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Net Assessment in the 1930s

Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray
Mershon Center

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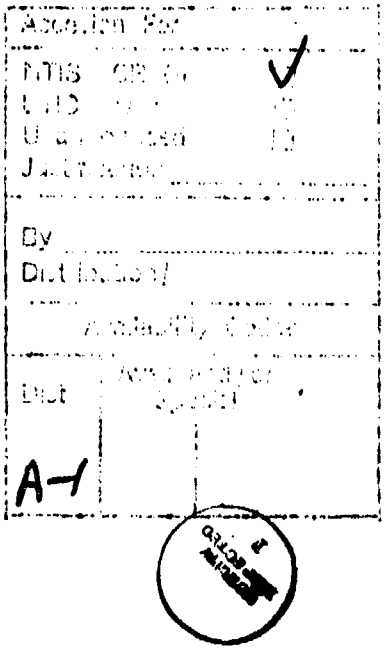

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NET ASSESSMENT: AN INTRODUCTION

Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray
The Ohio State University

Short of the costly and perilous audit of war itself, the problem of estimating the likely performance of one's armed forces against one's potential enemy is an intractable problem of defense planning. The process is not new -- at least in an unstructured way -- but in Western usage it has become known as "net assessment," while in Soviet usage it is part of evaluating "the correlation of forces." Writing in the 4th century B. C., the Chinese philosopher of warfare Sun Tzu described the assessment process:

> Now if the estimates made in the temple before hostilities indicate victory, it is because calculations show one's strength to be superior to that of his enemy; if they indicate defeat, it is because calculations show that one is inferior. With many calculations, one can win; with few one cannot. How much less chance of victory has one who makes none at all? By this means I can examine the situation and the outcome will be clearly apparent.[1]

The translator of Sun Tzu, however, adds that this passage escapes easy translation and that the methods Sun Tzu suggests for estimates are unclear, even though Sun Tzu cites them by inference throughout The Art of War and implies that the process is rational, structured, comprehensive, in part quantified, and explicit about assumptions and data. Modern net assessment follows Sun Tzu's principles, if not his confidence in outcome. The important allusion is to "the temple" and the role of faith.

The students of net assessment, at least in the United States since World War II, are far more certain about what effective net assessment is not than about what it is. It is not difficult

to make a positive assertion about the nature of net assessment. One analyst calls it "the appraisal of military balances," while another describes it as "the process of analyzing all the key variables affecting the military balance and relative military power and determining their impact on a given issue."[2] These assertions suggest, however, the inherent intellectual challenges in the nature of the appraisal. One problem is that net assessment is not just the analysis of the potential enemy's intentions and capabilities, in and of itself a difficult task. From data collection to final analysis, the intelligence process is only a constituent part of the net assessment process. The other major portion of the process is knowing one's own intentions and capabilities, sometimes as opaque as evaluating an enemy's likely military performance. Assessing either an enemy's or one's own military capability poses serious problems of defining vital questions and identifying the relevant data that allows the structured development of appropriate answers to questions of capability. To some degree the method of analysis tends to define questions rather than the other way around, particularly since the development of operational analysis and systems analysis, both of which rely on statistical measures related to the concepts of probability and marginal utility. Thoughtful students of net assessment recognize that statistical analysis has a tendency to disaggregate problems to measurable proportions and to filter out variables that elude translation into mathematical models. In other words, statistical modeling has an inherent tendency toward reductionism, which imperils net assessment. The challenge then is to create an analytic process that is not method-dependent, but one which draws its powers of synthesis from a variety of intellectual modes, even though such a mixing of methods opens the process to criticism for "imprecision" and "lack of empiricism."[3]

Another argument that bedevils the process of net assessment is debate about organization. Although it is a truism that organization can or, more emphatically, will influence process and analytic outcomes, net assessment is not just a problem in bureaucratic politics. Nevertheless, as net assessment increases its influence on the defense decision-making process -- as it has in the United States -- it becomes increasingly subject to territorial disputes over the nature and dependability of data and the appropriateness of method. One might argue that heightened political influence turns what should be a non-zero sum game into a zero sum game, for personal and organizational fates do indeed rest on whose analysis eventually triumphs and whose does not. Those outside of government -- or those who aspire to influence policy from outside government as the jackals of the policy process -- often tend to see territorial problems as simply matters of bureaucratic self-interest than can be cured by reorganization. Such positions undervalue the problems of net assessment that adhere to the intellectual enterprise itself. The cry for reorganizing the process begs many of the problems that defy reorganizational solution. A corollary to the question of processual change is the "Rockefeller solution," i. e., to throw enough assets at a problem that it eventually is crushed by the weight of the investment -- or at least changes its nature. Such an approach, which might be called "the American way of success," surely has outlived its usefulness in defense decision-making just as it has proven bankrupt in so many other aspects of American life. The efficacy of net assessment depends upon factors that cannot be accommodated simply by increasing budgets and rearranging organizational relationships, but by educating decision-makers upon the value of the intellectual enterprise of defining options and unmasking the unknowns in the process as well as the known factors. Clarifying difficult choices is not a happy function in government,

regardless of its form. It is, however, essential to rational decision-making.

U. S. Net Assessment After World War II

The American experience with net assessment in the twentieth century reflects the intrinsic difficulties created by the Constitution and American political culture. Since the Constitution divides responsibility for defense between the executive and legislative branches, it was inevitable that both branches would seek independent judgments on the likely performance of the American armed forces against their potential enemies. Traditionally Congress performed this task by interrogating executive branch witnesses and outside "experts," but after World War II it supplemented this process by creating elaborate committee staffs and agencies like the Office of Technology Assessment to provide independent evaluation. It also created a "think tank" of its own, the Congressional Research Service. The process of assessment, thus, can be easily influenced by the Presidential-Congressional rivalry often enhanced by party and electoral politics. One tool of Congress -- or those parts of it unsympathetic to a particular administration -- is to exploit differences within the executive branch over military issues. These differences can be inter-departmental, interservice, and intraservice. One result of the Constitutional division of responsibility, however, has been to put ever greater pressure on the executive branch to organize itself in order to accommodate bureaucratic differences in assessing enemy threats and friendly military performance. Since 1945, of course, this pressure has also been related to the emergence of the United States as a superpower, the immediacy of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, and alliance diplomacy.

The American experience in World War II dramatized the need for a more integrated

system for assessing enemy threats and likely American military performance. Traditional military intelligence departments -- the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Military Intelligence Division or G-2 of the War Department General Staff -- worked diligently on enemy capabilities, especially at the operational level, and passed on their assessments to naval and military planners. The only place where enemy and friendly capabilities were assessed on an interservice basis was the Joint Army-Navy Board, which evolved into the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the war. The military secretaries, however, did not create separate staffs to examine the evaluations, which proved no great handicap since President Franklin Roosevelt dealt directly with the JCS.

Roosevelt did his own net assessments. He was aided by two new wartime agencies, the Office of Strategic Services and the Office of War Information, as well as the State Department, which always had an opinion if not convincing alternative evidence. By the end of the war, however, the President's advisors felt the need for greater interagency cooperation and formed the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (1944), which served as a prototype of the National Security Council planning staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, did not feel any immediate need for integration with other federal agencies, since they had developed an elaborate staff planning system of their own that included intelligence analysis and operational judgment.[4]

Despite its eventual support for the National Security Act of 1947, the Truman administration did not prove adept in evaluating Soviet military behavior against American military capabilities. The shocks to American perceptions that began at Potsdam and ended at the 38th Parallel in Korea reflected the fact that Truman, distrusting the executive branch and avoiding clear interagency relations, still thought and acted like a member of Congress. Under

Dean Acheson and James V. Forrestal, however, the State and Defense departments saw that effective containment required greater interagency collaboration, including the evaluation of intelligence and military requirements. Forrestal, for example, forced the JCS to create the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (1948) to do joint service analysis of nuclear weapons.

The most historic effort, the ad hoc study group that produced NSC-68 (1950), had its impact muted by Presidential economizing, the rise of McCarthyesque attacks on foreign policy experts, and Forrestal's defeat by madness. The Korean War's outbreak, which dramatized serious flaws in the assessment process, should have produced changes, and it did, but only small ones. The Defense Department relied principally on the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide assessments; the State Department drew its evaluations from its own Bureau of Intelligence and Research. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), created in 1947, gradually returned to the process through its Office of National Estimates, but no well-developed agency existed to integrate the assessments in the only place it could have functioned -- the White House.[5]

When Dwight D. Eisenhower became President in 1953, he brought to the office rich experience in assessing defense requirements -- experience greater than any of his predecessors or successors. In dealing with the Department of Defense, he accelerated the process of strengthening the Office of the Secretary of Defense, a process that culminated in the 1958 amendments to the National Security Act. He relied upon the Central Intelligence Agency -- which he encouraged to widen its influence in policy -- and worked in more real harmony with the State Department than Truman. To make his basic defense policy -- the "New Look" -- work, Eisenhower needed more personal influence on the policy-process within the executive

branch, and he had no confidence that Congress could provide any real foreign policy leadership. (In the days of Joseph McCarthy, Robert A. Taft, and William Knowland, Eisenhower gauged Congress correctly.) Eisenhower decided to expand the role of the staff that supported the National Security Council, the rump cabinet for foreign and defense policy. He provided the NSC staff direct access through the special assistant for national security affairs, and he created two important interagency committees, the Planning Board (PB) and the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), both chaired by the special assistant.[6]

Largely on the initiative of Admiral Arthur W. Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council recommended the creation of a "net capabilities evaluation subcommittee" on 4 November 1954, a recommendation President Eisenhower approved on 14 February 1955. The mission of the subcommittee, which reported directly to the NSC, was "to prepare a report assessing the net capabilities of the USSR, in the event of general war, to inflict direct injury upon the continental United States and key U. S. installations overseas." The subcommittee's creation received the support of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of Defense Mobilization, and the Department of Defense. As approved by the President, the subcommittee of the NSC would be chaired by the Chairman JCS and include the director of the Office of Defense Mobilization, the Directory of Central Intelligence, the Federal Civil Defense Administrator, the chairman of the Interdepartmental Intelligence Conference, and the Chairman of the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security. The President charged the subcommittee to prepare an annual report (1 October) that would provide a three year projection on the strategic nuclear balance between the United States and the Soviet Union and the likely results of a nuclear exchange between the two nuclear superpowers. To develop its

report, the Net Capabilities Evaluation Committee would form an interagency staff that would become part of the National Security Council staff structure, although the individuals assigned to the staff would be on temporary assignment from their parent organizations with the exception of the executive secretary and director. As charged, the Net Capabilities Evaluation Subcommittee produced annual reports to the National Security Council through the end of the Eisenhower Administration.[7]

The rising influence of the CIA and the NSC staff gave the Department of Defense new incentive to broaden its own analytic capability beyond that of the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Although Robert S. McNamara's tenure as Secretary of Defense (1961-1967) is most often interpreted as an epic struggle between McNamara and the service departments, McNamara also recognized that the Secretary of Defense could not rely -- if only for political reasons -- on the intelligence/strategic assessments of the JCS and the armed services' intelligence agencies. He ordered the creation of the Defense Intelligence Agency in 1961 and strengthened the role of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. He introduced systems analysis to the Defense Department's budget process, thereby forcing the JCS to use the same methods in the justification of the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (JSOP), which always bore the odor of interservice accommodation.

McNamara's approach showed substantial signs of success; the Congress protested against his methods, and the JCS felt cowed. In retrospect, McNamara's arrogant dovishness and the limitations of systems analysis in dealing with non-nuclear force structuring issues doomed most of his initiatives at net assessment, for neither the military departments nor Congress could accept McNamara's reforms. McNamara's aggressiveness, did, however, reduce the influence

of the NSC staff as the arbiter of military performance evaluation, even if it did not change the system until the Vietnam War had discredited both McNamara and the JCS. The CIA retained more power, largely by the ultimate accuracy of its Vietnam analyses, but also because of the inter-service feuding within DIA. When the Net Assessment Group (now the Office of Net Assessment) began to function in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in 1971, it drew its strength from a fragile agreement between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Secretary James Schlesinger that CIA, DIA, and the JCS could not perform an objective comparison of Soviet and American force performance.

Until the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the Office of Net Assessment, which reported to the Secretary of Defense through the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, had no immediate challengers with the Department of Defense. The new legislation, however, allowed the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish his own net assessment group within the Directorate of Doctrine, Interoperability, and Operational Plans (J-8), which absorbed the Strategic Analysis and Gaming Agency. Thus, net assessment functions proliferated in the Department of Defense, but were not replaced in the staff of the National Security Council where they had been conducted in the 1950s. Although net assessment activity in the Department of Defense, which also includes the functions of the Assistant Secretary for Program Analysis and Evaluation, has now produced a triad of systematic comparative, military performance evaluators, it is uncertain where the quality of net assessment has improved in proportion to the number and resources of the evaluators.[8]

Net Assessment: An Historical Perspective

This study examines the problems posed by net assessment in the historical context of the 1930s. The seven separate essays investigate the processes by which the major powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Japan) carried out and were affected by the processes of national net assessment in the decade preceding the Second World War. This task poses some unusual difficulties for the historian, not the least of which is that few of the countries in question possessed formal net assessment organizations.

In considering how the major powers assessed their military capabilities relative to those of potential adversaries in the 1930s, there is a natural tendency to focus on intelligence rather than on net assessment. Nevertheless, the top decision makers in earlier historical periods have had to make judgments about the state of the military and diplomatic balance that confronted their nation, whether they directed that formal assessments be done or whether they raised explicit questions about the balance or not. Above all, the process of net assessment is both different from and far broader and more complex than intelligence evaluation. It involves the interplay among political authorities, military leaders, diplomats, and other crucial bureaucratic players; and difficult-to-quantify factors such as cultural and intellectual biases, national perspectives, and traditional policies -- all inevitably impact on how national leaders assess their national security environment. Finally, when one deals with the concept of net assessment, it is clear that one does not deal with a single assessment but rather a number of assessments dealing with complex military, economic, and diplomatic aspects of the balance. These assessments, moreover, can be performed at different levels of the bureaucracy and to answer substantially different questions.

The propose of this study, then, is to examine how the process of net assessment worked in the period of the late 1930s. While no explicit organizations existed in this period to assess the shifting net balance among the powers, government leaders had little choice but to move beyond the elementary data provided by their intelligence agencies and, for better or worse, to make the best net assessments that they could. Given the absence of formal net assessment organizations and processes, the task of the historians in this project is above all to piece together the often implicit, informal, or even unconscious ways in which judgments about military balances were reached. A historical examination of the process of net assessment should not aim at creating a neat model or framework for explaining events. Rather it should uncover the complexities and ambiguities involved in the net assessment process.

The essays, therefore, analyze the failures as well as the successes in national net assessment efforts during the 1930s as a basis of addressing larger questions. What were and are the pitfalls in making national net assessments? Why have they generally tended to miss the mark? What are the elements in the process that might have been correctable and what lay beyond the reach of policy makers? The author of each case study addresses all or most of the questions the editors and the current Director of Net Assessment defined as critical to the net assessment process. (These questions are listed in Appendix 1.) The authors, however, had complete freedom to develop their analysis within the cultural context of their respective countries' political systems and to accept neither the procedures nor language of late-twentieth-century American net assessment as the norm. Moreover, the authors accepted the challenge of examining the comparisons of potential military performance within the general history of diplomacy, strategic vision, and domestic politics for the seven subject nations. Their task

required an analysis of the complex relationship between domestic priorities, the changes in the international political system of the 1930s, and the varied judgments about the risks of war or the utility of war in the pursuit of national goals. They sought to determine how the comparison of capabilities influenced national decision-making. As one might have predicted, the results do not paint a pretty picture of prudent, rational statesmanship, regardless of nation. The essays, however, do provide compelling evidence that net assessment indeed occurred and produced serious problems for all the states in these case studies. Whether a better system of net assessment might have produced wiser diplomacy (and in the best developed system, that of Great Britain, it did not) is not answerable. Nevertheless, the comparative examination of how the belligerents of World War II evaluated their strategic dilemmas before the war provides useful clues to the fundamental nature of net assessment.

Net Assessment and the Road to World War II

In order to evaluate the organization, process, and results of net assessment by the seven major belligerents of World War II, one must begin with World War I and its legacy. By the 1930s three participants in the earlier war had endured fundamental changes in regimes that placed ruthless dictators in control of revolutionary political parties and the formal government. Two of these nations had been losers in World War I (Germany and Russia), and the other, Italy, might have well as lost, given the cost of its war and the rise of the Fascist party that followed the Armistice. In the case of Japan, success in World War I had been forfeited (in the eyes of Japanese imperialists and militarists) in the negotiations that began at Versailles and ended with the Washington treaties of 1922. By the 1930s, largely through their use of

intimidation (including assassination) and the intrinsic appeal of their plan to make Manchuria and China economic colonies, the Japanese imperialists had eliminated much of the traditional nobility, the business leadership, and the civilian party politicians from the design of Japanese foreign policy. The four non-status quo nations -- Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, and Japan -- formed governments dedicated to an aggressive foreign policy that assumed a high risk of war.

Three future belligerents maintained the same forms of government with which they waged World War I. Britain remained a constitutional monarchy with the effective reins of government in Parliament and the ministries (staffed by members of the Parliamentary majority and the career civil service) and the military staff system that culminated with the Committee of Imperial Defense. The French Third Republic, staggered by the national hecatomb the Western Front, also remained a parliamentary democracy with the prime minister at the apex of the three military ministries and a ministry of foreign affairs, supported by civilian ministers and an elaborate military staff system largely dominated by army officers. Although they would have been loathe to admit it, the British and French governments had much in common in both the form and the substance of the management of defense policy-making. They also shared a common memory of the effect the World War had had on their economies, their social fabric, and their eroded ability to rule their global empires. The United States had also preserved its democratic form of government despite the disappointments of its timid experiment with collective security (the League of Nations) and the psychological and social demoralization of the Great Depression, an experience it shared with all the other Great Powers and many lesser ones. Only the Soviet Union had avoided the collapse of the world industrial system in the

1930s, largely because civil war, collectivization, and the Stalinist purges had produced the same results without foreign assistance. The American government, however, organized its national defense structure in accordance with a constitution that separated the executive and legislative branches to a degree unknown in Great Britain and France. The president of the United States could shape policy without the same degree of direct accountability that a British or French prime minister assumed as the leader of the parliamentary majority. Nevertheless, the annual budget process and substantive legislation (like the Neutrality Acts) assured a Congressional role, however tumultuous.

All seven governments had ample experience in World War I upon which to build organizational lessons about the process of assessing their own and other's military capabilities. Gauging political intentions remained basically the responsibility of the heads of government and their foreign ministers. None of the heads of government lacked for relevant, if incomplete, information about their potential enemies and allies. To be sure, the more secretive governments, characterized by media censorship and the restricted distribution of military data, had an advantage since they could deny democratic governments access to much information about their own military capability. Nevertheless, the military intelligence organizations of the 1930s could and did piece together relatively sound descriptions of the Great Powers' military order-or-battle, at least in the static sense of numbers of operational units, the technological performance of weapons systems, and the relevant operational doctrine adopted by the armed forces. In fact, four of the powers had conducted major military operations before the war assumed its final form in 1940-1941. The Japanese had been at war in China since 1937 and fought the Soviet Union twice along their common border in Outer Mongolia in 1939. The

Italians had fought in Africa, and the Italians, Germans, and Russians had intervened in the Spanish civil war. The German army had deployed twice to Austria and Czechoslovakia. The Russians had invaded Finland in 1940 and both the Russians and Germans attacked Poland in 1939. Although all the implications of these operations may have eluded military analysts, the military intelligence communities showed a high degree of energy, assiduousness, cleverness, and professional competence in collecting information by open means (military observers and attaches) and covert methods (agents and electronic intelligence). The basic organizational problem of the seven nations' intelligence agencies was not the collection of data or even the challenge of expert capability analysis, but credibility within the highest levels of military planning and the political leaders for whom the military planners worked.

There is, however, one characteristic in the military intelligence effort that has organizational implications. When the armed forces of the industrialized powers created military intelligence agencies in the nineteenth century, these agencies grew as part of service staffs and reflected their parent services' concern about their like services in other countries. Armies fought armies; navies fought navies; and air forces fought air forces. The tri-dimensional concept of military operations eroded some in World War I, but not to the degree that it disappeared in World War II. None of the World War II belligerents foresaw the interrelationship of land, naval, and air forces that characterized that war or predicted the considerable effect that one-service strategic approaches (strategic bombing, submarine, commerce raiding) could have on the course of all military operations, if only in the area of opportunity costs.

Nor did intelligence agencies, established on service lines and loyalties, provide sound

appreciations of what the combination of tactical aviation and mobile land forces might do to the conventional concepts of land warfare. Although it is now fashionable to describe the doctrinal and operational flaws in the concept of Blitzkrieg, which surely existed and cannot be camouflaged by postwar German and British apologists, it is also true that no military intelligence organization in the 1930s predicted that the Wehrmacht had perfected (relatively speaking) an operational approach to warfare that could restore the initiative to an army that accepted the perils of the offensive. As an institution, the Soviet army might have reached the same conclusions as the Germans did -- driven in part by the inherent Russian problem of defending indefensible terrain with mobile forces -- but Stalin's decapitation of the Red Army's leadership make it unfashionable to follow German military doctrine. Even when there were modest tests of mechanized warfare, as there were in Spain and Outer Mongolia, the limited use and special operational circumstances tended to dilute the intelligence analysis of these operations. Although individual officers like Charles de Gaulle, Percy Hobart, and Adna R. Chaffee, Jr., might understand the potential of mechanized warfare, only the German officer corps (and then only part of it) appreciated the full potential of mobile operations, and they did so through their own maneuvers, not intelligence activities. Foreign military staffs did not miss the creation of panzer formations, but they could not predict the panzers' performance with sufficient alarm to galvanize the reform of their own armies.[9]

At the level of intelligence evaluation, then, the major organizational weakness was absence of interservice military intelligence organizations that would examine military capability across service lines and develop detailed appreciations of enemy strengths and weaknesses in joint and combined operations. Where military intelligence staffs attempted such assessments,

they did so as ad hoc committees formed for the special purpose of making a single assessment, not for continued analysis and the collection of relative data. Moreover, military intelligence staffs did not have sufficient information or authority to do force-on-force comparisons. Planning staffs demanded intelligence assessments from their intelligence sections, but they did not provide friendly force information either to their intelligence sections or to an independent evaluation group. The German armed forces probably did the best job of structured operational assessment because of their dedication to war-gaming. Nevertheless, the Germans did not evaluate the likely course of a strategic bombing campaign -- either one mounted against Great Britain or one directed at the Third Reich -- or investigate the longterm demands of submarine commerce-raiding against Allied anti-submarine warfare countermeasures. Military staffs could do and did regular evaluations of their own forces' performance in maneuvers and exercises, but they did not do operational-capability net assessment, which clearly rested within their domain.[10]

Although the organization for strategic appraisal differed from country to country, all seven of the Great Powers shared common problems and experiences that could not have been easily corrected by organizational reform alone. All the nations (with the exception of the United States) created elaborate interdepartmental organizations to fuse diplomatic assessment, military evaluation, and domestic political considerations. As in most complex bureaucracies -- as all these governments surely were -- formal and informal lines of influence and communication influenced net assessment, but all the responsible heads of government (with the possible exception of Japanese prime ministers until Tojo Hideki) had adequate access to a wide range of advisors with the relevant expertise about their own countries' strengths and weaknesses

and those of their allies and potential adversaries. All the nations but Japan had the recent experience of World War I with which to define their strategic problems. In the realm of economic mobilization, for example, governments had a respectable grasp of their own manpower resources, raw materials, industrial plant capacity, fiscal and monetary condition, transportation systems, agricultural productivity, and export-import balances. They understood the relevance of statistics and statistical trends even if they could not always be sure about the interrelationship of important economic variables. They may have been more uncertain about other nations's economic condition, and they may have too often seen other economic systems as similar to their own, but the economic foundations for strategic assessment were sound enough for informed decision-making. The same may be said for the organized reporting of foreign and domestic political trends, technological developments in armaments, scientific research, and public opinion.

From the perspective of organizational theory, which stresses the importance of timely and accurate information flow to responsible decision-makers, the one government that could have used more organizational structure was the United States, which had no analog to the cabinet governments of Great Britain or France. The French, however, fretted about the adequacy of their organization for strategic appraisal -- almost to the point of paralytic obsessiveness -- while the British chose not to tinker with reorganization as a cure for unpalatable facts. Even the autocratic regimes had agencies for strategic appraisal, the Russians the Council of People's Commissars and the Main Military Council, the Italians the Supreme Defense Commission, the Germans the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, and the Japanese (who prized collegial and consensual decision-making beyond Western norms) the Imperial Privy

Council. An organizational theorist could have found much to change in any of these arrangements that would have ensured a more rational and efficient flow of factual analysis and the structured development of policy-options, but none of the seven major belligerents of World War II flirted with catastrophe or suffered ultimate defeat because of formal governmental organization. The flaws in strategic net assessment had deeper and more persistent roots.[11]

With the exception of the Japanese militarists, whose grip on the Japanese people was complete by 1937, the governments of the Great Powers could not escape the fact that strategic net assessment carried in it the seeds of regime destruction, and they did their best to curb any internal challenge to national security policy that might overturn the government.

For the three Western democracies, the problem had predictable links to elections and party politics, although, in truth, none of the opposition parties in the United States, France, and Great Britain offered a real alternative to the policies of appeasement and crisis-avoidance that characterized those three nations after 1937. Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, managed national security issues the same way he had always handled any public policy issue, which was to rely on personal advisors, to discount bureaucratic analysis, to keep power within the executive branch diffused and authority uncertain, and to deal with Congress and the American people with a degree of indirection and ambiguity that bordered on duplicity. Perhaps he had learned too much from Woodrow Wilson, whom he had observed closely from his position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I. In Wilson's case, however, presidential confusion was honest; in Roosevelt's case, indecision was calculated since the president probably concluded as early as 1937 that Germany, Japan, and Italy had embarked on policies of aggression that endangered America's future. Roosevelt's problem was not the strategic net

assessment process, but how to educate the American people on perils they felt less acutely than he did.

For Neville Chamberlain in Great Britain and Leon Blum and Edouard Daladier in France, the basic challenge was to examine the condition of the armed forces and the risk of war within the normal (i. e., restricted) governmental forums like the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Comité Permanent de Defense Nationale without revealing too much of their deliberations to the Germans and Italians and their domestic political critics who tended to be skeptical individuals rather than whole parties. The processes of strategic assessment posed some problems: the intricate system of drafting collective documents, the arguments about data and analysis that plagued the intelligence services, and the tortuous and time-consuming requirement to reach consensus within the foreign policy and military bureaucracy before cabinet consideration. Both Great Britain and France had difficulty appraising the Luftwaffe, and at critical times in their diplomacy with Hitler, they miscalculated the threat of German air power. Nevertheless, the respective roles the participants expected to play in the process (political leader, military advisor, civilian expert) were played by the rules of democratic political culture and insured that responsible political leaders dominated the policy-process through setting procedure and framing the questions for evaluation. The process probably did not allow adequate airing of dissent among the expert advisors, and it tended to mute pessimistic advice, but on the whole the British and French governments understood their strategic dilemmas. Their basic mistake was more devastating: they believed (or hoped) that Adolf Hitler felt the same pressures and responsibilities that they did.

The process of net assessment in Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union had eccentricities

related to the personalities of Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Josef Stalin and to the one-party dictatorships they led. From their personal military experience none of three dictators had any real competence above the role of squad leader, but their fear of their nations's traditional military officer corps (and the military's assumed longing for its lost monarchical legitimacy) compelled them to inflict their personal biases into the strategic net assessment process. All three eventually assumed the functions of head of the armed forces in both military (commander in chief) and civilian (defense minister) roles. Their functional responsibilities as party leaders made it essential that they also dominate those portions of the government (the military and the police) that performed and might challenge the role of intimidation and actual violence upon which the dictators depended to silence opposition. The dictatorships found themselves in a dilemma they richly deserved. The popular appeal of national socialism and Fascism rested in part on the promise of a "greater" Germany and "greater" Italy, which implied an imperialist program that risked war. Yet the megalomania, paranoia, and political survivalism that characterized Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin dictated a form of government that made it difficult to evaluate the likely behavior of other states -- and, more importantly, their own. For one thing, all three nations developed two governments, the party structure and the traditional ministerial organizations they inherited. Although the Bolsheviks did the most thorough job in bringing revolution to the bureaucracy, they did not entirely replace (or kill) it, and thus the sensible thing for any dictator to do was to produce a party structure that carried on the same policy-advising and assessment functions as the government. For example, V. Molotov, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Geleazzo Ciano might serve as foreign ministers, but in the end they depended upon their personal relationship with Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini for their power, not

an independent power base in either the party or the government. Essentially, the dictators ran a court, not a government, a court of privileges granted and patronage voided (unto the point of death) that Nicollo Machiavelli would have recognized in an instant. Such a system was unduly sensitive to personal whim in the assessment process and the rule of intuition.

The fundamental nature of dictatorships and the national goals of Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union in the 1930s determined that strategic net assessment would be adulterated by the conspiratorial, personalist nature of the three regimes. For example, all three dictators argued that only they understood one another or truly saw the weak, compromising Western democratic leaders for the cowards they were. In military matters, Hitler and Mussolini had a strong tendency to dismiss reports of systemic problems and to reduce critical issues to matters of technology, tactical trivia, and will power. Stalin showed a greater willingness to trust the military staff's strategic net assessment system -- after, of course, he had purged the Soviet officer corps of virtually all its senior commanders and replaced them with his own generals. The dictators played the services off against each other and exploited all the personal rivalries they could. They reduced anyone else's capacity for independent strategic analysis. Mussolini could not rid himself of the one effective foci of opposition, King Vittorio Emanuele III and his trusted advisors, Marshal Pietro Bodaglio and Marshal Emilio de Bono. With deep contacts throughout the Italian government, these three men remained aware of the facts that belied Fascist romanticism, and they eventually unseated Mussolini in a coup in 1943, with a mighty push from the Allies. Hitler and Stalin scored higher successes at regime-dominance, but they so intimidated their advisors that only sychophants like Martin Bormann could survive. Stalin, it is true, made his peace with his surviving senior officers, but only for the duration of the war.

Had the marshals of the Red Army not emerged victorious national heroes from the Great Patriotic War, they would have decamped for the wall or the gulag as had their predecessors in the 1930s. Certainly such was the fate of their contemporaries in Germany, especially the conspirators of July 1944. Such poisonous civil-military relations are not likely to ensure that strategic discourse is influenced by frank discussions of operational feasibility, the essential contribution of military professionals to net assessment.

Again, the Japanese did things differently. With the cabinet and ministries under military domination in the 1930s, the Japanese imperialists had no reason to fear either the cowed political parties or the general population, who had no historical experience with democratic opposition. Instead, the Japanese military wanted to ensure that the Emperor and his personal advisors had no opportunity to challenge the military's definition of Japan's longterm economic vulnerability and the immediate strategic opportunities to create an autarkic empire. The Japanese military integrated two powerful weapons: an organizational structure that could provide Western-style staff assessments (which reflected the intellectual debt to the German army and the British navy) and a cultural claim of moral oneness with the Emperor and the Supreme Deity that had created the yamato or "chosen people." Facts and feelings made a powerful combination in defining "the Imperial Way." On the other hand, the military's self-assumed mission to save the yamato and the overpowering pressure from group consensus prevented any searching discussion of worst-case strategic assessments. It was no novelty for Axis generals and admirals to enter World War II with grave personal doubts about the eventual outcome, but in the case of the Japanese military, the senior officers bore a degree of responsibility for the decision for war not shared by their German and Italian colleagues. If the German and Italian

assessments contained too much politics, the Japanese assessment process allowed for too much strategy.

For those powers that sought to revise the international balance of power by force (Germany, Italy, and Japan) and those that pursued peace at almost any cost (France, Great Britain, and the United States), the organization and process of net assessment produced some common problems. Even for the one nation in an intermediate position, the Soviet Union, which combined small wars with Japan, Finland, and Poland with some shocking big diplomacy (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement of 1939 and the Neutrality Pact with Japan of 1941), the problem of strategic net assessment proved no less slippery and led to the ultimate disaster of Barbarossa. The experience of these seven nations provides some cautionary lessons for future practitioners of net assessment.[12]

The most important issue is the dynamic relationship between political judgment and strategic evaluation. Heads of government reach the pinnacle of power through their mastery of their own political culture, and they do not abandon what works for them when they begin to operate in the international arena. Until the widespread use of public opinion polling and the quantitative analysis of voter behavior, domestic political planning had virtually no empirical basis, and, of course, where public opinion means something and voting is significant, even these contributions to rational assessment often take a backseat to political intuition. Politicians pride themselves as creatures of instinct, and they have a notorious aversion to accepting collective bureaucratic analyses at face-value. At the same time they are not normally the product of long careers as diplomats and military officers, which reduces their capacity to judge the likely behavior of their opposite numbers from other political cultures. Compensating for

culture bias is difficult enough in evaluating military capability and operational doctrine. In the murky margins where international diplomacy merges with strategic assessment, the task of differentiating between one's judgments about how others (enemies or allies) should behave and how they might behave becomes even more challenging. To seek and accept expert opinion, whether it comes from intelligence professionals, military planners, or diplomats, is an act of moral courage that comes hard for heads of government because such advice in content and form often conflicts with the assumptions about human behavior that political leaders prize. The issue, then, is far more complex than just defining civil-military relations and the functional domains of decision-makers and their advisors. Successful net assessment is a continuing educational process in which the assessors bear the delicate burden of providing tutorials on strategic analysis for their political masters. In the status-quo democracies of the 1930s, this responsibility was at best difficult, and for the autocracies, it became virtually impossible as the likelihood of war increased.

Another continuing problem is the timing of assessments and the time period for which assessments are supposed to be valid. In each successive crisis of the 1930s the political leaders asked their advisers whether the armed forces were ready now for a variety of possible conflicts; the answer was consistently "no" with various qualifications and degrees of uncertainty. The focus of these assessments -- such as they were -- bore on questions not about the course of a war, but upon the likely course of a specific campaign that would initiate a war or respond to an enemy offensive. Like the planning that preceded the outbreak of war in 1914, the time period covered by the assessment was limited to months, not years, and assumed some sort of rapid resolution to the conflict, whether the resolution came in the form of a dictated or a

negotiated termination of hostilities. Unlike the period before 1914, however, the assessments of the 1930s did provide analysis of long-term demographic and economic trends that might influence the generation of military capability upon total national mobilization. In a technical sense, most of these long-war assessments were remarkably accurate and even, in some cases, prescient. The difficulty is that politicians are steeped in the contingent nature of governmental behavior, true believers in the role of what Machiavelli called fortuna. The appeasers of the 1930s, for example, entertained the hope that if they could at least postpone war, something would turn up. The aggressor states (especially Germany and Japan) assumed that the inherent fragility of their rivals -- whether they were capitalist democracies or Communist dictatorships -- made long-war calculations irrelevant. What no one apparently examined in any detail was a strategic "black hole" that might occur between the transition from short-war to long-war, the period of extemporization in which the belligerent military establishments would fight a "broken-back" war with forces that survived the initial onslaught, but which did not yet include forces created after war began. Where in Axis planning (or Allied planning, for that matter) does one find an analysis of the likelihood or results of the Russian, Mediterranean or South Pacific campaigns of 1942-1943, both of which produced a substantial (if selective) attrition of Axis military capability?

The last major problem inherent in strategic net assessment is that political leaders and military advisors approach the intellectual enterprise of planning the pursuit of national goals with military force from apposite perspectives. The political leaders address strategic issues in Clausewitzian terms, whether they realize it or not. In the 1930s they attempted to foresee how war would influence their vision of their nations' well-being, but they did so (with the possible

exception of the Japanese) without a very firm grasp of the operational capabilities of their national forces or those of their allies. The military leaders, on the other hand, tended to project operational capabilities into campaign planning and to frame strategic issue in operational terms. In itself, this predisposition is both understandable and professional, but it also tends to exclude some issues of logistical sustainability, doctrinal adaptiveness, enemy behavior, operational timing, and technological innovation. As the belligerents of World War II discovered, the soundest of strategic decisions still required operational effectiveness, but that operational skill could not redeem flawed strategy. Even if strategy remained essentially dependent upon the political goals that drove decision-making, strategic planning could not be simply defined as the aggregation of tactical capabilities and the extension over time and space of operational considerations.

In summary, the experience of the major World War II belligerents suggests that the organization of net assessment may be important, but only if it provides the fullest amount of relevant information about military capability, presented in force-on-force comparisons that are tested to the degree possible by appropriate analysis like free-play exercises, weapons effects, quantitative modeling, war-gaming, doctrinal exegesis, and leadership and organizational behavior. Net assessment should be conducted in some organizational framework that has access to timely and definitive political guidance as well as military advice. The process should ensure that organizational and personal bias -- of whatever sort -- is reduced, if not eliminated. The process should also provide for assessments that identify problems in terms of immediate, mid-range, and longterm significance. When political leaders face military capability assessments, they should have the expertise (probably from a personal staff) to dig into the methods and

assumptions that drive the analysis. It is a truism that military capability should not be viewed as an infallible indicator of political intent, but it is equally true that political intent alone does not produce appropriate military capability. Political leaders may be responsible for providing guidance to military planners, but that does not spare them the parallel responsibility of educating themselves on the substantive issues of military planning and organizational effectiveness.

NOTES

1. Sun Tzu, The Art of War, translated by Samuel B. Griffith, (rev. ed., New York/London, 1963), p. 71.

2. Eliot Cohen, "Net Assessment: An American Approach," paper prepared for the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University, 2 January 1990; Anthony Cordesman, "Net Assessment and Defense Resources: Challenges for the Next Administration," The Washington Quarterly vol. 12 (Spring 1989), pp. 129-49.

3. For the most continuous and penetrating discussion of the net assessment process, see Andrew W. Marshall, "Problems of Estimating Military Power," RAND Corporation memo P3417, August 1966; Andrew W. Marshall, Long Term Competition with the Soviets: Framework for Strategic Analysis (Santa Monica, CA, 1972); Andrew W. Marshall, "Net Assessment in the Department of Defense," Office of Net Assessment (OSD) memo. 21 September 1976; Andrew W. Marshall, "Theater-Level Gaming in the Formulation of Plans and Policies (Net Assessment)," in Proceedings, Vol. II, Theater-Level Gaming and Analysis Workshop for Force Planning, 1977. For a study of the complexities of the intelligence process, see Ernest R. May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars (Princeton, 1984).

4. On planning during World War II, see Grace Person Hayes, The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan, (Annapolis, MD, 1982);

Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942 in series "United States Army in World War II" (Washington, DC, 1953); Maurice Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944, (Washington, DC, 1959); James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt, the Soldier of Freedom, 1940-1945, (New York, 1970); Thomas B. Buell, Master of Seapower: A Biography of Admiral Earnest J. King, (Annapolis, MD, 1980); Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942 (New York, 1965) and George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943-1945 (New York, 1973).

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6. Douglas Kinnard, President Eisenhower and Strategy Management, (Lexington, KY, 1977); Samuel P. Huntington, The Common Defense, (New York, 1961); Paul Y. Hammond, Organizing for Defense (Princeton, 1961).

7. NSC 5423, "Directive for a Net Capabilities Evaluation Subcommittee," 23 June 1954 and NSC 5511, "A Net Evaluation Subcommittee," 15 February 1955, both from National Security Council Records (Policy Papers), Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; interview with Wallace E. Seibel, 5 October 1986.

8. Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, How Much Is Enough? Shaping The Defense Program, 1961-1969 (New York, 1971); Ralph Sanders, The Politics of Defense Analysis (New York, 1973); Richard K. Betts, Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises (Cambridge, MA, 1977); Freedman, U. S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat, pp. 30-61; Vincent Davis, "The Laird Pentagon, 1969-1973: Some Impressions," unpublished paper, IUSAF&S, 1973. See also Douglas Kinnard, The Secretary of Defense (Lexington, KY, 1980); Mark M. Lowenthal, "The National Security Council: Organizational History," CRS 78-104F (1978), and "The Department of Defense: Organizational History," CRS 78-188 F (1978), Congressional Research Service; Cordesman, "Net Assessment and Defense Resources," previously cited.

9. Kenneth Macksey, Tank Warfare (New York, 1971), pp. 70-107; Field Marshal Lord Carver, The Apostles of Mobility: The Theory and Practice of Armoured Warfare (New York, 1979), pp. 31-54.

10. Ernest R. May, "Capabilities and Proclivities," in Knowing One's Enemies, pp. 503-42.

11. For our analysis of net assessment in the 1930s, we have relied principally on the essays in this study, but also upon our earlier edited work: Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (eds.), Military Effectiveness 3 vols. (London/Boston, 1988). The observations on current organization theory are drawn from Paul S. Goodman, Johannes M. Pennings, and Associates, New Perspectives on Organizational Effectiveness (San Francisco/London, 1977) and Jay M. Shafritz and Philip H. Whitbeck (eds. and comp.), Classics of Organization Theory (Oak Park, IL, 1978).

12. In addition to our own judgments, we profited by a memorandum, "Conclusions and Reflections," 1988, drafted by one of our authors, Professor Paul Kennedy of Yale University.

BRITISH "NET ASSESSMENT" AND THE COMING OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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Introduction

The British system of "net assessment" in the 1930s, as compared with that of any other of the Great Powers, was elaborate, relatively sophisticated, bureaucratically well-developed yet also flexible, and truly global in nature. Compared with this British model, the strategic-assessment structure elsewhere in that period appears splintered, provisional and parochial. It is not surprising that the post-1945 American superpower, in seeking to develop its own global strategy, was significantly influenced by these existing British forms and practices.[1]

Yet for all its relative sophistication, British net assessment in the 1930s often did not manage to "get it right," with the result that many of its early wartime campaigns (Norway, France, Greece, Malaya) were disasters -- and compensated only by the fact that the larger global balances were steadily swinging against the Axis powers. The reasons -- personal, institutional and contextual -- for those defective assessments will be analyzed below; what is simply pointed out here is that even the most developed structures and procedures provide no guarantee either that correct judgments are being made, or against future conflicts unfolding in a way that decision-makers and their expert advisors had not anticipated.

* * * * *

The British system of net assessment in the 1930s was both well developed bureaucratically and global in its range because of two major influences: a Cabinet-cum-Committee structure of executive government, and the fact that those who made decisions were aware that they had inherited (and were responsible for) a world-wide Empire of territories, interests and obligations. While these are quite separate points,* they are worth linking at this early stage because both elements -- the organizational, and the spatial/contextual -- were critically concerned with the task of relating ends to means. Simply put, both elements involved the ordering of priorities and the striking of balances.

British governmental structures, as they had evolved since the eighteenth century, consisted of a strong central executive which, while accountable to Parliament (on a regular sessional basis) and to the country at large (at general elections), was nonetheless able to decide upon and implement national policies without much outside interference. Moreover, those "decisions" were made, not by a powerful individual alone as was the case with Stalin, Hitler and, to some degree, even Roosevelt; they were made on a collective basis, in Cabinet or in Cabinet sub-committees, and then executed by senior civil servants and/or military advisors who themselves had usually played some part in the assessments which preceded the decisions. Even the briefest perusal of the records of Cabinet debates, of the memoranda and position-papers laid before the ministers, or of a policy document which proceeded ever upwards (from a sub-committee to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and then to Cabinet itself) is likely to leave the reader with an impression of an extraordinarily well-oiled and elaborate machine -- and to

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* The committee system could exist without an Empire -- as is the case today;and the Empire could have existed without a Cabinet system of government -- as was true of most other empires.

give the historian the illusion that in Britain's case it is possible to connect policy "inputs" with policy "outputs" in straightforward fashion.

And much of that is, indeed, an illusion, created by the neatness of the minute-taking and memo-filing machine created by Sir Maurice Hankey, the long-serving Secretary to the Cabinet and to the Committee of Imperial Defence.[2] Yet even at its late-Victorian best, it is hard to recognize Robinson and Gallagher's idealized portrait of the British "Official Mind" at work. In that portrait Government ministers, briefed by their permanent officials, were able to sit in Cabinet, "consciously above and outside" the day-to-day political pressures; their system permitting them to "assemble and weigh all the factors," so that in fact they "registered and balanced all the contingencies."[3] Yet even at the time, issues such as Irish Home Rule, Tariff Reform, and higher taxation all disrupted this picture of Olympian detachment. Moreover, in the shadows cast by the Great War, the coming of full parliamentary democracy, and the impact of the post-1929 economic crisis, ministers were ever more conscious of "background influences on British external policy."[4] In addition, personal and practical factors also impinged upon the decision-making process: some departments (e.g., the Treasury) were much more important than others, and of course the power and opinion of the Prime Minister -- especially one as brisk and practical as Neville Chamberlain -- meant that his views carried tremendous weight.[5] If the Prime Minister was opposed to a certain proposal, neither it nor its backers were likely to get very far. This was not a gathering of philosopher-kings.

Nonetheless, the Prime Minister was <u>not</u> an autocrat. While someone like Neville Chamberlain heavily shaped British policies under his premiership, he did it as part of a <u>deliberative</u> process, in Cabinet itself or in some ministerial committee; decisions were <u>shared</u>

decisions, in which senior Ministers such as Halifax (Foreign Secretary, 1938-1940) also had great weight. And the simple organizational fact that a group of fifteen or so Ministers would spend an entire morning discussing a paper on policy-options -- which itself was probably the product of an inter-departmental committee or working-party -- meant that decisions were rarely eccentric or impromptu. This had both advantages and disadvantages. It was scarcely likely, for example, that the British people would wake up one morning to find themselves on the brink of war with other Powers as a consequence of actions taken by their leaders. On the other hand, this system of rational discussion, bureaucratic compromise, referral to specialist committees and the like, tended to delay action, even when swift measures were called for; and the very continuity of this urbane manner of Cabinet discourse and "parliamentary behavior" into the Fascist era may have obscured perceptions of the transformations which had taken place in global politics and ideology since Mr.Gladstone's day. All this will be returned to below, for mentalités are probably the most difficult and important part of the process of net assessment to be recovered.

The other factor which made for a "process" was Britain's global-imperial position. Ever since 1880 (i.e., the Carnarvon Report),[6] it can be argued that British politicians and officials had engaged in net assessment. The happy combination of geographical and technological circumstances which had made mid-nineteenth century Britain the leading naval, imperial, commercial and industrial nation in the world was then eroding. Rising new powers were beginning to assert themselves, in the western hemisphere, Africa, and the Far East. New naval challenges arose, in the Mediterranean, the North Sea, and in the waters off China. Britain's economic lead was cut back, and then overtaken; its market-shares declined, its industries

struggled to compete. Joseph Chamberlain's purple-prose description of "the Weary Titan, staggering under the too-vast orb of its own fate" was overly dramatic, but his general argument was true. The gap between Britain's global obligations and its national capacities had become dangerously large and was likely -- since other countries were still growing faster -- to get larger.[7]

. All this in turn led to a series of strategical reassessments by British ministers and their armed services; it produced that system of inter-departmental committees to examine "imperial defense" as a whole (as opposed to "colonial" defense, which was merely local), and to offer broad-ranging reviews of the Cardwell reinforcement system, the deployments of the Royal Navy's fleets, the development of Empire communications, logistics and (with the Dominions) even "burden-sharing." Yet, while this restructuring helped to produce a more centralized and efficient imperial "command and control," it could not recover for Britain the position she had held in Palmerston's time; it was not, in other words, an alternative to that parallel process, of measuring the dangers and requirements across the globe and deciding which colonies should have smaller or larger garrisons, which oceans needed more or less battleships. And that in turn involved political assessments of which foreign countries posed the greatest dangers to British interests (France in Africa? the U.S. against Canada? Germany in Europe?), and whether diplomatic compromises might be made with the less threatening Powers.

This process of global-strategical assessment had been accelerated by the shocks of the Boer War of 1899-1902 which led to the establishment of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and then been made even more necessary by the test of the First World War which produced the War Cabinet machinery and sub-committees administered by Hankey and his assistants. Further

institutional refinements occurred later -- thus, the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee was a consequence of the Chanak crisis of 1922, and in 1936 it was decided to establish a Minister for the Coordination of Defence[8] -- but the basic point remains. Since the premiership of Arthur Balfour, and perhaps earlier, the British had been obliged to carry out a rough and ready form of strategical assessment, and on a world scale.

Departmental Concerns and Collective Compromises

In order better to illustrate this process of net assessment, one of the major British strategical surveys of the 1930s -- the 91-page document known as the European Appreciation, 1939-40, which was produced by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee early in 1939 -- will be examined in some detail below. By doing this, it is hoped that the reader will be able to comprehend the genesis, the development, and the consequences of strategic assessment in the British system. More important still, an analysis of a specific (albeit typical) document offers perhaps the best way to understand what the planners themselves did, or did not, regard as important; which in turn gives us considerable insight into the strengths and the weaknesses of this particular assessment process.

Although it was external events (e.g., the Nazi seizure of power, the Abyssinian crisis) which prompted the British to reassess their strategic requirements, the first stages in the actual process inevitably had to begin in the service departments themselves. Whether it was the Cabinet itself, or a body like the Defence Requirements Committee of the same, the pattern was for the political leadership to request the Chiefs of Staff to prepare new strategical surveys, lists of comparative force strengths, estimates of the services' prospects in the event of war, and --

if those estimates were gloomy (which they often were) -- submissions for additional resources.[9] This then caused the generals, admirals and air marshals to assemble their data for the requested submission. In so assembling that information, the service departments not only selected what they judged to be most relevant, they also suggested conclusions which might be drawn -- as to strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and dangers, the balance of risks, the optimal allocation of forces, the need for improvements.

Even before the departments (themselves) engaged in this task, an earlier form of "assessment" had already taken place, namely that by British service attachés and diplomats stationed abroad whose task it was to send regular reports up on the strategical power of the country in question. While this information was supplemented by other, less regular sources (occasional radio decrypts, accounts by visiting businessmen, reports from secret agents), it was the attachés who provided the most systematic and authoritative flow of data about foreign armed forces that was "consumed" in Whitehall during the 1930s.[10] There exists in the literature nothing as detached as Hilbert's study of the role of the military attachés prior to 1914, but the scattered evidence certainly allows one to draw provisional conclusions about this element in the "net assessment" system.[11] In all cases, the British attachés were long-serving career officers, with a gift for languages and considerable experience of foreign travel and cultures. Coming from typical middle-class or upper-class "service" families which provided the overwhelming bulk of the officer corps of the inter-war British armed forces, they very much reflected the values and assumptions of those to whom they reported. That same background usually allowed them to establish good personal relations with members of the officer corps of the country in

which they were serving and thus to glean additional information from social contacts. There is no doubt, therefore, of their overall value.

Yet since the attachés' impressions and knowledge formed the first of the "building blocks" from which collective net assessment was constructed, it is also important to understand the difficulties which prevented them from acquiring a fully objective picture of what was going on. The first of these was simply the physical and political obstacles thrown up by the secretive and totalitarian regimes in which the attachés were stationed. Time and again, they confirmed in their reports to London that they had only been shown the outside of static models of German tanks (this from the British military attaché in Berlin), or that their visits to a Japanese dockyard were consumed by formalities, introductions, and other diversions (this from the naval attaché in Tokyo).[12] Being so restricted in the access to verifiable data, they often had to fall back upon rumors, tips, anecdotal evidence, and fleeting impressions.

Above all they fell back upon their own cultural, racial and ideological prejudices, which -- given the socially homogenous nature of the services they represented -- was unlikely to be challenged back in Whitehall: indeed, was likely to be seen as confirming already-existing assumptions about other countries and their armed services. Thus, the reportage upon the Reichsheer in the early-to-mid-1930s by the British military attaché in Berlin, Colonel Thorne, suggested that the German army was an independent and "moderate" instrument in the Nazi state, thereby reinforcing London's belief that an accomodation with Germany was feasible; while, at the other side of the globe, the British naval attaché (Captain Vivian) offered a view of the Japanese character -- unimaginative, deferential, imitative, lacking initiative -- which then permitted the Admiralty to regard Japan as a "less than first-class" power.[13]

Such information from abroad would already exist in the files -- and could be supplemented by requesting additional information from the attachés -- at the time when the Cabinet or Committee of Imperial Defence would ask the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a strategical assessment. Normally, the Chiefs would delegate the initial research and drafting to their respective staffs, who would then attempt to "fit together" their individual departmental visions so as to present a common overview to the political leadership. It hardly needs remarking that the years of experience of civil-military relations, together with the constricting socio-economic circumstances that prevailed in inter-war Britain, meant that the papers which the armed services offered to the Cabinet were usually very cautious, restrained, balanced -- in a word, conservative. Any other style or form would have been counterproductive.

Few of the early judgments and proposals of the Chiefs of Staff were going to survive unscathed: as will be noted later, most of the army's draft suggestions in the 1930s were likely to be severely reduced, whereas the Royal Air Force's schemes would at times be augmented -- but not necessarily in accordance with Air Staff preferences. In addition, there was the predictable impact of tacit inter-service bargaining, whereby a branch's requests (and strategic assumptions) were not seriously contested by the other services provided their own requests (and strategies) were also conceded in the main. But whatever the partial amendments and compromises which occurred en route, it is important to see the implications of this mode of proceeding for the general theory and process of "net assessment." It meant that, for the most part, political decision-makers were confronted with an amalgam of service-generated data and assumptions, which it was difficult for busy Cabinet ministers to challenge with any great knowledge of their own. Even the creation of the post of Minister for the Coordination of

Defence in early 1936 did not fully grapple with this fundamental problem, that the "building blocks" of information and judgment did not come from objective, independent sources. To be sure, the Minister could often recommend to the Cabinet spending priorities as between the various services' bids, but it was much more difficult to contest (say) the Admiralty's assessment of the fighting power of the Japanese navy or the army's plans to deal with the Wehrmacht on the battlefield. Those were internal matters on which the military was virtually unchallengeable. The implication was that the Cabinet had to take on trust a service's assessment of the military power of other countries (whether friend or foe), as well as that same service's opinion that it was, or was not, ready and able to go to war. And since each of the services had a different strategical concern causing them to "buy time" for further rearmament, their pre-1939 reports tended to be a conflation of their worst-case assumptions -- although it must be added that in Chamberlain's case the generally pessimistic strategical assessments of the British services fitted in nicely with his own predilections towards appeasement.

Another important implication was that, however sophisticated the overall strategical surveys might be, they could not anticipate which way individual campaigns would go, whether in the Atlantic sea-lanes or the jungles of Malaya. To the degree that "net" assessment gets the forthcoming conflict right as a whole, that may not matter too much; but to the extent that victory in war is the sum of various campaign victories, it is a point of some relevance that the nation's armed forces do not lose too many battles in detail. And this is where the departmental aspect of net assessment becomes very important indeed.

The naval component of British net assessment in the 1930s is reasonably easy to trace, since it did not involve much in the way of new structures or methodology on the Admiralty's

part. As mentioned above, information about foreign navies was gathered from a variety of sources, from official publications and announcements to personal observations by the British naval attachés and visiting officers. Given the obsessive secrecy and censorship of the fascist regimes, it was increasingly difficult for the attachés to get information upon newer warship types (especially in the case of Japan); and yet, as the post-Washington/London treaty naval arms race resumed after 1936, that was precisely what the Admiralty's own planners and designers wanted: how fast was the Bismarck?; what was the displacement of the latest Japanese heavy cruisers?

Perhaps the most candid acknowledgement of this ignorance came as late as 13 June 1939, during a discussion of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy, when the Prime Minister referred to a Daily Telegraph article concerning a recent speech by Admiral Raeder and the evidence that German heavy cruisers were far more powerful than their British counterparts. Not only did the Admiralty know nothing of the speech, but the First Lord doubted whether they would ever know early enough if Germany was building new and more dangerous types of warships for Admiralty planners to be able to respond. To this admission the Minister for the Coordination of Defence (Admiral Chatfield, previously the First Sea Lord) added that: "At the present time, we had no information as to what new types of Naval vessels Japan might be building. For all we knew she might be constructing battleships of 40,000 tons with 20" guns."[14] As the Second World War was to show, both German and Japanese large warships (i.e., heavy cruisers upwards) possessed a larger displacement, heavier armament and better defensive capabilities than British vessels -- a benefit of having been built in secret, and often in breach of Treaty limitations.

Lacking good details about the quality of potential enemies' warships, the Admiralty was generally reduced to "bean counting." Yet even this was fraught with problems, especially if the planners attempted to project the naval balances in, say, one or two years time -- and this in a period (the late 1930s) when a large number of the world's major warships were being modernized and when the post-1936 "naval race" was bringing many new vessels into service. The Admiralty's response to this difficulty was to play cautious. During the Tientsin crisis with Japan in June 1939, when the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy contemplated a Chiefs of Staff report which (in Sir Samuel Hoare's words) "painted the picture from our point of view as dark and gloomy as it could well be painted," the Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax felt bound to add that

> the Chiefs of Staff calculations were based on the assumption that while all our ships would not be available, all the Japanese Capital ships would be available.

To this Chatfield could only admit that the Admiralty had "practically no information on the subject."[15]

The second and more difficult element in assessment concerned how, and how well, the enemies' navies might fight. While the Royal Navy had learned a great deal about Italian naval doctrine and operations in Mediterranean waters, it knew much less about Germany. Here, secrecy prevented much in the way of direct observation, with the consequence that the Admiralty fell back upon traditional preconceptions. The chief early hindrance to a proper assessment of the German navy was the assumption that Raeder's new warships were being built with a view to dominate the Baltic and that Germany had quite given up that Tirpitzian ambition to challenge the Royal Navy's command of the sea.[16] Even when it finally dawned upon the Admiralty that the German navy might expand westwards -- and it was not until 1939 itself that

the possibility of a German occupation of Norwegian ports was considered[17] -- the Royal Navy's chief focus of attention was on battlefleet actions. This is hardly surprising, since for much of the inter-war years the Navy was mentally engaged in re-fighting the Battle of Jutland[18] -- and this time getting it right! The annual Naval Staff publication Progress in Tactics would therefore contain much more coverage upon "Night Fighting" than upon either "Convoy" or "Combined Operations."[19]

Such a concern was not without beneficial consequences, at least in the Mediterranean, where the Royal Navy was well trained to "have a go" at the Italian battlefleet, night or day. But this surface battle obsession made it difficult for the Admiralty to react to a German naval challenge which would be expressed partly by individual raiding cruises (Graf Spee; Scharnhorst and Greisenau; Bismarck and Prinz Eugen) to disrupt the Atlantic sea routes; and chiefly by a renewal of the U-boat attack upon merchantships, a danger which the Admiralty greatly underestimated. By extension, therefore, the Royal Navy had prepared itself well for a conflict against the Japanese fleet, since it also was structured for large surface actions. But it accompanied its desire to fight a new "Jutland" in the South China Sea with a distinct arrogance towards the Japanese navy, consistently rating it as having only 80% effectiveness of equivalent British forces and thereafter subtracting from that.[20] Above all, of course, it never got a full measure of the striking power and efficiency of the Japanese naval air arm, perhaps chiefly because the Admiralty's own conception of the use of aircraft-carriers, and the sorry history of the inter-war Fleet Air Arm, was so different.[21]

The Admiralty's greatest difficulty was the assessment of which navies it would be fighting against, and which (if any) would be allied with the Royal Navy -- a calculation which

had to be done, but was itself conditioned by the kaleidoscopic nature of Great-Power relations as the 1930s unfolded. Here, more than anywhere else, the Royal Navy's planners must have longed nostalgically for those simpler times prior to 1914, when the chief problem was how to bring the High Seas Fleet within range of the Grand Fleet's guns, with the French navy being allocated a minor, secondary role. For much of the 1930s, the Admiralty's gaze was fixed upon the Japanese naval threat in the Far East -- and it continued to be cast in that direction even when the other two services, the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister became increasingly worried about the German menace (and occasionally wondered about either compromising diplomatically with Japan or -- in Chamberlain's case, in 1934 -- simply scrapping the "Main Fleet to Singapore" strategy). The Admiralty's fixation with a Far Eastern war not only made it an "appeaser" in Europe, with Chatfield especially arguing that Hitler ought to be diverted eastwards, but it also dislocated its assessments; it rarely cooperated with the Industrial Intelligence Centre, for example, and its belief that the German fleet was intended for Baltic operations only meant that it was late in the day before the Naval Staff gave serious thought to the allocation of battleships as between home waters, the Mediterranean and the Far East. By the time it did so, Italy had become a potential enemy and the Admiralty was forced into an endless series of mental juggling acts and contingency plans, most of which tended to cast doubt upon the possibility of getting a large fleet out to Singapore whilst other dangers threatened closer to home. Even before the outbreak of war in Europe, priority had been given to the Mediterranean over the Far East (the security of the British Isles always being the top priority) and the greater part of the Admiralty's strategic assumptions had been rendered void.[22] At the time of the Chiefs of Staff European Appreciation of early 1939, that alteration had not yet been

made; but the document itself reflected a strong "European" orientation with which the Admiralty was only reluctantly coming to agree.

If the Royal Navy was fixated upon Japan, the Royal Air Force's overwhelming concern was Germany. It was a perfectly logical position on many grounds. The advent of the Third Reich made Europe after 1933 a much more dangerous and unpredictable place, and yet one in which the RAF's concept of possessing a powerful aerial striking force to "deter" aggression would become ever more pertinent; or, if deterrence failed, one in which the Nazi war effort might be crippled by more effective means than those employed in a lengthy and indirect maritime blockade. Moreover, as the Luftwaffe grew in size and (perceived) destructive power, so the RAF's need to provide aerial defense for the United Kingdom also increased in importance. By the mid-1930s, indeed, the German air threat so exercised the British public and politicians that these domestic pressures were, if anything, insisting that more resources be given to the RAF. Finally, it was clear to all that Germany was the most technologically and scientifically advanced of the "revisionist" Powers and the one with the largest aircraft-building potential. It followed, therefore, that if Britain could match Germany in the air, it could certainly deal with Italy and, most probably, with Japan.*

But if the RAF was right to concentrate upon Germany, its actual assessments of the Luftwaffe's size and role, and of its own ability to attack German industry and communications, were considerably off the mark. Little will be said here about the latter problem, since the story

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* That it actually could not deal with the Japanese aerial onslaught in 1941/42 had much more to do with the RAF's relative weaknesses in the Far East region than with any general backwardness.

is a well known one and was generic to all "strategic bombing" assumptions in the inter-war years: that is, the belief that "the bomber will always get through" blithely ignored -- or downplayed -- the awkward fact that the skies over the enemy's homeland might contain strong obstacles to "getting through." As it transpired, it was only in 1944 that long-range strategic bombing assumed the role that Trenchard, Mitchell, Douhet and other advocates of airpower had forecast two decades earlier.[23]

The real importance of the Air Staff's focus upon strategic bombing was that it influenced their perception of the Luftwaffe's role when that service emerged as a serious threat. If the true function of the RAF was to cripple Germany's war effort, it followed that the true function of the German air force was to cripple Britain, and by a "knock-out blow." Intelligence revelations that the Luftwaffe was much larger than the RAF produced an enormous crisis for the Air Staff. On the one hand, it grew increasingly dubious of its own ability to inflict much damage upon Germany, so that by late 1937 it was openly admitting that the "Metropolitan Air Force in general, and the Bomber Command in particular, are at present almost totally unfitted for war."[24] On the other, it led to political pressures for defensive as opposed to offensive aerial warfare, and to a concentration of minds upon ever more ambitious expansion "schemes" between 1936 and 1938 rather than upon what the Luftwaffe could do. The anxious efforts of the air intelligence directorate to get accurate figures of German production totals -- an effort joined by the Foreign Office, the SIS, the IIC, not to mention Churchill and his private informants -- turned much of the Air Staff's assessment into "bean counting," which included some of those more preposterous and arcane calculations about the average tonnage of bombs which could be dropped on Britain daily.[25] Although during the Munich crisis many of the Air

Staff properly pointed out that a German strike against Britain was "highly improbable while war was in progress against Czechoslovakia and France,"[26] the general sense of pessimism that Britain had lost the air race and should avoid a conflict with Germany clearly affected the political atmosphere in the Chamberlain cabinet's discussions.

In drafting its part of the European Appreciation in January/February 1939, the Air Staff found itself in the midst of a transition of views. The assessment still had to deal with the possibility that Germany might, at the outset of a European war, launch a surprise aerial blow against Britain; and it still showed a strong tendency to count numbers -- rather than to ask questions about the ranges of German bombers, or their capacity to find targets in cloudy conditions. Nonetheless, the document radiates a more confident tone about Britain's own aerial defenses and an increasing feeling that early German offensives can be withstood, a judgment which the events of 1940 would confirm. On the other hand, it is worth noting that, perhaps precisely because of this overwhelming concern about the power of air forces to damage an enemy's homeland, little consideration is given to the possibility that such forces might also be employed on the battlefield. Only a few months earlier, the Air Staff had felt that "the German Army Command believes in the potency of air power in land operations,"[27] yet the Chiefs of Staff's February 1939 report discussed the military balance in Western Europe merely in terms of numbers of French, British and German army divisions.

Of all three services, the difficulties facing the army during the inter-war years were the most profound, and significantly affected its contribution to British net assessment. To begin with, the army, even more than the navy, was structured to deal with Britain's imperial, extra-European liabilities; as in Cardwell's time, its chief problem was in finding the resources to

maintain its large garrison in India -- in addition to which there was the extensive military establishment in Egypt, the festering sore of Palestine, and smaller contingents ranging from Hong Kong and Singapore to Gibralter and Bermuda.[28] In early 1938, 64 of the army's battalions were in the British Isles, but 74 were deployed in India and the colonies -- a disproportion which none of the other Great Powers (save perhaps Japan, in its Manchuria/China interventions) possessed. This in turn meant that a considerable amount of army personnel and intelligence was devoted to assessing the possible Russian "threat" to Persia and India, or the politico-military problems of the Near East, which made the service somewhat complacent towards the growth of the German army, at least until 1936.[29]

The second element which deeply influenced army assessments was its awareness of how unpopular it was in the eyes of the British public and politicians, nursing gloomy memories of the Great War and determined to avoid committing a military force to the continent. Although such sentiments contradicted the traditional British concern with the European balance of power, not to mention the specific guarantees of the Locarno Treaty, the army could do little against the prevailing doctrine of "limited liability" -- a doctrine espoused by the Prime Minister and the Treasury, by influential outside critics such as The Times' military correspondent Liddell Hart, and at least tacitly by the Navy (which looked to the Far East) and the RAF (which held that it could deter aggression).[30] Thus, when the 1934 report of the Defence Requirements Sub-Committee proposed a scheme for modest but balanced expansion of all three services, it was the army's fate to have its portion cut to the bone. In the War Office's eyes, the contrast between the lamentable neglect of provisions for its own "Field Force," and the vast resources which the Nazi regime was apparently allocating to the Wehrmacht, could not be more marked.

When it became clear (after 1936) that the German army had exceeded its 36-division limit and was expanding to well over double that number, the War Office's assessments of the European situation became progressively gloomier -- climaxing in that array of private and official communications to the Cabinet during the 1938 crisis which suggested that there was nothing that could be done to assist the Czechs and that there was an urgent need to buy time.[31]

As many historians have pointed out, British defense planners -- led, if anything, by the War Office -- failed to provide a proper "net assessment" at Munich. The vast French numerical superiority in army divisions along Germany's western border was discounted -- as was the defensive strength of the Czech army -- the opinion of the British military attaché in Berlin (Mason-MacFarlane) being preferred to the attaché in Prague (Stronge). The Wehrmacht's problems with a too-rapid expansion were ignored. And the only consideration of whether it might be better to fight immediately or later -- at the cost of losing Czechoslovakia -- was couched (by General Ismay) overwhelmingly in terms of air strength.[32] Given that Germany's relative advantage vis-à-vis the West actually increased between 1938 and 1939, it was particularly ironic that the War Office was to the fore in the curious surge of optimism which occurred about three months after the Munich settlement. By that stage, the army had stopped focussing upon numbers of divisions -- where its intelligence estimates were very accurate -- and was concentrating instead upon the Wehrmacht's "overstrain" from a too rapid growth. In late February 1939, in fact, the War Office informed the Foreign Office that the 100-division strong German army was "an imposing facade of armaments behind which there are very little spares and reserves."[33]

This change of mood could be seen in the War Office's "input" to the European Appreciation of that very same month, which was much more confident in its assessments of a Franco-German land conflict than it had been five months earlier. This in turn leaves one major puzzle in the army's portrayal, that is, the total lack of qualitative assessments about mobility, fire-power, and overall efficiency. During the preceding three years, the Military Intelligence department had steadily accumulated a good sense of the various components of the Blitzkrieg strategy -- speed, concentrated armor forces, and close air support -- and also sensed that the French army had fallen a long way behind in those areas.[34] For example, Field Marshal Deverell's comparative analysis of the French and German army manoeuvres of October 1937 offered a clear testimony to the qualitative "gap" which existed between the offensively minded, air-supported, "businesslike" Wehrmacht and the less mobile, more traditional French.[35] But such distinctions were not included in the February 1939 net assessment.

While the three services made the chief contributions to British strategical surveys, the other departments also played a role, some major, some minor. The Colonial Office and Dominions Office can be placed in the latter category. It is true that the delicate relationship between Britain and the Dominions -- which had legally acquired a separate foreign policy status by 1931 -- meant that Whitehall worried about a "break-up" of the Empire if the country was again committed to a European war of which Canada, South Africa and Eire disapproved; and it is also true that the many imperial problems (India, Palestine, Egypt) increased the British desire to remain uninvolved in Europe. But such external pressures towards "appeasement" merely reinforced Neville Chamberlain's own intentions, and in any case had reached their peak in the Munich crisis. Thereafter, one has the sense that the British government mentally "took

note" of Dominions' isolationism but had concluded that it must make its decisions concerning peace or war regardless of sentiments in Ottawa and Pretoria.[36]

By contrast, the Foreign Office's contribution remained very significant, perhaps because it was bound to take a leading part in assessing any European crisis. As is well known, the Office was by no means united in its response to the various crises of the 1930s, with (for example) the Permanent Under-Secretary, Vansittart, becoming so critical of Nazi Germany that he was shunted aside into the honorific position of "Chief Diplomatic Advisor," and with contradictory advice being received from its diplomatic representatives abroad (e.g., Berlin vs. Warsaw; Tokyo vs. Peking/Nanking). In particular, the strongly pro-appeasement advice of Nevile Henderson from Berlin caused enormous discontents within the Office, which also played a role in "stiffening" Halifax to push for a stronger line towards Germany.[37] But in its contribution of the European Appreciation of February 1939, with its built-in assumption that Britain and France would be at war against Germany and Italy, the Foreign Office was much more impressive and balanced, commenting accurately upon the likely attitude of the other Powers, large and small.[38] It was well aware, for example, of just how restricted by American public opinion Roosevelt felt himself to be; and it was also aware of the uncertainties which attended -- and would probably deter -- any drastic Japanese move in the Far East during 1939. The reader may be struck by the importance which the Foreign Office gave to the position of Spain and Turkey, and perhaps even more to its deep concern about the precariousness of Britain's position in the Middle East (chiefly caused by Arab reaction to the Palestine issue). By contrast, another region of great importance in the Foreign Office's judgment -- Eastern Europe and Russia -- is given little attention in the Appreciation presumably because of the terms

of reference employed. Had the report been drafted two months later, the emphasis would have been significantly different.

What was clearly not a very useful source in the formulation of British "net assessment" in the late 1930s was the Secret Service. This was partly because of the incredibly confused and shadowy "war of the foxes" which was going on at that time, as well as the failure of the Intelligence community to coordinate (the Joint Intelligence Committee, which was to be immensely important during the war itself, was only set up in July 1939, following a whole series of fiascos). With Vansittart running his own private intelligence agency, with the Abwehr (and, even more, various anti-Nazi circles in Germany) feeding a host of false rumors to shock the British into standing firm against Hitler, and with the three armed services relying on their own, rather limited, intelligence departments, the overall contribution of these bodies was to add to the confusion in Whitehall as to what the dictators really planned to do. For every report from a secret source which proved accurate, there were three or four totally misleading or mischievous ones.[39] Yet even if this sort of intelligence had been better organized and more accurate, it probably would not have contributed much to the overall picture presented in a "net assessment" document, simply because the Secret Service was not really focussing upon those elements which contributed to the longer term global strategical balances, but endeavouring instead to discover what Hitler's "next move" would be.

One organization, however, which deliberately concentrated upon those elements was the Industrial Intelligence Centre, set up in 1931 and headed by Desmond Morton.[40] Its brief, of assessing foreign countries' economic strengths and weaknesses, their armaments capacity and vulnerability, was one of the few genuinely innovative parts of the British intelligence process.[41]

Although Morton's staff was miniscule and its sources of information sporadic (visiting businessmen, oil industry newsletters, etc.), it swiftly occupied an important position in the British assessment system -- partly because of the island-state's interest in "economic blockade," and partly because the IIC filled a vacuum, and thus endeared itself to the Air Ministry and the Foreign Office. As Professor Wark and other have pointed out, however, Morton's conception of an efficient, centralized Nazi "command economy" not only missed certain of the weaknesses and incoherences in the German system but also contributed to the 1936-1938 feelings in Whitehall that a liberal, democratic Britain had no real chance of matching the Third Reich in the armaments race.[42] When those ultra-pessimistic views were replaced in early 1939 by a plethora of reports and references concerning an "over-heating" of the German economy, the IIC remained more cautious, pointing out both the strengths and the probable weaknesses (in raw materials) of the dictator countries.

Although the information provided by the IIC on the state of the German economy was valuable and often very accurate, there was of course no way in which it could assist the British Cabinet as it wrestled with the international crises of the late 1930s: for example, did the evidence of Germany's shortage of foreign currency mean that Hitler would be more, or less, inclined to risk hostilities? It was impossible to say. On the other hand, if a general war was assumed, then the IIC's information was vital for British planning.

The importance which the Centre occupied in Whitehall can be seen in the large share of the European Appreciation, and the separate Appendix II, which is devoted to the economic aspects of the coming war.[43] In sum, it provided the intellectual underpinnings to the British

"long war" strategy, and remained in place even after Hitler's move against Prague and Poland, and the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

One further department played an absolutely central role in British net assessment for much of the 1930s -- the Treasury. In 1934 and again in 1937, for example, it was its conception of strategical challenges and priorities which prevailed, to the disgust of the armed forces and the anti-appeasers.[44] By early 1939, for reasons which will be analyzed below, its influence had been much reduced, with interesting consequences for the net assessment process.

Perceptions of Foes and Friends

Perhaps the greatest difference between British net assessment in the 1930s and American net assessment in (say) the 1960s was the extraordinary fluidity and multipolarity of the international scene in the earlier period. At the beginning of the 1930s, the Soviet Union was widely regarded as the greatest land enemy of the British Empire, while in naval terms the chief rivals were the United States and Japan; Mussolini's Italy was seen as temperamental, France as unduly assertive and difficult (but not hostile), and Germany as still prostrate. Five or eight years later, Japan appeared as a distinct challenge to British interests in the Far East, Germany had fallen under Nazi rule and was assessed as the "greatest long-term danger," and Italy's policies appeared aggressive and hostile; whereas the United States was more unpredictable and isolationist than ever, Russia had become somewhat less of a direct strategical threat (but remained an ideological foe), and France's weaknesses were more manifest than its strengths.

Indeed, even in the space of less than two years, the strategical landscape could be profoundly altered. In April 1938 the Foreign Office, discussing the "revised terms of

reference" for the Joint Planning Sub-Committee, listed the "principal new developments" since the previous assessment, in the autumn of 1936:

(1) The consolidation of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis.

(2) The existence of a state of war between China and Japan.

(3) The development of the Spanish Civil War.

(4) The temporary weaknesss of the Soviet army as the result of the recent (and still continuing) "purge."

(5) The annexation of Austria by Germany.

(6) The dangerous state of Anglo-Italian relations and the attempt now being made to improve them.

(7) The progressive deterioration of our position in the Middle East as a result of events in Palestine, with consequent risk to our oil supplies and communications with the East.

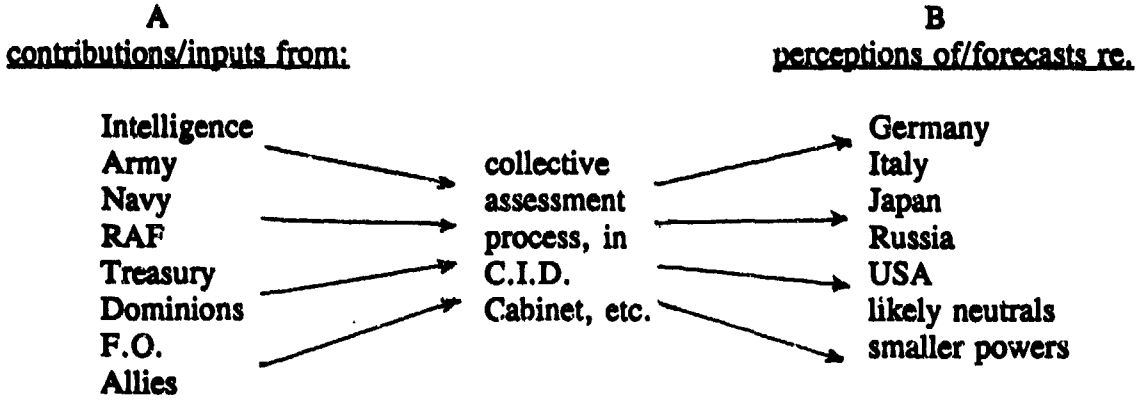
And although the Foreign Office optimistically went on to claim that "the general effect of these events and developments has been to clarify to some extent the possible causes of war in the near future and the probable alignment of the Powers,"[45] most readers would probably share the gloomier reaction of the Chiefs of Staff: that in such a kaleidoscopic international order, it was an extremely difficult task to fit all the permutations and possibilities into a coherent strategical plan. Would Britain be at war with one of the Axis powers, a combination of any two, or all three; would it be fighting alone, or aided by France (e.g., against Germany), or by the United States (e.g., against Japan)?; and where would the Soviet Union be? All this made that after-dinner boardgame of Diplomacy seem simple by comparison. . . .

As war-games today will confirm, the greatest problem in strategical assessment lies in identifying the political-diplomatic dimensions of the conflict in question. At the end of the day, the British planners of the time had to go for what seemed to them the most plausible assumptions, but with no guarantee that all of those conditions would be fulfilled. As one of the planners (Major Hollis) put it, when referring to the "terms of reference" of the Joint Planning Sub-Committee in January 1938,

> A foundation of Great Britain and France versus Germany, regardless of the attitude of other powers, seems so unrealistic a picture that, far from providing a sound basis, it might prove a dangerous one. On the other hand, it is impossible to range everyone up on one side or the other in a general world conflagration and, in addition, to spot the neutrals. Perhaps somewhere halfway between the unilateral war and the world war would provide the best setting, i.e., Great Britain, France and Czechoslovakia versus Germany and Italy; Turkey benevolently and Spain, from expediency, neutral. It is for consideration how we should cast the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and Japan.[46]

Yet, however plausible a proposal as a whole, its nicely-understated final sentence indicated what a host of uncertainties remained.

A further implication of all this complexity is that net assessment is to be seen, not only as an amalgam of departmental (and other) inputs, but also as an amalgam of eventually agreed-upon perceptions about the various Powers in the international system and how they related to each other. It is not usual for historians to offer graphic representations, but the following may serve to convey the idea that net assessment involves both individual contributions to the process and agreed-upon perceptions and policy forecasts as a result of the process:



Thus, in "deconstructing" a net assessment document such as the February 1939 European Appreciation of the Chiefs of Staff, it is possible to detect by archival analysis just how a variety of departmental inputs had been brought together in such a form. But the same document can also be viewed (and is usually read) as a summary statement of official British perceptions of the position and potential of the various large and small Powers as war approached, and as a set of operating principles for the early conduct of that war. Yet while A and B are distinct, they are also intimately connected; the prescriptions as to how to fight Germany (B) represent conclusions drawn from the opinions about the quality of the Wehrmacht's divisions, the changing balance of advantage in the air, the fragile state of the German economy, etc., etc., which had been submitted earlier by a number of agencies (A). In sum, net assessment has to be understood as being perceptions, process and product.

British perceptions of Japan did not change very much between 1935/36 and the outbreak of the Second World War in the Far East. The key change had occurred earlier, in the reassessments which occurred following the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. At that time, there still existed many pro-Japanese voices in the British foreign-policy decision-making system; and sympathy with Japan's frustrations in dealing with the Chinese nationalists was

combined, after 1933, with the feeling (held by Chamberlain and the Treasury) that the worsening European scene made it desirable to maintain reasonable relations with Tokyo. Nevertheless, already in 1934 the Committee of Imperial Defence had accepted its Defence Requirements Sub-Committee recommendation that Japan be regarded as an enemy -- the "more immediate" danger, with Germany the greater but longer-term one -- and that the threat of further Japanese aggressions in the Far East be taken seriously, and seriously planned for.[47] The Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936, the Japanese invasion of China proper in 1937, a whole series of unfriendly actions against British interests (the most alarming of which was the Tientsin crisis of summer 1939), and Japan's southward moves in 1940/41, simply confirmed that judgment.

The greatest British difficulty, as always, was that it did not enjoy the luxury of being able to plan for war against Japan alone. Its assessments of an Anglo-Japanese armed conflict were therefore nearly always accompanied by reference to third parties: what would the attitude of Germany and Italy be if war broke out in the Far East while there remained unsolved problems in Europe? What could be done if Japan attacked after a European war had broken out? If hostilities occurred in the Far East, would the British be fighting alongside the French -- and the Dutch? Above all, what would the position of the United States be? Assessments of the American role clearly influenced assessments of the expected course of the conflict, the more especially since it was likely to be a chiefly maritime campaign, in which the U.S. Pacific Fleet would be a, if not the, critical factor. Obviously, a war between Japan and "the West" (Britain, U.S.A., France, Netherlands, Australasia) with Germany and Italy neutral gave much more cause for optimism than one in which Japan attacked whilst a European war was already raging and the United States remained on the sidelines. Given the variables involved, the broad

political and strategical component of British assessments of a war against Japan could only be a moving picture, to be frequently amended as new developments occurred. After 1939, the issues became simpler: would Japan take advantage of the European conflict to attack and, if so, when?; and would the Americans be drawn in? The news from Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, therefore, immensely simplified things by providing positive answers to both questions.

The fighting capacity of the Japanese armed forces proved equally difficult to assess. Despite the very strict Japanese controls and secrecy concerning their armed forces, a great deal of information reached the British from intelligence-gathering organizations, photographs, and private reports. The overall impression is that, although individual observers caught glimpses of Japan's fighting efficiency, such insights were never brought together -- there doesn't appear to be an overall, inter-service assessment of Japan's forces -- and that racial prejudice all too frequently played a role in suggesting that the Japanese were not really up to the levels of efficiency of the West. (A variation of this was the common remark that the Japanese were on a par with the Italian armed forces.) If the Japanese personnel were disciplined and brave, they were also "fanatical," unable to react to unforeseen events, unimaginative. Their ship-designs were curious; their technological and economic base under-developed; their generals and admirals somewhat inferior.[48] Against this general set of cultural and racial stereotypes, specific reports about the very good coordination of the Japanese naval air force could easily be downgraded.

As for the British army, one has the sense that it was so convulsed by the European crisis and its own expansion in the late 1930s -- and then by the actual war -- that it had little time to study Japan's forces thoroughly. Laconic British minutes of "very interesting," which were

made upon secretly-acquired Japanese army documents concerning forest and jungle warfare, river-estuary operations and landings (with an emphasis upon flank attacks) suggest an intelligence and assessment organization which was much more focussed on the Belgian plains than the Malayan peninsula.[49] When the Far Eastern war finally broke out, there was no real British surprise at either its timing or its location (Hong Kong, Thailand/Malaya) since their own intelligence had made that fairly clear; there was also no equivalent of Pearl Harbor or Clark Field. What was not accounted for in the British net assessment was how successfully the Japanese forces could wage war, whether in the Malayan jungle or in the divebomber attacks upon Force Z.

The same pattern is observable in British assessments of Nazi Germany, albeit with one or two interesting variations. Since the literature upon this topic is now so vast, all that can be attempted is a brief synthesis here.[50] Given memories of the efforts required to defeat Germany in the First World War, it was not surprising that there was considerable British respect for that nation's organizational, technical and fighting qualities. But it was difficult for British officials not to adopt a "mirror-imaging" attitude in assessing Germany's immediate problems of rearmament in the early 1930s; if the British armed services were finding it difficult to secure adequate resources, to develop newer (and much more complex) weapons-types, to evolve new methods of command and control, to maintain a sufficient infrastructure and trained personnel, then surely Germany, more badly affected by the Depression, would be in an even worse condition? That certainly was the view of the Air Staff and, to some degree, of the War Office; whereas the Royal Navy's own concentration upon the Japanese danger meant that, for quite another reason, it viewed German rearmament with equanimity.

All this early departmental confidence was shattered (except for that of the navy, which steamed ahead regardless) from 1936 onwards, in a flurry of reassessments. The Luftwaffe was admitted to be superior in size, and drawing further ahead. The German army had announced that it was already past the 36-division size; indeed, looked as if it would be soon double that figure. And the Industrial Intelligence Centre's vision of a centralized, totalitarian economy, efficiently preparing an entire economy and people for war, suggested a degree of Nazi preparedness well ahead of anything that laissez-faire Britain could hope to muster.[51] All this provided the backdrop for that well-known, excessively pessimistic "input" by the Chiefs of Staff at the time of Munich. Germany's striking power was unassailable. The Czechs had no chance of defending themselves. The French deficiencies were plainly outlined. The Royal Navy could do little to hurt Germany. The army was incapable of helping Czechoslovakia. The Royal Air Force, far from being able to "deter" German aggression in central Europe, was judged unlikely to be capable of defending the British homeland from the 945 tons of bombs estimated to be rained upon it each day.

That the Chiefs of Staff offered a "worst-case scenario" is now generally admitted.[52] The very considerable Czech army was considerably down-graded, whereas the size and efficiency of the German army was greatly emphasized. The availability and size of the German and Italian heavy warships was exaggerated ("pocket" battleships being listed as battleships, for example). The Luftwaffe's capacity to deliver a "knock-out" blow to Britain if Germany was heavily involved in a war with Czechoslovakia and France was not seriously challenged, nor was there any debate about the limitations of range, although that was certainly a factor restricting the RAF's ability to bomb much of Germany.[53]

What is only now being recognized is the extent to which that excessive pessimism of September 1938 had been transformed into optimism by early 1939, i.e., the time of the European Appreciation memo itself. As will be argued below, the change of mood went too far, and if the 1939 assessments gained a better understanding of Germany's weaknesses, they ignored many of the strengths of their deadliest and most formidable enemy.

By contrast, the evidence suggests that the British -- at least in Whitehall -- consistently overestimated Italy's power. This may in part have been caused by the "shock" of Italy's 1935 defection from the pro-Allied nations over the Abyssinian crisis, an event which not only threw the Chiefs of Staff into confusion at the time,[54] but which immensely complicated all later plans for force deployments, especially those of the Royal Navy. It was also influenced, at least to some extent, by the tendency towards "bean counting" -- so that, for example, in paragraph 20 of the European Appreciation the Italian air force might be supposed to be the equivalent in striking power to the Royal Air Force,* and its "active infantry divisions" (paragraph 12) the equivalent in efficiency of the Wehrmacht's. On the whole, however, the British military and naval experts who had observed the Italian armed forces were almost unanimous in thinking that they would not be difficult to beat, and these sentiments were reinforced by the increasing awareness of Italy's dreadful economic weaknessses and its acute dependence upon imported raw materials. In consequence, there were many Britons early in 1939 who advocated giving the Italians a "crushing blow" just as soon as war broke out.[55]

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* Paragraph 23 does suggest that the Italian pilots' morale would be inferior, but there is no attempt at comparison between, say, a Spitfire and the Fiat CR42.

That such arguments were eventually going to be rejected by the Chiefs of Staff in the early summer of 1939 was chiefly due to fears of larger threats elsewhere. Mussolini's attack upon Albania, the Allied guarantees to Greece and Turkey, the reinforcement of the Italian garrisons in Libya, and the British worries about their entire position in the Middle East, suggested a "showdown" with Mussolini in order to eradicate these various Mediterranean uncertainties. But that in turn assumed that the Royal Navy's "main fleet to Singapore" strategy would be even further amended, and made ever more conditional -- which in its turn was dependent upon whether the United States Navy would be able to take care of Japan in the Far East. By June, British hopes of such American naval assistance had been dashed, and the government found itself in the midst of the Tientsin crisis with Japan, and agonizing over whether it should after all send a battlefleet to Chinese waters -- and what the implications of that would be for Britain's ability to handle the German and Italian navies closer to home. As Professor Pratt observes, "In both instances the crises in the Far East and Mediterranean interacted to paralyse policy and to rule out coercive solutions, such as the Mediterranean offensive or a naval demonstration against Japan."[56] The result was that preference for an Italian neutrality which weakened the prospects of putting economic pressure upon Germany.[57]

In turning to assess their potential allies, the British found their global dilemmas only intensified. By far the most important factor was the United States. Its fleet, as noted above, was regarded as the key element in the strategical balance in the Far East, an assessment which became even stronger following the outbreak of the war in Europe. By 1940/41, indeed, British ministers were clear that "the real deterrent to Japanese aggression in the Far East can only be found in the willing cooperation of the United States."[58] More generally, there was a widespread

appreciation of the enormous industrial-productive capacities of the USA, and of its great financial staying power. But all this was overshadowed by the British feelings of frustration, despair and even anger at the political unpredictability of the Americans, the willingness to preach firmness but not to offer any concrete support, and the ways (especially the Neutrality legislation) in which American decisions were hurting the Anglo-French chances of improving their own military strength by borrowing abroad.

