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3 June, 1944

Memorandum:



1. Subjects:

- a. Proper coordination with the French.
- b. Weather.
- c. Beach and undersea obstacles.
- d. Future success of the air in breaking up effectiveness of hostile ground units.
- e. Future organization.

2. The matter of coordination with the French has been highly complicated because of lack of crystallization in ideas involving both the political and military fields. Specifically, the President desires that coordination be effected with the French on the basis of dealing with any group or groups that can effectively fight the Germans. His Directive apparently recognizes the influence of the National Committee of Liberation in France but he is unwilling to promise any exclusive dealing with the group since that, he apparently believes, would be tantamount to recognizing the Committee as a provisional government of France, set up from the outside.

We have our direct means of communication with the Resistance Groups of France but all our information leads us to believe that the only authority these Resistance Groups desire to recognize is that of DeGaulle and his Committee. However, since DeGaulle is apparently willing to cooperate only on the basis of our dealing with him exclusively, the whole thing falls into a rather sorry mess. DeGaulle is, of course, now controlling the only French military forces that can take part in this operation. Consequently, from the purely military viewpoint we must, at least until the time that other French forces might conceivably be organized completely independent of his movement, deal with him alone. He, however, takes the attitude that military and political matters go hand in hand and will not cooperate militarily unless political recognition of some kind is accorded him. We do not seem to be able, in advance of D-day, to straighten the matter at all. I have just learned that DeGaulle has failed to accept the Prime Minister's invitation to come to England, saying that he would make his decision this afternoon.

The rapid sorting out of all the conflicting ideas is quite necessary if we are to secure the maximum help from the French both inside and outside the country.

3. The weather in this country is practically unpredictable. For some days our experts have been meeting almost hourly and I have been holding Commander-in-Chief meetings once or twice a day to consider the reports and tentative predictions. While at this moment, the morning of June 3rd, it appears that the weather will not be so bad as to

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preclude landings and will possibly even permit reasonably effective gunfire support from the Navy, the picture from the air viewpoint is not so good.

Probably no one that does not have to bear the specific and direct responsibility of making the final decision as to what to do, can understand the intensity of these burdens. The Supreme Commander, much more than any of his subordinates, is kept informed of the political issues involved, particularly the anticipated effect of delay upon the Russians. He likewise is in close touch with all the advice from his military subordinates and must face the issue even when technical advice as to weather is not unanimous from the several experts. Success or failure might easily hinge upon the effectiveness, for example, of airborne operations. If the weather is suitable for everything else, but unsuitable for airborne operations, the question becomes whether to risk the airborne movement anyway or to defer the whole affair in the hopes of getting weather that is a bit better.

My tentative thought is that the desirability for getting started on the next favorable tide is so great and the uncertainty of the weather is such that we could never anticipate really perfect weather coincident with proper tidal conditions, that we must go unless there is a real and very serious deterioration in the weather.

4. Since last February the enemy has been consistently busy in placing obstacles of various types on all European beaches suitable for landing operations. Most of these are also mined. Under ordinary circumstances of land attack these would not be particularly serious but because they must be handled quickly and effectively before the major portion of our troops can begin unloading, they present a hazard that is a very considerable one. It is because of their existence that we must land earlier on the tide than we had originally intended. This gives us a chance to go after them while they are still on dry land because if their bases were under water they would be practically impossible to handle. If our gun support of the operation and the DD tanks during this period are both highly effective, we should be all right.

The under-water obstacles, that is, the sea mines, force us to sweep every foot of water over which we operate and this adds immeasurably to the difficulties in restricted waters in which we are operating. The combination of under-sea and beach obstacles is serious but we believe we have it whipped.

5. Because the enemy in great strength is occupying a country that is interlaced with fine communication system, our attack can be looked upon as reasonable only if our tremendous air force is able to impede his concentrations against us and to help destroy the effectiveness of any of his counter attacks. Weather again comes into this problem, because it is my own belief that with reasonably good weather during the first two or three weeks of the operation, our air superiority and domination will see us through to success.

6. Lately we have been studying earnestly the question of future organization, assuming that we have established a beachhead so firmly that we

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no longer need fear being kicked into the sea. All British land forces will quickly be in and I personally doubt that the British will be able to maintain more than fifteen or sixteen Divisions in active warfare in this theater. This means that the bulk of the land forces must come from the United States. Logically, also, there should come about eventually the desirability of undertaking offensive operations in fairly distinct zones of advance, with each of the ground groupments supported by its own distinct air force at least so far as fighter and fighter bombers are concerned. When this comes about every factor of simplicity in organization, national pride, efficiency in administration, etc., indicates the further desirability of having two principal ground commanders, one operating to the Northeast, one to the East. (I believe, however, that the British formation will probably have to be reinforced by an American Army or at least a Corps.) Pending this particular development it will still be necessary to begin the establishment in Europe of an American Army Group Headquarters. I plan to have Bradley command this new headquarters during the transition period, that is, until we are completely established and ready to undertake operations in distinct zones of advance. He will operate during the transition period under Montgomery. Finally, Bradley and Montgomery will each report directly to me.

At that time a certain portion of the so-called "tactical" air force, that is, medium bombers and possibly some of the long range fighters, will remain under the C-in-C, A.E.F. This portion of the tactical air force will be available to assist either Army Group.

I have already issued a tentative Directive to plan for future organization of ground and air forces along the lines indicated in this paragraph.



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