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TOP SECRET

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

SUBJECT

RUSSIA THREAT TO
WESTERN CIVILISATION

P.M. 1412/48/111

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TOP SECRET

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Final

22nd May, 1945.

WAR CABINET

JOINT PLANNING STAFF

OPERATION "UNTHINKABLE"

Report by the Joint Planning Staff.

We have examined Operation UNTHINKABLE. As instructed, we have taken the following assumptions on which to base our examination:-

- (a) The undertaking has the full support of public opinion in both the British Empire and the United States and consequently, the morale of British and American troops continues high.
- (b) Great Britain and the United States have full assistance from the Polish armed forces and can count upon the use of German manpower and what remains of German industrial capacity.
- (c) No credit is taken for assistance from the forces of other Western Powers, although any bases in their territory, or other facilities which may be required, are made available.
- (d) Russia allies herself with Japan.
- (e) The date for the opening of hostilities is 1st July, 1945.
- (f) Redeployment and release schemes continue till 1st July and then stop.

Owing to the special need for secrecy, the normal staffs in Service Ministries have not been consulted.

OBJECT

2. The overall or political object is to impose upon Russia the will of the United States and British Empire.

Even though "the will" of these two countries may be defined as no more than a square deal for Poland, that does not necessarily limit the military commitment. A quick success might induce the Russians to submit to our will at least for the time being; but it might not. That is for the Russians to decide. If they want total war, they are in a position to have it.

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3. The only way in which we can achieve our object with certainty and lasting results is by victory in a total war but in view of what we have said in paragraph 2 above, and the possibility of quick success, we have thought it right to consider the problem on two hypotheses:-

- (a) That a total war is necessary, and on this hypothesis we have examined our chances of success.
- (b) That the political appreciation is that a quick success would suffice to gain our political object and that the continuing commitment need not concern us.

TOTAL WAR

4. Apart from the chances of revolution in the U.S.S.R. and the political collapse of the present regime - on which we are not competent to express an opinion - the elimination of Russia could only be achieved as a result of:-

- (a) The occupation of such areas of metropolitan Russia that the war making capacity of the country would be reduced to a point at which further resistance became impossible.
- (b) Such a decisive defeat of the Russian forces in the field as to render it impossible for the U.S.S.R. to continue the war.

Occupation of Vital Areas of Russia

5. The situation might develop in such a way that the Russians succeeded in withdrawing without suffering a decisive defeat. They would then presumably adopt the tactics which they employed so successfully against the Germans and in previous wars of making use of the immense distances with which their territory provides them. In 1941 the Germans reached the Moscow area, the Volga and the Caucasus, but the technique of factory evacuation, combined with the development of new resources and Allied assistance, enabled the U.S.S.R. to continue fighting.

6. There is virtually no limit to the distance to which it would be necessary for the Allies to penetrate into Russia in order to render further resistance impossible. It is hardly conceivable that the Allies could penetrate even as far as, or as quickly as, the Germans in 1942 and this penetration produced no decisive result.

Decisive Defeat of the Russian Forces

7. Details of the present strengths and dispositions of the Russian and Allied forces are given in Annexes II and III and illustrated on Maps A and B. The existing balance of strength in Central Europe, where the Russians enjoy a superiority of approximately three to one, makes it most unlikely that the Allies could achieve a complete and decisive victory in that area in present circumstances. Although Allied organisation is better, equipment slightly better and morale higher, the Russians have proved themselves formidable opponents of the Germans. They have competent commanders, adequate equipment and an organisation which,

though possibly inferior by our standards, has stood the test. On the other hand, only about one third of their divisions are of a high standard, the others being considerably inferior and with overall mobility well below that of the Allies.

8. To achieve the decisive defeat of Russia in a total war would require, in particular, the mobilisation of manpower to counteract their present enormous manpower resources. This is a very long term project and would involve:-

- (a) The deployment in Europe of a large proportion of the vast resources of the United States.
- (b) The re-equipment and re-organisation of German manpower and of all the Western European Allies.

Conclusions

9. We conclude that:-

- (a) If our political object is to be achieved with certainty and with lasting results, the defeat of Russia in a total war will be necessary.
- (b) The result of a total war with Russia is not possible to forecast, but the one thing certain is that to win it would take us a very long time.

QUICK SUCCESS

10. It might, however, be considered, as the result of a political appreciation, that a quick and limited military success would result in Russia accepting our terms.

11. Before a decision to open hostilities were made, full account would have to be taken of the following:-

- (a) If this appreciation is wrong and the attainment of whatever limited objective we may set ourselves does not cause Russia to submit to our terms, we may, in fact, be committed to a total war.
- (b) It will not be possible to limit hostilities to any particular area. While they are in progress, therefore, we must envisage a world-wide struggle.
- (c) Even if all goes according to plan, we shall not have achieved, from the military point of view, a lasting result. The military power of Russia will not be broken and it will be open to her to recommence the conflict at any time she sees fit.

12. Assuming, however, that it is decided to risk military action on a limited basis, accepting the dangers set out above, we have examined what action we could take in order to inflict such a blow upon the Russians as would cause them to accept our terms, even though they would not have been decisively defeated and, from the military point of view, would still be capable of continuing the struggle.

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General Strategic Situation

13. Of the Russian armed forces opposing us, the Red Army is far the most formidable part. There will be no threat from Russian strategic bombers or submarines comparable to the German threat against our bases and shipping. It is, therefore, the strength and dispositions of the Red Army to which we must give principal attention.

14. Europe. The main strength of the Red Army is concentrated in Central Europe. Although the Russians might occupy Norway as far south as Trondheim, and Greece, this would not materially affect the overall strategic situation. They might well overrun Turkey in Europe, and profiting by their present predominant position in South East Europe, close the Straits and prevent any naval action we might wish to take in the Black Sea. This would not of itself produce any additional danger to us, but South East Europe, including Greece, would immediately become barred to our influence and commerce.

15. Middle East. In Persia and Iraq an extremely dangerous situation would arise. It appears almost certain that Russia would take the offensive in this area, in view of the valuable oil resources to be gained and the extreme importance of these areas to us. It is estimated that there are some eleven Russian divisions available against an Allied force of three Indian brigade groups. It is, therefore, difficult to see how we could defend this area and the loss of this source of oil supply would be extremely serious.

