Chapter 2

THE ASIA-PACIFIC WAR AND THE BEGINNINGS OF POSTWAR PLANNING

The Joint Chiefs' greatest accomplishment in World War II was planning and executing a two-front war, one in the European-Atlantic theater and the other in the Asia-Pacific region. Even though the agreed Anglo-American strategy gave primary importance to defeating Germany, the attack on Pearl Harbor and Japan's rapid advances during the early stages of the war created a political and military environment that focused heavy attention on the Pacific and Far East. For the first year or so of the war, bolstering the American posture there consumed as much, if not more, of the Joint Chiefs' energy as Europe. At the same time, the absence of an agreed long-range wartime strategy made it practically impossible for JCS planners to draw a clear distinction between primary and secondary theaters. As a result, by the end of 1943, deployments of personnel were practically the same (1.8 million) against Japan as against Germany.[1] Thereafter, as the United States stepped up its preparations for Operation *Overlord* and as the Allies brought the German submarine threat in the Atlantic under control, the buildup in the United Kingdom accelerated quickly, overshadowing the allocation of resources elsewhere. But with such a substantial concentration of personnel and other assets in Asia and the Pacific from the outset, it was practically impossible for the Joint Chiefs to draw and maintain a clear distinction in priorities.

STRATEGY AND COMMAND IN THE PACIFIC

To wage the Pacific war, the Joint Chiefs adopted somewhat different command procedures than they used in the European and Mediterranean theaters. In Europe, the lines of command and control followed in accordance with the decision taken by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill immediately after Pearl Harbor to pool their resources and to pursue a common strategy. For the North Africa–Mediterranean campaigns and for the invasion of France, the Allies established combined unified commands, which operated under directives issued by the

Combined Chiefs of Staff. The Supreme Commander for the invasion of Europe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, took his orders from the CCS (which were relayed to him via the War Department) and presided over an integrated staff that was both multinational and multi-Service in its composition.[2]

Command arrangements in the Pacific evolved differently, owing to the predominant role played by the Navy in that theater, the Combined Chiefs' limited participation, and decisions taken during the initial stages of the war to split the theater into two parts. Shortly after Pearl Harbor General Marshall persuaded Admiral King to endorse the creation of a combined Australian-British-Dutch-American Command (ABDACOM) for the Southwestern Pacific in hopes of mobilizing greater resistance.[3] The Japanese surge continued and ABDACOM soon fell apart, leaving command relationships in the South Pacific in a shambles. From this unpleasant experience (and a later one involving difficulties with the British over protection of Anglo-American convoys crossing the Atlantic), King resolved never again to be drawn into a combined or unified command arrangement if he could possibly avoid it. Unity of command, King insisted, was highly overrated and definitely "not a panacea for all military difficulties" as some "amateur strategists"—a veiled reference to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson—seemed to believe.[4]

King's solution to command problems in the Pacific lay in a division of responsibility, approved by the Joint Chiefs with little debate on March 16, 1942, that created two parallel organizations: a Southwest Pacific Area command under General Douglas MacArthur, bringing together a patchwork of U.S. ground, sea, and air forces with the remnants of the ABDACOM, and a Pacific Ocean Area command under Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, composed predominantly of Navy and Marine Corps units.[5] In 1944, a third Pacific command emerged, organized around the Twentieth Air Force, which operated under the authority of the JCS, with General Arnold as its executive agent. King would have preferred a single joint command for the Pacific, but he knew that if he pushed for one, it would probably go to MacArthur rather than to a Navy officer. MacArthur was practically anathema to the Navy, and Nimitz, the leading Navy candidate for the post, was junior to MacArthur and still relatively unknown.[6] Unlike the ABDACOM, which had fallen under the Combined Chiefs of Staff, these new commands were the exclusive responsibility of the United States and reported directly to the Joint Chiefs, the presence of Australian and other foreign forces under MacArthur notwithstanding. Though joint organizations, composed of ground, air, and naval forces, they were not, strictly speaking, "unified" or integrated commands: MacArthur's staff was almost entirely Army; Nimitz's predominantly Navy. One byproduct of the new command structure was the establishment of the JCS "executive agent" system,

using the Service chiefs as go-betweens. Thus, in relaying orders and other communications, Marshall dealt directly with MacArthur and King with Nimitz.[7]

From the outset, the two original commands conducted separate and different types of wars. MacArthur's principal aim was to redeem his reputation and liberate the Philippines, where he had suffered an ignominious defeat early in 1942. Promising "I shall return," he launched an ambitious campaign, first to contain, then to roll back the Japanese in the Southwest Pacific. With aircraft carriers in short supply, he turned to Lieutenant General George C. Kenney, commander of the Fifth Air Force, to supply the bulk of his combat air support from a motley force of land-based fighters and bombers, many of them cast-offs from other theaters.[8] For naval support he relied on Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, commander of the Seventh Fleet. Working with limited resources and in a hostile climate where tropical diseases could be as lethal as the Japanese, MacArthur developed a leap-frog strategy that took him up the northeastern coast of New Guinea and eventually back to the Philippines. Nimitz's concept of the war centered on the interdiction of Japanese shipping and the destruction of the Japanese fleet as the keys to victory. Cautious and reserved by nature, he was initially skeptical of the idea—pressed upon him by King after the Casablanca Conference—that the Navy should, in effect, revive the old War Plan Orange and concentrate its efforts on strategic objectives in the Central Pacific. Seeking a war-winning strategy, King proposed a thrust through the Marshalls and Marianas, spearheaded by fast carrier task forces and Marine Corps amphibious assault units. Though Nimitz went along with the idea, he and his planning staff at Pearl Harbor insisted on refinements that included recapturing and holding the Aleutian Islands and neutralizing the Gilberts to give U.S. warships the benefit of land-based air protection.[9] As it turned out, Nimitz moved more slowly than King originally envisioned, chiefly because he synchronized his advance to progress more or less in unison with MacArthur's march up through New Guinea and Admiral William F. Halsey's campaign in the Solomon Islands, thereby optimizing his assets and assuring the protection of his western flank.[10]

King assured Nimitz as he embarked upon the Central Pacific strategy that he would enjoy substantial numerical superiority over the Japanese fleet. Indeed, a critical factor in King's advocacy of the plan was his knowledge that the Navy would soon have a "new" fleet in the Pacific, the product of a naval construction program inaugurated in 1940 and hurried along after Pearl Harbor.[11] Among the first of these ships to take up station in the Pacific during the second half of 1943 were a half-dozen of the new 27,000-ton *Essex*-class attack carriers. Built to accommodate nearly a hundred planes each, these ships gave Nimitz the capability of launching carrier bombing strikes comparable to land-based aviation. By the end of the year,

he had a force of over 700 carrier-based aircraft, many of them improved models, and a growing fleet of ships, half of them built since the beginning of the war.[12]

Additional support for Nimitz's push into the Central Pacific came from the Army Air Forces (AAF), who saw an opportunity to use island bases in the Marianas to launch B–29 attacks against Japan. Until mid-1943, the Air Staff had concentrated on China as the primary staging area for its B–29s, which were new high-altitude, long-distance, very heavy bombers that the AAF expected to deploy in large numbers against Japan during the second half of 1944. Owing to problems of supplying bases in China and protecting them against expected Japanese counterattacks, however, Air Staff planners began to look elsewhere. With the emergence of Nimitz's Central Pacific strategy, they refocused their efforts there.[13] Although the Joint Chiefs tried from time to time to develop an overall war plan for the Pacific, the divided command in the theater made it virtually impossible. Invariably, the decisions that emerged from Washington represented compromises, resulting in "an *ad hoc* approach to Pacific strategy."[14] Friction between MacArthur and Nimitz was endemic to the Pacific theater and required frequent intervention from Marshall and King. At the same time, in CCS meetings with the British, King often pursued what amounted to a separate agenda. Technically, the CCS exercised no responsibility for the Pacific, but because the demands of the various theaters regularly impinged on each other, the Combined Chiefs took it upon themselves to review plans for Asia and the Pacific while developing strategy for Europe and the Mediterranean. At the wartime summit conferences and in routine contacts in Washington, King's blatant Anglophobia and persistence in promoting the Navy's interests in the Pacific became practically legendary. Of the Americans they dealt with, King was by far the most unpopular with the British. Yet he also proved remarkably effective at getting what he wanted. In Grace Person Hayes's estimation, he was clearly "the JCS member whose influence upon the course of events in the Pacific was greatest."[15]

