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**CHURCHILL:  
THE MAKING OF  
A GRAND STRATEGIST**

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David Jablonsky

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A GRAND STRATEGIST**

**Colonel David Jablonsky**

**1990**

**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

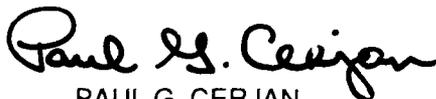
Foreword . . . . .	v
Chapter 1. Introduction . . . . .	1
Chapter 2.—The Building Blocks— The Vertical Dimension . . . . .	3
The Early Years . . . . .	5
On-The-Job Training . . . . .	10
The Continuum of War . . . . .	11
The Break in the Continuum . . . . .	15
The Maneuver Solution . . . . .	17
The Defensive Solution . . . . .	22
Force Multipliers . . . . .	25
Intelligence . . . . .	27
Deception . . . . .	28
Science and Technology . . . . .	31
Chapter 3. The Building Blocks— The Horizontal Dimension . . . . .	37
The Political Connection . . . . .	41
The Psychological and Economic Connections . . . . .	44
The Horizontal-Vertical Interface . . . . .	49
Grand Strategy and the Search for Decisiveness . . . . .	55
Conflict Termination . . . . .	62
Chapter 4. Epilogue—The Art of the Possible . . . . .	69
Endnotes . . . . .	79
About the Author . . . . .	97

## FOREWORD

Strategy is the calculated relationship of means to ends. At the highest military level, that relationship guides the use of the joint and combined military instrument of power to achieve national military strategic objectives. At the national or grand strategic level, the relationship becomes more complex, dealing with multiple, interrelated objectives that can only be achieved by the coordinated use of all the instruments of national power, to include that of the military. In a rapidly changing, increasingly more complicated and interdependent world, the U.S. military professional needs to understand not only the dynamics of military strategy, but of grand strategy as well.

This book examines the evolution of Winston Churchill's understanding of both strategic dynamics. In the author's view, that understanding came about not so much from any detailed, consistent study of great strategists or immutable strategic principles, but rather from on-the-job strategic training throughout an incredibly rich and varied life. In the military sphere, there were at first only his tactical experiences in the small wars in the closing years of the Victorian era. In the First World War, however, Churchill came to appreciate the operational and military strategic levels of war as well. Moreover, it was that conflict which drew him increasingly to the realm of grand strategy in which all the elements of national power were combined to achieve victory in the first total war of this century.

This analysis demonstrates why future military leaders and high level staff officers in the U.S. military should understand the relationship between military and grand strategy. It was this relationship that led to the allied victory in the Second World War. And it is this relationship that has allowed us to win the peace, the ultimate goal of grand strategy. That process has lasted almost half a century; but today, from the Baltic to the Adriatic, the tattered remnant of the curtain so aptly named by Churchill provides a daily reminder of the symbiotic relationship between military and grand strategy.



PAUL G. CERJAN  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commandant

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

"Churchill is the most bloodthirsty of amateur strategists that history has ever known," Adolf Hitler stated in a 1941 speech. "He is as bad a politician as a soldier and as bad a soldier as a politician."<sup>1</sup> Hitler was wrong on all counts. Winston Churchill was a competent, experienced and enthusiastic soldier who served as an officer in four wars, beginning as a subaltern on India's northwest frontier and ending as a battalion commander on the Western Front in World War I. And while he could not match Hitler's horrific life as a runner in the trenches for most of that war, the future British leader had experienced intense, close quarter combat first hand in many campaigns, in many lands before his 25th birthday.

In terms of his political career, there is a tendency to focus on Churchill's years in the wilderness of the 1930s. But that period was slight compared to his time spent gainfully as a successful politician. Between 1905 and 1922 with only a 2-year interruption, for example, he held high offices ranging from Home Secretary and First Lord of the Admiralty to Secretary of State for War and Colonial Secretary. The results were as diverse as they were successful, including much needed prison and naval reforms as well as new initiatives concerning the pacification of Ireland and the organization of mandated nations in the Middle East.

It was the combination of Churchill's experiences as a soldier and as a politician that gave lie to the Nazi leader's estimation of his British counterpart as an "amateur strategist." For it was this combination which ultimately allowed Churchill to master grand strategy. That mastery did not occur overnight; nor was it the result of reading such great strategic

thinkers as Sun Tzu and Clausewitz. It was, instead, the result of a long apprenticeship in military and public affairs.

Over the decades during that apprenticeship, Churchill also earned his living as a professional writer and historian. The result was a series of books and articles that described with vivid and visceral immediacy many of the historic events in which he had personally participated. These works provide a valuable collection of Churchill's reflections on Britain's recent and more distant past. Equally important, they provide a means to trace the evolution of the future British leader's thoughts on strategy.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate by means of these writings how Churchill's approach to grand strategy was formed. Through these works, it is possible to follow his first tentative strategic steps as he dealt with the rapidly changing nature of warfare at the turn of the century. That development caused him to broaden his military viewpoint beyond the purely tactical realm. Finally, as Britain passed through the 1914-18 crucible, the change in Churchill's perspective concerning military power was also complemented by an appreciation of the use in war of all the instruments of national power—the essence of grand strategy.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE BUILDING BLOCKS— THE VERTICAL DIMENSION

World War I demonstrated repeatedly that a single battle was no longer sufficient to achieve a strategic victory, that in fact an engagement or a battle would normally not determine the outcome of a campaign, much less a war. The frustration at this turn of events was captured by a character in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *Tender is the Night* when he visited the Somme Valley after that war. "See that little stream," he said, "we could walk to it—a whole empire walking very slowly, dying in front and pushing forward behind. And another empire walked very slowly backwards a few inches a day leaving the dead like a million bloody rugs."

Clausewitz had foreseen this trend early in the previous century. For him, the higher commander must create something that was more than the sum of its undivided tactical parts. "By looking on each engagement as part of a series," he wrote, "at least insofar as events are predictable, the commander is always on the high road to his goal."<sup>1</sup>

That high road became increasingly complex in the second half of the 19th century. By that time, Koenigraetz and Sedan notwithstanding, a series of developments had made it increasingly difficult for nation states to achieve strategic outcomes by means of a single decisive battle. To begin with, there was the dramatic increase in populations that allowed large nations to deploy more than one field army, each capable of simultaneously conducting a campaign in its own right. As the century drew to a close, this size was compounded by the growth in Europe of a complex and sophisticated alliance system that facilitated the formation of huge multinational armies that could fight on many fronts, extending a theater of

war to encompass an entire continent. Finally, there were technological innovations, ranging from breechloading weapons to smokeless powder which, in conjunction with these other factors, meant that concentration of armies on small, limited battlefields was no longer feasible.<sup>2</sup>

It was in this milieu that World War I was fought; and it was that conflict which demonstrated the inadequacy of classical strategy to deal with the intricacies of modern warfare. Napoleon had defined that strategy as the "art of making use of time and space."<sup>3</sup> But the dimensions of the two variables, as we have seen, had been stretched and rendered more complex by demographics as well as geopolitical and technological factors. And that very complexity, augmented by the lack of decisiveness at the tactical level, impeded the continuum of war outlined in Clausewitz's definition of strategy as "the use of the engagement for the purposes of war."<sup>4</sup> Only when the continuum was enlarged, as the Great War demonstrated, was it possible to restore warfighting coherence in modern conflict. And that, in turn, required the classical concept of strategy to be positioned at a midpoint, an operational level, designed to orchestrate individual tactical engagements and battles in order to achieve strategic results. In the aftermath of World War I, the Soviets incorporated this new perspective of the continuum of war into their military doctrine. "Tactics," a faculty member at the Frunze Academy wrote in 1927, "make the steps from which operational leaps are assembled; strategy points out the path."<sup>5</sup>

The United States was slower to explore this continuum. In 1982 and 1986, the U.S. Army incorporated the three "broad divisions of activity in . . . conducting war" into that organization's basic manual on operations.<sup>6</sup> And in 1990, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff are making the three level continuum of war (Figure 1) official for the Armed Services:

Operational Level of War is the level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives . . . . Activities at this level link tactics and strategy . . . . These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they provide the means

by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 1

## THE EARLY YEARS

The young Churchill, of course, did not consider this vertical continuum despite an abiding interest in all things military. Instead, his formative years in the Indian Summer of the Victorian era left him with a reverence for the great captains of the past whose decisive victories in battle had led to the scarlet splash on the world map that marked the British Empire. As a young boy, for instance, he was introduced to the majestic prose of Macaulay's *History of England*. Later, he acquired his own works of that author and, as he described it, "voyaged with

full sail in a strong wind" as he "revelled" in Macaulay's essays on such great leaders as Chatham, Frederick the Great and Clive.<sup>8</sup> Added to this were the works of George Alfred Henty, who 2 years after Churchill's birth published the first of his 80 novels and serials, many of which dealt with English and imperial history. Whether it was with Clive in India (1884) and Wolfe at Quebec (1887) or adventures in the Punjab (1894) and Afghanistan (1902), young Victorians like Churchill could relive vicariously every British triumph throughout the Empire. In 1898, the year Churchill observed Kitchener's victory over the Mahdi at Omdurman, Henty's annual sales were estimated to be as many as 250,000.<sup>9</sup>

At Harrow, the normally indifferent student could always muster an infectious enthusiasm for military activities. In 1889, Churchill described to his mother a "grand sham" battle at Aldershot conducted by the Rifle Corps from the various public schools in which his force of 3,500 students, two batteries of guns and a cavalry regiment was defeated by an attacking student force of 8,000.<sup>10</sup> And later that year, he focused on the Japanese defeat of the Chinese at Pyongyang in the Sino-Japanese War. "I take the greatest interest in the operations," he wrote his mother,

both of the fleets and armies. Anything so brilliant as the night attack of Pung Yang is hard to find in modern war. The reports . . . show that the Japanese concentration was so accurately timed and their assault so skillfully delivered that the celestials had 'no show' at all.<sup>11</sup>

At Sandhurst, Churchill's curriculum initially kept him grounded at the lowest level of war—"all . . . very elementary, and our minds were not allowed to roam in working hours beyond a subaltern's range of vision."<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, he managed to order a number of books through his father's bookseller dealing with the American Civil, Franco-Prussian and Russo-Turkish Wars, "which were then our latest and best specimens of wars. I soon had a small military library," he wrote many years later, "which invested the regular instruction with some sort of background."<sup>13</sup> More importantly, he was invited at various times to dine at the nearby Staff College

where, as he described it, he could at least broaden his tactical horizons.

Here the study was of divisions, army corps and even whole armies: of bases, of supplies, and lines of communications and railway strategy. This was thrilling. It did seem such a pity that it all had to be make-believe, and that the age of wars between civilized nations had come to an end forever. If it had only been 100 years earlier what splendid times we should have had! Fancy being nineteen in 1793 with more than twenty years of war against Napoleon in front of one!<sup>14</sup>

The ironic tone of Churchill's description, written while he was still reacting to the slaughters of the Great War, should not obscure the solid military education he received at Sandhurst, where he graduated 20th out of 130 and excelled in tactics, fortifications and riding.<sup>15</sup> "He would talk about the battle of Cannae," General Eisenhower commented years later in this regard, "just as well as could a professional soldier."<sup>16</sup> That, of course, was because Churchill was a professional soldier off and on for 5 years after graduating from Sandhurst, personally passing through four different regiments and three different wars in that twilight of the Victorian era. In the first two of these wars, there was nothing that would draw Churchill to the vertical continuum of war. Certainly, the minor engagements that he observed as part of Sir Bindon Blood's Malakand Field Force on India's northwest frontier in 1897 fit the lowest tactical parameters of most Victorian wars. And the following year, there could be no doubt as to the decisiveness of the battle of Omdurman in terms of the Sudan campaign, when Lord Kitchener's forces, by means of Maxim guns, naval and high velocity artillery shells and Dum Dum rounds, slaughtered between 10,000-12,000 dervish followers of the Mahdi with a loss of 48 dead.

There was, however, no such decisiveness in the Boer War. In South Africa, the British were not dealing with the Pathan and Omdurman tribesmen. This time it was the Boers with a panoply of modern weapons ranging from machine guns, which shredded the dense ranks of the Queen's army, to distant artillery known as Long Toms, which were emplaced

far beyond the reach of the British cavalry, rapidly firing 40 pound, 4.7 inch shrapnel shells that dismembered men in the attack or in static positions. Added to this were the sandbagged entrenchments and the barbed wire. As British casualties mounted at such battles as Spion Kop and Vaal Krantz, regimental histories began to record phrases that would become setpieces for the total wars of the 20th century. Battles became "enshrined forever" in history; engagements were "imperishable" and "immortal."<sup>17</sup>

Those changes were not lost on Churchill, who along with Ghandi served at the battlefields along the Tugela River. "Colenso, Spion Kop, Vaal Krantz, and the third day at Pieters were not inspiring memories," he wrote. At the battle of Pieters, he watched as British units were repeatedly cut down by "the hideous whispering Death" from Mauser bullets. And Spion Kop left an indelible impression concerning the effects of artillery shrapnel on a 2,000-man British brigade crowded into a space "about as large as Trafalgar" on the bare top of the kop—"scenes . . . among the strongest and most terrible I have ever witnessed."<sup>18</sup> Moreover, those scenes had been produced by far less than a battery of howitzers. "Yet in a European war," Churchill concluded, "there would have been . . . three or four batteries. I do not see how troops can be handled in masses in such conditions. . . ."<sup>19</sup> He returned to this theme in 1906 at the German Army maneuvers in Silesia where he watched "with astonishment" the dense columns of German troops attacking entrenched forces who "burned blank cartridges in unceasing fusillade."

I had carried away from the South African veldt a very lively and modern sense of what rifle bullets could do. On the effects of the fire of large number of guns we could only use our imagination. But where the power of the magazine rifle was concerned we felt sure we possessed a practical experience denied to the leaders of these trampling hosts. . . . Whatever else this might amount to, it did not form contact with reality at any point. Besides South Africa I had also vividly in my mind the Battle of Omdurman, where we had shot down quite easily, with hardly any loss, more than 11,000 Dervishes in formations much less dense, and at ranges far greater than those which were now on every side exhibited to our gaze. We had said to ourselves after Omdurman, "This is the end of these

sort of spectacles. There will never be such fools in the world again.<sup>20</sup>

The effect of the new technology on Churchill's perception of war at the time of the South African conflict should not be overstated. During World War II, Churchill's physician noted in this regard that "the P.M. always goes back to the Boer War when he is in good humour. That was before war degenerated. It was great fun galloping about."<sup>21</sup> Certainly, there was a tendency at the time for Churchill to gloss over the evolving nature of warfare. At Diamond Hill on June 14, 1900, for instance, there was almost a palpable sense of relief when the British reverted to a cavalry charge, "a fine gallant manoeuvre, executed with a spring and an elasticity wonderful and admirable . . . in troops who have been engaged . . . in continual fighting with an elusive enemy. . . ."<sup>22</sup> As for the new technologies, Churchill also had a warning firmly grounded in the 19th century. "Battles now-a-days are fought mainly with firearms," he wrote, "but no troops . . . can enjoy the full advantage of their successes if they exclude the possibilities of cold steel and are not prepared to maintain what they have won, if necessary with their fists."<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, there was also a sense of change that pervaded most of Churchill's writings on the period. By 1900, his dispatches to the *Morning Post*, while not neglecting the tactical aspects of what he observed, were sprinkled with insightful glimpses up the continuum of war. In January of that year, for instance, he noted that "it is impossible not to admire the Boer strategy. From the beginning they have aimed at two main objectives: to exclude the war from their own territories, and to confine it to rocky and broken regions suited to their tactics."<sup>24</sup> There was also a realization that the vast spaces of those regions as well as the new technology of warfare in the hands of a trained, well-armed, entrenched enemy, enjoying the advantages of interior lines, made it impossible for one battle in a campaign to achieve decisive strategic results. Nowhere was that more evident to Churchill than in the inept, ponderous and dilatory campaign for the relief of Ladysmith by General Redvers Buller, in which no attempt was made to mold the scattered minor tactical parts into anything resembling an

operational whole. That disconnect in terms of the continuum of war applied also to the campaign objective.

Whoever selected Ladysmith as a military centre must sleep uneasily at night. . . . Tactically Ladysmith may be strongly defensible, but for strategic purposes it is absolutely worthless. It is worse. It is a regular trap. . . . Not only do the surrounding hills keep the garrison in, they also form a formidable barrier to the advance of a relieving force.<sup>25</sup>

## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

World War I provided Churchill a continuing education on the vertical continuum of war. At the highest military level, as he pointed out after that conflict, the "entry of Great Britain into war . . . was strategically impressive. Her large Fleets vanished into the mists at one end of the island. Her small Army hurried out of the country at the other."<sup>26</sup> As First Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill was personally involved in the first decision. On July 26, 1914, he ordered the fleet, assembled for review at Portland, not to disperse in view of the increasingly tense international situation. That order was one of the decisive acts of the war, for while free from the provocation inherent in any army mobilization, it placed the British Navy automatically in control of the sea, particularly after the unnoticed dispersion of the fleet on July 29 to its war station at Scapa Flow. From that location in the Orkney Isles, the Grand Fleet controlled the passage between North Britain and Norway and began the invisible pressure on Germany's arteries until, in those same waters in November 1918, the German fleet surrendered to a force which it had only briefly glimpsed in over 4 years of a naval twilight war.<sup>27</sup>

As for the army, its arrival during the Marne campaign, Churchill added, "reached in the nick of time the vital post on the flank of the French line. Had all our action been upon this level, we should to-day be living in an easier world."<sup>28</sup> But it was not to be so simple. The Marne campaign was a German attempt to achieve a decisive victory in the manner of Austerlitz or Koenigraetz at the military strategic level. The operational

speed required for the Schlieffen Plan to work, however, could not be matched by the immense and complex German armies whose pace was still governed by the speed of the foot soldier. Moreover, the scale of the huge operation overwhelmed the still primitive telegraph and radio communications, and this, combined with the inevitable friction at all levels of the war, caused the Marne campaign to end in an operational and thus military strategic stalemate.<sup>29</sup>

Soon the entire war seemed to be locked in that stalemate—a situation, Churchill realized, made all the more terrible in total war. "Wealth, science, civilization, patriotism, steam transport and world credit," he wrote, "enabled the whole strength of every belligerent to be continually applied to the war. . . . But at the same time that Europe had been fastened into this frightful bondage, the art of war had fallen into an almost similar helplessness. No means of procuring a swift decision presented itself to the strategy of the commanders, or existed on the battlefields of the armies."<sup>30</sup> How far that situation had moved operational art from the earlier decisiveness of classical strategy was summarized by Churchill after the war:

Compared with Cannae, Blenheim or Austerlitz, the vast world-battle . . . is a slow-motion picture. We sit in calm, airy, silent rooms opening upon sunlit and embowered lawns, not a sound except of summer and of husbandry disturbs the peace; but seven million men, any ten thousand of whom could have annihilated the ancient armies, are in ceaseless battle from the Alps to the Ocean. And this does not last for an hour, or for two or three hours. . . . Evidently the tests are of a different kind; it is certainly too soon to say that they are of a higher order.<sup>31</sup>

