Strategic Planning for Coalition Operations: The American-British-Soviet Alliance in the European Theater of World War II

A Monograph

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The decision to concentrate combat power in France for a direct approach into Germany was not an obvious choice for Allied strategy in the European Theater of World War II. The British advocated for an indirect approach in the Mediterranean theater where Axis powers proved vulnerable. The Soviets wanted material aid and a second front against the Germans in Europe to relieve their desperate war of attrition on the Eastern Front. The United States sought an end to the war as quickly as possible through a direct approach on the European continent. The decisions regarding how best to implement each alliance member's preferences took the Allies over two years to formulate as a collective group, which manifested in an equilibrium strategy achieved through interdependent decision-making.

This study uses theories of strategy, alliances, and rational choice to explain how the Allies conducted interdependent decision-making to achieve an equilibrium strategy for coalition operations in the European Theater of World War II. The case study supports the monograph thesis that strategic planning through interdependent decision-making enables national leaders to make rational choice decisions that mutually support grand strategy and a balance of interests for coalition operations.

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Abstract

Strategic Planning for Coalition Operations: The American-British-Soviet Alliance in the European Theater of World War II, by MAJ M. Brian McCool, US Army, 47 pages.

The decision to concentrate combat power in France for a direct approach into Germany was not an obvious choice for Allied strategy in the European Theater of World War II. The British advocated for an indirect approach in the Mediterranean theater where Axis powers proved vulnerable. The Soviets wanted material aid and a second front opened against the Germans in Europe to relieve their desperate war of attrition on the Eastern Front. The United States sought an end to the war as quickly as possible through a direct approach on the European continent. The decisions regarding how best to implement each alliance member's preferences took the Allies over two years to formulate as a collective group, which manifested in an equilibrium strategy achieved through interdependent decision-making.

This study uses primary sources and theories of strategy, alliances, and rational choice to explain how the Allies conducted interdependent decision-making to achieve an equilibrium strategy for large scale combat operations in the European Theater of World War II. The monograph consists of two primary sections. The first section defines strategy and social science theories for cooperation and interdependent decision-making using current literature and US doctrine. The second section provides a historical case study of Allied strategy in the European Theater using theory and doctrine defined in the first section to describe how the Allies achieved an equilibrium strategy through interdependent decision-making, ultimately defeating Axis powers in Europe. The case study supports the monograph thesis that strategic planning through interdependent decision-making enables national leaders to make rational choice decisions that mutually support grand strategy and a balance of interests for coalition operations.

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Acknowledgements

Acronyms

A-B	American-British
ABS	American-British-Soviet
AFHQ	Allied Force Headquarters
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
COS	Chiefs of Staff (British)
ETO	European Theater of Operations
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff (US)
JPS	Joint Planning Staff
JSSC	Joint Strategic Survey Committee
JWPC	Joint War Plans Committee
MTO	Mediterranean Theater of Operations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force

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Introduction

Although alliances are difficult endeavors in international politics, they have existed since the establishment of the international system of sovereign states following the 1648 Peace of Westphalia. Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory argues for the necessity of alliances, such as the American-British-Soviet (ABS) alliance during World War II. However, disagreements plagued the alliance beginning with the first planning conference in December 1941 in Washington, DC. The national interests of the alliance members converged only in the mutual goal to defeat Germany. The details and decisions regarding how best to achieve this goal took the Allies over two years to formulate as a collective group, which manifested in an equilibrium strategy achieved through interdependent decision-making.[1]

Strategic planning through interdependent decision-making enables national leaders to make rational choice decisions that mutually support grand strategy and a balance of interests for coalition operations. This form of planning also benefits Army leaders in joint and multinational operations and complements US Army doctrine for large scale combat operations, such as *Field Manual 3-0*, *Operations*. This study uses the theories of strategy, alliances, and rational choice to explain how the Allies conducted interdependent decision-making to achieve an equilibrium strategy for large scale combat operations in the European Theater of World War II.

The differing approaches between the ABS alliance members offers an excellent case study of interdependent decision-making for coalition operations. Although the alliance shared a common goal to defeat Germany, each member pursued vastly different national interests that shaped their preferences for Allied strategy. Coincidentally, an equilibrium strategy emerged in 1944 that produced optimal outcomes for the alliance members. The indirect approach advocated by British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill enabled the Allies to seize the initiative from the Axis, who Churchill believed were too strong in Europe for a direct attack. Churchill touted an

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[1] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 76; Stephen Walt, *Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 5.

indirect approach against the vulnerable Axis periphery in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and the

Balkans to deplete Axis strength in Europe and provide relief to Stalin's Soviet forces on the

Eastern Front. Churchill's indirect approach manifested itself in his Mediterranean strategy that

dominated Allied operations through 1943 enabling the United States time to mobilize its military

and industrial resources while maximizing the contributions of the British. Stalin's ability to turn

his Soviet Army on the offensive in 1942 made the Mediterranean strategy even better for the

Allies because it allowed the US and British forces to deplete Axis formations in North Africa,

Sicily, and later Italy, while the Soviets dismantled German forces on the Eastern Front.[2]

US forces fighting in the Mediterranean theater gained valuable combat experience in

1942-43 while commanders and staffs learned how to conduct combined arms operations as a

coalition. When the United States fully mobilized its industrial and fighting strength in support of

a unified national strategy in 1943, Stalin cast the decisive vote at an inter-Allied planning

conference that enabled strategic planning to shift from an indirect to direct approach against

Germany. The timely transition concentrated Allied combat power in Europe that dominated

Germany through decisive action on two simultaneous fronts by the most powerful coalition ever

formed.[3]

Planning and Strategy

Henry Mintzberg defines planning as deliberate thinking about the future for the purposes

of controlling the future through a sequence of actions. Planning conceptualizes a desired future

and then develops an effective way of creating conditions favorable to the desired outcome.

Strategy is a plan, or course of action, that rationalizes and articulates a sequence of actions for a

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[2] Matthew Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 142; Mark Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 110.

[3] George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 554.

desired outcome or future condition. Mintzberg identifies two primary types of strategy: deliberate and emergent. Deliberate strategies are intentions put into action to achieve a desired outcome in the future. Unanticipated or unintended actions and conditions also influence strategy. These emergent conditions converge with intended actions to create emergent strategy. Mintzberg argues that few, if any, realized strategies are purely deliberate since some form of learning usually takes place in the execution of strategy that transforms intended actions due to unintended or unanticipated conditions. Likewise, few strategies are purely emergent since any action to achieve intended outcomes involve some measure of control.[4]

Grand Strategy

In the government of nation states, national strategy, also known as grand strategy, is the intended goals of a nation to secure "long term, enduring, core interests over time."[5] In his book, *On Grand Strategy*, John Gaddis encourages constraint in the ambitions of a nation to pursue grand strategy. He states that grand strategy should align the potentially unlimited aspirations of a government with its limited capabilities. Gaddis further warns that unconstrained grand strategy often leads to unrealized strategy. According to Gaddis, constraint is what German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz meant when he subordinated war to policy in his book, *On War*. Clausewitz argued that war should always serve as an instrument of national policy, which seeks to accomplish a goal or objective through sanctioned violence, but never as an end itself. Strategic planning enables national decision-makers to see military operations as intended actions to serve policy goals.[6]

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[4] Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 8, 23-25.

[5] US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-18, Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), vi.

[6] John Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018), 21, 312; Stephen Lauer, "American Discontent: Unhappy Military Outcomes of the Post Second World War Era," *The Strategy Bridge*, May 23, 2017, accessed August 8, 2018, https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2017/5/23/american-discontent-unhappy-military-outcomes-of-the-post-second-world-war-era.

Joint doctrine describes grand strategy as "a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve objectives."[7] Strategic planning provides national decision-makers with an objective assessment of the costs and risks of actions. According to joint doctrine, the United States engages other nations through strategic competition using cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict. Cooperation exists through bilateral and multilateral partnerships between strategic actors with similar or compatible interests. Competition below armed conflict occurs when strategic actors do not share compatible interests. Armed conflict occurs when strategic actors with incompatible interests resolve their differences using violence.[8]

British historian and military strategist Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart describes grand strategy as "policy in execution…for the role of grand strategy is to coordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of the war-the goal defined by fundamental policy."[9] Most importantly, grand strategy goes beyond the boundaries of war and conflict to define goals for the subsequent peace. Grand strategy should set limits on the use of national instruments of power, so they do not damage the desired future conditions for peace and post-war settlement. Hart blames the lack of this element of grand strategy as the primary reason for undesirable peace conditions that followed many conflicts, such as World War I.[10]

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[7] Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), xii.

[8] US Joint Staff, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-18, Strategy*, v-viii.

[9] Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), 321-322.

[10] Ibid.

