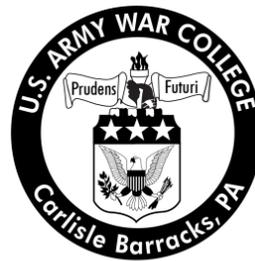


# Anzio to Libya: Strategic Direction in Coalition Warfare

by

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Class of 2012

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**ANZIO TO LIBYA: STRATEGIC DIRECTION IN COALITION WARFARE**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This project will use the Allied landings at Anzio during World War II as a historical case study to analyze the importance and complexities of building coherent strategic direction in coalition warfare, as well as relate the conclusions to recent operations in Libya and discuss implications for Coalition Force Commanders in the future. Joint doctrine states that strategic direction leads to unified action; strategic direction translated into commander's intent at the operational and tactical level of war leads to unified action.<sup>1</sup> When strategic direction is not conveyed in commander's intent, lives are put at risk and operations are often derailed. The complex nature of coalition operations demands that the Coalition Force Commander clearly understand higher commander's intent, and convey that intent to the tactical level of war. Moreover, this effort is difficult when coalition members have divergent strategic end states and desires. The battle at Anzio and NATO operations in Libya provide excellent examples of diverse and sometimes conflicting national desires within coalitions, and are instructive to senior leaders who must formulate strategic direction and subordinate commander's intent in this challenging multinational environment.



## ANZIO TO LIBYA: STRATEGIC DIRECTION IN COALITION WARFARE

The coalition of the willing, led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), endorsed by the Arab League, under mandate from the United Nations, successfully executed Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR, whose stated goal was the protection of innocents. Eventually, the operation led to the removal of long-time dictator Muammar Qadhafi by the Libyan Transitional National Council. The NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated that the operation was “a positive story about a strong European commitment to our alliance. The fact is that for the first time in the history of NATO, the European allies and Canada have provided a majority of the assets.”<sup>2</sup> That the operation is considered a success for NATO is widely contested. While the outcome was positive, the operation itself revealed several limitations and shortcomings inside the alliance and the broader coalition. Former United States Ambassador to NATO, Kurt Volker posits, “It is more accurate to say that it is a success *despite* deep-rooted problems that still remain unaddressed within the alliance.”<sup>3</sup>

The operation brought together a wide array of partners committed to enforcing United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973, which authorized participating nations “to take all necessary measures to enforce compliance with the ban on flights” inside the no-fly zone<sup>4</sup>. Whether or not the operation was a “success,” is largely irrelevant. What is important are the lessons that we are reminded of – not least of which is the difficulty in trying to divine strategic direction from a coalition composed of nations with divergent interests. History is ripe with examples of the importance of strategic direction driving commander’s intent in operations. Certainly, the strange marriage of communists, colonialists, and capitalists formalized by the grand alliance

between the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States during World War II is a colorful backdrop to frame the discussion. While all three were committed to the defeat of Nazi Germany, the campaign in the Mediterranean is an example of the danger of competing and divergent national interests. In particular, the tragedy at Anzio exemplified the implications of a lack of solidarity in strategic direction driving operational and tactical blunders on the battlefield. Significantly, recent operations in Libya revisit many of the same implications and are instructive to Coalition Force Commanders of the future.

#### Strategic Direction to Commander's Intent

Strategic Direction - the processes and products by which the President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provide strategic guidance to the Joint Staff, combatant commands, Services, and combat support agencies.<sup>5</sup>

Joint Publication 1 states that strategic direction leads to unified action. In other words, commander's intent that accurately translates higher command's strategic direction to the operational level results in unified action.<sup>6</sup> Commander's intent that fails to communicate strategic direction unnecessarily puts lives at risk, and often derails operations. The complex nature of coalition operations demands that the Coalition Force Commander clearly understand the strategic direction, and reflect that direction to the operational and tactical level of war through a cogent commander's intent. The commander's intent is a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the military end state.<sup>7</sup> To avoid confusion resulting from differences in doctrine and terminology, the U.S. Army states that commander's intent for multinational operations must be articulated simply and clearly.<sup>8</sup> Convergent strategic national interests are generally the foundations of coalitions; paradoxically, however, many of the underlying

motivations for such interests are divergent. The Allied battle at Anzio provides an excellent case study for analyzing the ramifications of divergent strategic direction among coalition partners and the implications for combined operations on the battlefield.

### Divergent Interests in the Mediterranean

The Allied strategic objectives in Italy and their importance garnered high-level discussion. At the strategic level, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his military team led by Chief of Staff of the Army, General George C. Marshall, were committed to a cross English channel invasion to deliver a direct blow to the fielded forces of the Third Reich. While this was conceived as the primary effort, the President also wanted to consolidate support in the United States for the “Germany first” strategy by getting United States troops engaged in the fight.<sup>9</sup> It follows that given the estimated time required to build up forces in Britain, a Mediterranean campaign had a certain political appeal for the President. General Marshall was not convinced. Weighing heavy on the situation was the ability of the Russians to continue fighting in the East without American and British forces engaging the Germans on the continent. As historian Stephen Ambrose put it, avoiding confrontation might “lead to a complete victory for Hitler” if the Russians faltered.<sup>10</sup>

