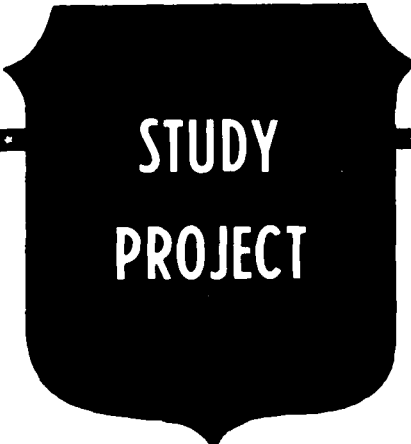


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CHURCHILL'S SOFT-UNDERBELLY APPROACH ONTO THE  
EUROPEAN CONTINENT - A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

BY

COLONEL JOHN P. LAWTON, INF

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle)  Churchill's Soft-Underbelly Approach Onto the European Continent - A Missed Opportunity		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED  STUDENT PAPER
7. AUTHOR(s)  COL John P. Lawton		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS SAME		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE 12 May 1986
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 33
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)  UNCLASSIFIED
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)  DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)  This paper analyzes Winston Churchill's World War II proposal to enter the continent of Europe via the Balkans, "the soft-underbelly." It considers the failure of the United States to have a National Policy or grand strategy in place upon which to weigh such proposals. The American, British and Russian perspectives are then reviewed, conclusion drawn and suggestions made for a future strategy in Europe. <u>UNITED STATES</u> The United States position, in terms of the Churchill proposal. (continued)		

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is analyzed via the accounts of its principal war planner, General Wedemeyer and the key players, Generals Eisenhower, Marshall, and Bradley. Also considered are sources such as President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and the Department of the Army Historical Series of that era. We learned that failure to have a National Policy left no reasonable basis to weigh the soft-underbelly proposal against; it left a post World War II Europe dominated by Soviet Russia; and left four U.S. Divisions permanently deployed in Europe. The United States analysis also points out the oversensitivity of the Americans to the British in terms of their post World War II colonial operations and interests.

BRITAIN

Mr. Churchill is the primary source for both the British perspective and definition as to what constitutes the soft-underbelly. Churchill's World War I and II experience in the Balkans is considered. The British learned to be more thorough in their proposal for a Balkan campaign. The British had to justify that the Balkans were important for the future of a free Europe and most important, this justification had to convince U.S. planners of the need to divert precious resources.

RUSSIA

The Russian perspective is dealt with in terms of what would have happened if they got only enough lend-lease to keep them in the war and to clear the Nazis from Russia. Also considered is Stalin's position regarding the soft-underbelly; i.e., was it to Stalin's advantage, to his post-war ambitions to say no to a Balkan campaign by the allies?

Finally, this history and its lessons learned are applied to a future European scenario—what should our objectives be in a future European war?

In summary, the paper demonstrates Clausewitz's dictum—that war is an extension of politics and that in order to wage war successfully a country must have political objectives.

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## USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

### CHURCHILL'S SOFT-UNDERBELLY APPROACH ONTO THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT -- A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

An Individual Study Project

by

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12 May 1986

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: John P. Lawton, COL, INF

TITLE: Churchill's Soft-Underbelly Approach Onto The European Continent - A Missed Opportunity

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 12 May 1986 PAGES: 29 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

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### United States

The United States position, in terms of the Churchill proposal, is analyzed via the accounts of its principal war planner, General Wedemeyer and the key players, Generals Eisenhower, Marshall and Bradley. Also considered are sources such as President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and the Department of the Army Historical Series of that era. We learned that failure to have a National Policy left no reasonable basis to weigh the soft-underbelly proposal against; it left a post World War II Europe dominated by Soviet Russia; and left four US Divisions permanently deployed in Europe. The United States analysis also points out the oversensitivity of the Americans to the British in terms of their post World War II colonial operations and interests.

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Finally, this history and its lessons learned are applied to a future European scenario--what should our objectives be in a future European war?

In summary, the paper demonstrates Clausewitz's dictum--that war is an extension of politics and that in order to wage war successfully a country must have political objectives.

## PREFACE

This Individual Study Project was produced under the guidance of my, project advisor, Lieutenant Colonel John Votaw, of the US Army Military History Institute. The paper was written to explore an area of interest to the author and to further his education in the Art of War and Peace. I received suggestions for study and research from LTC John Votaw and COL Alex Vardamis, and am most appreciative for their help. The paper, its perspective and conclusions are strictly my own responsibility.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The political object - the original motive for war - tells us both the military objectives to be reached and the amount of effort it requires.<sup>1</sup>

#### Clausewitz ON WAR

In World War II, the allies lost the Balkans because they ignored Winston Churchill's suggested soft-underbelly approach into this area and more importantly, because they lacked clearly defined political objectives against which to weigh such a campaign. An additional case could be made for the loss of the whole of Eastern Europe for the same reason.