*The Continuum of War.* Churchill's recognition of the vertical continuum of war was evident in his analysis of two key operations conducted by General von Ludendorff at the beginning and at the end of World War I. The first was the Tannenberg-Masurian Lakes campaign in August and September 1914 on the Eastern Front where there was, he noted, "the opportunity for manoeuvre, and for that kind of tactics or battlefield strategy. . . ."<sup>32</sup> At the tactical level of that campaign, Churchill later expressed his appreciation of the

German expertise in his biography of the first Duke of Marlborough, written in the 1930s. In particular, there was Oudenarde, the deft and decisive battle fought by his illustrious ancestor in the 1708 campaign, which with its "looseness and flexibility of all the formations" and "movement of the Allies, foreshadowing Tannenberg, present us with a specimen of modern war which has no fellow in the rest of the eighteenth century."<sup>33</sup> But it was at a higher level of warfare that Churchill reserved his greatest admiration for Marlborough, whose operational artistry "applied with the highest technical skill, and with cool judgment in the measuring and turning of events, exactly harmonizes with Napoleon's processes, and may very well have suggested some of them." It was this artistry, he concluded in the interwar years, that allowed Marlborough to move in time and space beyond one tactical encounter, that "enabled him to make a second or a further move, *foreseen in all its values from the beginning*, to which there could be no effective resistance."<sup>34</sup>

In a similar manner, Churchill appreciated the operational opportunities as the Russian forces moved westward in August 1914 by the Masurian Lakes in the eastern theater of operations. "Here too on a smaller front," he commented in this regard, "the Germans had a war on two fronts."<sup>35</sup> The task for the German commander, he realized, was to orchestrate his forces at the tactical level to achieve operational results that would stop the westward flow of Russian troops at the theater strategic level, while also allowing him, in a worst case situation, to form a continuous strategic fighting front behind the Vistula. It was, Churchill concluded, a "situation at once delicate and momentous, requiring the highest qualities, but offering also the most brilliant opportunities to a Commander-in-Chief! The task was one in which Marlborough, Frederick the Great, Napoleon or the Lee-Stonewall Jackson combination would have revelled. . . ."<sup>36</sup>

Operational synchronization is a difficult process, because it requires nothing less than "the arrangement of battlefield activities in time, space and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at the decisive point."<sup>37</sup> The key word

in the definition is "produce," which takes synchronization beyond just the adjustment of activities to one another—the essence of coordination. It also means that the process will involve more than bringing forces and fires together at a point in time and space, as is normally envisaged when concentration takes place. Synchronization at the operational level, in fact, may often be necessary between activities far removed from each other in either time or space, or both. Nevertheless, as the U.S. Army operations manual points out, "these activities are synchronized if their combined *consequences* are felt at the decisive time and place."<sup>38</sup>

That process formed the basis for Churchill's analysis of Ludendorff's opening campaign in 1914. "With that sorry wisdom that judges after the event," he wrote, "one may ask why the Russian strategic plan ever contemplated an advance of two separate armies, with all the advantages it gave the Germans with their breakwater of lakes and fortifications and their network of railways."<sup>39</sup> Those advantages were put to good use when the German cavalry screen in front of the First Russian Army caused that army commander to believe that he still faced the bulk of the German Eighth Army. Using this screen, the German commanders moved two corps to the south against the Russian Second Army, already engaged against a corps from the Eighth Army. At that encounter, coordination between units and the ultimate concentration of forces and fires achieved the decisive German victory. But, as Churchill well realized, the synchronization process by the German commanders had begun days before in the north with a series of activities, whose combined results led to the final campaign victory. "The double battles of the Eighth German Army under Hindenburg and Ludendorff against the superior armies of Samsonov and Rennenkampf," he concluded, "are not only a military classic but an epitome of the art of war."<sup>40</sup>

Churchill provided no such commendation to Ludendorff for his massive spring offensive in 1918. "War . . . should be a succession of climaxes . . . toward which everything tends and from which permanent decisions are obtained," he pointed out at the time of the offensive. "These climaxes," he added, "have

usually been called battles."<sup>41</sup> But without overarching military strategic guidance there could be no permanent decisions. And this was the case with the spring offensive, in which Ludendorff elected to follow the tactical line of least resistance by attacking where breakthroughs were easiest. That development was not lost on Churchill. "Five divisions engaged out of an army of seven may fight a battle," he wrote in this regard. "But the same operation in an army of seventy divisions . . . sinks to the rank of petty combat. A succession of such combat augments the losses without raising the scale of events."<sup>42</sup>

The results of the Ludendorff offensive at this lower tactical scale were spectacular, particularly by World War I standards, occasioning British Field Marshal Haig's famous "backs to the wall" order. At the operational level, however, the campaign degenerated into a series of uncoordinated and unproductive thrusts. "Of the . . . great battles which had been fought," Churchill wrote of the campaign, "the first three . . . had failed to achieve any one of the progressively diminishing strategic results at which they had aimed. The fourth . . . was . . . very spectacular but without strategic consequence."<sup>43</sup>

None of that was helped by Ludendorff's decision at one point in the campaign to reinforce failure on his stalled right flank with his limited operational resources, instead of exploiting the extraordinary and unexpected tactical successes of the 18th Army on his left. But ultimately, as Churchill realized, it was Ludendorff's choice to ignore the continuum of war that was decisive. By mid-summer of 1918, the tactical results of his offensive had been more than reversed; and the Quartermaster General was well on his way to bringing down the Second German Empire. "What then had been gained?" Churchill asked after the war.

The Germans had reoccupied their old battlefields and the regions they had so cruelly devastated. . . . Once again they entered into possession of these grisly trophies. No fertile province, no wealthy cities, no river or mountain barrier, no new untapped resources were their reward. Only the crater-fields extending abominably wherever the eye could turn, the old trenches, the vast graveyards,

the skeletons, the blasted trees and the pulverized villages, . . . the Dead Sea fruits of the mightiest military conception and the most terrific onslaught which the annals of war record.<sup>44</sup>

*The Break in the Continuum.* Decisiveness at the operational level of war remained a problem throughout most of World War I. A part of that problem, Churchill believed, lay in the key operational variables of space and time. "In the West the armies were too big for the country," he observed of the former; "in the East the country was too big for the armies."<sup>45</sup> Even in the East, all that was achieved militarily was to make a continuous front mobile. It was not that the Germans lacked the operational wherewithal. "The number of trains which can be moved north and south on the German side of the frontier is at least three times the comparable Russian figure," Churchill noted in a memorandum on the situation in June 1915. "This superiority of lateral communication applied to an 800-mile front has also enabled the Germans to deliver offensive strokes of the most formidable character."<sup>46</sup> But operational concentration was not the answer if space in the vast eastern theater could be traded for time, if "a retirement of 100 to 200 miles enables the Russians to recover their strength, and deprives the enemy of his advantage. . . ."<sup>47</sup>

In addition, there was also the problem of coordinating the combined forces of the Central Powers into a strategic whole at the theater of operations level—a fact noted by Churchill as he examined the "strategic barrenness" of the 1915 German winter campaign on the Eastern Front after the war, while quoting approvingly from Hindenburg's postwar description of that campaign:

In spite of the great tactical success . . . we had failed . . . strategically. We had once more managed practically to destroy one of the Russian armies, but fresh enemy forces had immediately come up to take its place, drawn from other fronts to which they had not been pinned down . . .<sup>48</sup>

On the Western Front, the inability to achieve decisive operational results in the troglodyte world of the trenches made an indelible, lifelong impression on Churchill. "Before the war,"

he wrote, "it seemed incredible that such terrors and slaughters, even if they began, could last more than a few months. After the first two years it was difficult to believe that they would ever end."<sup>49</sup> A major problem, as Churchill saw it after leaving his post as First Lord, concerned the capability to conquer sufficient space at the operational level to achieve anything approaching strategic outcomes. "Although attacks prepared by immense concentrations of artillery have been locally successful in causing alterations of the line," he wrote to the Asquith cabinet in June 1915, "the effort required is so great and the advance so small, that the attack and advance, however organized and nourished, are exhausted before penetration deep enough and wide enough to produce a strategic effect has been made." The result was that the line would be "merely bent" at particular points on the tactical spectrum that "do not . . . compromise other parts." In the end, he concluded, despite ferocious tactical combat,

no strategic results are obtained in France and Flanders . . . from making, at an inordinate cost, an advance of 3 or 4 miles. For beyond the ground captured so dearly lies all the breadth of Flanders before even the Rhine is reached, and before the artillery of the attack can move forward and re-register, a new line of entrenchments not less strong than the old has been prepared by the enemy.<sup>50</sup>

Closely allied with space at the operational level, and even more important as far as Churchill was concerned, was the factor of time—so critical in synchronizing and sequencing events into a larger whole. At the operational level, for example, there might be a series of tactical victories which could produce a larger, equally favorable outcome if exploited. "But none of these consequential advantages," Churchill wrote, "will be gained if the time taken . . . is so long that the enemy can make new dispositions. . . ." When that happened, the attacker would be "confronted with a new situation, a different problem," which in turn would result in "operations consisting of detached episodes extending over months and divided by intervals during which a series of entirely new situations are created. . . ." In such circumstances, without an overarching operational whole, attrition between relatively

evenly balanced forces would ensure that there were no military strategic decisions. "It is not a question of wearing down the enemy's reserves," Churchill concluded, "but of wearing them down so rapidly that recovery and replacement of shattered divisions is impossible."<sup>51</sup>

## THE MANEUVER SOLUTION

Within a few months after the Marne campaign, as the conflict settled into a familiar pattern of stalemated attrition, Churchill began to examine the possibilities of strategic maneuver. Germany's strategic position was the key to this approach, as he pointed out years later in his study of Marlborough. "The kingdoms of France and Spain were in a central position in 1702 similar to that of Germany and Austria in 1914," he wrote. "They had the advantage of interior lines and could . . . throw their weight now against this opponent, now against that."<sup>52</sup> There were, however, disadvantages to this position if the theaters of operation were not properly managed. "There are two enemies and two theaters," Churchill pointed out: "the task of the commander is to choose in which he will prevail."

To choose either is to suffer grievously in the neglected theater. To choose both is to lose in both. The commander has for his guides the most honored principles of war and the most homely maxims of life. . . . It is the application of these simple rules to the facts that constitutes the difficulties and the torment. A score of good reasons can be given not only for either course, but also for the compromises which ruin them. But the path to safety nearly always lies in rejecting the compromises.<sup>53</sup>

Those types of compromises, Churchill believed, prevented the Germans throughout the war from achieving operational successes sufficient to change the strategic balance in any of the theaters of operation. The most egregious example for him was in the opening days of the war when a campaign in one such theater adversely affected a campaign in another theater of operations that was just on the point of achieving an operational success with important strategic consequences.

On August 20, 1914, after the initial encounter with the Russians advancing westward in East Prussia, the German commander sent an alarming message to Moltke and the Central Command and began a phased withdrawal to the Vistula. In the West at that point, everything appeared to be proceeding smoothly. As a consequence, Moltke agreed to send six corps from the western forces, two of which were reserve and could thus be sent immediately. "Thus the wheeling wing of the Schlieffen plan," Churchill concluded, "was weakened at its most critical moment by the withdrawal of the two corps which would otherwise in a fortnight have filled the fatal gap at the Marne."<sup>54</sup>

Again and again as he looked back on the Great War, Churchill focused on this type of oscillation between the two major points in the theater of war. It was a matter, he believed, of failing to determine when a theater of operations could be decisive. In 1914, for example, after Falkenhayn had replaced Moltke, the new commander became absorbed in the western "race to the sea" and would not send reinforcements to the Austrians reeling backwards from their impact in the southeast with Russian and Serbian forces. As a consequence, four corps were withdrawn from the Hindenburg-Ludendorff combination's Eighth Army in the northeast and sent to the south as the Ninth Army to buttress the Austrian north flank on the Silesian frontier. It was just at that point as their campaign forces were being reduced that those eastern warlords, Churchill noted sympathetically, "believed that with six or eight additional army corps they could destroy quite swiftly the military power of Russia. . . . After that everybody could turn . . . and . . . finish with the West."<sup>55</sup> Ironically, by the following winter, the reputations of the two eastern commanders had increased to such an extent that Falkenhayn was forced to send troops from the West to the East. "The four corps which he had longed to hurl into a new offensive in the West had been wrested from him," Churchill concluded. "They had marched and fought in the Winter Battle, gaining new cheap laurels for his dangerous rivals, but producing as he had predicted no decisive strategic result."<sup>56</sup>

There were lessons in all this, Churchill believed, for the forces of the Triple Entente. Faced with operational indecisiveness in one theater of operations, he began to enlarge his perspective. "He never ceased to think of the war as a whole," he later wrote of Marlborough in 1703. "To him the wide scene of strife and struggle . . . was but one."<sup>57</sup> And so it was with Churchill. "The essence of the war problem was not changed by its enormous scale," he wrote in 1915.

The line of the Central Powers from the North Sea to the Aegean and stretching loosely beyond even to the Suez Canal was, after all, in principle not different from the line of a small army entrenched across an isthmus, with each flank resting upon water. As long as France was treated as a *self-contained theatre, a complete deadlock existed, and the front of the German invaders could neither be pierced nor turned. But once the view was extended to the whole scene of the war, and that vast war conceived as if it were a single battle, and once the sea power of Britain was brought into play, turning movements of a most far-reaching character were open to the Allies. These turning movements were so gigantic and complex that they amounted to whole wars in themselves.*<sup>58</sup>

For the young First Lord early in 1915, the key to such an enlarged perspective was to determine where decisive operational and thus strategic results could be achieved. "The Decisive theatre," he wrote in this regard, "is the theatre where a vital decision may be obtained at any given time. The Main theatre is that in which the main armies or fleets are stationed." That main theater, he added later in a far ranging memorandum to the War Cabinet, beginning in late 1914 "ceased to be for the time being the decisive theatre. . . ."<sup>59</sup> But to recognize the problem was not necessarily to solve it. The creation of a new theater of operations did not always lend decisiveness to the strategic whole—a fact, as Churchill knew, that had bedeviled Marlborough who had been "forced to acquiesce for years in a lamentable drain of troops and money from his own forces to regions where nothing decisive could be gained."<sup>60</sup> It was in this light that Churchill also considered Allenby's successful campaigns in Palestine.

No praise is too high for these brilliant and frugal operations, which will long serve as a model in theaters . . . in which manoeuvre is possible. Nevertheless their results did not simplify the general

problem. On the contrary, by opening up a competing interest which could not influence the main decision, they even complicated it. The very serious drain of men, munitions and transport which flowed unceasingly to the Palestine Expedition ought to have been arrested by action far swifter in character and far larger in scale. Brevity and finality, not less at this period than throughout the war, were the true tests. . . . Prolonged and expanding operations in distant unrelated theatres, whether they languished as at Salonica, or crackled briskly and brightly forward under Allenby in Palestine, were not to be reconciled with a wise war policy.<sup>61</sup>

In both of those instances, of course, Churchill was still reacting to the failure of the 1915 Gallipoli campaign in a theater of operations where "the true strategic direction could have been armed with tactical force."<sup>62</sup> There, he continued to believe throughout his life, the continuum of war could have stretched upward beyond the strategic objectives in the theater of operations and decisively affected the coalition's military strategy for the entire theater of war. "If we are successful," he wrote at the time to the War Cabinet, "results of the greatest magnitude will follow, and . . . dominate the whole character of the Great War and throw all other events into the shade."<sup>63</sup> But all that depended on success at the tactical and operational levels of war in the theater and that, Churchill was convinced, could only have been achieved by speed and the concomitant element of surprise—all of which were lost as the campaign evolved. "Time was the dominant factor," he wrote of the situation after the initial landings at Gallipoli.

The extraordinary mobility and unexpectedness of amphibious power can, as has been shown, only be exerted in strict relation to limited periods of time. The surprise, the rapidity, and the intensity of the attack are all dependent on the state of the enemy's preparations at a given moment. Every movement undertaken on one side can be matched by a counter movement on the other. Force and time in this kind of operation amount to almost the same thing, and each can to a very large extent be expressed in terms of the other. A week lost was about the same as a division. Three divisions in February could have occupied the Gallipoli Peninsula with little fighting. Five could have captured it after March 18. Seven were insufficient at the end of April. . . .<sup>64</sup>

The failure of the Dardanelles campaign closed the most promising phase of the war for Churchill. "There was nothing

!oft on land now," he wrote, "but the war of exhaustion. . . . No more strategy, very lit . . . tactics."<sup>65</sup> The result was continued and fruitless bloodletting on the Western Front in 1915, impelled by the offensive spirit of the military leaders from both sides. "Neither of them," Churchill wrote of Joffre and Falkenhayn as they prepared for new attacks on each other that year, ". . . had ever sufficiently realized the blunt truth—quite obvious to common soldiers—that bullets kill men."<sup>66</sup> The Somme campaign the following year, he noted in a memorandum at the time, showed a similar indifference, weakening the Allies, "while the actual battle fronts were not appreciably altered, and . . . no strategic advantage of any kind had been gained."<sup>67</sup> Once again, there were the military leaders "unequal to the prodigious scale of events," such as General Haig. "It needs some hardihood," he wrote of Haig's biographer after the war concerning the Somme, ". . . to write: 'The events of July 1 . . . amply justified the tactical methods employed.'"<sup>68</sup> Years after the war, it was impossible for Churchill to maintain his objectivity as he looked back on Haig's persistence in attempting to bridge the continuum of war with masses of human beings. For him the British commander would always be

a great surgeon before the days of anaesthetics; versed in every detail of such science as was known to him: sure of himself, steady of poise, knife in hand, intent upon the operation; entirely removed in his professional capacity from the agony of the patient, the anguish of relations . . . He would operate without excitement, or he would depart without being affronted; and if the patient died, he would not reproach himself.<sup>69</sup>

The pattern did not change in 1917, a year in which the "obstinate offensives" continued to be "pursued regardless of loss of life until at length . . . the spirit of the British army in France was nearly quenched under the mud of Flanders and the fire of the German machine-guns."<sup>70</sup> The problem, as Churchill saw it, was a lack of operational coordination. The Germans "only had to face . . . disconnected attacks by the British. . . ." As a consequence, he concluded, "although each military episode, taken by itself, wore the aspect of a fine success, with captures of ground and guns and prisoners, in

reality we were consuming our strength without any adequate result."<sup>71</sup>

That result would only come from an operational "succession of climaxes. . . toward which everything tends, and from which permanent decisions are obtained. The climaxes have usually been called battles." The major difficulty in all this, Churchill came to believe, was that the British by 1917 were *confusing operational intensity and decisiveness with casualties*, the latter, in reality, only reflecting tactical disjointness. "All the great operations of 1916 and 1917," he wrote, "although so prolonged as to cause very heavy casualties, have involved the simultaneous employment only of comparatively small forces on comparatively small fronts. The armies have been fighting in installments. . . ." Consequently, for Churchill the war in the West had dwindled down to tactical siege operations "on a gigantic scale which however bloody and prolonged cannot yield a decisive result."