For their part, the British reluctantly supported the cross channel effort, but desired an indirect strategy predicated on peripheral operations in the Mediterranean theater directed against Italy and the Balkans. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, apparently having recovered from the defeat at Gallipoli during the First World War, placed great significance on the capture of Rome. He remarked, “It would be impossible for us to forgo the capture of Rome. To do so would be regarded on all sides as a crushing defeat.”<sup>11</sup> Churchill’s anticipation of the postwar communist expansion,

particularly in the Balkans, likely played into the calculus. The U.S. commanders, under pressure from the President, agreed that an Italian campaign was important to the extent that it did not delay what General Dwight Eisenhower envisioned as the main effort – the landings in France, scheduled for the spring of 1944. Regarding British strategic assumptions, General Clark noted, “we took a chance on Churchill’s persuasive eloquence, his conviction that we could ‘slit the soft underbelly of the Mediterranean.’ It turned out not to be so soft.”<sup>12</sup>

The Soviet Union desired maximum pressure on the Germans. Their primary impetus to support the Mediterranean operations was the assumption that an aggressive offensive in Italy would draw German forces from the Eastern front, relieving pressure on beleaguered Red Army troops. The Russians were dissatisfied with Anglo-American progress as their intelligence suggested that the Germans were actually reinforcing the Eastern front with divisions occupying Italy and the Balkans.<sup>13</sup> Forcing Italy out of the war would drive Germany to replace 29 Italian divisions in the Balkans and five in France, or risk ceding the territory to the Allies.<sup>14</sup> Having allied bases of operations in Italy and the Balkans would complicate the operational scenario for German high command. The Germans, however, had no plans to make a quick retreat from Italy.

German Führer Adolf Hitler’s choice of a supreme commander for Italy reinforced his intent. Initially disposed to give the command to the “Desert Fox,” Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, Hitler did not agree with Rommel’s pessimistic view of defending south of Rome and predictions of Italian “treachery.” When the Allied advance was stopped at

the Gustav line, Hitler gave the command to Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, who had a more positive view of the situation. Hitler remarked:

...the events have proven him [Rommel] totally wrong, and I have been justified in my decision to leave Field Marshal Kesselring there, whom I had seen as an incredible political idealist, but also as a military optimist, and it is my opinion that military leadership without optimism is not possible.<sup>15</sup>

Hitler's decision to stand and fight in Italy made the Allied advance to Rome difficult and particularly bloody in places like Cassino, Anzio, Cisterna, and the Gustav line.

#### Italy; November 1943 to January 1944

The ghosts of [Operation] Shingle lie neatly in their graves at Anzio and Nettuno—2,300 British, 7,862 Americans, a cross or star bearing their names. A list in marble contains the names of 3,094 Americans missing in action there. Churchill had yearned for the capture of Rome, but his plan to end the 'scandalous' stagnation of the Italian campaign would add only more scandal and stagnation. 'I thought we had flung a wildcat into the [Alban] Hills,' Churchill would cry in disappointment, 'but, instead, got a whale floundering on the beach.'<sup>16</sup>

The situation in Italy at the end of 1943 was tenuous at best. After landing in southern Italy in September of 1943, the Allied forces, led by Lieutenant General Mark Clark, commander of the U.S. Fifth Army, and General Sir Bernard Montgomery, commander of the British Eighth Army, were pushing North against rugged terrain and a determined enemy. The Germans had constructed three defensive lines across the boot of Italy. The most formidable one was the Gustav line—an intricate, integrated defensive line that took advantage of the favorable terrain between Monte Cassino and the Garigliano and Rapido rivers. By November, the weather, terrain, and an experienced and battle-hardened enemy stalled the Allied advance.<sup>17</sup>

In order to break the stalemate at the Gustav line, the Allies contrived an ambitious plan to land two reinforced divisions between the U.S. Fifth Army and Rome,

in the area of Anzio. The intent was that the landing would pull German troops to the beachhead to reinforce the coastal defenses, allowing the Fifth Army to break out. In addition, the forces at Anzio could interdict the German lines of communication by surging towards the Alban Hills and gaining control of Route 6, the primary connection between German forces defending the Gustav line with reinforcements and supplies from the north (see Figure 1). This action would force a larger German retreat