Chamberlain himself was often extremely suspicious of Roosevelt, holding his policies to be hypocritical and "all words"; Churchill and many anti-appeasers were strongly pro-American, and urged understanding. The Foreign Office itself was more pragmatic: it recognized the great importance of maintaining good relations with the United States, but it also was realistic enough to see that it could not reckon upon active American aid unless further changes occurred in both international affairs and in domestic American opinion.[59] So far as one can tell, the Foreign Office did not share Chamberlain's apprehension that, if Britain became involved in another great war, the net result would be that it would lose its economic independence to a United States which would than make demands for the ending of the sterling block, imperial preference, British rule in India and South-east Asia, and the like (items which were indeed to form a major part of Anglo-American relationships after 1941);[60] or, if the Office did feel such unease, the danger seemed less pressing, and more hypothetical, than those posed by the Third Reich. As Gladwyn Jebb grimly put it, it was preferable that Britain become the next American state than another German Gau!

This point brings us to an element in British net assessment which is not very often detectable in the official documents but nonetheless was part of the traditional thinking of the

"Official Mind": namely, that it was important to plan, not just to avoid defeat (Chamberlain) or secure victory (Churchill) in the next war, but to ensure that the post-war order would be one satisfactory to Britain's long term interests. During the First World War, for example, some British ministers and officials had felt uncomfortable at the idea that a total defeat of Germany would leave the British Empire alone to face its two old imperial rivals, France and Russia.[61] In British eyes, what was ideally sought was a certain equilibrium among the other Powers, allowing London to concentrate chiefly upon domestic and colonial affairs and ultimately, if forced to choose, an option to move towards one Power or another. Since Palmerston's death in 1865 (the Prime Minister who coined the expression that Britain "has no permanent friends and no permanent enemies. She has only permanent interests."), this balancing act had been increasingly difficult to sustain.[62] Choices had had to be made, before and during the First World War; but each of those choices (e.g., the entente and then the alliance with France) had inevitably involved obligations, constraints, restrictions -- all of which the British hoped to be free of after 1919.

This mentality probably conditioned British assessments of France and Russia during the inter-war years to a far greater degree than did strictly military considerations. Despite a cultural Francophilia (most of the British elite knew French but not, say, German or Italian), there was a very widespread resentment of French policies and politics: its "hard-line" attitude over reparations, the 1923 occupation of the Ruhr, its financial pressures during the Kreditanstalt crisis, had all, in British eyes, stoked the fires of German nationalism. The corruption and fecklessness of French domestic politics in the 1930s did nothing to improve this negative image. Behind everything, one suspects, there was a subconscious resentment at France because of the

fact that she tied Britain to the continent of Europe, whether or not there was a formal treaty of assistance. At the end of the day, the British knew that they could not let France fall; geography and strategy determined that. But this constraint did not endear warm feelings towards France, the more especially when France's own obligations and treaties bound her (and therefore, by extension, Britain) to the fate of such east-European countries as Czechoslovakia and Poland. Much of the British energies expended during the 1938 crisis had been devoted to detaching France (which had to be defended) from Eastern Europe (which was negotiable).

Ultimately, this sort of separation was meaningless. A Hitler bent upon the domination of Europe was a threat both east and west. But at the time the Chiefs of Staff's European Appreciation was being composed, the British government itself was only halfway through that remarkable metamorphosis in its policies which occurred in the year following Munich. Faced with a series of reports in early 1939 about a possible French collapse and rumors of surprise German attacks upon the Netherlands or other small countries, the Cabinet had at last accepted the fact that France had to be given firm guarantees, including the promise of a British expeditionary force.[63] It was, indeed, on the basis of that supposition that the Appreciation was composed. But it is remarkable that there is such little reference to eastern Europe, the countries of which are presumed to remain neutral -- and to be allowed to stay neutral -- while war rages in the West and in the Mediterranean. Within another month, ironically, the impossibility of assessing the fate of one "side" of Europe without much reference to the other "side" would be made clear.

On a strictly military level, the reader of the European Appreciation cannot help being struck by its optimistic references to France's ability to withstand a German offensive. This was

clearly a reflection of the War Office's growing belief that the German military machine had overstrained itself and was "not ready to undertake more than an attaque brusque against a first-class power."[64] Yet other British military assessments of France had drawn attention to its great weaknesses in the air, its failure to prepare the army for modern armored warfare, its outmoded, defensively-structured attitude to tactics and operations. Little of that qualitative assessment is visible here.

British governmental perceptions of the Soviet Union were, of course, even more influenced by political, cultural and ideological judgments. Ever since 1920, the British had been trying to work out whether the Bolshevik state was a fundamental threat to the existing liberal-capitalist world order (and therefore to be treated as a pariah), or simply a somewhat different sort of Great Power (to be treated on the "no permanent friends . . . no permanent enemies" principle).[65] On the whole, Conservative administrations in London, and in particular Chamberlain, Halifax, Chatfield, Sinclair (the head of the Secret Service) and other "inner circle" policy-makers remained profoundly suspicious of the Soviet Union even when they were willing to admit that Nazi Germany had become a more immediate threat.[66] At Munich, Chamberlain had been willing to agree to Hitler's insistence that Russia be excluded from the discussions; after the Prague coup of March 1939, that was no longer going to be possible.

Complicating the picture was the shifting British assessments of Russian military strength. The almost uniformly favorable judgments of the early-to-mid 1930s about the Red Army's capacity had been replaced by altogether more negative ones in the wake of Stalin's purges -- and the belief that the Soviet Union had become militarily negligible seemed confirmed by the reports of the poor performance of its forces in the July/August 1938 border conflict

(Changkufeng) with Japan.[67] In addition, it was clear from all the diplomatic and military despatches from Warsaw and Bucharest that the Poles and Rumanians would strongly oppose any anti-German "security" scheme which involved Soviet troops on their soil -- a contradiction which the Anglo-French-Russian alliance negotiations of early summer 1939 completely failed to solve. Nevertheless, while these provided reasons for Chamberlain and his entourage to discount the Soviet Union as an important factor in the strategical balances, there were many in the Foreign Office and among the Chiefs of Staff who thought otherwise. While not claiming that Russia was a first-class military power, their argument was that it acted as a "bogey man," deterring both the Japanese and perhaps even the Germans from further aggression because of its unpredictable and menacing character.[68] The European Appreciation report diplomatically refers to Russia's ability to "exercise a restraining influence on Japan," but what is not expressed in the report -- because of its focus upon a west-European war -- is any sense of the bureaucratic debate which was occurring early in 1939 about Russia's potential to be a "restraining influence" upon Berlin.[69] Also missing is any appreciation of the Soviet Union's economic importance in any future European conflict.

In sum, the British perceptions of likely enemies and likely friends among the Great Powers present us with a very mixed bag. None of them was seen to be completely predictable. Each of them was viewed as possessing both strengths and weaknesses. All of them had to be taken into account by a British government which was being repeatedly urged by the Chiefs of Staff "to reduce the number of our potential enemies and to gain the support of potential allies."[70] But there was the rub. To reduce the number of potential enemies (e.g., by an agreement with Japan) would alarm and annoy potential allies (e.g., the United States). To stand

firm against a potential enemy (e.g., by building up British naval strength against Italy in the Mediterranean, or against Japan in the Far East) meant a reduction of strength elsewhere (e.g., in Far Eastern waters, or in the Mediterranean). To "gain the support of potential allies" when the United States remained isolationist and the Soviet Union inscrutable had been beyond the skills of British diplomacy. To gain France's support -- something the French had offered, on mutual alliance terms, for the past two decades -- had always involved a military and political involvement in Europe that Britain and its Empire disliked. Those difficulties, those sentiments, had all been there at Munich. By early 1939, the British had at last recognized that France was the only ally they had, and that it was necessary to cooperate with it in the event of a war against "potential enemies." The European Appreciation was a reflection of that admission, but that alone did not solve the dilemmas of net assessment in a world where Britain's obligations outstripped her capacities. In Chatsfield's words, "we were in a weak military position to meet a political situation which we could not avoid."[71] Net assessment, in other words, will all too often involve having to make a choice among evils.

The Unfolding of British Net Assessment, 1934-1941

The first substantive exercise in British net assessment began late in 1933, in the light of the "double crisis" occasioned by Japan's aggression in Manchuria and Hitler's withdrawal of Germany from the Geneva Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations.[72] In October of that year, the Chiefs of Staff produced a gloomy Annual Review which pointed out that, although the Ten Year Rule had been formally abandoned eighteen months earlier, nothing (apart from a revival of the Singapore base scheme) had been done to attend to the completely

inadequate state of the defence forces; and yet Germany was beginning to rearm at a pace which would make it a formidable military power in a few years time. If Germany did initiate aggressive actions which flouted the Versailles and Locarno accords, the Cabinet ought to be aware that

> far from our having the means to intervene, we should be able to do little more than hold the frontiers and outposts of the Empire during the first few months of the war.[73]

With the Geneva Conference in ruins, even the British Treasury agreed the circumstances were serious enough to warrant the creation of a special body, the Defence Requirements Sub-Committee (D.R.C.) of the Committee of Imperial Defence, to report upon the worst deficiencies of the armed forces and a spending program to eliminate them.

The story of the D.R.C. investigation is now well known, and its outcome set a pattern in British defense priorities until after Munich. The sub-committee itself, which reported in February 1934, consisted of the three Chiefs of Staff (Montgomery-Massingberd, Chatfield, Ellington) and those very powerful senior civil servants, Vansittart (Foreign Office), Fisher (Treasury) and Hankey (C.I.D. and Cabinet). Acting on the assumption that France, Italy and the United States were friendly, the Chiefs proposed a modest and balanced package of increases for all three services -- a naval modernization program, creation of a small but mobile British Expeditionary Force, and an expansion of RAF squadrons -- to meet both the Japanese and German dangers. The civilians pushed for altogether more drastic measures (such as reviving good relations with Japan, and further strengthening Britain's air and land forces vis-à-vis Germany), but their ideas were overtaken when the D.R.C. report was dissected by a committee of Cabinet ministers and then handed over to Treasury scrutiny. As a result of Neville

Chamberlain's influence among his fellow-ministers, the total cost of the D.R.C.'s five year spending package was cut by two-thirds, from 97 to 59 million pounds, with the bulk of the increases going to enhance the Royal Air Force's "deterrent" role against Germany. By contrast, the army was virtually denied a continental-commitment function -- and the necessary monies to carry it out -- while Chamberlain's radical scheme to scrap the "Singapore base" strategy was only just resisted by the rest of the Cabinet, but with the Royal Navy's hoped-for expansion much reduced.[74]

It would not be long before at least some of the policy imperfections and miscalculations of this first deficiency program became apparent, but it is worth observing immmediately that this exercise was a long way from being a full "net assessment" survey. No real analysis had been done of the size and capacities of the armed forces of the two potential enemies, and even less attention was paid to the strengths and weaknesses of the presumed "friends." The economic and technological components of national power were missing. The diplomatic context -- such as the position of the USSR, the situation in China, the problems of east-central Europe -- was left aside. All that was being done was a partial "repair job" on a delapidated, overstretched structure of imperial defence. Perhaps its chief value was that it reminded senior ministers, battered by financial strains and such political setbacks as the East Fulham by-election (October 1933), that external problems also had to be confronted.

Within another two years, those ministers' minds were wonderfully concentrated upon external problems. The Japanese threat in the Far East remained and was, if anything, potentially greater following that nation's withdrawal from the London Naval Treaty discussions early in 1936.[75] Even more alarming was Italy's defection from the pro-Allied camp as a result

of the Abyssinian crisis. This dramatic change of front, together with the large-scale Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War, severely weakened France's overall diplomatic and strategical position in Europe; but from the British perspective, its chief consequence was the specter of a new enemy, lying athwart the critical sea lines of communication to the East and threatening the entire British position in the Mediterranean and the Arab world. From this time onwards, therefore, the Chiefs of Staff and their planners were forced into a global strategical juggling act, especially in terms of naval forces, as they pondered how best to arrange their scarce resources to meet the awful possibility of having to confront three enemies at the same time.[76] Finally, and most threatening of all, there was the continued expansion of Nazi Germany. In March 1936 it had reoccupied the Rhineland, a flagrant breach of the Locarno Treaty which neither France nor Britain felt able to contest. The Luftwaffe now proclaimed itself to be far larger than the Royal Air Force, news which not only shattered the Air Staff's earlier calculations but also increased ministerial and public pressures for aircraft building to be concentrated rather more upon fighters than bombers. In addition, the German army was expanding at breakneck speed, forcing the War Office to revise upwards its calculations of German striking power. France, by contrast, looked much weaker than before, militarily, economically and politically. The Soviet Union remained inscrutable, and the United States appeared more isolationist than ever. From Palestine to India, local unrest was intensifying.[77]

One consequence of all this was that British defense spending projections moved smartly upwards* so that the services were now coming out of the "deficiencies repair" stage and at last

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* The first D.R.C. report had involved spending of an additional 59 million pounds; the third report, accepted in early 1937, involved more than 400 million pounds in additional defense spending.

entering the "enhancement" stage. But the size of these increases, with their threat of weakening British credit and exports, in turn was driving the Treasury to take an ever more active role in the ordering of defense priorities, with the RAF as the chief beneficiary and the army as the chief loser. Institutionally, the need to centralise this activity led to the creation of a Minister for the Coordination of Defence (Sir Thomas Inskip, appointed in March 1936), and to a strengthening of the role of a small committee of ministers (Defence Policy and Requirements Sub-Committee of the C.I.D.) -- both of which tended to place defence priority decisions and overall assessments in the hands of the politicians themselves, and in particular Neville Chamberlain. Moreover, while Britain's own increased spending worried ministers, it did not seem to be closing the "gap"; on the contrary, the Fascist states, whose ability to command national resources was admitted to be much greater than Britain's, appeared to be going further ahead. This in turn affected the British planners' assessments for the next two years, and their memoranda became gloomier and gloomier -- especially in respect of the democracies being able to halt German expansion in central Europe.[78]

All this formed the background to what has been termed the "blind" or ultra-pessimistic phase of British net assessments,[79] and fed into the government's handling of the Czech crisis in the autumn of 1938. Thanks to the accumulation of scholarly research, it is now possible to disentangle the various factors which contributed to London's conclusion that a peaceful settlement of the Sudetenland dispute chiefly on Hitler's terms -- i.e., appeasement -- was necessary. The first was the limitations of the British intelligence system concerning German power, and intentions. Part of this was due to human weakness -- the failure to probe the

Luftwaffe's likely roles in a war begun by a German attack upon Czechoslovakia, the exaggerated respect for the "totalitarian" economy or for an army which had almost quadrupled in nominal size over the past five years. Part of it was caused by a genuine problem: since the Third Reich was a "closed" society, information gleaned by (or fed to) the British was incidental and often anecdotal. And how could even a completely accurate breakdown of German aircraft production allow the Cabinet to know what Hitler planned to do?

The second was the excessively pessimistic nature of the Chiefs of Staff advice to the political leadership -- suggesting a downgrading of Czechoslovakia's defensive capabilities, the inability of France to do very much, the danger of a German "knock-out blow" from the air, the complete inadequacy of the British armed services and the need to buy time, without however offering any assessment of the future European balance of power if Germany was allowed to swallow up Czechoslovakia.[80]

The third was the way in which the Chiefs of Staff's advice could be used by Chamberlain to overwhelm doubters within the Cabinet, of whom there was a fair number (Stanley, Duff Cooper, Elliott, de la Warr, even Halifax).[81] That is to say, it seems clear that the Prime Minister already had a large number of reasons for avoiding war:[82] he genuinely feared that it would inflict lasting damage upon the delicate British economy, undermining its international credit-worthiness and making it dependent upon a United States whose long-term intentions towards the British Empire he mistrusted; he also was concerned that another "total war" would alter the domestic-political balances, enhancing the position of the trade unions and the Labour Party and reducing that of laissez-faire Conservatism;[83] he disliked Russia, was dismissive of the central-European states, resented the French, and was concerned at Dominion

isolationism -- all of which were grounds for avoiding being drawn into a European conflict on behalf of a country "of which we know nothing";[84] above all, there was his sheer moral dislike for conflict, fighting, destruction, bloodshed -- and desire to avoid it if at all possible.

But none of the above reasons were as powerful, or as useful, as the arguments -- which had been readily supplied by the Chiefs of Staff -- that Britain could do little to help Czechoslovakia, that the German army was a "terrific instrument" whereas its British equivalent was lacking in everything, and that the British Isles lay open to devastating aerial attacks from the Luftwaffe. . . .[85] It was on this ground that Chamberlain, supported by a majority of the Cabinet, overwhelmed the Stanleys and the Duff Coopers who wished to stand firm; and it was because of his position as Prime Minister, in control of the Cabinet and C.I.D. machinery, that he could head off the requests (e.g., by Stanley) for an assessment of how the overall strategical balances would look in a year's time if Germany swallowed Czechoslovakia.[86] In other words, this was not a "net assessment" at all in the proper sense of the term; it was, rather, Neville Chamberlain's personal net assessment of all the factors in the equation which he deemed to be important. And the subsequent historiographical debate as to whether Britain should have fought in 1938 instead of in 1939 is, in fact, chiefly a debate upon the Prime Minister's perception and misperception of international and national realities.[87]

On the other hand, within five months of Munich, the British government machine produced a far better grounded, much more detailed, and much less biased "net assessment" in the form of the Chiefs of Staff's European Appreciation, 1939-40 of February 1939. This is not to say that this strategical survey lacked faults -- it had both correct insights and significant

errors, as will be analysed below -- but simply that it gives the historian the best opportunity to "deconstruct" British net assessment as perception, process and product.[88]

Several reasons account for the much-improved nature of this European Appreciation, 1939-40 document. The first is that it was brought together and composed over a period of time in which the crisis atmosphere of September 1938 -- or September 1939 -- was missing; the Chiefs of Staff were not asked to give a snapshot reply as to whether Britain should go to war immediately. Instead, the entire paper was written on the assumption that Britain and France were at war against Germany and Italy, and with the purpose of advising how best that war should be conducted. It was therefore a much more strictly military-strategical document, and generally free of the political concerns which had exercised Chamberlain and his fellow ministers during the Czech crisis. More to the point, it was not dominated by the Prime Minister, either in the perceptions expressed or in the process itself; it went instead through the full array of departmental and committee stages before ending up as a formal Committee of Imperial Defence document for senior ministers to scrutinise, but not as something requiring decisions and actions to be taken there and then. Finally, with a few amendments, this was to represent the general outlines of British grand strategy as it went into the Second World War and, indeed, until the fall of France in 1940.

The European Appreciation report was chiefly the work of the three service members of the Joint Planning Sub-Committee (JPC) of the C.I.D., Group Captain Slessor, Brigadier Morris and Captain Danckwerts, together with their staffs and the C.I.D. secretariat; but it also benefitted by asking the advice of the Foreign Office on the international political situation, of the Industrial Intelligence Centre on "The Economic Situation in Germany, Italy and Japan," and

of the Home Office on the state of air raid precautions (this information being included as Appendices I - III of the main report). The individual service contributions, and those of the Foreign Office and IIC, were based upon a variety of forms of intelligence, especially in regard to comparative force numbers and to the analysis of the fascist powers' economies; such intelligence was not itself the subject of analysis by the Joint Planning Committee, it was simply accepted as true. Once the JPC had woven the survey together, it was sent to the Chiefs of Staff themselves, who reviewed it at three meetings (7, 8, and 15 February) but without any significant changes. That final version was accepted on 20 February, and went to the C.I.D. on the same day.[89] Thereafter it was attended to by a special "Strategic Appreciation" sub-committee of the C.I.D. which spent the following few months considering various aspects of the overall strategy such as Anglo-French military cooperation, bombing policy, and an offensive against Italy.[90]

Finally, it is worth remarking that the European Appreciation was composed at a time when British views of a conflict with Germany were becoming tougher and more resolute. This was perhaps chiefly due to the "sea-change" in public opinion towards appeasement which appears to have taken place as 1938 changed into 1939: anger at Kristallnacht, a sense of guilt at having abandoned the Czechs, a growing feeling that Churchill and others were right in claiming that Hitler only respected force, an appreciation that Britain needed to do more to help and reassure the French, are all detectable in the private letters and publicly expressed feelings of this time.[91] But this mood was reinforced, in official circles, by a rising sense that the military and especially the economic balances were not so disproportionately tilted against the Allies as had been assumed a year earlier. The army in particular had lost its awe at the all-

powerful German war machine and pointed instead to the Wehrmacht's problems in having expanded too far too fast. The Industrial Intelligence Centre and the Foreign Office focused attention upon Germany's raw materials shortages, its foreign exchange crisis, and its depressed public mood. The air force and other authorities felt that a German "knock-out blow" was now much less likely to succeed against Britain's improved aerial defences. While Chamberlain and his close entourage were still hoping to avoid a war, the Cabinet and government as a whole was much more ready to contemplate it. In February 1939, just as the European Appreciation was being drafted, decisions were being taken to expand the Field Force and begin staff conversations with the French.[92] After the Prague coup of the following month, London began offering guarantees to Poland, Greece, Turkey; "limited liability" had been replaced by a renewal of the "continental commitment."

It was in such an atmosphere that the joint planners put together the document. Read in their entirety, the 431 paragraphs of the Appreciation constitute an impressive strategical tour d'horizon of which -- as mentioned elsewhere -- there is simply no equivalent in the files of the other Great Powers of this period. Its summary "Examination of Factors and the Broad Strategic Problem" is followed by a detailed consideration of operational aspects in theater after theater, and then by remarks and recommendations concerning the unfolding of the war and Britain's general strategical policy in it. The document concludes with a set of very practical "Recommendations" and is then followed by the accompanying appendices and maps. It is a superb and characteristic "product" of the Whitehall military-political-bureaucratic machine. It bears the stamp of authority and it did, indeed, contain the basic strategical principles upon which Britain sought to conduct strategy in the first few years of the war.

In the months which followed the appearance of the European Appreciation, the British armed forces and entire governmental system prepared for war. As a further sign of the flexibility of that system, the Cabinet established a "Committee on Defence Programmes and Their Acceleration" (a reaction to the German invasion of Prague, and an indication of the newer sense of urgency which permeated Whitehall); then, in July 1939, a "Committee on the Coordination of Defence Programmes" (to sort out the short-term, intermediate, and long-term demands upon British resources); and, finally, as war loomed, a "Defence Preparedness Committee" (it was set up on 22 August, and dissolved at the outbreak of war).[93] In all cases, a small team of senior Ministers met several times a week to hammer out priorities and to "fine tune" the preparations for conflict. If "readiness" and "preparedness" -- rather than battlefield "effectiveness" -- were the criteria by which this system was to be measured, it would have had no superiors and very few equals.

The swift unfolding of events between February and September of 1939 -- including the remarkable changes in Eastern Europe -- did little to alter the basic strategical principles upon which the European Appreciation rested: if the British and French Empires could withstand the early assaults of Germany (and, possibly, Italy), they would eventually be able to make their greater resources prevail; in the Far East, Japan was a major distraction but not a true first-class Power; the USSR was unreliable; the United States, although not very helpful, was to be cultivated, and other neutrals -- especially Spain and Turkey -- handled with tact. The Allies were superior at sea, could probably hold their own on the ground, and were reducing their inferiority in the air.

It is, indeed, worth arguing that most of these principles survived into the war itself, certainly through the "Phoney War" of 1939-40 and in many respects even until the total transformation of the conflict in the second half of 1941. Churchill's advent to the Premiership may have brought a more activist and more centralized form of administration to the making of British strategy; and the actual experience of fighting, in the Atlantic, in the Norwegian fjords, over the English Channel, along the littoral of North Africa, may have answered many of the questions which the British had about their enemies' operational and tactical behaviour. But a great part of the pre-war "net assessment" prevailed during the first two years of the war.

That being the case, it is important to return to the European Appreciation itself, and to note just how much was missing from this analysis, despite its thorough and impressive pedigree. This is not to imply that the European Appreciation report was completely wrong. Its assessment of the overall political and diplomatic context, ranging from the probable neutrality of Spain and Turkey to the "wait and see" attitude of Japan and the Soviet Union, was entirely correct. Its recognition of the economic weaknesses of the Fascist powers was also accurate, and has been confirmed by many later studies.[94] Finally, it was right to conclude that, with the Allies being superior only at sea but significantly inferior in the air and on land, the Anglo-French strategy would necessarily be much more of a defensive than an offensive one, at least until the resources of Britain and its Empire were fully mobilized. Both Whitehall officials, and outside critics like Churchill, were willing to concede that the dictator-states had about a 2-year lead in armaments over the democracies -- although it was held that such an advantage "has probably been achieved largely at the expense of latent strength,"[95] implying that if the West could hold on for a year or so, the balances would steadily swing in its favor.

Nevertheless, the Chiefs of Staff report turned out to have two major areas of weakness, one at the strategical level and the other at the operational/war-fighting level. The strategical errors all to some extent involved a misreading of the economic element in the proposed Allied grand strategy. The first example was the contradictory nature of the assessments of Italy. On the whole the tendency in London was to overestimate the power of the Italian armed forces, especially its navy and air force, and this viewpoint, which was even more firmly held by the French, suggested that if at all possible the Allies should try to persuade Italy to stay out of any war instigated by Germany. On the other hand, as Williamson Murray has pointed out, Italy's economic weaknesses were so great that it would be a drag upon Germany if it became a belligerent -- which is why German strategic advisors preferred Mussolini to stay neutral -- and its chronic problems, exacerbated by war, might well have diverted German resources from other fronts.[96] As it was, the British felt unable to reduce their Mediterranean Fleet even when Italy remained on the sidelines in September 1939; indeed, such was Whitehall's concern about the security of the Eastern Mediterranean that, several months before the outbreak of war, it tacitly decided to reverse its traditional order of naval priorities and put those waters ahead of the "main fleet to Singapore" pledge (without, however, informing Australia and New Zealand of the decision).[97] For the first nine months of the conflict, therefore, Italy's neutrality both weakened the Allied plans for an economic blockade against Germany and pinned down substantial Allied forces in the Mediterranean theater.

An even greater "gap" in the British scheme to exploit Germany's economic shortcomings lay, of course, in Eastern Europe. Indeed, given the unfolding of events after February 1939 (Prague; Polish guarantees; Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact; defeat of Poland), it is amazing how little

attention is given in the Chiefs of Staff's report either to Germany's eastern and south-eastern flanks, or to the Russian factor. No doubt this was primarily due to the fact that the terms of reference for the European Appreciation assumed a German-Italian war against Britain and France within a short while (April 1939), so that the geographical focus was upon Western Europe, the North Sea and the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how the British planners could place so much weight upon economic pressures if Germany's important trade with Eastern Europe, most of Scandinavia and the Balkans was unimpaired; in fact by the late 1930s, much more than in 1914, the structure of German imports and exports made it much less dependent upon extra-European commerce.

Furthermore, within six weeks of the acceptance of the Chiefs of Staff's proposals, the whole situation in Eastern Europe had been changed by the German invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia and then by the British guarantees to Poland. Although that in turn implied that Germany might have to fight on both fronts, it also meant the diversion of scarce Anglo-French credit, arms, and economic support to the Balkans and Eastern Europe. More important still, it offered Hitler the chance to turn eastward first, while London and Paris stayed on their strategic defensive, and thus permitted the expansion of the German sphere of control. The only serious obstacle to this Drang nach Osten, as Chamberlain's critics pointed out after March 1939, was the Soviet Union. But the desultory Western dealings with Stalin, and the latter's decision to offer his own version of "appeasing" Hitler by means of their August pact, completely undermined the Anglo-French position. Yet even at the outset of the Second World War, indeed even after the overrunning of Poland, British memoranda were still claiming that it was economic pressure "upon which we mainly rely for the ultimate defeat of Germany."[98]

As the so-called Phoney War drifted into 1940, Chamberlain could be found writing: "What we ought to do is just to throw back the peace offer and continue the blockade. I do not believe that holocausts are required. . . ."[99]

The third and perhaps most egregious error was the almost-complete failure to consider Britain's own economic and financial difficulties in the event of another great European war; on the contrary, the Chiefs of Staff report was sprinkled with cheering references to the Allies' "staying power" and "latent strength." One reason for this was that the information provided by the Industrial Intelligence Centre concentrated upon "The Economic Situation in Germany, Italy and Japan on April 1st, 1939"; it therefore did not subject the British and French economies to a similar hard scrutiny of their foreign exchange reserves, availability of skilled labor, "surge capacity" of its industries, and general ability to sustain an expensive all-out war. In sum, this was not a properly comparative net assessment of each side's economic strengths and weaknesses.[100]

The one department which might have injected realism in this sphere was the Treasury. But here was the greatest irony of all. For twenty years the Treasury had exerted its claim to be the most important department in the central government structure; warning of the severe consequences of heavy defense spending upon the weakened British economy, it had repeatedly cut down the Chiefs of Staff's bids for fresh funds and, even when rearmament had begun, it had imposed its own priorities upon service requests. It occupied a central strand in the whole story of British appeasement policy -- until early 1939, when both the public and the government came to believe that military security was more pressing than economic stability. As a consequence, the Treasury's power to influence events was fading fast, and even the Prime

Minister was distancing himself from its stance. Defense spending was spiralling up at a remarkable rate, and under the pressure of the international crisis all three services were now being allocated sums which a year earlier would have seemed beyond the dreams of avarice. In these totally changed circumstances, therefore, the Treasury does not appear to have been consulted in the deliberations which attended the composing of the European Appreciation.

Even if the Treasury had been a part of the process, it might not have dented the rosy optimism of the strategists that Britain, while a slow starter in the race, possessed the greater endurance. But at least there might have ensued a debate about the Chiefs of Staff's economic assumptions. Because there was no such debate, the greatest contradiction of all in Britain's 1939 net assessment was virtually ignored. While the military planners were refining their scheme for the implementation of a long war (since they openly admitted that they could not win a short one), the Treasury was doing some deeply disturbing calculations about the explosion in defense spending, the widening of the merchandise trade gaps, and the fearful reduction in Britain's gold and dollar earnings. In March 1939 one alarmed Under-Secretary noted that:

> Defence expenditure is now at a level which must seriously call into question the country's ability to meet it, and a continuance at this level may well result in a situation in which the completion of our material preparations against attack is frustrated by a weakening of our economic stability, which renders us incapable of standing the strain of war or even of maintaining those material defences in peace.[101]

And a month later, in April 1939, the Treasury coldly pointed out that "If we were under the impression that we were as well able as in 1914 to conduct a long war, we were burying our heads in the sand."[102] This particular communication was not hidden from the strategists: it was, in fact, the Treasury Under-Secretary's statement to the very Strategic Appreciation Sub-Committee which was charged with the task of following up on the European Appreciation

report. And three months later, as Britain was bracing itself during the German-Polish quarrel over Danzig, the Cabinet was warned that Britain's gold reserves were running out, even in peacetime "let alone at a war rate. . . ."[103] But this did not alter the new British strategy.

The crux of the matter was that the Chiefs of Staff were perfectly right to urge the need for further armaments, and the Treasury was perfectly right in its warnings about financial bankruptcy -- a condition only narrowly avoided by Lend-Lease in March 1941 (when Britain's gold and dollar reserves totalled a mere $12 million). Each were critical parts of an effective long-term grand strategy; and both ought to have been included in the net assessment process. If the influence of economic factors upon British external policy had been excessive in the years up until 1939, it was hardly wise to ignore them altogether when the country was contemplating entering a great and lengthy conflict.

One is bound to wonder what all this would have meant had France been able to withstand the German offensive of May 1940; in many respects, the strategical situation might not have been dissimilar to that of, say, early 1915, with German forces in occupation of parts of Belgium and northern France, and the B.E.F. being built up to take a larger section of the "western" front. Professor Murray has pointed to Germany's economic weaknesses which, he suggests, the defensive-minded Allies failed to exploit.[104] But it is alsc possible to hypothesize that a Great Britain involved in a 1914/18 style continental military commitment might have run out of gold and dollars at a faster pace than she actually did -- especially since (unlike the earlier war) she now could not raise funds in the United States. As it transpired, such a hypothetical scenario -- involving the economic exhaustion of both Germany and the Allies -- was rendered impossible by another factor: the efficiency of the German war-fighting machine at the

operational level, which led to the surprisingly swift defeat of France and a transformation of the entire strategical landscape in the summer of 1940.

This brings us to the second area of weakness in the British net assessment of the immediate pre-war period: the inability to know how its own forces, and those of the perceived enemies, would perform in actual fighting. Perhaps this is an impossible demand to make of such "broad-sweep" surveys. If a country's naval advisors state that a rival's fleet contains, say, 100 effective submarines, or if its airforce insists that it has better quality planes and pilots than those possessed by another Power, how can that be checked on or countered at the ministerial level? If there was no challenge to the Foreign Office's observations upon the position of Turkey, why should one expect the War Office's observations about the French army's ability to hold its own to be questioned? As noted earlier, such information, supplied by the individual departments, simply became one of the "givens" or "building-blocks" in the Joint Planning Committee's weaving together of the various submissions. This is, clearly, a much more general problem. Indeed, it could be argued that such a structural weakness in the assessment system is, to a large extent, understandable; and that it can probably only be corrected by structural means, such as building a "devil's advocate" system into each department, or even by having a parallel intelligence-assessing organization.

Nevertheless, however "natural" this weakness, the pre-1939 British assessments misjudged the actual war fighting in an alarmingly large number of areas, and involving all three services. Perhaps the Admiralty was the worst offender here. It seems to have had an exaggerated opinion of the Italian fleet and Italian air power, whereas successive British C-in-Cs of the Mediterranean Fleet had a robust (and, as it turned out, quite justified) confidence that

they could give the Italian navy a drubbing. On the other hand, the Admiralty planners underestimated the dangers from Germany, and in two critical areas. The first was the threat posed to surface warships from the air, something which British naval planners had certainly considered during the inter-war period but which (they felt) could be handled by placing more anti-aircraft guns on board their ships.[105] In the 1940 Norwegian campaign, for example, there was no hesitation in sending "a squadron into Trondheim with no reconnaissance, and with the certainty that they would be bombed."[106] As it transpired, the Luftwaffe very much cramped the Royal Navy's operations during the battle for Norway and inflicted even heavier damage off Crete. Secondly, the Admiralty was unduly confident about its ability to deal with the U-boat menace, believing that Asdic had solved the problem of detecting submarines under water. Doenitz's tactic of encouraging U-boat attacks on the surface and at night consequently upset British calculations and turned the Battle of the Atlantic into one of the most serious and uncertain struggles of the entire war. Far from the Allied blockade bringing the German economy to its knees, the Nazi "counter-blockade" of U-boats and long range bombers threatened to starve the British into surrender.[107]

But the Royal Air Force itself was hardly free of miscalculation. Although it had repeatedly warned the politicians about the danger of a German "knock-out blow" from the air, and still made reference to that possibility in the European Appreciation, it was beginning to feel more confident about checking aerial attacks upon the British homeland: the coming of radar, the increase in the number of modern fighter squadrons, and a whole variety of air-raid precautions gave reasons for such hope, and the successful conclusion of the Battle of Britain confirmed it. Nonetheless, this appears to have caused no serious re-thinking of RAF Bomber

Command's own assumption that their planes would succeed in the strategic bombing campaign against the Third Reich even if German aerial attacks upon the UK failed. Finally, because of the RAF's inter-war obsession about an "independent" strategic bombing mission, it had given very little thought to tactical air power and to providing the British army with the type of support which the Luftwaffe could render to German troops. Only as the army began its rushed preparations to send a Field Force to France in 1939 was this deficiency debated between the services and the C.I.D. -- the chief result being that all sides recognized the problem but had no real solution to it.[108]

Yet even as the War Office was calling attention to the German advantages in tactical air power, it itself had failed to grasp the overall nature of the Blitzkrieg style of warfare which was being developed in the late 1930s. Certain observers -- for example, Gwynne in his study If Germany Attacks (published in 1940) -- appreciated the importance of the German "stormtrooper" assaults in the closing campaigns of the First World War, and others suspected that the Wehrmacht would use its armor and its air support in a more concentrated way than, say, the French intended.[109] Moreover, this was reinforced by copies of German after-action reports of the successes of their close-air support of the army in the Polish campaign.[110] But none of this seems to have shaken the British army's presumption (as is clear in the European Appreciation) that the Germans could be held in the west by the French, the Belgians, and the B.E.F. This meant in turn that the British were not at all prepared for the swift collapse of France in May/June 1940; nor, incidentally, were British Empire forces prepared to handle the explosive, mobile power of Rommel's Afrika Korps when it was sent to aid the Italians in recovering Cyrenaica. Even as late as the 1944 Normandy and Italian campaigns, the British

(and other Allies) had difficulty in coping with the Germans, unit for unit[111] -- which casts in doubt the entire process of measuring military strength merely by totalling numbers of divisions and brigades on each side.

In the Far Eastern fighting of 1941/42, one also has the distinct sense that the British assessments of Japanese fighting power were flawed. After all, the overall strategical shape of the Pacific War was extremely favorable from Britain's perspective. Japan had to leave considerable armed forces in Manchuria (out of a fear of Russia), it had about one million troops bogged down in China, and it had gone to war not just against the British Empire and the Dutch, but also against the United States. Yet that level of assessment was of little consolation to the crews of the Prince of Wales and Republic as they discovered the brutal efficiency of the Japanese naval air arm, to the British Empire units in Malaya and Burma as they struggled in vain against a Japanese army much better trained for jungle warfare, or to Admiral Doormann's ABDA navies in the Battle of the Java Sea when they first encountered Japanese "long lance" torpedoes.[112]

By early 1942, of course, the whole basis upon which the Chiefs of Staff's European Appreciation rested was quite transformed. The entry into the conflict of the Soviet Union, Japan and the United States -- all presumed neutral in the February 1939 report -- really did change things from the "last European war" into a "world war."[113] Moreover, despite the early brilliant offensives of both Germany and Japan, the underlying economic and technological balances were heavily tilted in favor of the Grand Alliance,[114] making the concept of a long-war strategy altogether more plausible than that inherent in an Anglo-French versus German-Italian struggle. After the news of Pearl Harbor, Churchill was right to conclude that "we had won

after all!"[115] But that happy state of victory was not to be secured along the lines of Britain's pre-war net assessment.

NOTES

1. For details of the British system, see J. Ehrman, Cabinet Government and War, 1890-1940 (Cambridge, 1958); N. H. Gibbs, Grand Strategy, Vol. 1, Rearmament Policy (London, 1976), ch. xx, "Defence and the Machinery of Government"; F. A. Johnson, Defense by Committee: The British Committee of Imperial Defence, 1885-1959 (London, 1960). For its influence upon the post-1945 American practices, see Johnson.

2. Hankey's own version can be found in his The Supreme Command, 2 vols. (London, 1961). For a later assessment, see S. W. Roskill, Hankey, Man of Secrets, 3 vols. (London, 1970-74).

3. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, with Alice Denny, Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism (London, 1961), pp. 19-20 and passim.

4. This refers to my critique in P. Kennedy, The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980 (London, 1981), pp. 59-65, 236-57.

5. We still await Professor David Dilks' second volume of Neville Chamberlain, but the premier's influence is already well documented in G. C. Peden, British Rearmament and the Treasury, 1932-1939 (Edinburgh, 1979); I. Colvin, The Chamberlain Cabinet (London, 1972); C. Barnett, The Collapse of British Power (London/New York, 1972); and M. Gilbert and R. Gott, The Appeasers (London, 1979 edn.).

6. Apart from Ehrman (fn. 1 above), see D. C. Gordon, The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defence, 1870-1914 (Baltimore, 1965). For an example of this global

assessment, see P. Kennedy, "Imperial Cable Communications and Strategy, 1870-1914," English Historical Review, vol. 86 (October 1971), pp. 728-52.

7. The literature on this point is summarised in Kennedy, The Realities Behind Diplomacy, chs. 1 and 2; and A. Friedberg, The Weary Titan (Princeton, 1989), passim.

8. Ehrman, Cabinet Government and War, traces these developments, as does Gibbs, Grand Strategy, Vol. 1, ch. xx.

9. Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, provides a good account of these procedures. There is also a useful summary in W. Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939 (Princeton, 1984), ch. II.

10. The Secret Intelligence Service's flow of information, by contrast, was much more uneven; and the breakthroughs in reading enemy "Ultra" codes had not yet occurred. For an analysis of the state of British intelligence-gathering at this time, see F. H. Hinsley et al., British Intelligence in the Second World War, Vol. 1 (London, 1979), chs. 1 and 2.

11. The careers of two military attachés (to Nazi Germany) has been detailed in Major General Sir Kenneth Strong, Intelligence at the Top: The Recollections of an Intelligence Officer (London, 1968), and E. Butler, Mason-Mac: The Life of Lieutenant General Sir Noel Mason-Macfarlane (London, 1972). For later treatments, see the articles by Wark (in footnotes 12 and 13 below). For the pre-1914 period, see L. Hilbert, "The Role of Military and Naval Attachés in the British and German Service with Particular Reference to those in Berlin and London and their Effect on Anglo-German Relations, 1871-1914," PhD dissertation, Cambridge, 1954.

12. See Public Record Office, London [hereafter, PRO], War Office [hereafter, W. O.] 106/5422, "Visit to German Tank Corps by Military Attaché Berlin" (1938); Note by Captain Vivian, "Difficulties Encountered by the Naval Attaché in Tokyo in Visits to Naval and Industrial Establishments" (1936), cited in W. K. Wark, "In Search of a Suitable Japan: British Naval Intelligence in the Pacific before the Second World War," Intelligence and National Security, vol. 1, no. 2 (May 1986), pp. 189-211.

13. Wark, "Three Military Attachés at Berlin in the 1930s: Soldier-Statesman and the Limits of Ambiguity," The International History Review, vol. 9, no. 4 (November 1987), pp. 588-94; Wark, "In Search of a Suitable Japan," passim.

14. PRO, Cab. 27/625, Proceedings of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy (F. P. 36), 51st Meeting, 13 June 1939.

15. Ibid., 52nd Meeting, 19 June 1939, remarks by Hoare, Halifax, and Chatfield.

16. W. K. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy: British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939 (Ithaca/London, 1985), ch. 6, is best here.

17. Ibid., p. 143; D. C. Watt, "British Intelligence and the Coming of the Second World War in Europe," in E. R. May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies (Princeton, 1984), p. 260. By contrast, see C. A. Gemzell, Raeder, Hitler und Skandanavien (Lund, 1965).

18. A tendency which was exaggerated by the division into "pro-Beatty" and "pro-Jellicoe" camps; see S. W. Roskill, Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty: The Last Naval Hero (London, 1980), ch. 15.

19. For examples, see the 1930 and 1931 Progress in Tactics reports, which were produced after the fleet maneuvers each year by the Naval Staff's Tactical Division. (I am grateful to Professor Jon Sumida for supplying me with copies.)

20. Wark, "In Search of a Suitable Japan," passim; A. J. Marder, Old Friends, New Enemies: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy (Oxford, 1981), pp. 341-62.

21. S. W. Roskill, Naval Policy Between the Wars, 2 vols. (London, 1968 and 1976), is best here. See also G. Till, Air Power and the Royal Navy, 1914-1945 (London, 1979).

22. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, ch. 6; L. R. Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez: Britain's Mediterranean Crisis, 1936-1939 (Cambridge, 1975).

23. This story has been well covered in C. Webster and N. Frankland, The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, Vol. 1 (London, 1961); N. Frankland, The Bomber Offensive Against Germany (London, 1965); W. Murray, Luftwaffe (Baltimore, 1985); M. Smith, British Air Strategy Between the Wars (Oxford, 1984); R. J. Overy, The Air War, 1939-1945 (London, 1980). The RAF's problems and mistakes with assessing the German threat are analyzed in Wark, "British Intelligence on the German Air Force and Aircraft Industry, 1933-1939," Historical Journal, vol. 25 (1982), pp. 627-48; and R. J. Overy, "The German Pre-War Aircraft Production Plans," English Historical Review, vol. 90 (1975), pp. 778-97.

24. PRO, Air 9/76 (Plans), "Comparison of the Strengths of Great Britain with that of certain other Nations 1938," Final Air Staff memo. (no title), copy, 10 September 1937.

25. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, pp. 68-69; and PRO, Cab. 104/37, "Germans, Estimated Scale of Air Attack on England in the Event of War With . . .," note by Dykes of 25 November 1937.

26. PRO, Air 9/90, Air Staff memo. of 24 August 1938, enclosed in Fraser to Slessor note of 29 August 1938.

27. Ibid. See also Hore-Belisha's similar point in PRO, Cab. 21/521, "Air Force, Allotment of, to the Field Force in War."

28. This is well covered in B. Bond, British Military Policy Between the Two World Wars (Oxford, 1980), as well as in M. Howard, The Continental Commitment (London, 1972), chs. 4 and 5.

29. Bond, British Military Policy, pp. 118-19, reproduces a war office map of "Distribution of British Troops, 1 January 1938." The far greater British concern about Russia rather than Germany for most of the inter-war years emerges in C. Andrew, Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community (London, 1985).

30. Bond, British Military Policy, chs. 2, 7-9; Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, ch. 5.

31. Bond, British Military Policy, ch. 9; Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, chs. v-vii; T. Taylor, Munich, The Price of Peace (London, 1979), ch. 23.

32. PRO, Cab. 21/544, "Note on the Question of Whether it would be to our Military Advantage to Fight Germany Now or to Postpone the Issue," by General Ismay, 20 September 1938; and see Murray's comments in The Change in the European Balance

of Power, p. 210. For the contrary opinions about the strength of the Czech army, see Wark, "Three Military Attachés in Berlin," pp. 604-7.

33. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, p. 115.

34. See especially the papers in PRO, W. O. 216/189; Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, pp. 93-99; Bond, British Military Policy, chs. 6 and 9.

35. PRO, Cab. 21/575, "Visit to French and German Manoeuvres, 1937," by Field Marshal Sir Charles Deverell, 15 October 1937.

36. R. F. Holland, Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance, 1918-39 (London, 1987), is best here. PRO, Cab. 104/19, "Position of the Dominions in the Event of War," contains interesting discussions of whether the Dominions would join a European war.

37. See A. L. Goldman, "Two Views of Germany: Neville Henderson vs. Vansittart and the Foreign Office, 1937-1939," British Journal of International Studies, vol. 6 (1980), pp. 247-77.

38. The text is in PRO, Cab. 53/45, C. O. S. Paper 843, Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee, European Appreciation, 1939-40, 20 February 1939.

39. For good examples, see D. Cameron Watt, How War Came: The Immediate Origins of The Second World War, 1938-1939 (New York, 1989), ch. 6; Andrew, Secret Service, ch. 13; D. Dilks, "Appeasement and Intelligence," in Dilks (ed.), Retreat from Power, 2 vols. (London, 1981), Vol. 1, pp. 136-69. For general background, see again Hinsley et al., British Intelligence in the Second World War, Vol. 1, chs. 1 and 2.

40. Apart from Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, ch. 7, see also R. Young, "Spokesmen for Economic Warfare: Industrial Intelligence Centre in the 1930s," European Studies Review, vol. 6 (1976), pp. 473-89.

41. See also the coverage in R. W. Thompson, Churchill and Morton (London, 1976).

42. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, ch. 7, is best here.

43. European Appreciation, 1939-40, paras. 3-5, 250-68.

44. Peden, British Rearmament and the Treasury, chs. IV-VI; Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, ch. V; Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 58-59, 72-73, 295-96.

45. PRO, Air 9/86 [Plans], Foreign Office Comments on up-dating the "German Appreciation," Annex II of Hollis to Slessor, 26 April 1938.

46. Ibid., "Future Work of the Joint Planning Sub-Committee," attached to Hollis to Slessor, 17 January 1938.

47. Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, pp. 345-50. More specifically, see P. Lowe, Britain in the Far East (London, 1981), chs. 8 and 9; W. R. Louis, British Strategy in the Far East, 1919-1939 (Oxford, 1971); A. Trotter, Britain and East Asia, 1933-1937 (Cambridge, 1975).

48. Marder, Old Friends, New Enemies, and Wark, "In Search of a Suitable Japan," are best here.

49. PRO, Cab. 106/5680, "Japan . . . Warfare under Special Conditions," minutes on.

50. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, is fundamental here; but see also Watt, "British Intelligence and the Coming of the Second World War in Europe"; Bond, British Military Policy,

chs. 8-11; K. Middlemas, Diplomacy of Illusion: The British Government and Germany, 1937-39 (London, 1972).

51. This is perhaps best expressed in Simon's observation that "the arrangements made by Germany in peace could only be adopted in this country if we had a 'Hitler' and a population which would accept a 'Hitler,'" made at the 330th Meeting of the C. I. D., 31 July 1938, in PRO, Cab. 64/14.

52. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, pp. 203-10; Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 504-46; and Telford Taylor, Munich: The Price of Peace, are best here. There is a good summary in Murray, "Appeasement and Intelligence," Intelligence and National Security, vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1987), pp. 47-67.

53. There is some important correspondence on these points in PRO, Air 9/90, "Group-Captain Slessor: Special Papers in Connection with the GERMAN EMERGENCY" [i.e., Munich Crisis]. More generally, see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 245-53; and Murray, "German Air Power and the Munich Crisis," in B. Bond and I. Roy (eds.), War and Society, Vol. 2 (London, 1977), pp. 107-18.

54. A. J. Marder, "The Royal Navy and the Ethiopean Crisis of 1935-36," American Historical Review, vol. 75, no. 5 (1970), pp. 1327-56; Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez, chs. 1 and 2.

55. Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez, p. 173 ff.

56. Ibid, p. 197.

57. Well argued in Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 314-21.

58. PRO, Adm. 1/1085, Alexander to Halifax, 29 November 1940.

59. The best two sources here are C. A. MacDonald, The United States, Britain and Appeasement, 1936-1939 (London, 1980); and D. Reynolds, The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-1941 (London, 1981).

60. In addition to the studies of MacDonald and Reynolds, see also the coverage of Chamberlain's views on the United States in M. Cowling, The Impact of Hitler: British Politics and British Policies, 1933-1940 (Cambridge, 1975).

61. For details, see M. Beloff, Imperial Sunset, Vol. 1, Britain's Liberal Empire, 1897-1921 (London, 1969), chs. V and VI; and Howard, Continental Commitment, chs. 2 and 3.

62. Apart from Howard, The Continental Commitment, and Kennedy, The Realities Behind Diplomacy, see also B. Porter, Britain, Europe and the World, 1850-1982 (London, 1983), passim.

63. For this reversal, see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 274-90; Howard, The Continental Commitment, pp. 128-33.

64. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, p. 115.

65. F. S. Northedge and A. Wells, Britain and Soviet Communism: The Impact of a Revolution (London, 1982); G. Niedhart, Grossbritannien und die Sowjetunion, 1934-1939 (Munich, 1972); G. Niedhart, "British Attitudes and Policies towards the Soviet Union and International Communism, 1935-39," in W. J. Mommsen and L. Kettenacker (eds.), The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement (London, 1983), pp. 286-96.

66. Watt, How War Came, Andrew, Secret Service, and Cowling, The Impact of Hitler, all detail the continued mistrust of the USSR.

67. This is best covered in J. S. Herndon, "British Perceptions of Soviet Military Capability, 1936-39," in Mommsen and Kettenacker (eds.), Fascist Challenge, pp. 297-319.

68. Herndon, "British Perceptions," p. 309. See also PRO, Cab. 53/48, C. O. S. paper 887, "Military Value of Russia."

69. Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, pp. 558-70, nicely covers this debate.

70. Howard, The Continental Commitment, pp. 120-21.

71. PRO, Cab. 27/624, Proceedings of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy (F. P. 36), 38th Meeting, 27 March 1939, observation by the Minister for the Coordination of Defence [Chatfield].

72. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, ch. 1; Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, p. 345 ff; and Gibbs, Grand Strategy, Vol. 1, pt. II, all cover the development of British strategic planning from 1934 onwards.

73. Quoted in Howard, The Continental Commitment, p. 105.

74. Gibbs, Grand Strategy, Vol. 1, pp. 102-27.

75. Marder, Old Friends, New Enemies, ch. 1; S. Pelz, Race to Pearl Harbor (Cambridge, MA, 1972); Trotter, Britain and East Asia, 1933-37, passim.

76. See Marder, "The Royal Navy and the Ethiopean Crisis"; Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez; R. Meyers, "British Imperial Interests and the Policy of Appeasement," and W. R. Louis, "The Road to Singapore: British Imperialism in the Far East, 1932-1942," both in Mommsen and Kettenacker (eds.), The Fascist Challenge.

77. Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, p. 382 ff; Bond, British Military Policy Between the Two World Wars, p. 225 ff; Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, p. 195 ff.

78. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, pp. 202-11.

79. This is Wark's term (see ibid., pp. 227-31).

80. See the powerful critiques in Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, and in Barnett, The Collapse of British Power.

81. This is very well analyzed by Barnett.

82. There is a good brief summary of this position in D. Dilks, "Appeasement Revisited," University of Leeds Review, vol. 15 (1972), pp. 28-56; and Dilks, "'The Unnecessary War'? Military Advice and Foreign Policy in Great Britain, 1931-39," in A. Preston (ed.), General Staffs and Diplomacy Before the Second World War (London, 1978), pp. 98-132.

83. As argued in Cowling, The Impact of Hitler; and, more recently, J. Charmley, Chamberlain and the Lost Peace (London, 1989).

84. This now notorious phrase comes, of course, from Chamberlain's (near-exhausted) radio broadcast on the evening of 27 September 1938; see Taylor, Munich: The Price of Peace, p. 884.

85. See the coverage of the Chiefs of Staff's advice in Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, pp. 104-10, 202-11; Taylor, Munich: The Price of Peace, pp. 629-33, 832-37; Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 156-62, 209-10.

86. Chamberlain's ruthless utilisation of the military appreciation is best covered in Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, p. 517 ff.

87. Compare, for example, the assessment in I. McCleod, Neville Chamberlain (London, 1961), with the much more critical analysis in Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power.

88. The document is discussed in Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, pp. 211-24; Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 311-14.

89. The differences between the first draft and the final version can be seen by comparing PRO Cab. 53/44 (draft) and Cab. 53/45 (final). Generally, the planners became a little more cautious over naval weaknesses, more pessimistic over the attitude of Spain, but slightly more confident over the long-term effects of the maritime blockade upon the German economy.

90. Gibbs, Grand Strategy, Vol. 1, p. 666 f.

91. Kennedy, "The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy, 1865-1939," in P. Kennedy (ed.), Strategy and Diplomacy, 1870-1945 (London, 1983), pp. 33-36; Watt, How War Came, pp. 86-108.

92. Bond, British Military Policy Between the Two World Wars, pp. 295-306; Howard, The Continental Commitment, pp. 128-33.

93. Their work can be followed in, respectively, PRO, Cab. 27/657, Cab. 21/532, and Cab. 27/662, with fascinating detail about immediate pre-war preparations.

94. Watt, How War Came; Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power; and Mommsen and Kettenacker (eds.), The Fascist Challenge, can be supplemented here by A. J. Toynbee and F. T. Ashton-Gwatkin (eds.), The World in 1939 (London, 1952).

95. European Appreciation, 1939-40, para. 27.

96. Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 314-21.

97. Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez, pp. 170-80; Gibbs, Grand Strategy, Vol. 1, pp. 420-31.

98. Cited in A. J. Marder, Winston is Back: Churchill at the Admiralty, 1939-40 (The English Historical Review, Supplement 5, London, 1972), p. 55.

99. K. Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London, 1957), p. 426; W. K. Hancock and M. M. Gowing, British War Economy (London, 1949), p. 72.

100. Compare the scanty remarks in paras. 381-85 of European Appreciation to the details in paras. 319-80.

101. Cited in R. P. Shay, Jr., British Rearmament in the Thirties: Politics and Profits (Princeton, 1977), p. 243.

102. Quoted in Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, p. 564.

103. Ibid., p. 569.

104. Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, chs. I, VII-X.

105. PRO, Cab. 16/147, Sub-Committee on the Vulnerability of Capital Ships to Air Attack. (I am grateful to Professor Jon Sumida for providing me with details of this file.)

106. Marder, Winston is Back, p. 55.

107. Details are in S. W. Roskill, The War at Sea, 3 vols. (London, 1954-61); J. Winton, Convoy (London, 1983), p. 127 ff.

108. This anxious -- and contentious -- debate is best followed in PRO, Cab. 21/521, "Air Force, Allotment of, to the Field Force in War."

109. The British inability to get to grips with this form of warfare is detailed in S. Bidwell and D. Graham, Fire-Power: British Army Weapons and Theories of War, 1904-1945 (London, 1982), chs. 12 and 13; W. Murray, "British Military Effectiveness in the Second World War," in A. R. Millett and W. Murray (eds.), Military Effectiveness, 3 vols. (London/Boston, 1988), Vol. 3, pp. 107-30.

110. See PRO, W. O. 106/5423, "German Methods of Providing Bomber Support," (November 1939-September 1941), which has some very prescient and revealing documents.

111. See the analyses in M. Hastings, Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy (London, 1984), pp. 14, 370, and passim; M. Van Creveld, Fighting Power: German and U. S. Army Performance, 1939-1945 (Westport, CT, 1982); M. Dupuy, A Genius for War (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1977).

112. S. W. Kirby, The War Against Japan, 5 vols. (London, 1957-1960), Vol. 1.

113. J. Lukacs, The Last European War (London, 1977), and W. Carr, Poland to Pearl Harbor (London, 1985).

114. For details, see P. Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers (New York, 1987), pp. 347-57.

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FRENCH NET ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

At the height of the Rhineland Crisis, a headline in a Parisian newspaper cried, "Surtout pas de guerre," reflecting the attitude of the Republic's leaders and many -- probably most -- segments of French public opinion during the late 1930s.[1] The French did not fear defeat at the hands of a revanchist Germany as much as they dreaded the price of victory. "War, at no price," wrote an editorialist for a provincial paper in 1938. "The next war will be more murderous than the last."[2]

World War I had been a searing experience for the French nation -- 1.5 million dead, additional millions wounded, vast areas of the national patrimony from Flanders to the Swiss border devastated. No family remained untouched by the conflict. Somber graveyards, the Verdun ossuary with the bones of over 100,000 unknown soldiers, and the special bus and metro seats reserved for war invalids served as constant reminders of the tremendous sacrifices required to achieve the victory of 1918. No French statesman could ever again lightly commit the nation to a renewal of the slaughter of Guise, the Marne, or Verdun. To most French leaders war itself, not the possibility of defeat, became the worst possible prospect for the nation.

Traditionally suspicious of Germany, few Frenchmen had any illusions concerning the nature and intentions of the Nazi regime. A few called for immediate and vigorous resistance

to Nazi aggression. Others called for friendship with Berlin while other groups advocated policies ranging from pacifism to isolationism. The majority of the Republic's leaders and the public, however, recognized the threat posed by a rearmed aggressive Reich. They regarded Hitler as sinister and dangerous but hoped against hope to establish a detente with Berlin. Somehow, French leaders felt, the Republic and the Reich had to resolve their differences without resort to war.[3]

The leaders of the 1930s, honest, intelligent, experienced men, were all haunted by the visceral horror of another general war. All of the problems besetting the Republic -- diplomatic isolation, economic recession, belief in Germany's superior war potential, and the doctrine of total war -- served to strengthen the overwhelming desire for peace. Leon Blum, for example, never changed his view expressed in April 1933: "The way to salvation is peace, the will to peace."[4] In a 1936 interview with Halmar Schact, he called for Franco-German detente, and in post-war testimony, he asserted that during the Munich crisis, he and the vast majority of his fellow Frenchmen had "a religious horror of war."[5]

Daladier, the Bull of the Vaucluse, appeared much tougher, but he too rejected uncompromising nationalism and had a distaste for the old style of balance of power diplomacy and for the policy of refusing concessions to Germany. At the Riom Trial, he even asserted that in 1939 had Hitler confined his demands simply to Danzig, war could have been averted.[6] A combat veteran of the First World War, Daladier was willing to do almost anything to avoid a repetition of the slaughter of 1914-1918. Pierre Cot later described him as "a man of good faith but a man of authority was wanted. He was the Ledru Rollin of his day, but France needed a Gambetta."[7] Daladier to the last moment sought to avoid another war. On 26 August 1939, he

wrote personally to Hitler pleading with the Führer to prevent the outbreak of war. He assured Hitler that he wished only a sincere collaboration with Germany in working for the establishment of a lasting peace for Europe. Daladier went on to point out that both he and the German leader were veterans of the last war and knew the horrors of combat at first hand. If war came, Daladier asserted, both France and Germany would fight in the confidence of victory, but the only victors would be the forces of destruction and barbarism.[8] Given the nature and objectives of the Nazi regime, Daladier's hope for a last minute peace was unrealistic, but his effort is testimony to his genuine desire to avoid the horrors of another war.

Daladier was not alone in his desperate search for a detente with Berlin. Francois Poncet claimed that in the aftermath of Munich and despite his doubts he tried to strengthen the accords and use them as a basis for a general European settlement.[9] On 1 September 1939, several hours after the German attack on Poland, Bonnet accepted an Italian proposal for a peace conference, insisting only that such a meeting deal not only with the Polish question but also provide the basis for a general appeasement and the establishment of a general peace for Europe.[10] Most French leaders saw a Continental detente based on an agreement with the dictators as the only means of avoiding a new world war and worked assiduously for an understanding with Berlin. They did not delude themselves as to the nature and goals of the Nazi regime. Rather, they hoped that a well-armed France willing to negotiate on a basis of equality with Germany could somehow tame Hitler's drive for hegemony.

The will to peace formed a filter through which virtually all French leaders viewed the strategic balance. Everything -- the wavering, unstable diplomatic constellation, the foundering economy, a rejection in many quarters of traditional balance of power diplomacy, and deep rifts

within the political spectrum -- seemed to indicate that the risks of resorting to war to protect the nation's security were simply unacceptable. Germany was too strong, allies were too unreliable, and the public was too volatile for the nation's leaders to take the country into a total war where victory or defeat could have the same practical consequences: a decimated nation threatened by internal crisis, even civil strife. Throughout the 1930s, few French political and military leaders could escape the haunting dread of another major war -- the price of victory was simply unacceptable.

The French Security Structure

In assessing the strategic balance French leaders implicitly understood that the Republic existed within a dynamic shifting power configuration. They realized too that a series of static measurements of foreign military and economic capabilities could provide at best a partial picture of reality. Decision makers had to deal with a complex set of variables that required constant attention and analysis of both French and foreign intentions, strengths, and vulnerabilities. Although no single element in the bureaucracy had the specific mission of evaluating the state's overall strategic situation, the French system of net assessment was elaborate, well organized, and on the whole, reasonably effective. Throughout the 1930s, decision makers had generally reliable information on most issues relating to the strategic balance. What was lacking in both political and military circles was the will to draw the necessary conclusions from the information they received.

During the 1930s, an experienced cadre of politicians was responsible for the country's security. Despite the accusation that the regime suffered from constant political turmoil, France

in fact enjoyed adequate governmental stability. The numerous cabinet changes in the early and mid-1930s were more a matter of redistributing portfolios than of fundamental political changes.

During the late '30s, only three men served as premier: Leon Blum, who served twice, Camille Chautemps, who was in office for less than a year, and Edouard Daladier, who had served in 12 previous cabinets and had been premier twice before returning again to office in 1938. For much of his term, which lasted until March 1940, he ruled by decree and also held the portfolio of Minister of National Defense and War. Governmental power in the 1930s was concentrated in the hands of relatively few individuals, and as Europe drifted towards war, an even more restricted group wielded authority.

Leading diplomatic and military posts were also held by a small group of experienced leaders. Only three men -- Yvon Delbos, Joseph Paul Boncoeur, and Georges Bonnet -- served as Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1936 and 1939. One man, Alexis Leger, occupied the post of Secretary General, the highest permanent civil service position at the Quai d'Orsay. Military leadership was also stable. Two individuals -- Maxime Weygand and Maurice Gamelin -- led the French army throughout the 1930s, and Gamelin as of January 1938 also served as Chief of Staff of National Defense with the authority to coordinate the wartime activities of all three services.

French political and military leaders had at their disposal a well organized system for the gathering, analysis, and discussion of information concerning the country's security. The diplomatic corps and the military intelligence services were generally able to supply the government with both raw and finished intelligence concerning the intentions and capabilities of the nation's friends and enemies. Despite some glaring errors and omissions, reporting was, on

the whole, of sufficient accuracy to enable French decision makers to construct a comprehensive picture of the power balance and of the Republic's place within it.

The Foreign Ministry was a small organization -- 686 officials in 1935 not counting clerks, secretaries, and administrative personnel. In addition to officials located in Paris, France maintained 14 embassies, 37 legations, and eight consulates. Ambassadors and others who chose a diplomatic career constituted a well educated, well trained elite. Diplomats were drawn primarily from upper and upper-middle class backgrounds. They were generally graduates of one of the Grandes Ecoles -- usually the Ecole des Science Politiques, where they achieved outstanding grades in history, international law, economic geography, and languages. Despite their background and the milieu in which they operated, individual diplomats made great efforts to report on more than the official position of the country to which they were assigned. They were aware of the importance of reporting accurately on economic issues and on the state of public opinion. Economic officers also made extensive and largely successful efforts to provide the Quay d'Orsay with detailed and accurate data.[11] Generally, the diplomatic service obtained a wide range of information and reported frankly and with a minimum of prejudice.

Military attachés played an essential role in the intelligence collection and assessment process. The Republic in 1935 had 26 army, 11 air, and 10 naval attachés. Their mission was to obtain a wide variety of military information including everything from order of battle data to details of uniforms and equipment. Attachés used overt means -- reading host country military journals, visiting bases, attending maneuvers, and speaking with host nation officers and other attachés. They were forbidden to engage in covert collection activities, although some attachés did in fact develop their own networks of secret informants. In major foreign posts,

attachés were at least lieutenant colonels with extensive experience including service in the Great War, graduation from the Ecole Superieur de Guerre, and a tour on the General Staff. Additionally, the attachés had frequently served on an interallied staff or as a liaison officer with a foreign army. The attaché in Italy between 1933 and 1937, for example, had served on the Piave Front during the war. Attachés were frequently familiar with the language of the country to which they were assigned. The attaché in Japan in the 1920s actually served in a Japanese regiment, and the attachés in Berlin were usually bilingual. Attachés reported to their own service and frequently sent information copies to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While on post, they met often with the ambassador to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern.[12]

The Service de Renseignements dealt with covert intelligence collection. With a headquarters consisting of 25 officers, 20 NCOs, and 30 civilians and a very limited budget, the Service, nevertheless, ran an extensive network of agents and handlers. The headquarters consisted of four sections: administration, technical services including cryptography, telephonic and microphonic listening devices, counterintelligence, and collection. The collection branch consisted of six subsections: Germany, the Mediterranean countries, the Soviet Union, Spain, war material, and air data.[13] The Service obtained most of its information from a series of posts, some located on French territory and others on foreign soil. Important posts maintained subordinate stations. The Lille Post, for example, maintained subordinate posts in Rotterdam and Antwerp, and the Metz post had auxiliaries at Luxembourg, Forbach, and Thionville. The posts operating in foreign territory were smaller but more numerous than the ones in France. There were Service operatives in every European capital with the exception of London. Clandestine operatives used private, consular, or embassy cover. By the late 1930s, the Service

had some 1500 agents in Germany. Most of them were low ranking individuals with limited access to valuable information, but a few were well placed within the German government, military, or Nazi Party. Others for a wide variety of motives would provide information on an irregular basis.[14]

The Service de Renseignements maintained daily contact with the 2nd Bureau, a section of the Army General Staff responsible for gathering and analyzing intelligence from all sources both open and clandestine. The Bureau by 1938 contained six sections: missions, responsible for foreign attachés stationed in Paris, liaison which dealt with foreign intelligence agencies, personnel, press which monitored the German news media, collections which was in turn subdivided into four geographical areas one of which was Germany, and a study department that prepared reports and studies based on intelligence received from all sources. The study section produced daily summaries of information received from the clandestine service, weekly reports based on all sources of information, and comprehensive monthly bulletins. The Bureau circulated the reports to the defense ministry, the War Council, divisional commands, and command posts of fortified regions. The 2nd Bureau sponsored annual three-week courses for active and reserve intelligence officers from divisional to army group level. The Bureau also offered courses in intelligence methods and findings to the senior military schools.[15]

The head of the Bureau was kept fully informed by his subordinates. He received all of the studies as well as attaché reports considered particularly important. The Bureau chief maintained daily contact with the Foreign Affairs Ministry and with the head of the Service de Renseignements. The Bureau forwarded its studies to the personal staffs of the Chief of Staff of National Defense, the Chief of the Army Staff, and the commander designate for the

Northeastern Theater of Operations. The Bureau chief also had frequent personal meetings with his superiors. Reports from the Bureau also went to the Minister of War's special military cabinet, which contained its own small study section. The head of the clandestine service or an assistant also met frequently with the minister's staff.[16] Other services also had their own intelligence collection and analysis elements, and their reports reached both service ministers and national decision makers. Personal rivalries and the filter of ministerial staffs may have reduced the flow of intelligence, but during the late 1930s, Daladier never complained that he lacked essential information or that he was surprised by the actions of a foreign power.[17]

At the higher levels of government a series of interdepartmental committees brought together those officials responsible for evaluating the information supplied by diplomatic and military sources and framing appropriate responses. The Conseil Superieur de la Defense Nationale included the President of the Republic, the premier, members of the cabinet, high ranking members of the armed services, and a Marshal of France. The Council's role was to furnish advice and guidance on major issues concerning national defense, and it had a permanent secretariat to prepare agendas and perform necessary staff functions. After 1936, the secretariat was under the control of the defense minister.[18]

The CSDN was a cumbersome body, but throughout the 1930s the French government steadily improved the efficiency of the national security decision-making machinery. In 1932, the Tardieu government created the post of Minister of National Defense in order to group the traditional independent ministries of war and navy, plus the new air ministry, under a single authority. The Herriot government suppressed the new position, but Daladier revived it during

his short-lived regime in 1934. In June 1936, the Popular Front government of Leon Blum reestablished the ministry under the name of the Ministry of National Defense and War.

The Republic also created permanent institutions for interservice and inter-ministerial coordination. The Haute Comite Militaire, established in 1932, included the premier, the defense minister, the civilian and military heads of the armed services, the service chiefs of staff, and the Inspector General of Air Defenses. The committee's role was to examine important defense issues including the defense budget and the organization and employment of the armed forces.

At first the HCM met rarely, but starting in December 1934, it began to hold monthly meetings. Premier Flandin consulted the HCM on military aspects of diplomatic issues. The Foreign Minister and other officials from the Quay d'Orsai attended many of the sessions. The Popular Front government in June 1936 replaced the HCM with the Comite Permanent de Defense Nationale. The Minister of National Defense and War presided over the CPDN, which included the permanent secretaries of the Foreign Affairs and National Defense ministries and the permanent secretaries and chiefs of staff of the armed services. The CPDN met to discuss major security issues, although Daladier after 1938 tended to prefer direct meetings with the service chiefs or their chiefs of staff.

The Conseil Superieure de la Guerre dealt with military strategy and the conduct of operations. The defense minister acted as president, and until 1938 the Army Chief of Staff was the vice-president. In wartime, the vice-president of the CSG became the commander-in-chief of the principal operational theaters. In 1938, the government reorganized the command

structure creating the post of Chief of Staff of National Defense to coordinate the conduct of operations of all the armed services.[19]

The Republic's committee system was at times unwieldy. Interservice rivalries and personality clashes at times hindered the smooth flow of information and decision making, but on the whole, the system functioned effectively. The committees provided a forum for diplomatic, military, and political figures to receive vital security information and frame responses.

The national security decision making system functioned effectively during the 1930s, but no system or wiring diagram is better than the people who run it. Accurate information and proper analysis can influence the decision making process, but leaders must still guard the state's interests by responding to information and by framing appropriate responses.

The French dilemma in the late 1930s went far beyond the nature and structure of the national security apparatus. Beset by severe political and economic crises, bereft of effective alliances, and fearful of a repetition of the slaughter of World War I, France had to face a revanchist Germany determined to destroy the European balance.

French Views of the Strategic Balance

French political and military leaders viewed the Republic's geostrategic situation with a mixture of gloom and consternation. The French presumed that any new conflict with Germany would, like the First World War, be global, total, and protracted, requiring the mobilization of the full range of the nation's resources. France would have to conduct an extended battle of attrition to wear down the enemy's resources before a counter-offensive administered the coup

de grâce. War would also require the resources of coalition partners including the United Kingdom, Continental allies, and perhaps the United States, because the Republic simply could not face Germany alone. Moreover, evidence concerning the Franco-German strategic balance, the state of the Republic's alliance structure, and perceptions of future warfare, served further to convince French leaders that even if France emerged victorious from another general war the nation would be bled white. Consequently, leaders tended to view gloomy assessments as reasons for inaction rather than as requirements for vigorous corrective measures.

The Demographic Dimension

The French were painfully aware that in the Franco-German strategic balance the demographic balance, already tilted against the Republic in 1914, continued to worsen after 1919. The German population in the 1920s outnumbered that of France by 20 million, and the trend continued unabated in the following decade. By 1935 there were 65 million Germans compared to 40 million French. The incorporation of Austria and the Sudetenland into the Reich increased the number of Germans to 76 million. Between 1935 and 1940 the French faced the "empty years" -- a serious shortage of eligible males of military age -- a result of the demographic decline during the war years. In 1937 France had 4.3 million males of military age compared to 8.3 million in Germany. German annexations and natural growth increased their numbers to 9.3 million by 1939. In 1940, according to French sources, Germany had 13 million mobilizable men while France had 6.7 million. Whatever the precise figures, it was clear that the Republic suffered a growing population imbalance in comparison with its major rival.[20]

The Economic Dimension

German industrial production was approximately twice that of France. Moreover, much of French industry, including a number of critical defense related sectors, was antiquated. The Swiss in the 1930s employed more men in the machine tool industry than France, and the French aircraft industry in 1938 employed only 47,000 workers.[21] The Depression further hampered the development of French industry. In France the Depression came later and lasted longer than in other western countries. In 1933-34, while other nations were beginning recovery, the Republic was still in the midst of an economic decline. The government's fiscal response -- a deflationary policy designed to protect the gold value of the franc -- exacerbated downward economic trends. Growing fear of the political consequences of the economic crisis led to capital flight or hoarding, and even the Popular Front was unwilling to check the free flow of money. Additionally, the Blum government's reforms led to higher wages, shorter hours, reduced profits, and consequently, slower recovery. Daladier, by his willingness to break with his predecessor's reforms and by in effect floating the franc, restored business confidence, but by the start of World War II, despite vastly increased defense spending, the economy had not fully recovered. Industrial production was only 86% of 1929 levels.[22]

French economic performance looked even worse when compared to that of Germany. From a 1929 baseline of 100, French production in 1934 measured 75 compared to 66 for Germany. French levels remained static for the next two years while German production reached 107. In 1938, French figures reached 80, but the Reich had surged to 115.[23]

In terms of defense expenditures as a percentage of the gross national product, France in the 1930s fell well behind Germany.

Defense Spending as a Percentage of GNP[24]

	France	Germany
1932	5.2	1.9
1935	5.8	6.0
1936	6.3	10.8
1938	8.6	17.2
1939	23.0	30.0

France never caught up with the Reich, and German defense spending began from a larger industrial base thus magnifying Germany's advantage.

Numerous problems beset the German defense effort, including a shortage of critical natural resources and a lack of sufficient hard currency to import them, inefficient allocation of industrial tasks, and the inability of the military industries to meet the demands of the armed forces. The French were aware, at least in broad outline, of the Reich's problems, but the knowledge provided scant comfort. France had to import many of its own critical raw materials including 99% of its copper, 99% of its oil, 95% of its tin, and 100% of its manganese. The French believed that in wartime the national merchant fleet could not carry sufficient tonnage to sustain the defense effort, and that the navy, acting alone, could not provide adequate protection to civilian shipping.[25]

French defense spending also followed an unfortunate trend, for just as the Nazi regime came to power and introduced a policy of rapid armament, the Republic was reducing defense spending as part of a deflationary fiscal response to the Depression. Paris cut defense spending

by over a billion francs in 1934, and after 1935, growth was slowed because of fiscal and political constraints.

The Diplomatic Dimension

Alliances were the answer to German numerical and economic superiority. They had proven their worth during the First World War, and the French were vividly aware of the vital contributions of their allies to the victory of 1918. The French were, however, equally aware of the fact that their post-war security structure was far less reliable than the pre-1914 system.

Having destroyed the German High Seas Fleet and reduced the threat of Prussian militarism, Great Britain sought to return to a policy of limited Continental liability. A widespread belief that the Versailles Treaty was unfair to Germany strengthened the hand of those favoring reduced Continental commitments. Imperial rather than European security became the arena of primary concern to British statesmen. London's adherence to the Lorcarno System, the French noticed, was a commitment to the post-war status quo in the west and was not an automatic guarantee of French security. In theory, as a guaranteeing power, England might find it necessary to side with Germany if France ever decided to mount a preemptive attack.

Anti-war sentiment in Britain was strong and often translated into suspicions of French intentions. Overt hostility to Poincare's occupation of the Ruhr found voice in continued British suspicions that the Republic was seeking to entangle Britain in great power confrontations that served French rather than British interests. British anti-war sentiment also gave rise to the

widespread belief that international disputes could be resolved either through the League of Nations or by direct negotiations between the contending parties.

Britain's reluctance to become involved in another Continental war had a direct impact upon the United Kingdom's defense capabilities. After 1919, Britain, like other powers, sharply reduced the size of its armed forces and slashed defense expenditures. The limited commitment to defense lasted throughout the 1920s and into the following decade. When the British began to rearm, the government emphasized sea and air power. Thus, in 1938, the French discovered that if the Sudeten issue led to war and Britain supported France, the British would commit fewer ground divisions to the critical opening campaigns than they had sent in 1914.[26] Throughout the 1930s, the French found the British to be at best reluctant partners, but if the British connection was weak, other alliances were chaotic and ineffective.

Belgium, the Republic's other major ally in the west, drew steadily away from the French orbit. In the 1920s the Franco-Belgian agreement, according to the French interpretation, permitted the French army to send forces into Belgium upon warning of planned German aggression. The deployment would shield northern France from invasion and provide a shorter defense line. A war's initial engagements would take place on Belgian rather than French soil and add the not inconsiderable Belgian army to the French order of battle.

Belgian domestic politics -- a growing resistance on the part of the Flemish population to close ties with France -- ultimately forced the government to revise its foreign policy. In March 1936, at almost the same moment that German troops moved into the Rhineland, Brussels informed Paris that Belgium would return to its traditional policy of neutrality and provide for its own defense through increased military allocations. If Germany again attacked, Brussels

would, of course, welcome French assistance, but French troops could no longer expect to enter Belgium prior to an act of overt aggression.

After 1936, Belgian authorities continued to hold secret staff talks and intelligence exchanges with the French, but the Belgian policy shift seriously weakened the French strategic position. In a new war, the French could no longer count upon meeting the initial German offensive well forward of the northern departments, nor could the High Command mount coordinated operations with the Belgian armed forces.[27] Rather, the French faced the bleak prospects of awaiting the enemy offensive in Northern France or risking an encounter battle in a hasty effort to establish a front in central Belgium.

In theory France's Eastern European allies could field over 100 divisions and constitute a major second front against Germany. In reality, however, the web of eastern alliances were more a sieve than a rampart. The allies were divided among themselves and regarded their participation in the French security system primarily in terms of narrowly defined particular interests rather than as a common effort to cope with common threats.

Because of its geographic situation, Poland required French support against both Germany and the Soviet Union, but Polish-Czech relations were embittered over the disposition of Teschen, and Warsaw was never willing to cooperate with Prague. The Poles also refused any and all cooperation with the USSR. In 1936, the head of the Polish military intelligence told his French counterpart that the German danger was Poland's second preoccupation, and that in case of war with the Reich, Poland, even if threatened with defeat, would refuse to call upon the Soviets for assistance.[28] Poland demonstrated its worth as an ally by signing a

non-aggression pact with Germany in 1934, by refusing to grant transit rights to Soviet forces during the Munich crisis, and by joining Germany in the partition of Czechoslovakia.

The Little Entente powers were primarily concerned with the threat posed by a revisionist Hungary. Belgrade was also fearful of Italian ambitions in the Danube basin while Rumania worried about Soviet designs on Besserabia and was in any case too far removed from Central Europe to be of immediate assistance in wartime. Prague was a loyal French ally, but Paris believed that Germany could easily overwhelm Czechoslovakia. The French view of Czech vulnerability was reinforced by the strategic consequences of the Anschluss.

All of the eastern alliances were predicated on the assumption that as in 1914 Germany would attack France first, and the allies would force the Germany to divert troops to the east. If Germany chose to strike first in the east, the basic rationale for the alliances disappeared, and they became a strategic liability.

Far from strengthening the Republic's eastern system, the pact with the USSR created both foreign and domestic complications. The initial impetus for the pact came from Louis Barthou, the Foreign Minister in the early 1930s. A member of the traditional right, Barthou, having read Mein Kampf, was under no illusions about the nature or intentions of Hitler's regime. His thoughts turned instinctively to a Russian connection to counter German strength. Ideological differences did not matter to him; after all, in the 19th Century, Republican France had concluded an alliance with Tsarist Russia to counter the German threat, and a Communist Russia could be just as useful in the 20th. The French right initially tended to agree with Barthou's approach, especially because the threat posed by domestic communism seemed

minimal -- in the 1932 elections the Communist Party had won only 10 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

After Barthou's murder, his successors continued to work for a pact, but with a significant change in emphasis. The growth of the Communist vote in France convinced most conservatives that an alliance with the Soviets would strengthen the domestic left. Paris, therefore, signed a diplomatic pact with Moscow in May 1935 but avoided concluding a military convention. The army also wished to avoid a military link. In April 1935, the 2nd Bureau noted that it was in French interests to prevent a German victory over Russia, but it was not necessary to commit the Republic in advance to a conflict that did not concern the nation directly.[29] In October 1936, Daladier told the Minister of Foreign Affairs that closer ties to the USSR would alarm other powers and generally produce grave problems for France.[30] In 1935 the army attaché reported favorably on Soviet military capabilities, but the following year, a different attaché, more in tune with the attitudes of the High Command, asserted that the USSR could not successfully conduct a war with a first rate European power.[31] The army was satisfied with an arrangement that denied Russian raw materials to Germany but remained opposed to direct military ties to the Soviets.

In May 1937, the Army Staff produced a study of the consequences of a military convention with the USSR emphasizing the serious diplomatic problems that would ensue. The Staff noted that the diplomatic agreement already alarmed the eastern allies and Great Britain. French security rested above all on a close working relationship with the British, and in wartime British aid would far outweigh any assistance that the Soviets could offer. Consequently, before concluding any military agreement with Moscow, London's assent was essential. Another

requirement was the prior consent of the eastern allies and an understanding between them and the USSR.[32] The Staff doubtlessly realized that such agreements were not feasible. The following month the Staff reiterated its position and noted that a military accord risked pushing Poland into the German orbit.[33] The Republic thus found itself with a treaty that alarmed both the state's allies and the domestic right. As the Communist vote increased and the number of Communist deputies grew, the right began to replace its traditional suspicion of Germany with the fear that a Franco-German confrontation would benefit only Moscow.

On the other side of the political spectrum French relations with Fascist Italy produced additional problems. Pierre Laval avidly pursued an alliance with Mussolini. France and Italy had been allies during the Great War, and Paris believed that Rome had a continuing interest in preserving Austrian independence and resisting the growth of German influence in the Danube basin. Moreover, an alliance with Italy would relieve the French armed forces from the tasks of securing the Alpine frontier and the colonial possessions bordering on Italian African territories. An alliance would also free troops for service on the crucial Northeastern Front and secure the line of communications between the Metropole and North Africa.

In the spring of 1935, the French and Italian air chiefs concluded contingency plans for joint air and ground operations against Germany. The air agreement included three scenarios. In case of a German attack against Italy, France would place a number of specified air bases at the disposal of Italian bomber squadrons and send fighters to assist in the defense of Italian air space; if Germany attacked France, the Italians would send 100 bombers and a fighter squadron to operate from French bases, and if Germany attacked both powers, each air force would

operate independently, and Italian air units would attack German targets from French aerodromes. The air accord also called for periodic staff talks and intelligence exchanges.[34]

Ground agreements also contained a number of contingency plans. If the Reich mobilized, France would send a division to Italy, and the Italians would send a division to France. If Germany invaded Austria, the French would send a corps to northern Italy where it would serve as a liaison force linking the Italian and Yugoslav armies. If Germany attacked France, nine Italian divisions would serve in Alsace, eventually cross the Rhine, and advance into Bavaria while the main Italian army pushed north across the Alps and into southern Germany. A French expeditionary corps would deploy to Italy where it would operate with Italian, Yugoslav, and Czech forces to invade Germany from the south and southeast.[35]

To French strategic planners, Italy represented a vital linch pin in the creation of a continuous southeastern front. Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia presented the Republic with a cruel dilemma. The British public was outraged and virtually forced the government to oppose the invasion and impose economic sanctions on Italy. Many in France would have preferred to treat the invasion as the latest in a long series of colonial wars but also realized that the Republic could not afford to alienate Great Britain. Paris, therefore, reluctantly joined London in the imposition of League-mandated sanctions. The advent of the Popular Front government in France, and Italian military intervention in a popular front government in Spain ended for all practical purposes efforts to secure a rapproachment and an alliance with Italy.

Throughout the 1930s the diplomatic scene offered the Republic scant comfort. England was at best a reluctant ally, Belgium was no longer reliable, ties with the Soviet Union were tenuous and divisive both at home and abroad, and relations with Italy grew steadily worse. The

Eastern European allies, weak and divided as they were, offered no viable substitute for a great power coalition. In the face of German aggression, French leaders were acutely aware that they stood virtually alone, and that in case of war France would have to bear single-handedly the brunt of the initial German onslaught. The lack of an effective alliance structure also provided French decision makers with a rationale for inaction in the face of German initiatives. Since France would have to face Germany alone in the opening phases of a conflict, it was better to wait until the security structure was stronger.

The domestic political situation placed additional constraints upon French policy makers. The growing rift between left and right made it virtually impossible to construct effective ties with either the USSR or Italy. The rise of the right-wing leagues, the explosive growth of the Communist vote tally, and a growing belief in intellectual circles that the Republic was outdated and doomed frightened moderates and contributed to their reluctance to undertake bold foreign policy initiatives. Left wing pacifism, right wing defeatism, and the not insubstantial support for Wilsonianism as manifested by the earlier popularity of Briand further complicated the calculations of the country's leaders. Behind the fear of foreign war lurked the spectre of domestic chaos.

The Military Dimension

Despite their desperate search for detente, the French did not neglect their military strength, and after 1935, the pace of defense spending increased steadily, if undramatically, until 1939.

French Defense Spending (in Billions of Francs)[36]

1933	13.431
1934	11.601
1935	12.797
1936	15.101
1937	21.580
1938	29.153
1939	93.687

Note: Construction projects, pensions, and colonial defense costs were borne by other ministries.

The army, the sine qua non of French security because of the overriding danger of a land attack, received the lion's share of the defense budget: 52.6% in 1936; 54.7% in 1937; 52.2% in 1938; and 60.7% in 1939.[37] The 1936 defense plan, which was to be complete by the end of 1940, called for the production of 6600 antitank guns, over 60 battalions of tanks, and 50 groups of 105 mm field guns. By the spring of 1940, the army had 25 battalions of light infantry support tanks -- 1125 vehicles. The army also fielded 582 tanks in three light mechanized divisions and 624 tanks in three armored divisions. French tanks were at least the equal of the German machines which they faced. German tanks were on the whole faster and had better radios while the French armored vehicles contained heavier guns and had thicker armor. The French also had about 17,000 artillery pieces and 14,000 anti-tank guns.[38]

The air force also received a substantial share of the defense budget. In 1936 the air force received 18% of defense allocations; 19% in 1937; 23% in 1938; and 27% in 1939.[39] With the creation of an independent air force, the Air Ministry contemplated a shift in mission

from ground support to strategic bombardment. The realization that the Luftwaffe had surpassed the French air force in numbers of bombers raised serious doubts about the viability of launching strategic bombardment missions against an opponent whose ability to retaliate was so great. Consequently, in 1937, the Air Ministry began to concentrate on the production of air defense fighters, which were also less costly than bombers and easier to produce in large numbers. Plan V of 1938 called for the purchase of 6858 fighters by 1941. In the same year, France ordered almost 1000 aircraft, mostly fighters and reconnaissance aircraft, from the United Sates.[40] Monthly aircraft production rose from 40 in March 1938 to 320 by September 1939. By the spring of 1940, 1470 planes ordered under Plan V had left the factories, and 1241 were in operational service giving the air force a frontline strength of 3289 modern planes of which 2122 were fighters.[41] Despite significant progress in 1939 and 1940, the French air force remained inferior to the Luftwaffe in numbers and mission capabilities. Shifts in mission priorities, inadequate funding, and the problems associated with introducing new aircraft types into operational squadrons delayed major improvements of the air force. The greater experience of French pilots did not fully compensate for these disadvantages.

French naval spending was also substantial -- 23.6% of the budget in 1936; 24.1% in 1938; and 11.2% in 1939.[42] By 1937, France possessed the world's fourth largest fleet including seven capital ships and three building, one aircraft carrier, 15 cruisers plus four under construction, 63 destroyers plus 15 building, and 75 submarines with six building.[43] The basic goal of French naval planning was to ensure superiority over the combined German and Italian fleets. In the late 1930s, the Naval Staff came to regard the Italian fleet as the main threat, but

the French believed that their navy was effective enough to check the Italians and control the lines of communication and supply between the Metropole and the Empire.

The goal of French rearmament, however, was not in fact war fighting but deterrence. Only a strong France could negotiate with Germany from a position of strength, and reasonable statesmen sustained by adequate forces might, the French hoped, convince Berlin that a resort to war was not a viable alternative. Deterred from war by the prospect of having to deal with a strong, well-armed France, German leaders would find it in their best interests to seek a peaceful resolution of outstanding differences.

French military organization and doctrine presented the government with a severely limited range of options. The military system, essentially, admitted only general war as the alternative to peace. With the introduction of one year military service in 1928 the army became a cadre and covering force dependent on full mobilization to attain full combat readiness. Forces in Metropolitan France consisted of recruits undergoing training and 20 active divisions. Upon mobilization the active divisions absorbed reservists and supplied cadres for A and B class reserve formations. The A divisions had a higher percentage of active troops than the B series units. The system relied upon the active divisions breaking up and forming the fully mobilized army.[44] For all practical purposes, the active forces functioned as a school for soldiers and as a mobilization base.