In contrast to other aspects of the war, there were relatively few sharp disagreements among the JCS over the merits of one course of strategy in the Pacific over another. Marshall had no objection to the Navy's Central Pacific strategy as long as it was logistically feasible and did not crowd MacArthur out of the picture.[16] Moreover, none of the chiefs wanted to see a stalemate develop that could prolong the Pacific conflict into 1947 or 1948 and lead to war-weariness at home. By 1943, the JCS agreed that a predominantly defensive posture in the Pacific was incompatible with American interests and that the tide had turned sufficiently to allow for the transition to an "offensive-defensive" philosophy. As the arrival of the many new ships and planes in the Pacific suggested, increased industrial production at home was finally making a difference by offering a broader range of options on the battle front.[17] These matters came to a head at the first Quebec Conference

(QUADRANT) in mid-August 1943. Though the chiefs' number-one goal at First Quebec was to firm up the British commitment to *Overlord*, stepping up the war in the Pacific was a close second. Applying a mathematical formula approach (a technique he enjoyed using), King proposed a worldwide boost in the allocation of resources from 15 to 20 percent in the Pacific, a 5 percent increase that would translate into one-third more available resources and only a 6 percent drop in supplies to Europe.[18] The British knew that, as a rule, the Joint Chiefs used exceedingly conservative production and supply estimates, so that in all likelihood an increase in the allocation to the Pacific would mean little or no change elsewhere. Though the CCS never officially approved King's formula, the British members were well aware that there was not much they could do if the Americans elected to abide by it. Turning to an alternative approach, the conference wound up approving an American plan increasing the tempo of operations in the Pacific at such a rate as to assure the defeat of Japan within 12 months of Germany's surrender or collapse.[19] Thus, by mid to late 1943, though not exactly on a par with the war in Europe, the war in the Pacific was steadily gathering momentum and recognition that the outcome there was no less important than victory in Europe. The chiefs knew that long, drawn-out wars tended to sap morale at home and have unforeseen political side-effects. Consequently, they hoped to lay the groundwork for the defeat of Japan well in advance and make it happen as quickly as possible once Germany surrendered. The chiefs assumed that, to carry out this strategy, they would need to move troops from Europe to the Pacific as fast as possible and mass forces on an unprecedented scale. Little did they realize that, when that moment arrived, they would have in their hands a new weapon—the atomic bomb—that would not only facilitate Japan's surrender more abruptly than anyone realized, but usher in a new era in warfare at the same time.

THE CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER

With Europe and the Pacific commanding most of the attention and resources, problems in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) took a distinctly secondary place in the Joint Chiefs' strategic calculations. Under the division of responsibility adopted by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in March 1942, the United States provided military coordination with the government of China, while Britain saw to the defense of Burma and India. The only American combat formations assigned to the CBI during the war were the Galahad commando unit (Merrill's Marauders) formed near the end of 1943, and the XX Bomber Command, consisting of four B–29 groups that operated mainly from Chengtu in southwest China in 1944–1945. Otherwise, the U.S. presence consisted of noncombat personnel involved in construction projects, training and advisory functions, and logistical support for China under the lend-lease aid program.

China's need for assistance had grown steadily since the outbreak of its undeclared war with Japan in 1937. Forced by the invading Japanese to abandon its capital at Nanking, the Chinese Nationalist government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had relocated to the interior. Operating out of Chongqing, Chiang had used his well-established political connections in Washington to mobilize American public opinion and congressional support for his cause. Prohibited under the 1937 Neutrality Act from providing direct military assistance, the Roosevelt administration arranged several large loans that allowed Chiang to buy arms and equipment to bolster his military capabilities. But with graft and corruption permeating Chiang's government, much of the financial help from Washington was wasted. By the time the United States entered the war in December 1941, Chiang's regime was near collapse. At the ARCADIA Conference, with Japanese forces moving practically at will across East Asia and the Pacific, Roosevelt and Churchill sought to boost Chiang's morale and shore up his resistance by inviting him to become supreme commander of a new China Theater. Inclusion of nonwhite, non-Christian China in the Grand Alliance helped the Western Allies undercut Japanese propaganda about "Asia for the Asiatics" and reduced the chances of World War II being seen as a racial conflict.[20] The offer carried with it no promise of additional assistance or immediate support, but it struck Roosevelt as a logical first step toward realizing his vision that China should emerge from the war as "a great power." Chiang promptly accepted and, to seal the deal, asked the United States to appoint an American officer to be his chief of staff, in effect his military second in command.[21]

To assist Chiang as his chief of staff, Marshall and Secretary of War Stimson eventually settled on Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell, an "Old China Hand" whom Marshall had once described as "qualified for any command in peace or war."[22] Gifted in learning languages, Stilwell was fluent in Mandarin Chinese, which he mastered during his numerous tours of duty in the Far East, dating from 1911, and intensive language training in the 1920s. But he had a prickly personality and soon grew contemptuous of Chiang, whom he regarded as an ineffectual political leader and inept as a general. As the military attaché to the U.S. Embassy in China from 1935 to 1939, Stilwell had deplored Chiang's lack of preparedness for dealing with the Japanese and had developed a tempered respect for Chiang's Communist rivals, led by Mao Zedong, who seemed determined to mount resistance to the Japanese with whatever limited resources they could from their power base in the countryside.[23]

Stilwell embarked on his mission with virtually no strategic or operational guidance. His only instructions were a generalized set of orders issued by the War Department early in February 1942. While the Army General Staff and the JCS routinely affirmed the importance of the CBI, they consistently treated it as a low priority. Preoccupied with Europe and the Pacific, the JCS had little inclination and

even fewer resources for waging a war on the China mainland. Only Marshall and Arnold took a personal interest in Chinese affairs—Marshall because he had spent 3 years in China during the interwar period and was a personal friend of Stilwell's, and Arnold because of the AAF's heavy commitment of men and equipment for supply operations and planned B–29 deployments. The most important military uses the JCS could see for China were as a base for future air operations against Japan and as a source of manpower for confronting and holding down large segments of the Japanese army. But it was unlikely that the AAF would make much use of China as a base of operations until the Navy completed its advance across the Pacific and could provide secure lines of supply and communications. Until then, as the senior American officer in the CBI, Stilwell was to oversee the distribution of American lend-lease assistance, train the Chinese army, and wage war against the Japanese with whatever U.S. and Chinese forces might be assigned to him.[24]

Stilwell arrived in Asia in April 1942, just as the military situation was going from bad to worse. The success of four Japanese divisions in attacking Burma, routing the British-led defenders and forcing them back into India, effectively cut the last remaining overland access route—the Burma Road—to China. For nearly the remainder of the war, from June 1942 until January 1945, China was virtually isolated from the rest of the world except via air. Though Stilwell had a replacement route known as the Ledo Road (renamed the Stilwell Road in 1945) under construction by the end of the year, it took over 2 years of arduous work in a torturous climate and terrain to complete. Of the 15,000 U.S. Servicemen who helped to build the Ledo Road, about 60 percent were African-Americans.[25] Meantime, supplies and equipment had to be flown into China from bases in India over the Himalayas (the "Hump") at considerable risk and cost. Eventually, the effort diverted so many American transport aircraft that, in General Marshall's opinion, it significantly prolonged the Allied campaigns in Italy and France.[26]

Logistics were only one of Stilwell's problems. Most difficult of all was establishing a working relationship with the Generalissimo, whose autocratic ways, intricate political connections, and lofty expectations clashed with Stilwell's coarse manner and business-like determination. Stilwell may have been the wrong choice for the job, but whether anyone else could have done better is open to question. Never a great admirer of Chiang to begin with, Stilwell became even less so as the war progressed. Rarely did he acknowledge the extraordinary political pressures under which Chiang operated or what some Chinese scholars now see as Chiang's accomplishments in the strategic management of his forces.[27] In Stilwell's private diary, published after the war, the full depth of his contempt for Chiang became apparent in his numerous references to the Generalissimo by the nickname "Peanut." In fact, Stilwell and Chiang rarely saw

one another. Stilwell spent most of his time in India training Chinese troops, while Chiang stayed in Chongqing.

