

The Great De-Escalator:
FDR's Conflict Management Strategies As Commander In Chief and Their Impact on the
FDR-Churchill Alliance in World War II

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Introduction

The two figures are by now iconic and have been for decades. One is the affable, optimistic, and larger than life-yet fierce and potentially brutal-bespectacled American president. The other is the short, rotund, and balding British Prime Minister whose appearance belied a dogged determination and a steadfast strength that would rival any bulldog or pit bull. They are, of course, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Photographs of the two men, individually and together, have been reprinted more often than dollar bills, and caricatures based on their images are nearly as common as the cold. The literature that pervades the academic world as to the relationship that existed between the two men nearly all paints the picture of a strong friendship that was formed out of pure necessity but cemented by time and circumstances and built solidly on the collective foundations of trust, admiration, and mutual respect. That picture is certainly not inaccurate. However, there is a side to their wartime relationship that has largely been ignored, or at best has received only the most cursory of glances from the eyes of history.

On the contrary, the alliance that evolved between the two men was not always as peaceful or as consistent as much of the literature might lead one to believe. The two leaders differed radically with regard to their views on colonialism and imperialism, and those differences of opinion often resulted in potential rifts between the Allies. Other areas of frequent contention included the value of peripheral and ancillary operations in the Mediterranean and the inevitability of a full-on cross-Channel invasion of massive proportions as the primary strategy for ending the war in the European Theater as soon as possible. Had it not been for Roosevelt's great skill in keeping Churchill at the table during these crucial times, the course of WWII could have been very different, and with it the fate of FDR's vision for the post-war world. Nigel Hamilton quite sagely explores and illuminates some of the major fractures between Roosevelt and Churchill, particularly in his book *Commander In Chief: FDR's Battle with*

Churchill, 1943.¹ Other authors and historians have also tackled the subject, and have done so with great skill. What is missing from the literature is an in-depth study of the techniques that FDR employed in his effort(s) to maintain the status quo with Churchill. The following three chapters are an attempt at creating just such a study. All three chapters will place beneath the proverbial microscope the methods with which FDR managed to keep Churchill in line during moments when matters could very easily have gone far off course. The backdrop common to the trifecta is D-Day, alternately referred to in this text as “OVERLORD” or simply “a cross-Channel invasion”.

Churchill dreaded the idea of a cross-Channel invasion, due in no small part to his blunder at Gallipoli during WWI. His fear manifested itself during the early stages of American and British cooperation in the form of what might be thought of as stall tactics, or more specifically the advocating of ancillary and peripheral offensives throughout the Mediterranean. The Prime Minister always put forth sound tactical reasons for these suggestions, but his primary incentive was always the same. In short, he hoped that these alternative offensives would bring about an end to the war by virtue of attrition, thereby negating any need for a cross-Channel invasion. Churchill’s behavior in this regard is most clearly visible in the aftermath of the Casablanca Conference and during the TRIDENT Conference several months later. Both events are explored in the first chapter of this text. The second chapter focuses on the first conference at Quebec. By the time that conference took place, the inevitability of D-Day was in many ways a foregone conclusion. It was, however, still a major factor at Quebec, as the American Chiefs of Staff came to Canada to insist on British agreement to a U.S. memorandum stating that D-Day would henceforth enjoy overriding priority status in the European Theater. The British were not prepared to acquiesce to such an agreement, and Roosevelt was faced with a very difficult choice. The third and final chapter is given over to an analysis of the conference at Tehran. That particular conference, the first one attended by all three Allied leaders, saw Roosevelt playing the role of a referee

¹ Hamilton, Nigel. *Commander in Chief: FDR’s Battle with Churchill, 1943*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016.

between Churchill and Stalin. A cross-Channel invasion was still inevitable, but the theme of D-Day served as an undercurrent as the President quite masterfully avoided what could have been a PR disaster and the death knell for his post-war goals. FDR's tactics in all three chapters are indirect, non-confrontational, and in many ways passive, yet still deliberate, calculated, and in many ways brilliant. To understand Roosevelt's strategies, a prerequisite understanding must also exist as to who FDR and Churchill really were, what they believed in, what type of relationship they had during the war, and what type of relationship the President desired to have with the Prime Minister after the war ended.

The fall of 1939 saw the invasion of Poland by Hitler and the Wehrmacht. The act was a blatant and direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles (which had brought about the end of World War I), and it meant that Great Britain was treaty-bound to come to Poland's defense. That effort at first appeared to be doomed. The once great and mighty nation of Great Britain had adopted a more localized, almost isolationist stance in the years since World War I, choosing to focus inward and direct both its energy and its financing toward the growth and subsequent maintenance of its own economy. Very little was spent on the military or on defense in general, and even less was spent on enhancements or innovations to its existing army, navy, and air force. Some of this reluctance was due to the unshakeable belief of the British people in their own invincibility. Some was due to a very real and powerful pacifist strain that had appeared in Great Britain in the years since 1919. One of the biggest factors, however, was the Treaty of Versailles, its arms limitations, and its promises of gradual disarmament. The British people supported the treaty so fervently that they feared an increase in their own arms would signal to the rest of the world that they had lost faith in the agreements that were made at Versailles. Considering the fact that Great Britain had been one of the victors in the aftermath of World War I, and therefore was not obligated in the same way to the demands for disarmament that served as an albatross around the necks of vanquished countries such as Germany, their attitude toward arms reduction and their commitment to peace were indeed admirable.

The problem, of course, was that Hitler and the Nazis were not at all committed to either disarmament or world peace, but rather to an arms build-up and to world domination. Germany had been secretly rebuilding its military for years, and its Wehrmacht had evolved into one of the most fearsome and brutal fighting forces in the history of modern warfare. The British were simply no match, not in spirit, arms, or ability. Though proud and stiff-necked, Churchill had no choice but to look to America and to Franklin Roosevelt for support. The support he was hoping for, of course, was America's official entry into the war. Unfortunately for both men, America was even more isolationist than the British had been in the lead-up to their own participation in World War II. Faced with both an electorate and a congress determined to avoid any trace of American involvement in another European conflict, the best that Roosevelt could do for the time being was the Lend-Lease Program, which made a much bigger difference for the good than Churchill was inclined to give it credit for publicly. Regardless of the extent to which America and FDR's hesitation and reluctance frustrated and often enraged Churchill, he had no choice but to take what he could get and hope that the status quo would change eventually. For Churchill, that was an insufferable position, and it explains, at least in part, the vacillation that would come to characterize the Prime Minister's behavior as it related to his fidelity to the agreements he made with Roosevelt even after the United States entered the war. Another reason for the Prime Minister's vacillation was his dread of a cross-Channel invasion. That dread would prove to be one of the chief causes of the conflicts that arose between the two men leading up to D-Day.

The change in the status quo that Churchill had been hoping for came the week that Pearl Harbor was attacked and Germany declared war on the United States. After that, Roosevelt needed Churchill just as badly as Churchill needed Roosevelt. That's not to say, however, that the two men were on equal footing. On the contrary, Roosevelt was definitely the stronger and more influential voice when it came to the bigger decisions of the war, while Churchill was relied upon for his status as a statesman more than anything else. His speeches and his public comments were critical in preserving the image of

unity and confidence that fueled the soul and spirit of the Allied initiative. Churchill's acquiescence to Roosevelt's handling of the war was also necessary when it came time to coordinate the tandem operations of British and American forces. While much has been made of the friendship that was forged between the two men, the truth is that Roosevelt and Churchill were very different people and were often in disagreement as to the proper handling of the war. Those differences were seldom made public, and often Churchill chose to feign agreement with Roosevelt only to claim to his British brethren that he had a better plan, and that at just the right moment he would put his own strategy in place, saving the day and demonstrating to one and all just who the real military genius was. Amazingly, some people even believed him. Roosevelt was no fool, and he was fully aware of Churchill's positions as well as his behavior. The fact that FDR chose not to confront Churchill directly had little to do with the President's need to placate a military ally, and even less to do with the friendship that authentically existed between the two world leaders despite their numerous differences. Instead, as the first chapter of this thesis will reveal, Roosevelt's handling of Churchill was dictated by the President's need for a European ally in the post-WWII world.

The differences between the two men stemmed not only from the respective differences between their two countries, but also from their experiences during the aftermath of World War I. Both men had been present at Versailles when the treaty was signed, and both had recognized, even then, the shortcomings and the severe limitations of the agreements that were made to bring the fighting to a close. The manner in which the war was brought to an end made a strong impression on Roosevelt. Roughly two decades later, FDR was sure that the Treaty of Versailles was at least partially to blame for World War II. He was also convinced that the new war in Europe could not end in the same manner as in 1919, for if it did then the planet would be dooming itself to fighting a long series of global wars every few decades until those wars had all but erased humanity. Thus, even before America was an official player in World War II, Roosevelt began to envision something different, something far greater and far

more permanent than a mere armistice. Churchill had not exactly varnished his own opinions about Versailles in the years following its signing. However, he did not share Roosevelt's precise vision of the post-World War II world, at least not at first. Rather, FDR was forced to bring Churchill around to his way of thinking as the war unfolded. Even then, Churchill still clung to many old ideas, such as colonialism. Roosevelt knew that winning the war was not enough and that lasting peace rested on a rearrangement of Churchill's priorities. In order to realize his vision, FDR needed to sustain a highly *productive* alliance with Churchill throughout the war and beyond, not merely a *pragmatic* one.

This text, by virtue of examining the various tactics that FDR utilized at TRIDENT, Quebec, and Tehran, will highlight the President's desire to de-escalate the issues that existed between himself and Churchill, rather than to confront them head-on and with force or pressure. What will emerge might best be described as a nuanced characterization or typology of approaches and strategies that FDR deployed in particular instances/circumstances when dealing with Churchill. The findings from such an analysis have the potential to somewhat complicate, or at least deepen, the understanding that we have of the FDR-Churchill alliance, give insight into and provide a more detailed vocabulary for talking about FDR's art of persuasion, and encourage other scholars to see if those findings are useful in explaining how FDR cajoled, encouraged, and otherwise interacted with other people with whom he needed to work closely.

The first step in understanding the approaches and strategies that FDR deployed in particular instances/circumstances when dealing with Churchill and in deepening the understanding that history has of the FDR-Churchill alliance is to understand the concerns that the British and the American planners had prior to the Casablanca Conference and the agreements that were made at that conference. Those agreements at first appeared to have set a tone that would negate the concerns of both parties and make potential conflicts between FDR and Churchill much less likely. Unfortunately, the collective sense of relief that Casablanca brought would prove to be short-lived. Worse yet, the British

reversal that took place in the months between Casablanca and TRIDENT would be only the first in a long line of potential derailments that were avoided only by Roosevelt's willingness to apply less aggressive techniques to complicated problems.

Chapter One

Argumentation By Proxy

To Err Is Human, To Forgive Oneself Impossible

The bodies still lay right where they had fallen, some alone and some piled up in bloody putrid heaps of carnage, reeking of death and covered in flies. It was unbearably hot, and the rocky and mountainous terrain was harsh and unforgiving, yielding practically no shade and precious little safety. British forces had committed the 29th Division, the Australian and New Zealand Corps, the Royal Naval Division, the 52nd (Lowland) Division, the 13th (Western) Division, the 10th (Irish) Division, the 11th (Northern) Division, the 53rd (Welsh) Division, and the 54th (East Anglian) Division to the nine month battle in an attempt to help the French overtake the mass of Turkish troops defending the Dardanelles Straits, just east of Gallipoli. Now approximately 265,000 of those British and French troops were dead, wounded, or sick. The Turkish, though the eventual victors, had not fared any better in terms of the overall body count. In fact, their casualties numbered around 300,000.²

In terms of human nature, the decision to go head-to-head with the Turkish troops was an understandable one. Because of the frustration and the heavy death toll brought about by the entrenchment in World War I's western front, many British politicians had been brainstorming other, quicker ways to successfully attack Germany, ways that would not result in the stalemate that so often characterized the war effort. They saw just such an opportunity through the Dardanelles Straits. The British put all their hope in a successful, head-on attack of the Straits, followed by land operations. Unfortunately, the naval forces were unsuccessful in their attempt to defeat the Turkish coastal fortifications. To make matters worse, the ships were unable to navigate the mines that the Turkish troops had placed in the shallow water near the beaches. In what might best be described as a "Hail Mary", the British and French armies tried to come around behind the Turkish troops and outflank them.

² *The Gallipoli Campaign, 1915-A Bloody And Terrible Ground Invasion In World War One.*
<https://www.warhistoryonline.com/>.

This effort was also a disaster, a disaster that temporarily halted the up-and-coming career of Winston Churchill, one of the chief planners of the failed operation.³

Casablanca

That tragedy, however, rested some twenty-seven years in the past. It was now 1943, and Churchill, now not only the Prime Minister of England but also the nominal commander in chief of all British forces in World War II, was relaxing in North Africa, enjoying the bright sunshine and the warm weather. It was not only the sun's invigorating rays that Churchill was basking in, but also the undeniable success of the recent "Operation Torch", a combined American, British, and Free French effort to wrest North Africa from the Vichy French and from German control. The British, without American assistance, had lost every major battle against Germany and her allies since 1940. What's more, they had been unable to offer any aid to the Red Army, which had been holding off the brunt of Hitler and the Wehrmacht's aggression on the eastern front since 1942. Stalin had run out of patience and had demanded that the other Allies open up a second front against the Nazis. Churchill and his team of British military planners suggested North Africa as the ideal place to establish such a front, and the Americans had reluctantly agreed, temporarily giving up their pet project, namely the preparations for a cross-Channel invasion from England within the next one to two years.

Torch was launched in November of 1942, with General Dwight Eisenhower at the helm. Targets of the Allied liberation efforts included Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers, with operations in each of those areas entrusted to one of the three Allied players. The United States was responsible for Casablanca, the French were assigned Oran, and the British handled matters in Algiers. This combined effort succeeded in achieving the surrender of the Vichy French forces in North Africa, but the victory was short-lived. Hitler simply reversed the 1940 Franco-German Armistice and sent his troops into those portions of

³ *The Gallipoli Campaign, 1915.*

Africa that he had previously left alone as a condition of the armistice. As a result, the final Allied offensive and the resulting German collapse did not occur until the spring of 1943, when the Axis forces in Tunisia surrendered, leaving the Allies free to establish a base from which to launch subsequent offensives into Italy.⁴

Torch was a high point, and so were the agreements that the Allies negotiated during the Casablanca Conference. Those agreements were secured largely without any direct debate between the President and the Prime Minister. Instead, they relied on their respective chiefs to hammer out understandings and to navigate the more difficult issues. This was a lesson that Roosevelt took to heart, and when the British tried to subvert the plans that had been made at Casablanca during the TRIDENT Conference, FDR remembered the value of using his chiefs as a front line or barrier island, which allowed him to fight the battles that he knew were necessary, but to do so by proxy, and in a manner that allowed him to remain on good terms with Churchill. These and other issues will be explored in detail later in this chapter, but first a degree of context is required.

The Gap Between FDR And Churchill

While they were certainly allies, and on another level friends, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt were not in lock-step, and they arrived at Casablanca with quite different mindsets. This is a good point at which to discuss why this was so. Although it is often the simple and quite natural instinct of historians to study lengthy historical events, such as economic depressions and world wars, as if they were composed of a series of relatively distinct events that, over time, came together to create the whole, such an approach is not useful in analyzing the war-time relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill, nor does it aid in any effort to understand the conflicts that often occurred between the two leaders. On the contrary, to arrive at the real reason that Churchill and FDR butted heads to such an

⁴ Hart, Basil Liddell. "North Africa Campaigns." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 21 Nov. 2017, <http://www.britannica.com/event/North-Africa-campaigns/Operation-Torch>.

extent, especially in 1943, and the real reason that Churchill would so thoroughly vex the President and the American military planners in the months between Casablanca and D-Day, one must start with the whole and then work back toward the individual events, or parts, themselves. In this case, the whole is D-Day. In his memoirs, Churchill characterized his attitude toward D-Day as one of commitment to and solidarity with Roosevelt and the American military planners, countered by a great reluctance to see any more of his own men die unnecessarily and bolstered by an optimistic and idealistic hope that the invasion might yet be avoided. “[W]hile I was always willing to join with the United States in a direct assault across the Channel on the German sea front in France, I was not convinced that this was the only way of winning the war,” Churchill wrote in his memoirs.⁵ In one of his most candid and unvarnished reflections, the Prime Minister framed his stance as to a cross-Channel invasion thusly:

[I] knew that it would be a very heavy and hazardous adventure. The fearful price we had had to pay in human life and blood for the great offensives of the First World War was graven in my mind. It still seemed to me, after a quarter of a century, that fortifications of concrete and steel armed with modern fire power, and fully manned by trained, resolute men, could only be overcome by surprise in time or place by turning their flanks, or by some new and mechanical device like the tank. Superiority of bombardment, terrific as it may be, was no final answer. The defenders could easily have ready other lines behind their first, and the intervening ground which the artillery could conquer would become impassable crater fields. These were the fruits of knowledge which the French and British had bought so dearly from 1915 to 1917.⁶

From his own words, three very important factors can be extrapolated with regard to Churchill’s commitment to a cross-Channel invasion. The first is that the Prime Minister really didn’t believe that such an invasion could be successful. The second is that he hoped to defeat the German line from behind or from the periphery, rather than from the front. The third is that his judgment as it related to World War II was heavily influenced by his memories of the carnage brought about by the First World War—specifically the disaster at Gallipoli. All three factors would come into play during the conference at Casablanca and in Churchill’s reversal of strategy following the conference.

⁵ Churchill, Winston S. *Memoirs of the Second World War (Abridged)*, 1978, 804.

⁶ *Ibid*, 804.

