STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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GENERAL EISENHOWER'S BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF THE STRATEGIC BOMBERS IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION OVERLORD- A CASE STUDY IN UNITY OF COMMAND

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, has a one page summary of the OVERLORD campaign entitled, "OVERLORD: A Classic Joint and Combined Operation." In the narrative, the author(s) referenced the OVERLORD command structure with its subordinate commands for land, air, and naval forces and "(after much dispute) what we would call today operational control over US and UK strategic air forces." This paper is an examination of the parenthetical "after much dispute." Moreover, it is an appreciation of the dynamics surrounding General Dwight Eisenhower's strategic leadership and his quest to achieve unity of command. Eisenhower believed unity of command was fundamental to the success of OVERLORD; he threatened resignation without it.

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On 29 November 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin attended the second plenary session of the Teheran Conference. The issue as to who was to command OVERLORD, the cross-channel invasion of France, was at the top of the agenda. Stalin demanded a name because in his mind such an appointment would solidify the American and British commitment. The favorite for the position had been General George Marshall, US Army Chief of Staff. However, Roosevelt had expressed concern that he "could not sleep at night with [Marshall] out of the country."[1] Seven days later in Cairo, Roosevelt named General Dwight Eisenhower Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, for OVERLORD.[2] James Roosevelt had asked his father, the President, why he had selected Eisenhower. The President replied that "Eisenhower is the best politician among the military men. He is a natural leader who can convince other men to follow him, and this is what we need in his position more than any other quality."[3]

Immediately after receiving the appointment, Eisenhower became mired in a four-month battle -- from December 1943 until March 1944 -- over his right to command the allied strategic air forces. At times it was a conflict that threatened to undermine the coalition, a battle that tested Eisenhower's leadership and political skill. It pitted Eisenhower, guided by the principle of unity of command, against Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff, who commanded by committee. The weapons in this conflict

were persuasion, guile, and compromise. Like most battles, there were missed opportunities, successes, and failures. Eisenhower's objective was a unified air command, one that would enhance unity of effort and which would tie the air command structure directly to formulation of campaign strategy.[4] At stake was the synergistic application of air power to the support of OVERLORD.

This paper is an examination of this struggle. The study will first discuss the key commanders. This will set the foundation for an examination of the events contributing to creation of an effective command structure. The methodology will place chronological events within the context of the larger issues such as: the selection of Eisenhower's chief air commander; the effect of American and British cultural divergence on command; and, the impact of parochial interests within Bomber Command and United States Strategic Air Forces (USSTAF). Finally, the paper will address the questions as to whether the Allies achieved unity of command and whether Eisenhower's strategic leadership was effective.

THE AIR COMMANDERS

> *The written basis for allied unity of command is found in directives issued by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The true basis lies in the earnest cooperation of the senior officers assigned to an allied theater…actual unity of command depends directly upon the individuals in the field.*[5]
>
> - Dwight Eisenhower

The above quotation comes from a letter Eisenhower wrote Lord Louis Mountbatten on 14 September 1943. Mountbatten had just received the appointment as Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia Theater and had requested time with Eisenhower to discuss some of the particulars of being a supreme Allied commander.[6] This quotation reflected the essence of Eisenhower's leadership -- he depended on the civility and cooperation of his commanders to solve problems. Above all Eisenhower's command climate rested on a foundation of trust -- he wanted his commanders to get along.

In a letter to Marshall in December 1943 Eisenhower outlined his idea of the ideal air commander. He wanted an air commander who understood "air support of ground troops."[7] Based on his experience in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Eisenhower did not believe this was widely understood. He wanted "men of some vision and broad understanding to do the job right."[8] Doing "the job right" meant having air commanders who would not squander air power on missions that did not support the invasion.

Eisenhower understood what Allied air power could bring to the critical effort. He wanted to channel maximum air power via an effective, unified air command structure. To accomplish this objective, he wanted to select a few senior individuals. Unfortunately, he did not have a choice. Fate and the Allied governments had already selected the air command lineup. The air commanders would be Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, Deputy Supreme Commander; Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, Commander, Air Expeditionary Air Force (AEAF); Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz, Commander, United States Strategic Air Force (USSTAF); and, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command.

Tedder

> *Tedder is on good terms with Eisenhower to whom he is superior in both intelligence and energy…He is very popular with the troops on account of his consideration and unassuming appearance.*
>
> *Obviously we are dealing here with one of the most eminent personalities amongst the invasion leaders.*
>
> - German Intelligence Document[9]

In the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Sir Arthur Tedder had developed a reputation as an unpretentious, yet highly effective, commander of the air effort -- a personality trait Eisenhower admired. His first encounter with American airmen in Palestine illustrated this personality characteristic.[10]

Expecting an English stuff shirt, Tedder pleasantly surprised the Americans when he greeted them with the following:

> One often heard a lot of sentimental stuff about the British and Americans being first cousins and even brothers. This is bunk. You are a pack of goddam [sic] Yanks. You think you speak English, but you don't. You dislike English food, but your own only looks better. You don't like being here, and I don't either.[11]

The American airmen loved it.[12]

Tedder had been Eisenhower's Mediterranean air commander since February 1943.[13] He had proven himself an effective Allied commander in addition to be being a first-rate airman. He understood air support of ground troops and believed in Eisenhower's command philosophy of unity and cooperation. Tedder's understanding of personalities played a major part in his effectiveness. Moreover, he was sensitive to the dynamics of coalition operations. In a speech to a group of British and American officers in February 1943, he vowed never to use "us British" and "you Americans". "From now on it is 'we' together who will function as Allies, even better than either of us alone."[14] Tedder perfectly fit Eisenhower's mold.

In the selection process of OVERLORD commanders, Tedder received the appointment as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, not Commander, AEAF -- the position Eisenhower wanted for him. In October 1943, Churchill had written Sir Arthur Sinclair, the British Secretary of State for Air, that Marshall -- the then assumed choice for Supreme Commander -- wanted Tedder as his

deputy.[15] Although the formal announcement came after Eisenhower's appointment, it represented a fait accompli. Churchill selected Tedder "on account of the great part the air will play in this operation."[16] The man selected as AEAF Commander was Leigh-Mallory.

Leigh-Mallory

> *A quiet and dignified airmen, who was not popular with the other airmen commanders or within SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force]; his reserved manner and dry, sometimes inarticulate performances at high level meetings caused some to dismiss him as a lightweight, pro-British, figure-head commander.* [17]
>
> - Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*

During the Battle of Britain, Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, as 12th Fighter Group Commander, gained notoriety with his "Big Wing" approach to defensive counter air. His "favored defensive tactic was to build up a heavy weight of interceptors to try for knockout blows against the German raiders."[18] Unfortunately, this tactic took time and all too often the German bombers hit their targets before Leigh-Mallory's fighters could arrive. As a consequence, Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, Commander-in-Chief, Fighter Command, was about to relieve Leigh-Mallory, when Churchill, under pressure from the RAF and the Air Ministry, relieved Dowding. Leigh-Mallory survived and eventually became Commander-in-Chief, Fighter Command in November 1942.[19]

In June 1943 Leigh-Mallory became the head of a small Anglo-American staff to assist COSSAC -- the initial OVERLORD planning group headed by Lieutenant General Frederick Morgan.[20] Upon receiving the assignment, Leigh-Mallory converted a large portion of Fighter Command from a "static organization for the air defense of Britain, into a tactical air force" possessing the mobility to support OVERLORD.[21] This would serve as the nucleus for AEAF headquarters.