The number one task that Stilwell and the JCS faced in China was to develop a capability to fight the Japanese; for Chiang the situation was more complex. Though he held the titles of president and generalissimo, he exercised limited authority over a group of independently minded generals, politicians, and war lords. Apart from the threat posed by the invaders, he also faced the likelihood of a showdown after the war with his arch-rival, Mao Zedong, leader of the Chinese Communists, who styled themselves as being in the forefront of the resistance to Japanese aggression. In fact, Nationalist forces put up as much if not more resistance to the Japanese than the Communists and suffered significantly heavier casualties. But on balance, it was Mao who emerged as most committed to the war. Saving his best troops for the postwar period, Chiang often ignored Stilwell's military advice and listened instead to an American expatriate and former captain in the Army Air Corps, Claire L. Chennault, who convinced Chiang that airpower could defeat the Japanese. An innovator in tactical aviation during the interwar years, Chennault led a flamboyant group of American volunteer aviators known as the "Flying Tigers." Recalled to active duty in April 1942, Chennault was eventually promoted to major general. Meanwhile, the Flying Tigers were absorbed into the Army Air Forces, becoming part of the Fourteenth Air Force in 1943. Though technically subordinate to Stilwell, Chennault often used his close connections with Chiang and his personal friendship with President Roosevelt to bypass Stilwell's authority.[28]

Despite the frustration and setbacks, Stilwell achieved some remarkable results. His most notable accomplishment was establishing the Ramgarh Training Center in India's Bihar Province, which served as the hub of his efforts to train and modernize the Chinese army. At Ramgarh, Stilwell initiated practices and policies that the JCS adopted as standard procedure for U.S. military advisory and assistance programs in the postwar period. By placing American commanders and staff officers with Chinese units, creating Service training schools, and indoctrinating Chinese forces in the use of U.S. arms and tactics, Stilwell helped to bring a new degree of professionalism to the Chinese Nationalist army. In the process, he created a system that saw extensive use in Korea, Vietnam, and other countries in later years. By the time Stilwell was recalled in 1944, he had trained five Chinese divisions that he considered to be on a par with those in the Japanese army, and was in the process of producing more, both at Ramgarh and in China.[29]

At the first Quebec Conference in August 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed the time had come to make plans for liberating Burma (thereby reopening the Burma Road to China) and the other parts of Southeast Asia the Japanese had conquered the year before. To organize the campaign, the CCS established a Southeast Asia Command (SEAC), with Lord Louis Mountbatten as supreme

commander. Earlier, when asked to contribute forces to the operation, Chiang had indicated that he would never allow a British officer to command Chinese troops. To get around this problem, the CCS named Stilwell as Mountbatten's deputy, thus adding yet another layer of responsibility to his difficult mission.[30] With the decision to launch the Burma offensive, the Joint Chiefs, through the CCS, became more actively and directly engaged in CBI affairs than at any time to that point in the war. Even so, the British chiefs left no doubt that they were determined to have their way in Southeast Asia, just as the JCS insisted on running the war in the Pacific.[31] Propping up Chiang, whose importance and role in the war Churchill dismissed as "minor," did not fit the British agenda. At the Cairo Conference (SEXTANT) in November 1943, Mountbatten and the British chiefs apprised Chiang of a change of plans for the Burma operation that would lessen the role of Chinese forces and thus reduce his projected allocation of shipments over the Hump.[32] To assuage Chiang's disappointment, Roosevelt promised to equip and train 90 Chinese divisions, but avoided setting specific dates for initiating and completing the project.[33] Around this same time, the Air Staff became convinced that bomber bases in China would be too vulnerable and difficult to maintain, and began eyeing Formosa or the Marianas as alternate staging sites for their B–29s. While the deployment of B–29s to China (Operation *Matterhorn*) went ahead in April 1944 as planned, the JCS cut the force in half, from eight bombardment groups to four, due to supply limitations.[34]

Coupled with the actions approved earlier at SEXTANT, the chiefs' decision curbing B–29 deployments confirmed China's fate as a secondary theater of the war. Bitter and indignant, Chiang became ever more critical of Stilwell and insisted—to Stilwell's and the Joint Chiefs' dismay—on micromanaging Chinese military operations in East China and Burma. Reverses followed on practically every front. At the same time, Chiang remained intent on preserving his authority and refused to listen when Stilwell proposed opening contacts with Mao and diverting lend-lease aid to Chinese Communist forces fighting the Japanese north of the Yellow River.[35] By then, Roosevelt was also having second thoughts about Chiang's leadership. At Marshall's instigation, the President urged Chiang in September 1944 to give Stilwell "unrestricted command" of all Chinese forces.[36] Though Chiang acknowledged that he might be willing to make concessions, he refused to have anything more to do with Stilwell and demanded his recall. Seeing no alternative, Roosevelt reluctantly acquiesced and in October 1944, Stilwell's mission ended.[37]

Following Stilwell's departure, the Joint Chiefs made no attempt to find a successor and decided to abolish the CBI. In its place they created two new commands: the China Theater, which they placed under Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, Mountbatten's deputy chief of staff; and the India-Burma Theater, which went to

Lieutenant General David I. Sultan, formerly Stilwell's second in command. The decision to break up the CBI was supposed to make Wedemeyer's task easier, but in reality it did no such thing. Though Wedemeyer served as the Generalissimo's chief of staff, the cooperation he received from Chiang was only marginally better than Stilwell had gotten. Revised instructions issued by the Joint Chiefs on October 24, 1944, were largely the product of Marshall's hand and implicitly urged Wedemeyer to exercise utmost caution. Barred from exercising direct command over Chinese forces, he could only "advise and assist" the Generalissimo in the conduct of military operations.[38]

Marshall correctly surmised that the wartime problems Stilwell and the Joint Chiefs experienced with Chiang Kai-shek were only a foretaste of the future. Roosevelt's desire to make China a great power and Chiang's eagerness to assume the leadership role fueled expectations that could never be fulfilled. Chiang's regime was too weak politically and too corrupt to play such a part. Preoccupied with preparing for the expected postwar showdown with his Communist rivals, Chiang hoarded his resources rather than trying to defeat the Japanese. The JCS were as interested as anyone in seeing a stable and unified China emerge from the war, but they were averse to making commitments and expending resources that might jeopardize operations elsewhere. China, meanwhile, remained a strategic backwater. While some American planners, Marshall foremost among them, hoped for better to come after Japan surrendered, they were not overly optimistic as a group.

POSTWAR PLANNING BEGINS

Despite setbacks in Asia and the steady but slow progress in pushing the Japanese back across the Pacific, the Joint Chiefs detected definite signs by mid-1943 that the global tide of battle was turning in the Allies' favor and that victory over the Axis would soon be in sight. Assuming a successful landing on the northern French coast in the spring of 1944, the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the QUADRANT Conference had estimated for planning purposes that the war in Europe would be over by October 1944.[39] While this proved to be an overly optimistic prediction, it did help draw attention to issues that the Joint Chiefs thus far had largely ignored: the need for policies and plans on the postwar size, composition, and organization of the country's Armed Forces, and similar actions on postwar security and other political-military arrangements.

Preoccupied with the war, the Joint Chiefs were averse to firm postwar commitments until they had a clearer idea of the outcome. A case in point was their reticence concerning the postwar organization and composition of the Armed Forces, an issue they knew was bound to provoke inter-Service friction and sharp debate. In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor and the other setbacks early in the war, there was a

growing sense within the military and the public at large that a return to the prewar separateness of the Services was out of the question and that the postwar defense establishment should be both bigger and better prepared for emergencies. In assessing postwar requirements, the Joint Chiefs agreed that the country needed a larger, more flexible, and more effective standing force. Where differences arose was over its size, the assignment of roles and missions to its various components, and its overall structure—in short the fundamental issues that differentiated each Service.[40]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff discussed these issues from time to time during the war but made little headway in the absence of a consensus on postwar defense organization and the possibility that the Armed Forces might adopt a system of universal military training (UMT).[41] In consequence, JCS planning to determine the optimum size, composition, and capabilities of the postwar force amounted to a compilation of requirements generated by the Services themselves, based on their own perceived needs and assessments. These uncoordinated estimates projected a permanent peacetime military establishment of 1.6 million officers and enlisted personnel organized into an Army of 25 active and Reserve divisions, a 70-group Air Force emphasizing long-range strategic bombardment, a Navy of 321 combatant vessels in the active fleet, including 15 attack carriers and 3,600 aircraft, and a Marine Corps of 100,000 officers and enlisted personnel.[42]