Another key to understanding the differing mindsets with which FDR and Churchill arrived at Casablanca lies in understanding the lessons that each man learned from World War I and Versailles, as well as the world that each hoped would emerge from the ashes of World War II. While both leaders realized the shortcomings of the Treaty of Versailles, the enormous gap in their thinking is best illustrated through their own words. In his *Memoirs of the Second World War*, Churchill wrote of WWI's end and the establishment of Germany's first democratic government that "beneath this flimsy fabric raged the passions of the mighty, defeated, but substantially uninjured German nation." Churchill was not only revealing his low opinion of the Weimar Republic, but indulging in a thinly veiled jab at non-monarchical forms of government. He went on to say that, instead of a half-hearted attempt at democracy, "wise policy would have crowned and fortified the Weimar Republic with a constitutional sovereign in the person of an infant grandson of the Kaiser, under a council of regency."⁷ Churchill, like Roosevelt, blamed the flawed resolution of World War I for the resentments that fueled the build-up of Nazi Germany and ultimately led to a second global conflict. Churchill, however, felt that the flaws were, at least for the most part, found in the type of government that was installed in Germany after Versailles. Even as late as the 1950s, the Prime Minister would claim that "the Weimar Republic, with all its liberal trappings and blessings, was regarded as an imposition of the enemy. It could not hold the loyalties or the imagination of the German people."⁸ It was the experimental government's failure to captivate post-war German society that Churchill blamed for the emergence of fascism. In his memoirs, he stated that, because of Weimar's ultimate demise, "the void was open, and into that void after a pause there strode a maniac of ferocious genius, the repository and expression of the most virulent hatreds that have ever corroded the human breast-Corporal Hitler."⁹

⁷ Churchill, *Memoirs*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

⁹ *Ibid*, 7.

FDR also lamented the short-comings of Versailles, but rather than finding fault with the democratic experiment of Weimar, his complaint was focused on the armaments limitations imposed on Germany after World War I, as well as the perfunctory degree to which the vanquished powers had been policed in the years following the war. In his State of the Union Address on January 7, 1943, Roosevelt told Americans that they “[could] never dig a hole so deep that it would be safe against predatory animals.”¹⁰ He also stressed his belief that “if [the Allies did] not pull the fangs of the predatory animals of this world, they [would] multiply and grow in strength-and they [would] be at [their] throats again once more in a short generation.”¹¹ The President, if one is to take his words at face value, felt that World War II might have been avoided if Germany had been completely disarmed as a result of the Versailles Treaty. The end result of World War II, then, was quite simple and non-negotiable in the President’s mind. In short, and in Roosevelt’s own words, Germany, Italy, and Japan “must be disarmed and kept disarmed, and they must abandon the philosophy, and the teaching of that philosophy, which has brought so much suffering to the world.”¹² On the topic of policing and enforcing the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, both leaders seemed to agree. Churchill mourned in his memoirs the “almost mortal blow”¹³ that had been dealt to the League of Nations in the form of Woodrow Wilson’s stroke, and he blamed the Republican political victories of 1920 for the death of Wilson’s post-war ideals and for America’s failure to join the League. The Prime Minister also pointed an accusatory finger at the Republican leaders who succeeded Wilson for the isolationist sentiment that took root in the 1920s, claiming that such sentiment left Europe “to stew in its own juice.”¹⁴

When it came to setting the world right, however, FDR and Churchill could not have been more different, despite the Atlantic Charter. The President’s views are best illustrated through the diary

¹⁰ Roosevelt, Franklin D. “State of the Union Address.” January, 1943.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Churchill, *Memoirs*, 9.

¹⁴ Ibid, 9.

entries of Elliott Roosevelt, who stayed with his father during the Casablanca Conference and served as his clerk and personal secretary. During private conversations that Elliott recorded in his diary, the President lambasted Charles de Gaulle, who he feared was “out to achieve one-man government in France, and was committed to the revival of its colonial empire.”¹⁵ Roosevelt told his son that “the colonial system means war.”¹⁶ He went on to provide Elliott with an interesting summation of his larger world view:

Exploit the resources of an India, a Burma, a Java; take all the wealth out of those countries, but never put anything back into them, things like education, decent standards of living, minimum health requirements—all you’re doing is storing up the kind of trouble that leads to war. All you’re doing is negating the value of any kind of organizational structure for peace before it begins.¹⁷

Instead, FDR entrusted all of his hopes for the future peace and security of the world to the United Nations. Roosevelt claimed that the United Nations were “the mightiest military coalition in all history”, and that they were “bound together in solemn agreement that they themselves will not commit acts of aggression or conquest against any of their neighbors.”¹⁸ Those statements, however, referred only to the loosely configured national alliance of the various countries which had come together to defeat Germany and Japan. The President’s dream of a permanent United Nations organization became clear later in the speech when he announced that, in his view, “the United Nations can and must remain united for the maintenance of peace by preventing any attempt to rearm in Germany, in Japan, in Italy, or in any other nation which seeks to violate the Tenth Commandment—‘Thou shalt not covet’.”¹⁹ Roosevelt’s statements to his son Elliott were even more specific. During a private moment of the conference at Casablanca, the President discussed his hope that, following the war, world powers like

¹⁵ Roosevelt, Elliott. *As He Saw It*. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York. 1946, 73.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Roosevelt, “State of the Union Address”, 1943.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

France and Great Britain would become the “trustees”²⁰ of their former colonies, monitoring their progress in what Hamilton refers to as “phased decolonization”²¹, and reporting such information back to the U.N., which FDR explained to Elliott would have four “policemen” - “the United States, the British, China, and the Soviet Union.”²² In a meeting with Prime Minister Mackenzie King of Canada prior to Casablanca, FDR had explained that “each of the policing powers would have its own air force.”²³ Roosevelt believed this was the best way to enforce complete post-war disarmament. The President told King that, if the United Nations approached the post-war world in the right manner, “colonial imperialism would, over time, become a thing of the past, with nations reverting to their original boundaries after Hitler’s war.”²⁴ Churchill’s vision for the post-World War II world can be summed up in far less words. He wanted the world to return to its former status quo, with England and France free to carry on their cherished colonial systems and to pursue all of the policies that FDR knew in his heart were to blame for war in the first place. Such a massive divide between the two friends and allies explains not only their differing viewpoints at Casablanca, but also the very different manner in which Roosevelt chose to deal with Churchill in the lead-up to the conclusion of World War II.

Reaching An Early Compromise

For now, however, in the glorious aftermath of Torch (although he was there prior to the official fall of Tunisia) Churchill was enjoying copious amounts of alcohol and awaiting Roosevelt’s arrival. However, Churchill was a textbook example of the phrase “once bitten, twice shy”. While the success of the Allies in North Africa should have erased many of the ghosts of Gallipoli and re-emboldened the Prime Minister, he was still a man who, contrary to his public image, carried around an enormous

²⁰ Roosevelt, Elliott. *As He Saw It*.

²¹ Hamilton, Nigel. *Commander in Chief: FDR’s Battle with Churchill, 1943*.

²² Roosevelt, Elliott. *As He Saw It*.

²³ King, William Lyon Mackenzie, and F.A. McGregor. *The Mackenzie King Diaries, 1893-1949*.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

amount of fear and self-doubt. In truth, that was one of the big reasons he and his planners had recommended Torch in the first place. The Allies, as mentioned earlier, favored the continued build-up and training of the forces that they were hoping to use to launch a cross-Channel invasion in the near future. Churchill was terrified of such a prospect. Haunted by the memories of British and French bodies piled up on the Dardanelles Straits years before, he could not commit himself to another head-on invasion strategy. Instead, he constantly found less risky options to recommend, hoping against hope that the cumulative effect of these “safe” operations would eventually wear down the Germans before he was forced to finally agree to a direct invasion. In that spirit, he had traveled to North Africa to agree to whatever Roosevelt and the American military planners suggested, not because he was necessarily in lock-step with their wishes, but because he needed to buy more time. He knew that the United States would be even more anxious to begin serious preparations for D-Day now that Torch had been such a success, and he also knew that they would expect that success to have made him more confident and more willing to support their plans than he had been in the past, during the darker moments when Great Britain had been licking her wounds, wounds brought about by a series of horrible and moral-killing defeats at the hands of the Germans. Put simply, Churchill had come to what history would later call the “Casablanca Conference” to merely go along to get along, giving the appearance of a willing participant and contributor, while secretly making his own plans and hoping that history would grant him the opportunity to implement his plans over those of Roosevelt and the Americans at some later point in time.

FDR ended up handing the Prime Minister a bit of a mixed bag at Casablanca, with equal parts given over both to what he thought he could easily live with as well as to what he dreaded the most. The two things that Churchill desired most at Casablanca were an agreement from the United States that operations in the Pacific would be placed on the back burner until the situation in Europe was resolved and a commitment to the British policy of “closing the ring around the Third Reich by sheering off its

allies, such as Italy, as they went, and hoping to get the peoples of occupied Europe to rise up against the Germans [and] engender Hitler's fall."²⁵ In addition, he hoped to see "the cleansing of the North African shore to be followed by the capture of Sicily, the re-conquest of Burma, and an invasion of Northern France."²⁶ It is important to note, however, that Churchill desired each of these things to occur instead of the cross-Channel invasion favored by the Americans rather than in addition to it. The Prime Minister had a number of reliable sources of information placed in strategic positions in Washington, D.C., and from those sources he had learned that the American military planners were chomping at the bit for a cross-Channel invasion, code named "Overlord" by that point. Thus, that is exactly what he expected Roosevelt to push for when he arrived at Casablanca. Churchill, while desirous himself to see an invasion of northern France, had no wish to witness a repeat of the disastrous head-on assault of Gallipoli. His dream was to conquer Northern France in a more peripheral manner. Thus, when he met with his own planners in the days before Roosevelt's arrival, he instructed them to "show willing, while stringing the Americans along in order to pursue a more opportunistic course in the Mediterranean," and to "pretend to be agreeable to closing down the Mediterranean activities by the end of June with a view to an Allied 1943 cross-Channel invasion in August."²⁷

One of Churchill's primary reasons for giving such instructions, aside from his desire to avoid a repeat of Gallipoli, was that he feared the Wehrmacht in Northern France were too seasoned and too numerous for the Allies to successfully contest.²⁸ He would have been surprised to learn that FDR agreed with him, at least for the time being. In fact, although the idea of a cross-Channel invasion was favored by both Roosevelt and his military advisors, the American camp was arriving at Casablanca severely split as to the proper timing and strategy for such an operation. While the chiefs favored the invasion as soon as possible, Roosevelt saw the same skill gap between Germany and the Allied troops that Churchill did.

²⁵ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 71-72.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 75.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 73.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 73.

This split played to Churchill's favor in a big way during the conference, for by Casablanca's end a decision had been reached by both the Americans and the British that their armies were not yet battle-hardened, and that the skills and experience necessary to defeat the Nazis should be gained in smaller, more manageable stages that risked less loss of life and depletion in overall resources. How an arrangement like this was reached in the midst of such initial far-flung disagreement is somewhat of a historical miracle. However, before the conference was over, General George Marshall, who had previously been salivating in his anticipation of a cross-Channel invasion, was admitting freely to the President and to everyone else that the Allied troops were just not prepared for such an assault and that "if the U.S. armies were to acquire the combat experience necessary to assault Hitler's Atlantic Wall, then it would best be gained in the Mediterranean, at the extremity of German lines of communication." Marshall added that the Mediterranean offered "shorter lines of communication" for the Allies, and that "the troops in North Africa have had experience in landing operations." General Clark reinforced Marshall's arguments, stating that "not only did the Allies already possess sufficient American and British forces in the Mediterranean-naval, air, and ground-to knock Italy out of the war that year by invading Sardinia or Sicily once the Axis had been forced out of Tunisia, but the Mediterranean offered the opportunity for U.S. units to gain the battle exposure they needed in a relatively secure environment where even local setbacks would not be disastrous to Allied strategy, something that could not be said for a premature cross-Channel assault."²⁹ The President was relieved, and the Prime Minister was delighted. Allied troops would not be marching into certain slaughter when they were outmatched and outgunned, and the British planners no longer had to feign enthusiasm for an end to the operations in the Mediterranean. All parties left the conference believing that the best possible agreement had been reached for everyone involved and that all players were on the same page with regard to the next phase

²⁹ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 86.

of the game. That was the relative calm before the storm, however. In truth, all hell would soon break loose.

Churchill & The British Try To Alter Course

Such hell came in the form of Winston Churchill and his contingent of military advisors, who all set sail for Washington in May of 1943. They arrived on May 11 with a fully developed strategy that was completely contrary to the one that had been agreed upon after Torch. The British, so it seemed, were determined to convince FDR and the American chiefs to reverse course and pursue new goals. Despite the agreements that had been reached at Casablanca, the conclusion of the conference had seen Roosevelt and Churchill go their separate ways and engage themselves in completely separate agendas. The President had flown back to Washington to begin work on the official strategy that had been developed in Africa. Churchill, true to the passive-aggressive and sneaky aspects of his character, had paid a visit to Ismet Inonu, the President of Turkey. The purpose of this visit, unknown to anyone but the Prime Minister and his advisors, was to recruit Turkey into the Allied fold. To Churchill's way of thinking, a friendly Inonu meant access to the Balkans and to Constantinople. He saw the prospect of pursuing the war in Europe via those territories as much safer than Roosevelt's plans, plans that he had not only agreed with, but expressed much enthusiasm for just a few months earlier.³⁰

While they didn't yet know about Churchill's secret visit with the Turkish leader, a certain amount of information had made its way to Roosevelt and his advisors while the British were still at sea and on their way to Washington. They had learned, for instance, that he favored "an opportunistic strategy of multi-pronged Allied attacks following the invasion of Sicily, not only on the Italian mainland but in the Aegean and the Balkans", and that he now "hoped the Allies would not only draw away from the Eastern Front crucial German forces that Hitler might otherwise employ to hold back the Russian

³⁰ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 157.

armies, but would provide the Western Allies with the launch pad for a drive into central Europe via the ‘soft underbelly’ of southern Europe.” Churchill also held out hope for a similar “soft underbelly” through the Balkans.³¹ It all sounded ambitious, optimistic, and energetic, yet it all amounted to the same thing. Churchill still wanted no D-Day. Sure enough, once the British contingent reached Washington and what history would later come to refer to as the “Trident Conference” began, Churchill “proceeded to outline how it ought to be the objective of the Allies, after securing Sicily, to invade Italy, obtain its surrender, then exploit the huge gap this would leave in the Adriatic and the Balkans, where twenty-five Italian divisions were currently helping the Germans in Yugoslavia. Once Italy fell out of the Axis alliance, those Italian forces would be hors de combat-offering an even softer European ‘underbelly’.”³² Churchill also entertained the notion that “if the Turks saw such a door into southern, mainland Europe opening, they might be persuaded to join the Allies or at least be encouraged to permit the Allies to use Turkish positions and airfields in order to attack the Third Reich from the south and southeast.”³³ The minutes from the first Trident meeting, which occurred on May 12, are given over in great detail to the Prime Minister’s argument that:

The collapse of Italy would cause a chill of loneliness over the German people, and might be the beginning of their doom. But even if not immediately fatal to Germany, the effects of Italy coming out of the war would be very great, first of all on Turkey, who had always measured herself with Italy in the Mediterranean. The moment would come when a Joint American-Russian-British request might be made to Turkey for permission to use bases in her territory from which to bomb Ploesti and clear the Aegean. Such a request could hardly fail to be successful if Italy were out of the war, and the moment were chosen when Germany could take no powerful action against Turkey. Another great effect of the elimination of Italy would be felt in the Balkans, where patriots of various nationalities were with difficulty held in check by large Axis forces, which included 25 or more Italian Divisions. If these withdrew, the effect would be either that Germany would have to give up the Balkans, or else that she would have to withdraw large forces from the Russian Front to fill the gap. In no other way could relief be given to the Russian Front on so large a scale this year. The third effect would be the elimination of the Italian fleet. This would immediately release a considerable British

³¹ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 201.

³² *Ibid*, 208.

³³ *Ibid*, 208.

squadron of battleships and aircraft carriers to proceed either to the Bay of Bengal or the Pacific to fight Japan.³⁴

There was, of course, no shortage of reasons that Churchill's grand scheme was ill-advised. Two of those reasons, however, leapt immediately to the forefront. The first had to do with what might be called an "optimal moment". Although the agreements reached after Torch provided for continued operations in the Mediterranean, there was a critical window during which the Allies needed to leave the area if they were to be successful in a cross-Channel invasion. At that window, the troops would have gained the skills and battle experience necessary to successfully face the Germans in Northern France, but would not have worn themselves or their resources down to such a point that they would be too exhausted to be successful in such an effort. The second reason had to do with Joseph Stalin. The Allied success in Torch had appeased him temporarily, but he still expected a major second front from the Allies on the Western Front, a front that would match the effort he and his Red Army had been expending against the Wehrmacht in the east. If Churchill's new plans were implemented, that front would be severely delayed.

FDR Pursues A Policy Of Non-Confrontation

These direct arguments, however, were not going to sway Churchill, and Roosevelt knew that instinctively. He chose instead a much less confrontational approach. FDR took the view that "the British were visitors in a foreign land, and the best way to coax them out of their funk was to encourage them to overcome their understandable fears, not berate them; to help, not to shame."³⁵

Despite the mutual need that the two leaders had for each other, it is at this point that Roosevelt's shadow begins to overtake Churchill's, and his character begins to become more important than that of the Prime Minister's. To fully appreciate that, one must ask themselves why FDR needed Churchill on his

³⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington & Quebec, 1943, May 12.