If we accept the proposition that the strategic goal for Europe should have been the restoration of the pre-World War II balance of power (minus Hitler) with various safeguards that would be woven into the details of such an objective, for example - a democratized Germany and a neutralized buffer of states between Eastern and Western Europe, then the Russians could have been given whatever was necessary to defeat the Germans in Russia. If the Allies had an agreed upon political objective that was more than "Europe first" or "enter the continent of Europe, and ...undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces"<sup>2</sup> would Eisenhower have been more open to a suggestion such as the Balkan campaign? Would an agreed-upon political objective to restore the balance of power (less Hitler) have enabled the allies to draw-down on lend-lease to Russia (bent on domination of Europe) so that these savings could be applied to support



a limited flanking attack via the Balkans into the German southern flank and still have had an OVERLORD in May 1944?

Samuel Eliot Morrison, a noted military historian, states:

Almost everyone who argues that a strategic decision by the allies in World War II was wrong, assumes that if we had done something different, the enemy would still have done the same thing he did.<sup>3</sup>

In regards to the Balkans and the proposition stated above, I will argue in this paper that the real enemy (Russia) would not have been able to dominate a post WWII Europe and that the Germans would not have been able to do much different than they did. The flexibility in this equation is how the United States used its armies and industrial might, lend-lease. The pressure applied from the Balkans would have picked up the loss of "pressure" from the Russians.

Forrest Pogue in Command Decisions points out that

The political leaders in the United States had framed no policy for dealing with an aggressive Soviet Union in Central Europe...(and that)...no political directive was ever issued to General Eisenhower by his American superiors or by the US-British Combined Chiefs of Staff.<sup>4</sup>

Pogue concludes that this lack of political direction "obviously takes us beyond the scope of this study into the making of foreign policy."<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this paper then, is to explore the area of foreign policy and strategic objectives; to explore Churchill's proposal for a soft-underbelly approach into the Balkans; and to take a hard look at the strategic thinking of the British, the Americans and the Russians and review what happened because of a lack of political objectives.

Finally, in a postscript I will take the lessons learned and apply them to a future NATO scenario.

## CHAPTER II

### SOFT UNDERBELLY DEFINED THE BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

What exactly was the soft-underbelly? Mr. Churchill tells us what it wasn't:

It has become legend in America that I strived to prevent the Cross-channel enterprise called "OVERLORD", and that I tried vainly to lure the allies into some massive invasion of the Balkans, or a large scale campaign in the Eastern Mediterranean...<sup>6</sup>

Churchill goes on to state his concept. He accepted in May, 1944 OVERLORD to include the troops and ships necessary. He felt the need to capture Rome. He knew it was necessary to maintain pressure on German forces to keep them in Italy and from Normandy, and finally and most important, "the Eastern Mediterranean with all the prizes it afforded, should not be neglected..."<sup>7</sup> Troops and shipping in the Mediterranean are discussed by Churchill and he makes the point that two to three divisions were all that were needed and these resources were already in theatre. Without stating how or where forces were to be committed, Churchill was certain that Turkey could be neutralized, the Eastern Mediterranean could be controlled and the supply routes to Russia could be shortened with less cost to the allies.<sup>8</sup>

Churchill was definitely aware of Allied concerns for the success or failure of an OVERLORD invasion; he had been intimately involved in debating how much combat power should be left in Italy and North Africa. Yet because of allied sensitivities to further campaigns in the area, Churchill had to downplay his intentions. In essence, he first wanted

to get his foot in the door. Once he got his foot in the door, he could push for what he wanted. General Wedemeyer notes that for Churchill "to skirt the facts for King and country was justified."<sup>9</sup> Churchill himself points out in his memoirs in discussing schemes to get into the Balkans and moreover how to convince the Americans of its importance, that his Chief of Staff pointed out "we should not conceal from you the difficulty we expect with the United States Chiefs of Staff if we tell them the true position as we see it."<sup>10</sup>

Churchill's fascination with this area did not begin in World War II. Winston Churchill's World War I experience and concern for the Dardanelles and the Balkans took place when he was the First Lord of the Admiralty. Towards the end of 1914 (October), WWI had become stalemated and both sides dug in. Churchill "advocated an attempt to break through the Dardanelles. He foresaw such a spectacular effort succeeding, the defeat and surrender of the Turks and the way opened out to send help to the Russians"<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that again the Dardanelles offered Churchill a way to send help to the Russians. If one reads extensively of these times there are a number of interesting parallels between his WWI and WWII fascination with the Balkans, i.e. the involvement in Arab and Turkish politics, the need and employment of the navy and finally the need for the commitment of an army to the area:

He had hitherto been against sending troops which he thought were needed on the Western Front, but events had forced him to change his view. Churchill was now clamoring for more soldiers.<sup>12</sup>

All this was justified by Churchill in that "through the narrows of the Dardanelles, and across the ridges of the Gallipoli peninsula, lies some of the shortest paths to triumphant peace."<sup>13</sup> Maybe Churchill wanted

to makeup for the WWI disaster in Gallipoli with a WWII "triumphant peace" via the same route.

