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The Royal Air Force on Okinawa:

The Diplomacy of a Coalition on the Verge of Victory

General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, commander of the Tenth U.S. Army on Okinawa, made note in his diary of the visitors he saw. His comments on his meeting with Air Vice Marshal Sir Hugh Lloyd of the Royal Air Force (RAF) on 12 July 1945 were brief and to the point: "Limie air marshal in—Lloyd. The God-damn Lancaster outfit."[1] The RAF would soon be joining in on the bombing of Japan from bases on Okinawa. Stilwell had never really liked the British and was less than eager to welcome them to the island, but his reaction to the British presence was the exception, rather than the rule. Although the conflict ended before the RAF joined in the bombing, the negotiations to incorporate it into the campaign did take place, and those talks showed that policymakers in both Washington and London, particularly those in uniform, realized that the war was a cooperative effort that had to service many different interests, not just those found in their capital.

In 1944, at the second Quebec conference, and in 1945, at the meeting in Potsdam, Germany, the Combined Chiefs of Staff discussed the role the British would play in the final defeat of Japan. At both gatherings, the United States accepted a British offer to contribute air, land, and sea forces to coming and ongoing operations. This study will focus solely on the air contribution the British wished to make, since the RAF units had less firepower than the detachments of the U.S. Army Air Forces they displaced and reduced the combat effectiveness of the Allied effort. It will seek to answer three simple questions: (1) Why did the British put forward this proposal? (2) Why did the United States accept this offer if they lost more than they gained? (3) How did these interests turn into policy? The answers to these questions lie in a study of diplomacy, domestic politics, and public opinion, rather than of military operations. Policy-makers in both the United Kingdom and the United States believed that if there were to be any hope of a postwar alliance between their two countries, the British had to contribute to the ultimate defeat of Japan. If the British spent their time trying to reclaim colonies lost to the Japanese early in the war, or if they focused their attention and energy on demobilization, the general

1. Joseph W. Stilwell, diary, 12 July 1945, Folder 45, Box 22, Papers of Joseph W. Stilwell, Hoover Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

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expectation in both Washington and London was that the American people would turn against the United Kingdom the same way they had done in the 1920s.

This study hopes to address two different historiographical debates. First, in the years since the end of World War II, a good deal of scholarly attention has focused on the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Such interest is understandable, considering that mankind lived under the constant threat of a nuclear exchange during most of the postwar period. Since the end of the Cold War and in preparation for, as well as in response to, the fiftieth anniversary of World War II, scholars have studied other aspects of the final days in the Pacific Theater. These writers have moved beyond the atomic bomb and examined strategic planning,[2] public opinion,[3] intelligence operations,[4] the consequences of unrestricted submarine warfare,[5] the conventional strategic bombing of Japan,[6] and various aspects of the planned invasion of the home islands.[7]

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2. Charles F. Brower IV, "Sophisticated Strategist: General George A. Lincoln and the Defeat of Japan, 1944–1945," *Diplomatic History* 15 (Summer 1991): 317–37.

3. John D. Chappell, *Before the Bomb: How America Approached the End of the Pacific War* (Lexington, KY, 1997).

4. Edward J. Drea, *MacArthur's Ultra: Codebreaking and the War against Japan, 1942–1945* (Lawrence, KS, 1992).

5. Roger Dingman, *Ghost of War: The Sinking of the* Awa maru *and Japanese-American Relations, 1945–1995* (Annapolis, MD, 1997).

6. Kenneth P. Werrell, *Blankets of Fire: U.S. Bombers over Japan during World War II* (Washington, DC, 1996); Herman S. Wolk, "General Arnold, the Atomic Bomb, and the Surrender of Japan," in *The Pacific War Revisited*, ed. Günter Bischof and Robert L. Dupont (Baton Rouge, LA, 1997), 163–78.

7. John Ellis van Courtland Moon, "Project SPHINX: The Question of the Use of Gas in the Planned Invasion of Japan," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 12 (September 1989): 303–23 is, as the title suggests, an examination of the use of gas in the invasion. Marc Gallicchio, "After Nagasaki: General Marshall's Plan for Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Japan," *Prologue* 23 (Winter 1991): 396–404 and Barton J. Bernstein, "Eclipsed by Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Early Thinking about Tactical Nuclear Weapons," *International Security* 15 (Spring 1991): 149–73 are examinations of the use of nuclear weapons as tactical support weapons for the infantry landing on the beaches of Kyushu. A strong debate has developed over the expected casualties in such an operation. The dispute has been intense, because the findings have an impact on the exchange regarding the use of the atomic bomb. Part of this debate has involved the nature of the evidence one should use in writing history. In a series of articles, Bernstein has argued that a reading of documents produced during the war shows that the argument that the invasion would have produced high casualties is suspect. Barton J. Bernstein, "Writing, Righting, or Wronging the Historical Record," *Diplomatic History* 16 (Winter 1992): 163–73; Barton J. Bernstein, "The Alarming Japanese Buildup on Southern Kyushu, Growing U.S. Fears, and Counterfactual Analysis: Would the Planned November 1945 Invasion of Southern Kyushu Have Occurred?" *Pacific Historical Review* 68 (November 1999): 561–91; Barton J. Bernstein, "Truman and the A-Bomb: Targeting Noncombatants, Using the Bomb, and His Defending the 'Decision,'" *The Journal of Military History* 62 (July 1998): 547–70; Barton J. Bernstein, "Reconsidering Truman's Claim of 'Half a Million American Lives' Saved by the Atomic Bomb: The Construction and Deconstruction of a Myth," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 22 (March 1999): 54–95. Others have argued that other evidence, such as oral histories and low-level supply-requisition documents, shows that a great fear of a costly invasion did indeed shape policy. D. M. Giangreco, "Casualty Projections for the U.S. Invasions of

The other historiography to which this article will add is that of U.S.-British relations. Works in this field have focused in varying degrees on the conflict between the two English-speaking allies and have questioned the uniqueness of their "special relationship."[8] Studies of their relationship in Asia have been few in number and have continued to emphasize the disputes in the partnership.[9] Works on British contribution to and strategic planning of the final defeat of Japan are also limited.[10] While there were disputes between the Americans and the British that shaped the relationship between these two nations, there is a danger in emphasizing this negative element too much. In the end, the U.S.-UK alliance held together and was much stronger than any of the relationships between the Axis powers. An examination of British efforts to contribute to the final defeat of Japan provides a good example of the strength of the U.S.-UK alliance.