Military Strategy

Clausewitz defined military strategy as "the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war."[11] Hart contextualized the purpose of military strategy as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy."[12] Everett Dolman added that war itself cannot be the purpose of the military, since the act of war does not serve a policy in and of itself. Dolman also discouraged the concept of an end-state as a purpose of military strategy. According to Dolman, there is no end-state in strategy, only political transitions that enable conditions for a continued strategic advantage, which policymakers should articulate as desired conditions for peace. Eliot Cohen supports Dolman's position on end-states and other misleading military strategy terms, such as exit strategies. According to Cohen, end-states and exit strategies are misleading because exiting a war "requires the cooperation of friend and foe alike; the fatal conceit of an exit strategy and an end-state is that it conceives of war as a kind of engineering enterprise, rather than a contest of opposing wills conducted in the murk of politics."[13] It then follows that military strategy should be proportionate to the political conditions desired for peace. The application of military force cannot be so great or destructive that it jeopardizes the desired political conditions for future peace.[14]

Beatrice Heuser builds on the political nature of war in her description of strategy as the relationship that exists between military means and policy goals. According to Heuser, strategy constitutes a "comprehensive way to pursue political ends, including the threat or actual use of

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[11] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 177.

[12] Hart, *Strategy*, 321.

[13] Eliot Cohen, *The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power and the Necessity of Military Force* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 202-3.

[14] Everett Dolman, "Seeking Strategy," in *Strategy: Context and Adaptation from Archidamus to Airpower*, ed. Richard Baily Jr., James Forsyth Jr., and Mark Yiesly (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 8-13.

force, in a dialectic of wills."[15] Heuser's use of the dialectic of wills is a reference to Clausewitz's explanation of the two-sided nature of conflict. Good military strategy should account for the opposing will of the adversary in addition to the political goals of the conflict. According to joint doctrine, strategic planners should consider intellectual tools, such as direct and indirect approaches, to determine how best to contest the adversary. A direct approach applies combat power decisively against the adversary's primary source of strength, whereas the indirect approach avoids the adversary's primary strength by directing combat power against the adversary's critical vulnerabilities, leading to the defeat of the adversary's source of strength.[16]

Hart envisioned military strategy in the form of an indirect approach. His concept for military strategy is to engage in battle only under advantageous circumstances, and "not so much to seek battle as to seek a strategic situation so advantageous that if it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by a battle is sure to achieve this."[17] Hart describes two spheres where military strategy can achieve a strategic advantage: physical and psychological. Within the physical sphere, military strategy should seek to complicate enemy force disposition by attacking away from his front, which should result in a dispersion of his forces. For example, an ideal indirect approach would target the enemy's supply routes and lines of communication, inflicting enough losses that the enemy can no longer sustain the war successfully. The physical sphere affects the psychological sphere by influencing enemy decisions and limiting his freedom of action. For example, an enemy commander forced to transfer combat power from his intended front or objective to his rear or flank causes him to distribute his forces so that they may not be able to successfully maintain the initiative. If the enemy is unable to maintain enough combat

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[15] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 27-28.

[16] Ibid., 27-28; US Joint Staff, *JP 5-0, Joint Planning*, IV-33.

[17] Hart, *Strategy*, 352.

power on his front while defending his rear or flanks, then his adversary has gained the initiative. According to Hart, "psychological dislocation fundamentally springs from this sense of being trapped."[18]

Hart calls this approach the line of least resistance based upon the adversary's line of least expectation. Once the enemy has dispersed his forces and no longer maintains the initiative, then his adversary can exploit him at a decisive point because the enemy is weak both numerically and morally. Sun Tzu also advocated for indirect approaches with an emphasis on inflicting losses on the enemy's vulnerabilities instead of attacking where adversaries are strong, such as concentrated combat power positions. Sun Tzu argued that the essence of military strategy is to defeat the enemy without ever engaging in direct combat. Like Sun Tzu, Hart's approach provides strategists and commanders with an alternative to the conventional wisdom of the direct approach advocated by traditional military theorists, such as Antoine de Jomini.[19]

Jomini's direct approach described military strategy in geometric terms using linear operations that concentrate combat power at decisive points to hasten success in war. Jomini's principles of war promote his fundamental concept to "throw by strategic movements the mass of an army successfully upon the decisive points of a theater of war."[20] Jomini summarized the importance of decisive points and lines of operation in *The Art of War* with the following maxim: "if the art of war consists in bringing into action the decisive point of the theater of operations the greatest possible force, the choice of the line of operation may be regarded as fundamental in devising a good plan for the campaign."[21] Jomini's direct approach dominated strategic thinking in World War I, especially with French Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the Allied Commander of the

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[18] Hart, *Strategy*, 326-27.

[19] Ibid., 329; Roger Ames, *Sun Tzu: The Art of Warfare* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 52.

[20] Antoine de Jomini, "The Art of War," in *Roots of Strategy,* Book 2, trans. J. D. Hittle (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1987), 461.

[21] Ibid., 475.

Western Front. According to Foch, the direct approach provided economy of force, which he defined as "the art of pouring out all one's resources at a given moment on one spot; of making use there of all troops; disposing the troops as to converge upon, and act against, a new single objective."[22] However, a strategy of attrition potentially emerges when the direct approach fails to achieve decisive battle, as occurred in the trenches of World War I.

The US Army has traditionally embraced Jomini's direct approach in doctrine and practice. Even after the terrible experience of trench warfare in World War I, US Army doctrine returned to annihilation of enemy armed forces as the principle goal of military strategy. During the interwar period, US Army planning for large-scale combat operations required the mobilization of the entire youth male population for attrition-based warfare. Army veterans of World War I, such as Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur wanted military strategy to evolve from attrition to maneuver warfare. This strategy kept with Jomini's direct approach but emphasized speed and surprise to quickly outpace the adversary's ability to make decisions in response to rapid advances against large adversary formations in decisive battle. This strategy served Germany well in the initial years of World War II and dominated US strategic thinking following the attack on Pearl Harbor in contrast to British preferences for the indirect approach.[23]

Conclusion

Deliberate planning is action directed toward a desired future, which includes emergent details that influence intended strategies. Strategic planning for grand strategy creates intended actions based on national policies and priorities to obtain political goals through the application of national power, such as the military. When the political authorities of a nation sanction violence in pursuit of grand strategy, military strategies seek to apply combat power through direct and indirect approaches against an adversary to achieve political goals for the desired peace. It is

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[22] Hart, *Strategy*, 328.

[23] Richard Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion?" *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 22, 48; Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy,* 181-88.

imperative for military strategies to provide national leaders with an objective assessment of the costs and risks associated with intended and unintended actions relative to the desired peace in grand strategy. Thus, strategic planning enables national leaders to view military strategy as a crucial ingredient of grand strategy.

Alliances

Alliances are "formal associations of states bound by the mutual commitment to use military force against non-member states to defend member states' integrity."[24] Coalitions are less formal, temporary alliances oriented by means to achieve differing goals. Kenneth Waltz's Balance of Power theory proposes that the lack of an international governing authority compels states to form alliances to guarantee security through interstate cooperation. Waltz argues that an international balance of power emerges naturally when states form security alliances against a perceived powerful nation.[25]

In *Origins of Alliances*, Stephen Walt proposes that states form alliances to balance against threats instead of power. Walt's Balance of Threat theory insists that states form alliances against perceived threats as opposed to power, which he asserts is an important nuance because power alone represents an insufficient reason. Weak states bandwagon with strong states or combinations of weak and strong states balance against a powerful state that poses a threat to the others. It is the combination of power and threat that compels states to form alliances. For example, Edward Luttwak identifies the benign hegemony of the United States as the primary reason states have not formed a balance of power alliance against it, while the aggressive actions

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[24] Heinz Gartner, *Small States and Alliances* (Vienna: Österreichisches Institut für Internationale Politik, 2000), 2.

[25] Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 582; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 102-105.

and credible nuclear threat posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War explains why the United States and European nations formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[26]

Although alliances strive toward cooperation to achieve mutual goals, the interests of its members rarely align, which presents multiple dilemmas for alliance members. The first dilemma, called "entrapment," occurs when an alliance member faces a decision to support another member as a result of formal obligations even though the selected course of action is not beneficial to the interests of the concerned member. The second dilemma, called "abandonment," occurs when an alliance member fears that other members will abdicate the requirements and responsibilities agreed upon within the alliance framework.[27]

Clausewitz observed that friction is inherent in military alliances. In *On War,* he noted that "one country may support another's cause, but will never take it so seriously as its own."[28] Each member of the alliance values its own interests above the others and will attempt to establish control over the strategy and actions of the alliance to achieve its strategic objectives. Hart also observed that friction in alliances complicates cooperation and often leads to attempted domination by its members. Hart proposed that cohesion within alliances is most successful when diversity in cooperation achieves mutual toleration "based on the recognition that worse may come from an attempt to suppress differences rather than acceptance of them."[29] Hart's egalitarian approach to alliance management works best when the external threat to the alliance is great. Alliance cohesion increases as real or perceived threats to its members multiply. According to Carlo Masala, other egalitarian advantages that help reduce friction within alliances include:

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[26] Stephen Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, 5; Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 264.

[27] Carlo Masala, "Alliances," in *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, ed. Myriam Cavelty and Victor Mauer (New York: Routledge, 2012), 387.

[28] Clausewitz, *On War*, 603.

[29] Hart, *Strategy*, 355.