It has been said of the Balkans, that "at the end of World War I, Germany's downfall began with the defeat in the Vardor Valley,"<sup>14</sup> a key road and valley network in the Southern Balkans. Interestingly, the same authors cite the fact that it was here that "Major Draja Mihailovic rallied the beaten Serbs and challenged German communications."<sup>15</sup> Until it became politically and militarily impossible, Churchill intrigued to restore a favorable government in both Greece and Yugoslavia. Again, his World War I experiences in the area convinced him of the importance of the Dardanelles. Certainly he was influenced by the fact that "Russia (Soviet or Czarist) inevitably sought to force its way out of ...the Black Sea...into ...the Mediterranean."<sup>16</sup> The question remains, to what advantage; why a Balkan adventure? One author suggests that "in 1918 Western Europe attempted to set up a cordon sanitaire to protect it from the influence of Bolshevism."<sup>17</sup> For World War II outcomes, the "British favored the creation of two federations, one composed of the Balkan states, the other of the Eastern European states to the North."<sup>18</sup> US Secretary of State Cordell Hull wrote that at the Quebec conference Churchill stated that "an Anglo-American entry into the Balkans and Southern Europe would prevent a Soviet rush into the area ..."<sup>19</sup> These facts are not too far fetched to accept as Churchill's perspective. Churchill did have a strategic vision, but overall he was unable to state that goal or sell the vision. Hence, to the United States, the Balkans were nothing but another British imperialistic adventure. But the question of what was the British thinking relative to the Balkans is still not completely

answered. What was Churchill's World War II reasoning?

In his Memoirs, Churchill tells us of his thoughts enroute to meet Stalin for the first time:

I pondered on my mission to this sullen, sinister Bolshevik State I had once tried so hard to strangle at its birth, and which until Hitler appeared, I had regarded as the mortal foe of civilized freedom.<sup>20</sup>

In reading Churchill, one cannot help but wonder if at some point he didn't harbor the thought of letting the Russians (Bolsheviks) and Nazis fight it out, to kill each other off before the United States and Britain entered the continent to finish them off. A post-World War II analysis reveals that Russia suffered 7.5 million killed or 1 of every 22 people; Germany 2.8 million or 1 of every 25 people. Prior to OVERLORD, the Russians engaged over 180 Nazi divisions while the United States and Britain engaged fewer than 10. Or to analyze it another way, of the almost 3 million Germans killed in WWII, the Russians killed 85 percent of them.<sup>21</sup> Britain lost 300,000 "or only half as many that fell in France in 1914-18, and only 10 percent of British losses took place in Europe during the 11 months between D-Day and VE-Day."<sup>22</sup> Such statistics and thinking by Churchill would certainly fit in with a soft-underbelly approach onto the continent in conjunction with OVERLORD and the expectation of large casualties.

Churchill points out his maneuvers or intentions reference the Balkans. In regard to Yugoslavia, he discusses the British mission in Yugoslavia, his initial support of not only King Peter (also living in London), but also Mihailovic. We see the political astuteness of Churchill as he realizes that Mihailovic has been overwhelmed by Tito

and the necessity for the eventual British repudiation of Mihailovic.<sup>23</sup> In August of 1943, General Smuts, who Churchill describes as "following Greek fortunes attentively,"<sup>24</sup> pointed out to the Prime Minister:

with politics let loose amongst those peoples, we may have a wave of disorder and wholesale Communism set going all over those parts of Europe. This may even be the danger in Italy, but certainly in Greece and the Balkans...The Bolshevisation of a broken and ruined Europe remains a definite possibility, to be guarded against by a supply of food and work and interim allied control.<sup>25</sup>

I do not think anyone would argue with the point that Churchill wanted to go into the Balkans and that he pushed hard for doing so. On the other hand, I think many people fail to understand that Churchill did support OVERLORD. Churchill was looking ahead; he understood the Clausewitzian principle that "the supreme standpoint for the conduct of war, the point of view that determines its main line of action, can only be that of policy."<sup>26</sup> Churchill was not outlining a military campaign (OVERLORD or soft-underbelly), he was concerned with a historical, political end--what will Europe look like at the end of this war; he was attempting to reestablish British interests in the area, if we accept as a British interest the containment of Communism and reestablishment of governments friendly to the West and Britain. I think it can be reasonably argued that Churchill's World War I experience and his deep sense of history taught him the importance of Turkey and the Dardanelles.

