

might attempt to transfer troops from the eastern front to oppose OVERLORD. In order to deny to the Germans the possibility of maneuvering he pledged that the Red Army would launch simultaneously with OVERLORD large scale offensives in a number of places for the purpose of pinning down German forces and preventing the transfer of German troops to the west. He said that he had already made the foregoing statement to the President, and Mr. Churchill but he thought it necessary to repeat it to the conference.



ESSAYS

The acrimonious debate over Allied wartime strategy sparked an equally acrimonious debate among historians in all three countries. In general, scholars in each country tended to defend the positions taken by their wartime political and military leaders. Simultaneously, however, the breakup of the Grand Alliance immediately after Axis surrender led many American writers to attack U.S. strategy in general, with particular emphasis on Roosevelt's supposed naiveté regarding the Soviet Union, his wartime leadership and relations with his military chiefs of staff, and the apolitical "pure military" nature of the advice those chiefs offered him as well as of the decisions he reached.

The first essay, by American journalist Hanson W. Baldwin, summarizes these criticisms. Although it was written only a few years after the war ended and before the release of key archival documents, this essay remains illustrative of a still-powerful strand of thought in the United States highly critical of Roosevelt and U.S. wartime strategy for its political naiveté. In the second essay, Mark A. Stoler, professor of history at the University of Vermont, disagrees with such criticisms by emphasizing the political aspects of the strategies pursued by the United States as well as its allies. In the third essay, U.S. Army Chief Historian Kent Roberts Greenfield emphasizes the extent to which Roosevelt controlled his military advisers, rather than vice versa, while noting the political nature of his military decisions.

The Political Shortightedness of U.S. Strategy

HANSON W. BALDWIN

The United States has fought wars differently from other peoples. We have fought for the immediate victory, not for the ultimate peace. Unlike the British or the Russians, we have had no grand design, no over-all concept. This lack of a well-defined political objective to chart our military action has distinguished, to greater or lesser degree, much of our past history. During World War II our political mistakes cost us the peace. The British and the Russians thought and fought in terms of the big picture, the world after the war; we thought and fought in terms of what we could do to lick Germany and Japan *now*. . . .

The major American wartime errors were all part and parcel of our political immaturity. We fought to win—period. We did not remember that wars are merely

From Hanson W. Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 1-3, 8, 14-15, 24-27, 29, 33-37, 41-42, 45, 107-108. Copyright © 1950 by Hanson W. Baldwin. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd.

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an extension of politics by other means; that wars have objectives; that wars with-
out objectives represent particularly senseless slaughters; that unless a nation is to
engage in an unlimited holocaust those objectives must be attainable by the avail-
able strength, limited by the victor's capacity to enforce them and the willingness
of the vanquished state to accept them; and that the general objective of war is a
more stable peace. We forgot that the "unity of outlook between allies in war never
extends to the subsequent discussion of peace terms." We forgot that "while the at-
tainment of military objectives brings victory in war, it is the attainment of political
objectives which wins the subsequent peace." The United States, in other words,
had no peace aims; we had only the vaguest kind of idea, expressed in the vaguest
kind of general principles (the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations) of the kind of
postwar world we wanted.

Our judgments were emotionally clouded by the perennial American hope for
the millenium, the Russian military accomplishments, the warm sense of comradeship
with our Allies which the common purpose of victory induced, and by the very
single-mindedness of our military-industrial effort. Wartime propaganda added to
illusion; all our enemies were knaves, all our Allies friends and comrades—military
victory our only purpose. We were, in other words, idealists but not pragmatists. We
embarked upon Total War with all the zeal and energy and courage for which Amer-
icans are famous, but we fought to win; in the broader sense of an objective, we did
not know what we were fighting for. . . .

One of our greatest weaknesses in the policy field during the war was the fail-
ure to equate, evaluate, and integrate military and political policy; there was then
no adequate government mechanism, save in the person of the President himself,
for such integration. . . .