The first and most obvious question deserving investigation is why the British wanted to take part in operations against Japan. Regaining colonies lost

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Japan, 1945–1946: Planning and Policy Implications," *The Journal of Military History* 61 (July 1997): 521–82; D. M. Giangreco, "Operation Downfall: The Devil Was in the Details," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 9 (Autumn 1995): 86–94; Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, "Invasion Most Costly," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (August 1995): 51–56; Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, *Code-Name DOWNFALL: The Secret Plan to Invade Japan—and Why Truman Dropped the Bomb* (New York, 1995). Bernstein has written an entire article that takes apart the Allen-Polmar article and the evidence the two authors used. Barton J. Bernstein, "Reconsidering 'Invasion Most Costly': Popular-History Scholarship, Publishing Standards, and the Claim of High U.S. Casualty Estimates to Legitimize the Atomic Bombings," *Peace & Change* 24 (April 1999): 220–48. In addition to the Allen-Polmar book, there is another on the invasion of Japan: John Ray Skates, *The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb* (Columbia, SC, 1994). Richard B. Frank, *DOWNFALL: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York, 1999) provides a broad study of the many different factors at work that resulted in the defeat of Japan. Both works address matters other than the statistical estimates of dead and wounded, but both come closer to supporting Bernstein's position than those of Giangreco and of Allen and Polmar. A more recent study, Alvin D. Coox, "Needless Fear: The Compromise of U.S. Plans to Invade Japan in 1945," *The Journal of Military History* 64 (April 2000): 411–38, suggests that Japanese operatives were able to penetrate MacArthur's headquarters in Manila and steal the plans for the invasion, which they were unable to deliver to any Japanese commands.

8. John E. Moser, *Twisting the Lion's Tail: American Anglophobia between the World Wars* (New York, 1999); Mark Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare* (Westport, CT, 1977); Warren Kimball, *Swords or Ploughshares? The Morgenthau Plan for Defeated Nazi Germany* (Philadelphia, 1976); Warren Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War* (New York, 1997); David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937–1941* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982); Alex Danchev, *Very Special Relationship: Field Marshal Sir John Dill and the Anglo-American Alliance, 1941–44* (London, 1986); Fraser J. Harbutt, *The Iron Curtain: Churchill, America, and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, 1986); Anne Orde, *The Eclipse of Great Britain: The United States and British Imperial Decline, 1895–1956* (New York, 1996); David Reynolds, *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942–1945* (New York, 1995).

9. Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain, and the War against Japan, 1941–1945* (New York, 1978); John J. Sbrega, *Anglo-American Relations and Colonialism in East Asia, 1941–1945* (New York, 1983).

10. H. P. Willmott, *Grave of a Dozen Schemes: British Naval Planning and the War against Japan, 1943–1945* (Annapolis, MD, 1996).

to the Japanese during the early stage of the war was not a factor in this decision. Prime Minister Winston Churchill preferred that the British armed services launch an offensive in the Pacific to retake British possessions. He believed that if the people of these territories saw the United Kingdom as liberators, the British might be able to rebuild the empire. Sending military units to fight in and around metropolitan Japan without a vital role offered no such prospects, and there was little chance that the British could depend on the Americans to restore their territories.[11] In fact, it seemed to many that involvement in the invasion might very well cost the United Kingdom any chance it had of regaining its lost colonies. One official in the South East Asia Command warned that the military efforts in the region would be

> effectively immobilized until the war with Japan is over (as it presumably must be after the final assault on Japan has taken place): if the Japanese continue to resist in outlying areas, as they probably will if the national structure is destroyed in Japan, it will mean that America will be free of the war while we European powers are left mopping up *ad infinitum*. We shall derive no benefit for taking part in the assault on Japan, while our idleness in South East Asia in the interim is liable to have the worst possible repercussions politically.[12]

Such an argument, however, while it made sense to Churchill, carried little weight with other officials in Whitehall. Clement Attlee, who became prime minister when the Labour party won the general election in July 1945, explained official thinking about British participation in the campaigns against the home islands of Japan in a telegram to his dominion counterparts: "Planning is premised on the belief that the defeat of the enemy's armed forces in the Japanese homeland is a prerequisite to unconditional surrender, and that such a defeat will establish the optimum prospect of capitulation by Japanese forces outside the main Japanese islands."[13]

The driving force behind this idea was Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff. He wanted to take part in operations in Japan to preserve the close relationship that the United Kingdom enjoyed with the United States. He also believed that British forces had to participate in this last campaign in order to preserve ties to Australia. Sir Alan had been arguing this point—and that is a polite way of describing his efforts—with Churchill since early in 1944. After the war, he explained that in his view, an operation designed to retake colonies would have been the

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11. David Fraser, *Alanbrooke* (New York, 1982), 413–14.

12. [Indecipherable] to John Sterndale-Bennett, 3 August 1945, Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 371 46440, UK Public Record Office, Richmond, Surrey, UK (hereafter PRO). Emphasis in original.

13. Prime Minister to prime ministers of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, 31 July 1945, Prime Minister's Office (hereafter PREM) 8 29, PRO.

> easiest to stage but limited itself to the recapture of British possessions without any direct participation with American and Australian forces in the defeat of Japan. I felt that at this stage of the war it was vital that British forces should participate in direct action against Japan in the Pacific. First of all, from a Commonwealth point of view to prove to Australia our willingness and desire to fight with them for the defence of Australia as soon as the defeat of Germany rendered such action possible. Secondly I felt that it was important that we should operate with all three services alongside of the Americans in the Pacific against Japan in the final stages of the war.[14]

The Earl of Halifax, serving His Majesty's government as the ambassador in Washington, DC, made a similar argument:

> The effect of our non-participation on American public opinion would be in the highest degree unfortunate for us. Apparent justification would be given to those who are already out to maintain that Britain will only participate in the Pacific war to the extent necessary to regain British Colonial possessions. Over and above this there would be a general feeling common to our friends as well as our critics that the British had quit when the boar was at bay. Whereas the United States had seen it through in Europe. Even if British participation were of necessity small or comparatively so, there would be an overwhelming difference between this and total absence.[15]

Professional pride was a final factor for the British to want a role in the victory over Japan. The outcome of the war in the Pacific was going to come in the home islands, not in distant territories in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia. "It is agreed," the British Chiefs of Staff told their American counterparts at Potsdam, "that the invasion of Japan is the supreme operation of the war." General H. H. Arnold of the U.S. Army Air Forces understood their interest: "The R.A.F. had done a grand job. It wanted to be in at the kill of Japan, as well as at the death of Germany."[16]

Now, let us turn our attention to the question of U.S. motivation. Put simply, why did the Americans agree to this British suggestion? Acceptance had little to do with an improvement in the operational performance of Allied air power. The United States lost more than it gained when it agreed to RAF participation in the strategic bombing of Japan. The U.S. Army Air Forces were using the B-29 bomber in their missions over Japan. This plane was the only one in the Allied arsenal with the range to reach Japan from the U.S. bases in the Marianas and had a bigger payload capacity than any other craft in either the U.S.

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14. Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, *War Diaries 1939–1945*, Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, eds. (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 2000), 526.

