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MEMORANDUM FOR THE

Secretary of War
The Chief of Staff
General Arnold
Secretary of the Navy
Admiral King
Harry Hopkins

3:05
To: _____
By authority of:
James B. Hood
Date: 9-21-70

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(a) and 5(a) of (E)
NND 730089
By: ERC NARS, Date 6-12-74

1. This memorandum is not to be circulated or used beyond the above group.
2. I always think it well to outline in simple terms and from time to time complex problems which call for over-all planning. Therefore, I should like you gentlemen to read the following. We can talk it over from time to time. Because the world situation is changing so rapidly, this should be considered only as a memorandum covering the present situation on May 7, 1942.

A. The Pacific Theatre

The whole of the Pacific area calls, at the present time, fundamentally for a holding operation. This is the responsibility of the United States, backed by such assistance as we can receive from Canada in relation to the defense of British Columbia, Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, New Zealand and Australia in relation to the protection of their own territories and of the protective chain of islands north and east of them, and China in relation to keeping occupied as large Japanese forces in China as is possible.

Defense of all essential points in the Pacific Theatre is the primary objective.

This defense calls for offense in two areas -- attacks upon the Japanese lines of communication and the bombing of Japan proper from east and west.

The objective of this defense strengthened by offensive actions is to destroy or damage as many Japanese naval vessels, merchant ships and airplanes as possible. In this regard, it is essential to maintain destruction or damage of a much larger number of Japanese ships and planes each month than they can replace. In other words, combat against Japanese ships and planes must be sought out in order to hasten the attrition of Japanese arms.

*James B. Blood*Date 9-21-70

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B. India and Burma Theatre

At the present moment, though this may be only a lull, we can very nearly separate India and Burma into a separate theatre of war.

This theatre is intimately connected in Burma and eastern India with the maintenance of air (and later highway) access to and from China. This theatre is also closely associated with the Near East only because of the necessity of withdrawing troops and materiel for its support from the Near East theatre. The responsibility for this theatre is primarily British, except that the United States must assure air connection with China and give such materiel assistance to British armies in India as possible.

Operations in this India-Burma theatre are also defensive in character and it seems premature to plan for any offensive action for the recapture of Burma or Dutch Islands.

C. Near East and East Africa Theatre

The responsibility in this theatre is British with the exception that the United States must furnish all possible materiel to the British in Libya, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and must especially bolster up unloading and assembly operations in Egypt and in the Persian Gulf and in pushing transportation from the Persian Gulf to Russia.

D. The Atlantic Theatre

This divides itself into the Western and Southern Atlantic area where the problem is one of patrol and convoy and the European, including the British Isles, and the task of getting materiel through by the northern route to Russia. The responsibility is British and American, depending largely on logical geography.

At the present time, the principal objective is to help Russia. It must be constantly reiterated that Russian armies are killing more Germans and destroying more Axis materiel than all the twenty-five united nations put together. To help Russia, therefore, is the primary consideration. There are two essentials.

1. To maintain the flow of goods into Russia by the northern route. This should become easier during the months this summer and early autumn when the ice recedes to north of Spitzbergen.

2. The organization of a second front to compel the withdrawal of German air forces and ground forces from the Russian front.

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In this operation, its primary success depends on control of the air over the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

Presupposing success in obtaining control of the air, land operations can be conducted at one or many points on the basis of (a) raids based on commando operations using a comparatively small number of troops and withdrawing them within a few hours, or not more than twenty-four hours; (b) super-commando operations using a ~~much~~ larger number of troops -- even up to 50,000 with the objective of damaging the enemy as ~~much~~ as possible and withdrawing this relatively large force within two days or a week; (c) establishment of a permanent front backed by a sufficient force to give reasonable certainty of adequate ~~re~~ reinforcements and the avoidance of being pushed into the sea.

This Atlantic theatre, therefore, calls for essentially offensive operations in the European area and is based on the thoroughly sound objective of aiding Russia in the destruction of as many Germans and German materiel as possible.

3. As regards timing, the general strategic plan in the Pacific Theatre, in the India-Burma Theatre, and in the Near East Theatre calls for a continuous day to day maintenance of existing positions and existing strength in these theatres at least for the next few months.
4. The Atlantic Theatre general plan calls, however, for very great speed in developing actual operations. I have been disturbed by American and British naval objections to operations in the European Theatre prior to 1943. I regard it as essential that active operations be conducted in 1942. I fully realize difficulties in relation to the landing of armed forces under fire. All of us would like to have ideal materiel to work with. Materiel is never either ideal, or satisfactory, or sufficient. We have to use "any old method of transportation which will get us to our destination".
5. The necessities of the case call for action in 1942 -- not 1943. In a recent memorandum of the United Nations it was stated that there was agreement on a second front -- provided the equipment and materials were available. But they went on to say that it might have to be created any way, if Russia were to be seriously endangered even if the operation on the part of the British and the United States had to be called an operation of desperation.

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6. If we decide that the only large scale offensive operation is to be in the European area, the element of speed becomes the first essential.

F.D.R.

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By authority of:
James B. Rhodes
Date 9-21-70