Whether the Services would achieve these goals depended, among other things, on the kind of defense establishment that would emerge after the war. The most outspoken on the need for postwar organizational reform—and the first to propose a course of action—was General Marshall, whose strong views grew out of his experiences with the hasty and chaotic demobilization that followed World War I and the Army's chronic underfunding during the interwar years. Expecting money to be tight again after the war, Marshall foresaw the return to a relatively small standing army and endorsed UMT as a means of expanding it rapidly in an emergency. To make better use of available funds, he also urged improved management of the Armed Forces, and in November 1943 he tendered a plan for JCS consideration to create a single unified department of war. Arguing that the current JCS-CCS committee structure was cumbersome and inefficient, Marshall proposed more streamlined arrangements stressing centralized administration, "amalgamation" of the Services, and unity of command.[43] Arnold and King were lukewarm toward the idea and favored tabling the matter until after the war. While Arnold agreed with Marshall on the need for postwar reorganization, his first priority was to turn the Army Air Forces into a separate coequal service. At King's suggestion, the chiefs sidestepped the issues Marshall had raised by referring them to the Joint Strategic Survey Committee for study "as soon as practicable."[44]

By the spring of 1944, emerging congressional interest in postwar military organization compelled the JCS to revisit the issue sooner than they wanted to. At the suggestion of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, the chiefs appointed an inter-Service fact-finding panel chaired by Admiral James O. Richardson to carry out an in-depth appraisal.[45] In April 1945, after a 10-month investigation conducted largely through interviews, the committee overwhelmingly endorsed unifying the Armed Forces under a single department of national defense. Though composed of separate military branches for land, sea, and air warfare, the unified Department would have a single civilian secretary. A uniformed chief of staff would oversee military affairs and act as the Department's liaison with the President, performing a role similar to Admiral Leahy's. The committee's lone dissenter was its chairman, Admiral Richardson. As a harbinger of the bitter debates to come, he proclaimed the plan "unacceptable" on the grounds that a single department was likely to be dominated by the Army and the Air Force and could end up short-changing the Navy and stripping it of its air component. Arguing essentially for the status quo, Richardson urged restraint until the "lessons" of the recent war had been "thoroughly digested." Until then, he favored preserving the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their committee structure in their current form and using that as the basis for expanding inter-Service coordination after the war.[46]

Even though the Joint Chiefs had authorized the Richardson Committee study, they could reach no consensus on its findings. Rather than resolving differences, the study had exacerbated them, revealing a sharp cleavage between the War Department members (Marshall and Arnold), who favored the single department approach, and the Navy members (Leahy and King), who preferred the current system. Unable to come up with a unanimous recommendation, the JCS agreed to disagree and on October 16, 1945, sent their "split" opinions to the White House. While the debate over Service unification was far from over, the JCS took no further part in it as a corporate body.[47]

A similar sense of trepidation characterized the Joint Chiefs' approach to political-military affairs. Initially, Admiral Leahy, the President's military Chief of Staff, believed it inappropriate for officers in the armed Services to offer opinions on matters outside their realm of professional expertise. Convinced that the JCS should tread carefully, he objected as a rule to military involvement in "political" matters.[48] Actually, Leahy's position at the White House drew him into daily contact with military issues having political and diplomatic impact, as had his recent assignment as Ambassador to Vichy, France. Nonetheless, Leahy's outlook was fairly typical of military officers of his generation, whose mindsets were rooted in a professional ethos and concept of civil-military relations dating from the late 19th century. Once in place, this attitude was hard to dislodge.[49]

The Joint Chiefs became caught up in political-military affairs not because they wanted to, but because they had no choice. Like his military advisors, President Roosevelt put the needs of the war first and preferred to relegate postwar issues relating to a peace settlement and other political matters to the back burner. This approach worked for a while, but by the Tehran Conference of November 1943, the pressure was beginning to build for the administration to clarify its position on a growing number of subjects. As an overall solution, Roosevelt put his faith in the creation of a new international security organization—the United Nations (UN)—to sort out postwar problems. But there were many issues that would need attention before the UN was up and running. At the same time, Roosevelt's deteriorating health—carefully shielded from the public—left him with less and less stamina, so that by the spring of 1944, his workdays were down to 4 hours or less.[50] In those circumstances, it was often up to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to help fill the void by contributing to the postwar planning process. For most of the war, the Joint Chiefs had neither their own organization for political-military affairs nor ready access to interagency machinery for handling such matters. At the outset of the war, the only formal mechanism for interdepartmental coordination was the Standing Liaison Committee, composed of the Army Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Undersecretary of State. Established in 1938, the Standing Liaison Committee operated under a vague charter that gave it broad authority to bring foreign policy and military plans into harmony. Its main contribution was to give the military chiefs an opportunity to learn trends in State Department thinking, and vice versa. Rarely did it deal with anything other than political and military relationships in the Western Hemisphere. After Pearl Harbor, it met infrequently, finally going out of business in mid-1943.[51]

In the absence of formal channels, coordination between the Joint Chiefs and the foreign policy community became haphazard. To help bridge the gap, the JCS accepted an invitation from the State Department to establish and maintain liaison through the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, initially to further the work of State's Postwar Foreign Policy Advisory Committee.[52] Seeking to expand these contacts, the Joint War Plans Committee recommended in late May 1943 that the State Department designate a part-time representative to advise the joint staff, arguing that it was "impossible entirely to divorce political considerations from strategic planning." Going a step further, Brigadier General Wedemeyer, a key figure in the Army's planning staff, thought State should have an associate member on the Joint Staff Planners who could also participate in JCS meetings "when papers concerned with national and foreign policies are on the agenda."[53]

Nothing immediately came of these proposals. But by spring 1944, the chiefs found themselves taking a closer look at the question of political-military consultation.

Their first concerns were to provide guidance to the European Advisory Commission (EAC), an ambassadorial-level inter-Allied committee operating from London, with a mandate to make recommendations on the termination of hostilities, and to help settle a growing list of disputes between the Western powers and the Soviet Union over the future political status of Eastern Europe. In assessing the prospects for a durable peace, the Joint Chiefs cautioned the State Department in May 1944 that the "phenomenal" wartime surge in Soviet military and economic power could make for trouble in devising effective security policies in the postwar period. In particular, the chiefs saw a high probability of friction between London and Moscow that could require U.S. intervention and mediation. While the chiefs downplayed the likelihood of a conflict between the Soviet Union and the West, they acknowledged that should one erupt, "we would find ourselves engaged in a war which we could not win even though the United States would be in no danger of defeat and occupation." Far more preferable, in the chiefs' view, would be the maintenance of "the solidarity of the three great powers" and the creation of postwar conditions "to assure a long period of peace."[54]

With growing awareness that postwar problems would require a greater measure of attention, the Joint Chiefs in June 1944 created the Joint Post-War Committee (JPWC) under the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, to work with State and the EAC on surrender terms for Germany and to prepare studies and recommendations on postwar plans, policies, and other problems as the need arose.[55] The JPWC proved a disappointment, however, due to its inability to process recommendations in a timely manner.[56] The problem was especially acute with respect to the development of a coherent policy on the postwar treatment of Germany, an issue brought to the fore by rumors of Germany's impending collapse in the early fall of 1944 and the intervention in the policy process of the President's close personal friend, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Lest Germany rise again to threaten the peace of Europe, Morgenthau proposed severely restricting its postwar industrial base, and at the second Quebec Conference (OCTAGON), in September 1944, he persuaded Roosevelt and Churchill to embrace a plan calling for Germany to be converted into a country "primarily agricultural and pastoral in its character."[57] There followed a lengthy debate, with Secretary of War Stimson leading the opposition to the Morgenthau plan, that left the policy toward Germany in limbo for the next 6 months. Eventually, a watered-down version of the Morgenthau plan prevailed, in part because its hands-off approach toward the postwar German economy appealed to the JCS and civil affairs officers in the War Department as the easiest and most expeditious policy to administer in light of requirements for redeploying U.S. forces from Europe to the Pacific.[58]

To help break the impasse over the treatment of Germany and to avoid similar bottlenecks in the future, the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy created a committee

of key subordinates to oversee political-military affairs. Activated in December 1944, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) operated at the assistant secretary level and resembled an interagency clearinghouse. By January 1945, it had functioning subcommittees on Europe, the Far East, Latin America, and the Near and Middle East. An Informal Policy Committee on Germany (IPCOG), organized separately to accommodate the Treasury's participation, handled German affairs. To simplify administration, SWNCC and IPCOG shared the same secretariat.[59] Though the JCS played little part in the policy debate over Germany, their command and control responsibilities gave them authority over the U.S. military occupation, which was run under a JCS directive (JCS 1067).[60]