Unconditional Surrender

This was perhaps the biggest political mistake of the war. In the First World War
Wilson took care to distinguish between the Kaiser and the militaristic Junkers class
and the German people; in the Second, Stalin drew a clear line between Hitler and
the Nazis, and the German people, and even the German Army. The opportunity of
driving a wedge between rulers and ruled, so clearly seized by Wilson and by Stalin,
was muffed by Roosevelt and Churchill. Unconditional surrender was an open in-
vitation to unconditional resistance; it discouraged opposition to Hitler, probably
lengthened the war, cost us lives, and helped to lead to the present abortive peace.

This policy grew in part out of the need for a psychological war cry; in part it was
intended, as Langer puts it, as a reassurance to "the Bolshevik leaders that there would
be no compromise with Hitler and that the Allies would fight on to total victory." The
haunting fear that motivated so many of our actions during the war—the fear of a sep-
arate Russian peace with Germany—and Russia's growing suspicions of her Western
Allies because of their inability until that time (January, 1943) to open a "second
front" on land in Western Europe, dictated the famous declaration of Casablanca. . . .

Unconditional surrender was a policy of political bankruptcy, which delayed
our military objective—victory—and confirmed our lack of a reasoned program
for peace. It cost us dearly in lives and time, and its essentially negative concept
has handicapped the development of a positive peace program.

By endorsing the policy, we abandoned any pragmatic political aims; victory, as defined in these terms, could not possibly mean a more stable peace, for "unconditional surrender" meant, as Liddell Hart has noted, the "complete disappearance of any European balance.

"War to the bitter end was bound to make Russia 'top dog' on the Continent, to leave the countries of Western Europe gravely weakened and to destroy any buffer."

Unconditional surrender could only mean unlimited war, and unlimited war has never meant—save in the days when Rome sowed the fields of Carthage with salt and destroyed her rival with fire and sword—a more stable peace.

This political policy, coupled with a military policy of promiscuous destruction by strategic bombing, could not help but sow the dragon's teeth of future trouble.

Loss of Eastern Europe

The long wartime history of strategic differences between Britain and the United States started soon after Pearl Harbor. From then until just before the invasion of southern France in August, 1944, when the British finally failed in their last effort to persuade us to undertake a Balkan invasion, we steadily championed an invasion of Western Europe and the British consistently proposed an alternative or complementary invasion of the "underbelly."

The two differing strategic concepts were separated, not only by geography and terrain, but by centuries of experience. We sought only military victory—the quickest possible victory. The British looked toward the peace; victory to them had little meaning if it resulted in political losses. We saw in the British insistence upon Southern European "adventures" all sorts of malevolent motives. . . .

. . . [F]undamentally the British evaluation was politico-military; we ignored the first part of that compound word. The British wanted to invade Southern Europe because its lands abut on the Mediterranean and are contiguous to the Near East, important to Britain's power position in the world. For centuries Britain had had major politico-economic interests in Greece, other Balkan states, and Turkey; for centuries her traditional policy had been to check the expansionism of Russia, to support Turkish control of the Dardanelles, to participate in Danubian riparian rights. In 1942 and 1943, with the Russians in deep retreat and the Germans almost at the Caspian, the British may not have foreseen 1944 and 1945, with the Russians entering the Balkans, but they perceived clearly the political importance of this area, and they saw that an invasion there would preserve it—in the best possible manner, by soldiers on the ground—against either Russian or German interests, and in so doing, would safeguard the British "lifeline" through the Mediterranean. Thus the British believed Germany could be beaten and the peace won "by a series of attritions in northern Italy; in the eastern Mediterranean, in Greece, in the Balkans, in Rumania and other satellite countries." . . .

. . . [I]n retrospect it is now obvious that our concept of invading Western Europe in 1942 was fantastic; our deficiencies in North Africa, which was a much needed training school for our troops, proved that. The British objection to a 1943 cross-Channel operation was also soundly taken militarily; we would have had in that year neither the trained divisions, the equipment, the planes, the experience, nor (particularly) the landing craft to have invaded the most strongly held part of the continent against an enemy whose strength was far greater than it was a year later.