³⁵ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 218.

side as badly as he did and why he chose to handle him in the manner in which he did. Roosevelt, though thoughtful and charming, was no stranger to direct confrontation, and there was certainly enough precedent within his long and storied presidency that a more firm and head-on approach to Churchill's wavering would not have come as a surprise to many people. In fact, shortly after winning his first campaign for re-election by a landslide, FDR had famously gone to war with the Supreme Court. In the absence of any constitutional authority whatsoever, Roosevelt demanded of Congress the power to install an extra judge for every member of the Court who was past the age of 70 and refused to retire. According to journalist William Leuchtenburg, the President "sought to name as many as six additional Supreme Court justices, as well as up to 44 judges to the lower federal courts."³⁶ Roosevelt lost his battle with the Court in July of 1937 when his bill failed to make it out of the Senate, but the loss isn't what matters here. What does matter is the question that FDR's behavior poses. If Roosevelt was willing to draw hands with the Supreme Court in 1936 and 1937, why was he so indirect in battling Churchill in 1943? After all, many of the same conditions existed. FDR was still an extremely popular leader, and still possessed tons of political capital. In addition, Churchill's waffling had made the Prime Minister extremely unpopular among the President's military planners and others in the Roosevelt inner circle. FDR, some six years before, had gone eyeball to eyeball with the highest court in the land, an institution in his own back yard, and one that he was stuck with no matter how the fight ended. Why not, then, duke it out with Churchill, from whom he was separated by an ocean? Comfortably in the driver's seat nearly from day one of their alliance, the President could have simply dismissed Churchill's counter-proposals. Not that he could have banished him from the war's inner circle or treated him as an underling, but he certainly could have been more heavy-handed had he decided to be. After all, the Americans were definitely the stronger of the two nations in terms of military might. Part of the answer to Roosevelt's tactics in handling Churchill and his advisors can be found in the President's hope for the

³⁶ Leuchtenburg, William E. "When Franklin Roosevelt Clashed with the Supreme Court-and Lost." *Smithsonian.com*.

post-war world. It was that dream, largely, that necessitated his cultivation and maintenance of Churchill as not only a nominal ally, but an actual friend. It was the need for Churchill to be what Nigel Hamilton refers to as Roosevelt's "steadfast, statesmanlike partner", a partner who could help FDR "ensure the democracies, under their combined leadership, had at least a chance of ending World War II with Western Europe under safe guardianship in relation to Soviet 'Bolshevization'." Hamilton adds that "Churchill may have been completely wrong in his understanding of the Wehrmacht, and a menace to Allied unity in his Mediterranean mania. But Churchill's understanding of the deepening rift and rivalry with the Soviets bespoke his greatness as a leader."³⁷

In his conflicts with Churchill, Roosevelt was the greater leader because of his detachment. That may sound counter-intuitive at first, but because FDR didn't personalize in the same way that other leaders have been known to do, he could create enough distance between himself and the situation to select from among a range of possible responses, rather than employing the same predictable and/or knee-jerk reactions time and time again. In this case, Roosevelt's response was, at least in a way, every bit as multi-pronged as Churchill's new and naïve Mediterranean strategy. Specifically, the President chose a three-pronged approach, with none of those prongs being direct or confrontational. In this way, Roosevelt and Churchill were mirror-opposites. The Prime Minister talked a pretty tough game, but preferred methods that were less direct than his rhetoric. FDR, on the other hand, spoke more softly and less arrogantly than did Churchill, but beneath the surface he was unshakeable in terms of the achievement of his ultimate goals. The first prong of Roosevelt's approach might best be described as the "wine and dine" phase. In the evenings, the British guests were taken to Williamsburg and to Shangri-La, where all of their whims and desires were catered to. Phase two involved a classic "divide and conquer" strategy. The President had an instinctive understanding that Churchill's personality was stronger than the personality of any of his advisors, or than all of his advisors combined for that matter.

³⁷ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, XIV-XV.

Thus, he simply kept the Prime Minister away from the daily meetings that took place between the American and British planners. The third and final prong of FDR's strategy was to keep Churchill busy addressing joint sessions of Congress.³⁸ While this third maneuver might not sound all that strategic, or for that matter all that different from the second prong of Roosevelt's approach, the rhetoric employed by Churchill during his remarks to Congress served only to further commit the British to the overall American plan for winning the war and hence to a cross-Channel invasion. While each of these prongs is interesting and important in its own right, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the second—namely “divide and conquer”, as it most clearly highlights FDR's overall strategy of “argumentation by proxy”.

For all intents and purposes, the President's divide and conquer strategy began immediately upon the Prime Minister's arrival in the United States, with Roosevelt dodging any attempt on Churchill's part to take rooms at the British Embassy. Instead, the President all but demanded that Churchill stay with him at the White House. By keeping the Prime Minister away from his own embassy, Roosevelt was minimizing his exposure to opinions and proposed courses of action other than his own and those of the American planners. By keeping him at the White House, conversely, FDR was ensuring that Churchill would be exposed to nothing but opinions and courses of action that were in line with his own and those of the American chiefs. What's more, Churchill had no sounding board, no support structure, and no one around to bolster him if and when his own resolve began to waiver. In his memoirs, Churchill presented this particular bump in the road as being much less severe than it actually was. “At first the differences seemed insuperable and it looked like a hopeless breach,” wrote Churchill. “During this period leakages from high American officers were made to Democratic and Republican

³⁸ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 233.

senators, leading to a debate in the Senate. By patience and perseverance our difficulties were gradually overcome.”³⁹ The Prime Minister added that:

The fact that the President and I were living side by side seeing each other at all hours, that we were known to be in close agreement, and that the President intended to decide himself on the ultimate issues—all this, together with the priceless work of Hopkins, exercised throughout a mollifying and also a dominating influence on the course of Staff discussions. After a serious crisis of opinions, side by side with the most agreeable personal relations between the professional men, an almost complete agreement was reached about invading Sicily.”⁴⁰

Since he was the only one of the two great leaders to live long enough to write his memoirs, Churchill could somewhat afford to hyperbolize, or perhaps the passage of a few years and FDR’s death had created a rosier picture in the Prime Minister’s mind’s eye than what had actually taken place. Hamilton, however, has unearthed evidence indicating that Churchill experienced great “anxiety” during his stay in Washington, and that “the atmosphere in the White House seemed somewhat frosty.” Hamilton’s descriptors, however, seem to refer only to the handling of official business during the daytime hours, and to the beginning of the conference more than to its entirety. What is not in doubt, though, is that “the President wined and dined Churchill on Pennsylvania Avenue”, and that “no invitation was extended to Churchill’s military advisers.” Once again, one can easily see that nothing was left to chance by Roosevelt. There was nothing incidental or innocuous. Rather, everything that took place during the conference and in the evening hours after the long meetings had ended was well calculated to bring about not only a desired result, but a critical result, one that Roosevelt was not willing to compromise on. In short, the British could not leave Washington until Churchill’s new position had been reversed.

³⁹ Churchill, *Memoirs*, 690-691.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 690-691.

The Meetings In Washington

The first official meeting between the British and American military chiefs during Trident took place on May 12. Roosevelt and Churchill were both in attendance, something that would only take place one other time during the conference. In general, the meeting provided nothing new. There was some time given over to a review of what had taken place in the handling of the war up to the present time, followed by a statement from Churchill confirming his new and alternative strategy, along with an implicit denial on the part of the Prime Minister that his strategy was in fact an alternative. Instead, he seemed to want to pretend that nothing contrary to his present plans had ever been agreed to following Torch. In addition, Churchill now said that no cross-Channel invasion could possibly take place “unless Germany should collapse as a result of the Russian campaign and our intensified bombing attack.”⁴¹ The shock and betrayal brought about by such an announcement, as well as by Churchill’s denial of any previous agreements with Roosevelt, made any progress on that first day all but impossible. Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill was in attendance at the May 13 meeting of the combined chiefs. Instead, matters were largely given over to each man’s subordinates. This, too, was no accident, at least not on FDR’s part. After making his position clear, albeit unacceptable, the previous day, the President was not about to allow the Prime Minister to remain a constant presence at further meetings. Such a presence would not only give the meetings a “line in the sand” atmosphere, within which honest discussion, negotiation, and compromise could not take place, but it would also prevent Churchill’s advisors, many of whom were likely to be less committed to the Prime Minister’s new strategy than their leader was, from speaking their minds in an uninhibited fashion. While the May 13 meeting began as merely a repeat of the previous day’s stalemate, it certainly didn’t end that way. Acting on behalf of Churchill was General Brooke. Roosevelt’s big guns that morning were Admiral Leahy, General Marshall, and General King. It was on this second official day of the conference that Roosevelt’s divide and conquer strategy

⁴¹ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 207-209.

began to reap its first small victories, something that has largely been ignored by history and has seldom received even the lightest brush on the cheek from other scholars. Brooke began strongly enough, restating the commitment of both Churchill and the British chiefs to their new plan and offering up possible mistakes in American planning. For example, Brooke stated that "Italy might not surrender after the fall of Sicily, or by the threat of Allied bombing", and that "in order to achieve Italy's capitulation, there would probably be need for amphibious operations against either the Italian islands or the mainland." The counter arguments offered by the American chiefs resulted in only further stalemate. However, Brooke was also foolish enough to claim that "by dumping the Casablanca agreement they would help Stalin-for if Italy fell, the Germans would be compelled to deny reinforcements to their Eastern Front and instead occupy and defend the Italian mainland, as well as defending the Balkans and Aegean Islands, just as they had done when compelled to send German reinforcements to Tunisia." Brooke added that "Hitler would thus be able to provide 20 percent less on the Russian front, aiding the Soviets." In making such statements, which would have either not been made or would have been made more carefully had Churchill been present, Brooke had backed himself into a corner. He was subsequently pounced upon by Leahy, Marshall, and King, who argued that "the mere threat of Allied invasion [would] compel Hitler to station that number of divisions in Italy and the Balkans-much as he had stationed four hundred thousand German troops in Norway, and twenty-five divisions in France." Without any additional support, Brooke admitted the real German position, namely that "unless fighting continued in the Mediterranean, no possibility of an attack into northern France would arise, for it would surely fail." What Brooke went on to outline was no less dispiriting. He claimed that "even if Allied troops succeeded in achieving a beachhead across the English Channel, the subsequent battle or campaign in northern France would be a disaster for the Allies", that "even after a bridgehead had been

established” the Allied troops would be unable to get beyond it, and that “the troops employed would be for the most part inexperienced.”⁴²

Brooke had, in essence, revealed that the British position was one that had resulted from fear rather than from intelligence. This is an admission that Churchill never would have allowed. Even if Brooke had uttered such statements in Churchill’s presence, the Prime Minister was a sage enough leader to have minimized the damage in real time. Such was not the case, however, and things now went from bad to worse for Brooke. As the Americans continued to pelt him with factual counter arguments that he could not combat, he began to betray his own. He claimed that the “British manpower position was weak”, that “its forces were, in all candor, not up to the challenge of a cross-Channel invasion” and that they never would be.⁴³ Roosevelt’s genius in keeping Churchill away from the meetings after May 12 had just brought about the first fissure in the wall of the dam. Roosevelt, upon learning of the results of the May 13 meeting, immediately began to ratchet up the first prong of his strategy. He ordered General Marshall and the American chiefs to wine and dine the British contingent at Williamsburg that weekend (which would encompass May 14, 15, and 16), and he ordered that during the weekend there would be no discussion of political or military affairs, only fun. In order to understand Roosevelt’s gift for de-escalation, one must first fully appreciate the atmosphere the President was creating with what might at first seem two small and simple orders. By ordering their immediate withdrawal from Washington to Williamsburg, FDR was denying the British chiefs any opportunity to recover from the disaster they had suffered at the hands of Brooke during the May 13 meeting. By ordering this trip to occur prior to any further meetings, the President was preserving the vulnerability of the British planners. By re-employing the wine and dine strategy, Roosevelt was creating an atmosphere for potential bonding between the British and American chiefs. If such bonding should occur, the British would naturally find it more difficult to abandon their American counterparts and to

⁴² Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 215.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 216.

leave earlier promises and agreements unfulfilled. Most important of all, Roosevelt did not allow Churchill the opportunity to participate in the Williamsburg trip.⁴⁴ Without the Prime Minister as their rudder, the British chiefs were dead in the water. The American chiefs were stronger in their commitment to the Casablanca agreements and to the President than the British were to Churchill and his plans. In the absence of Roosevelt, the Americans could still remain steadfast. In the absence of the Prime Minister, the same could not be said for the British. That isn't to say, however, that FDR never entertained the notion of changing Churchill's mind on his own during the time that the two men spent together. In fact, Roosevelt took Churchill to Shangri-La for the weekend following the May 13 meeting. In keeping with the Prime Minister's characteristic resolve and stubbornness, the trip did not produce any change in Churchill whatsoever. Not that such a change was necessarily the primary goal. For the time being, it was more important to keep Churchill and his advisors away from each other. The hope was that the advisors, once themselves worn down, would in turn soften up Roosevelt's British counterpart, or at least back him into a corner. Nevertheless, FDR pulled out all the stops during his weekend with the Prime Minister, inviting not only Eleanor to come along, but also Lord Beaverbrook. Eleanor couldn't stay for the entire weekend, but it was the President's hope that her presence, however limited, would discourage Churchill from shop talk at least for a while. As for Beaverbrook, his name was legend in British politics, despite being branded an appeaser in the days before WWII, and his reputation had become galvanized in the twilight of his career, when Churchill had commissioned him the Minister of Aircraft Production, and later Minister of Supplies, with a place in the War Cabinet in 1940. This was a post he still held at the time of the trip to Shangri-La, and it was Roosevelt's great hope that he would have Churchill's ear. The two men had not always gotten on well, but it was well known that Churchill had great admiration for Beaverbrook, and often sought out his advice even when he

⁴⁴ Hamilton, *Commander in Chief*, 218.

ended up disagreeing with it.⁴⁵ Beaverbrook, shockingly given his history of appeasement and the degree to which he went to keep Britain out of the war for as long as possible, was completely behind a cross-Channel invasion, and thought that such an effort should be launched as soon as possible. Thus, he came to Shangri-La, at Roosevelt's invitation, prepared to exercise whatever sway he might have over the stalwart Churchill. Unfortunately, it was all to no avail. Churchill remained committed to avoiding D-Day (a commitment that was unspoken), and his plan for avoiding D-Day rested within the alternative strategy that he had carried with him across the ocean, a strategy that, despite Churchill's efforts to make it appear otherwise, was a complete slap in the face to the agreements reached during the peak moment of the Allied successes at Torch. It was fortunate, then, that FDR's military planners were having far better luck in wearing down the British Chiefs of Staff.

The British Come Back Around

During a meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on May 14, Admiral Leahy argued that:

The African venture was undertaken in order to do something this year while preparing for cross-Channel operations. Little preparation for the latter had, in fact, been made, since all available U.S. resources had been sent to North Africa. The North African campaign was now completed. If we launched a new campaign in the Mediterranean, then we should continue to use our resources in that area. This would again postpone help to Russia since we should not be able to concentrate forces in the U.K. and thus cause a withdrawal of German troops to Western Europe. If new operations in the Mediterranean were the best way to bring the European war to a conclusion, then they must be undertaken; but if these operations would have the effect of prolonging the war, [I see] great difficulties in committing U.S. resources to them.⁴⁶

Thus, the American line in the sand was drawn. What is important is that the line wasn't directly drawn by Roosevelt, and that Churchill was not present to respond to such a line. In fact, General Brooke, in the absence of the Prime Minister, offered only a very impotent statement as to the belief on the part of the British chiefs that continued fighting in the Mediterranean would bring about a end to the war in

⁴⁵ "The Beaverbrook Foundation." *Beaverbrook Foundation*, 24 Dec. 2017.

⁴⁶ Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington & Quebec, 1943, May 14.

Europe sooner.⁴⁷ With four more days of meetings remaining in Trident, the British line had already lost strength. By May 15, Brooke, on behalf of the British point of view, was continuing to weaken, stating that plans for a cross-Channel invasion “must be undertaken as early as possible, but in the British view it was necessary to create a suitable situation by diversion of German forces.”⁴⁸ At this time, FDR was still keeping Churchill away from the British chiefs and winning the argument by proxy, with the American chiefs doing the dirty work, helping to maintain a more cordial relationship between the American and British commanders in chief. Had Churchill been in attendance at the May 15 meeting, he would never have allowed Burke to verbally commit to a sped-up timetable for D-Day. Burke’s statement was well-received by the American contingent, in particular Admiral King, who began pushing for a commitment to an actual invasion date in 1944. When the next meeting opened on May 18, the British, to the absolute shock of the American chiefs, had completely come around to their way of thinking. Sure, they remained committed to a few more operations in the Mediterranean than the Americans had originally agreed to. The important thing, however, is that the British had returned to the fold with regard to D-Day, and to the notion that everything undertaken by the Allies from that moment on was to be undertaken with a view toward a cross-Channel invasion at the earliest possible opportunity. Burke summed up the new British position as follows:

April 1944 as a target date would not be possible of achievement unless Mediterranean operations were undertaken. These would influence the strength of the opposition and should create a situation permitting cross-Channel operations. Landing craft alone were not the bottleneck, and one of the difficulties was the provision of the necessary personnel to man them. The rate of build-up of German forces in Western Europe would greatly exceed our own build-up on the Continent unless Mediterranean operations were first undertaken to divert or occupy German reinforcements. If these operations were undertaken, April 1944 might well be right for a target date, though the actual operation would be more likely to be possible of achievement in May or June. The knocking of Italy out of the war would be the greatest factor in using up Germany’s reserves and enabling our own build-up to exceed the enemy’s.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, May 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid, May 15.

⁴⁹ Ibid, May 18.

By the next meeting on May 19, the date for D-Day had been selected as April 1, 1944. The minutes from that meeting are copious and reveal quite a bit of discussion as to the possible need to change that date as it got closer, and to the extension of operations in the Mediterranean that the British were so married to, but there was no more discussion as to operations that would delay D-Day, operations that would be undertaken in lieu of D-Day, and (most importantly) the British had verbally committed to a date for a cross-Channel invasion. This was a huge win for the Americans, and by default for the Russians. Much of the credit for the turnaround is to be given to Field Marshall Dill, who told his British peers in private discussions that they could either “give in or risk a breakdown in what was a historic military coalition between the United States and Great Britain”, and that “the American people would not stand for the war in the Pacific being deliberately starved of men and resources for years [in the Mediterranean].” Dill would never have spoken those words, however, if the President had allowed the British contingent to remain united and to remain in the presence of their great leader. It was his acumen and the atmosphere he created that allowed for the changes that took place during Trident. Sadly, Trident would not be the last time that Roosevelt and Churchill clashed. As D-Day approached, there would be more conflict, more vacillation, more back-pedaling, and more of Churchill’s passive-aggressive behavior, all leading to further conflict between the British and American planners. For now, however, the course of the war had received a healthy shot of stability and unity. More importantly, Roosevelt himself had stayed out of the fray. Not that he was afraid to get his hands dirty, but had he taken the fight directly to Churchill, especially with an end to the war now in sight, he would have risked alienating the Prime Minister, not physically but philosophically. Roosevelt, unlike Churchill at this time, recognized that the world was changing as a result of the first two world wars, and that going back to the way things were before was simply not an option. If democracy was going to survive those changes, especially in light of the growing power and influence of the Soviet Union, FDR would need men like Churchill and de Gaulle as post-war diplomatic allies, not merely temporary military ones. Maintaining

such a relationship with Churchill would not have been possible had the President, during Trident and other subsequent conferences, come across as an unreasonable bully incapable of appreciating the Prime Minister's views and concerns, however much those views and concerns differed from his own and/or those of the American military planners.