The postwar treatment of Germany was only one of a growing list of political-military issues involving the JCS as the war wound down. By the time of the second Big Three conference at Yalta, in February 1945, the only military-strategic issue of consequence on the chiefs' agenda was the timing of the Soviet entry into the war against Japan. Otherwise, as the chiefs' pre-conference briefing papers suggest, JCS attention focused either on immediate operational matters growing out of strategic decisions taken earlier, or pending administrative, political, and diplomatic issues that were expected to arise from Germany's surrender, the allocation of postwar zones of occupation in Germany and Austria, shipping requirements for the redeployment of Allied forces, and disarming the Axis. Less than 6 months later, when the Big Three resumed their deliberations at Potsdam, their third and final wartime summit conference, political and diplomatic issues clearly dwarfed military and strategic matters. JCS planners, in preparing for the conference, were hard pressed to find enough topics to fill the Combined Chiefs of Staff expected agenda, not to mention a meeting with the Soviet military chiefs.[61]

Throughout most of World War II, the Joint Chiefs viewed themselves as, first and foremost, a military planning and advisory body to the President. But as they prepared to enter the postwar era, they found their mandate changing to encompass not only military plans and strategy, but also related issues with definite political and diplomatic implications. To be sure, as the postwar era beckoned, the Joint Chiefs still had an abundance of military and related security matters before them. Never again, however, would military policy and foreign policy be the separate and distinct entities they had seemed to be when the war began.

ENDING THE WAR WITH JAPAN

While addressing problems of the coming peace, the Joint Chiefs of Staff still faced difficult wartime decisions, none more momentous than those affecting the final stages of the war in the Pacific. Since the early days of the war, the Joint Chiefs had pursued a

double-barreled strategy against Japan that allowed MacArthur to conduct operations in New Guinea and the Bismarck Islands, while Nimitz rolled back the Japanese in the Central Pacific. Under the agreed worldwide allocation of shipping and landing craft set by the CCS, Nimitz's operations had a prior claim over MacArthur's whenever there were conflicts over timing of operations and the allocation of resources. But by early 1944, as the two campaigns began to converge, a debate developed on how and where to conduct future operations. At issue was whether to follow MacArthur's advice and make the liberation of the Philippines the primary objective in the year ahead, or to follow a plan favored by Nimitz of bypassing the Philippines for the most part and concentrating on the Marianas as a stepping stone toward seizing Formosa, from which U.S. forces could link up with the Chinese for the final assault on Japan.[62]

Of the options on the table, the Joint Chiefs considered the Formosa strategy the most likely to succeed in bringing U.S. forces closer to Japan and shortening the war.[63] To carry it out effectively, however, they would have to reconsider the dual command arrangements that had prevailed since the start of the war and to adopt a single, comprehensive Pacific strategy, something that neither MacArthur nor Nimitz was yet ready to accept. Most intransigent of all was MacArthur. Treating the Formosa operation as a diversion, MacArthur insisted that the liberation of the Philippines was a "national obligation." With a strong personal interest in the outcome, he was determined to see the expulsion of the Japanese from the entire Philippine archipelago through to the end.[64]

In July 1944, President Roosevelt paid a personal visit to Pearl Harbor for face-to-face meetings with MacArthur and Nimitz "to determine the next phase of action against Japan." The only JCS member to accompany him was Admiral Leahy, whose part in the deliberations was minor. In fact, the discussions were inconclusive; by the time they ended, President Roosevelt seemed inclined to support MacArthur's position. Nimitz took the hint and, shortly after the conference adjourned, he directed his staff to take a closer look at attacking Okinawa as a substitute for invading Formosa.[65] While King and Leahy continued to hold out for Formosa, a shortage of support troops and the prospects of a lengthy campaign there persuaded the Joint Staff Planners by late summer 1944 that the prudent course was to postpone a final decision on Formosa pending the outcome of initial operations in the southern Philippines.[66] This became, in the absence of the Joint Chiefs' ability to settle on a better solution, the accepted course of action and more or less assured MacArthur that he could move on to liberate the rest of the Philippines in due course. The coup de grace was Nimitz's decision, which he conveyed to King at a face-to-face meeting in San Francisco in September 1944, to shelve plans for a Formosa invasion and to focus on taking Okinawa. With this, the die was cast and on October 3, 1944, the

JCS approved a directive to MacArthur setting December 20 as the target date for invading Luzon and marching on to Manila.[67]

Clearly, in this instance, the views of the theater commanders had prevailed over those of the Joint Chiefs, an increasingly common phenomenon in the latter stages of the war and a preview of the influential role that combatant commanders would play in the postwar era. Left unresolved and somewhat obscured by the Philippines-versus-Formosa imbroglio was the final strategy for the defeat of Japan and whether to plan a full-scale invasion of the Japanese home islands. Initial discussion of these issues dated from the summer of 1944 when, in response to a preliminary review of options by the Joint War Plans Committee, Admiral Leahy mentioned the possibility of bringing about Japan's surrender through intensive naval and air action rather than through a landing of troops.[68] Over the following months, as MacArthur moved up the Philippines and Nimitz prepared his attack against Okinawa, Japan's situation steadily deteriorated. By late 1944–early 1945, with the home islands now within reach of Twentieth Air Force's B–29s operating from the Marianas and with the Navy conducting an unrelenting war at sea and a naval blockade, the outcome of the conflict was no longer in doubt. Though Japan's armed forces could still mount tenacious resistance, they were clearly engaged in a losing cause.

As the pressure on Japan mounted, so did conjecture within the joint staff about the means of achieving victory. Prodded by their superiors, Navy planners were especially reluctant to consider an invasion inevitable until air and naval attacks and the blockade had run their course. To Leahy, King, and Nimitz, it seemed "that the defeat of Japan could be accomplished by sea and air power alone, without the necessity of actual invasion of the Japanese home islands by ground troops."[69] Weighing the pros and cons, the Joint Staff Planners acknowledged in late April 1945 that while a case could indeed be made for a strategy of blockade and saturation bombardment, prudence dictated moving ahead with preparations for an invasion as the most likely course of action to assure Japan's unconditional surrender.[70]

On May 10, 1945, the Joint Chiefs gave the go-ahead for planning to continue for the invasion, while noting several objections and reservations raised by Admiral King.[71] The overall concept (code-named DOWNFALL) was a collaborative effort between the joint staff and the major Pacific commands. It called for the attack to take place in two stages: an initial invasion of southern Kyushu (Operation *Olympic*) toward the end of 1945, followed by a landing in the spring of 1946 on Honshu (Operation *Coronet*) in the vicinity of the Tokyo (Kanto) Plain, once reinforcements arrived from Europe. Still to be decided were final command arrangements, which the JCS had neatly sidestepped during the Philippines-versus-Formosa debate. Avoiding the issue once again, the chiefs in early April 1945 approved an interim assignment

of responsibilities, under which MacArthur would serve as commander in chief of all Army land forces while Nimitz commanded all theater naval forces. Strategic air assets would remain essentially as they were since the creation of the Twentieth Air Force a year earlier, under the strategic direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with General Arnold as executive agent, but available to General MacArthur as needed.[72] The Joint Chiefs expected the looming invasion of Japan to be their biggest operation of the war, dwarfing the D-Day invasion of Europe. Anticipating strong resistance, Operation *Olympic* proposed a 12-division assault force, with 8 divisions in reserve. *Coronet* would be even bigger, with 14 divisions in the initial invasion and 11 more in following echelons. By comparison, the D-Day landings at Normandy had involved an initial assault force of eight divisions—five American, two British, and one Canadian. Altogether, *Olympic* and *Coronet* would require more than a million ground troops, 3,300 aircraft, and over 1,000 Navy combatant vessels.[73]