In August 1943, at the first Quebec Conference (QUADRANT) Roosevelt, Churchill, and their diplomatic and military advisors, endorsed the initial OVERLORD plan developed by COSSAC.[22] Implicit in COSSAC planning was the part that air power would play in the invasion. The COSSAC planners called for an allied air expeditionary force and assumed that the bulk of air activity supporting OVERLORD would be tactical instead of strategic. The RAF's Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal felt "that the most important aspect of the air contribution to Overlord would be the attainment of air superiority over the beachheads" and tactical support for the ground forces.[23] As a result, a fighter commander received the position of air commander.[24] Given Leigh-Mallory's involvement with COSSAC, it therefore seemed logical to select him for the position. The Americans concurred.[25] On 20 August 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff endorsed the appointment of Leigh-Mallory as AEAF Commander.[26]

What QUADRANT failed to decide, however, was "how the operations of the new Allied Expeditionary Air Force and the Strategic Air Forces might be coordinated."[27] Leigh-Mallory had no experience with heavy bomber operations and had been in fighter operations his entire career. Directives were to follow "at a later date."[28] Events would prove it to be easier to agree on the appointment of Leigh-Mallory than to agree on the extent of his control.

Spaatz

> *Spaatz was an unassuming man who actively rejected personal publicity. This made him less well known than most of his contemporaries but only heightened the esteem in which he was held by them. This genuine modesty was no drawback when it came to high command, for he knew his own mind, was decisive in utilizing this knowledge, was in awe of no one, and had the capability of thinking big.* [29]
>
> - David Mets, *Master of Airpower*

In May 1942, General Henry 'Hap' Arnold, Commander Army Air Forces, sent Carl Spaatz to England to establish and command Eighth Air Force. It was here that Spaatz met Eisenhower.[30] When Eisenhower received the appointment as commander of Allied forces for the invasion of North Africa (TORCH) Spaatz went along, initially as Eisenhower's air advisor, later as commander Northwest Africa Air Force.[31] It was in Africa that Spaatz cemented his friendship with Eisenhower.

In November 1943, Arnold presented a proposal to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to combine Eighth Air Force and Fifteenth Air Force into a single strategic air force under one commander. Arnold's choice for that position was Spaatz.[32] The other members of the JCS accepted Arnold's proposal and established USSTAF, effective 1 January 1944.[33] On 8 December, Arnold informed Spaatz that he would command USSTAF.[34]

Arnold regarded Spaatz as his best commander and thought he was "the natural choice for leader in the climactic operations against Germany."[35] Spaatz experienced combat in World War I as a fighter pilot. This fighter experience, coupled with his extensive study of strategic bombing during the inner-war period, imbued Spaatz with a unique perspective. Although a fervent believer in strategic bombing, he was just as fervent in his belief in the need for air superiority.

Harris

> *Harris was an inflexible man, chronically resistant to negotiation and compromise, who treated those who disagreed with him as mortal enemies. He seemed driven, in the words of one historian, by an 'elemental tenacity of purpose'. This was a quality that would earn him many enemies and abrupt dismissal at the end of the war. But it was also a characteristic that, in the midst of war, has much value.*[36]
>
> - Max Hastings, *Bomber Command*

The British strategic bombing force, Bomber Command, was under the command of Sir Arthur Harris. Harris had been

commander since February 1942. Described as blunt, rude, extravagant -- he "had something of the earthy, swaggering ruthlessness of an Elizabethan buccaneer."[37] He had a vulgar wit and used it often to express his contempt of the British army. For example, in 1927 at the Army Staff College in Camberley he replied to a query by Chief of the Imperial General Staff that the army would never understand the value of tanks "until somebody invented tanks that ate hay and thereafter made noises like a horse."[38]

Until Allied troops crossed the border into Germany in 1944, Bomber Command was the only British offensive effort that actively engaged the Germans in their homeland. After Dunkirk, Harris had foreseen the role of the strategic bomber as Britain's only legitimate alternative to ground war: "I could therefore see only one possible way of bringing pressure to bear on the Boche, and certainly only one way of defeating him; that was by air bombardment."[39] Harris advocated area bombing as a means to defeat Germany and, for most of the war, Churchill supported him.[40] Solly Zuckerman, a renowned zoologist who had become an expert in assessing the effects of bombing through analysis and operations research, was Tedder's scientific advisor and member of the British Bombing Analysis Unit. Zuckerman knew the air chiefs well.[41] He felt that the Air Ministry "simply did not know how to check Harris when he stepped out of line, and when he carried out an area attack of lesser priority than the one

endorsed by the Chiefs of Staff. Under Churchill's protection, Harris had become almost a law unto himself."[42]

Harris, Spaatz, Leigh-Mallory and Tedder were an eclectic group of airmen with definitive ideas on air power and its application. During their careers, they had leveraged their expertise, personality and influence to rise to the peak of their professions. They were integral actors in Eisenhower's battle for command of the strategic bombers.

THE BATTLE FOR COMMAND

> *The problem of establishing unity in any allied command is [never] completely solved. This problem involves the human equation and must be met day by day. Patience, tolerance, frankness, absolute honesty in all dealings, particularly with all persons of the opposite nationality, and firmness are absolutely essential.*[43]
>
> - Dwight Eisenhower

Eisenhower learned a valuable lesson from his Mediterranean command experience: an overall air commander was fundamental to effective coordination and application of air power. In TORCH, he did not have an overall commander for air operations. As a result, American and British air activities were uncoordinated. He was adamant that "mistakes of this kind should not be repeated."[44] In February 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) reorganized the Mediterranean air command structure and named Tedder as Eisenhower's air commander. The reorganization was effective and mitigated many control and coordination problems.[45]

Tedder wanted to capture the effectiveness on paper. He therefore directed his staff to record the command arrangements and send them to COSSAC for the OVERLORD planning.[46] Unfortunately, "questions of relative ranks and seniority, coupled with national prejudices, threatened a complete break-up of what had been so harmonious."[47] As a result, Tedder canceled the staff directive. The difficulties encountered portended problems for the OVERLORD air command.

Eisenhower nevertheless appreciated the efficacy of Tedder's air command set-up. In a 17 December 1943 letter to Marshall he forwarded his concept for the OVERLORD air command: "Tedder would be my chief air man and with him I would have Spaatz who would have control of the Strategic Air Forces. Under Tedder will be one officer in charge of coordinating the tactical air forces."[48] Unfortunately for Eisenhower, future events undermined his plan.