The army did devise methods for partial mobilization to provide covering forces for the exposed frontier regions, but in every case of partial mobilization the active forces had to absorb reserves and supply cadres for activated units. Consequently, the army could not wage a limited war without placing at risk its mobilization base and its ability to fight a total war. The 1928

system suited most Frenchmen. Fiscal conservatives approved of the reduced expenditures involved, republicans believed that the system embodied the Revolutionary ideal of the citizen-soldier, and the professional soldiers accepted the system because it preserved their status and reflected their views concerning the lessons of World War I and the shape of wars to come. The reintroduction of two years' service, designed as it was to compensate for the empty years, led to no fundamental changes in military organization or doctrine.

During the war the French learned that major advantages accrued to the defense. Entrenchments, wire, machine guns, and massive artillery fire had made the task of assaulting prepared positions both difficult and costly. Frontal assaults were suicidal unless supported and sustained by enormous superiority in manpower and material. Any future conflict, the French concluded, would also be a gigantic war of materiel attrition. Given Germany's superiority in human and material resources coupled with the efficacy of defensive firepower, the French army rejected as disastrous any attempt to mount an offensive a l'outrance.[45] French military doctrine after 1918 called for protecting the national territory from a surprise attack that might disrupt mobilization and deprive the Republic of vital industrial regions. The army and its supporting air arm would then seek to blunt the initial enemy assault while the nation methodically organized its human and economic resources for total war.

The army was fully aware that in war only offensive operations were decisive. Assaults, however, had to be carefully orchestrated and controlled and required massive artillery support. A 1921 field manual asserted that "the offensive battle thus presents itself under the form of successive actions of fire preceded by indispensable delays for their preparation and followed by periods of movement more or less long."[46] A lecturer at the War College noted that the

"present doctrine . . . is based upon this dominant idea: the importance in combat in the defensive as well as in the offensive of the SURPRISE concentration of the fires of POWERFUL ARTILLERY."[47] Both the 1921 and 1936 Field Regulations noted that "the attack is the fire that advances; the defense is the fire that halts the enemy."[48] The 1936 instructions emphasized the importance of centralized control, noting that "the attack is the work of an army commander applying maximum means strongly centralized in his hands toward the desired direction." The 1938 Infantry Regulations emphasized movement by successive phases closely coordinated with the artillery. Battle was methodical, consisting of a sequence of successive steps under the detailed control of the commander who provided coherence and interarm cooperation and coordination in every phase.[49] The 1936 regulations summarized the French doctrine of the methodical battle with the pithy phrase, "audacious solutions . . . should be executed methodically."[50]

The Army High Command also understood that armor would play a vital role in any future conflict. Tanks would be essential participants in any future methodical battles. Tank battalions would accompany and support infantry attacks, and additional battalions would provide a commander with a mass of maneuver. Within corps and divisions no specific commander of tanks was designated since the tanks would operate under the control of the higher unit commander.[51] The 1937 Provisional Instructions for the Employment of Tanks called for the use of armor by surprise and in great numbers along large fronts. Tanks could not, however, occupy terrain, and they were to advance by successive bounds protected by the concentrated fire of artillery and by infantry in close support.[52] Tanks, the army believed, could increase the rhythm of the attack, but their presence on the field of battle did not eliminate the requirement

for movement by carefully delineated successive bounds. Centralized control of offensive operations was still regarded as essential. The 1939 Regulation on Combat Tanks reemphasized the requirement for close liaison with the artillery. Artillery support was needed to suppress antitank weapons. Tanks could impart a more rapid pace to operations but only within the context of the methodical battle. Tanks would advance in successive bounds of about 1500 meters, and commanders would coordinate the operations of armored elements with the infantry and artillery.[53]

There was in the French army extensive debate concerning the role of armor in modern war. General J. B. Estienne, the father of French armor, advocated in the 1920s the creation of a combined arms force capable of rapid movement. He and his followers regarded the tank as a focal point of the army's doctrine. In 1925, however, the High Command created a commission to examine the role of the tank. The commission concluded that the tank was essentially an infantry support weapon rather than an independent arm. In 1929, the instructions of the employment of the combat tank stated:

> Tanks are only supplemental means of action placed temporarily at the disposition of the infantry. They considerably reinforce the action of infantry, but they do not replace them.[54]

Tests conducted in 1933 at Coetquiden seemed to indicate the need to subordinate the pace of armored operations to that of the infantry and linked the tank to the conduct of the methodical battle.[55]

General Estienne, after his retirement in 1927, served as a civilian in the tank technical section of the Department of Infantry and continued to advocate the creation of an independent armored branch of service. He criticized severely the army's emphasis on the production of

light infantry support tanks as well as heavy tanks designed for breakthrough operations. He called instead for the design and production of a single all-purpose medium tank. In 1934 the Superior Council of War rejected his views and called for the production of both heavy and light support tanks. In 1936 the General Staff decided that three quarters of the army's tanks should be light vehicles and the remainder heavy. Maneuvers in the spring of 1937 appeared to confirm the High Command's views on armored warfare. Large concentrations of tanks were accepted as an essential element of warfare but only as part of the methodical battle.[56] Given the High Command's view on the nature of battle, the formation of armored divisions was not a high priority. General Estienne and a few others, including Lieutenant Colonel Charles de Gaulle, continued to advocate the creation of autonomous armored divisions, but as with armor advocates in many other countries, their view remained minority opinions.

The High Command saw no compelling reason to create armored formations especially since the production of the heavy B1 and B1b tanks remained painfully slow because of the costs involved and because of technical problems with the tank's exacting and complex steering system. Consequently, it was not until late in 1936 that the High Command, prodded by Daladier, began to study the possibility of employing large armored units. In February 1938, Daladier ordered the creation of another special study group. The group issued a report advocating the establishment of a large armored unit, but the army continued to resist the formation of armored divisions. On 5 February 1938, Gamelin told Daladier that the army should have two armored divisions by 1941 but that the most important concern was to increase the number of fortress troops, artillerymen, and A class infantry divisions. After Munich, the Superior War Council called for the establishment of three armored divisions, but by the time

the war began, the army had yet to create its first tank division. It was not until January 1940 that the army activated the first two armored divisions.[57] The divisions were not to operate as autonomous units but were to function as an integral part of the methodical battle. The French also had two and later three light armored divisions equipped with the excellent SOUMA S-35 tank. The divisions were combined arms formations, but their missions were essentially confined to the traditional cavalry roles of reconnaissance and security.[58]

The lack of concern for the creation of a tank-based army capable of conducting a deep continuous battle reflected not only fiscal and production problems but also a deep seated belief on the part of the High Command that such units were not essential. Wedded to the doctrine of the methodical battle, the army did not reject the tank. The army in fact called for the use of massed armor but viewed the role of the tank as a supplement to the carefully orchestrated movements of the infantry and artillery.

French army doctrine was not purely defensive. Extensive and extended debate within the officer corps convinced the High Command, and the civilian leadership, that the official view concerning the lessons of World War I and the impact of technological advances since 1919 was properly understood. In a future conflict, the army, after a defensive phase, intended to mount offensive operations. The defensive phase would wear down enemy strength and permit France and its allies to mobilize their forces. Methodical attacks sustained by massive firepower would then overwhelm hostile positions.

The construction of the Maginot Line did not indicate the existence of a purely passive strategy. The Line was designed to defend the industrial areas of Lorraine against a surprise attack and free additional troops from a static defensive role, thereby enabling the army to create

an even larger mobile mass of maneuver. Nor did the army neglect motorization and mechanization, and motorized and mechanized formations constituted a substantial portion of the mobile reserve force. The missions of the mobile reserve included meeting the initial German advance through the Low Countries either in Belgium or on the northern frontier of France, sealing off and destroying local breakthroughs, and finally, when reinforced as the result of national mobilization, mounting a carefully controlled and modulated counteroffensive.[59]

French doctrine had no place for a rapid war of maneuver or for limited operations designed to bring immediate pressure upon an enemy. After carefully studying the lessons of the Great War, the Army High Command rejected both concepts as incompatible with operations in a high firepower environment. Only carefully organized and regulated attacks sustained by massive firepower had a chance of success on the modern battlefield. Both the army and the civilian leadership were convinced that they had drawn the correct conclusions from the last war and that French military doctrine responded effectively to the current technological and political environment.

During the 1930s, a number of military and civilian commentators publicly criticized the army for refusing to create a force capable of rapid offensive operations that was not dependent upon full national mobilization. De Gaulle called for the creation of a rapid reaction force, and in the Chamber of Deputies, Paul Reynaud echoed de Gaulle's views. As early as the 1920s, Reynaud had insisted that France required a highly mobile army in order to enforce the Versailles Treaty and support the allies in Eastern Europe. Reynaud later noted:

> It is an axiom that a country's army is one of the instruments of its policy. A country must, therefore, have an army suitable for its policy. On the morrow of Versailles two policies were conceivable:

> 1. That of the Wall of China: to build a Maginot Line stretching from the North Sea to Switzerland and to place behind it a defensive army. . . .
> 2. That of a European Balance of Power: to find allies capable of balancing German power in the east and at the same time to create an offensive army fit to attack Germany if she attacked our allies.[60]

Although neither critic claimed that the current system would not work, they believed that an additional capability was required, for without a mobile strike force, there would exist a fundamental contradiction between the Republic's foreign policy and its military strategy.

On 21 July 1936 the head of the War Minister's Military Cabinet submitted a paper in response to calls for a special intervention force. A professionalized strike force, according to the High Command, would be expensive, drain the army of vital professional cadres, and create an army within the army with potentially dangerous consequences for civil-military relations. Moreover, a mechanized intervention force would not be militarily effective. It could achieve some local initial advances, but in the terrain along the Franco-German border it would quickly grind to a halt once it reached the main German defenses. Successful attacks required both careful preparation and an immense superiority in men and material. The army did not believe in passive defense. Rather it believed in initial defense to protect the integrity of the national territory while the country mobilized and prepared for a counteroffensive. As far as rendering aid to allies, those countries with a common frontier could count upon the prompt arrival of French forces. Allies geographically distant from France would receive indirect assistance: French air and naval forces would render immediate help, and the army's mobilization would require the Germans to retain substantial forces on the Western Front. Ultimately the Republic would send an expeditionary corps to operate with the eastern allies.[61]

The army, the report concluded, was indeed the army of the nation's policy. France did not seek war and would never start one. The nation's military policy was, therefore, fully in accord with the state's policy and interests.[62] The army thus admitted that it had neither the capability nor the intention of supporting efforts to maintain the status quo by offensive operations against Germany. The conviction that superior German human and economic resources would lead only to a lengthy total war was reflected in the army's post-1918 war plans.

Even during the 1920s when France enjoyed its greatest relative military advantages over Germany -- the German army was severely restricted in both size and armaments, and French troops occupied the Rhineland -- war plans were tinged with pessimism. Plan P, drawn up in 1920 and in effect until 1923, assumed that an 80 division French army required the support of the Belgian and Czech armies to disrupt German mobilization by advancing into the Ruhr and the Main River Valley in order to cut Germany in half. Having severed Germany, the plan called for the establishment of light field fortifications to resist counterattacks while diplomatic intervention brought the war to a successful conclusion.[63] Plan A, in force from 1924 to 1928, required more than 80 French and Belgian divisions to advance across the North German Plain to rescue Poland from a German offensive.[64]

After the introduction of one-year conscript service, plans became even more pessimistic in their assumptions. Plan B, in effect from 1929 to 1931, sought to resist German and Italian attacks on the nation's territory, and there was no further discussion of operations east of the Rhine. French forces in the Rhineland were to withdraw through a series of fortified lines while other units guarded the Alpine frontier and Tunisia. Only after full mobilization would the army

undertake offensive operations.[65] Plan C, written after the end of military occupation of the Rhineland but while the region was still demilitarized, was in effect from 1931 to 1933. The plan sought to counter surprise attacks against Belgium, Alsace, Lorraine, or Switzerland. Mobile forces were to counter the initial assaults and secure the national territory while the country mobilized.[66] The last pre-war plan -- Plan D -- was in force from 1933 to 1939. Its goal was to secure the frontier with less than full mobilization, parry surprise attacks, and provide mobile forces to assist Belgium and Luxembourg if either or both countries were attacked by Germany. Reservists could be recalled to reinforce the covering or the mobile forces, and the army could cover the nation's borders and screen a general mobilization.[67]

On 15 April 1939, the Army Staff produced a paper discussing the nation's strategy in the likely event of war in the near future. Germany, according to the report, possessed 54 active, 35 to 40 reserve, 32 to 36 Landwehr, and 17 frontier divisions. When the Germans mobilized their second echelon formations, the Reich would be able to place 200 divisions in the field. Italy had 75 divisions in Europe and 10 in Africa. To face the Axis powers, France had 67 field divisions, 17 fortress divisions, seven divisions in North Africa destined for the Western Front, and seven for local defense. Great Britain could eventually deploy 19 divisions on the Continent. Poland had 50 divisions, Rumania 35, and Yugoslavia 35. Greece and Turkey together possessed 50 divisions. The Axis powers could not sustain a long war because of serious economic problems, especially a shortage of petroleum products. The Germans and Italians would seek a rapid victory. The formation of a coalition would be a slow process, and only England could supply direct support to France. Therefore, the Army Staff concluded, France and England would have to endure until the moment when they could undertake offensive

operations. In the initial phases of a war, they would seek to establish a solid Western Front, force the Germans to fight on two fronts, blockade the Reich, protect the Mediterranean lines of communication, and when fully mobilized and sustained by the eastern allies, attack Italy and finally Germany.[68]

Throughout the 1920s and '30s, France possessed an army, an operational doctrine, and war plans that were in accordance with the nation's real if not its stated policy. Assuming that a new war with Germany would become a prolonged total conflict, the army prepared for a methodical mobilization while fending off attempts at a surprise invasion. Germany's superior war potential in turn led planners to prepare for an initial defensive phase followed by a carefully orchestrated counteroffensive delivered in conjunction with coalition partners.

Most French political leaders agreed with the High Command's projections concerning the nature of a future conflict, and like the military, rejected the concept of limited offensive operations as a prescription for disaster. Consequently, even before Hitler began to rearm the Reich, the French had abandoned any idea of initial offensive operations against Germany. French generals and politicians believed that they could, if fully mobilized and fully backed by coalition partners, win a second war against Germany, but they were unwilling to pay the price of victory.

Response to Crises

In every crisis preceding World War II, the French response was similar. Because of resource imbalances, the Republic could not face Germany alone. Allies were unreliable or unwilling to resort to arms to halt Nazi aggression, and if war came, victory would bleed France

white. Consequently, French civilian and military leaders tried to avoid war even at the price of strategically vital concessions, increase the pace of military spending in order to convince Hitler that he could not defeat France in a direct clash of arms, and negotiate a general detente with Berlin and Rome. Intelligence assessments sustained the government's gloomy picture of the nation's strategic position by indicating that France, in the absence of reliable allies, faced an immensely strong Germany and would have to bear the initial phase of a conflict alone.

Aware of the increased pace of German rearmament after 1933, French intelligence concluded that in 1934 Germany possessed an army of 300,000 active troops supported by 100,000 paramilitary police, 300,000 reservists, 400,000 recruits undergoing military instruction, and 2.8 million SA Troopers.[69] Even before Hitler reintroduced conscription, the French presumed that German forces were large and formidable. A 2nd Bureau assessment of 28 January 1935 placed the German strength at 300,000 regular troops, a number that would climb to 400,000 by spring. The army consisted of 21 infantry, three or four cavalry, and a mechanized division supported by 300,000 trained reserves and over 1.8 million paramilitary troops. The air force contained 1300 combat aircraft, 400 trainers, and 1500 civil aircraft of military utility. There were 6000 trained pilots in the German air arm. In war the 2nd Bureau estimated that Germany could mobilize 90 to 100 divisions of which 40 were capable of offensive operations.[70] By the end of the year, estimates of German strength rose to 480,000 active soldiers plus an equal number of trained reserves. Estimates for 1937 indicated that the Reich would have about one million men under arms.[71]

Given the perceived force balance, it was not surprising that when Hitler in 1935 reintroduced conscription in direct violation of the Versailles Treaty the French response avoided

threats of force. France sought closer ties with Italy, but the idea that Germany had created a casus belli never, according to Francois Poncet, entered anyone's head.[72] Nobody seriously contemplated reducing Germany to obedience by force of arms.

The Rhineland crisis witnessed a similar response. As early as October 1934, the army informed the Foreign Minister that Germany intended to occupy the Rhineland no later than the fall of 1936.[73] In May 1935 the consul in Cologne noted that the Germans were preparing to move into the Rhineland the following spring.[74] By January 1936, the French knew from multiple sources -- the attaché in Berlin, consuls in Cologne and Dusseldorf, and information supplied by the Swiss General Staff -- that reoccupation was imminent.[75]

The Army High Command informed the government that because of German strength France could do nothing short of general war to stop the German move. On 18 January 1936, the Army General Staff informed the Haute Comité Militaire that the German army contained 24 infantry, two cavalry, and three armored divisions plus a number of independent brigades. In addition to the 520,000 regulars, the Germans could also call upon 30,000 militarized police, 40,000 SS troops, and 200,000 men in the labor front. By the end of the year, the French estimated that the Germans would have 36 divisions under arms. The German armored formations deployed 1800 tanks and were designed to force rapid breakthroughs followed by deep strikes into enemy rear areas. The German army was expanding rapidly and intended to reoccupy the Rhineland in the near future.[76] With a peacetime army of 33 divisions and a mobilized strength of 79 divisions plus eight brigades of fortress troops, a war against an estimated 105 German divisions would at best be fraught with grave risks. The High Command,

therefore, recommended increased defense allocations but made no proposals for a direct response to German initiatives.[77]

On 17 February 1936, the Defense Minister informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs that in case of a German move into the Rhineland, France should undertake a number of countermeasures: reinforcement of the fortress troops, placing all fortress troops on full alert, and recalling certain reservist classes to strengthen the frontier defenses. There was no suggestion of a direct riposte against Germany. Nor did the government ever ask for such an option.[78] Two days later in a conference of the service chiefs of staff, General Gamelin stated that France could not act against the Reich without allied support.[79]

In the aftermath of the German reoccupation, the French, despite the realization of the gravity of Hitler's coup, found it impossible to contemplate a strong response. On 8 March the 3rd Bureau reported that only full mobilization and total war would force the Germans to relinquish the Rhineland.[80] On the same day, Gamelin again told the chiefs of staff that France could not enter the Rhineland without the diplomatic and military support of the Locarno powers. All the French could do was to reinforce the frontier garrisons against the contingency of a sudden German advance from the Rhineland into Lorraine.[81]

Although Leger at the Foreign Affairs Ministry told the Premier that strong French action would force London and Brussels to support Paris, Gamelin, aware of the reluctance of the government to undertake a strong response, continued to emphasize the dangers of unilateral action.[82] On 11 March and again on 28 March, he told government officials that the Germans had 295,000 troops in the Rhineland and that the Republic's military system did not give the nation the option of organizing an expeditionary corps to counter the German initiative. To act

decisively, France would have to establish a million-man covering force and proceed to undertake general mobilization. Even then an invasion of the Rhineland would quickly produce a strategic deadlock.[83] The Republic could not in fact achieve victory outside of the ranks of a major coalition.

The French continued to engage in bellicose posturing for several weeks, probably in an effort to secure a British commitment to France's security in return for not unleashing the war that they had no intention of fighting in the first place. A heightened perception of the German menace was also useful in wresting larger defense appropriations from the Chamber of Deputies, but throughout the crisis, the leaders of the Republic never seriously contemplated a resort to force. Instead of attempting to improve the nation's diplomatic and strategic situation by forceful action, leaders used the problems inherent in the existing balance of forces as an excuse for inaction.

The French were aware that Austria was next on Hitler's agenda. As early as April 1936, the Austrian Foreign Minister expressed fears of German aggression to the French chargé in Vienna, and in late 1937 the 2nd Bureau predicted that Berlin's next move would be the seizure of Austria.[84] By January 1938 French military intelligence knew that Germany was committed to the takeover of Austria in the near future and soon provided detailed information on the timing of the German occupation.[85] Once again, fear of German strength and alliance disunity provided French leaders with reasons for inactivity. In June 1936, French intelligence placed German strength at 34 active, 50 frontier, and 17 reserve divisions.[86] In January 1937, the air attaché in Berlin reported that Luftwaffe strength had grown to 2055 combat aircraft of which 1233 were modern first line planes.[87] In June, the Army Staff noted that the Red Army

was seriously weakened by the purges and that Poland remained hostile to any development of closer ties between Paris and Moscow.[88] Growing tensions with Italy, British reluctance to become involved in Central European affairs, and the absence of treaty obligations to defend Austrian sovereignty combined to convince the French to remain passive in face of the Anschluss.

After the occupation of Austria, the French realized that Czechoslovakia, the only reliable French ally in Eastern Europe, would be the next German target and quickly concluded that because of the Anschluss the Czech state was strategically exposed and indefensible.[89] The day after the German march to Vienna, Gamelin noted that Czechoslovakia was encircled and that any French attacks designed to support the Czechs would quickly grind to a halt against the German Westwall. Moreover, Gamelin asserted that in case of hostilities Italy and Fascist Spain would force France to divert troops from the west. Finally, the Anschluss would add 10 Austrian divisions to the German order of battle bringing the total to 120 divisions -- a total that would soon grow to 200. If war came, France could do no more than defend the Metropole and the Empire.[90] Any chance of victory rested upon the creation of a powerful coalition. Thus even before the threat to Czechoslovakia assumed concrete form, the High Command had dismissed the possibility of successful resistance to German aggression in the east and could predict only stalemate in the west.

During the following months, French military and diplomatic officials continued to emphasize the dangers inherent in seeking to sustain Czech independence. In a memo of 14 March 1938 dealing with the consequences of the Anschluss, Daladier, the Defense Minister, noted that the Czechs were encircled, and in case of war, France could not easily or rapidly

break through the German defenses in the west. Nor could the French army move through Belgium, and the army would also have to withhold forces from the west to deal with Italy. The Germans could deploy a total of 120 divisions, and the Soviets were not strong enough to assist the Czechs. France could not, therefore, render effective assistance to the Czechs whose only hope was reconstitution after hostilities.[91] Gamelin agreed with his civilian superior, and on 15 March 1938, issued a memo dealing with the general conduct of a war with Germany. French strategy called for halting the initial enemy offensive, mobilizing, and launching a counterblow. An immediate attack to assist an eastern ally was not feasible since the best route through the Low Countries and into the Ruhr was foreclosed by Belgian and Dutch neutrality. Terrain in other parts of the Rhineland was too difficult and well fortified to promise an avenue of exploitation for offensive operations.[92]

On the same day, the CPDN met to discuss possible French initiatives. Again the High Command insisted that the Republic could not directly assist the Czechs. In case of war, France could only mobilize and thus force the Germans to station substantial numbers of troops in the west. No other power could supply direct assistance to Czechoslovakia. An Army Staff study of 13 September noted that in case of war France should assure its territorial security, seek allies, and establish a blockade of Germany. The Staff did not even mention offensive operations in the opening phases of a conflict.[93]

Bleak assessments continued throughout the crises. On 4 April, the Secretariat of the CPDN reported that the only way to assist the Czechs was to create an eastern front, but the eastern allies were not willing to cooperate, and the British were far from ready for a major war.[94] The next day the Minister of Foreign Affairs informed the cabinet that neither Poland

nor the Rumanians would support the Czechs in case of a German attack. Gamelin noted that in a war France would face 126 German and 66 Italian divisions. Germany would deploy 25 divisions against the Czechs, use 12 to watch the Poles, two to guard against the Yugoslavs, and retain nine in reserve. The Germans would employ 70 infantry and five armored divisions on the Western Front.[95] The French ambassador to the Court of St. James reported on 7 April that England was not prepared for a major war, and a month later the attaché in Bucharest noted that the Little Entente would not support the Czechs in a conflict with Germany.[96] On 21 September, the 2nd Bureau estimated that it was futile to fight to preserve Czech independence and territorial integrity and that Prague had no realistic choice but to accept territorial sacrifices in the hope of retaining national sovereignty within reduced frontiers.[97] The same day, Gamelin informed Daladier that the Czechs could not resist a German assault for more than a few days.[98] Five days later, the Air Force Chief of Staff told the Air Minister that in a war against the Reich the French Air Force would lose 64% of its strength within the first two months.[99] Although he did not predict German losses or specify the operational conditions under which the French would suffer such heavy casualties, his report was passed to the Cabinet which used it as further evidence of the futility and danger of resorting to war.

The French government had substantial evidence concerning Germany's difficulties in sustaining its armaments expansion. Paris also had information indicating that in a war the Czechs would give a good account of themselves and were not, in fact, completely cut off from outside assistance. The government, nevertheless, remained undissuaded from its desire to avoid a conflict.

Reporting from Germany had for several years indicated that the economy was in difficult straits. In December 1936, the ambassador in Berlin reported that the Reich was experiencing severe shortages of primary materials and lacked the hard currency to purchase raw materials in foreign markets.[100] In March 1937, he noted that the price of primary materials was climbing and that Germany still suffered a shortage of hard currency.[101] On 13 September 1938, he telephoned Paris to report that the Reich was undergoing a severe inflationary spiral and needed to import two million tons of grain annually.[102] The 2nd Bureau had, meanwhile, noted that in addition to severe economic problems, Germany was experiencing severe problems in the realm of military expansion. The army had a shortage of more than 20,000 commissioned officers, and the Luftwaffe was receiving aircraft faster than it could train pilots and ground crew personnel. The French also knew that the Westwall was far from complete and that the concrete in many of the works had not yet hardened.[103]

In June 1937, the French ambassador in London reported to Paris that the British believed that the Czechs could resist a German offensive for three months without outside assistance.[104] In June 1938, the 2nd Bureau reported that the Czech Army could mobilize 770,000 troops in case of war and that the mobilization of the previous May indicated that the Czechs could respond rapidly and effectively to a crisis.[105] Other reports indicated that the Czech army had good equipment, well trained officers and staffs, and high morale.[106] On 9 September, Gamelin told Daladier that the Czechs, when mobilized, could place 34 divisions in the field, and on the 26th, despite his gloomy predictions of the 21st, he informed the British Committee of Imperial Defense that the Czechs were capable of offering significant resistance in Bohemia and if overwhelmed would retreat to Moravia and continue the war.[107] On 27

September 1938, he met with Chamberlain and told him that the Czechs would fight on after the loss of Bohemia and that Germany, because of the lack of trained military cadres and a serious shortage of primary materials, especially oil, would be unable to sustain a long war.[108] Gamelin appears to have been playing a double game assuring the British that a Franco-British coalition could emerge victorious from a conflict with Germany while sustaining the belief of French political leaders that a war would not save the Czechs and would be a costly and expensive conflict of attrition. Meanwhile, 2nd Bureau and attaché reporting from Prague continued to indicate that the Czechs were a formidable force that would offer substantial resistance to any German attack.[109]

Estimates of Soviet strength and of Moscow's ability to assist Czechoslovakia were also reasonably optimistic. The military attaché in Moscow on 22 March 1938 reported to Daladier that the Soviets were rapidly developing their heavy industry and that the media defined Germany as the main enemy.[110] A Czech report passed to the French asserted that the purges had not seriously reduced the Red Army's capabilities,[111] and on 8 April, the French military attaché reported that the Soviet armed forces could defend their country and launch limited offensive operations in the west.[112] Ten days later the ambassador informed Bonnet that the Soviets could provide aircraft to the Czechs and in fact had already delivered 20 to Czech fields.[113] Paris realized that neither Poland nor Rumania would permit the passage of Soviet ground units, but the Rumanians told the French that they would not attempt to hinder the passage of Soviet aircraft across their territory on their way to Czech aerodromes.[114]

Despite information describing German problems, Czech strength, and Soviet willingness to aid the Prague government, the French continued to take a pessimistic view of the overall

strategic situation. Instead of striving to convince London, Warsaw, and other powers to take a firm stand against German demands, Paris chose to emphasize problems rather than opportunities. Gamelin and Georges met with Daladier on 12 September and told him that any French offensive on the Western Front would be nothing more than a modernized battle of the Somme since the Germans had massive forces concentrated behind the Westwall.[115] The following day, an Army Staff study dealing with the conduct of the next war stated that the first goal was to insure the territorial integrity of the nation. France would then establish an economic blockade and seek to draw allies into the conflict.[116] There was no discussion of any significant ground operations. On 19 September, Daladier told the Cabinet that the British refused to become involved in a war in Central Europe and that in case of war France would have to face Germany alone. He went on to assert that the Luftwaffe outnumbered the French air force by three to one and that the army could not breach the Westwall without tremendous losses and in any case would not be able to breach the German defenses in time to render assistance to the Czechs.[117] To the government, war itself -- not defeat -- was the greatest possible disaster, and throughout the crisis, Daladier was content to allow the British government to take the lead in appeasing Germany. The French position was that the Republic would resist an armed attack on Czechoslovakia but would accept the diplomatic dismemberment of the Czech state even to the point of placing substantial pressure on Prague to relinquish to Hitler all that he demanded. France thus poised to prevent Germany taking by force what it would be given by negotiation.

After Munich, France continued to seek closer ties to Britain, to provide for the defense of the Empire, and to search for an understanding with Berlin and Rome as a prelude to a

European-wide detente. While not deluding themselves as to the nature of German intentions, French leaders continued to hope for a peaceful reintegration of Germany into the European system. Continued German aggression coupled with a sharp turn in public opinion against further concessions finally convinced the leaders of the Republic to toughen their stance. The government increased the pace of rearmament in the hope that deterrence could replace appeasement as the basis of French policy.

In the aftermath of Munich, the French realized that the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia opened all of Eastern Europe to German expansion. On 12 October, Gamelin noted that the French position in Central Europe had been dealt a serious blow as a result of Munich. The nation, therefore, had to strengthen its ties with Britain, prepare to fight a long war in order to wear down the enemy economy, and seek new allies.[118] During the last months of 1938, the 2nd Bureau and the ambassador in Berlin predicted further German efforts to expand to the east perhaps even into the Ukraine.[119] On 19 December, Gamelin informed Daladier that Germany's next target was Poland which was a step on the road to the conquest of the Ukraine.[120]

Paris, meanwhile, tried and failed to obtain international guarantees for the independence of the post-Munich Czech state and soon came to the realization that Hitler's next move would not be a drive to the east but the final liquidation of Czechoslovakia. Reports that in case of hostilities the Germans would place up to 250 divisions in the field led Paris to react with a combination of outrage and inactivity to the destruction of what remained of Czech Independence.[121] The day after the German occupation of Prague the 2nd Bureau noted that Germany had neutralized up to 40 Czech divisions in 1938 and had now destroyed any further

Czech threat and acquired arms and equipment for 34 infantry and four armored divisions.[122] On 20 March 1939, the military attaché in Prague informed Daladier that without firing a shot Germany had acquired 1.5 million rifles, 20,000 machine guns, 600 tanks, 750 military aircraft and control of the large and efficient Czech arms industry.[123]

After the occupation of Prague, French attention again focused on Eastern Europe as reports of German plans to move east resumed. French intelligence ultimately came to the realization that Hitler's next target was Poland. The attaché in Berlin in January 1939 noted that Germany would not be ready for war in the current year, but he also noted that the Germans were carrying out a covert mobilization.[124] On 23 March, he reported that it would be a mistake for Germany to attack Poland, which had a good army and could receive assistance both from the Western Powers and the USSR.[125] If Germany struck at Poland, an attack would come only after Berlin attained bases in Rumania and Lithuania, and the next German move would be directed at Rumania and Yugoslavia.[126] On 5 April, however, the 2nd Bureau noted that the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia was only the first step of even larger operations that directly threatened French interests, and a month later the Bureau reported that Hitler had abrogated the 1934 non-aggression pact with Poland indicating that Poland was in fact his next target.[127] By mid-June the 2nd Bureau claimed that there was a good chance that Germany would attack Poland in late August, and on 8 July, the Bureau noted that the Germans were recalling reservists and that many garrisons were empty indicating that active forces were deploying for action.[128] On 28 July, the 2nd Bureau informed the government that there were major troop concentrations and maneuvers near the Polish frontier and on 2 August, noted that the guarantees to Poland had done nothing to halt the German mobilization and concentration of divisions in

Pomerania and Slovakia.[129] The 2nd Bureau also reported that Berlin's ultimate objective was to push to the Black Sea in order to gain control of raw materials needed for a long war. In such a conflict, the Italians would assist the Germans by attacking French lines of communications in the Mediterranean, attempt to open a second front along the Pyrenees, and launch air attacks against French positions in Chad.[130]

Italian activities continued to alarm the government during the winter and spring of 1938 and 1939. In February, the government learned that by the beginning of March the Italians would have 800,000 men under arms.[131] On 18 March, Gamelin in a report to Daladier noted that in case of war the Italians had 60 active divisions.[132] A report on forces available to defend the Empire indicated that France had 441,000 men -- 11 maneuver and three fortress divisions in North Africa -- and could handle almost any Italian threat in the region, but continued reports of Rome's plans to hold major maneuvers on the Italian mainland in August when viewed in conjunction with the German mobilization presented an ominous picture.[133]

The only optimistic note was evidence that Fascist Spain would not in fact become an Axis partner. Reporting from Spain indicated that Franco would not join Germany and Italy in a war against France, and in late February the two powers signed an agreement that neither France nor Spain would allow its territory to be used for hostile acts against the other.[134]

As the German build-up in the east continued, Paris and London sought military talks with Moscow. Reporting from the USSR suddenly became more optimistic concerning Soviet military capabilities. On 13 June, the attaché noted that the Soviet army contained 110 active divisions and 5000 tanks. The weapons were modern, and the troops were well trained and well motivated. Because of the purges, the officers were young and lacked experience, but the

attaché asserted that this problem was only temporary.[135] Closer ties with the USSR would either deter Hitler or in case of war deprive him of vital resources and perhaps create a major threat in the east.

The negotiations, however, proceeded very slowly, due primarily to Anglo-French reluctance to deal with Moscow. French officials in Moscow began to warn Paris of growing Soviet impatience. On 13 July, the military attaché warned Bonnet that unless the government acted quickly the Soviet Union would adopt a neutral stance in the Polish crisis and might even turn to Berlin and arrange a fourth partition of Poland.[136] From Berlin, the French air attaché warned of a major shift in Soviet foreign policy, and upon his return to Paris, he insisted upon a meeting with the Foreign Minister and repeated his warning.[137]

Intelligence reports and other data indicating a change of direction in Soviet foreign policy failed to convince London and Pais to speed their efforts to conclude a security pact with the USSR. The Hitler-Stalin Pact destroyed all chances of creating a united front that might have deterred Hitler from striking at Poland or forced him to undertake hostilities under unfavorable circumstances.

On the evening of 23 August 1939, the CPDN met to assess the strategic impact of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and to discuss the future of French strategic responses to German aggression. Daladier asked whether in the light of the drastically changed international circumstances France should continue to honor its commitment to Poland or reconsider the policy and profit from the time gained, which would amount to only a few months, to strengthen the nation's defenses. The response to the question was essentially a function of the strategic balance. Gamelin told the CPDN that Poland could resist a German attack long enough to prevent the Germans from

attacking in the west before the spring of 1940. Consequently, the Committee concluded that France had no choice but to hold to its previous commitments to Poland. General Gamelin and Admiral Darlan asserted that the army and navy were ready. The Air Minister stated that the air balance was much better than in 1938. French and British fighter strength was roughly equal to the combined strength of the German and Italian air arms. Modern French bombers would not be available until the beginning of 1940, but British bombardment aircraft could strike at targets in northern German. Gamelin and Darlan indicated that at the start of a conflict France could do little directly against Germany but could act vigorously against Italy if Rome sided with Berlin. The Committee, therefore, concluded that France should begin to put the covering forces in place and begin general mobilization.[138]

The generally optimistic conclusions of the CPDN despite the failure of both appeasement and deterrence were founded on long held views of the nature of a new general war. The French had achieved one of their basic goals -- a security agreement with Great Britain. Staff talks in late March and early April had produced a basic agreement on Anglo-French strategy. The two powers had agreed that their basic war aims were to maintain the territorial security of the two empires, to check any German invasion of the Low Countries, and to seek the defeat of Italy before attacking Germany. The French also believed that Germany lacked the manpower, money, and raw materials for a long war, and with the help of the Royal Navy planned to mount a sustained blockade of Germany.[139] Thus, despite last minute efforts to avoid hostilities, France entered the Second World War in a reasonably optimistic frame of mind.

French Assessments

In each crisis between 1936 and 1939, the French government received timely detailed information concerning German intentions and timing. Information flowed from the field to the decisionmakers in a precise, orderly manner, and the quantity of operational and tactical data increased as the Germans prepared to strike. For example, the number of consular, 2nd Bureau, and SR reports concerning preparations for the reoccupation of the Rhineland increased dramatically in the spring of 1936. In 1938, the government was fully informed about German preparations to move into Austria, and during the Munich crisis, Paris received detailed reports of German troop movements down to regimental levels.[140] In 1939, German mobilization and troop concentrations along the Polish frontier were known in Paris by early summer. The system functioned as it was supposed to, and in no case was the government surprised by German political and military initiatives.

The French were also fully and acutely aware of Hitler's short and long term goals. As early as August 1936, the 2nd Bureau noted that Hitler intended to incorporate all German-speaking people in the Reich, defeat France in a quick war, isolate England, and conquer living space in the east.[141] The French were able to predict with substantial lead time the timing to within a matter of days of each German move and quickly understood the strategic consequences of Hitler's initiatives.

The government recognized well before 1936 that a German reoccupation of the Rhineland would have near catastrophic consequences for the Republic's eastern alliance system. Paris also grasped that the Anschluss would simultaneously strengthen Germany and endanger Czechoslovakia. Daladier was bleakly aware that Munich marked not only the betrayal of an ally

but also represented a major strategic defeat for France. The leaders of the Republic quickly understood that the occupation of Prague allowed Germany significant military benefits at no cost and destroyed hopes of transforming the Munich agreements into a general detente.

There were points of confusion and debates over precise details. For example, after the occupation of Prague, French intelligence was undecided about the direction of future German expansion for several weeks, but French leaders were generally aware of the goals of the Third Reich and of the timing of German moves. Such knowledge, however, made relatively little difference, given the overwhelming French desire to avoid another world war. Appeasement, deterrence, and even defeatism proved to be stronger motives than a willingness to preserve the status quo by force of arms.

Since Germany was the Republic's traditional enemy and most significant security threat, the government devoted a major portion of its intelligence assets to the collection and analysis of information on all aspects of the German state and society. Thus, in addition to seeking to uncover German political intentions, French intelligence also provided the government with assessments dealing with the state of the German economy and pubic morale. Paris was well aware that the Reich labored under severe economic constraints including shortages of essential raw materials, lack of hard currency to finance imports, labor and food shortages, and serious inflation. The German economic situation created numerous problems in the rearmament effort and would make it difficult for Berlin to face the challenge of a total protracted war. Long term economic problems would not be as relevant in a short war scenario. French analysts realized that the Germans sought rapid wars precisely to avoid their economic problems, but believed that any conflict involving France would have to be protracted.

Reporting from Germany also enabled the French government to learn that the German public was fearful of a new war. During the Munich and Polish crises, Paris was fully informed of the problems besetting the German home front. French intelligence produced accurate assessments of both the German economy and the state of public opinion.[142] Given the inevitable limitations of French resources and the difficulty inherent in collecting information in a totalitarian state, information was of necessity episodic, but it was sufficient to provide the government with a clear and generally accurate picture of German society.

The French did occasionally misinterpret the internal politics of the Nazi hierarchy. Diplomatic reporting often presumed that moderate and radical Nazi cliques and other interest groups exercised genuine influence over Hitler's decisions, a logical mistake since most regimes, including the Third Republic, contained influential factions and interests groups. The French did not comprehend that Hitler encouraged chaos in his inner circle because it made him the final arbiter on all major issues and enhanced his personal authority. On the other hand, in the absence of highly placed reliable informants, it is almost impossible to obtain precise information on the inner workings of any government, and the French belief in the existence of factions did not seriously distort their understanding of the Nazi regime.

Although Germany was their primary concern, the French realized that the strategic balance was not static. The reactions of other powers were a critical factor in understanding the Republic's overall positions, and Paris understood that German moves would have repercussions throughout Europe. Reporting from other capitals kept the government regularly informed of the reactions of other powers to developments in the Franco-German balance.

French leaders always believed that an alliance with Great Britain was a sine qua non of the Republic's policy and strategy, and Paris constantly sought closer ties with London. Given their experience in the 20th Century, the French took it for granted that Britain with its global empire was a vital element in any war against Germany and that the British contribution to a common war effort would increase as the war progressed. In the late 1930s the French assumed that at the start of hostilities only the Royal Navy and the RAF would play a significant role while land forces would reach the Continent only after a substantial period of preparation.[143] In the aftermath of every crisis, France sought to use German success as a vehicle to obtain a more effective relationship with Britain. The French also found England's reluctance to become involved in Continental affairs a convenient excuse for their own unwillingness to take a strong stand against German expansion. Paris was in fact quite willing to let London take the lead in appeasing Germany.

By the late 1930s, Paris presumed that Italy was hostile and that Mussolini would probably side with Hitler in a general war. The French were not particularly afraid of the Italians, and when Rome in late 1938 put forth bellicose public demands for territorial concessions, Daladier had no qualms about taking an uncompromising stand. The French regarded the Italian armed forces as well trained and well motivated but ill equipped for modern war. French intelligence also believed that Italy lacked the natural and industrial resources to sustain a protracted conflict.[144] France also found Italy to be a useful interlocutor with Germany. As it became more obvious that a clash with Germany was unavoidable, remaining French fears about Italian participation on the side of Germany gave way to optimistic appraisals of the ability of the Franco-British forces to achieve early victories at Italy's expense.

French views of the Soviet Union were never consistent. The French wished to use the USSR as a counter-weight to Germany but were reluctant to establish precise and detailed ties with Moscow. French authorities were satisfied with an arrangement that denied Soviet resources to Germany while at the same time providing Moscow with minimum leverage over French policy. Reluctance to strengthen ties with the Soviets coupled with the knowledge that the British were now committed to French security offers a partial explanation of the absence of alarm in Paris when the government received reports of the forthcoming shift of Stalin's policy. Domestic political considerations combined with anti-Soviet positions held by Britain and a number of eastern allies restrained France from doing more than holding the USSR at arms' length. Reporting from the Soviet Union was constantly shifting in its appraisals of Russian strength and military capabilities and often seemed to be designed to follow the views of the High Command and the government.

French analysis of Czech capabilities was constantly flawed by adherence to worst case assumptions and a prior commitment not to go to war to protect Czech sovereignty. French intelligence correctly noted that the German seizure of Austria seriously weakened the Czech strategic position but added that Czech capabilities remained formidable. Attaché reporting from Prague indicated that the Czech armed forces were ready to offer extended resistance to any German attack.[145] The attaché's views were not taken seriously in Paris. Some believed that the attaché had "gone native" and was speaking more as a Czech than as a Frenchman, and the High Command understood that the government needed to see a weak, helpless Czechoslovakia in order to justify its policy of appeasement.

During the Munich crisis Gamelin told two stories, assuring the British that the Czechs could offer extended resistance and telling the CPDN that Czechoslovakia would collapse quickly under a German onslaught. He was apparently attempting to establish closer ties with the British and simultaneously support his own government's policy of war avoidance. His gambit was successful. France did strengthen its ties with Britain, and the Daladier government avoided war over the Czech issue. The French government in 1938 was in fact not concerned with determining the possibilities of resisting German expansion but in seeking a way out of having to fight. Intelligence data was adequate to provide the government with an accurate assessment of the military balance, but Paris wished to avoid the catastrophe of war even at the price of significant strategic concessions.

The military intelligence agencies were, naturally, concerned with providing estimates of the German order of battle and overall military capabilities. Both the SR and the 2nd Bureau made substantial errors in order of battle data in the mid and late 1930s, although their estimates became more accurate as war approached. Of course, obtaining accurate information concerning another country's forces is a difficult task. Even a friendly power is not always completely forthcoming with information describing its armed forces, and a hostile totalitarian state will naturally make collection as difficult as possible, attempting not only to conceal information but also to engage at times in efforts at disinformation. In the summer of 1938, for example, the commander of the French air force paid a visit to the Luftwaffe and returned to inform the cabinet that in case of war, the French air force would be virtually destroyed within the first two months. In fact, however, the Luftwaffe was by no means ready for full scale combat and had presented him with a giant hoax, declaring prototype aircraft to be in full production and

producing strength figures that had no relation to reality.[146] Unless collectors can blanket a target country with a vast network of open and covert sources there will inevitably be gaps in order of battle data. Constructing an order of battle -- bean counting -- is in fact a daunting task, a reversal of the notion that it is easier to count beans than to divine intentions.

French intelligence in the 1930s faced these standard problems, and its views were influenced by a great respect for German power derived from previous wars, governmental pessimism concerning the military balance, and general fear of a new war. The First World War had taught the French to respect German power, especially the ability rapidly to generate large and effective forces. The French remembered that during the conflict the German army expanded from 87 to 252 divisions. The French also recalled that from the outset of hostilities the Germans had employed reservists in a frontline role. The French also used territorial formations effectively, and the postwar reliance of the French army on mobilized reservists to attain full combat strength further convinced French observers that Germany would also make effective use of reserve units.

Reluctance to engage in a new total war was prevalent in both military and civilian circles. Gamelin, a loyal republican, was determined to avoid a clash with his civilian superiors and supported their views on the dangers and costs of renewed conflict. His insistence on civil-military concord coupled with the army's strong hierarchical structure placed a damper on analysts who held views of German strength different from those accepted by the generals and politicians. Consequently, French intelligence tended to overestimate the Reich's military strength by focusing primarily on the numerical balance and giving limited attention to the quality of the German armed forces.

In 1935, the 2nd Bureau and the Army Staff included Nazi paramilitary formations as part of the German army order of battle without offering comment on the equipment and level of training of the non-regular formations. In the following year, the Army Staff counted 270,000 SS, police, and work service personnel as effective combatants.[147] In 1937, the French presumed that the Germans had 800,000 men under arms but once again included paramilitary formations as effective frontline units.[148] In March 1938, the army's estimate of combat ready divisions included semi-trained reservists and Landwehr divisions composed of veterans who had done no refresher training since the Armistice.[149] In September 1938, the army asserted that the Germans deployed 35 reserve divisions capable of conducting offensive operations and as many as 30 Landwehr divisions that could participate effectively in defensive operations.[150]

French intelligence did predict accurately the number of German active divisions but consistently overestimated the number and capabilities of reserve units. On one occasion, the SR simply divided the total number of reservists by 25 thousand to arrive at the number of reserve divisions available to the Germany army.[151] The French paid little attention to reserve equipment and training. The World War was primarily an infantry and artillery conflict, and tactics were relatively simple. Presuming that the German army of the 1930s was still primarily an infantry army, the French doubtless concluded that, despite severe officer and NCO shortages, reserve forces could be brought to a state of combat readiness with relative ease. Moreover, the vision of a large and proficient German army conformed with the views of the civilian leadership: strong German forces meant that a new war would be very costly, thus increasing the necessity of avoiding such a conflict. The existence of a powerful enemy also justified greater defense spending to deter the threat. Thus, the military's appraisals of the

strength of the German army coincided with civilian perceptions and provided the government with a rationale to justify the policy of war avoidance.

French estimates of German air power fluctuated widely, for in addition to the usual problems involved in establishing an air order of battle, the French tended to employ worst case assumptions to justify their reluctance to engage in a major war. Thus air intelligence placed the frontline strength of the Luftwaffe at 124 squadrons and 1800 frontline aircraft in 1937 and 9000 planes in 1938.[152] The estimates declined in 1939, and the 2nd Bureau in a summary covering the first months of the year placed Luftwaffe strength at 253 squadrons with 3800 first line aircraft.[153] In their examinations, the French paid relatively little attention to qualitative issues including logistics, ready rates, pilot training, and ground crew availability. The French knew that their pilots had more experience than German airmen and that German factories were producing airframes faster than the Luftwaffe could absorb them but did not rate qualitative issues as a critical factor in judging the air balance.

French predictions of air losses in 1938 were based on general assumptions about air warfare rather than upon an analysis of sortie rates and specific missions. The French also expressed fear that the Luftwaffe could devastate the nation's cities, disrupt mobilization, and wreak havoc upon the civilian population. Such fears dissipated as war approached. Increased production and promised help from the RAF reduced the perception of German air attacks from a critical problem to one of manageable proportions.

French assessments of German operational doctrine were, on the whole, quite accurate. The French grasped the basic concepts of the continuous battle. The problem was they did not believe that German doctrine was superior to their own.

As early as 1923, French intelligence reported that although forbidden by the Versailles Treaty to possess tanks, the Germans, nevertheless, studied armored warfare, and infantry units conducted exercises using tractors as a substitute for tanks.[154] In 1932, intelligence reporting noted that in field exercises the German army was using simulated tank battalions and that the Germans were increasingly turning to motorization to enhance their mobility.[155] In 1934, the 2nd Bureau reported that the Germans were creating tank battalions and discussing the creation of even larger armored formations designed to strike rapidly and deeply into enemy rear echelon positions.[156] A study of 6 October 1935 noted that the Germans were planning to create one or several armored divisions to operate with the infantry or autonomously.[157] On 5 April 1936, the 2nd Bureau translated an article by Guderian on armored warfare noting that the basis of Guderian's doctrine called for armored divisions to attack by surprise, penetrate deeply into the enemy's territory, strike at strategic objectives, and work in close cooperation with air power. Armored forces would use their speed and radius of action to pierce the front. Motorized forces would follow the armor which would not halt after attaining its first objective but continue to push forward while air power struck at enemy reserves.[158] The 2nd Bureau produced additional translations of Guderian's writings including a 1938 study of Achtung Panzer.[159]

Reports on the 1937 German army maneuvers, which involved experiments with division sized armored units, made it clear to the French High Command that Guderian and other advocates of armored warfare had attained a sympathetic audience from the highest levels of the German leadership.[160] French intelligence also supplied the High Command with numerous studies of German tank and anti-tank weapons and examined small unit tactics.[161] By 1938,

French political and military leaders understood that Germany would begin a war with a savage full scale armored assault in a bid for a rapid and decisive victory.

Although the French understood the basic elements of the German doctrine of the continuous battle, they remained convinced of the superiority of their own concept of the methodical battle which was the result of a great deal of study, debate, and analysis. The German system, the French believed, would work against lesser powers lacking natural or man-made defenses and adequate antitank weaponry but would fail when it encountered modern, well equipped French forces. German tanks might rupture a portion of the French front at a terrible cost, but French armor and mobile divisions would counterattack and quickly seal off any penetration. With 14,000 antitank guns and over 2000 tanks coupled with the defensive power of the Maginot Line and other prepared positions, the French army was confident that it could halt any German offensive. The 2nd Bureau in 1939 noted on a number of occasions that even the German army was not fully convinced of the efficacy of its armor doctrine and that German armor could not attain more than local successes against well organized modern forces.[162]

Reports from China and from Spain seemed to confirm French views. French analysts attributed successes against armor to the inherent superiority of defensive firepower and presumed that tank breakthroughs were the result of inadequate defensive preparations. A French observer of the Sino-Japanese war noted that badly prepared attacks insufficiently supported by heavy artiliery fire were bound to fail.[163] Reports from Spanish battlefields indicated that German tanks were mechanically defective and too lightly armored. They could not break through seriously prepared positions. Armor had to operate <u>en masse</u> in close conjunctions with artillery and aviation. Armored forces also had to work in coordination with

infantry units. The effectiveness of tank attack was, according to French observers, a function of close liaison with other arms.[164]

General Dufieux, the Inspector General of Infantry, writing in the Revue d'Infanterie of November 1938, concluded that, "The Spanish experience has confirmed the lessons of the Great War on two important points: (1) Tanks should be employed in mass and on a front as extended as possible. . . . (2) They are not able to fight without the support of the artillery and the support of the infantry which is alone capable of clearing and occupying terrain."[165] The general concluded that the army's doctrine was essentially sound and required no drastic alterations. In his 1939 book, Une Invasion est elle encore possible?, General Narcisse Chauvineau derided mechanized forces and armored columns asserting that they were easily halted by fixed and field fortifications and were subject to devastating counterattacks. A laudatory introduction by Marshal Pétain assured the public that French doctrine could defeat any new German operational techniques.[166] The German shift from light to medium tanks beginning in 1938 seemed to provide added confirmation to the army's view that lightening warfare might work in Eastern Europe but was ill suited to prevailing conditions in the west.[167]

Convinced that they had drawn the proper lessons of World War I and had responded effectively to post-war advances in technology, the French army believed that their operational doctrine was superior to the new untested German approach to modern war. Given the facts that only a small percentage of the German army consisted of armored and motorized divisions and that Guderian's doctrine was not battle tested, the French assumption of superiority was not unreasonable. Moreover, challenging the conventional wisdom, especially when such wisdom was sustained by victory in the field and by meticulous post-war analysis, was not a task lightly

undertaken. That the French did not fully understand the potential of armor and mechanization was not provable a priori. In the late 1930s, honest, patriotic men could find that the army's operational doctrine was sound without being accused of intellectual rigidity or dishonesty.

French intelligence also failed fully to grasp the impact of air power and underestimated its tactical importance while overstating its strategic significance. Since so little was known about the impact of air power, it is not completely surprising that French analysts missed the full importance of tactical air support. In April 1937, the 2nd Bureau reported that in Spain Soviet aircraft had attacked two Italian divisions and inflicted heavy losses upon them. The report also noted that the Italian formations had been surprised while still in marching columns and were poorly protected by anti-aircraft weapons.[168] In the following year, the 2nd Bureau reported that air power in Spain was generally employed in support of ground troops rather than against civilian targets and that tactical aviation was effective primarily against positions that lacked effective air defense assets.[169] Moreover, prior to the Polish campaign there were no clear cases of tactical air power playing a critical battlefield role, and even the Germans were not fully satisfied with air-ground cooperation during the war against Poland.

Strategic air power advocates throughout the 1920s and '30s claimed that air power would be decisive in the next war and that strategic air power could provide victory without the necessity of extensive and costly ground combat. Such theories were, however, untested before the Second World War. The Spanish experience provided no guidance concerning the impact and effectiveness of strategic air bombardment. Nevertheless, the French took the strategic air threat very seriously, and fears for the safety of the civilian population and the belief that air attacks could disrupt mobilization and hamper war production contributed to the reluctance of

the Republic's leaders to risk another war. When discussing Allied strategy in the late spring of 1939, the French decided to refrain from attacking German civilian targets because of fear of retaliation.

French miliary intelligence provided the government and the High Command with detailed analyses of the Polish Campaign both during and after hostilities. The 2nd Bureau noted that the Polish army numbered 300,000 men in peacetime and upon mobilization, could expand to about 2 million. The troops were hardy and well trained, but Polish artillery was limited in numbers and capabilities, and the army was weak in armor and motorization.[170] On 8 September 1939, General Faury, head of the French military mission, noted that German air power was assisting the advance of the armored divisions by breaking up Polish counterattacks, immobilizing reserves by attacking crucial road and rail centers, and destroying essential communications links. The Panzer divisions, working in close cooperation with the Luftwaffe, never gave the Poles a change to regroup and launch counterattacks.[171] On 22 September, the 2nd Bureau noted that the Panzer divisions not only pierced the Polish front but also struck boldly at Polish artillery positions and command posts.[172]

On 23 September, General Faury submitted a long report to Gamelin. He noted that German armored divisions, acting in close liaison with aviation, played a preponderant role in the recent campaign. Because of the weakness of Polish anti-aircraft defenses, the Luftwaffe was able to fly its missions at low altitude during daylight with very light losses. After a breakthrough, the armored formations moved well ahead of other units and prevented the Poles from establishing new defensive lines. When the Poles sought to regroup in new positions, they would immediately encounter German tanks, and the German infantry had only to deal with

positions and units already severely disrupted by the Panzer divisions. The Luftwaffe successfully disorganized efforts to mount counterattacks. German armor attacked en masse with as many as 400 tanks at the major point of assault and after breaking through the Polish front immediately assailed artillery positions and communications facilities in a successful effort to disrupt Polish command and control capabilities. The Germans, Faury warned, would use similar methods in the west. The most dangerous type of German attack would be a violent assault to rupture the French front, followed by immediate attacks on the rear of forces already immobilized by frontal attacks launched by infantry divisions.[173]

On 4 November and again on the 24th, the air force 2nd Bureau described the operation of the Luftwaffe. The reports noted that initially the German air force sought to attain air superiority. The next phase involved attacks against tactical targets. Finally, the Luftwaffe launched a series of attacks on miliary targets in Warsaw. The Germans, the reports concluded, would employ similar tactics in the west.[174]

Despite timely and accurate reporting from Poland, the High Command saw no reason to reexamine the fundamentals of its doctrinal approach to war. The army accepted the fact it they would have to meet assaults of exceptional violence but continued to believe that German armor could not do more than achieve local successes. German doctrine was, according to the High Command, simply not applicable in the west. The French army was far better trained and armed than the Polish forces, and the terrain in northern France and Belgium was far better suited to defensive warfare and the methodical battle than the open plains of Poland.

The Polish Campaign failed to shake French confidence in their assessment of the nature of modern war. The French were convinced that they were entering upon a protracted conflict

which in the long run promised victory. Unfortunately for the Republic, wars are also fought in the short term, and a nation must be able to respond effectively to episodes as well as to tendencies.

French net assessment in the 1930s was generally accurate and perceptive. The intelligence and diplomatic services described well in advance every German move and also understood Hitler's long term goals. The French did overestimate German military power and tended toward a worst case analysis of the strategic balance, but given the experience of the Great War, the rapid growth of German power in the 1930s, and the difficulty of amassing accurate data in a changing situation, such errors are comprehensible. French military and civilian leaders also overestimated the capabilities of the Republic's armed forces, but such an error is obvious only in the aftermath of the catastrophe of 1940. Nobody in 1939, including the Germans, could have predicted the utter collapse of the French army after the battles on the Meuse.

The French also had a clear understanding of the power and policy of other European states. Reporting from European capitals was generally accurate, and the French government receive prior warning even of Stalin's sudden shift of policy in August 1939. The French also clearly understood the diplomatic and strategic consequences of their policy of war avoidance. Paris realized that concessions to Germany not only strengthened the Reich, but also weakened the Republic's diplomatic position in other parts of Europe.

The unacceptability of war, however, overshadowed all other considerations. All levels of French society believed that another war would resemble the First World War and involve a vast tax in blood and treasure levied on the French people. Unfavorable shifts in the strategic

balance were less important to French leaders than the overriding need to avoid a new round of hostilities. Political leaders were in tune with popular sentiment when they chose the path of appeasement and accommodation rather than resistance, and popular opinion until the spring of 1939 supported rather than constrained French leaders in their resolve to avoid conflict with Germany. The post-Munich change in public opinion did not force the government's hand since the Republic's leaders were themselves reluctantly concluding that a change in policy towards German expansion was necessary. The argument that governments must lead and educate the public and not simply reflect popular moods may well be correct but goes well beyond the issue of net assessments and their influence on national policy. That a government has all the necessary information upon which to base decisions does not constitute a guarantee that the government will make the correct choice.

Ironically, the French belief that the next war would be a protracted conflict of attrition requiring massive mobilization by all of the belligerents and years of struggle before the Allies attained victory was quite correct. The French were also correct in their assumption that the defeat of Germany would require the united efforts of a great power coalition. Finally, the French were right in assuming that a new world war would destroy forever the European power balance. Unfortunately, French long term wisdom did not help the Third Republic in dealing with the immediate threat.

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THE IMPATIENT CAT
ASSESSMENTS OF MILITARY POWER IN FASCIST ITALY, 1936-1940

Brian Sullivan

> "Have you ever watched a cat while it studies its prey and then, with a leap, is upon it? Watch one. I intend to act in the same way." Mussolini speaking to Fascist labor leaders, 21 April 1940.[1]

As they approached the second great European war of the twentieth century, the leadership of Fascist Italy paid careful attention to the balance of force on the continent. Despite incessant Fascist boasts of Italian military might, Mussolini's lieutenants recognized the dubious nature of their claims of major power status for Italy. They did share the Duce's conviction that his genius and the new warrior spirit introduced by Fascism could raise Italy to mastery over the Mediterranean and vast regions to the south and east. Yet the Fascist gerarchi (leaders) appreciated the slender material resources at Italian disposal. As the power of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan surged, the determination of France and Britain wavered, and signals of the intentions of the United States and the Soviet Union flickered uncertainly, tempting possibilities arose for Italian aggrandizement. A serious misstep, however, one that brought Italy into conflict with superior strength, could shatter the painfully erected pillars of Italian power.[2]

Indeed, such an Italian dilemma predated the Fascist era. Mussolini's lieutenants had inherited both their hopes and their fears from the statesmen and generals who had united Italy and then sought to expand its influence into the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East.

Historical and Cultural Antecedents

The necessity of correctly estimating one's capabilities against those of the enemy had been burned into Italian consciousness by defeat during the first war for Italian independence. The outbreak of revolution throughout the Austrian Empire in 1848 had offered an extraordinary opportunity to create a united Italy. Italian nationalists had rallied to King Carlo Alberto of the Kingdom of Sardinia when the ruler had proclaimed that "Italia fara da se." But the Italians had not been able to do it by themselves due to the inept leadership of Carlo Alberto and his generals and the resilience of the Austrian military. With the crushing of Italian hopes in 1849, the Kingdom of Sardinia escaped dismemberment thanks only to the implied threat of French intervention to prevent this.

After he became prime minister to Carlo Alberto's successor, Vittorio Emanuele II, the highly pragmatic Camille de Cavour applied what he had learned from the debacle of 1848-49. He sought and gained a powerful ally against Austria in Louis Napoleon of France. In agreement with the French Emperor, Cavour adopted the more modest goal of creating a Kingdom of Northern Italy for Vittorio Emanuele II. Before Cavour maneuvered Austria into war in 1859, he ensured that his alliance enjoyed a preponderance of force. Even so, Cavour miscalculated. Napoleon III abandoned his Sardinian ally short of the agreed goal. Furthermore, Italian nationalist revolutionaries, recruited by Cavour against the Austrians, seized control over much of the peninsula and demanded national unification, possibly in the form of a republic.

After paying for his mistakes by a brief period out of power, Cavour returned to office to outwit both Louis Napoleon and the revolutionaries led by Giuseppe Garibaldi and Giuseppe Mazzini. By the time of his premature death in June 1861, Cavour had united most of Italy

under Vittorio Emanuele II and established the king's army as the sole guarantor of both the new kingdom's borders and its internal security.[3]

No subsequent Italian statesman possessed Cavour's skillful blend of calculation and daring. Nonetheless, protected by France until the collapse of the Second Empire in 1870 and benefitting from an alliance with Prussia against Austria in 1866, the young Kingdom of Italy did manage to escape Austrian vengeance, to survive a bitter war of peasant insurgency in the south and even to expand territorially. However, the patent lack of effective national leadership, the southern guerrilla insurrection and the humiliating demonstration of military and naval incompetence in the war of 1866 created a sharp sense of vulnerability in the Italian ruling class. After 1870, the Italians found themselves squeezed between a newly hostile France and a deeply resentful Austria-Hungary, which still controlled a sizeable Italian population. In 1881, the French seized Tunisia, a territory many in the Italian government had coveted. The next year, Italy increased the size of its army and entered an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

This Triple Alliance did offer Italy protection against France. But Italian attempts to use the alliance to expand territorially failed, while the Italian people staggered under the tremendous burden of paying for the armaments required by their government's foreign policy. Furthermore, Germany and Austria-Hungary displayed considerable opposition both to Italy's disastrous invasion of Ethiopia in 1895-96 and to its more successful attack on the Ottoman Empire in 1911-12. Not without reason, Italy's allies viewed such aggression as consuming Rome's meager military reserves in return for little or no practical gain. This friction, combined with growing rivalry in the Balkans with Austria-Hungary, left many Italians deeply dissatisfied with the Triple Alliance by 1914.[4]

German and Austro-Hungarian initiation of the First World War, without consulting Rome as the treaty of alliance stipulated, gave the Italian government ample excuse to remain neutral. Thereafter, the Italians considered their options and began negotiations with the two sides in the conflict. Eventually, both the terms offered by the Entente and their chances of victory struck the Italian negotiators as more favorable.

King Vittorio Emanuele III had gained the throne in 1900 determined to avoid the authoritarianism that had led to the assassination of his father, Umberto I. Nonetheless, the constitution which Carlo Alberto had reluctantly adopted in 1848 (which became the Italian constitution in 1860) granted the monarch great power over military and diplomatic affairs. Cavour had usurped these powers for himself, creating a precedent for future prime ministers. But parliament remained excluded from such matters, even after Italy became a democracy in 1912-14. In fact, a clause of the Triple Alliance had required that its very existence be kept secret and its actual contents remained a mystery until 1920.[5] Thus, in 1915, when the king conspired with his prime minister and foreign minister to bring Italy into the war, they excluded even the Army Chief of Staff from their councils.[6] The majority of the population and in the parliament opposed entry into World War I on either side. But the opinion of neither was consulted, nor even much considered, until after an alliance was signed with Britain, France and Russia in April 1915.

Some public agitation in favor of Italian intervention in the war had begun in the fall of 1914. Prominent among those demanding Italian adherence to the Entente was the Socialist renegade, Benito Mussolini. In the spring, however, as rumors about diplomatic negotiations fueled the debate, large demonstrations for Italian entry into the conflict began. The size of these

riotous assemblies helped disguise their lack of majority support. But they greatly assisted the government and monarchy to force a reluctant parliament to vote them full war powers. Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary on 24 May 1915.[7]

Mussolini echoed the beliefs of other interventionists, the king, government and the army general staff when he declared that "the war will be really short and victorious."[8] In fact, after his call-up was delayed, Mussolini worried he would miss participating in the fighting altogether. Instead, the combination of poor military leadership, inadequate firepower and wretched intelligence deprived the Italians of any chance of catching the Austro-Hungarians off-guard. When Mussolini reached the forward lines as a rifleman in mid-September 1915, the Italian campaign had already bogged down into the most futile example of trench warfare on any front in 1914-18. By the time Mussolini was discharged from service for severe wounds in August 1917, the Italians had suffered hundreds of thousands of casualties, in return for miniscule advances into enemy ground.[9]

The final fifteen months of the war brought Italy more dramatic events: great war weariness on the homefront and in the army, leading to the terrible defeat at Caporetto; retreat to and heroic resistance along the Piave river; a great upsurge of national unity and determination; and the great offensive and total victory over the Austro-Hungarians of October-November 1918. All told, the war cost Italy over 700,000 dead and incalculable suffering. But it temporarily had forged a pervasive sense of nationalism among all classes and regions for the first time in the country's history and had created the belief that Italy had truly entered the ranks of the great powers.

The immediate postwar years brought Italy anguished disillusionment. At the Paris Peace Conference, Britain, France and the United States did agree to Italy's acquisition of the Italian-inhabited territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. They also accepted Italian annexation of areas with considerable Austrian and Slovene minorities, which provided Italy with more easily defensible northern and eastern borders. This, combined with the disappearance of the Hapsburg Monarchy, arguably made Italy the greatest winner at the peace conference.[10] But extravagant Italian claims for territory at the expense of the new Yugoslav state, in Asia Minor and in Africa, as well as a protectorate over Ethiopia, were rejected. By doing so, President Wilson and the Allied leaders drove home the point of Italy's actual inferior status -- especially in Italian minds.[11]

Meanwhile,economic dislocation brought on by the war and the public's unfamiliarity with the new democratic system plunged Italy into social and political turmoil. Many conservative Italians came to regard democracy as the source of weakness and chaos, or even the preliminary stage in a communist revolution. Veterans of the war felt particular rage at the government's inability to reward them for their sacrifices and to preserve domestic tranquillity. By 1921, tens of thousands had joined Mussolini's new Fascist movement as a revolutionary alternative to pre-war Liberalism, democracy or Bolshevism. Promises to restore social peace, revive the economy, raise Italy to greatness among the nations -- combined with violent assaults against political opponents -- brought Mussolini to the office of prime minister in October 1922. After a few years, Mussolini won sufficient support from the army, monarchy, ruling classes -- and not a few ordinary Italians -- to transform his government into a dictatorship in 1925-27.[12]

The turbulent events through which Italians had lived in the seventy-five years preceding the Fascist dictatorship left vivid lessons for Mussolini and his gerarchi to ponder. Such recent history impinged directly on the making of policy through its immediacy and relevance. Men who had marched with Vittorio Emanuele II against the Austrians or who had fought in the red shirts of the Garabaldini still lived when Mussolini hurled his thundering threats of Italian power from the central balcony of the Palazzo Venezia. The Europe of the 1930s seemed to offer close parallels to the unstable conditions under which Cavour had miraculously expanded his little subalpine state into the Kingdom of Italy. Both the long years of frustration that had followed the Risorgimento and the humiliating settlement imposed at the Versailles conference appeared at an end, now that Italy enjoyed the leadership of a genius of vision and determination.

The Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires had disintegrated and the Soviet Union, successor to the Russian Empire, had been driven to the edges of Europe. Although they had emerged victoriously from the Great War, both Britain and France had suffered a marked decline from their prewar power. As Vittorio Emanuele III himself noted in April 1938, "Great Britain is no more and never will be again what it had been when they spoke of the Royal Navy, of Queen Victoria, of the pound sterling and of the Times like myths. . . ."[13] The Great War had bled France white with the loss of as many as 1,500,000 dead. In these terrible casualties Mussolini foresaw great opportunity for Italy when the time came that the French army could no longer fill its ranks. "The war crisis in Europe will explode between 1935 and 1940," he privately prophesied in January 1929, "We must be prepared for that time; to have the organization of our own massive population ready; to spend eight to ten billion lire in these eight to ten years to prepare arms, munitions, uniforms and to bring the entire army up to the

[French] frontier. . . ."[14] In sum, it seemed that neither Italy's former enemies nor allies any longer stood irremovably blocking Italian expansion across the Balkans, the Mediterranean and beyond.

Many Italians firmly believed that their country's destiny lay in an emulation of Roman imperialism. Not just Fascist propaganda but a century of Italian patriotic rhetoric had proclaimed this as fated. The twin prophets of the Risorgimento, the monarchist priest, Vincenzo Gioberti and the radical republican, Giuseppe Mazzini -- polar opposites otherwise -- had both insisted that Rome would rule the Mediterranean world again.[15] The question was when and how.

The events of 1848-49, 1870-82 and 1919 had taught the Italians their disadvantage in isolation. Bismarck's remark that "These Italians have such a big appetite and such bad teeth" contained a truth most Italian leaders recognized, if only among themselves.[16] Expansion required allies. But Italian experiences with Napoleon III, in the Triple Alliance and at the Paris Peace Conference had revealed how powerful allies could shackle and betray a weaker Italian partner. Therefore, Italy had to build the most potent military forces possible, despite the burden this imposed on the people. Popular enthusiasm for militarism and imperialism must be regimented and stimulated, unleashing that national spirit which had made both Italian unification and the recovery from Caporetto possible. Then Italy could seek its opportunites, offering its support at the decisive moment in return for suitable reward.

But this required the greatest skill in execution, such as only Cavour had previously demonstrated. Despite the extraordinary promise held out by the European situation in 1915, Italy's leaders had seriously misjudged that moment. The country could not afford another such

exhausting struggle as that of 1915-18, nor the kind of bungled diplomacy that had accompanied it.

The Rise of Hitler and the Ethiopian War

In Mussolini, Italy seemed to have found a worthy successor to Cavour. His Fascist regime had disciplined the nation, strengthened the armed forces and restored Italian prestige abroad. In his first decade of power, however, Mussolini had not matched his domestic accomplishments with foreign policy successes. Forty years earlier, Prime Minister Francesco Crispi had also crushed internal dissent, raised military expenditures and sought an empire for Italy. But Crispi had provoked the catastrophic war with Ethiopia in 1895-96 and this had unleashed the internal political turmoil leading to the murder of King Umberto II in 1900. Despite the hopes of his Fascist followers and his own promises, it remained unclear if Mussolini would emerge as a second Cavour or just another Crispi. The issue became pressing with the rise to power over Germany of Hitler and the Nazis in January 1933. The new German government offered both a threat which Italy could use to extract concessions from France and Britain or a possible ally in an assault upon them. In either case, Hitler's arrival on the international scene seemed to grant Mussolini an unprecedented freedom of action.[17]

Unlike many of the gerarchi, Mussolini had admired his German counterpart for years prior to the Nazi take-over. As Mussolini remarked to the Fascist leadership in April 1932:

> There are Fascists who do not approve of Hitler. Why? For my part I think that it must be admitted that he deserves our approval. . . . At the beginning he had scarcely 7 followers, or a twentieth of the numbers we had . . . in 1919. Today 12 million Germans follow him! . . . He cannot be dismissed as a lucky child of fortune.

> However that may be, Hitler is another great anxiety for France. I read in some book that France is the country of a gardener who has a fair garden, but a garden too fair for those dwelling in it. Those who approach the garden's threshold are not welcomed as guests but treated and considered as thieves. France is like an owner jealous of his riches and fearful lest his fortune be in danger. Thus Italy's military position and Germany's political position are persuading France to adopt a new attitude towards Italy in questions of foreign policy.
>
> . . . So far as we are concerned, then we shall have to clarify our relations as soon as a new situation [in Germany] arises. Either we shall have to make common cause with Germany, in which case all will be over with France, or we shall follow a western policy, in which case all will be over with Germany. It is a serious decision which we shall have to make, a decision which will commit Italy for many years. We shall have to ponder it very carefully.[18]

In reality, after the new Nazi government took power, it soon created more problems than opportunities for Mussolini. German pressure on Austria began almost immediately, clearly indicating Nazi intentions to bring about an Anschluss. Rather than allowing Mussolini to maneuver between Germany and the West, Hitler was forcing him to join with the British and French to protect the Austrian buffer state. Additional Nazi initiatives, such as departure from the Geneva disarmament talks and from the League of Nations itself, as well as attempts to increase German influence in Yugoslavia at Italian expense, continued to challenge Italy's interests throughout 1933 and into 1934. Hitler was moving too quickly and threatening European stability too much for Mussolini to be able to take advantage. Instead, he would have to choose sides.[19]

After a public visit to Rome by Goering that achieved little, Hitler dispatched a secret envoy to offer a settlement with Mussolini in late November 1933. Hitler proposed that Italy and Germany form an alliance for the purpose of imposing Fascism on the world. Berlin would cease agitation in Austria or among the German minority in northern Italy, while the details of this momentous Italo-German agreement were worked out. Such minor matters as the fate of Austria

would be settled later. Mussolini rejected the offer but he did agree to see Hitler that coming spring.[20] When Mussolini and Hitler finally met face-to-face in June 1934, the German dictator made a most unfavorable impression. As Mussolini remarked to a number of his advisers, Hitler reiterated the same small list of arguments in endless repetition, as if he were a living phonograph record. True discussion proved impossible.[21]

Six weeks later, local Nazis murdered Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss in a failed attempt to overthrow his government and unite Austria with Germany. It remains unclear if Hitler himself ordered this coup. However, at the very moment when the wife and children of Dollfuss were Mussolini's personal guests, the killing and attempted Anschluss infuriated him. Mussolini rushed four infantry divisions to the Brenner Pass to forestall any German moves against Austria and decided to seek a military alliance with France.[22]

A Franco-Italian understanding resulted in January 1935 under which Mussolini received a "free hand" in Ethiopia. In return, he dropped other colonial demands against France, ended his terrorism campaign against France's ally, Yugoslavia, and agreed to Italo-French military conventions designed to prevent either the remilitarization of the Rhineland or an Anschluss.[23] Three months later, after the Stresa conference, Mussolini returned to Rome believing that he had probably persuaded the British also to accept Italian dominance over Ethiopia, as the price for a united front against German expansion.[24]

Over the summer and fall of 1935, however, Mussolini discovered that his diplomatic arrangements had failed disastrously. The British had not accepted the Italian conquest of Ethiopia and attempted to stop Mussolini by threats of force and through League of Nations sanctions. Although it attempted to salvage its accords with Italy, the French government

nonetheless reluctantly backed Britain in the crisis. In considerable secrecy, President Roosevelt supported the British and French governments in their opposition to Italian aggression. Meanwhile, the Germans supplied the Ethiopians with arms and encouraged their resistance. Either retreat or advance seemed to offer Mussolini only disastrous humiliation and the probability of the collapse of his regime.[25]

Greatly contributing to Mussolini's predicament had been his decision to override the warnings of his closest advisers and plunge ahead with his attack on Ethiopia. The gerarchi had reacted with fear to displays of British determination in August 1935, when the Home Fleet had been dispatched to the Mediterranean. In particular, the Italian chiefs of staff had begged Mussolini to reconsider his decision. As the situation impressed itself on the average Italian, a shudder of uneasiness swept through the nation.[26]

Previously, unified objections to Mussolini's dangerous adventures by his military and political advisers had stayed his hand. In September 1923, such advice seems to have persuaded Mussolini not to attempt to annex Corfu after the British had deployed the Royal Navy in a threatening manner.[27] From late 1925 until the fall of 1926, Mussolini plotted an attack on Turkey in concert with the Greeks. As long as the Mosul crisis offered the possibility of Anglo-Turkish hostilities, such plans made some sense. But only resistance by the Italian military seems to have forestalled Mussolini's plans to go it alone.[28] More dangerous were Mussolini's plans for surprise attacks on France and its ally, Yugoslavia, in 1931 and, again, in 1933. In these cases, only the concerted efforts of Mussolini's more prudent Fascist lieutenants and his military leaders, combined with threats of resignation by the latter, prevented him from following a suicidal course of action.[29]

In 1935, however, Mussolini possessed military and diplomatic intelligence indicating that British threats of force against Italy were a bluff. Such information, withheld from the gerarchi, gave Mussolini the confidence to order the invasion of Ethiopia in early October.[30] But military operations in the four months that followed threatened to bring Italian defeat at the hands of the Ethiopians alone. Even the dispatch of Italy's senior military commander, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, to direct the war in East Africa did not at first improve the Italian situation.

To make matters worse, Mussolini began to fear that the British might take advantage of the Italian predicament and close the Suez Canal to Italian shipping. In that case, Mussolini decided he would order the invasion of Egypt and the Sudan. But this was a decision born of utter desperation. In the period from late December to early February, Mussolini lived through weeks of severe anxiety, coupled with profound personal isolation. Even his closest advisers lost faith in Mussolini's ability to guide Italy out of the crisis and prepared to abandon him.[31]

However, Mussolini's intransigence in the face of such odds greatly impressed Hitler. The Fuhrer decided that he must have such a man as an ally and ceased his support of Ethiopia. In turn, Mussolini ordered approaches made to Berlin, indicating a lessening of Italian protection of Austrian independence. In addition, when Hitler took advantage of the crisis caused by the Ethiopian War to remilitarize the Rhineland in March 1936, he did so with tacit Italian support. By mid-1936, already convinced that Germany was fast becoming the most powerful state in Europe, Mussolini was toying with the idea of an Italian-German alliance. Such a coalition would be invincible, he reasoned. Both sides had taken long strides toward the creation of a Rome-Berlin Axis.[32]

Throughout the darkest days of the conflict, Mussolini had also received the support of the Italian people. The propaganda organs of the regime succeeded in convincing most Italians that they, not simply their dictator, were besieged by a jealous Britain and its instrument, the League of Nations. Once Badoglio turned the tide of battle in Italian favor, greatly assisted by the massive employment of poison gas, Mussolini's popularity soared. After Italian forces marched into Addis Ababa in May 1936 and Mussolini proclaimed the establishment of the Italian Empire a few days later, his prestige reached unprecedented heights.[33]

Fascist propaganda boasted that Mussolini had achieved a triumph over the most powerful nation in the world, backed by a coalition of fifty-two states drawn up in economic battle array against impoverished Italy. In reality, Britain and France had done everything possible to avoid war or permanently to alienate Italy as an ally against Germany. Furthermore, despite tremendous odds, the Ethiopians had come close to fighting the Italians to a standstill. Haile Selassie's men had succumbed finally to an overwhelming concentration of force, including tons of mustard gas rushed to East Africa by a desperate Mussolini. But few Italians saw the victory over Ethiopia as anything other than incontestable proof of Mussolini's genius and the iron might of their Fascist Italy. Few Italians any longer raised the question of whether Mussolini was the worthy heir to Cavour. The new title bestowed on Mussolini by the leaders of the Fascist Party, "Founder of the Empire," implied a far more grandiose parallel. Thereafter such a title hailed the Duce as successor to Julius Caesar and Augustus.[34]

After the Ethiopian War, the psychological circumstances under which Mussolini and his lieutenants assessed the balance of power in Europe had altered to a degree that made objective analysis far more difficult than before. The propaganda slogan, "Mussolini is always right," now

appeared self-evident to most ordinary citizens. On the other hand, some of those who observed Mussolini from nearby wondered how such adulation would affect his own judgment. For example, while acknowledging that Mussolini deserved considerable credit for his victory, old Marshal Enrico Caviglia worried if Mussolini would begin to make "errors of megalomania even more serious than those he has committed already."[35] It soon became clear, in fact, that Mussolini took sole credit for even the direction of military operations against the Ethiopians. His military experts, Mussolini believed, had only handled the details. Now he dreamed of smashing the British in the same way. More serious, even in their communications with each other, at least some gerarchi repeated Mussolini's claims that Italy had replaced Britain as the arbiter of the Mediterranean.[36]

Such posturing, by Mussolini or his underlings, was partially used to buttress his authority or to curry his favor. Those who expressed such high opinions of Mussolini's military genius, even the dictator himself, did not necessarily believe them entirely. Nonetheless, such sentiments did reflect the great increase in Mussolini's self-confidence, as well as the high regard of many others for his strategic vision, after May 1936. Thereafter, Mussolini enjoyed far more latitude than before in deciding matters of peace or war.[37]

In June 1936, for example, when the League of Nations had not yet lifted sanctions against Italy, the possibility existed that sanctions might even be increased. In concert with his Hungarian allies, Mussolini ordered preparations for an invasion of Yugoslavia. He intended to seize mineral resources vital for Italian industry, rather than face economic strangulation. Mussolini dismissed the likelihood of French intervention, so long as the Italian-Hungarian attack

succeeded. Yet he was prepared to face the eventuality of war and his subordinates accepted his decision. Such blind obedience would have been unthinkable even six months earlier.[38]

This danger of war quickly faded with the revocation of sanctions in early July 1936. But in the dilemma facing Mussolini and his lieutenants regarding the question of Italian strategic alignment, subjective elements had begun to tip the balance. First came Mussolini's newly-acquired reputation as a strategic genius. Added to this was Italian conviction of French cowardice and treachery, and British hostility, combined with clear indications of both nations' weakness, all arising from the events of January 1935-July 1936. That, in turn, made the possibility of cooperation with Germany even more attractive than before.[39]

On the other hand, certain objective factors also played a role in the Italian leadership's judgment of their country's strategic options. Of great importance was the huge expense of the Ethiopian War and the expected high cost of the pacification and development of the Impero, as they now called Italian East Africa. The price in Italian lives, some 13-15,000, had been relatively low, though far higher than the 2800 officially admitted. But the financial cost of the war had amounted to 38.9 billion lire (compared to the official figure of 12.1 billion). In comparison, the state budgets for the previous decade had averaged only 26.5 billion lire for each year. In addition, colonial expenditures for the period 1936-40, largely invested in East Africa, would total a further 24.3 billion lire. This compares to cumulative army budgets of 38.2 billion during the same four-year period. Obviously, the cost of the Impero placed severe limits on Italian ability to finance other foreign adventures and simultaneously develop the armed forces. At the same time, the Empire provided very little in the way of exports or profits.[40]

In mid-1936, therefore, the achievements of the Fascist regime, combined with the

European situation, had brought Italy to a position of unparalleled influence and opportunity. But the slender resources available to them offered the Italian leadership limited scope for action and allowed only a narrow margin for error. Under these circumstances, the effectiveness and influence of those means by which the men at the pinnacle of Italian government judged their military power acquired crucial importance.

Power, Discussion and Decision Making in the Fascist Regime

Despite the creation of the Fascist regime, the 1848 constitution officially remained in force throughout the entire period of Mussolini's rule. The king was still head of state and, as such, commander of the armed forces. Many other pre-Fascist constitutional arrangements, such as parliamentary control over the budget, had ceased to function. But the close relationship between the king and the officer corps, especially the army's generals, continued. What respect Mussolini showed for Vittorio Emanuele III came largely from the fact that the army remained an independent power center at the potential disposal of the king. Unlike the heads of other royal houses, Vittorio Emanuele III and Crown Prince Umberto wore no other uniform than that of the army, underlining the special relationship. Even in the supposedly totalitarian Fascist regime, the army remained royal -- the Regio Esercito.[41]

Still Mussolini enjoyed considerable power. He had transformed the office of prime minister (more properly, President of the Council of Ministers) into that of permanent Capo del Governo (Head of Government). He buttressed this office by his position as Duce del Fascismo (Leader of Fascism), in a system in which the National Fascist Party had become the only legal political organization. In addition, through a chief of staff, Mussolini commanded the uniformed

militarized Party police force, the Milizia volontaria per la sicurezza nazionale (MVSN -- the Voluntary Militia for National Security), commonly known as the Camicie Nere (CC NN -- the Black Shirts).

Mussolini, in contrast to Stalin, had deliberately based his position on government, rather than party, institutions. In 1933, Mussolini had permanently assumed the offices of War, Navy and Air Force Minister. Since 1926, he had held the position of Minister of the Interior, granting him direct control of the police and internal surveillance organizations. Mussolini stepped down as Foreign Minister in June 1936 but he gave that post to his most trusted subordinate, his son-in-law, Galeazzo Ciano. Thus, Mussolini stood at the apex of twin Party and governmental structures but exercised power principally through the latter.[42]

Complicating matters however, particularly in the spheres of the armed forces and intelligence gathering and analysis, was considerable overlap between the Party and government institutions and leaders. After mid-1933, virtually all civil servants had to be members of the Party and Party membership became a prerequisite for promotion. Furthermore, despite considerable resistance from conservative monarchists, membership in the Fascist Party spread rapidly within the army officer corps after Mussolini's appointment of the ardently Fascist general Federico Baistrocchi as war undersecretary in July 1933. A few months later, Mussolini's selection of Admiral Domenico Cavagnari as navy undersecretary placed another enthusiastic Fascist in administrative control of the Regia Marina. Fascist sentiment had permeated the air force since its inception in 1923. Nonetheless, the king remained the official head of both these services, as their titles indicated -- Regia Marina and Regia Aeronautica.

In the 1936-40 period, all civilian cabinet ministers and their undersecretaries were high ranking members of the Party. A number of senior Party members had been appointed to leading positions in the forze armate and a number of generals and admirals who were Party members had reached positions of great responsibility. Given the adulation of Mussolini's genius within the Party after 1935 and his growing megalomania and detachment from reality, the increasing Fascist influence within military and government organizations meant decreasing objectivity and willingness to report honestly.[43]

In addition, Mussolini, who had never been particularly tolerant of critics or rivals, demanded ever more subservience from his lieutenants as the 1930s progressed. Those who refused to pay the Duce the homage he expected received exile or removal from office. The Duce increasingly surrounded himself with sycophants. Thus, fears of dismissal, and hopes of reward for obsequiousness and flattery, further inhibited Mussolini's access to objective analysis and stifled free discussion among his advisers.[44]

This problem assumed acute form in the two possible forums for discussion where Mussolini and his lieutenants dealt the most directly and comprehensively with assessing Italy's strength relative to her possible opponents. Potentially the more useful in this regard was the Commissione suprema di difesa (Supreme Defense Commission), although it sat but once a year for five or six days in early February. While it considered a wider range of topics than just military-strategic questions, the Gran consiglio del fascismo (Fascist Grand Council) did offer the advantage of meeting two or three times a year in the 1936-39 period, in clusters of sessions spread over one to three weeks.[45]

The Supreme Defense Commission, as defined by law in May 1940, was "an interministerial organization for coordinating the studies and decisions on all questions pertaining to national safety and defense, organization and mobilization of the nation for war, and development and better utilization of all resources, as well as all state activities involving defense."[46] Since its establishment in March 1923, the Commission had gradually increased its power, at the partial expense of the independence of the individual services, and had played something of the role formally legislated in 1940 since the period of the Ethiopian War.

The Commission consisted of twenty to twenty-five members, including the major cabinet ministers or undersecretaries, the armed forces chiefs of staff, the Secretary of the Fascist Party, the Militia Chief of Staff and Lieutenant General Alfredo Dallolio, who headed the Commissariato generale per le fabbricazioni di guerra (COGEFAG -- the General Commissariat for War Production), under the presidency of Mussolini. Other relevant officials would attend when specific topics relating to their competency were discussed. A permanent secretariat of four military officers dealt with the Commission's administration.

The Commission discussed a wide range of economic, educational, legislative, social, financial and industrial issues that influenced Italy's ability to wage war effectively. Perhaps its most practical role was to keep the two most powerful members of the regime, Mussolini and Ciano, informed of their country's war-making potential and to educate various members of the regime about their counterparts' attitudes and problems. Members of the Commission did make candid statements about Italy's industrial and economic weaknesses. Frequently, healthy discussions took place among the participants. However, Mussolini tended to deny that material factors necessarily inhibited his freedom of action. He insisted that the new spirit his regime had

infused in the Italians people could overcome the most imposing obstacles. Rarely did Mussolini's subordinates summon up the courage to dispute such Fascist dogma. Often, they believed it themselves.[47]

Other problems arose in implementation and reporting. One well-informed member, Giuseppe Bottai, privately wondered how many Commission orders were actually carried out. The Commission lacked personnel empowered to enforce its decisions, or even to gather its own statistics. Through COGEFAG, Mussolini supposedly had power to coordinate the access of the various services to raw materials and industrial production on a rational basis. But General Dallolio had great difficulty in obtaining precise weapons procurement program data from the armed forces. In addition, Mussolini showed great reluctance to exert pressure on the sensitivities of his leading generals and admirals by demanding interservice cooperation and seeking independently verifiable figures on weapons and equipment levels.

