. To break with one king would, by implication, challenge the legitimacy of the rest and, more importantly it would raise the whole question of popular sovereignty at a moment when Communist resistance fighters would be well placed to seize it.

Despite these warning voices, Washington endorsed London’s view of the Greek monarchy as the foundation of a pro-Allied and anti-Communist government in Greece. At the Quadrant conference in Quebec in August 1943, American and British leaders agreed that they should “continue to support the governments and regimes now

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1076 Berle, memorandum, Aug. 31 1943, FRUS 1943, 4: 149.
recognized by them through the period up to the defeat of the enemy.” The existing governments-in-exile, in other words, would continue to be viewed as the bearers of governmental legitimacy until more stable postwar conditions pertained, and resistance movements, no matter how popular or effective, would not be recognized as authoritative political leaderships. As we have seen, this approach would ultimately prove hard to uphold in Yugoslavia, but in Greece, it meant continuing to recognize George II as the head of the legitimate government and working to secure his return to the country. The Quadrant discussions left the conditions of the King’s return deliberately vague. Where Wallace Murray had cautioned against a return of the King before a plebiscite on the monarchy could be held, Churchill’s friend and adviser General Smuts argued that “fair play” required that George II be returned to his “former position” subject only—and “perhaps”—to a “later” decision by the Greek people on the form of government they wished to live under. The British, as Murray feared, proposed to return the King to Greece “under their wing” and before consulting the Greek people, and at Quebec Washington endorsed this course.

Churchill’s memoirs make it clear, even where the minutes of the Quebec conference remain opaque, that by the summer of 1943 London thought that the “most probable alternative” in Greece involved returning the King to his home country courtesy of a “substantial” British invasion force. In this scenario, British together with pro-monarchist Greek forces based in Egypt would get a firm grip on Greek politics and establish—as General Smuts delicately put it—the “proper conditions of public

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tranquility” prior to any plebiscite on the future of the monarchy. After the Quebec conference, Churchill and Roosevelt both wrote to George II to express their support for him and for this broad plan of action. In his message, President Roosevelt noted that the Greek people would have “full opportunity freely to express their political will” at the “earliest practicable moment,” but that “in the meantime” they should “subordinate” their differences and rally behind the King.

Given traditional American attitudes towards monarchy, all this might seem quite paradoxical. Indeed, during the Iowa discussions only a few months after Quebec, the President expressed a typically American disdain for royalty, chiding the “monarchist-minded” British for their support of Victor Emanuel in Italy and scoffing at their efforts to “keep kings on their thrones.” But, when it suited American needs, Roosevelt could easily and unblushingly be equally, if not more, “monarchist-minded” than the British. As we have seen, Roosevelt’s cultivated a long and paternal association with Peter II in Yugoslavia, while in Greece he signaled his support for the monarchy in early 1943 by insisting that a destroyer built by the United States for the Royal Greek Navy be named King George II. Pleas from Adolf Berle and Sumner Welles that the ship be given a more republican name were brushed aside in the rush of Presidential enthusiasm to give demonstrative expression to Washington’s view of the legitimacy of the Greek monarchy.

1080 Smuts to Churchill, Aug. 20 1943, Second World War, 5: 537.
1081 Roosevelt to King George II, Sept. 6 1943, FRUS 1943, Washington and Quebec: 1046.
1082 Meeting of Roosevelt and JCS, Nov. 15 1943, FRUS 1943, Tehran and Cairo: 196.
1083 Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, 10.
Roosevelt would in fact hew to his support for the Greek King—“Georgie,” as he called him—with even more consistency than the “monarchist-minded” British. In the fall of 1943, the British, doubting their capacity to mount a full-scale invasion of Greece, reversed their position on the plebiscite and urged King George II to delay his return to the country until after a popular vote on the future of the monarchy could be held. The British change of mind created a difficult problem for Lincoln MacVeagh, Washington’s ambassador to the Greek government-in-exile in Cairo. A personal friend of the President’s, MacVeagh juggled his official duties and participation in the organized structures of American diplomacy with his role as unofficial Presidential point man. Sympathetic to the arguments for an early plebiscite advanced by Murray and Berle, MacVeagh may well have lent his voice to British Ambassador Sir Reginald Leeper’s efforts to persuade the King to await a popular verdict on the monarchy. If so, he certainly did not anticipate the Presidential dressing-down—or “spanking”—that he received when Roosevelt arrived in Cairo after the Tehran conference.\footnote{MacVeagh to Roosevelt, Dec. 13 1943, MacVeagh papers, Princeton.}

After meeting privately with George II in Cairo, Roosevelt quickly forced the British to abandon their new plan for a plebiscite prior to the King’s return. In its place London and Washington agreed that at some appropriate moment the King himself would decide “in agreement with his government” when and how he should return to Greece.\footnote{Ibid.} As he pressed his case that the British should reverse course the President launched a particularly sharp attack on Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, whom he accused bluntly of “trying to deprive the King of his crown.”\footnote{Quoted in Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, 12.} “It really is too tiresome,” Sir Alexander
Cadogan sighed, complaining that Roosevelt had “sold the pass” by giving the King advice “diametrically opposed” to that proffered by the British. The President, Cadogan concluded with typical sarcasm, was “less interested—and certainly less expert—in Europe than we are.”

Roosevelt concluded from comments made by King George that MacVeagh had joined the British in putting pressure on him, and Presidential censure that resulted caused the ambassador to pen a long letter full of excuses and explanations in an effort to regain Roosevelt’s good graces.

This incident, for all its display of Presidential anger—King George later told *New York Times* journalist Cyrus Sulzberger the somewhat implausible story that Roosevelt had been “so furious that he rose out of his chair and walked a few steps”—would have little lasting significance were it not for the way that it illustrates Roosevelt’s detailed and forceful interest in the disposition of Greek affairs. It is all the more significant given that it occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Tehran conference and at a time when the shape of the post-war settlement was commanding significant attention in Washington as well as in London and Moscow. From this point of view, it is reasonable to suggest that Roosevelt’s anger stemmed from what he saw as the urgent necessity of acting to ensure that Greece remained within the Allied sphere of influence, even if it meant backing an unpopular, undemocratic, and deeply conservative monarchy. Roosevelt had not, of course, been converted to monarchism *per se*; after all, even as he was reinforcing the Greek monarchy, he was coming to the conclusion that the political challenges in Italy necessitated the removal of Victor Emanuel. But in contrast to the situation in Italy, there were no American forces in Greece, and without having Allied

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1087 Cadogan, diary entry, Dec. 8 1943, *Diaries*, 585.
troops on the ground the organization of a plebiscite on the future of the monarchy would be a dangerous and unpredictable maneuver. What the incident in Cairo and Roosevelt’s support for “Georgie” reveals is not incipient monarchism, but rather a combination of hard-nosed pragmatism and extreme political flexibility.

As these intemperate debates over the disposition of the Greek monarchy indicate, by early 1944 both Allied powers viewed the situation in Greece from the point of view of establishing a post-occupation government capable of repelling the threat of Communism. At precisely the same time that Allied supplies flowed freely and exclusively to—as Churchill called them—the “heroic” Partisans in Yugoslavia, arms shipments to the Communist-led resistance in Greece—described by Churchill as a “gang of bandits”—were being curtailed. At the beginning of April 1944, Greek troops based in Egypt responded to the government-in-exile’s arrest of a delegation of army officers pressing for the EAM to be included in the government by rioting and demanding a republic. Greek forces in Egypt, Churchill quickly concluded, had been “contaminated by revolutionary and Communist elements, and their rebellion had to be crushed quickly.” Surrounded by British troops and starved of food and water, the rebellious Greeks surrendered on April 23. As punishment for their support for a more broadly based Greek government, over 20,000 Greek soldiers would spend the rest of the war in British prisoner of war cages.

As British forces were readied for action against the rebellious Greek troops, Roosevelt assured Churchill that was he acting with Washington’s backing. Approving the forcible suppression of the rebellion, Roosevelt described the upcoming action as an

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1089 Churchill Second World War, 6: 257.
1090 Churchill Second World War, 5: 541.
effort to “bring […] back the Greeks into the camp of the Allies” and expressed the pious hope that they might “retain a sense of proportion and […] set aside pettiness.” For its part, Moscow stuck closely to agreements with the Allies struck at Tehran and raised no protest against the British action. In fact, as Gabriel Kolko points out, there is no evidence of Russian contact with the EAM in 1943, and precious little in 1944. Moreover, when Moscow did intervene in Greek affairs in August 1944, it was to instruct the Greek Communists (KKE) to join the new Government of National Unity formed under British supervision by Greek social-democratic George Papandreou in the aftermath of the bloody suppression of the army rebellion. While this move represented a broadening of the Royal government, the outcome of the army rebellion demonstrated in the most graphic terms where real power lay, and the EAM was justifiably wary of becoming entrapped in an administration over which it could exert no real influence. The Russian intervention forced the issue and, not for the last time, the resulting division in the EAM revealed the KKE standing on the most moderate, pro-Allied wing of the movement.

Even as London was working to put together this political settlement, British leaders were simultaneously preparing to back the establishment of a pro-Allied government by force of arms. British planners were particularly concerned that a precipitate German withdrawal from Greece might leave—as Churchill put it—a “long hiatus” during which “EAM and the Communists” might seize Athens and “crush all forms of Greek expression but their own.” To counter this prospect, London readied

1091 Roosevelt to Churchill, Apr. 17 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 98–99.
1092 See Kolko, Politics of War, 181.
1093 Churchill to Roosevelt, Aug. 17, Complete Correspondence, 3: 278–279.
an expeditionary force of some 10,000 men drawn from British forces in Italy, and prepared to rush it into Athens immediately following the anticipated German withdrawal. The forces allocated to operation *Manna* included an airborne element, and Churchill requested the use of American aircraft to transport them to Greece. Roosevelt signaled that he had “no objection” to British plans to “preserve order” in Greece, and he approved the use of American transport aircraft for the operation.\(^{1094}\) So, at the same time as the EAM—under considerable Russian pressure—was giving every indication of its willingness to collaborate with the Allies, placing its fighters under Greek government control and promising not to allow ELAS units to enter Athens, London was setting the stage for an armed confrontation.