"reductions in transactional costs and ability to control other alliance members; access to information about the intentions and behavior of alliance members; and the iterative nature of a cooperative framework."[30]

Rational Choice Theory for Interdependent Decision-Making

Decision making is paramount in planning and strategy. Plans and strategy exist to provide options when uncertainty exists. If an outcome is certain, then decision-making is unnecessary. Thus, decisions are important in planning and strategy to make meaningful choices when uncertainty exists. Interdependent decision-making is the act of making meaningful collective choices when outcomes are uncertain for multiple actors with mutual interests. Interdependence occurs when multiple actors exert power over each other as the result of some degree of dependence between themselves. Interdependent decision-making based on rational choice theory argues that decision makers choose among options that maximize the utility of an interaction based on power and reward. Although power and reward preferences can be subjective, rational choice theory proposes that it is possible to know enough about how an actor makes decisions based on his previous behavior and demonstrated preferences for certain outcomes. Announced or attributed preferences allow analytical models to determine an equilibrium point that maximizes the utility of the interaction. Therefore, information and transparency about behavior, values, and preferences allows for cooperative games to produce an outcome that maximizes utility for each actor's self-interests.[31]

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[30] Masala, "Alliances," 387; John Neal, "The Shared Burden: United States-French Coalition Operations in the European Theater of World War II" (monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2013), 3.

[31] Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 41; Alan Lamborn, "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June 1997): 191; John Kotter, *Power and Influence: Beyond Formal Authority* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 17; Freedman, *Strategy*, 577.

However, obtaining complete information proves impossible, even when actors are transparent. This critique of rational choice theory led to the concept of bounded rationality, which accounts for human fallibility by proposing that people sometimes make sub-optimal choices based on the degree of difficulty in obtaining the optimal solution. Bounded rationality provides variance in rational choice models by proposing that actors sometimes favor sub-optimal outcomes based on the best available information when perfect information is not available to achieve the desired outcome.[32]

In international relations, optimal rational solutions are more difficult for actors to ascertain due to the uncertain and anarchic nature of international politics. The international system produces many actors and infinite strategies that complicate determining a probable outcome in strategic interactions. Two important requirements emerged from rational choice theory to help reduce uncertainty in coalition models. First, the model works best when reduced to a two-actor game. Reducing the actors involved in the model limits the number of preferences and potential solutions. Second, the model requires an external threat or some form of exogenous coercion that compels self-interested actors to seek cooperation. A credible threat to the coalition increases cooperation and narrows the potential outcomes to address the threat. When a credible threat and incentives to cooperate exist, it is possible to determine the preferences of each actor to achieve a common goal and determine a probable outcome using rational choice theory.[33]

Power and Preferences

Strategic interaction in international alliances and coalitions involves the pursuit of interdependent decisions and outcomes. Interdependent outcomes are the collective goals and conditions favored by each coalition actor based on perceptions, beliefs, and preferences. The probability of success for the interdependent outcomes is proportionate to the legitimacy of the

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[32] Freedman, *Strategy*, 592.

[33] Ibid., 581-83.

alliance and coalition relationships. According to Alan Lamborn, legitimacy in strategic interactions is influenced by the following political dynamics for power and preferences: (1) interdependence between each actor's relative power within the relationship and the compatibility of the actors' preferences and outcomes; (2) each actor's political value of the relationship; (3) each actor's time horizons and assessments of the future; (4) risk-taking preferences; and (5) each actor's linkage between coalition outcomes and domestic politics.[34]

The value of an actor's power within the coalition is proportionate to the compatibility of each actor's preferred outcomes. When preferences are compatible, there is less concern over which actor controls the outcome. Conversely, when preferences are incompatible, each actor's relative power within the coalition becomes more important. Thus, a lessor power within the coalition will become strategically weaker to the stronger power's outcome preferences. Concerning political value, when coalition partners attach high political value to maintaining the legitimacy of the alliance, actors are more inclined to take a longer view toward implications and effects of policy choices and outcomes on the future of the relationship. Additionally, actors with a high perception of legitimacy within a coalition are more likely to accept strategies and outcomes that are less preferred in the short-term of the relationship. Again, the opposite is true when the long-term value of a relationship is less valuable. In these circumstances, actors are more concerned with short-term gains from preferred outcomes without a high regard for the effects on the alliance. In addition to power and preferences, coalition actors also value their assessments of how future strategic interactions will evolve over time within the alliance. If an actor anticipates that future interactions with a coalition partner will become more incompatible over time, then the actor will compete harder for favorable short-term outcomes and resist compromises that do not translate into immediate benefits. The same is true for uncertainty in future interactions. Conversely, coalition partners are likely to make short-term concessions when

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[34] Lamborn, "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," 191.

they assess a high probability for compatible future outcomes through a stable and acceptable relationship.[35]

Concerning risk, Lamborn's expected utility approach argues that an actor's preferences for risk should be proportionate to the expected value of the outcome. For example, when the perceived value of an outcome is high, coalition actors are likely to accept more risk and contribute more resources to achieve the preferred outcome. The opposite is also true as actors will accept less risk and contribute fewer resources as the expected value decreases. According to Lamborn's political dynamics, coalition actors who are strategically weak and unable to control choices are also less likely to accept risk to achieve coalition goals. In opposition to expected utility theory, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky's prospect theory for decision-making under risk argues that an actor's preference for risk is not proportionate to the expected value of the outcome. Instead, actors tend to value risk in terms of gains and losses comparable to a reference point, such as the status quo. According to prospect theory, actors value options of certainty higher than options involving probability, especially when there is probability for loss. Thus, an actor who values a status quo reference point will negotiate for low-risk options over all other options involving probability.[36]

Lamborn's linkages between domestic policy and international negotiations offers some of the most important dynamics within interdependent decision-making for coalitions. According to Lamborn, "World politics is driven by the interaction between international politics within national and transnational coalitions and constituency politics."[37] The linkages between these political levels influence both the choices made by coalition actors and the subsequent outcomes

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[35] Lamborn, "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," 191-94.

[36] Ibid., 196; Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk," *Econometrica* 47, no. 2 (March 1979): 263-64.

[37] Lamborn, "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," 196.

available due to those choices. The influence works both ways. For example, domestic constraints could limit the options available for coalition strategy, especially if the potential outcome is unfavorable to the public in a democratically elected government. Ramesh Thakur refers to the connective tissue between domestic politics and international negotiations as a balance of interests. Thakur argues that a balance of interests more accurately describes the process policymakers use to identify and prioritize so-called national interests. Policymakers balance interests between multiple domestic actors from all elements of national power as well as government and non-government organizations through interdependent decision-making to form national policies that can succeed domestically and internationally.[38]

Robert Putnam describes the connectedness between domestic and diplomatic politics as two-level games that coalition actors negotiate based on balanced interests. Ideal outcomes for coalition strategies should be acceptable to domestic politics, or else the negotiator risks involuntary defection from coalition agreements. According to Putnam, the number of winning options between domestic politics and coalition strategies is the most crucial factor to negotiators, because winning options influence the probability for a successful agreement. Likewise, the size of the winning options empowers negotiators to select outcomes that maximize the distribution of gains between coalition partners. Putnam describes several factors that affect winning options on both levels of negotiations. Most notable for coalition decisions are domestic preferences and power distribution. Domestic preferences determine the level of constraints and limitations placed on coalition negotiators based on relative population support for isolationist versus internationalist policies. Domestic preferences tend to support internationalist policies in small

[38] Ramesh Thakur, "A Balance of Interests," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, ed. Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 78, 84.

countries with open economies that rely heavily on trade commerce, whereas isolationism is usually strong in countries rich in resources and manpower like the United States.[39]

When domestic preferences support isolationism, negotiators must consider "no-agreement" as an outcome to strategic interactions, lest they risk involuntary defection. However, a domestic preference to isolationism can improve the negotiating position in international interactions, because the negotiator has a limited range of acceptable outcomes to faithfully consider for approval. In these conditions, the negotiator can credibly impose a narrow set of outcomes on the coalition. Conversely, when domestic preferences support neither isolationist nor internationalist polices as a majority, the chief negotiator can accept a wider range of outcomes and improve the chances for coalition cooperation. However, this condition weakens the bargaining power of the negotiator to advocate for any single policy or strategy within the coalition. Coalition members are more likely to bargain for a narrow set of outcomes when negotiating with a partner who has a wide range of acceptable outcomes.[40]

Game Theory

Game theory in social science incorporates mathematical modeling for strategic decision-making. In interdependent decision-making, game theory models create an opportunity to simulate potential strategies and outcomes for coalition cooperation. The usefulness of game theory relies on several assumptions regarding an actor's behavior. The theory assumes an actor is rational and game models attempt to reflect an actor's existing behavior to achieve certain goals. The model then helps anticipate potential future behavior choices, notably when an actor's preferences and payoffs change. Walt acknowledges the descriptive linkages demonstrated between game theory and coalition behavior and promotes the usefulness of game theory

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[39] Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 440-53.