Thus, when a great battle is raging on the British front, six or eight British divisions are fighting desperately, half a dozen others are waiting to sustain them, the rest of the front is calm; twenty British divisions are remaining quietly in their trenches doing their daily routine, another are training behind the lines; 20,000 men are at school, 10,000 are playing football, 100,000 are on leave.<sup>72</sup>

## THE DEFENSIVE SOLUTION

As he looked back in revulsion at the indecisive bloodletting of the allied offensives against the entrenched German defenses, Churchill recalled a "sense of grappling with a monster of seemingly unfathomable resources and tireless strength, invulnerable—since slaughter even on the greatest scale was no deterrent. . . ." <sup>73</sup> That had not always been the case, he realized later, as he examined the life of his ancestor and discovered the shock that the sanguinary battle of Malplaquet in 1709 had had on the "intricate polite society of the Old World."<sup>74</sup> During that battle, the French commander conducted defensive operations that "extracted from the Allies a murderous toll of life," as he maneuvered back and forth

within his entrenchments. Despite Marlborough's ultimate victory, Churchill noted that "not one of the allied generals, if he could have gone back upon the past, would have fought the battle, and none of them ever fought such a battle again."<sup>75</sup> That, of course, was not the case with the allied commanders in World War I who, as Churchill constantly and emotionally pointed out after that conflict, sent their men struggling

forward through the mire and filth of the trenches, across the corpse-strewn crater fields, amid the flaring, crashing, blasting barrages and murderous machine-gun fire. . . . The battlefields . . . were the graveyards of Kitchener's Army. The flower of that generous manhood . . . was shorn away forever. . . . Unconquerable except by death, which they had conquered, they have set up a monument of native virtue which will command the wonder, the reverence and the gratitude of our island people as long as we endure as a nation among men.<sup>76</sup>

The major problem in all this, as Churchill realized early on, was that the offensive at the higher levels of war was not a viable option. The opportunity for such solutions had faded at the Marne when, although the Germans had reached their "culminating point," the Allies were equally exhausted and could not unsheath Clausewitz's "flashing sword of vengeance." The situation was not unique. "Military history," as he wrote shortly after the Marne campaign, "shows many examples of commanders marching swiftly into an enemy's country and seizing some key position of defensive strength against which the enemy is afterwards forced to dash himself. Thus are combined the advantages of a strategic offensive with those of a tactical defensive."<sup>77</sup> Added to this in the Great War was the combination of technology and entrenchments which insured that "the power of the defensive is as 3 or 4 to 1. We are therefore in the unsatisfactory position," Churchill concluded, "of having lost our ground before the defensive under modern conditions was understood, and having to retake it when the defensive has been developed into a fine art."<sup>78</sup>

For Churchill, as the war proceeded, it was obvious that the defensive posture of the Germans on the Western Front was the key to their continual success. "It is certain surveying the war as a whole," he wrote, "that the Germans were

strengthened relatively by every Allied offensive . . . launched against them, until the summer of 1918."<sup>79</sup> The situation changed that year, however, because of the great German attack in the West. "It was their offensive, not ours, that consummated their ruin," Churchill observed. "They were worn down not by Joffre, Nivelle and Haig but by Ludendorff."<sup>80</sup> Moreover, without that last operational offensive gasp, the German military situation would have remained relatively favorable. "Had they not squandered their strength in Ludendorff's supreme offensive in 1918," he concluded, "there was no reason why they should not have maintained their front in France practically unaltered during the whole of the year, and retreated at their leisure during the winter no farther than the Meuse."<sup>81</sup>

The answer for the Allies, Churchill maintained as early as 1915, was an "active defense" in the West, combining defensive operations at the lowest level with operational offensive assaults. "If our whole strategy and tactics had been directed to that end," he asked, "would not the final victory have been sooner won?"<sup>82</sup> The key to the "active defense," Churchill believed, was the deliberate weakening of various sections of the line in order to invite German attacks at the tactical level. Once the enemy had pushed in great pockets at different points in the yielding line, the Allies would "strike with independent counter-offensive on the largest scale and with deeply planned railways, not at his fortified trench line, but at the flanks of a moving, quivering line of battle!"<sup>83</sup> This type of thinking led Churchill in 1916 to assert that the French should have sacrificed ground at Verdun to gain a "greater manoeuvring latitude."<sup>84</sup> And this conceptual understanding of the interplay of defense and offense up and down the continuum of war allowed Churchill to provide Lloyd George during the German offensive of 1918 an explanation of Clausewitz's culminating point that the Prussian philosopher of war might have articulated himself. On March 24, 1918, the British Prime Minister took Churchill aside and asked why, if the Commonwealth soldiers could not hold the line they had fortified so carefully, they should be able to hold positions

further to the rear with troops who had already been defeated. "I answered," Churchill replied,

that every offensive lost its force as it proceeded. It was like throwing a bucket of water over the floor. It first rushed forward, then soaked forward, and finally stopped altogether until another bucket could be brought. After thirty or forty miles there would certainly come a considerable breathing space when the front could be reconstituted if every effort were made.<sup>85</sup>

## FORCE MULTIPLIERS

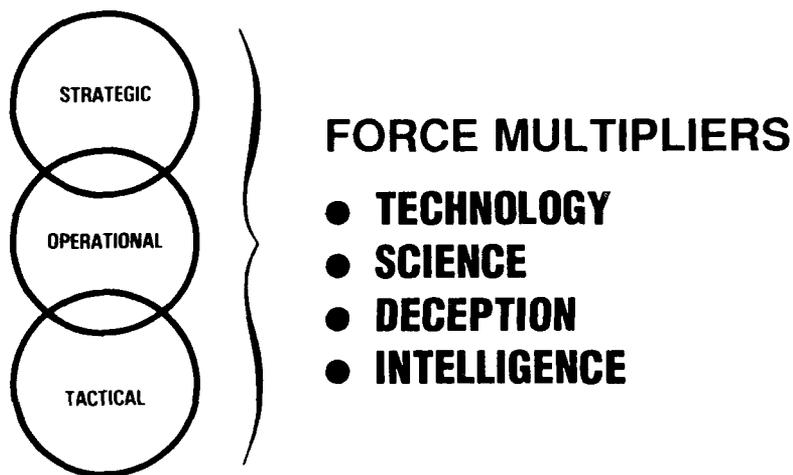


Figure 2

The stalemate of World War I drew Churchill to a variety of means by which decisive linkage could be restored to the continuum of war. (See Figure 2.) The idea of such force multipliers, he discovered in his interwar studies of his

ancestor, were very much a part of the first Duke of Marlborough's military philosophy. "As clever at piercing the hidden designs of his enemy as in beating him on the field of battle," Churchill wrote admiringly of Marlborough, "he united the cunning of the fox to the force of the lion."<sup>86</sup> And so it was with Churchill. He became a firm believer in deception operations at all levels of war from his experiences in World War I as well as from his later studies of Marlborough's campaigns. And to an appreciation of tactical intelligence and all that could reveal of enemy capabilities, he added in the Great War an understanding of what operational and strategic intelligence could mean in terms of enemy intentions. The advent of wireless communication, in this regard, opened up an entirely new field of signal intelligence (Sigint), the impact of which Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, grasped immediately.

The science and technology that spawned Sigint also caused the attritive stalemate on the Western Front. Ironically, part of the cure for that stalemate lay in the cause—a fact that Churchill realized from the first bloody encounters in the trenches. As a result, he devoted much of his efforts throughout the war to creating the means for technological surprise. It was not an easy task. "In nearly every great war there is some new mechanical feature introduced the early understanding of which confers important advantages," Churchill noted in his study of Marlborough. "Military opinion is naturally rigid. Men held in the grip of discipline, moving perilously from fact to fact, are nearly always opposed to new ideas."<sup>87</sup> But those ideas must be explored, he concluded, if the vertical continuum of war was to be restored.

There is required for the composition of a great commander not only massive common sense and reasoning power, not only imagination, but also an element of legerdemain, an original and sinister touch, which leaves the enemy puzzled as well as beaten. It is because military leaders are credited with gifts of this order which enable them to ensure victory and save slaughter that their profession is held in such high honour. For if their art were nothing more than a dreary process of exchanging lives, and counting heads at the end, they would rank much lower in the scale of human esteem.<sup>88</sup>

*Intelligence.* Early British codebreaking success in World War I began Churchill's lifelong enthusiasm for Sigint. In November 1914, he issued a memorandum, for which he devised a new formula, "Exclusively Secret," directing the study of all decoded intercepts "in order to penetrate the German mind and movements. . . ."89 By the end of that year, a small staff of cryptographers were implementing that charter from Room 40 of the Admiralty Old Building, and as their numbers grew, from a series of adjoining rooms, but still known by the innocuous collective title as "Room 40 O.B." Churchill's enthusiasm for this new organization was quickly justified. In January 1915, Admiral von Pohl submitted a memo to William II recommending German submarine attacks on merchant shipping and the dispatch of air ships to attack Britain. "So excellent was our Intelligence Service," Churchill wrote later, "that reports of what was passing in the minds of the German Naval Staff reached us even before Admiral von Pohl's memorandum had been laid before the Emperor."<sup>90</sup>

At the strategic level, so long as Room 40 could continue this type of successful decryption efforts, there would always be a forewarning of any German move into the North Sea. This meant, in turn, that it was no longer necessary for the Admiralty to keep the Grand Fleet in a constant state of complete readiness, nor were the sweeps by that fleet of the North Sea required on a continual basis. The implications for the fleet as well as for the British people were not lost on the First Lord.

Without the cryptographers' department . . . the whole course of the naval war would have been different. The British Fleet could not have remained continuously at sea without speedily wearing down its men and machinery. Unless it had remained almost continuously at sea, the Germans would have been able to bombard two or three times all our East Coast towns . . . and returned each time safely, or at least without superior attack, to their home bases. . . . The nation would have been forced to realize that the ruin of its East Coast towns was as much their part of the trial and burden as the destruction of so many Provinces to France.<sup>91</sup>

At the operational level, Sigint could be equally effective as Churchill demonstrated after the war in his analysis of the opening German eastern campaign in that conflict. On August

24, 1914, Ludendorff hesitated to dispatch two of his corps from their positions opposite Rennenkampf's advancing First Army in the north to attack the flank of Samsonov's Second Army in the south at Tannenberg. At that key moment, Churchill wrote, the Russian "radio now with bland simplicity proclaimed to the world in two uncoded messages exactly what Rennenkampf and Samsonov would do or not do on the 25th and 26th. The German wireless station . . . listened to these amazing disclosures" which "told them . . . that Rennenkampf's army could not take part in Samsonov's battles."<sup>92</sup>

After the war, as he worked on the biography of his ancestor, Churchill reinforced his appreciation of operational intelligence. That appreciation was particularly apparent in his description of the 1704 campaign, as Marlborough's "Scarlet Caterpillar" crawled across Europe from the North Sea to southern Germany. During the march, the British leader was provided information by an agent on the entire French campaign plan. The plan had been taken from the cabinet of the War Minister in Paris, deciphered, and sent to Marlborough at his camp by long and circuitous routes through France and Germany. For Marlborough, Churchill pointed out, the plan "only confirmed what his occult common sense had divined. But it must have been nonetheless very reassuring."<sup>93</sup> So must have been the continual flow of information on his French opponent, Marshal Tallard, provided by his elaborate Secret Service, on which the normally stingy British commander consistently lavished funds. "Even more remarkable was Marlborough's own intelligence," Churchill added in describing the Blenheim campaign, "for on July 3 he already knew almost exactly the number of battalions and squadrons which the King had so secretly assigned to Tallard only ten days before at Versailles. A message could hardly have covered the distance quicker."<sup>94</sup>

*Deception.* Deception was always a favorite means for Churchill to facilitate the vertical linkage in the continuum of war. Early in World War I, he was instrumental in such an operation at the tactical level—an operation that had decisive military operational and strategic results. On August 26, 1914,

as First Lord, he dispatched a brigade of marines to Ostend "in the hopes that it would attract the enemy and give him the impression that larger forces would follow by sea."<sup>95</sup> To the small force about to embark, Churchill pointed out that the object was "to create a diversion . . . and to threaten the western flank of the German southward advance. It should therefore be ostentatious."<sup>96</sup> That same day, in order to provide further publicity, he announced in Commons that a British force had begun landing at Ostend. By September 5, the momentous day in the Battle of the Marne when French troops from Paris were moving to strike at the flank of the German First Army, that army believed that its rear was seriously menaced, primarily due to the Ostend expedition. How much effect that belief had on the German command at that crucial stage is not definitely known. Nevertheless, the September 5 message that the "English are disembarking fresh troops continuously on the Belgian coast," must have placed insidiously enervating pressures on the German commanders as the Battle of the Marne reached its climax.<sup>97</sup>

After the war, as he immersed himself in Marlborough's 18th century campaigns, Churchill lingered in great detail over every deception operation conducted by his ancestor. At Elixem in 1705, Marlborough's deception plan, which included the construction of eleven bridges that were never to be used, was not only designed to fool the French but his cautious Dutch allies as well. On the morning of July 18, the Duke's forces overwhelmed the outnumbered French units at Elixem, breaching the Lines of Brabant, the great defensive system that ran from Antwerp to Namur, while the preponderance of the French army, reacting to Marlborough's deception, was far to the south. "There is no moment in war more thrilling," Churchill wrote of that operation's successful denouement, "than a surprise attack at dawn."<sup>98</sup> In a similar manner, there was Marlborough's feint before Tournai in 1709 where the "surprise was complete and the fortress was caught with barely five thousand men."<sup>99</sup> And in the 1711 campaign, marked by "the artifices and stratagem which he used," Churchill detailed a series of operational level deceptions implemented by Marlborough's forces as they "traversed those broad

undulations between the Vimy Ridge and Arras which two centuries later were to be dyed with British and Canadian blood."<sup>100</sup>

But it was the Blenheim campaign of 1704 that truly reinforced Churchill's appreciation of deception as a force multiplier. In August and September of 1704, Churchill toured his ancestor's battlefields on the Continent, and was struck by the success of the overall deception operation that governed the Grand Alliance march into Bavaria. On September 25, he wrote his cousin, the ninth Duke of Marlborough, about the first Duke's departure from Coblenz on the march that would end at Blenheim, emphasizing that:

none of the hostile watching armies ready to spring, not even our army, was sure where it was going to. They still thought it was a campaign in Alsace: but no, a fortnight later the long scarlet columns swing off to the Danube. . . . This marvellous march was distinguished . . . for its absolute secrecy and mystery—no one knew, not the Queen, not Sarah, not the English government, except Eugene. . . .<sup>101</sup>

Eugene was, of course, Prince Eugene of Savoy, Britain's great ally who was to play a major role in Marlborough's deception plan at Blenheim. Prior to the battle, Eugene gave Tallard the impression by numerous spies and deserters that he was moving back to his old position on the Lines of Stollhofen, thinly held against the French General Villeroy by the corps of the Prince of Anhalt. He then marched his forces ostentatiously north in the direction of the Lines. On July 27, he reached Tuebingen, then vanished from the French view among the desolate hills of Swabia. Villeroy was convinced that Eugene was still close to the lines and showed no sign of movement toward Bavaria. As a consequence, Churchill concluded, "Villeroy, gaping at the half-vacant Lines of Stollhofen, need no longer be considered as a factor in the fateful decisions impending upon the Danube."<sup>102</sup>

Marlborough coordinated every aspect of that deception. There was thus no sudden surprising arrival of Eugene to rescue the coalition commander at Blenheim in the nick of time,

as had sometimes been reported until Churchill set the record straight in his biography. In fact, as Churchill convincingly demonstrated, Marlborough had a superabundance of information from his own Secret Service and confirmed it where necessary by Eugene's field reports. "The accuracy of his information about the enemy," he wrote, "and also the speed with which it reached him is remarkable. He knew . . . exactly what had happened . . . and where Tallard was baking his bread and would march."<sup>103</sup> The key to all that was Eugene, moving secretly with his forces to join those of Marlborough. "Eugene knew that, whatever might miscarry behind him," Churchill concluded, ". . . he must arrive on the Danube somewhere between Ulm and Donauwoerth at the same time that Tallard joined the Elector. Marlborough in all his conduct counted on him to do this, and his own arrangements made the juncture sure and certain."<sup>104</sup>

With all the coalition forces gathered together, Marlborough engaged in another deception operation on August 12 by planting four deserters in the French camp. As Churchill described it, each deserter told the same story: Marlborough had arrived with his troops; but the entire allied army was going to retire under a bold display toward Noerdlingen on the morning of August 13. That information appeared to be confirmed by reports from the French cavalry scouts, who had watched the dust clouds above the allied baggage columns which Marlborough had sent off on a false march, and by planted rumors that came in from the countryside. Marshal Tallard and his staff agreed as a result that they should not attack so strong an army, but more important, that the allies themselves would not attack. At 7 a.m. on August 13, just prior to Marlborough's attack on the French forces, Tallard wrote a letter to Louis XIV, describing how the enemy forces had begun to assemble before daybreak at 2 a.m. and were now drawn up at the end of their camp. "Rumour in the countryside," he concluded confidently, "expects them at Noerdlingen."<sup>105</sup>

*Science and Technology.* Churchill's natural interest in scientific gadgetry deepened as World War I progressed. Increasingly, he saw science and technology as a means to

break the military deadlock, much as innovations ranging from the stirruped cavalry horse to the long bow and the Maxim gun had enabled armies to achieve surprise and win unexpected victories in the past. "Machines save lives," he asserted in the March 1917 Army Estimates debate, "machine-power is a substitute for man-power. . . ." Unless new devices were developed, he continued, "I do not see how we are to avoid being thrown back on those dismal processes of waste and slaughter which are called attrition."<sup>106</sup> At the end of the year, Churchill reflected on allied progress with "new devices" and the fact that the Germans appeared bent on resuming the offensive. "Let them traipse across the crater fields," he wrote. "Let them rejoice in the occasional capture of placeless names and sterile ridges; & let us dart here & there armed with science and surprise. . . ." <sup>107</sup>

Churchill's attitude about the role that scientific and technological surprise would play in the continuum of war was demonstrated by his involvement in the evolution of the tank in World War I. In the beginning, his restless imagination concentrated on protecting his fledgling Royal Naval Air Service with an armored machine possessing large driving wheels and rollers in front to crush both barbed wire and trenches. It was not until 1915, because of the failure of those experiments coupled with the persuasive advice of several army officers, that Churchill advocated a tank with a caterpillar system which could advance into German lines, "smashing away all the obstructions and sweeping the trenches with their machine-gun fire. . . ." <sup>108</sup>