Fearful of being cut off by Red Army advances into the northern Balkans, German troops began withdrawing from Greece in early October 1944. London quickly initiated operation Manna, but when British troops arrived in Athens on October 18 with the Papandreou government in tow they were greeted not by armed revolutionaries but by cheering crowds organized by the EAM. The KKE was particularly outspoken in its praise for the Allies, expressing support for Papanderou’s “people’s government” and arguing for the “normal development of political life.”\(^{1095}\) The British, it seemed, had successfully navigated the “hiatus,” although their success was entirely dependent on the co-operation of the EAM and hence on Moscow. As British Special Operations Executive officer C. M. Woodhouse noted, “if EAM had wished to seize control of


Athens as the Germans withdrew, nothing could have prevented them. [...] By no conceivable calculation could a better opportunity be expected to recur.”

Despite the warm welcome extended to British troops by the EAM, London had no intention of allowing the resistance movement any significant voice in the post-occupation political set-up in Greece. For its part, the EAM hoped to use its considerable political support throughout the country to influence the policies pursued by the new government. As Lincoln MacVeagh reported from Athens, the EAM pressed for ELAS fighters to be incorporated into the ranks of a new national army, inspired by a “democratic spirit of regeneration” and purged of officers with “dictatorial or fascist tendencies.”

Given the association of broad layers of the old officer corps with the Metaxas dictatorship, MacVeagh took this to mean that the EAM intended to “bore from within” with the aim of gaining control of the army. With the Greek resistance continuing to push for basic democratic reforms—despite Moscow’s efforts to moderate the demands of the KKE and its allies—and with the Allies viewing any significant concessions to the EAM as steps towards a communist dictatorship, a confrontation was inevitable. London recognized this fact, with Churchill arguing for the use of the “free hand” in Greece promised by Moscow under the terms of the Great Power division of the Balkans. Having “paid the price” to the Russians, the prime minister thought, “we should not hesitate to use British troops to support the Royal Hellenic Government.”

During November 1944, and while British ambassador Reginald Leeper stiffened Papandreou’s resistance to EAM demands for greater inclusion in the government, the

\[1096\] Ibid.
\[1097\] MacVeagh to State Department, Nov. 9 1944, FRUS 1944, 5: 137.
\[1098\] Churchill to Eden, Nov. 7 1944, Churchill Second World War, 6: 250.
British reinforced their forces in Athens in preparation for the “clash” that they now “fully expect[ed]” — not to say actively sought. Troops arriving in Greece included squadrons of the Royal Greek Air Force and the elite Sacred and Mountain brigades, all as MacVeagh observed, “notably rightist in sentiment.” Despite opposition from the British Chiefs of Staff, who worried that a major effort in Greece would stymie operations in Italy, London pressed ahead with the build up. By the beginning of December, British commander Harold Scobie had over 40,000 British and Commonwealth troops under his command, much to the dismay of Chief of the Imperial General Staff Alan Brooke, who saw all prospect of British-led advance in Italy slipping away; “all my worst forebodings are coming true,” Brooke complained to his diary.

The armed confrontation between the British army and the Papandreou government and the EAM/ELAS finally broke out at the beginning of December after the collapse of talks aimed at securing the disarmament of the resistance fighters. When government officials, encouraged by Ambassador Leeper, rejected EAM demands that the disarmament of its fighters be linked to that of the German-organized Security Battalions, the EAM resigned from the government and called a popular demonstration in protest. After initially approving the planned protest, the government withdrew permission at the last minute, thereby opening the door to an armed assault on the demonstration by Greek security forces backed by British troops. As street fighting raged, several thousand EAM protestors thronged the streets outside the American

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1099 Ibid.
1100 MacVeagh to State Department, Nov. 17 1944, *FRUS 1944*, 5: 140.
1101 Brook, diary entry, Dec. 3 1944, 631–632.
embassy hopefully cheering President Roosevelt and the United States.\textsuperscript{1102} The following day, amidst a general strike and the arrival of ELAS fighters from surrounding areas, a full-scale civil war unfolded in Athens. Churchill issued blunt orders to General Scobie, instructing him to “neutralize” or “destroy” ELAS bands approaching Athens and to “act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress.”\textsuperscript{1103}

Despite Churchill’s injunction to “hold and dominate Athens,” ELAS fighters got the best of the early fighting. Lincoln MacVeagh drove from the center of Athens into the suburbs, encountering numerous guerilla machine gun posts and bands of armed fighters in the village streets and concluding that the “ELAS appears in complete control of the suburbs.”\textsuperscript{1104} After fierce fighting, however, British forces, urgently reinforced from Italy, secured control of Athens and Piraeus by the end of the month. Churchill himself arrived in Athens at Christmas to preside over the establishment of a political settlement, securing the appointment of Archbishop Damaskinos to represent King George pending a plebiscite on the future of the monarchy. “With guns firing at each other not so far away,” Churchill noted, and with ELAS fighters still locked in battle with the British, EAM representatives shook the prime minister’s hand and hailed the British as “our great ally.”\textsuperscript{1105} With this framework in place, Damaskinos moved quickly to consolidate a conservative regime, appointing the rightist General Nicholas Plastiras as prime minister in place of social democrat Papandreou in early January 1945. Then in

\textsuperscript{1102} MacVeagh to State Department, Dec. 3 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 5: 141.
\textsuperscript{1104} MacVeagh to State Department., Dec. 3 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 5: 141.
early February the EAM signaled its capitulation in the face of the new order by formally disbanding the ELAS after signing of the Varkiza Agreement with the new government.

These steps left major social and economic questions unresolved—popular democratic sentiment remained strong in Greece and economic dislocation fueled continued political unrest—but they did mark a critical step in breaking the revolutionary dynamic of the resistance movement. In contrast to Yugoslavia, where Tito and the Partisans were able to carry through their social revolution, in Greece the leadership of the EAM crumbled under the combined weight of the British army and Russian political pressure. Of these factors, the influence of Moscow, acting in defense of the division of the Balkans agreed with London and in sharp contradiction of the political will of a substantial section of the Greek population, was undoubtedly the weightiest. Where Tito was able in practice to challenge Moscow’s injunction to subordinate the social struggle within Yugoslavia to its wartime diplomacy, the KKE remained fundamentally entrapped within the framework of the “anti-Fascist alliance,” greeting Churchill as an ally even as his troops were shooting down their own members and supporters. Without this backhanded support from Moscow, it is hard indeed to see how the British could have broken the challenge of the EAM so quickly and so effectively.

The crisis in Greece that unfolded in December 1944 also posed a major challenge for Washington and, while not modifying the essential thrust of American policy, it certainly forced substantial changes in the public presentation of that policy. American policymakers had, of course, long shared British concern over the extension of Communist influence in Greece, and they too saw in the agreement with Moscow to divide the Balkans as an opportunity to break the power of the EAM. Washington also
shared London’s view that the Royal government-in-exile—the “legitimate government” as American policymakers saw it—could, with suitable Allied backing and with careful attention to the mechanism by which King George returned to the country, provide the basis for a stable, pro-western regime in Greece. At times, as we have seen, Washington was even more sensitive to the prerogatives of the Greek monarchy than London, and the Americans stood firmly and publicly behind the British during the suppression of the revolt amongst Greek soldiers in Egypt in early 1944.

Washington maintained this course during the violent clashes between the EAM and the British occupation forces in December. In August, Roosevelt had approved draft British plans to “maintain order” in Greece and, as promised, American air and naval transport was made available to move British troops into the country. A move by Admiral King to refuse the British use of American landing craft to transport troops to Greece was quickly squashed by Harry Hopkins, who argued that refusing to provide logistical support to the British would be tantamount to “walking out on a member of your family who is in trouble.”1106 In the midst of the crisis, President Roosevelt wrote to Churchill offering his support in the face of the “tragic difficulties [...] encountered in Greece” and expressing his “desire [...] to be of any help possible in the circumstances.”1107 The President’s inner circle of foreign policy advisers applauded British actions, with Joseph Davies noting that there was “no question” that London was “within its rights” to repress the Greek resistance.1108

As an interim political solution emerged over Christmas 1944, Roosevelt lent critical support to the British effort to establish the Damaskinos regency. Writing to King George, the President urged him to act in a “courageous and patriotic” manner by accepting the regency. In this way, Roosevelt argued, the King could help to “restore confidence [and] clear the way” for the establishment of a stable government.\textsuperscript{1109} Given Roosevelt’s longstanding support for the Greek monarchy and his personal relationship with “Georgie,” this message carried considerable weight and helped persuade the King to approve the Damaskinos regency. As Roosevelt had suggested, the efficacy of the regency as a tool for the preservation of King George’s throne was vindicated by the large majority in support of the monarchy secured when the plebiscite was finally held—under very different political conditions—in September 1946.