[40] Ibid., 443-44.

modeling for power distribution and payoffs in coalition decision-making. Dolman and Heuser also acknowledge the linkages between game theory and strategic cooperation. Dolman argues that game theory is most useful when the rules and goals of the model accurately reflect the preferences and payoffs that actors follow in real decision-making. Heuser follows with recommendations that rational choice methods, such as game theory modeling, should contribute mostly to help create a framework for dialogue and debate within the processes for decision-making, especially when used for modeling coalition behavior.[41]

One of the most famous game theory models for demonstrative purposes is the prisoner's dilemma model. The prisoner's dilemma model demonstrates the mutual interdependence of actors in a non-zero-sum game, which means that a loss for one actor does not guarantee a win for the others. Instead, the actors share a complementary relationship as each actor's decisions influences the other's payoffs. In this example, two prisoners face options to either betray the other by providing incriminating information to the police or remain silent. If both criminals remain silent, they will each spend one year in prison (status quo conditions). If only one prisoner betrays, he will be set free while the other remains in prison for three years. If both criminals betray, then both will remain in prison for two-years. Table 1 illustrates the payoff matrix with each prisoner's incentives to cooperate or betray. The payoffs demonstrate that it is in the best interest of each player to betray the other prisoner and receive the lesser prison sentence, but they receive a longer sentence of two years when both prisoners betray.[42]

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[41] Avinash Dixit and Barry Nalebuff, *Thinking Strategically: The Competitive Edge in Business, Politics, and Everyday Life* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1991), 2; Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 52; Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy,* 499.

[42] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 55; Jamshid Gharajedaghi, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann, 2011), 39.

Table 1: Prisoner dilemma payoff matrix.

Prisoner's Dilemma (A,B)	Prisoner B Silent	Prisoner B Betrays
Prisoner A Silent	A -1, B -1 Win-Win	A -3, B 0 Lose-Win
Prisoner A Betrays	A 0, B -3 Win-Lose	A -2, B -2 Lose-Lose

Source: Adapted from William Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma: John von Neumann, Game Theory, and the Puzzle of the Bomb* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 8-11.

An important critique of the prisoner's dilemma scenario in game theory modeling is that the model represents only a single decision, or event, and does not account for iterative negotiations. The model also assumes no communication. Incentives to cooperate increase when actors can communicate and know they will negotiate in iterative play, such as in coalition operations. Using Lamborn's political dynamics for strategic interaction, the value of iterative cooperation reduces the prisoner's dilemma payoffs for defection when coalition partners are interested in a long, stable relationship. Table 2 demonstrates changes in the payoff matrix when non-cooperation reduces the payoff in iterative games. For example, if Prisoner A betrays B in round 1 of the game, then Prisoner B is likely to betray A in subsequent rounds. This form of emergent behavior incentivizes cooperation and encourages actors to reciprocate behavior in successive games to achieve mutually high payoff outcomes for both actors.[43]

Table 2: Prisoner's dilemma with communication and continuous interaction among actors.

Prisoner's Dilemma (A,B)	Prisoner B Silent	Prisoner B Betrays
Prisoner A Silent	A 0, B 0 Win-Win	A -3, B -1 Lose-Win
Prisoner A Betrays	A -1, B -3 Win-Lose	A -2, B -2 Lose-Lose

Source: Adapted from William Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma: John von Neumann, Game Theory, and the Puzzle of the Bomb* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 8-11.

Coalition planners can use game theory modeling to help discover optimal strategies that maximize winning solutions for the coalition. The best set of winning options, which are the

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[43] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 56-58.

combinations of options that are acceptable for domestic politics and coalition negotiations, form dominant strategies in game theory. Dominant strategies are options that outperform all other options in coalition negotiations. Thus, actors should always choose a dominant strategy regardless of other coalition actor decisions.[44]

Likewise, when a coalition member has a dominant strategy, other actors should choose the best available payoff option within the dominant strategy. Returning to Lamborn's political dynamics, dominant strategies work best when options are compatible, coalition actors prefer long-term cooperation, and are less concerned over which actor controls the outcome. When preferences for cooperation are high, an actor with a dominant strategy can make promises for future payoffs that incentivize the strategy to other actors. An equilibrium strategy emerges when coalition actors have correctly predicted each other's best option and choose accordingly. It is important to note that an equilibrium strategy does not presume that each actor receives the best payoff, especially when the model contains a dominant strategy. An equilibrium strategy means that each actor chose the best available option according to their preferences for cooperation.[45]

Conclusion

Interdependent decision-making is crucial to the success of an alliance. Rational choice theory based on Lamborn's political dynamics for power and preferences help explain how alliance members determine the value of cooperation, and Putnam's two-level game theory demonstrates that coalition strategies must be acceptable domestically for each member if there can be any chance of international cooperation. Expected utility and prospect theories describe how risk influences decision-making, and game theory explains how coalition members choose strategies based on rational choice preferences and power distribution within alliances, especially when a member deploys a dominant strategy. When successfully played, the model produces a

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[44] Dixit and Nalebuff, *Thinking Strategically*, 66.

[45] Lamborn, "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," 191; Dixit and Nalebuff, *Thinking Strategically*, 125.

balance of interests in the form of an equilibrium strategy that strategic planners can use in pursuit of grand strategy. The following case study uses primary sources and theories of strategy, alliances, and rational choice to describe how the ABS alliance achieved an equilibrium strategy through interdependent decision-making, ultimately defeating Axis powers in the European theater of World War II.

Allied Strategy 1942-43

President Roosevelt anticipated an eventual entry into World War II for the United States, but US domestic politics did not support participation in another conflict in Europe. Roosevelt also anticipated an alliance with the British government and dispatched his personal advisor and friend, Harry Hopkins, in January 1941, to inform Churchill that the United States would support the British throughout the war. Roosevelt initially supported them with material supplies through a program that became known as Lend-Lease. This program contributed billions of US dollars in vehicles, ammunition, airplanes, tanks, and World War I era battleships. Instead of repayment, the Lend-Lease program traded US materials and supplies for access to British military bases around the world and other arrangements that incentivized long-term cooperation between the two countries.[46]

After the United States entered World War II in December 1941, British and US leaders met in Washington, DC for the first of many allied conferences that shaped strategic planning throughout the war. President Roosevelt established the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to create a peer organization for strategic planning and decision-making with the British Chiefs of Staff (COS). The JCS adopted the British planning committee structure through the Joint Planning Committee to serve as the US planning conduit to the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS). The CCS represented both countries and presided over all Allied planning decisions, set priorities for Allied

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[46] Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 797-98; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 8.

operations, and approved Allied commands and commanders in the designated theaters of war. The British COS, with their professional staffs, boasted much more experience than their US counterparts, successfully using this advantage to shape and influence early decisions in Allied strategy and plans.[47]

The first planning conference, named Arcadia, met from December 1941 to January 1942, including subsequent months of post-conference planning sessions. The Arcadia conference produced the American-British strategy and a formal alliance in the United Nations charter. The American-British (A-B) strategy identified a Germany-first priority, followed by Italy and then Japan. The A-B strategy named Germany as the highest threat to the Allies, even though Japan represented the only Axis Power that had attacked the United States. Following Walt's Balance of Threat theory, the Allies collectively viewed Germany as the principle threat and center of gravity for the Axis powers.[48]

The A-B strategic priorities for Allied operations in 1942 centered on offensive operations against Germany and aid to the Soviet Union to establish an Allied ring around Germany. The Allied ring included the Eastern front in the Soviet Union from the northern port city of Archangel to the Black Sea, the northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and the western coast of continental Europe. According to the strategy, the Allies would tighten the ring in 1942 by sustaining the Soviet front, arming and supporting Turkey, increasing Allied strength in the Middle East, and gaining possession of the North African coast. British planners emphasized operations in North Africa as a move to prevent further Axis aggression into Africa and deny Axis freedom of maneuver deeper into the British Empire in the Middle East and India.[49]

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[47] Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 23.

[48] US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *World War II Inter-Allied Conferences* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2003), 98.

[49] Ibid., 98-101; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 86.

Mediterranean Strategy

US planners initially balked at the British focus for offensive operations in North Africa, including Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who at the time led the War Planning Division of General George C. Marshall's US Army staff headquarters. Like most army planners, Eisenhower favored Marshall's proposal for a cross-channel invasion into continental Europe, codenamed Operation Roundup. However, the A-B strategy determined that a major land offensive against Germany in Europe as unlikely in 1942, and US planners agreed that a full mobilization would require another year to complete. Instead of Allied operations in North Africa in 1942, General Marshall's plan advocated for a massive military buildup in the United Kingdom in preparation for a cross-channel invasion, codenamed Bolero.[50]

Although British pressure for a 1942 Allied offensive in North Africa became a part of the A-B strategy, US planners continued to oppose it. There were no long-term national interests for the United States in the Mediterranean. The problem for US planners opposing the British Mediterranean strategy was that the United States lacked a unified strategy. Service rivalries stoked divergent opinions that divided US planners at conferences while a united British front continued to promote the North African campaign, where the British were already fighting Axis troops. The US Army advocated for a military buildup in England while the US Navy wanted to focus on operations in the Pacific theater despite the A-B strategy's Germany first approach. British support for Allied operations in North Africa further emboldened US advocates for a Pacific strategy. In their frustration, US planners believed the British were attempting to entrap US forces in a scheme to restore their territorial empire, and British planners feared the United

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[50] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 74; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 142.