The 'Chief Air Man'

In late December, while Eisenhower was still in the Mediterranean, Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith, his Chief of Staff, went to London as part of the advance staff.[49] On 30 December he sent Eisenhower the following cable:

> We all believe that appointment of Tedder as deputy Allied Commander without portfolio and Mallory as GFA commander in chief will make a difficult situation. I personally believe that Tedder should be the real air commander and your advisor on air matters, which Mallory now considers himself. I don't think there is a place for both of them.[50]

Smith's portending of a "difficult situation" went further than just a case of Tedder's lack of "portfolio". Smith regarded Tedder as a man "who wanted authority without responsibility."[51] Furthermore, Smith viewed the deputy position, when occupied by someone with considerable prestige, threatening to his own position as chief of staff. "This fear, and perhaps a genuine concern for the untidiness of the air command structure, prompted Smith to push for a clarification of Tedder's function as deputy

and Leigh-Mallory's as air commander-in-chief."[52] The next day, Eisenhower cabled Marshall:

> I hear that Tedder, who I have assumed to be my chief air man is really intended to be an officer without portfolio, and that a man named Mallory is to be my chief air man...this tendency to freeze organization so that a commander may not repeat not use trusted and superior subordinates in their proper spheres disturbs me very much.[53]

The inaccurate nature of this cable -- Eisenhower failed to check Smith's spelling of Leigh-Mallory and repeated it verbatim -- illustrates Eisenhower's frustration with the Combined Chiefs of Staff selecting the air commander without his input. Eisenhower had built a constituency of known personalities and capabilities in the Mediterranean. He knew what worked. Eisenhower abhorred this 'tendency to freeze organization' dynamic.[54] He discussed this issue in a 14 September memorandum to Mountbatten. Eisenhower wrote:

> Your senior commanders will probably be named for you by the Combined Chiefs of Staff and their duties may even be prescribed in some detail. Fundamentally this is an error since it tends to weaken an authority that has no legal basis, such as exists in a single national fleet, army or air force. Moreover, it can be wrecked at any moment not only by dissatisfaction on the part of either Government, but by internal bickering.[55]

Although one could argue that Deputy Supreme Commander was an important position, Eisenhower wrote: "it would be a waste to keep a man indefinitely as 'Deputy Commander-in-Chief' with no other duties than to be just a stand-by in case of disaster to the Commander."[56] Smith felt the deputy "has nothing to do except

get into the hair of the chief of staff, who has enough troubles without this added encumbrance."[57] Both Eisenhower and Smith wanted Tedder to have a position of substance, a job with greater influence with air command and air strategy. Leigh-Mallory, however, thought differently.

A man with his own agenda, Leigh-Mallory intended to control and direct all air force operations for OVERLORD[58]. He had envisaged himself, in Churchill's words, as "a real Commander-in-Chief of the Air."[59] Backing Leigh-Mallory was the RAF's Secretary of State for Air, Sir Archibald Sinclair. Sinclair told Churchill that Leigh-Mallory "must be the officer who would integrate with the operation of these Tactical Air Forces the effort of heavy bombers which might be placed at his disposal by the Chiefs of Staff."[60] Sinclair was quite certain that it would be a mistake to "derogate from these responsibilities."[61] However, the thought of Leigh-Mallory, a fighter pilot, having strategic bombers "placed at his disposal" was anathema to the strategic bomber barons and Churchill.

This was not just a personal vendetta against Leigh-Mallory. In his post-war account, Eisenhower wrote:

> Their objections, I felt sure, were not based upon personal reasons but upon a conviction that a Tactical Air commander, who is always primarily concerned with the support of front-line troops, could not be expected to appreciate properly the true role and capabilities of Strategic Air Forces and would therefore misuse them.[62]

This was a cultural schism. Embodied within the Army Air Force (AAF) and RAF were sub-cultures, cultures with their own rules and beliefs, identified by the type of aircraft and mission. In this case, this was the strategic culture versus the tactical culture, heavy bombers versus fighters. The strategic bombing men wanted to separate themselves from the fighter community. In their view, fighters directly supported ground forces and inexorably linked to the ebb and flow of land war. With Douhetian fervor, strategic bomber proponents envisioned strategic bombing as an independent alternative to sustained ground combat. If employed properly under the right leadership, strategic bombing was the key to victory. The right leadership, however, was not in the fighter community. "The RAF's best officers were almost all strategic bombing men."[63] Moreover, Portal envisioned the AEAF as a tactical organization. Strategic bombers needed strategic direction, not tactical.

On 5 January 1944 an important meeting took place in Marrakech, Morocco between Smith and Churchill while the latter was recovering from pneumonia.[64] At this meeting they discussed the air command arrangements for OVERLORD.[65] This conference took place after Smith's trip to London and after he wrote his initial assessment of the air structure and the problems envisioned from such an arrangement. Though no known minutes of the meeting were available, Churchill's and Smith's correspondence following the

meeting provided sufficient data to garner the essence of the discussion.

It became apparent to Churchill that the scope of air effort for OVERLORD was far greater than previously anticipated and that it was probably more than Leigh-Mallory could handle. The next day, 6 January, Churchill addressed this concern in a letter to Sinclair and the British Chiefs of Staff:

> I do not know that Tedder is any great authority on war in general, and certainly not in the use of armies and fleets. He has, however, proved himself a master in the use of the Air Force, and this is the task I hoped he would have assigned to him by the Supreme Commander in the same way as Alexander was entrusted with fighting the land battles in Sicily and Italy. As Tedder is only to be a floating kidney, we shall be wasting him and putting more on Leigh-Mallory than in my opinion he can carry.[66]

Churchill envisioned an air chain of command "where Spaatz would take orders from Eisenhower and where there would be no difficulty 'in arranging between Tedder and Harris'."[67]

This correspondence had two important themes: First, Churchill had removed Leigh-Mallory from the strategic air picture. Thus, Leigh-Mallory lost the confidence of the one man who could have salvaged his position as a "real commander-in-chief of the air."[68] Second, Churchill opened the door for compromise. He suggested Tedder as point man for air operations in lieu of Leigh-Mallory.

Smith's and, indirectly, Eisenhower's influence was effective. Churchill's suggestions for command "had the appearance of corresponding with the American aim of achieving

unified and Supreme Command."[69] This letter touched off a storm of protest from Sinclair and the British Chiefs of Staff.[70] Sinclair did not favor the creation of a supreme air commander for OVERLORD.[71] In his reply to Churchill, 7 January 1944, he favored the integration of tactical and strategic air forces on a case by case basis. Moreover, he strongly suggested that Churchill resist all attempts by Eisenhower to gain command of these strategic assets.[72]

Although Churchill's position was a basis for compromise, he did not explicitly say that the strategic bombers would fall under Eisenhower's command. To Churchill, their employment was to be an "arrangement" between Tedder and Harris.[73] This was not what Eisenhower envisioned. He wanted definite lines of authority. An "arrangement" was too nebulous. In a letter to Arnold, 23 January 1943, Eisenhower left no doubt: "There can be no evasion of the certainty that when the time comes the OVERLORD Commander must have the full power to determine missions and priorities for the attacks by all forces."[74] Arnold, in his reply, "pointed out that they would need the Prime Minister's strong support to overcome the British Chiefs of Staff reluctance to approve this command transfer."[75] Arnold was correct. They needed Churchill's backing; however, it was not as simple as getting Churchill's acquiescence. The British Chiefs reluctance was cultural. Having control of the British strategic forces was a matter of national pride and not easily overcome.