15. Earl of Halifax to Foreign Office, 5 July 1945, FO 371 46440, PRO.

16. Memorandum by the British Chiefs of Staff, 6 July 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), 1945* (Washington, DC, 1960), 1:937 (hereafter *FRUS*, followed by appropriate year); H. H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York, 1949), 526.

or the British air fleets. The Lancaster bomber that the RAF wanted to use over Japan was a proven, battle-tested weapon and probably a better plane than either the B-17 or B-24 that the Americans had used in the German skies, but strategic bombing in Europe involved flight over shorter distances than it did against Japan.[17]

Bringing in British planes raised two sets of logistical issues. First, the United States faced acute supply and support problems in the Pacific. Unlike the campaign in Europe, where there was plenty of ground on which to build airfields, the Army Air Forces had limited space on a few small islands to construct the bases they needed. "We had no place where we could use either the R.A.F. or our own B-17's or B-24's to any extent," Arnold wrote in his memoirs. "As a matter of fact, if we could use 1500 of the 3500 we had in the E.T.O. [European Theater of Operations], we would be very, very lucky. Certainly, we would much rather have the B-29's with their longer range and their heavier bomb load than we would the B-17, the B-24, the Lancaster, or the Halifax."[18]

A second logistical issue was inventory. The American air campaign against Japan was at the end of an extremely long supply line, and adding a contingent from the RAF to these operations would only complicate matters. British planes would require different spare parts than American ones, which would take up valuable cargo space. In the summer of 1945, the air campaign was facing a shortfall in material, due not to limitations in production but to delivery. A significant backlog was developing on Okinawa due to limited dock capacity. The XXI Bomber Command that initiated the fire-bombing of Japanese cities had to halt its efforts after it consumed all its incendiary devices.[19] The different supply requirements of the British contingent would only complicate this problem. Indeed, Arnold informed his fellow service chiefs that British participation in the air campaign would add little in combat effectiveness to the ongoing bombing missions and would most likely reduce the capability of support operations to sustain U.S. units out in the field.[20]

Diplomatic considerations, rather than enhancement of operational performance, explain the interest of the Americans in having the British join their effort over the skies of Japan. Even before the conference in Quebec, U.S. diplomats were warning President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his advisors that the administration would come to regret excluding the British from the Pacific theater. "The really gallant people of Great Britain are as anxious to join us in the fight against Japan as we are ourselves to defeat Japan," John Winant, the U.S. ambassador in London, argued in a letter he sent to presidential advisor Harry Hopkins. The ambassador worried that the U.S. military might do severe

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17. Werrell, *Blankets of Fire*, 55–83.

18. Arnold, *Global Mission*, 526.

19. George A. Lincoln to Albert Wedemeyer, 10 July 1945, Folder 7, Box 5, Papers of George A. Lincoln, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY; Arnold, *Global Mission*, 572; Werrell, *Blankets of Fire*, 166.

20. Meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 17 July 1945, *FRUS (Potsdam), 1945* 2:41.

damage to bilateral relations if it prevented an Allied contribution to this last great effort:

> If we allow the British to limit their active participation to recapture areas that are to their selfish interests alone and not participate in smashing the war of machine of Japan, if British soldiers don't cross the Atlantic to our ports and entrain for our Pacific ports, and if we shuck the British air force in order to prove our own dominance in the air, we will create in the United States a hatred for Great Britain that will make for schisms in the postwar years that will defeat everything that men have died for in this war. Repetition of the tragedy of 1918 will be unforgivable.

The ambassador closed his letter by asking Hopkins if the president were aware of this concern.[21] Hopkins wrote back immediately and assured Winant that Roosevelt was alert to the issue. Indeed, he had personally discussed the matter with the president two weeks earlier. In a letter addressed to "Gil" (short for Winant's middle name, Gilbert), the presidential advisor agreed with the argument the ambassador had made. "We simply must find a way to have Great Britain take her full and proper place in the war against Japan. This, with the best goodwill in the world is full of many difficulties—transportation, supply, etc."[22]

Four days after Hopkins sent his response, Secretary of State Cordell Hull expressed these concerns to Roosevelt. "It is clear that one of the most important objectives of United States policy must be to bring the British into war operations in the Far East to the greatest possible extent," he declared. The advantages were "obvious." British participation would bring the war to an end quicker than would otherwise be the case, which would in turn save lives and expenses. "The disadvantages of the failure of the British to participate to the full in the war in the Far East deserve special emphasis." If no British forces fought in Japan, there would be an intense hostile reaction among the American public, and the United Kingdom would have an opportunity to expand their exports in the Pacific, which would anger the relevant sections of the business community. A British absence would also expose Lend-Lease as a failure, at least to some degree. "All of these factors will combine to produce the most difficult of circumstances in which to attempt to build Anglo-American and general political and economic collaboration to face the problems of the post-war world."[23]

These concerns continued on into 1945, even after Roosevelt's death. On 4 July 1945, President Harry S. Truman celebrated Independence Day with a

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21. Winant to Hopkins, 1 September 1944, *FRUS: The Conference at Quebec, 1944* (Washington, DC, 1972), 255–56.

22. Memorandum of conference with the President, 18 August 1944, ibid., 160–61; Harry Hopkins to John Winant, 4 September 1944, ibid., 257.

23. Secretary of State to the President, 8 September 1944, ibid., 178.

cruise aboard the presidential yacht *Potomac*, taking with him a group of aides, friends, and advisors. The main topic of conversation was the forthcoming conference at Potsdam. The consensus of the group was that Truman had to secure, among other things, the full participation of the United Kingdom in the Pacific war.[24]

These American and British officials had a real foundation for these concerns about the future of the alliance. There were a number of warning signs in 1945 that the American public wanted a larger British contribution to operations against Japan. Editorials in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, and the *Washington Post* faulted the British for making little contribution to the crusade against the Japanese.[25] Field Marshal Henry Wilson, head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, wrote to Brooke in late April, "The belittling of what our forces are doing, as compared to the US Forces, is on the increase, and, in addition, there is continual sniping at our policy, intentions and administration in every theatre. This will, I fear, have a tendency to increase when the war changes completely to the Pacific."[26] In the chambers of the House of Representatives, Leon H. Gavin of Pennsylvania, after noting that many allies had been in the war longer than the United States and had made important contributions to the cause, declared, "When the European war ends all the manpower of the Allies and total resources and equipment should go into the South Pacific for a speedy and total victory." Other members of Congress were making similar comments to American generals and British diplomats, but in much harsher and hostile language. Average Americans were beginning to express this view in their own way. Sir Gerald Campbell, Director General of the British Information Service, reported on a trend at dance clubs where American girls refused to dance with sailors of the Royal Navy because the United Kingdom was not fighting in the Pacific. "We are definitely on the downward grade in the opinion of the average American," he stated succinctly.[27]

The U.S. military was attuned to these concerns and recognized that British participation in the campaign against Japan was a diplomatic necessity, despite being operationally counterproductive. The Americans also knew that once the

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24. Memorandum for the President, 6 July 1945, *FRUS (Potsdam), 1945* 1:228.

25. *Chicago Daily Tribune* and *San Francisco Examiner* cited in Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 544, n. 69; *The Washington Post*, 15 July 1945.

26. Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, 493.

27. Remarks of Leon H. Gavin, 23 April 1945, *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 1st sess., A1847. See also the remarks of other members of the lower house in the *Congressional Record*, 2501, A2246, 7485–86, and the following sources: memorandum for general persons, 23 June 1945, and memo for record, 27 June 1945, Folder: OPD 336.2 GR Brit (Section II) (Cases 29–), Box 973, Office of the Director of Plans and Operations, General Records—Correspondence, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165 (hereafter RG), U.S. National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter USNA); report of Sir Gerald Campbell, 6 April 1945, 6/2/51, Papers of the 1st Viscount Alanbrooke of Brookeborough, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London, Strand, London; Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (New York, 1995), 131.