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Sicily inevitably led to an invasion of Italy, an operation envisaged first as a limited one against the boot of the Italian peninsula, then later for the seizure of air bases at Foggia, the quick capture of Rome, and the consequent political-psychological advantage. Churchill saw Italy and Sicily as bases for a jump eastward into the Balkans, and he continued, with the aid of his military leaders, to push this project. . . .

At Teheran the British again advocated the Balkan invasion, but Roosevelt, stressing the geographical advantages of the cross-Channel assault and the terrain difficulties of the Balkans, said that only an invasion of western France could be considered, from the Russian point of view a "second front." Stalin naturally sided with Roosevelt; indeed, the two "got along" not only at Teheran but at Yalta. . . .

. . . And so it was that on November 30, 1943, the invasion of Normandy was finally decided at Teheran, and *Stalin strongly supported the southern France invasion*, rather than a trans-Adriatic operation into the Balkans which was mentioned by Roosevelt and backed strongly by Churchill.

This Teheran decision, in which Stalin's unequivocal insistence upon an invasion of western France and the unanimity of the American military were the decisive factors, really settled the postwar political fate of Eastern Europe.

Major General John R. Deane in his book says of Teheran: "Stalin appeared to know exactly what he wanted at the Conference. This was also true of Churchill, but not so of Roosevelt. This is not said as a reflection on our President, but his apparent indecision was probably the *direct result of our obscure foreign policy*. President Roosevelt was thinking of *winning the war*; the others were thinking of their *relative positions when the war was won*. Stalin wanted the Anglo-American forces in Western not Southern Europe; Churchill thought our postwar position would be improved and British interests best served if the Anglo-Americans as well as the Russians participated in the occupation of the Balkans." (*italics mine*) . . .

Despite these arguments it was not to be; the British, despite the great eloquence of Churchill and the reasoned logic of his staff, had failed; the American strategy—heartily endorsed by the Russians—was the pattern of conquest.

It was, of course, a successful pattern, for it was a very sound plan militarily, probably sounder in a military sense than a Balkan invasion, and it led to unconditional surrender. But it also led to the domination of Eastern and Central Europe by Russia and the postwar upset in the European balance of power which has been so obvious since the war. . . . For we forgot that all wars have objectives and all victories conditions; we forgot that winning the peace is equally as important as winning the war; we forgot that politico-military is a compound word.

Such mistakes as those outlined in these pages—the attempt to find total victory, to inflict absolute destruction, to use unlimited means, and to mistake military victory for political victory—have been heretofore in history the peculiar characteristics of totalitarian or dictator-led states. The long view, the greatest good of the greatest number, a desire for world tranquilization and peace, have never characterized absolute rulers.

One reflection from a prison cell by the German General Kleist ought to be emblazoned above every doorway in the Pentagon and in the State Department:

The German mistake was to think that a military success would solve political problems. Indeed, under the Nazis we tended to reverse Clausewitz's dictum, and to regard peace as a continuation of war.

The Political Wisdom of U.S. Strategy

MARK A. STOLER

War, as Carl von Clausewitz perceived, is an instrument of policy, and military strategy should be geared to the accomplishment of national political goals. According to popular belief, Americans have traditionally rejected such a concept, naively insisting that their wartime strategy be geared solely to achieving quick and decisive victory while politics awaited the peace conference. Following this unrealistic duality during World War II, the United States supposedly gave no thought to the importance of placing troops in key areas for bargaining purposes once the war ended, and vehemently opposed British attempts to follow such a "politically inspired" strategy. The State Department, which should have pointed out the necessity of controlling key areas, refused to meddle in what it considered "purely military" matters. Thus, it excluded itself from the decision-making process during the war and left the president with only military advice from the joint chiefs of staff.

According to this interpretation, the American military chiefs thus wound up determining foreign as well as military policy without ever realizing it—and with disastrous results. Their victory in the long and bitter strategic debate with Britain, signified by the Normandy invasion in June 1944, ensured decisive victory over Germany. But the political cost of such blindness to reality was a dangerous extension of Soviet power, thereby denying the United States the fruits of victory and adding another chapter to the supposed American tradition of winning the wars but losing the peace.