Was Churchill's anti-Communist instinct sharp enough to allow him to predict the war's outcome? In June of 1940 just after the fall of Dunkirk, and not too long after the signing of the Soviet-Nazi Non-

Aggression Pact of 1939, Churchill wrote of the Soviets,

we comprehended the future more truly than those cold-blooded calculators, and understood their dangers and their interests better than they did themselves.<sup>27</sup>

What is interesting is the fact that shortly afterwards, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Rumania fell quickly to Russian dominance only to be wrenched away shortly thereafter by the Nazis. More important is the fact that Churchill divined the original intent of the Soviet-Nazi Non-Aggression Pact--to buy time for the Russians to marshall their armies; to buy time to defend and eventually defeat the Nazis.<sup>28</sup> Suffice it say, Churchill understood the Communists, the Nazis and history.

## CHAPTER III

### THE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

It might be overly simplistic to say that the United States was primarily concerned with the military ends of war far more than any political consequences, but I think a good case can be made for this notion. For example, in his book Crusade in Europe, General Eisenhower makes the point:

The directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff was very simple, merely instructing us to land on the coast of France and thereafter to destroy the German ground forces... This purpose of destroying enemy forces was always our guiding principle; geographical points were considered only in relation to their importance to the enemy in the conduct of his operations or to us as centers of supply and communications in proceeding to the destruction of enemy armies or air forces.<sup>29</sup>

America in World War II remained a very idealistic nation, protected by her seas and sense of isolationism. We need only to remind ourselves that Roosevelt was going to appeal to Stalin "on grounds of high morality"<sup>30</sup> as to the fate of Poland and the Baltic States. Roosevelt also did not want to recognize France (De Gaulle) as the continental power she was; "he tried to convince London...that France must be treated as a very minor power."<sup>31</sup> And finally it was Roosevelt who expressed "doubts that the Russians would wish to dominate the Balkans unduly in any event."<sup>32</sup> To further appreciate American political naivete, consider General Marshall's comment to Eisenhower on the suggestion by the British that Patton take Prague before the Russians-- "I would be loath to hazard American lives for purely political reasons"<sup>33</sup> and Eisenhower's reply in the same conversation,



"I shall not attempt any move I deem military unwise merely to gain a political advantage..."<sup>34</sup>

General Wedemeyer, one of the principal United States war planners, along with Eisenhower, notes that Churchill tried to encircle the Germans in World War I:

...he had tried the back door at the Dardanelles, through which he sought unsuccessfully to effect a junction with the Czar. Certainly it would have demanded a logistics miracle to supply a British army committed to fighting its way into Central Europe via the Balkans.<sup>35</sup>

Wedemeyer goes on to point out that "1941-42 was not 1914-18, and Churchill should have realized it."<sup>36</sup> There are a number of important facts to be gleaned from Wedemeyer's book. One, Wedemeyer had both Marshall's and Harry Hopkins' ears. Two, Wedemeyer constantly mentions his suspicions of the British commitment to (desire for) OVERLORD. For example, Churchill as early as 1942

was constantly looking for places to employ his limited forces in some wonderful periphery-pecking operation which he imagined would weaken the enemy without calling upon Britain to go all out for a decisive blow.<sup>37</sup>

"Periphery-pecking" is used by Wedemeyer several times throughout his book to describe Churchill as not supporting OVERLORD and to support Wedemeyer's thesis that Churchill was not a strategist; "planned strategy was not his strong card. He preferred to work by intuition and by impulse..."<sup>38</sup> This type comment occurs at least five to six times. In essence, there was an overemphasis on Churchill and his personality and not on what he was saying. In 1943, the War Department conducted four major studies on the Balkans, the titles of some of which prove interesting:

1. Oct 43- Major and Limited Operations in the Balkans  
vice Eastern Mediterranean

2. Nov 43 - OPD Brief of Operations in the Balkans
3. Nov 43 - JCS 121st Meeting, UN Strategy in the Balkans Eastern Mediterranean Region
4. Nov 43 - The Unsuitability of the Balkans as an Area for Major or Decisive Operations

Unfortunately these studies were conducted within the framework of "keeping subsequent action in the Balkan-Eastern Mediterranean within the accepted basic pattern of operations."<sup>39</sup> in essence, we were not studying the feasibility or practicability of those operational possibilities, but rather were trying to appease Churchill while keeping with the OVERLORD planning. An interesting analysis would be - did we consider in these studies less lend-lease for the Russians and then consider using the savings in the Balkans? This would have met Wedemeyer's assertion that "our strategic planning should have been oriented toward denying the Soviet Union the opportunities which she used so promptly and effectively to extend her frontiers and her power"<sup>40</sup> at the end of the war.

