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COPY NO. 1

HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME ALLIED COMMAND

OUTGOING MESSAGE

From: SHAEF

Date TOO: Jan 232300A

To : AGWAR (B-33)

Originator: COS

Info: British Chiefs of Staff London (M-37)

U R G E N T

U.S. SECRET - BIGOT

"BIGOT"

"Edited Literal Text"



To : AGWAR and TROOPERS
For : Combined Chiefs of Staff rptd British C/S
From : SC, AEF
Signed: Eisenhower

1. I have now had an opportunity of discussing the 'OVERLORD' plan with my Commanders-in-Chief. We are convinced that in all discussions full weight must be given to the fact that this operation marks the crisis of the European war. Every obstacle must be overcome, every inconvenience suffered and every risk run to ensure that our blow is decisive. We cannot afford to fail.

2. In this light we have reviewed the 'OVERLORD' plan and we are fully convinced that it is, as the Chiefs of Staff have already asserted, on a narrow margin. The present plan is limited to a three divisional assault. To ensure success we consider it essential to increase the assault force to five divisions. Nothing less will give us an adequate margin to ensure success.

3. Our reasons for this view are that an operation of this type must be designed to obtain an adequate bridgehead quickly and to retain the initiative. Three divisions are insufficient for this. The present frontage of assault is consequently too narrow. It will be essential to extend the front to give us a greater opportunity of finding a weak spot through which to exploit success. Moreover, the chances of success of the operation will be greatly increased and the capture of a port speeded up if we could extend our assault to the EASTERN beaches of the COTENTIN PENINSULA WEST of the barrier formed by the RIVER VIRE and its marshy estuary. Further, the securing of the EASTERN flank, and the early capture of the important focal point of CAEN with the vital airfields in its vicinity will be facilitated by the extension of the assault to the beaches just WEST of OUISTREHAM.

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4. With five divisions we should carry out our assault as follows. We should land one US and two BRITISH assault divisions on the CAEN beaches each on a two brigade front as already planned. We should land one additional BRITISH division with one brigade up on the beach just WEST of OUISTREHAM and a US division with one brigade up at the SOUTHERN end of the EAST COTENTIN beaches. The whole assault would thus be made by five divisions with eight brigades up. These would be followed on the second tide of D day by the equivalent of two divisions in landing ships and craft as in the original plan. To assist the assault on the COTENTIN an airborne division would be landed on D day to seize the exits from the beaches; followed probably by a second airborne division in approximately twenty-four hours.

5. I understand that COSSAC has previously stated that additional craft becoming available for 'OVERLORD' should be used to strengthen the follow-up on D plus 1 by embarking in landing craft units at present carried in ships. While I agree as to the desirability of this, I am convinced that the first necessity, as stated above, is to widen the frontage of the assault in order to obtain a larger initial bridgehead.

6. I have had examined the additional resources required to fulfill these proposals. By cutting down the scales of vehicles carried in the assault and follow-up I can find enough craft from within those already assigned to me to provide lift for one more assault brigade and one brigade in reserve. The balance required will have to come from resources outside my control.

7. To carry out the revised plan will require an addition of the following:

- 
- 1 L.S.H.
 - 6 L.S.I.(L) or A.P.A.
 - 1 L.S.I.(H)
 - (All with full complement of L.C.A. or L.C.V.P.)
 - 72 L.C.I.(L)
 - 47 L.S.T.
 - 144 L.C.T. (see paragraph 16 below)

8. The following additional naval forces will be required above those already requested:

- (a) ESCORTS:
 - 24 destroyers
 - 28 motor launches
- (b) MINESWEEPERS:
 - 4 flotillas

(c) BOMBARDMENT FORCE:

- 5 cruisers
- 12 destroyers
- 1 or 2 monitors or old battleships.

9. The majority of the naval forces, including the assault shipping and craft, must be formed in the UNITED KINGDOM by D minus 42, the last ships and craft joining their naval forces by D minus 28 at the latest.

10. The following additional BRITISH land forces will be required to start training in the UNITED KINGDOM by D minus 42:

- 2 beach groups
- 1 beach sub-area headquarters
- 2 dock operating companies



11. An additional eight fighter squadrons will be required to ensure the necessary cover over the extended assault area and wider shipping lanes, and two hundred troop carrier aircraft to ensure reasonable provision for the dropping of two airborne divisions within approximately twenty-four hours. These air forces must be available in the UNITED KINGDOM by D minus 60.

12. To allow an increase in the rate of follow-up and build-up proportionate to the increase in the assault, an additional 64 MT/Stores ships will be required for the first month.

13. The problem that must be faced at once is the provision of these additional forces.

14. I regard 'ANVIL' as an important contribution to 'OVERLORD' as I feel that an assault will contain more enemy forces in SOUTHERN FRANCE than a threat. The forces both US and FRENCH are in any case available; and the actual landing of these forces will increase the cooperation from resistance elements in FRANCE.

15. 'OVERLORD' and 'ANVIL' must be viewed as one whole. If sufficient forces could be made available the ideal would be a five divisional 'OVERLORD' and a three divisional 'ANVIL' or, at worst, a two divisional 'ANVIL'. If insufficient forces are available for this, however, I am driven to the conclusion that we should adopt a five divisional 'OVERLORD' and a one divisional 'ANVIL', the latter being maintained as a threat until enemy weakness justifies its active employment. This solution should be adopted only as a last resort and after all other means and alternatives have failed to provide the necessary strength by the end of May for a five divisional 'OVERLORD' and a two divisional 'ANVIL'.

16. As regards the target date, it is preferable from the army point of view that the early-May date should be adhered to if

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possible in order to obtain the longest campaigning season. I should prefer, therefore, to adhere to the existing date if it were possible. Rather, however, than risk failure with reduced forces on the earlier date, I would accept a postponement of a month if I were assured of then obtaining the strength required. Such a postponement would give an additional month of good weather for preparatory air operations and for training the additional troop carrier aircraft crews. It would also make available an extra month's production in the UNITED KINGDOM of about 96 L.C.T.

17. An immediate decision on the plan to be worked to and the date is a vital necessity. I request this decision at the earliest possible moment in order to allow time for the transfer of the additional resources to this theater and to enable planning and training to be completed in the limited time still available. The recommendations contained in this message have been made after consultation with my commanders and my own staff, but with no outside agencies.



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