While such an explanation of events appears correct on the surface, it actually raises more questions than it answers. Why, for example, were the president and the joint chiefs so intent upon defeating Germany as quickly as possible? Was "military efficiency" the sole reason for the Army's almost fanatical adherence to the cross-Channel concept and opposition to British Mediterranean plans? Did the State Department totally ignore what had become by 1942 the biggest political as well as military issue of the war? How could a president known for his incredible political acumen, and military leaders trained in Clausewitzian and Mahanite principles of warfare, totally ignore the political aspects of strategy?

Careful examination of American military and political records for the war years casts doubt upon the validity of traditional assumptions regarding American naiveté during the war. From its very inception, the second-front issue was highly political and was so recognized by the leadership in Washington. The United States developed and backed this concept not simply as a way to win the war as quickly and decisively as possible, but as a way to win it on American, rather than British or Soviet, terms. Furthermore, the military did not develop its concept in a political vacuum. It asked for and received advice from political agencies, increased its contact with the president, and politicized itself to an unprecedented degree during the war. If the "military mind" did triumph with the Normandy invasion, it was a

From Mark A. Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare, 1941–1943* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), xi–xii, 6–7, 160–168. Reprinted by permission of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc. <http://www.greenwood.com>.

Strategy

of policy, and military strategy. According to such a concept, naively achieving quick and decisive victory following this unrealistic dual-aim had no thought to the impossibilities once the war ended, and the "politically inspired" strategy. The necessity of controlling the "purely military" matters. Thus, ending the war and left the president's staff.

Military chiefs thus wound up never realizing it—and with the strategic debate with Britain, assured decisive victory over Germany was a dangerous extension of the fruits of victory and the notion of winning the wars but

on the surface, it actually was, were the president and the military as possible? Was "military strategy" adherence to the cross-channel plans? Did the State Department see the biggest political as well as the military for his incredible political and Mahanian principles of

political records for the war. Assumptions regarding American strategy. The second-front issue was highly debated in Washington. The United States wanted to win the war as quickly as possible. American, rather than British, developed its concept in a political context. Military agencies, increased its role to an unprecedented degree during the Normandy invasion, it was a

military mind very concerned with and knowledgeable of the political aspects of strategy-making. . . .

Accustomed to working with an abundance of manpower and material on a continent with no other major land power, the American military was firmly convinced of the validity of the "direct" approach of strategy; the quickest and the most efficient way to win a war was to meet the enemy in a massive confrontation. Continuing British insistence on a wasteful Mediterranean alternative, the planners felt, could be explained and justified historically and in the present only by reference to its political implications; London's strategy always had been and was once again being orientated not to winning a war as quickly as possible, but to preserving the British Empire. American acquiescence in such a strategy, the Joint Army-Navy Planning Committee (JPC) warned in January 1941, could hurt American interests and should therefore be avoided. "We cannot afford," it bluntly stated, "nor do we need to entrust our national future to British direction." London's proposals at the coming conference "will probably have been drawn up with chief regard for support of the British Commonwealth. Never absent from British minds are their postwar interests, commercial and military. We should likewise safeguard our own eventual interests."

American military planners thus did not naively believe in following a strategy based solely on ideas of military efficiency. They were well aware of the fact that war is an instrument of policy and should be conducted so as to facilitate the accomplishment of national political goals. The definition of such goals, they further realized, was not their job but that of the civilian leadership of the country. . . .

The second-front issue was basically a political controversy within the Grand Alliance based on differing national conceptions of the proper way to defeat the Axis. These conceptions were in turn products of the histories, interests, and immediate positions of each member of the Alliance. London, Moscow, and Washington all perceived the war from their own vantage points and generalized their particular positions into concepts of the only "proper" way to win. Each viewpoint was thus as incorrect for an ally as it was correct for the nation propounding it. The result was a politico-military conflict that became the basic theme of Allied diplomacy through 1943.