Cultural Divergence

> *The British system of command has proved that it can work where only British Empire forces are involved. But it cannot work where sizeable U.S. and British forces are placed together in one theater to achieve a common objective.* [76]
>
> - Dwight Eisenhower

There were cultural differences between the American and British systems of managing war. Americans believed in unity of command with a single commander responsible for theater strategy. The British ran war by committees.[77] They used the British Chiefs of Staff to guide theater strategy. "The British complicated and dispersed command responsibility by blurring it, another symptom of committee mentality, thereby gaining more influence than their individual contribution to the war effort warranted."[78] George Marshall was the primary American advocate for unity of command. Had Marshall been appointed Supreme Commander, he would have demanded unity of command immediately and probably would have received minimal objection from the British.[79] Eisenhower, although just as insistent, did not have the enormous prestige and political backing Marshall commanded.

Eisenhower spent the better part of his Mediterranean tenure cultivating and refining the coalition and making it a daily working reality. He worked religiously at mitigating cultural friction between his British and American commanders and by late

1943 was adept at keeping the commanders focused on fighting the Germans and not themselves. His finesse for working with the British had developed so much that Lieutenant General George Patton remarked in his diary that "Ike is more British than the British and is putty in their hands."[80]

The salient difference between the Mediterranean Theater of Operations and the European Theater of Operations was the latter's proximity to British command culture and political influence. Eisenhower had to grapple with cultural divergence. The Americans wanted unity of command of all forces while the British wanted to maintain control in the United Kingdom of specific commands such as Bomber Command and Coastal Command. The British Chiefs of Staff wanted to "protect the independence of Bomber Command [and] retain strategic direction of the war in the Mediterranean, where British interests were great."[81] They did not want to lose control of the war to the Americans.

In early October 1943, Churchill wrote Air Marshal Portal to get his views on using strategic bombing forces for OVERLORD. Portal replied that the strategic bomber forces "based in the United Kingdom might not be involved until fourteen days before D-Day, when 50 per cent of their effort should be switched to the support of Overlord."[82] Also in the same letter, Portal expressed concerned that the "Overlord Supreme Commander shall command the whole of the Strategic bomber forces, British and American,

probably from an early date after his appointment and certainly from D minus 14."[83]

The American's actually wanted greater control than what Portal envisaged. Arnold, at the First Cairo Conference, 23 November 1943, proposed the establishment of a single Allied Strategic Air Force under a single commander based in London.[84] "The American leadership hoped for an inclusive organizational structure incorporating under one commander all operating from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean against the Axis and combining in one air command all British and American strategic bomber forces."[85] The British did not concur. They wanted to maintain the status quo, whereby Portal acted as agent for the Combined Chiefs of Staff and, in effect, coordinated the efforts of Bomber Command and the Eighth Air Force.[86]

The Americans relented. Three weeks later, at the second Cairo Conference, "the Americans abandoned their quest for an Allied Strategic Air Force and a supreme commander."[87] The control of USSTAF and Bomber Command would continue under the direction of Portal as agent for the Combined Chiefs of Staff until they could be placed under Eisenhower "at a date to be announced later."[88] In December, Portal contradicted this agreement. In a letter to Harris, he reiterated that the strategic bombing forces were "at the disposal of Eisenhower and not under the control of him."[89]

Churchill's 5 January meeting with Smith brought the issue to the forefront. After the meeting, Smith relayed to Eisenhower that Churchill supported the notion that all operational aircraft, strategic and tactical, would fall under Eisenhower's command for OVERLORD. Later on, however, Smith learned that the British Chiefs of Staff had written documents signed by Churchill that contradicted this position.[90] One explanation for the contradiction may lie with the word "command." Smith or Churchill may have misspoken and used this word in the course of the conversation. Without question, the British Chiefs of Staff were sensitive to such language.

American insistence on having a single air commander for the theater disturbed the British Chiefs of Staff who were unwilling to "subordinate RAF's Bomber Command to such unified control."[91] According to the official RAF historians, "the British preference for separate and independent commands had always been a bone of contention between the two great allies."[92] The British Chiefs of Staff wanted to preserve the independence and special functions of Bomber Command, Coastal Command, Home Forces, and Home Fleet. They could offer support to Eisenhower but they "could not possibly be placed under General Eisenhower's sole command."[93]

The British Chiefs of Staff position was understandable; it "stemmed from considerations of national policy and prestige."[94] American aerial dominance in manpower and equipment was rapidly approaching. Churchill relented on the Supreme Allied Commander

being American. As far as the British were concerned, control of Bomber Command was a matter of national pride and self-defense. It was non-negotiable.

Nonetheless, by late January Eisenhower was optimistic that the air control issue was near resolution. He believed he had American consensus on command. "Both [Arnold and Spaatz] nevertheless recognize that during the invasion period, at least, they should come under the Supreme Commander's control. This will probably work out all right."[95]

Eisenhower's optimism was short lived. In addition to British Chiefs of Staff resistance to Eisenhower's command of British strategic forces, there were USSTAF and Bomber Command parochial interests that impacted on the issue. These parochial interests went above and beyond the fighter versus bomber debate. The strategic bombing advocates believed OVERLORD bombing operations were a diversion from the main effort, the strategic bombing of Germany.

The Parochial Interests of the USSTAF and Bomber Command

> *One of our most difficult problems here has been the setting up of a completely satisfactory air organization. This comes about because of the widely scattered interests of the Air Forces and the great strength of units that have been acting in almost an independent way.* [96]
>
> - Dwight Eisenhower

In February 1944, the coordination of Bomber Command and USSTAF effort was Portal's responsibility. Portal understood OVERLORD's importance and directed bombing missions to support the invasion. Dissension surfaced, however, between the strategic bomber planners and the tactical air planners. At issue was the continued effort of POINTBLANK, the combined bombing offensive, vis-à-vis the air support for OVERLORD.[97] Spaatz felt POINTBLANK was the best way to achieve air superiority and support OVERLORD.[98] Harris wanted to continue with night area bombing against German targets, specifically the air offensive against Berlin.