Nevertheless, Churchill quickly learned as First Lord of the Admiralty that the process of inventing was only part of the problem in the complex power hierarchy of total war. In 1915, for instance, he tied the lack of progress in tank development directly to government indifference. "The problem," he wrote, "of crossing two or three hundred yards of open ground and of traversing . . . barbed wire in the face of rifles and machine guns . . . ought not to be beyond the range of modern science if sufficient authority . . . backed the investigation. The absence of any satisfactory method cannot be supplied by the bare

breasts of gallant men."<sup>109</sup> And after the war, Churchill returned to the subject when he credited the armor pioneers in the British officer corps with seizing the idea of the tank and even presenting specific proposals before the War Office. "These officers," he noted, "had not however the executive authority which alone could ensure progress and their efforts were brought to nothing by the obstruction of some of their superiors. They were unfortunate in not being able to command the resources necessary for action, or to convince those who had the power to act."<sup>110</sup>

With authority must come coordination extending from the lab to the trenches. "A hiatus exists between inventors who know what they could invent, if they only knew what was wanted," Churchill wrote in 1916, "and the soldiers who know, or ought to know, what they want and would ask for it if they only knew how much science could do for them."<sup>111</sup> That belief was reinforced by his experience with the Stokes gun, a hand-held mortar whose design was based on a front line need for immediately responsive, short-range indirect fire to be used in attacks on trenches at close quarters. "All the ideas on which this scheme rests," he wrote after the demonstration, "have come from officers who have been themselves constantly engaged in trench warfare. In order to give a fair chance to such a method of attack, it is necessary that it should not be attempted until it can be applied on a very large scale."<sup>112</sup>

With that last injunction, Churchill returned to the continuum of war and the key element of operational surprise. In any armor attack, he emphasized as early as December 1915, tactical surprise should not be squandered when the means were lacking to mesh the results into an operational whole. Less than a year later at the Somme, however, 35 tanks were dispersed in small, ineffective groups along the entire front of the Fourth Army as it attacked. Lloyd George informed Churchill just prior to the assault. "I was so shocked at the proposal to expose this tremendous secret to the enemy upon such a petty scale," Churchill recalled, ". . . that I sought an interview with Mr. Asquith."<sup>113</sup> But to no avail. The attack was a limited success which, in Churchill's opinion,

recklessly revealed to the enemy a secret that might have produced allied victory in 1917. The immense advantage of novelty and surprise was thus squandered while the number of the tanks was small, while their condition was experimental and their crews almost untrained. This priceless conception . . . was revealed to the Germans for the mere petty purpose of taking a few ruined villages. . . . The enemy was familiarized with them by their piecemeal use. . . .<sup>114</sup>

It was not until the Battle of Cambrai on November 29, 1917 that massed armor combined with sufficient tactical surprise to achieve a breakthrough in the German lines. "All the requisite conditions were at last accorded," Churchill wrote. "The tanks were to operate on ground not yet ploughed up by artillery, against a front not yet prepared to meet an offensive. Above all, Surprise! The tanks were themselves to open the attack."<sup>115</sup> That development had occurred because of the technological progress in other areas such as the science of gunnery which meant, in Churchill's words, that "indispensable preparation" would no longer destroy "indispensable surprise."<sup>116</sup> By the fall of 1917, as a consequence, artillery did not require preliminary registration to be on target, and the British were able to open accurate, preplanned fire at H-Hour just as the British tanks moved forward in the attack in the first half light of the dawn.

Despite technological advances, however, Cambrai still represented for Churchill only a single tactical event separated by a wide and disjointed gulf from the higher levels of war. "If British and French war leaders had possessed . . . the vision and comprehension which is expected from the honoured chiefs of great armies," he wrote, "there is no reason why . . . three or four concerted battles like Cambrai could not have been fought simultaneously in the spring of 1917. . . . Then indeed the roll forward of the whole army might have been achieved and the hideous deadlock broken."<sup>117</sup> Those leaders, in Churchill's judgment, had been captured by technology instead of harnessing it for novel, imaginative use that restored operational surprise and thus operational maneuver to warfare. Nevertheless, as he also realized, the quantity and scope of the technological innovations that were

provided to the Allies by 1918 ultimately allowed even Marshals Haig and Foch to move to the higher levels of war's continuum.

Both were now provided with offensive weapons, which the military science of neither would have conceived. . . . The Goddess of Surprise had at last returned to the Western Front. Thus both . . . were vindicated in the end. They were throughout consistently true to their professional theories, and when in the fifth campaign of the war the facts began for the first time to fit the theories, they reaped their just reward.<sup>118</sup>

## CHAPTER 3

### THE BUILDING BLOCKS— THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION

The U.S. Department of Defense *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines national strategy as the "art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, *during peace and war*, to secure national objectives."<sup>1</sup> The inclusion of peace as well as war is understandable, given the emphasis in the nuclear age on what Clausewitz termed "preparation for war." Nevertheless, it is useful to focus on national strategy purely in a wartime setting, for conflict ultimately tests the ability of a nation and its leaders to make the calculated relationship of means and ends that is the essence of successful strategy.

That type of national calculation is described by the term "Grand Strategy," the role of which, as Liddell Hart has pointed out, "is to coordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, toward the attainment of the political objective of the war. . . ." This aspect, he concludes, causes a grand strategy to look "beyond the war to the subsequent peace. It should not only combine the various instruments, but so regulate their use as to avoid damage to the future state of peace. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Grand Strategy, then, is the use in wartime of all the instruments of national power. Those instruments can be conveniently broken down on a horizontal plane into the categories described in the JCS definition of national strategy: political, economic, psychological and military (Figure 3).

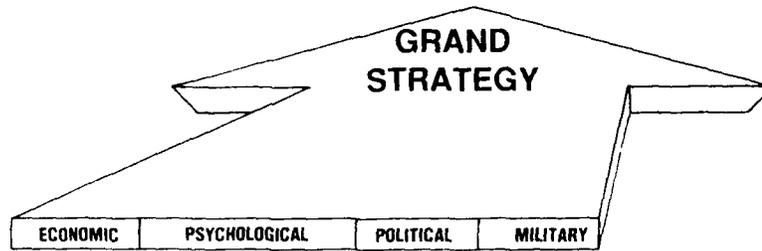


Figure 3

The linchpin in this horizontal design is the military instrument of power at the national strategic level—the apex, as we have seen, of the vertical continuum of war. Normally, no matter how sophisticated the interaction of all elements of national power during wartime, military force plays the ultimate and decisive role. Moreover, the various levels of war will not only influence the national military strategy, but can directly affect at the national policy level the other instruments of power that support the overall grand design. Compounding this

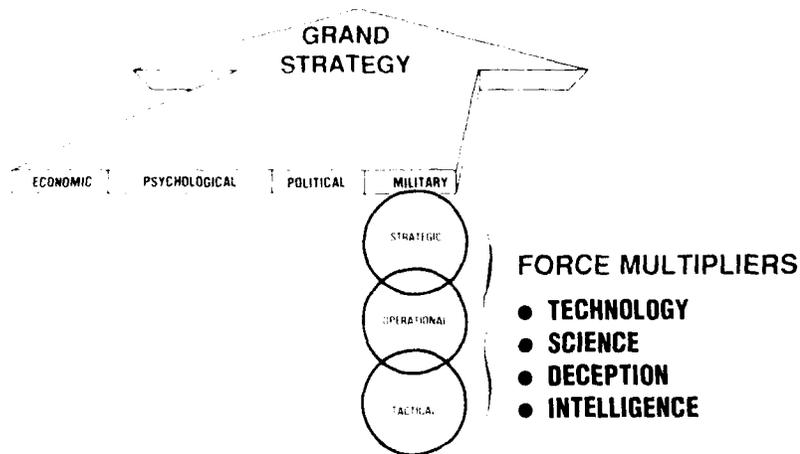


Figure 4

already intricate picture is the fact that force multipliers at all levels of the vertical continuum are often inextricably entwined with the political, economic and psychological aspects of grand strategy (Figure 4).<sup>3</sup>

In his early encounters with Victorian wars, Churchill showed some awareness of these elements that make up grand strategy. To be aware, however, was not necessarily to approve of the intrusion of nonmilitary matters. "Of course nowadays every budding war is spoiled and nipped by some wily diplomat," he wrote his mother from India in 1895; and a few years later with the Malakand Field Force on India's northwest frontier, he did not hide his contempt for the political officers assigned to that unit.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, in his account of the 1898 Sudan campaign, the young Victorian showed a marked appreciation of the political and psychological interaction with the military aspects of that operation launched by the Conservative government.

The diplomatist said 'It is to please the Triple Alliance.' The politician said 'It is to triumph over the Radicals.' The polite person said 'It is to restore the Khedive's rule over the Sudan.' The man in the street . . . said 'It is to avenge General Gordon.'<sup>5</sup>

That type of grand strategic interaction was further brought home to Churchill by the increased involvement of the British public in the Boer War at the turn of the century. To begin with, there was the national outcry at the "Black Week" of December 1899, during which occurred the defeats of Lord Methuen at Magersfontein, General Gatacre at Stormberg, and Sir Redvers Buller at Coleriso—the latter with the loss of eleven artillery pieces without breaking the Boer investment of Kimberley and Ladysmith. And conversely, there was the national exultation on the night of May 18, 1900 when the siege of Mafeking was raised and all London rioted with joy. That night, in the interval before the last act of "Lohengrin" at Covent Gardens, the Prince and Princess of Wales stood with the audience and sang the national anthem. But the humorist, Saki, put the victory in perspective in one of his brief sketches and thus introduced a new word to the English language.

Mother, may I go and maffick,  
Tear around and hinder traffick?<sup>6</sup>

For Churchill, these aspects of the Boer War demonstrated that the vertical military continuum was no longer sufficient in itself to meet the demands of modern conflict. In a prescient speech in May 1901, he pointed out that "a European war cannot be anything but a cruel, heart-rending struggle, which, if we are ever to enjoy the bitter fruits of victory, must demand, perhaps for several years, the whole manhood of the nation, the entire suspension of peaceful industries, and the concentration to one end of every vital energy in the country." Earlier wars on the margin of the Empire were one thing, he concluded.

but now, when mighty populations are impelled against each other, each individual severally embittered and inflamed—when the resources of science and civilization sweep away everything that might mitigate their fury, a European war can only end in the ruin of the vanquished and the scarcely less fatal dislocation and exhaustion of the conquerors. Democracy is more vindictive than cabinets. The wars of peoples will be more terrible than the wars of kings.<sup>7</sup>

In World War I, Churchill confirmed this aspect of a larger wartime strategy. "It is established that henceforth whole populations will take part in war," he wrote, "all doing their utmost, all subjected to the fury of the enemy." Out of that conflict emerged for the young statesman certain sombre facts, "solid, inexorable, like the shapes of mountains from drifting mist," which directly concerned the role of grand strategy. "There are many kinds of manoeuvres in war, some only of which take place upon the battlefield," he concluded. "There are manoeuvres far to the flank or rear. There are manoeuvres in time, in diplomacy, in mechanics, in psychology; all of which are removed from the battlefield, but react often decisively upon it. . . ."

It was a broader picture of wartime strategy that would have been understood by Marlborough, Churchill believed, who "was not only Commander-in-Chief of the English and Dutch

armies, but very largely a Prime Minister as well." As a consequence, he concluded in the interwar years, his ancestor "could . . . feel towards the whole problem a responsibility different from that of the leaders of individual armies, however large."<sup>9</sup> It was in this context that Churchill came to realize that the vertical military continuum was only one aspect of total war. A massive defeat like Tannenberg at the operational and theater strategic level, for instance, did not mean the fall of a government with sufficiently strong nerves and untapped resources. Clear decisions were no longer possible on that continuum alone. Even campaigns and major operations were no more than competitions in mutual attrition in which "the strength being eroded had to be measured in terms not simply of military units but of national manpower, economic productivity, and ultimately the social stability of the belligerent powers."<sup>10</sup>

## THE POLITICAL CONNECTION

In the 1930s, looking back on Marlborough's career, Churchill neatly summarized much of his thoughts on the interaction of the military and political instruments of power in grand strategy. "His life was a ceaseless triple struggle," he wrote of his ancestor, "first to preserve the political foundation in England which would enable her to dominate the continental war; secondly, to procure effective military action from the crowd of discordant, jealous, and often incompetent or lukewarm allies; and thirdly—and this was the easiest part—to beat the French in the field."<sup>11</sup> That the political foundations of his nation were inextricably linked with the fortunes of war at all levels was by that time a truism for Churchill who had been thrust from office as First Lord by the operational defeats on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915. "At home," he could thus note sympathetically of Marlborough's situation two centuries before, ". . . the wolves were always growling."<sup>12</sup> In 1703, as an example, there were the violent attacks by the High Tory Party on the Duke's conduct of the war. The Whig Party, Churchill concluded, "had hitherto most loyally voted the supplies and sustained the policy of a grand land war; but they

expected results. Without victories and solid gains they saw themselves stultified and pilloried in the party fight."<sup>13</sup>

The answer in that instance lay in the victorious Blenheim campaign of 1704. Yet even that outcome was colored by politics. After the storming of the Shellenberg in that campaign where Marlborough pressed the central attack, in Churchill's words, "with a disregard of human life unusual in these prolonged and stately wars," the Tories were not alone in asking at home: "What was the sense of capturing a hill in the heart of Germany at such heavy loss? Were there not many such hills?"<sup>14</sup>

Marlborough's Blenheim campaign was the result of Bavaria's joining France and Spain in 1702, the strategic equivalent, Churchill believed, of Turkey's coalition with the Central Powers in 1914, since Bavaria's defection separated the Austrian Empire from the West much in the way Turkey's hostility cut Russia off from the Allies in World War I. The role of a government in recruiting allies, Churchill realized, was a vital part of grand strategy. "The manoeuvre which brings an ally into the field," he wrote, "is as serviceable as that which wins a great battle."<sup>15</sup> That was, of course, particularly true of the U.S. entry into the war, an event captured in microcosm by his description at the Chemin des Dames in May 1918 of the "impression made upon the hard-pressed French by this seemingly inexhaustible flood of gleaming youth in its first maturity of health and vigour. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

Even the failure to recruit such allies by either side, Churchill realized, could have momentous results. There were, for instance, the disadvantages to the Allies of the Dutch neutrality throughout the war which kept the Rhine open for Germany and closed the Scheldt to Antwerp. In that case, Churchill pointed out, "a neutral Holland was of far more use to Germany than a hostile, a conquered, or even an allied Holland."<sup>17</sup> But neutrality was not normally such a boon to the Central Powers whose efforts to recruit allies, like those of the Entente, depended heavily on the fortunes of war at every level of the vertical continuum. The twin defeats in September 1914,

for instance, of the Germans at the Marne and the Austrians around Lemberg decisively influenced several neutrals. "Roumania had actually decided at the beginning of September," Churchill observed, "to make proposals to the Central Powers. . . . But under the decisions of the battlefields in France and Galicia the offer was suppressed. . . . Bulgaria, the spectator of the Austrian repulse by Serbia, wrapped herself in impenetrable reserve."<sup>18</sup> This linkage of the vertical continuum to the political part of the horizontal policy plane, Churchill also emphasized, proved to be equally strong for the Western allies.

After war had been declared, diplomacy counted little with neutrals. They were no longer concerned with what was said or promised. The questions they asked themselves were, What was going to happen, and who was going to win? They were not prepared to accept British assurances upon either point. We were astonished to find that many of these neutrals seemed to doubt that Great Britain would certainly be victorious. One pitied their obliquity. But they persisted in it. The Foreign Office talked well: but it was like talking to the void.<sup>19</sup>

Once allies were recruited, Churchill realized how hard it was to keep them together. The problems with coalition warfare in World War I were part of his personal experiences. Those impressions were reinforced in the interwar years as he examined Marlborough's efforts to coalesce the disparate Dutch, British and German forces that formed the core of the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV's France in the War of Spanish Succession. "It was never in his power to give orders which covered the whole field of the war," Churchill observed in this regard, "and in many quarters . . . his command was disputed."<sup>20</sup> Added to this were the centrifugal tendencies of sovereign states with their own national interests. "The history of all coalitions," he concluded at the end of the study of his ancestor's Grand Alliance, "is a tale of the reciprocal complaints of allies. . . ."<sup>21</sup>

And those complaints, Churchill knew, could reach serious proportions if coalition progress throughout the vertical military continuum was not forthcoming. "Fear and hatred of French ascendancy," he wrote of the situation in 1703, "would not hold

the Alliance together beyond the hour when hope of beating France departed. . . . The Grand Alliance quivered at this moment in every part of its fragile organization. Marlborough saw that without some enormous new upholding force it must come clattering down."<sup>22</sup> The answer once again was the Blenheim campaign, in which Marlborough's operational art produced political-military results on a grand strategic scale. "The wide plain, bathed in the morning sunlight," Churchill wrote of the Blenheim battlefield, "was covered with hostile squadrons and battalions, already close at hand and steadily marching on."

But behind this magnificent array, if the count could have discerned them, were the shapes of great causes and the destinies of many powerful nations. Europe protested against the military domination of a single Power. The Holy Roman Empire pleaded for another century of life. The ancient rights of the Papacy against Gallicanism and the ascendancy of a Universal over a National church—despite the mistaken partisanship of the reigning Pope—were, in fact, fatefully at stake. The Dutch Republic sought to preserve its independence, and Prussia its kingdom rank. And from across the seas in England the Protestant succession, Parliamentary government, and the future of the British Empire advanced with confident tread. All these had brought their cases before the dread tribunal now set up in this Danube plain.<sup>23</sup>

## **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC CONNECTIONS**

World War I required a total mobilization for which there was no example to guide the British government. It was a total war in the sense that its rigors were not just confined to front line combatants, but to entire populations on what came to be called the "Home Front," no matter how distant from the battle area. For the people of Britain, as the war progressed, the conflict brought every aspect of their lives under an ever-increasing control and regimentation ranging from freedom of action and speech to employment and even diet.

Churchill was intimately involved in many of the major issues that arose from the regimentation of the Home Front.