Logistic difficulties and her commitments in Central Europe make it unlikely that Russia would advance towards Egypt in the early stages.

Russia would undoubtedly try to stir up trouble in all the Middle East countries.

16. India. Although Russia would undoubtedly try to stir up trouble in India, it seems doubtful whether she would undertake military action in this area.

17. Far East. In the Far East, any Russo-Japanese agreement would allow the Japanese to free forces to reinforce the Home Islands or to resume the offensive in China. They could hardly undertake amphibious operations to recover any of the areas they have lost. Since the main operations against Japan would clearly have to be postponed, the result would probably be stalemate in the Japanese war. Russian offensive action against the Allies in the Far East seems unlikely.

18. The above considerations and the present locations of the main forces lead us to conclude that the principal theatre would inevitably be Central Europe with subsidiary, but highly important, operations in the Persia-Iraq area.

19. We have examined in Annex I a campaign in Europe. The salient points in our examination are summarised below.

Factors Affecting our Strategy in East Europe

20. Our main superiority over the Russians will be in the air and at sea. The latter will enable us to control the Baltic, but this by itself will not be an important factor in bringing about a quick success.

21. In the air our superiority will, to some extent, be offset by the fact that initially our strategic bomber force must be based in England, even if staging posts are used on the Continent. In view of the wasting effort of our air forces and the great distances involved, they cannot be expected to produce the same scale of effort as they did during the war against Germany.

22. Russian industry is so dispersed that it is unlikely to be a profitable air target. On the other hand, the great length of the Russian communications would appear to offer us far more favourable targets, especially at the important crossings of the water barriers. To achieve any worthwhile results, however, these attacks on communications must be co-ordinated with a land offensive.

Our only means, therefore, of obtaining a quick success is by means of a land campaign, making full use of our air superiority both tactically and in attacks on Russian L. of C.

23. Considerations of topography and the general run of communications indicate that the main effort of a land offensive would have to be in the North. This would have the further advantage of enabling us to make use of our naval superiority in the Baltic to protect our left flank and to harry the enemy's right flank.

24. We, therefore, conclude that the campaign must be fought primarily on land in North East Europe.

The Land Campaign in North East Europe (See Map C)

25. The Allied forces which can be made available for offensive operations will depend to a great extent upon the numbers which will be tied down by the necessity for re-establishing and securing communications in the devastated areas of Germany.

26. After allowing for such forces and those necessary to ensure the security of the front as far north as Dresden - Chemnitz, we estimate that a force of some 47 divisions, including 14 armoured, could be made available for offensive operations.

27. Against this we estimate that the Russians would be able to produce a force amounting to the equivalent in Allied formations of 170 divisions, of which 30 would be armoured. We should, therefore, be facing odds of the order of two to one in armour and four to one in infantry.

28. It is difficult to assess to what extent our tactical air superiority and the superior handling of our forces will redress the balance, but the above odds would clearly render the launching of an offensive a hazardous undertaking.

If this course is decided upon, however, it might take the form of two main thrusts:-

- Northern - on the axis Stettin - Schneidemühl - Bydgoszcz.
- Southern - on the axis Leipzig - Cottbus - Poznan and Breslau.

29. The main armoured fighting would probably develop east of the Oder - Weisse line and upon its outcome the result of the campaign would probably depend. If the result was favourable, we might reach the general line Danzig - Breslau. Any advance beyond this, however, would increase the length of the front to be held during the winter and increase the danger resulting from the salient formed by Bohemia and Moravia, from which the Russians would be under no necessity to withdraw. Unless, therefore, we have won the victory we require west of the line Danzig - Breslau, it appears likely that we shall, in fact, be committed to a total war.

30. The success of a land campaign, therefore, would depend upon the result of the fighting west of the above line before winter conditions set in. There is no inherent strength in our strategic position and, in fact, we should be staking everything upon one great battle, in which we should be facing very heavy odds.

CONCLUSIONS

31. We conclude that:-

- (a) If we are to embark on war with Russia, we must be prepared to be committed to a total war, which will be both long and costly.
- (b) Our numerical inferiority in land renders it extremely doubtful whether we could achieve a limited and quick success, even if the political appreciation considered that this would suffice to gain our political object.

(Signed) G. GRANTHAM
 G.S. THOMPSON
 W.L. DAWSON

Offices of the War Cabinet,
 22ND MAY, 1945. S.7.1.

Attached are:-

Annex I - Appreciation of Campaign in Europe	Page 7
Annex II - Russian Strengths and Dispositions	Page 15
Annex III - Allied Strengths and Dispositions	Page 21
Annex IV - German Re-actions	Page 27
Map A - Russian Strengths and Dispositions	
Map B - Allied Strengths and Dispositions	
Map C - Campaign in North East Europe	
Map D - Vulnerable Points on Russian L. of C.	

ANNEX I

APPRECIATION OF CAMPAIGN IN EUROPE

OBJECT

The object of this campaign would be to achieve a quick, though limited, success against the Russians.

FACTORS AFFECTING ALLIED STRATEGY

Use of Air Power

2. In the air, our superiority will, to some extent, be offset by the fact that initially our strategic bomber force must be based in England, even if staging posts are available on the Continent. In view of the vast effort of our air forces and the great distances involved, they cannot be expected to produce the same scale of effort as they did during the war against Germany.
 3. Russian industry is so dispersed that it is unlikely to be a profitable air target. On the other hand, the great length of the Russian communications would appear to offer us far more favourable targets, especially at the important crossings of the water barriers. To achieve any worthwhile results, however, these attacks must be co-ordinated with a land offensive in order to stretch the Russian supply requirements.
 4. An examination of vulnerable points on the Russian L. of C. is attached at Appendix I. These vulnerable points, however, are in the main beyond the range of heavy bombers based in the United Kingdom. If, therefore, these targets are to be attacked, the bomber force must either be deployed to airfields in North West Europe or staging airfields must be used.
 5. The elaborate ground organisation of the bomber force would, however, make it impracticable to move it from the United Kingdom to North West Europe for some months, by which time the opportunity to inflict a quick and decisive blow might well have passed.
- The use of staging airfields, whilst reducing the weight of the attack, might make it possible to develop strong attacks against important targets behind the Russian lines.
6. In considering the employment of our bombers, we must, however, take into account the great numerical superiority of the Russian armies and tactical air forces, that would be deployed against us. This superiority is such that our heavy bombers should in the main be employed to supplement our Tactical Air Forces in giving direct support to our land forces.