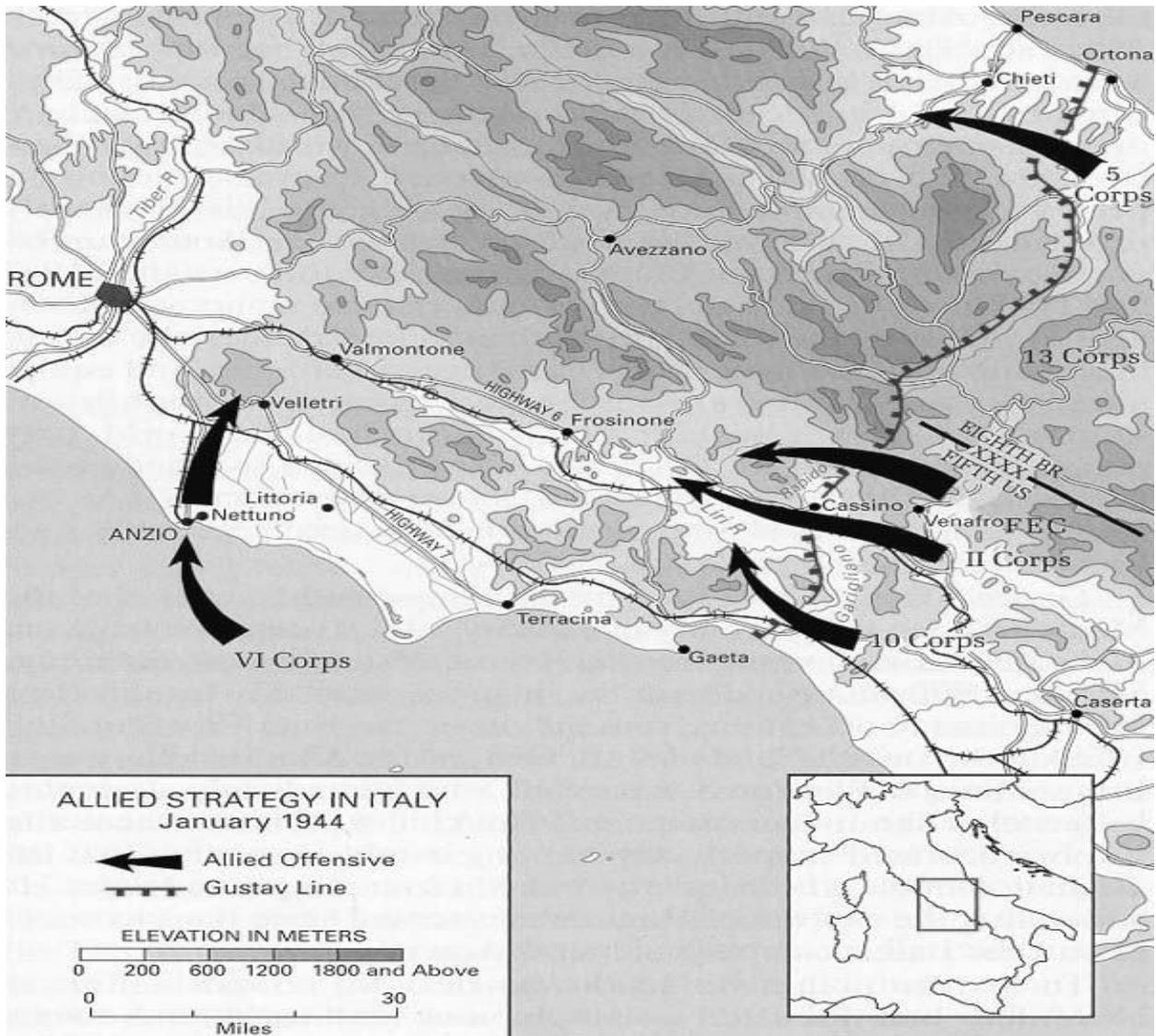


Figure 1: Allied Strategy in Italy, January 1944

towards the Alps and support the strategic direction of drawing German forces away from the planned landings in Normandy and southern France, as well as from the Eastern front.<sup>18</sup> General Clark reflected this strategic direction in his initial orders to Major General John P. Lucas, commander of Operation SHINGLE. Consequently, on 27 December 1943, Lucas and his VI Corp were directed to:

1. Seize and secure the beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio.
2. Advance and secure the Colli Laziali (Alban Hills).
3. Be prepared to advance on Rome.<sup>19</sup>

Both Lucas and Clark had reservations about the planned operation and their ability to support it logistically. These reservations drove the cancellation of the operation in late December. This is not surprising given the United States focus on “the main effort” at Normandy. Assuming additional risk by delivering two divisions on a beachhead with marginal lines of communication in a peripheral theater did not support the primary American strategic focus of a direct campaign in Western Europe. Britain had other ideas and Prime Minister Churchill resurrected the plan in early January. Two factors contributed to this reversal. First, in anticipation of Overlord, General Eisenhower transferred to England and control of the Italian campaign fell to the British Chiefs of Staff, heavily influenced by Prime Minister Churchill. This shift in command to the British placed increased emphasis on ending the stagnation in Italy. Second, Churchill secured an extension from President Roosevelt to keep a minimum number of landing craft necessary to execute the operation in Italy until February, at which time they would move to England to support cross channel operations.

Clark and Lucas' main concern was that the plan was under-resourced, a vulnerability easily exploited by experienced German troops. A note dictated for General Clark well illustrates his dilemma:

...genuinely eager to engage in Shingle, to the point of committing in it units which he would subsequently have to utilize in ANVIL, but that, in effect, a pistol was being held at his head because he was told, totally to his surprise, that if he was to engage in SHINGLE it must be done with inadequate landing craft, that the craft would be available for only two days after the landing, and that no supply or reinforcement thereafter would be available. In effect, therefore, he was asked to land two divisions at a point where a juncture with the balance of the Fifth Army was impossible for a long period, thereby leaving two divisions in question out on a very long limb.<sup>20</sup>

Understanding the operational complexity and logistic challenges of maintaining and safeguarding an amphibious force ensconced behind enemy lines, General Clark amended his original orders. In order to give General Lucas some operational flexibility, on 12 January 1944, he amended the orders:

1. Seize and secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio.
2. Advance on Colli Laziali<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, the change masked the original commander's intent and urgency to interdict the German lines of communication along Route 6, the key operational lever required to force a German retreat and enable Fifth Army to break out from the Gustav line. With these orders, General Lucas secured the beachhead and his own lines of communication first. His delay allowed the Germans to react and contain the lodgment with combat tested divisions - including the famed Hermann Göring Division - and ultimately prolonged the march to Rome and robbed the operation of its intended strategic effect in theater.