That skill would become even more important for President Roosevelt during the first conference at Quebec, when he would be called upon by history to go against the advice of his military planners and allow Churchill and the British planners to score a psychological victory and avoid signing a memorandum prepared by the American chiefs that guaranteed priority status to D-Day as an offensive strategy in the European Theater. The written record indicates that FDR arrived at Quebec fully prepared to support his chiefs in their effort to secure British agreement to the memorandum. However, the next chapter will argue that Roosevelt chose to back off, and told his chiefs to back off as well, after a carefully worded warning from Churchill during the preliminary stages of the conference. The chapter will also argue that, contrary to the opinions of George Marshall and the remaining American planners, the first conference at Quebec was a huge win, not only for the Americans, but also for the Allied war effort in total.

Chapter Two: Backing Off To Move Forward

President Roosevelt's son, Elliott, did not attend the Quebec Conference in August of 1943, and was thus unable to keep a record of his father's thoughts and actions during that particular time period. The two men met a short time after the conference, however, and Elliott's curiosity knew no bounds. After his son had bombarded him with questions about Quebec, FDR summarized the matter in one incredibly succinct, yet frustratingly mysterious statement. "Well," he said, "it begins to look as though the debate is over."⁵⁰ Before Elliott could ask what debate his father was referring to, Roosevelt went on to say that "the British have been working on a plan for the cross-channel invasion."⁵¹ The President's tongue during this conversation, however, was forked. No sooner had he delivered the good news with regard to the British commitment to D-Day than he began in the next breath to criticize as well. "It's got a lot of question marks, to hear George Marshall on the subject," said FDR. Roosevelt added that "Winston insisted on our approving it-'in principle', just so the back door can be left open."⁵² Without context, the President's use of the term "back door" is ambiguous and could potentially be interpreted in a number of different ways. However, Roosevelt had just returned from a series of meetings that, among other things, had padded the collective comfort zones of Churchill and the British planners by providing, at least in theory, the possibility of alternatives to D-Day, in particular Operation Jupiter. The President did not add any clarification to these statements, and did not expound upon them in the presence of his son, or if he did Elliott did not record such statements. What is clear, however, is Roosevelt's low opinion of not only the British plan, but also of Churchill's commitment to it.

The first chapter of this text analyzed a very specific situation in which President Franklin Roosevelt employed an indirect, non-confrontational strategy in dealing with Prime Minister Churchill

⁵⁰ Roosevelt, Elliott. *As He Saw It*, 128.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 128.

⁵² *Ibid*, 128.

and emerged victorious by virtue of his efforts. In this example, despite the fact that Churchill and the British planners had done a complete about face after Casablanca and had put the Americans quite on the defensive with their trip to Washington, D.C. during TRIDENT, FDR employed his “argumentation by proxy” strategy in a very planned and intentional manner. True, the British had forced the issue by sailing to America with alternative plans in the first place. However, intelligence gathered from various sources had alerted Roosevelt and the American chiefs to some of what was coming and the President and his planners had time to prepare while the British contingent was still at sea. Thus, while this was a situation that FDR had not originally been planning to deal with, he was never without full control and was never responding to Churchill and his military staff while in retreat. This second chapter, in contrast, is focused on the first conference at Quebec, a time when Churchill got just about everything he wanted and when Roosevelt’s response, however indirect and non-confrontational, was a defensive response and not an offensive one. That isn’t to say, however, that FDR emerged the loser, or that he gained nothing at Quebec as a result of his strategy with the Prime Minister. On the contrary, the President managed to preserve a great deal at the conference. He just didn’t gain what he and the American planners had hoped to gain. What follows is an analysis of why this was so, as well as an argument for why the first conference at Quebec can still be considered a victory for Roosevelt, even though he was at Churchill’s mercy in many ways. In terms of the overall argument advanced in this paper, the President’s response to the Prime Minister is a critical point. FDR as a pre-war domestic president did not give an inch when he was challenged and he seldom took prisoners. The breathing room that Roosevelt gave Churchill at Quebec stands as one of the strongest examples as to just how many tricks the President had in his bag and to just how willing and able he was to select varied confrontational strategies if conditions necessitated and justified such varied strategies.

Churchill's Veiled Threat

The official minutes from the first conference at Quebec make a teasingly brief reference to a dinner that took place on Saturday, August 14, 1943. Among a few others, the dinner's attendees included FDR, Mrs. Roosevelt, and Churchill. Whatever the reason, the Prime Minister was seated next to Mrs. Roosevelt, and from his perch at the side of the First Lady he expounded upon his views as they related to the post-war world and how it would function. Churchill's remarks, at least in so far as they are documented within the official meeting minutes of the first conference at Quebec, were completely unsolicited, and seemed to spring from nowhere following a conversation between the Prime Minister and another dinner guest as to the future of Ireland.⁵³ Churchill, ostensibly speaking to Mrs. Roosevelt but talking loudly enough for all to hear, said that he looked forward to the "fraternal relationship" that America and Great Britain would enjoy in the years to come.⁵⁴ He then claimed with all sincerity that such an arrangement would be

"much better than any attempt at more definite association or understanding[,] as more definite arrangements are subject to misunderstandings whereas loose concepts become realities in the public mind and, if flexible enough, can be adjusted to historic developments."⁵⁵

If he is to be taken at his word, it seems that Churchill had become a "big picture thinker" as it related to the post-war world, trusting in the quality of the relationship between the United States and the British, rather than relying on specifics. To what must have been the horror of Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt, the Prime Minister also claimed at the dinner that "any hope of the United Nations would be in the leadership given by the intimacy of the United States and British in working out understandings with the Russians."⁵⁶ The idea of a permanent United Nations had taken root deeply within the President, and he

⁵³ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943*. (Office of the Historian, J.C.S. Files) 832.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 832.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 832.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 832.

knew that while relationships were important to its success, so too were agreements and firm understandings. To hear Churchill speak so casually about the future structure of the U.N. must have filled FDR with no small amount of apprehension. In fact, the minutes reveal that “Mrs. Roosevelt seemed fearful that [Churchill’s words] might be misunderstood by the other nations and weaken the United Nations concept.”⁵⁷ This was a concern that Churchill simply brushed aside.

Still, it wasn’t as if Roosevelt hadn’t been warned as to the non-committal attitude that Churchill would be bringing to the first conference at Quebec. In fact, on the morning of that same dinner party, General Marshall had provided a report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding his meeting with Churchill on the evening of August 15. Marshall stated that he had explained to the Prime Minister “that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had had a difficult meeting yesterday afternoon.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, he said he had spoken to Churchill about the “frank differences of opinion” that existed between the two camps.⁵⁹ Marshall went on to report that he had expressed to the Prime Minister that “he could not agree to the logic of supporting the main effort by withdrawing strength therefrom in order to bolster up the force in Italy.”⁶⁰ In response to all of the information that Marshall shared with Churchill, the Prime Minister had reportedly responded by simply saying “give us time.”⁶¹ In order to firmly understand the meaning of Churchill’s remarks at the dinner, the source of the rupture between the American and British chiefs, and the importance of the Prime Minister’s request for time, a certain degree of context is required.

The First Quebec Conference

The first conference at Quebec was the first meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill and between the American and British planners since TRIDENT, which had taken place in Washington, D.C. in

⁵⁷ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 832.

⁵⁸ Transcript of Marshall’s report, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

May of 1943. At that time, Churchill and the British planners had arrived in the United States with new plans for the future of the war, plans that contradicted the agreements made at Casablanca and threatened the possibility of a cross-channel invasion. FDR's military chiefs were furious and demanded aggressive behavior from the President to combat the British back-pedaling. Roosevelt, however, could not do direct battle with Churchill. He had to protect D-Day, but he had to do so in a way that preserved the friendly relationship that he had with the Prime Minister into the post-war world and the development of a permanent United Nations. The President's indirect and non-confrontational approach had resulted in a British re-commitment to the plans that had been agreed to at Casablanca.

Thus, the first conference at Quebec in August of 1943 was supposed to be a step forward, focused on even firmer plans for D-Day, the operations in Southeast Asia, and agreements related to the exchange of atomic energy secrets. Instead, the initial portions of the conference were dominated by stalemate. The American chiefs had arrived at Quebec having prepared a memorandum stating that OVERLORD (D-Day's codename) should become the "overriding" objective above all other offensives in the Mediterranean theater.⁶² This memorandum caused instant gridlock between the Americans and the British. During a meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on August 15, 1943, a meeting which neither Roosevelt nor Churchill attended, British planner Sir Alan Brooke dropped a bombshell that risked sinking the remainder of the conference when he announced that the British could not approve the "U.S. Chiefs of Staff memorandum that as between OVERLORD and operations in the Mediterranean, when there is a shortage of resources, OVERLORD will have an overriding priority."⁶³ Brooke added that the British found such an approach "too binding", and that "sufficient forces must be used in Italy in order to make OVERLORD a possibility."⁶⁴

⁶² Greenfield, Kent Roberts. *Command Decisions: 20 Crucial Command Decisions That Decided the Outcome of World War II*. (Harcourt, Brace, 1959), 188-189.

⁶³ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943*. 866.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 866.

General Marshall pounced on Brooke immediately. Marshall argued that the real question was “whether or not the required conditions for a successful Overlord could only be made possible by an increase in the strength in the Mediterranean.”⁶⁵ In his opinion, “only by giving an operation overriding priority could success be insured.”⁶⁶ While he acknowledged the possible advantages of the Allies controlling “as much of Italy as possible,”⁶⁷ his firm belief was that “if Overlord was not given overriding priority, then [sic] the operation was doomed and our whole strategic concept would have to be recast and the United States forces in Britain might well be reduced to the reinforced army corps necessary for an opportunist cross-Channel operation.”⁶⁸ Secondary to his main argument, Marshall directed everyone’s attention to a report that had been prepared by General Barker, in which the Combined COSSAC Staff expressed their opinion that, while the three conditions in question certainly provided an opportunity for D-Day’s success, the absence of one or more of those conditions did not spell failure, but merely rendered a cross-channel invasion more difficult.⁶⁹ The meeting ended in a stalemate, with the British stating firmly that “success depended not on the absolute strength of the [sic] forces available for Overlord, but on the relative strength of those forces vis-à-vis the Germans opposed to them,” and that “this relative strength could best be achieved by operations in Italy.”⁷⁰ The Americans, conversely, were firm in their conviction that “unless overriding priority were given to Overlord the operation would never materialize.”⁷¹ All of this argument had taken place before either Roosevelt or Churchill ever even arrived. Thus, before the first plenary session on August 19 even took place, the British refusal to sign on to Overlord as the top priority had poisoned the waters and left the Americans suspicious of British resolve and commitment.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 866.

⁶⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 866.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 866.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 867.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 867.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 867-868.

⁷¹ Ibid, 868.

Churchill wrote in his memoirs that, at the first plenary session of the Quebec Conference on August 19, 1943, “[t]he objections which I had to the cross-Channel operation were [sic] now removed,”⁷² and that he was immediately convinced “that every effort should be made to add at least twenty-five per cent to the first assault.”⁷³ Whatever the reason for the discrepancy between the Prime Minister’s memoirs and reality, that isn’t how the first plenary session began, however. In fact, Churchill wasted no time restating the three conditions that he thought were necessary for a successful cross-channel invasion, and adding that, if those conditions were not met, then “the plan should be subject to revision by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.”⁷⁴ It is difficult to understand the Prime Minister’s thinking at this point, or how he thought that such a stance would remove American suspicion as it related to the strength of the British commitment. Regardless, Henry Hopkins immediately argued that he “did not feel that the Allies should take a rigid view of these limitations.”⁷⁵ To illustrate his point, Hopkins asked all present to envision a scenario in which the Germans still had as many as fifteen divisions when D-Day rolled around, but those divisions were not at full strength. Wouldn’t this be just as acceptable as reducing German strength to twelve divisions? Hopkins then accused the British mindset of being “inelastic.”⁷⁶

Churchill had no choice but to accept Hopkins’s argument, but FDR sensed that the Prime Minister was dragging his feet, at least psychologically, and he asked Churchill to do everything he could to hasten the arrival of American troops in England. Churchill seemed to realize that Roosevelt was trying to lock him in, and there followed a detailed discussion as to the availability of landing craft for troop transport, which was Churchill’s only real weapon against FDR’s request. The President wasn’t about to be out-manuevered, however, and shot back that “a study [was] being carried on looking

⁷² Churchill, Winston. *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 721.

⁷³ Churchill, *Memoirs*, 721.

⁷⁴ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943*. 895.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 896.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 896.

toward the possibility of converting excess dry cargo ships into troop carriers.”⁷⁷ The plenary session ended with D-Day still largely unresolved, not as a viable operation, but as a priority for both Allies. Things got worse from there. During a session on August 23, 1943, Churchill argued that “if it developed that the German ground or air fighter strength proved to be greater than that upon which success of the plan was premised, the question as to whether or not the operation should be launched would be subject to review by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.”⁷⁸ Should the Chiefs feel that D-Day was no longer a viable option, the Prime Minister suggested that they “have a second string to their bow.”⁷⁹ Churchill won the battle. The minutes of the meeting state that “it was decided that the Final Report to the President and Prime Minister should include a paragraph which would provide for continued planning for the launching of Operation Jupiter in the event that Overlord should have to be abandoned.”⁸⁰ Jupiter was an offensive against Norway that had first been recommended by the British in 1942. The plan relied on commando raids rather than full-scale invasion.⁸¹ It may seem on the surface as though this wasn’t such a large issue and as though it wasn’t much of a “win” for Churchill. After all, the additions and amendments that the British succeeded in having added to the D-Day memorandum were not at first glance unreasonable, and it may even seem petty to some extent that the United States was ever against those changes in the first place. A number of things were in play when the memorandum was amended, however, that gave Churchill a victory in the form of a psychological trifecta. First, the plan for Operation Jupiter was one that the Prime Minister had been forced by the Americans to give up earlier in the war. To have reclaimed it as an offensive possibility had to have given Churchill a warm glow inside. Secondly, the British now had, at least in theory, a real alternative to D-Day, one that did not threaten the same loss of life and other resources as did OVERLORD. That is the irksome “back door”

⁷⁷ Ibid, 896.

⁷⁸ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 942-943.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 943.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 943.

⁸¹ *Norway’s Bravest Sons.* <http://www.avalancheexpress.com/99thininfantry.php>.

to which Roosevelt had referred when speaking with Elliott in the aftermath of the conference. In order for Churchill to commit to D-Day “in principle”, he needed the assurance of knowing that other options were still on the table. At TRIDENT, those options had been more immediate. At the first conference in Quebec, the option of Operation Jupiter was further down the road. The third way in which the altered D-Day memorandum was a victory for Churchill had to do with Marshall’s meeting with the Prime Minister prior to the August 14 dinner. During that meeting, Churchill had said to Marshall “give us time.” That’s exactly what the British got. The augmented D-Day memorandum “[provided] for the continued planning for the launching of Operation Jupiter in the event that OVERLORD should have to be abandoned.” Having received permission to indulge in the planning of another operation gave the British time before they would have to psychologically embrace the reality of D-Day, although both offensives would end up taking place in June of 1944, and at approximately the same time.

To the American planners, the fact that the British had not signed on to D-Day as the “overriding priority” in the European Theater was not only a major blow, but also an outright defeat. General Marshall took it the hardest. He insisted that “[o]nly by giving an operation overriding priority could success be insured”, that “[u]nless a decision were taken to remove the seven divisions from the Mediterranean, and unless overriding priority was given to OVERLORD, he believed that OVERLORD would become only a subsidiary operation.”⁸² When impassioned statements such as these got him nowhere, Marshall insisted that “[i]f OVERLORD was not given overriding priority, then in his opinion the operation was doomed and our whole strategic concept would have to be recast and the United States forces in Britain might well be reduced to the reinforced army corps necessary for an opportunist cross-Channel operation.”⁸³ In what might be called a scare tactic, Marshall also claimed that “[u]nless OVERLORD were given overriding priority it would become a minor operation, in which case we should

⁸² *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 867.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 867.

be depending for the defeat of Germany on air bombing alone.”⁸⁴ The U.S. Chiefs as a whole were less vocal than was Marshall on his own, but they all united behind the General and submitted a combined statement at the end of the first plenary session that, in their view, “unless overriding priority were given to OVERLORD the operation would never materialize.”⁸⁵ Given the fact that the Americans were committed to D-Day as an “overriding priority”, and given FDR’s low opinion of Churchill’s “back door”, the fact that the British were able to leave Quebec having made a commitment to D-Day only “in principle” is astonishing. The key to understanding how and why the conference ended in this way as it relates to D-Day and the memorandum prepared by the American chiefs lies in FDR’s commitment to a permanent United Nations.

Roosevelt And The United Nations

As mentioned in the first chapter of this text, the President entrusted all of his hopes for the future peace and security of the world to the United Nations. Roosevelt claimed that the United Nations were “the mightiest military coalition in all history”, and that they were “bound together in solemn agreement that they themselves will not commit acts of aggression or conquest against any of their neighbors.”⁸⁶ Those statements, however, referred only to the loosely configured national alliance of the various countries which had come together to defeat Germany and Japan. FDR’s dream of a permanent United Nations organization was made clear in his statement that “the United Nations can and must remain united for the maintenance of peace by preventing any attempt to rearm in Germany, in Japan, in Italy, or in any other nation which seeks to violate the Tenth Commandment-‘Thou shalt not covet’.”⁸⁷ After the first conference at Quebec, the President said to his son, Elliott, that “the United Nations...They aren’t that yet, completely, but they’re getting there, and they can be pushed a lot

⁸⁴ Ibid, 867.

⁸⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 868.