Despite the fundamental and unwavering support for British policy as expressed in Roosevelt’s message to Churchill at the height of the crisis in Athens, the fact that there were no U.S. forces on the ground in Greece gave American policymakers a degree of separation that simultaneously allowed them to be publicly critical of London. Behind the scenes, American policymakers like Wallace Murray and Adolf Berle had fretted that heavy-handed British efforts to reestablish the Greek monarchy might provoke a popular reaction that could sweep away all prospect of a stable and pro-western Greece. From Egypt, Lincoln MacVeagh agreed, arguing that the British were “unnecessarily stupid” and committed to “playing the old game of power politics with inadequate means.”\textsuperscript{1110}

Too close an association with British policy, MacVeagh warned, would ensure that the United States incurred the same “dislike, suspicion and distrust” that the people of the

\textsuperscript{1109} Roosevelt to King George II, Dec. 28 1944, \textit{FRUS 1944}, 5: 177.
\textsuperscript{1110} Wittner, \textit{American Intervention in Greece}, 14.
Balkans already felt towards “our cousins.” For this reason, MacVeagh concluded, Washington should avoid the use of the term “Anglo-American” to describe “activities purely British in character.” MacVeagh’s dislike of British policy extended to his relations with British Ambassador to the Greek government, Sir Reginald Leeper, whose “love for bargaining” made the patrician American suspect presence of “Jewish blood.”

In practice, this liberal-sounding critique of British policy advanced by the State Department was firmly subordinated to the Presidential policy of extending firm, if backdoor, support to London. But State Department policymakers were also looking beyond the immediate crisis in Greece to the establishment of the postwar order in the Eastern Mediterranean. In a June 1944 report prepared by the department’s Country and Area Committee (CAC), policymakers sketched out a picture of postwar Greece in which the United States would provide substantial economic aid, both directly and through the United Nations Relief and Recovery Administration, to help “repair the damage” to Greek agriculture, industry and transport, and to facilitate the integration of the country into the new American-led “multilateral world.” After “careful consideration” American policymakers concluded that they had an interest in enhancing Greece’s strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean, with the prospect of establishing a stable Greece in America’s economic orbit leading them to look favorably on Greek territorial claims in Macedonia, Thrace, Bulgaria, and the Dodecanese. For all these reasons it was

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1111 MacVeagh to Roosevelt, Aug. 1944, Box 3, MacVeagh papers, Princeton.
1112 Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, fn 66, 319.
1113 CAC 203, June 6 1944, microfilm T1221, NARA.
important that Washington not be too closely associated with the most egregiously repressive actions undertaken by the British.

The importance of avoiding too-close association with British policy was underscored in Athens on December 3 when, with Greek government forces and British troops firing on their compatriots only blocks away, EAM-led protestors thronged the streets around the American embassy cheering for Roosevelt and the United States. The same day the KKE paper *Resospastis* carried a declaration by Secretary of State Stettinius underscoring Washington’s stated policy of opposition to “interference in the internal affairs of countries now being liberated” and, at least by implication, criticizing British actions in Greece.\(^{1114}\) A few days later, new Secretary of State Edward Stettinius assured MacVeagh that the declaration printed in *Resospastis* was indeed an accurate translation of an OWI broadcast approved by the State Department; the attached text, however, reaffirmed the remarkable claim that the United States would “make no attempt to influence the composition of any government in any friendly country” but made no overt criticism of British policy.\(^{1115}\) The lack of direct American involvement in Greece thus allowed Washington to pursue an effective dual policy, providing the transport and logistical support to facilitate British actions, while maintaining a degree of public separation from, and even criticism of, those actions.

This combined approach found its reflection within the Allied military leadership. On October 13 1944, the inter-Allied Combined Civil Affairs Committee endorsed the establishment of direct British military rule in areas of Greece in which there was “a serious state of disorder,” and authorized a substantial relief operation including utilizing

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\(^{1114}\) MacVeagh to State Department, Dec. 3 1944, *FRUS 1944*, 5: 141.

American resources channeled through UNRRA. On December 19, however, and with the British reporting that they were facing “much stronger opposition than anticipated” in Athens, the minutes of the Combined Chiefs of Staff record a rather different American response to the crisis. While noting that the deployment of British troops to Greece had been approved at the Octagon conference in Quebec, American leaders nevertheless argued that it was inappropriate for the Combined Chiefs to discuss reinforcing the occupation force on the basis that the operation had been launched in a “purely British capacity.” In an ironic twist, and one that was no doubt deeply offensive to British leaders who had seen their favored Italian campaign stripped of troops for the invasion of southern France, the Joint Chiefs hoped that British units in Greece would soon be free to return to Italy.

As they walked this fine line between offering private support for the British actions in Athens while publicly distancing the United States from them, American policymakers were acutely sensitive to domestic criticism of London’s policy. Thus President Roosevelt’s December 13 note offering Churchill support and encouragement in the face of the “tragic difficulties you have encountered in Greece” also made it quite clear that “limitations” imposed on Washington by America’s stated policy of non-interference and by the “mounting adverse reaction of public opinion” meant that it would be impossible for Administration to “take a stand with you” in public. Earlier the same day, Secretary of State Stettinius had alerted the President to the fact that public opinion within the United States had been “stirred to an unprecedented degree by the

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1116 CCAC Oct. 13 1944, Box 220, RG 218, NARA.
1117 CCS 750/1, Dec. 19 1944, Box 220, RG 218, NARA.
Given the degree of domestic criticism of American policy in Spain, North Africa, and Italy, this was something of an overstatement; but, in the context of the great liberal turn in American policy opened in the summer of 1944, Stettinius had a point. With questions of reconstruction and the ordering of the postwar world looming large, Washington’s policy needed to be presented both to domestic and international audiences in the most favorable democratic light possible.

From this point of view, public criticism of British policy was not simply “stirred” by news from Greece, but was actively encouraged by the State Department itself. The first reaction of mainstream liberal opinionmakers to the crisis unfolding in Greece was to extend broad support to the British. On December 4, the day after the first open street fighting in Athens, the *New York Times* argued that Allied forces could not “tolerate” civil war and were therefore “bound” to defend recognized governments against “violence or armed insurrection,” however “distasteful” this task might be. On December 7, however, Secretary of State Stettinius intervened in the public discussion through a press statement. While endorsing Churchill’s statement to the House of Commons to the effect that the decision on the form of government to be established in Greece was “entirely a matter for them (the Greek people),” Stettinius implied that in practice British actions violated this pledge. Catching this tone, commentator Walter Lippmann argued that it was better to accept the “risks and inconveniences” of recognizing “bad governments” that displayed “some of the characteristics of self-

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government” than it was to back “unpopular governments” with “tanks and bayonets.”

An editorial article in the December 7 Washington Post underscored Lippmann’s point, welcoming Stettinius’ implied criticism of London as a “breath of fresh air” demonstrating that the “Atlantic Charter continues to have meaning.”

Drew Pearson added fuel to the mounting criticism of British policy by printing the full text of Churchill’s orders to General Scobie in his syndicated “Washington Merry-Go-Round” column on December 12. Churchill’s blunt instructions to “keep and dominate Athens” graphically depicted London’s intent to force a confrontation with the EAM, and needed little elaboration. Pearson’s text came from a copy of Churchill’s order circulated to officers at AFHQ and forwarded to Washington by Ambassador Kirk. As Pearson pointed out, they had been seen by “only a few high-ranking U.S. officials,” at least some of who found them “harsh, almost brutal, in tone.” At least one highly placed State Department official also clearly believed that British actions could be placed in the worst possible (if entirely accurate) light, and that Washington’s critical distance from that policy could be simultaneously enhanced, by the publication of Churchill’s orders, and consequently leaked them to Pearson.

The underlying reality was, of course, more complex, with American criticism of British policy masking, as Roosevelt indicated in his December 13 message to Churchill, firm American support for London’s actions in Greece. Not surprisingly Churchill, faced with mounting domestic criticism of his policy, found the contradiction between Washington’s public word and private deed somewhat irksome. “The fact that you are

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1125 Kirk to State Department, Dec. 5 1944, FRUS 1944, 5: 143-144.
supposed to be against us,” he complained to Roosevelt, “has added to our difficulties and burdens.”

Churchill struck a typically maudlin note when he responded to parliamentary criticism on December 8. “Poor old England!” the prime minister complained, “assuming the burden of the most thankless tasks, and in undertaking them to be scoffed at, criticized, and opposed from every quarter.” Churchill had a point; with London prepared to do the dirty work necessary to prevent the establishment of an EAM government in Greece, Washington had the luxury of criticizing the egregiously undemocratic and heavy-handed aspects of British policy while endorsing and facilitating it in private.

This dual policy was not a product of the fact that Washington was still “smarting” from criticism of its Vichy policy as it was of American preparation for a postwar world in which they would lay claim to the moral high ground. It was not, in other words, a reflection of sensitivity to past transgressions but was rather a consequence of future plans. Moreover, the storm of American press criticism abated quickly. Churchill’s dramatic personal intervention in Greek politics, the decision to establish Archbishop Damaskinos as regent, and Washington’s support for this course allowed opinionmakers to recast British policy in a much more favorable light. The New York Times congratulated Churchill for “grasping the Greek nettle firmly” and noted that the only alternative to the Damaskinos regency was continued “chaos,” while the Washington Post felt that “peace and order [could now be] restored to that unhappy land” and that a “word of praise” for the prime minister was “very much in order.”