## Operation SHINGLE

The preparation for the Operation SHINGLE's amphibious assault began poorly in rehearsals in mid-January 1944; "The token rehearsal for the 3d Division was terrible. Some forty amphibious 2-½ ton trucks and nineteen 105mm howitzers lost. All because the Navy did not close in the beach--which they admit."<sup>22</sup> Despite a poor rehearsal, the short timeline did not allow any additional training. On the evening of 21 January 1944, Task Force 81, under the command of Rear Admiral F.J. Lowry, waited undetected while anchored three miles from the beach enjoying their last meals of double-rations, extra chocolate bars and conducting last minute equipment checking.<sup>23</sup> The nighttime assault began with "nearly 800 5-inch allied rockets that crashed into the buildings along the waterfront of all the invasion beaches."<sup>24</sup> Assault forces stormed the beaches unopposed and assisted by two man teams previously launched from submarines that established landing lights to direct craft. On the beaches, engineers escorted forces through the mines and directed traffic with loudspeakers. Any enemy resistance was quickly overwhelmed. "By the end of D-Day the allies had put ashore 36,034 troops, 3,069 vehicles, and a large number of supplies –90 percent of the VI Corps assault load."<sup>25</sup> Despite the poor rehearsals, the amphibious assault secured a beachhead and opened another avenue to Rome for the Allies in less than twenty-four hours.

Rapid execution and poor German intelligence allowed the VI Corps to completely surprise Kesselring's forces and secure the beachhead with only 13 killed and 97 wounded.<sup>26</sup> An Irish coalition soldier characterized the landings as "very gentlemanly, calm and dignified."<sup>27</sup> This speed was critical in maintaining operational security. Despite a short planning timeline, poor German intelligence also assisted in

maintaining the element of surprise. Over 60 tank landing crafts (LST's), 300 landing craft, ships, destroyers, and cruisers were positioned and prepared. Amazingly, German intelligence discounted the massive build-up of coalition forces as increased amphibious exercises near Naples. Speedy execution, coupled with German intelligence failures created one of the most successful initial landings in the war. After the landing, a young American Lieutenant named John T. Cummings, assigned to the 36<sup>th</sup> Engineer regiment under Major General Lucian Truscott's Third Infantry Division, was given orders to begin reconnaissance. Cummings and his driver set out past the Alban Hills unopposed all the way to the city limits of Rome.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, this report never made it to General Lucas. If it had, it may have motivated him to move out from the beachhead more hastily. German Field Marshal Kesselring commented after the war that:

The Allies on the beachhead on the first day of the landing did not conform to the German High Command's expectations. Instead of moving northward with the first wave to seize the Alban Mountains...the landing forces limited their objective. Their initial action was to occupy a small beachhead...As the Allies made no preparations for a large-scale attack on the first day of the landings, the German Command estimated that the Allies would improve their positions, and bring up more troops...During this time sufficient German troops would arrive to prevent an Allied breakthrough.<sup>29</sup>

German troops arrived in sufficient strength and speed to prevent the surprise landings at Anzio from yielding the operational advantage and strategic effect. Under Operation "Case Richard," the Germans reinforced the area with infantry, jaeger and panzer divisions. By 24 January, while General Lucas consolidated his forces around the initial landings, more than 40,000 German soldiers closed on the area. By 29 January, German reinforcements rose to nearly 70,000 soldiers from eight different divisions that established key blocking positions against the Allied positions (see Figure

2). “Moreover, a new threat soon emerged in the form of deadly radio-controlled glide bombs, which forced the Naval support to retire at 1600 hours each day.”<sup>30</sup> The large build up of ground forces, the arrival of the German Luftwaffe, and the limited logistical support from sea lines of communication severely affected the Allied advance towards Rome.