Despite its formidable powers on paper, in reality COGEFAG controlled little more than supervison of steel production and the disciplinary supervision of armament workers. Dallolio could provide Mussolini with accurate information about those areas of the weapons production system but little more.[48]

By 1936, the Fascist Grand Council had assumed the role of the supreme political assembly of the state. Originally the governing body of the Fascist Party, the Grand Council had evolved into a combination of cabinet and legislature as the constitutional system had withered. The Council varied from some thirty to forty members in the decade before World War II, including the major non-military members of the Council of Ministers, the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, the Secretary and Vice Secretary of the Fascist Party, the

Chief of Staff of the Militia, the heads of the major Fascist syndicalist organizations, the President of the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State and a few other leading members of the Party. The Council had no military members, as such, but Air Marshal Italo Balbo, Marshal Emilio De Bono and Admiral Costanzo Ciano (father of Galeazzo) represented the views of the forze armate. Many members of the Council also sat on the Supreme Defense Commission, adding to the ability of the Council to consider matters from an informed strategic and military viewpoint.

Council meetings consisted of long reports by members, most frequently those of Mussolini himself, followed by discussions in the form of questions and answers. Their proposed decrees were voted upon. By 1936, rubber stamp approval had become the norm. Domestic issues predominated, although foreign policy matters were placed on the agenda, particularly during periods of crisis. The Council did not discuss strictly military affairs.

As Mussolini's personal power grew, especially after the conquest of Ethiopia, the Grand Council declined as an arena for discussion. Instead, Mussolini increasingly used meetings only as occasions to promulgate, explain and defend his policies. However, bolder members of the Council, especially Balbo, occasionally seized the opportunities provided by Council meetings to offer criticisms or alternate policies.[49] Balbo came to realize, however, that his displays of independent opinion in the presence of the Duce's other subordinates served only to enrage Mussolini, frustrating communication. Instead, Balbo took advantage of his knowledge that Mussolini had ordered Balbo's telephone tapped and used his phone conversations with third parties to send messages to the Duce.[50]

The Grand Council held no meeting between 7 December 1939 and the fateful session of 24-25 July 1943, which provoked the downfall of the regime. As a result, in the period from 7 December 1939 to Italy's entry into World War II, on 10 June 1940, the meetings of the Council of Ministers took on greater importance.

Throughout the entire period of Mussolini's rule, military matters were a frequent subject at cabinet meetings. However, after 1933, when Mussolini held the portfolios of the three services, he himself represented the armed forces ministries at Council of Minister sessions. The military undersecretaries, always generals or admirals who did the actual work of running their ministries, were not invited. Under these circumstances, meaningful discussion rarely took place. Instead, Mussolini simply lectured his ministers on military matters. But in the months from December 1939 to June 1940, these pronouncements provided the ministers with the opportunity to ascertain Mussolini's plans for war, generating considerable discussion among themselves beyond the Duce's hearing.[51]

Since Mussolini and most of his major lieutenants sat on two, and even three, of these bodies, they certainly were able to acquire a very clear picture of Italy's military posture. At the same time, however, hardening psychological and ideological attitudes on Mussolini's part restricted the influence of this information upon him and thwarted the attempts of Mussolini's subordinates to persuade him to act prudently, in light of the facts.

Mussolini's confrontation with Britain and his victory over Ethiopia in 1935-36 had greatly strengthened his faith in the unerring quality of his intuition. After May 1936, Mussolini considerably decreased his previously frequent conversations with foreign and domestic visitors and withdrew into ever greater isolation. The death of his brother Arnaldo and the end of his

twenty-year love affair with Margherita Sarfatti already had deprived him of his two closest and oldest human relationships. The adoring young Claretta Petacci, with whom Mussolini commenced a love affair in late 1936, offered Mussolini some diversion but no real companionship. As a result, he sank deeper into a state of bitter loneliness and emotional deprivation, leading to increasing distrust and suspicion of his ministers.[52]

The partial exception was Galeazzo Ciano, who had married Edda Mussolini, the only one of the Duce's children to inherit something of their father's intelligence. Until August 1939, Ciano offered virtually blind obedience and genuine hero worship to his father-in-law. In return, in the summer of 1936, Mussolini had handed over the day-to-day running of the entire government to his thirty-three-year-old foreign minister. Galeazzo and Edda Ciano shared an admiration of Nazi Germany, a loathing for France and deep suspicion of Britain and the United States. They were also determined to succeed the Duce and had set about undermining his faith in his other ministers' opinions. Naturally, this included any other ideas about foreign policy. Since daily meetings with Ciano provided Mussolini with his major source of information on foreign affairs, his son-in-law's proclivities had considerable influence on the Duce's view of the world.

In his solitude, Mussolini pondered the lessons of history, as he saw them, and attempted to use these insights to peer into the future. He became convinced that European civilization stood on the brink of a radical transformation, an upheaval which could propel Italy to an unassailable position of world power. Mussolini came to believe that he alone possessed the understanding and ability to lead Italy through the coming crisis to triumph. No expense, no risk

would be too great because such an opportunity would not recur for centuries, nor would an Italian leader like him appear again.

This view of his own abilities gave Mussolini the self-confidence to ally Italy with Nazi Germany. Despite all evidence to the contrary, especially after Hitler's repudiation of the Munich settlement, Mussolini retained the conviction that he could dominate Hitler with his intellect and yoke German power to the Italian chariot. Ciano encouraged him in this illusion until the spring of 1939. But even after his son-in-law came to recognize the errors of the foreign policy he himself had helped to shape, Mussolini remained convinced that his genius would outweigh the material weakness of Italy vis a vis Germany.

When Mussolini fell under the influence of these meditations, the warnings of his advisers about Italy's lack of financial resources or the shortcomings of the armed forces struck him as childish prattle. In fact, he gradually came to the conclusion that he could rule better without ministers at all, relying solely upon technicians and bureaucrats.[53]

However, such periods of perceived infallibility afflicted Mussolini only at intermittent intervals. At other times, he judged matters with keen lucidity, guided by his undoubtedly high intelligence, his extraordinary understanding of human nature, his prodigious memory for facts and statistics, and his lengthy experience as a statesman and political leader. Even those subordinates who most clearly recognized Mussolini's faults and feared the direction in which he was leading Italy still acknowledged his powerful genius. In times of crisis, such as during the February 1940 meeting of the Supreme Defense Commission, Mussolini displayed a clear understanding of the problems afflicting the Italian forces and the limits this placed on his actions.[54]

On these occasions of objectivity, however, Mussolini still suffered from a difficulty in appreciating the military potential of Italy and of other states. After World War II, Mario Roatta, who had come to know Mussolini well as head of Army Intelligence and, later, as Army Chief of Staff, observed that:

> Mussolini, extremely quick to grasp and retain any information which came to his attention, an assiduous and diligent reader of military books and journals, a good student of history, possessed a truly noteworthy body of statistical information and used technical language perfectly. However, even when he understood to perfection the individual facts of a military problem, he did not understand their reciprocal value, nor grasp precisely their interdependence, and he did not realize how the separate elements had to be weighed and combined in order to lead to the proper solution.
>
> For example, while being, in general, a man who saw things in a wide perspective, [in military matters] he would seize upon a detail and attribute to it a decisive importance, while in that given moment or circumstance, it had only a secondary value. . . .
>
> The substance, the true essence of military questions, and especially their artistic and spiritual side, escaped him completely.[55]

For Mussolini's subordinates, deprived of the Duce's access to intelligence sources, the problem was far greater. Not only did Mussolini restrict the flow of information but grave flaws afflicted the Italian information gathering and analysis system.

Intelligence Agencies and Personalities

Mussolini enjoyed access to a wealth of information on the military potential and strategic intentions of the nations surrounding Italy. Such intelligence flowed to him from a number of sources. Principle among them were:

1) the three military intelligence services

2) the Foreign Ministry

3) the various police agencies under the Ministry of the Interior

4) the Ministry of Press and Propaganda (renamed the Ministry of Popular Culture in May 1937)

5) the Fascist Militia

6) the Ministry of Colonies (renamed the Ministry of Italian Africa in April 1937)

7) the Finance Ministry, the Bank of Italy and other financial institutions

8) executive agents and personal emissaries

9) letters from, and conversations with, a wide range of foreign and domestic personalities, including heads of government, ministers, ambassadors, attaches and assorted notables.[56]

As noted, Mussolini's human contacts shrank considerably after mid-1936, although they did not disappear entirely. Nonetheless, after the Ethiopian War, his major source of information on the military and strategic posture of foreign states came through reports and publications. His most important suppliers were the military intelligence services: Servizio Informazioni Militari (SIM) for the army, Servizio Informazioni Segreto (SIS) for the navy and Servizio Informazioni Aeronautiche (SIA) for the air force. Of these, SIM was by far the largest and most important and SIA the least significant, having only been created in the 1935-36 period.[57]

SIM suffered from a number of serious interconnected problems which weakened its ability to give Mussolini an accurate picture of his potential enemies and allies. In 1921-26, SIM had enjoyed the able leadership of Colonel Attilio Vigevano, who had reorganized the service efficiently and concentrated its attention on the Danube-Balkan and Mediterranean-North African areas. However, Vigevano also used SIM to supply Mussolini with information on the political attitudes and activities of the army high command. The discovery of this internal espionage led

to Vigevano's dismissal, at a time when Mussolini did not yet possess his later authority over the Italian armed forces. The result was a deliberate policy by successive Army Chiefs of Staff of frequently changing SIM's leadership and regarding the entire organization with extreme suspicion. Only in January 1934, with the promotion of Colonel Mario Roatta from second-in-command to chief, did SIM recover real vitality. Roatta played a major role in SIM's resurgence by forming a close working relationship and friendship with Galeazzo Ciano. Thus, the service remained more closely wedded to Mussolini (and to Ciano) than to the army leadership. The suspicion and distrust that this relationship engendered hindered SIM collaboration with the army leadership.[58]

However, Mussolini's reorganization of the armed forces high command on the eve of the Ethiopian War greatly strengthened the cooperation between each of the intelligence organizations and the chief of staff of its respective service. Mussolini's assumption of the three armed forces ministerships in 1933, combined with his various other posts, had given him far too many official responsibilities to fulfill each effectively. As a result, Mussolini turned over the majority of his ministerial duties to the undersecretaries. In the case of the armed forces ministries, in 1933-34, Mussolini appointed each of the undersecretaries to be the chiefs of staff of their service, as well. This created the appearance of unity of administrative and command functions. In reality, each of the deputy chiefs of staff assumed the duties of chief of staff, leaving two men at the top of each service struggling to carry out the obligations of three. Furthermore, since each of these men functioned at one step above their official assignment only through Mussolini's delegation of powers, each became particularly dependent on the dictator. Mussolini further cemented his control over the armed services by appointing true Fascists to

the combined posts of undersecretary and chief of staff: Federico Baistrocchi for the army, Giuseppe Valle for the air force and Domenico Cavagnari for the navy. Mussolini made another ardent Fascist, Alberto Pariani, deputy chief of staff of the army in October 1934. In the case of the army, therefore, Roatta served under two military superiors as wedded to the regime as he was, and this relationship between the heads of SIM and the army high command continued until Italy's entry into World War II.[59]

Roatta received a tripling of SIM's budget soon after he assumed command of the service. This allowed him to improve greatly decryption capabilities and to hire a number of civilians, including women, as agents. SIM's military personnel remained constant at some 700-750 (of which 150-200 were officers) from 1934 until mid 1940. But Roatta succeeded in obtaining their services on a long-term basis, ending the frequent reassignments which had previously hampered SIM's effectiveness.[60]

However, due both to new demands placed on the service by Mussolini and Roatta's own ambition, SIM acquired a new range of responsibilities in the area of covert operations in addition to its previous intelligence gathering role. This burden increased after October 1936, when Mussolini dismissed Baistrocchi over the general's doubts over Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War and promoted Pariani in his place.

Baistrocchi's removal appears to have shaken Pariani, since the former had been both a convinced Fascist and not without sympathy for Mussolini's plans to expand Italian power through intervention in Spain. However, Baistrocchi had felt it to be his duty to point out the debilitating effect of arms transfers to the Spanish Nationalists on the Regio Esercito's preparations for a general European war. Coming on the heels of the army's conquest of

Ethiopia, and parallel to the ongoing pacification campaign in the Empire, Baistrocchi stressed that major aid to the Nationalists would render impossible his modernization plans. Baistrocchi paid for this honesty by losing his posts.

After this, Pariani seems to have felt a need to prove his absolute loyalty, as well as his fervent Fascism. One way the new Army Chief of Staff did this was by placing SIM entirely at the disposal of Galeazzo Ciano, recently appointed foreign minister. As a result, SIM became even more deeply involved in sabotage and assassination, further diluting its effectiveness as an intelligence organization.[61]

As acting chief of staff under Baistrocchi, Pariani had already been directing SIM's activities for over two years. Roatta had enthusiastically cooperated with Pariani by employing SIM in a wide range of clandestine political activities and this continued after Roatta left SIM in the summer of 1936. However, Pariani and Roatta had understood the pressing need to expand SIM's information gathering activities and had shown the foresight to target both Britain and Germany as special new subjects of intense interest by Army Intelligence. They also had increased the number of SIM agents abroad, usually disguised as consular officials, enlarged the radio intercept capacity of the service and penetrated most of the embassies in Rome (the Soviet's excepted) with agents skilled in safe cracking. The result was a considerable increase in the flow of intercepted and purloined diplomatic documents across the desks of Mussolini and Ciano and a swelling of the contents of SIM's daily intelligence summaries and monthly reports. These army intelligence distributed to general officers holding major commands, the Chiefs of Staff of the Navy, Air Force and Militia, as well as Mussolini, Ciano, the king and the princes

of the royal house. Beginning in late 1938, SIM began publishing weekly intelligence reports, as well.[62]

The burden imposed on SIM's staff, still limited to some 700-odd men, by its expanded intelligence collection and covert activities inevitably led to serious problems with the quality of its interpretation of information. SIM simply lacked the personnel to carry out such a wide range of duties effectively. These problems increased with Italian involvement in Spain. In July 1936, Roatta and Colonel Emilio Faldella, head of SIM's foreign armies section, were sent to Spain to coordinate Italian aid to the Nationalists. By September, these Spanish activities had expanded to such an extent that Roatta and Faldella were removed from SIM altogether, which passed under the command of Colonel Paolo Angioy. Not only had SIM lost two of its most effective leaders but, simultaneously, it had become involved in a large-scale new effort to disrupt French and Soviet-Comintern support for the Spanish Republicans through surveillance, sabotage and assassination. Furthermore, both Angioy and Colonel Donato Trippicione, who succeeded him as head of SIM in July 1937, proved far less able bureaucatic operatives than Roatta. Only in November 1939, When Brigadier General Giacomo Carboni took over military intelligence, did SIM regain a leader of Roatta's political abilities.[63]

Yet another obligation fell within SIM's purview in the summer of 1937: coordination of Italian arms sales abroad and the use of military attachés to promote these transactions. The need for foreign currency to purchase imported fuels and raw materials for arms production gave this program special urgency for the army. But the efforts involved detracted from the ability of attachés to gather military intelligence.[64]

The result of all these demands on SIM's resources can be judged from Pariani's orders to SIM, and the chief of staff's communications of intelligence to Mussolini, beginning in late 1936. What SIM had the greatest difficulty in supplying were detailed reports on the strength and disposition of foreign armies and accurate appreciations of how the military strength of other states influenced their foreign policies. At the same time, Pariani did receive a remarkably accurate picture of British, French and German strategic war plans, which he passed on to Mussolini and Ciano.[65] But what Mussolini primarily needed to know was if foreign governments were prepared to go to war, rather than their planning for such eventualities.

The problem, therefore, lay in SIM's inability to help Mussolini judge the intentions of a large number of European governments, as well as those of the United States and the Soviet Union. During the international crisis provoked by the Ethiopian War, SIM had given Mussolini a precise picture of British naval and military dispositions in the Mediterranean, Middle East and Northeast Africa. By revealing the inadequacy of British deployments, SIM's intelligence greatly assisted Mussolini to come to the conclusion that Britain would not go to war with Italy, unless provoked. At the same time, Dino Grandi, then Mussolini's ambassador in London, had sent him an accurate description of the non-belligerant attitude of the British cabinet and of most of the British ruling class. With these two sets of information, Mussolini had been able to act with just the right balance of daring and prudence toward London.[66]

Thereafter, SIM exercised a far greater influence on the formulation of Italian foreign policy. However, this success and Mussolini's consequent increase in self-confidence had resulted in such increased demands on SIM that it could no longer perform its primary functions in an adequate manner. The size and resources of the service, adequate for Italian actions as a

regional power, were not sufficient after Mussolini decided to cast Italy in the role of a continental, and even world, power. SIM was able to supply a fairly detailed picture of the military dispositions of the French and Yugoslavs, although the closing of its major intelligence center in Vienna after the Anschluss did disrupt SIM's intelligence gathering in Yugoslavia. Beyond that, in the ever wider concentric circles that included Germany and Britain, then the United States and Japan, army intelligence perceived the situation in ever dimmer light. Knowledge of and interest in the Soviet Union was virtually non-existent. Furthermore, on a day-to-day basis, SIM acted on directives from the army high command. Mussolini's generals showed little interest in the world beyond the confines of the Mediterranean and the Balkans, while their continued distrust of SIM led to their refusal to inform the intelligence service of its own general staff's war plans. Consequently, SIM frequently had little idea what investigations should receive priority in the allocation of its slender resources.[67]

Most of Mussolini's ambassadors lacked Grandi's easy familiarity with the governing circles of their host nations. Furthermore, as even Grandi discovered, after mid-1936 it became increasingly difficult to get past Ciano to present unfiltered information directly to Mussolini. A major reason was that Ciano had a low opinion of the majority of his ambassadors, although he did respect Bernardo Attolico in Berlin (July 1935-April 1940) and Augusto Rosso in Moscow (June 1936-June 1941). In the case of the well-informed Grandi, Ciano hated and distrusted him as a serious rival for the succession to Mussolini. On the other hand, Grandi constantly tailored his reports to appeal to the susceptibilities of Ciano and Mussolini. Grandi knew too well that even when an ambassador did gain direct access to Mussolini, the Duce would no longer listen to advice he did not wish to hear. Too often, after mid-1936, what Mussolini wished to learn

was how weak, cowardly and decadent his potential opponents and victims were, how the world trembled before the might and majesty of Fascist Italy and how much foreigners admired the wisdom and genius of the Duce.[68]

Nor could the other Italian foreign intelligence services compensate for SIM's deficiencies. SIA was too small, inexperienced and narrowly focussed on internal security and military police work. SIS did have a wider geographical range of interests than SIM and a world-wide agent network. But it still was a small, underfinanced organization with a purely naval orientation. Furthermore, even within its maritime sphere, SIS served a high command single-mindedly intent on war with France and utterly unwilling to prepare for war against the dreaded Royal Navy, despite the experiences of 1935-36. Consequently, SIS gathered little intelligence on the British, never even establishing a single agent on Malta, for instance. Ciano's own intelligence service within the Foreign Ministry operated in such close collaboration with SIM that it very largely reflected the weaknesses of the other service.[69]

Mussolini's other intelligence sources provided him with information but no systematic analysis. The Direzione Generale della Stampa Estera of the Ministry of Popular Culture, for example, supplied both Mussolini and Ciano with a wide range of foreign publications. Such books, journals and newspapers offered useful details about events and thinking abroad -- an invaluable advantage for those at the summit of a regime which practised strict censorship -- but they provided no context within which to interpret them. Thus, Mussolini could rely on that sensational tabloid, the New York Daily News, to gather a picture of American public opinion. When a well-informed individual did offer him an unwelcome but accurate net assessment, Mussolini could dismiss it as only one man's opinion.[70]

Sources of Independent Net Assessment

Despite Mussolini's system of centralized and highly personal net assessment, a small number of men within the upper echelons of the government were able to make independent judgments about the European balance of power. In addition to Ciano and Vittorio Emanuele III, these included the capo di Stato maggiore generale (Chief of the Supreme General Staff), Marshal Pietro Badoglio; the Governor General of Libya, Air Marshal Italo Balbo; and the Viceroy of Ethiopia, Amedeo di Savoia, the Duke of Aosta, who assumed his post in November 1937. To a lesser extent, Marshal Emilio De Bono, without an official position after November 1935, until appointed Inspector of Overseas Troops in December 1939, and Cesare Maria De Vecchi, Governor of the Dodecanese Islands from November 1936, were also capable of net assessments that varied from those of Mussolini.

In each case, these men enjoyed independent access to intelligence, familiarity with the armed forces, considerable foreign travel and residence outside Italy, and a certain strength of character or ability to resist pressure from Mussolini. However, with the exception of the king, each of these figures could be removed from office by Mussolini whenever he chose. The ever-present awareness of this reality had considerable influence on these officials' willingness to express their opinions to Mussolini and to each other. In addition, these men met only rarely and their awareness of the intercept of communications by Mussolini's surveillance organs further inhibited their frank exchange of views.

Among those so capable, Vittorio Emanuele III enjoyed the most advantages in arriving at an independent assessment of the European military situation. By the time Mussolini had become prime minister, the king had already occupied the throne for over twenty-two years. As

crown prince, he already had risen to the command of an army corps, and the events of his early reign, including the Libyan War and the First World War, had further expanded the king's military knowledge. In fact, Vittorio Emanuele III had spent May 1915 to November 1918 in the war zone, observing both operations and the general staff at first-hand. Throughout the Fascist period, he maintained the closest possible relations with his generals and admirals, particularly the former. By the 1930s, Vittorio Emanuele III possessed a virtually encyclopedic knowledge of the Italian armed forces. In addition, the king rightly prided himself on his knowledge of foreign affairs, aided by his fluency in English, French and German. He had tried, with limited success, to educate his son, Crown Prince Umberto, in the same manner.[71]

Equally important in assisting the king's judgement was his independent access to persons and information. Virtually alone in Mussolini's stato totalitario, Vittorio Emanuele III maintained his prerogatives from the defunct Liberal era. Mussolini could rail against the bizarre system which made Fascist Italy "a monster with two heads" but he reluctantly accepted the inviolable nature of the monarchy, so long as Vittorio Emanuele III lived.

The king chafed under the tedium of his official ceremonial duties. They remained his primary function, now that the need for political consultation had disappeared with the emergence of a permanent head of government. Yet such duties allowed the king to discuss matters with each new minister upon appointment, for they officially remained his ministers. His obligations permitted him to discuss military and naval matters with his generals and admirals at parades, receptions and maneuvers. Finally, the king retained his right to receive the confidential papers, diplomatic traffic and intelligence reports which detailed Italy's internal situation and external relations.

As the king's prime minister, Mussolini regularly corresponded with the king and frequently reported to him in person. Each maintained the fiction that the old constitutional order somehow still functioned. Thus, as a constitutional monarch, Vittorio Emanuele III felt restrained from interfering in the activities of the Fascist regime. Yet, paradoxically, he clung to the fiction of constitutional rule for it alone justified the existence of the monarchy and granted him specific powers. Since these included the right to declare war and to command the armed forces, Vittorio Emanuele III held immense potential authority. That the king used such rights so parsimoniously reflected both his cautious nature and his recognition of the precariousness of his situation. Nonetheless, while he sometimes confused the interests of his dynasty with those of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele III harbored an intense patriotism. He was as avid for Italian territorial expansion as Mussolini. Yet, as the dictator drove Italy toward involvement in a new European war, the picture of the military and diplomatic situation that the king drew from his wide access to information caused him increasing worry. He foresaw only disaster if Italy joined Germany in war. When and as he saw fit, he made his concerns clear to those gerarchi he trusted.[72]

Second only to the king in his ability to make and profer independent assessments of the military balance was Pietro Badoglio. Despite the marshal's impressive title, he had no Supreme General Staff over which to be chief. The appellation merely signified Badoglio's role as Mussolini's senior military adviser. The Duce preferred to deal with the high commands of each service on a separate basis. A combined or joint armed forces staff might offer dangerous opposition or the locus of a military plot against Mussolini.

Despite the services of only a small personal staff of some twenty people, Badoglio still possessed significant influence, considerable access to information and a certain degree of independence. In part this derived from the great prestige he enjoyed with the public and a large segment of the officer corps of the three services.

Due to both luck and political connections, Badoglio had escaped the consequences of his share of responsibility for the disaster of Caporetto in October 1917. Instead, at the extraordinarily young age of forty-six, Badoglio received appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army. Thereafter, he helped to both rebuild the Italian Army and to lead it to total victory over the Austro-Hungarians in November 1918. Badoglio rose to Army Chief of Staff in 1920-21 but then fell into eclipse due to political conflicts with both the outgoing Liberals and the incoming Fascists. As a result, Badoglio accepted overseas assignments in the form of a goodwill tour of the United States and as ambassador to Brazil.

Nonetheless, when Mussolini required his services, Badoglio returned to Italy to accept the post of Chief of the Supreme General Staff, for a time combined with that of Army Chief of Staff (1925-27). Even after Mussolini separated the posts, leaving Badoglio with only an empty title, the marshal proved indispensible. He served Mussolini as Governor of Libya, 1928-33, crushing the festering Arab revolt. After the Fascist general Emilio De Bono proved incapable, Badoglio assumed supreme command in East Africa and smashed the Ethiopians. He returned home to Italy in June 1936 to enjoy unparalleled renown, great financial reward and the title of Duke of Addis Ababa.

In late 1936, Mussolini put Badoglio in charge of the National Committee for Economic Independence. Following the death of Marconi, Badoglio replaced him as head of the National

Research council in November 1937. While far beyond his competence, these posts did offer Badoglio some realization of the sorry state of the Italian economy and of the backwardness of Italian scientific research and technological development.[73]

Badoglio felt neither admiration for Fascism nor loyalty to Mussolini. This detachment from the regime, combined with Badoglio's participation in five wars by 1936, gave him considerable ability to judge objectively the military abilities of Fascist Italy, as well as its potential allies, opponents and victims. Yet the marshal's greed for money and honors nonetheless bound him to Mussolini, the source of all benefits.

In August 1935, Badoglio had warned Mussolini that confrontation with Britain over Italian plans to invade Ethiopia would lead to disaster and begged him to back down. Nonetheless, he eagerly sought the supreme command in East Africa and proved that Mussolini had gambled correctly when Badoglio led the Italian forces to victory. When Mussolini learned of Badoglio's grumbling about Italian participation in the Spanish Civil War, he demanded a public expression of the marshal's enthusiasm for that crusade against Bolshevism. The marshal complied.

Mussolini did rely on Badoglio for military advice and the two consulted every workday morning. Unlike Hitler, Mussolini deferred to his military advisers, especially Badoglio, on technical matters. Vittorio Emanuele III also held the marshal in the highest regard. This confidence, along with the power Badoglio held as the generally acknowledged head of the army officer corps, granted him considerable autonomy. Yet the marshal's avidness for rewards and his moral cowardice undermined his willingness to press his opinions when they conflicted with those of the Duce. Furthermore, while he possessed a peasant cunning, Badoglio lacked what

could be called a brilliant intellect. He relied on gifted subordinates for ideas. When pressed for an immediate decision in a crisis situation, the marshal was often at a loss.

Badoglio held the Royal Navy in awe and, even more so, considered the French army to be the finest in Europe. He did not share Mussolini's growing conviction that the German air force and army might prove the better of one and of the other. However, it remains unclear how far Badoglio went in challenging Mussolini's burgeoning belief in the superiority of German arms. Nonetheless, it does appears that Badoglio succeeded in nurturing some doubts in Mussolini's mind about the power of Hitler's war machine.

Badoglio held a low opinion both of Ciano and the young foreign minister's ally, General Pariani. In turn, both men attempted to minimize Badoglio's influence in military affairs. This reinforced both the marshal's hostility to Ciano's policy of an alliance with Nazi Germany and his willingness to question the efficiency of the Italian Army under Pariani's leadership. To some extent, he expressed his views on these matters during his meetings with Mussolini on every workday morning. Altogether, then, Badoglio served as a brake, although a limited one, on the Duce's desire for war on the side of Germany against the West.[74]

The governors of Italy's overseas territories -- Balbo in Libya (January 1934-June 1940), the Duke of Aosta in Italian East Africa (November 1937-May 1941) and, to a lesser extent, De Vecchi in the Dodecanese Islands (November 1936-November 1940) -- gained an independent perspective on the international military balance thanks to their distance from Rome, their ability to interview informed vistors in private and their autonomous intelligence organizations. While all three, including the duke, can be described as Fascists, each became disillusioned, to a varying degree, with Mussolini's ideological approach to foreign policy. The vulnerability of

each governor's territory to British and French attack, combined with a realization of the inadequacy of their forces, prompted each to make their concerns clear to Mussolini during their separate reports to him in Rome. Insofar as they came to spread their viewpoints to the senior officers under their commands and to the gerarchi they met while visiting Italy, the governors contributed to affecting Italian net assessment.

On the other hand, Mussolini had alternate sources of information on the conditions in his overseas provinces. Both the Dodecanese and Albania, after the Italian take-over in April 1939, came under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, Ciano played a large role in shading the picture of the military situation in those areas. The Ministry of Colonies (renamed the Ministry of Italian Africa in April 1937) controlled Libya and Italian East Africa. The successive heads of the ministry, Alessandro Lessona (June 1936-November 1937) and Attilio Teruzzi (November 1937-July 1943), told Mussolini what they believed he wished to hear.[75] In addition, disloyal and dishonest subordinates further undermined the Duke of Aosta's attempts to present Mussolini with an honest assessment of the conditions in the Impero. Furthermore, their isolation from each other and from Italy deprived the governors of more than marginal influence. Finally, both Mussolini and Ciano considered Balbo as treacherous and a self-nominated successor to the Duce, the duke as primarily loyal to the monarchy and his own dynastic ambitions, and De Vecchi as rather stupid and too much of a monarchist.[76]

De Bono had been one of the founders of the regime. A professional army officer, he had reached the rank of lieutenant general by the end of World War I. Placed on the inactive list, De Bono drifted into Fascist politics and helped plan the March on Rome. Thereafter, among other posts, he had served as Governor of Tripolitania (July 1925-December 1928),

Minister of Colonies (September 1929-January 1935) and High Commissioner for East Africa (January-November 1935). In that latter capacity, De Bono had prepared the invasion of Ethiopia and then directed early operations, until relieved by Badoglio.

Mussolini had assuaged De Bono's wounded pride by promoting him to the rank of marshal but left him without employment for the next four years. While no more than a moderately competent general, De Bono's command and colonial experience gave him considerable military expertise. Throughout the late 1930s, De Bono watched the direction of Mussolini's military and foreign policies with growing alarm. By 1938, he had come to fear he had made a terrible mistake in helping Mussolini establish his dictatorship and undermine the monarchy.

It does seem that, to some extent, Mussolini trusted De Bono as an honest observer, although comically encumbered by further ambition. At the same time, Mussolini rejected De Bono's opinions outside the military sphere as those of an "old half-wit" and increasingly came to resent the marshal's criticisms of Italian foreign policy. Thus, while Mussolini slowly and grudgingly came to accept De Bono's concerns about the state of the forze armate, he rejected the marshal's warnings about the dangers of war with the French and British.[77]

Insofar as they could, therefore, the king, Badoglio, the overseas governors and De Bono attempted to present Mussolini with a realistic vision of the military balance. After his change of heart about the wisdom of the alliance with Germany, so did Ciano. Admittedly, with the partial exception of the king, all of these men had intensely selfish interests which often circumscribed their honesty. But the chief obstacle to getting Mussolini to accept an objective net assessment, beyond the Duce's own biases, were Pariani, Valle and Cavagnari. These three,

in their dual capacities as chiefs of staff and military undersecretaries, were hardly prepared to admit how thoroughly unprepared their services were for a major war. Their powers and careers depended on convincing Mussolini of both their loyalty and efficiency. Until his turnabout in August 1939, their reports to the Duce were buttressed by Ciano. While suspicious of all of the gerarchi, Mussolini preferred to believe those who approved his foreign policy and agreed that the Italian armed forces were capable of achieving those aims by force or threat thereof. Under these circumstances, the military operations and maneuvers carried out by the armed forces in the 1935-39 period took on a special significance. However he interpreted them, Mussolini could not reject facts as easily as he could dismiss opinions.

Measurements of Military Capabilities

No other nation's armed forces experienced military operations of the range or duration of those carried out by the forze armate in the years immediately preceding World War II. These included the two-front campaign against Ethiopia in 1935-36, the pacification operations that continued in East Africa up to Italian entry into the Second World War, large-scale Italian participation in the Spanish Civil War and the invasion and occupation of Albania. In addition, the Italian armed forces underwent two general mobilizations, in the summers of 1935 and 1939, and limited mobilizations during the "Pirate Submarine" crisis of August 1937, the crisis preceding the Munich Conference, the extended diplomatic crisis with France from November 1938 to February 1939 and the minor crisis resulting from Mussolini's seizure of Albania that spring.[78] To these rich sources of experience were added a series of major military maneuvers in Italy, the Mediterranean and Libya during these same years.

Paradoxically, actual Italian military operations in East Africa, Spain, Albania and the Mediterranean proved less useful in shaping accurate net assessment than maneuvers and mobilizations. From his victories, Mussolini received the impression that his forces were generally effective.[79] Instead, it was the maneuvers of August 1939 and the general mobilization that immediately followed, provoked by the German invasion of Poland, that finally opened the Duce's eyes to the reality of Italian military inefficiency.

On the other hand, the mistakes and weaknesses of their own forces in battle had impressed many Italian officers from the time they had engaged the Ethiopians in late 1935. These concerns had been reinforced by problems encountered in combat over the next four and a half years. Reports on these shortcomings had worked their way up the chain of command and had been brought to Mussolini's attention. As has been seen, he had either dismissed them or assumed they were being corrected. Nonetheless such complaints had injected certain worries in the Duce's mind. As a result, the shock of August 1939 produced a swifter reaction from Mussolini and the military leadership than it might have otherwise.

Even more difficult for the Italians was an accurate appraisal of the military effectiveness of their likely opponents (France, Britain, Yugoslavia and Greece), possible opponents (the Soviet Union and Rumania) and allies (Germany, Hungary, Nationalist Spain and, perhaps, Bulgaria). None, save the Spanish Nationalists, engaged in major hostilities in the 1935-39 period. Still, the Spanish Civil War did offer hints about French capabilities and real lessons about those of the Germans. That the Italian leadership failed to appreciate these indications points out one weakness in their net assessment system. It took the events of September 1939 to May 1940 to make matters clearer. By then, however, the previous failures of Italian

judgment about the military balance placed the Fascist regime in a position that can literally be called hopeless.

As early as 1936, however, and guaged even without reference to foreign forces, the Italian military leadership viewed the condition of their individual services with varying degrees of discontent. Even before the Ethiopian War, the army high command had recognized the need for the total renovation of its artillery. Operations in East Africa revealed other shortcomings in weapons and equipment. Foremost were the need for a semi-automatic rifle, an improved light machine gun, more powerful rifle ammunition, a better light mortar, an effective anti-tank gun, a modern medium tank, some sort of armored half-track or personnel carrier and sufficient numbers of motor vehicles. Combat in Spain reinforced army awareness of these needs. Furthermore, both wars devoured huge amounts of existing arms, ammunition and equipment.

Stressing the conflict between rectifying these shortcomings and sending significant military aid to Franco had cost Baistrocchi his career. Mussolini made it clear to his successor, Pariani, that the army could not expect funds to begin to remedy its needs until mid-1938. Pariani calculated that a minimum program of resupply and modernization would take at least four and a half years. But a satisfactory level of small arms, crew-served weapons, artillery, motor vehicles and modern medium tanks could not be reached until 1947. Even that would require the retention of the unsatisfactory models previously acquired.[80]

Mussolini and Pariani discussed the material shortcomings of the army frequently in the 1936-39 period. Starting in September 1938, at the time of the Czech crisis, Pariani began regular meetings with Dallolio, the head of COGEFAG, and with the Ministers of Finance and Exchange, the Governor of the Bank of Italy and major industrialists to coordinate and expand

arms production for the army. These interchanges made the serious weaknesses afflicting the Regio Esercito clear to them all.[81]

Within the army, however, a peculiar process of denial and dishonesty impinged upon the process of assessing its problems. The example of the army's appreciation of its tank forces is illustrative. Even with the great advantages they enjoyed in the Ethiopian War, Italian tank units had discovered the inadequacy of their poorly armed and armored fighting vehicles and their organization. These problems became far more obvious in Spain, where the Italians were able to observe the superior armored equipment, doctrine and organization of their German allies and Soviet opponents. Italian tank commanders reported such matters to their superiors. The response from above, however, was to either dispute that such defects really mattered or to issue false promises of hasty rectification. Apparently, since the army high command could not act on such complaints, they deemed it best for reasons of morale or politics to simply deny the problems existed. Until the fall of 1939, such attitudes extended to every other shortcoming in the Regio Esercito, with the obvious impact upon Italian Army ability to judge itself and its likely opponents.[82]

Nonetheless, throughout his tenure as chief of staff, Pariani expressed a high degree of unwarranted optimism about the effectiveness of the army. Partly, this seems to have resulted from wishful thinking and from a calculated desire to curry favor with Mussolini and Ciano. But the Army Chief of Staff also placed great hopes in the use of poison gas. Italian employment of chemical weapons in Ethiopia had greatly impressed Pariani. Experiments in Italy had convinced him that it would perform wonders on European battlefields, as well. Pariani had given some thought to using poison gas against the Spanish Republicans but had decided against it,

apparently to keep Italian chemical warfare developments secret. He had also promised it to the Hungarians, in case of need. Pariani had every intention of using chemical weapons in war against the British, the French and any lesser peoples who opposed the Italian march of conquest. Convinced that the Italian Army enjoyed major advantages both in its ability to employ gas offensively and to defend against it, Pariani faced the possibility of a general war with aplomb. He seemed to believe that the use of chemical weapons could alone redress the balance of force in Italian favor.[83]

Self-deception and deliberate dishonesty made it even more difficult for the air force leadership to evaluate the weaknesses of their service. In the summer of 1936, the Air Force General Staff prepared plans for a construction program designed to raise Regia Aeronautica strength from 115 to 170 squadrons, a total of some 3300 combat aircraft, by the spring of 1938. Such a force was deemed necessary to achieve air superiority over the Mediterranean, to maintain control over the new Impero and to provide the new types of aircraft the air force needed to retain its technical edge in an age of rapid advances in aircraft design. The Council of Ministers approved the plan in October 1936.[84]

Simultaneously, the air force high command began debating the interconnected questions of air war doctrine, aircraft design and aircraft procurement. Italian experience in the Ethiopian War had raised questions about the validity of Douhet's theories of independent strategic bombing and suggested the alternative of developing an air force designed to cooperate with the army through close air support operations.

While Valle enthusiastically supported Mussolini's decision to intervene in the Spanish Civil War on a large scale in late 1936-early 1937, Regia Aeronautica involvement in the

conflict threw its expansion plans into disarray. Scarce funds and hundreds of aircraft were diverted to support operations in Spain. New questions about the direction of air force development were generated by lessons learned from combat in the Spanish skies and from contact with the Luftwaffe units flying for the Nationalists. Increasing numbers of air force commanders became disillusioned with Douhet's grandiose ideas and attracted to building a bomber force for ground attack missions. Seeing the new German fighter aircraft in action and growing awareness of the capabilities of the British Hurricane and Spitfire convinced many Italian fighter commanders that the Regia Aeronautica had to abandon its attachment to biplanes. Meanwhile, operations in Spain steadily chipped away at air force strength. In late December 1937, the Regia Aeronautica counted 1670 aircraft; by late December 1938, the number had fallen to 1147, of which only 930 were combat-ready. Hopes for air force expansion in the near future had collapsed.[85]

Despite these indications, Valle resisted a radical change of direction for his service. To renounce Douhet's theories meant to reject the paramount role for the Regia Aeronautica in a future general war. The Air Force Chief of Staff hesitated to abandon the biplane fighters which had proved so effective in Spain. After all, by the end of the war, the Italians had lost only 73 biplanes in aerial combat while downing at least 450 enemy aircraft. Furthermore, to manufacture all-metal monowing fighters would require extensive retooling, the temporary suspension of existing assembly lines (with consequent losses of foreign orders) and the large scale importation of costly raw materials. Building large numbers of such aircraft would prove fabulously expensive.[86]

Valle also knew that the concentration of Italian industry in the Po Valley, especially aircraft factories, left them highly vulnerable to bombing attacks. Even worse, the army's artillery shortages included a woeful lack of anti-aircraft guns, paralleling the air force's insufficient numbers of fighters for air defense roles. But to shift aircraft assembly to new and more easily-defended plants in the south and to order large numbers of new fighters would both disrupt aircraft construction and shift resources away from bomber production.[87]

But by remaining on his old track, Valle ignored the deficiencies plaguing the Regia Aeronautica. Leaving aside the question of the validity of Douhet's theories, these problems made implementation of those ideas out of the question. Bomber pilots were of generally poor quality and could not accurately place their ordnance on target; training of all aircrews suffered from attempts to save scarce and costly fuel; the engines supplied by Italian industry were woefully underpowered, crippling aircraft performance; the air force certainly lacked anything like the numbers or kinds of bombers called-for by Douhet's concepts. In effect, the air force leadership knew that had no effective doctrine whatsoever.

In early 1938, Valle moved to remedy one problem by agreeing to award the first contracts for experimental modern fighters. At the same time, however, he ordered the development of another biplane. Only in mid-1939 did the Air Force Chief of Staff abandon biplane development and settle on metal monowing aircraft. But he chose the inferior designs of those available. He appears to have been bribed.[88]

For the naval leadership, awareness of the weaknesses of the Regia Marina revolved around one problem. With the brief exception of the Corfu Crisis of 1923, the Italian Navy had never contemplated war against the Royal Navy, which it held in awe. The Italian Navy had

always prepared for a conflict with the French, even in 1915-18. From 1935 onward, however, Cavagnari and his admirals had to plan for a contest with Britain for which they had no stomach. To make matters worse, all Italian warships had been specifically designed for combat with French vessels. Given the extended building times for Italian ships, due to shortages of raw materials and of skilled workers, this included all major warships which would enter service through 1943.[89]

Yet Cavagnari exacerbated the problem by a combination of wishful thinking and passive acceptance of Mussolini's authority. During the Ethiopian War, the Regia Marina had made significant progress on the development of surface and underwater assault techniques. As operations during the Second World War would demonstrate, these projects offered great hopes for success against the Royal Navy. The 1935-36 crisis had also stimulated studies that pointed out the need for and the efficacy of extensive mine warfare to counter the British. Once the immediate danger of war passed, however, Cavagnari withdrew support for these matters and concentrated his scarce resources on building submarines and battleships.[90]

The Navy Chief of Staff acted on the basis of Mussolini's assurances that he would avoid a general war until Italy and its navy would be prepared. Furthermore, the admiral accepted Mussolini's directives to prepare the Regia Marina to strike offensively with its battlefleet once the conflict began. Nor did he contest Mussolini's exaggerated expectations of what Italian submarines might accomplish in the Mediterranean. Yet Cavagnari recognized that his fleet would not be strong enough to carry out such offensive operations against both the British and the French. He knew he would be hard pressed simply to protect the convoy routes to Libya.[91]

In addition, Cavagnari knew of other serious problems afflicting his service. Problems

with the quality control of propellants and shells made Italian naval gunfire extremely erratic. Nor could Italian industry produce naval artillery to match the power of the new guns entering service in foreign navies. The threat that aircraft posed to warships had markedly increased and Regia Marina ships lacked sufficient anti-aircraft guns. But Italian industry could not produce enough. To reduce building costs, Italian shipyards and naval arsenals scrimped on materials and construction techniques. As a result, many Italian naval vessels failed to meet design standards.

To go to war against the Royal Navy, famed for its gunnery practice, possessing aircraft carriers (Mussolini had vetoed the construction of any such vessels as of too little use and too great expense) and boasting warships of the highest quality meant suicide. Cavagnari dreaded the prospect.[92]

While the deficiencies of each service were well-known to their respective chiefs of staff/undersecretaries, they did not readily reveal them to each other or to Badoglio. The lack of a combined general staff prevented the dissemination of such information by other channels. In times of crisis or on other extraordinary occasions, Mussolini did empower Badoglio to convene conferences of the chiefs of staff. Then, some problems of a particular service might be revealed to all. In general, however, the service chiefs planned in isolation and in ignorance of their counterparts' capabilities and disabilities.

When they did discuss their own strategic planning during their infrequent meetings, each chief of staff revealed the incompatibility of his thinking with that of his counterparts. In the meeting of 2 December 1937, for example, Pariani asked for navy and air force support for his plans for an offensive from Cyrenaica to seize the Suez Canal. But Cavagnari and Valle demanded freedom to conduct totally independent sea and air wars. Valle rejected the admiral's

demands for air support, while Cavagnari resisted the idea of employing the fleet to supply Pariani's proposed operations in North Africa. Badoglio thought that Pariani's plans were unrealistic and that there should be close air force-navy cooperation. Yet the marshal lacked the authority to impose his views on the chiefs of staff.[93]

Mussolini, the king and Badoglio had a clearer picture of the overall situation. But Mussolini alone seems to have had access to all available relevant information on the state of his armed forces. Furthermore, he knew the details of the near-disasters inflicted on Badoglio's army by the Ethiopians in December 1935-January 1936, of the Italian defeat at Guadalajara and of the bungled invasion of Albania.[94]

Save for the period of the Czech Crisis in September 1938, what mitigated any anxiety produced by this knowledge was Mussolini's conviction that Italy would avoid a major war until 1943. Mussolini had also convinced himself he could separate France from Britain and engage his neighbor in an isolated conflict. War against Britain would take place only after victory over France and in alliance with a powerful Germany. This final conflict for control of Europe, the Middle East and Africa would take place sometime in the mid or late 1940s. By then, however, Italy would have rebuilt its armed forces. Mussolini's revelation of this scenario to his political and military subordinates did much to lessen their worries. Furthermore, despite the repeated war scares from late 1935 to early 1939, the Duce had not only avoided a major war but had achieved his territorial and political objectives. These successes offered the chiefs of staff even more reassurance that their forces would not be put to any major test until fully prepared.[95]

Still, harsh reality did intrude on the artificially serene prospect Mussolini presented to himself and his lieutenants. Final victory in Africa and Spain could ease the sting of defeats

suffered along the way. The expectation of years of peace to remedy shortages of arms and equipment could dull worries over empty magazines and bunkers. But nothing could erase the concern that arose from the performance of the forze armate at their carefully orchestrated maneuvers, held in the full view of the assembled gerarchi.

Preparations for War, 1936-38

The army's annual large-scale exercises, usually pitting one army corps against another, took place in August. These tested the latest weapons, unit organizations and operational doctrine. The presence of the Duce, the king, the military and political leaders of the regime, and the foreign military attachés lent these occasions considerable diplomatic and political significance, as well as providing an opportunity to test the army's effectiveness. Given its paramount importance among the forze armate, the performance of the army reflected on the overall military power of Fascist Italy. Furthermore, the army's annual exercises were sometimes combined with those of the other services, offering a display of the full panoply of the regime. However, the annual army maneuvers also contained theatrical and propagandistic elements that detracted from their usefulness as an indicator of military effectiveness.[96]

The 1936 maneuvers tested the army's proposed mechanized brigade and motorized infantry regiment in the mountains directly north of the Gulf of Salerno. The scenario, while not made explicit, clearly simulated a French invasion of the Po Valley and a successful counter offensive by Italian forces. Baistrocchi did not invite the French military attaché, General Henri Parisot, to observe the exercise, a clear indication of the recent deterioration of French-Italian relations.[97]

As Mussolini indicated in a speech delivered at Avellino following the conclusion of the exercises, another purpose of the maneuvers was to refute questions, in Italy and abroad, about the effect of the Ethiopian War on Italian military power. None too convincingly, Mussolini insisted that "not despite the African War but as a result of the African War, all the armed forces of Italy today are more efficient than before. In the course of a few hours and after a simple order, we can always mobilize eight million bayonets."[98]

In addition, Baistrocchi used the opportunity to attempt communications entirely by radio, since wire communications hardly lent themselves to mechanized operations. These experiments encouraged Baistrocchi's successor, Pariani, to pursue mechanization. But they also underlined the inadequate quantity and quality of motor vehicles and radio equipment available to the army, problems which remained unsolved.[99]

For 1937, Pariani had planned maneuvers that again simulated a French invasion of the Po Valley, concurrent with an Italian offensive against Yugoslavia toward the Ljubljana Gap. However, early that year, the British government had announced a marked increase in its military spending. Mussolini decided that these measures were designed to intimidate him. While agreeing to the maneuvers in the Veneto to test plans for the invasion of Yugoslavia, he cancelled the remainder of Pariani's preparations. Instead, Mussolini ordered combined land, sea and air maneuvers held in the area around Trapani in northwestern Sicily. Their primary purpose was to warn the British and reassure the Italians that the forze armate could defend the island against invasion. In that regard, Mussolini judged the exercise a complete success. "Is a landing in Sicily conceivable? I have been led to exclude that in a very absolute way." But the red forces, playing the role of the invaders, had moved inland from their beachhead slowly and

ineptly. Furthermore, although possessing the single operational armored brigade in the entire army, the red forces had thrown away this advantage. In his only assault, the brigade commander had advanced his unsupported tanks uphill over open terrain against well-sited artillery and infantry dug into commanding positions. Little wonder that the invasion had been judged to have failed.[100]

In private, Pariani drew some correct conclusions from the maneuvers. He decided that the newly-created Italian armored brigades could not make successful attacks without the direct support of organic artillery. As a result, he ordered the formation of armored divisions. On the other hand, the Army Chief of Staff considered that both the Sicily and Veneto exercises had proved the proposed two-infantry-regiment division a success, despite the negative observations of his subordinates and the doubts of Badoglio and Mussolini himself about the divisione binaria. According to Pariani, such light divisions would prove particularly mobile, greatly improving the ability of the Italian Army to engage in rapid movement and hard-hitting offensive operations, while discouraging defensive-mindedness. By granting its commander only two main maneuver elements, the divisione binaria organization theoretically imposed offensive action on him, even in a defensive situation. Unable to defend any position with more than half his forces, the commander of such a division would be forced to counterattack even when threatened by an enemy break-through. Finally, Pariani decided that the Sicilian exercises had demonstrated that Italian shores could be defended adequately by the rapid concentration and intervention of naval and air forces, supplemented only by anti-aircraft units in the landing zone. With that judgment, Mussolini concurred.[101]

Surpassing these maneuvers in their influence on both Mussolini and Pariani, however, were the German military exercises of September 1937. That fall, the entire political and military leadership of Fascist Italy accompanied Mussolini on his state visit to Germany. The German army and air force maneuvers in Mecklemburg, his tour of a Krupp cannon factory in Essen and his reception everywhere throughout the Reich greatly impressed Mussolini. Indeed, Hitler and Goebbels had devoted great energy and expense to that end. Nonetheless, Badoglio insisted that what they had seen revealed the German army as inferior to both the Italian and the French. Ciano found the Germans less impressive than he had expected. But Mussolini returned to Italy almost intoxicated with the Wehrmacht, Nazi discipline and German industrial might. Better able than Mussolini to assess the display of German military power, Pariani became an enthusiastic advocate of a German-Italian military alliance.[102]

The dual 1937 exercises had proved so expensive for the army that Pariani decided not to hold any major maneuvers in Italy in 1938. Instead, Mussolini, as well as the leadership of the army and the other armed forces, devoted considerable resources to the military spectacles arranged for Hitler's visit to Italy in early May 1938. The Anschluss, which took place in the midst of these preparations, made it all the more important to the Italians to impress their new German neighbors with the strength of the Italian armed forces.[103]

All the attention paid to the military aspects of what Hitler saw during his stay in Italy did create a favorable picture. Previous German military observers, notably the former commander-in-chief of the Wehrmacht, Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg, had received very negative impressions of the Italian armed forces. But the May 1938 demonstrations of the Italian army and air force convinced the Fuhrer and many in his entourage of the efficiency of Italian

arms. In particular, the stupendous naval review in the Bay of Naples on 5 May 1938 dazzled Hitler. The climax, a simultaneous mass dive and surfacing by eighty-five Italian submarines, seemed to offer proof that the Regia Marina possessed both the skill and the strength to dominate the Mediterranean. Thereafter, despite the warnings of the German military and naval attachés in Rome, Hitler angrily rejected critical assessments of the forze armate.[104]

In the midst of the naval display, Hitler's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, suggested a military alliance with Germany to Ciano. Ribbentrop emphasized his own hopes for a war against the West and as soon as possible. Acting on Mussolini's instructions, the Italian foreign minister suggested putting off the question of alliance until a future date. But Hitler's enthusiastic reaction to the Italian fleet and Ribbentrop's offer reinforced Mussolini's high opinion of his armed forces and whetted his appetite for an eventual war of aggression on the side of Germany. Mussolini does not seem to have realized that by convincing Hitler that Italy was ready for war, the Duce had encouraged the Fuhrer's plans for aggression in the immediate future.[105]

Mussolini's decision to delay the signing of a formal alliance with Germany arose from his temporary rapprochement with Britain and his hopes to isolate France in preparation for a possible Franco-Italian war, a conflict which Hitler encouraged for a time in 1937-38. As a result, Mussolini ordered Pariani to reduce the scope of maneuvers in Libya, scheduled for late May 1938, to avoid the appearance of a threat to Egypt. The dispatch of two army corps to Libya in 1937 had allowed Pariani to substitute experiments with these forces for the cancelled annual large-scale army maneuvers. The presence of Vittorio Emanuele III, as well as Pariani, at the Libyan maneuvers in late May accentuated their import. In addition to their intended

purpose, the exercises provided the king and Balbo the opportunity to lament Mussolini's ever-closer relations with Hitler and to reinforce each other's opinion that the forze armate were in no condition to fight the French or the British.[106]

Nonetheless, that hypothesis formed the premise of the exercises. Pariani and Balbo had first conceived a plan for the invasion of Egypt in the late summer of 1935, during the crisis with Britain just prior to the outbreak of the Ethiopian War. Pariani had continued to hold a low opinion of the British forces in Egypt, a judgment shared by Mussolini. While the British had reinforced their garrison since 1935, Pariani intended to raise the strength of Italian forces in Libya to two full armies. One could defend Tripoli against a French attack, while the other could invade the Nile Delta and seize the Suez Canal. The May 1938 maneuvers tested both the ability of the Italians to defend Tripolitania against the French and to advance into Egypt. Pariani returned to Italy convinced of the feasibility of his plans.[107]

In early July, Pariani visited Germany for military conversations and to inspect the growing power of the Wehrmacht. Arms production on a scale beyond anything possible in Italy impressed him mightily. So did military training, although Pariani did not always comprehend the vast superiority of German methods over those of the Italian Army. Talks with the German high command, Goering and Hitler convinced Pariani of genuine German friendship for Italy. He also came away from his meetings certain that the West could not withstand Axis might. In fact, Hitler argued that they were so powerful that Italy and Germany could reach their goals through intimidation alone.

Once the hypnotic influence of the Fuhrer wore off, however, Pariani assessed the German military situation a bit more soberly. He decided that Germany would not be ready for

war until late 1940 at the earliest and possibly not until the first months of 1942. Even then, a German-Italian alliance would remain bereft of sufficient resources to wage a long war. The Axis would have to wage a short, offensive conflict to secure the resources of the Balkans and Central Europe and to gain access to the oceans by overrunning Egypt and the Sudan.[108]

Equally influential were small-scale army maneuvers that August in the Sabine Hills east of Rome. By successfully pitting one of his experimental divisione binarie and one conventional infantry division against the finest three-infantry-regiment division in the army, the royal guards of the Granatieri di Sardegna, Pariani finally gained Mussolini's assent to the complete conversion of the army to the new table of organization. Such a transformation of divisional structure would completely disrupt the army, making it incapable of an effective mobilization until the spring of 1940. Nonetheless, Pariani believed the risk worth taking. He was convinced that completion of his project would remodel his forces into a far more powerful and effective offensive force. Furious over what he considered both a dishonest experiment and a blunder of the first order, Badoglio refused to attend the maneuvers.[109]

Badoglio's assessment of the divisione binaria proved correct. Its table of organization and equipment created a unit too cumbersome to function as a brigade but too weak to operate as a division. By concentrating organic infantry firepower at the regimental level, Pariani left the division's companies and battalions inexperienced in operating with the support of crew-served weapons. Given the lack of tanks and the shortages of modern artillery, the junior reserve officers who would command the army's platoons and companies in wartime would lead their units into combat ignorant not only of combined arms tactics but even of the concept of fire and maneuver.

The only advantage the new units offered was to add to the number of divisions officially on the rolls of the Italian Army. These leapt upward from the forty-one established by Baistrocchi in October 1934 to the sixty-three created on paper by Pariani in December 1938. This may have been the deciding factor for Mussolini. At the time of the Anschluss he had commented that such an expansion of German power would force him to increase the strength of the Italian Army by ten well-equiped divisions. True, even the army's existing divisions lacked sufficient arms. But creating twenty new divisions, not just ten, seemed impressive. If the purpose was only to reassure the Italian people, perhaps this increase made some sense from the point of view of domestic propaganda. However, this sleight of hand also reinforced Mussolini's dangerous illusions about the strength of his forces.[110]

The late summer of 1938 marked the high point of Mussolini's faith in Pariani and the military efficiency of the Italian Army. Just a few days before the August maneuvers, Pariani had obtained Mussolini's agreement to a five-year, five billion lire program for the modernization and replenishment of the army's weapons and equipment, especially its artillery. By the spring of 1943, the completed reorganization and reinforcement of the army would allow Mussolini to face the prospect of a major war with considerable confidence. But Mussolini also decided that it would be prudent to fortify the new Brenner frontier with Hitler's expanded Reich. With the king's enthusiastic approval, Mussolini ordered the construction of a vast defensive system in the Alps along the old border with Austria.[111]

In the meantime, Mussolini expected no trouble from the British and the French. His contempt for both nations had grown steadily as a result of Western failure to impede Italian aggression in East Africa and Spain. In particular, Mussolini believed that British and French

pacifism and cowardice had rendered their armed forces nearly worthless. This attitude toward their potential enemies had spread through the officer corps of the forze armate, as well. Even as the German-Czech crisis grew during the summer of 1938, Mussolini dismissed the likelihood of Franco-British intervention, even in the case of a German invasion. A private conversation with the Conservative politician, Leo Amery, in April 1938, had apparently convinced Mussolini that the British and French would do nothing to help the Czechs. At the same time, Hitler kept Mussolini in the dark over German intentions.[112]

In mid-September, therefore, the outbreak of the Czech Crisis took Mussolini by surprise and forced him to face the possibility of war not in years but in days. He recognized the forze armate were unready for a war in which the Axis would face a suddenly resolute Britain, France and Czechoslovakia, possibly the Soviet Union and even the United States. He estimated that Russian intervention might force Poland to join Germany. However, both the threat from Rumania and their own military weakness would force the Hungarians into neutrality, even if the Italians sent them aerial reinforcements. He hoped for Yugoslav neutrality but realized that they might very well join the anti-Axis alignment. On 26 September, much to Mussolini and Ciano's outrage, they learned that Franco also intended to declare his neutrality in case of war. This would strand the Italian forces in Spain.

Mussolini and Pariani understood that the army could only assume a defensive posture on all fronts. Even then, as a rapid inspection tour during the crisis made clear to Pariani, Italian frontier fortifications were sadly lacking. Under such circumstances, the Italians could not contemplate an offensive against Egypt. On the contrary, they anticipated a British attack on the Dodecanese and French operations to seize Spanish Morocco and the Balearics to neutralize the

threat presented by Italian forces based in Nationalist territory. If hostilities broke out, the most the Italians could do to aid Germany would be to pin-down as many enemy forces as possible. The situation appeared so threatening that Vittorio Emanuele III and Badoglio seem to have considered overthrowing Mussolini and realigning Italy with the Western powers.[113]

Despite these bleak prospects, Mussolini decided that he must stand by Hitler. Otherwise, an isolated Germany would certainly lose the struggle. After that, Italy would face the West and the Soviets alone. Most essentially, however, Mussolini gambled that his intuitive understanding of Chamberlain and Daladier would prove correct. He believed that their spiritual weakness and moral cowardice would lead them to back down in the face of Axis intransigence.[114]

On 27 September, Mussolini summoned Pariani, Valle, Cavagnari and Badoglio to a conference to assess the situation. Each of the chiefs of staff reported severe shortages of arms and equipment. Summing up the situation, Badoglio made it clear to Mussolini that Italy simply could not enter a war against Britain and France. In response, Mussolini ordered the partial mobilization of the armed forces but on the basis of armed neutrality, pending the development of events. It appeared that he had miscalculated and that hostilities were imminent. Mussolini and his lieutenants experienced real fear.[115]

At the last moment, diplomacy and the Western weakness that he had anticipated rescued Mussolini from his painful dilemma. Mussolini's advice to Hitler to seek a negotiated settlement had a powerful braking effect on the German dictator since he now considered Italy to be a major military power. Hitler did not want to risk war without full Italian backing. Instead, over the next few days, the shortsightedness of Chamberlain and Daladier, the ruthlessness of Hitler and the diplomatic skill of Mussolini peacefully resolved the situation at the Munich Conference

in favor of the Axis. During the weeks that followed, however, an evaluation of what the mobilization of his forces had revealed left Mussolini deeply troubled.[116]

The navy seemed to have done its best, especially given the fact that it possessed only two operational battleships. Cavagnari could expect four, of the six undergoing construction or modernization, to be ready only sometime in 1940. Until then, there was little he could have done in a war against the French and British -- except pray for the unlikely intervention of the Japanese.[117]

But even the limited army mobilization had produced chaos. Procedures to speed reservists to their units had collapsed in confusion. Many had never received uniforms. Severe lack of almost every type of arm, equipment and vehicle had been shockingly apparent. Despite Pariani's plans for the use of poison gas, protective masks had been in critically short supply.[118]

Among the circle of his senior staff officers and commanders, Pariani admitted to many of these shortcomings. But he was less candid with Mussolini. Nonetheless, as the weeks passed, rumors about the army's disastrous September 1938 mobilization spread through the population. The military attachés in Rome gathered detailed reports on the matter for their governments. Stories of Italian military shortcomings, repeated in the foreign press, so stung Mussolini that during a meeting with Ribbentrop on 28 October he insisted that what had been a botched call-up of 137,000 reserves had really concentrated 400,000 troops on the French frontier, fully ready to attack. A month later, as rumors of the true state of affairs continued to swirl, Ciano delivered a speech to the Chamber of Deputies in which he described the armed forces as having been completely prepared for war in September.[119]

The crisis did reveal to the three chiefs of staff just how dangerously incompatible their separate plans for war had been. In December 1938, the Navy General Staff finally responded to army and air force requests for support of their proposed operations in Africa. It drew up plans to transport an army corps and aviation to Libya, as well as to support landings on Malta and at Aden, and for naval actions to block the Suez Canal. In terms of actual operations in 1940-42, these plans were inadequate. But they did mark an important departure from previous navy thinking. Cavagnari, however, allowed no actual implementation of such concepts. He refused to alter his policies or his shipbuilding programs designed for an independent naval war in the Mediterranean.[120]

The Pact of Steel and the Outbreak of War

Throughout the eleven months that separated the Munich Conference from the outbreak of World War II, Mussolini remained seriously confused about the European balance of power. The Duce's greatest error was to believe that Italy possessed the means to maintain the Munich settlement until it suited him to upset it. The Italian mobilization of September 1938 had revealed the disarray of the forze armate. Mussolini was well aware that the plans of his chiefs of staff for the modernization of their services were years from completion. Yet he acted as if such material factors counted for little. Instead, he seems to have believed that his political genius and Fascist willpower could overcome any obstacle.[121]

In late 1938 Mussolini was basing his plans on the assumption that he could secure Italian influence in the Balkans by seizing Albania and by erecting a barrier to German expansion consisting of an Italian-led coalition of Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia (or an independent

Croatia). Furthermore, Mussolini concluded from Munich that he could bully France into making major concessions to Italy. Ultimately, he thought in terms of Nice, Corsica, Tunisia and Jibuti. Such territorial gains were likely only through war, however. In the short term, Mussolini believed that threats and diplomacy could win Italy a portion of the French shares in the Suez Canal and a change in the status of Jibuti to an Italo-French condominium. Furthermore, Mussolini believed that he could deflect Hitler's interest from Europe temporarily by synchronizing Italian claims on French territory with German demands for the return of their old colonies. Finally, Mussolini considered the British to be so cowed by the Axis and so impressed by Italian military might that they would abandon France in favor of an understanding with Italy.

Mussolini revealed his thinking in an unusually frank report to the Fascist Grand Council on 4 February 1939. He described Italy as a "prisoner in the Mediterranean," confined by the British and the French. The nation would either have to break out or strangle. This was a theme he had been elaborating since the late twenties. The time was fast approaching, however, when Italy would take action to gain windows on the oceans. Mussolini proposed a war with France first. Under Pariani's influence, he discounted an offensive across the Alps or into Tunisia. While the Italians might overrun Jibuti, Mussolini envisioned the conflict as primarily an aero-naval contest. Just how such a struggle would lead to conquest of the territories Mussolini sought, he did not say. Nor did he expect to be ready before 1942, in any case, and suggested the French might simply surrender in the face of Italian might.[122]

News of Mussolini's bombastic dreams reached not only the king, whom Mussolini did not want informed, but a copy of his report was acquired by French intelligence, as well. The

French government began pressuring the British to take a stand against the Italians.[123] Already, Chamberlain had rejected Mussolini's offer of a special relationship and Hitler had refused to support Mussolini's campaign of intimidation against France. Then Mussolini's schemes really began to unravel.

The French resisted Italian efforts to bully them. Prince Paul of Yugoslavia dismissed his pro-Italian prime minister. Hitler seized the remnants of Czechoslovakia without any warning at all to Mussolini. Yet the Duce still persisted in clinging to his fantasy about Italy's weight in the scales of Europe. He continued to insist, both with his subordinates and to the Germans, that Italy could wage a war with France some years hence and persuade the British to remain neutral.

True, some developments had run in Italian favor. In March 1939, Hungary did achieve a common border with Poland when the Magyars acquired Ruthenia. Later that month, the Nationalists and their Italian allies achieved complete victory in Spain. In April the Italians seized Albania as a form of compensation for the German destruction of the Munich settlement. But the balance of power in central and eastern Europe had now tipped decisively in German favor. Furthermore, these acts of Axis aggression were quickly followed by the announcement of the Franco-British guarantees to Greece and Rumania; then the separate British and French security treaties with Turkey in May and June. At the same time, both the British and the French accelerated their rearmament and began serious war preparations. In April, the British took the unprecedented step of introducing peacetime conscription.

By the late spring of 1939, Mussolini realized that Italy had been encircled and his freedom of action greatly restricted. By acting upon his miscalculation of the European balance of power, Mussolini had actually tipped the scales against Italy even further. While he refused

to recognize this -- or, at least to admit it -- Ciano did. From March 1939 onward, the Foreign Minister began to lose faith in his father-in-law's judgment and to consider a new anti-German course for Italian foreign policy. But Mussolini convinced himself that the Nationalist victory in Spain, like the earlier Italian victory in Ethiopia, proved the validity of his strategic vision.[124]

Helping Franco gain his victory certainly had been costly. While Mussolini had paid a relatively small price in Italian lives -- some 4300 killed in action -- he had doled out a great deal of treasure and military equipment. Total Italian aid to the Nationalists had amounted to 12-14 billion lire and enough materiel to arm 15-20 divisions. The cost of the Ethiopian War, the continuing campaign to pacify the Impero, Mussolini's armaments programs and, finally, the war in Spain reduced the reserves of the Bank of Italy from 20 billion lire in 1933 to less than 3 billion lire in 1939.[125]

In the spring of 1939, Mussolini acted in response to his increasing sense of vulnerability and to the Franco-British security arrangements, as well as in hopes of restraining Hitler until Italy could recover and prepare for a general war. In May, he finally agreed to the signing of the offensive-defensive military alliance with Germany known as the Pact of Steel. Soon after, however, Mussolini informed Hitler that Italy could not be ready to wage war until the beginning of 1943 at the very earliest. Ciano's negotiations with the Spanish in June and July, aimed at offsetting the recent Franco-British security agreements, indicated the need for an even longer period of peace if the Italians wanted Spain as a military ally. Franco told Ciano that the Spanish were too exhausted by the civil war to join the Italians in another conflict until at least 1944. In

view of their joint plans for Spanish construction of a large fleet, including four battleships modeled on the Italian Littorio class, the date could very well be much later.[126]

Even before the signing of the alliance with Germany, Mussolini had authorized Pariani to meet with General Wilhelm Keitel in early April to discuss military matters of common interest. This meeting was followed by similar discussions between Valle and General Erhard Milch in late May, and between Cavagnari and Admiral Erich Raeder a month later. At the very end of June, Valle held additional talks with Goering. Except for Pariani's initial insistence on the feasibility of an isolated Italian-French war -- which he quickly abandoned -- the conferences were based on the assumption of a conflict between the Axis and West in the 1942-43 period. Both the Italians and the Germans agreed that their forces would not be ready until that time. Neither side gave the other a very precise idea of their planning and no concrete steps were taken to create any type of joint staffs. Underneath the boasting both sides engaged in, the Germans sensed Italian insecurity, while the Italians came away impressed with growing German might.[127]

While accomplishing little else, these meetings helped reinforce Mussolini's belated recognition of the extent of Italian military and economic weakness. In late July, he decided to hold a conference with Hitler. Since early May he had known the Germans were seeking a comprehensive agreement with the Soviets and he feared the consequences. Mussolini intended to secure Hitler's firm commitment to peace until Italy could rebuild its armed forces. Furthermore, he hoped to gain the German dictator's agreement to a conference with Chamberlain and Daladier. Such a meeting, Mussolini believed, could allow him to extract fresh concessions from the craven Western powers. Instead, the unexpected events of August 1939

showed Mussolini that he had already lost much of his ability to influence the international situation. The first proof came from the army's maneuvers in the western Po Valley during the first eleven days of the month.[128]

Since the army had not held large-scale maneuvers in two years and had, in the meantime, begun the total reorganization of its divisions, the exercises of 1-11 August 1939 held special importance. Pariani used the Sixth Army ("The Army of the Po"), which he had begun organizing in October 1938. In it he had concentrated two of the army's three armored divisions, both of its motorized divisions and all of the army's three motor transportable and three Celere divisions. The former consisted of infantry divisions specially organized for movement by truck; the latter were hybrid formations formed from tank, motorized, motorcycle, bicycle and cavalry units.[129]

The maneuvers fell into two parts: first, the concentration of the Sixth Army by road and rail movement in the area east of Turin to test its mobility; then, a war game based on the hypothesis of a war between the Axis and the West. Pariani approved a scenario in which the Swiss had allowed the movement of French troops across their territory, forcing the Italians to respond to offensives both from the north and the west into the Po Valley. Proud of the powerful new striking force he had created, Pariani invited not only the entire military attaché corps but also the chiefs of staff of the armies of Italy's two allies, Generals Franz Halder of Germany and Henrik Werth of Hungary. While Vittorio Emanuele III, Crown Prince Umberto and the gerarchi, including Balbo, De Bono and De Vecchi attended, Mussolini, Ciano and Badoglio were conspicuous by their absence.

Concerned by the unfolding international crisis between Germany and Poland, the Duce and his son-in-law stayed in Rome to monitor the diplomatic situation. Badoglio, by then on the worst of terms with Pariani, apparently boycotted the maneuvers to express his severe disapproval of the Army Chief of Staff's work. Two visits by the marshal to Libya, in February and June, had convinced him that Pariani's plans to use the colony as a springboard for an invasion of Egypt were totally impractical. Badoglio returned convinced that Libya could not even be defended without extensive reinforcement.[130]

Pariani's grand maneuvers, even the military review that capped the exercise, provided a disastrous display of the unpreparedness of the Italian Army. Chaos on the roads and railways, confusion in the assembly areas, and lack of minimal coordination during the maneuvers all revealed an army incapable of conducting mechanized warfare. The single company of medium tanks Pariani had managed to acquire for the army were driven by technical representatives of the manufacturer disguised as soldiers. Pariani's armored, motorized and Celere divisions revealed themselves as frauds. They lacked modern equipment altogether and what vehicles they possessed were pitifully outmoded.

While the king and the gerarchi looked on in outraged embarassment and the foreign military observers struggled to conceal their amusement, furious Italian generals rushed about screaming orders to set things right. During the final parade, the look of disgust on the face of Vittorio Emanuele III and the ironic smiles of the assembled attachés summed up Pariani's accomplishments as they watched the best units in the Italian Army pass by in a pathetic display of their wretched equipment. Two weeks later, when the king described the maneuvers to Ciano,

he still could not contain his rage. Despite the efforts of the propaganda organs of the regime, the true state of the Italian Army soon became public knowledge.[131]

Yet Mussolini continued to discount the condition of his armed forces. Following a hasty trip to Germany, Ciano returned to report to Mussolini on 13 August that Hitler was determined to invade Poland and expected Italy to plunge into war alongside Germany. That same day, Ciano brought Pariani, Valle and Cavagnari to meet with Mussolini to buttress the foreign minister's case that Italy was perilously unprepared. On 16 August, during a meeting with Badoglio, Mussolini informed the marshal he intended to remain neutral. In turn, Badoglio stressed the weaknesses of the forze armate. Four days later, in a conference with Mussolini and the king, Badoglio repeated the same arguments. Before and after an inspection of the frontier defenses, De Bono informed Mussolini that the army was in no condition for war. Each time, Mussolini agreed.

Nonetheless, Mussolini repeatedly changed his mind and surrendered to his burning desire to lead Italy into a war of conquest. Even if he could not attack France, he believed he might be able to take advantage of the opportunity to invade Yugoslavia and Greece, an attitude encouraged by Hitler. The announcement of the Hitler-Stalin Pact further raised his hopes. In these swings of mood he received Pariani's encouragement. For behind Ciano's back, the Army Chief of Staff argued in favor of Italian intervention in the impending conflict. At one and the same time, both Mussolini and Pariani were aware of the glaring deficiencies of the army yet simultaneously denied the truth to each other. Valle seems to have engaged in the same game with Mussolini in regard to the air force. In this regard, Italian net assessment had ceased to

involve rational calculation and had come under the sway of psychological pathology -- at least as far as Mussolini, Pariani and Valle were concerned.

Only on 26 August, after a further meeting encouraged by the king and arranged by Ciano -- with the chiefs of staff in tow -- did Mussolini finally accept the reality that Italy must stay out of any conflict with the West, at least for the time being. In a letter to Hitler, Mussolini explained that Italy could not join Germany in war unless it received essential raw materials, 600 88 mm anti-aircraft guns and machine tools for artillery production. Mussolini listed requirements of such magnitude that he knew Hitler could not possibly supply them. Nonetheless, Italy did face real supply problems. For example, the Germans had failed to deliver all the coal promised to the Italians in 1939. As a result, the Italians held only one to two weeks' supply, a crippling restraint on their arms industry. For these reasons, Mussolini and Pariani continued to plan for an attack on Yugoslavia with the poorly trained and equipped Sixth Army. This seemed one sure way to seize the raw materials the Italians needed.[132]

Meanwhile, as a precautionary measure, the armed forces had been mobilized. The resultant chaos produced by the call-up of the army's reserves showed that Pariani had failed utterly to improve matters since the Czech Crisis. Mussolini already knew of the army's lack of artillery and the weaknesses of the armaments industry. The maneuvers of early August had revealed the pitiful state of mechanization. In late August and early September, however, mobilization revealed an army almost literally naked and roofless. Severe shortages of uniforms, boots, bedding and barracks space, compounded by administrative incompetence, produced chaos. Tens of thousands of reservists were forced to live in the streets near their mobilization centers in the single set of civilian clothes they had arrived wearing. Even the elite Carabinieri,

who attempted to produce some order from the confusion, strode about in a bizarre hodgepodge of uniforms. When the army could provide food, it was inedible. But even if there had been clothing and food in abundance, the army would still have been an empty shell. Small arms, crew-served weapons, artillery and ammunition were virtually unavailable for the reserves.

Naturally, these deficiencies had a devastating influence upon morale. But even before the reservists had reported to their units, they had demonstrated a disturbing lack of discipline and enthusiasm. Once at the Alpine frontier, many troops fraternized with the French, revealing a total lack of martial spirit. These incidents thoroughly alarmed Pariani. The army of 1939 did not even measure up to that of 1915, let alone to the Army Chief of Staff's grandiose visions of armored Fascist legions ardent for combat and conquest.[133] Yet, as the events of August 1939 indicated, such facts had come to play a secondary role in the Italian net assessment process. The divisions within the Italian leadership reflected not so much disagreements over the effectiveness of the forze armate -- even Mussolini reluctantly came to admit their shortcomings -- as over the best course of action for Italy. The key factors in such appreciations involved calculating German power.

None of the Italian leaders, not even Ciano nor the king, could be considered pro-Western. But attitudes toward Germany among the leadership ranged from admiration to hatred. Some, perhaps Mussolini most of all, entertained both feelings. But where did Italian interests lie? The question that divided the gerarchi was how to take advantage of the situation created by the European war that broke out on 3 September 1939. Should Italy remain neutral, enter the war on the German side or join the West against the Third Reich? The final option, of course,

would represent the antithesis of Mussolini's foreign policy since 1936. It implied if not his overthrow, at least the diminution of his power.

Non-Belligerence

Mussolini had avoided declaring Italy officially neutral, as his adoption of the formula "non-belligerence" to describe Italy's diplomatic situation indicated. But he writhed under his awareness that, after his bellicose posturing, he had, nonetheless, chosen neutrality. He took refuge in the fact that the war had broken out at a most inconvenient moment for Italy. But if the war continued, he intended joining Germany in the conflict at the appropriate moment, after Italy was ready. He refused to consider joining the West under any circumstances. These attitudes were encouraged by the most extreme Fascist leaders, as well as Pariani. Like Mussolini, they feared that a break with Germany ultimately would mean the end of their power.[134]

Others among the gerarchi, particularly Ciano, preferred indefinite neutrality in order to profit from trade with both sides. By mid-1939, Mussolini had brought the economy to the verge of collapse by the costs of his wars in East Africa and Spain, added to his ruinous armaments program. The war had brought an unexpected opportunity to restore the health of Italian state finances. Ciano expected the conflict to drag on for years.

Eventually, the foreign minister believed that a major shift in the European balance of power would dictate Italian intervention on whatever appeared to be the winning side. Unlike Mussolini, however, Ciano believed that the war might develop in favor of the West. Furthermore, Ciano foresaw the possibility of active participation by the Soviet Union in the

struggle on the German side. In that case, he advocated immediate Italian intervention on the Western side to prevent the spread of Bolshevik power.[135]

Cautionary precedents from the recent Italian past underlay these attitudes. In 1870, Italy had barely escaped disaster after Vittorio Emanuele II had committed his kingdom to support Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian War. Fortunately, his cabinet rescued the king from his predicament by arguing that Vittorio Emanuele II had made his promise to the French Emperor not to France. After Napoleon III surrendered to the Prussians, the Italian government considered itself free to remain neutral. Later that month, after Napoleon III's garrison protecting Rome departed to join in the defense of France, the Italians seized the remnant of the Papal Kingdom.[136]

More relevant were Italian actions in 1914-15. Then as in 1939, Italy's allies had provided legitimate grounds for Italian neutrality. But German revenge for two Italian "betrayals" in the course of a quarter century could be expected to be terrible, if Italy chose the Western side and Germany won the war. Furthermore, even if Italy joined the victors that did not guarantee success. Italian miscalculations in the spring of 1915 about the duration of the war and the willingness of Italy's allies to honor their pledges under the Treaty of London had left the nation exhausted and embittered in 1919. Finally, the consequences of a German victory, even with Italy as an active ally, might reduce Mussolini to the status of Hitler's gauleiter in Rome. Amidst these dilemmas one course of action clearly suggested itself. Italy must improve its military posture as quickly and as far as possible.

Once it became clear that the French would respect Italian "non-belligerence," Mussolini ordered a partial demobilization of the army. Planning for an invasion of Yugoslavia continued.

But Pariani informed his commanders on the eastern frontier that such operations would occur no earlier than April 1940. Meanwhile, on orders from the Duce, Pariani had begun preparing the army as well as he could for a general war.

After he gained a clear picture of the situation, the chief of staff set a goal of acquiring enough small arms, uniforms and supplies to equip an army of some 2.5 million men and 64 divisions by 1 May 1940. As more equipment became available thereafter, Pariani planned to further increase the army to 88 and, eventually, to 126 divisions. Pariani realized, however, that he could not expect even minimally sufficient numbers of modern tanks or artillery until 1942. Lack of antiaircraft guns to protect Italian cities and factories presented a particularly serious problem and greatly worried Mussolini. Yet, despite his professed enthusiasm for war in August 1939, Pariani had known of these shortcomings in considerable detail since at least May, and probably earlier.[137]

By late September, Mussolini had come to the painful conclusion that he must dismiss Pariani and Valle. Still, it took him over five weeks to take action. While the two generals had lied to him about the efficiency of their services, Mussolini had always known the truth, at least in its general outlines. Furthermore, Pariani and Valle had been loyal and ardent Fascists and had shown enthusiasm for war with the West. These were rare qualities among Mussolini's military leadership.

But Mussolini needed scapegoats to explain the mess into which he had allowed the army and air force to fall. In particular, Mussolini needed a politic explanation of why he had pursued such an aggressive foreign policy in total contradiction to the deplorable state of the two services. As both War and Air Force Minister, these were his responsibilities. But Pariani and

Valle had to take the blame. Making examples of them would also spur their successors to perform more efficiently.[138]

On 31 October 1939, as part of a general cabinet reshuffle, Mussolini dismissed Pariani as Army Undersecretary and Valle as both Air Force Undersecretary and Chief of Staff. Generally pleased with Cavagnari's performance, Mussolini left the admiral in his posts. Mussolini appointed General Francesco Pricolo, previously commander of Italian air forces designated for operations against Yugoslavia, as Valle's successor. General Ubaldo Soddu, previously Pariani's deputy chief of staff for operations and an enthusiast for the divisione binaria, became Army Undersecretary.

Yet, while Mussolini admitted to Vittorio Emanuele III that Pariani had lied to him and also bore responsibility for the bungled mobilization, he hesitated to relieve the general as Army Chief of Staff until he found him another command. Despite Pariani's failures and faults, Mussolini continued to prize the general's political attitudes.

Mussolini also had planned to resign as War Minister and to appoint Marshal Rodolfo Graziani as his successor. As Badoglio's chief rival in the army, a fervent Fascist and a supporter of the alliance with Germany, Mussolini could count on Graziani to offset anti-Axis sentiment in the military and to push preparations for Italian entry into the war. Since August, Graziani had commanded the army group on the Yugoslav border. Mussolini considered replacing him in that post with Pariani.

Apparently, the king vetoed both appointments, a painful reminder to Mussolini of the influence Vittorio Emanuele III still enjoyed in military affairs. As a result, Mussolini remained War Minister with Soddu as his undersecretary. Graziani became Army Chief of Staff on 3

November and Pariani left active duty. To assist Graziani, who lacked general staff experience, Mussolini recalled Roatta from Berlin, where he had been serving as military attaché.[139]

Under Badoglio's direction, the new military leadership gave priority to determining the true state of the forze armate, particularly the army and air force. Despite the revelations of the previous two months, Pariani had left office insisting that the army could field 38 combat-ready divisions. Upon his departure, Valle consigned what he claimed were a total of 8500 aircraft to Pricolo. In fact, as the figures presented to Badoglio on 1 November revealed, the army had only 10 effective divisions and the air force counted some 1800 combat-ready aircraft. But, as Pricolo determined, modern planes actually airworthy numbered only 850. Furthermore, each of the services suffered from crippling shortages of fuel and ammunition, and could offer virtually no anti-aircraft protection to either themselves or to Italian cities and factories.[140]

When the new chiefs of staff met on 18 November, Badoglio reiterated the policy he had insisted upon since September. Given the circumstances, the armed forces must concentrate upon insuring the defense of the borders, creating adequate anti-aircraft defenses and assembling stockpiles. In case of war, any plans for offensive land operations must be abandoned for the foreseeable future, especially in North Africa. The possible exception might be small-scale actions mounted from Ethiopia. But Badoglio deliberately refrained from discussing any war plans whatsoever. The marshal estimated that, with hard work, the forze armate might be ready for war in 24 to 30 months; certainly not by May 1940.[141]

Some three weeks later, Mussolini received an even more sobering appreciation from General Carlo Favagrossa, who had succeeded Dallolio as head of COGEFAG in August. Based on guesswork and optimistic projections, Favagrossa calculated that even if Italian industry

received all the raw materials required, it would still take until at least 1944 to produce most of the weapons and equipment needed to make the army combat efficient. But the artillery program could not be completed until the end of 1949. The navy and air force faced a less serious situation. The air force could be substantially ready by mid-1941; the navy by late 1943. The next day, during a meeting with the chiefs of staff, Mussolini agreed to drop Pariani's plans to expand the army to 126 divisions and to aim at a target of 73 divisions, of which 60 were to be ready by August 1940.[142]

Throughout the fall of 1939, the forze armate leadership struggled to understand what the nature of the war that Italy faced might be. Several Italian army officers, including Roatta, had been able to visit Poland in September and October. Their reports, those of the Italian air attaché in Berlin and the study of the Polish campaign compiled by SIM which circulated throughout the upper reaches of the army created considerable grounds for worry. The Italian observers ascribed the German victory to their vastly superior numbers and the devastating power of the Luftwaffe, compounded by Polish errors. The destruction inflicted by the German air force on both the Polish forces and Warsaw greatly impressed the Italians. But the Italians gained only limited appreciation of German combined arms mechanized warfare, which they described as audacious but perhaps effective only against an inferior opponent. If employed against the French, such methods might fail, Roatta thought.[143]

Nonetheless, such reports emphasized the unpreparedness of the forze armate by stressing the importance of the modern aircraft, tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft guns and radios that they lacked. When these reports reached the Sixth Army, they produced serious consternation. Better acquainted than others in the army about the rudiments of mechanized operations, the division

commanders of the Po Army were forced to recognize the hopeless inferiority of their forces to both the Germans and the French.[144]

Yet the material weakness of his armed forces did not impress Mussolini as they did his new military leadership and the gerarchi. Throughout the fall of 1939 and into early 1940, he took note of other factors. The failure of the West to react to Soviet aggression against both Poland and Finland impressed Mussolini as a sign of the cowardice of the British and French. So did their failure to open a Balkan front against Germany. At the least, such inaction indicated that the Italians might be able to attack Yugoslavia and Greece with impunity. At best, it suggested severe Allied moral collapse. Secret French diplomatic feelers in early September, offering to negotiate over Italian colonial demands, indicated fear and weakness. Fascist spirit might count for more than the superior numbers of British and French arms. SIM reports from Finland demonstrated how determination and courage could defeat overwhelming strength. Other SIM reports reinforced Mussolini's perception of the rotten morale of both the French army and people, yet also described the German internal front as fragile.[145]

As a result, as late as March 1940, Mussolini believed that chances remained for a negotiated settlement of the war. He preferred such a solution. It would create a respite during which Italy could better prepare for a future war in alliance with Germany against the West. All the while, however, Mussolini pressed military preparations in order to be able to enter the conflict. Barring a settlement, he expected that events would await the moment of Italian readiness. Even before the war began, Mussolini believed that the Maginot and Siegfried Lines made major land offensives by the Germans or the French against the other impossible. The

inactivity from September 1939 to May 1940 reinforced that opinion. He thought that the war could continue for years, possibly longer than the First World War.

However, Mussolini judged Germany to be in a far stronger position than during World War I. Eventually, he foresaw that the balance would tip in favor of the Germans. At that point, Italy would enter the struggle to wage a parallel war agains the West. This would probably provoke American intervention to save Britain from collapse. But the Axis would win before significant American help arrived.

The Italians would rely primarily on their navy and air force to deal staggering blows to the British and the French in the Mediterranean. To the Italian Army would fall the easier task of defending the Alpine frontier and Libya, while conducting offensive operations in East Africa. Yugoslavia and Greece could not withstand the hammer blows of the Italian Air Force, leaving little resistance for the army to overcome in the Balkans.

Of course, Germany would emerge very powerful from such a war. For that reason, Mussolini rushed the completion of the powerful line of fortifications along Italy's northern borders begun a year earlier. These would ensure the nation's security once all northern Europe fell under German domination.[146]

In fact, in the six months following the outbreak of World War II, the Italian government took on a decidedly anti-German cast. At the same time that Mussolini had dismissed Pariani and Valle, he had replaced many of his ministers. The new cabinet contained many political allies of Ciano, creating the impression that Mussolini had relinquished control of foreign policy to his son-in-law. At the Fascist Grand Council meeting of 7 December, the first since the

previous April, Ciano described the course of Italian-German relations over the previous four years, documenting every instance of German perfidy.

When Mussolini spoke, he appeared defensive, even embarrassed, about the predicament in which he had placed Italy. But he stressed the danger of indefinite neutrality. If either side emerged clearly victorious, they would place the Italians beneath their yoke. Therefore, it would be best if the two sides tore each other to shreds. Nonetheless, he made it clear that he considered a British victory more dangerous than a German one and he insisted on continued adherence to the Pact of Steel. He enumerated the armaments he expected the forze armate to acquire over the next eighteen months, leaving little doubt that he hoped to intervene in the war, in some manner or other, in the second half of 1941.[147]

Mussolini was more explicit in his orders to Graziani on 13 December. He ordered the Army Chief of Staff to have 60 divisions, with arms, equipment and supplies capable of conducting operations for one year, ready by August 1940. But Mussolini left it unclear against whom the marshal should prepare for war or even if he should necessarily expect war by the coming summer. After Roatta examined the matter for Graziani, he came to the conclusion that Mussolini's expectations were completely unrealistic. Roatta advised Graziani that indefinite neutrality remained the best course of action for Italy.[148]

On 16 December, Ciano delivered a speech to the Chamber of Deputies in which he justified Italian "non-belligerence" by a non-too-subtle description of recent German behavior. Yet, on Mussolini's insistence he also pledged Italian loyalty to its Axis partner. Mussolini had approved Ciano's private and public criticisms of the Germans to justify Italian neutrality. But

when both Balbo and Grandi suggested that Italy denounce the Pact of Steel, the Duce expressed rage and contempt.