States might abandon them for the Pacific theater. The stalemate led Churchill to intervene, directly petitioning Roosevelt for support in the North African campaign.[51]

Churchill pitched the North African campaign, code-named Gymnast, to Roosevelt as the second front against the Germans that Stalin needed to remain in the war. This argument struck a chord because Roosevelt fretted about the Soviets collapsing on the Eastern Front before the Allies could mount a campaign in the West. He understood Churchill's reasoning to fight German forces where they were weak in North Africa while providing invaluable combat experience for the untested US military. Roosevelt also had political reasons to get quick military results. His party faced a mid-term election in 1942, and he needed to demonstrate resolve against the Axis powers. Thus, Roosevelt sent a team of military planners to London in the summer of 1942 to conduct planning for Operation Gymnast.[52]

For the British, the Mediterranean strategy evolved from necessity of survival into a dominant strategy for victory. When the possibility of saving France no longer appeared feasible, they turned to the Mediterranean where they still held lines of communication on land and sea, although the Vichy French and Italians now contested the space. Churchill suspected Axis weakness in North Africa, and he believed the Germans would expend resources there to prevent the Allies from securing a Mediterranean foothold. Furthermore, the Vichy French-occupied territory in North Africa supported German supply lines, which if disrupted could open the Mediterranean to Allied shipping, expose the Axis southern flank, and enable Lend-Lease support to the Soviet Union. Additionally, Churchill convinced Roosevelt that the North African campaign was less risky than a 1942 cross-channel operation against twenty-five fresh German

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[51] Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and The Peace They Sought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 98; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 100; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 21.

[52] Dale Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 34; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 26, 72.

divisions. Churchill nearly lost the entire British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk, France in June

1940, which increased his risk averseness toward a cross-channel attack.[53]

The payoff matrix in Table 3 is adapted from the prisoner's dilemma model to

demonstrate Churchill's cooperation preferences for the Mediterranean strategy, which provided

the highest payoffs when the United States participated in the North African campaign. Churchill

increased US incentives for cooperation with promises to conduct Operation Roundup sometime

after the North African campaign. His dominant strategy succeeded in coalition negotiations

without endangering cooperation in the alliance because Roosevelt considered Churchill's

strategy compatible with US interests and he valued a long-term alliance with the United

Kingdom over his preferences to control coalition strategy at the time.[54] Churchill logically

followed his dominant strategy and increased the payoff for cooperation with the United States by

promising a future cross-channel operation. His negotiations created an equilibrium point for

Allied strategy in 1943 noted by the asterisk in Table 3.[55]

Table 3: US-British payoff matrix when Churchill promised a cross-channel invasion following the North African campaign; Asterisk notes an equilibrium choice.

US-British Strategy 1942	Cross-Channel Invasion (UK)	North African Campaign (UK)
Cross-Channel Invasion (US)	US 1, UK 0 Win-Lose	US 0, UK 1 Lose-Win
North African Campaign (US)	US -1, UK -1 Lose-Lose	*US 2, UK 2 Win-Win

The 1942 Anglo-American decision to commit to a North African campaign led to the

establishment of Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) to plan, coordinate, and conduct Gymnast,

renamed Operation Torch. The CCS selected Eisenhower to lead the allied operation, which is

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[53] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 86; Nigel Hamilton, *Commander in Chief: FDR's Battle with Churchill, 1943* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), 57.

[54] Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 552.

[55] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 395; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 79; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 20.

ironic given Eisenhower's earlier opposition to the campaign. Operation Torch became a success later in 1942, when the Allies defeated the Vichy French and brought them into the coalition, which led to the Tunisian Campaign that expelled Axis forces from North Africa the following year.[56]

The success of the North African campaign encouraged Churchill and the British COS to double down on their Mediterranean strategy. When US and British leaders met in January 1943 at Casablanca to determine Allied operational priorities for the year, US participants expected to discuss plans for Roundup. Instead, the British COS proposed a new campaign for Allied operations in Sicily to exploit the Axis' vulnerable southern flank. Roosevelt's JCS opposed the Sicily operation, particularly Marshall, who adamantly argued it would reduce resources and planning for Bolero and Roundup. However, Marshall and the JCS could not provide Roosevelt with a viable alternative to Sicily. Roosevelt concluded that the Allies were not ready for a cross-channel operation into France and directed the JCS to cooperate with the British COS to plan an operation against the Axis in Sicily, codenamed Husky.[57]

By August 1943, Operation Husky proved another major victory in the Mediterranean as the Allies decisively defeated and drove the Axis forces from Sicily, which led to Mussolini's topple from power and Italy's exit from the war. The Allied success also influenced Spain and Turkey to remain neutral, which enabled Allied shipping in the Mediterranean. Most importantly, Italy's defeat opened the peninsula to an Allied invasion that caused Hitler to divert one fifth of his entire German army to defend his southern flank for the remainder of the war. Although Stalin never accepted the North African campaign as the second front Roosevelt promised him, the

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[56] Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 25, 38.

[57] Nigel Hamilton, *Commander in Chief,* 57; Robin Edmonds, *The Big Three: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin in Peace and War* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991), 297.

Allied successes in the Mediterranean appealed to Roosevelt as Hitler continued to demonstrate a willingness to commit troops and resources to defend his outer periphery.[58]

Roosevelt's agreement to continue the Mediterranean strategy proved unpopular with his JCS and altered the immediate goals set out in the A-B Strategy, although he remained resolute about an eventual invasion into France. His flexibility early in the alliance, which allowed the British to lead strategy formulations, gave Roosevelt political capital and credibility later when a dominant strategy emerged for the United States in favor of a cross-channel invasion. Altogether, Roosevelt's rational decision-making preferences converged with Churchill's risk aversion from 1942-43 to solidify the Anglo-American alliance, which maximized British contributions and kept the allies on the offensive early in the war and prompted Hitler to dedicate resources and manpower to an area of no strategic benefit. By late 1943, the Mediterranean campaign opened shipping lanes to the Soviet Union, kept Spain and Turkey neutral, knocked Italy out of the war, and forced Hitler to divert one-fifth of his entire Army to defend Germany's southern flank.[59]

Soviet Strategy

Before the war, Stalin signed a secret non-aggression pact with Hitler to remain out of the impending conflict as European heavyweights prepared to knock each other out. Hitler's non-aggression pact, along with his promises to partition Poland, provided Stalin a deal too good to refuse. Stalin trusted the agreement so much that the Soviet Union was completely unprepared when Germany invaded. Throughout the summer and fall of 1941, Operation Barbarossa launched over 3.8 million German troops and thousands of tanks into the Soviet Union, capturing entire field armies and killing hundreds of thousands of Red Army troops along their advance to

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[58] Charles T. O'Reilly, *Forgotten Battles: Italy's War of Liberation, 1943-45* (New York: Lexington Books, 2001), 37-38; Nigel Hamilton, *Commander in Chief,* 99.

[59] Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 98; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower,* 552.

Moscow. It took Stalin months to organize an effective defense, which materialized late in 1941 just in time to save Moscow.[60]

In early 1942, Stalin secured Moscow and threw his Red Army onto the offensive against a vulnerable German Army bogged down in brutal winter conditions. The Soviet offensive grinded daily throughout 1942 to reclaim territorial gains from the Germans. The Red Army encircled and captured the German Sixth Army and regained control of Stalingrad by January 1943, which demonstrated to Roosevelt and Churchill that an Allied victory in Europe was possible. The Soviet success at Stalingrad exposed the Germans on the Eastern Front, coinciding with the Allied planning conference at Casablanca, potentially making a 1943 cross-channel invasion on the Western Front a credible goal for the Allies. However, Churchill and his COS remained committed to the Mediterranean strategy and were pleased with the Soviet Army's battles of attrition with the Germans on the Eastern Front. Instead of remaining safely outside the war, Stalin's Soviet Union carried the overwhelming burden of the fighting throughout 1941-43 as Roosevelt and Churchill decided on their own terms when and where to enter the conflict.[61]

Although the Soviet Union cooperated as a member of the Allies, there was limited collaboration for strategic planning from 1942-43 as Stalin remained singularly focused on repelling the German invasion. Early on, Stalin pursued US and British aid to sustain the Soviet war effort. He initially asked for war materials, and after the United States entered the war, he asked for a second front in Europe against Germany. Roosevelt responded by extending Lend-Lease in October 1941 to the Soviet Union. In 1942, through personal communications between Stalin and Hopkins, the President promised to open a second front in Europe against Hitler. Stalin desperately needed relief on the Eastern Front. The Soviets successfully defended Moscow in

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[60] Stuart Goldman, *Nomonhan, 1939: The Red Army's Victory that Shaped World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 22; Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 394-95; David Stahel, *The Battle for Moscow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 45-47; Hart, *Strategy*, 267.

[61] Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 105; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 110.