The American perspective on Churchill's soft-underbelly was to ignore it, to provide the necessary support to guerillas in Yugoslavia and Greece but to keep allied (primarily American and British) eyes and emphasis on OVERLORD. Although we were willing to make major adjustments in campaign planning to the "Germany First" policy when we saw offensive possibilities in the Far East, there appears to have been no real, meaningful consideration of a Balkan endeavor. The Balkans were not considered by the United States Chiefs of Staff because the terrain and meteorological conditions were not favorable, the Balkans

extended our lines of communication, and the Balkans would bog us down in a costly war of attrition.<sup>41</sup> What if we had a strategy that oriented on a post-World War II balance of power, would these same factors have been too costly? What is most interesting in this regard is the contrast of General Wedemeyers' remarks in his book and his 1958 testimony before the House of Representatives Committee on un-American Activities. General Wedemeyer stated:

I felt it was very important at war's end to ensure that Anglo-American forces would be occupying most of Western Europe and the Balkans...Nazism would take unfair advantage, would subvert or conquer areas in their narrow, strongly nationalistic interest, whereas communism was worldwide in scope and visualized the enslavement or conquering of all peoples.<sup>42</sup>

One question from the American perspective remains. Did we have (enough) manpower and shipping to support a Balkan campaign of two to three divisions? General Wedemeyer and the official Army historians lay out an initial requirement for 200 divisions globally that in 1943 was finally pared down to 90 divisions. I think we could have supported three or more divisions.<sup>43</sup>

In terms of shipping, it was there. There were LST's for example committed to the Far East for a dubious campaign that everyone but Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-shek had reservations about. If we still didn't want to use this shipping, then certainly there would have been a savings in shipping from cutting back on Russian lend-lease. This could have been applied to the Balkans.

In sum, the Allies could have supported a limited Balkan campaign with the possibility of large strategic gains. The strategic gains

could as a minimum have been a free and independent Bulgaria, Hungary and possibly Rumania. The Allies failed to do so for lack of a strategic objective.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RUSSIANS

Wedemeyer best describes the Russian grand strategy when he states:

In relying upon the land forces of the Soviet Union to deliver the knockout blow, we were storing up infinite trouble for ourselves at the peace table. At the war's end, the Communists would be in a favorable position to deliver mighty blows in political, economic, and psychological fields against their allies.<sup>44</sup>

In trying to understand the Russian grand strategy for World War II and in particular the strategy for the Balkans, we need to distinguish between military and political objectives. We need to do so at least to the extent of realizing that the American and unfortunately the British, strategy was mostly military in character. The Russians were a different case. General Wedemeyer, as noted above, has described how we contributed to the Russian political objectives. The United States and Britain put the Russians "in a favorable position to deliver mighty blows in political, economic and psychological fields... ." The Elbe river for us was not so much a military objective as it was a political stop line.<sup>45</sup>

General Wedemeyer's analysis of the political and military considerations for a Balkan initiative has great merit. Stalin knew Tito; he knew he had Yugoslavia in his pocket. Stalin recognized the importance of Romanian oil fields, and more than likely the fact that Eastern Europe was there for the taking. He certainly knew this in 1944. Be that as it may, when Roosevelt and Churchill couldn't agree on a Balkans Strategy, going to Stalin for an opinion was not the thing to do. What drove Roosevelt to do so was primarily a lack of a US grand

strategy against which to measure such questions. The question of the Balkans should not have been asked of Stalin but of the strategy. How would a campaign in the Balkans affect the strategy? Instead the question went to Stalin, the "honest broker" who would decide the issue. Stalin considered the effects of United States and British forces in the Balkan Peninsula, the postwar effects, and concluded that they would definitely offset future Communist influence in the area. His answer was--put your efforts into OVERLORD.

As regards the Balkans, the Russian perspective hinged on two conferences--the November 1942 Cairo Conference in which the British and United States decided to ask for a Russian opinion of such operations because the United States and Britain could not agree amongst themselves and the Teheran Conference at which Stalin made it clear that he opposed

the scattering of allied forces throughout the Mediterranean...where no decision could be reached...that OVERLORD be made the basis for all 1944 operations.<sup>46</sup>

But did Stalin make it clear? Was there an ulterior motive? Why did Stalin go for OVERLORD versus both an OVERLORD and Balkan operation? Wedemeyer describes Stalin as

wily, prepared long before the war's end to move into the vacuum. He quickly took advantage of his unchallenged military power to extend the frontiers and to spread the influence of Soviet world Communist conspiracy throughout war --weary Eastern Europe and China.<sup>47</sup>

It is clear that the lack of political objectives led to Stalin and unfortunately to a decision to leave the Balkans alone. Eventually this decision left the Balkans to communist domination; moreover, the lack of clear political objectives, stated early on prior to United States involvement, lost the whole of Eastern Europe to communist domination and enslavement.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

It is clear that a nation must have a clearly stated strategic goal against which it weighs all efforts. As Colonel Art Lykke points out, "there are seldom 'purely military' or 'purely political' goals."<sup>48</sup> While "enter the continent of Europe," "destroy enemy forces," and "unconditional surrender" are a mix of military objectives, they are purely military objectives and not grand strategy.

What did the United States want from a war in Europe? Four and one half United States divisions permanently stationed in Europe was not expected but it should have been. Clausewitz points out that "in war many roads lead to success and that they do not all involve the opponents outright defeat,"<sup>49</sup> unconditional surrender notwithstanding. What is important is to find a right road. The United States prior to her entry into the war should have insisted on strategic goals, one of which should have been "restore" the balance of power in Europe less Hitler.