⁸⁶ Roosevelt, Franklin, D. *State of the Union Address, 1943.*

⁸⁷ Ibid.

farther along.”⁸⁸ This statement is an indication as to just how much the United Nations weighed on Roosevelt’s mind during the time period in which the first conference at Quebec was held. A subsequent statement made to Elliott following the second conference at Cairo provides even further evidence of FDR’s mindset as it related to the U.N.. During that conversation, Roosevelt stated that:

People at home, Congressmen, editorial writers, talk about the United Nations as something which exists only on account of war. The tendency is to snipe at it by saying that only because we are forced into unity by war are we unified. But war isn’t the real force to unity. Peace is the real force. After the war-then is when I’m going to be able to make sure the United Nations are really the United Nations!⁸⁹

Even as late as Christmas of 1944 the President was telling Elliott that he was “seriously thinking of a trip to England, in the late spring or early summer.”⁹⁰ Roosevelt said he felt “that might well be the best way to sell the British people and the British Parliament on the need for Britain to put its hopes for the future in the United Nations.”⁹¹ He added that the British needed to put their hopes in “*all* the United Nations- and not just in the British Empire and British ability to get other countries to combine in some sort of bloc against the Soviet Union.”⁹²

Churchill’s Coded Language

Knowing how important the United Nations was to Roosevelt puts Churchill’s remarks at the August 14 dinner in a different light. FDR’s two chief concerns during the war, but particularly beginning in 1943, were D-Day and the United Nations/peace in the post-war world. The future of D-Day, for all intents and purposes, had been secured at TRIDENT and was not threatened at Quebec. The only thing not settled as it related to a cross-channel invasion was whether or not the British would sign on to OVERLORD as the primary offensive in the European theater of the war. Given these conditions, one

⁸⁸ Roosevelt, Elliott. *As He Saw It*. 129.

⁸⁹ Roosevelt, Elliott. *As He Saw It*. 213.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 228.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 228.

⁹² *Ibid*, 228.

might reasonably ask why it mattered whether Great Britain committed to D-Day outright or merely “in principle”, and whether President Roosevelt really conceded anything to Churchill in allowing the British to commit only “in principle” and to keep a “back door” in the form of other options. The fact is, however, that a firm British commitment to D-Day was of great importance in terms of military planning. The more the British were allowed to hang on to other options, the less American military planners were able to pour the full might of the Allied resources into D-Day as the first priority. Those same planners were firmly wedded to the belief that without a one hundred percent commitment of resources D-Day could not succeed. In other words, it was all or nothing. Thus, the President’s willingness to leave Churchill a “back door” and to allow the British to commit to an invasion “in principle” had to be driven by some other motivating factor. After all, Roosevelt himself had admitted to Elliott that the British had participated in the formulation of a plan as it related to D-Day. FDR had thus far gotten everything he wanted, so why would he back off at Quebec and not push Churchill and the British planners to sign the memorandum giving complete priority status to OVERLORD?

The answer is in Churchill’s dinner remarks from August 14. Prior to that date, it seems likely that Roosevelt was planning to employ the same “argumentation by proxy” technique that he had used successfully at TRIDENT. After all, most of the arguing at Quebec was done by the American and British chiefs, and not by Roosevelt and Churchill themselves. Given the weight that the American planners put on the memorandum and on the British acquiescence to it, and given the degree to which they passionately argued for it during the initial portions of the conference, it seems highly likely that Roosevelt arrived at Quebec having given the memorandum his blessing. In fact, it is difficult to imagine that the American chiefs would have pushed so hard for something that did not have the full backing of their commander in chief. That battle, however, was one that died early, and Churchill’s mealtime conversation is what took the wind out of its sails.

The Prime Minister's remarks were a warning to Roosevelt, with carefully selected code words and phrases designed to let FDR know just how far he could push. Churchill said at the dinner that he looked forward to the "fraternal relationship" that America and Great Britain would enjoy after the war.⁹³ A fraternal relationship is one that, according to a strict dictionary definition, is "informal" and shared "between friends or people who share the same interests or opinions."⁹⁴ The dictionary also equates the term fraternal with that of "acquainted."⁹⁵ Churchill's choice of the term "fraternal" was not something FDR would have welcomed. The President, as stated earlier, wanted the British to put all of their "hopes for the future in the United Nations."⁹⁶ In addition, Roosevelt wanted to dispel the notion that the United Nations were only united because of the war. He wanted the United Nations to become permanent. He described the U.N. as being "bound together" and in "solemn agreement."⁹⁷ One can easily speculate that Roosevelt, sitting and listening to the Prime Minister's remarks at the August 14 dinner, knew with a painful certainty that his goals would not have lined up with Churchill's description of the U.S. and Britain as being simply "acquainted", sharing common interests, or simply just being on good terms with one another. In fact, those ideas are pretty much the opposite of being "bound together" and in "solemn agreement." Thus, there is no mistaking the fact that the Prime Minister was issuing a veiled threat. Knowing how much the United Nations mattered to Roosevelt, Churchill was threatening to withhold the type of committed post-war relationship the President desired if FDR and the American planners pushed too hard with regard to the OVERLORD memorandum.

The Prime Minister's next words were chosen purposefully as well. He stated that "fraternal" associations were

"much better than any attempt at more definite association or understandings[,] as more definite arrangements are subject to misunderstandings whereas loose concepts

⁹³ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 832.

⁹⁴ <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/fraternal>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Roosevelt, Elliott. *As He Saw It.* 228.

⁹⁷ Roosevelt, Franklin. *State of the Union Address, 1943.*

become realities in the public mind and, if flexible enough, can be adjusted to historic developments.”⁹⁸

FDR knew that, if it was going to be successful, a permanent United Nations would require “definite arrangements”, “definite associations”, and “definite understandings”, and that it could not rely on “loose concepts.” Churchill’s remarks, then, were a form of deeper communication with the President. In essence, the Prime Minister was telling Roosevelt that if he did not remain “flexible enough” as it related to D-Day, and if he did not leave the door open for the invasion to be “adjusted to historic developments”, then the British were prepared to withhold the kind of complete commitment to a post-war United Nations that FDR knew was essential. In a manner of speaking, Churchill was telling Roosevelt that he could choose where to apply flexibility. He could either be flexible with the D-Day memorandum and salvage the hope that Britain would fully commit to a post-war United Nations, or he could dig his feet in as it related to the D-Day memorandum and risk being forced to tolerate a “flexible” and noncommittal post-war relationship with England.

The last admonition that Churchill provided to Roosevelt was in his statement that “any hope of the United Nations would be in the leadership given by the intimacy of the United States and British in working out understandings with the Russians.”⁹⁹ Whether or not the Prime Minister actually believed this to be true is debatable and makes no difference at all in this particular context. What is important is the way in which Churchill used the words. The first six were intended to get the President’s attention and to infuse him with insecurity. The wording “any hope of the United Nations” made it sound as if the future success of the U.N. was uncertain or at risk. More than that, the initial phrasing made it sound as if Churchill hadn’t yet bought in to the idea of a successful post-war peace-keeping organization. Roosevelt would have been chomping at the bit to hear the Prime Minister finish his statement and to find out just where the “hope of the United Nations” rested. Churchill’s insistence that the key to the

⁹⁸ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 832.

⁹⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* 832.

success of the U.N. would be determined by “the intimacy of the United States and British” left no room for doubt. The warning being issued to FDR was that if he and the American planners did anything to spoil the relationship between the United States and England during the war, then their post-war relationship would be diminished, threatening the success of a permanent U.N.. In other words, “Mr. President, back off on the D-Day memorandum. You already got what you wanted at TRIDENT. Stop pushing for an even firmer agreement!” In terms of pure geopolitics, the relationship with the British after the war was the bigger concern at this point. The British were not threatening to withdraw from a cross-channel invasion. Rather, they simply didn’t want to be boxed in to the terms of the memorandum. At the August 14th dinner, Roosevelt recognized the situation he was in all too clearly, and he wisely allowed Churchill and the British to leave the first conference at Quebec believing they still had an out and that other options were still on the table in the European theater other than OVERLORD.

The Prime Minister’s comments came before any firm commitments to a permanent United Nations were made later in the war, particularly at Yalta and in San Francisco after Roosevelt’s death, so it is difficult to compare and contrast Churchill’s statements about the U.N. on August 14 to other remarks that he might have made prior to Quebec. For the purposes of comparing and contrasting, however, the contradiction is best illustrated by returning to the agreements made in August of 1941 during the development of the Atlantic Charter. Even in his own memoirs, which are often the victim of whitewash and retroactive sanitizing of certain events, Churchill makes no attempt to conceal or alter the fact that he entered into an agreement with Roosevelt upon which both parties were “[basing] their hopes for a better future for the world.”¹⁰⁰ That agreement contained promises that, among other things, the two countries would “endeavor, with due respect to their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States [sic], of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the

¹⁰⁰ Churchill, *Memoirs*. 491.

world which are needed for their economic prosperity.”¹⁰¹ Additionally, America and Great Britain pledged “to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field”, to “see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want”, and to the “establishment of a wider and more permanent system of general security” following the end of the war.¹⁰² These early agreements became the foundation for the development of the permanent United Nations that FDR came to care so deeply about. What’s more, Churchill claims in his memoirs that the agreements and pledges that the two countries had made to one another and had made public in their joint declaration had as their springboard an outline that he himself had provided to Roosevelt.¹⁰³ As in other parts of this overall text, the meaning that this chapter assigns to Churchill’s dinner remarks, as well as to what did or did not happen in Quebec following those remarks, is speculative and can certainly be viewed through another lens, or multiple lenses for that matter. However, when viewed in comparison with the ideals expressed in the Atlantic Charter, ideals that Churchill himself claims to have not only agreed with but to have authored, it seems clear that the Prime Minister’s choice of words was very intentional and was meant to convey a message.

An Argument For Victory

The initial pages of this chapter promised an argument for why the first conference at Quebec can still be considered a victory for Roosevelt, even though he was at Churchill’s mercy in many ways. In these remaining pages, such an argument will be presented. Certainly, as laid out in the preceding pages, FDR achieved a victory in maintaining the status quo with Churchill and the British and in preserving the chances for a post-war Britain that was fully committed to the United Nations. There

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 491.

¹⁰² Churchill, *Memoirs*. 492.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 491.

were, however, a number of other things that were agreed to in Quebec that quite possibly would not have been if the President had chosen to cling stubbornly to the D-Day memorandum, and if he had allowed his chiefs to continue to force the issue on the British planners.

Atomic Energy

Whereas it is vital to our common safety in the present War to bring the Tube Alloys project to fruition at the earliest moment; and whereas this may be more speedily achieved if all available British and American brains and resources are pooled; and whereas owing to war conditions it would be an improvident use of war resources to duplicate plants on a large scale on both sides of the Atlantic and therefore a far greater expense has fallen upon the United States; It is agreed between us First, that we will never use this agency against each other. Secondly, that we will not use it against third parties without each other's consent. Thirdly, that we will not either of us communicate any information about Tube Alloys to third parties except by mutual consent. Fourthly, that in view of the heavy burden of production falling upon the United States as the result of a wise division of war effort, the British Government recognize that any post-war advantages of an industrial or commercial character shall be dealt with as between the United States and Great Britain on terms to be specified by the President of the United States to the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The Prime Minister expressly disclaims any interest in these industrial and commercial aspects beyond what may be considered by the President of the United States to be fair and just and in harmony with the economic welfare of the world. And Fifthly, that the following arrangements shall be made to ensure full and effective collaboration between the two countries in bringing the project to fruition:

(a) There shall be set up in Washington a Combined Policy Committee composed of:

The Secretary of War.	(United States)
Dr. Vannevar Bush.	(United States)
Dr. James B. Conant.	(United States)
Field-Marshal Sir John Dill, G.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.	(United Kingdom)
Colonel the Right Hon. J. J. Llewellyn, C.B.E., M.C., M.P.	(United Kingdom)
The Honourable C. D. Howe.	(Canada)

The functions of this Committee, subject to the control of the respective Governments, will be:

- (1) To agree from time to time upon the programme of work to be carried out in the two countries.
 - (2) To keep all sections of the project under constant review.
 - (3) To allocate materials, apparatus and plant, in limited supply, in accordance with the requirements of the programme agreed by the Committee.
 - (4) To settle any questions which may arise on the interpretation or application of this Agreement.
- (b) There shall be complete interchange of information and ideas on all sections of the project between members of the Policy Committee and their immediate technical advisers.
- (c) In the field of scientific research and development there shall be full and effective interchange of information and ideas between those in the two countries engaged in the same sections of the field.
- (d) In the field of design, construction and operation of large-scale plants, interchange of information and ideas shall be regulated by such ad hoc arrangements as may, in each section of the field, appear to be necessary or desirable if the project is to be brought to fruition at the earliest moment. Such ad hoc arrangements shall be subject to the approval of the Policy Committee.

Aug. 19th 1943
Approved
Franklin D Roosevelt
Winston S. Churchill¹⁰⁴

The reprinted text above is from a collection of the final official documents that came out of the first conference at Quebec. It reflects the agreement that was reached at the conference with regard to the sharing of technology related to atomic energy. This is the first in a long list of “final” documents that came out of the conference, and it is unlikely that such an agreement would have been reached if FDR and the American chiefs had continued to double down on the issue of D-Day and the memorandum that would have given the cross-channel invasion top priority. The issue of the memorandum dominated the initial phases of the conference and was the first and most significant bone of contention between the American and British chiefs during early meetings that FDR and Churchill did not attend. Had Roosevelt not recognized what

¹⁰⁴ *Agreement Relating To Atomic Energy*. Final Documents of the First Quebec Conference. Foreign Relations of the United States, the Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.

Churchill was really asking of him at the August 14th dinner, and had he not heeded the Prime Minister's warning, it is unlikely that the debate over atomic technology would have ever come to the table, and even less likely that an agreement like the one above would have been reached, at least not at Quebec. Best case scenario, FDR would have been forced to settle for a watered-down version of such an agreement as payback for trying to force the British to sign the D-Day memorandum. The "back door" that the President had given Churchill with regard to the D-Day memorandum had to have played a large role in securing such strong British commitment to the issue of atomic technology, regardless of the fact that the atomic energy agreement was to their benefit.

German Crimes In Poland

[Quebec, August 22, 1943.]

Trustworthy information has reached the United States Government regarding the crimes committed by the German invaders against the population of Poland. Since the autumn of 1942 a belt of territory extending from the province of Bialystok southwards along the line of the River Bug has been systematically emptied of its inhabitants. In July 1943 these measures were extended to practically the whole of the province of Lublin, where hundreds of thousands of persons have been deported from their homes or exterminated.

These measures are being carried out with the utmost brutality. Many of the victims are killed on the spot. The rest are segregated. Men from fourteen to fifty are taken away to work for Germany. Some children are killed on the spot, others are separated from their parents and either sent to Germany to be brought up as Germans or sold to German settlers or dispatched with the women and old men to concentration camps, where they are now being systematically put to death in gas chambers.

The United States Government reaffirms its resolve to punish the instigators and actual perpetrators of these crimes. It further declares that, so long as such atrocities continue to be committed by the representatives and in the name of Germany, they must be taken into account against the time of the final settlement

with Germany. Meanwhile the war against Germany will be prosecuted with the utmost vigor until the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny has been finally overthrown.¹⁰⁵

The text reprinted above is a declaration on German crimes in Poland. It was issued by the United States and, like the atomic energy agreement reprinted on the previous page, is part of the collection of final documents resulting from the first conference at Quebec. This declaration is of enormous importance, as it is the first document of its kind to come out of any of the major conferences of World War II. In this document, the American government is publicly acknowledging its awareness of Nazi war crimes and making clear its intention to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. Had FDR and the Americans continued to try to box the British in at Quebec as it related to the D-Day memorandum, this issue, much like that of atomic energy, may have remained on the back burner. Perhaps just as importantly, the British would have fought a great deal of the wording that was used in the document. In fact, in the version of this declaration that was released to the press the words “where they are now being systematically put to death in gas chambers” were not included due to British opposition to them. How much more might they have objected to had they been licking their wounds after signing the D-Day memorandum against their will?

Other Agreements

Atomic energy and German war crimes were just two of the agreements that were formalized in the aftermath of the first conference at Quebec. The parties also agreed, for instance, that:

Upon the defeat of the Axis in Europe, in cooperation with other Pacific Powers and, if possible, with Russia, to direct the full resources of the United States and

¹⁰⁵ *Declaration On German Crimes In Poland*. Final Documents of the First Quebec Conference. Foreign Relations of the United States, The Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.