Army planners in Washington developed the second-front concept as a way of winning the war on American, rather than British, terms. They defined those terms through a host of politico-military factors that represented a generalization of Army into national as well as national into Allied interests. While their position seemed to rest on the military need to achieve concentration and aid Russia in order to gain a quick and decisive victory, these needs were highly political.

Britain's peripheral approach through the Mediterranean, designed to minimize casualties and place troops in areas of imperial interest, would take longer to defeat Germany than a massive cross-Channel assault. The American Navy and public, insistent upon revenge against Japan, would not countenance such a dilatory approach and would demand further action in the Pacific, perhaps to the extent of overthrowing the Germany-first strategy. Such a move would not only imperil final victory, but would also replace Army influence in the White House with that of the Navy. From the War Department's viewpoint, the Mediterranean approach had already succeeded in replacing its influence with that of Churchill, thus creating this

series of problems in the first place. Furthermore, continued dispersion of forces in either the Mediterranean or Pacific would destroy both Army power in Washington and American power within the Grand Alliance.

The necessity to aid Russia through a second front was based not only on the military situation, but also on the fact that Moscow had made the operation a political prerequisite for continued participation in the war. That participation was in turn mandatory in order to successfully launch the cross-Channel attack and maintain the Germany-first approach. Moreover, Russia's aid would be needed in the Pacific, and Stalin would eventually supply such aid only if he were given equivalent help against Germany.

While agreeing to the Army plan, Roosevelt perceived it as providing an immediate as well as a decisive front in Europe. Besides keeping Russia in the war, such immediate action would enable him to counter the Pacific thrust in American thought and mollify the offensive demands of the American public, thus silencing his critics and protecting his own political position. It would also allow him to take the lead in Allied diplomacy and define the alliance on American terms by offering Stalin a second front in return for an end to Russian demands for recognition of the 1939-1940 conquests in Eastern Europe.

Such an approach to foreign and domestic problems suffered from numerous deficiencies. The Army had developed the 1942 assault as an emergency operation in case disaster threatened on the Eastern front and as a method of forcing concentration for the massive 1943 assault. The 1942 operation was thus too small to fulfill Russian needs and too risky to guarantee the victory Roosevelt needed for domestic purposes. Furthermore, it depended upon British troops, and London was totally unwilling to risk another Dunkirk.

Most of these facts were known to all three partners. Yet, each ignored them in hopes of achieving specific aims. London agreed to the 1942 plan in order to prevent an American shift to the Pacific, but from the beginning had absolutely no intention of launching the operation. Despite strong hints of the true British position, Roosevelt promised the Russians a 1942 second front on a scale that was logistically impossible in return for a nonterritorial treaty. The Soviets demanded such a promise from him, although they knew London would have to supply the forces and would not agree to such a sacrifice. Churchill then played on Roosevelt's need for a 1942 victory in Europe so that the British could replace the cross-Channel attack with an invasion of North Africa. This switch in turn virtually destroyed the possibility of any second front until 1944.

In the short run, this series of deceptions produced benefits for all three countries. Roosevelt gained his nonterritorial treaty and 1942 action in Europe for domestic political purposes; London kept American forces in Europe and operations centered in the Mediterranean; and the Soviets received a "promise" they could show their war-weary people and perhaps use as a bargaining point in later Allied negotiations. In the long run, the deceptions proved disastrous, however. The political necessity for 1942 action, coupled with the British refusal to cross the Channel that year, led to a two-year delay in the second front and a slowing down of Western aid to Russia. Together with the nonterritorial treaty, this meant that Stalin had been denied everything he had demanded from his allies at the most critical juncture of

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the war. His suspicions of the West were increased by this "second-front diplomacy," rather than decreased as the Americans had hoped, and his reaction precipitated a diplomatic crisis within the Grand Alliance. The wounds engendered by this conflict never fully disappeared.

The episode also split the American military services, hardened the planners' beliefs regarding British motives and their inherent danger to American interests, and forced the military to further recognize the inseparability of political and strategic issues. As a result, in late 1942 and 1943 the planners began to delve deeply into the political aspects of strategy-making in order to convince the president of the validity of their views and to defeat the British in combined staff discussions. Those discussions increasingly resembled battles rather than conferences between allies.