British made the offer, there was nothing they could do, given the political factors at work, but accept. General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, said as much in a cable to General Douglas MacArthur: "In considering the proposal of the British Chiefs of Staff, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff felt that they had no action but to accept the British proposal. For our government to put itself on record as having refused agreement to the use of additional British and Dominion resources in the Pacific or Southwest Pacific Area was unthinkable." Twelve years later, in 1956, Marshall told his official biographer that he had no strong feelings either way about British participation in the Pacific.[28] From a memo he wrote before OCTAGON, it is clear that he made room for RAF involvement in the bombing of Japan. In considering areas for base development, he suggested that "[T]he bulk of our VLR [very long range] bombers could be based in Luzon and staged in Formosa, leaving Formosa as the primary base for our own heavy bombardment, with perhaps the British as well."[29] Perhaps most reflective of Marshall's thinking about U.S.-UK relations was a speech he gave at Yale University on the importance of Allied cooperation in the war. Although the speech specifically addressed the campaign in Europe, Marshall's views relate to the efforts being made in all theaters:

> In my opinion the triumph over Germany in the coming months depends more on a complete accord between the British and American forces than it does on any other single factor, air power, ground power or naval power. . . . The harmful possibilities of . . . discord have been serious in the past and will continue to be so in the future because of the necessity in the European Theater of combined operations, even involving on occasions the complete intermingling of troops. . . . That we have been able to master these very human difficulties, that in fact we have triumphed over them to the disaster of the enemy, is in my opinion the greatest single Allied achievement of the war.[30]

The most important member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the matter of deploying the RAF to the Pacific was Arnold. In the early summer of 1945, his mind was on the issue of "winning the war; winning the peace." He was convinced that the Allied militaries had worked well together throughout the long

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28. George Marshall to Douglas MacArthur, 12 September 1944, Folder: Octagon, Box 31, ABC Files, Office of the Director of Plans and Operations, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165, USNA; George C. Marshall, interview, 21 November 1956, in *George C. Marshall: Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue*, ed. Larry I. Bland, rev. ed. (Lexington, VA, 1991), 376.

29. Memorandum by the Chief of Staff, 22 September 1944, Folder: 73/27, Box 73, Papers of George C. Marshall, Marshall Research Library, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA.

30. George C. Marshall, "Anglo-American Accord: Remarks on the Award of the Howland Memorial Prize to Field Marshal Sir John Dill of the British Army at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut," 14 February 1944, in *Selected Speeches and Statements of General of the Army George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, United States Army*, ed. H. A. DeWeerd (Washington, DC, 1945), 249.

conflict. As he later explained in his memoirs, "Despite conflicting national aims and interservice rivalries, the Combined Chiefs of Staff, for all their arguing, had achieved both compromise and cooperative action. The measure of the agreement they had reached was to be seen now in the global victory." The tone of Arnold's diary on the issue of British participation in the Pacific theater is one of sympathy, but he is also clear that logistical issues limited the usefulness of including RAF planes in operations over Japan. In a memo he wrote in response to the initial British proposal, he suggested that the United States welcome the participation of their allies in the Pacific theater, but only if they could secure territory on the eastern coast of China on their own, in order to avoid complicated administrative problems. This suggestion went nowhere among the other chiefs or their staffs, and Arnold clearly expected political factors to come into play. "Where can we use the R.A.F. heavies? Who knows—National pride is a very strong stimulant and may be a compellant if used in the highest levels."[31]

The planners on the U.S. Joint Staff were quite divided on this issue. These officers debated RAF participation in the bombing of Japan from the OCTAGON conference to the end of the war. The staff recognized that having the British served an important political purpose: "R.A.F. participation in the main operation against Japan is desirable: From the British point of view in order to maintain their prestige in the family of nations particularly in the Orient." Much of the debate focused on what impact the RAF would have on operational performance. The progress of the war in the Pacific shaped these concerns. The RAF went through cycles of being a liability and then an asset, and then the debate would start over again. Throughout these exchanges there was a constant recognition that the Lancasters were less effective than the B-29 and a liability if their presence reduced the use of the American planes.[32]

Now let us turn towards an examination of how these views were turned into policy. The agreement on RAF involvement in the Pacific theater came at the OCTAGON conference in Quebec. Prior to this meeting, there were a number of serious and ugly disputes about the role the British would play in the Pacific, but these disagreements were internal differences between Churchill and Brooke, not confrontations between British and American leaders. On 25 Feb-

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31. Arnold, *Global Mission*, 568; H. H. Arnold, diary, 12 September 1944, Folder 3, Box 3, Papers of H. H. Arnold, Library of Congress, Washington, DC; memorandum by the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, 26 September 1944, Folder: Great Britain (7-15-44), Sec. 1, Box 82, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

32. "British Participation in V.L.R. Bombing of Japan: Report by the Joint Staff Planners" (JPS 526/3), 6 October 1944, and "British Participation in V.L.R. Bombing of Japan: Report by the Joint Staff Planners" (JPS 526/4), 17 October 1944, Folder: CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, USNA; minutes of Joint Planning Staff meeting, 4, 11, 18, and 25 October 1944, Folder: Great Britain (7-15-44), Sec. 1, Box 82, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

ruary 1944, Brooke spent seven and a half hours arguing off and on throughout the day with his prime minister. "I got very heated at times, especially when Anthony Eden chipped in knowing nothing about Pacific strategy!" he scribbled into his diary. The comments of Major General Richard Dewing were too much for the head of the British Army to endure, though. "Dewing chipped in and talked unadulterated nonsense, and I lost my temper with him. It was a desperate meeting, with no opportunity of discussing strategy on its merits." Later that evening, Brooke and Churchill dined alone. Brooke thought their meeting was much more reasonable, and a Chiefs of Staff meeting that evening went quite smoothly compared to the events earlier that day. Brooke thought "that a great deal of what we have been doing has soaked in."[33]

After the war, and after re-reading this diary entry, Brooke wrote that his hope had been extremely foolish, since he had many more conflicts with Churchill ahead of him.

> It was as well that I did not know all that lay ahead of me connected with the tip of Sumatra! It was indeed a pious hope to think that anything we had done up to date had "soaked in"! We were just at the very beginning of the most difficult period I had with Winston during the whole of the war."[34]

The problem flared up only a week later at a moment that should have been one of unreserved honor for Brooke. On 1 March, King George VI made Brooke a field marshal and presented him the baton of that rank. The king had heard that there was a proposal to use Australia as a base for combat operations in the Pacific and wondered if his newest field marshal had any maps or documents that he could examine. Brooke found himself in a difficult position. He could hardly say no, but if he briefed his sovereign, it might seem like he was trying to circumvent the authority of the prime minister. He avoided giving a firm answer, even though His Majesty asked for the material a second time as Brooke was leaving. The next day he tried to discuss the issue of informing the king with Churchill, but the prime minister kept avoiding the subject. Frustrated, Brooke suggested that he inform the palace that there was a difference of opinion between the chiefs and the cabinet and that the military wanted to hold off on its briefing of the king until Churchill had an opportunity to prepare some remarks. The prime minister agreed. The next day, Brooke recorded in his diary that the service chiefs might resign over the issue of where the United Kingdom would operate in the Pacific: "I am shattered by the present condition of the PM."[35]

The confrontation came on 8 March at an evening meeting Churchill had with the Chiefs of Staff. The chiefs had spent a week discussing how they would respond to the prime minister's preference for an attack on Sumatra. The

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33. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 524–25; Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, 414–20.
34. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 525.
35. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 525–28; Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, 414–420.