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7. The bomber force in the Mediterranean would also be employed in these roles.

Topography

8. Study of the topography and communications of Eastern Europe leads immediately to the conclusion that the main effort on land should be in the north. South of a line approximately Zwickau - Chemnitz - Dresden - Goerlitz, there are few good west-east avenues of advance except the Danube valley, and the generally mountainous nature of the country will limit the possibilities of mobile warfare.

Security of the Left Flank

9. It will be essential to guard against a Russian countermove from the North German ports or from Bornholm to Sweden or Denmark. Our naval superiority in the Baltic would be able to guard against this; nevertheless, it would be wise to aim for the early capture of Stettin. This would appear to indicate that one of the main thrusts should be along the north German coast, assisted by amphibious hooks which would allow us to exploit our superiority in amphibious warfare.

In addition, our naval forces in the Baltic would cut the enemy's sea communications and destroy any part of his Navy which came to sea. Neither of these would have any important effect on the Russian capacity or will to resist.

Logistics

10. In the area now occupied by the Allies, the German communications system has been almost completely destroyed, whereas in that part of Germany occupied by the Russians, destruction has been far less and the railways are working. From the Allied point of view, it is, therefore, in our rear areas that the logistical difficulties will arise.

11. Heavy demands upon troops and resources are likely to be made in order to prevent occupied Germany becoming a liability. It is not possible to forecast how heavy these demands will be. From the logistical point of view, however, provided it is possible to start an offensive at all, it does not seem that administrative considerations need limit the depth of the advance until the change from narrow to broad gauge is reached. The broad gauge on the main routes may now have reached the general line of the Oder. Normal employment of M.T. resources will allow a further radius of action of some 150 miles beyond this line.

Summary

12. Consideration of the above factors leads to the conclusions:-

- (a) That the campaign must be fought primarily on land in North East Europe.

18. North of Belaburg, a strong defensive position is available along the line of the Bohmer Wald Mountains to Zwickau. In view, however, of its length (250 miles) and of the Russian numerical superiority, we consider that a force of some five armoured and twenty infantry divisions will be necessary to ensure the security of this sector of the front.

German Assistance

19. The possibility of German assistance is dealt with in Annex IV where it is estimated that 10 German divisions might be reformed and re-equipped in the early stages. These could not, however, in any event be available by 1st July. Although, therefore, they might be reformed in time to take part in the fighting by the autumn, we have not included them in our calculations.

20. The reforming of any larger German force would be a much longer term project since it would depend on whole-sale re-equipment from Allied sources.

Conclusion on Availability of Forces

21. We, therefore, calculate the availability of Allied forces for offensive operations in the north as follows:-

	<u>Arm. Divs.</u>	<u>Inf. Divs.</u>	<u>Airborne Divs.</u>	<u>Equiv. Divs.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total available					
1st July	20	50	5	8	83
Internal Security	1	5	-	5	11
Defensive	5	20	-	-	25
Available for offensive	14	25	5	3	47

Air Forces

22. Provided that no reductions are made in first line strength, the Allied Tactical Air Forces in North West Europe and the Mediterranean consist of 6,724 first line aircraft. The Bomber Potential consists of 2,464 aircraft, of which 1,840 are based in the United Kingdom and 624 in the Mediterranean.

23. The United States redeployment after 1st June, 1945, is not known. These totals may, therefore, be subject to considerable reduction due to continued redeployment during June, should this occur.

Naval Forces

24. In spite of the restrictions on operations imposed by ice during the winter months, a force of the following order would be required in the Baltic:-

- 2 or 3 Cruisers
- 2 Destroyer Flotillas (including 1 Fleet Flotilla)
- 1 S/M Flotilla (small type)
- 4 M.T.D./M.G.D. Flotillas
- 1 Assault Force.

25. This force would probably have to be based at Brunsbittel with advanced bases on the North German coast, close behind the Army, and in Sweden where Karlskrona (the main Swedish naval base) and Lång Fjord would be suitable.

26. Some of the above forces could be withdrawn from the Home Fleet since the Russian naval threat in the North Sea would be extremely slight but the remainder would have to be provided at the expense of our build up in the Far East.

27. Small naval forces only would be required in Home Waters and the Mediterranean in order to destroy any enemy ships which might venture out of the North Russian ports or through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean.

RUSSIAN STRENGTH AVAILABLE

Land Forces

28. The strength of Russian forces in Europe is examined in Annex II. The total force available amounts to:-

169 Shock Divisions
 347 Ordinary Divisions
 112 Shock Tank Brigades
 141 Ordinary Tank Brigades.

29. It is not possible to foresee what changes in Russian dispositions are likely to have occurred by 1st July. It must be assumed, however, in view of the necessity of bringing Allied public opinion to a point at which war with Russia will be accepted, that any attack will not come as a complete surprise. They will probably appreciate that any attack we may launch is likely to be in the north.

30. The Russians may have a considerable internal security commitment in Poland. The vast majority of Poles are believed to be violently anti-Russian; even the Berling Army, which now amounts to ten divisions, could not be relied upon to support the Russians or even to remain neutral.

31. Even making some allowance for this, however, we must reckon that our offensive will be faced by the strength of the following Russian Army Groups:-

2nd Baltic
 1st Baltic and 3rd Belorussian
 2nd Belorussian
 1st Belorussian
 1st Ukrainian

32. These Army Groups comprise a total of:-

100 Shock Divisions
 220 Ordinary Divisions
 86 Shock Tank Brigades
 71 Ordinary Tank Brigades.

See also Map 'A'.

33. As a rough guide, it is estimated that these represent the equivalent in Allied formations of:-

140 Infantry Divisions
30 Armoured Divisions
24 Tank Brigades.

Air Forces

34. The Russian Army Air Force in the West consists of some 14,600 aircraft of which 9,380 are fighters and ground attack aircraft and 3,380 are bombers of unspecified type, although some 1,000 of them constitute a heavy bomber force.