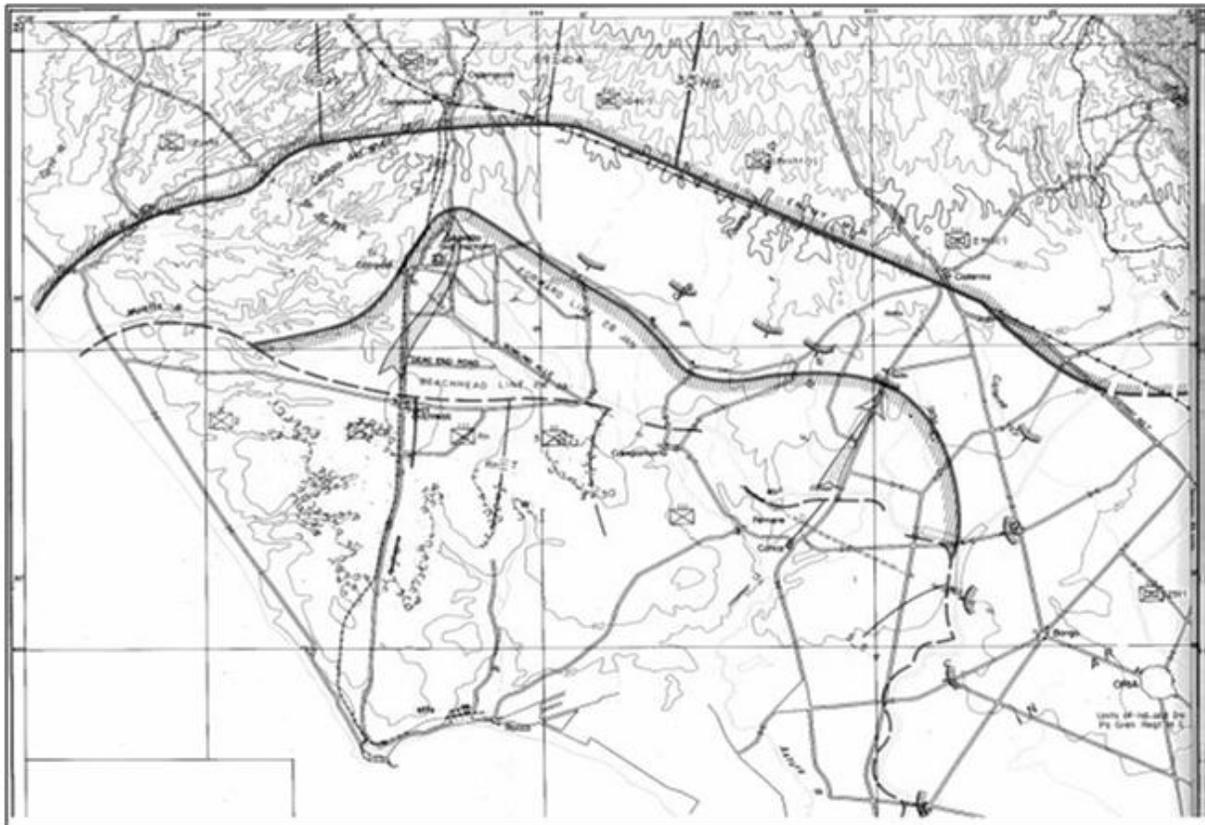


Figure 2: Expanding the Beachhead, 24-28 January 1944

After seven days of delay in building up supplies on the beachhead and in reconnaissance, the Allies attempted an attack to seize the key terrain of the Alban Hills and begin their push to Rome. ‘Darby’s Rangers’ attacked the town of Cisterna as part of a larger breakout. The unit fought bravely against heavily armed panzer divisions, but in the end,

...the Ranger force ceased to exist. Of the 767 men who took part in the attack of Cisterna, almost all were lost during one of the worst periods of the campaign, which also saw the loss of a British Cruiser and a Liberty shipped loaded with ammunition. Small unit action was typical of the seemingly endless bloody battles of Anzio, where both sides fought with tenacity and grit but too little tactical gain.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, the beachhead had evolved into a battlefield resembling the trench warfare of the First World War. The spring rains and unpredictable weather only added to the delays in progress. Incessant shelling, barbed wire, slit trenches and sheets of machine gun fire produced many recipients of medals for valor--many of whom are enshrined in Allied cemeteries on the outskirts of Rome. The Allies did not break the stalemate until May of 1944, after the relief of General Lucas and addition of combat troops, with Operation DIADEM. By 4 June 1944, allied forces reached Rome with the German Tenth and Fourteenth Armies in retreat. Although an initial success, the battle at Anzio demonstrates the danger of divergent coalition strategic directions muddling commander's intent on the battlefield. Recent NATO operations in Libya revisit this lesson.

#### Spring 2011- NATO Operations in Libya

The spring of 2011 marked a sea change for the countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East. Freedom was in the air, and many people who lived under authoritarian regimes desired change. Tunisia was first, then Egypt. Powered by the information velocity of social media, the uprisings were generally peaceful and the authoritarian regimes eventually ceded power in what became known as the "Arab Spring". In the geographic middle of those two countries lies Libya, whose people yearned to be out from under the repressive grip of Muammar Qadhafi, who had been ruling with an iron fist for more than 40 years. On 17 February 2011, Libyan rebels took to the streets in

the city of Benghazi to protest the regime.<sup>32</sup> The closer the uprising moved towards the capital of Tripoli and Qadhafi's hometown of Sirte, the more ruthless the response. Swearing to hunt his own citizens down like "rats," and authorizing attacks on innocent people, hospitals, and ambulances, Qadhafi gave every indication that he would do whatever was necessary to maintain power.<sup>33</sup> Using the protection of innocents as justification for intervention, a diverse coalition of nations came together to stop Qadhafi's aggression. The United States and NATO led this band.

In the 2010 National Security Strategy, President Barack Obama identifies four overarching national interests: security, prosperity, values, and international order.<sup>34</sup> With respect to international order, he states that it should be an international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges. At face value, it seems that supporting NATO operations in Libya served the larger strategic direction of promoting United States values and advancing international order. Moreover, the President clearly asserted that the United States relationship with NATO is the cornerstone of our engagement throughout the world. He describes the alliance as the pre-eminent security alliance in the world with the stated goal of strengthening the collective ability to promote security, deter vital threats, and defend member citizens.

NATO is a political and a military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed on 4 April 1949 in Washington, D.C.<sup>35</sup> Consisting of 28 member nations, NATO headquarters are located in Brussels, Belgium, and the organization is rooted in collective defense. The first NATO Secretary General, Lord Ismay, stated that the organization's goal is "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans

down.”<sup>36</sup> Today, NATO’s stated role “...and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.”<sup>37</sup> As a political organization, it reinforces security by reducing the risk of conflict through diplomacy, dialogue and consensus, and cooperation. When diplomatic efforts fail, the alliance uses collective defense, crisis management operations, and maintaining adequate military capabilities to deter, influence, and if necessary defeat opposing forces. NATO nations share the common values of democracy, freedom, solidarity, rule of law, well-being, individual liberty, peace and stability, and common heritage. Even with shared values, several challenges are inherent in trying to maintain solidarity in the Alliance.

In the case of Libya, the coalescing end state for the coalition of the willing was the protection of civilians. In his address to the American people, President Obama stated that NATO had a responsibility to act to protect the innocent civilians, and if the members waited just one more day, “Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.”<sup>38</sup> In reality, several members of NATO had many other motivations to ensure regional stability, most of which were political and economic, not humanitarian.