Great Britain to bring about at the earliest possible date the unconditional surrender of Japan.¹⁰⁶

In terms of budgetary considerations and the wise use of other resources, a number of priorities were agreed to at Quebec. In the most condensed format possible, the Allies agreed that they would “1) maintain the security and war-making capacity of the Western Hemisphere and the British Isles, 2) support the war-making capacity of our forces in all areas, 3) maintain vital overseas lines of communication, with particular emphasis on the defeat of the U-boat menace, 4) continue the disruption of Axis sea communications, 5) intensify the air offensive against the Axis Powers in Europe, 6) concentrate maximum resources in a selected area as early as practicable for the purpose of conducting a decisive invasion of the Axis citadel, 7) undertake such measures as may be necessary and practicable to aid the war effort of Russia, 8) undertake such measures as may be necessary and practicable in order to aid the war effort of China as an effective Ally and as a base for operations against Japan, 9) to prepare the ground for the active or passive participation of Turkey in the war on the side of the Allies, and 10) to prepare the French Forces in Africa to fulfill an active role in the war against the Axis Powers.”¹⁰⁷ In addition, all parties reached agreement regarding the use of facilities in the Azores Islands and the role of the British in arranging for the United States to make use of these islands for transit purposes, and had come to a mutual understanding that:

The progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic system, the disruption of vital elements of lines of communication, and the material reduction of German air combat strength by the successful prosecution of the Combined Bomber Offensive from all convenient bases is a prerequisite to Overlord (barring an independent and complete Russian victory before Overlord can be mounted).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ *The Combined Chiefs of Staff to President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, Aug. 24, 1943. Reports of Conclusions Reached By The Combined Chiefs Of Staff. Final Documents of the First Quebec Conference. Foreign Relations of the United States, The Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.*

¹⁰⁷ *The Combined Chiefs of Staff to President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, Aug. 24, 1943.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

It was, however, the eleventh enumerated item in the document that was prepared at the conclusion of the first conference at Quebec with regard to the agreements that had been reached among all parties that is perhaps the most important in illustrating that FDR and the Americans did not really come out of Quebec on the losing end. It is marked simply “Operation ‘Overlord’” and it states the following:

This operation will be the primary U.S.-British ground and air effort against the Axis in Europe. (Target date 1 May 1944). After securing adequate Channel ports, exploitation will be directed toward securing areas that will facilitate both ground and air operations against the enemy. Following the establishment of strong Allied forces in France, operations designed to strike at the heart of Germany and to destroy her military forces will be undertaken.¹⁰⁹

There will be a balanced ground and air force build-up for Overlord , and continuous planning for and maintenance of those forces available in the United Kingdom in readiness to take advantage of any situation permitting an opportunistic cross-Channel move into France.¹¹⁰

At first glance, it would appear that the Americans won and that the British capitulated on the issue of the D-Day memorandum. After all, the first paragraph begins with the sentence “This operation will be the primary U.S.-British ground and air effort against the Axis in Europe.”¹¹¹ It is in the third and final paragraph, however, that the subtlety of what took place at Quebec becomes apparent. That paragraph states that:

As between Operation Overlord and operations in the Mediterranean, where there is a shortage of resources, available resources will be distributed and employed with the main object of insuring the success of Overlord . Operations in the Mediterranean Theater will be carried out with the forces allotted at Trident except insofar as these may be varied by decision of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ *The Combined Chiefs of Staff to President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, Aug. 24, 1943.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

It is in the words “except insofar as these may be varied by decision of the Combined Chiefs of Staff”¹¹³ that the difference between what the Americans wanted and what the British wanted lies. This was the only line that the Americans had to add to the original memorandum in order to report officially that the matter enjoyed the agreement of both the Americans and the British. Furthermore, should the Combined Chiefs of Staff decide to make changes to OVERLORD at any point in time, item thirteen of the document, titled simply “Operation ‘Jupiter’” states that:

In case circumstances render the execution of Overlord impossible, it may be necessary to consider Jupiter as an alternative. Plans for this operation, with particular reference to an entry into Southern Norway, should therefore be made and kept up to date.¹¹⁴

There were other agreements reached at Quebec, agreements no less important to the continued prosecution of the war than those listed here, but not as important to the argument that Roosevelt’s wise choice to cut his losses with regard to the D-Day memorandum really didn’t cost him anything at all. Given the significance of the atomic energy agreement, the declaration on German war crimes in Poland that the United States was able to release, the promise of British assistance in the Pacific theater of the war following Hitler’s defeat, and the preservation of OVERLORD as a priority offensive in the European theater, it is clear that the President actually emerged from the first conference at Quebec as a winner and not a loser. More importantly, he won without really giving up anything. He already had a British commitment to D-Day following TRIDENT. What difference did it make that Churchill insisted on the ability of the Combined Chiefs of Staff to re-evaluate a cross-channel invasion at a later time if and when circumstances changed? The chiefs would have retained that ability even if it had not been spelled out in the conference’s final documents. What military body wouldn’t re-evaluate a

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ The Combined Chiefs of Staff to President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, Aug. 24, 1943.

previous plan if and when circumstances changed? The ability to make adjustments without sacrificing offensive momentum is what makes victory possible in the first place. In addition, of what importance was it that the British would only go along with the D-Day memorandum if it included provisions for an alternate offensive, namely Operation Jupiter, should one be necessary? If circumstances in the future had made D-Day impossible, the Allies would have needed a substitute offensive regardless, so why not go ahead and reserve one ahead of time? The paragraph relative to Jupiter doesn't mandate that any resources other than planning be diverted to the operation right away. That meant troop resources and material could continue being pumped into D-Day and none would be aggregated for Jupiter unless absolutely necessary (In fact, Operation Jupiter ended up being a reality, but it was undertaken in conjunction with D-Day, and not instead of a cross-channel invasion.) D-Day didn't take a single hit at Quebec as a result of the additional wording demanded by the British. In fact, it was bolstered in many ways, and all President Roosevelt had to do to achieve that was to respect the subtle warnings that Churchill provided him with on August 14, 1943.

If FDR was going to make concessions to the Prime Minister, then the first conference at Quebec was definitely the place to do it. Things became much more complicated after the conference, and the dynamic that had previously existed between Roosevelt and Churchill had to evolve and adapt as Stalin became more and more of a presence in terms of decision-making. Thus, the President would have two world leaders with whom he would need to negotiate. Given the mutual distrust that already existed between the British and the Soviet Union, Roosevelt would have to find a way to walk a fine line between Churchill and Stalin. He could not be viewed as siding either with or against either man, for he needed to preserve his relationship with the Prime Minister while at the same time avoiding any appearance of a U.S./Great Britain

coalition against the post-war Soviet Union. That task would come to the forefront during the conference at Tehran, where Roosevelt would be called upon to perform what might best be described as a public relations miracle.

Chapter Three: Roosevelt the Referee

When Franklin Roosevelt's son, Elliott, arrived in Tehran to assist his father during yet another of the seemingly endless conferences of World War II, things did not at first proceed in the way he had envisioned. "The first morning of our arrival," said Elliott in his book *"As He Saw It"*, "we spent an hour trying to get an army car to come down to the field and pick us up." The President's young son found out quickly that his problems were not going to end there. "I spent another hour driving through Tehran to the wrong addresses," said Elliott. Eventually, Elliott discovered that FDR was staying at the Russian Embassy. This was highly unusual and it troubled the President greatly. He explained to his son that he had fought the arrangement tooth and nail. According to Elliott, his father felt that "he would be more independent if he were no one's guest", and that he would "offend" the British by staying at the Russian Embassy. In the end, however, logistical considerations won the day and FDR had abandoned his arguments.¹¹⁵

While the President's living arrangements and the concern that he expressed with regard to them might at first seem innocuous, Roosevelt's desire to avoid giving offense, and his determination to avoid the appearance that he was anybody's man, would come to define his behavior during the conference that was soon to follow. The quiet and noncommittal stance that he adopted at Tehran, while appearing from the sidelines to be somewhat unimpressive and cowardly, was calculated to keep both the Soviets and the British happy. FDR's ultimate acquiescence to Stalin and his acceptance of living quarters at the Russian Embassy is also telling, for it would be Stalin who would emerge from Tehran having received pretty much all that he desired from Roosevelt, and it would be Churchill who would have to yield to logistical considerations and settle for simply not being offended and for the preservation of his status quo with the President.

¹¹⁵ Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It* (Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, New York, 1946), 172-173.

The Oxford Living Dictionary defines the word “referee” as “an official who watches a game or match closely to ensure that the rules are adhered to and (in some sports) to arbitrate on matters arising from the play.”¹¹⁶ In the sport of basketball, referees assume a somewhat risky and confrontational role. They run from one end of the court to the other right next to the actual players, many of whom are two and even three times their size, they assign immediate blame for violations such as traveling, fouling, and goal tending, and they fearlessly push their way in between players in order to prevent or break up fights. Football referees often stand further outside the action than do their basketball-officiating peers, and they generally review possible infractions for a much longer period of time before making a ruling. They are, however, in no less danger, as they are often several sizes smaller than the players they are attempting to police as well. Thus, in terms of both sports, calling FDR a “referee” is perhaps a slight misuse of the term. After all, basketball and football players usually dwarf their respective referees. In addition, referees don’t really have a vested interest in who wins the games they are officiating. Roosevelt, in contrast, was on equal footing with Churchill and Stalin, and he had just as much to gain or to lose as they did.

The President’s behavior at Tehran, then, might best be compared to that of a boxing referee. Those officials are typically the same approximate size as the fighters whose performances they scrutinize. Furthermore, their rulings are confined to low blows, punching after the bell has ended the round, performing ten-counts during knockdowns, and (if necessary) stopping the fight before too much injury or bloodletting occurs to the losing fighter. In essence, a boxing referee makes no actual rulings, speaks very little, and relies on his or her physical presence as a way to maintain order and fairness. Unless there is a knockout (which happens far less often than Hollywood movies would have people believe), the fight goes to the scorecards and the judges determine the winner based on a point system. At that stage, the referee’s only job is to raise the arm of the winning fighter. At Tehran, Churchill and

¹¹⁶ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/referee>

Stalin were the heavyweight contenders. Roosevelt's job was to prevent the low blow of delaying or preventing D-Day, guard against punches after the bell by checking British and Soviet territorial acquisitions for their own sake, and to make sure the conference didn't end with the destruction of either fighter.

In keeping with such a metaphor, the combined chiefs were the judges whose scorecards would determine the victor, and Roosevelt's only task at the conclusion of the fight would be to raise the hand of the winner. That winner would emerge by virtue of their performance in the ring, and while Stalin's performance didn't feature any overwhelming punching power or superior speed, he did do a better job than did Churchill of boxing within the rules that had been established for the fight. This was the role that history had thrust upon FDR. The President already knew that Stalin's ideas for the continued prosecution of the war were the ones that were the most favorable to D-Day. Yet, he could not openly side against Churchill. To maintain the impartial stance required of any good referee, FDR did a number of things that this chapter will highlight, using primarily the official minutes from the Tehran and Cairo II conferences as evidence.

First, Roosevelt allowed Stalin to come out punching, prepared to directly intervene only in the case of a low blow, a punch after the bell, or an early knockdown. In this case, such things could only have come in the form of a direct attack by Stalin on American and British performance in the war thus far, open accusations from either Churchill or Stalin as to colonial or territorial motivations, or a delay/negation as it related to the planning and execution of D-Day. Another risky activity performed by referees in the ring is the breaking up of fighters who are tangled up together and on the ropes. This is done for one of two basic reasons. One is to move the fight along and keep things from getting stalled. The other is to prevent the taller fighter from leaning on the shorter one, thereby taking advantage of an unearned rest and at the same time wearing out the other fighter with increased body weight. Roosevelt would be called upon early in the first plenary session at Tehran to break up just such an

entanglement when a brief fight broke out between Stalin and Churchill and Stalin began to lean his weight into the Prime Minister to tire him out more quickly. Most of the time, a referee moves entangled fighters off of the ropes with warnings such as “break”, “keep it clean”, or “next time it’s a point.” FDR did something similar with his quiet but firm warning that the argument “on the ropes” between Churchill and Stalin was moving away from a commitment to D-Day, thus both fighters had to break and leave the ropes. Lastly, a referee can only determine the winner of a fight in cases of knockouts, disqualifications, or in some cases if there is a tie in scoring. Otherwise, he or she sends the final decision to the judges. Tehran would see FDR perform this task as well, sending matters of contention between Churchill and Stalin to the judges, or in this case the combined chiefs. All of this comparison between FDR and referees in sporting events, boxing or otherwise, is of course speculative. It is possible that he had other, more private reasons for behaving as he did at Tehran. Based on a number of remarks that he made to his son, Elliott¹¹⁷, however, it certainly seems likely that the President, in ways that will be suggested a bit later on, was trying to keep the peace between Churchill and Stalin at Tehran, in addition to securing peace for the world in the long run.

Background/Context

To the casual reader of this text, it might appear as though the Allied World War II conferences were merely a series of “one step forward and two steps back” debates in which President Roosevelt, in one manner or another, secured Prime Minister Churchill’s verbal commitment to a cross-English Channel invasion, only to see Churchill and the British vacillate and back-track at the next conference, thereby forcing Roosevelt to win their commitment all over again, at the cost of precious time and energy. In order to avoid that highly inaccurate portrayal, a brief statement as to the actual secession of events is hardly a waste of ink. In total, and including the United Nations Conference in San Francisco in

¹¹⁷ Those remarks are outlined by Elliott himself throughout his book *As He Saw It*, 1946.

April-June of 1945, there were twenty-three conferences. The first took place in Washington, D.C. in 1941, and the last occurred in Germany in 1945. The years in between were filled with meetings in various other locations and with various other purposes. Some of the conferences were attended by only the Americans and the British, others by America, the British, and the Canadians, and still others were attended by the Soviet Union as well. What is important for the purposes of this paper, however, is that a cross-channel invasion was not discussed and/or contested at all of these twenty-three meetings. Instead, the invasion was discussed at the Second Washington Conference in June of 1942, the Second Moscow Conference in August of 1942, and at the Casablanca Conference in January of 1943, and was not really a bone of contention until the Third Washington Conference, or “TRIDENT”, in May of 1943.

The conflict that took place at TRIDENT with regard to a cross-channel invasion has already been documented in the first chapter of this text and it requires no revisiting. What is important to understand is that the agreements reached at the end of TRIDENT did not immediately crumble, thereby necessitating a need for yet another conference. In fact, plans for an invasion were not again in dispute until the first conference at Quebec in August of 1943 and the Tehran Conference in November-December of 1943. By that time, other major conferences had taken place in the aftermath of TRIDENT. What’s more, the conflict over plans for an invasion was never direct after TRIDENT. In other words, Churchill never said no to an invasion. He actually said the opposite. Rather, the Prime Minister’s overall technique involved the occasional suggestion of alternative battle plans that would, by default, delay an invasion. In the past, these alternative strategies were, among other things, Churchill’s way of pursuing the war peripherally in the hope that an invasion from the west would eventually prove to be unnecessary. That calculation was still in play at Tehran, but a much larger and potentially nastier concern, colonialism, had also reared its head, one that defined FDR’s behavior at Tehran. That issue will be discussed in more detail later. First, however, some additional context is in order.

The New Face of the War

It is often said that war changes everything. While broad statements such as these are bound to have their adherents as well as their detractors, a clearer and less debatable statement might be that in war nothing stays the same, particularly long wars fought in multiple theaters and involving multiple world powers. The first chapter of this text dealt with the time period spanning the Casablanca Conference in Morocco and the Third Washington Conference, or TRIDENT, a time period comprising January through May of 1943. The circumstances of the war, as they existed at that time, have already been enumerated and do not require repetition. The second chapter focused on the first conference at Quebec in August of 1943. This third chapter is devoted to a slightly later time period, specifically the conferences at Cairo and Tehran, which lasted from November 23 until December 6 of 1943. In order to avoid presenting an awkward and confusing timeline, the following brief explanation seems in order. The first conference at Cairo took place from November 23 through November 26. A conference at Tehran was then held from November 28 through December 1. At the conclusion of the meetings at Tehran, a second conference was held at Cairo from December 4 through December 6. All of these meetings took place a mere six months after TRIDENT and only about ninety days after the first conference at Quebec, but already the face of the war had changed immensely.

Perhaps the best summation of those changes is found in the writing of Richard M. Leighton, who states that "American military leaders and their staffs, on the eve of the Cairo-Tehran Conferences, were in a mood to force a showdown on the strategy of the European war." Leighton also discusses at length the general view among the American chiefs that the war's collective energy was not being harnessed in the most effective way. In particular, he laments the diversion of American resources "into the development of a new line of communications and a new invasion base in North Africa." Leighton claims that the decisions made at Casablanca quickly became the victims of "British persuasion and the ineluctable logic of momentum", which he further claims "had drawn the Allies deeper into the

Mediterranean-into Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, Sardinia, [and] Corsica.” There were a number of problems with this increased Mediterranean focus, but the basic problem leading up to the conferences at Cairo and Tehran, at least according to Leighton, was that the Americans no longer had any faith that the British were committed to a cross-channel invasion. Of particular concern to the United States was the fact that, while the Quebec Conference had ended with the acceptance of an OVERLORD plan prepared by both the American and the British chiefs, the British “had rejected an American demand that OVERLORD be given an ‘overriding’ priority over operations in the Mediterranean.”¹¹⁸

Back to the Issues at Hand

Thus, the eve of the conferences at Cairo and Tehran found FDR in a similar but yet somewhat different boat. He knew that the British would no longer attempt to supplant D-Day by pushing for alternate strategies, and he knew they would remain verbally committed to a cross-channel invasion. He also knew, however, that they would continue to recommend additional offensives to take place prior to D-Day, and that they might also recommend alternate offensives that could be taken up quickly if D-Day looked like it might fail. Their arguments would fall generally along the line that such offensives would put the Allies in a stronger position heading into a cross-channel invasion, or that they should not be without options should D-Day backfire. So far, FDR wasn’t really dealing with a new game at all. In addition, his objections to the British line of thinking had not changed. He still felt that additional operations prior to D-Day would not only delay the invasion, but would also squander the precious resources needed for a successful invasion from the west. He was also committed to the idea of relieving the pressure on Stalin’s eastern front as soon as possible. While Churchill was probably still hoping that his suggestions would be implemented, thereby pushing D-Day back and possibly making it

¹¹⁸ Greenfield, Kent Roberts. *Command Decisions: 20 Crucial Command Decisions That Decided the Outcome of World War II*. (Harcourt, Brace, 1959),188-189.

unnecessary, there was a new motivation for the Prime Minister by November of 1943, one that Roosevelt understood all too well. In the introduction to this text, colonialism was listed as a point of contention between FDR and Churchill. Early on, the President felt that this difference of opinion would be a problem only in the maintenance of peace in the post-war world. The recent successes of the Red Army, however, had made colonialism a wartime concern as well. Stalin's troops had not only reclaimed much of what the Nazis had taken in their push east, but had taken possession of new territory as well in their westward offensive. This accumulation of new territory threatened not only previous and current British outposts, but also areas that they had scoped out for the future as well. Basically, the British and the Soviets were in a race to either protect or acquire anew as much territory in central Europe as possible. This included the Balkans, Rumania (The President preferred this older spelling of "Romania."), and Hungary. Roosevelt believed that Churchill and Stalin were competing for other areas as well. FDR knew that this concern had become more important to Churchill than was D-Day. He also knew that any new or alternative strategy(s) that the British might suggest moving forward would be calculated to either hold the Soviet Union in check or to allow Churchill's armies to beat Stalin to the punch. All of this new information altered the chessboard.

Returning to the things that had not changed, FDR still needed Churchill as not only an ally in battle, but as a post-war, non-communist European ally as well. Thus, he still could not afford to offend or isolate the Prime Minister. Roosevelt needed Stalin too, as the Red Army was still doing much of the dirty work against Hitler and the Germans. Having Stalin as a post-war ally wasn't likely for the long haul, but the President needed his cooperation in the formation of the early structure of the United Nations, and in the carving up of post-war Europe, specifically Germany. The original title of this chapter was "Stalin: The Human Shield", due primarily to the fact that an early look at the minutes from Tehran indicated that Roosevelt's basic strategy during the conference was to hide behind Stalin as a way of indirectly refuting Churchill's arguments. A closer inspection of primary sources, however, indicates that

a more appropriate title is “Roosevelt the Referee”. The President’s behavior at the conference in Tehran was not designed as a means of protecting himself. Rather, FDR was in the unenviable position of having to 1) protect D-Day from any more forestalling or loss of resources, 2) maintain Churchill’s trust and friendship, and 3) prevent the perception on the part of the Soviets as the end of the war approached that America and England were in concert against the Soviet Union in terms of the post-war world. With regard to this last point, Roosevelt had to provide such assurance to the Soviets without openly siding either with or against the British. Such a task rendered Roosevelt’s typically direct and confrontational style impossible, as one can hardly be direct, confrontational, and impartial all at the same time. Much as he did at Casablanca, the President would need to step carefully, for the balancing act between the British and the Soviets was one in which the slightest breeze, the tiniest misstep, or the most incremental change in momentum could easily spell disaster.