Even General Wedemeyer failed to define or help define the correct strategic objective. If General Wedemeyer was serious about the Soviet menace (vis-a-vis the Germans), and if at that time he truly recognized the Russians would not drop out of the war, then why so much concern for lend-lease to the Russians? Why not a serious study that considered such things in terms of a Balkan campaign? The United States Army Studies noted earlier, that were limited to "keeping subsequent action in the Balkan-Eastern Mediterranean within the basic pattern of operations" cannot be considered realistic or unbiased--again because

they had no objectives against which to be verified and because their purpose was simply to limit any British initiatives within already stated military objectives.

Prejudices on both sides of the ocean did not allow for a fair appraisal of such a venture; moreover, the desire to keep Russia in the war while preparing to fight on two continents so overshadowed United States thinking that we never realistically defined our strategic objectives, which in turn left a vacuum upon which to weigh such ventures. For example, if as previously stated our strategic objectives were to restore the former balance of power in Europe, could we not have drawn down on the lend-lease to Russia and applied these savings to a flanking attack via the Balkan peninsula into the German southern flank?

Better yet, if such objectives existed would they have influenced United States positions relative to the Italian surrender? There were not only 23 armed Italian divisions in Italy but 31 Italian divisions occupying the Balkans. The arms and equipment of these units went in many instances to the partisans of the particular country. Thirty-one divisions, even though Italian, are valuable combat power if you have a strategic objective to guide their employment. For example, as Eisenhower negotiated the Italian surrender (and again assuming we had a strategic objective to restore a pre-World War II balance of power-less Hitler), would not Eisenhower have considered using these divisions? As a minimum, would Eisenhower have been more careful to assure that Italian weapons and equipment did not fall to Communist partisans? Trumbull Higgins in his book the Soft Underbelly tells us that Churchill told Roosevelt of these divisions and their importance.



In essence, the soft underbelly or Balkan approach into Europe was not supported because of the United States paranoia about British colonial interests, because of OVERLORD concerns and because keeping the Russians in the war prejudiced any reasonable debate of the issue. The British, on the other hand, failed "to frame" this campaign in terms the United States planners could deal with. For example, although there is scant mention of a two to three division force, the broad outline of a campaign is not mentioned nor is the logistical support to include shipping and the timeframe for such an effort (key to such a debate when OVERLORD and operations in the Far East are staring you in the face), and most certainly the political consequences of such an effort were never realistically addressed. Did anyone discuss partisan support (Greek, Yugoslavian, Rumanian, etc); the long term gains (post-World War II) of having allied forces in Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, etc., rather than the Russians? Did anyone point out the pressure such a campaign would put on the Germans, thereby providing relief both to the Russians and later to OVERLORD? How hard a case was made? The official United States Army history does not reflect any analysis other than preparation to rebut Churchill's proposal; the Churchill Memoirs reveal a constant orientation on the Balkans; Roosevelt unfortunately did not leave us his account of this history.

A Balkan campaign was possible, dependent on how lend-lease and the US might was used. We know that with the collapse and surrender of Italy, the Germans in July through October of 1943 increased the number of divisions in the Balkans from 10-1/2 to 16; in Italy from 6-1/2 to 19.<sup>50</sup> Wouldn't such a campaign help both the Russian front and OVERLORD by drawing more Nazi divisions to the Balkans?

Churchill tells us he only wanted one-tenth of the total forces committed to Europe which equals two or three divisions for the Balkans. For the Mediterranean, those forces would be distributed 4/5 in Italy (already there), 1/10 in Corsica and 1/10 in the Balkans.<sup>51</sup> The payback--gain the support of Turkey; dominate the Black Sea; shorten the supply sources to the Russians; and, not stated, a post World War II Western oriented occupation of key Eastern European countries by friendly allies.

Our net loss. Lack of a strategy cost us a Soviet dominated Balkans and approximately one-third of our standing Army permanently stationed in Europe.

We are currently in the process of reviewing our NATO strategy. In a 3 March 1986 New York Times article, Mr. Fred Ikle, the Under Secretary of Defense, criticized our current state policy "of maintaining a defensive posture early in a conflict and not mounting a counterinvasion."<sup>52</sup> He goes on to ask "should we assure Soviet planners that they do not need to worry about a counter-invasion?...Should we not...adopt a strategy that would encourage Eastern European nations not to support Soviet forces in a conflict?"<sup>53</sup>

It appears to me that once again the United States and NATO do not have a grand strategy. We continue to have an Elbe river stop line; we will give up a chance at the Balkans as well as Eastern Europe. Once again, there are no conditions for a reasonable chance at a lasting peace.

## CHAPTER VI

### FUTURE STRATEGIES

The evolution of a future strategy takes into account the following:

1. The historical lessons learned of this paper in which lack of clearly stated political and military objectives, got the United States into a position where approximately one-third of its Army is stationed overseas.