The planners had long recognized the inseparability of political and military issues, but they had always felt that the political leadership of the country should play the key role in defining the relationship between the two. Roosevelt refused to give such a definition beyond unconditional surrender, and he appeared to be under British influence to a dangerous extent. As a result, the planners insisted on a greater role for themselves in defining the political and military aspects of national goals. By mid-1943, they had evolved a statement of these goals as well as those of Britain and Russia, the relationship of strategy to national aims, and the necessity of a second front to accomplish American desires. In the process, they called upon the State Department and the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] for political advice and achieved a degree of unofficial liaison with these two services. At the same time, the military improved its own coordination through the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] and joint committees, planned combined staff conversations on a political basis, and increased its influence with the White House.

The planners' basic conclusion was that London's Mediterranean strategy was a reflection of British political interests and ran counter to American interests as defined during the 1942 debate. In 1943, however, new political interests were added to these old ones. Most important was the fear now expressed, often in terms quite similar to [George F.] Kennan's 1947 "Containment" theory, over the combination of Russian victories and diplomatic truculence resulting from the postponement of the second front. This combination seemed to threaten either a separate peace or Soviet domination of the peace conference and postwar Europe.

According to the planners, the only way to avoid this menace without negating either unconditional surrender or the goals expressed in 1942 was to establish a second front. The Soviets had demanded such an operation in return for continued cooperation both during and after the war. Furthermore, only a second front could enable the West to land enough troops in Europe to give it an effective bargaining position at the peace conference and block any Soviet attempts to dominate Europe without alienating Moscow before the war ended. An approach via the Balkans would immediately alienate the Russians and was logistically incapable of defeating either them or the Germans. In short, the planners perceived the second front as an "umbrella" policy, capable of fulfilling all American goals and handling any future possibility with the Soviets. British Mediterranean strategy was rejected not because it was political, but because it was logistically unfeasible and attempted to fulfill British goals at the expense of those of the United States.

Roosevelt's military advisers stressed these points in their conversations with him, and by mid-1943 the president was in complete accord with them. During that entire year, his degree of support for the cross-Channel assault increased as the Red armies moved westward and Soviet-American relations deteriorated. Stalin had already told him that any future cooperation hinged on this operation. His advisers reinforced this point as well as the fact that only a second front could block Soviet domination of the peace conference and Europe.

The results of this united American front were the TRIDENT* and QUADRANT† decisions on Operations OVERLORD and RANKIN, the successors to the original ROUNDUP and SLEDGEHAMMER projects in 1942. RANKIN, however, was a good deal more political than its predecessor. It had little military value, and it was basically designed to get Western forces onto the continent rapidly if Germany collapsed before OVERLORD could be launched. Not the least of the reasons for such a plan was the desire to prevent Russian domination of the peace conference and Europe.

RANKIN was, of course, never communicated to the Soviets. OVERLORD was, and it led to a great improvement in relations between the USSR and the West, culminating in the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference and the promise of a future Big Three meeting. The Soviets again made clear, however, that future cooperation depended upon a successful OVERLORD.

London now attempted to postpone the cross-Channel assault once more so that further operations could be launched in the Mediterranean. In an ironic twist, the Soviets backed this proposal. The worried Americans decided to explain their position to Moscow. They realized, however, that cooperation was the key goal and, if the Soviets insisted, OVERLORD would have to be delayed or canceled.

The final decision on the second front at Tehran was thus arranged not as a military decision, but as political one to be made totally within the context of Allied diplomatic relations. Ironically, Stalin would determine future Anglo-American strategy. But before the conference opened Roosevelt moved to protect American interests, in case the Soviets sided with the British, by insisting on Far Eastern action to aid China and on a RANKIN plan to get American forces into Berlin. Stalin, however, backed the American position fully at Tehran, and the British were overruled. Roosevelt, still thinking in terms of 1942, saw this agreement as the foundation for all future cooperation. He never did realize the changes in the situation caused by the two-year delay, nor did he understand that a 1944 second front could not be the all-encompassing politico-military operation he had hoped the 1942 assault would be. Hard political compromises were now necessary. Unfortunately, they were not forthcoming.