Figure 1: Knights of the Realm: Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, and Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, listen to Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Charles Portal, Chief of the Air Staff, during the second Quebec conference. The British Chiefs of Staff were united in their determination that the United Kingdom should play a role in the final and decisive operations against Japan. The three faced greater difficulties in getting Prime Minister Winston Churchill to approve their ideas than they did when they met with their American colleagues.

meeting lasted two and a half hours. According to Brooke's account in his diary, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Charles Portal, Chief of the Air Staff, was reluctant to challenge Churchill directly and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham, First Sea Lord, was "so wild with rage that he hardly dared let himself speak!!" Brooke spent the bulk of the meeting presenting the views of the chiefs against those of Churchill and four members of the cabinet. "The arguments of the latter were so puerile that it made me ashamed to think they were Cabinet Ministers! It was only too evident that they did not know their subject, had not read the various papers connected with it, and had purely been brought along to support Winston! And damned badly they did it too!" When the meeting came to an end, the field marshal thought he had won:

> I had little difficulty in dealing with any of the arguments they put forward. Finally we had succeeded in getting the PM to agree to reconnaissances of Australia being carried out as a possible base for future action and we had

> got him to realize that his plans for the defeat of Japan must go beyond the mere capture of the tip of Sumatra.[36]

Yet confrontation continued to reign in London. The disputes still focused primarily on defining the type of relationship the United Kingdom would have with the United States. The Chiefs of Staff Committee met with their planners in April, and the two groups were unable to develop a detailed plan. The committee met with their staff a month later in May and still faced a number of complications. "Unfortunately the right course to follow is troubled by personalities, questions of command, vested interests, inter-allied jealousies," Brooke recorded in his diary.

> [Australian Prime Minister John] Curtin and MacArthur are determined to stand together, support each other and allow no outside interference. Winston is determined Mountbatten must be given some operation to carry out, Andrew Cunningham is equally determined that Mountbatten should not control the Eastern Fleet. Americans wish to gather all laurels connected with Pacific fighting, Winston is equally determined that we should not be tied to the apron strings of the Americans!!"

All these problems clearly exasperated Brooke, as the last line in his diary for that day makes clear: "How on earth are we to steer a straight course between all these snags and difficulties?"[37]

Brooke became even more frustrated in July, when Churchill returned to his old preferences. On 14 July the Chiefs of Staff met with the prime minister at 11:30 P.M. and discussed Pacific strategy until 2 A.M. "We listened to all the PM's futile and empty arguments which we have listened to again and again." Brooke had finally had enough and told Churchill that the chiefs had given him a concrete recommendation. There were some risks to basing operations out of Australia, but the military was unanimous in its position. Brooke came close to demanding that Churchill make a firm decision one way or another. "He then stated that he must go on thinking about it and would give us a decision within a week! I doubt it!!"[38]

Three weeks later, the dispute came to a resolution. On 8 August, the Chiefs of Staff Committee had another meeting with their prime minister. "Winston still hovers back to his tip of Sumatra and refuses to look at anything else," Brooke noted in his diary. Before the day was over, Brooke would spend seven hours with Churchill on this one matter. "I believe he has lost the power of giving a decision. He finds every possible excuse to avoid giving one." After a late night meeting, Brooke added to his diary entry for that day, "I am at my wits' end and can't go on much longer!" The next day, however, Churchill

36. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 526–30.
37. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 540, 548.
38. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 570.

changed his position slightly. Since the prime minister's position was similar now to that of his chiefs, Brooke suggested that General Sir Hastings Ismay, Churchill's chief of staff, write a paper combining the two positions. Privately, he asked Ismay to base the compromise mainly on the chiefs' paper using the prime minister's language. The paper, which was soon sent to Washington, focused primarily on securing a position for the Royal Navy in the Pacific theater. Deployment of the RAF and the British Army were secondary topics.[39] "It is not what we started out for and not ideal but it saves as much as it can out of the wreck," was Brooke's judgment on the compromise.[40]

The British delegation traveled to Canada together on the *Queen Mary*. During this trip, Churchill repudiated the compromise on Pacific strategy. In a routine matter, the chiefs sent the prime minister a copy of the paper and wanted to make sure their talks with their American counterparts were in line with those he was going to have with Roosevelt. "I do not agree," he wrote, totally forgetting the compromise of a month earlier.[41] Brooke poured his frustration into his diary.

> He knows no details, has only got half the picture in his mind, talks absurdities and makes my blood boil to listen to his nonsense. I find it hard to remain civil. And the wonderful thing is that ¾ of the population of the world imagine that Winston Churchill is one of the Strategists of History, a second Marlborough, and the other ¼ have no conception of what a public menace he is and has been throughout the war![42]

It was Ismay's responsibility to remind Churchill that he had approved the paper in August and that it had already been sent to the Americans. Even after arriving in Quebec, Churchill continued to advance the arguments he had made earlier in the year. His objection was to "the great diminution of the forces engaged with the enemy which results from lengthening the communications. A gush has to be poured into the pipeline at one end to produce only a trickle at the other, so great is the leakage as the route lengthens." The United Kingdom could make the greatest contribution to the defeat of Japan by engaging the largest amount of Japanese soldiers, and that would only come in Southeast Asia, where it could project the most force. Any other contribution would make the empire an appendage to its onetime colonies.[43]

In Canada, however, the prime minister forcefully advocated to his American allies the very policies he had resisted. David Fraser, Brooke's biographer,

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39. Hastings Ismay to Prime Minister, 18 August 1944, PREM 3/160/6, PRO.

40. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 578–79.

41. "Aide-Memoire: War Against Japan," n.d., attached to Ismay to Winston Churchill, 8 September 1944; and Churchill to Ismay for COS Committee, 9 September 1944, both PREM 3/160/6, PRO.

42. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 589–90.