In basketball and other team sports, athletes often discover that various officials have “pet calls”, or alleged infractions that they like to call repeatedly, whether or not those infractions are actually happening as baldly and as frequently as they claim. Boxing differs slightly, in that the conversation that takes place between the referee and both fighters just prior to the opening bell alerts the competitors to the particular infractions that the official will be looking for most closely. Sometimes these things change from fight to fight and from official to official, but the pre-fight huddle usually resolves any mystery that might otherwise exist as to what will be tolerated and what will not. FDR did Churchill a great favor in providing him with a pre-fight warning. Specifically, an early indication as to what Roosevelt’s primary concern at Cairo and Tehran would be is provided in a November 11, 1943 message from FDR to Churchill. The message serves as both a reminder and a warning. In it, the President states to the Prime Minister that “I have held all along-as I know you have-that it would be a terrible mistake if U.J. (Uncle Joe, Stalin’s nickname) thought we had ganged up on him on military

action.”¹¹⁹ Further insight into Roosevelt’s frame of mind is found in a conversation between he and Elliott following the meetings at the initial Cairo Conference and during the early moments of the meetings at Tehran. In that conversation, documented by Elliott, the President expressed a great deal of respect and admiration for Stalin and his leadership style. “He gets things done, that man,” said FDR. “He really keeps his eye on the ball he’s aiming at. It’s a pleasure working with him. There’s nothing devious. He outlines the subject he wants discussed, and he sticks to it.”¹²⁰ Roosevelt went on to criticize Churchill quite thoroughly and to take aim at not only his strategies, but at his motives as well. “Well.....now Winston is talking about two operations at once, said FDR. “I guess he knows there’s no use trying to argue against a western invasion any more.”¹²¹ Elliott asked his father to explain what he meant in terms of Churchill favoring two simultaneous operations. FDR responded that the Prime Minister wanted one operation in the west and one up through the Balkans. “You know, Elliott, it’s an extraordinary thing, these plenary sessions, from one standpoint,” said the President. “Whenever the P.M. argued for our invasion through the Balkans, it was quite obvious to everyone in the room what he really meant.” As if to dispel all doubt for future historians as to what he was referring to, Roosevelt added that “he [Churchill] was above all else anxious to knife up into central Europe, in order to keep the Red Army out of Australia and Rumania, even Hungary, if possible.” FDR seemed certain that he was not the only one who was painfully aware of the Prime Minister’s colonial motivations. “Stalin knew it, I knew it, everybody knew it,” Roosevelt told Elliott.¹²²

Life is full of admonishments such as “Don’t cry over spilled milk.”, “Never count your chickens before they’ve hatched.”, and “Don’t poke the bear with a stick.” It was this last warning that Elliott failed to heed when he suggested to his father that Churchill’s preference for two simultaneous

¹¹⁹ Loewenheim, *Roosevelt & Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (Saturday Review Press, Dutton, New York, 1975), 393.

¹²⁰ Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 183.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 183-184.

¹²² *Ibid*, 184-185.

operations, regardless of the motivation behind them, might well be grounded in solid military planning. FDR had quite a visceral reaction to this suggestion. “Our chiefs of staff are convinced of one thing,” Roosevelt responded. “The way to kill the most Germans, with the least loss of American soldiers, is to mount one great big invasion and then slam ‘em with everything we’ve got.” FDR then made it clear that he wasn’t simply going along with the recommendations from the chiefs for the sake of harmony. “It makes sense to me. It makes sense to Uncle Joe. It makes sense to all our generals, and always has, ever since the beginning of the war and, I expect, since before that, too,” said the President. He added that “it makes sense to the Red Army people. That’s that. It’s the quickest way to win the war. That’s all.”¹²³ In response to a suggestion that D-Day might still be successful even if Churchill’s strategies were implemented, FDR made his position even more clear, stating that

[I]f the way to save American lives, the way to win as short a war as possible, is from the west and from the west alone, without wasting landing-craft and men and material in the Balkan mountains, and our chiefs are convinced it is, then that’s that!¹²⁴

The President then switched gears and attacked Churchill’s colonialist mentality directly. “Trouble is,” said FDR, “the P.M. is thinking too much of the post-war and where England will be. He’s scared of letting the Russians get too strong.”¹²⁵ Given the fact that at least fifty percent of Roosevelt’s decisions and arguments were motivated by his dreams for the post-WWII world, such an attack on Churchill has to rate as one of history’s most glaring examples of irony and hypocrisy. “I see no reason,” added FDR vehemently, “for putting the lives of American soldiers in jeopardy in order to protect real or fancied British interests on the European continent.” Roosevelt added that “we’re at war, and our job is to win it as fast as possible, and without adventures. I think-I *hope*-that he’s learned we mean that, once, finally, and for all.”¹²⁶ While historical perspective makes FDR’s comments regarding Churchill’s post-war

¹²³ Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 185.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 185.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 185.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 186.

aspirations surprising, the news that he dropped on his son during that same private conversation absolutely shocked young Elliott to his core. The President informed him that he had participated in private meetings with Stalin and that “he offered to declare war against Japan and start fighting in the Far East in order to win finally the argument for a second front in the west.” FDR added that “He [Stalin] was willing to get in as soon as he could get troops to Siberia, if we would just promise the May first invasion in the west.”¹²⁷ Roosevelt’s next statement regarding Stalin is the best indication provided to history as to the approach that the President adopted at Tehran. “The biggest thing,” said FDR, “was in making clear to Stalin that the United States and Great Britain were not allied in one common bloc against the Soviet Union.” It is clear from Roosevelt’s next statement that he was thinking of the post-war world as well. “The one thing that could upset the applecart, after the war, is if the world is divided again, Russia against England and us,” said FDR. He added that “that’s our big job now-making sure that we continue to act as referee, as intermediary between Russia and England.”¹²⁸

The Fight At Tehran Begins

The official minutes from the Tehran Conference indicate that Churchill’s passive-aggressive techniques were in play almost immediately. The funny thing is, so were Roosevelt’s. During a meeting between the President and his Joint Chiefs of Staff on the morning of November 28, 1943, Admiral Leahy advised all in attendance, a number that did not yet include anyone from the British or Soviet contingents, that the progress of the war in the European theater to date had created a scenario in which two choices were available to the Allies. They could proceed with plans for a cross-channel invasion, or they could concentrate on a major offensive in Italy. He pointed out that, should they choose the latter, the idea of an invasion across the English Channel would cease to be a priority, and

¹²⁷ Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 203.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 207.

“would revert to the status of an operation of opportunity.”¹²⁹ As is evident from Roosevelt’s comments to Elliott in private, the President was committed to D-Day as the top Allied priority for winning the war and would accept no other scenario. General Marshall informed the group that, based on his conversations with the British, he felt they would prioritize further operations in Italy, and that they would not bristle at all at the idea of a delay in a cross-channel invasion. Their attitude was no longer based merely on a general reluctance to commit to D-Day as the ultimate offensive priority, but also on their desire to protect their colonial interests from Soviet conquest. Marshall also informed the group of one other very important fact, namely that the Soviets would not only be opposed to a delay in D-Day, but that they would also insist on some form of offensive prior to a cross-channel invasion in order to relieve the pressure on the eastern front.¹³⁰ Roosevelt was committed to the idea of coming to Stalin’s aid as soon as possible himself, as was Churchill if his words are to be believed. Early intelligence, however, indicated that D-Day wasn’t going to be enough for Stalin. He would want something more and something sooner. Thus, both the British and the Soviets were expected to arrive at the conference prepared to argue for additional offensives prior to D-Day. One of the major problems was, however, that neither camp was going to argue for the same strategy. The British were expected to argue for an offensive that would allow them to ostensibly continue their prosecution of the war, while at the same time holding Soviet expansion in check. The Soviets, in contrast, were expected to argue for a plan that did not allow either of their two wartime allies to check their rapid movement across Europe. Roosevelt would have to balance both plans while at the same time preserving D-Day. This was the state of affairs among the Allies at the dawn of the Tehran Conference.

During the first plenary meeting of the conference, which took place on November 28 at 4 p.m. and included Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, as well as their various staff members, Roosevelt first

¹²⁹ *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, 478.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid, 478.*

attempted to appease Stalin by assuring him that the most important consideration throughout the many meetings that he and Churchill had conducted in the Marshal's absence was the launching of a major offensive that would aid in the Soviet Union's efforts against the Germans in the east. He further placated Stalin by insisting that a commitment to such an offensive, namely D-Day or "Overlord", would have occurred sooner were it not for the perils of sea transport and the rough waters of the English Channel. He reiterated to the Soviet Premier that, as per the agreements reached during the Quebec Conference of August 1943, a cross-channel invasion would be launched in May of 1944.¹³¹ These opening remarks were anything but spontaneous. On the contrary, knowing that the British were soon to argue for a shift in priorities that would delay D-Day, and also knowing that the Soviets were prepared to not only argue against a delay, but to argue in favor of an additional and earlier offensive, FDR was setting himself, and by extension the United States, up as the one member of the Big Three that remained committed to earlier agreements. A good referee must remain impartial. Thus, Roosevelt was creating an atmosphere in which any change in the earlier agreed upon status quo could conceivably be blamed on the fighters and not the official.

What the President did next was predictable. He explained to Stalin that American and British efforts in the Mediterranean had been so successful that there now existed the question of what to do with their combined forces. Should they focus on operations in Italy, or concentrate their efforts elsewhere? FDR added, in a very calculated way, that he personally desired no delay in a cross-channel invasion, regardless of any other decisions that might be made in the short-term. He then stated that, since the primary focus of any future operations should be to relieve the pressure on the Soviets, Stalin should weigh in as to his preference-Italy or an invasion from the west? This was the first in a long series of "I have my own opinion, of course, but the decision isn't really up to me." techniques that Roosevelt would employ during the conference. No matter what was decided upon, what was rejected, which if

¹³¹ *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, 489.

any of Churchill's hopes were dashed, it would not be Roosevelt's doing but Stalin's. If Stalin won the fight, it would be because of his superior boxing, not because of a direct ruling from FDR. Furthermore, FDR wasn't risking his current relationship with Churchill as a war-time ally or his future relationship with the Prime Minister as a post-war European ally against communism because the President had, in essence, deflected blame and/or criticism by laying the issue at Stalin's feet. If anything, especially given the fact that FDR was all too aware of Churchill's colonial concerns, the President had rendered it even more likely that the British would remain America's allies in the post-war world. Roosevelt, after all, expected to still be alive after the war. What better way to ensure his post-war relationship with Churchill than by setting the Soviets up? In short, Roosevelt maintained and even enhanced his relationship with Stalin and the Soviets by allowing them to weigh in on the logical next move for the Americans and the British. At the same time, any strategies recommended by Stalin that resulted in a reduction in Great Britain's post-war status as a colonial power could be blamed in their entirety on the Soviets. The President had figured out a strategy for having it both ways. He could maintain friendly relations with both countries, hold fast to D-Day, and do both without giving Stalin the impression that America and Great Britain would be a post-war block against the Soviet Union. FDR had done all of this by simply allowing Stalin to come out of his corner and throw the first real punches of the fight.

An important distinction here between TRIDENT and Tehran is that at TRIDENT Churchill showed up in Washington with a strategy that completely contradicted the plan he and his British counterparts had agreed to just a few months earlier at Casablanca. At Tehran, in contrast, the Prime Minister and his staff arrived still verbally committed to the May 1944 implementation of D-Day that had been reached earlier in Quebec, but recommending an additional offensive against Italy first. Churchill and company realized that such an offensive would delay a cross-channel invasion by a few months, but argued that such a delay might be necessary from a public relations or image control standpoint. In short, Churchill argued at Tehran that, if the Allies did not take advantage of the opportunity to capture Rome, it would

be perceived in the eyes of the world as a military defeat, and he could not envision embarking upon an operation as important and as risky as D-Day on the heels of a PR defeat. For good measure, the Prime Minister threw in a tactical consideration as well, arguing that capturing Rome would give the Allies control of Airfields in northern Italy, from which air cover could then be provided that would make a cross-channel invasion of northern France that much more feasible. Churchill was nothing if not a great speaker and a passionate debater. The old leopard, however, had not changed his spots. All of his brilliant oratory boiled down to the same two things. He still hoped the war could be won without a cross-channel invasion, and, more importantly as the Russians continued pushing the Nazis back through Europe, he wanted to continue clinging to the old British colonialist/imperialist mentality.

In most cases, and with the obvious exception of knockouts, the winning fighter is the one with the best ratio of punches thrown to punches landed. Thus, so long as punches are being thrown cleanly and neither fighter's health or safety is in question, a good referee simply lets the punches determine the course of the fight. The minutes from the various meetings at Tehran show that FDR allowed Stalin to continue throwing jabs by simply yielding most of the conversation to the Russian leader, who predictably balked at the notion of additional operations in Italy and an attempt to capture Rome, insisting that the wiser course of action was to stick to the original plan as it related to D-Day, but in the meantime to launch a smaller offensive into southern France, an offensive that would not delay D-Day nor divert resources from it.¹³² All of this discussion is documented in the minutes from the various meetings of the Tehran Conference, and those minutes read much like a script that was set into motion by FDR before the conference even began. The second that the discussion was turned over to Stalin and he advocated for no changes in D-Day and a push into southern France as well, Roosevelt was safe. The President knew that Churchill's plans regarding Italy, while not disingenuous in their own right, were really masking other British priorities. The two men had been down this and similar roads before, and

¹³² *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, 496.

Roosevelt had no desire to rake over old coals. Thanks to Stalin he didn't have to. He didn't need to agree with Churchill's plans to capture Rome, nor did he need to reject them. He also didn't need to go head to head with the Prime Minister over a delay in D-Day. In fact, he didn't need to agree with Stalin's suggestion for an offensive in southern France either. All he really had to do was to agree with Stalin's suggestions as they related to D-Day, for Churchill was long past offering verbal objections to the invasion. Thus, the early key for Roosevelt in achieving the appearance of an impartial position between Churchill and Stalin rested simply in holding fast to D-Day. The President wasted no time in doing so, interrupting an early disagreement between the Marshal and the Prime Minister as to the importance of Rome versus that of Southern France and the timing of possible ancillary operations by stating simply that "nothing should be done to delay the carrying out of OVERLORD", and recommending that a discussion of southern France versus Italy be relegated to groups of lower level staff.¹³³ In this way, FDR, ever the good referee, was preventing the two fighters from becoming entangled on the ropes and was also sending the fight to the judges.

That didn't happen immediately, however. Churchill was no fool, and he understood the position he had been placed in. Hoping to garner the support of at least one of his peers if not both, he laid out what he saw as the cold hard facts as they related to Italy. He reassured both Stalin and Roosevelt of the combined resolve of Great Britain and the United States as to the need for D-Day, explained that he would have liked to see it launched in 1943, but that circumstances had not allowed for that, and reiterated the commitment to a cross-channel invasion in the late spring or early summer of 1944. He then switched gears, however, and claimed that, since the operations in the Mediterranean had been successful and since D-Day was still six months away, the primary objective should be to find a use for the soldiers and other resources that would eventually be used for the invasion, rather than allowing them to simply sit and gather rust. Further, he argued that, whatever was done with these

¹³³ *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, 496.

reserves, the project should be one that was of the most possible benefit to Stalin and the Red Army. To Churchill's way of thinking, this meant the capture of Rome, and he even implied that the diversion of resources that had already occurred toward the D-Day initiative was the primary reason that Rome had not yet been taken by the Allies. Churchill tried to soften the blow by assuring all present that a push for Rome, at worst, might delay D-Day by only a few months.¹³⁴

All of this conversation wouldn't amount to much for the purposes of this paper, were it not for the fact that Roosevelt is conspicuously absent from the discussion. A close look at the meeting minutes reveals clearly that Stalin was left to do FDR's arguing for him. That isn't to say, however, that the President was on Stalin's side. Nor was he on Churchill's, at least not completely. The key thing to remember is that, by the time Tehran took place and the end of the war was finally foreseeable, Roosevelt's thinking had already moved beyond D-Day and to the post-war world. That, again, is what makes his criticism of Churchill's post-war concerns so hypocritical, and it is also what makes the three Allies, at best, fair weather friends. FDR liked Churchill, but disagreed with him one hundred percent when it came to colonialism and imperialism, even going so far as to tell his son Elliott that both of these things actually caused world wars. On the other hand, FDR liked Stalin and admired his resolve and his work ethic, but he disagreed with the communist philosophy. If Roosevelt's only goal was to win World War II, he would have behaved differently and probably more forcefully toward Stalin and Churchill at Tehran. He would not have been forced into the role of referee, and could have been a third fighter in the ring instead. Unfortunately, permanent post-war peace and the United Nations had become such strong themes in the President's mind by this time that he had no choice but to proceed more carefully. Thus, Roosevelt wasn't exactly siding with Stalin. Rather, he simply cared so little for colonialism and imperialism that the notion of Great Britain losing some of her former/future outposts was easy for him to stomach, particularly if it helped keep Stalin at the table and increased the likelihood that the man of

¹³⁴ *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, 502.

steel would be reasonable and cooperative when it came time to rebuild the post-war world. As it related to his duties as referee, however, it is important to remember that direct references to colonialism, imperialism, or the selfish acquisition of territory by either the British or the Soviets were all considered to be punching below the belt, and FDR did a good job in steering the fight away from such things.