Significantly, Europe receives over 85 percent of Libya’s crude exports.<sup>39</sup> In 2010, Libyan oil accounted for 22, 16, and 13 percent of Italy, France, and Spain’s consumption respectively.<sup>40</sup> Italian and Spanish oil conglomerates harvest about one-third of the oil produced in Libya, and Austria is largely dependent.<sup>41</sup> For its part, France is invested heavily in Libya; President Nicholas Sarkozy himself signing a major

memorandum of agreement in 2007 that allows French access to Libyan uranium in exchange for an agreement to sponsor construction of a nuclear desalination plant in the country.<sup>42</sup> It is also suggested that President Sarkozy was politically motivated towards intervention to distract voters from economic woes and corruption in his own party.<sup>43</sup> The Italians are also concerned about illegal immigration from North Africa and the impact on their treasury. With a French refusal to accept more migrants, the Italian conservative Northern League party has backed a boycott of French goods and a league junior minister mentioned opening fire on vessels carrying migrants.<sup>44</sup> Given divergent interests, NATO solidarity during the Libyan crisis would prove problematic.

The continued pressure on NATO defense budgets despite increased international volatility also affected alliance cohesion. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates chastised the Europeans during his last visit to NATO in June of 2011. At the time of his visit, only four of the 28 nations were spending at or above the agreed upon floor of two percent of gross domestic product (GDP), while the United States spends upwards of five percent, including supplemental funding for overseas contingencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>45</sup> This disparity in resource allocation is remarkably out of balance considering that the Non-U.S. NATO countries' combined economies are larger and more populous than the United States. Data from 2009 indicates that the Non-U.S. NATO GDP is approximately \$17.6T for a population of 591 million, compared to the United States GDP of \$14.1T for a population of 371 million.<sup>46</sup> The net result is that the United States provides significantly more capability under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Article 5 specifies that an attack on one nation is considered an attack on all. The impact of the Greek debt crisis and possible long-term

effects of one or more European country defaults only serves to complicate the equation.

A lack of resources does not engender a desire in many countries to upgrade and recapitalize their military equipment and capabilities. This limits the alliance's means available to meet strategic end states. It also creates a particular problem with regard to interoperability of NATO forces, especially with new members having historic ties to the former Soviet Union. These challenges are of keen interest to a Coalition Force Commander trying to divine a cogent commander's intent that ties to the strategic direction and capabilities of the nations involved.

On 17 March 2011, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 1973. The resolution established a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace, and authorized robust enforcement measures for the arms embargo established by the previous UNSCR 1970. Inside the resolution, the United Nations authorized member states "to take all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory."<sup>47</sup> In response, the United States provided forces from the United States European Command under tactical control of United States Africa Command to enforce a no-fly zone and protect civilians in Libya. Military operations began two days later on 19 March 2011. U.S. and coalition forces, initially led by the French and United Kingdom, quickly established air supremacy over Libya's major cities, destroying the most dangerous elements of the Libyan air defense network and attacking pro-regime forces threatening the rebels, their sympathizers, and civilian populations. In his address to

the nation at the National Defense University, President Obama clearly stated his intent to transfer air operations over Libya to NATO.<sup>48</sup> On 30 March 2011, NATO assumed command of all aspects of coalition military operations under Lieutenant General Bouchard of the Canadian Air Force. With the clarity of hindsight, many argue that the operation in Libya was a success for NATO, and although the dictator was deposed and the people of Libya gained a real chance to establish self-governance, the operations exposed potential political and military vulnerabilities in the alliance, particularly with respect to divergent strategic interests.

Kurt Volker, the former United States Ambassador to NATO, made a compelling case that the operation demonstrated the political dangers of vaguely defined missions operating under United Nations mandate. In tying operations to UNSCR 1973, NATO politically handcuffed itself since China and Russia are permanent members on the Security Council and can drive vital nuances in the resolution, and consequently, operations. We have seen that most recently with the Chinese/Russian veto of the proposed resolution on Syrian aggression.<sup>49</sup> The Libya resolution strictly prohibited ground forces and there was no language specifically calling for regime change. Additionally, NATO members Germany and Turkey opposed any expansion of the mission past what was specified in the resolution. Mr. Volker points out that eventually Britain, France, and Italy ended up sending in special operations forces to help pass intelligence and coordinate the ground offensive with the Libyan rebels.<sup>50</sup> NATO or the Security Council never officially sanctioned that action. Had this been included in the original scope of the mission, the rebel offensive may have succeeded much faster than it did. The likely tradeoff would have been a loss of broad international support

including that of the Arab League, which was critical to encourage our Arab allies in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Jordan.

Even more disturbing was the operational vulnerabilities that the operation exposed. The United States had to augment and fill critical capabilities such as air refueling, reconnaissance, command and control, and targeting because NATO nations either did not have, or were unwilling to provide the capabilities. An air operations center that would normally surge 300 sorties a day struggled to launch 150 sorties. Although the operation was effective (the coalition only lost one aircraft due to a mechanical malfunction), with a more capable adversary, NATO air supremacy certainly could and would be contested. Given what we witnessed in Libya, the United States and her Allies must overcome adverse economic conditions, interoperability issues, and institutional vulnerabilities. More importantly, Coalition Force Commanders need to understand the intricate nature and balance of alliances and coalitions in order to direct operations that support end states and objectives born from divergent strategic directions.