As early as 1915, he was urging a more discriminate acceptance of volunteers in terms of civilian employment in war essential industries; and during the conscription crisis of 1916, he fought against the compromise solution which "neither secured the numbers of men that would be needed, nor did it meet the new fierce demand for equalization of sacrifice."<sup>24</sup> But his head-on encounter with industrial unrest, after joining Lloyd George's government in 1917 to head the Ministry of Munitions, brought home to Churchill the importance of the psychological and economic aspects of grand strategy. Typically, he answered many of the grievances with pragmatic, common sense solutions that demonstrated to the workers their importance in the total effort. That effort, he told over 4,000 workers at the Ponders End munitions factory in October 1917, "was not a war only of armies, or even mainly of armies. It was a war of whole nations. . . ." <sup>25</sup>

The key to the Home Front, Churchill came to realize, was national will molded by strong leadership and propaganda into an unswerving belief in the worthiness of the war effort. In Churchill's only novel, *Savrola*, the protagonist is asked in this regard how he knows he will ultimately triumph. "Because we have got might on our side, as well as moral ascendancy," he replies.<sup>26</sup> In the interwar years, Churchill returned in his study of Marlborough to the dominant influence this psychological aspect of grand strategy could have on the vertical continuum of war, even entitling one chapter of that biography, "The Home Front." And in his analysis of the closing years of the War of the Spanish Succession, he admitted that even his ancestor could be wrong concerning that influence. In the discussions in that war about a possible conflict in Spain, Churchill concluded in terms that presaged the limited wars of a later era,

Marlborough himself considered that a single campaign would suffice. It may well be that he greatly underrated the resisting power of a nation, and thought of it in terms of professional armies. He might have fallen into the same trap as was a hundred years later to ruin Napoleon. There was always the possibility which Bolingbroke . . . was many years later to describe: 'That armies of

twenty or thirty thousand men might walk about the country till  
Doomsday . . . without effect.<sup>27</sup>

This type of will meant even the most crushing military defeats in the field would not be necessarily decisive—particularly if they could be counterbalanced by positive news as occurred for the Germans in the fall of 1914. "The dazzling victories in the East," Churchill observed, "came just at that moment when the German people became aware of the fact that they had been repulsed from Paris. . . . They nursed and warmed themselves with the good tidings that Hindenburg had smashed the Russians."<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, if the national will was weakened or lacking, the most trifling military defeat at the tactical or operational level could be decisive. In 1918, for example, the two battles of Salonica and Vittorio Veneto, both almost negligible by earlier standards, brought about the collapse of the exhausted Central Powers. In that regard, the subsequent "undefeated" claims of the German military feeding into the "stab in the back" myth were appeals to anachronistic criteria that were as irrelevant as they were untrue. The vertical continuum of war could no longer be divorced from its parent society. "Once the national will to war had been exhausted," Michael Howard has pointed out, "that great reserve of enthusiasm and patriotism and endurance built up over a century of careful training and squeezed to the last drop by relentless war propaganda, the military instruments of that will were as useless as empty suits of armour."<sup>29</sup>

Nowhere was this phenomenon better illustrated than in the 1918 Ludendorff offensive in which the psychological and economic instruments worked in adverse synergism against Germany. "Here then was the wearing down," Churchill wrote,

which coming at the moment when the German national spirit was enfeebled by its exertions during four years and by the cumulative effects of the blockade, led to the German retreat on the Western Front; to the failure to make an effective withdrawal to the Antwerp-Meuse line with all the bargaining possibilities that this afforded, and to the sudden final collapse of German resistance in November 1918.<sup>30</sup>

In all that, the inexorable economic pressure of the British blockage was particularly effective, a fact realized by Churchill who criticized Falkenhayn for turning west in 1916 at Verdun to attack the strongest enemy at the strongest point. "It was a decision that not only underestimated the allied defenses in France, but took altogether too narrow and too purely military view of the general position of Germany and her allies." The vital need, he observed, was for Germany to break the blockade which with its "vast process of starvation not only in food but in materials indispensable to modern armies was remorselessly and unceasingly at work." Since that was impossible, there should be a drive to the east and southeast where Germany "could find the feeding grounds and breathing room . . . without which her military strength however impressive was but a wasting security."<sup>31</sup> In this way, Churchill concluded, Falkenhayn could

have gained the vast food and fuel regions which stretched from Galicia to the Caspian Sea. He would thus have broken the naval blockage by continental conquest, and gained from the land much that the British Navy denied upon the sea. Instead, in approved professional spirit he chose to gnaw the iron hills of Verdun and their steel defenders. Thus were the Allies delivered from the penalties which their strategic follies in 1915 had deserved, and the equipoise of the war preserved for another bloody year.<sup>32</sup>

Falkenhayn's decision to attack Verdun was based to a large extent on psychological factors—a "simple solution," in Churchill's words, "for world-wide problems" in which whether Verdun "was taken or not, the French Army would be ruined and the French nation sickened of war."<sup>33</sup> In a military sense, Churchill knew that Falkenhayn was right. "At its highest," he observed, "the capture of Verdun would have been a military convenience to the Germans, and in a lesser degree an inconvenience to the French."<sup>34</sup> The problem, however, was that the "psychological conceptions which had led Falkenhayn to select Verdun as the point of the German attack became mingled in the tactical sphere. . . ."<sup>35</sup> As a result, "anything less than absolute victory would count as a failure for Germany. . . . Only one result, and that the most difficult, could achieve his purpose. A hundred variations would meet the modest

requirements of his antagonists."<sup>36</sup> Thus it was, Churchill concluded, even though the "Germans had performed prodigies, . . . the world sustained only one impression, namely that the French held Verdun; and that impression was grievous to the German cause."<sup>37</sup>

In a similar manner, the Battle of Jutland that same year demonstrated for Churchill how entwined the psychological and economic instruments of power were with the military instrument at all levels of war. Those considerations made the possible outcome of the battle a very uneven proposition for the former First Lord. On the one hand, a decisive British defeat could be catastrophic, which is why Churchill considered the commander of the British Grand Fleet to be "the only man on either side who could lose the war in an afternoon."<sup>38</sup>

The trade and food-supply of the British islands would have been paralysed. Our armies on the Continent would have been cut from their base by superior naval force. All the transportation of the Allies would have been jeopardized and hampered. The United States could not have intervened in the war. Starvation and invasion would have descended upon the British people. Ruin utter and final would have overwhelmed the Allied cause.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, Churchill concluded concerning a decisive German defeat, the "psychological effect upon the German nation cannot be estimated. . . ."<sup>40</sup>

In fact, the German High Seas Fleet won a minor tactical victory at Jutland. For Germany, the strategic situation remained at least as bad as it had previously, and arguably worse since the German commander only allowed that fleet in the future to put to sea in an even more grudging and sporadic fashion than before. It was, as far as Churchill was concerned, a situation that already obtained and one which should not have been risked on one roll of the dice at the middle and lower levels of the vertical military continuum. "Although the battle squadrons of the Grand Fleet have been denied . . . decisive battle," he wrote of the British forces, "yet from the beginning they have enjoyed all the fruits of a complete victory. If

Germany had never built a Dreadnought, . . . the control and authority of the British Navy could not have been more effective. . . . There was no need for the British to seek battle at all. . . ."41

In 1917, the national will of the Russian Empire collapsed in revolution, a psychological blow to the Entente that had an impact on all instruments of grand strategy, to include the naval encirclement of Germany. Churchill was aware of this connection, pointing out to the War Cabinet that "our policy of blockage on which the Navy have hitherto relied can no longer be counted upon to produce decisive results now that the Germans have got enormous portions of Russia at their disposal."<sup>42</sup> The counterbalance to this development in the East was the entrance of the United States into the war, the moral and psychological consequences of which, he concluded, marked the turning point in the conflict.

The war had lasted nearly three years; all the original combatants were at extreme tension; on both sides the dangers of the front were matched by other dangers far behind the throbbing lines of contact. Russia has succumbed to these new dangers; Austria is breaking up; Turkey and Bulgaria are wearing thin; Germany herself is forced even in full battle to concede far-reaching Constitutional rights and franchise to her people; France is desperate; Italy is about to pass within an ace of destruction; and even in stolid Britain there is a different light in the eyes of men. Suddenly a nation of one hundred and twenty million unfurls her standard on which is already the stronger side; suddenly the most numerous democracy in the world, long posing as a judge, is hurled, nay, hurls itself into the conflict. The loss of Russia was forgotten in this new reinforcement. Defeatist movements were strangled on the one side and on the other inflamed. Far and wide through every warring nation spread these two opposite impressions—"The whole world is against us"—"The whole world is on our side."<sup>43</sup>

## THE HORIZONTAL-VERTICAL INTERFACE

The issue of overall centralized government direction of grand strategy was for Churchill the key problem that had emerged from the complications of modern war. To begin with,

there was the decisionmaking process. In peacetime, under a popular and democratic form of government, he acknowledged, that process could be decentralized to some extent with compromise being "very often not merely necessary but actually beneficial. . . ."44 But in war, particularly total war, decisionmaking on the grand strategic plane had to be centralized. There could be no prevarication on the part of political leaders, such as that which he had witnessed by Arthur James Balfour at the Supreme Council of the Allies at Versailles during World War I. Balfour spoke for ten minutes; and when he finished, Clemenceau abruptly inquired of him: "Pour ou contre?"45 Looking back on those experiences, Churchill concluded that the grand strategic decisionmaking process in modern war was and must be entirely different from that of national strategy in peacetime.

There is no place for compromise in War. That invaluable process only means that soldiers are shot because their leaders in Council and camp are unable to resolve. In War the clouds never blow over, they gather unceasingly and fall in thunderbolts. Things do not get better by being let alone. Unless they are adjusted, they explode with shattering detonation. Clear leadership, violent action, rigid decisions one way or the other, form the only path not only of victory, but of safety and even of mercy. The State cannot afford indecision or hesitation at the executive centre.<sup>46</sup>

Grand strategic policy was the result of decisions at that "executive centre," and as Churchill had learned during Britain's initial skirmish in South Africa with modern war, that type of policy must determine military strategy. "It is not enough," he wrote to Joseph Chamberlain in 1901, "for the Government to say 'we have handed the war over to the military: they must settle it: all we can do is to supply them as they require!' I protest against the view. Nothing can relieve the Government of their responsibility."<sup>47</sup>

That belief was reinforced by Churchill's prewar problems as First Lord with the high level naval bureaucracy, which prevented the formation of a naval general staff and prevented or slowed many of his cherished projects. But it was the Admiralty's resistance to the convoy system, in which the "means of salvation were forced upon them from outside," that

in all probability confirmed Churchill's views.<sup>48</sup> The adoption of that system, he noted, was the result of a struggle

between the amateur politicians, thrown by democratic Parliamentary institutions to the head of affairs . . . and the competent, trained, experienced experts of the Admiralty . . . . The astonishing fact is that the politicians were right . . . upon a technical professional question ostensibly quite outside their sphere, and the Admiralty authorities were wrong upon what was, after all, the heart and centre of their own peculiar job.<sup>49</sup>

As he became more immersed in the total conflict of World War I, Churchill became increasingly concerned that grand strategic policy must dominate military strategy at the highest leadership. "The distinction between politics and strategy," he wrote, "diminishes as the point of view is raised. At the summit true politics and strategy are one."<sup>50</sup> But the civilian apparatus for control at that level in Britain during World War I was lacking. After the Dardanelles campaign, Churchill pointed out that "no one had the power to give clear brutal orders which would command unquestioning respect. Power was widely disseminated among the many important personages who in this period formed the governing instrument."<sup>51</sup> And to Asquith, he wrote concerning Lord Kitchener in October 1915: "The experiment of putting a great soldier at the head of the War Office in time of war has not been advantageous. In the result we have neither a Minister responsible to Parliament nor a General making a plan."<sup>52</sup> But the key was responsible power. "I will never accept political responsibility," Churchill concluded after the Dardanelles debacle, "without recognized regular power."<sup>53</sup>

Even the more highly controlled and centralized government under Lloyd George, who took office in 1916, was not adequate to the task as far as Churchill was concerned. To begin with, there was not a tight executive core, ensuring that policy evolved from the equivalent of what in Marlborough's time was "the eye and brain and soul of a single man, which from hour to hour are making subconsciously all the unweighable adjustments, no doubt with many errors, but with ultimate accuracy."<sup>54</sup> Moreover, by that time the dispute

between the military, or "brass hats," and the politicians, or "frocks," was public knowledge. In fact, the people were becoming more and more influential in the dispute since the general public impression was that the military leaders must be right on matters of war. "The feeble or presumptuous politician," Churchill wrote in this regard,

is portrayed cowering in his office, intent in the crash of the world on Party intrigues or personal glorification, fearful of responsibility, incapable of aught save shallow phrase-making. To him enters the calm, noble, resolute figure of the great Commander by land or sea, resplendent in uniform, glittering with decorations, irradiated with the lustre of the hero, shod with the science and armed with the panoply of war. This stately figure, devoid of the slightest thought of self, offers his clear farsighted guidance and counsel for vehement action or artifice or wise delay. But his advice is rejected; his sound plans put aside; his courageous initiative baffled by political chatterboxes and incompetents. As well . . . might a great surgeon, about to operate with sure science and the study of a lifetime upon a desperate case, have his arm jogged or his hand impeded, or even his lancet snatched from him, by some agitated relation of the patient.<sup>55</sup>

That impression, Churchill pointed out, "was not entirely in accordance with the facts, and facts, especially in war are stubborn things."<sup>56</sup> The basic fact, as he increasingly realized, was that the broad issues of grand strategy were so complex and far reaching that the coordination of ends, means and ways for the war effort could only be accomplished at the highest policy level. "The General no doubt was an expert on how to move his troops," he observed, "and the Admiral upon how to fight his ships. . . . But outside this technical aspect they were helpless and misleading arbiters in problems in whose solution the aid of the Statesman, the financier, the manufacturer, the inventor, the psychologist, was equally required."<sup>57</sup>

Reacting to all this after World War I, Churchill wrote in exasperation that there "was no supreme authority in London as in Berlin. . . . It was only one man's opinion against another."<sup>58</sup> Despite the note of envy, Churchill would not have had Britain's adversarial grand strategic policy direction evolve in any other way. For the alternative, as he knew full well, was the dominance of that policy by military strategy—a

prescription for unmitigated disaster in both the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. In France, for instance, the Minister of War had attempted to dissuade General Neville from his disastrous campaign in 1917. "The German retreat, the outbreak of the Russian revolution, the certain and imminent entry of the United States into the war against Germany," Churchill wrote, "—surely these had introduced some modification into the problem." But Neville would not alter his plan, and Churchill summed up that effort after the war by quoting a French general's analysis of the Neville campaign: "Prisoners yes, guns yes, a narrow band of territory or perhaps 10 or 12 kilometres; but at an outrageous cost, and without strategic results."<sup>59</sup>

In Germany by that time, there was the Hindenburg-Ludendorff dictatorship which not only dominated the war machine, but "increasingly absorbed to themselves the main political authority in Germany."<sup>60</sup> In particular, there was Ludendorff, a man Churchill pointed out, who "loved his country, but he loved his task more."<sup>61</sup> He was, in short, "a man of the German General Staff. This military priesthood was . . . the dominating and drawing power of Germany . . . through the fifty-two months of the war. . . ."<sup>62</sup> As a consequence, Churchill concluded, grand strategic decisionmaking in the Second German Empire dealt only with:

the high confederation of the General Staff; only men who know what they are talking about; only men who talk the same technical language; only men who are thinking of war propositions in war terms to the exclusion of all other considerations! Quite a small gathering, a rigidly limited few, competent experts in blinkers, their eyes riveted on the job, their own job, with supreme knowledge in their sphere and little inkling that other or larger spheres existed.<sup>63</sup>

Reflecting on this development after the war, Churchill pointed to three cardinal mistakes, all stemming from military ascendancy in Germany over grand strategy. "The invasion of Belgium and the unlimited U-boat war were both resorted to on expert dictation as the only means of victory," Churchill wrote, citing two of the mistakes. "They proved the direct cause of ruin. . . . Nothing could have deprived Germany of

victory in the first year of war except the invasion of Belgium; nothing could have denied it to her in its last year except her unlimited submarine campaign."<sup>64</sup> The war plan of the General Staff determined grand strategy in the opening days of the war. "The violation of Luxembourg and Belgium by the German armies marching upon France," Churchill concluded, "will stare through the centuries from the pages of History."<sup>65</sup>

For Churchill, the involvement of Hindenburg and Ludendorff in the U-boat decision was typical of what occurred when the narrow military framework of strategy, overly dependent "upon a purely mechanical device," dominated the broader implications that grand strategic policy must consider. "They looked too little," he concluded, "to the tremendous psychological reactions upon the Allies, upon the whole world, above all upon their own people, which must follow the apparition of a fresh, mighty antagonist among the forces against Germany."<sup>66</sup> The German declaration of unlimited U-boat war, Churchill noted, was only one of three major events in 1917, the others being the intervention of the United States and the Russian revolution. The order in which these events were placed, he concluded, proved to be decisive, leading to more of the "terrible ifs" of World War I.

If the Russian revolution had occurred in January instead of in March, or if, alternatively, the Germans had waited to declare unlimited U-boat war and consequently no intervention of the United States. If the Allies had been left to face the collapse of Russia without being sustained by the intervention of the United States, it seems certain that France could not have survived the year, and the war would have ended in a Peace by negotiation or, in other words, a German victory. Had Russia lasted two months less, had Germany refrained for two months more, the whole course of events would have been revolutionized. In this sequence we discern the footprints of Destiny. Either Russian endurance or German impatience was required to secure the entry of the United States, and both were forthcoming.<sup>67</sup>

This type of indifference to grand strategy led to the Ludendorff offensive, the third of what Churchill considered the great German mistakes, with its negative implosive effect on the Home Front, which in turn destroyed an excellent possibility

for Germany of a negotiated peace. "The passion for revenge ran high, and stern was the temper of the Allies," Churchill wrote; "but retribution, however justified, would not in the face of real peace offers have been in itself a sufficient incentive to lead the great war-wearied nations into another year of frightful waste and slaughter."<sup>68</sup> But Ludendorff, "altogether lacking that supreme combination of the King-Warrior-Statesman," was not interested in such considerations, being "captivated" instead, Churchill concluded, by "the scale and mechanism of the enterprise. . . ."

These were the calculations on which he had spent his life. This was the quintessence of all he had learnt and wrought. Here were intense, precise, tangible propositions. The larger arguments about making peace with the Allies while time remained, and of compromising on both sides in the West at the expense of caitiff Russia, seemed quite unimportant. The practical warnings addressed to him in the winter by the ablest German industrialists upon the danger of continuing the war were brushed aside. All this was to him merely a vague, pale, tenuous mist, in the centre of which lay his own gigantic red-hot cannon-ball. To fire that shot, to pull that spring, and press that button, to let loose those mighty pent-up energies, must have seemed an end in itself.<sup>69</sup>

## **GRAND STRATEGY AND THE SEARCH FOR DECISIVENESS**

The vertical impasse in the continuum of World War I impelled Churchill to work within the larger framework of grand strategy. That framework, in turn, provided some measure of comfort to the young statesman who increasingly saw victory in the cumulative effect that all instruments of Allied power could bring on the Central Powers. "The old wars were decided by their episodes rather than by their tendencies," he explained to Commons while resigning over the Dardanelles disaster.

In this war the tendencies are far more important than the episodes. Without winning any sensational victories we may win this war. We may win it even during a continuance of extremely disappointing and vexatious events. It is not necessary for us in order to win the war to push the German lines back over all the territory they have absorbed, or to pierce them. While the German lines extend far

beyond her frontiers, and while her flag flies over conquered capitals and subjugated provinces, while all the appearances of military success attend her arms, Germany may be defeated more fatally in the second or third year of the war than if the Allied Armies had entered Berlin in the first.<sup>70</sup>

Victory, then, could come not as a result of Napoleonic orchestration of battles in campaigns of maneuver to achieve strategic ends, but rather as the result of the collapse of entire nations strained beyond endurance. It was in a sense a return to the time of Marlborough when the grand strategic objectives had centered on the exhaustion of the enemy's economic resources. The attrition accomplished in that 18th century *Ermattungsstrategie*, however, had been accomplished primarily by avoiding battles in campaigns that did not focus on the destruction of enemy forces but sought instead, as Churchill noted in his study of Marlborough, "no prize that was not geographic."<sup>71</sup> In World War I, on the other hand, the attrition was accomplished by provoking battle; and the basic linchpin of that attrition became, as the conflict continued, the production of human casualties.