1941 and turned their strategic defense into an offensive in 1942, but at a great cost that measured in millions of lives. For these reasons, Stalin rejected the American-British second front in North Africa and continuously threatened to seek a separate peace with Hitler. US planners informed Roosevelt that a cross-channel operation into the European Atlantic coastline was only possible if the Soviets kept a majority of German combat power tied up on the Eastern Front. Roosevelt took Stalin's threats seriously and assured him that help was coming soon.[62]

Axis Strategy

In 1941, Hitler's intended strategy for the Axis powers included a strategic defense in Europe and strategic offense in the Soviet Union. Hitler intended to resettle Russian territory for German expansionism from Western Europe to Moscow. His plans for the new German territory did not include space for ethnic Russians or Jews, which led to unprecedented atrocities against 30 million people on the Eastern Front. In 1941, the German Army's setbacks in the Soviet Union, along with the successful Allied invasion in North Africa the following year, revealed the initial flaws in Axis strategy. Hitler remained rigidly committed to his intended strategy as he relentlessly demanded a counter-offensive as Barbarossa failed in the Soviet Union, even though he continued to dedicate more of his diminishing combat power to North Africa, France, and Italy. He had many opportunities to adapt from the counsel of his staff and field commanders, who on multiple occasions, advised him to transition to a strategic defense in the Soviet Union until a counter-attack proved feasible. However, Hitler ignored this advice and remained on the offensive in the Soviet Union and deployed more combat power to his periphery. For example, when Mussolini lost power and Italy exited the war, Hitler deployed troops into Italy to protect and extend his southern flank. Hitler's inability to learn from the emergent events in 1941-43 continued to make elements of his intended strategy untenable. Furthermore, his reactions to the

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[62] Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 553; Christopher O'Sullivan, *Harry Hopkins: FDR's Envoy to Churchill and Stalin* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 83; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 72, 87.

North African and Italian campaigns enabled the Allies to adapt their strategies and learn to fight more effectively as a coalition in combined arms operations. Most importantly, Hitler's stiff resistance in Italy helped the United States transition Allied strategy from the Mediterranean theater to a cross-channel invasion into France.[63]

Equilibrium Strategy 1943-45

The Allied planning conference at Casablanca in January 1943 constituted a setback for US strategic planning. Although the British agreed to establish a combined command in London to begin planning for a cross-channel invasion, there was no timetable established for execution. Instead, the British gained reassurances for the North African campaign and won approval from Roosevelt for a continuation of the Mediterranean strategy into Sicily as the Allied land operations priority for the remainder of the year. Marshall worried that US plans for Bolero and Roundup were never going to materialize if the British kept the Allies focused on the Mediterranean. Even members of the JCS, including Army Air Force General Henry Arnold and Navy Admiral Ernest King, warmed up to the Mediterranean strategy. Thus, the JCS remained divided about US strategy in early 1943 while the British remained unified in both strategy and national priorities, which helped persuade Roosevelt to support the British Mediterranean effort.[64]

The outcome of Casablanca compelled the JCS to regroup strategically to find common ground for a unified US strategy, as well as invest in an earnest planning effort to convince the British COS to commit to a 1944 Roundup operation. The JCS agreed that a unified strategy required better coordination between the Services and the President, as well as the State Department. The JCS also agreed that a new strategy must include clear links to US national policies beyond the military, including economics and politics. This was new territory for the JCS

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[63] Stahel, *The Battle for Moscow*, 45-47; Hart, *Strategy,* 267, 275; George P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 171.

[64] Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 28; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 98.

because it previously excluded its roles to military strategy. The British COS did not limit themselves to such a role, and demonstrated superiority in planning by integrating political, economic, and military elements of national power into a grand strategy that dominated Allied planning conferences from Arcadia to Casablanca.[65]

In 1943, the JCS established a new war planning system to develop future strategy based on a national concept of war that "expresses the national objective, the policies the nation desires to pursue, and the extent and nature of the effort it intends to exert to attain the objective."[66] The JCS created two new committees for the effort: the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC) and the Joint War Plans Committee (JWPC). The JWPC served to develop global and theater strategy for the Joint Planning Staff (JPS), and the JSSC to advise the JCS on the "relation of military strategy to national policy and all matters of combined, grand, and global strategy."[67]

The JSSC reported directly to the JCS, which authorized its members to attend any meetings of the JCS, CCS, and JPS deemed necessary for research. The JSSC also forged close ties with the State Department and invited their representatives to participate in the JWPC to help develop Allied plans and policies. The JSSC noted in its findings and recommendations to the JCS that it is "impossible to entirely divorce political considerations from strategic planning," while maintaining a Clausewitz-like approach that "military strategy and operations exist only as the implementing measures of national policy."[68]

The JSSC's first task examined the Anglo-American dispute resulting from the initial execution of the A-B strategy. The JSSC found that the British Mediterranean strategy served as a catalyst to restore and maintain the British Empire, reestablish a balance of power on the

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[65] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 103.

[66] Ibid., 104

[67] Ibid., 105.

[68] Ibid., 107.

European continent, and provide the British with opportunities for expansion into former French and Italian colonies. The British also preserved combat power by avoiding decisive battle, while allowing the Soviets to carry most of the Allied combat operations against Germany on the Eastern Front. According to the JSSC, these goals conflicted with US national interests, specifically stalling a second front on the European continent to relieve pressure on the Soviet Army. Additionally, British interests prevented a swift conclusion to combat operations in the European theater necessary to shift US military resources against Japan in the Pacific.[69]

The JSSC's assessment of the Mediterranean strategy concluded that continuation of US military operations beyond the goals established for 1943 would serve only the interests of the British Empire. Furthermore, Stalin never recognized the Mediterranean strategy as Roosevelt's promised second front, which strained Soviet relations with the United States. The JSSC determined that Soviet military cooperation with the United States against Japan following the defeat of Germany remained an important strategic requirement. Thus, the JSSC recommended to the JSC that the US national war aim should be an early and decisive defeat of Germany, which Operation Roundup could best achieve, while also fulfilling the Soviet request for a second front. Additionally, the committee recommended that the European theater should not include the Mediterranean, and that US national priorities should include the following: first, a decisive defeat of Germany by a cross-channel invasion in the European theater; second, operations against Japan in the Pacific theater; and third, supporting British interests in the Mediterranean theater.[70]

The JCS concurred with the JSSC's findings and recommendations, and for the first time arrived at a unified strategy. Next, the JCS coordinated the strategy with the President using JSSC and JWPC papers that articulated the conflict between British and US national interests.

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[69] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 110-11.

[70] Ibid., 116-19.

Roosevelt adopted the JCS positions, and later used their information papers to rebut Churchill's requests for action in the eastern Mediterranean. The united front between the President and his JCS enabled them to challenge British strategy at the upcoming Allied planning conferences in 1943: Trident held in Washington and Quadrant in Quebec during May and August respectively. The JCS invested in heavy preparations for the conferences using the full resources of the JSSC, JWPC, and the JPS to counter potential British proposals, advocate US interests, and anticipate British responses and counter-arguments. They held rehearsals, practiced negotiating tactics, and conducted multiple preparation sessions with the President to forge a united front.[71]

The unified strategy realigned the preferences of the United States, which resulted in a new game theory model that reduced the payoffs of the British strategy, nullifying their dominant position. Several political dynamics and emergent factors in 1943 also contributed to the payoff realignments in favor of the United States. Specifically, US combat power contributions to Allied operations began to exceed British contributions in 1943, the US war industry churned out material and supplies at an extraordinary scale and speed, and the US nuclear program was underway and making progress. Additionally, there was a US presidential election in 1944 that pressured Roosevelt to gain a major military victory and quiet his political opponents of the Germany-first approach, including US Army General Douglas MacArthur. Ironically, political dynamics in 1944 influenced Roosevelt to diverge from Churchill's risk aversion, which had served Roosevelt well during the 1942 midterm election. Finally, Churchill began to recognize the rising power and influence of the United States, especially as a balance against the Soviet Union in the upcoming post-war settlement, prompting him to value a long-term relationship with the United States over his ability to influence Allied strategy.[72]

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[71] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 121.

[72] Ibid., 112; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 346.

The unified US strategy for the war and post-war settlement created new preference

values for cooperation. Table 4 demonstrates elevated US values for a second front in Europe

over all other outcomes. Although the British still favored a Mediterranean campaign, they began

to see that Roundup was inevitable for continued cooperation with the United States and the

Soviet Union. Cooperation remained a top political preference for both actors, but US priorities

now privileged a cross-channel preference over the Mediterranean campaign, whereas previously

in Table 3 the United States preferred the cross-channel operation only if the British cooperated.

Furthermore, the British feared that the United States would transfer its resources out of the

Mediterranean theater altogether for the Pacific if they did not agree to Roundup. Thus, in 1944,

the United States held the dominant strategy for Allied operations.[73]

Table 4: Payoff matrix for Allied Operations in 1944; Asterisk notes equilibrium choice.

US-British Strategy 1944	Cross-Channel Invasion (UK)	Mediterranean Campaign (UK)
Cross-Channel Invasion (US)	*US 2, UK 1 Win-Win	US 1, UK 0 Win-Lose
Mediterranean Campaign (US)	US -1, UK -1 Lose-Lose	US 0, UK 2 Lose-Win

Trident and Quadrant Conferences

The transition in Allied strategy began during the May 1943 Trident conference.