As Commander, AEAF, Leigh-Mallory was responsible for the OVERLORD air campaign.[99] He envisaged strategic bombers rendering direct support to the invasion through a massive interdiction campaign. In February, he forwarded an interdiction plan that assigned heavy bombers on missions against French and Belgium railway transportation centers in order to disrupt lines of communication.[100] The plan, developed by Tedder and Zuckerman based on experience from Mediterranean operations, was known as

the Transportation Plan.[101] Spaatz and Harris resisted the plan. They proposed continued bombing of strategic targets in Germany.[102]

Spaatz and Harris believed a continued, sustained strategic bombing campaign against Germany abrogated the need for such a large invasion.[103] In fact, the belief that the German army could only be defeated in the field had "long been disagreeable to many air-minded officers. To them, it seemed to represent an outmoded, uneconomic, and, in view of German military strength, unsound strategy."[104] The AAF and RAF agreed with this premise, but for different reasons: the AAF saw this as a means to foster their independence while the RAF saw this as "the key to rapid victory in war without prohibitive expense."[105]

Unlike the RAF, the AAF was under the administrative control of the US Army and not technically independent. Although War Department Field Manual FM 100-20, *Command and Employment of Air Power*, stated unequivocally that land power and air power were co-equal,[106] the AAF leadership needed to build a case for it. [107] The AAF had spent vast sums of money building up its forces and "it knew full well that its position in the postwar organization of national defense would depend upon the record now to be established."[108] The AAF had to fight the war according to its own doctrine and strategy; it had to make an indelible impression.

Spaatz confined his concerns with OVERLORD's impact on the strategic bombing campaign to his diary:

> Launching of OVERLORD will result in the calling off of bomber effort on Germany proper from one to two months prior to invasion. If time is as now contemplated, there will be no opportunity to carry out any Air operations of sufficient intensity to justify the theory that Germany can be knocked out by Air power.[109]

Spaatz understood strategic bombers would have to support OVERLORD. He just hoped "that this diversion to the invasion would be neither complete nor long-lasting."[110] Additionally, Spaatz wanted a significant voice in the target selection for his bombers. He did not want to be beholden to Leigh-Mallory.

Spaatz was not fond of Leigh-Mallory.[111] Much of this animosity stemmed from Leigh-Mallory's opinions on air supremacy requirements for the invasion. Leigh-Mallory stated air supremacy was not necessary before the invasion, but was achievable over the beaches.[112] This belief "evoked the reverse of enthusiasm in Spaatz, who strongly opposed endowing that officer with any significant degree of control over Eighth Air Force."[113] Spaatz, a former fighter pilot, believed Leigh-Mallory's premise was a recipe for disaster.[114]

Zuckerman's account of the first OVERLORD air campaign meeting on 15 February 1944 reflected Spaatz's animosity toward Leigh-Mallory. Spaatz asked Leigh-Mallory when he proposed to take control of the strategic air forces:

> Without the slightest hesitation Leigh-Mallory replied, 'March the 1st.' Spaatz's comment was: 'That's all I

> want to know; I've nothing further to say.' That he left the meeting determined to do everything in his power to prevent his Strategic Air Forces coming under Leigh-Mallory became quickly apparent.[115]

Zuckerman further asserted Spaatz did not want to fall under AEAF command because he wanted to pursue targets in Germany in order to foster the case for an independent air force.[116] Spaatz's independence beliefs notwithstanding, he was in command of an American organization, technically still part of the US Army. As a result, there was no contention with Eisenhower on unity of command; Spaatz just refused to work under Leigh-Mallory.

Unlike the USSTAF, Bomber Command was independent of the British Army. Moreover, it enjoyed a special status within the RAF and the British psyche. "The RAF could present strategic bombing as the appropriate twentieth-century embodiment of the historic British aversion to large-scale ground combat, and thus a guarantor against repeating the 1914-1918 aberration that had dispatched mass British armies to the Western Front at so terrible a cost."[117] Bomber Command had been dropping bombs on Germany since 13 May 1940 when bombers attacked Ruhr oil installations and marshalling yards.[118] Losses during these early day missions forced Bomber Command to establish night bombing as operational policy.[119] On 9 July 1941, due to a poor track record against industrial targets, Bomber Command received the directive to "destroy the morale of the civilian population."[120] Night area

bombing of industrial towns and cities became Bomber Command's modus operandi.

In a letter to Portal, 13 January 1944, Harris left no doubt that the strategic bombing of Germany was priority and that support for OVERLORD was a diversion:

> If we attempt to substitute for this process [strategic bombing] attacks on gun emplacements, beach defences, communications or dumps in occupied territories, we shall commit the irremediable error of diverting our best weapon from the military function for which it has been equipped and trained, to tasks which it cannot effectively carry out. Though they might give a specious appearance of 'supporting' the Army, in reality it would lead directly to disaster.[121]

Harris was not in favor of the Transportation Plan, but for different rationale than Spaatz. Harris argued against using Bomber Command in direct support of OVERLORD for two reasons. First, he claimed Bomber Command was capable of night area bombing only and not capable of precision bombing attacks against railway centers. Secondly, Harris believed that departing from the current area bombing policy would negate the effort from the previous two years and allow Germany "a breathing-space in which to effect a general industrial recovery."[122]

Tedder attended OVERLORD air campaign planning meetings and witnessed firsthand the parochial battles between AEAF, USSTAF and Bomber Command. In a 22 February 1944 letter to Portal, Tedder wrote:

> [I am] more and more being forced to the unfortunate conclusion that the two strategic forces are determined not to play. Spaatz has made it abundantly clear that he will not accept orders, or even co-ordination from

> Leigh-Mallory, and the only sign of activity from Harris's representatives has been a series of adjustments to the records of their past bombing statistics, with the evident intention of demonstrating that they are quite unequipped and untrained to do anything except mass fire-raising on very large targets.[123]

Time was a factor. D-Day was less than four months away.

The conflict intensified. Cultural divergence and service parochialism impeded resolution. Although Eisenhower had tacit agreement from Arnold and Spaatz on command -- USSTAF parochialism would not inhibit American unity -- he did not have such agreement with the British. The British wanted control of their strategic bombers.

Achieving Consensus

> *Unity in Allied Command depends as much upon the comprehension and good judgement of officers in high positions as it does upon blind adherence to a principle. An allied command cannot possibly be handled as would a completely homogenous one.* [124]
>
> - Dwight Eisenhower

Labeled by Churchill as "the accepted star of the Air Force," Sir Charles Portal had American respect.[125] Marshall said Portal had "the best mind of the lot" and "in sessions with the British Chiefs of Staff, Air Marshal Portal took the lead in trying to reach understandings when matters reached an impasse."[126]

Fortunately for Eisenhower, the relationship between Portal and Tedder was excellent. Portal had resisted successfully

Churchill's attempts to remove Tedder from command in the Mediterranean in November 1941.[127] Thus, Tedder was in Portal's debt. They had been corresponding with one another on a regular basis since May 1941.[128] Eisenhower realized that he had to rely on Tedder to get Portal's backing. Tedder was to leverage his relationship with Portal to affect a change in the British position.