Seen in this light, even achievements at the lowest end of the continuum of war could feed into the larger grand strategic whole. "Every year . . . the close of the campaign has seen the enemy's front, however dented, yet unbroken," Churchill wrote in a 1917 memorandum to the War Cabinet.

But this in itself is by no means conclusive; for the effects of our efforts upon the enemy have been cumulative, the exhaustion of his manpower and the deterioration of his morale have been progressive. . . . Therefore it may well be . . . that the assertions and hopes that have proved unjustified in four successive campaigns might be vindicated in the end.<sup>72</sup>

After the war, he returned to the subject in his analysis of the Paschendaele campaign, so costly for the British in 1917. "The losses and anxieties inflicted upon the enemy," he concluded, "must not be underrated. Ludendorff's admissions are upon record."<sup>73</sup>

There was, however, a great deal of pragmatic rationale in all of this—an attempt to make the best of what Churchill considered a horrible situation. For him, there would always be better ways for activities on the military continuum to influence the "tendencies" of grand strategy, at least in the initial stages of exhausting the enemy. This had been the lesson before the turn of the century of Alfred Thayer Mahan whose emphasis on the influence of sea power in history in his best seller of that title had apparently influenced Churchill in his early proponentcy as a young statesman of the so-called Maritime School of strategy. Certainly by 1905, Churchill was opposed to continental involvement by the British army, referring to that organization in the same year in an argument against the supplemental army budget as "those gorgeous & gilded functionaries with brass hats and ornamental duties who multiply so luxuriously on the plains of Aldershot & Salisbury."<sup>74</sup> In the coming years, however, that attitude changed completely due at least partially to the influence of Sir Julian Corbett, one of the few strategic theorists Churchill ever studied.

Unlike Mahan, who postulated strategic principles and then looked for historical examples, Corbett studied history in order to formulate such principles. From these studies, he came to believe that modern war must be viewed in the light of an all-encompassing grand strategy—"a complex sum of naval, military, political, financial, and moral factors."<sup>75</sup> Within this perspective, Mahan's doctrine concerning command of the sea was too simplistic for Corbett. In his 1900 study of British naval history since Elizabethan times, Corbett wrote that what "the period teaches us is the limitation of maritime power." Jointness was the answer because land and naval power were mutually dependent upon each other in the support of grand strategy; and since this was the case, the histories of the two services should not be studied separately. "The real importance of maritime power," the British strategist concluded, "is its influence on military operations."<sup>76</sup>

Whether Churchill actually read *The Successors of Drake* cannot be determined; but the need for joint operations was a

constant theme in most of Corbett's works, to include the influential *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. In 1911, the year in which he became First Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill referred to both Mahan and Corbett in lamenting the lack of strategic works produced by the British navy. "The standard work on Sea Power was written by an American Admiral," he pointed out. "The best accounts of British sea fighting and naval strategy were compiled by an English civilian."<sup>77</sup> And that same year in his prescient memorandum outlining the course of any future war, the First Lord outlined the vital role army forces would play on the continent in such a conflict.<sup>78</sup>

Equally influential was Corbett's interpretation of Francis Bacon's maxim: "He that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much or as little of the war as he will."<sup>79</sup> For Corbett, this meant the selection of a theater of operations where the application of limited power could achieve the unlimited grand strategic objective of total victory by aiding the larger operations of continental forces. This peripheral approach with joint army-navy amphibious forces found a ready audience in Churchill, anxious in the first new year of World War I to restore a decisive role in grand strategy to the vertical military continuum. "Julian Corbett writes one of the best books in our language upon political and military strategy," Lord Esher noted in his diary during the year of Gallipoli. "All sorts of lessons, some of inestimable value, may be gleaned from it. No one except Winston, who matters just now has ever read it."<sup>80</sup>

To Churchill, the Dardanelles-Gallipoli campaign would always be the great lost opportunity for a true intersection of the vertical continuum with all the instruments of power in the horizontal grand strategic plane. But it required leaving "the great armies scowling at each other in the trenches and the great navies hating each other in strict routine from widely separated harbours," and breaking in "upon this new weak opponent" and beating "him down by land and sea. . . ."<sup>81</sup> If all that had been successful, he was certain that Constantinople would have fallen and thus "the only ally the Teutonic Empires had gained would be irretrievably broken." Militarily, that would

have opened up Germany's most vulnerable flank in Austria to a deadly allied thrust with the great port as its base. Moreover, it would have allowed the flow of arms and equipment to Russia. "Even more serious," Churchill added, "would be the political consequences." The Allies "could offer to Italy, Greece and Romania, all three already trembling on the verge of joining them, ample and highly-coveted rewards. They could act upon Bulgaria both by the threat of isolation amid a hostile Balkan Peninsula, and by potent bribes."<sup>82</sup> It was all, he remarked bitterly on the ill-fated campaign after the war, "again very simple; again very difficult."

The politicians are attracted, the Generals and Admirals mutter 'To break away from a first-class war, the sort of war that only comes once in a hundred years, for an amphibious strategic-political manoeuvre of this kind is nothing less than unprofessional.' Divided councils, half-hearted measures, grudging resources, makeshift plans, no real control or guidance.<sup>83</sup>

Despite, or perhaps because of, his experience in the Dardanelles campaign, Churchill reaffirmed his belief in joint military operations in support of grand strategy as he immersed himself in the 1930s in his work on Marlborough. During Duke John's era, he pointed out in this regard, "the Tories *obstinately* championed the policy that if we were drawn into a war, we should go as little to the Continent, send as few troops as possible," and "fight as near to the coast as possible. . . ."<sup>84</sup> That approach, Churchill believed, could be as injurious to the grand strategic balance of power in Marlborough's time as it had recently been in the Great War. The English political hierarchy, he emphasized in his opening volume of *Marlborough*, was "as sure in 1688 that Belgium must not be conquered by the greatest military power on the Continent as were all parties and classes in the British Empire in August 1914."<sup>85</sup> This did not mean, however, that he had lost his belief in the role that peripheral military operations in other theaters could have in the larger context of grand strategy. In fact, it was this belief that caused Churchill to make the somewhat forced comparison of Marlborough's 1704 campaign into Germany to the ill-starred Dardanelles venture.

The strategic results of Bavaria joining France and Spain in 1702 resemble curiously in many points those that followed the accession of Turkey to Germany and Austria in 1914. The enemy in his central position had gained a state which lay across the circuitous communications of the allies. The defection of Bavaria separated the large, loosely knit, ill-equipped, but none the less indispensable mass of the Empire from the rest of the confederacy, in the same way as the hostility of Turkey cut Russia off from the allies in the Great War. The isolation and forcing of the Empire into a separate peace in 1704 seemed as certainly fatal to the allied cause as the same events in Russia would have been in 1915. . . . On both occasions grave differences of opinion prevailed which aggravated the difficulties of decisive action. But there was also a great contrast. The allies of 1914 could, if they so resolved, strike down Turkey with ease and swiftness by a naval or amphibious operation. Their forbears in 1704 could only reach Bavaria by a long and hazardous march across Europe and amid its moving armies.<sup>86</sup>

Nevertheless, there was a dominant theme, growing stronger in each succeeding volume of *Marlborough*, which emphasized that grand strategic decisions could only be achieved ultimately in northwest Europe. After Blenheim, Churchill noted approvingly, Marlborough planned "the decisive invasion of France" along the Moselle by establishing "the strongest possible forces in winter quarters for an advance toward Paris in the spring."<sup>87</sup> But the great war leader lacked cooperation from his German allies and was soon compelled to return with his army to the Netherlands rather than pursue the decisive attack through Lorraine against the enemy capital.

A similar opportunity occurred for Marlborough after his victory over the French in the spring of 1706 at Ramillies when all of the Spanish Netherlands submitted to the Grand Alliance. Once again a major force from that coalition was poised in the north in the major theater to strike into the heart of France. This time, however, there was to be a diversionary amphibious operation at Toulon that could act as a supplement in southern France to the major theater by creating "the root of an immense rodent growth in the bowels of France, leading to a fatal collapse either on the northern or the southern front, or perhaps on both. Here was the way to achieve the full purpose of the

Allies and finish the war." It was a plan, Churchill concluded, which "lay in that high region of strategy where all the forces are measured and all the impulsions understood."<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, it was also a plan that was never implemented because of problems within the Grand Alliance.

Ultimately, as Churchill demonstrated in his later volumes on Marlborough, "a war of the circumference against the centre" must strike toward the middle in order for the military instrument to have a full effect on the other instruments of grand strategic power. The Whigs in England at the time of Marlborough, he noted approvingly in this regard, "sought, with the largest army that could be maintained, to bring the war to an end by a thrust at the heart of France, the supreme military antagonist, arguing that thereafter all the rest would be added to them."<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the encircling ring could only be closed so far before other pressures in the grand strategy of coalition warfare pressed in. "Was the war to drag on in costly, bloody gnawings around the frontiers of France," Churchill asked concerning the conflict over the Spanish succession, "until perhaps it died down in disastrous futility, until the Alliance, reforged on the anvil of Blenheim, broke again to pieces? For a thrust at the heart, the chance, the means, the time, and—might he not feel?—the man had now come."<sup>90</sup>

Once again an opportunity for "a thrust at the heart" was provided by a great allied victory over the French—at Oudenarde in July 1708. After that battle, Churchill wrote, his ancestor devised "his greatest strategic design. The whole combined army should invade France, ignoring the frontier fortresses and abandoning all land communication with Holland." It would require seizing the sea base of Abbeville northeast of Paris by a British force descending upon it from the Isle of Wight. British and Dutch sea power would be used to ferry masses of stores, weapons and equipment to the sea base and thereafter maintain a constant flow of logistical support. The bulk of the Grand Alliance forces would then bypass the French frontier fortresses and march directly to Abbeville. From there, Churchill summed up the operation, "Marlborough . . . would march on Paris through unravaged

country at the head of a hundred thousand men, and bring the war to a swift and decisive close."<sup>91</sup>

But the War of Spanish Succession was not destined for such an early end. Once again Marlborough's plan for the invasion of France was thwarted by his allies—"one of the cardinal points of the war," in Churchill's words. "The lesser processes to which he was confined," he wrote of Marlborough after the invasion plan was abandoned, "although yielding immediate necessary supplies, did not procure the strategic result." And that result, he emphasized, lay squarely on the horizontal axis of grand strategy. "Great battles would have been fought in the heart of France," Churchill concluded, "and victory would have provided in 1708 that triumphant peace which after so much further bloodshed the Grand Alliance was still to seek in vain."<sup>92</sup>

## CONFLICT TERMINATION

Churchill had no more illusions about the effect of the Great War on the victors than he had about its effect on the vanquished. "The shadow of victory is disillusion," he wrote. "The reaction from extreme effort is prostration. The aftermath even of successful war is long and bitter."<sup>93</sup> That disillusion was evident throughout the interwar period, in which he often returned in his writings and speeches to the attritive slaughter of the trenches where combat had been "reduced to a business like the stockyards of Chicago."<sup>94</sup> And in 1922, his notes for an election speech began:

What a disappointment the Twentieth Century has been  
How terrible & how melancholy  
is long series of disastrous events  
which have darkened its first 20 years.<sup>95</sup>

It was natural in those circumstances that Churchill's thoughts would return to the "palmy days" of his youth. "Winston waxed very eloquent on the subject of the old world & the new," one friend noted in her diary in January 1920, "taking up arms in defence of the former. . . ."<sup>96</sup> But there was

no immediate comfort or direction for him from the past in terms of the unprecedented cataclysm through which Britain had passed. "The Muse of History to whom we all so confidently appeal has become a Sphinx," he wrote. "A sad half mocking smile flickers on her stone war-scarred lineaments."<sup>97</sup> In a long and bitter discourse touched with longing, Churchill lashed out at the era of his youth. "How those Victorians busied themselves and contended about minor things!" he wrote. ". . . They never had to face as we have done, and still do, the possibility of national ruin. Their main foundations were never shaken."<sup>98</sup> That was not a past, he believed, that could help in the cold grey dawn of grand strategy in modern war. Commenting on the effect of the new era on John Morely, the statesman whom he considered a quintessential Victorian, Churchill found that Morely "was dwelling in a world which was far removed from the awful reality."

At such juncture his historic sense was no guide; it was indeed an impediment. It was vain to look back to the Crimean War, to the wars of 1866 and 1870, and to suppose that any of the political reactions which had attended their declaration or course would repeat themselves now. We were in the presence of events without their equal or forerunner in the whole experience of mankind.<sup>99</sup>

Despite these developments, Churchill's fundamental belief in historical continuity was only momentarily suspended by World War I. Already in 1929 he was referring to history "as a guide to present difficulties," to Katherine Asquith. "How strange it is," he wrote, "that the past is so little understood and so quickly forgotten. We live in the most thoughtless of ages. Every day headlines and short views."<sup>100</sup> And in the following decade as he moved back and forth in the late 17th and early 18th century life of his ancestor, Churchill began to appreciate the totality of the grand strategic stakes in the more limited warfare of Marlborough's time. The battle of Blenheim, for instance, had changed the political axis of the world in that period. If that battle had been lost, he concluded, the "collapse of the Grand Alliance and the hegemony of France in Europe must have brought with them so profound a disintegration of English political society that for perhaps a century at least vassalage under a French-inspired king might well have been

our fate."<sup>101</sup> Even attritive warfare had its characteristics of continuity. In fact, as Churchill concluded, the "spectacle of one of the battlefields of Marlborough, Frederick, or Napoleon was . . . incomparably more gruesome than any equal sector of the recent fronts in France or Flanders."<sup>102</sup> In that light, World War I became for Churchill part of the grand historical pattern of Britain.

For the fourth time in four successive centuries she had headed and sustained the resistance of Europe to a military tyranny. . . . Spain, the French Monarchy, the French Empire and the German Empire . . . During 400 years England had withstood them all by war and policy, and all had been defeated and driven out. To that list of mighty sovereigns and supreme military Lords which already included Philip II, Louis XIV and Napoleon, there could now be added the name of William II of Germany.<sup>103</sup>

His renewed faith in historical continuity caused Churchill in the last decade of the interwar years to examine his ancestor's problems concerning conflict termination within the broad grand strategic object of winning the peace. The fundamental tenet in that process, he believed, was to negotiate from strength. "We must admire the dual process . . . of earnestly seeking peace while . . . preparing for war on an ever greater scale," he wrote of Marlborough's efforts in 1706. "Nearly always Governments which seek peace flag in their war efforts, and Governments which make the most vigorous war preparations take little interest in peace." The solution, he realized, was to bring both efforts together for it was "only by the double and, as it might seem, contradictory exertion that a good result can usually be procured."<sup>104</sup>

There were many instances in which such an effort almost brought permanent peace to the War of Spanish Succession. "Marlborough's exertions for five months to have large forces at his disposal during the negotiations had succeeded beyond his hopes," Churchill noted of the 1709 preparations. "'All the facts,' wrote Eugene to the Emperor, 'go to show that . . . we can . . . if we wish obtain everything we ask for. We have only to hold together and preserve good understanding among ourselves.'"<sup>105</sup> That, of course, was easier said than done in

coalition warfare. Already in 1704, despite the fact that Marlborough "had rescued the Empire from ruin and the Grand Alliance from collapse, the fruits of victory were largely cast away by the jealousies of the allies. . . ."106 Louis XIV, of course, was aware of that divisiveness, and in the spring of 1707 made an all out effort to arrange peace. Churchill was in accord with Duke John, however, in believing the French monarch's type of conflict termination could be fatal in coalition warfare. "Between equals and similars," he concluded,

there always is much to be said for peace even though a drawn war: but to a wide numerous disconnected coalition, faced by a homogeneous military nation . . . a drawn war embodied in a treaty spelt permanent defeat. One man still carrying with him the British island in its most remarkable efflorescence of genius and energy, stood against this kind of accommodation. Marlborough, harassed and hampered upon every side, remained unexhausted and all-compelling.<sup>107</sup>

But without all the strands of grand strategy at his command, the military instrument of power was ultimately useless to Marlborough in his efforts at conflict termination. There was, for instance, *the problem of war aims*. In 1703, in order to lure Portugal into the Grand Alliance, the Allies had moved away from the original goal of partitioning the Spanish Empire between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs. After Blerheim, the original war aims would probably have been acceptable to Louis XIV whose "object henceforward was only to find a convenient and dignified exit from the arena in which he had so long stalked triumphant."<sup>108</sup>

Negotiations continued to flounder in the future, however, even under the bludgeoning of such battles as Ramillies and Malpaquet, on the allied insistence that the entire Spanish Empire be peacefully transferred to the Habsburg claimant. Thus it was, Churchill noted, that the costly allied victory at Malpaquet in the autumn of 1709 "cast a lurid reproach upon the failure to make peace in the spring." Moreover, whatever disputes there might be about the consequences of that battle, he concluded, "one fact was certain: peace was no nearer than in June."<sup>109</sup> In the end, the Tory government negotiated a

separate peace with France behind Marlborough's back, followed by the end of 1711 with his humiliating dismissal by Queen Anne. Looking back over the centuries at the entire sorry episode, Churchill wrote: "Here in foretaste we may read the bitter story of how in the eighteenth century England won the war and lost the peace."<sup>110</sup>

Churchill was referring at the time, of course, to what he considered the disastrous Versailles Treaty, the results of which were brought home daily to him in the "Lotus Years" of the 1930s. The fundamental defect of that treaty for the British statesman was its violation of his lifelong belief in victorious magnanimity. As one who had been bullied and misused as a child, and as a Public School product, Churchill had always had an instinctive sympathy for the underdog. Consequently, he never painted the enemies in his Imperial conflicts in stark black, displaying instead a fairness and generosity, unusual even by Victorian chivalric standards. "'Never despise your enemy' is an old lesson," he wrote of the 1897 Indian campaign, "but it has to be learnt afresh, year after year, by every nation that is warlike and brave."<sup>111</sup>

That outlook was reinforced by his experience as a captive in the Boer War, in which his captors treated him with fairness and in many cases with generosity, "a great surprise."<sup>112</sup> In later years, Churchill was drawn to General Smuts for many reasons, not the least of which was his perception of the South African as a gallant foe who had become a loyal and devoted subject of the King. The British statesman had always taken great pride in helping to establish a just and generous peace after the Boer War, and Smuts was living proof for him that magnanimity and good sense in victory would achieve best the ultimate goal of grand strategy.<sup>113</sup>

But magnanimity in the realm of grand strategic conflict termination must also be accompanied by a firm dose of realism. For Churchill, escalation of allied war aims had been as disastrous for the Entente as it had been for Marlborough's Grand Alliance. In Marlborough's time, that escalation had taken the traditional form of territorial aggrandizement. In