2. The need to state up front that limited tactical nuclear weapons (soldier against soldier) will be employed early in the next war if the Russians violate the current border.

3. If the Russians start a war, our objectives will be as follows:

- a. Eventually, to free Eastern Europe from Russian dominance. In so doing, neutralize these countries to create a buffer between historically suspicious East and West.

- b. The United States will guarantee the neutrality of these States.

- c. To reunite a democratized Germany.

This new strategy is justified as follows:

As a result of World War II and Korea, the United States finds herself with 1/3 or more of her armies stationed overseas. There are a number of costs that must be weighed in terms of this stationing and these costs must be weighed initially from a United States interest perspective. For too long the United States has locked its strategy to Europe, the Far East and even a more dubious term - the "free world" while neglecting her world-wide interests and responsibilities. The

United States constantly weighs its interests while simultaneously weighing those of its allies which are not necessarily ours. One result, the United States is approaching a \$200 billion deficit. The US strategy lacks flexibility in that it is tied to Europe and Korea by forward deployment of vast amounts of United States men and material; the United States is hampered by this current strategy in projecting power in the Middle East and Central and South America.

The immediate period of post-Korea and World War II may have called for these forward deployed forces. Most assuredly Europe and South Korea were literally on their knees, but they aren't now. Neither is Japan, but the United States is spending its valuable resources on these economic and potential military giants while neglecting her interest.

Globally, if the preponderance of our forces were stationed on the East and West Coasts, how much more flexibility would we gain as the guarantor of the free world democracies? If we withdrew one or more divisions from Germany what kind of a message would we send both our allies in Europe and the Russians?

If one thinks that message is one of lack-of-commitment, I ask, have we not already proved our commitment to the free world by 40 plus years in Europe; the Korean War; 10 plus years in Vietnam, 10 plus years in a country and war halfway around the world in which we had no real interests other than a concern for the people to have right of free choice? Have we not proven our commitment to the free world by accepting a \$200 billion deficit?

Michael Kinsley in a 13 March 1986 Washington Post article states that "while we spend about 6.5 percent of our gross national product on defense, the NATO allies spend an average of 3.5 percent and Japan

spends 1 percent."<sup>54</sup> He points to a DOD study that notes that while the "richer countries should pay a more than proportional share, we're carrying 20 percent more than our fair share and Japan is carrying one-fourth of its own."<sup>55</sup> Kinsley makes two other key points as regards the effects of this economical/military wrench-up:

The allies can shoulder more of the Defense burden directly, or they can find ways to reimburse us for some of our expenses. If Europe and Japan were to devote just one percent more of their respective GNP's to defense, in a way that spared us a like amount, this alone would slice \$50 billion off our deficit.<sup>56</sup>

You can't maintain a strong Army with a big deficit, nor can you have a well trained Army that rotates one-third of its troops annually because one-third of its forces are forward deployed. Further, you don't have much flexibility in the use of the deployed force.

If we withdrew a division or two from Europe, what would Europe do? Maybe NATO would consider lifting the post WWII 500,000 German Army ceiling; maybe the Dutch or Belgians or Canadians or even the French might reconsider their commitments. Would they turn to the East - make concessions?

If those countries are truly democratic and enamored with their way of life, then maybe they would come up with the troops to replace the withdrawn United States forces. We will never know unless we try. I don't think they would make concessions, although that is always the veiled threat of the Europeans. I personally cannot conceive of a Finlandization of Europe - even Finland found out it doesn't really work. If well prior to the withdrawal of the two US Divisions we stated a unilateral United States position that warns the Soviets of the

consequences\*, then our allies would have time to adjust and the Soviet Union and her allies would realize the full implications.

It is in Europe's interest to see these forces withdrawn to the States. Note, I say "withdrawn," not demobilized. The West gains flexibility in the United States ability to better react to contingencies throughout the free world. The United States plows back into her economy a good deal of revenue currently spent on and by those forward deployed forces. The United States gets a better trained Army as rotation is significantly reduced and everyone benefits because I truly believe, the Europeans would make up for what we withdrew.

Who are the economic giants of the free world? Western Europe, Germany, Japan and South Korea. Who is contributing their fair share to the defense - these giants? Certainly not these giants; let the United States do it seems to be their solution and would be mine if I was in their place and could get away with it as they obviously are.

What would be the effects on NATO strategy if two US division were withdrawn, their equipment left in Europe and if Europe provided two divisions to replace these forces? In one scenario, I could see war plans rewritten such that the two division US force could be planned as a large counterattack force (supported by an in-place logistical tail) to counter and restore any Soviet incursion into the West. This certainly is better and more flexible than a French force, currently not committed to NATO, that has no staying power (no logistical tail) and as such raises the nuclear threshold because we have no real strategic NATO reserve. Finally, the United States reserve will buy time from a

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\*These consequences are stated in the beginning of the section.

nuclear escalation, as it is known that French position is all out nuclear retaliation once their border is crossed.