Mussolini's loyalty to the Axis even survived credible reports of German designs on northern Italy. Mussolini reacted angrily. When, soon after, he received reports from the Italian military attaché in Berlin of an impending German attack on the Low Countries, he ordered Ciano to pass the information to the Dutch and Belgian amabassadors on 26 December. But Mussolini seems to have been motivated more by a desire to delay any decisive German offensive than by a wish for a German defeat. In any case, his anger soon passed and the events of December 1939 marked the nadir of Italian-German relations. In early January, Mussolini resumed his personal direction of Italian foreign policy.[149]

In a letter delivered to Hitler on 5 January 1940, Mussolini urged him to consider ending the war with Britain and France, consolidating German gains in Poland and then embarking on a war of conquest against the Soviet Union. The Western democracies were in the process of dissolution from their internal weaknesses, Mussolini argued. It would be better to await their self-destruction, rather than to consume the lives and resources of the Axis in their immediate overthrow. But, if Hitler was determined to continue the war with the West, Mussolini pledged to enter the conflict on the German side, when Italy was strong enough to be of significant assistance. In essence, Mussolini sought to defer Hitler's attack on the West, not to deter it.[150]

Hitler did not reply for two months. In the meantime, economic and financial pressure began pushing the Italians toward ever-closer cooperation with the Germans. The possibility entertained by Ciano and other gerarchi that Italy could grow both rich and militarily powerful through prolonged neutrality proved illusory. Instead, as the months passed, Italy grew ever

more reliant on German economic assistance. At the same time, hopes for major increases in the production of Italian arms faded. Even before the German victories of April and May 1940, Italian vulnerability and dependency already had made a break with Germany unlikely.

The Italians needed hard currency to pay for the imported coal and raw materials required by the Italian arms industry. For years, the major source of such exchange had been Italian arms sales abroad, especially aircraft and naval vessels. After September 1939, the Italians attempted to acquire as much foreign exchange as they could from arms sales to neutral countries. Despite Cavagnari's desperate attempts to build up his navy, for example, Italian shipyards had been engaged to build two light cruisers for Siam in late 1939. Two destroyer escorts were sold to Sweden in 1940. But the high cost of imported raw materials left the Italians with slim profit margins in hard currency and sales to neutrals simply did not provide enough foreign exchange. Thus, despite the obvious contradictions involved, Mussolini had approved arms sales to Britain and France in September 1939. Arms exports to France continued until late May 1940, eventually totalling the equivalent of 700 million lire. By the time the Italians attacked their neighbors, they had sold them 500 trainer aircraft and large amounts of ammunition.

Yet these sales hardly solved the Italians' problems in regard to foreign exchange and weapons production. Mussolini's decision to supply the Finns with arms and aircraft for their war with the Soviets, as well as the needs of the Hungarians for 500 million lire worth of Italian weaponry, placed additional burdens on the arms industry. By late December 1939, the Italians had become desperate enough to demand the return of artillery sold to the Spanish Nationalists during the civil war. To make matters worse, the Italians found themselves in competition with

the Germans over arms sales to the Balkan states in return for raw materials. The Germans were selling arms to Greece and Yugoslavia, both high on Mussolini's list of potential victims. Most infuriating, the Italians discovered that the Germans were selling the Yugoslavs the very 88 mm anti-aircraft guns the Italians had been begging for since August 1939. Yet Goering had insisted that the Luftwaffe had none to spare. At the same time, in response to protests from their new Soviet allies, the Germans prevented the transit of Italian arms for Finland across the Reich. All these matters were reported to Mussolini in detail.[151]

In mid-January 1940, the British offered the Italians a far larger arms contract than ever before: 1.2 billion lire worth of hard currency for aircraft, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns and the equivalent of another 500 million lire for minerals, foodstuffs and other raw materials. A few days later, the British threw in an additional offer to purchase 380 million lire worth of Italian agricultural products, for a grand total of nearly 2.1 billion lire in hard currency. This would provide the Italians with enough hard currency to satisfy all their coal requirements for 1940 from British sources, as well as a hefty surplus to purchase raw materials for arms production.

The entire Italian military budget for 1939-40 stood at 28 billion lire. Obviously, Mussolini could not sell so many weapons without crippling his own rearmament plans. In addition, now that he had pledged his loyalty to Hitler, he considered such a deal dishonorable, however lucrative it might be and however treacherous the Germans themselves had proved to be in such matters. The Duce not only ordered Ciano to reject the British offer, he cancelled an existing contract for the sale of 400 light bombers, worth another 680 million lire in foreign exchange. To make up for the resultant lack of hard currency, he authorized the Bank of Italy

to release 1 billion lire of its slender 2.3 billion lire gold reserves to pay for imports of British coal.

However, in retaliation for Mussolini's arms embargo, the British cutoff the sea-borne supplies of German coal they had previously allowed the Italians to received through neutral ports, effective 1 March. This amounted to some 50% of Italian requirements and threatened to bring Italian industry to a halt. In the coldest winter in memory, this action would also threaten the Italian people with real misery. But with its reserves of hard currency nearly exhausted and prevented by Mussolini's veto from selling enough arms to obtain more, the government could neither buy coal nor sufficient amounts of raw materials from abroad.[152]

Already, at the annual meeting of the Supreme Defense Commission in early February, the inability of the economy and the government to supply the needs of the arms industry had become painfully obvious. The conflicts between available Italian resources and the weapons programs of the forze armate led to angry words. Raffaello Riccardi, the Minister of Exchange and currency, pointed out that if the armed forces reached the weapons and manpower levels set by Mussolini, Italy would have to import 22 billion lire worth of raw materials in wartime. Riccardi proposed a far more modest weapons program and warned Mussolini that if the armed forces did not curb their plans and allow an increase in exports, the nation faced imminent bankruptcy. Graziani replied with bombast, accusing Riccardi of impugning the patriotism of the army. Mussolini also defended the armed forces but offered no logical rebuttal to Riccardi. He simply stated that he would strip the country bare to supply the needs of the military.[153]

The Germans came to Mussolini's rescue. In late February, they promised to supply all Italian needs for coal, as well as for other raw material, under a barter agreement. On 10

March, Ribbentrop arrived in Rome bearing Hitler's reply to Mussolini's January letter. Before he handed it over, he promised the delivery of all of Italy's coal requirements by rail. This meant a quadrupling of German coal deliveries to Italy by rail, for a total of one million tons a month. It would require a stupendous effort by the railways of both countries. But it freed the Italians from both British interference with deliveries and from the necessity of spending precious foreign exchange on coal. The agreement was worked out on 13 March. Thereafter, Mussolini no longer feared bankruptcy nor industrial vassalage to Britain.[154]

Conversations between Mussolini and Hitler's emmissary took place on 10 and 11 March. Ribbentrop assured Mussolini that Hitler intended to attack in the West during the summer of 1940. Greatly exaggerating the strength of the Wehrmacht, the German foreign minister stated that it numbered 205 divisions and that it would breach the Maginot Line with little difficulty. At first, Mussolini exhibited some doubts over Ribbentrop's optimism but he agreed that British and French morale was poor. Several overnight readings of Hitler's letter, which expressed determination to continue the war to complete victory and stressed the common interests of Italy and Germany, seemed to convince him. The next day, warming to the possibilities, Mussolini agreed that the Axis enjoyed the strength of superior numbers. The Italian Army itself would number two million men by May, half of them fully prepared and trained for war. While Italy would face serious opposition on land and could not afford a long war, the Duce announced that Italy would enter the war at the appropriate moment. His navy would drive the British from the Mediterranean and free Italy from foreign tyranny in its own sea. Mussolini agreed to meet Hitler soon to discuss his momentous decision.[155]

Almost immediately, Mussolini had second thoughts about the promises he had made to Ribbentrop. In particular, the idea of a great German offensive in the West that spring or summer deeply worried him. German success would leave an unprepared Italy trailing in the dust. A German defeat would leave Italy at the mercy of Britain and France. When Ribbentrop telephoned to set a date for a meeting with Hitler, Mussolini expressed great irritation at the demand for an immediate conference. But, upon reflection, he decided it would be best to meet Hitler soon, to dissuade him from attacking before Italy was ready. Nonetheless, as Ciano observed, Mussolini feared being left out of great events even more than he worried about Italian unpreparedness.[156]

Vittorio Emanuele III had come to the same conclusion as Ciano. Since late 1939, he had believed that Mussolini was being drawn inexorably into a war that would lead to disaster for Italy and the overthrow of the monarchy. The wretched condition of the forze armate meant either defeat by the West or subservience to the Germans. In neither case could the House of Savoy survive. Instead, with the backing of many of the gerarchi, the king began planning to replace Mussolini with Ciano. This, he hoped, would prevent both civil war and German intervention.

Apparently acting on the king's suggestion, Balbo, De Bono and De Vecchi had met on Rhodes in late January 1940 to coordinate efforts to keep Italy out of the war. As permanent members of the Fascist Grand Council, the three quadrumvirs could expect to attend any meeting of that body called to discuss Italian entry into the conflict. Since Mussolini had convoked the Grand Council every year since 1923 between February and April, a meeting seemed imminent. The three agreed to vote against any resolution favoring war. Both in person and through his

personal representative, Count Pietro D'Acquarone, the king had kept Ciano abreast of the conspiracy during a number of discussions since the beginning of the year.

Following the meetings with Ribbentrop, the king decided Mussolini had committed the nation to war, even if the Duce could not quite bring himself to admit the fact. On 14 March, acting on the king's behalf, the count approached Ciano to ask him to ascertain the attitudes of the members the Fascist Grand Council about entering the war on the German side. If, as Vittorio Emanuele III believed, the majority opposed war, then he hoped that Ciano himself would convoke the Grand Council. After the Council held what would amount to a vote of no confidence in Mussolini's policy, the king would demand Mussolini's resignation and replace him as Capo del Governo with Ciano.

But Ciano hesitated to act despite his belief that Mussolini was leading Italy toward catastrophe. Mussolini alone had the authority to call together the Grand Council. The Duce had made it clear that he did not intend to seek the Council's approval of Italian entry into the war, probably because of the opposition of the majority of the members. For Ciano to act on his own would represent a clear act of rebellion. He asked Acquarone for time to think.[157]

The Decision for War

Four days later, Ciano accompanied Mussolini to the Brenner Pass. When they met, Hitler insisted to Mussolini that a negotiated settlement to the war remained impossible. He also exaggerated the strength of the German army and air force and insisted that he intended to attack in the west, bringing the war to a victorious conclusion by the fall. The war would be decided in France. But Germany might need help to annihilate the Western forces. Hitler specifically

suggested that Mussolini send an army group to southern Germany to participate in the offensive. The Italians would advance parallel to the Swiss frontier, wheel leftward and attack down the Rhone Valley, thus turning the French Alpine front from the rear.

Perhaps Mussolini's grasp of German prevented him from understanding what Hitler had proposed. Alternately, he may have understood but preferred to avoid making any specific commitment. After all, he knew the pitiful state of the Italian Army far better than Hitler did. In any case, the Duce replied that his navy and air force would be ready in three to four months time. In turn, it seems that Hitler ignored this broad hint that the Italian Army was in no condition to undertake major offensive operations.

The two dictators did agree that Germany would strike the first blow, since Italian forces could not sustain a lengthy struggle. If operations developed favorably, Italy would intervene a few weeks later. On the other hand, if the German offensive stalled, Italy would remain out of the fighting until a decision appeared imminent. In private, Mussolini told Ciano that he expected Hitler to think very carefully before launching an all-out offensive.[158]

Over the next few weeks Mussolini wavered considerably in his opinion about what Hitler might do. After all, if the German armed forces were as powerful as Hitler had claimed, why should he have been so eager for Italian assistance and why were the Germans still unable to deliver the anti-aircraft guns and machine tools for artillery production that they had long promised the Italians? Mussolini also remained convinced that the Maginot Line represented an obstacle that the Wehrmacht could not crack. The diplomatic and intelligence reports he was receiving raised many other doubts in his mind about German strength, as well.

But, as the days passed, he came to the conclusion that Hitler had meant what he had said about attacking in the west. Mussolini decided that he could not remain out of the fighting, despite the condition of the army. But he would choose the time for his intervention carefully and limit Italian operations to a land campaign in East Africa and an aero-naval offensive in the Mediterranean.[159]

Mussolini had stressed the importance of his meeting with Hitler to the king, though he stated that he did not expect a German offensive in the immediate future. However, even before he had read an account of the conference, the king decided that he must remove Mussolini at once. But when he was approached by Prince Umberto in late March about his decision, Ciano declined to act against his father-in-law. In the meantime, Mussolini seems to have learned of the royal conspiracy and came close to dismissing Ciano. In the end, he did not. Ciano was simply the most prominent of all those gerarchi who had doubted the wisdom of Mussolini's policy. Now many of his lieutenants had begun to accept Mussolini's analysis of the situation, leaving Ciano isolated.

Even Ciano had been converted to the idea of a war against the West if German victory seemed certain. The British blockade, accentuated by the cut-off of Italian seaborne coal imports, had driven home Mussolini's concept of Italy as a prisoner in the Mediterranean. Italy must gain free access to the oceans and secure the status of a true world power or suffocate. She could do so only through a war against the British and French. With most in the upper ranks of the regime converted to these ideas, Vittorio Emanuele III could only attempt to delay Italian entry into the war. He had the support of Badoglio, who remained convinced that the Germans could

not win and that Italy could not be ready for war until at least late 1942. But others in the army, prominently Graziani, now supported Mussolini.

On 31 March, the Duce committed his strategic ideas to paper. But he waited four days before sending his memorandum to the king (along with a summary of the discussions at the Brenner Pass conference) and another two before distributing it to Ciano, the chiefs of staff, Soddu, the Minister for Italian Africa and the Fascist Party Secretary. In the meantime, in meetings of the Council of Ministers, he insisted on the necessity of Italian belligerence and the certainty of Axis victory. But, as Ciano, Grandi and Giuseppe Bottai, the Minister of National Education, agreed, Mussolini seemed to be trying to convince himself more than his audience.[160]

In his memorandum, Mussolini reiterated many of the ideas he had been expressing in recent days. He had been heavily influenced by recent reports from SIM, from the naval attaché in Berlin and from Alessandro Melchiori, a journalist who had just spent a month in Germany. All described German morale as quite poor. But Mussolini also remained convinced that a deadly internal rot afflicted the West. Therefore, Mussolini rejected the possibilities both of a negotiated peace and of a land offensive by either side. The West, he claimed, lacked the stomach for such an attack, while the Germans had already achieved what they wanted in Poland and would not "gamble everything on a single card." Instead, Germany would remain on the strategic defensive but would break the British blockade by expanded air and sea operations.

Italy had to enter the war because its fate was tied to the outcome. Neutrality would mean resignation to insignificance, reduction to "the level of a Switzerland multiplied by ten." To join the West, however, would mean immediate attack by Germany without aid from the British and

French. They would abandon Italy as they had Poland and Finland. Therefore, Italy would have to enter the war on the German side, in order to gain supremacy over the Mediterranean and access to the open seas. Nonetheless, Mussolini felt constrained by two factors: Italy's limited economic and military resources and Allied strength in the Mediterranean and Middle East, as pictured in Italian intelligence reports.[161]

Italian weakness meant that they could not afford a long war, nor wage effective large-scale land operations. They would intervene only at the appropriate moment in a war waged independently of Germany, to realize Italian objectives in the Mediterranean. But the intelligence reports read by Mussolini were discouraging. SIM considered French defenses in the Alps and Tunisia to be extremely formidable. SIM estimated that French forces in Syria numbered 200,000, supported by powerful air forces. Army intelligence also believed the British Army in Egypt, the Sudan, British Somaliland, Aden and Kenya to present a serious obstacles to Italian attack and to threaten the Impero. SIA thought the French air units in southern France and North Africa to be equal or superior to anything the Regia Aeronautica could send up against them. It described Royal Air Force units in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and East Africa in similar terms. Furthermore, a recent report from an Air Force observer in Finland reported that the modern Italian fighters sent to help the Finns had proved markedly inferior to French, British and American aircraft.

Italian army and air force intelligence calculations of Allied force levels were gross overestimates and should be faulted. At the same time, the results of the distrust of SIM by the army leadership made intelligence gathering very difficult. Badoglio never invited Carboni to chiefs of staff meetings, nor informed him of general staff planning. Nonetheless, some SIM and

SIA reports, such as those on the quality of Italian equipment, were quite accurate. And all intelligence, both good and bad, formed the bases of the decisions made by Mussolini and his chiefs of staff.

In contrast, the Allied naval situation struck Mussolini as less imposing. For one thing, SIS knew nothing about the night fighting capabilities and very little of the radar which would give the Royal Navy such advantages in the naval war in the Mediterranean. Since the Regia Marina impressed Mussolini as the best-prepared of the Italian services, he assigned it the major role in his war plans, supported by the air force. Only in the improbable case of a complete collapse would Mussolini order the army to attack France. If opportunity arose, offensives might be mounted against Yugoslavia and Greece. Only local offensives would be launched in East Africa. Mussolini left it to the chiefs of staff to develop plans to achieve these objectives.[162]

Badoglio summoned the chiefs of staff and Soddu to consider Mussolini's directives on the morning of 9 April. They discussed Mussolini's vague strategic considerations at length and arrived at the conclusion that there was nothing to be done. Even Graziani abandoned his facile optimism. Three days earlier he had received a gloomy study from Roatta. The deputy chief of staff had emphasized that the Italian Army could not hope to undertake offensive operations anywhere, except against France in the moment of her collapse. Even then, a successful campaign would require massive amounts of German equipment and large numbers of German armored and motorized units transferred beforehand, with iron-clad guarantees of replacement as the need arose. However, Mussolini's concept of an independent, parallel Italian war made such reinforcements politically unacceptable.

The chiefs of staff agreed that the armed forces were simply unprepared for war. Mussolini had forbade virtually every form of action. As for the navy, to which Mussolini had assigned an active role, Badoglio and Soddu suggested that it conduct only a submarine campaign against enemy shipping. Even that seemed too much for Cavagnari. "One [British] fleet will station itself at Gibraltar and another at Suez, we will strangle inside the Mediterranean," the admiral lamented. Badoglio ended the totally inconclusive meeting by advising the chiefs to study the matter and report later on the possibilities.

Apparently, Badoglio had done as the king had ordered him. When Badoglio reported on the results of the meeting to Mussolini, the marshal stated that only an overwhelming victory by the Germans could create conditions that would allow Italy to enter the war. A few days later, after the German military attaché had raised with Graziani Hitler's project for an Italian offensive from southern Germany, Badoglio reacted even more negatively. Not only did the Regio Esercito lack the forces for such a scheme, such an expedient would be truly humiliating. Furthermore, given the uncertain situation, even to discuss the matter with the Germans would be extremely unwise, Badoglio argued. The project for the operation died.

In a separate report a day earlier, Cavagnari had warned Mussolini that even if Italy emerged victorious from the war on the side of Germany, the Regia Marina would be annihilated in a conflict with the West. "Italy could reach the peace talks not only without territorial gains but even without a fleet and perhaps without an air force," the admiral concluded. In every way that they could, the chiefs of staff sought to hold back Mussolini from any action.[163]

In early April, Balbo and the Duke of Aosta, both of whom visited Rome at that time, reinforced the pessimistic assessments of the Italian military situation made by the chiefs of staff.

After first conferring with Balbo in Bengasi, the Viceroy of Ethiopia reported in separate meetings with Mussolini and Soddu, Ciano and Badoglio that the forces in the Impero were unable to defend it against the British and the French. Offensive operations in East Africa were almost totally out of the question. During the same period, Balbo confessed to Mussolini and Ciano that his long-held hopes for an offensive against Egypt were out of the question, given the state of his forces. He urgently needed modern arms, especially tanks and anti-tank guns, simply to defend Libya.[164]

At the very time that the chiefs of staff were meeting on 9 April, the Germans were showing just how mistaken Mussolini was in his strategic appreciation. That morning, the Wehrmacht had invaded Denmark and Norway. In successive letters to Mussolini, however, Hitler stressed that he still intended to attack in Western Europe in the immediate future. Mussolini reacted to the Scandinavian campaign with excitement, seemingly ignoring Hitler's warning about a decisive attack in the West. With the Germans, French and British engaged in Scandinavia, Mussolini reasoned, he would be free to act in the Balkans. He began speaking of an invasion of Yugoslavia, convincing himself that the West neither could nor would react.

But a meeting on 11 April with Vittorio Emanuele III left him frustrated and gloomy. The king had accepted the arguments of Mussolini's memorandum of 31 March, judging it "geometric" in its logic. But he still refused to countenance any form of Italian military intervention until the outcome of the war was absolutely clear. Two days later, Mussolini received another restraining message, this time from Franco. On 8 April, Mussolini had informed the Caudillo that Italy would definitely intervene on the side of Germany and that the moment was fast approaching. The invitation for Spain to join Italy was implicit. Franco replied

in a sympathetic manner, promising to do whatever he could to help Italy. But due to the condition of the economy and armed forces, he explained, Spanish participation in the war would be impossible. Franco, it would seem, also had his doubts about the outcome of the struggle.[165]

However, these suggestions that an Axis victory was far from certain failed to deter the Duce. Over the next few days, the irrational side of Mussolini's nature finally won out in the struggle for possession of his will. Thereafter, he judged the situation in Europe primarily according to criteria based on Fascist mysticism. When Bottai entered the Duce's office on 15 April, he found him reading a volume of Mazzini's collected works. Mussolini referred to the fulminations of the Risorgimento prophet against the furtive diplomatic maneuvers of Cavour. Once again, Mussolini insisted, Italy had to choose between the path of greatness, morality and virtue or that of calculating disloyalty to its promises. Mussolini was rejecting the calculated opportunism of Cavour for the idealistic romanticism of Mazzini -- at least as he understood it. This would mean Italian intervention almost regardless of the circumstances.

To buttress his case, Mussolini whipped out documents he had ordered from the army's archives which detailed the military conventions between Italy and Germany under the Triple Alliance. He pointed out that as late as March 1914 the Italians had agreed to send forces to Germany to help in the execution of the Schlieffen Plan. How could Italy betray its ally for a second time? When Bottai protested that it had been the Germans who had betrayed the Italians in 1914, Mussolini dismissed the facts. The government of Fascist Italy must remain true to its given word. Bottai made no further attempt to argue. He realized he had been summoned not for a dialogue but to attend a soliloquy.[166]

Despite his brave words, however, Mussolini still hesitated to move. As always, Hitler was not informing him of German intentions. Furthermore, despite their repeated promises, the Germans continued to delay the deliveries of anti-aircraft guns and machine tools. From Berlin, the Italian military attaché reported on 16 April that a German general had told him that the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht now accepted the possibility of the war dragging on for four more years. All this hardly encouraged Mussolini to join the war soon. At the same time, the reports Mussolini continued to receive from the intelligence services described Allied forces throughout the Mediterranean as extremely powerful. True, Mussolini had begun to suspect that these reports were being doctored to dissuade him from precipitate action. He knew that Carboni, the new head of SIM, was both anti-German and close to Ciano. However, Mussolini did not dismiss Carboni's pessimistic descriptions of the military situation out of hand.[167]

On 20 April, Mussolini spoke to Ciano about the possibility of coming into the war in the late summer. But just two days later, after an angry conversation with the king, Mussolini was thinking in terms of intervention no earlier than the spring of 1941. While the Duce despised Vittorio Emanuele III's lack of daring, his objectivity had temporarily restrained his emotions. Once again, Mussolini recognized the danger of plunging an unprepared Italy into conflict against the West. And, as he assured an audience of labor leaders on 21 April, he would proceed with all the caution of a cat.

Searching about for alternatives, Mussolini sought to satisfy his hunger for war by an attack on Yugoslavia. Plans had been developed in considerable detail since September. When the German ambassador informed him on 25 April that Hitler had no objection if Mussolini

sought to improve Italy's strategic position in the Balkans, Mussolini decided to move ahead.[168]

In January, the Hungarians had begun pressing Mussolini for Italian help in acquiring Transylvania by supporting either Hungarian military action or diplomatic pressure on Bucharest. At the same time, Mussolini had taken steps toward an attack on Yugoslavia. Since the crisis of June 1936, the Italians and Hungarians had made preparations for the Regia Aeronautica to use Hungarian airfields in such an eventuality. In July 1938, Pariani had actually discussed a joint attack on Rumania with the Hungarians. But this seems to have been a designed to gain their agreement for an Italian-Hungarian operation against Yugoslavia.

Since the beginning of the war, Hitler had made it clear to the Italians that he wished for the Balkans to remain quiet. By April 1940, however, a number of reports had reached Mussolini that Hitler had decided to support the Hungarians against Rumania. This reinforced his determination to secure Italian hegemony in the Balkans by seizing Yugoslavia. As he contemplated such an operation, Mussolini decided he should also invade Greece. Control over both countries was needed to ensure Italian security in the Adriatic. Furthermore, in his pessimistic analysis of the possibilities open to the navy, Cavagnari had informed Mussolini that Italian possession of Greece could improve the chances for the Regia Marina to undertake some form of offensive action. When approached by the Italians about joint action against Yugoslavia and Greece, however, the Bulgarians demurred. Clearly, Italian influence in the region was slipping away, while German power there was surging.[169]

On 18 April, Col. Laszlo Szabo, the Hungarian military attaché, who enjoyed close ties to Mussolini, had met with him at the Palazzo Venezia. Szabo informed Mussolini of German proposals for a German-Hungarian attack on Rumania, once the campaign in Norway was

concluded. On the German side, such a campaign was intended to secure the Ploesti oilfields, given the growing likelihood of a Soviet move against Rumania. Such plans may have been designed by the Germans to deceive Mussolini or even the Allies, given Hitler's belief that the Italian government was riddled with pro-Western sympathizers. In any case, Mussolini accepted Szabo's story at face value.

Furthermore, within days, independent reports of impending German action in the Balkans reached Mussolini from a variety of sources. So did information that the Allies would move into the Balkans to counter any German move. For Mussolini, everything counselled an Italian attack on Yugoslavia. If there were to be an intervention by the Germans, the Soviets, the French and the British in the Balkans, the Italians would be well-advised to secure at least the eastern shore of the Adriatic. Hitler's apparent go-ahead on 25 April removed the possibility of a German veto. Furthermore, as the days went by, several sources in Paris indicated that the French would not consider an Italian attack on Yugoslavia alone as hostile, if taken to counter German and Soviet moves into the region. Thus, it appeared, Mussolini might be able to make major territorial gains, while still keeping out of the war until a more favorable moment.

Even a move by the Allies into the Balkans offered Mussolini one advantage. SIM calculated that Allied forces in French North Africa numbered some 314,00; British forces in Egypt about 100,000; and the French army in Syria in the area of 200,000. Even upon mobilization, the Italian garrison in Libya would come to only 220,000. But if the French Syrian army landed in Greece, an Italian attack on Egypt might just be feasible.

On 6 May, on Mussolini's orders, the chiefs of staff met to discuss the question of reinforcing Libya. Badoglio made clear his attitude that the Italians in North Africa could not

even defend the colony without massive reinforcement, let alone undertake offensive operations. The chiefs of staff concurred. Plans for an attack on Yugoslavia were mentioned in passing. But Graziani had already informed Badoglio and Soddu that the army could only conduct such an operation successfully in the case of a Croatian revolt, as well as German and Hungarian intervention. As Badoglio emphasized, Mussolini's directives to study such an invasion "does not mean that we will have to do it." Obviously, Mussolini's hopes for some form of action were not shared by his military leaders.

Nonetheless, by 9 May, Budapest had agreed to allow the Regia Aeronautica to use Hungarian bases to attack Yugoslavia. The Hungarians had even indicated willingness to allow Italian ground forces to launch offensive operations from their territory. But these understandings seemed to have been reached without consultation between Mussolini and his chiefs of staff. Mussolini told Ciano that he had brought Badoglio around to his viewpoint. It was true that German successes in Norway had impressed the marshal. But Ciano had come to recognize the pattern of the Duce's wishful thinking. None of the Italian military leaders had dropped their opposition to intervention. They shared the opinion that the industrialist Alberto Pirelli had expressed to Mussolini in mid-April: "The truth is, Presidente, that there is an imbalance between your aspirations and the real forces of the country."[170]

The Fall of France and Italian Intervention

After the German ambassador delivered the news of the Wehrmacht attack on the Low Countries early on 10 May, Ciano had to struggle to persuade Mussolini not to take any immediate action against Britain and France. Even Edda Mussolini arrived at the Palazzo

Venezia to urge her father to declare war immediately. After much argument, Mussolini accepted his son-in-law's advice to wait. But Ciano decided that the opportunity had come to move against Yugoslavia soon. Mussolini agreed and set the date for early June.

Later that day, however, meetings with Graziani and Soddu left Mussolini furious. Both men warned Mussolini that Italy could not afford the risk of joining the war on the German side, at least until the miliary situation clarified. Once his anger passed, Mussolini's ardor for war cooled as well for a few days. But, on 13 May, the victorious German advance convinced Mussolini to abandon any caution. He told Ciano that he had decided against the Yugoslav operation as a "humiliating expedient." The Italians would launch an aero-naval offensive against the French and British within a month. Ciano realized that he could no longer do anything to deter the Duce. Only some unexpected and unlikely German military set-back could stop Mussolini from entering the war.[171]

It took another week or so to indicate that nothing would stop the German advance. By 15 May, Guderian's panzer corps was well across the Meuse and headed west. Five days later, Guderian's tanks had reached the Channel. The scale of German success was too much even for Mussolini. He began hoping for a second Battle of the Marne to reduce the scope of the German victory and allow Italian intervention to tip the balance, preferably in the autumn. The forze armate simply needed more time to prepare and successful French resistance, even if ultimately futile, might weaken the Germans and help to preserve something of a balance of power on the Continent.[172]

One indication of Mussolini's growing concern over the possibility of German hegemony over Europe came from a detail of naval nomenclature. In September and October 1939, Italian

shipyards had laid down the new Capitani Romani class of light cruisers, named after the great generals of ancient Rome. On 11 May 1940, however, construction began on a solitary addition to the class, significantly christened Giulio Germanico. The warship's name honored Germanicus, who had ravaged western Germany in the first century A.D., revenging the destruction of Augustus' legions in the Teutoburger Forest.[173] As the events of May 1940 unfolded, however, Mussolini came under increasing pressure to join Hitler in the war. By the end of the month, it seemed clear that French collapse was imminent. Increasingly desperate offers from Paris to satisfy any Italian grievances indicated to Mussolini that fear and despair were overwhelming the French government. Somewhat less frightened suggestions from London sent the same message. Mussolini decided that he must intervene in the immediate future, before the Germans seized all the benefits from the defeat of France for themselves.[174]

Badoglio, Soddu and many others in the army high command had expected French resistance to stop the German onslaught, as in 1914. But as the dimensions of the German victory became evident, their reluctance to enter the war declined. By late May, many generals enthusiastically approved of intervention. Nonetheless, Graziani warned Mussolini that the army was in no state to undertake offensive operations, not even against Yugoslavia. Mussolini agreed, although he apparently neglected to inform Pricolo. The Air Force Chief of Staff continued to prepare for an imminent attack on Yugoslavia.[175]

Both the gerarchi and the Italian public also had swung behind the idea of entering the war on the side of the invincible Germans. Ciano swallowed many of his previous doubts and looked forward to huge Italian territorial gains. Control of the Mediterranean and the Balkans, which the foreign minister now contemplated, could allow Italy to maintain its independence of

expanding German empire. He also convinced himself that Hitler's respect for Mussolini was such as to protect Italy -- so long as the two dictators lived. Acting on his own authority, Ciano flew off on a brief trip to Albania to arrange his own private offensive against Greece, one which the army high command had considered but rejected. Even Grandi began expressing great enthusiasm for the idea of war. Only the king continued to express some doubts. But by 30 May, Vittorio Emanuele III himself was convinced of German victory over France.[176]

The king had not changed his mind about the long-term consequences of intervention for both Italy and the monarchy. Despite the imminent fall of France, Vittorio Emanuele III believed Britain would hold out and the United States would eventually enter the conflict. As a result, he foresaw a long war and certain Axis defeat. But if he attempted to overthrow Mussolini, Vittorio Emanuele III expected a bloody civil war and a German rescue of Mussolini. This seemed the worst possible alternative. If he refused to sign a declaration of war and went into exile, he believed his people would curse him for desertion and never accept his return. Instead, on 1 June, the king acquiesced to war and to Mussolini's demand for operational command of the armed forces. Nonetheless, although Soddu argued otherwise, the king did not think that this abdication of powers would allow him to escape blame for defeat. He had decided to share the fate of the Italians, even though he was certain the House of Savoy would not survive the catastrophe. With the king's decision, Mussolini faced no further obstacles to war.[177]

On 29 May, he had already ordered the chiefs of staff to be prepared to enter the conflict on 5 June. In a meeting with the chiefs and Ciano in his office, Mussolini described the French as beaten. Still, under the influence of a recent report by the Italian military attaché in Berlin, he thought that they might continue to resist for another month or six weeks. The danger had

arisen, however, that if the Italians did not enter the war in the immediate future, the Germans might reject their claims for a share of the spoils. To avoid the appearance of playing the jackal, the Italians would concentrate their efforts on an aero-naval offensive against the British. He had decided to avoid any action in the Balkans. Such operations would disrupt the flow of raw materials desperately needed by the arms industry. Ciano realized that he must cancel his private project for an attack on Greece.[178]

Meeting on 30 May, the chiefs of staff agreed to confine offensive operations to limited air strikes and submarine patrols. Only then, however, did Pricolo discover that plans for an attack on Yugoslavia had been called-off. Apparently he had not been paying close attention the day before. But even the assumption of almost totally defensive dispositions left Badoglio uneasy. When Graziani expressed satisfaction with their passive arangements, the marshal recalled the facile optimism he had witnessed in 1911. "We shouldn't believe that we're dealing with something so simple. Keep in mind that at the outbreak of the Libyan War they spoke of a military parade while, instead, it was a very different matter." As Badoglio warned Mussolini the next day, he feared that the French might hold out against the Germans for another two or three months. Even after the collapse of France, Britain would continue to resist. The marshal worried that the defenses of Libya were so weak that if Italy entered the fighting immediately, the Allies might overrun the colony. He advised Mussolini to delay intervention until at least early July.

But powerful emotions which militated against such considerations had Mussolini in their grip. As Ciano had noted of Mussolini at the 29 May meeting with the chiefs of staff: "Few times have I seen Mussolini so happy. He has achieved his real dream: that of becoming the

military commander of the country in war." Furthermore, Mussolini already had informed Hitler that Italy would intervene on 5 June and had inquired if this would be acceptable. After Hitler asked for a postponement -- so as not to provoke the dispersion of the French air force out of range of the Luftwaffe -- Mussolini set the date for 10 June. On 2 June the German ambassador relayed a message from Hitler that 5 June would be fine, after all. But Badoglio's concerns had influenced Mussolini enough that he ordered emergency reinforcements rushed to Libya and kept the date of intervention set for 10 June, to allow for their arrival in Benghasi. At the final meeting of the chiefs of staff before Mussolini's declaration of war, the high command devoted most of its attention to defensive arrangements: the last-minute reinforcement of Libya and precautions against possible French air raids on Rome from Corsica. Badoglio had already made it clear to the German military attaché that the condition of the army and air force made major offensive operations impossible. The marshal expressed the wish that the Germans would bring the war to a swift conclusion.[179]

After that, a curious sense of tranquillity settled over most of the gerarchi. The events of 1935-36 seemed to have been repeated. Once again, the doubts and fears of the military and political leaders of the regime appeared to have been foolish. Mussolini had foreseen the German triumph and acted appropriately. He had maneuvered Italy onto the side of the victor to receive the maximum gains at minimum risks and costs.[180]

In fact, dazzled by the German campaign in the West, Mussolini had made the classic error of basing a fundamental strategic decision on the outcome of a single operation. Yet his miscalculation was hardly without precedent in military history and should be placed in perspective. Many others also believed that the fall of France had decided the fate of Europe.

Stalin, a man of rare cunning, interpreted the events of May-June 1940 almost exactly as Mussolini did.[181]

Thanks to Italian geography, however, Mussolini was far better situated than Stalin to take advantage of developments. Furthermore, the forze armate were much improved from their sorry state in August 1939. In June 1940, the army counted 1.6 million men under arms, arranged in 73 divisions, plus two more in the Impero. Of these, 19 could be considered roughly up to strength and 34 incomplete but still efficient. Pricolo had managed to bring the Regia Aeronautica up to 2500 aircraft, of which 1600 were reasonably modern. The navy still counted only two modernized battleships actually ready for combat. But four more, including two modernized warships and the two brand-new Littorio class battleships would be ready in the next few months.[182]

The nation, the military and the gerarchi returned to their accustomed obedience to the Duce. Given the collapse of France and expectations of the imminent surrender of Britain, the forces available to Italy seemed sufficient for the short war that most expected. On the other hand, Balbo and the Duke of Aosta felt far less optimistic. Both governors had returned to their colonies resigned to defeat for their forces and death for themselves.[183]

As for Mussolini, he entered the war fully cognizant of the perilously weak state of his armed forces and Italian war industries. In fact, gross overestimates by Italian intelligence of the strength of French and British forces in the Alps, North Africa, the Middle East and surrounding the Impero made the Italian military situation seem even worse than it was in June 1940. Such misapprehensions blinded the chiefs of staff to the fleeting opportunities available to the Italians in the spring and summer of 1940.[184]

Yet such material factors seemed of relative unimportance to Mussolini. Clausewitz had stated that no one in his right mind starts a war without first being certain what he intends to gain thereby and how he intends to achieve his goals. But Mussolini rejected such Clausewitzian concepts as restraints on action. When he joined Germany in war with Britain and France on 10 June 1940, Mussolini knowingly joined a battle of giants with pygmy forces in an attempt to conquer a world empire for Italy. But Mussolini did not envision war as organized force in the service of politics. He rejected the view that war was subordinate to, yet different from, politics. Such thinking would have forced Mussolini to recognize that he was wielding an instrument both too weak to achieve his aims and one he had no skill in using. Instead, Mussolini envisioned war as no more than an act of politics.[185]

He had seized power in Italy by applying the violence of the war to the usual variety of political actions. In June 1940, he was attempting the reverse. These methods had already brought him success in 1935-36 over Ethiopia and in 1936-39 over the Spanish Republic. But this had obscured the fact that superior force on the battlefield had been at least as important in obtaining these victories as Mussolini's diplomatic maneuvering and threats against the British and French. Instead, Mussolini seemed to believe that war was the continuation of politics with the very same means or, at least, that in war political means were superior to military means. Thus, Italy's military forces, which Mussolini recognized as inferior to his enemies' and his ally's, could be compensated for by his political genius.

Such a combination of megalomania and wishful thinking would be all too painfully revealed in the disasters that would befall Italy in the fall and winter of 1940-41. Once the Germans failed to bring the war to a successful conclusion in the second half of 1940, the

original fears of Mussolini's military commanders about the wisdom of Italian intervention in the war proved well-founded. Mussolini's attempts to conquer Greece and overrun Egypt led to disaster. His political skills offered no adequate substitute for military power.

But even major Italian military success, such as the capture of Malta, seizure of the Suez Canal or conquest of Greece, would not have brought Italy victory in its "parallel war" against Britain. Italian weakness and geographical isolation prevented Mussolini from striking at the foundations of British power. A crippling blow at the Royal Navy, the air defenses of Great Britain, the island's maritime communications, its war industries, the will of the British people -- however the British centers of gravity in the Second World War are defined -- all lay beyond the means available to Mussolini in 1940-41.[186]

As the Axis war effort expanded in 1941-42, Italian influence on its outcome, except in a negative manner, virtually disappeared. Italy could match only 10% of the production of British or Soviet war industries and 2-3% of those of the United States. Italian productive capacity remained plagued by the inefficiencies and resource deficiencies that had been laid before Mussolini in the months preceeding the war. What could Italy have done to help Germany win the Battle of the Atlantic or conquer the Soviet Union, even if it had been free to concentrate all of its war effort on only one of those campaigns? Obviously very little.[187]

Despite its many failings, the prewar net assessment process in Fascist Italy had produced a reasonably accurate picture of the military balance confronting Mussolini. But, blinded by his dreams of military glory and imperial conquest, he had simply chosen to ignore reality. The results were the catastrophic Italian military collapse of July-September 1943, the reduction of

the Italian peninsula to a battlefield fought over by the Allies and the Germans, and, for Mussolini, an ignominious death in April 1945.

NOTES

1. Giuseppe Bottai, Diario 1935-1944 (Milan, 1982), p. 188.

2. For official assessments of Fascist Italian power in the period immediately before World War II, see the articles by the military and political leaders of the regime in Tommaso Sillani (ed.), Le forze armate dell'Italia fascista: studi e documenti (Rome, 1939). For the private opinions of many of these same individuals, see Galeazzo Ciano, Diario 1937-1943 (Milan, 1980), pp. 28-363; Giuseppe Bottai, Diario 1935-1944 (Milan, 1982), pp. 113-71; Alberto Pirelli, Taccuini 1922/1943 (Bologna, 1984), pp. 126-262; Mario Montanari, L'esercito italiano alla vigilia della 2a guerra mondiale (Rome, 1982), pp. 395-429, 442-54.

3. The most thorough portrait of Cavour and his age is the highly favorable four volume study by Rosario Romeo, Cavour e il suo tempo (Bari, 1969-84). For a more caustic but still admiring view, see Denis Mack Smith, Cavour (New York, 1985). The best military history of modern Italy, from the Risorgimento through the Second World War, is provided by Lucio Ceva, Le forze armate (Turin, 1981). The wars of the Risorgimento are described in more detail in Piero Pieri, Storia militare del Risorgimento (Turin, 1962).

4. For a general survey of Italian military and foreign policy between the Risorgimento and the outbreak of the First World War, see Denis Mack Smith, Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento (London, 1971); Federico Chabod, Storia della politica estera italiana dal 1870 al 1896, 2 vols., (Bari, 1976); Renato Mori, La politica estera di

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5. Christopher Seton-Watson, Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1970-1925 (London, 1967), p. 114.

6. Gianni Rocca, Cadorna (Milan, 1985), pp. 49-69.

7. Seton-Watson, Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, pp. 413-50.

8. Edoardo and Duilio Susmel (eds.), Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini, 44 vols., (Florence, 1952; Rome, 1978-80), [hereafter, OO] Vol. VII, p. 417 (quote); Rocca, Cadorna, p. 71.

9. For the Italian war effort, see Ceva, Le forze armate, pp. 117-79 and John Gooch, "Italy during the First World War, " in Vol. I of Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (eds.), Military Effectiveness, 3 vols., (London/Boston, 1988). Mussolini's war experiences are described in chapters 13 and 14 of Philip V. Cannistraro and Brian R. Sullivan's forthcoming biography of Margherita Sarfatti.

10. Carlo Sforza, L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944, Quale io la vidi (Verona, 1946), p. 58.

11. Seton-Watson, Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, pp. 527-36.

12. Mussolini's rise to and consolidation of power are described and analyzed in Adrian Lyttelton, The Seizure of Power, Fascism in Italy, 1919-1929, 2nd ed., (New York, 1988). See also the first three volumes of Renzo De Felice's massive biography of Mussolini: Mussolini il rivoluzionario, 1883-1920 (Turin, 1965), Mussolini il fascista,

I. La conquista del potere, 1921-1925 (Turin, 1966), Mussolini il fascista. II. L'organizzazione dello Stato fascista, 1925-1929 (Turin, 1968).

13. Pirelli, Taccuini, p. 207.

14. Enrico Caviglia, Diario (aprile 1925-marzo 1945) (Rome, 1952), p. 60.

15. Vincenzo Gioberti, Il Gesuita moderno, 5 vols., (Lausanne, 1847), Vol. V, p. 461; Giuseppe Mazzini, Scritti editi ed inediti, 104 vols., (Imola, 1934-41), Vol. LXXXXII, pp. 167-68. For the later influence of these ideas, see Giovanni Gentile, I propheti del Risorgimento italiano (Florence, 1923), pp. 37-38 and Chabod, "L'idea di Roma" in Storia della politica estera italiana, Vol. I, pp. 215-373.

16. Alfred F. Pribham, The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 2 vols., (Cambridge, MA, 1920-21), Vol. I, p. 6.

17. Jens Petersen, Hitler e Mussolini, la difficile alleanza (Bari, 1975), pp. 104-6.

18. National Archives, Military Field Branch, Suitland, Maryland, Record Group 331, Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II. Allied Force Headquarters. G-2 Section Counter Intelligence (II) Civil security. Reel 476-A. [hereafter, NA/RG 331/476-A] Extract No. 11, "Address by Mussolini to the Fascist Grand Council - 7 April 1932," pp. 11-13.

19. Fulvio D'Amoja, Declino e prima crisi dell'Europa di Versailles, 1931-1933 (Milan, 1967); Petersen, Hitler e Mussolini, pp. 175-297.

20. Archivio Centrale dello Stato [hereafter, ACS], Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione generale della pubblica sicurezza, Divisione polizia politica, fascicolo [hereafter, f],

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21. Pietro Badoglio, Italy in the Second World War. Memories and Documents (Westport, CT, 1976), p. 2; Cesare Maria de Vecchi di Val Cismon, Il Quadrumviro scomodo. Il vero Mussolini nelle memorie del piu monarchico dei fascisti (Milan, 1983), p. 226; Renzo De Felice, Mussolini il duce. I. Gli anni del consenso. 1929-1936 (Turin, 1974), p. 496.

22. De Felice, Mussolini il duce. I, pp. 498-504.

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Ubaldo Soddu observed Mussolini at close hand as the general rose from Head of Cabinet in the War Ministry to Deputy Chief of the Supreme General Staff in 1933-40. In his unpublished memoirs, Soddu makes substantially the same observations as Roatta about Mussolini's military abilities. Ubaldo Soddu, "Mussolini e Badoglio," pp. 5-9 in "Memorie e riflessioni di un generale."

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60. Felice Borsato, La leggendaria fuga del generale Roatta (Rome, 1965), pp. 77-84; Brondi, Un generale, p. 43.

61. Brondi, Un generale, pp. 43-48; De Lutiis, Storia, pp. 14-15; Cesare Ame, Guerra segreta in Italia, 1940-43 (Rome, 1954), p. 50; Sullivan, "A Thirst for Glory," pp. 639-45; Vladeta Milicevic, A King Dies in Marseilles. The Crime and its Background (Bad Godesberg, 1959), pp. 52-75; CP, q 1, Pariani to Roatta, 6 Oct. 1934; Luigi Goglia, "Un aspetto dell'azione politica italiana durante la campagna d'Etiopia 1935-36," Storia contemporanea (December 1977); Clara Conti, Servizio segreto (Rome, 1945), pp. 32, 38, 70-73, 87-93, 137-43, 195-201, 212-46, 273; Conti (ed.), Il processo Roatta. I documenti (Rome, 1945), pp. 30, 45-47, 82; Emilio Canevari, La guerra Italiana. Retroscena della disfatta, 2 vols., (Rome, 1948), Vol. II, pp. 381-82; Emilio Faldella, L'Italia nella seconda guerra mondiale, pp. 97-98.

62. Brondi, Un generale, pp. 44-45; NA, T120, reel 2420, frames E224789-94; Heinz Hohne, Canaris (Garden City, NY, 1979), pp. 221-22, 234; Matteo Mureddu, Il Quirinale del re (Milan, 1977), p. 55; CP, q 1, Pariani to Roatta, 25 Oct. 1934; ibid., q 2, entries for 12 and 22 Nov. 1934; ibid., q 9, entries for 13 Aug., 25, 30 Sept., 1, 14, and 17 Oct. 1935; ibid., q 12, Pariani to Angioy, 14 Oct. 1936; ibid., q 19, Pariani to Tripiccione, 27 July 1937; ibid., q 27, entry for 25 Aug. 1938; Carlo De Risio,

Generali, servizi segreti e fascismo. La guerra nella guerra, 1940-1943 (Milan, 1978), p. 17.

63. John F. Coverdale, Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War (Princeton, 1975), pp. 87, 103-6, 117-18; Sullivan, "Faldella, Emilio," in Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy, p. 193; Massimo Mazzetti, "I contatti del governo italiano con i cospiratori militari spagnoli prima del luglio 1936," Storia contemporanea (December 1979), p. 1185, n. 23; Conti, Servizio segreto, pp. 234-46, 289-90. CP, q 13, Pariani to Angioy, 2 Nov. 1936; ibid., q 14, entries for 14 and 20 Nov. 1936; Viviani, Servizi segreti italiani, Vol. I, pp. 208-11, Vol. II, p. 236.

Without dismissing the problems created by its inadequate manpower, SIM's personnel shortcomings can be placed in perspective by the following fact. In the period 1937-39, despite responsibilities stretching from the Philippines and Alaska to Puerto Rico and Maine, U.S. Army Intelligence numbered only sixty-nine officers and men. See Bruce W. Bidwell, "History of the Military Intelligence Division. Part Three. Peacetime Problems (1919-7 December 1941)," (Historical Manuscript File, Office of the Chief of Military History), p. XIX/31.

64. Raspin, "The Italian War Economy," pp. 26-33, 53-56; CP, q 18, Pariani to Angioy, 25 June 1937; ibid., q 19, Pariani to Tripiccione, 3 Sept. 1937;ibid., q 21, Pariani to Tripiccione, 26 Nov. 1937; ibid., q 29, Pariani to Mussolini, 27 Sept. 1938; ibid., q 32, Pariani to Tripiccione, 8 June 1939.

65. CP, q 12, Pariani to Angioy, 14 Oct. 1936; ibid., q 18 Pariani to Angioy, 20 and 23 July 1937; ibid., q 21, Pariani to Tripiccione, 26 Nov. and 7 Dec. 1937; ibid., q 24,

Pariani to Tripiccione, 9 Mar. 1938; ibid., q 27 Pariani to Tripiccione, 25 Aug. 1938; ibid., q 28, Pariani to Ciano, 8 Sept. 1938, Pariani to Tripiccione, 10 Sept. 1938, Pariani to Mussolini, 27 Sept. 1938; ibid., q 31, Pariani to Tripiccione, 22 Nov. 1938; ibid., q 34, Pariani to Tripiccione, 27 Dec. 1938; ibid., q 35, Pariani to Tripiccione, 9 Jan. 1939; ibid., q 37, Pariani to Tripiccione, 7 Apr. 1939; ibid., q 38, Pariani to Mussolini, [early] May 1939; ibid., q 41, Pariani to Tripiccione, 1 Sept. 1939.

66. Sullivan, "A Thirst for Glory," pp. 408-542.

67. Mario Toscano, "L'asse Roma-Berlino -- il patto anticomintern -- la guerra civile in Spagna -- l'Anschluss -- Monaco," in La politica estera italiana dal 1914 al 1943 (Turin, 1963), pp 189-90; Cesare Ame, "Prefazione," in De Risio, Generali, servizi segreti e fascismo, pp. 7-10; Ministero della Guerra, Comando del corpo di Stato maggiore, SIM, Jugoslavia. Preparazione militare alla frontiera giulia (Rome, 1938); Comando del corpo di Stato maggiore, Jugoslavia. Preparazione militare alla frontiera albanese (Rome, 1939); SP, 1938, report no. 270/173, memorandum of conversation with Col. Tripiccione, 10 May 1938; CP, q 28, Pariani to Ciano, 8 Sept. 1938, Pariani to Tripiccione, 10 and 13 Sept. 1938; ibid., q 31, Pariani to Tripiccione, 22 Nov. 1938 ibid., q 34, Pariani to Tripiccione, 27 Dec. 1938; ibid., q 41, Pariani to Tripiccione, 1 Sept. 1939; Knox, "Fascist Italy Assesses," pp. 355-6; Lucio Ceva, "La campagna di Russia nel quadro strategico della guerra fascista," Il politico (September 1979), pp. 423-24.

One can extrapolate SIM's earlier intelligence on Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, the United States and Japan from reports nos. 12-27 (20 March-23 Oct. 1941), Ministero

della Guerra, Servizio Informazioni Militare, Situazione settimale stati esteri (Rome, 1941).

68. Grandi, Il mio paese, pp. 407-70; Fulvio Suvich, Memorie 1932-36 (Milan, 1984), pp. 191-98; Raffaele Guariglia, Ricordi 1922-1946 (Naples, 1950) p. 351; Augusto Rosso, "Obiettivi e metodi della politica estera sovietica," Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali, no. 13 (1946); Ciano, Diario, pp. 27, 30, 35, 45, 101, 142-43, 152-54, 166, 169-74, 177-86, 210, 222, 235-36, 256, 261-63, 270, 277, 286, 292, 320-25, 329, 331, 334-38, 385; Mario Luciolli, Palazzo Chigi, anni roventi (Milan, 1976), pp. 54-55; NA, Records of the Department of State, Reports Prepared by Psychological Warfare Branch on Material Discovered in Archives of Ministry of Culture (Italian) 1922-44 [hereafter, PWB], Box 1, Special Report No. 13; ibid., Box 2, Special Report No. 17; ibid., Box 9, Special Report No. 131, "Ambassador Grandi's Letters to Mussolini and Ciano"; Denis Mack Smith, "Dino Grandi," The Independent (25 May 1988); Cassels, Italian Foreign Policy, pp. 17-18. For a withering (although somewhat excessive) portrait of Mussolini's post-Ethiopian War megalomania, see Mack Smith, Mussolini, pp. 202 ff.

69. Ame, "Prefazione," p. 9; Franco Maugeri, Ricordi di un marinaio. La Marina italiana dai primi del Novecento al secondo dopoguerra nelle memorie di uno dei suoi capi (Milan, 1980), pp. 18, 51-68; Alberto Santoni, Il vero traditore. Il ruolo documentato di ULTRA nella guerra del Mediterraneo (Milan, 1981), pp. 30-34; Sullivan, "A Fleet in Being: The Rise and Fall of Italian Sea Power, 1861-1943," The International History Review (February 1988), pp. 116-21; Viviani, Servizi segreti italiani, pp. 206-8.

70. NA, T-586, reel 24, passim.; Knox, "Fascist Italy Assesses its Enemies," p. 364;

Documents on German Foreign Policy [hereafter, DGFP], series D, Vol. VIII, p. 908; Pirelli. Taccuini, pp. 260, 263-64; Claudio Segre, "Italo Balbo," in Cordova, Uomini e volti, p. 25.

71. No satisfactory biography of Vittorio Emanuele III exists, largely due to the lack of primary source materials. Nonetheless, much on this enigmatic figure can be gleaned from the following: Giovanni Artieri, Cronaca del Regno d'Italia, 2 vols., (Milan, 1977); Silvio Bertoldi, Vittorio Emanuele III (Turin, 1971); Romano Bracalini, Il re "vittorioso." La vita, il regno e l'esilio di Vittorio Emanuele III (Milan, 1980); Mureddu, Il Quirinale del re; Paolo Puntoni, Parla Vittorio Emanuele III (Milan, 1958); Silvio Scaroni, Con Vittorio Emanuele III (Milan, 1954). Denis Mack Smith, Italy and its Monarchy (New Haven, CT, 1989), pp. 147-300. For the king's relations with Mussolini, see the relevant volumes of Renzo De Felice's biography of Mussolini and Massimo De Leonardis, "La monarchia e l'intervento dell'Italia in guerra" in Ennio Di Nolfo, Romain H. Rainero and Brunello Vigezzi (eds.), L'Italia e la potenza in Europe (1938-40) (Milan, 1985).

72. Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco (Barcelona, 1976), p. 67; Richard Washburn Child, A Diplomat Looks at Europe (New York, 1925), pp. 155-457; Renzo De Felice, "Introduzione," to Dino Grandi, 25 luglio. Quarant'anni dopo (Bologna, 1983), pp. 76-77; OO, Vol. XLII, pp. 89-90, 101, 113, 125, 185-86, 193-95; ibid., Vol. XLIII, pp. 4, 17, 19-22, 31; Matteo Mureddu, Il Quirinale del re (Milan, 1977), p. 55; Silvio Scaroni, Con Vittorio Emanuele III (Milan, 1954), p. 134; De Leonardis, "La monarchia," pp. 39-43; Pirelli, Taccuini, pp. 483-85.

73. A satisfactory biography of Badoglio remains to be written. Some picture of the man's life can be gained from Piero Pieri and Giorgio Rochat, Badoglio (Turin, 1974) and Giovanni De Luna, Badoglio. Un militare al potere (Milan, 1974). For Badoglio's role as Chief of the Supreme General Staff see, Giorgio Rochat, Militari e politici nella preparazione della campagna d'Etiopia (Milan, 1971); Lucio Ceva, "Appunti per una storia dello Stato Maggiore generale fino alla vigilia della 'non belligeranza' (giugno 1925-luglio 1939)," Storia contemporanea (April 1979); L. Ceva, "1927. Una riunione fra Mussolini e i vertici militari; Mario Montanari, L'esercito italiano alla vigilia della 2a guerra mondiale (Rome, 1982). Aldo Aytano (ed.), Economia armata (Rome, 1938) offers an idea of Badoglio's work as head of the National Committee for Economic Independence. The marshal's memoirs, La guerra d'Etiopia (Milan, 1936) and L'Italia nella seconda guerra mondiale (Milan, 1946) [English language edition, Italy in the Second World War] are useful but not trustworthy.

74. Bottai, Diario, pp. 79, 83, 153, 181, 463-64; Ciano, Diario, pp. 28, 60, 92, 274, 365, 380, 383; Rochat, Militari, pp. 225-37; Pieri and Rochat, Badoglio, pp. 727-36; Coverdale, Italian Intervention, p. 270; Guerri, Galeazzo Ciano, p. 230; Lucio Ceva, "Un intervento di Badoglio e il mancato rinnovamento delle artigliere italiane," Il Risorgimento (June 1976); Pirelli, Taccuini, p. 484; Grandi, Il mio paese, p. 479; Fidia Gambetti, Gli anni che scottano (Milan, 1979), p. 278; Westphal, The German Army in the West, p. 138; NA T821, reel 214, frames 3-8; NA T78, reel 365, frame 6326839.

75. Officially, Mussolini headed the Ministry of Italian Africa between November 1937 and

October 1939, when he was succceded by the former undersecretary, Teruzzi. Teruzzi, however, had effectively run the ministry.

76. For Balbo's role in shaping net assessment, see Guerri, Italo Balbo, pp. 343-79; Rochat, Italo Balbo, pp. 235-47, 276-96. On the Duke of Aosta, see Alfio Berretta, Amedeo d'Aosta, il prigionerio del Kenia (Milan, 1956); Edoardo Borra, Amedeo di Savoia, terzo duca d'Aosta e vicere d'Etiopia (Milan, 1985), pp. 85-106, 131-50; Del Boca, La caduta dell'Impero, pp. 307-55; Sbacchi, Il colonialismo, pp. 29-80.

On De Vecchi, see his not entirely reliable Il Quadrumviro scomodo, pp. 232-37; also, Ruggero Fanizza, De Vecchi, Bastico, Campioni, Ultimi governatori dell'Egeo (Forli, n.d.), pp. 13-23. On all three, see Ciano, Diario, passim; De Risio, Generali, pp. 15-16.

77. De Bono has no book-length biography, but see Monte S. Finkelstein, "Emilio De Bono" in Cordova, Uomini e volti and E. Valleri Scaffei, "De Bono, Emilio" in DBI, Vol. 33, (Rome, 1987). For De Bono's judgments on Mussolini's policies and the Italian armed forces in 1938-40, see ACS, Carte De Bono, diario, q 43. For Mussolini's views on De Bono, see Ciano, Diario, pp. 270-72.

78. For an outline of the events of these wars and crises, and for detailed sources of information on them, see Brian R. Sullivan, "The Italian Armed Forces, 1918-40" in Millett and Murray (eds.), Military Effectiveness, Vol. II; William I. Shorrock, From Ally to Enemy, The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy, 1920-1940 (Kent, OH, 1988), p. 141 ff.; Jean-Baptiste Duroselle and Enrico Serra (eds.), Italia e Francia dal 1919 al 1939 (Milan, 1981), p. 245 ff.

79. Only the Germans, it seems, were capable of seeing their tactical and operational weaknesses -- and implementing the lessons -- in the midst of their victories. On this, see Williamson Murray, "German Response to Victory in Poland: A Case Study in Professionalism," Armed Forces and Society (Winter 1981).

80. Lucio Ceva, "L'evoluzione dei materiali bellici in Italia" in Di Nolfo, Rainero and Vigezzi (eds.), L'Italia e la politica, pp. 343-59; L. Ceva, "Un intervento," pp. 141-42; Alberto Pariani, Chiacchiere e realta. lettera agli amici (n.p., 1949), pp. 9-15.

81. Lucio Ceva and Andrea Curami, La meccanizzazione dell'esercito italiano dalle origini al 1943, 2 vols., (Rome, 1989), Vol. I, pp. 234-45.

82. Ceva and Curami, La meccanizzazione, Vol. I, pp. 191-212.

83. Ciano, Diario, pp. 98, 174, 184, 254, 333; Ministero della Guerra, Direzione del servizio chimico militare, Note sull'impiego degli aggressivi (Rome, 1936); same source, Note sull'impiego dell'yprite (Rome, 1936); NA T78, reel 364, frames 6325825-8, 6326069-70, 6326285-9, reel 365, frames 6326712-4; NA T1022, reel 2519, PG 45170, p. 2; CP, q 31, "Riunione per servizio chimico," 9 and 21 Nov. 1938; ibid., q 36, "Riunione," 18 Feb. 1939; ibid., q 38, "Riunione chimica," 21 June 1939, "La guerra (appunti per Duce)," p. 50, n.d. [but mid-1939]; ibid., q 40, "Riunione chimico," 23 Aug. 1939; SP, 1938, report 671/443, "Presentation to the Duce."

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NET ASSESSMENT IN NAZI GERMANY IN THE 1930s

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Introduction

The process of net assessment has been integral to relations between states whether one talks about war or periods of peace. Yet the processes by which statesmen and strategists weigh the balance and calculate the risks of the international arena have received relatively little attention from both political scientists and historians. The former have focused on the general relationships between players or "actors" on the international scene; the latter have generally satisfied their curiosity with studies that lay out in excruciating detail one side of the story or the other. Policy makers have reinforced the inclinations of these disciplines. On the one hand they have used history, if at all, to elucidate "lessons" rather than ambiguities; on the other, they have found political science with its artificial clarity and quantifications both alluring and attractive. Whether it has been useful is another matter.[1]

An additional complication has been the natural tendency of academic analyses to focus on intelligence rather than net assessment. Two factors help explain this. First, formal net assessment has only recently made its appearance (1972) as a coherent, disciplined effort to address problems inherent in achieving meaningful measures of the international balance. Even historians with documents on both sides of international conflicts and crises have proven surprisingly unwilling to attempt balance analyses. It is not difficult to estimate the balance of forces in May 1940; the wreckage of French and British armies in northern France seemingly

makes the balance in that month quite clear. Yet unless one accepts Calvinistic or Marxist predestination, the shifting military and strategic balances through the 1930s, both real and in terms of perceptions of statesmen and military leaders, is crucial in judging how the international arena worked.[2] Unfortunately, historians have tended to center analyses on single nations; consequently, convinced by the weight of one nation's documentary evidence, they barely move beyond the perceptions of those who weighed the risks under the pressures of time and incomplete information.[3] As a result, balance assessments by historians have mostly consisted of simple "bean" counts of units available on opposing sides.[4] Secondly, historians have frequently confused assessment with intelligence, thus reducing the complexities and ambiguities of national balance analysis to intelligence organizations and their products.[5] Net assessment, however, has aimed at achieving a different picture of the world than that proposed by intelligence organizations either past or present.[6]

While net assessment is a relatively recent conception, statesmen and military leaders have engaged in serious attempts to weigh national power within the international arena whether in peace or war. Admittedly these efforts have been somewhat ill-formed. As Paul Kennedy has suggested about British leadership before the outbreak of the First World War:

> In fact, the very concept of "the balance of power" was never deeply explored, in either the political or military sense. As an expression, it was, of course, much employed; in early August 1911 [Sir Henry] Wilson noted that it was 'an axiom that the policy of England is to prevent any Continental Power from attaining a position of superiority that would allow it to dominate and to dictate to the rest of Europe.' One can concede that certain Britons who studied German advances in industry and technology (say, James Louis Garvin, Leo Amery, Eyre Crowe) became alarmed at the prospect of this new and formidable economic might being at the disposal of the Prusso-German elite; yet did this reasoning move those many other Britons, especially the military, who took little interest in economic matters?[7]

Kennedy's description of the international arena confronting Britain in the first decade of this century fits most other periods and nations. The fog of war is only one reflection of the general ambiguities of human affairs. Statesmen operate in a milieu in which calculations of even their own national power are intrinsically unsure. If it is difficult to calculate one's own strength, then how much more difficult to calculate the strengths of others whose culture, language, and nationality are so different?

This essay will address the problem of Net Assessment and the Third Reich from two perspectives: the difficulties that Hitler and his advisers confronted in weighing the international balance in making their calculations; and the problem that this rogue nation posed for others in the European strategic arena of the late 1930s and early 1940s. While the former represents the heart of this essay, the latter is essential to whatever one hopes to learn from the twisted, tragic history of the Nazi era.

The Problem of Ideology

The study of German history that deals with the last century has obviously concentrated on the Nazi catastrophe. Interwoven within that historiography has been the argument over continuities and discontinuities in the history of the Third Reich. Significant cultural influences affecting the German leadership in the late 1930s transcended the strict delineation between "Nazi" and "non-Nazi" within the civil and military bureaucracies. As Charles Sydnor has noted:

> For a generation, one major analytical trend in studies of the Third Reich has focused upon the intense rivalries and anarchic divisions within the National Socialist system. . . . It may now, however, be time to reexamine this problem from a different perspective. The SS and the Waffen SS . . . functioned

> extremely well despite internal tensions and rivalries, and in the face of extraordinary difficulties. This, it seems, would not have been possible without a formidable degree of institutional solidity -- the presence of shared assumptions and beliefs, commonly accepted norms, and the unquestioned general values that enable large numbers of people, despite individual ambitions, dislikes, and disagreements, to work together in common purpose toward definite goals.[8]

Although Sydnor is addressing the issue of the internecine quarrels within the SS, he provides a useful depiction of how the Germans as a nation faced the crisis occasioned by the excessive drive of the Nazi regime. There was a community of shared cultural and intellectual values, a national Weltanschauung, that existed across the spectrum of German opinion in the 1930s. One must unravel the national Weltanschauung as well as the specifics of Hitler's ideology to understand the conceptions that the Third Reich evolved in evaluating the international environment.

The emerging consensus among historians emphasizes that Hitler's ideology provided a revolutionary dynamism to the foreign and strategic policies of the Third Reich.[9] For Hitler, race was the primary determinant of civilization and human values, as opposed to the Marxist/Leninist definition that class formed the primary basis of human affairs. The Aryan race, loosely defined as the German nation, had, according to Hitler, provided the essential motive force behind the advance of European civilization. However, lesser races had hindered and at times entirely distorted the path of Aryan advance. To the east, in the great spaces of the Eurasian land mass, the Slavs, incapable of creating an advanced civilization, blocked the Germans from the spaces needed to realize their full potential. The populated regions to the west offered lesser possibilities. Therefore, while Hitler planned to deal with Germany's enemies in the west, particularly the French, the Nazi dictator looked primarily to the east. Yet the greatest enemy in Hitler's racial framework was an internal one: the Jew. According to him

the Jews, like an insidious bacteria, had undermined the viability of a racially strong regime from the time of the Roman Empire. "No nation can dislodge the fist of the implacable world Jew from its throat except by the sword. Only the united, concentrated forces of a mighty insurgent nationalistic passion can defy the international enslavement of the nations. But such a development is and remains a bloody one."[10]

Intimately intertwined within this drive to achieve racial superiority went Hitler's desire to achieve Lebensraum, an expansion of Germany's territory to include virtually all of Eastern Europe up to the Urals. As he told the Reich's senior foreign policy and military leaders in November 1937:

> The aim of German policy was to make secure and to preserve the racial community and to enlarge it. It was therefore a question of space. Germany's future was wholly conditional upon the need for space, and such a solution could be sought, of course, only for a foreseeable period of about one to three generations.[11]

Three crucial factors in Hitler's Weltanschauung are thus encompassed within these three sentences: 1) Germany must achieve racial purity; 2) To do so she must acquire the living spaces that would make her truly independent; and 3) Time was short. The period within which Germany could achieve racial purity and space was wasting.

Not surprisingly, Hitler viewed himself as unique and essential to the achieving of these ideological goals. Again, as he told his generals immediately before the outbreak of the war:

> Essentially all depends on me, on my existence, because of my political talents. Furthermore, the fact that probably no one will ever again have the confidence of the whole of the German people as I have. There will probably never again in the future be a man with more authority than I have. My existence is therefore a factor of great value.[12]

Within this ideological framework that aimed at creation of a great, judenfrei Aryan

empire from the Urals to Gibraltar, Hitler possessed clear conceptions of how he would drive the "Thousand Year Reich" to his goals. Unlike most Germans, he was willing to strike a deal with the Italians over the loss of Alto-Adige, the German-speaking region south of the Alps seized by the Italians in 1918. Moreover, Hitler believed that the British, despite their behavior in the 1914-1918 war, would stand aside, provided that Germany did not threaten their strategic position. Above all he understood that achievement of his ideological goals demanded a massive military struggle to destroy a European status quo established over the previous thousand years. As Hitler told the military leaders of the German state within a week of his accession to power on 30 January 1933, if France possessed statesmen and military leaders of any fibre, Germany would face war in the immediate future.[13] From that moment on, German foreign policy ran risks that neither Germany's military or foreign policy experts had yet imagined. The level of those risks and Hitler's drive only becomes understandable when one recognizes the fundamental long-term ideological goals.

But war was not only for external conquest. Hitler aimed to utilize foreign conquest for the legitimization and prestige that it conferred on the Nazi regime and above all on himself to complete the internal revolution. In particular, continental victory would allow the regime to settle accounts with the churches, particularly Roman Catholicism, the remnants of the aristocracy, and industrial barons and bankers. The underlying principles on which the Nazi regime rested were revolutionary; foreign policy represented a significant part of this revolution. As MacGregor Knox has pointed out:

> I have throughout [in his article 'Conquest, Foreign and Domestic, in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany'] endeavored to use the term <u>revolution</u> in as neutral a fashion as possible, without assuming that revolutions (violent attempts to achieve rapid, fundamental changes in dominant values and myths, political institutions, social

> structures, leadership, and governmental policies) are of necessity 'progressive.' I have also applied the term to relationships between states, to mean an attempt to achieve violent, fundamental change in power relationships and the distribution of territory. The widespread assumption that only the Left makes revolutions contains a hidden but indefinable teleology, and when applied to the twentieth century falls afoul of the obvious confusion between political extremes: was Stalin 'Right' or 'Left'?[14]

Hitler's revolutionary drive represented the crucial factor in the international balance in the late 1930s. To fully understand what was occurring in Germany's strategic and foreign policies in the late 1930s, one must recognize the driving, motive power of the fanatic, ruthless, and impatient Adolf Hitler. There were many within both the military and civilian bureaucracies who recognized the risks, but they consistently found themselves driven in headlong flight as the Führer drove German policy at breakneck speed towards the cataclysm of World War II. The rational, careful calculations of those who did not fully embrace the Nazi regime proved useless against Hitler's willingness to take and to extend risks. And as every successive position against Hitler's risk-taking collapsed in the face of the Führer's palpable successes, those who quarrelled with the regime's course either found themselves in retirement or accepting the dictator's Weltanschauung.

Magnifying the Nazi dynamism was the fact that the other major European statesmen proved generally unable and unwilling to recognize the revolutionary drive of the Nazis. To British governments and population it seemed inconceivable that Germany would deliberately court another major war.[15] In an early September 1938 Cabinet meeting, the minsters debated Hitler's personality. Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, admitted that the Führer might be quite mad and that "this view . . . was supported by a good deal of information from responsible quarters [in Germany]."[16] Obviously in Halifax's eyes anyone who would court war after the

experiences of World War I must obviously be insane; until 1 September 1939 he and Chamberlain clung to the hope that Hitler would not prove "mad," at least according to their definition. Such attitudes only increased the magnitude of Hitler's successes and further inflamed the dictator's willingness to take risks and move against to the next obstacle as soon as possible.

But it was the Soviet Union that paid the highest price for its blanket refusal to recognize the revolutionary nature of Hitler's regime. Stalin explained the Nazi phenomenon as monopoly capitalism in the last stages of decay. Such an interpretation resulted in a number of disastrous decisions. For example, in the final days of the Weimar republic, Stalin ordered the German Communists to support the Nazis in their assault on the Republic and singled out the Social Democratic Party, the Party of "Social Fascism," for the most direct attacks. Stalin believed that the political triumph of Nazi "monopoly capitalism" would ultimately lead to the collapse of capitalism in Germany and victory for the German Communists.

The failure of German capitalism to disintegrate after Hitler's triumph did not change Stalin's evaluation of the Nazi threat. Even the great German victory of May 1940 with its resulting seizure of the highly industrialized region of Western Europe only served to confirm his belief that Nazi monopoly capitalism now possessed its goals. Therefore, it seemed unlikely that the Germans would attack in the east. After all, the industrial acquisitions of May 1940 should fully satiate any regime dominated by monopoly capitalism. Unfortunately for the Soviets, the Nazis were hardly the representatives of monopoly capitalism. Everything that they had achieved through 1941 only represented a starting point for the racial-agricultural conquest of Russian Lebensraum.[17] As John Erickson has pointed out: "The failure to comprehend the

essentials of German military doctrine in a tactical operational sense and German 'war doctrine' in its widest context [the strategic context] was the prime cause of the disaster: the effect of this was and had to be devastating, for such a failure impeded and inhibited effective operational planning" [emphasis in the original].[18]

The Problem of National Self-Deception

National attitudes and beliefs reinforced the regime's ideological thrust. Hitler's system of beliefs, while obviously an extreme expression, fell within a national tradition that had reflected the values and direction of German society of the 19th and early 20th Century. This tradition "nurtured the idealistic rejection of modern society and the resentment against the imperfections of western ideals and institutions, that contributed so greatly to the debility of democracy in Germany."[19]

The catastrophe of the First World War only reinforced the peculiarities of Germany's national view of herself and her role in history. Defeat in 1918 did not result in any fundamental reappraisal within German society, its intellectual elite, or the ruling military and civilian bureaucracies. The "stab in the back" legend -- that Jews and communists at home had stabbed the German military in the back in the summer of 1918, thus turning victory into defeat -- appeared even before the collapse of September-November 1918. By 1919 Ludendorff, Hindenburg, Tirpitz, as well as other even more sinister figures on the fringes of national politics, were using the "Dolchstoss" legend to divert national attention away from the real causes of the national catastrophe. Even the Social Democratic first President of the new Republic, Friedrich Ebert, greeted returning troops as "unconquered in the field."[20]

A rewriting of the foreign policy and strategic record of Wilhelmine Germany soon followed this distortion of the causes of the September-November collapse. This disinformation campaign began within the foreign ministry. Its willful and clever authors were not only the German bureaucracy but the academic community as well. The product sought to confuse and disorient the German body politic as well as substantial numbers of foreign leaders.[21] In the resulting fog of maskirovka the Germans were incapable of profitably learning from their recent disasters. As Holger Herwig has pointed out:

> . . . from June 1919 through the Third Reich, key elements of the German bureaucracy mounted a massive and successful campaign of disinformation that purveyed false propaganda through a wide range of channels, . . . Writers were . . . engaged either directly or indirectly by the Foreign Ministry to propagate its views, to organize translations of foreign studies sympathetic to the German cause, and to channel the Wilhelmstrasse's official line to German Schools and diplomatic missions via newspapers and radio. . . . By selectively editing documentary collections suppressing honest scholarship, subsidizing pseudo-scholarship, underwriting mass propaganda, and overseeing the export of this propaganda to Britain, France, and the United States, the patriotic self censors in Berlin exerted a powerful influence on public an elite opinion in Germany, and to a lesser extent outside Germany. Their efforts polluted historical understanding both at home and abroad well into the post-1945 period . . . . The significance of the campaign of official and semi-official obfuscation and perversion of fact extends well beyond the history of Germany or the origins of the Great War. It raises basic questions concerning the role of the historian in society, scholarly integrity, decency, and public morality. It further illustrates the universal problem of establishing the critical record of events that are sufficiently vital to the national interest to become the objects of partisan politics. . . . Nazi expansionism clearly fed upon the fertile intellectual basis laid down for it by the patriotic self-censors in the 1920s. In other words, Adolf Hitler's radical 'revisionism' was already well rooted in public and elite opinion under the Weimar Republic. Finally, the export of this propaganda to Britain, France, and the United States did its part, however major or minor, to undermine the moral and eventually the strategic terms of the settlement of 1919.[22]

To be sure, some Germans avoided the self deception of this propaganda. Wilhelm Groener, Ludendorff's successor as chief of the general staff, admitted in a talk to his

subordinates shortly after the war that Germany had failed because she had aimed at both Continental hegemony and world power with the "High Sea Fleet." Even during the war the historian Hans Delbrück displayed a keen sense of the failure of German policy makers to connect strategic goals to the operational means at hand and the strength of their enemies. Delbrück's criticism after the war was even more pointed. The German high command had failed in 1918 because of its complete disregard of Clausewitz's principle that "no strategical idea can be considered completely without considering the political goal."[23]

Unfortunately, the views of much of the German population, particularly of "informed" opinion, was far closer to the racist, violently anti-semitic simplifications offered up not only by the Nazis but by German nationalists across the spectrum of political opinion. Heavily influenced by the Foreign Ministry's disinformation campaign, the Germans came to believe that internal enemies had stabbed the army in the back in 1918 and that the hostility and plots of the Reich's European enemies had justified German policy both before and during the war.

Germany's problems on the strategic level went beyond this institutionalized national effort at self deception. Germans, statesmen and academics as well as the man in the street, had traditionally abdicated responsibility over strategic policy and thought to the military. In the wars of national unification Bismarck had maintained control over national strategic policy. But the glow of the 1866 and 1870 victories conferred on Prussia's generalität a reputation for strategic wisdom and expertise that they did not deserve. When Bismarck departed from the scene, no civilian minister held the prestige or authority to contest strategic policy with the generals. Moltke the elder had lost nearly all of the strategic arguments to Bismarck; his successors in the Wilhelmine Reich won their arguments with disastrous results.

As a result of Bismarck's constitution and civilian deference to military wisdom, the German military found themselves before and during World War I in control of strategic policy-making -- a role for which by education and inclination they were unprepared. As Michael Howard has suggested: "Colmar Von der Goltz expressed the majority view in refusing to accept Clausewitz. It was not that he ignored the political element in the Clausewitzian trinity. He considered it to be no longer relevant."[24] By the early 20th Century the education of general staff officers, the intellectual elite of the army, no longer provided for the study of Clausewitz. A letter from General Geyer von Schweppenburg to B. H. Liddell Hart after the Second World War makes clear what general staff officers read and how they regarded Clausewitz's writings:

> During the time of my insight [sic, intellectual development is what von Schweppenburg meant], beginning with 1911, when I came to our staff college, up to the finale of the old German army of 1945 when I was responsible as inspector of armored troops, also for their schools, the education of the General Staff was almost entirely based on the authors or strategists as under (unfortunately)
> 1. Schlieffen's Cannae
> 2. Frederick the Great
> 3. Napoleon (yes, good old Bonnie, this might be of interest to classics [sic!])
> Although I have not read his book, I want to point to one, called 'Defense' of Frh. Ritter von Leeb. . . . You will be horrified to hear that I have never read Clausewitz or Delbrück or Haushofer. The opinion on Clausewitz in our general staff was that of a theoretician to be read by professors.[25]

The educational system for the general staff after World War I hardly suggests an improvement in the study of strategy or strategic thought. The future American general, Albert C. Wedemeyer, attended the Kriegsakademie in 1936-1937; his detailed report makes no mention of Clausewitz and his description of the curriculum suggests a narrow concentration on operational and tactical matters.[26]

The German military had dominated strategic policy making in Germany from the onset of World War I.[27] They attempted to solve the complex issues raised by that conflict as a series of six-month operational problems and disregarded or missed the strategic-political problems.[28] The peculiar fashion with which the German military addressed submarine warfare is a case in point. Entirely on the basis of operational analysis, the German navy persuaded the army high command that unrestricted submarine warfare would win the war; the leadership of both services either refused to address America's long-range potential or dismissed it as unimportant.[29]

The confusion between strategy and operations reached its high point under General Erich Ludendorff. The Quartermaster-General of the OHL (the army high command) and de facto dictator of Germany defined his strategic conception for the March 1918 "Michael" offensive thus: "I object to the word 'operation.' We will punch a hole into [their line]. For the rest, we shall see. We also did it this way in Russia!"[30] The result was disastrous; tactical and operational excellence on the battlefield were not substitutes for strategic or political wisdom. The battlefield performances of the German army played an important role in prolonging both world wars and in raising the strategic and political price that Germany had to pay for its defeats.[31]

Those brought up within the German political culture and the products of the military system had considerable difficulty in judging and understanding strategy. Consequently, the ability of German leaders to weigh strategic issues such as the relationship between means and ends were clouded. More often than not, where means and ends failed to match, Germans fell back upon Nietzschean will or some other palliative. This is not to suggest that Germany's strategic choices could be easily discerned, or that national strategy was a simple, easy matter.

But the overall distortions suggested above went beyond the norms for other nations and may help to explain why the Germans lost two world wars.

The Organization of Governmental Assessment

The traditional picture of Germany depicts a well-organized and disciplined people, ruled by a state with clearly delineated lines of authority. In reality, however, the Germans lived in an environment of bureaucratic ambiguity from the founding of Bismarck's Second Reich. In order to insure the Prussian king's prerogatives and to avoid interference from the Reichstag, the constitution of the new German Empire placed its army and the navy outside of direct parliamentary control. To compound matters, Kaiser Wilhelm II magnified the constitutional vagaries in terms of strategic policy and military organization; at one time no less than forty army officers and eight naval officers possessed the right of direct access to the Kaiser.[32] The result was a general incoherence in strategic policy and an incapacity to assess Germany's position within the European balance.

The framers of the Weimar constitution attempted to provide the new Republic with a more coherent bureaucratic structure. The President of the Republic would provide stability; the Chancellor and cabinet would make policy and handle day-to-day matters. The new constitution reflected continental processes with its establishment of a civilian Defense Minister to control the army and navy (because of the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles Germany did not possess an air force). Unfortunately, the first ministers of defense, particularly Otto Gessler, were hardly more than rubber stamps for the military.[33] This allowed the army to establish an independent position; the first head of the secret general staff (the so called Truppenamt, with

a disguised title since the Treaty of Versailles forbade a general staff) and father of the post-war army, General Hans von Seeckt, accurately described the Reichswehr as "a state within a state."

Despite the constitutional changes, the Reichswehr assumed responsibility for strategic planning. In late 1922 it designed a joint war game for 1923 with the German navy (now reduced to a pre-dreadnought force) to thwart a Franco-Danish invasion of North Germany. The French soon underlined the lack of relevance of such games to Germany's real strategic situation when they invaded and occupied the Ruhr industrial districts; the real correlation of forces became crystal clear. A German failure to fulfill the reparation payments demanded by the Treaty of Versailles had given the French the excuse; the Reichswehr had made no preparations to meet such a contingency. Within the Truppenamt Joachim von Stülpnägel urged that the Reichswehr undertake an improvised popular war of liberation; Seeckt rejected such an approach out of hand.[34]

As with the Empire, the Weimar Republic did not possess a coherent means to analyze the strategic and diplomatic issues confronting it. One can contrast this situation with that of Britain after World War I where a system of strategic assessment and coordination was rapidly beginning to develop.[35] Indeed, even before the war the British had created the Committee of Imperial Defense to provide guidance on Britain's strategic policies.

Only under Wilhelm Groener, Defense Minster from 1927-1931, was an attempt made to bring some coherence into the assessment of Germany's position. In April 1930 Groener issued a directive, "The Tasks of the Wehrmacht," in which he argued for "the paramount importance of political viewpoints in defining the tasks of the armed forces."[36] Above all, he attempted to introduce an air of realism into Reichswehr preparations to defend German

territory. A study tour in late 1928 designed by the Truppenamt suggests how difficult a task that was. General Walther von Blomberg designed the political portion of a war game involving Germany and Poland to have the League of Nations intervene and impose an armistice at precisely the moment when the Reichswehr ran out of ammunition. According to the scenario, the Soviet Union then offered an alliance, joined the conflict and enabled the Reichswehr to go over to a massive offensive to crush the Poles.[37] Blomberg's exile to East Prussia followed hard on the heels of this bizarre scenario.

The Process of Net Assessment in Nazi Germany

If anything, the structure of the Nazi regime only exacerbated these administrative weaknesses. Hitler divided authority among competing bureaucracies; in addition to the Republic's existing structure, the Nazis created an independent bureaucracy of the Nazi Party that competed with increasing success for authority. Hitler's management style rejected coherence and consistency; his style placed considerable emphasis on ad hoc groups and access to his entourage. At the top of the Nazi pyramid stood the Führer, who after Hindenburg's death in 1934 combined the offices of Chancellor and President of the Weimar Republic with the power of undisputed chieftain of the Nazi Party. By 1935 the process of Gleichschaltung had incorporated or destroyed all other political organizations in Germany. The Nazi party remained a crucial player in Hitler's government, providing not only alternative means of analysis but of interpretation. For example, Joachim von Ribbentrop, self-styled party foreign policy expert, consistently provided estimates through early 1938 that stood in direct opposition to those of the Foreign Office. In February 1938 this anomaly ended when Hitler displaced

Foreign Minister Constantin von Neurath and named Ribbentrop to the post. While the result may have provided more coherence between party and diplomacy, it hardly brought more effective assessment to government.

Under the Weimar constitution, the Cabinet was to play the crucial role in policy-making and government. However, it rarely met in Hitler's Germany and was certainly not in use as a deliberative, policy-making institution. Hitler, of course, had no intention in allowing the Cabinet to participate in any decision making process. As he told his senior advisors in the infamous meeting recorded by his army aide, Oberst Friedrich Hossbach, "the subject of the present conference was of such importance that its discussion would, in other countries, certainly be a matter for a full Cabinet Meeting, but he had rejected the idea of making it a subject of discussion before this wider circle of the Reich Cabinet just because of the importance of the matter . . ."[38] [my emphasis]. Part of the explanation for Hitler's action undoubtedly had to do with security. But even more important was his desire to exclude as many as possible and as much as possible from strategic evaluation. The Hossbach meeting represented an exclusion of the Cabinet from the process; moreover, the strongly worded objections of several of the attendees made this meeting the last of its kind in the Third Reich. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1938 Hitler held meetings with the chiefs of staff of the most important army and Luftwaffe formations. Here too, he ran into substantial arguments and debate over his assumptions. As the future field Marshal Eric von Manstein testified at Nuremburg in recounting an August meeting between Hitler and the more junior generals, that occasion the was last of its kind at which Hitler allowed substantial discussions from the floor.[39]

Hitler's War Minister, Blomberg, with his chief military assistant General Walther von

Reichenau, attempted to center German strategic planning and control within the War Ministry. In retrospect it is doubtful whether Hitler would have allowed such a concentration of power; however, he did not have to intervene. Hermann Göring, the Luftwaffe's new head, used his political position as Hitler's chief assistant to thwart the War Ministry efforts to bring the Luftwaffe within its sphere of control. Not surprisingly, the army was no more willing to serve under a "joint" higher command. The navy simply sailed in the lee. As General Walter Warlimont noted in his memoirs on the workings of the German system: "In fact the advice of the British Chiefs of Staff and the US Joint Chiefs was a deciding factor in Allied strategy. At the comparable level in Germany there was nothing but a disastrous vacuum."[40]

With Blomberg's fall in January 1938, Hitler assumed command of the German armed forces. The War Ministry staff became the Oberkommando des Wehrmacht (OKW, Armed Forces High Command) under the future Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel; but in fact under the new arrangements the OKW only served as Hitler's personal staff. It had no independent status, and through 1941 the three services dealt directly with Hitler. Consequently, one cannot talk about joint strategic assessments within the German high command. That, of course, reflected the peculiarities and traditions of the German military. It also fell in with Hitler's conceptions of how best to control the defense establishment and the evolution of German strategy. As he announced on one occasion, the business of the generals was to prepare forces for war and then to fight. They were to leave strategy to their Führer.

In the late 1920s Groener had concentrated intelligence gathering services of the army and navy within the Defense Ministry in an organization called the Abwehr.[41] Groener hoped that the Defense Ministry staff would serve to coordinate and control strategic and political

analyses, while allowing the services to maintain control over operational and tactical intelligence. The Abwehr, under the leadership of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, attempted to strengthen its position within Blomberg's War Ministry. However, even under Groener the Abwehr had run into resistance from military and civilian agencies in its claim that it should be the focal point for strategic and political assessment.[42] Blomberg's failure to control defense policy resulted in the collapse of Abwehr pretensions that it was the center for collation and assessment of strategic and political intelligence. Instead, under Canaris' leadership, it turned more and more to espionage, counter-espionage, sabotage, and eventually to plotting against the regime itself.[43]

Under the peculiar circumstances of Hitler's regime, there was a proliferation of intelligence organizations, including the SS, nearly every department of government, and the military services. Virtually every agency of government involved itself in the business of intelligence, since without information, the services, bureaucratic organizations, and political leaders in Nazi Germany were quite literally at sea. The fragmentation of intelligence and assessment capabilities continued even within the services themselves. Within the army, the staffs of Foreign Armies East and Foreign Armies West maintained independent and uncoordinated organizations that by 1943-44 had the former working for the OKH (Oberkommando des Heeres, Army High Command), while the latter worked for the OKW. None of these intelligence organizations displayed much interest in strategic assessment; rather, particularly in the case of military intelligence, the focus remained on operational matters.