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1126 Churchill to Roosevelt, Dec. 15 1944, Complete Correspondence, 3: 458.
1127 Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, 24.
persistent and acerbic critic of British policy, hoped that the “grotesque and provocative comedy” enacted by Churchill in Greece might yet give cause for “optimism” with the appointment of the regent.\footnote{1129}

With the establishment of the Damaskinos regency, the installation of the reliably right-wing Plastiras government, and the easing of domestic criticism of British policy, Washington was able to shift its economic aid program for Greece into high gear. In early December 1944, American officials had already sketched out plans for extensive aid to Greece that aimed to use Lend-Lease funding to ship 35,000 tons of relief supplies per month in sixteen chartered Swedish freighters.\footnote{1130} By the end of January 1945, Lincoln MacVeagh was able to assure the new Greek foreign minister that American assistance would be available for the rehabilitation of health services and public utilities as well as for the provision of immediate relief and aid to “displaced persons.”\footnote{1131} Over the following months, American aid efforts were subsumed into those of UNRRA—itself, of course, overwhelmingly led and funded by the United States. In Greece UNRRA operations faced none of the political difficulties, either in terms of providing aid to a former enemy or to a dangerously independent-minded ally, that complicated agency operations in Italy and Yugoslavia; the provision of aid to an ostensibly democratic and Allied-leaning government appeared to be precisely the mission UNRRA’s American founders had had in mind. Moreover, there was an urgent need for aid in post-occupation Greece, with the economic conditions there rapidly becoming the most desperate in Europe.

\footnote{1129} Editorial, \textit{Nation}, Jan. 6 1945.  
\footnote{1130} \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, Dec. 7 1944, 2: 300–305.  
\footnote{1131} JCS Memo #366, Feb. 26 1945, Box 84, RG 218, NARA.
The situation in Greece seemed tailor-made for a demonstration of American benevolence: as State Department officials noted in June 1945, the taking of an “active and benevolent interest in Greece at this time offers one of the most practical means of demonstrating this government’s determination to play an international role commensurate with its strength and public commitments.” Unfortunately, however, American diplomats and aid officials soon found that the defeat of the EAM and the establishment of the Plastiras government had opened the door to corruption and profiteering on a massive scale. A great deal of UNRRA-supplied aid found its way directly onto the black market where it was sold at greatly inflated prices. By mid 1945, American officials were engaged in an uphill struggle to promote a degree of economic rectitude and accountability in exchange for loans and aid. But continued government graft ensured that few supplies actually reached those in most need, rendering the aid effort ineffective as a tool with which to quell popular dissent and effectively ensured that the United States would ultimately have to back economic assistance with military might. In 1945, however, the overall direction of American policy towards greater ongoing engagement in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean, and the critical place economic “aid” would play in advancing this course, was only beginning to become clear.

1132 Quoted in Kolko, The Politics of War, 435.
5.5) Washington’s Wartime Intervention in Greece and Yugoslavia:

Some Conclusions

Despite President Roosevelt’s cynical—and oft-repeated—assertion that he hoped that the troublesome factions of the Balkans would just fight it out amongst themselves, Washington’s wartime interest in the region began with the decision to recognize the exiled government of King Peter of Yugoslavia in early 1941 and grew during 1943 and 1944 as the United States pressed deeper into the Mediterranean. Moreover, it soon became apparent to American policymakers that Greece and Yugoslavia might either contribute to the order, stability and pro-Western orientation of Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean or, conversely, they might provide avenues both for popular revolutionary upheavals and for Russian advance. These issues grew in importance as the military struggle began to turn in favor of the Allies and as it became increasingly evident that, residual isolationist sentiment notwithstanding, the United States would play a central and ongoing role in the establishment of a new order both in the region and in the world.

Washington’s difficulties in the Balkans stemmed not from a lack of desire to intervene, but from a lack of means. Unlike the situation in North Africa, Italy, or Southern France, where the presence of large numbers of American soldiers gave heft to American political and economic interests, Washington enjoyed no military leverage in the Balkans beyond the actions of small OSS sabotage teams and of the Balkan Air Force. The absence of a direct American intervention was not inevitable; before Tehran Roosevelt himself repeatedly floated the idea of an Allied landing at the head of the
Adriatic, and he raised it for one last time—and much to the consternation of the Joint Chiefs—at the conference itself. Roosevelt’s interest in an Adriatic landing finally gave way before two interlocking sets of political and strategic calculus, the first being the emergence of clearly defined spheres of influence in the Balkans that, with Washington’s approval, effectively divided the region between London and Moscow, and the second being the relationship between the President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose concerns were increasingly focused on northern France.

From the Tehran conference onwards, emerging plans for a division of postwar Europe between the great powers had a particular and immediate importance for Balkan affairs. Firstly, clear lines of demarcation were necessitated by the possibility that the region might see operations of both Russian and Allied armies—Roosevelt’s proposal at Tehran for an Adriatic operation was premised precisely on joining forces with a Red Army drive into Romania—with all the resultant opportunities for both collaboration and conflict. And secondly the establishment of clear lines of great power influence was particularly important in a region where the weakness “legitimate” governments-in-exile, not to mention their prior and often on-going histories of collaboration with Germany and Italy, opened the door for the development of powerful popular resistance movements that linked the struggle to end the Axis occupation with a broadening fight to transform economic and social conditions. The division of the Balkans agreed by Churchill and Stalin in Moscow in October 1944 allowed London to deploy military force against the EAM in Greece while at the same time permitting the unfolding of a protracted political battle for influence in Yugoslavia between Moscow and the western Allies. This,
moreover, would be a battle in which the Yugoslavs themselves would act forcefully and to the discomfiture of all the Great Powers.

The strengthening of Partisan forces in Yugoslavia during 1944 quickly rendered the deployment of Allied forces there moot, at least until British-led troops, under the very different circumstances created by the final collapse of Germany, moved into Venezia Giulia in 1945. At the same time Washington, in the context of burnishing the liberal sheen imparted to its Mediterranean policy in the summer of 1944 by its mounting criticism of Franco and by the instillation of the Bonomi government in Rome, was happy to provide back-door encouragement and logistical support for British operations in Greece while publicly taking its distance from them. “Poor old England,” as Churchill complained, would be left to bear the public relations burden of the attack on the Greek resistance that both London and Washington believed necessary.

In this situation, the second set of relationships—those between the President and his chiefs of staff—would unfold with what was, by the standards of the early years of the war, an unusual degree of harmony. From the time of America’s entry into the war, President Roosevelt had pressed Washington’s engagement in the Mediterranean forward, often in the face of fierce opposition from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Moreover, while the great civil/military divide in the months before Torch had been resolved in the President’s favor, and while the Joint Chiefs had subsequently accepted the logic of invading Italy, opposition to further operations in the Mediterranean “suction pump” ran deep. Consequently, as the political calculus shifted against an armed intervention in the Balkans, there was simply no reason for Roosevelt to undertake another bruising battle with his top military leaders in an effort to secure the opening of another military front in
the region. Much to the relief of the Joint Chiefs, the President’s worrying lurch towards
the head of the Adriatic at Tehran marked the end of an idea and not the opening of a
bitter new confrontation.

The absence of viable avenues for military intervention did not, of course,
foreclose either on American interest in the Balkans or on the attempt to gain political
leverage by other means. In both Yugoslavia and Greece, Washington gave consistent
political support to governments in exile it viewed as the legitimate bearers of pre-
occupation authority, an approach that in many ways directly mirrored its relationship
with the government in Vichy. Given the political instability that plagued both exiled
governments, this approach often focused on extending support and encouragement to the
one stable element at their center, the monarchy itself. Despite his complaint on the Iowa
that the British were only interested in the restoration of monarchy, Roosevelt was
frequently and quite unblushingly more pro-monarchical in his approach than was the
British government. In Yugoslavia, the monarchy proved a weak reed indeed in the face
of the political power and authority of the Partisan-led revolution; but in Greece, and
when backed by British muscle, it furnished the necessary bridge to the establishment of
a pro-Western regime. In terms of a “realist” policy of establishing geopolitical relations
conducive to American power, if not in terms of the Atlantic Charter and the principles of
self-determination, Roosevelt’s support for George II—and his forceful defense of the
King’s prerogatives when they appeared threatened by British maneuvers—paid off
handsomely.

Once the rising strength of the Partisan movement began to make itself felt in the
fall of 1943, it became apparent to both London and Washington that a simple return to
the status quo ante was not going to be possible. However, while the American government was convinced at Tehran of the necessity of providing material support to Tito’s fighters, it shared neither Churchill’s enthusiasm for the Partisans nor his belief that British policy could secure at least a neutral postwar Yugoslavia, if not one positively orientated towards the West. As a result, Washington resisted a definitive break with Mihailovic, maintaining contact with him until late in 1944 and endorsing the popular image of the Chetniks presented in the American news media. At the same time the American government sought to develop its own independent channels of influence in Yugoslavia, succeeding in 1944 in placing Ivan Subasic, who was by this time functioning virtually as an OSS agent, at the center of Yugoslav politics. Given both Subasic’s actual lack of influence in Yugoslav politics of 1944—despite his self-serving claims to the contrary—and the great and growing strength of the Partisan movement, it is not surprising that the Shepherd Project did not deliver the promised results. But the project’s existence, and the President’s enthusiasm for it, demonstrates Washington’s interest in gaining leverage in Yugoslav politics. More importantly, the Shepherd Project anticipates the place of “intelligence” operations in the postwar development of American power and foreshadows the use of intelligence agencies as arms for policy execution.