### Analysis and Conclusions

Allied operations at Anzio and over the skies of Libya demonstrate the difficulty of Coalition Force Commanders generating unified action from strategic direction born of divergent national interests. During Anzio, the operational complexities were immense, and the political divides greater. Strategic direction not properly translated to operations at Anzio was costly in time, blood, and treasure. In Libya, operations were not as complicated, and the enemy was less capable and more predictable. However, identifying a strategic end state that satisfied the real interests of all coalition nations, and then designing an operation that achieved the end-state was problematic at best. In

both cases, Coalition Force Commanders had to balance national interests and caveats to generate operational success on the battlefield. Whether it was landing craft extensions at Anzio or putting NATO special operations forces on the ground in Libya, commanders worked and adapted inside their multi-national frameworks.

Operation SHINGLE is an excellent case study on why understanding strategic direction is essential for unified action during war. The stated object of the operation was to facilitate the breakout of the Allies behind the Gustav line and capture Rome—thereby drawing German reinforcements from other fronts.<sup>51</sup> At the operational level, the intent was to execute the landing at Anzio and interdict German lines of communication north of the Gustav line, thereby hastening the German retreat. Due to General Clark changing the intent of his original orders to General Lucas, the strategic direction was never supported at the operational level. Kesselring's Chief of Staff, General Siegfried Westphal offered this perspective:

An audacious and enterprising formation of enemy troops...could have penetrated into the city of Rome itself without having to overcome any serious opposition...but the landed enemy forces lost time and hesitated<sup>52</sup>

The Germans viewed the Anzio beach landing as a success for the Allies, followed by an immediate failure to move quickly and capitalize on the initiative. Certainly, the failure at Anzio is a result of many factors. Faulty assumptions by the planning staff on enemy capability, inadequate resources for the invasion force, hesitant leadership at the most senior task force levels, and an overall lack of agility by coalition forces were contributing factors. Unfortunately, war is a human endeavor characterized by uncertainty, and history is full of examples that illustrate the necessity for clarity in strategic direction. Clear strategic direction provides focus and purpose to subordinate leaders. At Anzio, this strategic direction was lost between the architects and the

executors of the plan. In the final analysis of Anzio, many are quick to cite an apparent lack of aggressiveness in General Lucas. With the benefit of hindsight, the Mediterranean strategy at Anzio was under resourced from the beginning and not executable in a manner that could achieve the desired objective of cutting German lines of communication and forcing a retreat. General Clark knew it, and that is why he modified his orders to General Lucas. In a telling exchange just after the landings, General Clark offered this advice to General Lucas: "Don't stick your neck out, Johnny. I did at Salerno and got into trouble."<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the American commanders did the best they could, balancing means with ends and taking risk where they thought appropriate. No one was more disappointed, except perhaps Churchill himself, in the apparent lack of understanding of Mediterranean strategic direction than Chief of the Imperial Staff, Field Marshal Alan Brooke:

American drag on us has seriously affected our Mediterranean strategy and the whole conduct of this war. If they had come wholeheartedly into the Mediterranean with us, we should by now have Rome securely, [and] the Balkans would be ablaze. I blame myself for having the vision to foresee these possibilities and yet have failed to overcome the American shortsighted views, and to have allowed my better judgment to be affected by them<sup>54</sup>

Unfortunately at Anzio, orders were not given that would achieve the strategic effect, and too much blood and time were wasted salvaging an operation ultimately derailed by divergent coalition interests and differing priorities.

Libya demonstrated that although coalitions of the willing may have divergent interests, it is still possible to achieve your common objectives, even if it appears haphazard. Regardless of the overriding national interests, finding common ground is critical in providing the strategic direction necessary to design and conduct operations. Libya also exposed the danger and risks entailed when coalitions mask real motivations

under the cover of good intentions. The stated strategic direction was to protect Libyan civilians by fixing and targeting regime forces loyal to Muammar Qadhafi through establishment of a no-fly zone over Libyan airspace. If United States national interests were to promote values and maintain international order by protecting the people of Libya from their own government, one wonders how this is possible without regime change or ground forces advising the Libyan rebels. The fact that ground advisors were introduced and regime change occurred is a pleasant fact for the coalition, because it was never identified in the strategic objectives of the campaign, nor was it authorized in the UNSCR. That European economic interests were also secured by this operation is also too convenient to be ignored. Some say that all is well that ends well, except this is problematic in light of the human tragedy now occurring in Syria. Thousands have died and many wonder why the Libyan people were more important for the NATO and coalition members to protect. The hard truth is that we risk alliance credibility by trying to work a slight of hand in foreign policy. All this is to say that the one chosen to lead the coalition needs to have some situational and political awareness. The Coalition Force Commander must make sure that commander's intent reflects the strategic direction in tactical operations in order to generate unity of effort.

The man in charge of Libyan air operations, Canadian Lieutenant General Brouhard was able to muster a divergent coalition around a single goal of controlling the skies over Libya and protecting civilian populations. Moreover, the coalition was able to share resources with the United States providing most of the air refueling, reconnaissance, and personnel recovery assets, while the British, French, Danes, Spanish, Emirates, and Swedish provided air interdiction and close air support.

Likewise, the Jordanians and Qataris provided airlift, the Italians, French, and Greeks hosted the air armada and Germany provided logistics and access to United States munitions. While limited to primarily air and sea lines of effort, the coalition was still able to coordinate with the Libyan rebels and achieve effects on the battlefield that led to Qadahfi's demise. General Brouhard worked within the framework he was given, balanced national interests and caveats, provided a clear commander's intent that was representative of the agreed upon strategic direction, and made the mission a success with the means he was given.