Although the United States pushed hard for an end to Mediterranean operations, the British held

firm on their arguments to complete the campaigns in North Africa and Sicily. Churchill also

convinced Roosevelt to begin a new campaign in Italy, codenamed Operation Avalanche. The

Allied successes in the Mediterranean still appealed to Roosevelt, which convinced him of the

Italian campaign's merits, but he demanded the British commit to a date in 1944 for a cross-

channel operation. Churchill reluctantly agreed to conduct Roundup in May 1944, although his

COS considered the date as a soft position still open for debate and later attempted to attach pre-

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[73] Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 20-21.

conditions for the operation, such as the defeat of the German Air Force. US planners considered the conference a success, especially considering the British agreement for a cross-channel invasion in May 1944. Marshall criticized the conference. He judged the Italian campaign as another Mediterranean operation serving British interests that would drain Allied resources from US priorities. His concerns became a reality in early 1944 when nearly a million US troops operated in the Mediterranean theater.[74]

Although the Trident conference was a marginal success for US strategy, it helped US planners strengthen their arguments and better prepare Roosevelt for the Quadrant conference just a few months later in Quebec. Quadrant proved a major US strategic planning success. The British reaffirmed their commitment for Roundup in May 1944 and declared the operation as the top priority for Allied operations that year. Additionally, they agreed to establish a Supreme Allied Commander for a European theater of war separate from the Mediterranean theater. Most importantly, the British agreed to conduct a second Allied invasion into southern France using forces from the Mediterranean theater. Although Roosevelt persuaded Churchill to support the operation into southern France, Churchill privately, and later publicly, opposed the operation. Instead, he preferred to keep Allied forces in the Mediterranean for a Balkans campaign that exploited Hitler's exposed southern flank and limited Soviet expansion into southern Europe. Instead of a concentration of Allied forces in France, Churchill advocated for a dual-approach strategy that split Allied forces between France and the Balkans. The debate between an Allied operation in southern France or the Balkans continued after Quadrant and emerged as one of the major decisions at the upcoming conference in Tehran.[75]

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[74] Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 128-30; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 16, 97, 149.

[75] Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 97; Jay Winik, *1944: FDR and The Year That Changed History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 62-70.

Tehran Conference

The Tehran conference, codenamed Eureka and held from 22 November-7 December 1943, constituted the year's most decisive Allied planning conference. It was the first time that Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met personally to discuss Allied war plans. The conference proved another major success for US strategy as Stalin not only declared his support for US proposals for both the Atlantic and Mediterranean invasions into France, but also opposed Churchill's proposal for a Balkan campaign. Stalin held a strong negotiating positions buoyed by his military's success against Germany leading up to the conference. Stalin argued that heavy Soviet sacrifices on the Eastern Front made the Balkans his area of influence. Most importantly, Stalin offered to transfer his forces to the Pacific theater to fight against Japan following the defeat of Germany if Roosevelt and Churchill opened a second front in France.[76]

Stalin's support for Allied operations in France and his commitment against Japan settled the debate about 1944 Allied operations. His support for the US strategy tipped the balance and created an equilibrium strategy for the Allies. Roosevelt already had a dominant strategy heading into the Tehran conference, but British influence over two years of Allied strategy lingered, especially with the preponderance of US and British forces already committed in the Mediterranean theater. Stalin's vote in Tehran served as a tie-breaker that enabled an equilibrium strategy to emerge and achieve optimal outcomes for US, British, and Soviet strategies. However, Churchill continued to oppose the outcome at Tehran and allowed his British officers at AFHQ to drag their feet in preparations for operations in France. As 1944 neared, it became apparent to US planners that the debate about Allied priorities in the Mediterranean remained unsettled, and an enormous strategic effort was necessary to transfer the remaining combat power to France.[77]

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[76] Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 263-277; Jay Winik, *1944*, 62-70.

[77] Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 153-67.

Operation Dragoon

Following Tehran, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed that a US officer should command the cross-channel invasion, codenamed Overlord, and selected Eisenhower as the Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe. Churchill also agreed that the campaign in southern France, codenamed Anvil, should receive its forces and support from AFHQ in the Mediterranean theater. They agreed that AFHQ, now renamed Supreme Allied Command of the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, and commanded by a British officer, General Sir Henry Wilson, could keep the Allied forces committed in the Italian campaign until the summer of 1944 when the US VI Corps, consisting of three veteran infantry divisions, would transfer along with seven divisions of the French Expeditionary Corps to make preparations for Anvil, later renamed Operation Dragoon for operational security reasons. Strategically, Dragoon achieved US goals to concentrate Allied combat power in France, limit Allied operations in Italy, and deny any possibility for a Balkan campaign.[78]

By January 1944, Churchill was all in for Operation Overlord, but still held out hopes for the Italian and Balkan campaigns, which were not possible if the Allies went through with Dragoon. Thus, Churchill set his mind on convincing Roosevelt and Eisenhower that Dragoon represented an unnecessary application of Allied resources. Churchill lobbied Eisenhower initially through General Bernard Montgomery, Eisenhower's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, who argued Anvil would reduce landing craft for Overlord and absorb desperately needed resources for the Italian campaign. In a cable to Montgomery on 21 February 1944, Eisenhower agreed and favored abandoning Dragoon since the operation competed with Overlord for resources. However, Eisenhower also knew he would need the additional combat power provided by Dragoon to support the Overlord breakout in France. Additionally,

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[78] L. K. Truscott, *Command Missions: A Personal Story* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1954), 386; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 107, 166.

Eisenhower worried that he could not land enough combat power during Overlord to sustain the necessary tempo against the Germans.[79]

Planning for Dragoon went through several false starts as strategic planners mulled over its overall necessity. Churchill took advantage of these events to lobby for Dragoon's termination. Allied Planners initially designed Dragoon as an Allied deception plan to prevent Hitler from discerning the true location of the invasion's main effort. As planning time grew short, Dragoon became a simultaneous assault with Overlord to fix German forces in southern France and prevent Hitler's reserve Panzer Divisions from reinforcing the beaches at Normandy. When planners realized they lacked enough landing craft and other resources to conduct Overlord and Dragoon simultaneously, the CCS delayed the operation to August 1944 when adequate shipping and landing craft became available. Churchill again took advantage of the uncertainty to renew his campaign against Dragoon, directly appealing to Roosevelt that Dragoon failed to achieve its intended purpose if it could not help the Allies in deceiving the Germans of the cross-channel operation or fix their reserve forces away from Normandy.[80]

At the request of the JCS, US planners forecasted potential dilemmas for the Allies if Roosevelt cancelled the operation. Most importantly, Eisenhower would lose ten veteran fighting divisions to support Overlord in France. Churchill argued these divisions should continue fighting in the Mediterranean to exploit Allied success in Italy. However, the Italian campaign had devolved into a costly battle of attrition with little strategic value. Seven of the ten divisions in Italy earmarked for Dragoon hailed from the French Expeditionary Corps, who were eager to

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[79] Winston Churchill, *The Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), 58-68; Eisenhower to Montgomery, cable, February 21, 1944, in Cables Official (GCM/DDE March 1943-June 1944), file 14, box 83, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

[80] Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, 58-68; William Breuer, *Operation Dragoon: The Allied Invasion of the South of France* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1987), 13; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 344; Stephen Sussna, *Defeat and Triumph: The Story of a Controversial Allied Invasion and French Rebirth* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2008), 21.

fight for the liberation of France. General Charles De Gaulle, the de facto French government representative for the Allies, insisted on French military participation in the liberation of France. Unfortunately, De Gaulle proved to be a difficult partner and unreliable ally. Neither Roosevelt nor Eisenhower wanted De Gaulle to interfere with Overlord. Therefore, Dragoon remained the only operation designed for major French military participation and cancelling it to keep the French divisions fighting in Italy became untenable for De Gaulle.[81]

Fortunately for the JCS, an emergent detail saved Dragoon. During planning for Overlord, Allied planners anticipated and later confirmed that ports around Normandy lacked the capacity to land enough manpower and resources to maintain the necessary operational tempo against the defending Germans. Over forty US divisions and thousands of tons in ammunition and supplies were stuck in the United States. As planners probed the coast of France for deep-water port options, only two ports emerged as viable candidates: Marseille and Toulon situated on the Mediterranean in southern France. The ports fit within the initial planning scope of Dragoon with its defensive positions maintained by third-rate German forces mostly comprised of foreign conscripts either too old or injured to fight on the Eastern Front. Eisenhower agreed with Allied planning assessments about the southern French ports and asked Marshall to weigh in on the matter to help concentrate all available resources for Overlord and Dragoon. Eisenhower and Marshall later presented these to Roosevelt and the CCS. They agreed and thus, the deep-water ports at Marseilles and Toulon saved Dragoon along with JCS hopes to concentrate Allied combat power in France.[82]

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[81] Simon Berthon, *Allies at War: The Bitter Rivalry among Churchill, Roosevelt, and De Gaulle* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2001), 302; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 386; Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, 168.