Clearly, Washington’s wartime intervention in the Balkans, in contrast to its parallel efforts in North Africa, Italy, or southern France, cannot be construed as an unblemished success. In Yugoslavia, and for all the apparent promise of the Shepherd Project, Washington emerged with little “say” and even less control over the course of events in Yugoslavia; even at the level of economic relations, American efforts to
develop an aid and rehabilitation effort through UNRRA were largely stymied by—not entirely unwarranted—Yugoslav suspicions. In Greece, firmly within the western “sphere” and courtesy of British military action, the situation was much less bleak, although here, too, the use of American aid to foster political relations proved more problematic than anticipated. Significantly, American support for British action was extended sotto voce, allowing the United States to continue to claim the democratic high ground even as the troops of its closest ally were battling resistance fighters in the streets of Athens. All of this would stand the United States in good stead when, in 1947 and in the midst of the next round in the Greek Civil War, it came time to assume the mantle of the leading external force in Greek affairs. If uneven, then, the fruits of American intervention in the Balkans were by no means negligible and, even if first the military and then the Administration as a whole was determined to avoid the deployment of American troops in the region, American policy was far being the limp and “Balkan-phobic” creature of historical memory.
6.1) The Ring Dance and the Battleship Cruise

For many midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, the social highlight of their Second Class year is the annual Ring Dance. It is an event replete with tradition and symbolism. After passing through a giant plaster model of a class ring, midshipmen stand before a water-filled brass binnacle into which their class ring is ceremonially dipped. The water in the binnacle is drawn from world’s seven seas, and the ceremony makes it clear that the young officer can expect to see service in all of them. It is surely, as *Life* described it in 1939, an “odd custom;” but it is also one that could only be practiced—and taken seriously—by the navy of a world-dominant power.\(^{1133}\) It was not always thus. When the Ring Dance was first held in 1925, the water in the binnacle was drawn from the “three U.S. seas,” the Atlantic, Pacific, and Caribbean, representing the seas in which the bulk of an officer’s service might be performed and hence reflecting the essentially defensive posture Navy strategy.\(^{1134}\) In 1944, water from the rest of the world’s great waterways—the Mediterranean and the Indian and Arctic Oceans—was added to the binnacle. The meaning was not lost on one French official, who noted that the “change symbolized that the United States had assumed the role of world power.”\(^{1135}\)

\(^{1133}\) *Life*, June 12 1939.

\(^{1134}\) Ibid.

\(^{1135}\) Wasson to State Department, July 6 1945, *FRUS 1945*, Potsdam 1: 997.
The changing ritual of the Annapolis Ring Dance reflected a profoundly changed reality: from early 1944, the Mediterranean was indeed an “American lake,” and the United States Navy had gone from a force structured primarily for “continental defense” to one capable of global power projection. In the Mediterranean, this transition was effected seamlessly, with no prolonged discontinuity between war and postwar. In the spring of 1946, Washington took advantage of the need to return the Turkish ambassador’s body to his homeland to dispatch the fast battleship Missouri to the Mediterranean. The “battleship cruise” furnished, in ambassador to Greece Lincoln MacVeagh’s ponderous phrase, an “ocular demonstration of America’s naval strength” and a symbol of the consolidation of American power in and around the landlocked sea. The demonstrative voyage of the Missouri was widely interpreted as a signal of Washington’s growing willingness to confront the extension of Russian influence into the so-called “Northern tier” countries of Greece, Turkey and Iran.

In October 1946 Washington further stepped up its naval presence in the Mediterranean, deploying the new aircraft carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt and using it to project dramatic displays of air power over actual or potential trouble spots from Athens to Algiers. From then on an aircraft carrier battle group, the epitome of modern naval power, was constantly on station in the Mediterranean. In 1948, American naval forces in the region were reorganized into the Sixth Fleet, a powerful force based in Naples that could draw on numerous base and port facilities throughout the Mediterranean. At the same time Washington reactivated briefly decommissioned airbases from Casablanca to

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Wheelus field in Libya, and in 1954 the first U.S. nuclear weapons to be based outside of American territory were deployed to Morocco. The same year American-led exercises *Grand Slam* and *Italic Weld* rehearsed a coordinated naval, air, and nuclear response to a projected Russian incursion into the Mediterranean.

These moves consolidated American military predominance throughout the Mediterranean, strengthening the “southern flank” of NATO and providing the western allies what Joseph Roucek described as a strategic “ace in the hole.” These military moves all rested on the practical accomplishments of Washington’s wartime Mediterranean strategy, from the sprawling U.S. military bases in Morocco to burgeoning American investment in Egypt, and from accelerating overt and covert intervention in support of Italy’s Christian Democrats to the discrete contacts with Franco’s Spain that would result in Madrid’s *de facto* membership in NATO. Indeed, without this wartime preparation, the postwar deployment of American naval power into the Eastern Mediterranean would have been an act of baseless bravado. Building on its wartime position, Washington stepped into the Greek civil war following the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, and the following year strengthened its position in the Middle East by backing the establishment of the state of Israel. And, in addition to all this, American business pushed through the “Open Door” to deepen its economic penetration of the region from Spain to Egypt and from Algeria to Italy.

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America’s evident postwar military, political, and economic strength in the Mediterranean speaks strongly not only to the existence of a wartime grand-strategic

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1138 See Ball, *Bitter Sea*, 327.
approach but also to the success of that grand strategy. It also provides a platform from which to evaluate three key questions of wartime geopolitics in the Mediterranean: the relationship between Washington and Moscow; the shifting balance of power between Washington and London; and the actual character of Washington’s wartime grand strategy.

6.2) Washington and Moscow: Joint Architects of the Postwar Mediterranean

It is ironic, given Washington’s postwar use of the Mediterranean as a critical strategic zone in its struggle against alleged Russian expansionism, that America’s standing in the region was a direct product of its wartime alliance with Moscow. American engagement with the Mediterranean took place as a result of Anglo-American strategizing and of President Roosevelt’s push towards the region, but it came to maturity within the framework of the geopolitical architecture of U.S.–Russia relations established at Tehran in late 1943. The Washington-Moscow axis forged at Tehran is usually, and correctly, viewed as finally forcing a firm commitment to the cross-Channel invasion on the reluctant British and as setting up the command structures necessary for its execution. But Tehran was also critical to the triumph of Washington’s Mediterranean strategy, particularly at the all-important—but often overlooked—level of politics. Here the spheres of influence sketched out at Tehran and further clarified in relation to Greece and the Balkans during 1944 allowed the consolidation of pro-American governments in countries where turbulent and potentially revolutionary social crises had appeared to be looming.
Without Moscow’s active support, organized through its guiding influence on all the regional communist parties except that in Yugoslavia, Washington would have faced a much bigger challenge in confronting and absorbing the potentially revolutionary dynamism of anti-Axis liberation movements throughout the Mediterranean. The potentially far-reaching challenge to liberal capitalism posed by radical social movements emerging in country after country under the impact of war and the breakup of fascism and its surrogates should not be under-estimated. “Presentism” is a substantial obstacle here, for with the knowledge of hindsight it is easy to dismiss the significance of these popular challenges to the old order. But to contemporary policymakers, and from William Bullitt’s 1940 plea to Washington for automatic weapons for use against new Communards in Paris onwards, the possibility that wartime social dislocation might unleash radical popular movements was viewed as a decidedly clear and present danger.

In fact, from North Africa, where Washington conceptualized the threat as a “premature” push towards colonial independence, to Italy, France, and Greece, the challenge posed by radical social movements legitimized and empowered by resistance to Axis occupation was met and defused. Washington’s success, particularly in the decisive arenas of France and Italy, rested not only on the proximate deployment of large numbers of Allied troops but, more importantly, on the political accord with Moscow that assigned Western Europe and the Mediterranean to the American sphere in exchange for Allied recognition of the Russian-dominated “buffer states” in Eastern Europe. In Italy this arrangement, personified by the return of Palmiro Togliatti from Moscow and signaled by the reversal of PCI policy towards Badoglio and the monarchy in the “Salerno switch,” directly facilitated the establishment of the liberal Bonomi government and the
subsequent containment of the “wind from the North.” In this, Washington’s agreement with Moscow directly facilitated the “liberal turn” in American policy, since without the cooperation of Russian and hence of the local communist parties, U.S. forces would undoubtedly have been forced to confront Italian and French partisans directly and with gun in hand. Such a development would have had entirely unpredictable consequences not only in relationship to the outcome of the war and the postwar settlement in Italy and France but also for the domestic debate within the United States. Whatever its ultimate outcome, a substantial armed confrontations between Allied troops and partisan fighters would, to say the least, have dented the image of the “Good War” and disrupted the formation of the Cold War liberalism that rested upon it.

For its part, and while Stalin certainly sought a voice in the postwar settlement in Europe through participation in the Advisory Council in Italy and through a series of meetings of foreign ministers, Moscow neither expected nor sought a decisive say. And, needless to say, the radical aspirations of Italian and French resistance fighters and of the peasants and urban workers who supported them counted for little in Moscow’s worldview. Moreover, the fact that Moscow was able with little difficulty to impose its line of support for capitalist democracies on communist parties throughout Europe bears witness both to their rigorous internal discipline and to the great political authority enjoyed by the Soviet Union and the Red Army. American commanders in both Italy and France, while far from embracing the politics of local communist parties and the armed forces under their direction, nevertheless quickly appreciated that they acted above all as a stabilizing influence and as a force for the preservation and rehabilitation of capitalist social relations. The ultimate wartime test of the spheres of influence agreement came in
Greece, where Moscow simply stood aside as British troops, with critical back-door American support, broke the EAM’s bid for a substantial place in the post-occupation settlement. Wisely, Washington left most of the dirty work to the British, leaving Churchill to complain that British action against EAM/ELAS forces in Athens received more criticism from the Americans than it did from the Russians!

The blunting of the radical political dynamic of anti-fascist liberation movements in southern Europe must surely be rated as one of the great-unsung consequences of Washington’s Mediterranean strategy. In contrast, it is difficult to see London, with its impulsive reliance on the most conservative social forces and—most clearly demonstrated it Italy—its bitter resistance to political liberalization, being able to accommodate and absorb this popular and potentially revolutionary political dynamism. The efficacy of Washington’s approach is also demonstrated by the fact that in Italy it attracted the support of leading British officials, including Harold Macmillan and generals Noel Mason MacFarlane and Henry Wilson—no small matter when one considers the potentially career-ending consequences of crossing Churchill.