35. There are also nearly 2,000 miscellaneous or unidentified types, 800 of which are in the Russian Naval Air Arm.

PROBABLE RUSSIAN STRATEGY

36. In the opening stages, Russian strategy is likely to be defensive. If they have had adequate warning, they may have stiffened up their forward positions in order to hold us on the line of contact. In view of the great numerical superiority of force which they will possess, they may well be able to prevent any advance by our forces. The bulk of their armoured forces is likely to be held well in rear to act as a strategic reserve and to be ready to counter-attack should we be able to effect a breakthrough. If this occurs, the Russian strategy may be to offer "cushion" resistance back to the Oder - Neisse line with the object of engaging the main armoured battle in the areas east of these rivers.

They will be under no necessity to make a parallel withdrawal from Bohemia and Moravia and should they decide to retain their hold on these areas, supported as they are likely to be by the Czechs, the further we advance the more awkward will this salient in our line become.

37. In the opening stages of the land campaign, the Russian Air Force is likely to be used mainly in providing direct support to their land forces. It is probable that the Russian Long Range Bomber Force would also be employed in this role as it has so far proved ineffective when employed strategically.

38. The Russians are likely to attempt extensive sabotage activities on Allied lines of communication, especially in France, Belgium, Holland and to a lesser extent in Germany. The normal method will probably be the employment of local Communists strengthened by infiltration of Russians specially selected from those repatriated after spending some time in the areas concerned as prisoners or forced labourers.

Outline of Campaign (See Map C)

39. The Russian superiority of land forces clearly makes the launching of any offensive a hazardous operation. If however it were decided to launch such an offensive on the grounds that we might effect a very considerable measure of surprise and thus catch the Russians off their balance, the factors outlined above lead to the conception that there might be two main thrusts carried out by two Army Groups as follows:-

Northern - on the axis Stettin - Schneidemuhl - Bydgoszcz.

Southern - on the axis Leipzig - Cottbus - Poznan and Breslau.

40. The first objective might be the line of the Oder and Neisse. This might be followed by a further advance to the general line Danzig - Breslau. How far, however, it would be possible to advance east of the Oder - Neisse line would depend upon the result of the main armoured fighting which as shown above, would probably develop at this stage, i.e. in the area Schneidemuhl - Bydgoszcz - Breslau - Glogau.

41. Account must be taken of the fact that unless the Russians withdraw from Bohemia and Moravia, the deeper any advance is pushed, the longer will be the southern flank which we should have to watch. Owing to the south-easterly trend of the mountains from Gorlitz eastwards moreover the length of front will increase as the advance proceeds.

42. If, therefore, by the autumn we have reached the line Danzig - Breslau and hostilities are still in progress, we may find ourselves in a difficult position, faced with the prospect either of pushing on with lengthening communications hampered by bad weather, or holding during the East European winter a front too long for the forces available. If an advance beyond this line is necessary, it appears that we shall, in effect, be committed to a total war and that in order to fulfil the hypothesis on which this appreciation is based, we must win west of the general line Danzig - Breslau a victory sufficient to cause Russia to submit to our terms.

CONCLUSIONS

43. We, therefore, conclude that:-

- (a) The campaign would take the form primarily of land operations in North East Europe.
- (b) Air action would take the form primarily of direct support of the land operations. We should be able to inflict a severe defeat upon the Russian Air Force and seriously interfere with Russian rail communications in rear of their front.

- (c) We should have virtually complete naval superiority in the Baltic and should be able to prevent any Russian move to Sweden or Denmark.
- (d) The main land operations would take the form of an Allied offensive north of the line Zwickau - Chemnitz - Dresden - Goerlitz, the remainder of the front being held defensively.
- (e) The forces which we could make available for an offensive would depend to a great extent upon the diversion necessary to ensure that the Allied L. of C. through the devastated areas of Germany will work.
 In the area given in (d) above, however, it appears likely that we should be facing odds of the order of two to one in armour and four to one in infantry.
- (f) Such odds clearly render any offensive a hazardous undertaking.
- (g) If, on the grounds that we could achieve surprise and throw the Russians off their balance, an advance eastwards is considered possible, the result would depend upon the outcome of the main armoured fighting which would probably develop east of the Oder - Neisse line. Superior handling, and air superiority might enable us to win this battle, but there is no inherent strength in our strategic position and we should, in fact, be staking everything upon the tactical outcome of one great engagement.
- (h) Any advance beyond the general line Danzig - Breslau may lead us into formidable difficulties if hostilities continue. In fact, it seems that if we have not won the victory we require west of this line, we shall be committed to a total war.

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ANNEX II

RUSSIAN STRENGTHS AND DISPOSITIONS

ECONOMIC

1. Russia is at present producing a vast flow of war material for her land and air forces. The bulk of these are transported to the Armies along lengthy and tenuous lines of communication which would be particularly vulnerable to air attack.
2. Her war potential will have been substantially increased during the first half of 1945 by the industrial resources and raw materials of the territories which she has overrun, especially Upper Silesia. These territories are now being reorganised by the Russians and much of the industrial equipment is reported to be in the course of being dismantled and transferred to Russia. Therefore the Russians will not benefit immediately by the acquisition of these resources and they will not adequately replace the loss of Allied supplies. On the other hand, the Russian Armed Forces would derive some immediate benefit from the capture of German equipment - especially M.T. and anti-tank weapons.
3. The finished war products for which she relies most extensively on Allied supplies are M.T. and high grade aviation spirit of which imports account for about half her supplies. To maintain the flow of her own war production at its present rate, Russia is at present dependent to a considerable extent on Allied supplies, particularly of explosives, rubber, aluminium, copper, magnesium and some ferro-alloys. Even when she lost these supplies, however, it cannot be said with assurance that Russia, with the aid of her spoils of war, would be unable, if she chose, to continue war with undiminished overall efficacy for a period of some months. The specific fields in which the loss would be most felt would be in aircraft performance, military transport, and in explosives.
4. Russia would probably manage to maintain her present ration levels without Allied food supplies, even if necessary by exacting heavy contributions from all the areas which she occupies in Europe.
5. Russia will be faced with a very considerable task in fully restoring her lines of communication by 1st July. The vast majority of bridges will still be temporary wooden structures and she will not have been able to re-gauge and restore the rail net-work west of the Vistula, except, perhaps, the main lines running from East to West. These will be vulnerable to air attack.

She will suffer from an increasing shortage of locomotives and motor vehicles due to wear and tear and air attacks. This will be intensified by the long haul required from the main industrial regions in the Urals and east of Moscow.

The Russians will not be faced with shortage of manpower for work inside Russia owing to their return of prisoners of war and displaced personnel and the wholesale conscription of manpower in occupied territory.

RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES (See Map A and Appendices I and II)

ARMY

6. After allowing for total permanent casualties in the present war estimated at between ten and eleven millions, the total mobilised strength of the Russian land forces on 1st July will probably be just over 7,000,000 men. Over 6,000,000 of these are estimated to be in the European theatre of operations. In addition, there will be some 600,000 Special Security (NKVD) troops. The Russian Army has developed a capable and experienced High Command. The Army is exceedingly tough, lives and moves on a lighter scale of maintenance than any Western Army and employs bold tactics based largely on disregard for losses in attaining a set objective. Security and deception are of a high quality at all levels. Equipment has improved rapidly throughout the war and is now good. Enough is known of its development to say that it is certainly not inferior to that of other great powers. The facilities the Russians have shown in the development and improvement of existing weapons and equipment and in their mass production has been very striking. There are known instances of the Germans copying basic features of Russian armament. There has been a marked improvement during the war in such matters as wireless communications and in the technique of river crossings, recovery of A.F.V.'s and the restoration of rail communications. Russian engineer training is of a high standard.

7. On the other hand, the Russian Army is now suffering from heavy casualties and war-weariness. The standard of tactics and training is, on the whole, lower than that of the German Army. Due to the comparatively low standard of general education in the Red Army, the Russians have been forced to reserve their best manpower for specialist arms: i.e. the Air Force, Armoured Troops, artillery and engineers. This has left their infantry greatly deficient in the type of soldier who could be trained to any standard comparable to the infantry of a Western Power. There is a marked shortage of well-educated and trained Staff Officers and intermediate commanders, which inevitably results in over-centralisation. There is widespread evidence that the Russian Command is finding considerable difficulty in maintaining discipline in the Russian Army abroad. Looting and drunkenness are prevalent and are symptoms of a war-weary army in contact with higher material standards than obtain at home. Any renewal of war in Europe would prove a severe strain on the Red Army. Their troops would be fighting outside Russia and the High Command might have difficulty in maintaining the morale of the rank and file, particularly in the low grade infantry formations. This effect would be increased by the effective application of Allied propaganda.

Air Force

8. The morale of the Russian Air Force is considered to be high. Their pilots are always reasonably competent, sometimes brilliant, and they have vast experience in short range tactical operations in support of the Army. It must be borne in mind that they have long enjoyed numerical superiority over the Germans. They are not nearly as well trained or disciplined as the Allied Air Forces.

9. The Russian Air Force has a total first line strength of 16,500 operative aircraft comprising four arms:-

The Army Air Force of over 14,000 aircraft equipped to give close support to the Army's ground operations. Defence against enemy air attack is a secondary consideration.

The Naval Air Force - This force of over 1,100 aircraft corresponds, in its relations with the Russian Fleets, more to Coastal Command and the minelaying branch of Bomber Command, than to our Fleet Air Arm. It has been concerned primarily with anti-submarine operations.

The Long Range Bomber Force consists of about 1,000 aircraft. It has so far proved ineffective in a strategic role.

The Fighter Defence Force - This force of some 300 aircraft is allotted the duty of defence of important targets in the rear areas. There are additional fighter defence aircraft included in the fighter strength of the Air Armies. The aircraft allotted for the defence of important targets can have had little experience in target defence.

10. Russian aircraft are of modern type and adequate for their task. They are, however, generally inferior to Allied types. The Russian Air Force is neither organised nor equipped to oppose a modern day or night force of long range bombers, to combat a modern day fighter force or to operate in a strategic role. In particular, Russian radar technique is believed to be much below Western standards.

11. Aircraft production has increased. A monthly output of 3,000 aircraft has been attained. This production was able to meet wastage on the scale suffered against Germany. When, however, aluminium from Allied sources is denied them and if, as is confidently expected, the Allies inflict heavy losses on them, their production will be totally inadequate to meet the demands made upon it.

12. Russia depends upon the Allies for nearly 30% of her aviation fuel. She is unlikely to obtain substantial quantities from former German plants in under six months.

Navy

13. The small Russian Navy is neither a modern nor efficient weapon of war and it is clearly not within the competence of the various fleets to show any initiative in a war at sea under modern conditions. The equipment is largely old, the standard of education and training of personnel is low. Officers and men are ignorant of modern developments in naval warfare, particularly as regards air-sea co-operation. Warship building yards at Leningrad have suffered from damage and those in the Black Sea from complete destruction.

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APPENDIX I TO ANNEX II

STRENGTH OF RED ARMY (exclusive of satellite armies)

Fronts or Areas	Armies		Divisions		Tank Brigades	
	Shock	Ordinary	Shock	Ordinary	Shock	Ordinary
Finland and Norway	-	3	-	9	-	1
Leningrad and 3rd Baltic	-	3	1	15	1	12
2nd Baltic	3	4	19	40	7	17
1st Baltic	3	8	25	54	9	19
3rd Belorussian	2	5	16	40	20	12
2nd Belorussian	5	5	16	50	31	13
1st Belorussian	4	4	24	36	21	10
1st Ukrainian	1	3	12	32	3	2
4th Ukrainian	3	4	32	28	7	21
2nd Ukrainian	1	4	19	36	7	6
3rd Ukrainian	-	1	5	15	6	29
War Zone (Unlocated)	-	1	-	11	-	1
S. Caucasus and Iran	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total in West	22	45	169	366	112	143
Far East	7	-	36	-	13	-
GRAND TOTAL	29	45	205	366	125	143

74 Armies 571 Divisions 268 Tank Brigades

Equivalent Value in Terms of Allied Divisions

Fronts or Areas	Infantry/Cavalry Divisions	Armoured Divisions	Army Tank Brigades
Western Europe, S. Caucasus and Iran	235	36	47
Far East	24	4	-
GRAND TOTAL	259	40	47

APPENDIX I TO AIDEX-IX

STRENGTH OF RED ARMY
(exclusive of satellite armies)