World War I, the process had acquired ideological and moral overtones for the allies—particularly damaging, Churchill pointed out, in the form of Woodrow Wilson and his 14 Points, of which he later approvingly quoted Clemenceau's judgment: "Même le bon Dieu n'avait que dix."<sup>114</sup> This type of escalation had brought vast populations into the most important aspect of grand strategy, but not, Churchill emphasized, with propitious results. "The peoples, transported by their sufferings and by the mass teachings with which they had been inspired," he wrote, "stood around in scores of millions to demand that retribution should be exacted to the full. Woe betide the leaders now perched on their dizzy pinnacles of triumph if they cast away at the conference table what the soldiers had won on a hundred blood-soaked battlefields."<sup>115</sup>

# CHAPTER 4

## EPILOGUE—THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

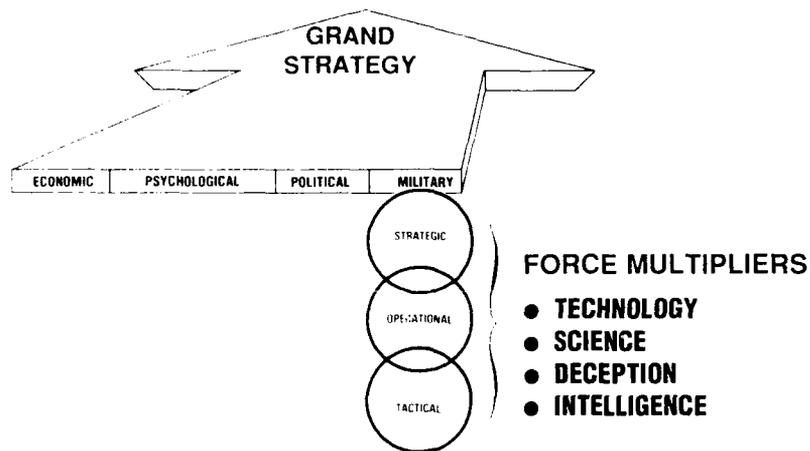


Figure 5

Figure 5 represents a rational confluence of the horizontal plane of grand strategy with the vertical continuum of war. But that confluence could be skewed, as Churchill realized after World War I, a conflict in which "events passed very largely outside the scope of conscious choice."<sup>1</sup> War was a period for him in which "action is circumscribed within practical limits. There are only a certain number of alternatives open . . . in a world of reality where theories are constantly being corrected and curved by experiment. Resultant facts," he concluded, "accumulate and govern to a very large extent the next decision."<sup>2</sup> In such an environment, warfare in both dimensions of the paradigm was the art of the possible. "We

cannot make war as we ought," Churchill quoted Lord Kitchener; "we can only make it as we can."<sup>3</sup>

This seemed hardly evident when Churchill assumed power in May 1940 and immediately proclaimed that the overriding grand strategic goal was victory at any price. Members of his cabinet early in the war raised the subject of negotiations with the Germans, and the Foreign Office held out against repudiating the Munich settlement until 1942. But Churchill was resolute. "I have only one aim in life," he remarked at the time, "the defeat of Hitler, and this makes things very simple for me."<sup>4</sup> This simplicity not only eased the Prime Minister's burden, but it suited his temperament as well. For although more fertile in imagination and ideas than most leaders, he remained fundamentally a straightforward person, always ready to strike out for goals that he could see.

Nevertheless, strategy in any form remains the calculated relationship of means to ends; and given the state of Britain's resources, Churchill's war aim seems in retrospect much less rational than that of Hitler's at the time. But Churchill, unlike the Nazi leader, was operating in both dimensions of strategy. On the horizontal plane, the British leader centralized his power by the assumption, with the King's blessing but without parliamentary mandate, of the post of Minister of Defence, a position unknown during World War I. Churchill was careful not to define the powers of the new post too precisely. But, in this combined capacity as Minister of Defence and Prime Minister, he was able to supervise all the power instruments in Britain's grand strategy, both as the ultimate political authority and as the specific war lord directing defense policy. Thus, in terms of grand strategy, Churchill became in 1940, as he had written of Marlborough, "the central link on which everything was fastened. . . . It is not until we reach Napoleon, the Emperor-statesman-captain, that we see the threefold combination of functions—military, political and diplomatic—which was Marlborough's sphere, applied again upon a Continental scale."<sup>5</sup>

Finally at the helm where "politics and strategy are one," Churchill immediately began to orchestrate the instruments of grand strategy. On the economic and psychological side, there was the country's mobilization and the British leader's embodiment of the British people in the *annus mirabilis* of 1940. "Come then: let us to the task, to the battle, to the toil—each to our part, each to our station," he exhorted that year. "Fill the armies, rule the air, pour out the munitions, strangle the U-boats, sweep the mines, plough the land, build the ships, guard the streets, succor the wounded, uplift the downcast, and honor the dead."<sup>6</sup> And politically, perhaps Churchill's supreme achievement was the formation of a triumphant Grand Alliance, in the manner of his great ancestor. For the United States, in this regard, there was his assiduous courting of President Roosevelt from a position of weakness throughout the 19 months prior to Pearl Harbor—a process one historian assessed as "feline, adroit, and far-sighted."<sup>7</sup> And for the Soviet Union, despite his consistent and virulent antipathy to Bolshevism, there was Churchill's immediate support of that country under the onslaught of Barbarossa and all that portended positively on the horizontal scale—particularly when compared to Hitler's gratuitous declaration of war upon the United States after Pearl Harbor.

Against this grand strategic background Churchill applied his meager military resources. Nowhere were those means more vital than in the Battle of Britain. In the midst of that battle, the Russian ambassador called on the British leader and inquired as to his overall strategy. "My general strategy at present," Churchill replied drawing on his cigar, "is to last out the next three months."<sup>8</sup> But the Battle of Britain, coming in the wake of Dunkirk and the Battle of France, was also a boost not only to the national will of the Home Front, but to Britain's relationship with its potential ally across the Atlantic, engaged at the time in a presidential campaign. For as Churchill well knew, the United States would not side with a losing cause; and the image of strength and defiance orchestrated by the Prime Minister in the summer and fall of 1940 was intended for the American as well as the British people.

It was in this context in the early years of the war that Churchill pursued the military art of the possible. The Battle of the Atlantic, a struggle against German submarines to keep open Britain's economic lifeline, was only won at great cost and at an excruciatingly ponderous pace. The strategic bombing of Germany was as much concerned with bolstering British morale as it was with the psychological and economic impact it could have across the Rhine. Perhaps more. "You need not argue the value of bombing Germany," Churchill wrote the Air Staff in this regard early in 1942, "because I have my own opinion about that, namely, that it is not decisive, but better than doing nothing. . . ."9 That urge to do something, to take action, was also fundamental to Churchill's character. "It was his paramount duty to make the Second Army fight *somewhere*," he had written of the Austrian commander in 1914 who was not able to reach Galicia for the central battle.10 And so it was with the Eighth Army in North Africa, the only area in the European theater of war until the invasion of Sicily where British landpower could grapple with the Axis.

Such limited application of military power still had to be handled very carefully within the framework of grand strategy in the early years of the war. For as Churchill knew from his experience in World War I, military options at the operational and tactical levels on the vertical continuum of war, even in a peripheral theater of operations, could have major impact along the horizontal plane of that framework, particularly in the realm of national will and the acquisition of allies as well as in his own ability to remain in power. It was this perspective that at least partially explains many of the British leader's more controversial decisions early in the war, ranging from the destruction of the French fleet at Oran to the priority given to the Middle East in Britain's strategy over the Far East. It was this perspective that also, in part, drew the Prime Minister down to the operational and sometimes even tactical level in his interface with his field commanders throughout much of the desert campaigns.

Finally, the lack of resources on the vertical continuum, and the concomitant need for that continuum to contribute fully in

the horizontal dimension of strategy, reinforced the British leader's natural enthusiasm and interest in force multipliers. As a consequence, he was a major force in the use and development of means to improve intelligence and counterintelligence, the most graphic examples being Ultra and the Double Cross system. In a similar manner, Churchill was instrumental in encouraging and centralizing deception activities at all levels of war, the most important outcome of which was the strategic "bodyguard of lies" in the form of the Fortitude operation that protected the cross-Channel invasion. Added to this was the Prime Minister's abiding interest in technological surprise as demonstrated at all points up and down the vertical continuum during World War II, from the strategic "Mulberry" harbors, to the "Window" clutter at the operational level, down to the tactical "sticky bomb."

By December 1941 with the help of the Japanese surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, Churchill had consolidated the other instruments of power sufficiently to be able to ward off a series of disasters on the vertical continuum that began after the Arcadia Conference that month and continued for six more months until Rommel was halted at the first battle of Alamein. By the end of February 1942, Singapore had been captured, General Auchinleck had been pushed back to Gazala, and the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had traversed the Channel with humiliating ease. On June 25, 1942, after Auchinleck's defeat, Churchill faced a motion in Commons that "this House, while paying tribute to the heroism and endurance of the Armed Forces of the Crown . . . has no confidence in the central direction of the war."<sup>11</sup> On July 1, the debate began on the Vote of Censure, the thrust of which was to eliminate Churchill's position of Minister of Defence. That same day, German forces reached El Alamein, 130 miles inside Egypt, 80 miles from Cairo, and in the Crimea captured Sebastopol.

Churchill would not turn away from the institution he revered. At the same time, however, harkening back to World War I and his experiences thus far in the current conflict, he would not approach leadership in terms of grand strategy without possession of the means necessary to work effectively

on that horizontal plane. "I am your servant," he told Commons on July 2, "and you have the right to dismiss me when you please. What you have no right to do is to ask me to bear responsibilities without the power of effective action. . . ."12 At the conclusion of the debate, only 25 members supported the vote, a consoling figure to the historically-minded Prime Minister in more than one way, since it duplicated the number of votes against the conduct by the younger Pitt of the war in 1799. Equally important was a message from across the Atlantic. "Good for you," Roosevelt telegraphed. "Action of House of Commons today delighted me."13

The message was a reminder of Churchill's great triumph in forging the Grand Alliance. For the first 19 months of his tenure, he operated without that full coalition. And for the next 22 months of the war, he played a dominant role in it. That dominance notwithstanding, however, the grand strategic patterns of the alliance during that period were molded by circumstances, necessity, trial and error and, above all, compromises among its leaders. Those compromises were never more in evidence than with the question of a cross-Channel invasion. The United States wanted that operation to begin as early as 1942. Churchill did not question the ultimate and necessary decisiveness of a thrust into the heart of northwest Europe. It was, after all, what Marlborough had advocated so many centuries before at Abbeville; and no one worked harder than the British leader in the early days of the coalition to make the operation an ultimate reality.<sup>14</sup>

But grand strategy remained for Churchill the art of the possible, and he became convinced that the strategic resources were lacking for the American timetable. In the summer of 1942, he persuaded President Roosevelt, also very much aware of the vertical-horizontal interface, that allied operations that year should be in French North Africa, the only proposal "which, either at the time or in retrospect, seemed to make strategic sense."<sup>15</sup> That those operations would preclude a 1943 cross-Channel invasion became apparent as they continued well into that year. That this was a fortunate by-product of the 1942 Roosevelt-Churchill agreement, which

had bypassed the American Chiefs of Staff, has also become apparent over the years. "A cross-channel offensive in 1942," Ronald Lewin has noted in this regard, "would have been a guaranteed, and in 1943 an almost certain, failure."<sup>16</sup>

But if the pragmatic caution and realism of Churchill were invaluable and necessary elements in the early efforts at combined strategic planning, the stubborn perseverance of the American military leaders in the closing years of the war ensured the ultimate implementation of the allied grand strategy. For by mid-to-late 1943, Churchill's enthusiasm for an attack on northwest Europe had disappeared, and he increasingly regarded the Mediterranean not as a subsidiary theater, but a primary one where successful operations were themselves the ultimate justification for that primacy. It was in that theater that he saw the remaining possibility for enhancing British military prestige as well as for indulging in his continuing passion to direct the war. Certainly, there was also the lure of the Eastern Mediterranean from the earlier war. But there were also the memories from that war of northwest Europe, the source of the attritive blood baths, which he admitted in his memoirs "were not to be blotted out by time or reflection."<sup>17</sup> In the end, like World War I, the decisive campaign had to be fought in France, and the dominant and consistent American pressure made that possible.<sup>18</sup>

That dominance had been progressively more evident at Casablanca, Washington and Quebec. By 1943, both Roosevelt and Stalin were operating from a position of increasing power and influence, while that of Churchill's was in decline. The vulnerability was suddenly and humiliatingly exposed in November of that year at the Teheran Conference, in which the American president actively sided both publicly and privately with the Soviet leader against Churchill on several key strategic issues. "I realized at Teheran for the first time," Churchill later recalled, "what a small nation we are. There I sat with the great Russian bear on one side of me, with paws outstretched, and on the other side the great American buffalo, and between the two sat the poor little English donkey who was

the only one, the only one of the three, who knew the right way home."<sup>19</sup>

The "right way home" for Churchill was the path that would lead to the ultimate goal of grand strategy, the winning of the peace. All his experience over the years had demonstrated to him that in support of that ultimate goal there must be a flow from the dominant horizontal plane into the vertical military continuum. But to the British leader that flow appeared to be reversed in the West once the Allies under U.S. direction were on the Continent. There, in the absence of clear and consistent political guidance from Washington, General Eisenhower increasingly made decisions primarily on the basis of military considerations despite, as Churchill realized, the growing political character of the war. The final result in the West in the last year of the European war was "a conventional war of concentration, a technical military game."<sup>20</sup> "In Washington especially," Churchill later lashed out in his memoirs, "larger and wider views should have prevailed."<sup>21</sup>

Whether the outcome would have been different even had Britain retained its dominant position in the Grand Alliance is problematical. Part of the reason was that the objective of unconditional surrender had been woven into the fabric of allied grand strategy. Whatever positive warfighting aspects that objective may have possessed, it did not prove to be a viable peace goal, masking instead the divergent allied interests while providing no basis for bringing those interests closer together. As a result, the only common denominator for the allied coalition by 1945 was the defeat of Germany. But as those partners moved closer together and Germany's defeat seemed imminent, the Grand Alliance began to unravel. In the end, Maurice Matloff has argued in this regard, "the war outran the strategists and the statesmen."<sup>22</sup> For Churchill, who combined those occupations, it was a situation he had addressed in the preceding decade when describing the "great decline in Marlborough's personal power. . . ."

He had since 1700 woven together a Grand Alliance and carried it forward by management, tact, and great victorious battles to mastery. At every stage he had had to hold in check divergent and

competing aims. The fear of being defeated and destroyed had joined the Allies together. Now his own victories had destroyed that fear. Thus at the moment when his work should have given him the greatest authority, and when that authority might have been most beneficently exercised, he found himself alone. . . .<sup>23</sup>

None of the events in the last year of World War II, however, could diminish Churchill's colossal achievement in the realm of grand strategy. The British leader's focus on the "tendencies" in that horizontal dimension, as he had learned so many years before, proved ultimately to be successful, particularly because of Hitler's fundamental disregard for that same overarching aspect of modern war. The Nazi leader's failure of statecraft in the horizontal plane made defeat in the end a virtual certainty even as the tactical, operational and even theater strategic German victories piled up in the early stages of the war. Those victories on the vertical continuum could only help Germany win the war if they decisively affected allied strength in the horizontal dimension. But that only occurred early in the war when the Nazis overran countries like Poland or France, forcing them out of the conflict while adding their resources and economics to the greater Reich. This early advantage in the vertical continuum, based on war preparations and superior military competence, offset initially the growing allied efforts set in train by Churchill in the horizontal plane of grand strategy.

But the British leader's success in that plane, most notably in the formation of the Grand Alliance, began in 1942 to affect the amount of resources that could be applied to the vertical continuum in one theater after another. Added to this was the growing military quality of allied forces after that year which deprived the Axis powers of their former advantage at the tactical and operational levels. Moreover, as the victorious forces moved closer to the Axis homelands, allied military power on the vertical continuum increasingly was used to diminish enemy strength in the horizontal dimension by the strategic bombing of industry, marshalling yards and capital infrastructure. In the end, the final victory in World War II was due to this mutually reinforcing confluence of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of strategy, as the Allies increasingly

outmatched the Axis forces at the tactical and operational levels of war in all theaters of operations, the very multiplicity of which, attested to the Axis failure in the realm of grand strategy.<sup>24</sup>

## ENDNOTES

### CHAPTER 1

1. Charles Eade, ed., *Churchill By His Contemporaries*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954, p. 173.

### CHAPTER 2

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 182.

2. James J. Schneider, "The Theory of Operational Art," School of Advanced Military Studies, *Theoretical Paper No. 3*, March 1988, p. 9.

3. David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, New York: MacMillan and Co., 1966, p. 161.

4. *On War*, p. 177.

5. David M. Glantz, "The Nature of Soviet Operational Art," *Parameters*, Spring 1985, p. 65.

6. Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations*, Washington, DC: May 5, 1986, p. 9.

7. *JCS Pub 1-02*, to be published February 1990.

8. Winston S. Churchill, *A Roving Commission*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, p. 112. Churchill retained this early interest in Macaulay despite what he considered to be that historian's unfair treatment of John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough. "I am deep in Macaulay," he wrote his mother on January 21, 1897. "... it is easier reading than Gibbon and in quite a different style. ... Both are fascinating and show what a fine language English is. ..." Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume I, Part II, 1896-1900* (hereafter C.V. I, II), Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967, p. 726.

9. Janet and Peter Phillips, *Victorians at Home and Away*, London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1978, p. 166.

10. Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill, Companion Volume I, Part I, 1874-1896* (hereafter C.V. I, I), Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967, p. 181.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 522.

12. *Roving Commission*, p. 44.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 43. One title, Sir Edward Bruce Hamley's *The Operations of War Explained and Illustrated*. C.V. I, II, p. 480.

14. *Roving Commission*, p. 44.

15. C.V. I, II, p. 548. In an interview with General Eisenhower after Churchill's death, Alistair Cooke referred to the fact that Churchill was at the bottom of his class at Harrow, but excelled at tactics and fortifications at Sandhurst. Eisenhower replied that he had been a mediocre student at West Point, but graduated at the top of his Leavenworth class at the Command and General Staff School. "So you can't tell when people begin to mature," he concluded. James Nelson, ed., *General Eisenhower on the Military Churchill*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970, p. 22.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

17. William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill: Visions of Glory, 1874-1932*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1983, p. 317.

18. Winston S. Churchill, *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria*. London and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900, pp. 416 and 429. C.V. I, II, p. 1147. *Roving Commission*, p. 309.

19. *London to Ladysmith*, p. 420.

20. Winston S. Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*. London: Ordhams Press Limited, 1949, pp. 51-52. In the 1909 maneuvers, which Churchill also attended, he pointed out that the absurdities of the Silesian maneuvers were not repeated. *Ibid.*, p. 55. Nevertheless, Churchill wrote to Lord Eigin from Silesia that he was impressed with the Army whose "members, quality, discipline and organization are four good roads to victory." And upon returning to England, he told his Aunt Leonie: "I am very thankful there is a sea between that army and England." Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill, Volume II, 1901-1914, Young Statesman*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967, p. 191.