In the final analysis, within the hazy ideological conception of the Nazi state, responsibility for strategic analysis lay entirely within Hitler's sphere. The regime combined

overcentralization with fragmentation of bureaucratic authority to allow Hitler considerable latitude in determining his course. Moreover, the Führer deliberately sought to avoid consultative mechanisms such as those that allowed the British government to examine strategic questions from such wide perspectives. He did so for several reasons: a bureaucratic approach was anathema to his style and also represented a substantial impediment to his flexibility and freedom of action.

It is worth underlining the extraordinary differences between the German and the British systems. Under the British system there was a smooth flow of questions from the Cabinet down through the bureaucracy, and thorough analyses by the bureaucracy in response often involving a number of agencies.[44] German assessments of the strategic situation, on the other hand, rested almost entirely on individual rather than bureaucratic efforts. Strategic net assessments during the summer 1938 crisis were the product of individuals, admittedly highly placed, who opposed the risks involved in Hitler's foreign policy over Czechoslovakia. The foremost examples were those studies written by General Ludwig Beck, the chief of the army's general staff.[45] But a number of other figures, military as well as civilian, produced net assessments of the strategic situation that echoed Beck's analyses. The most notable examples were studies worked up by Captain Hellmuth Heye and Admiral Günther Guse of the Seekriegsleitung (naval high command) and the State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Ernst von Weizsäcker.[46]

Hitler had little interest in such thorough assessments of the international situation. Nevertheless, this should not suggest that he refused to weigh the strategic balance confronting Germany. On a number of occasions he made clear his evaluation of the balance. In August 1938, obviously in response to criticisms raised by Beck and others, he commented that if

Germany waited until she had prepared all of her military forces, then everyone else would be prepared as well. The crucial issue to Hitler was not how well the German military were prepared for conflict, but rather how well prepared the Reich was in relation to other powers.

It would be useful at this point to follow the course and nature of Hitler's assessments of the strategic situation as well as the response of those who disagreed with the Führer's strategic Weltanschauung and the extraordinary risks that he was running. The changes in Hitler's views along with the collapse of an alternative view within civilian and military bureaucracies explains both the extraordinary successes that Hitler was able to achieve in the late 1930s and early 1940s and the catastrophic final results of the German smashup.

In the Hossbach meeting of November 1937 Hitler began by underlining the importance of achieving Lebensraum for the expansion of the German people; he then admitted that history suggested that one could only achieve such goals "by breaking down resistance and by taking risks; setbacks were inevitable." Britain and France, according to Hitler, represented substantial stumbling blocks; moreover, while the short term strategic prospects for the Reich were good, in the long term "our relative strength [will] decrease in relation to the rearmament which would by then have been carried out by the rest of the world." As a result Nazi Germany should move soon, particularly if external events created favorable strategic situations. In particular Hitler suggested that such occasions might involve either civil strife in France or a war in the Mediterranean embroiling the French and the Italians. The immediate object of his interest was significantly Czechoslovakia (not Austria) and he suggested that "Britain, and probably France as well, had already tacitly written off the Czechs." The Führer found it unlikely that the French would intervene, while a French offensive in the west "without British

support, and with the prospect of the offensive being brought to a standstill on our western fortifications, was hardly probable." The danger lay in waiting: "in this connection it had to be remembered that the defensive measures of the Czechs were growing in strength from year to year, and that the actual worth of the Austrian army was also increasing in the course of time." Finally, the speed and swiftness with which the Wehrmacht moved would be decisive in keeping the Poles and Russians out of a central European confrontation.[47]

A. J. P. Taylor singled out the so-called Hossbach memorandum in his argument that few of the events of 1937-1940 resembled Hitler's picture of the strategic situation and his future intentions.[48] Nevertheless, what was essential in these discussions was Hitler's enthusiastic willingness to assume great risks and his assessment of his potential opponents. As Hitler told an assemblage of generals in August 1939:

> It was clear to me that a conflict with Poland had to come sooner or later. I had already made this decision in the spring, but I thought I would first turn against the West in a few years, and only after that against the East. But the sequence of these things cannot be fixed. Nor should one close one's eyes to threatening situations. I wanted first of all to establish a tolerable relationship with Poland in order to fight first against the West. But this plan, which appealed to me, could not be executed, as fundamental points had changed.[49]

To Hitler's dismay, several of his military listeners voiced serious doubts about his assessment of the strategic situation. Field Marshal Blomberg, War Minister, and the army's commander-in-chief, Colonel General Werner von Fritsch, "repeatedly emphasized that Britain and France must not appear in the role of our enemies." Moreover, they warned that even should the French become embroiled in war with the Italians, they would have more than enough troops to invade the Rhineland. The two generals argued "that the state of French preparations must be taken into particular account and it must be remembered apart from the insignificant

value of our own present fortifications -- on which Field Marshal von Blomberg laid special emphasis -- that the four motorized divisions intended for the West were still more or less incapable of movement."[50] Considering Hitler's lack of appreciation for those voicing independent opinions, it is not surprising that within two months he had seized upon Blomberg's mesalliance to purge the War Minister, Fritsch, the foreign minister, and a number of other senior advisers. That in turn resulted in the most serious confrontation between Hitler and his officer corps in the Third Reich's history. The crisis appears to have played a crucial role in driving Hitler to pressure Austria and in the eventual Anschluss of March 1938.[51]

Because of Hitler's speed in striking, as well as the mistakes of the Austrians and the internal turmoil within the German military, no significant assessments of the strategic environment occurred in March 1938. Hitler concluded from his success with Austria that Western opposition to further moves, particularly against Czechoslovakia, was most unlikely.[52] Before the month was out Hitler was hard at work conspiring with Sudeten-German leaders to cripple the Czech Republic. His military had already delineated the framework within which they felt a confrontation with the Czechs could occur. An OKW directive supplementing Fall Grün (deployment plan for eastern contingencies) noted

> When Germany has achieved complete preparedness for war in all fields, then the military conditions will have been created for carrying out an offensive war against Czechoslovakia, so that the solution of the German problem of living space can be carried to a victory and even if one or other of the Great Powers intervene against us. . . . But even so, the government [Staatsführung] will do what is politically possible to avoid the risks for Germany of a war on two fronts and will try to avoid any situation with which, as far as can be judged, Germany could not cope militarily or economically.

The memorandum then suggested that should "the political situation not develop, or only develop slowly, in our favor, then the execution of operation 'Green' from our side will have

to be postponed for years." However, if Britain refused to concern herself with the affairs of Central Europe or war were to break out in the Mediterranean between France and Italy, then Germany could risk eliminating Czechoslovakia, even if the Soviet Union involved itself, "before the completion of Germany's full preparedness for war."[53] This directive encompassed the strategic arguments over summer 1938 between Hitler on one side and Beck on the other. The former argued that Germany must move, while the West was displaying such weakness; Beck posited that the Western Powers would eventually recognize that they must stand by Czechoslovakia. The great mass of the officer corps floundered some where in between these two views.

May 1938 represented the crucial moment in German decision making over the Czech problem. In mid month Hitler journeyed to Italy to visit Mussolini; as the preparatory protocols underline, Hitler felt that Italian ambitions were essential to support his aggressive policy towards Czechoslovakia. If Mussolini were interested in "imperium Africa" then Hitler could "return with Czechoslovakia in the bag . . . Czech question only to be solved in face of Fr[ance] and Br[itain] if closely allied with Italy."[54] Even with Italian cooperation considerable caution remained in Hitler's attitude towards a military strike against the Czechs. On 20 May Keitel passed on to Hitler a new draft for "Green"; the preamble (for Hitler's signature) stated that "it is not my intention to smash Czechoslovakia by military action in the immediate future without provocation unless an unavoidable development of the political conditions within Czechoslovakia forces the issue, or political events in Europe create a particularly favorable opportunity which perhaps may never recur."[55]

However, the May crisis at the end of the month during which the Czechs mobilized to

deter the threat of a German invasion radically altered Hitler's strategic conceptions. A reworking of the "Green" directive ten days later now began: "It is my unalterable decision to smash Czechoslovakia by military action in the near future."[56] But Hitler had already mulled over how best to remove the Czech Republic. On 22 April he had posited three possibilities to a military aide. The first, a bolt from the blue, he rejected as too dangerous until Germany had eliminated all her enemies but one on the continent. The second, "action after a period of diplomatic discussions which gradually lead to a crisis and to war," was unsatisfactory for military reasons; the final possibility, a mixture of the first two, might involve a precipitatory event "(for example the murder of the German Minister in the course of an anti-German demonstration)" followed by a great political crisis and a "lightening German invasion."[57]

Hitler now fixed on a swift destruction of Czechoslovakia to provide the Reich with victory within the first days of an invasion. "Thus it is essential to create a situation within the first two or three days which demonstrates to enemy states which wish to intervene the hopelessness of the Czech military position, and also provides an incentive to those states which have territorial claims upon Czechoslovakia to join in immediately against her."[58] Hitler's strategic and foreign policy from this point followed a direct, simple logic of 1) isolating over the summer by diplomatic means, 2) concentrating the Wehrmacht's military power around the Republic's frontiers, and 3) destroying the Czech state in the fall before anyone could intervene. Hitler's assumptions were enormous and risky; they depended on operational perfection, a dubious prospect given the still incomplete rearmament, and on the incalculable actions of numerous statesmen and national polities.[59]

In this atmosphere of growing crisis significant opposition to Hitler's strategic

assessments appeared for virtually the only time in the Third Reich's history; the chief of the general staff, General Ludwig Beck, posed a direct and serious challenge to Hitler. In early May he underlined three disturbing aspects of the international situation: the international balance, the military strength of the Western Powers, and Germany's military potential.[60] Unlike his counterparts in Great Britain, Beck recognized the advantages of Britain's position as a world power. He doubted whether Japan and Italy would act in concert with Germany in a world war. The Sino-Japanese War and its resulting drain on Japanese resources had removed the latent Japanese threat to the British position in the Far East. Britain and France, as they had done in the Great War, would act in concert in any military confrontation. The Reich would face the Soviet Union as an enemy in any conflict, while Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Poland were all doubtful quantities from the German point of view.

Turning to the Western Powers, Beck suggested that the Sino-Japanese War and the lessening of tensions in the Mediterranean, now made it easier for the British to devote their full attention to European affairs. The British, Beck argued, understood that Germany's rearmament was not complete and that its economy was in serious trouble. Admittedly France did not desire war, but there were limits beyond which even the French would not allow the Reich to go. Moreover, Beck believed, the French army was still the best in Europe. Czechoslovakia would represent a point of honor for France and should France come to its defense the British would follow suit.

As for Allied strategy, the chief of staff believed that Britain and France would pursue a limited conflict, at least on the ground. Admittedly such an approach would not immediately help the Czechs, but as with Serbia in World War I, the course of a future war, not its first

moves, would determine the Czech Republic's fate. Beck had no doubts as to who would win a conflict starting in 1938. Germany's strategic position was definitely inferior to what it had been in 1914. The Reich possessed neither the economic nor military base to fight even a Central European war, much less a world war. The economic base was in worse shape than it had been in 1917-1918. The Czech problem could find no solution without the agreement of the Western Powers and it seemed unlikely that they would give Germany a free hand. Should Nazi Germany nevertheless attempt to force a solution, it would face a coalition of overwhelming strength,

Barely three weeks later, immediately following Hitler's "unalterable decision" to smash Czechoslovakia by the fall, Beck completed another assessment.[61] He began by making clear that his argument was not with Hitler's goals but rather with the risks that the dictator was running:

> 1) It is correct, that Germany needs greater living space. Such space can only be captured through a war.
> 2) It is correct, that Czechoslovakia is unbearable for Germany in its form imposed by the Versailles Diktat and that a way must be found, even if necessary by war, to eliminate it as a danger [to] Germany. . . .
> 3) It is correct that France stands in the way of every extension of Germany's power and that it in this respect will be a certain enemy of Germany's.
> 4) It is correct that there are a number of grounds to justify an immediate solution employing force to solve the Czech question:
>
> a) The increasing strength of the Czech fortifications
> b) The advancing rearmament of France and England.[62]

Beck, however, contradicted Hitler's assumption that Nazi Germany could get away with a limited war against Czechoslovakia. He stressed that Germany could not yet wage a war on Britain and France; the Czech army was a serious military factor; and it was doubtful whether the Wehrmacht could overrun Bohemia and Moravia so quickly as to preempt intervention by

the Western Powers. As opposed to Hitler's hopeful call for a two to three day campaign, Beck expected that the Czechs could put up significant resistance, lasting three, and perhaps more, weeks. Should Britain and France intervene, the outcome of the war would not depend on the first clash of arms but rather on a whole series of factors over which Germany had little control.

Besides Beck, the state secretary in the Foreign Ministry, Ernst von Weizsäcker, also warned of the enormous risks that Hitler was running. In an 8 June memorandum written for the Foreign Minister, Weizsäcker argued that, although France was Germany's most implacable enemy, England was her "most dangerous foe."[63] In a major war Germany would find the Soviet Union and the United States associated with Britain and France. Such a situation, argued Weizsäker, demanded that Germany avoid conflict with the West. Even in Eastern Europe the Reich could achieve its goals only with the sufferance of those powers. Blocking the West (through construction of the Westwall) and conquest of Czechoslovakia would not decide the issue. To win, Germany must dictate peace in London and Paris and the Reich lacked the military means to do that. Weizsäcker did believe that Britain and France had little interest in Czechoslovakia, but that Germany must proceed with care: the situation was definitely not ripe for a surprise attack. Any such action would only bring Western intervention. Germany could only hope that through diplomatic pressure and claims of self determination it could gain the Sudetenland and dissolve the Czech state. Any such course would have to represent a gradual, long term project.

Assessments of the strategic situation have little importance, except to scholars, unless they are available at the highest levels of bureaucracy. Beck's memoranda did not enjoy wide circulation, but rather remained within the OKH (including the General Staff). This was a

considerable contrast to Britain where COS assessments enjoyed wide dissemination within the Cabinet, The Committee of Imperial Defense, and the foreign policy community. In mid-July the enormous differences in assessment pictures between Hitler and the army chief of staff's broke into the open, when Brauchitsch, with some editing help from Keitel, passed along to the Führer Beck's 5 May 1938 memorandum. Hitler exploded in fury and reserved special contempt for Beck's estimate that the French possessed superiority in ground forces. He characterized such calculations as "kindische Kräfteberechungen" (childish calculations) and stormed that he would make his own assessments, including SS, SA, and police formations, and then "hold it in front of the noses of the gentleman" responsible for such estimates.[64] By August Hitler was well aware that his drive towards a military confrontation had aroused widespread opposition within the German military. Brauchitsch screwed up enough courage to show the Führer a further memorandum of Beck's (written on 15 July) and to inform Hitler that it had been read at a senior assemblage of generals.[65]

Again Hitler was furious; as he exclaimed to his entourage: "What do I have for generals, when I as chief of state must drive them to war?. . . I demand not that my generals understand my orders, but that they obey them."[66] On 10 August Hitler met with a group of important junior generals (the chiefs of staffs of immediate and mobilized commands) at Berchtesgaden. Hitler held forth for his usual extended oration; among his major points were the desperate plight of the German minority in Czechoslovakia, the fact that Britain had hardly begun her rearmament, while the French were in domestic turmoil, and the general lack of enthusiasm in the West for war. Finally, he argued, in the east Poland and Hungary were eager to participate in the butchering of Czechoslovakia, while the Red Army was in no position to

fight due to the purges. To Hitler's annoyance, he again ran into considerable opposition. The chief of staff of the western army group doubted whether the Reich's western fortifications could hold against a determined French counterattack for more than three weeks. This drew the rejoinder from Hitler that the line could be held for three years.[67]

Five days later on 15 August Hitler confronted his critics among the generals at Jüterborg. As he told his listeners, it had been his fundamental drive since he had embarked on a political career to make Germany the most powerful nation in Europe. His greatest fear was that he might be removed before he had completed his mission. After treating his audience to a discussions of the crucial role of Lebensraum to Germany's future, Hitler turned to the current strategic situation:

> Czechoslovakia -- the 'Soviet Russian aircraft carrier' -- must be eliminated. Armies were never strong enough to suit their leaders, and success depended on rightly gauging the politico-military balance. So far he had always been right in his assessments. The other powers would not intervene: 'Gentlemen, with that possibility you need not concern yourselves.' English threats were bluff, as [their] efforts at compromise showed, and [they] would keep out as long as Germany showed no sign of weakening. . . . 'Fortune must be seized when she strikes, for she will not come again!. . . I predict that by the end of the year we will be looking back at a great success.'[68]

By now in late summer the general officer corps had fractured into three distinct groups. Some remained firmly convinced that an invasion of Czechoslovakia would unleash a general European war that Germany would not only lose but lose quickly. On the other pole, particularly among the younger generals, there was a general acceptance of the Führer's assessment. In response to the 10 August blow up, Jodl disconsolately noted in his diary that the senior officers were bound up in the traditions of the old army and "they lacked the strength of heart, because in the final analysis they did not believe in the genius of the Führer."[69] The soon-to-be chief of staff of the Luftwaffe, Hans Jeschonneck, sputtered after the concluding

remarks by Beck to a spring 1938 war game over a hypothetical attack on Czechoslovakia that "the blind will see as soon as Beck will! Thirty days for those ridiculous Husseits! As if there wasn't any Luftwaffe! Schlieffen set back military technique by 20 years, and on the Marne we paid the price. For Beck, our squadrons are only a troublesome appendix. But all of you will soon see the most stupendous things!"[70]

The great bulk of the generals fell between these two views, but one must note a steady migration towards Hitler's point of view. There was no chance of presenting the Führer with a united front of opposition. A gathering of senior officers on 4 August foundered on the inability of those present to agree on even a symbolic gesture against Hitler's policy. Moreover, as the summer unwound evidence from abroad (through the Foreign Ministry as well as military attachés) seemingly lent greater credence to Hitler's assessments. It was apparent that there was considerable unwillingness in the West to engage the Third Reich in a war. Even more important was the fact that intelligence evaluations were now casting doubt on how quickly the French army could launch an attack on Germany's western frontier.[71]

By late summer Beck was clearly in an untenable situation. The army's commander-in-chief would not stand up to Hitler, the officer corps was riddled with Hitler devotees, and most who maintained any distance from the Nazi Regime and its leader were on the fence. In late July, the future field marshal and one of Beck's favorites, General Erich von Manstein, wrote his former mentor a long letter urging that the chief of staff remain at his post. Manstein argued this not on the basis of the dangerous strategic situation but largely that only Beck's presence could prevent the OKW from seizing control over German strategy from the OKH. On the great issue as to whether the Western Powers would intervene in the case of a war with

Czechoslovakia, Manstein had no opinion, for, as he said, the final responsibility was Hitler's. The military should attempt to deter such an eventuality and make sure that Hitler understood the risks. But, added Manstein, "Hitler has thus far always estimated the political situation correctly."[72] In view of this strategic framework within which one of his closest collaborators and brightest Germans generals worked, it is not surprising that Beck soon resigned.

Hitler continued to confront a less than unwilling general officer corps. Nevertheless, a major conference between the Führer and the military commanders in the West made clear how the grounds for the argument had shifted:

> The Führer spoke first and in a long speech gave his views on France, in effect as follows: France possesses a peace-time army of 470,000 men and can raise a wartime army of at most 1,700,000-1,800,000 men. The capacity of French industry is limited, no essential changes have taken place in French armaments since the end of the war. . . . Today France is not in a position to despatch her entire Field Army to the North-east frontier for she must maintain strong forces against Italy. England, at present, can intervene with five divisions and one armored brigade. The motorization of these five divisions is not yet completed. . . . The tank arm has passed its peak. . . . On the Western Front we have 2000 anti-tank guns and we possess an excellent means of defense in the tank mine.[73]

By now the mood among the generals had shifted to a wary acceptance of Hitler's strategic vision. A few, Halder, Witzleben, Hoeppener, among others dabbled with thoughts of removing Hitler, but with such scanty documentary materials as exist on the 1938 conspiracy it is difficult to judge the potential of the "plot." Hitler drove relentlessly throughout September towards a military solution of the Czech problems. Here he became involved in a fierce confrontation with Brauchitsch and Halder over operational matters; but Hitler's concern with the strategic and political balance manifested itself in his demand that the OKH's operational plans aim at achieving such a sudden decisive success against the Czechs that the Western Powers would be deterred from intervention.[74]

In the end Hitler backed off from war; the fact that the Western Powers were willing to serve the Czechs up to him undoubtedly helped pull him back from the abyss at the last moment. But it was not decisive. Most probably it was a combination of factors: the doubts of many among his senior generals, the military preparations of Britain and France, questions about the Poles, and the very considerable economic difficulties which the Third Reich was experiencing at this time combined to make Munich possible. Hitler himself almost immediately regretted that he had agreed to a peaceful solution. His success, however, had a crucial impact on German assessment of the balance. It served to convince Hitler that his views were infallible, that his genius could do no wrong. On the other hand, it completely undermined the opposition to Hitler's assessments. There would be no memoranda the following summer on the dangerous risks that German policy was running as Hitler and Goebbels stoked the fires of the Polish crisis.

Hitler's assessment of the 1939 crisis ran on very similar lines of thinking for 1938: he aimed to isolate the Polish Republic, create the basis for a sudden and brutal descent that would deter intervention from the West, and intimidate and undermine the willingness of the West to intervene. In effect the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact made Hitler's policy even more successful. Moreover, Hitler's contempt for Western leadership reinforced his belief that he could get away with a short war over Poland. As he told his entourage, he had seen his enemies at Munich and they were worms. In a long detailed speech to his generals and admirals on 22 August 1939 Hitler laid out the assessment on which he was launching the Third Reich into World War II:[75]

> It was clear to me that a conflict with Poland had to come sooner or later. I had already made this decision in the spring, but I thought that I would first turn

> against the West in a few years, and only after that against the East. But the sequence of these things cannot be fixed. . . . I wanted first of all to establish a tolerable relationship with Poland in order to fight first against the West.

Hitler then moved on to his assessment of the international situation that favored the Reich at the present moment. Not surprisingly, the personalities of the two leaders of the Axis states was first:

> Essentially all depends on me, on my existence, because of my political talents. Furthermore, the fact that probably no one will ever again have the confidence of the whole German people as I have.

Hitler then moved to the economic and strategic factors that buttressed his decision to take the risks associated with an invasion of Poland and the possibility of another World War:

> It is easy for us to make decisions. We have nothing to lose; we have everything to gain. Because of our restrictions our economic situation is such that we can only hold out for a few more years. . . . We have no other choice, we must act. Our opponents will be risking a great deal and can gain only a little. . . . Our enemies have leaders who are below average. No personalities. No masters, no men of action. England and France have undertaken obligations which neither is in a position to fulfill. There is no real rearmament in England, but only propaganda. A great deal of harm was done by many Germans, who were not in agreement with me, saying and writing to English people after the solution of the Czech question: The Führer succeeded because you lost your nerve, because you capitulated too soon. This explains the present propaganda war. The English speak of a war of nerves. One factor in this war of nerves is to boost the increase of armaments. But what are the real facts about British rearmament? The naval construction program for 1938 has not yet been completed. . . . Little has been done on land. . . . A little has been done for the Air Force, but it is only a beginning. . . . The West has only two possibilities for fighting against us:
>
> 1. Blockade: It will not be effective because of our autarky and because we have sources of supply in Eastern Europe.
> 2. Attack in the West from the Maginot Line: I consider this impossible.

In comparison with Hitler's statements in the Hossbach protocol, one is struck by the continuity in themes. But by late summer 1939 Hitler had reached a point where he entirely

dominated the business of net assessment. No longer were his advisors encouraged or even allowed to speak their minds. In fact by this point, the senior military and policy makers either fully accepted Hitler's strategic assumptions or kept their mouths shut. One suspects that the great majority of his listeners on 22 August 1939 fully ascribed to Manstein's comments of the previous year: "Hitler has thus far always estimated the political situation correctly." It is also worth noting that in many cases this acceptance would involve a wholehearted embracing of the Führer principal, that Adolf Hitler could do no wrong. As we shall see in the next section, the stunning successes of the first two years of the war would further debilitate and destroy the independence of judgment that is so necessary to any intelligent and sophisticated attempt to calculate the balance. The disastrous course of "Operation Barbarossa" largely reflected that collapse of independent judgment.

One comes away from the business of analyzing the process of net assessment in Nazi Germany with a sense of watching a train rapidly heading towards an abyss with the engineer opening up the throttle rather than applying the brakes, while berating a cowardly crew that if they can get up enough speed the train will leap across the yawing chasm. And bit by bit the crew becomes persuaded and goes about its task of oiling the machinery with more and more enthusiasm. The process of net assessment in any realistic, carefully nuanced sense quite simply disappears in Nazi Germany in the last years of the 1930s. Rather Hitler's very successes robbed his advisors of their rational judgment. We must also note that in terms of the German intellectual and cultural climate they were already predisposed to follow the Führer. While his views were an extreme expression of their Weltanschauung, his was nevertheless a world view with which they had considerable sympathy, and as he enjoyed more and more success, they

were predisposed to accept his message and vision in their full totality. By 1941 the Führer and his advisors were in complete agreement on the strategic and political levels of German policy making.

The Factors in the Making of German Net Assessment

Where then did Hitler get the information on which he based his views on the overall strategic situation, if not from the bureaucracy? His general framework remained his racial Weltanschauung. Some reports, such as those of the German military attaché in Washington, consistently reinforced and played to his beliefs. Those who conformed to Hitler's racial Weltanschauung found an attentive audience in their Führer. Those, however, who contradicted his conceptions received short shrift. The OKW, particularly its chief, Wilhelm Keitel, proved particularly adept at providing Hitler with support that echoed his opinions. In fact, Hitler probably selected Keitel for the top slot in the OKW on the basis of his servility. Those who dominated the upper levels of German bureaucracy in the late 1930s and early 1940s increasingly reinforced Hitler's preconceptions. That was precisely in accordance with his wishes; those who maintained independent judgment quickly found themselves in retirement.

One of the clear trends in the Third Reich is the erosion of independent judgments and the capacity to assess the strategic situation in realistic terms. In 1933 there was little doubt within the leadership, including Hitler, about Germany's weakness within the European balance of power. Hitler's carefully calculated moves from 1933 to 1936 reflected his realistic sense of what was acceptable to the powers -- in other words what risks one could take without becoming involved in a conflict. Significantly, when the Austrian Nazis assassinated the Chancellor of

Austria, Engelbert Dohlfuss, Hitler disowned his followers when the Italians appeared to take a stand.

By 1938 Hitler's view of the European political balance was becoming more optimistic; successful occupation of Austria reinforced his sense that his international opponents were lacking in will.[76] Certainly Britain's weak response to the Anschluss and the collapse of the French government seemed to justify his view. Hitler's policies over the summers of 1938 and 1939 reflected a judgment about both the political and military weaknesses of his western opponents. The Wehrmacht's enormous success in the spring 1940 campaign turned confidence into megalomaniacal overconfidence, not only in Hitler's mind but among many of his advisers. Consequently, the German leadership failed to catch the significant change in British leadership that came with Winston Churchill's arrival in power -- something that the Italian Foreign Minister, Galeazzo Ciano, sensed as early as August 1940.[77]

The German misestimate of the political strength and will of Stalin and his Soviet regime needs special emphasis. By 1941 Hitler and his entourage had because so enamored with the myth of the Führer as "the greatest field commander of all time" that few were capable of making reasonable judgments about the impact of operational realities on the political and strategic situation. By education and inclination the German military was already on the road to a mindless acceptance of Hitler's "genius" by 193[illegible] Manstein's letter to Beck underlines.

On operational and tactical intelligence (the "bean counting" aspect of net assessment), German intelligence performed more creditably. This was a sphere of technical competence that the military felt was their preserve. Within this narrow area the Germans accurately assessed the probable strength of their putative opponents. Nevertheless, there were problems. German

assessments of opponent strength were most accurate within the Central European arena. In other words, they were very good at estimating the military strength of opponents like Czechoslovakia, Poland and France. The Manstein plan that led to the overwhelming German victory in spring 1940 rested in large measure on a thorough understanding of French doctrine and the probable French responses to a German invasion.

However, the Battle of Britain suggests that once the Germans moved beyond the Central European arena, they had increasing difficulty in estimating the balance accurately. In retrospect, the Luftwaffe faced insurmountable problems in coming to grips with Fighter Command. Nevertheless, intelligence reports, particularly the July 1940 chief intelligence summary produced by the Luftwaffe's chief of intelligence, Beppo Schmid, suggest an overconfidence that is breathtaking. Schmid's summary missed the British radar network entirely, rated the Bf 110 as superior not only to the Hurricane but to the Spitfire as well, and ended with the judgment that "the Luftwaffe, unlike the RAF, will be in a position in every respect to achieve a decisive effect this year."[78]

The following year's preparations to invade the Soviet Union suggest a more egregious incapacity to calculate even the numerical balance. A diary entry of the Chief of the General Staff, Generaloberst Franz Halder, in early August 1941 catches the extent of the German miscalculation in estimating Soviet potential military strength:

> [The] whole situation shows more and more clearly that we have underestimated the colossus of Russia -- a Russia that had consciously prepared for the coming war with the whole unrestrained power of which a totalitarian state is capable. This conclusion is shown both on the organization as well as the economic levels, in the transportation, and above all, clearly in infantry divisions. We have already identified 360. These divisions are admittedly not armed and equipped in our sense, and tactically they are badly led. But they are there, and when we destroy a dozen, the Russians simply establish another dozen.[79]

Perhaps the strongest point in the German assessment processes lay in the Wehrmacht's ability to estimate its own strengths and weaknesses and then to use those estimates to improve its capabilities. From the Anschluss, German armed forces vigorously evaluated performance of front line units in peacetime maneuvers and in combat. Those evaluations began with after action reports at regimental level and reached all the way to army level. These reports generally represented honest, realistic, and thorough examination of what had gone right or wrong in the exercise or combat environment. The army then utilized these reports to create realistic, demanding training programs to correct deficiencies that appeared. These reports tended to become more critical the higher the level of command reviewing troop performance.[80] The Polish campaign in September 1939 suggests the extent to which this ruthless self-evaluation process reached:

> The preparation of the German army in the phony war indicates several important points. First and perhaps foremost, is the fact that the German high command, within the limited sphere of its military competence, possessed the organizational integrity to recognize that the operational success in Poland had revealed major flaws and weaknesses. Moreover, it was willing to learn from experience. Having evaluated the Polish campaign in the harsh light of its high standards, the German general staff then instituted a vast training program to correct deficiencies by closely tying its training to its "lessons learned" analysis of events in Poland. Of critical importance to his process was the fact that there existed an implicit trust between the different levels of command. Commanders were not afraid to give accurate critical reports on the status and performance of their troops. In addition, the high command expected commanders to give negative evaluations of their units, if there were weaknesses. This is not to say that a unit commander would not do all in his power to correct such deficiencies. There were simply no Potemkin villages.[81]

The process of self-evaluation after the Polish campaign helps explain the blow up between the army's senior leadership and Hitler in fall 1939. The former argued that the deficiencies that had appeared in the Polish campaign must be corrected before the Wehrmacht

met the French in the west. From the army's perspective the argument did not involve the operational design for the proposed fall campaign much less the Führer's strategic vision. Rather, the senior army leadership cast its evaluation entirely on the tactical, battlefield level.

As war approached, the German capability to assess the strategic balance substantially decreased. This reflected increasing Nazification in the upper levels of bureaucracy. Part of this process was direct, with replacement of individuals like von Neurath and von Fritsch with von Ribbentrop and von Brauchitsch. But equally important was an increasing acceptance of the Nazi Weltanschauung, as Hitler's successes in diplomacy and war continued unabated. Hitler's success at Munich in September 1938 was a crucial moment in undermining the arguments of those who believed the risks he was running were too great. The result was twofold. On one hand, many senior officials and generals became out and out Nazis. One the other hand, particularly among the Generalität, senior leaders who were in a position to raise strategic issues confined themselves to narrow technical issues within their field of expertise. Thus, in fall 1939 the generals did not question Hitler's argument on the Reich's strategic position. Rather their interest centered on the tactical and operational problems raised by the war. By 1941, the convergence of these trends was even more pronounced.

The arguments by his senior generals against the fall 1939 offensive outraged Hitler. It only served to confirm his increasing contempt for generals who from his point of view did not want to fight and who had consistently argued against his foreign policy initiatives from the mid 1930s. Brauchitsch made the mistake of suggesting that in Poland German soldiers had not performed as well as they had in 1914. Brauchitsch believed that inconsistent levels of

preparation, resulting from massive military expansion, was at fault. Hitler, however, took the army commander-in-chief's comments as suggesting that the Third Reich had not prepared its soldiers adequately; he was even more furious when Brauchitsch continued on to suggest troop morale of the troops was analogous to what it had been in 1918. In the ensuing explosion, the Führer demanded to know, if this were the case, how many death sentences had the army handed out and accused the army of "not want[ing] to fight."[82]

This concentration on the narrow technical aspects of military professionalism existed in all three services. The navy had had a long tradition of confusing operations with strategy; it is only in this light that one can understand why the Seekriegsleitung pushed throughout summer and fall 1941 for a declaration of war on the United States.[83] For the navy all that mattered were the operational possibilities that a declaration of war would open up for German U-boats off the east coast of North America.[84] In judging the overall strategic situation in December 1941, when word of the Japanese success in Hawaii came in, none of Hitler's advisors, including naval aides, knew the location of Pearl Harbor in the Pacific.[85] Not surprisingly both the army and air force concentrated on similar narrow technical aspects of assessment.

For the Germans, then, evaluation of the strategic balance increasingly rested on a framework reflecting military and operational consensus. In 1938 those, like Beck, opposed to Hitler's Czech policy cast surveys that assessed the larger framework beyond a Czech-German confrontation. Hitler's Munich success cut the ground from underneath such attempts to deal with strategic realities. From that point on, the senior leadership within the Wehrmacht and the foreign policy establishment largely executed Hitler's will. For Ribbentrop this meant slavishly following the Führer's genius with absolute faith. The military themselves no longer produced

strategic analyses, but confined themselves to gaming the narrow operational possibilities of whatever the next conflict might bring.

The two methods by which the Germans assessed the military environment consisted of wargaming and static force comparisons. In both areas the OKH generally captured an accurate picture of the operational balance and possibilities in a future conflict. In summer 1938, the wargaming of a Czech-German conflict -- conducted as the Hitler-Beck argument reached its height -- indicated that Czechoslovakia did not present the Wehrmacht with insurmountable problems. A general staff map experience in late June suggested that war with Czechoslovakia would be a relatively quick affair and that by the twelfth day German forces would break the back of Czech resistance. Within seven days, it concluded that the Wehrmacht could begin transferring units from Czechoslovakia to the west.[86] While this did not directly contradict Beck's assessments, especially in regards to the strategic framework of the crisis, it served to undermine his credibility among generals like Manstein, who regarded Hitler's political wisdom as sufficient.

Kriegspiele were particularly useful in elucidating operational possibilities. The March 1940 game played a crucial role in convincing senior German commanders that a major armored push through the Ardennes offered substantial operational advantages over earlier conceptions.[87] But there were limits to what war games could tell. The gaming of Barbarossa is particularly instructive in this regard. The 1940-1941 operational games carried clear implications about what the Germans would encounter in force to space ratios, especially after the Wehrmacht had advanced deep into the Soviet Union.[88] There is little evidence, however, to suggest that Germans planners allowed such warnings to affect the over-optimistic calculations on which so

much of Barbarossa rested.

Besides Kriegspiele the Germans also used numerical comparisons to quantify the strength of possible opponents. Within the western and central European context these were quite good. Moreover, the Germans exhibited circumspection in estimating the qualitative strengths of opponents. Throughout the French campaign, the Germans retained a high regard for the battlefield capabilities of the French. That undoubtedly explains the nervousness that the leadership exhibited after the Ardennes breakthrough on the Meuse and why the German army halted on the coast before Dunkirk was in its hands. Not only Hitler but most senior generals (including Guderian) feared that the French might repeat the "Miracle of the Marne" with a counter thrust, especially against the vulnerable southern flank along the Somme.

Even so, by 1940, the Germans were beginning to minimize qualitative capabilities of potential enemies. The Battle of Britain underlines this growing overconfidence. The Germans entirely missed the fact that Fighter Command enjoyed a substantial technological superiority in its development and deployment of a radar system. But in the Russian campaign German miscalculations reached an even greater extent. The discovery of the T-34 medium tank, captured early in the campaign, demonstrated that the Soviets possessed an armored fighting vehicle far superior to anything in the German inventory. Similarly, the Germans expressed consistent amazement in the first months of Barbarossa at the tenacity and fighting power of Soviet infantry formations. When one realizes that qualitative misjudgments went hand in hand with quantitative misestimates, the seriousness of German miscalculations becomes clear. The Germans did improve their order of battle picture of Soviet forces as the war continued. Nevertheless, as recent historical work has indicated, the Gehlen organization, from Stalingrad

on, was consistently caught flat-footed by Soviet deployments before each of the great offensives that battered the Wehrmacht back into Central Europe.[89]

The Germans were not much interested in long-term trend analysis. Hitler himself did display considerable interest in trends, but only in terms of his own idiosyncratic interpretation. His ideology rested on a belief that he was swimming against the tide of history. According to him, the forces that had shaped the 19th and early 20th Century world were gradually but steadily eroding the racial basis on which German civilization rested. Only his "unique" political genius could reverse this process; and if he did not grasp the opportunity, he might die and history would not turn onto new paths. Consequently, Hitler was driven by the restless conviction that he must reach his goals in his own lifetime; and as he suggested he could be assassinated at any moment.[90]

This drive reinforced Hitler's own reading of the strategic balance in the late 1930s. Germany had begun rearmament in 1933 and therefore possessed a considerable lead over her opponents by the late 1930s. That lead, however, represented a wasting asset. The British and French were both assembling impressive rearmament efforts, at least on paper by 1938. Moreover, the seizure of Prague in March 1939 led the British to abandon the severe limitations that they had placed on their rearmament particularly of the ground forces.[91] By summer 1939 the British had thrown themselves wholeheartedly into rearmament. They ticketed enormous increases for the RAF and with the help of conscription the British army was creating a field force for commitment on the continent of over 30 divisions.[92] That British effort with its attendant propaganda warned Hitler that whatever advantages Germany possessed in 1939 were ones that in the long term it could not maintain.

This was particularly due to economic problems that had emerged as early as 1936. In that year shortages of raw materials and foreign exchange retarded the German rearmament so much that Hitler created a special economic authority under Göring, "The Four Year Plan," to find alternatives to the Reich's heavy dependency on imports of raw materials. "The Four Year Plan" hoped to give the German war economy sufficient strength to resist a blockade while the Wehrmacht conquered the larger economic and raw material base required to fight a true "world war."[93] By 1937 and 1938 German economic difficulties had severely impacted on rearmament. From September 1937 through February 1938 German industry met only 58.6 percent of its scheduled and contracted orders because of raw material and foreign exchange shortages as well as the lack of industrial capacity.[94] As a report of the Kriegsministerium's economic section warned as early as 1935: "We are becoming poorer from day to day because of our clear internal preoccupations and that without exports we will create no foreign exchange and that without foreign exchange no rearmament is possible."[95]

Even with the Anschluss and seizure of the Sudetenland, economic trends hardly improved over the winter of 1938/1939. Signs of economic collapse appeared immediately after the success over the Western Powers; the economy seemed to have reached a breaking point. In October the Reich Defense Committee reported that "in consequence of Wehrmacht demands (the occupation of the Sudetenland) and unlimited construction on the Westwall so tense a situation in the economic sector occurred (coal, supplies for industries, harvest of potatoes and turnips, food supplies) that continuation of the tension past 10 October [1938] would have made an [economic] catastrophe inevitable."[96] At a setting of the same committee the next month, Göring admitted that the economic strain had reached a point where no more workers were

available, factories were at full capacity, foreign exchange was completely exhausted, and Germany's economic situation was desperate.[97] These economic difficulties finally forced Hitler to reduce Wehrmacht steel allocations 30 percent, copper 20 percent, aluminum 47 percent, rubber 14 percent, and cement 25 to 45 percent.[98]

The crucial point here is that Hitler was well aware of these economic trends that were making it impossible to fulfill his grandiose rearmament plans. That is the underlying message of the Hossbach discussions of November 1937; in 1938 the Anschluss and in 1939 the occupation of the remainder of Czechoslovakia tided the Germans over temporarily. Such success, however, did not solve the problem that no peaceful expansion of the economy could possibly support the rearmament programs that Hitler and his military advisers were pushing. But then it had never been Hitler's intention to limit himself to peaceful expansion; the attack on Poland (and if not on Poland then on someone else) was implicit in his regime from his accession to power.

However, the Germans and their Führer failed to understand that the victories of spring 1940 (over Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France) hardly changed the unfavorable economic balances and trends that had marked the period from 1936 to 1939. While German economic difficulties eased with inclusion of western Europe within the Reich's sphere of influence, German success did not change the fact that Britain and the United States controlled the oceanic world economy and that the Soviet Union controlled the raw material and economic potential of European and Asiatic Russia. Consequently, the Germans dawdled from summer 1940 through to the defeat of Moscow in the idle belief that their easy victories in 1940 had solved their economic and strategic problems. They had not, since the British and the

Americans were mobilizing their economic resources for the long haul. This would show in the great air battles of 1943 and 1944, where Anglo-American quantitative superiority swamped the Luftwaffe.[99]

Conclusions: The Results of German Net Assessment

In the dust and rubble of Germany in 1945, it was convenient to blame the crash on Hitler. Indisputably, without him much of the disaster would never have happened. As Fritsch commented, Hitler was Germany's fate for ill or for good. But the community of interest as well as the abdication of strategic responsibility within the senior leadership is suggested by a letter that Fritsch wrote in December 1938:

> . . . It is really peculiar that so many people should look to the future with increasing fears, in spite of the führer's indisputable successes during the past years. Herr von Weigand's letter interested me very much. . . . Unfortunately, I am afraid he is right when he speaks of the profound hate which is directed to us by a large part of the world. Soon after the war [World War I] I came to the conclusion that we should have to be victorious in three battles, if Germany were to become powerful again:
>
> 1. The battle against the working class - Hitler has won this
> 2. Against the Catholic Church, perhaps better expressed against Ultramontanism, and
> 3. Against the Jews.
>
> We are in the midst of these battles and the one against the Jews is the most difficult. I hope everyone realizes the intricacies of this campaign.[100]

The framework within which German net assessment occurred is very much wrapped up in the growth of the Hitler legend. That legend resulted in a steady erosion of the position and credibility of those who urged a more cautious approach. But the course of German history over the past one hundred years had undermined the position of those who served as a brake on the regime's revolutionary impetus. From the 1860s and 1870s the officer corps had achieved a

unique position of intellectual and cultural respect within German society that allowed it to dominate military matters. The professional officer corps, however, defined military affairs in such exceedingly narrow terms that strategy disappeared in favor of operational and tactical concerns. One should not minimize the battlefield excellence that resulted from this operational and tactical expertise.

But this concern with the tactical and operational led the Germans to minimize the strategic and the political. Geyer von Schweppenberg's casual dismissal of Clausewitz as a person only to be read by professors suggests the incapacity of the officer corps to deal with larger questions of war. Thus, it is not surprising that the Mansteins and Guderians abdicated their political and strategic responsibility to Hitler and concerned themselves almost entirely with the operational and tactical matters. The extent to which they ignored strategic and political questions is suggested by the fact that Manstein used his family fortune to buy an estate in East Prussia in the fall of 1944.[101] The officer corps' disdain for strategic and political matters only reflected societal and educational values. The widespread belief that the German army had not lost the war but had been stabbed in the back enjoyed enormous popular support throughout German society by the early 1920s. Admittedly, the disinformation campaign of the Foreign Office further muddied the water. This national consensus consequently made it difficult to provide a coherent, conservative basis on which those opposed to Hitler's risky course might take a stand.

The individual strategic surveys undertaken by those like Beck suggest what might have been possible had a more coherent systematic approach existed within the old bureaucracy. Groener had attempted to create such analytic capabilities within the Defense Ministry in the late

1920s; nevertheless, even Groener's efforts would not have led to the creation of an equivalent of the Committee of Imperial Defense, where a wide variety of viewpoints political as well as military were present. However accurate a survey of the international strategic environment Beck's studies and memoranda may have represented,[102] Hitler was correct in the final analysis in his judgment that the British and French were unwilling to fight for the Czech Republic. He almost precipitated a European war by his belief that he could get away with a small war; but at the last moment he settled for diplomatic success, which rendered Czechoslovakia indefensible and began the rout of Anglo-French interests in Eastern Europe.

Consequently, it is Hitler with whom we must deal in addressing German net assessment in the 1930s. In every sense, the Führer's ideology and goals made Nazi Germany a rogue state.[103] Hitler recognized the brutal alternatives on which his foreign policy rested -- Weltmacht oder Niedergang (world power or defeat) -- in a fashion the Wilhelmine Germans did not. Moreover, he understood that the European powers possessed the power to crush the Nazi state in its early years before it reached full military potential. But the desperate rearmament effort, first to catch up and then to provide the Wehrmacht with a margin, came close to bankrupting the state and had a direct impact on the rearmament rate. Only the most desperate of measures coupled with external acquisitions (Austria, the Sudetenland, and Czechoslovakia) kept the economy and rearmament on track.

Hitler, at least in 1937, would have preferred avoiding a major European war until 1943. Admittedly he indicated in his memorandum in 1936 establishing the Four Year Plan that the army must be combat ready and the economy prepared to meet the demands of war within four years.[104] The push to war in the late 1930s resulted from Hitler's sense of Germany's

economic woes and his belief that the strategic moment of greatest Allied weakness had come. His judgment of the Allied leaders, confirmed by meetings with them in September 1938, reinforced his instincts to strike at weakness. A British observer writing on Britain's initial rearmament efforts in 1936 commented: "Here is of course the salient difference between us and Germany that they know what army they will use and, broadly, how they will use it and can thus, prepare . . . in peace for such an event. . . . In contrast we here do not even know yet what size of army we are to contemplate for purposes of supply preparation between now and April 1939."[105]

It was Hitler's diplomatic skill and intuitive judgment that destroyed the existing balance in the period from 1933-1940. Knowing that war was inevitable and possessing military organizations of considerable operational and tactical competence, the Germans prepared with a ruthlessness with which their opponents were simply incapable. But luck also played a role; Germany's substantial weaknesses, even though Allied strategists recognized them, did not result in any significant strategic or operational impairments.[106] Consequently, the invasion of France and the Low Countries projected maximum German military power into the greatest weakness of the Allied Front -- the crucial joint in the Ardennes. That offensive, however, represented an enormous gamble; for example, German stocks of petroleum had sunk by one-third over the period of the "Phony War" from 2,400,000 tons to 1,600,000 tons.[107] If the victory over France represented a strategic victory that substantially altered Germany's position, it did so only in the sense that it allowed the Reich to escape from its economic difficulties and to utilize the economic strength of Western Europe to the advantage of its war economy.

It was in summer 1940, however, that the Germans lost the war.[108] Two factors were

at work and both deserve attention in understanding why the Germans failed at net assessment in 1940-41. On the one hand the Germans, from Hitler on down, caught the "victory disease." As Jodl noted in a strategic survey on 30 June 1940, "the final victory of Germany over England is only a question of time."[109] Hitler, of course, wholeheartedly agreed with the assumption that he was "the greatest military leader of all time" and that the British would soon recognize the hopelessness of their position. If not, then the Wehrmacht, led by the Luftwaffe, would batter Britain into submission.

On the other hand, and probably even more disastrously, lay the German evaluation of their present and putative opponents in the post-May 1940 assessments. In Nazi eyes the British, degenerate inheritors of a world empire they could no longer protect, had decayed due to the influences of liberalism and Jews. The United States represented a mongrolized society in which waves of jewish and slavic immigrants from Eastern Europe had diluted the good racial stock. Reports from Washington only reinforced Hitler's contempt for the United States. While such estimates did suggest American economic potential, neither the reporters on the American scene nor the receptors of their information took the American threat seriously. With great glee, Goebbels recorded every Anglo-American disaster in 1942, while dismissing as idle boasting the American production programs.[110] Göring casually dismissed warnings on America's industrial potential with the comment that Americans "could only produce cars and refrigerators."[111]

But it was for the Slavic nations that the Germans registered the most contempt. The Poles were first to feel the full weight of the Nazi racial attitudes.[112] It was in its estimates of Soviet military potential and of the strength of Russian national character that the Germans so severely underestimated their opponents. From the first, Hitler's ideology had emphasized that

the Russian revolution of 1917 had destroyed the ruling Germanic elements and turned the government over to the Jews and Slavic "Untermenschen " (sub-humans).[113] Not surprisingly, Hitler believed that an invasion of the Soviet Union would lead to a quick and sudden collapse of Stalin's regime. As he commented to his entourage, once Germany kicked in the door, the whole rotten Soviet regime would collapse like a house of cards.[114] Hitler's views found a considerable response in the officer corps. Günther Blumentritt, a general staff officer, commented shortly before the invasion that "Russian military history shows that the Russian combat soldier, illiterate and half-Asiatic, thinks and feels differently [than the German]."[115] The great majority of those responsible for the planning of Barbarossa fully accepted such a Weltanschauung. Consequently their ideological orientation led them to underestimate Soviet potential; on the other hand acceptance of Hitler's racial goals and ideology with the concomitant atrocities against the Soviet civilian population ensured that the Germans would not be able to undermine Stalin's regime. Rather, the German approach rallied the Russian people behind a popular war that Stalin and his henchmen had hardly prepared.

Consequently, by 1941 virtually no strategic judgment remained in Germany. Conservative critics had lost all credibility within even their own class. The great majority of the generals and bureaucracy were technocrats who had abdicated strategic responsibility to the regime. Even more disastrously, most of the technocrats were now enthusiastic supporters of the regime. Like Alfred Jodl and Erich von Manstein, they sang the praises of the Führer. They could no longer judge the potential of their opponents except in terms of Hitler's ideological preconceptions and those preconceptions contributed directly to strengthening their opponents' potential, particularly in the Soviet case. The reaction of the senior officers and the

bureaucracy to the attempt on Hitler's life underlines how much, even at the end of the war, those who should have provided independent judgment were incapable of doing so.

Hitler had provided the malevolent genius and drive on which the German success of the 1930s had rested. With victory over France, he seems to have substituted the flattery of his advisors for his ability to judge the ambiguities and weaknesses in his opponents. But this process had already begun in the late 1930s. Moreover, Hitler more and more determined to drive events in accordance with his beliefs. In the end he substituted will for judgment and a national catastrophe resulted from his strategic and political misconceptions that no operational or tactical expertise could salvage.

The lessons that the Nazi German regime present to the current policy- makers are not simple nor are they direct. They suggest that some states in the international system are not open to assimilation and may be so hostile in their orientation as to remove "rational" calculations from the equation. British and French statesmen (and American as well) assumed in the 1920s and 1930s that international conflict represented such an unmitigated horror that no state would deliberately set out to cause such a catastrophe. Yet in fact that was precisely what Hitler intended to do. The Nazi aims were so vast in compass and so uncompromising that they left no alternative to Allied statesmen except war or surrender. In the final analysis the latter was unacceptable, but by the time that the powers recognized the choice, they had almost given the game away.

For Hitler the crucial issue was to choose that moment when the balance between Germany and her opponents gave him the best chance to destroy his enemies. Almost entirely, he rested the choosing of that moment on his intuition. He came within hours of starting World

War II in 1938; had he done so Nazi Germany would probably have failed to break out from its immediate economic and strategic weaknesses. The following year, Hitler's policy was even more successful in isolating the intended victim. But his intuition on how the British and French would act was flawed, not because he misjudged the leadership but because he failed to understand how the shifting emotional moods had handicapped those leaderships.

Throughout those crucial years, Hitler rejected efforts to provide a more coherent and organized effort to assess the international environment. He fully understood that such bureaucratic assessments would limit his room for maneuver and his ability to make the decision for peace and war. His system of government from his appointment as Chancellor aimed to destroy the ability of the bureaucratic system to provide independent judgment on the strategic environment. Ironically, the intellectual perceptions and training of most of those in the diplomatic, the intelligence, and the military bureaucracies were all too close to Hitler's preconceptions. Their attitude made possible, in a direct sense, the triumphs of Hitler's early years and the catastrophes of the later years.

NOTES

1. The implications of "chaos theory" for the social sciences are beginning to emerge. It is interesting to note that economists have initially proven receptive to this line of mathematical inquiry, while political scientists have largely ignored its implications. It is the feeling of this writer that while most economists have solid mathematical training; the same cannot be said for most political scientists.

2. Astonishingly, with all the ink spilt over the Munich crisis in the literature, only one author in English has attempted to calculate the actual correlation of forces. See Williamson Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939, The Path to Ruin (Princeton, 1984).

3. For an egregious example of the confusions that can result from reading too many documents on one side of the balance, see Robert J. Young, In Command of France, French Foreign Policy and Military Planning (Cambridge, MA, 1978). Young attempts to rehabilitate the reputations of General Maurice Gamelin and the French high Command by placing most of the blame for the 1940 disaster on the shoulders of civilian leaders.

4. Again the Munich crisis provides examples. On the side of those who have argued that Britain and France could easily have won a war against Germany in 1938, see the analysis in Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika (Chicago, 1969), p. 223. For an analysis of how Chamberlain "saved" Britain at Munich that posits a chain of events running in a pattern similar to those of the 1939 conflict and then argues that Fighter

Command could not have defended the British Isles in summer 1939 against the Luftwaffe. See Keith Eubank, Munich (Norman, OK, 1963).

5. With the exception of MacGregor Knox, Paul Kennedy, Holger Herwig, and John Erickson, the essays in Ernest R. May (ed.) Knowing One's Enemy: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars (Princeton, 1984) rarely move beyond national intelligence organizations to the process of national net assessment.

6. In terms of the present-day analysis of intelligence organization it is worth noting that the Defense Intelligence Agency by law cannot calculate or study "blue" forces but instead only calculates "red" strength. Consequently it is by statute incapable of estimating what the Soviets call "correlation of forces"; obviously it cannot engage in any coherent effort at net assessment.

7. Paul M. Kennedy, "Great Britain Before 1914," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemy, p. 194.

8. Charles W. Sydnor, Jr., Soldiers of Destruction (Princeton, 1977), pp. 345-46.

9. The most important contribution to the rethinking of the role of ideology in the dynamism of the Nazi regime in reaction to A. J. P. Taylor's claims that Hitler was only an opportunistic statesman came with the appearance of Eberhard Jäckels Hitlers Weltanschauung (Tübingen, 1969), published in English as Hitlers Weltanschauung (Middletown, CT, 1972). The most sophisticated examination of Nazi ideology is MacGregor Knox, "Conquest, Foreign and Domestic, in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany," The Journal of Modern History (March-December 1984). The discussion of Nazi ideology below is largely drawn from these two sources.

10. Quoted in Jäckel, Hitler's Weltanschauung, p. 60.

11. Documents on German Foreign Policy [hereafter, DGFP], Series D, Vol. I, #19, Memorandum of the Conference in the Reich Chancellery, 5 November 1937.

12. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, Doc #192, Unsigned Memorandum, Speech by the Führer to the Commanders in Chief on 22 August 1939.

13. "Aufzeichnung Liebmann," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1954).

14. Knox, "Conquest, Foreign and Domestic, in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany," footnote 18, p. 8.

15. For a discussion of the diplomatic and strategic policies of the British in the 1930s see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, ch. II.

16. Public Record Office [hereafter, PRO] CAB 23/95, Cab 37(38), Meeting of the Cabinet, 12.9.38., pp. 8-10.

17. I am indebted to Professor Gerhard Weinberg of the University of North Carolina for this formulation of the Soviet misapprehensions which he enumerated at the Air Force Academy's 1988 colloquium on military intelligence.

18. John Erickson, "The Soviet Union, 1930-1941," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, p. 418.

19. Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology (Berkeley, 1961).

20. Walter Goerlitz, The German General Staff (New York, 1962), p. 210.

21. For an outstanding examination of this campaign to distort the historical record and the

impact that this effort had, see Holger H. Herwig, "Clio Deceived, Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany after the Great War," International Security, vol. 12, no. 2 (Fall 1987). In fairness to the historical profession, the German effort at disinformation did not fool all historians. See in particular Luigi Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1914, 3 vols. (London, 1952-57), (Italian edition, Le origini della guerra del 1914 [Milan, 1942-43]).

22. Herwig, "Clio Deceived, Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany after the Great War," pp. 6-7.

23. For Delbrück's contributions to military thought and history see the outstanding article by Gordon Craig, "Delbrück, The Military Historian," in Edward Mead Earle (ed.), Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton, 1943). For Delbrück's testimony before the post-war Reichstag committee on the causes of the German defeat in the First World War see Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Deutsche Verfassunggebenden Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstages 1919-1926: Die Ursachen des deutschen Zussamenbrucks im Jahre 1918.

24. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1976), p. 87.

25. Letter from General Geyer von Schweppenberg to B.H. Liddell Hart, 3.8.49, Liddell Hart papers 9/24/61, King's College Library, London.

26. Final report of Captain Albert C. Wedemeyer on his tour at the Kriegsakademie, German General Staff School, Report 15,999, dated 7/11/38 from the Military Attaché, Berlin, 1kb, 2/23/39, National Archives.

27. One can argue that they controlled strategic policy, helped by the abdication of Germany's civilian leaders of their responsibility. For the most thorough examination of the increasing role that the military played in German strategy see Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter. The Problem of Militarism in Germany, 4 vols. (Coral Gables, FL, 1969).

28. I am indebted to my former graduate student Bradley Meyer for this point.

29. See in particular Holger Herwig, The Politics of Frustration. The United States in German Naval Planning, 1889-1941 (Boston, 1976).

30. Holger Herwig, "The Dynamics of Necessity: German Military Policy During the Great War," in Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (eds.), Military Effectiveness, Vol. I, The First World War (London/Boston, 1988), p. 99.

31. See the essay by Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, "The Constraints on Waging War: Military Effectiveness in the Twentieth Century," The National Interest (Winter 1988).

32. Herwig, "The Dynamics of Necessity: German Military Policy During the Great War," p. 82.

33. John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power. The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945 (New York, 1964), p. 44.

34. Michael Geyer, Aufrüstung oder Sicherheit. Die Reichswehr in der Krise der Machtpolitik, 1924-1936 (Wiesbaden, 1980), p. 80.

35. For a description of how the British system functioned in the 1930s, see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 55-57. However, even the best

bureaucratic system in the world for analyzing strategic issues is not proof against those who make policy.

36. See Gaines Post, The Civil-Military Fabric of Weimar Foreign Policy (Princeton, 1973), pp. 197 ff.

37. Wilhelm Deist, The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament (London, 1981), p. 16.

38. DGFP, Series D, Vol. I, Doc. #19, Memorandum of the Conference in the Reich Chancellery, 5 November 1937.

39. Telford Taylor, Munich, The Price of Peace (New York, 1979), p. 698, and J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, The German Army in Politics 1918-1945 (New York, 1967) p. 404.

40. Walter Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters (New York, 1964), p. 54.

41. Geyer, Aufrüstung oder Sicherheit, pp. 110-12.

42. Michael Geyer, "National Socialist Germany, The Politics of Information," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, p. 317.

43. Ibid., p. 317.

44. There are a number of examples that can be given of the products of the British assessment system; one of the most interesting, whatever its defects, is "Military Implications of German Aggression Against Czechoslovakia," PRO, CAB 53/37, COS 698 (Reuse) (See also paper DP[P] 22), CID, COS Sub-Committee, 28.3.38. For a discussion of the bureaucratic origins of this study see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 157-62.

45. For the most important of Beck's studies see Bundesarchiv/Militärchiv [hereafter,

BA/MA], N 28/3, Nachlass Generaloberst Ludwig Beck, "Betrachtungen zur gegenwärtigen mil. politischen Lage," 5.5.38; "Bemerkungen zu den Aüsführungen des Führers am 28.5.38," 29.5.38; Report an den Herrn Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres, 3.6.38; "Vortrag," 16.7.38; and Vortragsnotiz vom 29.7.38.

46. For the Heye Memorandum see BA/MA, K 10-2/6, Captain Heye, "Beurteilung der Lage Deutschland-Tschechei, Juli 1938"; for Guse's analysis see BA/MA, K 10-2/6, Admiral Guse 17.7.38; and for Weisäcker see Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, Vol. II, Doc. 259, 20.6.38, "Aufzeichnung aus dem Auswärtigen Amt, 8.6.38 an R.M. v. Ribbentrop gegeben."

47. DGFP, Series D, Vol. I, Doc. #19, Memorandum of the Conference in the Reich Chancellery, 5 November 1937.

48. A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (London, 1962), pp. 28-132.

49. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, Doc. #192, "Unsigned Memorandum, Speech by the Führer to the Commanders in Chief on August 22, 1939." See also the entry in the Halder Diaries for 22 August 1939. Telford Taylor notes: "Intense and singleminded in his broad purpose to aggrandize Germany, his methods were fluid in the extreme, until the time when disastrous reverses shattered his mental resilience. Whatever his other faults, he was no slave to Emerson's hobgoblin of false consistency. And it would be a serious mistake to picture Hitler as pursuing, regardless of other factors, a rigid time table, constructed long in advance and calling for an attack on Poland on a certain date. Under other circumstances he might well have struck at another time, or in a different direction." Taylor, Sword and Swastika, p. 291.

50. DGFP, Series D, Vol. I, Doc. #19, "Memorandum of the Conference in the Reich Chancellery," 5 November 1937.

51. For the most thorough discussion of the Fritsch/Blomberg crisis see Harold C. Deutsch, Hitler and his Generals: The Hidden Crisis, January-June 1938 (Minneapolis, 1979). See also Robert J. O'Neill, The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933-1939 (New York, 1966).

52. Indeed Hitler's intuitions were not far off the mark on the nature of the reaction within Western governments to the Anschluss. At a Cabinet meeting shortly after the demise of the Austrian Republic, Chamberlain admitted that the German methods had shocked and distressed the world "as a typical illustration of power politics, while unfortunately making international appeasement more difficult." PRO, CAB 23/92, Cab 12(38), Meeting of the Cabinet, 12.3.38, pp. 349-50.

53. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, Doc. # (K) (i), "Directive by the Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht," 21 December 1937.

54. DGFP, Series D, Vol. II, Doc. #132, "Notes Made by the Führer's Adjutant (Schmundt) on Observations Made by the Führer on the Contemporary Strategic Situation," April 1938.

55. Ibid., Doc. #175, "Letter from the OKW to the Führer, Enclosing Revised Draft Directive for Operation Green," 20 May 1938.

56. Ibid., Doc. #220, "Directive for Operation 'Green', From the Führer to the Commander-in-Chief, . . ." 30 May 1938.

57. Ibid., Doc. #133, "Memorandum on Operation 'Green', Initiated by the Führer's

Adjutant," 22 April 1938.

58. Ibid., "Directive for Operation 'Green', From the Führer to the Commander-in-Chief," 30 May 1938.

59. For the most complete analysis of the military and strategic factors involved in the confrontation in late September 1938 see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, ch. VII.

60. BA/MA, Beck Nachlass: "Betrachtungen zur gegenwärtigen mil. politischen Lage," 5.5.38. For the most thorough discussion of Beck's analysis and opposition see Klaus-Jürgen Müller, General Ludwig Beck. Studien und Dokumente zur politisch-militarischen Vorstellungswelt und Tätigkeit des Generalstabs Chefs des deutschen Heeres, 1933-1938 (Boppard am Rhein, 1980).

61. Ibid., "Bemerkungen zu den Ausführungen des Führers am 28.5.38."

62. Beck's quarrel was not with the larger design of European conquest; rather it was with Hitler's timing. It is well to remember Telford Taylor's severe judgment on the German military leaders: "Despite all the clashes of temperment and judgment -- despite the caution which made the generals and admirals want to hold back until 1943, or 1944, or 1945, and the demon which drove Hitler to force his luck and betrayed his own malignant but phenomenal political genius -- these men were at one in their aim. They wanted to make the world their own, and they were prepared to smash it if they could not have their way." Taylor, Sword and Swastika, p. 256.

63. DGFP, Series D, Vol. II, Doc. #259, Memorandum 20.6.38. The German version of DGFP notes that the memorandum was given to Ribbentrop on 8.6.38. For other

Weizeäcker memoranda see DGFP, Series D, Vol. II, Doc. #304, 21.7.38, Doc. #374, 19.8.38, and Doc. #409, 30.8.38. It is also worth noting that there was considerable unease at the highest levels of the German navy in 1938. See particularly the two following strategic sketches: BA/MA, K 10-2/6, Captain Heye, "Beurteilung des Lage Deutschland - Tschechei, Juli 1938," and BA/MA, K 10-2/6, Admiral Guse 17/7 (38).

64. Gerhard Engel, Heeresadjutant bei Hitler, 1938-1945, ed. by Hildegard von Kotze (Stuttgart, 1975), pp. 27-28.

65. Wolfgang Foerster, Generaloberst Ludwig Beck, (Munich, 1958), p. 141.

66. Wilhelm Deist et al., Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Vol. I, Ursachen und Voraussetzungen der deutschen Kriegspolitik, (Stuttgart, 1979) p. 645.

67. Taylor, Munich, p. 697.

68. Ibid., p. 698.

69. IMT, TMWC, Vol. XXVIII, Doc. #1780-PS, Jodl Diary, entry for 10.8.38, p. 374.

70. Quoted in Taylor, Munich, p. 684.

71. Klaus-Jürgen Müller, Armee, Politik und Gesellschaft in Deutschland, 1933 -1945, (Paderbon, 1979), pp. 96-99.

72. BA/MA, N 28/3, Letter from Manstein, Kommandeur der 18. Division, to Beck, 21.7.38.

73. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, Doc. # (K) (iii), Memorandum by Colonel von der Chevallerie of the OKH.

74. Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 225-29.

75. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, Doc # 192, "Speech by the Führer to the Commanders in

Chief on August 22, 1939."

76. For the reaction of the Western Powers to the Anschluss as well as the internal German conflicts over the strategic situation see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 155-94.

77. Galeazzo Ciano, The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943 (Garden City, NY, 1946), p. 286, entry for 20 August 1940.

78. Francis K. Mason, Battle Over Britain (Garden City, NY, 1969), Appendix K, OKL, 16.7.40, Operations Staff Ic.

79. Franz Halder, Kriegstagebuch, Vol. III, ed. by Hans Adolf Jacobsen (Stuttgart, 1964), p. 170.

80. This was exactly the opposite of what this author's experience was in the USAF during the late 1960s.

81. Williamson Murray, "The German Response to Victory in Poland: A Case Study in Professionalism," Armed Forces and Society (Winter 1981), pp. 294-95.

82. Telford Taylor, The March of Conquest: The German Victories in Western Europe, 1940 (New York, 1958), pp. 53-54.

83. For the most thorough examination of the German navy's undervaluation of the military power of the United States and the role that that misevaluation played in German strategy, see Holger Herwig, The Politics of Frustration: The United States in German Military Planning, 1889-1941 (Boston, 1976).

84. About the best that can be said for the German navy's rationale is that with the British break into the German naval codes in July 1941, the sinkings by the German submarines

had precipitately declined. Nevertheless, the weighing of the short time advantages of declaring war on the United States versus the long-range disadvantages was distinctly absent from German discussions. For the impact of Ultra on the Battle of the Atlantic during the last half of 1941, see Patrick Beesley, Very Special Intelligence: The Story of the Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre, 1939-1945 (Garden City, NY, 1978), pp. 92-106.

85. Horst Boog, "Higher Command and Leadership in the German Luftwaffe, 1935-1945," in Alfred F. Hurley and Robert C. Ehrhart (eds.), Airpower and Warfare, (Washington, DC, 1979), p. 129.

86. Müller, Armee, Politik, und Gesellschaft in Deutschland, pp. 96-99.

87. See Taylor, March of Conquest, pp. 174-75 for a discussion of the war game and the argument within the German high command over its implementation; Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader (New York, 1957), pp. 70-71 also gives a highly colored account of the war game.

88. See George E. Blau, The German Campaign in Russia: Planning and Operations (1940-42) (Washington, DC, 1955), pp. 14-15. (Stuttgart, 1964), p. 170.

89. See particularly the outstanding article by David M. Glantz, "The Red Mask: The Nature and Legacy of Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War," in Michael J. Handel (ed.), Strategic and Operational Deception in the Second World War (London, 1987).

90. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, Doc # 192, "Speech by the Führer to the Commanders in Chief on August 22, 1939."

91. For a discussion of Britain's rearmament program from 1937 through 1938 and the constraints that the Chamberlain government placed on that effort, see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 71-78.

92. See Peter Dennis, Decision by Default: Peacetime Conscription and British Defense, 1919-1939 (London, 1972).

93. For a discussion of Hitler's strategic and economic survey that led to the creation of the Four Year Plan, see Wilhelm Treue, "Hitlers Denkschrift zum Vierjahrsplan, 1936," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, no. 2 (1955), p. 184.

94. Reichswirtschaftsminister, Berlin, 10.8.40, Betr: "Sicherung von Ausfuhrfragung," National Archives and Records Service [hereafter, NARS] T-71/118/621477.

95. Hans-Erich Volkmann, "Aussenhandel und Aufrüstung in Deutschland, 1933 bis 1939," in Friedrich Forstmeier and Hans-Erich Volkmann (eds.), Wirtschaft und Rüstung am Vorabend des Zweiten Weltkrieges, (Düsseldorf, 1975), p. 91.

96. Reichsverteidigungsausschuss, 15.12.38, NARS T-1022/3048/PG 33272.

97. International Military Tribunal, Trial of Major War Criminals, Vol. XXXII, Doc. 3575 PS, p. 413.

98. Jost Dülffer, Weimar, Hitler und die Marine: Reichspolitik und Flottenbau, 1920-1939 (Düsseldorf, 1973), p. 504.

99. For a discussion of the economic decisions taken in 1940-41 see Murray, Luftwaffe, pp. 92-94. For the air battles of 1943-1944 and the contribution that Allied numerical superiority made, see chs. VI and VII.

100. Taylor, Sword and Swastika (Chicago, 1969), pp. 325-26.

101. For this fact I am indebted to Wilhelm Deist of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt.

102. For a discussion of Beck's memoranda see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 174-84. For an analysis of the actual strategic and military balance see ch. VII. For further discussions, see David Vital, "Czechoslovakia and the Powers, September 1938," in Hans Gatzke (ed.), European Diplomacy Between Two Wars, 1919-1939, (Chicago, 1972).

103. For those who may think that this "rogue" state with its revolutionary ideology, so much at odds with the Weltanschauung of France and Britain, does not have much to offer us in our current world, the following passage from the Ayatollah Khomeini may be of some use: "Holy war means the conquest of all non-Moslem territories. War will perhaps be declared after the formation of an Islamic government worthy of the name. . . . It will then be the duty of all adult able-bodied men to volunteer for this war of conquest whose final goal is to make Koranic law supreme from one end of the earth to the other. But the entire world should know that the universal supremacy of Islam [will] differ considerably from the hegemony of other conquerors. . . . To ensure the unity of the Moslem nation, to liberate the Moslem homeland from the domination or influence of the imperialists, we have no alternative but to form a truly Islamic government and to take all possible steps to overthrow the other tyrannical pseudo-Islamic governments put in place by the foreigner, and having attained that goal, to install the universal Islamic government." Ayatollah Khomeini, Principes politiques, philosophiques, sociaux et religieux (Paris, 1979), pp. 22, 28. I am indebted to Professor McGregor Knox for

providing me with this passage.

104. Treue, "Hitlers Denkschrift zum Vierjahrsplan, 1936," p. 184.

105. PRO CAB 63/14, Letter from Sir. A. Robinson to Sir Thomas Inskip, Minister for the Coordination of Defense, 19.10.36.

106. An Allied strategic survey of April 1940 accurately summed up the difficulties from which the Germans had escaped over the winter of 1938/1939: "Hence the Reich appears to have suffered relatively little wear and tear during the first six months of war, and that mainly as a result of the Allied blockade. Meanwhile, it has profited from the interval to perfect the degree of equipment of its land and air forces, to increase the officer strength and complete the training of its troops, and to add further divisions to those already in the field." PRO CAB 85/16, M.R. (J.) (40) (S) 2, 11.4.40, Allied Military Committee, "The Major Strategy of the War, Note by the French Delegation."

107. "Bericht des Herrn Professor Dr. C. Krauch über die Lage auf dem Arbeitsgebreit der Chemie in der Sitzung des Generalrates am 24.6.41"; NARS T-84/217/1586749.

108. See Murray, Luftwaffe, pp. 92-104.

109. Chef WFA, 30.6.40, "Die Weiterführung des Krieg gegen England," IMT, TMWC, Vol. 28, pp. 301-3.

110. Joseph Goebbels, The Goebbels Diaries, 1942-1943, ed. by L. Lochner (New York, 1948), pp. 41, 65, 104, 169, 251.

111. Asher Lee, Goering, Air Leader (New York, 1972), p. 58.

112. There is considerable irony here, for it was entirely due to the intelligence efforts and the mathematicians that the basis was created in the 1930s that allowed British signals

intelligence to break into the German enigma enciphering system.

113. Horst Boog, Jürgen Förster, Joachim Hoffman, Ernst Klink, Rolf-Dieter Müller, and Gerd R. Ueberschär, Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Vol. 4, Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion (Stuttgart, 1983), p. 29, fn. 13.

114. Quoted in Klaus Reinhardt, Die Wende vor Moskau. Das Scheitern der Strategie Hitlers im Winter 1941/1942 (Stuttgart, 1972), p. 27.

115. Ibid., p. 21.

SOVIET NET ASSESSMENT IN THE 1930s

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The pivotal year in the interval between the two world wars began on 1 January 1930. The symbolic height of the postwar search for permanent peace had been reached in 1929 when the Pact of Paris (Kellogg-Briand Pact), which purportedly outlawed war, went into effect. An overt assault on the peace and the world order, the Japanese-instigated Mukden Incident, was more than a year and a half in the future. But change was in the air. Five years of prosperity had ended, and a worldwide economic depression was setting in, bringing governments under threat from the right and left. The German people, sensitized by a lost war and a ruinous inflation, could not be persuaded as Americans could that prosperity was just around the corner. In the September 1930 elections, the National Socialist (Nazi) Party went from 12 seats in the German Reichstag to 107. The Communist Party, which had held 54 seats, secured 77. The Nazi leader, Adolf Hitler, promised a fascist dictatorship and release from the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles; and the Communist Party, under pressure from Josef Stalin to reject "right opportunism" (that is, participation in democratic legislative processes), offered a Soviet-style dictatorship.[1]

The search for permanent peace through collective security agreements continued during the year in a political and economic climate that was becoming perceptibly less propitious. In June, when Britain and France terminated the occupation of the German Rhineland five years earlier than the Versailles Treaty required, the German Government instantly raised complaints

about other treaty impositions. German nationalist paramilitary groups were soon demonstrating in the restored territory, and France began building the Maginot Line along its northeast frontier.[2] In July, the signatories to the five-power Washington naval limitation treaty of 1922 convened a meeting in London to consider limiting other categories of naval vessels than capital ships. Britain and the United States managed to secure a precarious balance by giving Japan a 5:3.5 ratio in light cruisers and destroyers and parity in submarines, which was higher than the 5:3 it had in battleships; but Japan, angered at not having also secured 5:3.5 in battleships, expanded its airfield building program in the mandated Pacific islands to convert them into surrogate aircraft carriers. France and Italy refused to attend the conference, and a so-called "escalator clause" gave the London agreement a look of fragility. Germany, at the very least loosely interpreting the limits imposed on its naval building under the Versailles Treaty, was pushing to completion Panzerschiff "A" (later Deutschland), the first of a programmed three pocket battleships.[3]

The Soviet Communist Party held its Sixteenth Party Congress in June 1930. It has been designated as the congress "that expanded the socialist offensive [the five-year plan for industrialization and the agricultural collectivization] on all fronts." Since the five-year plan and collectivization were already in full swing, other considerations also figured significantly in the proceedings. Stalin introduced them in his report on the work of the Central Committee: the world economic crisis, he said, had profound implications for the Soviet Union. On the one hand, the disastrous decline in the capitalist economies and the concurrent Soviet economic upswing proved the correctness of the Soviet course; on the other, the world economic crisis

engendered a grave threat to the Soviet Union and justified an across-the-board speedup in development with "forcing" in heavy industry.

In addressing the latter concern, Stalin gave a snapshot survey of the international situation as seen through the lens of Marxist-Leninist and emergent Stalinist theory that would be employed in Soviet net assessment throughout the current decade -- and beyond. Stalin posited a bipolar world in which the Soviet Union was "the citadel of revolution" and the United States "the principal capitalist country, the citadel of capitalism." The Soviet Union was, by its shining example, revolutionizing the working classes and colonial peoples everywhere. The United States, as the country in the most severe economic decline, would give a "colossal" impetus to the expansion and intensification of the economic crisis. The crisis itself was not an ordinary cyclical event but the consequence of capitalism's massive internal contradictions complicated by the effects of the "imperialist war" (World War I). It was, moreover, "laying bare and intensifying the contradictions and antagonisms between the major imperialist countries. . . ." Capitalism was in decay, and the result would be "an epoch of wars and revolutions."

There was another side, however, one that also would affect the net assessment process. The Communist Party could not deal exclusively in theory and the working out of the Marxian dialectic. It controlled the Soviet Union, which was a state no different from any others in most fundamental respects, and the state's interests imposed practical considerations. The Soviet state, Stalin told the congress, was alone and "encircled" by capitalist states. While they were divided among themselves and would increasingly be coming into conflict with each other, they shared a common antagonism toward the Soviet Union and could be expected to consider "whether it would not be possible to solve this or that contradiction of capitalism, or all the

contradictions together, at the expense of the USSR." As deterrents to "adventurous attacks" Stalin maintained the Soviet Union would rely on sympathy and support from the workers in capitalist countries, the growth of Soviet economic and political strength, increasing Soviet military power, and most particularly, "undeviating pursuit" of the Soviet Government's peace policy. The Soviet Union, he asserted, adhered wholeheartedly to the "Kellogg Pact" and would continue "this policy of peace with all our might and with all the means at our disposal."[4]

Stalin's commitment to peace sounded distinctly more positive than it had when he first announced the peace policy at the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1927. He had then pronounced war with the capitalist world to be necessary and inevitable and presented the peace policy as a temporary expedient that would "buy off the capitalists" while the Soviet Union strengthened its defenses and promoted revolutionary movements in the capitalist states and their colonies. He had suggested that the policy would change when the revolutionary movements had "matured" or "at the moment when the capitalists come to blows over the division of the colonies."[5]

Stalin's theoretical premises were not new. The idea of world revolution was an article of faith in Bolshevik Marxist doctrine. Those of the inevitable armed confrontation with capitalism and the capitalist encirclement were born in the 1917 revolution and matured in the Civil War. No nation existed under a more pervasive compulsion to assess its power against that of its enemies; and perhaps because the premises have not changed, no nation has made as continuous and determined an effort to conceal everything about such assessments. The attempt to investigate Soviet net assessment in the 1930s encounters at the outset the additional

complication of the Soviet system having been in a state of flux that makes it difficult to discern even what the organization for net assessment might have been.

In the early 1930s the Soviet system completed its entry into the period to which Stalin's successors have applied the euphemism "cult of personality" but which actually constituted a conversion of the existing government and party organizations into a screen for an absolute autocracy. Stalin used the two inherently contradictory principles on which the Soviet system was based, collegiality and democratic centralism, to achieve what almost amounted to a second revolution. Collegiality had vested authority in an array of councils (soviets), collegiums, and committees. Democratic centralism had imposed a rigidly hierarchical structure that while retaining formal collegiality, greatly restricted its operation in the decision-making process. Stalin subordinated the entire structure to one authority, himself. That this circumstance must have profoundly affected the organization, the process, and the results of Soviet net assessment goes without saying.

Organization

The Government

The highest executive body in the Soviet Government was the Council of People's Commissars. It had come into being in November 1917 when the Bolsheviks had appointed people's commissars to take over the Imperial ministries and begun creating people's commissariats of their own. Stalin, for instance, had become People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs, one of the first of a large number of people's commissars who had no counterparts in the Imperial system. The Council of People's Commissars was functionally

comparable to the cabinet in other governments. Lenin had been the chairman from 1917 until his death in 1924. Vyacheslav Molotov became the chairman in 1930 and stayed in office until May 1941 when Stalin, who had not held any position in the government since 1922, assumed the chairmanship.

The Council of People's Commissars had early on become too large and diffuse a body to deal effectively with national security affairs, and the principle of democratic centralism had been applied in November 1918 (some months before it was officially adopted) to bring into being a war cabinet, the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense, under Lenin. During the Civil War, the Defense Council, which had a sweeping mandate to transform Russia into "a single armed camp," had been the actual top executive organ in the government. Its activity had centered predominantly on ruthless exploitation of manpower, industry, and agriculture for the benefit of the war effort, but Lenin, as chairman, had exercised a deciding voice in all matters pertaining to the conduct of the war. The leading members, aside from Lenin, had been Leon Trotskiy, the People's Commissar for Military Affairs, and A. I. Rykov, who headed the large and enormously powerful Supreme Soviet of the Economy. Stalin, who had no power base comparable to Trotskiy's or Rykov's had been a member, so to speak, without portfolio.[6]

In late 1920, when the greater part of the Red Army's five million or so conscripts were being assigned to labor armies, the Defense Council had become the Council of Labor and Defense. The labor armies had been disbanded soon after, but the name was retained. Molotov, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, was the chairman in 1930, and the membership then consisted of the people's commissars for military and naval affairs, railroads, agriculture, food, and labor and representatives of a number of economic agencies. The Council

of Labor and Defense was predominantly engaged in the early 1930s with determining the military share in the five-year plans. During 1935 and 1936, the emphasis shifted to the so-called "technological reconstruction (perestroyka)," the absorption into the armed forces of the weapons and equipment becoming available through the five-year plans; and the Council of Labor and Defense was dissolved in April 1937. Its successor, created in the same month, was the Defense Committee Under the Council of People's Commissars, which was charged with "coordinating all measures pertaining to questions of defense related to the intensifying military threats against the USSR." Besides the chairman, Molotov, and the People's Commissar of Defense, the membership included Stalin "and others."[7] The "others" probably remain unnamed because the tenure of some was short owing to the purge, which was approaching its peak in the armed forces in 1937.

Stalin's membership in the Defense Committee certainly confirmed it as the top governmental organization concerned with national security affairs, in fact, a war cabinet in reserve. That it became the State Defense Committee with powers identical to those the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense had held during the Civil War in June 1941, a week after the German invasion began, can be taken as additional confirmation. Strategic assessments would seem necessarily to have figured in the work of the defense councils and committees, but how they did their work or even that they did it has not been disclosed.

Direct governmental authority over the armed forces was vested in the people's commissars. People's commissariats for military and for naval affairs had been established in early 1918. Trotskiy was the people's commissar for naval as well as for military affairs from March 1918 until December 1922 when the two commissariats were merged into the People's

Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs, which continued until March 1934 when it became the People's Commissariat of Defense. The navy acquired its own peoples commisariat in December 1937 and thereafter came directly under the Defense Committee, but its people's commissar was not a member of the committee.

Kliment Voroshilov was the People's Commissar for Military and Naval affairs and of defense from 1925 to 1940. He sat, as has been indicated, in the Council for Labor and Defense and the Defense Committee, and he was a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee and its Politburo. Within the commissariat he chaired its collegial body, which in the early 1930s was the Revolutionary Military Council (Revvoyensovet) of the USSR. A machinist by training, he had organized partisan detachments and off and on commanded "armies" (aggregates of detachments) in the early stage of the Civil War. He had been a leader in the so-called "military opposition," party members who believed that they, not "military specialists" (ex-imperial officers), should command the Red Army and who opposed centralized command and formal discipline. Too headstrong and insubordinate to be fitted into the chain of command at a level commensurate with both his ambition and his modest ability, he had been the political commissar of the First Cavalry Army after November 1919. The defense of Tsaritsyn (later Stalingrad) in 1918 had gained him a largely spurious military reputation and a close relationship with Stalin that contributed mightily to his subsequent rise in the party and the armed forces. He was a far more proficient party infighter than a soldier and was totally subservient to Stalin. Until 1935, when he became a marshal of the Soviet Union, he served as people's commissar in a civilian capacity. In May 1940, in the aftermath of the badly bungled Winter War against Finland, Stalin made Marshal S. K. Timoshenko People's Commissar of Defense and moved

Voroshilov to the deputy chairmanship of the Council of People's Commissars. In that capacity he served as chairman of the Defense Committee until Stalin took over in June 1941.[8] Voroshilov demonstrated his inability early in the war to command at a level appropriate to the rank he held, but he continued as a member of the State Defense Committee throughout the war.

The Military

The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army had been conceived in January 1918 as a volunteer, primarily workers' militia in which rank and class distinctions would not exist and leadership would be self-generated. After Trotskiy became the people's commissar, he had insisted, against stubborn opposition within the party, that to meet threats of White counterrevolution, renewed hostilities with Germany, and Allied intervention, the Red Army had to become a mass, conscript army organized on conventional lines and trained and commanded by ex-imperial officers, who performed their functions as military specialists under the close surveillance of party-appointed political commissars. Topping off his scheme in October 1918, he had created a general headquarters of the armed forces with a supreme commander-in-chief, who was a military specialist, and a directing and planning organ, the Field Staff, that was manned by military specialists and was a general staff in everything but name.

To ensure political control over the general headquarters, Trotskiy had formed the Revvoyensovet, in which he, the people's commissar, was the chairman, the commander-in-chief a member ex officio, and the members (as many as fourteen at one stage) senior party men. Trotskiy had also installed revvoyensovety in the field commands. Those consisted of the commander, the chief of staff, and their assigned political commissars (three at the army group,

two at the army, and one at the corps and division levels). The regulations specified that the commander-in-chief and the commanders were to have sole responsibility for military decisions and the commissars were to confine themselves to political work and to warding off treachery; but no military orders could be issued without a commissar's counter-signature; and whenever the slightest doubt existed, the party was likely to place more confidence in the commissar than in the commander.

The position of commander-in-chief had been abolished and the Revvoyensovet reorganized in 1924. In the early 1930s, the then dozen or so deputy people's commissars and department heads and the chief of the Red Army Staff, the successor to the Field Staff, comprised the membership under the people's commissar as chairman and the chief of the Army Political Directorate as deputy chairman. The Revvoyensovet acquired the appearance of a military-professional collegium, and some senior field commanders were authorized to act as their own commissars, but duality was not much less the rule in the command structure than it had been during the Civil War.[9]

In 1930, the Revvoyensovet received an assignment that appears clearly to have required net assessment in some form. The Central Committee ordered it to review the plan for armed forces development from two standpoints: (a)"numerical strength -- in order not to be inferior to our probable enemies in the main theater of war" and (b)"technology -- to ensure that the decisive types of armament, aircraft, artillery, and armor, will be superior to those of the enemy." In the following year, (a) was amended to specify "superiority over our probable enemies."[10] Since the plan was revised on an annual basis, the charge was very likely a continuing one.

The Revvoyensovet was abolished in June 1934 and replaced a few months later with an eighty-member, purely advisory body, the Military Council.[11] While Erickson's conclusion that the Revvoyensovet's disappearance placed Stalin and Voroshilov into position to assume total control over the defense commissariat is correct, that was not its most immediate effect.[12] It and the simultaneous termination of the revvoyensovety in the field commands brought the military close to a long-sought goal, "unity of command," freedom from direct political supervision. Consequently, the middle years of the '30s were bright ones for the military leadership. In 1935, the Red Army Staff became the Red Army General Staff, which appeared to give it stature equal to that of the general staffs in other European armies, and a command-service regulation terminated a prohibition on personal military ranks that had been in force since 1917. Five marshals of the Soviet Union were appointed in 1935, V. K. Blyukher, S. M. Budennyy, M. N. Tukhachevskiy, K. E. Voroshilov, and A. I. Yegorov.[13] The appointments seemed to bring the military professionals to the fore vis-a-vis their chief, Voroshilov. In the next year, Tukhachevskiy became first deputy people's commissar and war plans director, which could be taken as all but confirming him as commander-in-chief-designate.[14] Yegorov's marshal's star gave the General Staff and him as its chief a powerful boost in prestige. Blyukher, who commanded the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army, became in effect a theater commander for the entire Soviet Far East.

The military's heyday, such as it was, ended in May 1937. On the 10th, the Council of People's Commissars passed a resolution reestablishing the commissar system throughout the armed forces and instituting "military councils" (voyennyy sovety) composed of the commander, chief of staff, and a commissar in the field commands. Tukhachevskiy was relieved from all

his posts and transferred to the out-of-the-way Volga Military District a day later.[15] A month later he would be executed. The purge was beginning.