It is also worth noting that the Allies faced no equivalent partisan challenge in northern Europe. In Germany, years of Nazi repression had taken its toll of the German Communist Party and long months of Allied bombing had “dehoused”—Churchill’s ugly neologism—and demoralized the German working class, compounding the effect of losing a two-front war. As a consequence, Allied troops advancing into Germany encountered a profoundly dislocated economy, desperate food shortages, and millions of “displaced persons,” but no anti-fascist partisan movement intent on “auto-liberation.” In contrast, without the collaborative framework established with Moscow and without the
presence of large numbers of Allied troops in the Mediterranean—including the reequipped French armed troops returned to metropolitan France via Operation Dragoon—the war could have ended quite differently in countries where communist organizations had not been smashed and where workers and peasants had not been demoralized by sustained Allied bombing. As it is, the Yugoslav exception proves the rule.

The only substantial breach of the spheres of influence agreements established at Tehran came in Yugoslavia, and here the fault (perhaps not the right word!) lay not with Moscow but with Tito and the Yugoslav Partisans. For much of the war the Partisans operated in relative isolation from Moscow, with close relations between Russia and the Yugoslav fighters only being established with the advance of the Red Army into the northern Balkans in the summer of 1944. Yugoslav communists therefore enjoyed greater freedom from direct control by Moscow than did their comrades in France and Italy. Even if this had not been the case, however, it seems unlikely that Tito would have bowed to Soviet diktats to subordinate the struggle in Yugoslavia to the requirements of Russian foreign policy. The radical social dynamic of the Yugoslav resistance struggle unfolded outside of the direct control of either Moscow or the Allies, and its development posed a challenge to both. The infamous 50%/50% division of Yugoslavia adopted by Churchill and Stalin in October 1944 gave accurate mathematical expression to the fact that the troublesome Partisans were under no-one’s direct control. Under different circumstances, it seems reasonable to suggest that Stalin may have countenanced either a “Polish” or a “Greek” solution: as it was, the independent-minded Yugoslavs would be a source of constant irritation to Moscow.
In many ways Washington displayed a better appreciation of the unfolding situation in Yugoslavia than did the British, who hoped to woo Tito through a combination of arms shipments and blandishments. But, while skeptical of British policy towards Tito, the Americans lacked a viable lever with which to gain political purchase. This failing was demonstrated both by Washington’s protracted dalliance with Mihailovic and then by its attempt to promote Ivan Subasic as a counterweight to Tito in a unified Yugoslav government. The latter experience is of interest because it shows Washington’s new willingness to utilize covert operations to achieve political influence in a situation where more conventional levers are unavailable. By resting on inherently unverifiable premises and promising much more than it could actually deliver, it also, inter alia, gave early indication of some of the weaknesses of such covert projects.

Overall, however, the revolutionary turmoil in Yugoslavia offers striking back-handed confirmation that elsewhere in the Mediterranean the division agreed with Moscow did hold, sparing Washington the necessity of bloody confrontation with radical forces emerging from the anti-fascist resistance. In this sense, Washington’s spheres of influence agreement with the Russians was an indispensable element in the emergence of a postwar Mediterranean that was capitalist in economic structure and oriented politically towards the United States.

6.3) Allies and Adversaries: Anglo-American Relations

As Washington deepened its engagement with the Mediterranean, so the balance of power in the region between the United States and the United Kingdom shifted
inexorably in favor of the former. But this was not a simple or unilinear process. Moreover, relationships within the Mediterranean were but one aspect of a broad, complex, and multilayered transition from one system of global pre-eminence to another. While Britain had ceased to be the world’s leading industrial power before the turn of the century, the last great expansion of Empire in the years after World War I registered the fact that until the outbreak of World War II it remained the leading military and political power in the world. As B.J.C. McKercher argues, Britain’s “relative decline in manufacturing, accumulating capital, and investment” was not matched in any one-to-one relationship by a “concurrent political and strategic decline.”1140 So, while global hegemony is ultimately dependent on underlying economic realities, the acquisition and exercise of that power requires a willingness to develop and deploy the instrumentalities of military force and diplomatic persuasion. Washington’s wartime engagement with the Mediterranean is marked by a growing realization of precisely this fact and hence by a increasing willingness to deploy a range of military, diplomatic and economic instruments with a view not only to winning the war but also to structuring the peace—and to doing so at the expense of British power and influence.

This outcome was by no means predetermined nor even, at least on London’s part, anticipated. When British leaders presented their “peripheral” strategy as the basis for Anglo-American strategic planning at the Arcadia conference in Washington over Christmas 1941, their intention with regard to the Mediterranean was to secure American support for British-led operations in what would remain predominantly a British-controlled theater. Similarly, while Churchill wrapped his correspondence with

Roosevelt in the language of convivial friendship, it is evident that during the critical discussions on Gymnast in the spring and summer of 1942 he cast himself as a sage mentor to a President inexperienced in matters of grand strategy. Roosevelt’s obvious enthusiasm for the Mediterranean in the face of persistent opposition from his own chief military advisers may well have reinforced this notion: when General Dill reported from Washington that “a good number of people in authority here […] feel that we have led them down the Mediterranean garden path,” there were surely those in London who took pride in this apparent accomplishment.1141

This sense of British leadership was reinforced in the early stages of American engagement in the Mediterranean, with the decisions of the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 being widely viewed, both contemporaneously and with hindsight, as registering a further triumph of British strategy over American. But, by opening the way for the Allies to push on to Sicily and then Italy, the Casablanca Conference may well have achieved exactly what Roosevelt wanted it to all along. There is no evidence that the President shared his military advisers’anguished sense of being outmaneuvered by the wily and well-prepared British, and plenty that he was happy to embrace the conference’s Mediterraneanist conclusions. Moreover, as the war in the Mediterranean unfolded and the as commitment of American men and material increased, so the balance of the Anglo-American relationship subtly but surely shifted. Within months of Casablanca, Roosevelt forcefully and explicitly challenged London’s claim to “senior partners” status in the military government of Sicily, and by the early stages of the invasion of Italy senior British officials were clearly coming under the influence of

1141 Quoted in Roberts, Masters and Commanders, 300.
American ideas on the need to liberalize the Italian government. These were straws in the wind, demonstrating that the Mediterranean was not destined to remain a predominantly British concern. Then, in the summer of 1944—and despite fierce British opposition—Washington presided over the establishment of the new governmental setup in Italy that, in turn, paved the way for a further extension of American political and economic influence. London resisted Washington’s advance every step of the way, opposing in turn the dollar remittances for troop pay, the increased bread ration, and the overall shift from “disease and unrest” to “rehabilitation,” but was ultimately unable to block, or even long delay, the complex and multilayered unfolding of American power.

By the end of 1944 American influence was supplanting that of Britain throughout much of the western Mediterranean, and even in Greece the demonstrative exercise of British power was only made possible by American support. Moreover, as the Culbertson Mission demonstrated, the United States was preparing to turn sharply away from the structures of Anglo-American wartime regulation of commerce and to insist instead on a return to free trade and the “Open Door,” thereby offering American business enormous competitive advantages even in longstanding bastions of British power like Egypt. Not surprisingly, British policymakers found it hard to reconcile themselves to this new state of affairs. Too many longstanding assumptions of imperial power—not to mention the longstanding realities upon which they had rested—were being upended in too short a time. Some, like Harold Macmillan, clung to the illusion that as worldly-wise “Greeks” they could steer their muscle-bound but unschooled “Roman” cousins by guile and good advice guide.1142 Others like Generals Noel Mason-

1142 Jones, Mediterranean War, 80.
MacFarlane and Sir Henry “Jumbo” Wilson, accommodated themselves to the new realities of power even at the cost of facing Churchill’s wrath for so doing. And still others, like Churchill himself, continued to rail against the new dispensation, causing some of his closest colleagues to begin to doubt his mental stability.

The transition from British to American pre-eminence in the Mediterranean took place, as we have seen, within the overall framework of the Washington-Moscow axis forged at Teheran in November 1943. But the decisive turning point in the relationship had an entirely Anglo-American and specifically Mediterranean character, taking place in the summer of 1944 when Washington insisted, against desperate British opposition, on mounting the Anvil/Dragoon invasion of southern France. With the decision to proceed with Dragoon, Washington, rather than London, assumed responsibility for the final great strategic decision of the Anglo-American war in the Mediterranean. Given the importance of operations in southern France for the restoration of the armed power of the new French government, the decision for Dragoon also demonstrated the importance of Washington’s relationship with de Gaulle’s FCNL, despite its often tortured and tempestuous course. Moreover, and much of the subsequent historiography notwithstanding, Anvil/Dragoon was inherently neither more nor less “Mediterranean” than the half-baked scheme for a dash to Vienna which Churchill advanced against it. The point—and it was not lost on London—was that the Mediterranean, the most quintessentially “British” theater, was quickly becoming America’s Mare Nostrum. Marshall’s “great reversal” was becoming a reality, and the frankly unhinged tone of London’s response to Anvil/Dragoon can only be understood in this context.
The war itself saw neither the final completion of the transition of power in the Mediterranean nor the consolidation of American predominance. Particularly in the eastern Mediterranean, London retained significant influence into the early postwar period. Here Washington’s demonstrative support for Turkey in 1946, the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine and the subsequent intervention in the Greek civil war in 1947, and American support for the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 would simultaneously emblematic of the deepening Cold War, the transition of power from Britain to the United States, and the further strengthening of America’s leading role in the Mediterranean. Yet here, too, the substantive steps had been taken during the war, signified by the critical support extended to British operations in Greece, by the strengthening of American diplomatic and economic influence in Egypt, and by Washington’s participation in, and subsequent dissolution of, the Middle East Supply Center. Moreover, as American influence extended throughout the eastern basin in the late 1940’s, it rested upon bases of power secured in the western basin during the war itself: when the Sixth Fleet was established in 1948 to give American power-projection a genuinely pan-Mediterranean scope it was based in Naples.