21. Lord Moran, *Churchill, Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran, The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966, p. 254. On September 20, 1940, after a particularly grueling day that included a visit to one of the worst bombed areas of London, Churchill sat up late at night, reminiscing about the Boer conflict, "the last enjoyable war." Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill, Volume VI, Finest Hour, 1939-1941*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983, p. 800.

22. Winston S. Churchill, *Ian Hamilton's March*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900, p. 386.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

24. Frederick Woods, *Young Winston's Wars. The Original Dispatches of Winston S. Churchill, War Correspondent 1897-1900*, New York: The Viking Press, 1972, p. 192.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

26. Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911-1914*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928, p. 247.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 211 and 225. B. H. Liddell Hart, "The Military Strategist," *Churchill Revised. A Critical Assessment*, New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1969, pp. 182-183.

28. *World Crisis 1911-1914*, p. 248. Churchill's August 13, 1911 memorandum entitled "Military Aspects of the Continental Problem" anticipated the use of "four or six British divisions in these great initial operations," particularly since France "will not be strong enough to invade Germany. Her only chance is to conquer Germany in France." *Ibid.*, p. 59.

29. Robert M. Epstein, Advanced Military Studies Program Course 4, "The Practice and Evolution of Operational Art," School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, pp. 4-7:8-2.

30. Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis 1916-1918*. Part I, London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1927, pp. 18-19.

31. Winston S. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1937, p. 189.

32. Winston S. Churchill, *The Unknown War*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, p. 274.

33. Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough. His Life and Times. Volume V 1705-1708*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937, p. 404.

34. Emphasis added. Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough. His Life and Times. Volume IV. 1704-1705*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935, pp. 31-32.

35. *Unknown War*, p. 176.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *FM 100-5*, p. 2-11.

38. Original emphasis. *Ibid.*

39. *Unknown War*, p. 193.

40. Maurice Ashley, *Churchill as Historian*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968, p. 131. See also Churchill's analysis of the August 23-September 12, 1914 Lemberg campaign in the East in which three Austrian armies were pitted against four Russian armies. "This prodigious event," he wrote, "comprised seven separate hard-fought battles between individual armies each lasting several days, reacting upon each other." *Unknown War*, p. 144.

41. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 40.

42. *Ibid.* Gordon A. Craig, "Delbrueck: The Military Historian," *Makers of Modern Strategy From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. by Peter Paret, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 351. Ludendorff stated that "tactics were to be valued more than pure strategy." *Ibid.* "Ludendorff started from the assumption that tactics were more important than strategy; it was a question above all of launching an offensive at a point where a tactical breakthrough was possible, not where a strategic one was desirable." Martin van Creveld, *Command in War*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935, p. 172. Ludendorff concluded that "tactics have to be considered before purely strategical objects. . . ." B. H. Liddel Hart, *Strategy*, 2d ed., New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967, p. 205.

43. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part II, p. 458. See also Churchill's analysis at *Ibid.*, p. 448:

He had thus resigned all the decisive strategic objects for which the German armies had been fighting since March 21. He had first abandoned the great roll-up of the British line from Arras northwards and the general destruction of the British armies, in favour of the more definite but still vital aim of taking Amiens and dividing the British from the French armies. Arrested in this, he had struck in the north to draw British reserves from the Amiens battlefield. But the Battle of the Lys, begun as a diversion, had offered the lesser yet still enormous prize of the northern Channel ports. Now he must abandon that; and his strategic ambition, already thrice contracted, must henceforward sink to an altogether lower plane. The fourth German offensive battle of 1918 was to a large extent a mere bid for a local victory, and apart from its usefulness in diverting Allied troops from the fateful fronts, offered no direct deadly strategic possibilities.

Although often critical of Haig, Churchill approved of the General's "backs to the wall" message which, he noted, the British commander had written himself without any aid. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 228.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 420. Craig, p. 351 and Crevel, pp. 180 and 183. For the reasons behind the tactical successes, see Timothy T. Luper, "The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War," *Leavenworth Papers*, No. 4, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, July 1981, *passim*, chapter 2.

45. *Unknown War*, p. 76.

46. Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis 1915*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, pp. 421-422. G. D. Sheffield, "Blitzkrieg and Attrition: Land Operations in Europe 1914-1945." *Warfare in the Twentieth Century. Theory and Practice*, ed. by Colin McInnes and G. D. Sheffield. London: Unwin Hyman, 1988, p. 61.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

48. Churchill took the quote from Hindenburg's post-war memoirs. *Out of My Life. Unknown War*, p. 299.

49. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part II, p. 509.

50. All quotes from Churchill's June 1, 1915 "Note on the General Situation." *World Crisis 1915*, pp. 404-405.

51. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, pp. 40-42.

52. Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough. His Life and Times, Volume III, 1702-1704*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935, p. 99.

53. *Unknown War*, p. 131

54. *Ibid.*, p. 190. "It is not to their neglect to enter Paris or seize Calais that their fatal defeat was due, but rather to the withdrawal of two German army corps to repel the Russian invasion of East Prussia." *World Crisis 1911-1914*, p. 357. And later, referring to the initial Russian offensive, Churchill noted: "We know that the effects of this offensive upon the nerves of the German Headquarters Staff had led to the withdrawal of two army corps from the German right in Belgium during the crisis before the Marne. It may very well be argued that this event was decisive upon the fate of the battle." *World Crisis 1915*, p. 9. The Brusilov offensive in 1916, of course, played a similar fortunate role for the Entente at Verdun—achieving, as Churchill pointed out, "results far beyond anything dreamt of. . . ." *Unknown War*, p. 362.

55. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 114. *Unknown War*, p. 239.
56. *Unknown War*, p. 301.
57. *Marlborough*, III, p. 258.
58. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 14.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 36 and *Ibid.*, 1916-1918, Part II, p. 461.
60. Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough. His Life and Times. Volume II. 1688-1702*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933, p. 208.
61. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part II, p. 336. When the main theater became the decisive theater again in 1918, resources were pulled from the indecisive theaters, no matter the extent of operational successes. "In the actual event. . . Ludendorff's offensive of 1918 dissipated in a day all of Allenby's careful plans for the spring campaign. Not less than sixty battalions with many batteries were incontinently snatched from Palestine to plug the shot hole of the twenty-first of March." *Ibid.*, p. 337.
62. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 74.
63. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 446.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 413.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 544.
66. *Unknown War*, p. 287.
67. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 195.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
69. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 227. "He was rarely capable of rising to great heights," he wrote of Haig; "he was always incapable of falling below his standards." *Ibid.*, p. 230.
70. *Thoughts and Adventures*, p. 108.
71. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 464.
72. All quotes from *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 401.
73. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 458.

74. Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough. His Life and Times. Volume VI. 1708-1722*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938, p. 172.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 175. The Allies lost 24,000; the French about 15,000 casualties. *Ibid.*, p. 172. All the years of war had not been able to create in Marlborough, as Churchill pointed out, "that detachment from human suffering which has often frozen the hearts of great captains." *Ibid.*, p. 173.

76. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 195.

77. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 22.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 423.

79. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 59.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

85. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 423.

86. *Marlborough, III*, p. 337.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

88. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 5.

89. Patrick Beesly, *Room 40*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982, p. 16. Beesly pointed out that "'Excessively Secret' would have been a more accurate description." *Ibid.*

90. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 51.

91. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 118. But see Beesly, p. 69, who also points out:

The problem for the British was that Room 40's information was now so good, that signs of any German movement could be detected in advance and could not be ignored if the Grand Fleet was to be sailed in time to intercept any offensive operation. That the movements, throughout

1915, always turned out in the end to be purely local ones, to cover minesweeping in the Helgoland Bight, or to guard against possible British attacks, could rarely be ascertained until the *Hochseeflotte* was already on its way back to port. It was all most frustrating for those who credited the Germans with more aggressive intentions than they in fact possessed, and equally for those longing to bring on the great naval battle which would ensure Britannia's supremacy once and for all.

92. *Unknown War*, pp. 201-202.

93. *Marlborough*, III, p. 338. See also *ibid.*, p. 337. *Ibid.*, II, p. 183 and *ibid.*, IV, p. 128.

94. *Ibid.*, III, p. 61.

95. *World Crisis 1911-1914*, pp. 334-335.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 335. Gilbert, III, p. 56.

97. Liddell Hart, "Military Strategist," p. 185. Ashley, p. 81. *World Crisis 1911-1914*, p. 336.

98. *Marlborough*, II, p. 209.

99. *Ibid.*, VI, p. 111.

100. *Ibid.*, pp. 421-428. Marlborough personally was involved in the deception plan that resulted in the rupture of the Ne Plus Ultra line. In the opening gambit of that operation, the British commander, protected by a large troop of cavalry, conducted an ostentatious reconnaissance of the French right flank at close quarters, even while his pioneers were preparing the approaches to the enemy's left. *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427 and 438.

101. Martin Gilbert. *Winston S. Churchill. Volume V. The Prophet of Truth 1922-1939*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977, p. 438.

102. *Marlborough*, IV, p. 65.

103. *Ibid.*

104. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

106. Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill. Volume IV. The Stricken World 1916-1922*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975, p. 8 and Ashley, p. 101.

107. Gilbert, *IV*, p. 62.

108. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 64. Liddell Hart has pointed out that "without Churchill's impulsion, and the naval experiments he initiated, however misguided, the new idea might never have survived the chill of that first winter in official Army quarters." Liddell Hart, "Military Strategist," p. 196. Nevertheless, Churchill never claimed primary proponentcy. He acknowledged that a 1903 H. G. Wells article "had practically exhausted the possibilities in this sphere." Moreover, there was also the small band of armor pioneers in the British Army. "There never was a moment which it was possible to say that a tank had been 'invented,'" Churchill wrote later. "There never was a person about whom it would be said 'this man invented the tank.'" *World Crisis 1915*, pp. 69-70.

109. *Ibid.*, p. 425.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

111. *Ibid.*, 1916-1918, Part II, p. 564.

112. *Ibid.*, 1915, p. 496. See also *Ibid.*, 1916-1918, Part II, p. 555.

113. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 185.

114. *Ibid.*, 1915, p. 82.

115. *Ibid.*, 1916-1918, Part II, p. 345.

116. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 194.

117. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 347.

118. *Ibid.*, pp. 517-518.

### CHAPTER 3

1. Emphasis added. *JCS Pub 1*, p. 240.

2. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, p. 322.

3. For the basic concept of this horizontal-vertical paradigm, see Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy. The Logic of War and Peace*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

4. C.V. I, I, p. 587. *Roving Commission*, p. 131.
5. Ashley, p. 49.
6. Herbert Tingsten, *Victoria and the Victorians*, London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1972, p. 473.
7. R. Churchill, II, p. 19.
8. Winston S. Churchill, *The Aftermath*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, p. 483 and *World Crisis 1915*, p. 6.
9. *Marlborough*, III, p. 353.
10. Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace*, New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1971, p. 189.
11. *Marlborough*, III, p. 13.
12. *Ibid.*, V, p. 90.
13. *Ibid.*, III, p. 262.
14. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 31 and 40.
15. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 6.
16. *Ibid.*, 1916-1918, Part 2, p. 454.
17. *Ibid.*, 1911-1914, p. 362.
18. *Unknown War*, pp. 231-232. The Austrian attack had been a conscious effort to prod the neutrals. "The defeat of Serbia and her collapse," Churchill pointed out, "might be the signal which several at least of the neutral States seemed to await before answering the long-drawn and several times repeated trumpet call." *Ibid.*, p. 117. See also *Ibid.*, p. 273.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
20. *Marlborough*, VI, p. 124. "Neither in his headquarters at the front nor behind him at home did he have that sense of plenary authority which gave to Frederick the Great and to Napoleon their marvelous freedom of action." *Ibid.*, V, p. 6.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
22. *Ibid.*, III, p. 290. See also *Ibid.*, p. 355: "Surveying the general war," Churchill wrote of the situation just prior to Blenheim, "we can see that

matters had now come to such a pitch that without a great victory in two or three months, the Grand Alliance was doomed."

23. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 84.
24. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, pp. 237 and 240.
25. Gilbert, IV, p. 50.
26. Winston S. Churchill, *Savrola. A Tale of the Revolution in Laurania*, New York: Random House, 1956, p. 82.
27. *Marlborough*, VI, p. 76. Chapter 24 in the fifth volume of *Marlborough* is entitled "The Home Front."
28. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 113.
29. Howard, *Studies*, p. 108.
30. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 58.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.
32. *Aftermath*, p. 476.
33. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 88.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 84, "In a military sense, Verdun had no exceptional military importance. . . . It was two hundred and twenty kilometers from Paris, and its capture would not have made any material difference to the safety either of the capital or of the general line." *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
36. *Unknown War*, pp. 352-353.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 363.
38. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 112.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
41. Geoffrey Till, "Naval Power," *Warfare in the Twentieth Century*, p. 91.
42. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part II, p. 396.

43. *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 226-227.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239.
45. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 254.
46. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 239.
47. R. Churchill, Vol. II, pp. 26-27.
48. *Thoughts and Adventures*, p. 100.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
50. *World Crisis, 1915*, p. 6.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 526. "There was no supreme authority."
52. Martin Gilbert. *Winston Churchill. Volume III. The Challenge of War 1914-1916*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971, p. 543.
53. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 111. A similar position to that of Marlborough in the winter of 1703 when "responsibility with odium, but without power, was all that was offered. . . ." *Marlborough, III*, p. 266.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
55. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 244.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
58. *Unknown War*, p. 287.
59. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part I, pp. 277 and 279.
60. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 117.
61. *Thoughts and Adventures*, p. 109.
62. *World Crisis, 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 199.
63. *Thoughts and Adventures*, p. 109.
64. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 349.
65. *Aftermath*, p. 467.

66. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 118.
67. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, pp. 213-214.
68. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 511.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 405, and *Thoughts and Adventures*, p. 113.
70. *World Crisis 1915*, p. 527.
71. *Marlborough*, III, p. 141. Michael Howard, *War in European Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 113.
72. *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part II, p. 305.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 338.
74. This led the King to comment: "What good words for a recent subaltern of Hussars!" R. Churchill, Vol. II, p. 93.
75. Sir Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911, p. 236.
76. Sir Julian Corbett, *The Successors of Drake*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900, p. vii. Churchill pointed out in World War I that "the Admirals who thought only of the Grand Fleet and the Generals who thought only of the Main Army may learn how cruel are the revenges which Fortune wreaks upon those who disdain her first and golden offerings." *World Crisis 1915*, p. 539.
77. *Ibid.*, 1911-1914, p. 93
78. *Ibid.*, p. 58-62. But see D. M. Schurman, *The Education of a Navy. The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought, 1867-1914*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 185, who points out that the pre-1914 naval strategists may have had some indirect influence on the conduct of both World Wars, but adds that "their obvious influence was not overwhelming."
79. Michael Howard, *The British Way in Warfare. A Reappraisal*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1975, p. 5.
80. Schurmann, p. 190.
81. *Aftermath*, p. 474.
82. *Unknown War*, p. 304. See also *World Crisis 1916-1918*, Part I, p. 66.

83. *Aftermath*, p. 475.
84. Emphasis added. *Marlborough*, III, p. 95.
85. Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough. His Life and Times. Volume I. 1650-1688*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933, p. 77.
86. *Ibid.*, III, p. 299.
87. *Ibid.*, V, p. 242 and IV, p. 135.
88. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 242-243. "Nevertheless," Churchill concluded about the failure of the 1707 Toulon amphibious operation, "good strategy even in failure often produces compensations." *Ibid.*, p. 290.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 553 and *Ibid.*, III, p. 55.
90. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 149.
91. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 453 and 456.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 456-457.
93. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 326.
94. *Thoughts and Adventures*, p. 113.
95. Gilbert, IV, p. 915.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 914.
97. *Thoughts and Adventures*, p. 197.
98. *Great Contemporaries*, p. 23.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
100. Gilbert, V, p. 319.
101. *Marlborough*, IV, p. 129.
102. *Ibid.*, III, p. 112.
103. *Aftermath*, p. 1.
104. *Marlborough*, IV, p. 50.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

106. *Ibid.*, III, p. 16.

107. *Ibid.*, V, p. 242. Marlborough also believed "that any peace offer from France would only be an attempt to . . . cheat the Allies." *Ibid.*, VI, p. 42.

108. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 128.

109. *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 177 and 185.

110. *Ibid.*, V, p. 9.

111. Winston S. Churchill. *The Story of the Malakand Field Force. An Episode of Frontier War*, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901, p. 208.

112. *London to Ladysmith*, p. 98.

113. John Wheeler-Bennett, ed., *Action This Day. Working With Churchill*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969, p. 106. Churchill was certainly more magnanimous than his ancestor. When King George restored Marlborough to office after the death of Queen Anne, the earlier Churchill immediately attacked the two men most responsible for driving him from power and staining his reputation. Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, the former Tory Secretary of State, fled England to escape from Marlborough, who simultaneously pressured the government to impeach the second of his enemies, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and former Lord Treasurer. Ashley, p. 156.

114. Wheeler-Bennett, p. 82.

115. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War. Volume I. The Gathering Storm*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948, p. 4.

#### CHAPTER 4

1. *World Crisis 1915* p. 1.

2. *Ibid.*, 1911-1914, p. 174.

3. *Unknown War*, p. 288.

4. A. J. P. Taylor, "The Statesman," *Churchill Revised*, p. 43.

5. *Marlborough*, III, pp. 13-14.

6. Eade, p. 285.

7. Ronald Lewin, *Churchill as Warlord*, New York: Stein and Day, 1973, p. 35.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

9. Gilbert, *VII*, p. 75.

10. Churchill's emphasis. *Unknown War*, p. 132. "But it was no use sitting down and waiting for a year while these preparations were completing," Churchill commented in *World War I* concerning the efforts to meet the Zeppelin threat. "Only offensive action could help us." *World Crisis 1911-1914*, p. 339.

11. Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill. Volume VIII. Road to Victory 1941-1945*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986, pp. 133 and 51-52.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

14. See Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy. Volume IV. August 1942-September 1943*, London: HMSO, 1972, *passim*, pp. 191-221.

15. Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968, p. 69. "In after months," Eisenhower commented many years later in reference to Torch, "I became absolutely certain that Mr. Churchill had been right in his argument for that particular operation; and so did General Marshall." Nelson, p. 33.

16. Lewin, p. 139.

17. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War. Volume V. Closing the Ring*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951, p. 38.

18. Howard, *Mediterranean Strategy*, pp. 70-71.

19. Wheeler-Bennett, p. 96.

20. Maurice Matloff, "Allied Strategy in Europe," *Makers of Modern Strategy*, p. 695.

21. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War. Volume VI. Triumph and Tragedy*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1953, p. 455.

22. Matloff, p. 702.

23. *Marlborough*, VI, p. 90.

24. Luttwak. Part III, *passim*.

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