Missing from these plans were hard estimates of U.S. casualties. Those under consideration at the time were extrapolated from earlier Pacific campaigns by the Joint War Plans Committee, which predicted U.S. losses ranging from 25,000 killed and 105,000 wounded for an invasion of Kyushu alone, to 46,000 dead and 170,000 wounded for attacks on Kyushu and the Tokyo Plain combined.[74] To draw off defenders, the joint staff in May–June 1945 put together a deception plan (*Broadaxe*) to convince the Japanese that there would be no invasion prior to 1946, or until U.S. forces had consolidated control of Formosa, the China coast, and Indochina, and the British had liberated Sumatra.[75] Yet even if the deception worked, Admiral King believed that an invasion of the home islands would still meet stronger resistance than any previously encountered and that the joint staff should calculate its casualty figures accordingly.[76] In view of the methodological problem Admiral King raised, the Joint Staff Planners decided to withhold an estimate of casualties, stating only that losses were "not subject to accurate estimate" but would be at least on a par with those elsewhere in the Pacific Theater, which tended to be higher than in Europe.[77]

DAWN OF THE ATOMIC AGE

Also absent from U.S. invasion plans was an assessment of the impact of the atomic bomb, still a super-secret project outside the purview of the joint staff. Launched in October 1939, the atomic bomb program had come about as insurance against research being done in Nazi Germany, where scientists a year earlier had demonstrated a process known as "nuclear fission." While the Germans were apparently slow to grasp the full importance of what they had achieved, their colleagues elsewhere in Europe and the United States speculated that, under properly controlled conditions,

nuclear fission could produce enormous explosive power. Among those alarmed by the German breakthrough were Leo Szilard, a Hungarian expatriate, and Enrico Fermi, a refugee from Mussolini's Fascist Italy, both living in the United States. Unable to interest the Navy Department in a program of stepped-up nuclear research, they persuaded Albert Einstein, the celebrated physicist, to send a letter (written by Szilard) to President Roosevelt, drawing attention to the German experiment and suggesting the possibility of "extremely powerful bombs of a new type." Roosevelt agreed that the United States needed to act, and from that point forward the program grew steadily to become the Manhattan Engineer District (MED), with the War Department covertly funding and overseeing the effort.[78]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff learned of the atomic bomb project individually, at different times during the course of the war. The first to be brought in on the secret was General Marshall, who became involved in 1941 as a member of the President's Top Advisory Group, which was nominally responsible for overseeing the program.[79] Marshall told Admiral King about the project late in 1943, but according to King, the subject was still too sensitive to be placed on the chiefs' agenda or discussed at meetings.[80] General Arnold had suspected for some time that something was afoot, and received confirmation from the MED director, Brigadier General Leslie R. Groves, in July 1943. Toward the end of March 1944, Groves gave Arnold a more in-depth description of the project and a list of tentative requirements.[81] The last to learn about the bomb was Admiral Leahy, who was not apprised until September 1944 when he attended the second Quebec Conference. Afterwards, he received a full briefing at the President's home in Hyde Park, New York, by Vannevar Bush, Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development and scientific coordinator of the project.[82]

Whether the Manhattan Project would yield a workable weapon was an open question for much of the war. Convinced that the project had merit, Bush assured President Roosevelt as early as July 1941 that the explosive potential of an atomic bomb would be "thousands of times more powerful" than any conventional weapon and that its use "might be determining."[83] Leahy, on the other hand, scoffed at Bush's claims and thought the effort would never amount to much. "The bomb will never go off," he insisted, "and I speak as an expert in munitions."[84] Even though the other members of the JCS appeared not to share Leahy's skepticism, they were still cautious and knew better than to incorporate a nonexistent weapon into their strategic calculations. Nor was it clear, even if the bomb worked, exactly when it would be available and in what quantities. According to Groves, the earliest date for a prototype was around August 1, 1945, with a second bomb to follow 5 months later.[85] As it turned out, the first atomic test took place July 16, 1945, 2 months after Germany's capitulation and well into the planning cycle for the invasion of Japan. Until then, lacking confirmation of the bomb's

capability, the JCS could count on nothing more than an expensive program wrapped in secrecy that might or might not change the course of history.

Despite JCS uncertainty over whether the bomb would work, preparations for its possible use received top priority from March 1944 onward, when Groves briefed Arnold on the project. Expecting the bomb to be of considerable size and weight, Groves speculated that, for delivery purposes, it might be necessary to use a British Lancaster heavy bomber, the largest plane of its kind in the Allied inventory, which could carry a payload of up to 22,000 pounds. Arnold strenuously objected to using a British plane and insisted that the AAF could provide a suitable delivery platform from a modified B–29. From this discussion emerged Project SILVERPLATE, which produced the 14 specially configured B–29s that made up 313th Bombardment Wing of 509th Composite Group, the unit that carried out the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.[86]

Composed of carefully selected top-rated pilots and crews, 509th was the most elite unit in the Army Air Forces. Eventually it became part of the Twentieth Air Force, though for all practical purposes it operated independently and was responsible to Groves and the MED. As a composite group, 509th carried with it most of its own logistical support and was by design a stand-alone organization. Training began in early September 1944 in utmost secrecy at Wendover Field, an isolated air base in western Utah within easy reach of the MED's weapons research laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico. Crews concentrated on learning to drop two different weapons—a cylindrical uranium bomb called "Little Boy" and a rotund plutonium bomb called "Fat Man." The initial plan was to use nuclear bombs against Germany. But as it became apparent that the war in Europe might end before they were ready, 509th turned its attention to the Pacific in December 1944 and spent the next 2 months conducting test flights over Cuba to familiarize crews with terrain similar to Japan's. In May 1945, advance elements of the 509th began arriving at their staging base on Tinian, one of the Marianas, to dig the pits from which the bombs would be hoisted into the planes. Pilots and crews arrived soon thereafter and by late July were executing combat test strikes over Japan with high-explosive projectiles of the Fat Man design.[87]

Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945, left the fate of the Manhattan Project in the hands of his successor, Harry S. Truman. Though a bomb had yet to be manufactured and tested, the project was far enough along that Truman was reasonably certain it would succeed. What remained to be seen was how powerful the explosive device would be. In early May, on Secretary of War Stimson's initiative, Truman authorized the War Department to create an interdepartmental Interim Committee to recommend policies and plans for using the bomb and related issues.[88] Separately, a committee of technical experts chaired by Groves began to assemble a list of targets.

Omitted from both groups was any formal JCS representation, though Marshall received regular updates from Stimson on the Interim Committee's progress and even attended one of its meetings on May 31, 1945. How much, if any, of this information Marshall conveyed to the other chiefs is unknown. According to Groves, the omission of the Joint Chiefs was intentional, to preserve security and, no less important, to avoid having to deal with Leahy's negative views.[89]

With the atomic bomb still in gestation and blanketed in secrecy, the Joint Chiefs continued to ignore it in their plans for ending the war with Japan. Meeting with the new President and the Service Secretaries on June 18, 1945, they described in some detail the preparations for the invasion, discussed the probability of heavy casualties, and agreed that Soviet intervention would be desirable but not essential for winning the war. Characterizing Japan's situation as "hopeless," the JCS estimated that it would only worsen under the continuing onslaught of the blockade and accompanying air and naval bombardment. In Marshall's opinion, however, air and sea attacks would not suffice to bring about a Japanese surrender, a view in which Admiral King now grudgingly concurred. What caused King to come around is not apparent from the official record, but it may have been recent ULTRA radio intercepts, to which all at the meeting had access. These indicated an accelerated buildup of Japanese forces on Kyushu and a feverish determination by the Japanese high command to mount a last-ditch stand using heavily dug-in forces and suicide air attacks.[90] Despite sending out peace feelers, the Japanese showed no sign of giving up. Instead, the military leaders appeared intent on inflicting such heavy damage and casualties on the United States that it would see the futility of further fighting and seek a negotiated peace. Even skeptics like King seemed to agree that an invasion was the only viable option for obtaining Japan's surrender. Truman was visibly distraught over the prospects of a bloodbath, but by the time the meeting broke up he saw no other choice and ordered planning for the Kyushu operation to proceed.[91]

Whether the use of nuclear weapons as a possible alternative to an invasion was discussed at this meeting is unclear. While the formal minutes make no mention of the atomic bomb, they indicate an interest on Stimson's part in finding a political solution for ending the war and an off-the-record discussion of "certain other matters."[92] Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, who accompanied Stimson, recalled raising the issue of sending the Japanese an ultimatum, urging them to surrender or be subjected to a "terrifyingly destructive weapon." McCloy remembered that the JCS were "somewhat annoyed" by his interference and veiled reference to the bomb, but that President Truman "welcomed it" and directed that such a political initiative be set in motion. However, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal,

who was also present, had no recollection of McCloy's remarks and reckoned that the discussion McCloy had in mind took place at another time.[93]