43. Ismay to Churchill, September 10, 1944; Churchill to Ismay for COS Committee, 12 September 1944, PREM 3/160/6, PRO.

Figure 2: Eight Stars at OCTAGON: General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, Commanding General, U.S. Army Air Forces, and General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, discuss military issues during a meeting in Quebec, Canada. Even though the United States had enough resources on its own to defeat Japan, both Arnold and Marshall realized that political and diplomatic factors necessitated that the British play a role in the final operations in the Pacific. The American public demanded nothing less.

credits the ill-mannered opposition of Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations of the U.S. Navy, to any British role in the Pacific with restoring unity among the UK delegates. Portal, of the RAF, was of the opinion that King seemed to want to make the crippling of the British Empire a U.S. war aim. As Fraser put it, "Even a suspicion of this was, of course, sufficient to bring Churchill charging to his Chiefs of Staff's support."[44] While there is no doubt some truth in this observation, the prime minister had begun to change his position before King's outburst. "He is gradually coming round to sane strategy, but by heaven what labour we have had for it," the Chief of the Imperial General Staff noted in his diary two days before this outburst.[45]

Churchill saw air power as a solution to both his dispute with the Chiefs of Staff and the efforts of the United Kingdom to reassert its colonial authority. He believed that there was a good possibility that Japan might fall to a bombing

44. Fraser, *Alanbrooke*, 445.
45. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 591.

campaign alone. He would have the RAF and the Royal Navy make contributions to the forces assaulting the home islands. At first glance, it seemed that Churchill had no cards to play in this summit meeting. The large ocean area in the Pacific required the use of very long range bombers, of which the RAF had none and which the United States had only in the B-29. The British, however, told the Americans that they could improve the range of the Lancaster with in-flight refueling. One plane with a little modification could serve as a tanker, and the other as a bomber. These aircraft would be available for service in the early summer of 1945. In the paper the British Chiefs of Staff Committee sent to their American cousins following the compromise with the prime minister, they offered forty squadrons, half of which would be tankers.[46] At the same time, other British air and naval units combined with the British Army to retake colonies lost to the Japanese earlier in the war. At the Quebec conference, the Canadians informed Churchill that they intended to contribute a division to take part in the invasion of Japan.[47] This development worked to his advantage. Most Americans looked at Canada as a North American extension of the United Kingdom. In 1945, the British Union Jack was part of the Canadian national flag, just as was the case with Australia and New Zealand. Although a separate service, the Canadian Army was, for all practical purposes, an appendage of the British Army, wearing matching uniforms, using the same equipment, employing identical tactics and doctrine, and exchanging officers on a large scale.[48] The Canadians would do just fine as representatives of the British Empire and Commonwealth in the invasion of the Japan. Churchill could have his cake and eat it, too.

The six-day conference in Canada was an example of a well-functioning alliance. Brooke made several observations in his diary on the working relationship between the two English-speaking peoples. "Things have gone well on the whole in spite of Winston's unbearable moods." The next day, he added, "On the whole we have been very successful in getting the agreement which we have achieved, and the Americans have shown a wonderful spirit of co-operation."[49] The sessions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff went well, and Churchill strongly advocated a British role in the air campaign over Japan in the meetings he and Roosevelt had with the chiefs. On 13 September, the third day of the conference, the prime minister met with the president and the Combined Chiefs of Staff and explicitly offered the services of the Royal Navy and RAF to the ongoing crusade against Japan. Churchill said he wanted a bomber

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46. Memorandum by the British Chiefs of Staff, 18 September 1944, Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

47. Extract from minutes of Cabinet War Committee, 14 September 1944, Department of External Affairs, *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, vol. 10, part 1, *1944–1945* (Ottawa, 1987), 413–15.

48. John A. English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command* (New York, 1991), 13–30, 159–60.

49. Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 593.

force of 1,500 planes to take part in strikes against Japan. A little later in that same meeting, Portal suggested a more modest 600 to 800 planes. The U.S. minutes of this meeting state, "The President said that the offer was accepted on the largest scale."[50] The British version comes closer to capturing the actual words the two used. Churchill said his Empire was "ardent to play the greatest possible part." Roosevelt responded by saying "the British fleet was no sooner offered than accepted." This British document also contains a statement not in the U.S. version of remarks the prime minister made toward the end of the meeting that were quite similar to the views of Brooke. The document reads:

> The Prime Minister remarked that for the future good relations of the two countries, on which so much depended, it was of vital importance that the British should be given their fair share in the main operations against Japan. The United States had given the most handsome assistance to the British Empire, in the fight against Germany. It could only be expected that the British Empire in return should give the United States all assistance in their power towards the defeat of Japan.[51]

Towards the end of conference, Churchill even suggested that a strategic bombing campaign in and of itself could force the Japanese to surrender.[52]

Churchill's presentation made it clear to the U.S. Joint Chiefs that this was an issue that was larger than a simple enhancement of operational performance. Two of the U.S. chiefs were keeping diaries at the time of the gathering at Quebec, and each recorded his views that finding a role for the British was a political and diplomatic issue. William D. Leahy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, noted, "Mr. Churchill expressed strongly his desire that British ships and troops take part in the war against Japan in order to Britain's part and to share in the credit."[53] And Arnold observed that "[T]here was no doubt as to the Prime Minster desiring for political reasons to be there with his main Fleet and some 500 to 1000 H.B.s [Heavy Bombers]. There was also no doubt as to the President's being in accord." The air general also recorded a comment Churchill directed to him personally: "The British could not hold up their heads if such was not done. With all your wealth of airdomes you would not deny me a mere pittance of a few."[54] Years later, Marshall was succinct, as was his way, when discussing this episode: "Churchill was very anxious."[55]

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50. Meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff with Roosevelt and Churchill, 13 September 1944, *FRUS, The Conference at Quebec, 1944*, 315.

51. John Ehrman, *History of the Second World War: Grand Strategy*, vol. 5, *August 1943–September 1944* (London, 1956), 518–19.

52. Meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff with Roosevelt and Churchill, 16 September 1944, *FRUS, The Conference at Quebec, 1944*, 379.

53. William D. Leahy, diary, 13 September 1944, Box 4, Papers of William D. Leahy, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

54. Arnold diary, 14 September 1944, Folder 3, Box 3, Arnold Papers.

55. Marshall interview, 14 February 1957, in *George C. Marshall: Interviews and Reminiscences*, 427.

The only obstruction to the smooth working of this meeting of coalition leaders came on the fourth day of the gathering, during a Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting. "Not much excitement," Arnold wrote in his diary. "Everything normal until British participation in the Pacific came up. Then Hell broke loose."[56] King, angry at what he saw as unnecessary concessions made the night before to the British, rejected any significant role for the Royal Navy in the final defeat of Japan. The U.S. Navy could handle the Japanese on its own, had no interest in sharing the glory and fame awaiting it, and wanted to avoid having to support and supply the British Pacific Fleet. King fought the British chiefs single-handedly, denying that the president and prime minister had agreed to anything specific. When Marshall appeared to make a concession to the British, King turned on him. Leahy stopped the two from getting into an angry exchange, commenting, "I don't think we should wash our linen in public." Recalling the actions of the Chief of Naval Operations in his retirement, Marshall said, "He made it quite embarrassing." Cunningham was more blunt: "King made an ass of himself." The other American chiefs overruled the admiral and agreed to British naval participation in the defeat of Japan. Cunningham noted that King "gave way" at that point, "but with such bad grace."[57] Overall, the alliance was quite strong, and when disputes arose both sides were committed to finding solutions that preserved the strength of their coalition.