The findings developed in this study contradict many popular assumptions regarding the second front and American advocacy of that operation. From its very inception, the cross-Channel controversy was heavily involved in political issues and was a basic factor in the origins of the Cold War. Furthermore, both President Roosevelt and his military planners were well aware of the political factors involved

*TRIDENT was the May 1943 Anglo-American Conference in Washington, D.C.

†QUADRANT was the August 1943 Anglo-American Conference in Quebec.

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and acted accordingly. In retrospect, the American plan appears more realistic on both military and political levels than Britain's approach.

While historians have recognized the crucial importance of the second-front controversy in the coming of the Cold War, most of them still maintain that the planners, and perhaps the president, were naive regarding the political aspects of this operation. Such conclusions appear to stem from two basic facts: the nature of the documents involved and the questions historians have asked relating to politics and strategy.

World War II records are so enormous that no individual historian can read all of them. Consequently, each historian writing on this period has concentrated on a specific set of documents. Studies based on such examinations have been extremely valuable, and this work has relied heavily upon many of them. Such concentration, however, can easily lead to a distorted view of the entire picture. Certain Army records, for example, show that logistical problems were the basic factors in delay-ing and modifying the cross-Channel assault. But such a conclusion ignores the fact that many of these logistical problems were caused by earlier political decisions. TORCH is a prime example.

Furthermore, the documents themselves do not tell the entire story. Roosevelt's statements (or lack thereof), if taken literally, would lead one to the conclusion that the president was a political and strategic moron. Yet, his political wisdom is famous, and as an ex-Navy man, he was well aware of Mahanite principles regarding the link between strategy and politics. One of the problems here stems from the fact that Roosevelt's goals, by his very position as the chief of state, were broader than and often different from those of his advisers. Although these advisers theoretically realized this fact, they as well as later historians reached the erroneous conclusion that Roosevelt was either ignorant of strategic and political realities or naively under the influence of Churchill.

Neither judgment is correct. Roosevelt was usually very consistent, and his few inconsistencies were the result more of the contradictory nature of his many goals than of any ignorance of the realities of the situation. Roosevelt may have been indulging in wishful thinking, for example, in his belief that the Soviets would accept TORCH as an effective second front. But since a true second front was impossible for 1942 and his political goals demanded some offensive action, he was forced to hope that the North African assault could accomplish everything the defunct cross-Channel attack would have achieved.

Another key problem regarding Roosevelt and the documentation available is his notorious insistence upon secrecy. Throughout his White House career, Roosevelt refused to divulge his innermost thoughts to the men around him. By his standards, only the president should weigh all the factors involved in a decision, and no one, future historians included, should know how he reached such a decision. Nor was Roosevelt above the temptation of distorting the record for the sake of his future reputation, as is clearly shown by his desire to expunge the 1942 record of all references to the Pacific alternative. Even more revealing of his secretiveness was his 1943 comment to Cordell Hull that the notes of conversations between Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau should never have been written. Had the president been able to have his way, there probably would have been no official record of the Tehran Conference.

Such secretiveness is in no way ignorance. Roosevelt's refusal to inform his advisers of his political goals beyond unconditional surrender may have been a grave error which led the military into political discussions, but that is not equivalent to a total ignorance of or refusal to deal with political goals. His actions and statements during the war clearly show that those goals were constantly on his mind.

The situation is similar in regard to the planners on both sides of the Atlantic. Because of their beliefs and training, these men seldom set down their political thoughts in official documents. Historians reading these documents have thus concluded that the American planners ignored political factors. Furthermore, since British strategic papers show no strong political desire either to enter the eastern Mediterranean or to cancel OVERLORD, Washington's stated beliefs in this regard appear to be figments of paranoid imaginations rather than reflections of the facts. Again, one must realize that the official documents do not tell the entire story. In their memoirs and unofficial correspondence, the planners expressed their concern with political factors, and this concern sometimes did spill onto official papers. Some unguarded British comments even suggest that the American suspicions were correct.

