

TAC. H.Q. 21 Army Group,

M.540.

29 - 12 - 44.

~~TOP SECRET~~

PERSONAL

My dear **Ike**



✓ Bradley

It was very pleasant to see you again yesterday and to have a talk on the battle situation.

2. I would like to refer to the matter of operational control of all forces engaged in the northern thrust towards the RUHR, i.e. 12 and 21 Army Groups.

I think we want to be careful, because we have had one very definite failure when we tried to produce a formula that would meet this case; that was the formula produced in SHAEF FWD 15510 dated 23-9-44, which formula very definitely did not work.

3. When you and Bradley and myself met at MAASTRICHT on 7 December, it was very clear to me that Bradley opposed any idea that I should have operational control over his Army Group; so I did not then pursue the subject.

I therefore consider that it will be necessary for you to be very firm on the subject, and any loosely worded statement will be quite useless.

4. I consider that if you merely use the word "coordination", it will NOT work. The person designated by you must have powers of operational direction and control of the operations that will follow on your directive.

5. I would say that your directive will assign tasks and objectives to the two Army Groups, allot boundaries, and so on.

Thereafter preparations are made and battle is joined.

It is then that one commander must have powers to direct and control the operations; you cannot possibly do it yourself, and so you would have to nominate someone else.

6. I suggest that your directive should finish with this sentence:

"12 and 21 Army Groups will develop operations in accordance with the above instructions.

From now onwards full operational direction, control, and coordination of these operations is vested in the C-in-C 21 Army Group, subject to such instructions as may be issued by the Supreme Commander from time to time."

7. I put this matter up to you again only because I am so anxious not to have another failure.

I am absolutely convinced that the key to success lies in:

(a) all available offensive power being assigned to the northern line of advance to the RUHR.

(b) a sound set-up for command, and this implies one man directing and controlling the whole tactical battle on the northern thrust.

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...../I am absolutely...

I am absolutely certain that if we do not comply with these two basic conditions, then we will fail again. X

8. I would be grateful if you would not mention to Bradley the point I have referred to in para. 3. I would not like him to think that I remembered that point and had brought it up.

Yours *always, and your
very devoted friend*



Ranty

Do not bother to answer this.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force,
SHAEP.

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