The Americans and British had agreed in principle on a role for the RAF in the strategic bombing of Japan. Working out the details of the deployment, however, was a different matter. The planning staff in the Pentagon would be extremely important players in these technical discussions. While these staff officers understood and supported the diplomatic interests that required British participation, they focused more on operational concerns than did their chiefs, which mitigated against Allied participation. Another problem was confusion on both sides of the Atlantic about the intentions of the other party. On 26 October 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved a draft memo that was sent to their British colleagues that stated, "The participation of Lancasters in the main air effort against Japan would be most welcome." A qualification followed: "Present plans are insufficiently firm to permit a worthwhile estimate of the location or numbers of bases which might be allocated to the RAF, but it appears that at the proper time some facilities can be made available within reach of Japan." Five days later, the U.S. chiefs approved a staff study that noted that a British air contingent would disrupt the timing of coming operations and delay the defeat of Japan. This study recommended that the Joint Chiefs wait until after the British gave a firm indication of determining when and where

56. Arnold diary, 14 September 1944, Folder 3, Box 3, Arnold Papers.

57. Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, 520–23; John Winton, *Cunningham* (London, 1998), 359; Marshall interview, 21 November 1956, in *George C. Marshall: Interviews and Reminiscences*, 376.

these additional forces would be used.[58] After the end of the war in Europe, Brooke noted in his diary, "We want if possible, to participate with all three services in the attacks against Japan. It is however not easy to make plans as the Americans seem unable to decide between a policy of invasion as opposed to one of encirclement."[59] On 1 February 1945, Portal wrote Major General Laurence S. Kuter, the chief planner for the U.S. Army Air Forces, and informed him that the RAF had figured out a way to add tanks to the Lancaster and the Lincoln to increase their range. It now looked as if there would be no need to conduct mid-air refueling. He thought this force could become operational seven months after the war in Europe ended. "This RAF force will be thoroughly experienced in the technique of night bombing and in sea-mining, and will be capable of dropping the very effective 1,500-pound British mines." Kuter wrote back the same day and said his air force would welcome the presence of thirty-six Lancaster or Lincoln squadrons to operate under U.S. command.[60]

As the war came to an end in Europe that spring, the Americans offered the RAF the Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon for base development. This region in the Philippine Islands was hardly attractive, but Portal thought the British should accept, since the undertaking was "more of a political than a military question."[61] MacArthur, however, objected strongly to putting the British—or anyone else, for that matter—in this region. "It would be impossible to provide logistical support in the area," he informed the War Department in a cable. He went on to explain that there was only one road of poor quality connecting this region to central Luzon, one that could never sustain the traffic that would be necessary to support an air base. The existing ports in central Luzon were also unable to handle the necessary demands of such an installation. If this area were to be the site of a new military facility, it would require the building of a new port and road in addition to the construction of the base itself, all of which would come during the rainy season in the Philippines. Finally, the weather in the valley made it likely that planes based there could fly only one day in five. MacArthur recommended that the planners drop the idea of developing the Cagayan Valley region.[62]

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58. Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff (CCS 691/1), and note on JCS 1120, "British Participation in V.L.R. Bombing of Japan," 26 October 1944, Folder: CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

59. Diary of Sir Alan Brooke, 24 May 1945, 5/1/11, Alanbrooke Papers.

60. Laurence S. Kuter to Arnold, 1 February 1945, Folder: CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

61. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 524.

62. MacArthur to War Department, 10 April 1944, Folder: CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

The Joint Staff planners realized that political concerns required that they find some role for the British. A week later, they had a new study suggesting that the RAF deploy to the Ryukyu Islands, which included Okinawa. "It is considered that employment of British bombers from bases in the Ryukyus offers the greatest possibility for economical use of these aircraft." The Allies had two options. One alternative was that the United States could seize the island of Miyako. Having Lancasters based on this island would save the Americans some of the troubles of deploying eight groups of B-29s. Since the planners considered the B-29 a more economical weapon, however, this choice remained less than satisfactory. The other alternative was to put the RAF bombers on U.S. bases in southern Okinawa as the Army Air Forces moved forward following the invasion of Japan. With this solution, there would no longer be any need for British engineers to build new bases, and it would also require that the RAF provide fewer support services, such as photo reconnaissance and rescue planes. The only problem would be that the British would have to wait until mid-January before these bases became available. The RAF bombers would be ready before then and would be waiting without any mission.[63]

The planning staff discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each plan. Colonel Curtis R. Low of the Army Air Forces noted that the British had 10,000 engineers stationed in Canada and were prepared to send them and their equipment to the Pacific immediately. The British would be willing to help construct U.S. installations while they waited for an area to become available for the RAF. The British, however, wanted to get into the fray quickly. Brigadier General George A. Lincoln questioned the undertaking. He was willing to consider an RAF contingent of very long range bombers if it would save American lives and made sense militarily. He thought, however, that the United States might need the available runways on Okinawa for tactical air forces that would support the force invading Japan. If so, then giving the British bases might be counterproductive and cost lives. He suggested the planners study the issue some more, and the staff agreed to defer action on the matter. A week later the planners considered the issue again, but decided to wait until they received an expected position paper from the British.[64]

The memorandum arrived on the desks of the planners on 2 May, and the British made clear their desire to take part in operations against Japan as quickly as possible. Lloyd, as the force commander designate, had visited Washington for some preliminary staff talks and learned of the liabilities of the Cagayan Valley area. He had also heard mention of Miyako, and in the paper, His Majesty's Chiefs of Staff suggested that this island would be much better for the

63. "British Participation in V.L.R. Bombing of Japan: Report by the Joint Staff Planners," 17 April 1945, Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

64. Joint Planning Staff minutes, 18 and 25 April 1945, Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

RAF. The British wanted to have their first squadrons operational by 1 December. "We are in the process of examining this alternative proposal but it is already evident that both from the operational point of view and from that of construction it is an incomparably better proposition." Miyako, however, was still in the hands of the Japanese, and the British chiefs requested confirmation of U.S. intentions to seize the island.[65] A small problem then developed: the battle for control of Okinawa had become much tougher than the Americans had expected. The commander of the Tenth U.S. Army, Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., decided to concentrate all his resources on seizing the main island of the Ryukyus and cancelled operations designed to seize smaller outlying land masses, which included Miyako.[66] As it was, it would take another two months before the battle came to an end.

As the planners read the British paper and debated its merits, they were in a difficult position. The Cagayan option was out, as was Miyako. Lincoln, Colonel Howard Johnson, and Rear Admiral Donald B. Duncan all expressed unease about giving the British airfields that the U.S. Army Air Forces might need. The planning staff decided to have the Joint War Plans Committee study the papers and issue a report in light of the new British paper.[67]

Over the course of the next week, the members of the committee, being talented military intellectuals and bureaucrats, produced a lengthy study, along with a draft memo that suggested a new option for the Joint Chiefs to send to their British colleagues. Since the United States might need to use bases to provide air cover for the invasion of Japan, the committee recommended that the Joint Chiefs ask the RAF to provide a tactical air force of ten squadrons. These planes would be stationed on Okinawa alongside U.S. units. The committee said that the British could deploy these planes more quickly than the Lancasters; the RAF would thus become operational at an earlier date and would make an important contribution to the final campaign. The report stated that following the Quebec meeting, negotiations had focused on very long range bombing, since that was the only type possible at the type of the agreement, but that in the not-too-distant future, it would be possible to employ other types of aircraft. The RAF had heavy and medium bombers that were as good as those in the U.S. air fleet, and the use of these planes would reduce the deployment requirements of the U.S. Army Air Forces. Having the RAF contingent based alongside U.S. units would reduce the British need for support service and would also put the British in territory dominated by U.S. personnel, reducing

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65. Message from the British Chiefs of Staff to the United States Chiefs of Staff, 2 May 1945, Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

66. Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., diary, 27 April 1945, Box 1, Papers of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

67. Joint Planning Staff minutes, 2 May 1945, Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

the chance that questions of command would arise. But if the issue resulted in displacing B-29s, then that was another matter altogether. The Lancaster and Lincoln were inferior to the B-29 in range and payload capacity and not needed.[68]

This paper was the subject of lengthy discussion at the Joint Planning Staff meeting on 9 May. In fact, the issue of the RAF on Okinawa was the first issue on the agenda. Since World War I, air-power advocates had contended that an air force could bring about the defeat of an enemy if it was allowed to attack and destroy strategic targets. There was a good deal of debate in the international air-power community as to what was an appropriate target, but both the U.S. Army and the RAF believed that air power, when properly employed, had the potential to bring about victory on its own. While important, other missions, such as providing support for air and sea operations, lacked this promise. It was also altogether likely that a small tactical air force would be unable to service the political and diplomatic needs of the British within the English-speaking coalition.