In his 22 February 1944 letter to Portal, Tedder wrote:

> I very much fear that if the British Chiefs of Staff and the P.M. are going to take up a position regarding Bomber Command which prevents that unified control, very serious issues will arise affecting Anglo-American co-operation in 'Overlord'. I think everybody in authority, both British and American, realizes that it is going to be hard work for all concerned to maintain harmonious co-operation during this next job. A split on the question of the control of air forces might well, since the issues are very clear, precipitate a quite irremediable cleavage.[129]

This letter linked Eisenhower's objective for unity of command with the need for coalition stability. There was no record of Eisenhower directing Tedder to write this letter. Tedder was symbiotic in his relationship with Eisenhower and understood his frustration with British intransigence. Furthermore, Tedder knew dominant American military power enhanced Eisenhower's position: by January 1944 there were 1,667 American heavy bombers compared with 1,226 British bombers available for operations.[130]

On the night of 28 February 1944, Eisenhower met with Churchill.[131] Eisenhower's accounting of the meeting suggests it was dramatic. Two issues were at the center of discussion. The

first focused on the extent of Leigh-Mallory's authority and the second was on Eisenhower's demand for control of the strategic bombers. According to Eisenhower's aide, Captain Harry C. Butcher, Eisenhower threatened to resign over the control issue.[132] Eisenhower documented his version of what transpired in three separate sources: a 29 February memorandum to Tedder; a 3 March letter to Marshall; and, a 3 March diary entry for Butcher.

In his letter to Marshall, Eisenhower recounted portions of the evening's conversation:

> The Prime Minister was quite violent in his objections to considering Leigh-Mallory as the overall Air Commander-in-Chief, although this was his definite assignment. His query was, 'Why did we give you Tedder?' and my answer was merely, 'Why?'[133]

What was unusual about this letter was that Leigh-Mallory's position vis-à-vis control of the strategic bombers was still an issue even though Churchill stated 6 January that Leigh-Mallory would not command the strategic bombing forces. Perhaps Eisenhower had implied that preserving unity of command required Leigh-Mallory have control of the bombers. Nonetheless, Eisenhower respected Churchill's stand and prepared to issue an immediate directive whereby "[Leigh-Mallory's] position would not be changed so far as assigned forces are concerned but those [strategic forces] attached for definite periods of time for definite jobs would not come under his command."[134] This represented a compromise solution between Eisenhower and Churchill and hearkened back to Churchill's 6 January letter in

which he envisioned Eisenhower as the Supreme Commander of all the OVERLORD forces with Tedder as the "Aviation Lobe" of Eisenhower's brain.[135] In his memorandum to Tedder, Eisenhower referenced this directive and expressed concern with Churchill's impatience:

> I find that he is disturbed (very much) at the thought of L.M. commanding [the strategic air forces]. I asked him to do nothing until we had a chance to make the directive work. He seemed very impatient...[136]

Eisenhower directed Tedder to staff the directive and "push conferences and planning so that we can have an answer quickly. Otherwise, the P.M. will be in this thing with both feet."[137]

Sometime during the meeting, Eisenhower reiterated his demand that he have control of all the strategic assets to make OVERLORD a success. If the British were unwilling to give him control, "he would simply have to go home."[138] Churchill replied that he was not willing to hand over complete control of the British strategic forces, but that he would agree "to whatever arrangement is found satisfactory by Portal and Eisenhower."[139] Furthermore, in a 29 February Memorandum to the British Chiefs, Churchill discussed unity of effort: "The 'Overlord' battle must be the chief care of all concerned, and great risks must be run in every other sphere and theatre in order that nothing should be withheld which could contribute to its success."[140]

Although formal consensus was not achieved, the light was at the end of the tunnel. Eisenhower wrote Marshall:

> As we always anticipated, the air features of our plan have been difficult to get completely in line. It is now my impression that Tedder will become at least the de facto Commander-in-Chief of Air with Spaatz's, Harris' and Leigh-Mallory's forces each coordinate bodies under Tedder.[141]

Eisenhower relied upon Tedder and Portal to put the compromise in writing. They met daily to work the details. Tedder wrote:

> During the first ten days of March I saw or spoke with Portal almost everyday as he struggled to reconcile the differences between Eisenhower's wish for complete control of the heavy bombers and the Prime Minister's ruling that Bomber, Fighter, and Coastal Commands could not be handed over as a whole to Eisenhower or me.[142]

Portal suggested the planning for controlling strategic assets be a two-phase approach: for preliminary bombing the strategic bombers would be under "loose control and supervision" by Tedder and Eisenhower; and, for the bombing period just before the invasion "detailed control" would be enacted.[143] Eisenhower knew there were limitations and reservations with the scope of his power. He understood the British Chiefs of Staff could act independently should the need arise concerning the safety of Britain.[144]

On 9 March, Tedder and Portal drafted a message that served as foundation for the air command directive. It was the basis for the actual message, *CCS 520, Mar.17, SHAEF SGS 373/1 Policy Re: Control and Employment of USSTAF and Bomber Command*, sent to the American Chiefs in Washington.[145] In essence, Tedder was to supervise all air operations for OVERLORD. Eisenhower, as "a direct agent of the Combined Chiefs of Staff for the execution of

OVERLORD," and Portal, "as executive of the Combined Chiefs of Staff for the execution of POINTBLANK," were to render final approval for any OVERLORD air plan.[146] The document stated that "the responsibility for supervision of air operations out of England of all the forces engaged in the programme including U.S. Strategic and British Bomber Command together with any other air forces that might be available should pass to the Supreme Commander."[147]

Eisenhower told Portal that, "it was exactly what we want." Smith agreed and wrote, "I think this is excellent and a most fair solution."[148] On 10 March, Portal wrote Churchill "that the strategic air plan for 'Overlord' was now in [Tedder's] hands as Eisenhower's agent."[149] Upon receiving a copy of the directive Churchill wrote: "I think this is very satisfactory."[150] Eisenhower was optimistic. He had a directive that he was comfortable with.

The Directive

> *Just when Ike thinks he has the problem of air command licked, as he put it today, 'someone else's feelings are hurt and I have another problem to settle'.*[151]
>
> - Harry Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*

However, Washington did not accept the directive. The American Chiefs of Staff protested that the directive did not give Eisenhower command of the strategic air forces. "Yet,

Eisenhower not only approved of the draft, but had written part or it."[152] What was the problem? The American Chiefs of Staff disagreed with the word "supervision." In its place, they wanted "command."[153] In a cable to Marshall dated 21 March, Eisenhower wrote:

> I have just seen an exchange of telegrams between the British Chiefs of Staff and the United States Chiefs of Staff concerning the words 'supervision' and 'command' as applied to my control of air forces allotted for the support of OVERLORD. It is true that in my original draft I used the word 'supervision' in describing the responsibilities that would devolve upon me I the handling of air forces. At that time my main concern was to secure agreements in the development of the overall air plan, the method of passing of responsibility in operational control and the certainty that authority for coordination of all this effort lay in the hands of the Supreme Commander... [154]

Although Eisenhower, Tedder and Smith saw the original draft message and agreed that it was a good document, it was unusual that they failed to understand the implications of the wording, especially given the previous three months wrangling. Eisenhower further wrote:

> I am somewhat astonished that in view of all these agreements there should have been any reluctance on the part of the British Chiefs of Staff to accept the word 'command' because I readily understood and agreed to the obvious reservations.
>
> As long as any question has arisen on this point, I personally much prefer some word that leaves no doubt as to the right of the Supreme Commander to control these air forces under the conditions stated.[155]