Fronts or Areas	Armies		Divisions		Tank Brigades	
	Shock	Ordinary	Shock	Ordinary	Shock	Ordinary
Finland and Norway	-	3	-	9	-	1
Leningrad and 3rd Baltic	-	3	1	15	1	12
2nd Baltic	3	4	19	40	7	17
1st Baltic	3	8	25	54	9	19
3rd Belorussian	2	5	16	40	20	12
2nd Belorussian	5	5	16	50	31	13
1st Belorussian	4	4	24	36	21	10
1st Ukrainian	1	3	12	32	3	2
4th Ukrainian	3	4	32	28	7	21
2nd Ukrainian	1	4	19	36	7	6
3rd Ukrainian	-	1	5	15	6	29
War Zone (Unlocated)	-	1	-	11	-	1
S. Caucasus and Iran	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total in West	22	45	169	366	112	143
Far East	7	-	36	-	13	-
GRAND TOTAL	29	45	205	366	125	143

74 Armies 571 Divisions 268 Tank Brigades

Equivalent Value in Terms of Allied Divisions

Fronts or Areas	Infantry/Cavalry Divisions	Armoured Divisions	Army Tank Brigades
Western Europe, S. Caucasus and Iran	235	36	47
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TOP SECRET

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

PRIME MINISTER

In the attached report on Operation 'UNTHINKABLE', the Chiefs of Staff have set out the bare facts, which they can elaborate in discussion with you, if you so desire. They felt that the less was put on paper on this subject the better.

H. L. Ismer

8th June, 1945

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TOP SECRET.

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

PRIME MINISTER.

In accordance with your instructions, we have considered our potential ability to exert pressure on Russia by the threat or use of force. We have confined ourselves in what follows to the barest outline of facts and figures. We could amplify these in discussion if you so desire.

2. The relative strengths of Russian and Allied forces in Europe can briefly be summarised as follows :-

(a) Land Forces

The Russian division is not comparable in establishment with an Allied division. We have, therefore, translated the figures for Russian divisions into divisions equivalent to ours. The following is our estimate of the total forces in Europe on 1st July:-

	<u>Allies</u>		<u>Russian</u>
U.S.	64 divisions		
British and Dominion	35 divisions		
Polish	4 divisions		
<u>Total</u>	103 divisions (including 23 armoured)	<u>Total</u>	264 divisions (including 36 armoured)

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(b) Air Forces

	<u>Allies</u>		<u>Russian</u>	
	<u>Tactical</u>	<u>Strategical</u>	<u>Tactical</u>	<u>Strategical</u>
U.S.	3480 a/c	1008 a/c		
British & Dominion	2370 a/c	1722 a/c		
Polish	198 a/c	20 a/c		
<u>Total</u>	6048 a/c	2750 a/c	11802 a/c	960 a/c

The preponderance in numbers of Russian aircraft would for a time be off-set by the vastly superior handling and efficiency of the Allied Air Forces, especially the Strategic Air Forces. After a period of operations, however, our lack of replacement aircraft and air crews would seriously impair our air strength.

(c) Naval Forces.

The Allies could, of course, achieve dominating superiority at sea.

3. It is clear from the relative strength of the respective land forces that we are not in a position to take the offensive with a view to achieving a rapid success. Since, however, Russian and Allied land forces are in contact from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, we are bound to become

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OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

involved in land operations. In support of our land forces we should have our technically superior, but numerically inferior, Tactical Air Forces. As regards Strategic Air Forces, our superiority in numbers and technique would be to some extent discounted by the absence of strategical targets compared with those which existed in Germany, and the necessity for using these Strategic Air Forces to supplement our Tactical Air Forces in support of land operations.

4. Our view is, therefore, that once hostilities began, it would be beyond our power to win a quick but limited success and we should be committed to a protracted war against heavy odds. These odds, moreover, would become fanciful if the Americans grew weary and indifferent and began to be drawn away by the magnet of the Pacific war.

(Signed) A.F. BROOKE
ANDREW CUNNINGHAM
D.C.S. EVILL
(For C.A.S.)

8TH JUNE, 1945.

Ref.:

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Office of the
Minister of Defence

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

I submit for your
approval a draft minute to
the Chiefs of Staff about
"UNTHINKABLE".

L. Attolins

9th JUNE, 1945

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E.R.

GENERAL ISMAY
C.O.S. COMMITTEE

I have read the Chiefs of Staff note on "UNTHINKABLE" dated 8th June, which shows Russian preponderance of 2-1 on land.

2. If the Americans withdraw to their zone and move the bulk of their forces back to the United States and to the Pacific, the Russians have the power to advance to the North Sea and the Atlantic. Pray have a study made of how then we could defend our Island, assuming that France and the Low Countries were powerless to resist the Russian advance to the sea. What Naval forces should we need and where would they be based? What would be the strength of the Army required, and how should it be disposed? How much Air Force would be needed and where would the main airfields be located? Possession of airfields in Denmark would give us great advantage and keep open the sea passage to the Baltic where the Navy could operate. The possession of bridgeheads in the Low Countries or France should also be considered.

3. By retaining the codeword "UNTHINKABLE", the Staffs will realise that this remains a precautionary study of what, I hope, is still a purely hypothetical contingency.

(Intld) W.S.C.

10.6.45

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E.R.

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

PRIME MINISTER

In accordance with your instructions, we have considered our potential ability to exert pressure on Russia by the threat or use of force. We have confined ourselves in what follows to the barest outline of facts and figures. We could amplify these in discussion if you so desire.

2. The relative strengths of Russian and Allied forces in Europe can briefly be summarised as follows:-

(a) Land Forces

The Russian division is not comparable in establishment with an Allied invasion. We have, therefore, translated the figures for Russian divisions into divisions equivalent to ours. The following is our estimate of the total forces in Europe on 1st July:-

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Polish	4 divisions	
<u>Total</u>	103 divisions (including 23 armoured)	<u>Total</u> 264 divisions (including 36 armoured)

(b) Air Forces

	<u>Allies</u>		<u>Russian</u>	
	<u>Tactical</u>	<u>Strategical</u>	<u>Tactical</u>	<u>Strategical</u>
U.S.	3480 a/c	1008 a/c		
British & Dominion	2370 a/c	1722 a/c		
Polish	198 a/c	20 a/c		
<u>Total</u>	6048 a/c	2750 a/c	11802 a/c	960 a/c

The preponderance in numbers of Russian aircraft would for a time be off-set by the vastly superior handling and efficiency of the Allied Air Forces, especially the Strategic Air Forces. After a period of operations, however, our lack of replacement aircraft and air crews would seriously impair our air strength.

(c) Naval Forces

The Allies could, of course, achieve dominating superiority at sea.

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E.R.