These considerations dominated the discussion that followed. Johnson started the discussion with the circulation of a new proposed memo for the Joint Chiefs to give to the British. In this memo, the colonel stressed the shortage in airfield capacity. As a result of this shortage, the United States could provide space for only ten Lancaster squadrons. These 220 planes would have a strategic bombing mission. The other ten squadrons could be added to the force if space became available. In his presentation, Johnson reminded his colleagues that the British had originally offered to make a contribution to the strategic bombing campaign against Japan and had always kept the negotiations focused on that topic. As a result, it would be inappropriate for the United States to change the nature of the discussion. Duncan responded, saying that circumstances had changed; the United States was closer to Japan now and, as a result, it was possible to consider using planes in other missions. The only point on which all were in agreement, he noted, was that the British should have some sort of role in the air campaign. The admiral thought that, at the very least, the British should have an opportunity to consider this proposal. Lincoln favored the tactical air force suggestion as well. Okinawa was the only location that would be able to provide air cover to OLYMPIC, the first amphibious assault on Japan. Johnson's views won out, although the minutes of the meeting fail to explain why. The planners forwarded the report to the Joint Chiefs, and they approved it three weeks later.[69] In Germany, the U.S. chiefs told the British that

68. "British Participation in V.L.R. Bombing of Japan: Report by the Joint Staff Planners," n.d., Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

69. Joint Planning Staff minutes, 9 May 1945; memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff, 29 May 1945; and "British Participation in V.L.R. Bombing of Japan: Note by the Secretaries," 30 May 1945, all in Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

they saw no possibility of the necessary airfields becoming available until at least 1 December 1945.[70]

The British accepted the offer and conditions a week after it was made. The first lines of the British memo read, "The British Chiefs of Staff gladly accept in principle the proposal of the United States Chiefs of Staff to base a British force of the order of ten squadrons of some 220 aircraft in the Ryukyus. This force to come under United States Command."[71]

Arnold sent a cable to MacArthur that was eventually sent to Chester Nimitz and other commanders in the Pacific, informing them of the decision and asking for their comments on the immediate deployment of the British engineers. MacArthur had no problem with including the British in forthcoming operations. He was quite worried, however, about where to put them on Okinawa. He suggested either putting them in the southern portion of the island or delaying their introduction until 1 November, when the U.S. units would have moved to bases in Japan itself and could make the facilities on Okinawa available to the British.

Nimitz's reactions were extremely negative. Shipping considerations and the backlog at port facilities on Okinawa made MacArthur's first plan "extremely inadvisable." The second proposal was better, but Nimitz really did not want the British on Okinawa at all. The RAF units would create a mixed force, with all the problems that such an organization entailed, on a small and congested island.[72] The reactions of other commanders in the region were even more contrary and usually focused on the issue that had worried Arnold in Canada—the limited amount of useable terrain. General Barney M. Giles of the Army Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, suggested that no air units from the UK be used at all in the missions over Japan. Arnold quickly shot this idea down. While he might have recognized that Giles had an argument on operational grounds, Arnold knew that the United States was politically stronger with British participation than it would be trying to defeat Japan by itself.

Shortly after he sent his initial cable, Arnold left for an inspection trip of Army Air Forces bases in the Pacific. He met with MacArthur and Nimitz and got both to accept the immediate use of the engineers. The record is a bit unclear, but it appears that Arnold agreed to the second MacArthur proposal that Lancasters would not be stationed on Okinawa until 1 December. The problem was that the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had clearly implied at Potsdam

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70. Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff, 17 July 1945, *FRUS (Potsdam), 1945* 2:1335.

71. Memorandum by the representatives of the British Chiefs of Staff, 5 June 1945, Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

72. Arnold to MacArthur and Robert C. Richardson, 2 June 1945; MacArthur to War Department, 6 June 1945; and CINCPOA (Nimitz) to COMINCH (King), 7 June 1945, all in Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

that the first ten squadrons could be deployed before 1 December.[73] The RAF dispatched Lloyd to clarify matters. The squadrons under his command were on schedule to become operational in October.[74] There were obvious problems with these conflicting timetables. "These questions were never finally or firmly decided," Arnold explained in his memoirs.[75] The end of the war made resolving these discrepancies unnecessary.

In the end, what does this episode tell us about the Pacific theater in World War II, U.S.-UK relations, or coalition warfare? It is clear that the U.S. Army Air Forces required no assistance from the Royal Air Force to conduct a strategic bombing campaign in the skies of Japan. The Americans had more than enough resources available to do the job on their own. The British proposed UK participation and the United States agreed to it largely for political reasons. The considerations involved in these decisions were substantial and involved long-term interests, rather than being petty or selfish, as the term "political" implies on occasion. American and British leaders faced a number of difficulties in trying to get the RAF to Okinawa. Most of these problems were never resolved, but the high-level interest in this undertaking makes it likely that efforts to find some spot for the British in the skies over Japan would have been successful. Churchill foresaw these types of problems, but believed that the RAF could make some contribution to what he saw as the decisive campaign, while hoarding the bulk of the United Kingdom's resources to retake lost colonies. The Americans saw things more like the British Chiefs of Staff. During the war, the American people had committed themselves to being part of a multilateral coalition, in the belief that the whole of their alliance was greater than the sum of its individual parts. Converted to a simple mathematical formula, this expression holds: $2 + 2 = 5$. In this particular case, the U.S. armed services found that despite their unilateral ability to defeat the enemy, the public demanded that their allies from the United Kingdom play a role in the final operations against Japan. Sometimes you have to sacrifice part of the sum for the whole. This math is a little more complicated: $2 + 2 - 1 = 5$.

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73. Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff, 17 July 1945, *FRUS (Potsdam), 1945* 2:1335; Commanding General, Pacific Ocean Areas, Guam to Arnold, 16 June 1945, and Arnold to War Department, 17 June 1945, both in Folder CCS 373.11 Japan (9-18-44), Sec. 1, Box 114, Geographic File, 1942–1945, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, USNA.

74. John Ehrman, *History of the Second World War: Grand Strategy*, vol. 6, *October 1944–August 1945* (London, 1956), 235, 263; Arnold, *Global Mission*, 573.

75. Arnold, *Global Mission*, 527.

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