Eisenhower's diary reflected his frustration. In a 22 March entry, he considered resignation for a second time: "If a satisfactory answer is not reached I am going to take drastic

action and inform the Combined Chiefs of Staff that unless the matter is settled at once I will request relief from this command."[156] Later, however, Eisenhower added a handwritten note to this memo. "At a C.O.S. meeting this A.M. (Wed. Mar. 22) I was told the word 'direction' was acceptable to both sides of the house. Amen!"[157]

One more glitch arose before Eisenhower assumed control of the strategic bombers. In a 12 April memorandum for his diary, Eisenhower expressed dismay "that from the British side of the house the actual amalgamation of the air forces has not yet taken place."[158] The directive stated that "as soon as we had agreed upon a plan of operations, this agreement was to take effect."[159] Unfortunately, the "plan of operations" was hung up in the British War Cabinet because it entailed bombing French railway centers under the auspices of the Transportation Plan. Churchill's war cabinet concerns with possible French casualties and the effect such losses would have on long-term relations delayed directive implementation. Eisenhower "protested bitterly at allowing details of a few targets to interfere with the operation of the whole plan."[160] Eisenhower's protests were effective. On 14 April 1944, the "Combined Bomber Offensive reached its legal end and the US Strategic Air Forces [and Bomber Command] passed from control of the RAF Chief of Staff, acting as agent for the CCS to that of the Supreme Allied Commander..."[161]

ANALYSIS

After three months of negotiating, cajoling, threatening, and persuading, Eisenhower accomplished his primary objective: he secured operational control of the strategic bomber forces for OVERLORD. Furthermore, inter-allied agreements had enhanced Tedder's position. It had not been an easy battle. The "establishment of a command system to control air assets in support of the invasion was a tortuous process."[162] It is worthwhile fusing together the salient events of this process to simplify the analysis.

Leigh-Mallory's selection as AEAF commander vis-à-vis Tedder's appointment as Deputy Supreme Commander conflicted with Eisenhower's vision for air command and control of the strategic air forces. Since Eisenhower was in the United States in early January, resolution of this conflict fell to Smith. Smith was successful. Following the 5 January 1944 meeting with Smith, Churchill drafted a proposed air command structure. Churchill's proposal was similar to the final directive: it had Tedder as the de facto 'supreme air commander' and it diluted Leigh-Mallory's command authority. The proposal did not give Eisenhower unfettered control of the British strategic bombers.

Nonetheless, had the British Chiefs of Staff accepted Churchill's proposal, Tedder would have become the supreme air commander in January. His voice would have been the voice of

decision and as a result, "orders and not ambassadors could have been sent to the strategic air forces."[163] This was a missed opportunity. Why was Churchill's proposal not accepted?

Churchill disseminated his proposal in-house; Eisenhower never received the offer. Sinclair and the British Chiefs of Staff resisted Churchill's proposal and viewed it as an American attempt to further the principle of unity of command at the expense of British control. The British commanded by committee rather than follow the unity of command principle favored by the Americans.[164] As a result, when the strategic emphasis shifted from the Mediterranean Theater of Operations to the European Theater of Operations, the two command methods conflicted. The conflict was cultural. The Americans wanted unity of command for all available forces stationed in the United Kingdom while the British wanted to maintain the status quo, whereby certain forces, the strategic forces in particular, remained under Combined Chiefs of Staff control. This cultural divergence was the major impediment to rapid resolution. The British Chiefs of Staff did not want to give up control of Bomber Command and other United Kingdom specific commands to an American. It was a matter of pride.

Inexorably linked to the unity of command conflict was Churchill's refusal to having Leigh-Mallory control British strategic bombers. Churchill believed Leigh-Mallory incapable of running an OVERLORD air campaign that incorporated anything more

than tactical aircraft. The Prime Minister's position was crucial, for had he not been so vehemently opposed to Leigh-Mallory's control of strategic assets, the extent of Tedder's involvement in the OVERLORD air campaign would have been at Eisenhower's discretion and not mandated.

OVERLORD air campaign planning coherence suffered due to the parochial interests of the strategic air forces and by the inter-personal relationships between the air commanders. Moreover, both factors affected Eisenhower's ability to resolve the unity of command issue because these dynamics occurred concurrently and exacerbated the conflict. Bomber Command and USSTAF parochial interests affected OVERLORD air campaign planning and created an environment of incoherence. The crux of the self-interest centered on the debate of using air power, in lieu of land power, to force Germany to capitulate. Both Harris and Spaatz viewed strategic bombing support of OVERLORD as a necessary evil, diverting precious time and resources away from their strategic bombing campaigns. Both men opposed the Transportation Plan. Harris believed Bomber Command incapable of bombing French railway yards because of the precision demanded. Harris was wrong. In fact, Bomber Command successfully carried out experimental bombings of the Trappes, Le Mans, and Amiens railway yards in March.[165] As for USSTAF, Spaatz wanted to continue with POINTBLANK to garner air superiority. He felt this was the best way to support the invasion. Tedder and Eisenhower concurred

with Spaatz and directed USSTAF in their 17 April 1944 employment directive to do so.[166]

Eisenhower depended on the comity of his staff and commanders to ensure coherence in planning and execution. Although Eisenhower had a favorable relationship with his air commanders, especially Tedder, the relationship among his air commanders was not as civil. Zuckerman offered unique perspective of the dynamic interpersonal environment of the air commanders. As an educated zoologist, he had studied primate behavior. He noted:

> While I sometimes saw Tedder and Spaatz together, I never once saw Tedder alone with either Harris or Leigh-Mallory. So far as I could tell, they met only at the Commander's meetings. I cannot recall any occasion when I was at a luncheon or dinner table with any two of them at the same time.[167]

Tedder thought Harris "something of a dictator who had the reputation of not taking kindly to directions outside his own command."[168] Zuckerman believed Spaatz never felt comfortable with Leigh-Mallory and Harris. He believed that to Spaatz, "both [Harris and Leigh-Mallory] were somewhat too humorless and austere, too 'English' for his liking."[169]

Spaatz's and Harris's enmity toward Leigh-Mallory permeated their respective staffs and contributed to the lack of coherence. When planning and coordinating of the air campaign occurred with SHAEF, it occurred under a cloud of dissension and arrogance.[170] Military hierarchy usually mitigated personality conflict in Allied forces in 1944. Though one may have detested one's

superior, discipline usually prevailed, salutes were rendered and the work was accomplished. In this situation, however, military protocol was amorphous. As a result, the efficacy of the air organization depended on the civility of its members. Eisenhower wrote that the one thing the Supreme Commander "must strive for is the utmost in mutual respect and confidence among the group of seniors making up the allied command."[171] Unfortunately for Eisenhower, lapses of 'mutual respect' between his airmen affected unit cohesion.

Fortunately, Eisenhower and Tedder had an effective and civil relationship, forged in the Mediterranean. Eisenhower "valued Tedder's ability and quickly warmed to his personality."[172] Moreover, they shared similar beliefs on human behavior. Eisenhower commented: "Tedder agreed that if prestige was to depend on pomp and flags and bad temper, then it was just too bad."[173] Tedder and Eisenhower were cut from the same cloth. It was this relationship that proved most important; this was the foundation for fostering unity.