3. It is clear from the relative strength of the respective land forces that we are not in a position to take the offensive with a view to achieving a rapid success. Since, however, Russian and Allied land forces are in contact from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, we are bound to become involved in land operations. In support of our land forces we should have our technically superior, but numerically inferior, Tactical Air Forces. As regards Strategic Air Forces, our superiority in numbers and technique would be to some extent discounted by the absence of strategical targets compared with those which existed in Germany, and the necessity for using these Strategic Air Forces to supplement our Tactical Air Forces in support of Land operations.

4. Our view is, therefore, that once hostilities began, it would be beyond our power to win a quick but limited success and we should be committed to a protracted war against heavy odds. These odds, moreover, would become fanciful if the Americans grew weary and indifferent and began to be drawn away by the magnet of the Pacific war.

(Signed) A.F. BROOKE
ANDREW CUNNINGHAM
D.C.S. EVILL
(For C.A.S.)

8TH JUNE, 1945.

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Final

11th July, 1945.

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

JOINT PLANNING STAFF

OPERATION "UNTHINKABLE"

Report by the Joint Planning Staff

As instructed, we have examined a Minute from the Prime Minister dated 10th June, 1945, concerning Operation UNTHINKABLE.

2. We attach at Annex a short appreciation which we recommend the Chiefs of Staff should forward to the Prime Minister in answer to his Minute.

3. Owing to the special need for secrecy, the normal staffs in Service Ministries have not been consulted.

(Signed) G. GRANTHAM

G.S. THOMPSON

W.L. DAWSON

Offices of the Cabinet and
Minister of Defence, S.W.1.

11th July, 1945.

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ANNEX

DRAFT MINUTE TO THE PRIME MINISTER

OBJECT

In accordance with the instructions in your minute dated 10th June, we have considered what measures would be required to ensure the security of the British Isles in the event of war with Russia in the near future.

FORMS OF ATTACK

2. The following are the main methods by which the Russians might attempt to attack the British Isles after they had reached the shores of the North Sea and Atlantic:-

- (a) By cutting our sea communications.
- (b) By invasion.
- (c) By air attack.
- (d) By rocket or other new methods.

Attack on Sea Communications

3. The Russians would be unable to develop, either by submarine or air attack, any immediate threat to our sea communications which would be comparable to that exerted by Germany.

It would certainly take them a period of years to develop a submarine fleet or a maritime air force capable of producing a decisive threat to our sea communications, even though Germany provided the Russians with production facilities and technical advice for the construction of submarines.

Invasion

4. In planning an invasion either by sea or air, the Russians will be greatly handicapped by lack of experience in this form of warfare. Provided, therefore, that we have not unduly reduced our defence forces, it is probable that the Russians would only attempt an invasion when they could employ very large forces, of which they would hope that a proportion would get ashore in the British Isles.

We rule out the practicability of decisive invasion by airborne operations alone.

In mounting a large scale seaborne operation, the Russians would be faced with the considerable task of constructing a large amphibious fleet and training their personnel in a new method of warfare. Their lack of a Merchant Navy would add to their difficulties, particularly as we should presumably have withdrawn or destroyed all merchant shipping in the western ports of Europe.

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We cannot rule out the eventual possibility of an invasion, but it would clearly be a matter of years before the Russians could build up the necessary amphibious forces and Merchant Navy to give them even a slight chance of success against proper defensive measures.

Air Attack

5. The Russian Air Force as at present constituted is predominantly designed as an integral part of the Russian Army and is, therefore, trained and equipped chiefly to give close tactical support to the ground forces. It is, however, possible that the Russian Air Force would attempt to attack all types of important target in the United Kingdom with its existing equipment and without regard to lack of experience beyond the close support role. By virtue of numbers alone it would constitute a threat to this country that would require energetic counter-measures.

It is considered, however, that our Air Forces should be able to inflict such losses on the Russian Air Force as to prevent it from achieving any decisive results.

New Developments - The Rocket and Pilotless Aircraft

6. The Russians are likely to make full use of new weapons, such as the rocket and pilotless aircraft. They are fully aware of the capabilities of these weapons, relevant developments and technical data.

The Russians are, therefore, likely to begin large scale production of these weapons at an early date. We must expect a far heavier scale of attack than the Germans were able to develop, and we do not at present see any method of effectively reducing this.

This would be the main threat over the considerable period which must elapse before the Russians can contemplate any attempt at invasion.

RETENTION OF BRIDGEHEADS ON THE CONTINENT

7. The desirability of retaining bridgeheads on the continent has been considered, particularly with a view to reducing the danger from rockets and other long range weapons.

In view of the Russian numerical superiority on land, there can be no question of holding a continuous continental front. Any bridgeheads would, therefore, have to be selected so as to enclose a comparatively large area, but be defensible by relatively small forces. Areas which might be considered are:-

Denmark
Western Holland
Havre
Cherbourg Peninsula
Brittany Peninsula.

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Such bridgeheads would, however, offer the enemy a well defined, compact target. Their defence would, therefore, impose a heavy and continuous drain on our resources. In return for this we should not gain any appreciable compensating advantage since:-

- (a) The range of the present rocket would necessitate the holding of a continuous front well into France and the Low Countries, if the scale of attack by this method is to be seriously affected.
- (b) If used as bases for a return to the continent, we should be sacrificing surprise and would enable the enemy to build up against us at leisure.
- (c) Except in the case of Denmark, use of which is limited by lack of harbours on the north and west coasts, the air forces we could station in the bridgehead would be little greater than those required to support the troops defending it.

We do not, therefore, consider that there would be an operational advantage in retaining bridgeheads on the continent.

DISPOSITIONS FOR DEFENCE

8. Although in the initial stages invasion appears to us extremely improbable, we have thought it right to set out what we consider should be the dispositions of our forces in the initial period after the Russians have reached the Western Coast of Europe. We clearly cannot disregard the threat represented by an enemy in possession of the coasts of France and the Low Countries and it will be necessary to guard against raids and possible airborne landings.

We should rely primarily on naval and air action to prevent the invasion of the British Isles, but sufficient mobile land formations would also be necessary to ensure the defeat of any enemy bodies which might land. It would also be wise to provide garrisons for the more important urban, industrial and port areas.