Furthermore, even the political leadership often discussed political matters on purely military grounds because of the standards of the times. According to Eisenhower, Churchill once argued for a change in strategy on military grounds for seven straight hours, although both men knew the rationale for such a change was political. Since military men were not supposed to consider these issues, and since the Americans had carefully kept such issues out of their official statements, Churchill apparently concluded that he would be on safer ground if he stuck to military arguments with Eisenhower. The American commander quickly realized this, informed Churchill of his knowledge as to the real situation, and suggested he discuss the issue with Roosevelt on political grounds if he desired a change in strategic plans.

The second key problem centers on the questions historians have asked regarding the relationship between strategy and politics. Most have searched for a "right" versus a "wrong" approach to strategy and have often based their conclusions on statements of "military" versus "political" factors. Both dichotomies are artificial. The key question here is not right or wrong, but right or wrong for *whom*; the missing factor is the *merging* of the political and military aspects of an issue into a truly grand strategic design. Churchill's primary motive for pushing Aegean operations in the fall of 1943 was not his fear of communism in the area. However, this was definitely *one* of the factors in his mind, and he merged it with his other desires—the indirect approach to victory, low casualties, a purely British victory, proving his World War I ideas correct, and placing British troops in areas of great imperial interest—into a grand strategic design. As he himself stated later, "It is not possible in a major war to divide military from political affairs. At the summit they are one." The American planners wholeheartedly agreed with such a judgment and planned accordingly. Ironically, future historians, and not the characters themselves, created this artificial split.

In later years, American planners spoke out sharply against the growing belief in their political naiveté during the war. General Marshall in particular pointed out that, with the exception of the landing craft shortage, nothing "came to our minds more frequently than the political factors." Dean Acheson, who worked under Marshall in the State Department during the postwar era, often discussed this point

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with the general and later concluded that when Marshall thought about military problems, "non-military factors played a controlling part." In fact, Marshall's explanation and knowledge of the complex political and military factors involved in the second-front controversy convinced Acheson of the brilliance of the man considered by many to have been America's greatest soldier. One might also add that such knowledge enabled Marshall to become secretary of state. He, along with his advisers and JCS colleagues, learned a valuable lesson during the war in the inseparability of political and military factors. Hence, within the second-front controversy may lie one of the origins of military influence in the formulation of post-World War II foreign policy.

If one disagrees with that foreign policy, then one may conclude that Roosevelt's greatest failing as a war leader was his unwillingness to share his political thoughts with his advisers. Yet from a larger vantage point, his very ability to perceive the link between strategy and politics, and to act accordingly, proved his greatest failing. This ability, shared by the other two heads of state and the different advisers, meant that no one within the Grand Alliance was capable of viewing the war, politically or militarily, from an *Allied* rather than a national perspective. Such a broad outlook was beyond the power of men trained in terms of national interest and facing the supreme threat to the very existence of their countries. While this situation may appear natural, or even inevitable, it set definite limits to the cooperation possible within the alliance both during and after the war. Common danger may bring nations together, but the desire to survive as a national entity means that the cooperation stops far short of its desired goals.

In World War II, those goals included future international cooperation. Men hoped that the second front and the alliance as a whole would bring the anti-Axis nations together and further the idea of internationalism in the process of defeating the enemy. The merging of strategy and politics did the exact opposite by reinforcing national desires and suspicions, and thus future rivalries. No one during the war wanted this to happen, but no one proved capable of breaking through established national thought patterns to prevent it. No national leader has to this very day.

Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief

KENT ROBERTS GREENFIELD

Without going beyond the published histories one can count more than twenty cases in which Mr. Roosevelt overruled the considered judgment of his responsible military chiefs and substituted for theirs his own estimate of the military situation, or his own concept of the strategy that the situation required. To these can be added twelve other instances in which the initiative for taking an important military measure came, as far as one can see, from him. . . .

From the date of the Military Order of 1939 until Pearl Harbor, F.D.R. made all of his important decisions regarding the use of American military power either

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