Planning for military action against Japan now followed a two-track course, one along the lines laid out by the Joint Chiefs in preparation for an invasion, the other driven by the gathering momentum of the Manhattan Project. Both came together at the Potsdam Conference (TERMINAL) in July–August 1945, where Truman and the JCS received word of the successful test shot held near Alamogordo, New Mexico. By then, Truman had also received the recommendations of the Interim Committee, which favored using the bomb if the experiment succeeded. The expense of having developed the bomb in the first place, the potential diplomatic leverage it offered in dealing with the Russians, and last but not least the elimination of the need for a bloody invasion, all doubtless weighed heavily on Truman's mind. Once he had confirmation that the bomb would work, the decision to use it became almost automatic.[94] Looking back, Leahy and King strongly disagreed with the President's choice. Insisting that the enemy's collapse was only a matter of time, they considered attacks with atomic weapons excessive and unnecessary. Still, there is no evidence that either stepped forward to propose a different course. If Leahy and King objected at the time, they kept their reservations to themselves.[95]

The only JCS member who seriously considered an alternative course of action was Marshall. Like King and Leahy, Marshall hoped the Japanese would see the light and surrender, making use of the atomic bomb unnecessary. The difficulty arose in finding a way of bringing the Japanese around. During the Interim Committee's deliberations prior to Potsdam, Marshall and Stimson discussed the possibility of issuing an explicit warning before dropping the bomb or of confining its use to a demonstration over uninhabited terrain. But they could see no practical way of assuring that the Japanese would be sufficiently awed by either a warning or a demonstration shot to draw the logical conclusion and concede defeat.[96] According to his biographer, Forrest C. Pogue, Marshall's main concern was to wind up the war quickly with as few casualties as possible to either side; on this basis he came to the conclusion that if the test at Alamogordo turned out to be a success, the bomb should be used against targets in Japan.[97]

The attacks that followed, destroying Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, with the Little Boy gun-type uranium bomb and Nagasaki, 3 days later, with the Fat Man plutonium implosion bomb, forced Japanese military leaders to acknowledge that they had no countermeasures to the Americans' new weapons. In between these attacks, on August 8, 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria. For years, historians debated whether the atomic bombs were decisive in bringing the war to an end. Recently, however, a Japanese scholar has conjectured that while it was the atom bomb that convinced the Japanese high command that the war was lost, it was

not until the Soviets invaded Manchuria that Japan's civilian leadership came to the same conclusion, since without the USSR there was no one left to mediate an end of the war. In other words, a convergence of events—the atomic bombing of Japan and the Soviet Union's entry into the war at the same time—provided the catalyst for Japan's surrender.[98] Yet of these two sets of events, it was the use of the atomic bomb that produced the most lasting impressions—tens of thousands killed and injured, two cities destroyed, and an entire nation lying at the mercy of another. Without question, the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki confirmed the predictions of Stimson, Groves, and others associated with the Manhattan Project that atomic weapons were indeed more awesome in their destructive power than any existing weapon. Whether they would revolutionize warfare and produce, as Stimson predicted, "a new relationship of man to the universe," was another matter.[99]

Shortly after the attacks, at the chiefs' request, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee presented its assessment of the atomic bomb's military and strategic impact. At issue was whether, as some military analysts were beginning to speculate, atomic weapons would preclude the need for sizable conventional forces after the war. Though duly impressed with the atomic bomb's destructive power, the committee pointed out that these weapons were as yet too few in number, too expensive and difficult to produce, and too hard to deliver to be used in anything other than special circumstances. In view of these unique characteristics, the committee doubted whether atomic weapons would render conventional land, sea, and air forces obsolete, though they might change the "relative importance and strength of various military components." Any immediate changes were apt to be minor, however, as long as the United States enjoyed a monopoly on the bomb. This situation could change if other industrialized countries—the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union—wanted to devote the time and resources to developing nuclear weapons. The most dangerous and destabilizing situation that the Joint Strategic Survey Committee could foresee was if the Soviet Union acquired the bomb. Even so, the committee downplayed the likelihood of a dramatic transformation in modern warfare resulting from the proliferation of nuclear technology. It pointed out that the development of "new weapons" had been continuous throughout history and that the advent of one new weapon invariably produced something equally effective to counter it.[100]

Thus, as the war drew to a close, the Joint Chiefs found themselves entering the uncharted realm of atomic war, somewhat reassured that the apocalypse predicted by Stimson and likeminded others had been postponed, yet cautious and uneasy at the same time. No less unsettling was the Joint Chiefs' own uncertain future as an organization. At the outset of World War II, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had not existed. By 1945, they were an established fixture atop the largest, most powerful military

machine in history. Despite inter-Service friction and competition, the JCS had found that working together produced better results than working separately. A corporate advisory and planning body, they reported directly to the President and were at the center of decision throughout the conflict. Operating without a formal charter, the Joint Chiefs were at liberty to conduct business as needed to meet the requirements of the war. With the onset of peace, this free-wheeling style was sure to change. Still, few seriously contemplated a postwar defense establishment in which the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or some comparable organization, did not loom large.

NOTES

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2 See Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1954), 41–42.

3 "Directive to the Supreme Commander in the ABDA Area as Approved by the President and PM," January 10, 1942, ABC-4/5; and "Procedure for Assumption of Command by General Wavell," January 16, 1942, ABC-4 C/S 3, both in *World War II Conference Papers*.

4 King quoted in Robert W. Love, Jr., *History of the U.S. Navy, 1942–1991* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 14. See also Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1952), 368–372.

5 Minutes, JCS 6th Meeting, March 16, 1942, RG 218, CCS 334 (3-16-42).

6 Louis Morton, "Pacific Command: A Study in Interservice Relations," in Harry R. Borowksi, ed., *The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History, 1959–1987* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1988), 134.

7 Louis Morton, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1962), 244–250.

8 Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 207.

9 Report by JPS, August 6, 1943, "Specific Operations in the Pacific and Far East, 1943–44," JCS 446. See also Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1941–45* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 68–69.

10 Henry H. Adams, "Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz," in Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1976), 411; E.B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1976), 235–56, 279–297.

11 King and Whitehill, 491–493.

12 Love, II, 199–200; Morton, *Strategy and Command*, 447–453.

13 Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. V, *The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983; reprint), 3–32; Morton, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years*, 602–603.

14 Ross, *American War Plans, 1941–45,* 50.

15 Grace Person Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 725.

16 Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943–1945* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 206.

17 Matloff, 231.

18 Minutes, CCS 107th Meeting, August 14, 1943, *World War II Conference Papers*; King and Whitehill, 483–484.

19 "Progress Report to the President and Prime Minister," August 27, 1943, CCS 319/2 (revised), *World War II Conference Papers*.

20 See Tohmatsu Haruo, "The Strategic Correlation between the Sino-Japanese and Pacific Wars," in Mark Peattie, Edward J. Drea, and Hans van de Ven, eds., *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 424.

21 Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 11–13; Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Mission to China* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2002, reprint), 61–63; Joint Planning Committee Report to Chiefs of Staff, January 10, 1942, "Immediate Assistance to China," U.S. ABC-4/6, ARCADIA Conference, *World War II Conference Papers*.

22 Quoted in Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–45* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 125.

23 Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 513–515.

24 Hayes, 80; Feis, *China Tangle*, 15–16.

25 Ulysses Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2000), 610.

26 Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1987; reprint), 454.

27 See Zang Yunhu, "Chinese Operations in Yunnan and Central Burma," in Peattie, Drea, and van de Ven, eds., *Battle for China*, 386–391.

28 Craven and Cate, I, 504–505; IV, 436–443.

29 Theodore H. White, ed., *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948), 136–138; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 212–221; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 471.

30 Matloff, 238.

31 Hayes, 518.

32 Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), 328; Minutes, 1st Plenary Meeting, Villa Kirk, Cairo, November 23, 1943, *World War II Conference Papers.*

33 Matloff, 350–351.

34 Report by JPS, April 6, 1944, and decision on April 10, 1944, "VLR Bombers in the War Against Japan," JCS 742/6. Like all B–29 units in World War II, XX Bomber Command was part of the Twentieth Air Force, which reported to the JCS. Bombing missions

from China began in July 1944 and concentrated initially on Japanese industrial targets in Manchuria, gradually expanding to targets in Japan as XX Bomber Command gained experience. Chiang's government objected, however, to what it regarded as a diversion of resources; it wanted the fuel and munitions used by XX Bomber Command to go to Chennault's air force. By the end of January 1945, B–29 bombing operations from China ceased owing to the deteriorating security situation. See Craven and Cate, V, 3–32, 92–131.