On this basis, we estimate that the broad composition and distribution of our forces in the British Isles should be as follows:-

Naval Forces

Our essential security requirements should be met by local naval forces on the south and east coasts backed by a Home Fleet in Northern Waters. Forces of the following order appear necessary:-

Home Fleet - 2 battleships, 4 cruisers, 3 destroyer flotillas, 3 submarine flotillas.

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East Coast - 3 destroyer flotillas, 6 flotillas
MTB/MOB.

South Coast - 2 cruisers, 3 destroyer flotillas,
6 flotillas MTB/MOB.

Convoy escorts may be required at a later date,
depending on how the Russian threat develops.

Air Forces

The Russians would not be able to develop a major air threat to this country immediately after their arrival in Western Europe. In the initial stages we estimate that by concentrating the British and American garrison squadrons from Europe in the United Kingdom, we could defend this country adequately. In order to maintain the R.A.F. contingent at war time wastage rates, it would be necessary to stop the flow of R.A.F. aircraft and crews to the Far East.

In order to take the offensive in the air, to reduce the threat from rockets, etc., and to guard against a mounting Russian air threat, we consider that we should aim to build up as quickly as possible to Anglo-American air forces of the following order (approximately what we had at the end of the German war):-

Day and Night Fighters	230 squadrons
Tactical Bombers	100 squadrons
Heavy Bombers	200 squadrons

Land Forces

Some 20 divisions would have to be built up as soon as possible. The main body of this force, including the majority of the armoured formations, would be located south of a line Wash - Severn with the highest concentration in the south-east.

AVAILABILITY OF FORCES

9. There will be no difficulty in providing the naval forces required, though this would entail some withdrawals from foreign stations.

In so far as land forces are concerned, the manpower provided by the British and United States forces at present in this country and Western Europe should be sufficient. It must, however, be anticipated that, in the process of withdrawal from the continent considerable losses of equipment will occur; and we should, therefore, withdraw from the continent as much heavy equipment as possible as soon as war with Russia appears imminent. Moreover, we should have to maintain from now onwards production capacity necessary for forces of the size given above.

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UNTHINKABLE

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4-2/48/11

TOP SECRET CYPHER TELEGRAM

RECEIVED BY O.T.P.

Prime Minister
Secretary
Adm. Secy. Cabinet
Deputy Secy. Military
Secy. C.O.S.
General Jacob
Asst. Secy. C.O.S.
Secy. J.E.S.
Secy. J.C.
C.O.S. Section C.
Under Secy. Overseas
Australian Liaison Officer
Dominion Liaison Officer
Secy. P.A.O.C.
Secy. I.C.C. & Conscription
Miss Murray
Cypher Security Officer
P.M. File

IZ 3952.
TOO 302359Z.
TOR 310645Z.

IMMEDIATE

FROM : J.S.M. WASHINGTON.

TO : CABINET OFFICES.

FMW. 271.

30th August, 1946.

Private and Eyes Only for General Ismay for Chiefs of Staff from Field Marshal Wilson.

Reference COS(W) 364.

1. We had lunch with the United States Chiefs of Staff today and a very frank and informal discussion afterwards.

2. The United States Chiefs of Staff felt strongly that the state of affairs in Europe had reached a stage when the uncontrollable developments of events arising from some local incident might grow into a major conflict however unwilling Russia or ourselves might be to become involved and that it would be reprehensible if we did not start immediately to prepare an appreciation of the broad European situation as opposed to the local situation regarding Venezia Giulia. This appreciation would be with the object of uncovering the many diverse problems which would inevitably lead to the production of an inter-Allied plan to be used in the event of aggression by Russia.

3. Their thinking agrees with ours in that any reinforcements despatched to stabilise an attack in the Venezia Giulia area would no doubt arrive in that area too late to be of use in the preliminary stages, as at that time the conflagration would have ceased to be local and would probably have spread to central Europe. Therefore, any reinforcement plans would have to be based on the possibility of their being utilised in any area to support operations which might grow out of a local act of aggression.

4. Assuming that an attack in the Venezia Giulia area would rapidly develop into a general conflict in Europe, with Russia as main aggressor, it was apparent that planning should cover two phases (A) stabilisation of the situation and formation of a bridgehead (B) offensive operations to readjust the situation.

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-2-

5. Regarding (A) the United States Chiefs of Staff stressed that the opening phase would have to take the form of a withdrawal from our respective zones of occupation into a bridgehead. General Eisenhower discussed possible areas but appeared to favour one comprising the low countries. He gave the following obvious main reasons why retention of a foothold in the low countries would be preferable to withdrawal from central Europe into Italy or elsewhere.

(i) Provision of air cover and air striking forces based in the U.K.

(ii) Short lines of communication with our bases in the U.K.

(iii) Denial of a possible area of operation for so-called V or other novel weapons against the U.K.

Whether the low countries were decided upon or not it was essential to agree between us in the first instance where a bridgehead was to be held and to coordinate an overall plan for a strategic withdrawal to that area.

6. With regard to (B) little was said except Eisenhower stressed that any plan to readjust the situation must be self-contained and must not involve us in reinforcing an area where there will already undoubtedly be considerable disorganisation. As an instance of the detailed points requiring consideration in the later stages of planning arising out of the problems which the overall appreciation would uncover Spaatz instanced the existing restrictiveness of air strips in the U.K. from which to operate B-29 squadrons, and the Naval representative raised the question of the necessity for the reoccupation of Iceland.

7. At the conclusion of our discussion on the lines given above we were told that the United States planners would be instructed to commence preparing an overall appreciation immediately. They proposed all future discussion to be restricted to a Chiefs of Staff and Planners level, with the possible exception of the incorporation of a Ministry of Transport planner. On no account at this stage should discussions be permitted outside this level on either side of the Atlantic and the absolute minimum should be committed to paper. When an outline plan of action had crystallised from the overall appreciation our respective Commanders-in-Chief designate in Europe and their Chiefs of Staff should then be brought in. The Americans are anxious to agree on the command organisation to be set up for the various fronts which operations might cover and that their composition should be considered at an early date.

8. We put your views in paragraphs 7 and 8 of COS(W) 364 to the United States Chiefs of Staff and they were most emphatic that the United States Government would not be

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-3-

prepared, owing to the political aspect, to issue such a statement now or in the near future.

9. We had the impression the United States Chiefs of Staff feeling was that the Venezia Giulia or any other localised problem was ~~not~~ an integral part of the overall European problem; but only supplementary to it.

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