In March 1938, the Central Committee created the Main Military Council of the Army in the defense commissariat.[16] Voroshilov chaired the Main Military Council. The members were Marshal Blyukher, Marshal Budennyy, Army Commander 1st Rank (full general) I. F. Fedko, Army Commander 1st Rank G. I. Kulik, Army Commissar 1st Rank L. Z. Mekhlis, Army Commander 1st Rank B. M. Shaposhnikov, Army Commissar 1st Rank Ye. A. Shchadenko, and Stalin. Budennyy was a "legendary" Civil War hero associated with Voroshilov and Stalin since the Tsaritsyn defense in 1918 and the Inspector of Cavalry. Fedko, also a "legendary" hero of the Civil War, had been in field commands until January 1939 when he became first deputy people's commissar, replacing Yegorov, who had replaced Tukhachevskiy and was being sent down the same path Tukhachevskiy had taken a year earlier. Kulik, who had been associated with Voroshilov and Stalin since Tsaritsyn, was chief of the Main Artillery Directorate. Mekhlis, Stalin's former secretary, was the chief of army commissars. Shaposhnikov, a former Tsarist colonel and general staff officer and a military specialist in the Soviet service from 1918 on, was Yegorov's successor as chief of the General Staff. Shchadenko, also an associate of Voroshilov and Stalin since Tsaritsyn, was a career commissar who had been appointed chief of the army command personnel directorate in November 1937. Another two military members came into the council later, General Armii (full general) Kirill Meretskov, who replaced Shaposhnikov as chief of the General Staff in August 1940, and General Armii Georgiy Zhukov, Meretskov's successor in January 1941. Both were Civil War veterans, party members, and career soldiers. Meretskov had been Blyukher's chief

of staff, an error that he seems to have explained satisfactorily to Stalin. Zhukov was a protege of Budennyy and Timoshenko. Shaposhnikov and Meretskov stayed on the council as deputy people's commissars after being relieved as chiefs of the General Staff.[17]

The Main Military Council was a general headquarters on standby, and it was modeled on the Civil War Revvoyensovet. (It was converted into the Stavka, the World War II general headquarters, on 23 June 1941.)[18] Blyukher and Fedko, in their time, were the commanders-in-chief-designate for the Far Eastern and Western theaters. The General Staff, as Shaposhnikov's seat on the council indicated and as the Field Staff had been, was the planning and executive organ of the council, not of one or both commanders-in-chief. The other members, whether they held military appointments or not, represented the party's interest and, more specifically, Stalin's interest. Who the commander-in-chief might actually be became uncertain early on and remained so until Stalin became supreme commander-in-chief in July 1941. Blyukher was executed in November 1938, Fedko in February 1939. Budennyy became a deputy people's commissar in March 1939 and first deputy people's commissar in August 1940, which would seem to have singled him out as Fedko's successor; but Timoshenko was the people's commissar by then and, although he also was one of Stalin's Tsaritsyn group, was better qualified than Budennyy to take over as commander-in-chief.[19]

Organizationally, the Main Military Council was a response to a narrowing focus on war. War had become more tangible and more imminent. The inevitable conflict with the capitalist world was coming down to specific balance of power concerns involving wars on one, two, or three fronts against Germany or Japan or both and possibly also Turkey. The threat from Germany in the West was the most dangerous but in 1938 and 1939 that from Japan in the Far

East, where Blyukher became commander of the Red Banner Far Eastern Front (the first army group to be activated since the Civil War) on 1 July 1938, was the most immediate.[20]

Stalin's membership in the Main Military Council fixed it solidly at the top of the military chain of command. Meretskov's memoirs give a guarded glimpse inside the council as it was in 1938 when he was its secretary in his capacity as deputy chief of the General Staff. It met, he says, two or three times a week, usually to hear military district commanders' reports. (The frontier military districts would become fronts, that is, army groups, in wartime.) Stalin attended frequently and often invited the members and military district commanders to continue the discussions over dinner with him. Stalin, however, was more than just a member of the council. "Virtually every military or military-economic issue," Meretskov states, "was settled with the direct participation of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU [Stalin]." The council sent all of its decisions to Stalin and received the results of his action through party and government channels in the form of directives.[21]

The navy, specifically the sailors of the imperial Baltic Fleet, had been the Bolsheviks' most reliable source of armed support in 1917 and early 1918. They had taken over the ships and fortresses and had fought for the revolution in the cities and the countryside. There had been no doubt about their importance to the nascent Soviet state when the Workers' and Peasants' Red Navy was proclaimed in February 1918. Three years later that had changed. The Red Army had won the Civil War while a British fleet had kept as much of the navy as the Bolsheviks could control bottled up in the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland. White crews had sailed the surviving ships of the Black Sea fleet off to internment in French North Africa, and the Red Navy consisted of the remnants of the Baltic Fleet, three battleships, two cruisers,

eleven destroyers, and some torpedo boats -- all old. In March 1921, the Kronshtadt naval mutiny had attracted worldwide attention. The sailors, long publicized as revolutionary stalwarts, had risen against the regime, and Lenin had proposed closing down the navy, at least for a year.

The navy survived but under a heavy political cloud and as an adjunct of the Army. If it had not already done so earlier, the designation "Red Navy" dropped out of use when the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs was created. After 1924, the navy was the Directorate of Naval Forces in the RKKA (the Red Army), and its chief sat in the Revvoyensovet on the same footing as the army chiefs of infantry, artillery, and so forth. Although a naval staff existed, national plans and assessments involving naval matters were the Red Army Staff/General Staff's responsibility. The chief of naval forces from 1926 to 1931 was R. A. Muklevich, who had been a petty officer in the imperial navy and an army commissar until shortly before his appointment to head the navy. His successor, V. M. Orlov, an ex-midshipman who had been a commander and commissar in the navy, became a Fleet Flagman 1st Rank (full admiral) in 1935 and a deputy people's commissar of defense in January 1937, eight months before being purged. The purge hit the navy particularly hard. Orlov's successor, Fleet Flagman 1st Rank M. V. Viktorov lasted only from August to December 1937. His replacement, Army Commissar 1st Rank, P. A. Smirnov, who was the first people's commissar and commander-in-chief of the navy, was what his rank indicates, and his sole qualification for appointment in the navy was a brief stint as chief commissar of the Baltic Fleet sometime between 1926 and 1937. He and his successor (in August 1938), Army Commander 1st Rank M. N. Frinovskiy, were obviously purgers who where themselves, as frequently happened,

purged. Frinovskiy had been a commander of NKVD border guards and was given his army rank to qualify him -- vaguely -- for the naval appointment. Fleet Flagman 2d Rank I. G. Kuznetsov, who took over in April 1939, was a 36-year-old career navy man to whom the purge had brought spectacularly rapid advancement.

Possession of its own people's commissariat did not markedly enhance the navy's position in the national net assessment process. In effect, the navy was thereby shunted away from the strategic planning center, which was situated in the Main Military Council and the General Staff. Andrey Zhdanov was Stalin's counterpart in the Main Navy Council. Zhdanov was the Leningrad party secretary and as such nominally ranked next to Stalin in the party and the Politburo, but all significant decisions still had to come from Stalin. Consequently, the navy had to work through Zhdanov and through the Defense Committee to get Stalin's attention and to rely on the not always cooperative chiefs of the General Staff to keep abreast of current strategic developments.[22]

In 1918, Trotskiy had created the Main Administration of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Air Fleet, which was charged with organizing air units and procuring supplies for them, and had established a section in the Field Staff to supervise the air units after they were assigned to support the troops at the fronts. It was an arrangement that continued throughout the pre-World War II period without much change other than in numbers of aircraft and personnel. The air units had 435 serviceable aircraft in 1918 and 228 in 1921. The Bolsheviks had developed a penchant for air power during the Civil War but did not have an aircraft industry. From 1924 to 1934, the chief of the then Directorate of the Air Force in the RKKA (Red Army) held a seat in the Revvoyensovet, and the Red Army Staff was responsible for air planning and operations.

After the Main Military Council came into being in 1938, the deputy chief of staff for air in the General Staff apparently was the air force's most direct source of access to the national assessment process. The air force chief from 1925 to 1931, P. I. Baranov, and his successor, Ya. I. Alksnis, were career army commissars. Alksnis received the grade of army commander 2d rank (lieutenant general) in 1935, became a deputy people's commissar of defense in January 1937, and fell afoul of the purge in December 1938. His replacement, Army Commander 2d Rank A. D. Loktionov, was a career ground forces commander, whose last previous command had been the Central Asian Military District. Komkor (major general) Ya. V. Smushkevich, a former air force commissar with some command experience, took over from November 1939 to August 1940, and General Leytnant (major general) P. V. Rychagov followed him until June 1941. Except for Alksnis, the relieved air force chiefs survived the purge.[23]

The Communist Party

The ultimate authority in military affairs was vested in the party's Central Committee, which had in December 1918 decreed that "the policy of the military department . . . is carried out on the precise basis of general directives issued by the party in the name of its Central Committee and under its immediate control."[24] The Central Committee had from time to time exercised collegial control over military affairs during the Civil War and the early postwar years, but even then the principle of democratic centralism had acted to shift the exercise of its authority to the Politburo. By 1930, Stalin had eliminated all but a few traces of real collegiality in the Politburo and the Central Committee, and thereafter the Central Committee became the

conduit through which he, in his capacity as party general secretary, had his decisions converted into directives to the party and the government.

Stalin stood alone at the top of the party and the organization for net assessment. Like the other leading Soviet figures of the time who were engaged in military and national security affairs, he derived his primary qualifications from the Civil War, and those, prima facie, were considerable. He had sat in on least three of the four organizations that directed the Civil War, the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense. (He had probably not been in the Revvoyensovet although he later claimed to have been.) He had been a plenipotentiary with unlimited powers, military and civilian, at Tsaritsyn in 1918 and at Petrograd (Leningrad) in 1919. From the summer of 1919 on, he had served as the chief commissar in several army groups.

Important elements of what might be called Stalin's style in dealing with military matters also can be traced to the Civil War. He had displayed a towering confidence in his own ability. In the inner circle he had always deferred to Lenin, outside it to nobody; and he had not hesitated to lecture even Lenin in his dispatches from the field. He had been a master at putting himself in position to claim credit for correct decisions after the fact; and his military biography, first published in 1929 and updated at ten-year intervals thereafter, hailed him as an infallible strategist who had "always correctly determined the line of main attack and by his masterly application of tactics . . . achieved the desired results."[25] During the Civil War, he had formulated and vigorously applied a principle of war, "the stability of the rear," which required elimination of all actual, potential, or possible internal opposition to the Soviet regime. At

Tsaritsyn, Perm' (1919), and Petrograd he had put the greater part of his effort into using the Cheka (political police) to secure stability of the rear.

Stalin had always ranked the military specialists foremost among the groups contributing to instability in the rear. He had shown an antipathy toward them that went a long way beyond the party members' usual mistrust of former officers and involved a disdain for and suspicion of "specialists" in general and military professionals particularly. Stalin's military biography describes at some length how he had "purged" the rear at Tsaritsyn after having recognized on his arrival in June 1918 that the military specialists in the headquarters there, "being 'staff' workers who only know how to make 'field sketches' and draft plans for realignment, are absolutely indifferent to actual operations. . . ."[26] Nikita Khruschchev later described Stalin as a "specialist-eater" during the Civil War, who "remained a specialist-eater all his life."[27]

The Military Leadership

The technological reconstruction of the 1930s confronted Stalin with a tough problem: How to create a modern armed force that could stand up to a world of presumed enemies without becoming a potential threat to his authority as he construed it. His initial approach was to give the military leadership a relatively free rein, releasing it from direct political interference in the military-professional sphere and tentatively granting it a share in the national security policy-making process. As a result, until 1937, the Red Army's leaders appeared to be on the way to achieving a professionally autonomous position at least as close to the top as those their counterparts in other armies occupied.

The foremost figures in the Red Army in those years were Tukhachevskiy, Yegorov, Blyukher, Iona Yakir, and Iyeronim Uborevich. Yakir and Uborevich, as army commanders 1st rank after 1935, commanded respectively the Kiev and Belorussian Military Districts, the crucial districts on the western frontier. All five had been party members since 1917 or 1918, had successfully commanded units as large as armies and army groups in the Civil War, were "legendary" war heroes, and had held high posts in the army throughout the 1920s. None owed his reputation or his advancement to Stalin. They were self-made men and prominent -- and popular -- public figures in their own right. All were elected to the Central Committee in 1934.[28]

The potent implications of Tukhachevskiy's appointments as rearmament chief, war plans director, and first deputy people's commissar drew domestic and foreign attention to him in particular, attention he had worked at attracting throughout his Red Army career. The composer Dimitri Shostakovich, who knew him well in the late 1920s (because he was also a patron of music and art), remembered that he had then been called "the Red Napoleon."[29] In 1928, while he was chief of the Red Army Staff, a German colonel with access to the Soviet high command had described him as "the most significant military figure in the Red Army . . . extremely ambitious and intelligent . . . [and] a communist only for opportunistic reasons."[30] The future German field marshal, Erich von Manstein, who paid a courtesy visit to Moscow in 1931, found him "from the military point of view, an undoubtedly interesting personality . . . ruthless and intelligent" but rated Uborevich and Yakir higher on the score of "military characteristics."[31] Colonel Giffard Martel, a British observer at the 1936 Red Army maneuvers, considered him to be "by far the ablest officer whom we met."[32] His progressive advancement, published

commentaries on military affairs, addresses to the party congress in 1934 and the party conference in 1936, and his meetings with foreign leaders, including one in 1936 with the French commander-in-chief, General Maurice Gamelin, appeared to -- and temporarily, perhaps, did -- establish Tukhachevskiy in a position of extraordinarily independent authority.

Stalin knew Tukhachevskiy as an aristocratic former guards lieutenant turned communist who had entered the Red Army in 1918 as a military specialist. While Stalin was an army group commissar, he had twice resisted orders to assist army groups Tukhachevskiy commanded -- in the 1920 Soviet-Polish war with serious consequences for the whole campaign.[33] According to Tukhachevskiy's biographer General A. I. Todorskiy, modernization plans Tukhachevskiy had submitted while chief of the Army Staff had so often encountered "unfriendly" receptions from Stalin that he had asked for reassignment and, in 1928, been transferred to the Leningrad Military District.[34] Another biographer, N. I. Koritskiy, says Stalin had dismissed Tukhachevskiy's proposals as "harebrained schemes."[35] When Stalin recalled Tukhachevskiy to Moscow in 1931, he, for once, conceded a need for a "specialist." That he was also prepared to tolerate a "Red Napoleon" is very doubtful.

Stalin took care not to let another Tukhachevskiy emerge after 1937. Together with Timoshenko, Kulik and Shaposhnikov became marshals in early 1940, perhaps as much to fill an embarrassing gap as for any other reason. Timoshenko had commanded a cavalry division in the First Cavalry Army during the Civil War and had held field commands thereafter, but he had not entered the highest level until February 1938, when he took over the Kiev Military District from Fedko.[36] The best indicators of Kulik's qualifications may be his having taken a "special" (simplified) course at the Frunze Academy in the early '30s (together with Budennyy

and others) to acquire a paper qualification for the rank he held and his reduction to Generalmayor (brigadier general) in August 1941.[37] Shaposhnikov was a competent chief of the General Staff, ever mindful of his former military specialist status, and thoroughly self-effacing. Meretskov and Zhukov tried to excuse themselves on the gound of inexperience. Both owed their appointments more to the purge and Stalin's whims than to their demonstrated qualifications.[38]

Intelligence and Ancillary Organizations

The main organization with a capability for actually doing net assessment may have been situated outside the government and the military and have been directly accessible only to Stalin. As general secretary of the party, Stalin controlled the Central Committee's rather large bureaucratic apparatus and within it had a secret personal chancellery, which appeared in the organization tables as the Secret Department before 1934 and as the Special Sector thereafter and was managed throughout the 1930s by his private secretary, A. N. Poskrebyshev. Bypassing all government and other party offices, the secret chancellery was the central clearing-house for domestic and foreign intelligence and coordinated and directed the intelligence agencies' work. It operated behind a wall of secrecy that has yet to be breached.[39]

The secret chancellery had the security service, which went by the initials OGPU until 1934 and NKVD thereafter, exclusively at its disposal. Although the security service had been associated with the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (the NKVD) since its inception as the Cheka, it was not responsible to any government agency. Its mission was to protect the party by policing the population at large, the government, and the armed forces. In the 1930s

Stalin extended its purview to include the party, the Central Committee, and the Politburo, thereby putting himself alone at the head of what John Dziak has called a "counterintelligence state," a political system with an "overarching concern with 'enemies,' internal and external."[40] The perceived external threat from capitalism gave the OGPU/NKVD a foreign as well as a domestic mission and added a dimension to Soviet net assessment that would have required access to information available only in the secret chancellery files.[41]

In the military command structure, after as well as before the naval commissariat came into being, the Red Army Staff/General staff functioned as a joint staff. A 1937 regulation designated the General Staff as "the supreme organ of the High Command for resolving all operational-strategic questions pertaining to forces employed on land, at sea, and in the air."[42] General S. P. Ivanov's study of the World War II initial period states that the General Staff's pre-invasion plans were derived from "consideration of the military and political situation, the requirements of our military doctrine, and the real capabilities of the Soviet Union and its potential enemies."[43]

The Red Army Staff/General Staff's Intelligence Directorate, the RU, which became the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) in the late 1930s, ran extensive foreign military and technical intelligence operations. Strictly speaking, the RU/GRU was hardly any more the army's intelligence service than the OGPU/NKVD was the party's. It also was closely tied to the secret chancellery, and it came under intensive OGPU/NKVD surveillance. Until November 1937, when he was arrested and executed, Army Commissar 2d Rank Ya. K. Berzin, who had been a senior officer in the Cheka, headed the RU. After thoroughly purging the directorate, the people's commissar of the NKVD, N. I. Yezhov, became the RU chief as well. Yezhov's

downfall in late 1938 brought the RU/GRU its first military head, General Leytenant (major general) I. I. Proskurov, who was arrested and executed in July 1940. Proskurov's successor, also military, was General Leytenant F. I. Golikov, who served until after the German invasion in 1941.[44]

In matters affecting national security, Stalin was the intelligence analyst. Walter Laqueur has concluded that in the 1980s the Soviet leadership "seems to prefer information untinged by bureaucratic analysis and manipulation" and that the "style" is to use "data from the collectors, but estimates and 'net assessments' from the leadership itself."[45] Manifestly, Stalin would have been far less disposed than his successors are to accept net assessments from the bureaucracy.

The faculties of the Frunze Academy and the General Staff Academy (the latter opened in 1936) engaged in studying as well as teaching military art and science and were significant potential contributors to net assessment.[46] In his time, Tukhachevskiy drew heavily on them. The faculty members were military, many of whom were former military specialists with general staff and command experience acquired in the "old" (tsarist) army. The navy had (since 1923) an academy comparable to the Frunze Academy. Air force command personnel attended the Frunze Academy until 1940, when the Zhukovskiy Air Engineering Academy expanded its offerings in command and navigation and became the Air Force Academy. An evaluation and assessment capability also existed outside the military in the national Academy of Science's Institute of World Economics and World Politics and probably some of its other institutes. But the military academies and the Academy of Science were no less subject to constraints than any other organizations, only somewhat lower in the heirarchy.

The Process

The Soviet net assessment process cannot be directly observed. Like a dark object in outer space, its probable nature can only be discerned from interactions with visible surroundings. Fortunately, its rigidly secret environment has been somewhat subject to such countervailing conditions. The Soviet Union was desperately concerned in the 1930s with establishing itself as a modern military power, and that could not be done inside the secret chancellery or the Defense Committee and the Main Military Council. Tukhachevskiy and his associates conducted a relatively open discussion in print. Foreign developments were analyzed quite freely in the military press, then as now sometimes contrasting interestingly with the total silence on the same subjects as they pertained to the Soviet armed forces. Some restricted materials, for instance, field service regulations and the journal Voyennaya Mysl' (Military Thought), eventually found their way abroad.[47] The victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45, which was -- and is -- the Soviet regime's absolute greatest achievement, necessitated a reexamination of the 1930s after Stalin's death to redistribute the credit for the victory, which Stalin had claimed virtually for himself alone, and to assess the responsibility for the early defeats. The resulting continuous stream of publications has yet to emit steady light, but it has intermittently given off illuminating flashes. Although those are closely regulated, they give some substantive information and more indirect guidance.

The Nature of War as a Problem

The most crucial concern of net assessments in the 1930s was not relative strengths but the nature of war itself. The contenders in World War I (except Russia, Austria-Hungary, the United States, and Italy) had been about equally well prepared, and the result had been a prolonged war of attrition in which the defensive proved so far superior to the offensive that movement became practically impossible. Poison gas, the most frightful new weapon introduced during the war, had only added to the misery and strengthened the defensive. In early 1918, German offensives employing the so-called Hutier Tactics and exploiting a temporary numerical superiority had made several deep but not decisive advances. Thereafter, an impending attrition-induced German collapse and a massive influx of American troops enabled the Allies to break the German front and force an armistice. The war had ended with a victory that could only be loosely attributed to military art as it had been previously understood and left its future thoroughly beclouded.

The question of what the next war was going to be like profoundly affected all assessments up to -- and after -- September 1939. Theorists contemplated radically new approaches. B. H. Liddell Hart and General J. F. C. Fuller envisioned fleets of tanks and airplanes engaging each other in fully mechanized battles, and Giulio Douhet saw air power dominating wars in which armies and navies would be relegated to the sidelines.[48] The chief of the British Air Staff, Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, contended that strategic bombing could destroy an enemy's will to resist by breaking his civilian morale.[49] General Hans von Seeckt, who commanded the 100,000-man German Reichswehr, suggested that by a surprise attack, a small standing army might defeat a much larger conscript force before it could be mobilized.[50]

The German World War I military mastermind, General Erich von Ludendorff, published a plan for total war.[51] The leading circles in the military establishments, on the other hand, looked to empirical evidence derived from World War I, and it did not indicate any swift or cheap way of overcoming the superiority of the defensive. On the contrary, improved weapons and deeper defenses appeared to necessitate combining all arms to achieve movement, which would be sporadic, nevertheless, at least until one party could no longer continue the contest on equal terms. Barring radical and as yet unthought of innovations, the last war was taken to have established the essential parameters of the next.[52] Knowing the problems, however, by no means simplified them, and the projected solutions to them figured decisively in assessments.

The Soviet Union was a latecomer to the scene. The capitalist armies had worked out doctrine and attained what they took to be appropriate levels of proficiency in four years' fighting on the Western Front. Neither the Red Army nor the Imperial Russian Army had experienced that kind of war. The army groups and armies Tukhachevskiy, Yegorov, and others commanded in the Civil War had not in any respect come near approximating the aggregations of men and materiel employed on the Western Front. Consequently, the Soviet assessment process was heavily dependent on a tenuous frame of reference derived from foreign sources.

Politics and the Civil War experience injected further complications into the assessment process in the form of what might be called articles of faith that although they might not be objectively verifiable, could not safely be denied. At its inception in early 1918, the Red Army had been declared to be "an army of a new type" unlike any that had ever existed before, a "workers' and peasants' army" in which the troops fought for their own class interests and not, as they presumedly did in capitalist armies, for those of a hostile class, the bourgeoisie. That

was taken to be a strength no capitalist army could possess. The Red Army, as its name implied, was also regarded as the army of the world revolution, hence capable of attracting support from the working class in other armies. The evidence on that score had been strongly contradictory but not entirely negative in the final stage of World War I. Furthermore, as has already been indicated at some length, the political authority had the deciding word in all assessments. The star politico-military figure of the Civil War, M. V. Frunze, who was regarded as a theorist of war greater than Clausewitz, had called for a "unified military doctrine" that would depart from traditional doctrine and base itself on Marxist principles; and he had identified certain qualities in which the Red Army was naturally superior, among them, offensive-mindedness, decisiveness, and mobility.[53]

Frunze's unified doctrine had not been officially adopted, but the Civil War could be construed as having confirmed its existence in the Red Army even then. The war had not baffled it. It had successfully mounted offensives on fronts larger in area than the whole Western Front and had regularly made advances hundreds of miles deep. It had retreated equally long distances but always, at least almost aways, returned to the attack. Even with Allied support, the best White generals (A. I. Denikin, N. N. Yudenich, and P. N. Vrangel') had gone down in defeat before it. A party man with no previous military experience, Frunze, had won great battles. Another, Stalin, had brought into being a powerful (approximately 20,000-man) mobile force, the First Cavalry Army. Lenin (and Stalin) had demonstrated genius at determining the correct point for the main effort. Why, then, should the Western Front be the model for the future? Why not the Civil War? Trotskiy, who had worked as a war correspondent in France before 1917 and probably knew more about both wars than anyone else

in Russia, had explained the differences between them in numbers and quality of troops and weapons employed, but he had been "exposed" as a subversive and "wrecker."[54] The Frunze Academy's mission in the 1920s had been to study the experience and expound the lessons of "class war" (the Civil War). Soviet military science ranked class war above "imperialist war" (of which World War I had been the first) in all respects.[55] That distinction was bound to enter into assessments.

Assessing Contemporary War

The first phase of Soviet concerted preparation for war, the technological reconstruction of the armed forces, began in June 1931 when Tukhachevskiy took over as armaments chief and the Central Committee concurrently passed a resolution on command in the Red Army. The resolution gave the "main immediate requirements for raising the army's combat capabilities" as being "decisive improvement of military-technological competence in the command staffs and their mastery of advanced combat techniques and the intricacies of contemporary battle."[56] Tukhachevskiy therewith received confirmation of an assessment he and some others had made several years earlier, namely, that the Soviet armed forces were far behind the leading foreign military powers in modern weapons and the ability to use them. Tukhachevskiy had written the article on war in the first (1928) edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. While giving due credit to the Red Army's feats of arms in the Civil War, on which his own reputation also rested, he had graphically shown the growing impact of artillery, automatic weapons, aircraft, and tanks in operations on the Western Front and had concluded that the example set there was much more likely than that of the Civil War to provide the model for future wars.[57] Vladimir

Triandafillov, who had worked under Tukhachevskiy as operations chief and deputy chief of the Army Staff, had (in 1929) submitted an extensive study, "Characteristics of Army Operations in Contemporary War," based on German and French examples and some from the Soviet-Polish War in which France had supported the Poles with weapons and advisors. He described operations in which army groups composed of shock armies, each with four or five infantry corps and strong artillery, tank, and air elements, would oppose each other on broad, deeply echeloned fronts. (His work is also, if not the first, an early example of the everlasting Soviet preoccupation with quantifying effectiveness in terms of frontages, distances advanced, troops and weapons employed, and duration of operations.) In his general conclusions, Triandafilov came close to excluding ideological considerations from estimates of military effectiveness. "All of tactics, operational art, and strategy," he stated, "proceeds from the type of materiel and the human material that the state provides for the conduct of war. Military art departing from these bases will inevitably be reduced to adventurism and fantasism and cannot succeed."[58]

In the early 1930s, still, Soviet assessments were not focused on a specific enemy or hostile coalition. Japan's occupation of Manchuria in late 1931 raised a problem in the Far East; on the other hand, the German-Soviet 1926 treaty of friendship and neutrality was renewed for five more years in 1931. France was maintaining the Little Entente (Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia) on the southwest and had a treaty with Poland. While those arrangements were not friendly to the Soviet Union and Stalin frequently denounced them as downright hostile, their main purpose actually was to keep Germany in check. On the south, Turkey was not friendly but by itself was hardly a threat.

Since the Soviet armed forces were far behind in most respects, the assessment process as it pertained to the technological reconstruction was not concerned with particular balances. Analysis primarily concentrated on ascertaining the current state and trends of foreign technology. The treaty with Germany furthered that purpose. The German Reichswehr -- prohibited under the Versailles Treaty from developing advanced weapons -- and the Red Army jointly operated aircraft, tank, and chemical warfare test and training facilities on Soviet territory, and the German Junkers company ran an aircraft plant near Moscow.[59] Catching up was not all that difficult. Western armies were not then intensively promoting new development, and designs they ignored could easily be had. In 1931, the Red Army took up an outstanding British Vickers light tank and put it into production and bought two M1931 Christie tank chassis into which the American designer J. Walter Christie had incorporated several revolutionary features.[60]

Technology was quantifiable; how the next war would be fought was not. World War I had demonstrated conclusively that more and better weapons would not by themselves spell victory. With regard to what else was necessary, it had left more questions than answers. The line of operational and tactical development that would presumably lead to the answers had been laid down before Tukhachevskiy and Triandafillov took it up, in the German General Staff's directive "The Attack in Positional Warfare," issued in early 1918 and published in 1920. It described the technique of combined arms deep operations. General Oscar von Hutier's Eighteenth Army had employed the shock army principle in the German 1918 spring offensive.[61]

Conflicting theories and uncertainties about the effects new and improved technology would have, however, complicated the assessment process. In 1931, for instance, Soviet

analysis accepted the French contention that the Maginot Line constituted a technological and strategic-operational breakthrough, and the Red Army began fortifying the western border (and the eastern as well a year later). The Central Committee, the purported source of definitive judgments, straddled the technological issue, instructing the military, on the one hand, not to overvalue the traditional service arms and, on the other, to exercise caution in regard to the bourgeois mechanization theories. In 1932, the Red Army activated two mechanized corps, one in the Leningrad and the other in the Kiev Military district, each with 500 tanks and over 200 other armored vehicles, apparently to keep abreast of Liddell Hart's and Fuller's entirely theoretical conceptions.[62] A year later it also established a corps-type organization for the TB-3s and other bombers that were coming into service.[63]

At mid-year in 1933, Yegorov endorsed and sent forward an Army Staff study which undertook to assess the balance between the technological level the Red Army would reach in the next two years or so and its ability to respond effectively to the kind of war it would then have to fight. In the latter regard, the study concluded that the Red Army had correctly identified the requirements but was deficient in the tactical and operational competence needed to meet them. Defenses would be deep (60 to 70 miles), and combined arms shock armies and air power would be employed in appropriately deep offensive operations. The initial period of hostilities would be particularly, perhaps decisively, important. Both sides would strive at the outset to carry the war to the enemy's territory; and if they had built permanent fortifications, would exploit those to carry out covert mobilization before war was declared. The Red Army would soon have the means to conduct such a war, but it lacked much else. Only the cavalry had relevant experience in deep operations (a compulsory obeisance to the First Cavalry Army).

The army as a whole had no applicable operational or tactical experience and had as yet not even worked out theoretical guidelines. That condition called for intensively organized research and acquisition of substitute experience through large-scale ground and air maneuvers.[64]

The Army Staff's assessment came just at the time war clouds were visibly beginning to form on the international horizon in the East and the West. Japan had seized Manchuria in 1931, and Adolf Hitler had come to power in Germany in January 1933. Announcing that Germany would henceforth let its own needs determine its military policy, Hitler withdrew Germany from the world disarmament conference then going on in Geneva, Switzerland, and from the League of Nations in the autumn of 1933. Shortly afterward, he also terminated the German Soviet military collaboration which the German Army believed -- and thought the Red Army agreed -- was about to become more valuable to both parties than it had thus far been.[65] On 30 January 1933, the day Hitler became Chancellor in Germany, Stalin had instructed the foreign communist parties to form popular fronts with other antifascist parties, but that move came too late to accomplish anything in Germany. In January, he had also offered to negotiate a nonaggression pact with Japan; and late in the year, he completed a treaty of friendship, nonaggression, and neutrality with Italy and opened negotiations on collective security with France.[66]

The Seventeenth Party Congress convened on 26 January 1934. It was billed as "the Congress of the Victors" (over the party's internal opposition), but the talk was much about war. Stalin told the delegates that another "imperialist" war was in the making. "Military circles in Japan" and the "political leaders of certain nations in Europe" were hatching schemes for war against the Soviet Union as well; and "Fascism of the German type" had become "the most

fashionable commodity among the war-mongering bourgeois politicians." Those who tried "to poke their pig snouts into our Soviet garden" would receive "a crushing repulse," but the Soviet Union would pursue its peace policy resolutely and was prepared to conclude nonaggression treaties with all nations ready to do the same. "Of course," he said, "we are far from being enthusiastic about the fascist regime in Germany. But fascism is not the issue here, if only for the reason that fascism in Italy, for example, has not prevented the USSR from establishing the best relations with that country."[67]

Tuknachevskiy, reporting on the armament program, told the congress that war would generate an enormous demand for weapons, equipment, and supplies of all kinds. The Soviet industrial base, he said, was still too small to meet such a demand. Therefore, one would have to be built and directed away from peacetime and toward war production. It would be necessary to "deploy sufficiently gigantic technological resources to smash any country intruding on us."[68]

In the second year of the Second Five Year plan (the first having been declared completed after four years), Tukhachevskiy was announcing the tremendous expansion of a massive armament build-up already under way. The annual output of armored vehicles, 2200 a year from 1930 through 1934, would exceed 3,000 per year in and after 1935. The aircraft industry turned out 12,000 airplanes in the years 1930 through 1935 and a better than equal number in the next three years. Artillery pieces, Stalin's favorite weapons, were produced at the rate of 2500 a year in 1930 through 1933 and over 6000 a year in 1934 through 1938. The Soviet system's abiding faith in the inherent importance of numbers and a shortage of skilled labor impelled output toward easily mass-producible items. During the First and Second Five Year Plans, between a half and two-thirds of the artillery pieces were in the 37 and 45mm

categories. The armored vehicles turned out under the First Five Year Plan were almost all tankettes and light tanks, and the light tanks stayed in heavy production thereafter. The by-far most numerous aircraft type was the U-2 (Po-2), a wood and fabric, two-place, biplane primary trainer with a five-cylinder engine; and fighters and bombers developed (some with German assistance) in the 1920s continued in production into the middle '30s. On the other hand, medium and heavy tanks began coming into the inventory in 1932 and in 1935 reached numbers not then matched anywhere else in the world. In 1932, a fruit of the collaboration with Germany, the TB-3, an all-metal, four-engine, cantilever monoplane heavy bomber went into production as the first of its kind anywhere. In 1934, the I-15, an advanced biplane fighter, went into production; and it was followed in the same year by the I-16, a cantilever monoplane fighter that was several years ahead of its time in speed and maneuverability.[69]

A variety of pre-existing circumstances and considerations governed the navy's involvement in the net assessment process during the early and mid-1930s. Some former imperial officers continued to serve in commands and in the Navy Academy. They had been schooled in Alfred Thayer Mahan's sea power theories, which had dominated Russian naval thinking after the Russo-Japanese War; and foreign interventions through the Black Sea, the Baltic, The Arctic Ocean, and the Pacific during the Civil War had made the Soviet regime amply aware of sea power as a threat. On the other hand, Russian sea power had not accomplished anything significant either in the World War or under Soviet control in the Civil War. Both had been continental wars, lost or won entirely by land forces. After the Civil War, the few ships the navy had were obsolete; the main shipyards at Reval (Tallinn) and their trained

personnel were in another country, Estonia; and the navy was an appendage of the Red Army and out of political favor.

In the middle 1920s, early in Muklevich's term as chief, when the prospect of some new building began to arise, the navy settled on a program for a "mosquito navy," one without battleships or cruisers that would confine itself to operations in coastal waters. In wartime, its elements would be subordinated to the adjacent land forces and perform whatever offensive or defensive missions they required. The concept was well suited to the initial five year plans because it afforded a relatively quick way to achieve high unit output with limited technical expertise and without heavy preliminary investments in yards and docks. In 1930, the Revvoyensovet directed the navy to create as its share in the technological reconstruction a balanced aggregation of vessels (destroyers, submarines, motor torpedo boats, coastal guard ships, and minesweepers), naval aircraft, coastal fortifications, and defensive mine screens.

In 1933, two experienced navy professionals working in the Navy Academy, I. S. Isakov and A. P. Aleksandrov, proposed a "new school" theory of naval operations modeled on the late-nineteenth century French Jeune Ecole. They maintained that the navy could employ submarines in independent operations against enemy lines of communications and battleship fleets while also defending the coasts and supporting the land forces. Isakov was just then in high favor for having demonstrated strategic potential in Stalin's pet project, the recently completed White Sea-Baltic Canal, by navigating a flotilla of destroyers through the canal from the Baltic to the White Sea. Plans and diesel engines secured from Germany had put submarine building on a sound footing early in the First Five Year Plan, and in 1933, the Council of Labor and Defense authorized "a powerful underwater fleet."[70]

Air power complicated national assessments everywhere. The airplane was regarded as a potentially devastating, even decisive weapon; but in the World War, it had been little more than a glamorous supernumerary; and pretense was heavily intermixed with reality in the claims made for it after the war. Throughout the interwar period, the airplane figured in Soviet assessments as the quintessential symbol of technological advancement, but conservatism dominated the thinking on its employment. The air force remained what it had been during the Civil War, a technical service without a command function. The air power it generated would be subordinated in the form of air regiments and brigades to the ground forces' field commands and the national air defense forces (a separate directorate within the army). Like the navy's submarines, the heavy bombers coming into the air force inventory in the early '30s raised a prospect of missions extending beyond the ground forces' tactical purview. In 1936, the air force obtained authority to activate air armies in which TB-3s were the main components.[71]

The Tukhachevskiy Era

Tukhachevskiy's career was approaching it peak. On 7 November 1933, he had ridden on horseback out of the Kremlin through the Spasskiy Gate to take the salute at the army parade celebrating the October Revolution. Three months later he had addressed the party congress, and the congress elected him to candidate membership in the Central Committee.[72] Those were distinctions not ordinarily conferred on military professionals. In the arcane Soviet protocol they signified preeminence. What exactly they meant in terms of Tukhachevskiy's influence in military affairs and particularly in the decision-making at the highest governmental level is less than clear cut. He had strong support in the army leadership but also met strong resistance.

Although he could not have been given honors and advancement without Stalin's concurrence, those were at best doubtful evidences of his standing with Stalin. According to Shostakovich, Tukhachevskiy knew that very well.[73] His biographer Lev Nikulin states that Stalin was no more favorably disposed toward him in the 1930s than he had been in the previous decade.[74] Stalin rather obviously saw to it that he did not rise alone. Yegorov, Blyukher, and Budennyy also became candidate members in the Central Committee at the 1934 congress, and the pattern, of course, was repeated in their marshal's appointments.

Nevertheless, Tukhachevskiy for a time exercised authority which he could not have acquired without powerful support outside the military. It apparently came from his association with three men, Sergey Kirov, Valerian Kuybyshev, and Grigoriy Ordzhonikidze. All were party veterans, Stalin loyalists (but not, like Voroshilov for instance, mere hangers-on and yes-men), and Politburo members. Kirov was the first secretary of the quasi-autonomous Leningrad party organization and looked upon as the second-ranking Politburo member. Kuybyshev directed the five year plans and was deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labor and Defense. Ordzhonikidze was People's Commissar of Heavy Industry and as close a personal friend as Stalin had, having worked with him in the underground and been jailed with him before the revolution. Kuybyshev, whose younger brother had been friends with Tukhachevskiy since their days in tsarist cadet school, had sponsored his admission to the party in 1918 and had smoothed his way into responsible commands. Ordzhonikidze had been Tukhachevskiy's commissar when he commanded the Caucasus Front (army group) in 1920, and Kirov had been an army commissar. These were men of considerable import in party and state affairs, and Stalin, for the time being more concerned with

consolidating his personal power, would have been inclined to give them their way on military matters. They had enough influence to secure Tukhachevskiy's access to the center of power -- temporarily. Kirov died in December 1934, Kuybyshev in February 1935, both murdered in circumstances that allowed Stalin to mourn them as martyrs to the cause and exploit their deaths as justification for the purges he launched thereafter. Ordzhonikidze committed suicide in February 1937 after a falling out with Stalin over the purges -- and Tukhachevskiy was executed six months later.[75]

The years 1934 through 1936 stand out in the Soviet post-Stalin literature as a golden age in which military genius and the party's innate wisdom combined to keep Soviet military science on a clear and steady course toward total theoretical and practical mastery of the art of war. The implication is that in those years, the Soviet military leadership assessed the nature of future war more accurately and devised more effective responses than its foreign counterparts did. Since about 1960, the period has also been symbolically important to current Soviet military doctrine, initially in relation to the Soviet Army's campaign against proposed conventional force reductions, more recently as support for the idea that the kind of war then envisioned can be fought in the nuclear era.[76] These considerations need to be kept in mind while examining the Soviet assessment process at that stage.

In the Soviet view, the fundamental strength of its military thought was -- and by implication, is -- that it "kept clear of the capitalist states' characteristically onesided military theories" and consequently "surpassed them in the solution of many problems."[77] Marshal A. A. Grechko's 1975 work on the Soviet armed forces refers to the "then [pre-World War II] fashionable onesided concepts such as 'aerial warfare' and 'tank warfare,' which overestimated

the role of individual types of weapons."[78] Ivanov credits "bourgeois" theorists with having "more or less accurately judged the role of tanks and aviation on the future battlefields" but charges them with have "propagated erroneous ideas on the possibility of achieving victory in a future war using small . . . professional armies."[79] The "onesided" theories, such as those of Fuller, Liddell Hart, Douhet, and von Seeckt, are implied to have dominated capitalist military thinking.

The "onesided" theories did enter into the assessment process in the middle 1930s, though not at the level of significance now attributed to them. The Politburo authorized a major change in the military system in May 1935, a shift from a militia to a cadre (standing) army. Since 1925, when the cadre army was limited to 562,000 men, most conscripts had done their service part-time in the militia.[80] Although the Politburo had made the decision, the changeover apparently still had to be justified, possibly -- unlikely as it may seem -- even to Stalin. Marxist doctrine rejected standing armies; and the military leadership outside Tukhachevskiy's circle would have suspected a "onesided" emphasis on technological arms to the detriment of the traditional and more easily comprehended infantry and cavalry, which were what the militia primarily produced. At any rate, the cadre expansion, which had been going on in fact for some years and had brought an increase from 617,000 men in 1928 to 885,000 in 1933, was, if anything, lagging at the end of 1935, having by then raised the cadre army's strength only to 930,000.[81]

On 15 January 1936, Tukhachevskiy delivered a strategic estimate to the Central Executive Committee, the Soviet legislature (now the Supreme Soviet). To an accompaniment of applause and cheers "For our iron People's Commissar Voroshilov!" and "For the Great

Stalin!," he gave an exaggeratedly glowing progress report on the conversion to the cadre system, claiming that the cadre divisions, which had been 26 percent of the army's total in January 1935, had grown to 77 percent by December. (The cadre divisions did not get above the 60 percent level until 1937.)[82] In a more sober vein, he told the delegates that the country was in growing danger of having to fight Germany and Japan simultaneously on fronts in the West and the Far East totalling 6000 miles. He made a particular point of those potential enemies' ability to deploy very large forces on the Soviet frontiers in a short time. Japan, he said, had built over 300 miles of railroad in Manchuria in 1933, 550 miles in 1934, and 750 miles in 1935. Using the Nazi party rallies as examples -- and calling them maneuvers -- he estimated that the German railroads had exceeded their best World War I performance in mass movement of people by almost three times.[83]

At about the same time in early 1936, the Institute of World Economy and World Politics in the Academy of Science put out an assessment entitled Armament of Capitalist States in the Year 1935. Its thesis was that the year had conclusively proved the Fuller, Liddell Hart, Douhet, and Seeckt theories about small professional armies to be "bankrupt," in fact to have been "political deceptions" all along. Citing the German return to conscription in March 1935, Ludendorff's design for total war, and General Douglas MacArthur's remarks on technology and maneuver in his final report (November 1935) on his term as U. S. Army Chief of Staff, it concluded that the capitalist states had let their real views come into the open and those had nothing to do with small armies fighting relatively humane little wars. Current bourgeois theory held that "offensive arms, such as tanks and aircraft, could achieve superiority over defensive means." Consequently, small armies were "out of fashion," and the trend was toward mass

armies capable of exploiting the new technology to "deal blows right through the entire depth of the enemy's deployment." Germany, for instance, was developing "special [shock] armies."[84]

The Tukhachevskiy report and the Academy of Science analysis, which the defense commissariat published and which Tukhachevskiy or his associates may have had a hand in writing, sheds a modicum of light -- however uncertain -- on the Soviet assessment process at that time.[85] Tukhachevskiy appears to have possessed a license to address in public a question of national policy (possible war with Germany and Japan) on which the party (Stalin) had not yet spoken. Both his speech -- the cheers not withstanding -- and the Academy of Sciences assessment were surprisingly free of the then obligatory credits to Stalin as the greatest authority on all subjects. The remarkable features of the two were their oblique and convoluted approaches. The decisive event in 1935, the one that profoundly altered the balance of military power, was the German reversion to a conscript army. It, no doubt, impelled the decision to convert to the cadre system. Yet, Tukhachevskiy did not mention it at all, and the Academy of Sciences analysts only alluded to it in passing. Perhaps it could be assumed to be well enough understood; but that leaves a question as to why, on the other hand, it should have been necessary to dwell at length on the various small armies theories, treating them at once as deceptions and as previously accepted doctrine. A plausible answer seems to be that the Soviet theory being applied in the technological reconstruction needed to be presented as both superior to and in conformity with that of the capitalist states. In any event, significant results may have been achieved. Between January 1936 and December 1937, the cadre army's strength increased to somewhat over 1.5 million men.[86] In April 1936, Tukhachevskiy became war plans director and first deputy people's commissar in the defense commissariat.

Tukhachevskiy and Deep Operations Doctrine

The Soviet Military Encyclopedia states that in 1930 the Red Army began conducting large scale maneuvers "to raise the level of war-readiness" and to secure "practical verification for new propositions in military theory." In the first of those, the Belorussia Military District is said to have experimented with the employment of mechanized regiments and brigades.[87] The scale thereafter was much enlarged, and in September 1935, the Kiev and Kharkov Military Districts conducted the "Great Kiev Maneuvers" with 65,000 troops, over 1000 tanks, 600 aircraft, 300 artillery pieces, and "other military technology." Yakir had the command, and Voroshilov, Tukhachevskiy, and Yegorov were present. The Frunze Academy's operations faculty under Colonel G. S. Isserson developed the problem, which required the "blue" (enemy) force to execute a 150-mile-deep offensive from the vicinity of the western border to Kiev. The exercise ran in two stages. In the first, the "blue" infantry with supporting tank battalions broke through a 124-mile-wide fortified defense line, and the "reds" counterattacked with a mechanized and a cavalry corps. In the second, the "blues" resumed the attack and dropped a 1200-man parachute regiment to seize a bridgehead on the Dnepr River east of Kiev, and two "red" regiments, one mechanized, the other cavalry, attacked the paratroops while the "red" mechanized corps staged a grand sweep around the "blue" right flank.[88] In his evaluation, Yegorov stated that the maneuvers had shown how current operations would be conducted and had provided a "provisional basis for instruction in deep operations." The late Marshal A. I. Eremenko, who was an umpire at the maneuvers, wrote in his 1964 memoirs that "for the first time in the history of military art, the solutions to the problems of deep operational blows and the questions of deep battle were resolved in large-scale maneuvers."[89] Interestingly, it was

apparently assumed, since the "blue" thrust did reach Kiev, that both sides would have found equally valid "solutions."

The fall maneuvers held a year later in the Belorussian Military District are said to have tested successfully principles being incorporated into the 1936 Field Service Regulations (PU 36) then being drafted in the General Staff and by Isserson and his colleagues, who had been transferred to the General Staff Academy. Uborevich commanded, and Tukhachevskiy and Yegorov attended. Tanks and cavalry simulated deep battle and a combat crossing of the Beresina River under a smoke screen laid down from the air; a mechanized brigade made a 125-mile cross-country march; and 1800 parachute troops performed a mass jump to "capture" an airfield.[90]

French, Italian, and Czech observers were present at the maneuvers in 1935, British, French, and Czech in 1936. The parachute troops struck them as a sensational innovation, and the quantity and quality of the equipment, particularly the aircraft and tanks, impressed them.[91] But the French General Lucien Loizeau, who was there to evaluate the Soviet potential as an ally, reported strong doubts about the adequacy in tactics, training, and leadership.[92] (The paratroops rode the wings of TB-3 bombers.) Col. Martel, who was a British tank specialist, saw the proceedings as "more like a tattoo than maneuvers." The umpires, he said, "were terribly busy seeing that the troops knew what to do according to plan and any real umpiring was purely incidental." The maneuvers were staged in "ideal country for mechanized warfare;" the tactics were "nothing very new except for the parachute landing;" and in the action, the opposing sides "appeared just to bump into each other."[93]

In the winter, around the turn of the year, the Soviet High Command usually also sponsored war games in which some of the military district staffs participated. The first of those to involve a potentially actual rather than a hypothetical situation was apparently held in early 1936 at Tukhachevskiy's suggestion and took a German-Polish attack north of the Pripyat Marshes toward Moscow some time in 1936 as its premise. Isserson worked up the problem. Tukhachevskiy "commanded" the German, Yakir the Polish, and Uborevich the Soviet forces. The General Staff, which supplied the figures on enemy strengths, calculated that Germany could mobilize 100 divisions and would put 50 into the attack while the Poles would put in 30. Tukhachevskiy disagreed, insisting that Germany could mobilize 200 divisions and therefore would commit at least 80. He also argued that the Germans could conceal their deployment to achieve surprise. Tukhachevskiy was overruled on both points, and the game was played through as a conventional frontier clash between approximately equal forces, "therewith losing all strategic interest." The last according to Isserson and Tukhachevskiy's biographer, General Todorskiy, who, nevertheless, see in Tukhachevskiy's 200-divisions an estimate that came close to the approximately 190-divisions Germany and its allies committed against the Soviet Union five years later in June 1941.[94] (The actual number of divisions at that time was 152 German and 32 allied for a total 184.)[95]

Voroshilov endorsed PU 36, the new field service regulations, on 30 December 1936, and they were published early in the new year. Since the late 1960s, PU 36 has been acclaimed in the Soviet literature as the high-water mark -- for a time -- in world military thought, the point at which successful assessment of the nature of the next war culminated in the Red Army's becoming the first to possess a doctrine of deep operations. A. I. Korotkov, in his 1980 work

on Soviet military thought says the theory of deep operations "was developed first in our country."[96] The Soviet Military Encyclopedia ranks the Soviet deep operations theory as "a qualitative leap in the art of war."[97] The History of War and the Art of War published in 1970 states, "The very great achievement of Soviet military science, in which it outstripped Western bourgeois theory, consisted in the development of the theory of deep operations."[98] Earlier comments were usually somewhat more restrained. Interestingly, Marshal M. V. Zakharov, in the 1965 volume of writings on strategy and operations he edited, only credited PU 36 with containing "some elements of deep operations." But in an article printed five years later, in 1970, he maintained it could be said with regard to the Soviet theory of deep battle and operations as it existed in the middle '30s that "not a single army in the world had as profound and as thoroughly worked out a military theory as our armed forces did." On the other hand, he asserted in both places that the German Army filched the idea of the deep operation from PU 36 and "in smugly perverted fashion," derived their blitzkrieg operations from it.[99]

Despite much recent Soviet and some Western scholarship, the idea of the deep operation was not a Soviet discovery, and PU 36 did not advance it in any significant way beyond what was then elsewhere considered to be good doctrine.[100] A comparison of PU 36 with the German Army's 1933 field service regulations, which had their antecedent in the 1918 "Attack in Positional Warfare" directive, shows only two notable differences between them: (1) a less dogmatic approach in the German regulations and (2) an assumption in PU 36 that cavalry would be capable of carrying out strategic operations in a future war.[101]

Looked at in the context of the time, PU 36 also does not appear to have constituted a clear-cut success for the Tukhachevskiy group in the assessment process. In December 1934,

Voroshilov rejected a move in the Military Council to declare deep battle (the tactical form of deep operations) to be a new form of war. Deep battle, he insisted, was a characteristic of all wars; battle in the future would not be different, only deeper. The question was, therefore, not what to think about deep battle but how to conduct war in "all of its diversity" and in its "multiple manifestations."[102] In an article on PU 36 printed in the military newspaper Red Star on 6 May 1937, Tukhachevskiy disclosed that he had encountered strong opposition from those who still believed that the Red Army had developed a unique "special mobility" of its own in the Civil War (particularly in the cavalry armies) and did not need to concern itself with maneuver in other forms. "Some comrades," he added, also believed tanks could not operate in all weather and all seasons and ought, in any event, to be confined to the infantry-support role for which they had been invented in World War I.[103]

Evaluating War Experience: Spain and the Far East

Civil War erupted in Spain on 17 July 1936 when the "Nationalists," Spanish Foreign Legionaires under General Francisco Franco, began a march on the "Loyalist" government stronghold, Madrid. Italian and German military assistance was on the way to the Nationalists before the month ended, and the Loyalists began receiving Soviet arms and advisors in October. The foreign interventions converted a domestic upheaval in a military backwater into a conflict that drew world attention. As Isserson put it, the war in Spain was "the first trial of the new means of battle in Europe" and therefore, "raised the curtain somewhat on the present-day battlefield."[104] The Red Army sent a number of promising junior general officers, particularly from the technical branches and the General Staff, to Spain as "volunteer" advisors, among them

G. M. Shtern, K. A. Meretskov, D. G. Pavlov, N. N. Voronov, Ya. V. Smushkevich, and I. I. Kopets. Ya K. Berzin, the RU chief, went as chief advisor to the Loyalist government without giving up his military intelligence functions, which he continued to carry on from Madrid.[105]

The war generated an abundance of apparently unequivocal evidence for analysts in all countries. Tukhachevskiy already gave attention to it in his May 1937 article on PU 36. "The war in Spain," he wrote, "demonstrates the importance and power of the defensive." For once he expressed limited agreement with Liddell Hart, who, in a January 1937 article in Foreign Affairs, had speculated that mechanization might prove more beneficial to the defensive than to the offensive. While conceding that positional warfare was still possible, Tukhachevskiy argued that tanks and artillery could, nevertheless, execute "completely successful" offensives if they were "employed in sufficient mass."[106] In its subsequent course, the war proved Tukhachevskiy right with regard to the possibility of positional warfare's recurrence. A bloody stalemate persisted on the main front around Madrid from October 1936 to 28 March 1939 when exhaustion and a power struggle between communist and noncommunist factions brought about a Loyalist collapse.

Stalin's changing foreign policy and the purge brought the Soviet advisors home before the fighting ended, some to arrest and execution, others to rapid advancement. Of those that have been mentioned, Meretskov returned in September 1937 to be deputy chief of the General Staff, commanding general of Leningrad Military District a year later, and chief of the General Staff in 1940. Voronov, Pavlov, Smushkevich, and Kopets came back in November 1937. Voronov, who had headed the Leningrad artillery school before going to Spain, became chief

of the army's artillery directorate. Pavlov, who had previously -- and in Spain as well -- commanded no more than a tank brigade, became chief of the tank directorate and in 1940, commanding general of the Belorussian Military District. Smushkevich, who had been an air brigade commissar before going to Spain where he directed air defense of Madrid, became deputy chief of the Air Force. Pavlov and Smushkevich also received the recently authorized highest Soviet decoration, Hero of the Soviet Union. Kopets received senior appointments in the Air Force, becoming chief of the air units in the Belorussian Military District in 1940. Shtern after a brief tour as Berzin's successor, returned in April 1938 to become Bluykher's chief of staff and his replacement later in the year. His earlier experience had been as a commissar in the First Cavalry Army and as Voroshilov's assistant for special affairs. These were representative of the new men on whom responsibility for war readiness would fall.

In 1939, the General Staff academy issued a volume of "operational-tactical conclusions" on the experience in Spain for controlled circulation to command personnel. It expanded and brought into definitive form a two-part article that the author, Kombrig (brigadier general) S. Lyubarskiy, had published a year earlier in the General Staff's restricted journal, Military Thought.[107] The war, Lyubarskiy wrote, had much to offer:

> Studying the lessons of the war in Spain is tremendously important. In that war all of the technical means of battle were employed. In it, on a small scale, all of the methods of conducting battle and operations accepted in contemporary European armies were tested.
>
> The conclusions to be drawn from that experience need to be thoroughly analyzed. Superficial inferences without analysis of all the characteristics of that war, without taking into account the huge World War and the Civil War experience, without considering the current development of armies in the capitalist states with their powerful industry, can result in great errors.[108]

Lyubarskiy's fundamental conclusion was that "history repeats itself:" the war in Spain, like World War I, had become a war of position after an even shorter period of maneuver than in World War I. Those "comrades" who claimed there were deep operations in Spain were wrong. There had only been isolated fragments of deep operations. The war had "decisively demonstrated the growing strength of the current defensive." Neither side, he conceded, had tanks, aircraft, and artillery in sufficient quantities, and the only form of offensive that could be effective was the deep operation. Nevertheless, the experience in Spain showed that "even if the forces have enormous strength and the most advanced technological means, operations will assume a prolonged character."[109]

In practical terms, according to Lyubarskiy, history had also repeated itself, proving again the value of the mass army and the "decisive" role of the infantry. The war in Spain had demonstrated as well the "great importance" of fortifications. Tanks had displayed both strengths and weaknesses. On the defensive, they had not achieved either "large or small successes" independently of the infantry. They had confirmed the view that they were a powerful offensive weapon; but they had not proved to be a substitute for artillery; and in attacks on prepared positions, they had run into "great difficulties" without strong artillery support. They had also been vulnerable to antitank guns, even ones as light as 20mm, which indicated that infantry platoons and companies could probably be armed to defend themselves against tanks. Fighter aircraft had proved essential in the contest for air supremacy over the battlefield and as escorts for the bombers, which could not carry out missions without them.[110]

Also in 1939, the military publishing house printed a book, The Air Army, by Kombrig A. N. Lapchinskiy, who had been the professor of air tactics in the Frunze Academy until his

death in 1938. Lapchinskiy's concern was to provide a doctrine for the air armies. He identified three primary types of missions: long-range (strategic) bombing to destroy the enemy civilian population's morale; interdiction bombing directed against the enemy's communications lines; and direct battlefield support. The war in Spain, he concluded, had proved the last to be by far the most important. Only the destruction of the adversary's armed forces "secured victories." Bombing cities did not impair the "armed mass's will to fight." Interdiction and attacks on the enemy's rear area could be worthwhile but only if they did not detract from direct battle support.[111]

In 1938 and 1939, the Red Army acquired battle experience in the Far East where tension had been growing since the Japanese took over Manchuria in 1931. In the summer of 1938, Stalin was ready to assess the balance of power in the region by a controlled test of strength. Blyukher's Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army, which had been heavily reinforced since the beginning of the year, became the Red Banner Far Eastern Front on 1 July with 200,000 troops in two armies and an air army. From 3 to 11 August, Shtern led a 32,000-man corps with 609 artillery pieces and 345 tanks in a frontal attack on a two-mile-long ridge line west of Lake Khasan that the Soviet Union claimed as the Soviet-Manchurian boundary. Voronov and Smushkevich came from Moscow to supervise the artillery and the operations of the Second Air Army. Although Shtern only got about half of his ground force into action, he had a substantial superiority over the Japanese General Kamezo Suetaka's 9000 troops and 37 artillery pieces; and the incident ended in a truce at noon on 11 August with Soviet troops on the ridge and Stalin's curiosity satisfied.

Stalin ran another, more extensive test, in the summer of 1939 east of the Khalkhin-Gol (Halha River) on the border between Outer Mongolia and Manchuria. In early June, on Timoshenko's recommendation, he sent Komkor (major general) G. K. Zhukov to build an "army group" (more than a corps, less than an army) around a corps already stationed in the area. Kulik, Pavlov, Voronov, and Smushkevich arrived later. Zhukov had 57,000 troops, 500 tanks, and over 500 aircraft by the third week in August. The Japanese Sixth Army, under General Rippei Ogisu, apparently committed about 59,000 troops, 300 aircraft, and 180 tanks. Both sides strictly limited their operations to a 50-mile-wide, 10-mile-deep stretch of disputed territory between the Khalkhin-Gol and the Mongolian settlement of Nomanhan. The Japanese held the initiative in June, July, and August until 21 August when Zhukov launched a very precise encirclement that in ten days trapped the Japanese force between Nomanhan and the river. Losses in the almost three-months' battle were heavy on both sides, but Stalin again made his point, and Zhukov inflicted a severe prestige loss on the Japanese Army.[112]

Although the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol incidents provided the first tests since the Civil War of Soviet troops and technology in battle, they appear not to have generated general assessments like those derived from the war in Spain. There were, perhaps, several reasons: the experience in Spain, because it was European, was assumed to be more valid from the technological point of view; that in the Far East, hence, was taken to have limited applicability because the Japanese were presumed to be qualitatively inferior; and of course, by the time the fighting on the Khalkhin-Gol ended, a flood of new evidence for assessment was coming from Europe. In the final analysis, the Soviet forces in the Far East had not come off decidedly better than the Loyalists had in Spain. Lake Khasan was a victory but a somewhat disappointing

performance. Effective infantry, artillery, tank, and air coordination had not been achieved, and the tanks had been vulnerable to antitank fire.[113] The Japanese performance had been sufficiently impressive to bring about a 350,000-man increase in the Red Army, most of it for the Far East.[114] Zhukov's crushing finale at Khalkhin-Gol had come after an expensive two and a half months on the defensive.

Zhukov's account of his report to Stalin on Khalkhin-Gol offers a glimpse at Stalin's personal assessment process. On his return to Moscow in May 1940, that is, eight months after the battle, Zhukov says Stalin called him to the Kremlin and, with Politburo members present, questioned him closely on the quality of Japanese troops and equipment and on the Soviet troops' performance. Stalin had earlier done the same with the advisors returning from Spain, and from Zhukov's, Meretskov's, and Voronov's accounts, it appears that Stalin may have been more interested in judging the interviewees than in securing information, which must already have been available to him from other sources.[115] Zhukov came off well and departed from Moscow with a promotion to the newly instituted rank of general armii (one step below Marshal) and an appointment to command the Kiev Military District.

While Stalin was engaged in the test of strength in the Far East, the balance of power in Europe, as he saw it, was threatening to shift dangerously against him. Even though he had mutual assistance treaties with France and Czechoslovakia, the parties involved in the 1938 Sudeten crisis ignored him, and the British and French at Munich in September helped Hitler to begin dismantling Czechoslovakia. On 10 March 1939, Stalin told the Eighteenth Party Congress that Great Britain, France, and the United States were "egging on the Germans to march east," but the Soviet Union would frustrate their schemes by "strengthening business

relations with all countries."[116] A month later, in the midst of a growing German-Polish crisis, he proposed a defensive alliance to Britain and France, but two weeks later, he dismissed his long-time foreign minister, Maxim Litvinov, who was a Jew, and appointed Molotov to replace him. On 31 May, Molotov told the Supreme Soviet, ". . . while conducting negotiations with Great Britain and France, we by no means consider it necessary to renounce business relations with countries like Germany and Italy."[117] In Moscow on 23 August, Molotov and German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop signed a nonaggression pact, which was to take effect immediately and specified that the other partner was to remain neutral if either went to war with a third party or parties.

During the 1938-39 drift toward war in Europe, the Soviet armed forces were engaged in the most comprehensive assessment effort since the start of the decade and the most urgent ever. Technology, organization, and doctrine were all affected. Stalin's willingness to align with the country's most dangerous potential enemy indicated the extent of the problems and how the balance stood in his personal net assessment.

Obsolescence had overtaken the products of the technological reconstruction during the war in Spain. The air force's I-15, the best fighter in the world in 1936, in 1938 was fast being outclassed by a new generation of high-performance, all metal fighters such as the German Me 109. The last of some 800 TB-3s, the largest heavy bomber fleet in existence anywhere, were built in 1939. They were too slow and lightly armed to be more than marginally effective any longer. The air force was having to rush new aircraft designs into production: the TB-7, an advanced four-engine bomber; two twin-engine bombers, the DB-3 and the Pe-2; and three high-performance fighters, the I-22, I-26, and MiG-1 (I-61). In Spain, light tanks had shown

themselves vulnerable to small-caliber antitank fire, and a practice Tukhachevskiy had promoted of designing tanks for specialized purposes (reconnaissance, cruising, infantry support, and so forth) had, as the German tank specialist General Heinz Guderian predicted it would in a 1937 book, complicated organization and maintenance. In August 1939, the Central Committee held a military-industrial conference which decided to concentrate production on two new tanks, the medium T-34 and the heavy KV-1, both of which used the same engine, and to phase out the others, particularly the light tanks.

The experience in Spain and the Far East seemed to show artillery more than ever to be the infantry's main support and that far from being able to relinquish some of that mission to the tanks, that artillery was going to have to support them as well. Consequently, the artillery was taken to require modernization and massive expansion. According to Voronov, the whole weapons system, in all types and calibers from submachine guns to 305 mm guns had to be revised in 1938.[118] When the war began in Europe, the Soviet Union was embarked on a second technological reconstruction to develop and produce a virtually entire new generation of weapons.

The navy entered into the second technological revolution in an unexpectedly big way. After they secured an expanded mission for the submarines, Isakov and other "new school" advocates had begun promoting a surface fleet strong enough to venture onto the high seas; and the navy had modernized its three ex-imperial battleships and two cruisers (and completed one cruiser half-built before 1917). In early 1937, Stalin had called in the commanders of the Baltic, Black Sea, and Pacific Fleets and asked them what kinds of ships they needed. As he often did, he had not told them beforehand what he wanted to discuss; consequently they had given

different answers, and he had dismissed them with a remark that they did not seem to know what they wanted.[119] But his interest was being aroused. Germany had launched two battleships in late 1936, and the naval limitation treaty had expired at the end of the year with practically no prospect of its being renewed. In 1937, Germany laid down the Bismarck and Japan the Yamato. Both exceeded the 35,000 ton treaty limit, the Yamato by nearly again as much. Stalin could hardly not have perceived the possibility that a naval race was about to begin in which all participants would be starting from scratch. Moreover, the intervention in Spain had shown the Soviet inability to project visible sea power beyond its own shores to be a distinct political and psychological handicap.[120] The emergence of the People's Commissariat of the Navy signaled a major shift in naval policy and, without the turmoil the purge induced, would probably have shown effects sooner than it did.

On 19 December 1938, the Main Naval Council held the final session of its year-end meeting in the Kremlin, where Stalin listened to the participants' reports, including one by Kuznetsov, the commander of the Pacific Fleet. Afterward, Stalin discoursed on "combined forms of battle," which he maintained could be conducted by navies with battleships, cruisers, "and other powerful ships." The Soviet Navy, he concluded was still weak and confined to coastal waters, but it could be made "strong at sea within eight or ten years." The People's Commissariat of the Navy, according to Kuznetsov, took "every remark Stalin made as an order."[121]

Shortly after the turn of the year, Isakov went to the United States to renew officially efforts begun a year or two earlier to have a 62,000 ton battleship built in a U. S. shipyard and buy plans for an up-to-date aircraft carrier. Designing and building such large ships posed

enormous problems for Soviet industry. The U. S. Government, which was still trying to uphold the 35,000 ton limit, refused to let the battleship be built and to release aircraft carrier plans, but Isakov apparently did get designs for 35, 45, and 62,000 ton battleships. Soviet shipyards had begun work in 1938 on two battleships in the 60,000 ton range. Two more were added in 1939 and '40 along with two 35,000 ton battle cruisers. The navy had begun building six 8,000 ton Kirov class cruisers in late 1935 and laid down seven somewhat heavier and five heavy cruisers in and after 1938. The destroyer and submarine programs, meanwhile, continued at full tilt.[122]

Although the rapid progress in development during the last prewar years laid to rest all doubts concerning the airplane's tactical and operational effectiveness, the experience in Spain dimmed its future as a strategic weapon. Improved aircraft appeared to be bringing air supremacy into the realm of attainable strategic objectives, but that it could be pursued separately from the reliably established strategic objective, victory on the ground, was a knotty proposition, particularly where air power was as tighly integrated into the ground force structure as it was in the Soviet Union. In April 1938, as a result of what must have been a decision to keep the whole range of possibilities open without impairing the ground forces' entitlement to air support, the Main Military Council conferred the designation "armies for special purposes" on the air armies and established a uniform table of organization for them under which each would have 170 heavy bombers, 50 light bombers, and 50 fighters. Their missions would include independent strategic bombing. Their commanders would exercise authority equal to military district (army group) commanders and would receive their orders directly from the defense commissariat. The First Air Army had been stationed in the Moscow Military District

since 1936; the Second had been activated in the Far East in March 1938; the Third was set up in the North Caucasus Military District later in the year; and others were planned for the Leningrad, Belorussian, and Kiev Military Districts.[123]

By the time Lapchinskiy's work on bombing came out, similar analyses had been published in Germany, and those seem to have provided sufficient confirming evidence to put the plan for setting up additional air armies into abeyance. In early 1940, the three existing air armies were disbanded, and production stopped on the TB-7s after 79 had been built. The evidence that bombing would not be done outside the zones of operations then appeared very strong. At the outbreak of war in Europe, the British, French, and German governments had all immediately acceded to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's call for a pledge to restrict bombing; and contrary to predictions that the bombers would be the first to strike, the pledge had been observed, except for a few questionable instances in Poland.[124]

Suddenly, in the late summer of 1940, Soviet military periodicals directed a burst of attention to "assault aircraft" (shturmovoy aviatsiya), aircraft whose only function would be low-level, tactical ground support. Designers, apparently looking for an answer to the German Ju 87, Stuka, which had attracted attention in Spain in 1938 and was a sensation in the Polish Campaign, had developed a somewhat less sophisticated alternative, the BSh-2 (later I1-2) armored shturmovik. It was built around a very reliable engine designed for a single-engine passenger plane, a modified version of which had made a record-breaking transpolar flight from Moscow to Vancouver, Washington, in June 1937. Armor (1500 lbs. of steel plate, particularly on the underside) and powerful armament, two 20mm cannon, two 7.62mm machine guns, and four 220 lb. bombs, made it virtually a flying tank.[125]

The experience in the Spanish Civil War also brought the role of tanks into question. In July 1939, a commission chaired by Kulik and having Budennyy, Shaposhnikov, Timoshenko, Meretskov, Mekhlis, and Pavlov as members took up tank organization. Pavlov, with Kulik's support, proposed that the tank corps, of which the Red Army then had four with 560 tanks apiece, should be abolished because such large aggregations of armor had not been used in Spain. The majority, however, concluded that Spain, where the fighting was mostly in and around cities, had not provided an adequate test. Two months later, in mid-September, two tank corps were committed in the "liberation of Western Belorussia and the Western Ukraine," the march into Poland. Like almost everybody else, including some German generals, Stalin had not expected the Germans to advance as fast as they did; and the hastily mounted Soviet offensive, although it did not encounter organized resistance, was a ramshackle affair in which the tank corps' performance was glaringly weak. On 21 November, without further discussion, the Main Military Council abolished the tank corps, assigned half of their tanks to be used in activating four motorized divisions, and distributed the other half elsewhere.[126]

New field service regulations, PU 39, appeared in late 1939. Soviet accounts, particularly the more recent ones, pass over them lightly. The article on field service regulations in the Military Encyclopedia does not mention them or PU 40, which came out the following year, at all. It cites PU 36 as having permanently established deep operations doctrine and states that changes resulting from the experience in Spain and the Far East (and Finland) were incorporated in PU 41.[127] Nevertheless, PU 39 and PU 40 are two of the most significant documents pertaining to the Soviet assessment process.

The first chapter in PU 39 consisted of several dozen aphorisms, among them the following:

> The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will respond to any enemy attack with a crushing blow involving all the might of its armed forces.
>
> If an enemy unleashes a war on us, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army will be the most offensive-minded of all the attacking armies that ever existed.
>
> We will attack and carry the war to the enemy's territory.
>
> The Red Army's greatest asset is the new man of the Stalinist epoch. He will have the decisive role in battle.[128]

Those statements can be taken as sheer bombast or, as one Soviet history does, as "correct in principle" but bound to result in dangerous over-emphasis on the offensive.[129] The question is: Why the bombast and the overemphasis? And the most likely answer is that they were responses to a deep concern about the Red Army's offensive capability. In Spain, the Soviet advisors had military and political control over troops of about the same quality as those in the Red Army, and the war had been entirely defensive on the Loyalist side. In the Far East, an offensive capability had not been as positively demonstrated as the outcomes at Lake Khasan and on the Khalkhin-Gol seemed to indicate.

In substantive doctrinal terms, PU 39 conformed to the published analyses. Infantry was designated as the chief arm, and all others served alongside it. Artillery possessed "the most powerful and farthest reaching fire of all the ground arms." The tanks' "fundamental mission" was to support the infantry; in a mobile battle, they "could be utilized for deeper blows into the enemy's deployment." The air force's main mission was "to assist the ground troops in battle and operations."[130]

Evaluating War Experience: Finland and France

The Soviet Union declared war on Finland on 30 November 1939. What was initially designed as a warlike demonstration similar to one Hitler had staged against Czechoslovakia earlier in the year developed into two major operations. The first, in December and early January 1940, was an outright disaster. The second, begun on 1 February after Timoshenko had replaced Meretskov in the top command and regrouped the forces, would eventually have overwhelmed the small Finnish army; but Stalin agreed to an armistice on 12 March that gave him enough of a victory to disguise his prestige loss at home. The campaign throughout, despite the presence in the field of Red Army rising stars like Meretskov, Pavlov, Voronov, and Smushkevich, was far from masterfully conducted. The Finnish commander-in-chief, Marshal Carl Mannerheim, described the performance in his memoirs: "The artillery," Mannerheim said, "kept up heavy fire, but it was badly directed and badly coordinated with the movements of infantry and armor. Tanks might advance, open fire, and return to their starting point before the infantry had even begun to move." He noted a distinct improvement in the second operation, which he credited to more methodical preparation, but he observed that certain weaknesses had prevailed throughout: "a kind of inertia" in the higher commands that "displayed itself in the formalism and simplicity of the operational plan, which excluded maneuvering and was obstinately pursued to victory or defeat;" overreliance on the weight of materiel; "a striking absence of creative imagination where the fluctuations of the situation demanded quick decision;" and a frequent inability to exploit initial successes.[131]

The Central Committee met in a special plenary session from 26 to 28 March "to discuss the results and lessons of the armed conflict with Finland thoroughly." From 14 to 17 April,

the Main Military Council did the same in a conference to which the operations personnel of the military districts and armies and the military academies' faculties were invited.[132] The meetings are frequently mentioned in Soviet accounts, but nothing specific has been disclosed about what went on in them. However, it is safe to assume that conclusions similar to Mannerheim's were reached. The Central Committee "demanded a radical reformation of Red Army training to eliminate obsolete and inappropriate forms and methods in military instruction and political education of the troops." On 16 May, Voroshilov's successor Timoshenko issued Order No. 130, a training directive for the coming summer in which he insisted, "Teach the troops only what is necessary in war and only what pertains to war."[133]

The fall of France, in June 1940, drastically altered the European balance of power, threatened the world balance, and necessitated comprehensive reassessments everywhere. The Red Army suddenly found itself facing a victorious Wehrmacht alone on a German-dominated continent. Khrushchev, who was with Stalin when the news about the French surrender came over the radio, has said: "The most pressing and deadly threat in all history faced the Soviet Union." According to Khrushchev, "Stalin's nerves cracked; he cursed the governments of England and France;" and despairingly asked, "Couldn't they put up any resistance at all?"[134] It was a profoundly significant question also for him.

A commission of the Main Military Council worked out "concrete recommendations" for improved leadership and training that were put into effect during the summer. The commission, having found that training, both at the command and troop levels, had been too much oriented toward classroom instruction out of manuals and not enough attention had been given to developing endurance and combat proficiency, issued orders to all services and all commands

to give their troops extensive practice at fighting in all kinds of terrain and "in all weather by day and by night." Artillery, armored, and air units were to work at perfecting methods of lending coordinated support to the infantry in the form of massed fires. Commanders and staffs were to be familiarized with "the requirements of modern warfare" in field exercises and war games and educated "to exercise creative initiative" and "make correct decisions in difficult and fast moving situations."[135] In August and September, on Timoshenko's orders, the military districts gave up the past practice of staging big show-piece maneuvers and conducted field exercises at the divisional and lower levels. Timoshenko attended many of them to observe and to talk to the command personnel.[136] Red Star reported on 2 October that Timoshenko had met with the commanders in a wrap-up session at which he pronounced the exercises a success and said there was "no such thing as blitzkrieg."[137]

Initiative and a capacity for independent decision making were manifestly not easy to instill in officers drawn from a society that ordinarily discouraged both and recently had inflicted the severest punishments on those suspected of having attempted to exercise them. The authorization in May 1940 of general officer ranks -- prohibited since the Revolution as politically unacceptable -- was a symbolic first step to enhance the commanders' authority. The second step did not come until 12 August 1940 when a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet reintroduced unity of command. The decision must have been difficult to reach and would, no doubt, shed light on the assessment process if more were known about it. Unity of command was broader than it had been earlier in the decade when lower level commanders had still been mostly excluded, but as before, the political control structure remained in place as did

also the NKVD special sections, which kept commanders and political workers alike under close surveillance.

The General Staff engaged during the summer in war planning, in the midst of which Meretskov replaced Shaposhnikov as Chief of the General Staff.[138] The war planning brought Stalin's purported special talent for determining the location of the main effort into play. The two-front war problem, which had been under consideration since Tukhachevskiy's time, had changed in two respects: Japan, chastened by the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol encounters, could be expected to let Germany strike first, and Germany had become a more dangerous enemy than had previously even been imagined. The thinking therefore centered on Germany. Stalin and the General Staff agreed in substance that to get at the agricultural land and resources in the Ukraine and the oil in the Caucasus, the Germans would make their main drive south of the Pripyat Marshes. In September, however, Meretskov presented a plan to Stalin in which the General Staff, following the doctrine that required a counterstrike to carry the war to the enemy's territory, placed the Soviet main effort north of the Pripyat Marshes on the most direct line to Germany. Stalin thereupon "expressed thoughts" on the enemy's main effort being in the south and ordered the General Staff to place the Soviet main effort there as well.[139]

Stalin's assessment of the Red Army's war readiness and the balance of power between the Soviet Union and Germany can be deduced from a conversation he had with the British Ambassador, Sir Stafford Cripps. He admitted that a German victory over Britain would put the Soviet Union in a difficult and dangerous position, but he insisted that "it was impossible at the present time to invite the certainty of a German invasion of the Soviet Union by any alteration of Soviet policy." He added that he preferred to risk having to fight Germany alone

after a British defeat because he believed a victory over Britain would "appreciably weaken" German military power and it would then "be very difficult for the Nazi leadership to persuade the German people to embark on a new major military objective."[140]

Isserson, one of the few Tukhachevskiy associates to have survived the purge, published a comparative assessment of the Spanish Civil and the German-Polish War in 1940. He also included the French campaign, but except for a few allusions, that part was not printed. As he interpreted it, contemporary war had shown itself capable of taking at least three forms. In Spain, maneuver had terminated early and the "modern means" had not managed to prevent a war of attrition. Maneuver had prevailed from start to finish in Poland and the result had been super deep operations, but a question remained as to whether such deep battle could be conducted against "an opponent equal in strength and technology who has belts of border fortifications and large reserves in the rear." In Western Europe, a lengthy positional war from September 1939 to May 1940 terminated "with great force" in a war of maneuver that "disclosed a new path to a higher stage of development in military art applicable to major European wars."[141] In a 1965 memoir, Isserson said that those who had worked on mobile warfare theory before the purge -- and like him survived -- understood and analyzed the changes the Germans had introduced in France, but their conclusions did not get outside the offices "of some circles in the General Staff and the War Academy." Consequently, the "young, honest, and courageous" leaders who replaced those lost in the field commands during the purge were "not sufficiently oriented in the innovative aspects of deep operations."[142]

Nevertheless, the Soviet Command rather quickly, perhaps better said hastily, drew some conclusions from the war in western Europe. In early June 1940, at the time of Dunkirk, the

defense commissariat submitted a study to Stalin in which it apparently attributed the German armor's success to overwhelming mass. On 9 June, Timoshenko approved a plan to organize nine mechanized corps, each with 36,000 troops and 1031 tanks.[143] German employment of parachute troops to attack Belgian border fortresses in May 1940 revived interest in airborne operations, which had flagged during the Spanish Civil War because none were undertaken, and the Red Army began activating five airborne corps with about 10,500 troops apiece.[144] Late in the year, the German air offensive against England stimulated some reassessment of strategic bombing.

PU 40 gave a doctrinal imprimatur to the hectic reassessment that had gone on during the year. Except for another reference to the Stalinist man, the high-flown aphorisms in PU 39 disappeared or were toned down, others, more prosaic but remarkable in the context of the Soviet military system, replaced them:

> The commander organizes and directs the battle.
>
> The commander stands at the head of military formations.
>
> The commander bears complete responsibility for the condition and fighting efficiency of military formations, for operational direction of forces, and for their successful engagement in battle.

The former political commissars' functions were subsumed under a rubric, "sections for political propaganda." Doctrine pertaining to the infantry, artillery, and tanks stayed as it was in PU 39. The air mission changed substantially. Ground support on the battlefield became "one of the main air missions." Long-range bombers were to "destroy war production centers, air and naval bases, and other important objects in the enemy's deep rear." Airborne forces, not mentioned

in PU 39, were pronounced capable of executing a variety of tactical missions in the enemy rear area.[145]

The Final Assessment

The annual winter war games the General Staff sponsored for the military district commanders and their chiefs of staff were scheduled for the second week in January 1941. They were unusual in that they were preceded by a week-long conference, from 23 to 29 December, in which, besides the district commanders and chiefs of staff, branch chiefs and inspectors, army commanders, and some corps and division commanders participated, and Central Committee and Politburo members were in the audience. The memoirs of participants and the Soviet histories describe it as a very important event, and the official view is that its purpose and accomplishment were to give the higher leadership an opportunity to brush up on the niceties of current operational art, which may in fact have been the intent. Timoshenko told the gathering that the German campaigns in Poland and France had "in no way been surprising in strategic respects."[146] A generous scattering of evidence, however, indicates that problems arose.

Stalin did not attend the conference. Khrushchev, who visited him while it was going on, says Stalin was staying at his country house outside Moscow, ill, depressed, and preoccupied with "military matters."[147] He had recently received another shock. Having annexed the Baltic states and a piece of Rumania during the summer, he had sent Molotov to Berlin in November to pave the way for another attempt to take over Finland, the last of the territories due him under the 1939 treaty. Hitler and Ribbentrop had indirectly but firmly warned Molotov to leave

Finland alone, across whose territory the German army was transporting troops and supplies to northern Norway.[148] Khrushchev, who had been present when Molotov reported on the trip, says the result had "strengthened our general conclusion that war was inevitable and probably imminent" and Stalin's face and behavior had shown "signs of his anxiety."[149]

The conference followed a familiar format: a senior member presented a prepared report on an assigned subject and others delivered comments and raised questions. As Chief of the General Staff, Meretskov's topic was the status of the past year's training program. He gave a detailed progress report and concluded that training was not the success Timoshenko had announced; was still not close enough to the actual requirements of battle; and "shortcomings in operational and general military proficiency exist in the upper command structure, the troop commands, army and front staffs, and especially in aviation."[150] One commentator, General I. S. Konev, alluding to the purge, remarked that the shortcomings existed because, for example, "division commanders have been appointed who never commanded regiments."[151]

Zhukov spoke on the nature of the modern offensive operation. He attributed the German victories in Poland and France primarily to surprise and the shock of powerful blows delivered against weak and irresolute opponents. Therefore, since it could be assumed that such effects could not be achieved against the Soviet Union, the problem as he saw it was not to deal with a whole new style of warfare but to decide how to bring materiel and manpower to bear most effectively in a prolonged war of attrition.[152] He went on to talk about the breadths of fronts, numbers of divisions, mix of forces, and depths of offensives. He also suggested setting up shock armies with fifteen infantry divisions and five tank brigades plus artillery, aviation, and possibly a mechanized or cavalry corps. General P. A. Romanenko, a mechanized corps

commander, proposed creating shock armies modeled on the panzer groups (armies) the Germans had used in France and Belgium, each consisting of four or five mechanized corps and three or four air corps. Although shock armies had been talked about for ten years or more, none of any kind had been activated. Zhukov did not reply.

According to General M. I. Kazakov, Zhukov did not consider Romanenko's proposal worth discussing because Romanenko had failed to consider the strain such organizations would put on the national economy.[153] Timoshenko said in his concluding remarks that because it would be necessary "to saturate a very long front with the modern means of war," general purpose field armies would be the rule.[154] Soviet military leaders and theoreticians, he added, "in contrast to the Hitlerite army leadership, do not rely on lightning war." They believed, he said, that a major war "in the present epoch" would be "intense and protracted" and that individual operations would achieve "finite aims" resulting only in the long term in the attainment of strategic objectives.[155]

Rychagov, the air force chief, reported on the current status of war in the air. The general tenor of his analysis was that a bid for air supremacy would require more centralized control than then prevailed in the Red Army. A bid for strategic superiority would have to encompass destruction of the enemy's production facilities as well as his aircraft and installations and would necessitate the entire air effort being directed to that end as the Germans were then doing against the British. Operational supremacy would require deep strikes against the enemy's airfields and bases, and control would have to be centered at the army group level. Other air force generals and General Leytenant (major general) M. M. Popov, himself an army commander, argued that commands lower than the army group could not effectively direct air

operations, but the weight of opinion and rank was against them. Shtern, who could claim appropriate experience in Spain and the Far East, declared air supremacy in any form to be nothing more than the simple matter of shooting down all the enemy's planes; and Timoshenko ruled that the battle for air supremacy could be carried out within the purview of army group and army operations.[156]

On 11 and 12 January, the military district commanders and their chiefs of staff attended the war games. Two were played but the Soviet accounts only treat the first as significant and if at all, barely mention the second. Although the General Staff drew on its war plan in designing them, the problems were confined to single operations in the sense in which Timoshenko had described them at the conference. (Strategic wargaming was apparently never undertaken in the prewar period.) The first game was situated north of the Pripyat Marshes in the Special Western Military District (the renamed Belorussian Military District) and required the "red" commander, Pavlov, to respond to a "blue" attack in which Zhukov commanded. The "blue" force broke through on a fifty-mile front between Grodno and Bialystok and advanced almost seventy-five miles.[157] In the second game, sited south of the Pripyat Marshes, Pavlov commanded on the "blue" side and Zhukov launched a "red" offensive -- with apparently at best indeterminate results.

Stalin summoned the participants to a meeting in the Kremlin with the Main Military Council and Politburo members at noon on the 13th. It got off to an unpleasant start when Meretskov gave what Stalin judged to be a superficial analysis of the war games.[158] The subsequent discussion turned acrimonious when General Ya. N. Fedorenko, the army's tank chief, proposed diverting some artillery funds to tank production and Rychagov requested more

money for new aircraft. Kulik, as chief of the Main Artillery Directorate, declared tanks to be "a sheer waste" because artillery would "make scrap" of them and insisted that increasing the infantry divisions to 18,000 men apiece with horsedrawn trains would eliminate the need for mechanization.[159]

Stalin, whom everyone present knew to be at least as partial to artillery as Kulik was, initially pronounced the existing allocation of funds necessary for "harmonious and properly proportioned" force development and asked Timoshenko why the army had not been motorized and mechanized if it set so much store by tanks. Timoshenko gave a circumspect answer: the army leadership fully appreciated the importance of motorization and mechanization, only Kulik did not "comprehend the question." Stalin then polled the district commanders, asking each how many mechanized corps he believed he needed. Their answers came to a total of between fourteen and twenty. Stalin, following one of his standard procedures, thereupon resolved the issue. Kulik, he said, was wrong; "contemporary war will be war of motors, on land, in the air, on water and under water."[160]

In his final remarks, Stalin reproached the Defense Commissariat and the General Staff for not having given "the military districts problems they will have to solve in an actual war" and laid down specific requirements: to prepare for a two-front war, to expand and rearm the forces, to create reserves, to "learn how to conduct" a war of fast movement and maneuver, and to "work out the organizational questions" devolving from the other requirements. "War," he added, "is approaching fast and now is not distant. . . . We must gain a year and a half to two years' time to complete the armament plan."[161] Meretskov, whom Stalin dismissed as Chief of the General Staff on 15 January but retained in the Main Military Council as deputy commissar

of defense for war readiness, says Stalin told him on the 18th that "of course we would not be able to keep out of the war until 1943 . . . but it was conceivable that we would not be involved until 1942."[162]

Stalin formulated what would be his final assessment in the Kremlin meeting but did not yet himself fully accept it. He told Meretskov on 18 January that a plan to activate more mechanized corps was "subject to further discussion" because the tanks could not be built until 1942.[163] In mid-January, capping a four-month dispute with Finland over nickel mines in the Petsamo area in which Germany had secured an interest, the Soviet Government threatened "to bring order into the situation by certain means" if its demands were not met.[164] During January and February, the German Foreign Ministry observed a "noticeable" Soviet restraint in negotiating and carrying out commercial dealings with Germany.[165]

The assessment became firm toward the end of February or early in March. The air force received authority in late February to put the TB-7 back into production, and Stalin approved twenty additional mechanized corps for the army in early March. At best, TB-7s could not have begun to come off the lines again until late in the year, and by Zhukov's estimate, the 16,000 KV-1 and T-34 tanks required to complete the mechanized corps would have taken more than a year to produce.[166] On 5 May, Stalin told the graduates of the General Staff Academy that because Germany had very considerably augmented its military potential as a result of its operations in 1939 and 1940, the Soviet Union had to gain time to make changes that had been identified in late 1940 and early 1941. Preparations to resist aggression were therefore having to be accompanied by a necessity not to give Germany a direct excuse to unleash a war.[167]

The German Foreign Ministry reported that Soviet deliveries rose in March "by leaps and bounds" and a grain contract for 1.4 million tons was closed at "relatively favorable prices."[168] The Soviet tone toward Finland became progessively milder until, by early May, the Finnish Foreign Minister was finding he could chide the Soviet Ambassador for the "psychologically unfavorable effect" his government's past behavior had on Finnish public opinion.[169]

The preparedness program and the play for time did not embody Stalin's whole assessment, however. He was not as ready for war in June 1941 as he believed he needed to be, but he was as ready as he could then have been by his own and his military leadership's calculations. He had 4.2 million men under arms in the cadre army on 1 January 1941 and 5 million on 1 June. The ground forces had 24,000 tanks, 67,335 artillery pieces and mortars (larger than 50mm), and fortifications on the post-1939 border that included 2500 reinforced concrete bunkers. The air force had received 17,745 aircraft between 1 January 1939 and June 1941.[170]

During the winter and spring, the General Staff simultaneously worked on and put into effect two plans: MP-41, a mobilization plan, and Plan 9, which is described as "a covering plan for the state frontier."[171] MP-41 was the latest in a series of annual plans based on an assumption, accepted since 1934, that in future wars mobilization would be carried out before, not after war was declared. Mobilization, consequently, had already been going on for some years, and the active-duty strength had more than doubled in 1939-1940. The 800,000 troops MP-41 added in the first five months of 1941 was part of a much larger increase projected into 1942.[172]

Plan 9, the so-called covering plan, embodied the General Staff's final assessments of the nature of contemporary war and the balance of power in a German-Soviet war. Following what Zhukov has called "the existing scheme," that is, the doctrine and theory developed over the previous ten years, the General Staff assumed that in a war between two countries as large and powerful as the Soviet Union and Germany both sides' operations would have to be conducted in essentially the same way: the initial objective would be to carry the war to the enemy's territory; the forces would be deployed covertly before war was declared; surprise would not be possible; and after war was declared, there would be a two-to- three-week period of "creeping war" during which the parties would test each other and make adjustments before delivering their main blows.[173] When fighting began in full earnest, "the war would inevitably become long and intense, and the achievement of victory would depend to a decisive degree on the ability of the rear to supply the front with human and material resources longer than the enemy could."[174]

In the spring, Stalin received warnings from his own and foreign sources that a German attack was impending. From the United States, Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles sent messages to that effect to Moscow on 1 and 4 March and through the Soviet Ambassador on 20 March.[175] Stalin received a personal letter from Prime Minister Winston Churchill on 22 April, and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden instructed Cripps on 11 May to emphasize the "many signs" of a German attack in talking to the Russians.[176] On 7 May, Stalin became Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, thereby giving a signal stronger than the one he had sent with Molotov's appointment to the foreign affairs commissariat a year earlier. That the signal was not directed to the western powers was certain. Cripps said Stalin and Molotov were avoiding him "like grim death," and the United States Ambassador Steinhardt was in much

the same situation.[177] In a Moscow railroad station on 13 April, where he was seeing off the Japanese Foreign Minister, who had just signed a Soviet-Japanese neutrality treaty, Stalin had singled out the German Ambassador among the dignitaries, threw his arm around the ambassador's shoulders, and declared, "We must remain friends, and you must now do everything to that end."[178] Zhukov's memoirs state that "Stalin saw that the governments of Britain and the United States were doing everything possible to incite Hitler to make war on the Soviet Union."[179] The Moscow morning newspapers on 14 June printed and the radio broadcasted a TASS communiqué accusing the British Government of having spread false rumors about a crisis in German-Soviet relations. "According to information in the possession of the Soviet Union," it stated, "Germany is unswervingly observing the provisions of the Soviet-German nonaggression treaty as is the Soviet Union."[180] A day later, in a radiogram from Tokyo, the Soviet master spy, Richard Sorge, predicted a German attack on 22 June "on a broad front."[181] Before dawn on 22 June, German Operation Barbarossa achieved a devastating surprise.