Peter Paret, a Stanford University Professor of International History points out

that a state's economic resources, according to Clausewitz, together with its geography and social conditions, determine, or should determine, its military policies.<sup>57</sup>

As decision-makers, US military strategists need to consider Clausewitz's point and to reevaluate United States interests in today's world, not a world we left 40 years ago. We need to understand the history that got us there and why it got us there. Our interests and the free world's interests have changed; so too, has our ability to meet those commitments.

#### ENDNOTES

##### Chapter I - Introduction

1. Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, p. 84.
2. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade In Europe, p. 225.
3. James A. Huston, "Commentary," in D-Day: The Normandy Invasion In Prospect ed. by The Eisenhower Foundation, p. 142.
4. Forrest C. Pogue, "The Decision to Halt at the Elbe," in Command Decisions, ed. by Office, Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, p. 387.
5. Ibid.

##### Chapter II - Soft-Underbelly Defined - The British Perspective

6. William L. Neumann, After Victory: Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and the Making of the Peace, p. 85.
7. Winston Churchill, Memoirs of the Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy, Book IV, p. 756.
8. Ibid., p. 757, paraphrased material.

9. Albert C. Wedemeyer, Wedemeyer Reports, p. 105.
10. Winston S. Churchill, Memoirs of World War II: Closing the Ring, p. 434.
11. Enrys Hughes, Winston Churchill: British Bulldog, pp. 71-72.
12. Ibid., p.76
13. Ibid.
14. Edgar A. Mawrer and Marthe Rajackman, Global War: An Atlas of World Strategy, p. 88.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 90.
17. Neumann, p. 101.
18. Ibid.
19. Mark A. Stoler, The Politics of a Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy In Coalition Warfare, p. 119.
20. Winston S. Churchill, p. 708
21. Neumann, p. 85, paraphrased material.
22. Ibid.
23. Churchill, p. 469; paraphrased material.
24. Ibid., p. 537.
25. Ibid; the underline is my emphasis on the key fact that the British (and Churchill indirectly by virtue of his quoting Smuts), had "allied control" of the Balkans in mind.
26. Carl Von Clausewitz, p. 607.
27. Winston S. Churchill, Memoirs of the Second World War, p. 292.

### Chapter III - The American Perspective

28. Ibid., pp. 161-162, paraphrased material.
29. Eisenhower, p. 225.
30. Neumann, p. 107.



31. Wedemeyer, p. 77.
32. Trumbull Higgins, Soft-Underbelly: The Anglo-American Controversy, p. 101.
33. Neumann, p. 84.
34. Ibid., pp. 84-85.
35. Wedemeyer, p. 133.
36. Ibid., p. 133.
37. Ibid., p. 120.
38. Ibid., p. 77
39. Maurice Matloff, The US Army In World War II: Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944 p. 260.
40. Wedemeyer, p. 95.
41. Matloff, p. 260, paraphrased material.

#### Chapter IV - The Russians

42. US Congress, House, Committee on un-American Activities, The Communist Program for World Conquest, 1958, 85th Congress, 2nd. session, p. 7.

43. In the US Army WWII historical reports, Strategic Planning For Coalition Warfare 1943-1944, Maurice Matloff discusses these divisions under a paragraph titled "A Question of Manpower," pp. 264-269. Matloff states that 90 divisions are based on the timing of operations, i.e., delay manpower and divisions to the East as well as pare down on operations in Europe and the Mediterrean, on logistics (each division required a large logistical tail) and the need to pare down the current combat support and service support already deployed overseas. Hence, my contention that "the manpower was there" if we were seriously considering a two to three division effort in the Balkans. Timing could have been changed or manpower gained from combat support or additional divisions built. Easy as it is to look back in history, most assuredly, everyone was keying in on the importance of the post-WW II Balkans but not taking action to provide solutions.

44. Wedemeyer, p. 241.
45. Omar N. Bradley, A Soldier's Story p. 531. Gen Bradley discussed how he and Gen Eisenhower picked the Elbe River. He points out that for lack of a clear means to stop both armies he "shuddered at

the prospect of a collision that might flare into a fight;" hence, the Elbe was picked.

46. Higgins, p. 134.

47. Wedemeyer, p. 95.

#### Chapter V - Conclusions

48. COL. Arthur F. Lykke, Jr. Military Strategy: Theory and Application, p. 1-3.

49. Carl Von Clausewitz, p. 94; other references to this thought appear throughout On Wars, example, p. 93.

50. Maurice Matloff, US Army In WWII (The War Department), p. 260.

51. Churchill, Memoirs of World War II; Triumph and Tragedy, p. 756.

52. "US Aide Faults NATO Strategy," New York Times, 3 March 1986, p. A-2.

53. Ibid.

#### Chapter VI - Future Strategies

54. "Fat Targets: NATO and Japan," Washington Post p. OP/ED A-6.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Peter Paret, "Clausewitz" in Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli To the Nuclear Age, ed. by Peter Paret, p. 209.

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