The future is difficult to predict, but a few things are certain. In our modern strategic environment with rising regional powers, economic and resource scarcity, there will always be diversity in ideas, interests, ways, means, and ends. Equally true, there will always be commonalities that bring people together to unite in a common cause. The challenge for the Coalition Force Commander is to find common ground in operations that satisfy the strategic greater good. In other words, understanding how to employ forces given national constraints and caveats, resource and operating limitations, and interoperability of the participating forces is the bread and butter of coalition operations. As coalitions of the willing form, commanders must understand the higher strategic direction and be able to shape coherent operations that generate unified action and unity of effort on the battlefield. Commanders ignore these complexities at their peril. Armed forces can ill-afford to undertake tactical level operations without understanding - or acting contrary to - strategic direction.

In both Anzio and Libya, coalition force commanders managed operations based on their understanding of the higher commander's strategic intent, and their ability to

balance that with assigned resources and operating limitations. At Anzio, the Allies obligated precious resources fulfilling Prime Minister Churchill's Mediterranean strategy, President Roosevelt's desire to engage and support Russia, and Stalin's hope that the Italian campaign meant survival for the Red Army. In Libya, the balancing act of national caveats and capabilities operating under a UN mandate that failed to capture the true strategic goals of the participating nations, unnecessarily extended operations and brought the coalition and NATO integrity into question.

The bottom line is, and always has been, that Coalition Force Commanders must understand the higher strategic direction, and then translate that into a commander's intent that moves the alliance towards the desired end states given the reality of the partnerships. The United States will engage in future coalitions defending our interests around the globe. Operations like Anzio and Libya are instructive to commanders who are faced with enormous challenges but are still expected to get the mission done. The value of a historical perspective is measured in the national blood and treasure saved while operating in a volatile and complex world.

## Endnotes

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<sup>3</sup> Kurt Volker, "Don't Call it a Comeback," August 23, 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/23/dont\\_call\\_it\\_a\\_comeback](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/23/dont_call_it_a_comeback) (accessed November 10, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011)*, March 17, 2011, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf> (accessed October 20, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 8 November 2010, As Amended Through 15 October 2011), 322.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2007, Ch1 2009), II-1.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0 (Washington DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), II-8.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 3-0 (Washington DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 2001), 2-17.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism* (New York: Penguin Group, 1997), 16.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 140.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: Mediterranean Theater of Operations- Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 246.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>15</sup> In many circles, General Kesserling was known as 'smiling Albert' due to his optimistic nature and pervasive positive attitude. Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: Mediterranean Theater of Operations- Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 245-246.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 149.

<sup>17</sup> Clayton D. Laurie, "Rome-Arno 1944", U.S. Army Center of Military History, <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/romar/72-20.htm> (accessed December 14, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 111.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: Mediterranean Theater of Operations- Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 301.

<sup>21</sup> Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 112.

<sup>22</sup> Carlo D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean 1942-1945* (Chapel Hills: Alonquin Books, 1990), 135.

<sup>23</sup> Lloyd Clark, *Anzio, Italy, and the Battle for Rome 1942-1945* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Books, 2006), 87.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>25</sup> Carlo D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean 1942-1945* (Chapel Hills: Alonquin Books, 1990), 135.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Robert Katz, *The Battle for Rome* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 151.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: Mediterranean Theater of Operations-Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 362.

<sup>30</sup> Carlo D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean 1942-1945* (Chapel Hills: Alonquin Books, 1990), 139.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>32</sup> "NATO and Libya, Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR", Chronology of Events, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_71679.html](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_71679.html) (accessed October 20, 2011)

<sup>33</sup> Barack Obama, "Address to the Nation on Libya," speech, National Defense University, Washington, DC, March 28, 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2011/03/28/text-of-obamas-address-on-libya/>, (accessed October 17, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, (Washington DC: The White House, May 2010), 7.

<sup>35</sup> *The North Atlantic Treaty*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (April 4, 1949), [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm) (accessed February 24, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Octavian Manea, "Lord Ismay, Restated," November 18, 2010, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/lord-ismay-restated> (accessed February 24, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> "Introduction to NATO briefing," briefing slides, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, [http://www.nato.int/welcome/intro\\_to\\_nato\\_en.ppt](http://www.nato.int/welcome/intro_to_nato_en.ppt) (accessed November 10, 2011), slide 3.

<sup>38</sup> Barack Obama, "Address to the Nation on Libya," speech, National Defense University, Washington, DC, March 28, 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2011/03/28/text-of-obamas-address-on-libya/>, (accessed October 17, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> Andrés Cala, "Europe Rethinks Dependence on Libyan Oil," February 23, 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2011/0223/Europe-rethinks-dependence-on-Libyan-oil> (accessed October 20, 2011)

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Alex Boldfrass, "France, Libya Sign Nuclear Desalinization Deal," *Arms Control Today*, (Washington DC: Arms Control Association, 2007), 39.

<sup>43</sup> Anne Applebaum, "France's Goals in Libya Hit a Little Closer to Home," *The Washington Post*, March 28, 2011.

<sup>44</sup> "Europe: Take My Migrants Please; Italy and Immigration", *The Economist*, April 16, 2011.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011)*, March 17, 2011, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf> (accessed October 20, 2011).

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<sup>50</sup> Kurt Volker, "Don't Call it a Comeback," August 23, 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/23/dont\\_call\\_it\\_a\\_comeback](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/23/dont_call_it_a_comeback) (accessed November 10, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: Mediterranean Theater of Operations-Salerno to Cassino* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1969).

<sup>52</sup> Martin Blumenson, *Anzio, the Gamble that Failed* (New York: J.B. Lipincott Company, 1963), 169.

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