6.4) Washington and the Construction of Sovereignty in the Wartime Mediterranean

Washington’s efforts to gain maximum political leverage in the wartime Mediterranean benefited from the deployment of extraordinarily flexible notions of how political legitimacy might be constructed and recognized. In wartime Europe, as
historian Stephen Krasner points out, “violations of [national] autonomy were extensive,”
with both the United States and the Soviet Union intervening to “influence or determine
the constitutional structures of many states within their respective spheres of
influence.” Moreover American policymakers did not feel bound to any one-size-fits-all template: in some places Washington strenuously upheld notional principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, while openly violating them in others.
In practice, therefore, American policymakers “decoupled” their actual “behavior” from
the theoretical norms of Westphalian sovereignty that had been held to govern relations
between nations, freely and egregiously violated longstanding principles when it suited
their interests to do so.

In the course of the war in the Mediterranean, and unencumbered by overly
restrictive doctrine or principles, the United States thus pursued an entirely pragmatic
and, at least from the standpoint of idealist principle, a highly erratic, course on questions
of governmental legitimacy and national sovereignty. So, for example, Washington
recognized the legitimacy of the Franco government in Spain and that of Pétain in France
(one by dint of victory in civil war, the other as the continuator of the ousted Third
Republic); upheld French colonial rule in North Africa (despite offering limited
encouragement to elite nationalists in Morocco); recognized the participation of the “Six”
anti-fascist parties as the basis of sovereign government in Italy (despite the lack of
electoral confirmation); long refused to recognize the FCNL as the basis of a sovereign
government in France (citing the lack of electoral confirmation); and continued to
recognize the exiled monarchies of Peter I of Yugoslavia and George II of Greece

\[1144\] Ibid., 200.
(avoiding the issue of electoral legitimacy and ignoring substantial evidence that both regimes lacked popular support). One can search here in vain for any general theory of state relations or overarching principles, and find only an “anarchic system” functioning to promote “particular institutional arrangements” favorable to the United States and to local elites beholden to it.  

In a sense there was nothing new here: contingent and fluid notions of sovereignty (and hence of international relations) had long justified pragmatic policies of United States intervention in the Americas justified by the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. What was new was the projection, beginning in the Mediterranean, of this pragmatic *modus operandi* into Europe, the center of the old world order. Once established this approach proved remarkable resilient, justifying interventions in the internal affairs of sovereign states ranging from the decisive support given to the Christian Democrat in the critical 1948 election in Italy to military participation in the Greek Civil War. What is equally striking is the degree that American liberalism accommodated itself to this turn of events. In the first period of Washington’s wartime engagement with the Mediterranean, liberals vigorously protested the Administration’s pragmatic approach to the governments Franco, Pétain, Darlan, and Badoglio, contrasting American practice unfavorably with the elevated principles of the Atlantic Charter. Yet as the “liberal turn” unfolded in the summer of 1944, they found themselves ranged alongside the government in relation to the Bonomi government in Rome, the invasion of southern France, and the newly critical stance towards Franco.

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1145 Ibid., 205.
By the end of the war, and despite the fact that the underlying pragmatism at the heart of American policy remained unchanged, American liberalism—and hence American public opinion in general—was broadly in support of the emerging American-sponsored order in Mediterranean and throughout Western Europe. The paternalist impulse that both shaped and justified American intervention in the Caribbean and the Philippines was now projected into the Mediterranean, furnishing the essential master narrative for “rehabilitation” in Italy and beyond. In this sense the ideological voice of Washington’s Mediterranean grand strategy was furnished by John Hersey, whose enormously popular novel, stage play and movie Bell for Adano used the experience of Allied military government in Sicily to urge Americans to embrace the burdens of leadership in Europe. Major Joppolo, the Italian-American civil affairs officer at the center of Hersey’s story, possessed a “wonderful zeal for spreading democracy,” and “good men” like him would, as Hersey concluded, provide the basis of America’s “future in the world.”

6.5) Washington’s Mediterranean Strategy?

It is not hard to make the case that on every significant level of engagement—military, diplomatic/political, and economic—and in relation to every country in the

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1147 New York Times, Feb. 6 1944; Hersey, Bell for Adano, 2.
Mediterranean—and particularly to those in the western basin—the United States emerged from World War II immeasurably stronger than it entered it. By the end of the war American policymakers had consciously begun to develop the grand-strategic (or imperial) vision necessary to view the Mediterranean as a unified entity: as William Reitzel explained in 1948, Washington now viewed events in the region not as “isolated issues” but as “related questions affecting a total American position.” Questions of “American security” were thus intimately “linked [to a] larger complex of Mediterranean issues.” These notions were particularly influential with President Truman’s Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal who, in reconceptualizing the Mediterranean as the “southern flank” of the rapidly-deepening Cold War with the Soviet Union, grasped the naval element of pan-Mediterranean force-projection and pressed for the establishment of a powerful and permanent American fleet. Tellingly, where British naval supremacy had sought primarily to secure the “imperial lifeline” from Gibraltar to Suez, its American successor was an integral part of a much grander hegemonic project that aimed to ensure the pro-American orientation of the entire region.

This great transformation in America’s standing in the Mediterranean between 1942 and 1945 was first and foremost the product of the consistent and massive application of force. Despite the often-vigorous opposition of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, between November 1942 and June 1944 the Mediterranean was the site of the largest overseas deployment of American combat forces. Even as the main tides of war flowed away from the Mediterranean following the cross-Channel invasion of Normandy and as troop levels in the region declined, U.S. forces left behind them a residue of military

bases, ports, repair and assembly facilities, and airfields that would continue to provide critical points of support for American military power. More importantly America’s armies and, as John Hersey put it, the “after armies,” would leave a more intangible legacy in the skeins of political influence and networks of business relationships that would underpin American power once the fighting men had moved on. As wartime economic regulations were eased these networks of political and economic influence, formed with the willing collaboration with local elites, would serve to bind country after country into a global system of “free trade” dominated by the United States.

In this sense, and while everything was ultimately the product of the application of military force, Washington’s grand-strategic orientation towards the Mediterranean in World War II was never entirely, or even primarily, a military question. Initially resting largely on the initiative of President Roosevelt—and offering, in the context of pre-determined circumstance, striking confirmation of the importance of individual agency and leadership—American engagement began in France and in French North Africa as political initiatives. As it turned out, many of hopes Roosevelt initially vested in the “Vichy gamble” and in Robert Murphy’s covert operations in the Maghreb failed to materialize, necessitating the tactical flexibility manifest in the deal with Darlan and successive adjustments that followed it. But, even if many of the original plans misfired, Roosevelt’s insistence on American intervention North Africa opened, as he may well have anticipated it would, a broad and multilayered engagement first with the Maghreb and then with the countries of the western Mediterranean as a whole.

This engagement quickly developed a dynamic and logic of its own. In narrowly military terms, the conclusive character and timing of the victory at “Tunisgrad” pointed
irrefutably towards an invasion of Sicily and then on into mainland Italy. But the building momentum of American engagement with the Mediterranean also had a political and economic character from the early days of Torch onwards. And, while many of these political and economic elements were routed through the rapidly expanding bureaucracy of Allied Forces Headquarters in Algiers they, like the developing military momentum, took on a life, logic, and dynamism of their own. So, for example, with typical bureaucratic voracity the North African Economic Board reached deeply into the economies of the Maghreb with one hand and back into an expanding network of suppliers in the United States with the other. Eisenhower’s genius as Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean lay in his capacity to overcome his initial aversion to politics—and even more to economics—and to embrace the “managerial” responsibilities inherent in leading the multilayered effort with which he had been entrusted.1149

One striking aspect of this process is the degree to which President Roosevelt, having played an indispensable role in getting America’s engagement with the Mediterranean underway, stepped back from day-to-day decision making as the process unfolded. In contrast to Churchill, who interfered constantly in the work of military officers, diplomats, and political representatives in the field, the President only intervened directly on the most critical of decisions. This stepping-back did not demonstrate any lack of interest in Mediterranean affairs, as Roosevelt’s occasional waspish interventions demonstrate, but rather reflected the broad and building momentum of American engagement in which leadership characteristically took on a multi-headed character, with several agencies—including the State Department, the Joint Chiefs, the FEA, and the

1149 See Brian Linn, The Echo of Battle, esp. 143, 149.
OSS—working in parallel. At one level, this approach represented the projection onto an international stage of the multi-agency (or alphabet soup) approach typical of Roosevelt’s New Deal. But it also reflected the growing strength of the rising superpower and its capacity to pursue numerous parallel, or even sometimes contradictory, approaches.