35 Feis, *China Tangle*, 192. In fact, no lend-lease aid ever reached the Communists. See Zhang Baijia, "China's Quest for Foreign Military Aid," in Peattie, Drea, and van de Ven, eds., *Battle for China*, 299.

36 Roosevelt to Chiang, September 16, 1944, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference at Quebec, 1944* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1972), 465.

37 Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 468–471.

38 Feis, *China Tangle*, 201–202; Pogue, *Organizer of Victory*, 478–479; Romanus and Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in CBI* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1999; reprint), 15.

39 Matloff, 240.

40 JCS Statement, "Basis for the Formulation of a Military Policy," September 20, 1945, JCS 1496/3.

41 Army and AAF planners were emphatic that the lack of guidance on UMT and postwar organization was a major impediment; Navy planners were less convinced. See Memo, Arnold to JCS, September 7, 1945, "Reorganization of National Defense, JCS 749/17; and Memo, King to JCS, September 10, 1945, "Reorganization of National Defense," JCS 749/18.

42 Memo, Marshall to JCS, September 19, 1945, "Interim Plan for the Permanent Establishment of the Army of the United States," with enclosures, JCS 1520; Memo, Arnold to JCS, October 2, 1935, "Interim Plan for the Permanent Military Establishment of the United States," JCS 1478/4; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1945* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, January 10, 1946), 3.

43 Memo, Marshall to JCS, November 2, 1943, "A Single Dept of War," JCS 560.

44 Memo, King to JCS, November 7, 1943, "A Single Department of War in the Post-War Period," JCS 560/1; Herman S. Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence, 1943–1947* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1997), 40 and passim.

45 Report by JSSC, March 8, 1944, "Reorganization of National Defense," JCS 749; Enclosure to Letter, Leahy (for JCS) to Secretaries of War and Navy, May 9, 1944, JCS 749/6. See also the Memo by Richardson Committee, October 19, 1944, "Tentative: Origin and Activities of the JCS Special Committee for the Reorganization of National Defense," JCS 749/14.

46 The Special Committee's recommendations and Richardson's dissenting opinions are filed together in "Report of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Committee for Reorganization of National Defense," April 11, 1945, JCS 749/12.

47 Memo, Leahy to Truman, October 16, 1945, "Reorganization of National Defense," JCS 749/29.

48 See Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 130, 138.

49 For a fuller discussion, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (New York: Random House, 1957), still the classic work of the subject. Leahy was not very good at practicing what he preached. Toward the end of the war, for example, he successfully argued for modification of the Japanese surrender terms to allow retention of the emperor, an issue heavy in political implications.

50 See Robert H. Ferrell, *The Dying President: Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1944–1945* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 72–73 and passim.

51 Ernest R. May, "The Development of Political-Military Consultation in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 70 (June 1955), 172–173; Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1990; reprint), 41–42.

52 Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1949), 76, 124–125.

53 Cline, *Washington Command Post*, 317.

54 Letter, Leahy to Hull, May 16, 1944, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), 1945*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1960), I, 264–266. This series hereafter cited as *FRUS.*

55 "Charter: Joint Post-War Committee," enclosure to Note by the Secretaries, June 7, 1944, JCS 786/2.

56 Cline, *Washington Command Post*, 325.

57 Memo Initialed by Roosevelt and Churchill, March 15, 1944, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Quebec, 1944* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1972), 466–467. The words were actually Churchill's, the sentiments Morgenthau's.

58 John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 114–132.

59 Steven L. Rearden, "American Policy Toward Germany, 1944–1946" (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1974), 176–177.

60 Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for the Occupation of Germany: The Washington Controversy," in Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil-Military Decisions: A Book of Case Studies* (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1963), 311–460; Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1975), 98–108, 208–224.

61 Hayes, 713–721.

62 Matloff, 453–459; Hayes, 603–604.

63 Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1963), 4–8.

64 Message, MacArthur to Marshall, June 18, 1944, quoted in Hayes, 606.

65 Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 196–198; D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, vol. II, *1941–1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 529–533; Smith, 9–11.

66 Matloff, 484–485.

67 Smith, 16; Hayes, 623–624.

68 Matloff, 487.

69 King and Whitehill, 598; Hayes, 702; William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), 245, 384–385; and Michael S. Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 172–173.

70 JPS Report, "Pacific Strategy," April 25, 1945, JCS 924/15.

71 Decision on JCS 924/15, "Pacific Strategy," May 10, 1946.

72 JCS Directive, April 3, 1945, "Command and Operational Directives for the Pacific," JCS 1259/4; Craven and Cate, V, 676–684.

73 Directive to CINC, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, CINC U.S. Pacific Fleet, CG Twentieth AF, May 25, 1945, "Directive for Operation 'Olympic,'" JCS 1331/3; Report by JPS, June 16, 1945, "Details of the Campaign Against Japan," JCS 1388. John Ray Skates, *The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), looks at invasion planning in depth.

74 See Report by the JWPC, June 15, 1945, "Details of the Campaign Against Japan," JWPC 369/1, in Douglas J. MacEachin, *The Final Months of the War With Japan: Signals Intelligence, U.S. Invasion Planning, and the A-Bomb Decision* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1998), 11–12 and Document No. 5. See also Barton J. Bernstein, "A Postwar Myth: 500,000 U.S. Lives Saved," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 42 (June–July 1986), 38–40.

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79 Richard G. Hewlett and Oscar E. Anderson, Jr., *A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission*, vol. I, *The New World* (Washington, DC: U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, 1962), 46, 77. The other members of the Top Advisory Committee were President Roosevelt, who served as chairman, Vice President Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of War Stimson, Vannevar Bush, and James B. Conant. Never once did the full committee meet. See McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival* (New York: Random House, 1988), 45–46.

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81 Walton S. Moody, *Building a Strategic Air Force* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1996), 7; H.H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1949), 491; Leslie R. Groves, *Now It Can Be Told* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1962), 253; and Vincent C. Jones, *Manhattan: The Army and the Atomic Bomb* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1985), 519.

82 Leahy, *I Was There*, 265, 269.

83 Letter, Bush to Roosevelt, July 16, 1941, quoted in Marchtin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 36–37.

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85 Memo, Groves to Marshall, December 30, 1944, "Atomic Fission Bombs," U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers—The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1955), 383–384.

86 Groves, *Now It Can Be Told*, 253–254.

87 Jones, 519–528; Groves, *Now It Can Be Told*, 253–262; "History of 509th Composite Group, 313th Bombardment Wing, Twentieth Air Force, Activation to 15 August 1945" (MS, August 31, 1945, Maxwell AFB, Alabama), 45–50.

88 Entry, May 2, 1945, Meeting with Truman, Stimson Diary, Library of Congress (microfilm).

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91 Minutes of Meeting Held at the White House, June 18, 1945, filed with JCS 1388.

92 Ibid.

93 Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 70–71; John J. McCloy, *The Challenge to American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 40–43.

94 See Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 55–56; and entry, July 18, 1945, Stimson Diary, also cited in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin, 1945*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: GPO), II, 1361.

95 Leahy, *I Was There*, 441; King and Whitehill, 621.

96 Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, 75; Herbert Feis, *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 45–46.

97 Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Statesman, 1945–1959* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), 24–25.

98 Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 177–214.

99 Stimson's comments in Notes of Interim Committee Meeting, May 31, 1945, Misc. Historical Documents Collection, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

100 Report by JSSC to JCS, October 30, 1945, "Over-all Effect of Atomic Bomb on Warfare and Military Organization," JCS 1477/1.

A conference of Secretary of Defense James Forrestal with the Joint Chiefs of Staff was held at the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, on August 21–22, 1948. Shown at the conference table are, left to right, Major General Alfred M. Gruenther, USA, Director, Joint Staff; General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force; Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, Chief of Naval Operations; General Omar N. Bradley, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; Secretary of Defense James Forrestal (at head of table); Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, Director of Plans and Operations, U.S. Army; Vice Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Vice Chief of Naval Operations; and Lieutenant General Lauris Norstad, Deputy Chief of Operations, U.S. Air Force.