Tedder's empathy for Eisenhower was reflected in his 22 February letter to Portal. The writing of this letter marked the turning point of this tortuous debate. This was a case of one British officer writing to another and preaching Eisenhower's gospel. Tedder, exasperated by the obstinacy of Spaatz and Harris, seized the initiative. He leveraged his relationship with Portal in order to effect a change in the British position.

This was a leadership success and marked the beginning of the negotiation process. If Tedder's letter were the watershed event of this struggle, then Eisenhower's threat to resign was the culminating point. It forced Churchill's acquiescence and accelerated the consensus process. Eisenhower's threatened resignation opened the door to compromise, and Eisenhower seized the opening. Eisenhower's threat to resign was effective. But, was it appropriate?

In this case it was appropriate. Eisenhower believed firmly in unity of command as a precursor to success. Without unity of command and for that matter, unity of effort, the invasion was in jeopardy. Eisenhower determined to apply maximum effort, an effort that transcended culture, service, or personal lines. Eisenhower understood what strategic air power could accomplish when applied in a coherent, synergistic manner. He demanded the control of the strategic bombers because they were pivotal to OVERLORD. His threat to resign broke Churchill's intransigence.

Eisenhower's threat to resign was effective, but there was a limit to what Eisenhower wanted. He was not going to destroy Allied comity in the process. Eisenhower understood Churchill's position vis-à-vis Bomber Command and other British specific commands. He understood British sensitivities. Thus, Eisenhower's proposed solution was one that took into account British pride. The solution was immediately acceptable to Churchill and one that hearkened back to 6 January. Tedder was

the solution. Tedder, a British commander, was to supervise employment of the strategic bombers. Furthermore, Eisenhower agreed to the British security clause in the directive. Eisenhower mitigated British concerns of American dominance and bridged the cultural divergence.

After this event, the process was administrative. Tedder and Portal negotiated an agreement eventually acceptable to Churchill, the British Chiefs of Staff, and Eisenhower. However, the directive became mired in the bureaucratic wrangling between the American and British Chiefs of Staff over the word "supervision." Although Eisenhower approved the directive and had written part of it, his correspondence with Marshall belied his real involvement; thus, he was caught off guard. The four month long struggle came down to an argument over a single word. The Americans wanted "command;" the British wanted "supervision." They compromised with "direction."

Was unity of command achieved? The awkward final air command structure had Leigh-Mallory, Spaatz, and Harris on the same level, each with their own staff, their own planning cells, and their own headquarters. Tedder, as deputy commander was the de facto supreme commander for air, but without a staff. He was the arbiter, settling disputes between the three separate commands. Moreover, the planning of the air effort took place in three locations: AEAF at Stanmore,[174] USSTAF at Bushey Park,[175] and Bomber

Command at High Wycombe.[176] Although it was an amorphous command structure, it was not dysfunctional.

According to *Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations*: "Unity of command means that all forces operate under a single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose.[177] Additionally, Eisenhower wrote: "the true basis [for unity of command] lies in the earnest cooperation of the senior officers assigned to an allied theater."[178] Against these criteria, Eisenhower achieved unity of command. Eisenhower was the "single commander," and he did have the authority to "direct all forces" in support of OVERLORD. Although forced cooperation among Leigh-Mallory, Harris, and Spaatz retarded planning effectiveness, they were under the control of Eisenhower and focused on one purpose: the success of OVERLORD.

Was Eisenhower's strategic leadership effective? Strategic leadership is built on a foundation of interpersonal competencies: the ability to build consensus within an organization; the ability to negotiate with external organizations to shape the environment; and, the ability to communicate effectively.[179] Eisenhower's interpersonal competencies were strong. Roosevelt knew this when he selected him to be the Allied Supreme Commander.

Although Eisenhower accomplished his objective and achieved control of the strategic bombers, the efficacy of his strategic

leadership was not evident until late February, after Tedder had expressed concern for Allied unity. It was then that his political skill and interpersonal competencies were present and effective: Tedder crafted the consensus under Eisenhower's guise; Eisenhower negotiated with Churchill to shape the essence of the directive; and, Eisenhower communicated his demands to Churchill and Portal. In doing so, Eisenhower properly applied persuasion, reason and compromise, the hallmarks of a successful strategic leader. Eisenhower's leadership was instrumental to the final outcome. However, his leadership style contributed to his failure to achieve an early agreement.

The secret to Eisenhower's leadership was his ability to put the right people in the right job. "Behind the disarming smile lay a calculated shrewdness. Eisenhower analyzed his subordinates carefully, noting their personal qualities and weaknesses. He then determined what tasks they were best suited to perform."[180] Furthermore, Eisenhower was a firm believer that personalities were the major dynamic in the effectiveness of an organization. "For all his faith in unity of command and his hypersensitivity over being seen only as a friendly peacemaker, Eisenhower depended upon the vagaries of personal relationships to cement cooperation."[181]

Eisenhower's dependence on subordinates to resolve conflict inhibited early consensus of this unity of command issue. Eisenhower was not decisive during the early stages of the

conflict. He failed to confront Churchill early and demand resolution. His leadership style depended on others to confront this issue and work out the details. Unfortunately, the human dimension was too dynamic and too uncertain. The cultural divergence, cemented with national pride, was too strong for the good will of the air commanders to overcome these dynamics.

In Eisenhower's defense however, SHAEF was a command in transition. Moreover, Eisenhower was grappling with myriad of strategic issues. Although this was a missed opportunity for early resolution, Eisenhower's political acumen was the dominant factor in the eventual consensus: in effect he convinced Churchill to compromise. Eisenhower was the architect of this directive.

SUMMARY

When a battle needs the last ounce of available force, the commander must not be in the position of depending upon request and negotiation to get it.[182]

- Dwight Eisenhower

Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, has a one page summary of the OVERLORD campaign entitled, "OVERLORD: A Classic Joint and Combined Operation". In the narrative, the author(s) referenced the OVERLORD command structure with its subordinate commands for land, air, and naval forces and "(after much dispute) what we would call today operational control over US and UK strategic air forces."[183] This paper was an examination of the parenthetical "after much dispute."

The dispute lasted from December 1943 until March 1944. This was a battle that seriously tested Eisenhower's interpersonal competencies as consensus builder, negotiator, and communicator. Eisenhower overcame American and British cultural divergence and USSTAF and Bomber Command service parochialism to achieve unity of command. In doing so, Eisenhower leveraged his personality and the dominant American military presence. The battle was a contest of wills. Eisenhower, as a fervent believer in unity of command, aligned himself against Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff, who commanded by committee. This cultural divergence had to be bridged, for the success of OVERLORD was at stake. Eisenhower successfully bridged this divergence by effective

Eisenhower successfully bridged this divergence by effective negotiation, communication, and persuasion. His strategic leadership was pivotal to the outcome.

WORD COUNT = 10,463

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