Beginning with American military leaders like Albert Wedemeyer, who felt themselves outmaneuvered and out-argued by well-prepared British officers at the Casablanca Conference, it has become customary to contrast apparently anarchic American decision-making unfavorably with slick and sophisticated British “committee work.” But what is frequently lost here is an appreciation of just how effective American policymaking actually was at advancing the multilayered and multifaceted elements of American grand strategic engagement. There was no manual—no *Global Hegemony for Dummies*—to guide American policymakers down the path to becoming the predominant power in the capitalist world. But what the United States did have was the ever-increasing economic and military muscle that allowed its leaders to run numerous parallel projects and to determine their efficacy in practice. From this point of view, the sophisticated British committee work and tightly organized political/military integration that seemed so appealing to some American military leaders, were not only the finely-honed product of decades of empire, but also the necessary organizational expression of a great power forced to marshal limited and waning resources in a fundamentally defensive effort. In contrast, Washington’s Mediterranean grand strategy ended up effectively advancing American leadership and “Americanism” throughout the western Mediterranean, and in doing so it laid the basis for the consolidation of American hegemony in the postwar period.
The apparently anarchic character of Washington’s wartime grand-strategic decision making, in which critical decisions were made by numerous parallel—and sometimes competing—agencies and in which the overall direction of policy was centralized exclusively in the hands of the President, did not persist long into the Cold War. Even before the end of the war, it was evident that the freewheeling methods that had, under Roosevelt’s leadership, served well in the pursuit and acquisition of global leadership would be entirely inadequate to dealing with the increasingly complex task of maintaining and defending that position. In 1943 George Marshall floated a plan for the integration of the Navy and War departments, and in April 1945 a special committee headed by Admiral James Richardson proposed that the establishment of a unified military department. Richardson’s report, ironically delivered the day before Roosevelt’s death, initiated a process of extended and often acrimonious debate that culminated in the passage of the National Security Act on July 26 1947.

With the passage of the National Security Act, the United States finally acquired a formal executive body capable of exercising genuine grand strategic leadership. Under the act the President, the secretary of the new unified Department of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board, and representatives of the Army, Navy, and Air Force would sit on the National Security Council (NSC), and the director of the newly established Central Intelligence Agency would attend meetings as an observer and adviser. By dint of its composition, which would expand as the work of the body developed, the NSC was able to begin to integrate the military, political/diplomatic, and economic aspects of grand strategy in a thoroughly

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systematic manner. No doubt there was an element of personal leadership style here: it is hard to see Roosevelt, the consummate political juggler, allowing himself to be bound to the relative transparency represented by the NSC’s closely argued policy statements and clearly minuted decisions. But in this, as in much else, it fell to Truman and then to Eisenhower—the archetypal military “manager”—to consolidate America’s wartime gains. It is also worth noting that, building on the wartime work of the OSS and on the experiences like the Shepherd Project, a capacity for covert operations would for the first time be integrated into the arsenal of policy execution.

6.6) The Great Erasure.

If Washington’s grand strategy in the Mediterranean was so evident and so successful, it is reasonable to ask how it could have been so thoroughly erased from both popular memory and scholarly historiography. The Mediterranean theater in World War Two remains almost universally described as a pre-eminently British concern in which the United States, more or less willingly—or simply for lack of anything better to do—played an important but secondary role before getting out as quickly as possible. The erasure of this critical aspect of America’s actual wartime experience sits inside an even larger lacuna that consistently downplays the overall weight and significance of the Mediterranean theater. Despite being the site of the only serious and protracted combat with Axis forces for the British (from late 1940) and for the United States (from November 1942) until D-Day, and despite witnessing both the overthrow of Italian Fascism and the rebuilding of pro-Allied France, the Mediterranean is relegated to the ranks of a “secondary” or “diversionary” theater. Recent studies, including James
Sadkovich’s work on Italian military capacity and books by Simon Ball and Douglas Porch on the wartime Mediterranean as a whole, have gone some way to redressing the balance. But these remain largely voices in the wilderness.

Hopefully, the material presented above will have gone some way to righting both erasures, particularly in relation to the grand strategy of the United States. But the question remains: why the erasure in the first place? Studying the place of the Mediterranean in American foreign policy for the influential Institute of International Studies at Yale shortly after the end of the war, William Reitzel alerted his readers to the necessity of developing a self-consciously regional approach to the Mediterranean in the face of alleged Russian expansionism. In doing so, Reitzel traced the development of Washington’s wartime engagement with the Mediterranean, contrasting what had actually been accomplished to the popular perception of the waste of American resources. But for many in the Mediterranean “American power” had not gone away at the end of the war but remained a “present reality” that shaped military, political and economic conditions throughout the region. Part of this misperception, Reitzel argued was that there was “no general appreciation in the United States of the extent to which the actual basis of power in the Mediterranean had shifted during the war from British to American shoulders.”

These popular misperceptions of Washington’s role in the Mediterranean conformed, as Reitzel suggested, to the popular notion that America’s task in the war had

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been to get in, get the job done, and go home, eschewing any long-term engagement, military occupation, or involvement in what might today be called “nation-building.” To a striking degree, this popular notion, rooted in the idea that American military action against the Axis could somehow be decoupled from politics, paralleled the precepts advanced by George Marshall and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In many ways the division between the Joint Chiefs and the President that reached its apogee in the fight over *Gymnast* was a clash between a narrow military/strategic vision based on classical principles of mass and concentration and a more multi-dimensional/grand-strategic approach that privileged the strengthening of America’s *postwar* position over following the line military leaders were convinced represented the shortest road to victory. In a democracy, however, where the all-out mobilization of human and material resources necessary to wage a modern total war rests to a significant degree on popular consent, it is a good deal harder to make the argument that war is being waged to secure postwar standing and economic advantage than it is to suggest that everything is being done to secure victory by the quickest and most painless route possible. It is not, as Henry Luce demonstrated with his argument for American global leadership in the “American Century,” impossible to make the former case in a popular and persuasive manner. But, with an eye to maintaining popular morale in difficult and unpredictable circumstances and to combating continued currents of isolationism, the Roosevelt Administration consistently declined to do so.

In the absence of a forceful countervailing argument from Washington, the convergence between apparent military common sense and popular desire to get the war over as quickly as possible inevitably shaped popular understanding of strategic decision-
making. Buttressed by a substantial media campaign, the Normandy landings and the subsequent drive into Germany thus took pride of place over the apparently endless, seemingly British-led, and politically confusing, efforts in the Mediterranean. As Douglas Porch points out, it was not difficult for opinion-formers to draw a favorable comparison between the “pure” and fast-moving warfare in northern Europe and the problematic political complexities with which military operations in the Mediterranean were necessarily burdened.\textsuperscript{1152} This popular perception was reinforced by the character of the political arrangements made with such self-evidently undemocratic figures as Franco, Pétain, Darlan, Badoglio, and the Kings of Yugoslavia and Greece. Whatever their military justifications, the series of appeasements, deals, and compromises that characterized the opening phases of America’s war in the Mediterranean could not be easily squared with the banner of a Manichean struggle between free world and slave under which the war was being fought. The “liberal turn” in the Mediterranean that unfolded after the capture of Rome went some way to resolving this discontinuity between actual practice and ideological justification, but it was itself subsumed into the ideologically clear and militarily decisive campaigns in northern Europe.

If this factors account for the eclipse of the Mediterranean in popular memory, why have academic historians not struggled to set the record straight? Firstly, it is worth noting that academics are by no means immune to the forces that shape popular perception. For much of the Cold War it was extremely difficult for historians to step outside of the self-justifying discourse of American triumphalism: every other country, it seemed, might pursue ulterior “political” motives, but the United States only ever thought

\textsuperscript{1152} Porch, \textit{The Path to Victory}, 681.
in terms of winning a crushing military victory and going home. According to this narrative, wartime Washington had had neither thought of nor interest in any long-term and up-close involvement in European affairs, and the deep engagement that did develop in the early years of the Cold War was therefore not a continuation of wartime policy but a radical break from it. In this context the very extensive discussion on Anglo-American strategy in the Mediterranean that unfolded after 1945—Trumball Higgins’ “historians war”—assumed a narrowly military character and, insofar as politics intruded on the debate, they were the politics of the then-contemporary Cold War and not those of the wartime Mediterranean. So, for example, the critical political issues of the rearmament of the French military and the consequent securing of the authority of de Gaulle and the FCNL that were so central to the actual wartime discussion on Anvil/Dragoon were almost entirely consumed in the fantasy debate over whether or not Allied forces could have arrived in Vienna before the Russians. To this day, most discussion on the Franco-American invasion of the South of France is still framed in precisely these terms.\textsuperscript{1153}

The postwar debate over Allied strategy in Europe, structured around a binary counterposition between Overlord and the Mediterranean, thus separated military strategy from politics and economics—or at least from American politics and economics. Moreover, no substantial alternative narrative was advanced to challenge this bifurcation: even as they campaigned to build public support for a sustained global commitment to the “containment” of Russian “totalitarianism,” it suited American policymakers and opinion-formers to present the “Good War” as a noble and politically disinterested crusade. Since the 1960s, many historians have chipped away at pieces of this over-\textsuperscript{1153} See, for example, Anthony Tucker-Jones, Operation Dragoon: The Liberation of Southern France, 1944 (Barnsley, S. Yorks.: Pen and Sword Books, 2009).
arching American war-myth. But, even for those like Gabriel Kolko who offered a radical critique of the nature and limits of American power, it was easier to minimize the specifically military questions altogether in order to focus on the economic and political. Thus military affairs have remained largely disconnected from the broader story of the advance of American power, and the bifurcation of American grand strategy has persisted.

I trust that this study has gone some way towards reestablishing the essential military, political, and economic unity of American grand strategy in a way that permits a reevaluation of the place of the Mediterranean in America’s war. Given the freewheeling and often chaotic character of Washington’s grand-strategic decision making—itself, as I have argued, a product of the rising arc of America’s march to hegemony—this has not been a straight-forward task. Washington would only—could only, in fact—rise to clear and integrated grand-strategic planning after assuming the undisputed leadership of the “free world.” Washington’s wartime grand-strategic impulse thus has to be judged by results, not by plans. The deed, it turns out, precedes the word: as this study demonstrates, the full spectrum of American grand-strategic engagement in the Mediterranean was decisive not only for winning the war but also for beginning to structure the peace and America’s place within it.
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