[82] Forrest Pogue, *The Supreme Command: U.S. Army in World War II European Theater of Operations* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1996), 220; Jacques Robichon, *The Second D-Day* (New York: Walker and Company, 1969), 14; Eisenhower to Marshall, cable, February 8, 1944, in Cables Official (GCM/DDE July 1943-February 1944), file 1, box 132, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

Dragoon became one of most successful large-scale combat operations in World War II. On 15 August 1944, the US Seventh Army conducted a three-division assault along with the French Armored Combat Command against the German Army Group G defense of the French Mediterranean coastline from Marseilles to Cannes. The total invasion forces encompassed 150,000 allied French, US, British, and Canadian troops, 885 ships and landing craft, 21,000 vehicles, and an air operation that consisted of 5,000 sorties that dropped 6,700 tons of munitions. Operationally, Dragoon split the German forces operating in France between two fronts and provided deep-water port access to allied forces at Marseilles and Toulon. Following the successful invasion, the Allies utilized lines of operation along the Rhone River to maintain pressure against the withdrawing German forces. By October 1944, the operation achieved its strategic goals by dividing and fixing German forces in southern France, including Hitler's Reserve Panzer division, while also gaining additional deep-water ports that landed over one-third of the supplies and troops sent to the Western Front.[83]

Dragoon afforded an operational advantage to Eisenhower later in the European campaign in addition to its logistical success. Dragoon provided ten additional fighting divisions in France that Eisenhower formed into the 6th Army Group, commanded by US Army General Jacob Devers, the former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater. Devers' 6th Army Group linked up with Twelfth Army Group forces from Normandy in September 1944 to play a decisive role in hastening Hitler's withdrawal from France and holding Eisenhower's southern flank during the German final assault in the Battle of the Bulge. After the war, Eisenhower stated that the combat power provided to the European theater from Dragoon afforded him a decisive advantage because it helped sustain Allied tempo against the Germans

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[83] Combat Studies Institute, *CSI Battlebook: Operation Dragoon* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1985), 46-50; Michael J. Volpe, "Task Force Butler: A Case Study in the Employment of an Ad Hoc Unit in Combat Operations during Operation Dragoon, 1-30 August 1944" (monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2007), 1-4.

that they could not withstand. Most importantly, Dragoon marked a major strategic success for

the United States because it concentrated Allied combat power in France in concert with US

national priorities for the war, transferred its best divisions to the European theater, and

effectively ended US participation in the Mediterranean theater.[84]
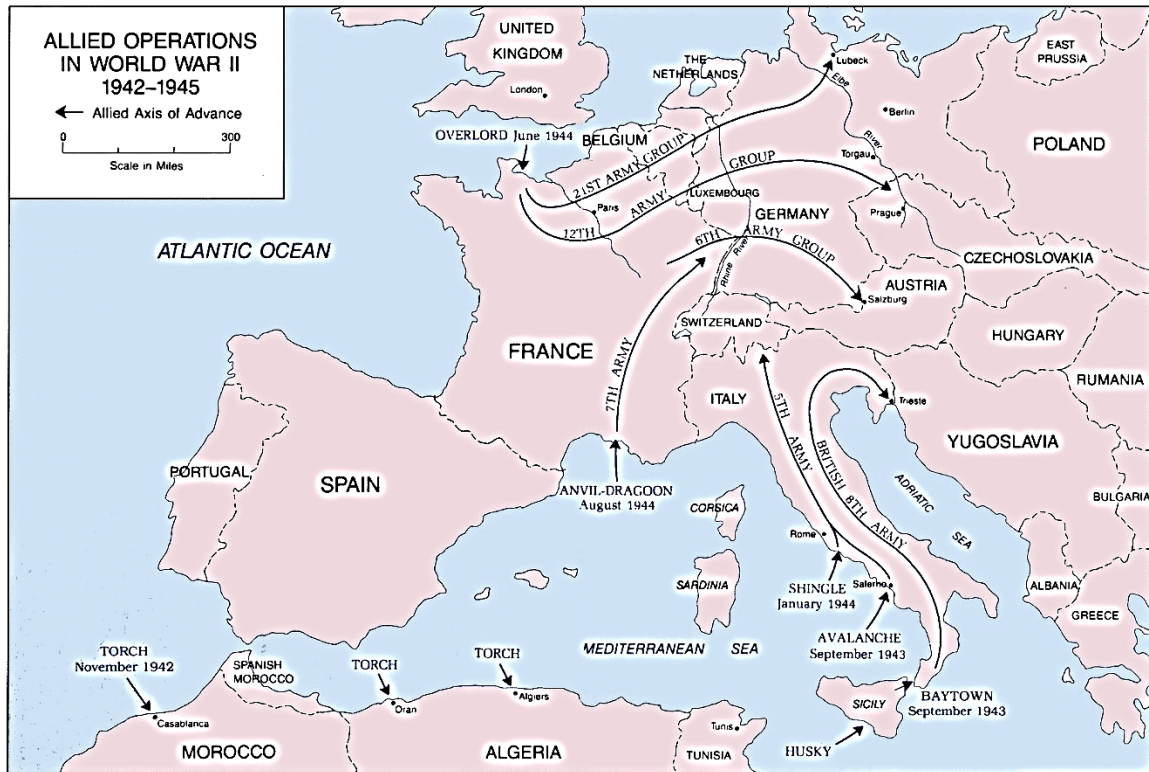

Figure 1: Allied European Theater of Operations 1942-45. Map courtesy of the US Army Center of Military History, "Allied Operations in World War II 1942-45," *Omar Nelson Bradly: The Centennial*, accessed on March 15, 2019, https://history.army.mil/ brochures/bradley/bradley.htm.

Conclusion

The decision to concentrate Allied combat power in France for a direct approach into

Germany was not initially an obvious choice. The British advocated for an indirect approach in

the Mediterranean theater where the Axis powers proved vulnerable. Churchill desired a post-war

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[84] William Breuer, *Operation Dragoon,* 247; Rebecca Beard, "Footnote in History: Sixth Army Group Operations in the Second World War and Lessons for Contemporary Planners" (monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2017), 45-48; Andrew Stewart, *Operation Dragoon: The Invasion of the South of France, 15 August 1944* (West Midlands: Helion & Company, 2015), 82; Seventh United States Army, *The Seventh United States Army Report of Operations in France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Nashville, TN: Battery Press, Inc., 1988), 13; Command and General Staff School, 2nd Command Class, *Operation Dragoon* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Government Printing Office, 1946), 5-20.

settlement that reclaimed and potentially expanded the British Empire and did not aid Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt sought an end to the war as quickly as possible with the fewest US casualties, preferably through a direct approach in Europe in order to shift resources to the Pacific. However, the United States lacked a unified strategy for a feasible cross-channel invasion in 1943 and remained unprepared to negotiate with British planners united behind the Mediterranean strategy. The better prepared British planners held firm behind a comprehensive strategy aimed at fulfilling their political goals through a Mediterranean campaign that dominated 1942-43 Allied plans.

Without a unified strategy, US leaders found themselves entrapped in British political interests, which became politically untenable for Roosevelt's 1944 bid for re-election. Only after the disappointing performance of US military planners at Casablanca did the JCS understand the earnest effort required for a comprehensive US strategy for the war. Initially, Marshall and the JCS limited their roles to pure military strategy in 1941-43, which led to an incoherent and fragmented strategy. A new planning effort required an overhaul of existing US strategic military planning that resulted in the creation of the JSSC, charged with advising the JCS on global theater strategy and national policy. JSSC members had to think strategically through a constant dialogue with policymakers within the War Department and interagency partners at the State Department to formulate national priorities and strategy. Only after the JCS decided to participate in the formulation of US national strategy in earnest did a coherent unified strategy emerge that enabled planners to better understand US national priorities as well as British and Soviet preferences for strategy. This situational awareness better prepared US leaders and planners to contribute toward interdependent decision-making for Allied strategy.

The equilibrium strategy that emerged in 1944 between the ABS alliance through interdependent decision-making achieved optimal outcomes of each member's preferences for strategy. The indirect approach from 1942-44 enabled the Allies to seize the initiative from Germany and allowed the United States time to mobilize its military and industrial resources

while maximizing the contributions of the British. Stalin's ability to turn his Soviet Army on the offensive in 1942 made the Mediterranean strategy even better for the Allies because it allowed the US and British forces to deplete Axis formations in North Africa, Sicily, and later Italy, while the Soviets dismantled German forces on the Eastern Front. Additionally, US forces fighting in the Mediterranean gained valuable combat experience early on while commanders and staffs learned to conduct combined arms operations as a coalition. When the United States fully mobilized its industrial and fighting strength and its leaders unified in a national strategy in 1943, Stalin delivered the decisive vote at Tehran that tilted the balance of power from Britain to the United States. The timely transition from an indirect to direct approach concentrated Allied combat power in Europe and squeezed Germany on two simultaneous fronts by the most powerful coalition ever assembled.

Strategic planning through interdependent decision-making enabled national leaders of the ABS alliance in the European Theater of World War II to make rational choice decisions that mutually supported national grand strategy and a balance of interests for coalition operations. Equilibrium strategy achieved through interdependent decision-making optimized cooperation for the Allies, as each member balanced national interests between coalition goals and preferences for desired future conditions following the war. This form of coalition planning will benefit Army leaders and planners in joint and multinational operations and complements contemporary US Army doctrine for large scale combat operations.

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