Churchill was not on the ropes, nor was he in danger of being knocked out. He was, however, on the defensive, forced to block, duck, and counterpunch rather than carrying the fight. This being the case, the Marshal simply continued to jab. Stalin's direct response to the British suggestions, ostensibly to all assembled but in reality a shot at Churchill specifically, was that "it was not worthwhile to scatter the British and American forces." He added that "the plans presented seemed to indicate that part would be sent to Turkey, part to be utilized in Southern France, part in Northern France and part for operations across the Adriatic." Stalin stated firmly that D-Day should "be accepted as a basis for operations in 1944 and other operations should be considered as diversionary." Again Roosevelt said nothing, but simply waited to see if and how Churchill would counterpunch. The Prime Minister responded by stating his own concern with regard to scattering resources, but argued that his plans for the Eastern Mediterranean would require very few Allied resources and were not likely to have a significant impact on D-Day (Which was a statement that made a defense from Roosevelt all but impossible. All other considerations aside, FDR could never have endorsed the British strategy, which openly delayed D-Day by a few months, when Stalin was advocating an approach that was said to have no impact on the cross-channel invasion at all.). Churchill added again that he was opposed to a long period of inactivity during the run-up to a cross-channel invasion and that, in his view, the British suggestions for the Mediterranean were the best way to avoid such a doldrum. It was at this point that Stalin returned to his own pet project. He suggested again that D-Day should be "supported by another offensive movement from Southern France", and suggested that the Allies "release ten divisions for

operations in Southern France”, thereby diverting German troops from northern France and making the subsequent success of D-Day that much more certain. Stalin said he was not opposed to a push on Rome, but suggested that such an initiative could wait. Churchill once again argued that Rome should be taken prior to a cross-channel invasion. Roosevelt then spoke for the first time in a long time. Without responding to Churchill directly, FDR stated that “Marshal Stalin’s proposals concerning Southern France were of considerable interest to him”, and suggested that “the planners make a study of the possibilities of the operation.” The fight was, for all intents and purposes, over. FDR was simply sending matters to the judges. In a non-direct response to Churchill, the President said he was interested in the possibility of pursuing Stalin’s strategies in Southern France while still launching D-Day on time, and then stated that “he was particularly desirous that this operation not be delayed if it were possible to avoid it.”¹³⁵

This last statement from Roosevelt was somewhat of a lie, but it once again highlights FDR’s basic position and helps explain his approach to the debate at Tehran. The President could not have cared less about Italy or southern France. He would have happily endorsed either operation, or both for that matter, if it had only been that simple. But it wasn’t simple at all, and the complexities that were involved made it a matter of absolute necessity that Roosevelt not openly accept or reject either of the two proposals. He couldn’t endorse Churchill’s strategy in Italy because it was certain to delay D-Day and because the strategy was put forward out of British fear that the Soviets were gaining too much territory. He couldn’t reject the Italian plan outright either, because he had worked too hard to build the relationship that he had with Churchill and couldn’t risk alienating his loyalty and support, both of which would be needed in the future. In the case of Stalin, FDR could not openly reject the strategy for southern France because it served the short-term objectives of the Allies without delaying D-Day. Then again, he was not in a very good position to publicly endorse an offensive in southern France as opposed to Italy, because if he did so it would ensure that the Soviets gained the European territories that Great

¹³⁵ *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, 506.

Britain was looking to protect as per their post-war plans. As previously stated, the President was also concerned that Stalin never be given the impression that America and Great Britain were united in concert against the Soviets moving into the post-war world. All of these things combined to make Roosevelt appear quite neutered at Tehran, which he was some time later at Yalta. At Tehran, however, everything FDR said and did was carefully calculated to maintain a delicate balance, not among three world powers, but between two. Noncommittal statements and referrals of delicate matters to subcommittees were his most powerful tools in achieving such an end. Roosevelt's statement at the closing of the first Tehran meeting that he was interested in Stalin's plan but was concerned about its impact on a cross-channel invasion was his way of crediting Stalin with the creation of a very viable alternative to Churchill's strategy, while at the same time making it clear to Churchill that, if there did end up being a final rejection of the Italian offensive, it would not be the President who rejected it, but rather the planners, and only on the basis of D-Day and not due to the difference of opinion that existed between the two men as it related to colonial interests. After the war, Elliott Roosevelt wrote of the fine line that his father had to walk between Stalin and Churchill and expressed open admiration for FDR's "ability to keep those two men thinking along constructive and broadly similar lines", adding that it was a responsibility that he himself "would never hanker for."¹³⁶

However, the fine line that Elliott admired so much had not been navigated as flawlessly by his father as a first glance would indicate. In fact, Churchill's feelings were badly hurt. The Prime Minister's wounds were not so much the result of decisions reached at Tehran, as he recorded in his diary, but were instead caused by FDR's meetings with Stalin, meetings from which Churchill had been excluded. Churchill would later record in his memoirs the degree to which he was vexed by "the fact that the President was in private contact with Marshal Stalin and dwelling at the Soviet Embassy, and that he had avoided ever seeing me alone since we left Cairo, in spite of our hitherto intimate relations and the way

¹³⁶ Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, 191.

in which our vital affairs were interwoven.”¹³⁷ Roosevelt needed no one to tell him of Churchill’s wounded ego. He began damage control before the conference at Tehran was even over. On November 30 at 4 p.m., after the combined chiefs had already made their decisions, all parties reconvened for what would be the last plenary session of the conference. FDR opened the meeting by suggesting that Sir Alan Brooke, British Chief of Staff, make the official announcement as to the future course of the war in Europe. Brooke reported that the combined chiefs of staff were resolved that D-Day would take place in May of 1944, and that an additional offensive would occur in southern France, as per Stalin’s recommendation.¹³⁸ Sometimes, most prominently in team sports, a referee will either make a call that is obviously wrong, or fail to make a call that is obviously right. In such cases, it is unspoken and commonly accepted that at the earliest possible opportunity, that same official will make another error, this one intentional and designed to balance the scales, making up for the first bad call. While Roosevelt didn’t exactly make bad calls at Tehran, he was in a position where “make-up” calls in Churchill’s favor were certainly in order. History doesn’t record the President’s specific reasons for opening the final session at Tehran by yielding the floor to Brooke, but his strategy does not seem to be a complicated one. During the previous meeting, despite FDR’s silence and seeming impartiality, every call had gone Stalin’s way, leaving Churchill without anything that he could count as a victory. In asking Brooke to announce the official decision of the combined chiefs, the President was giving Churchill the chance to save face. It was his man who was making the announcement, not one of Roosevelt’s, and more importantly not one of Stalin’s. Furthermore, the British and American chiefs had reached their conclusion without any input from Soviet planners. Lastly, but certainly of no less importance, Churchill’s acquiescence to the final recommendation from the combined chiefs could be construed by the Prime Minister as simply that-agreement with the combined chiefs, and not agreement with Stalin.

¹³⁷ Winston S. Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, 763.

¹³⁸ *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, 576.

FDR was in a similar situation. He could make it appear as if he were simply accepting the advice of the chiefs and not siding with Stalin against Churchill. Roosevelt did not stop there, however. Instead, he further appeased Churchill's ego by announcing that the next big decision of the war would be the selection of a commander for the D-Day operation. He also stated that he and Churchill would make that decision together. Naturally, the President didn't turn to Stalin and add "without you Joe", but that was basically what was being said. Roosevelt's announcement, though, was not delivered as a means of taking Stalin down a few notches. Instead, FDR was giving Churchill some of his pride back by dangling in front of him the opportunity to weigh-in on perhaps the single most important decision of the war, not to mention the possibility of selecting a British commander to lead a cross-channel invasion. To stretch the referee metaphor still further (and to borrow from a sport other than boxing), FDR was calling a play in Churchill's favor as a way of making up for missing a foul at the other end of the court. Viewed against the backdrop of boxing, FDR's actions can also be compared with those of a referee who allows a punch after the bell and does not take away points as a way of making up for the quick kidney punch that was missed at the end of the previous round. History shows, of course, that Churchill did not ultimately get his way in terms of choosing a D-Day commander. For the time being, however, Roosevelt had found a way to raise Stalin's arm in victory while allowing Churchill to act as if the fight had ended in a draw.

Beginning on December 4, at the first plenary meeting of the second conference at Cairo, FDR extended yet another olive branch to the Prime Minister. During the 11 a.m. session, which included Roosevelt, Churchill, Admiral King, Sir Alan Brooke, Sir Andrew Cunningham, Sir Charles Portal, General Marshall, Admiral Leahy, Anthony Eden, and Field Marshall Dill, the President allowed Churchill to take over the meeting, and to direct the planning for an offensive in Southern France (now codenamed "Anvil") almost completely by himself. In fact, the Prime Minister, as shown in the meeting minutes, held the floor during fourteen of the forty-one statements made during the session, and he was given much more time than other speakers. During these moments, Churchill was allowed to plan the number

of divisions that would be allocated for Anvil, as well as the number of landing craft. He was also given the wiggle room to suggest that “Buccaneer”, a separate Allied offensive that was being planned for the Far East, be postponed. Additionally, Churchill indulged in long discussions as to the value of offensives in the Aegean and dreamed aloud about how much things could change for the better if Turkey entered the war, an event that he believed could start a chain reaction in places like Bulgaria, Rumania, and Hungary. The Prime Minister also suggested the removal of forces earmarked for Buccaneer and their reallocation to D-Day.¹³⁹

During the majority of these moments, FDR said nothing. In fact, he spoke only six times during the entire session. The first was to open the meeting, the second was to back up Churchill and support his concerns, the next two were to sum up points of general agreement, and yet another was to make a seemingly innocuous statement regarding the need for a secure base in Bangkok. Only once did FDR speak up to contradict Churchill, and then only to voice his opposition to withdrawing resources from Buccaneer.¹⁴⁰ One might argue that none of this means anything, and that the events of the first plenary session unfolded the way that they did simply by happenstance. There is, however, another possibility. Roosevelt could have easily taken the helm during that meeting. He had the same facts and figures before him as did Churchill, and he shared the same general concerns. In fact, with the exception of Buccaneer, a session directed by the President would not have been much different from the one directed by the Prime Minister. Why, then, does history not record a larger role for FDR at Cairo II? The most likely answer to this question is simply that Roosevelt had nothing to lose by allowing Churchill to take the reins. Conversely, at least in terms of repairing the wounds to the Prime Minister’s ego from Tehran and preserving a friendship that he needed both for the present and for the post-war world, Roosevelt had everything to gain by re-empowering Churchill and by reaffirming some of his diminished

¹³⁹ *Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, 675-681.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 675-681.

authority. Following the first meeting of Cairo II, FDR could rest assured in the knowledge that he had officiated a fair fight, and that the larger contest, that of the war itself, could continue without either fighter feeling as though he had been slighted. The second meeting of Cairo II, which took place on December 5, was largely given over to a discussion of whether Buccaneer would be possible at all. The operation was eventually scrapped, but it is too big a leap to suggest that this was a part of FDR's management strategy as it related to Churchill. By the time the offensive was cancelled, it had become clear to all that proceeding with Buccaneer would seriously compromise D-Day.

It is worth noting that Churchill's memoirs, while useful to history in one sense, provide considerable confusion in another. The writing of the Prime Minister is almost always in conflict with the official minutes of the meetings at Tehran, Cairo, and nearly everywhere else. In cases where the conflict is less sharp, there is still the sense that certain things are being glossed over. For instance, Churchill recorded the central issues of Tehran as follows:

The design for final victory in Europe had been outlined in prolonged discussion at the Teheran Conference [References to Tehran prior to the end of the war use the alternate spelling of "Teheran".] in November 1943. Its decisions still governed our plans, and it would be well to recall them. First and foremost we had promised to carry out "Overlord." Here was the dominating task, and no one disputed that here lay our prime duty. But we still wielded powerful forces in the Mediterranean, and the question had remained, "What should they do?" We had resolved that they should capture Rome, whose near-by airfields were needed for bombing Southern Germany. This accomplished, we planned to advance up the peninsula as far as the Pisa-Rimini line, and there hold as many enemy divisions as possible in Northern Italy. This, however, was not all. A third operation was also agreed upon, namely, an amphibious landing in the south of France.¹⁴¹

It is impossible to know for certain whether or not Churchill really believed all of the things that he wrote in his memoirs. He may well have been aware that he was whitewashing, yet persisted in doing so for reasons of his own. Regardless, his view of the "Anvil" operation that Roosevelt allowed him to spearhead at Cairo II as a way of regaining some of his status is interesting to say the least. Contrary to the very large role that Churchill played at Tehran and at both conferences in Cairo, at least according to

¹⁴¹ Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 57-58.

the official meeting minutes, the Prime Minister downplayed it all in his memoirs, claiming of the operation that:

It was originally conceived as a feint or threat to keep German troops on the Riviera and stop them joining the battles in Normandy, but in Cairo the Americans had pressed for a real attack by ten divisions and at Teheran Stalin had supported them. I accepted the change, largely to prevent undue diversions to Burma.¹⁴²

Earlier, this paper made the argument that, in his role as referee, FDR had managed to raise Stalin's arm in victory following Tehran, while at the same time allowing Churchill to act as if the fight had been a draw. In his memoirs, however, the Prime Minister seems to want to pretend as if he wasn't really engaged in a fight at all. Perhaps the fact that this type of reminiscing was even possible on Churchill's part is additional proof of Roosevelt's success at Tehran and immediately after. Not only had he officiated a fair fight between Stalin and the Prime Minister, he had refereed a battle in which Churchill wasn't even aware that he had been punched.

¹⁴² Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 58.

Conclusion

President Roosevelt's death in April of 1945 robbed history of any comparison that might have been made between his wartime behavior and his post-war style. However, FDR's handling of Churchill and the British during the war, particularly at TRIDENT, Quebec, and Tehran, indicates that, contrary to the image history normally provides of Roosevelt, he actually had a large assortment of varied problem-solving styles at the ready, and that he was quite capable of using any or all of these styles in a given situation.

That isn't to say, however, that the President didn't still prefer a direct and confrontational style when one was possible. The key issue, though, was risk, or perhaps more accurately *what* was being risked. By the time that any potential conflicts with Churchill manifested themselves, FDR was firmly committed to two ideas. The first was a cross-Channel invasion and the second was a permanent United Nations. So married was Roosevelt to these ideas that they had become a sort of litmus test or "minimum threshold". As long as D-Day and/or FDR's post-war relationship with Churchill as it related to the U.N. and to the carving up of post-war Europe were not threatened, the President was still ready, willing, and able to use a more confrontational style. Conversely, when those things were at risk, he backed off and chose less in-your-face solutions. To some extent, this characterization of Roosevelt is in conflict with the common notion that FDR's health dictated his behavior during the war. While this latter explanation for Roosevelt's behavior certainly holds up during the waning moments of the war, and particularly at Yalta, the strategies that he employed earlier in the war cannot be analyzed through the lens of the President's health.

Had the President lived longer, there are indications that, following the end of the war and the establishment of a permanent United Nations, he would have fallen back on the more direct manner that had defined him prior to the war. One example is found in Roosevelt's rather constant boasts that he couldn't wait to straighten things out in the Middle East after the war. While traveling back to the

United States following the conference at Yalta, FDR received King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia as his guest aboard ship. The President wasted no time in recommending to the King the importance of making “all the arid land in Saudi Arabia and Egypt [sic] flourish and bloom.”¹⁴³ He told the aged leader that now that he “had brought all the dissident tribes together and had fashioned a great kingdom, thought should be given to raising and selling crops.”¹⁴⁴ The King received such suggestions with bemused indulgence, but at no time did he appear to take the conversation seriously. His mood darkened, however, when Roosevelt began to force the issue of a Jewish homeland following the war.¹⁴⁵ FDR got nowhere with Ibn Saud, either with farming the Middle East or with the fate of Palestinian Jews. What is important, though, is that the conversation indicated a return of the old FDR, the one who was sure that his ideas were right and best, and that the world would be a much better place if people did things his way. The President later backed off and gave his assurance that America would not interfere in the matters confronting Ibn Saud¹⁴⁶, but the conversation that the two men had at sea proves that the pre-war, crusading, “I know best” FDR was certainly not dead.

There are other indications, however, that suggest the emergence of a new maturity on the part of Roosevelt, as well as a softening of his once fierce approach to problem solving. In his January 6, 1945 State of the Union Address, the President spoke of the differences between and among the Allies and lamented the fact that those differences were becoming more and more visible as peace drew nearer. He warned Americans that “we must not let those differences divide us and blind us to our more important common and continuing interests in winning the war and building the peace.”¹⁴⁷ His next comments are remarkable in retrospect, considering the attitude that he had taken toward various issues in the 1930s, in particular the Supreme Court. Roosevelt told Americans that the “[i]nternational

¹⁴³ Bishop, Jim. *FDR's Last Year, April 1944-April 1945*. William Morrow & Company. New York. 1974, 406.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 406.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 406-407.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 408.

¹⁴⁷ President Franklin Roosevelt's January 6, 1945 State of the Union Address, as cited in *FDR's Last Year*, 226.

cooperation on which enduring peace must be based is not a one-way street.”¹⁴⁸ He added that “[n]ations, like individuals, do not always see alike or think alike, and international cooperation and progress are not helped by any nation assuming that it has a monopoly of wisdom or of virtue.”¹⁴⁹ While a cynical eye could easily paint the President’s words as pure rhetoric, a kinder and more fair-minded takeaway is that FDR had grown beyond himself and his own ideas, and that he had come to the realization that nuance and compromise were more often than not the order of the day.

It is possible, of course, that Roosevelt could have achieved such growth without the war, but the absence of a second world war would have made four consecutive terms highly unlikely. Thus, the President would not have remained on the world stage long enough to achieve the same degree of growth. Regardless, the natural question that remains is that of which Roosevelt would have emerged post-war, given that D-Day and the United Nations were no longer at risk. Would it have been the uncompromising and indefatigable idealist who took no prisoners and preferred scorched earth to giving in, or would it have been the patient and reserved negotiator, the “referee” that had emerged at Tehran. The answer, of course, isn’t a simple one. FDR was a complex man living in complex times, and the solutions that he would have applied to post-war problems are likely to have been varied, multi-layered, and nuanced. There were several different versions of Roosevelt, all living within the same broken body. Had he lived and remained healthy, different sides of his personality would have responded differently to different situations at different times. There can be no doubt, however, that the techniques the President used at TRIDENT (“argumentation by proxy”), Quebec (giving Churchill a “back door”), and at Tehran (acting as a “referee” rather than a direct participant) provide a fascinating indication as to just how many tricks he might have had in his bag as it related to the post-war world.

¹⁴⁸ President Franklin Roosevelt’s January 6, 1945 State of the Union Address, as cited in *FDR’s Last Year*, 226.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 226.

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