The Results

Stalin's apparent failure to heed warnings about the German attack has often been cited as the greatest and most damaging error in prewar Soviet assessment. Churchill attributed it to "the purblind prejudice and fixed ideas which Stalin had raised between himself and the terrible truth."[182] Khruschchev, in his 1956 destalinization speech, spoke at length about the British warnings and others from the Soviet military attachés in Berlin and said that despite those, "the necessary steps were not taken to prepare the country properly for defense and to prevent it from

being caught unawares."[183] Churchill's charge, although it has become ineradicably embedded in Western historiography, has at most no more than tangential validity. Khrushchev's does also, but it has had much less circulation either in or outside the Soviet Union. The interrelationship of the Soviet assessments and their results was too complex to be reduced to a single, simple judgment, which Churchill and Khrushchev both must have known when they pronounced theirs.

From northern Norway to the Pyrenees, the Germans, in early 1941, conducted Operation Harpoon, an elaborate deception designed to divert attention from the Barbarossa deployment by simulating one against England.[184] As far as British Military Intelligence could discern before 12 June, Enigma intercepts notwithstanding, an invasion of England was about as likely as an attack on the Soviet Union. Up to and after 12 June, MI also regarded another Soviet-German compact similar to that of August 1939 or a Soviet capitulation to a German ultimatum as likely.[185] A joint Intelligence Committee study concluded on 23 May that "the advantages . . . to Germany of concluding an agreement with the Soviet Union are overwhelming."[186] As Harpoon's primary target Stalin must have been getting the same intelligence picture. He, like Churchill, would have had to know that a deception was being played against one of them, but the prospect of another deal with the Germans could hardly have done other than suit him exactly. Stalin was mistaken but not purblind, and he shared his fixed ideas with MI and Churchill.

The 14 June TASS communiqué constitutes somewhat more viable evidence of gross misassessment on Stalin's part. Zhukov has said that on 13 and 14 June, Timoshenko and he requested permission to put the frontier military districts on alert and Stalin refused, saying,

"That means war. Do you understand that or not?"[187] The History of the Great Patriotic War attributes a "negative influence on the military readiness of the Soviet armed forces and on the alertness of command and political personnel" to the TASS report.[188] On the other hand, Vasilevskiy states that the report "at first" aroused surprise in the General Staff, "but thereafter no new instructions were issued, which made clear that it was not directed at the armed forces or the public." The History of the Second World War maintains, as Vasilevskiy also does, that the communiqué was issued to probe for a German reaction, and the subsequent total German silence was quickly taken as a sign that war was about to break out. Therefore, the history adds, the Commissariat of Defense, between 14 and 19 June, ordered the frontier military districts to set up command posts from which they could exercise their appointed wartime functions as army group commands and to camouflage air fields, military units, and "important military objectives."[189] If Stalin believed a last-minute agreement with Germany was possible, he was not alone. The British Foreign Office, at the moment of the attack, had "no conclusive evidence that Germany intended to attack Russia and not merely to use diplomatic and military threats to intimidate her."[190]

The most durable charge brought against Stalin is that his attempt to escape an armed conflict crippled the Soviet deployment. As Vasilevskiy has put it, ". . . if our military units had been mobilized at the proper time and had been deployed as specified in their plans for border war . . . the enemy would have been dealt such losses already on the first day of the war that he could not have advanced farther into our country."[191] Zhukov speaks of the "extreme caution Stalin displayed when it came to carrying out the basic measures contemplated in the operational mobilization plans regarding preparations for repulsing possible aggression."[192] The

figures on mobilization, however, indicate that the General Staff's plan called for 170 divisions and 2 brigades to be deployed in the frontier military districts when hostilities began, and those were in position on 22 June 1941. None was at full war strength, but it was expected that the empty spaces could be filled in a few days during the anticipated hiatus with reservists drawn from the military districts.[193]

A question remains as to the balance of power existing at the front on 22 June. The standard Soviet contention is that the western military districts were outnumbered by 1.8:1 in troops, 1.5:1 in medium and heavy tanks, 3.2:1 in late-model aircraft, and 1.25:1 in artillery and heavy mortars.[194] The German records show the Barbarossa force to have consisted of 152 German, 15½ Finnish, and 15½ Rumanian divisions. It had 3,050,000 German troops, 500,000 Finnish, and approximately 150,000 Rumanian, a total of about 3.7 million. Of those, about 2.5 million men, all German, were engaged on 22 June. The Finnish army and the German army of Norway did not begin operations out of Finland until 29 June. The Rumanian army and the mixed German-Rumanian Eleventh Army did not join the offensive until 2 July.[195] Soviet accounts give two figures, 2.7 and 2.9 million, on Soviet troop strengths in the western military districts. The smaller figure excludes 220,000 naval personnel assigned to the districts; both exclude 100,000 NKVD border troops; and both exclude four armies assembling along the Dnepr River -- apparently because they had not yet been turned over to the district commands. The four armies had at least 28 divisions between them, which would have added 300,000 to 450,000 troops to the total.[196] The German Barbarossa force had 2770 combat aircraft, 3350 tanks, and 7184 artillery pieces.[197] The western military districts had 34,695 artillery pieces and heavy mortars.[198] The Soviet accounts customarily only give three figures on aircraft and tanks,

1540 late-model aircraft and 1800 medium and heavy tanks, of which 1,475 were T-34s and KV-ls; but one recent Soviet history gives percentages rather than specific numbers. From those, it appears that the total aircraft deployed in the districts would have been over 7000, and the tanks would have been either about 10,000 or somewhat over 8000, depending in which number was used.[199] The greater part of the Soviet aircraft and tanks were obsolete or obsolescent but then, so were all of the German tanks from the moment they encounted the T-34 and KV-l; and the air force had 2739 late-model aircraft, even though not all were deployed in the western districts.[200] All in all, neither side had a decisive numerical advantage, and the Soviet inferiority is a myth.

Nevertheless, the events of 22 June conclusively sustain the Ivanov statement that "the Soviet High Command had been unable to create the initial strategic grouping of the Red Army along the western borders in the form required by the developing situation." Ivanov takes Stalin's misassessment and a lopsided imbalance of forces to have been the decisive reasons why the High Command was unable to create an effective strategic grouping; but if the first of those was a limited impediment and the second did not exist, there must have been others.[201]

Under the covering plan and MP-41, the strategic deployment was in three echelons: the first, 56 divisions, and 2 brigades, was stationed within 30 miles of the border; the second, 52 divisions, was 30 to 60 miles farther back; and the third, 62 divisions was in reserve at distances up to 180 miles from the border. The mission of the first two echelons was to "cover" the border with a tight, static defense.[202] (The 1930s theory of fortified lines made it seem advantageous to let the enemy attempt the first blow.) What was at work was a case of mirror imaging similar to that which had afflicted the Allied commands in May 1940 when they

expected the Germans either to wear themselves out under the guns of the Maginot Line or in a head-on collision on the Dyle River. The Soviet planners expected their German counterparts to think as they did, hence not to attempt a strategic surprise but to spend the two or three weeks after war was declared positioning themselves and thereafter to conduct operations at a relatively stately pace.

The History of the Second World War identifies another weakness in the planning, namely, that "as a practical matter, the military leadership left a strategic defensive out of consideration and assumed that all future Red Army . . . operations would be almost exclusively offensive."[203] The covering plan and MP-41 were, in fact, offensively oriented. The covering echelons were, after a short defensive period, to have become the first strategic echelon, to have delivered the answering blow, and to have begun carrying the war to the enemy's territory. That was and probably still is, except for the more extravagant language in the field service regulations, good doctrine in any army.

On the other hand, the implications that a strategic defensive should have been considered and that one could not have been mounted because none had been contemplated point up the rigidity of the prewar assessment process. Strategic defensives exploiting the vast Russian space had defeated Charles XII in 1709, Napoleon in 1812, and Kolchak and Denikin in 1919, but there is no evidence that Stalin took the room to retreat, which the German General Staff regarded as his greatest strategic asset, into account in his prewar balance of power calculations. He also did not authorize a single timely withdrawal until July 1942. The pre-World War I chief of the German General Staff, Count Alfred von Schlieffen, in a study on Cannae, concluded that a successful encirclement required a daring and imaginative Hannibal on one side

and a stubbornly inflexible Terentius Varro on the other, "both cooperating for attainment of the great goal."[204] Throughout 1941, Stalin was the Germans' Terentius Varro.

Stalin, of course, also sited the main effort in the wrong place. If the German estimate is correct, 80 Soviet divisions, 40 percent of the covering force, were south of the Pripyat Marshes.[205] Stalin's error, though, more than compensated in its unanticipated results for all his other misassessments. Although the German main effort was to the north of the marshes, Stalin had, if anything, underestimated Hitler's eagerness to get possession of the Ukraine and the Caucasus. More divisions on the north would, in all likelihood, only have enlarged the German success there, but the massive deployment in the south cut the tempo of the German advance sufficiently to arouse Hitler's impatience. The upshot was the great July debate between Hitler and his generals that culminated in the main effort's being shifted to the south and in the longer term, to the December disaster on the approaches to Moscow.

Had the state of the art in weaponry been at the 1935 level, the Soviet forces would have been splendidly armed when the war began. As it was, they were massively equipped with weapons that varied widely in quality. The relative merits of artillery, armor, and aircraft had been debated too long, and the war's actual requirements were not fully appreciated until after it began. Those were shortcomings that afflicted all of the belligerents. The Soviet Union had developed another more distinctively its own: an overriding preoccupation with weapons. Motor vehicles, aside from tanks, had figured marginally in the technological reconstruction. The military districts were expected to take over the civilian trucks in their areas when war broke out and to use tractors from the collective farms as artillery prime movers. Motorized divisions had less than half their authorized truck allotments, and the rest were to come from

civilian sources. The system had worked very poorly in the Finnish war, but the blame had apparently been attributed to faulty organization. Significant motorization would not take place until 1943, when American Lend-Lease vehicles became available in large numbers. Signal communications were perilously inadequate for a military establishment as rigidly geared to act only on explicit orders as the Red Army was. Since the Civil War, Moscow had maintained contact with the military districts/army groups and they with their subordinate commands via telephone and telegraph land lines. A decision to convert to radio had been made after the December 1940 conference, but radio sets and trained operators were scarce when the war broke out and the land lines definitively demonstrated their inadequacy in mobile situations.[206]

On the other hand, the prewar assessments pertaining to arms production embodied a strain of prescience that is evident in its results but difficult to trace in the assessment process. That the Soviet Union rearmed during the war in plants evacuated from the German-occupied territory is mostly a myth. Although the output was then relatively small, the capacity to produce advanced weapons was in place in June 1941 and was situated where it proved to be out of the German reach. From the first, the five year plans had concentrated on developing three new industrial complexes: Moscow-Upper Volga, Urals, and Western Siberia (Kuznets Basin). War and war related industries, including standby capacity, had been sited in them, and the costs could probably only have been justified by strategic considerations. Loss of the older Donets Basin complex in 1942 cut national coal and steel production for the rest of the war by over 50 percent but it did not impair armament output, which increased during the year and continued to grow thereafter. Although the Soviet accounts prefer to credit economy in production, that

achievement compellingly suggests that stockpiling strategic materials had also figured heavily in the prewar assessments.[207]

The consequences of faulty planning initially fell most heavily on the air force. Of the aircraft deployed on 22 June, 40 percent were attached to the military districts/army groups, 45 percent to the armies and lower units. In both instances, they included bombers as well as fighters, although the bombers were not expected to come strongly into play during the "creeping war" stage; and they were based at airfields close (those with the armies very close) to the front. The Soviet analysts had correctly concluded that the Luftwaffe would concentrate on ground support, but they had missed an essential point: the Luftwaffe operated alongside the ground forces, not under their control. It could, therefore, set its own objectives, and the first was to eliminate Soviet air power. On the morning of 22 June, bombers, Stukas, and fighters attacked 31 airfields and counted 890 aircraft destroyed. A Soviet figure for the whole day's losses is 1200 planes, 738 of them at West Front, which lost 38 percent of its air strength. All told, the Luftwaffe, by its reckoning, destroyed over 6800 Soviet aircraft before the battles on the frontier ended on 12 July. The air force's confidence was shattered. Until after the end of the year, bombers seldom ventured across the front. Fighters came out but more often than not, kept their appearances brief. As a lesson to the air force, Loktionov, Smushkevich, Rychagov, and three other air force generals were executed on 28 October 1941. The 1941 disaster terminated the debate on air doctrine. For the rest of the war, the air force confined itself to close ground support, to which the Il-2 proved itself very well suited, particularly after the summer of 1943 when the Luftwaffe withdrew most of its fighters to defend the Reich against the Western Allies' bombers.[208]

When the German invasion began, the Soviet Navy had 3 battleships, 7 cruisers, 54 destroyers, 212 submarines, and 287 motor torpedo boats plus sundry other craft. The submarine fleet was the largest in the world by a substantial margin. Since the German Navy was not heavily engaged in the East and the Germans early on had air superiority over the Baltic and Black Seas, the surface ships only figured incidentally in the war, and the submarines hardly counted at all. All the navy had to show for the materials and labor invested in the 1938 building program were four light cruisers. Others of the cruisers were completed after the war, but the half-built battleships and battle cruisers by then belonged to a dying breed and were scrapped. With army help, the navy managed to hold the Kronshtadt-Oranienbaum complex of forts while Leningrad was under siege and the Sevastopol fortress until July 1942. Those successes together with a few of the "mosquito fleet" variety at sea and the fortuitous absence of outright disasters brought the navy into some favor with Stalin. Kuznetsov stayed in command throughout the war and received the title Hero of the Soviet Union in September 1945.[209]

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After ten years' intensive effort to assess the requirements of the next war, the Red Army was deficient in comprehension of the war it encountered on 22 June 1941 and in the technique and flexibility that would have been required to prevent the ensuing surprise from ballooning to strategic proportions. The Barbarossa blitzkrieg was at a far remove from prewar Soviet deep operations theory and a radical departure even from the German operations in Poland and

Western Europe. The double envelopment (better known in 1941 as the Zangenangriff or pincers movement) was its essential feature, not a chance outcome of deep penetrations as in Soviet theory or an exploitation of positional advantage as in the 1939 and 1940 campaigns. Strictly speaking, it should not be classed at all as a deep operation in the sense that applied before 1941 since its purpose was not to gain ground but to destroy the enemy's main forces as expeditiously as could possibly be done in terms of time and distance.[210]

The Barbarossa-style blitzkrieg was the closest approach to pure war of annihilation yet seen in the twentieth century, but it was born of necessity as well as art and therefore fragile. It could not be sustained beyond the summer of 1942. Thereafter, Soviet industrial production and the Red Army mass overwhelmed the German armies in an "extended war of attrition." At Stalingrad and on a few other occasions, the Red Army executed double envelopments, but it relied predominently on the rassekayushchiy udar (a splitting or splintering blow), a deep frontal attack (usually mounted in series on a broad front), which had first been used against Denikin in 1919 and in modernized form had been the central feature of Tukhachevskiy's deep operations theory. In its major aspects, the 1930s assessment received its definitive validation in Berlin at midnight on 8 May 1945.

NOTES

1. On Stalin's warning to the German Communist Party see J. V. Stalin, Works (Moscow, 1954), Vol. 11, pp. 307-24.

2. Hajo Holborn, A History of Modern Germany (New York, 1969), Vol. 3, p. 667.

3. Robert A. Hoover, Arms Control: The Interwar Naval Limitation Agreements (Denver, 1980), pp. 95-98. Erich Gröner, Die deutschen Kriegschiffe, 1815-1945 (Munich, 1966), Vol. 1, p. 124.

4. J. Stalin, Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress of the CPSU(B) (Moscow, 1951), pp. 7-39, 91.

5. J. Stalin, Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU(B) (Moscow, 1949), p. 30.

6. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, Dekrety sovetskoy vlasti (Moscow, 1968), Vol. 4, pp. 92-94, 150-57; Leon Trotskiy, Stalin (New York, 1967), p. 291.

7. Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, Institut Voyennoy Istorii, Sovetskaya voyennaya entsiklopediya (Moscow, 1976-1979), Vol. 4, p. 266 [hereafter, SVE]. A "defense commission" had existed within the Council of Labor and Defense after 1931, and it is sometimes mentioned as the organization from which the Defense Committee evolved.

8. Current Soviet literature treats Voroshilov respectfully but not effusively. See V.S. Akshinskiy, Kliment Effremovich Voroshilov (Moscow, 1976). On Voroshilov, see also John Erickson, The Soviet High Command (London, 1962), pp. 200-1 and passim.

9. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, Iz istorii grazhdanskoy voyny v SSSR (Moscow, 1960), Vol. 3, p. 151; Jan M. Meijer, The Trotskiy Papers (The Hague, 1964), Vol. 1, pp. 105, 123; S.S. Kromov (ed.), Grazhdanskaya voyna i voyennaya interventsiya v SSSR (Moscow, 1983), p. 495.

10. Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, Institut Voyennoy Istorii, Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny, 1939-1945 (Moscow, 1973-79), Vol. 1, p. 258 [hereafter, IVMV].

11. SVE, Vol. 2, p. 272.

12. See Erickson, High Command, pp. 366-70.

13. IVMV, Vol. 2, p. 204.

14. SVE, Vol. 8, p. 151.

15. S. A. Tyushkevich et al., The Soviet Armed Forces: A History of their Organizational Development (Washington, DC, 1978), pp. 195, 500; Erickson, High Command, p. 845.

16. The Soviet literature does not say what became of the 1934 Military Council. Only 75 of its 80 original members survived the purge, but it most likely ceased to function (probably in May 1937) before it ran out of personnel. Tyushkevich, Armed Forces, p. 501; Erickson, High Command, p. 478.

17. Biographical information on these persons is found in SVE under their name entries. See also G.K. Zhukov, The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov (New York, 1971), pp. 76-146 passim; K.A. Meretskov, Serving the People (Moscow, 1971), pp. 119-22.

18. A main military council also existed from 1950 to 1953, during the Korean War. SVE, Vol. 2, p. 566 f.

19. Nikolay Kondrat' yev, Marshal Blyukher (Moscow, 1965), p. 292; Aleksandr Zolotrubov, Budennyy (Moscow, 1983), p. 300.

20. IVMV, Vol. 2, p. 172.

21. Meretskov, Serving, p. 95.

22. SVE, Vol. 2, pp. 238, 242; Vol. 3, p. 321; Vol. 4, p. 511; Vol. 5, pp. 294, 295, 448; Vol. 6, p. 115 f; Vol. 7, p. 393. Michael Morozow, Die Falken des Kreml (Munich, 1982), pp. 153, 167; Jurg Meister, Soviet Warships of the Second World War (New York, 1977), p. 7; N. Kuznetsov, "Before the War," in International Affairs (January 1967), p. 103.

23. SVE, Vol. 1, p. 391; Vol. 2, pp. 202-4; Vol. 4, p. 572; Vol. 7, p. 402. V. S. Shumikhin, Sovetskaya voyennaya aviatsiya 1917-1941 (Moscow, 1986), pp. 23, 108, 158, 223 f; Morozow, Falken, pp. 220, 246, 262; Tyushkevich, Armed Forces, pp. 59, 128.

24. S. P. Ivanov et al., The Initial Period of War (Washington, DC, 1986), p. 57.

25. K. E. Voroshilov, Stalin and the Armed Forces of the USSR (Moscow, 1951), p. 50.

26. Ibid., pp. 13, 19.

27. N. S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (Boston, 1970), pp. 18, 20.

28. See their biographical entries in SVE.

29. Dimitri Shostakovich, Testimony (New York, 1979), p. 96.

30. Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik (Göttingen, 1976), Series B, Vol. 9, p. 19.

31. Erich von Manstein, Aus einem Soldatenleben (Bonn, 1958), pp. 141-42.

32. Giffard Martel, The Russian Outlook (London, 1947), p. 24.

33. A. I. Todorskiy, Marshal Tukhachevskiy (Moscow, 1963), pp, 61 f, 66 f.

34. Ibid., p. 82 f.

35. N. I. Koritskiy, Marshal Tukhachevskiy (Moscow, 1969), p. 131.

36. SVE, Vol. 8, p. 43.

37. SVE, Vol. 4, p. 517; G. K. Zhukov, The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov (New York, 1971), p. 105.

38. Meretskov, Serving, p. 122; Zhukov, Memoirs, p. 187 f.

39. In Knowledge and Power: The Role of Stalin's Secret Chancellery (Copenhagen, 1978), Niels Erik Rosenfeldt compiled a comparative analysis of the existing published evidence that confirms the secret chancellery's importance and demonstrates how little is known about it.

40. John J. Dziak, "The Study of the Soviet Intelligence and Security System," in Roy Godson (ed.), Comparing Foreign Intelligence (New York, 1988), p. 65 f.

41. On the secret chancellery and the OGPU/NKVD see Rosenfeldt, Secret Chancellery, passim; Walter Laquer, A World of Secrets (New York, 1985), pp. 234-37; Simon Wolin and Robert Slusser (eds.), The Soviet Secret Police (New York, 1957), pp. 10-17.

42. N. Lomov and V. Golubovich, "Ob organizatsii i metodakh raboty general'nogo staba," in Voyenno-istoricheskiy Zhurnal (Febuary 1981), p. 12 [hereafter, ViZ].

43. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 173.

44. Dziak, "Intelligence," p. 77; SVE, Vol. 1, p. 453; Victor Suvorov, Soviet Military Intelligence (London, 1984), pp. 177, 178.

45. Laqueur, Secrets, pp. 240, 242.

46. The Frunze Academy and the General Staff Academy were respectively the approximate equivalents of the U. S. Army's Command and General Staff School and War College.

47. German Intelligence collected Soviet military literature during World War II, which passed into United States military intelligence libraries after 1945 and to the National Archives in the early 1980s.

48. See B. H. Liddell Hart, The Remaking of Modern Armies (Westport, CT, 1980); J. F. C. Fuller in Norman Angell et al., What Would be the Character of the New War? (London, 1933); Giulio Douhet, Command of the Air (New York, 1942).

49. Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, 1939-1945 (London, 1961), pp. 52-55.

50. Hans von Seeckt, Gedanken einen Soldaten (Berlin, 1929), pp. 94-99.

51. See Erich Ludendorff, The Nation at War (London, 1936).

52. See Hermann Foertsch, Kriegskunst heute und morgen (Berlin, 1939), pp. 188 f, 228-40.

53. M. V. Zakharov (ed.), Voprosy strategii i operativnogo iskustva v sovetskikh voyennykh trudakh, 1917-1940 (Moscow, 1965), pp. 29-44; F. N. Petrov (ed.), M.V. Frunze (Moscow, 1962), pp. 233-37.

54. Leon Trotskiy, Military Writings (New York, 1969), p. 103.

55. I. A. Korotkov, Istoriya sovetskoy voyennoy mysli (Moscow, 1980), p. 98.

56. KPSS o vooruzhennykh silakh sovetskogo soyuza (Moscow, 1981), p. 263.

57. Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya, 1928, Vol. 12, pp. 576-98.

58. V. K. Triandafillov, "Karakter operatsiy sovremennykh armiy," in Zakharov, Voprosy strategii, pp. 291-345. Triandafilov's death in an airplane accident in 1931 apparently

kept his work from being proscribed to the extent that Tukhachevskiy's and other purge victims' was.

59. Helm Speidel, "Reichswehr und Rote Armee," in Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 1 (1953), p. 18.

60. B. Perrett, Fighting Vehicles of the Red Army (London, 1969), pp. 15, 26.

61. See Erich Ludendorff, Urkunden der Obersten Heeresleitung über ihre Tätigkeit, 1916-1918 (Berlin, 1920), pp. 641-66.

62. IVMV, Vol. 1, pp. 262, 263; V. A. Anfilov, Proval blitskriga (Moscow, 1974), p. 117.

63. Olaf Groehler, Geschichte des Luftkriegs (Berlin, 1980), p. 135.

64. Zakharov, Voprosy strategii, pp. 374-84.

65. Gustav Hilger and Alfred G. Meyer, The Incompatible Allies (New York, 1953), p. 260; Speidel, "Reichswehr," p. 41.

66. IVMV, Vol. 1, pp. 346, 347.

67. J. Stalin, Report to the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU(B) on the Work of the Central Committee (Moscow, 1951), pp. 29-37.

68. Lev Nikulin, Tukhachevskiy (Moscow, 1964), p. 177.

69. Tyushkevich, Armed Forces, pp. 187-91; B. Perrett, Fighting Vehicles of the Red Army (London, 1969), pp. 24-30, 45-7; Bill Gunston, Combat Aircraft of World War II (New York, 1978), pp. 184-88, 191.

70. Korotkov, Voyennoy mysli, pp. 178-82, IVMV, Vol. 1, pp. 262, 269; SVE, Vol. 1, p. 144; Vol. 2, p. 230; Vol. 3, p. 599.

71. Shumikhin, Aviatsiya, p. 185; Groehler, Luftkrieg, p. 301.

72. Candidates had all the rights of membership in the Central Committee but could not vote.

73. Shostakovich, Testimony, p. 99.

74. Nikulin, Tukhachevskiy, p. 178.

75. On Tukhachevskiy's relations with Kirov, Ordzhonikidze, and Kuybyshev, see Nikulin, Tukhachevskiy, passim and their respective biographical entries in GVE. On the murders of Kirov and Kuybyshev and Ordzhonikidze's suicide, see Robert Conquest, The Great Terror (New York, 1968), pp. 43-61, 185-89, 414-17; Roy A. Medvedev, Let History Judge (New York, 1972), pp. 157-68, 193-95; Anton Antonov-Oveseeko, The Time of Stalin (New York, 1980), pp. 84-104. Conquest, pp. 185-89, also classes Ordzhonikidze's death as a Stalin-instigated murder.

76. On the current significance of deep operations, see Earl F. Ziemke, "The Soviet Theory of Deep Operations," in Parameters (June 1983), pp. 23-40.

77. IVMV, Vol. 2, p. 171.

78. A. A. Grechko, The Armed Forces of the Soviet State (Washington, DC, 1975), p. 261.

79. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 40 f.

80. Tyushkevich, Armed Forces, p. 150.

81. IVMV, Vol. 1, p. 270; M. V. Zakharov (ed.), 50 let vooruzhennykh sil SSSR (Moscow, 1968), p. 198.

82. IVMV, Vol. 2, p. 199.

83. M. N. Tukhachevskiy, Zadachi oborony SSSR (Moscow, 1936), pp. 6-16.

84. A. Nikonov and I. Lemin (eds.), Vooruzheniya kapitalisticheskikh stran v 1935g (Moscow, 1936), pp. 3-10.

85. The Academy of Science analysis concentrated mainly on economic matters. The first chapter, which has been used here, appears to be an expanded and updated version of a critique Tukhachevskiy wrote in 1930 as the introduction to the Russian translation of J. F. C. Fuller's 1923 book, The Reformation of War. See M. N. Tukhachevskiy, Izbrannye proizvedeniya (Moscow, 1964), Vol. 2, pp. 147-56 and Richard Simpkin, Deep Battle (London, 1987), pp. 125-34 (for an English translation).

86. Zakharov, 50 let, p. 198. Since increasing numbers of conscripts were being trained in the cadre army as the militia phased out, the number of troops on active duty was probably substantially more than 1.5 million.

87. SVE, Vol. 2, p. 120.

88. A. I. Eremenko, The Ardous Beginning (Moscow, 1964), pp. 7-10; G. S. Isserson, - "Razvitiye teorii sovetskogo operativnogo iskustva v 30-te gody," in ViZ (January 1965), pp. 44-46; SVE, Vol. 5, p. 121 f.

89. Eremenko, Beginning, pp. 11, 12.

90. A. K. Sul'yanov et al., Krasnoznamennyy belorusskiy okrug (Moscow, 1983), p. 71; SVE, Vol. 5, p. 121.

91. The Soviet literature treats the parachute descents as a Soviet innovation in military art. The first mass jumps, though not as large as those in the Soviet Union, were made in Italy in the late 1920s, and the idea had been around since World War I. On this and on Wavell's comments, see Maurice Tugwell, Airborne to Battle: A History of Airborne Warfare, 1918-1971 (London, 1971), pp. 17-26.

92. Ronald R. Rader, "Anglo-French Estimates of the Red Army," in David R. Jones (ed.), Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual, 1980, (Gulf Breeze, FL, 1980), p. 266.

93. From Eremenko's account of the 1936 maneuvers, it appears likely that they also were programmed in detail. Martel, Outlook, pp. 17-21.

94. Todorskiy, Tukhachevskiy, p. 89 f.

95. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-261a, The German Campaign in Russia: Planning and Operations, 1940-1942 (Washington, DC, 1955), pp. 38-40.

96. Korotkov, Voyennoy mysli, p. 235.

97. SVE, Vol. 2, p. 574.

98. Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, Istoriya voyn i voyennogo iskustva (Moscow, 1970), p. 104.

99. Zakharov, Voprosy strategii, p. 22, "O teorii glubokoy operatsii," in ViZ (October 1970).

100. For a different evaluation see Simpkin, Battle, which also (pp. 177-246) gives excerpts from PU 36 in English translation.

101. See Narodnyy Kommissariat Oborony, Vremennyy polevoy ustav RKKA 1936 (Moscow, 1936) and Chef der Heeresleitung, Truppenführung (Berlin, 1936), Teil I. Although the German army was still under the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, the 1933 field service regulations were written as if they applied to an army that possessed the full range of modern weapons and equipment, and they remained in force throughout the 1930s.

102. Zakharov, "O teorii," p. 14.

103. IVMV, Vol. 1, p. 264; Simpkin, Deep Battle, pp. 160, 161; M. N. Tukhachevskiy, "O novum Polevom ustave RKKA, in Zakharov, Voprosy strategii, pp. 110-12.

104. G. S. Issersom, Novye formi bor'by (Moscow, 1940), excerpted in Zakharov, Voprosy strategii, p. 425.

105. Suvorov, Intelligence, p. 177.

106. Tukhachevskiy, "Polevum ustave," pp. 13-15; Simpkin, Battle, pp. 161 f, 163.

107. S. Lubarskiy, "Nekotorye vyvody iz opita voyny v Ispanii," in Voyennaya Mysl' (October 1938), pp. 12-31; (November 1936), pp. 95-108.

108. S. Lyubarskiy, Nekotorye operativno-takticheskie vyvody iz opita voyny v Ispanii (Moscow, 1939), p. 7.

109. Ibid., pp. 16, 33 f, 37, 47, 62.

110. Ibid., pp. 10, 12, 14, 15, 19, 24, 49, 53, 57 f.

111. A. N. Lapchinskiy, Vozdushnaya armiya (Moscow, 1939), pp. 94, 144.

112. IVMV, Vol. 2, pp. 211-13. See also Alvin D. Coox, The Anatomy of a Small War (Westport, CT, 1977), p. 111. The relative strengths and the casualties at Khalkhin-Gol are uncertain. The Soviet figures on their own strength and casualties (18,500) have to be accepted because there are no others. The current official Soviet estimates on the Japanese are 75,000 total troops and 61,000 casualties (IVMV, Vol. 2, pp. 216, 219; GVE, Vol. 8, p. 253). An earlier Soviet account (M. V. Novikov, Pobeda na Khalkhin-gole (Moscow, 1971), p. 67) gives the Japanese strength as 55,000, which is somewhat lower than a Japanese figure, 58,925, given in Alvin D. Coox, Nomonhan (Stanford, 1985), Vol. 2, p. 916. This near coincidence seems to support the number given in the

text. Coox (p. 916) gives the Japanese casualties as 19,714, which on its face appears more credible than the official Soviet number. On the campaign see IVMV, Vol. 2, pp. 214-19; GVE, Vol. 8, 253 f; Novikov, Pobeda, 109 pp.; Coox, Nomonhan, 2 vols.

113. N. F. Kuzin, Na strazhe mirogo truda (Moscow, 1959), p. 208 f.

114. IVMV, Vol. 2, p. 215.

115. Zhukov, Memoirs, pp. 168-71; Meretskov, Serving, p. 93 f; N.N. Voronov, Na sluzhbe voyennoy (Moscow, 1963), p. 110 f.

116. J. Stalin, Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.) on the Work of the Central Committee (Moscow, 1951), pp. 22, 28.

117. Gerhard L. Weinberg, Germany and the Soviet Union 1939-1941 (Leiden, 1954), p. 32.

118. Groehler, Geschichte, pp. 298-300; Tyushkevich, Armed Forces, pp. 225-31; Voronov, Sluzhbe, p. 114; S. S. Lototskiy et al., Armiya sovetskaya (Moscow, 1969), p. 144 f. See also Heinz Guderian, Achtung--Panzer! (Stuttgart, 1937), p. 212.

119. Korotkov, Voyennoy mysli, p. 180 f; Kuznetsov, "Before the War," International Affairs (December 1966), p. 95 f.

120. Jost Dulffer, Weimar, Hitler und die Marine (Düsseldorf, 1973), p. 570; Roger Chesneau (ed.), All the World's Fighting Ships, 1922-1946 (New York, 1980), p. 178; Kuznetsov, "Before the War," p. 95.

121. N. G. Kuznetsov, Nakanune (Moscow, 1969), p. 227.

122. Donald W. Mitchell, A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power (New York, 1974), p. 366; Meister, Warships, pp. 20 f, 22, 39-43, 59-65, 184-208.

123. Shumikhin, Voyennaya aviatsiya, p. 185; SVE, Vol. 1, p. 259.

124. Groehler, Luftkrieg, pp. 326; 301; Horst Boog, Die deutsche Luftwaffenfuhrung (Stuttgart, 1982), p. 176 f; Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, 1939-1945 (London, 1961), p. 134.

125. Korotkov, Voyennoy mysli, p. 174 f; Gunston, Aircraft, p. 175; Igor Andreyev, "The Plane That Joined Two Continents," in Soviet Life (July 1987), p. 35.

126. Anfilov, Proval, p. 117 f.

127. GVE, Vol. 7, p. 405.

128. Narodnyy Komissariat Oborony SSSR, Polevoy ustav RKKA 1939 (Moscow, 1939), pp. 9, 11.

129. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, Istoriya velikoy otechestvennoy voyny sovetskogo soyuza (Moscow, 1960-65), Vol. 1, p. 441.

130. PU 39, pp. 20-22, 24.

131. Carl Mannerheim, The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim (New York, 1954), pp. 350-67.

132. IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 409.

133. V. A. Anfilov, Bessmertnyy podvig (Moscow, 1971), p. 128.

134. Khrushchev, Remembers, p. 134.

135. IVMV, Vol. 3, 430 f.

136. See Anfilov, Proval, pp. 139-53.

137. Krasnaya Svezda, 2 October 1940.

138. Stalin reportedly told Shaposhnikov, "in a most amiable and respectful manner," that the change was necessary "to let the world know the lessons of the conflict in Finland are being completely assimilated." (A. M. Vasilevskiy, Delo vsey zhizni (Moscow, 1976),

p. 102.) The explanation seems somewhat odd, since Meretskov had commanded the disastrous first operation in Finland; nevertheless, the treatment Shaposhnikov received was vastly more gentle that that accorded General I. I. Proskurov, the chief of the GRU, who was executed on 5 July, apparently for having allegedly provided faulty intelligence on the Finnish army. See Suvorov, Intelligence, pp. 24, 178; Morozow, Falken, p. 263.

139. Vasilevskiy, Delo, p. 106; Ivanov, Initial Period, pp. 174, 175.

140. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (Washington, DC, 1959), 1940, Vol. 1, p. 611 [hereafter, FRUS].

141. Isserson, Novye formi, pp. 423, 437, 438.

142. G. S. Isserson, "Razvitiye teorii sovetskogo operativnogo iskusstva," in ViZ (March 1965), pp. 54, 55.

143. Anfilov, Proval, p. 118; I. E. Krupchenko et al., Sovetskiye tankovye voyska (Moscow, 1973), p. 13.

144. Anfilov, Proval, p. 123.

145. Narodnyy Komissariat Oborony SSSR, Polevoy ustav Krasnoy Armii 1940 g (Moscow, 1940), pp. 10, 15-22, 25, 26.

146. Korotkov, Voyennoy mysli, p. 137.

147. Khrushchev, Remembers, p. 133.

148. Ibid., p. 132.

149. Department of State, Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941 (Washington, DC, 1948), pp. 188, 198, 202, 204, 217.

150. Meretskov, Serving, p. 124 f; M. I. Kazakov, Nad Kartoy bylykh srazhenniy (Moscow, 1971), p. 52.

151. Anfilov, Proval, p. 136.

152. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 72; Anfilov, Proval, p. 162.

153. Kazakov, Nad Kartoy, p. 53 f.

154. Korotkov, Voyennoy mysli, p. 156.

155. Anfilov, Proval, p. 167.

156. Korotkov, Voyennoy mysli, p. 172 f; Eremenko, Beginning, p. 31 f; Anfilov, Proval, p. 121.

157. Anfilov, Proval, p. 170.

158. Ibid.

159. Louis Rotundo, "War Plans and the 1941 Kremlin War Game," in Journal of Strategic Studies (March 1987), pp. 84-97, gives a detailed analysis of the war games and the Kremlin meeting.

160. Eremenko, Beginning, p. 34; Kazakov, Nad kartoy, p. 59.

161. Eremenko, Beginning, p. 35; Kazakov, Nad kartoy, p. 60. A. I. Eremenko, Pomny voyny (Donetsk, 1971), p. 129 f. Pomny voyny (War Recollections), the last of Eremenko's three memoirs, in some respects contradicts the account of the Kremlin meeting he gave in The Arduous Beginning. On the differences, see E. F. Ziemke, "Stalin as a Strategist, 1940-1941," in Military Affairs (December 1983), p. 176.

162. Meretskov, Serving, p. 125.

163. Ibid.

164. Wiehl, Aufzeichung, 19.1.41, in U. S. Department of State, German Foreign Ministry Records, B19/B003955.

165. Nazi-Soviet Relations, p. 318.

166. Zhukov, Memoirs, p. 198.

167. IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 439.

168. See Weinberg, Germany, p. 161; Nazi-Soviet Relations, p. 318.

169. H. Peter Krosby, Finland, Germany, and the Soviet Union, 1940-1941 (Madison, 1968), pp. 161-63.

170. Zakharov, 50 let, pp. 202, 236; IVMV, Vol. 3, pp. 435, 439, 441; I. Kh. Bagramyan (ed.), Istoriya voyn i voyennoye iskusstva (Moscow, 1979), p. 96; Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 178.

171. IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 435, 438.

172. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 177 f.

173. Zhukov, Memoirs, p. 215; Vasilevskiy, Delo, p. 101; Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 106; V. D. Sokolovskiy, Soviet Military Strategy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1963), p. 232.

174. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 174.

175. FRUS, 1941. Vol. 1, pp. 712, 714, 723,

176. Winston S. Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston, 1950), p. 361; F. H. Hinsley et al., British Intelligence in the Second World War (New York, 1979), Vol. 1, p. 455.

177. Gabriel Gorodetskiy, Stafford Cripps' Mission to Moscoe, 1940-1942 (New York, 1984), p. 125 f.

178. Nazi-Soviet Relations, p. 324.

179. Zhukov, Memoirs, p. 223.

180. FRUS, 1941, Vol. 1, p. 149.

181. G. A. Deborin and B. S. Tel'pukhovskiy, Itogi i uroki velikoy otechestvennoy voyny (Moscow, 1975), p. 102.

182. Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston, 1949), p. 367.

183. Khrushchev, Remembers, p. 588.

184. See Earl F. Ziemke, The German Northern Theater of Operations, 1940-1945 (Washington, DC, 1959), p. 138; Ivanov. Initial Period, p. 165 f.

185. Hinsley, Intelligence, pp. 463-81.

186. Ibid., p. 470.

187. Zhukov, Memoirs, p. 230.

188. Velikoy otechestvennoy voyny, Vol. 2, p. 10.

189. Vasilevskiy, Delo, p. 119; IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 440f.

190. Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War (London, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 623.

191. Vasilevskiy, Delo, p. 117.

192. Zhukov, Memoirs, p. 223.

193. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 179; IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 438.

194. See Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 184, or any other comparable Soviet account.

195. DA Pamphlet No. 20-261a, pp. 38-41.

196. Zakharov, 50 let, p. 252; IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 440; B. S. Tel'pukhovskiy (ed.), Velikaya otechestvennaya voyna sovetskogo soyuza (Moscow, 1984), p. 50; Ivanov, Initial Period, pp. 181, 184.

197. Earl F. Ziemke, Moscow to Stalingrad: Decision in the East (Washington, DC, 1987), p. 7. See also Horst Boog et al., Der Angriff auf die Sowetunion, in Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg (Stuttgart, 1983), Vol. 4, pp. 271, 312, which gives slightly lower numbers for German artillery and aircraft.

198. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 184. Tel'pukhovskiy, Velikaya otechestvennaya, p. 50, gives 37,500 artillery pieces and mortars.

199. P. N. Bobylev et al., Velikaya otechestvennaya voyna (Moscow, 1984), p. 75.

200. Tyushkevich, Armed Forces, p. 231.

201. Ivanov, Initial Period, p. 184.

202. Ibid.; IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 441.

203. IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 415.

204. Alfred von Schlieffen, Cannae (Fort Leavenworth, 1931), pp. 297-306.

205. Boog, Angriff, p. 471.

206. Velikoy otechestvennoy voyny, Vol. 1, pp. 417-19, 453, 476; Anfilov, Proval, pp. 130, 276.

207. IVMV, Vol. 12, pp. 156, 157, 161.

208. Shumikhin, Voyennaya aviatsiya, p. 241; Boog, Angriff, pp. 653-55; Anfilov, Proval, pp. 207, 220; Morozow, Falken, p. 262 f.

209. IVMV, Vol. 3, p. 427; Kuznetsov, "Before the War," International Affairs (December 1966), pp. 94-96; Meister, Warships, pp. 22 ff, 26 f, 38-45.

210. On the blitzkrieg in Barbarossa, see E. F. Ziemke, "Military Effectiveness in World War II," in A. R. Millett and W. Murray (eds.), On the Effectiveness of Military Institutions (Boston, 1988). Vol. 3, p. 298 f.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT AND THE CRAFT OF STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

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For a student of the contemporary national security structure of the United States, the apparatus in the late 1930s must indeed seem inchoate, disorganized, and naive.[1] There was no National Security Council, no Joint Chiefs of Staff, no Central Intelligence Agency, no Defense Intelligence Agency, and certainly no Office of Net Assessment. When the Ecuadorian government in 1937 inquired whether the nephew of the President of Ecuador might attend one of the United States Army intelligence schools, President Franklin D. Roosevelt admitted that "unfortunately, we have no Army school for instruction in 'military intelligence.'"[2] Little wonder that when the British military staff first came in contact with the American defense structure at the January 1942 ARCADIA meeting, Sir John Dill observed incredulously that "the whole organization belongs to the days of George Washington."[3]

This rudimentary apparatus, however, did not mean that the United States -- and more precisely President Roosevelt -- lacked the means or intention to carry out strategic assessment in the increasingly hostile world of the late 1930s. When it came to assessment, all roads led to the Oval Office. Intelligence information regularly flowed to the president from the State Department and its personnel around the world, from the Military Intelligence Division (MID or G-2) of the army, and from the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). These agencies also exchanged information with each other on a regular basis. At the White House, military reports

usually moved to the president either through his naval aide or his permanent military aide, General Edwin W. "Pa" Watson, though, depending on the information or source, communications often went directly to the President. By the fall of 1940, MAGIC added to this intelligence material by providing summaries of intercepted Japanese diplomatic messages.[4] In addition, the Department of Justice and its Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as the Departments of Interior, Commerce, and Treasury, periodically submitted various national security items.

Roosevelt, however, had no intention of limiting himself to official reports funneled to him through sundry agencies. Like his much-admired cousin Theodore Roosevelt, FDR believed in the use of multiple channels for information and communication. With a personal inclination toward secrecy and intrigue, the President made extensive use of semi-formal and informal sources to increase his feel for the texture of international players and events. He continually directed diplomats in critical assignments to write directly to him about their general observations, impressions, and thoughts, and he often ended his own short replies with the closing, "Write again soon." Sometimes he asked for thoughts on a specific subject, such as his 1937 inquiry on the military capabilities of Czechoslovakia and Poland to defend themselves against a possible German attack.[5] Among the ambassadors and ministers who communicated directly with Roosevelt in the late 1930s were those assigned to Japan, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Italy, Poland, Ireland, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Russia, Belgium, France, Greece, and Rumania.[6] Several of these diplomats, such as Josephus Daniels in Mexico City, Joseph Grew in Tokyo, William Bullitt in Paris, and William Phillips in Rome, were personal friends of many years.

These friends and officials were not the only sources of direct communication. A myriad of other business, governmental, newspaper, and academic contacts, acquaintances, agents, and friends wrote the President. Some of these regular sources resided outside the country, including Arthur Murray in Great Britain and two Marine Corps officers, Captain Evans F. Carlson and Colonel Joseph C. Fegan, in China. Others, such as Vincent Astor and John Franklin Carter, provided the President with his own informal intelligence network from inside the country.[7]

Taken as a whole, Roosevelt's sources of information prior to World War II are certainly more impressive than the formal structure might suggest. Often the President would share this material with such officials as the Secretary of State, the Under Secretary of State, or the Chief of Naval Operations. That exchange, of course, rested solely upon the judgment of the President.

Roosevelt did not feel uneasy or uncomfortable that he alone had all the sources of information passing his desk. Instead, the President reveled in his position, for he had long had an interest in geopolitics, and clearly he was completely confident in his own knowledge and judgment of international affairs. After all, under the Constitution he was the Commander-in-Chief, and he never had any doubts that he would and could fill that role to its fullest.[8]

Nor was FDR concerned about his own unsystematic, "impressionistic"[9] weighing and balancing of security information, for Roosevelt had normally practiced a personalized and "messy" (if not chaotic) management style. Although the process seemed to work, FDR was the only one who knew exactly how it worked. Lord Halifax, who came to Washington in 1941 as the British ambassador, observed that Roosevelt's policymaking seemed "rather like a

disorderly line of beaters out shooting; they do put the rabbits out of the bracken, but they don't come out where you expect."[10] Roosevelt often practiced bureaucratic disunity by allowing subordinate rivalries to undercut cabinet leadership. The national security organization was not an exception, as the conflicts between Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles and between Secretary of War Harry Woodring and Undersecretary of War Louis Johnson attest. Bureaucratic tidiness was not a Roosevelt trait. Keeping all the threads in his hands was. Formal organizations could dissipate his power and lessen his control, a fact well understood by the president. After World War II, the United States Strategic Bombing Survey would conclude: "The structure of our prewar military organization provided no means, short of the President, for integrating our armed forces."[11] Roosevelt, it seems clear, would not have wanted it any other way.

Roosevelt shared his innermost thoughts with others only when he wanted to, and that was not often. His Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, told FDR that he was one of the most difficult men with whom the Secretary had ever worked. "You won't talk frankly even with the people who are loyal to you," Ickes complained. "You keep your cards close up against your belly. You never put them on the table."[12] Ickes' words were echoed throughout Washington. When Roosevelt spoke there was a vague, amorphous quality in his words and demeanor that made precise understanding difficult, and his statements often seemed determined more by his audience than by his beliefs. Friends might accept this characteristic as an astute politician keeping his options open, but opponents often viewed it as outright mendacity. Roosevelt, as one critic asserted, was "a chameleon on plaid."[13]

Although Roosevelt was history-minded, he wanted no historians around the White House

peering over his shoulder. Policy decisions were the public's business, but how policy decisions were made was not. He forcefully told members of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, "In arriving at the final determination of any question of government, the machinery is not of interest to anybody and it is not going to be."[14]

Taken together, these facts make it difficult to say with precision what Roosevelt was thinking at any given time or why he was thinking it. From a variety of formal and informal contacts the President received clearly argued, multi-page reports of world affairs and leaders; too often he replied with a short, banal paragraph, leaving a reader still to penetrate the haze and fog that regularly surrounded the actions and inactions of the President.

Despite this problem, however, presidential documents leave the clear impression that Roosevelt quite early saw the Axis as a threat. Nor, once perceived, did he waver in that belief, even if he understood imperfectly the extent of the threat or what the United States should do about it.[15] "The German-Italian-Japanese combination is being amazingly successful -- bluff, power, accomplishment or whatever it may be," he wrote in the fall of 1937, and "we cannot stop the spread of Fascism unless world opinion realizes its ultimate dangers."[16] The President understood that those dangers would not go away. In the spring of 1938, he reflected: "Over here there is the same element that exists in London. . . . They would really like me to be a Neville Chamberlain. . . . But if that were done, we would only be breeding far more serious trouble four or eight years from now."[17] This negative assessment of the Axis, however, existed within the context of Roosevelt's essentially confident, optimistic temper, a characteristic that was basic to his personality, and one that he had amply demonstrated while fighting the Depression of the 1930s. He would continue to display this trait, especially toward Britain in

1940 and the Soviet Union in 1941.

Sometimes Roosevelt's optimism betrayed him. Relieved that the Munich settlement had averted war, he happily blurted, "I want you to know that I am not a bit upset over the final result."[18] But his euphoria disappeared almost instantly. Within a few days, he turned his mind toward a war that now seemed nearer than before. Acting through a close English friend, Roosevelt privately pledged to Neville Chamberlain that if the British did find themselves in a war with Germany, Britain "would have the industrial resources of the American nation behind it."[19] In the eyes of the President, Hitler was a "pure unadulterated devil."[20]

Thus, when the Führer unleased war in September 1939, Roosevelt was not surprised. Nor, at the same time, did he harbor any doubts about his own ability to steer America through the oncoming storm and eventually bring her safely to port.

* * * * *

Roosevelt's introduction to strategic thinking came early in his life. For Christmas in 1897, his Uncle Fred and Aunt Annie Hitch gave him a copy of Alfred Thayer Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power upon History. Roosevelt was then fifteen years old. A month later for his birthday they followed with a copy of Mahan's The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future.[21] With the words of Mahan and the example of his hero and cousin Theodore Roosevelt, young Franklin quickly developed his life-long love of the navy and interest in strategic affairs.

Roosevelt continued these interests as an adult. Becoming Woodrow Wilson's Assistant

Secretary of the Navy, he corresponded with Mahan and even enlisted his aid, asking the naval strategist to write articles to educate the American people as to why, now that the Panama Canal was completed, the United States must not divide the fleet by placing half the ships in the Atlantic and half in the Pacific. Such an action, Roosevelt understood, would result in the navy's being inferior to a potential enemy in both oceans.[22]

The President's experience as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I inevitably influenced his actions, thoughts and perceptions as the world first staggered toward and then fell into a second world war. The First World War greatly increased his knowledge of the day-to-day operations of the navy, and this knowledge in turn increased his confidence that he knew best the needs of his navy. Time and his other duties did not erode this confidence, for presidential records from the late 1930s show that along with being president, Roosevelt largely acted as his own navy secretary; he continually bombarded the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations with questions and directives covering a plethora of large and little items ranging from officer promotions, to the proposed specifications of a wooden-hulled submarine chaser, to the selection of names for future seaplane tenders.[23] In turn, these officials knew that the President expected to be consulted on almost all matters. Roosevelt especially practiced this micro-management during the secretaryships of Claude A. Swanson (1933-1940) and Charles Edison (1940), for both secretaries were often ill during their tenures. In contrast, the President rarely demonstrated an equivalent interest in the army. This was a reflection of Roosevelt's knowledge of and interest in the navy, the relevant importance of the navy as compared to the army at that time, and the very warm personal relationship the President had with his Chiefs of Naval Operations, William D. Leahy (1937-1939) and Harold

R. "Betty" Stark (1939-1942).

Those personal relationships also dated back to the President's service in World War I. Leahy was then the skipper of the USS Dolphin, a dispatch boat often used to transport high-level officials. As a result, Leahy's ship often carried Roosevelt and members of his family to Hyde Park or Campobello. The two men became good friends, and Leahy often found himself being included in family festivities.[24] "There developed between us," Leahy later recalled, "a deep personal affection."[25]

Stark and Roosevelt had a similar experience. During the war, the young Assistant Secretary had been a passenger on the USS Patterson, a destroyer commanded by Stark. A secure friendship was the result.[26] When Stark came aboard as Chief of Naval Operations, his commander-in-chief wrote him: "It will be grand to have you here as CNO. As in the case of Bill Leahy, you and I talk the same language."[27] The ease in their relationship can be seen in the jokes or doggerel that Stark would often pass along to the President, his effusive congratulatory messages on presidential speeches, and even the CNO's occasional political advice to the President. The last must surely rate as a case of turn-about-is-fair-play, considering how often Roosevelt told Stark how to run the navy.[28] Yet this closeness could come at a price, for Roosevelt could be openly rude and sarcastic to Stark when he was unhappy with the navy.[29] The idea of General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army, responding to a presidential speech with the single hand-written word "GREAT," or the picture of Roosevelt mocking Marshall at a meeting is much harder to imagine.

A knowledge of the navy and friendships with some of its officers were not all that FDR gained from the First World War. Lessons were there to be learned. There was his (and the

country's) conviction that America would never again be willing to send an army to Europe. There was the remembrance of Brest-Litovsk and the willingness of the new Soviet state to turn its back on its allies and seek a separate treaty with its enemy. There was the belief that, in the rush to gain the armistice in 1918, the chance to crush forever German militarism had been lost, because the armistice had furnished the German army the opportunity to avow that it had never been defeated on the battlefield. And lastly there was the view that, if somehow events forced the United States to send an army overseas, American public opinion would demand its quick return once the hostilities concluded; any long-term American occupation role in Europe would be an impossibility.

Lessons from World War I were not all that confronted Roosevelt as he interpreted and balanced strategic perceptions during his second administration. Assessment occurs within a political environment, and the late 1930s were no different. Roosevelt had sought and gained reelection in 1936, but his second term brought on a presumed lame-duck status. His abortive effort at packing the Supreme Court in 1937, a sharp economic downturn the same year, increasing turmoil between management and labor, and the President's public failure to purge conservatives from within his own party, all weakened his political influence further. The continuing economic depression and Roosevelt's New Deal hopes for recovery and reform demanded most of his attention. Additionally, America saw little threat to its security, for its two oceans gave it protection. Its people were determined to avoid any entanglements that might entrap it in a future conflict. Isolationist sentiments were deep and its supporters vocal. When fiscal concerns demanded cuts in the budget, the already low level of defense spending was a popular target. The army especially suffered through tight budgets during the 1920s and 1930s;

the navy generally did better, especially as the 1930s drew to a close.[30] Serious spending on the army would not come until after the shocking collapse of France in the spring of 1940, and not until Congress passed the Selective Service Act in September 1940 would it furnish the necessary manpower for even a limited army expansion.

Roosevelt began to see the Axis as a serious threat to peace in 1936. As he later related to the Senate Military Affairs Committee in a confidential 1939 meeting held at the White House, "We got the pretty definite information that there was in the making a policy of world domination between Germany, Italy and Japan."[31] The events of the following years hardened his perception. At the same time, however, the President would neither take nor be pushed toward precipitous action. Caution, indecision, and procrastination were not unknown elements of Roosevelt's leadership. As he told Admiral Stark in 1940, "When I don't know how to move, I stay put."[32] In addition, any fledgling steps he might take to lend support to the European democracies or to block the Axis, Roosevelt knew, had to consider public opinion. And he was loath to push that opinion too hard or to get in front of it too far.

Early in his career, Roosevelt concluded that unity at home was a necessity if the United Sates was to have influence abroad. As Robert Dallek stresses in his study of FDR's foreign policy, the President had learned soon after World War I that "the first requirement of an effective role abroad was stable consensus at home."[33] Roosevelt held tightly to that lesson as first Europe and then the United States moved toward war.

If the President had needed reminding of the crucial role of public opinion -- and he did not -- there were people and events that would do it. When Roosevelt asked Attorney General Homer S. Cummings for a memorandum delineating presidential powers in the area of foreign

affairs, Cummings responded:

> You will observe that the authority of the Executive is practically unlimited in the matter of any measures -- military or otherwise -- that he may take, either alone or in conjunction with other governments, in emergencies, which in his judgment call for the exercise of unusual powers. The check upon his authority lies in the force of public opinion.[34]

Great Britain's movement from appeasement to resistance also provided another example of the vital importance of public thinking. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Roosevelt corresponded frequently with Arthur and Faith Murray in Scotland. The president had first met them during World War I when Arthur Murray was the Assistant Military Attaché in Washington, D.C., and to his delight Roosevelt discovered that Arthur was a distant cousin. Colonel Murray, C.M.G., D.S.O., had been a member of Parliament before and after World War I, and he moved easily within top-level British governmental circles. His many letters chronicled the direction of British public opinion.[35] Roosevelt understood that the British had to go through their appeasement thinking, because it was only their ultimate realization that appeasement could not work with Hitler that finally united the British in their determination to fight. In short, without the failed policy of appeasement British unity would not exist.

The President realized that American public opinion would have to undergo the same process. If America were to enter the war, or any war, the country must be united. That unity could not be pushed or manufactured artificially. It had to be hardened in the kiln of time and events. Even the hard-pressed British seemed to confirm Roosevelt's belief. Reporting to the President from London in May 1941, W. Averell Harriman observed:

> I find everyone here from the Prime Minister down deeply appreciative of the increasing aid that you are giving. It is natural that they hope for a belligerent status but I am surprised how understanding all are of the psychology of the situation at home. It is because of what they went through themselves.[36]

Roosevelt's approach to public opinion, therefore, was cautious, gentle, and at times even fearful, much to the frustration of some of his own advisors. "I don't think we want to frighten the American people," Roosevelt declared. "We want them to gradually realize what is a potential danger."[37] He understood American determination not to send a future army to another European war, for FDR had the same reluctance. As Europe approached the Munich Crisis, Roosevelt reflected that if war did come he would not ask the people of the United States to practice a Woodrow Wilson-style neutrality of thought. Instead, he would "strongly encourage their natural sympathy [toward the Allies] while at the same time avoiding any thought of sending troops to Europe."[38] In early 1939, the President declared that "about the last thing that this country should do is ever send an army to Europe again."[39]

Congress agreed with the President, and the legislators were determined that any natural sympathy for the Allies should not lead to an economic relationship that might suck the United Sates into a European war. This resolve narrowed the President's options and reduced in his own mind his ability to have a positive influence on the course of European events. Roosevelt's attempt to change neutrality legislation in the summer of 1939 presents as example of the President's problem.

Under the neutrality law at the time, the United States could not sell arms, ammunition, or war material to any belligerent. If war broke out in Europe, Britain and France would find themselves at a disadvantage, for they would be unable to obtain weapons from the United States. Having rearmed first, Germany did not need American weapons. In addition, Germany acquired impressive armament stockpiles and productive capacity in its seizure of Czechoslovakia. Thus, in the administration's mind, the so-called neutrality legislation actually

would work in favor of the Third Reich. In addition, the current neutrality restrictions might well encourage a war, since Hitler might be emboldened by his knowledge that his opponents could not obtain the military means from the United States to defend themselves.[40] Although a proposed "cash and carry" modification would offer some improvements (the British navy, expecting to control the Atlantic in any European war, would be able to carry back to Britain arms purchased with ease in the United States), Roosevelt did not believe that it was the needed solution. Such a modification would fall on the wrong side of the Sino-Japanese conflict:

> While the cash and carry plan works all right in the Atlantic, it works all wrong in the Pacific. . . . The more I think the problem through, the more I am convinced that the existing Neutrality Act should be repealed in toto without any substitute.[41]

Roosevelt failed to get his wish. In July 1939, Congress blocked either repeal or major revisions of the law. At a White House meeting with Congressional leaders, Vice President John Nance Garner had to admit to FDR, "Well, Captain, we may as well face the facts. You haven't got the votes, and that's all there is to it."[42] At the same meeting, Republican Senator William Borah, a key opponent to revision, flatly declared that there would be no European war. When Secretary of State Hull protested, citing the pessimistic reports flowing into his department, Borah brushed the Secretary and his reports aside, proclaiming that "I wouldn't be bound by them. I have my own sources of information which I have provided for myself, and on several occasions I've found them more reliable than the State Department."[43] Roosevelt's defeat was made more bitter by the fact that many within his party opposed him. As he chastised one New Deal Democrat who had broken ranks on this issue, "If war breaks out in Europe . . . an important part of the responsibility will rest on [Congress's] action. . . . I honestly believe that the vote . . . was a stimulus to war."[44]

Problems within the Democratic ranks would continue to fetter the President through 1940 and 1941. Sometimes he reacted with humor. When the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers endorsed the reelection of a leading isolationist representative, Roosevelt wrote a three-sentence note to a friend and leader in the Brotherhood: "Is your face read? Do your ears burn? Does your conscience prick?"[45] Other times he reacted with anger. Following the 1941 passage of Lend-Lease, Congressman James O'Connor of Montana wrote to Roosevelt, expressing why he had opposed the President on that bill. Although citing constitutional issues, the representative quickly turned to the British:

> Do not let Churchill run this country. . . . Our people voted for you and for me upon our pledges that we would help England, SHORT OF WAR, and that is all. They took us at our word and voted for us. . . . British diplomacy, intrigue and the financial oligarchy of England will see to it that the United States will be the prime sucker Nation of the world again.[46]

Roosevelt understood too well that O'Connor's views were not unique within Congress or the electorate, and he replied with more than a three-line quip. This private letter demonstrates FDR's frustration and ire at the isolationist bloc that he believed weakened his hand and ultimately endangered the country:

> Slowly, and in spite of anything we Americans do or do not do, it looks a little as if you and some other good people are going to have to answer the old question of whether you want to keep you country unshackled by taking even more definite steps to do so -- even firing shots -- or, on the other hand, submitting to be shackled for the sake of not losing one life. . . . When will you Irishmen ever get over hating England? Remember that if England goes down, Ireland goes down too. Ireland had a better chance for complete independence if democracy survives in the world than if Hitlerism supersedes it.

Having vented his feelings and not wanting to burn a political bridge entirely, Roosevelt closed with an invitation and a plea: "Come down and talk to me about it some day -- but do stop

thinking in terms of ancient hatreds and think of the future."[47]

Throughout his second term, Roosevelt had to contend with his shrinking political power as a lame-duck president and with the constraints he believed this weakness placed on his maneuverability. The problems of the Axis would have to be faced by his successor; unless, of course, he decided to confront America's two-term tradition and seek an unprecedented third term himself.

Roosevelt apparently had that possibility in mind when he wrote to the Republican leader Frank Knox in late December 1939. Looking ahead to the fall election, FDR speculated that if the "phony war" stalemate continued in Europe, America would have "an old fashioned hot and bitter campaign this Summer and Autumn." Another scenario, however, was possible: "If there should develop a real crisis such as you suggest -- a German-Russia victory -- it would be necessary to put aside in large part strictly old fashioned party government, and the people would understand such a situation."[48] Yet Roosevelt's ultimate decision to seek reelection also limited his freedom, for much as he might wish to move the United States toward a position of military security and a de facto industrial alliance with Britain, he dared not move so far as to jeopardize his uncertain reelection. The contradiction Roosevelt faced can be seen in the passage of the selective service law. Though favoring the idea, he remained aloof as it passed through Congress, fearful that too close an attention might hurt him politically, and when it did pass in the late summer of 1940, he inquired whether the selective service director could postpone the national lottery until after the presidential election.[49]

With his reelection success soon followed by the passage of Lend-Lease, Roosevelt could reflect with some pride to the Murrays in Britain that "it has been possible, as you know, for

me to carry the country along slowly, but I think surely."[50] One wonders if the Murrays, however, with their country standing alone against the combined German-Italian strength, might have thought ruefully that the critical word was "slowly" rather than "surely."

* * * * *

A primitive American military structure for carrying out national security assessment emerged as part of the military reforms established after the Spanish-American War. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff was a World War II creation of Franklin D. Roosevelt, its forerunner went back to 1903 when an agreement between the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy created the Joint Army-Navy Board. Composed of four officers from the Army General Staff and four officers from the Navy General Board, the Joint Board considered military plans that demanded joint service deliberation. Its power, however, was restricted by the fact that the service Secretaries controlled the issues which were to be considered. In addition, the Secretaries were free to ignore the Board's advice. Finally, the lack of a separate staff limited the Board's ability to carry out necessary research.[51]

During the First World War, both President Woodrow Wilson and the State Department ignored the Joint Board completely. The Board's isolation demonstrated the problem that would haunt the agency during the 1920s and much of the 1930s: the lack of clear policy direction. Put simply, if the president and State Department failed to express clearly and authoritatively the national policy of the United States, how was the Joint Board to consider and develop military plans to support that policy?[52]

Following the First World War, the Joint Board underwent important changes. Membership on the Board was trimmed to six officers: the Chief of Naval Operations, the Army Chief of Staff, their deputies, and the heads of the Navy and Army War Plans divisions. Although still holding only advisory power, the Board could now consider issues on its own initiative rather than waiting for the direction of the service secretary. In addition, it received both a permanent civilian secretary and the necessary staff officers to carry out the detailed investigations necessary for the creation of joint war plans. This latter organization was the Joint Planning Committee, composed of eight officers, four each from the Army and Navy War Plans Divisions. It reported directly to the Joint Board, which in turn continued to require the approval of both secretaries to translate its recommendations into action. With these improvements in place the Board achieved considerable success in dealing with joint service concerns during the interwar years.[53]

These changes, however, did not alleviate the absence of policy direction from above. Ironically, it was the young Franklin D. Roosevelt, at that time the Acting Secretary of the Navy, who tried to address that problem with a proposal in May 1919.[54] Attempting to elicit a clear statement of United States policy in the Far East, the Acting Secretary directed a letter to the Secretary of State that included an organizational blueprint to coordinate the planning efforts of the War, Navy, and State Departments through a type of general staff. This link was necessary, Roosevelt asserted, because the military needed to know what foreign policy objectives it might have to uphold and because the State Department needed to understand the potential military costs needed to uphold them. Foreign policy, the young Roosevelt declared, "depends for its acceptance by other nations upon the naval and military force that is behind

it."[55] Nothing came of the proposal; in fact, evidence shows that Roosevelt's carefully drawn blueprint not only was never discussed, it was not even opened.[56]

Roosevelt was not alone in realizing that military planning could effectively support national policy only if it knew what that policy was. A few months after FDR's ignored proposal, Captain W. H. Yarnell, a navy member of the Joint Planning Committee, approached the problem with a different solution. His proposal called for the Under Secretary of State to become a member of the Joint Board and for the heads of the geographic divisions of the State Department to take positions on the Planning Committee. The State Department was no more sympathetic to Yarnell's proposal than it had been to Roosevelt's, for the Department was congenitally opposed to any reform that might seem to give the military a role in determining national policy.[57]

The paucity of civilian collaboration with the military and the absence of clear policy direction would continue to plague national security affairs up to Pearl Harbor. A 1932 army study on the subject of joint war planning emphasized this point. An examination of war planning carried out by other countries demonstrated that in all first class powers, with the exception of the United States, "the civilian departments of the government share with the military in the responsibility for national defense, and this responsibility manifests itself in their war planning agencies." In the United States, even when direction or information did filter down from civilian agencies, it came only from informal contacts with lower-level officials whose statements were given "without the responsibility, and generally without the knowledge of the departmental heads."[58] Seven years later the Chief of the Army War Plans Division aired his frustration to the Chief of Staff, complaining of the difficulty of preparing war plans without the

clear knowledge of national policy toward a specific security problem. In seeking national policy, the officer continued, the Planning Committee has been unable to gain "authoritative expressions of fact or opinion from representatives of other Executive Departments, in particular, the State Department."[59]

The State Department was not the only guilty party, nor were the military services the only ones left in the dark. After Roosevelt's re-election in 1940, the American ambassador to Japan, Joseph C. Grew, wrote a letter to the President, attempting to draw out Roosevelt's thoughts on the Far East. He began with the plea, "I would give a great deal to know your mind about Japan and all her works," and ended five pages later with the request, "If you are willing to give me even a cue to your thoughts . . . it will be of tremendous help."[60] Grew's hopes went for naught. Although the President's reply carried his signature, the words were not his. The letter instead was prepared by Stanley K. Hornbeck, the State Department's chief political expert on Far Eastern affairs.[61]

Despite these problems, the Roosevelt administration had improved the links between the State Department and the military services. Events across the Atlantic and Pacific demanded it. In a statement reminiscent of young Roosevelt's dictum back in 1919, Secretary of State Cordell Hull observed the link between diplomatic leverage and military power. Concerning Axis diplomats, Hull had discovered that "they were looking over my shoulder at our Navy and our Army and that our diplomatic strength in dealing with [the Axis] governments . . . goes up or down with their estimate of what that amounts to."[62]

As a result, Hull increasingly sought advice from senior army and navy officers. This was especially true in matters dealing with the Far East and with Latin America. In 1935, Hull

named Hornbeck, his Far East expert, to serve as a political advisor to the Joint Planning Committee.[63] In 1938, Hull followed with a proposal for a Standing Liaison Committee. Aware that the current liaison between the State Department and the War and Navy Departments was faulty, Hull wanted to find a means "to perfect the coordination of these three departments in the execution of national policy."[64] This link was especially needed when considering the Latin American republics, Hull explained. The President enthusiastically approved the idea, though he emphasized the need for the Committee to maintain absolute secrecy in its considerations.[65] Normally meeting once a month and composed of the Under Secretary of State, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Chief of Naval Operations, the Committee brought the State Department and the armed services together for the first time in a formal, operating organization that would consider the military and diplomatic elements of national policy.

Roosevelt had earlier used various ad hoc military-civilian committees to study specific problems. Some concerns had demanded cooperation of a number of departments, such as FDR's long-running vexation over possible Japanese espionage activities in Hawaii, a fear made especially acute because of the large Japanese-American population living in the Islands.[66] During 1936, the President received reports that Japanese-American residents of Oahu often greeted arriving Japanese merchant ships and sometimes entertained crew members.[67] Without a casual aside to constitutional guarantees, Roosevelt responded:

> One obvious thought occurs to me -- that every Japanese citizen or non-citizen on the Island of Oahu who meets these Japanese ships or has any connection with their officers or men should be secretly but definitely identified and his or her name placed on a special list of those who would be the first to be placed in a concentration camp in the event of trouble.[68]

The following May, FDR formed a special committee to investigate the activities of Japanese

naval personnel and civilians in Hawaii. Chaired by Secretary of War Harry Woodring this committee consisted of the Attorney General and the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Labor, Navy, and War. Although not a member of the committee, the Secretary of Interior also participated in the discussions.[69]

The President also expressed concern with possible Japanese activities in Mexico, especially in Lower California. When Secretary of War Woodring forwarded a memorandum on the alleged movement of Japanese, one which concluded that "there are no reliable indications of any large influx of Japanese into Lower California," Roosevelt immediately sent it back. "I do not think that this report is satisfactory," he said and directed that MID insert agents into the area to carry out personal observation.[70] Although further investigation did not change the army's conclusion, Woodring pledged to the President that "this subject will continue to have the special attention of the War Department. . . . Any material change in the situation on this subject will be reported promptly to the President."[71] The army also responded by detailing to the President its investigations into Japanese activities in Panama and Central America.[72]

Roosevelt's interest in Japanese ethnic groups continued. In the fall of 1941, John Carter investigated the situation on the West Coast. Although his reports expressed concern over the vulnerability of key railroad bridges, dams, and other critical structures to possible sabotage, he found that there was little to fear from Japanese-Americans. Instead, his memorandum concluded that they "are more in danger from the whites than the other way around."[73]

As war approached in Europe, Roosevelt took steps to increase his control as Commander-in-Chief. In an order of 5 July 1939, he brought the Joint Army-Navy Board, the Joint Aeronautical Board, and the Joint Army-Navy Munitions Board under his direct

supervision, removing them from the military departments and placing them within the Executive Office. With this order, the senior army and navy officers -- soon to be George C. Marshall and Harold Stark -- would report directly to the President, and the Joint Board now took an important step toward becoming the President's joint military staff. Appropriately, historians still argue as to whether that was what Roosevelt intended.[74] Whatever the case, by the time Roosevelt finished his second term as President and entered his third, collaboration between the armed services and civilian agencies had moved a long way from the near-separate paths that they had followed only two decades before. Yet, as Louis Morton reminds students of this period, "this collaboration was achieved very largely by informal and personal means through the agency of the President."[75]

Roosevelt's two most important military advisors came on board almost simultaneously with the onset of World War II. George C. Marshall became Army Chief of Staff on the same day German troops smashed across the Polish border; exactly one month earlier, Admiral Harold R. Stark had replaced Admiral William D. Leahy as Chief of Naval Operations. They joined the President's important civilian advisors, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau. The following June, FDR added two Republicans to the administration when he appointed Henry L. Stimson as Secretary of War and Frank Knox as Secretary of the Navy. Following his reelection, Roosevelt brought Harry Hopkins into the White House as a de facto national security advisor and trouble-shooter. The President's pre-Pearl Harbor national security team was now complete. By spring 1941, FDR was meeting regularly with what became known as his "War Council": Knox, Stimson, Hopkins, Hull, Marshall, and Stark, with Morgenthau and other officials sometimes attending.[76] Of all these

advisors, Stimson, Welles, and Hopkins were the most important to the President. They alone, argues the historian Waldo Heinrichs, "secured both ready access and some appreciation of the president's thinking and outlook."[77]

In comparison to the others, Harry Hopkins would seem to be woefully unprepared and totally out of place, yet he was the most important. Trained as a social worker and bringing to the administration a New Dealer's suspicion of the military, he became the nexus between Roosevelt and his other advisors. Totally loyal to the President and matching FDR's love of political intrigue, Hopkins had a brilliant mind, a superb ability to focus his attention on the crux of a problem (Churchill would dub him "Lord-Root-of-the-Matter"), an intuitive gift for knowing what Roosevelt was thinking, and a pragmatic approach to the problems at hand. At first military leaders looked at him with suspicion, but they soon came to value both his abilities as an individual and his access as a presidential alter ego. After the war, Marshall attested to Hopkins importance:

> He was invaluable to me. . . . Whenever I hit a tough knot I couldn't handle . . . I would call him up and he would either arrange a meeting with the President for me or he and I together would see the President. He was always the strong advocate, it seemed to me, of almost everything I proposed. . . . I couldn't get at the President with the frequency he could, nothing like it, nor could I be as frank nor could I be as understanding. . . . He made the technique . . . of the military position . . . plainer to the President than I could possibly have done myself.[78]

Stimson, too, discovered that same ability of Hopkins to present the War Department's position better than the Secretary could. By March 1941, Stimson had concluded that "it is a godsend that he should be at the White House."[79]

With the onset of World War II in September 1939, the sources of British information flowing to the President increased considerably. Roosevelt made the first move by writing to

Winston Churchill, who had recently been appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, the same position Churchill had held previously in World War I. Exaggerating somewhat the importance of his own position in that war, FDR opened his letter with the greeting, "It is because you and I occupied similar positions in the World War that I want you to know how glad I am that you are back again in the Admiralty." Then, in a sentence that many of his own diplomats would recognize, the President made clear that "I shall at all times welcome it if you will keep me in touch personally with anything you want me to know about."[80] With this short letter began a flow of messages between the two leaders that would number almost two thousand by the time of Roosevelt's death in April 1945.[81]

Before the war's outbreak, the flow of information between the two nations had been sporadic and tentative, depending upon the tension in specific areas of the world and the benefits the two countries believed would accrue to themselves through the exchange. Nor was the information necessarily valuable or accurate. In late February 1939, the British Ambassador to the United States passed along a secret political assessment concluding that British rearmament had now progressed to a point that it would deter any future German action.[82] Two weeks later, Germany absorbed Czechoslovakia. In turn, United States material was sometimes little better. In commenting on an American secret report passed along to the British, Desmond Morton, Churchill's intelligence aide, observed that "the Book of Revelations read backwards would be more helpful."[83] Not withstanding such occasional shortcomings, Roosevelt expressed pleasure over the intelligence reports coming from both American and European sources. Writing to Arthur Murray during the latter part of the "phony war," the President praised the British and French governments for being "so frank with us," and he concluded

confidently, "I imagine that I am getting better information from the world as a whole (except Russia) than anybody else."[84]

As soon as Churchill became Prime Minister, he ordered Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador in Washington, to forward British military intelligence summaries to the President. These reports covered a vast range of topics and sometimes came as often as twice a day. The British embassy continued forwarding these reports directly to the President until America entered the war, at which time the reports moved to the President through the American section of the Secretariat of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.[85]

As the quasi-neutral United States moved from non-belligerency in 1939 to a belligerent non-belligerency in 1941, intelligence sharing naturally increased on all levels. Yet there were obstacles to be overcome. Mutual interests are not the same as mutual trust, and there was still both a literal and figurative ocean separating democratic America and imperial Britain. An anti-Axis stance was not automatically tantamount to a pro-British position. Elements within the American military firmly believed that Britain wished to draw the United States into the war for the purpose not just of defeating the Axis but also of saving the British Empire; as in World War I, America's sons would be used to pull England's imperial chestnuts out of the fire.[86] British haughtiness and condescension added to the problem. As Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle peevishly observed, "A British Imperial Englishman cannot easily get over the idea that no foreign government is entitled to a foreign policy without their OK, they of course reserving complete freedom." It was, Berle noted,"the survival of an old habit."[87] Even Roosevelt, despite the genuine warmth of his relationship with Churchill, found that he and the Prime Minister could not discuss the subject of British imperial rule in India without severely straining

their relationship.[88]

Not surprisingly, both countries were loath to exchange information on secret items that they perceived especially crucial to their security. Captain (later Vice Admiral) Alan Kirk was the United States Navy attaché in London in the early days of the war. Following this assignment, he returned to become the Director of the Office of Naval Intelligence. He later recalled that "in no case was there what you might call wide-open exchange. Our side was very, very cautious, and so were they."[89] Such caution included the American denial of the Norden bombsight to the British, despite Neville Chamberlain's personal plea to the President.[90]

In addition, the British had a strong concern that United States security was lax and that information furnished to America would find its way into the hands of Germany.[91] This is understandable, especially since the British themselves had broken American diplomatic ciphers before the war and had regularly been listening in on United States diplomatic traffic, a fact of which Bullitt had warned FDR back in 1938 and one which Churchill neglected to tell FDR until 1942.[92]

In the early days of the war, the United States had far more to gain from an exchange of information than Britain. Through combat Britain was gaining valuable military and technical experience that was unavailable to the United States. As a consequence, Roosevelt was advised that the British "will gradually out distance us in many technical subjects." Thus, it would be in the natural interest if the United States moved toward "liberalizing our policies of exchange."[93]

It is doubtful that Roosevelt needed to have this brought to his attention. He understood the benefits which would accrue from a greater exchange of information, but it was not until the

crisis brought on by the fall of France and by the fear of an encore by Britain that he took action. Very much in FDR's character, when he did act he used an unofficial, personal emissary who would report directly to him. In July 1940, Roosevelt picked William Donovan to go to Britain. Donovan was a highly decorated former World War I army officer. FDR had known him in law school at Columbia. In fact, he had once toyed with the idea of bringing this Republican lawyer into his cabinet as part of a coalition government, and the President had used him earlier for confidential intelligence-gathering tasks.[94] Donovan's overt mission to London was to gather information on how the British dealt with fifth-column activities. A much more important purpose, however, was to gain a "feel" for whether Britain would fight on or succumb.[95]

The latter prediction was the view of many American military and civilian officials, including the American ambassador on the scene, Joseph Kennedy. Hearing of Donovan's intelligence-gathering mission, Kennedy called to protest, claiming that the ill-conceived mission "will simply result in creating confusion and misunderstanding on the part of the British." Sumner Welles replied coolly that the President's decision had been made.[96]

The British suffered no confusion in the least. It was hardly difficult for them to deduce Donovan's mission, and what they failed to deduce the head of British intelligence in the United States, William S. Stephenson, apparently told them. In fact, some experts have argued that the idea of sending Donovan came from Stephenson himself, though it is also possible that the original idea came from Frank Knox.[97]

Realizing that future American aid (including the destroyers for which Churchill had been pleading since May) and eventual participation in the war itself might well depend on Donovan's

personal report to the President, the British welcomed Donovan's arrival and guaranteed that he met with all the right people and in all the right circumstances. As a Central Intelligence Agency study later described, "Donovan scurried about London and its environs visiting every important government office and inspecting many of the military, naval, and air installations then girding for the defense of the islands."[98]

Along with demonstrating their determination to continue the fight no matter what the circumstances, the British made clear their willingness to share intelligence information, and Donovan discussed with them "such subjects as intelligence, propaganda, the organization of the information ministry, subversion, and the Fifth Column."[99] Included on Donovan's visitation list were Colonel (later Major General) Stewart Menzies, the head of the British Secret Service (MI-6), and Rear Admiral John H. Godfrey, Britain's Director of Naval Intelligence.[100]

Though only a first step, Donovan's trip was nonetheless an important first step. Not only did it result directly in increased Presidential confidence that Britain would survive, it also set the stage for a close personal working relationship between Donovan and Stephenson (referred to respectively as "Wild Bill" and "Little Bill"), for a steadfast and intimate Anglo-American intelligence collaboration (including the American gift to the British in late 1940 of one of the precious PURPLE machines used to decode Japanese diplomatic messages[101]), and for the appointment of Donovan first as the Coordinator of Information (COI) and later as the Director of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Though it would be overstating the case to imply that all of these results were somehow what FDR intended to achieve when he made the decision to send Donovan, it also would be wrong to assume that the President did not understand the path that events might take.

When war first approached Europe during the late 1930s and then turned toward the United States in the early 1940s, a substantial portion of the intelligence assessments passing the President's desk concerned the economic resources of the Axis and the ability of their resources to sustain an offensive war machine, for a common weakness of Germany, Italy, and Japan was their paucity in raw materials, especially oil. In addition, as an island nation, Japan suffered from the added vulnerability that all its supplies had to be imported by ship, thus leaving it open to retaliation by a nation or coalition of nations with a superior naval force.

A confidential study by the Treasury Department, completed by early 1938, estimated that Japan imported 90% of its current petroleum needs, with 64% of that figure coming from the United States. While oil topped the Treasury list, it was not by any means Japan's only weakness. Japan imported 100% of its rubber, 90% of its lead, 100% of its nickel, 80% of its iron ore, and 95% of its cotton; the list went on and on.[102] When the United States examined these figures, it is understandable if the administration, and the country as a whole, had a difficult time contemplating a war with Japan. After all, how could Japan, so weak in resources, consider a war against the United States, a nation so strong in resources? In addition, Japan already had one war with China, a struggle that showed no sign of abatement. Surely Japan would not seek an additional conflict with America. Logic alone would seem to rule against the possibility.

The navy watched American sales of petroleum to Japan with understandable interest and kept both FDR and the State Department informed of its findings. The figures demonstrated clearly Japan's appetite for American oil. In the fall of 1937, Chief of Naval Operations Leahy notified FDR that Japan had just contracted for over 3.5 million barrels, "the largest single

purchase of crude that has ever come to our attention."[103] The navy also kept close watch on Japanese purchases elsewhere, especially in Mexico.[104]

Although Japan's need for imported oil was manifest, how the United States could use this fact to its advantage was not. If the United States cut off petroleum sales in order to force Japan into rethinking its expansionist foreign policy, would such an economic bludgeon change Japanese international behavior? Or would it simply accelerate Japanese plans for grabbing the oil-rich Dutch East Indies? A State Department study in early 1938 concluded that an American embargo was likely to cause the latter.[105]

Germany's need for oil was of equal interest to Roosevelt, for petroleum not only represented a grave German strategic weakness, but for the same reason it provided a window into probable future German plans to ameliorate that condition. Anthony J. Biddle, the United States Ambassador to Poland and a long-time friend of FDR, discussed this prospect with the President five months before Hitler's invasion of Poland. Speaking of Germany's needs for both iron ore and petroleum, Biddle compared Hitler to a football quarterback who would slide along the line of scrimmage until he saw an opening through which to dash. The game-winning touchdown would be scored against the Soviet Union, for the iron ore of the Doniec [Donetsk] area and the oil of the Baku region would give Hitler what he needed. Although other sources of oil, such as Rumania, would be helpful, their production would not be enough. In terms of oil, Biddle observed, "Rumania may be marked down rather as a 'service station' on Hitler's envisaged route to Baku."[106]

In line with his usual modus operandi, Roosevelt also received unofficial economic assessments from private sources, especially from business contacts. Bernard Baruch served as

one of Roosevelt's prime connections, and Baruch would request of experts in various economic fields that they contact FDR directly if Baruch himself did not have the information.[107] Economic data flowed to concerned agencies through the informal Interdepartmental Committee on Strategic Materials, which had representatives from the Navy, War, State, Commerce, and Interior Departments.[108] Nor did Roosevelt limit his economic assessments to the Axis alone. At his direction, the army sent an officer to Britain in 1939 to study the ability of the English electrical grid system to withstand the rigors of war. The officer's conclusion was favorable.[109]

Additional information came to Roosevelt from his New York neighbor and friend, Vincent Astor. The scion of the American branch of the Astor family owned Newsweek magazine and served as a director of both the Western Union Telegraph Company and the Chase National Bank. This multi-millionaire had an interest in intelligence matters that predated FDR's election, and he had used his business and social contacts to organize a loose informal intelligence circle marked by its Anglophile views.[110] Through his business contacts, Astor supplied political and economic data directly to FDR, including details on the movement of foreign funds passing through the Chase bank. Not only could this help in keeping track of foreign purchases of raw materials and other strategic goods within the country, but it also could assist in counter-intelligence work. Astor reminded FDR that "espionage and sabotage need money, and that has to pass through the banks at one stage or another."[111] In providing his own intelligence system to the President, Astor did not limit himself, however, to working within the country. In 1938, he sailed his private yacht Nourmahal to the Pacific to gather information on Japanese-controlled islands, taking with him Kermit Roosevelt, the second son of President Theodore Roosevelt, and reporting on Japanese activity at Eniwetok, Bikini, Wotje,

and Jaluit.[112] Roosevelt would later appoint Astor as the intelligence coordinator in the New York City area, where, as a Commander in the United States Naval Reserve, he would work with the FBI, ONI, MID, and William Stephenson, the director of British intelligence in America.[113]

Once the European war had begun, the President continued to keep a close watch on economic resources. As Hitler's armies swept through western Europe in the spring of 1940, Roosevelt received revised estimates that incorporated the effects of German success on its economic position. By the late summer of 1940, Anglo-American intelligence collaboration was becoming fact, and Treasury Department estimates now included British assessments of German, Italian, and Japanese oil stocks. Other studies investigated German food supplies, labor shortages, and finances.[114]

In July 1941, Roosevelt appointed Donovan to the position of Coordinator of Information and directed that he

> assist me . . . in assembling and correlating information which may be useful in the formulation of basic plans for the defense of the Nation. . . .[He] is authorized to obtain such defense information from the various departments and from other sources as may be necessary in the performance of his duties. He will digest this data, place it in relationship to other information . . .[and] present the results to me and to the agencies concerned for such coordinated action as may be desirable.[115]

One of Donovan's first strategic estimates centered on Germany's military and economic position and its resources of manpower, food and agricultural products, minerals, transportation, and petroleum. Donovan also addressed the less easily quantified topic of morale. His twenty-one page report concluded that in none of these categories, including the last two, was Germany likely to face a crisis in the coming year.[116]

Of equal or greater concern to Roosevelt during the late 1930s was the state of Axis and Allied aviation. Here the picture appeared gloomy in the extreme. Roosevelt understood that air power served as both a weapon of war and a truncheon of diplomacy. Few spectacles so effectively projected national power as the sight and sound of a sky laden with aircraft. As an astute politician, FDR must have looked both with anger and awe at the way that Hitler's Luftwaffe had shaped European diplomacy before the war. If Britain and France had only had more aircraft, Roosevelt asserted, then "there would not have been any Munich."[117]

Six weeks after Munich, Roosevelt took steps to tend to America's air power frailty. In an afternoon meeting with key military and civilian advisors, he directed the War Department to plan for a two-year program to construct ten thousand aircraft, as well as to provide for the establishment of manufacturing plants which could produce twenty thousand aircraft annually if needed.[118] This was a huge program. It represents not only one of the first steps toward American rearmament, but it also gives some insight into Roosevelt's thinking in the immediate post-Munich period.

As already noted, Roosevelt was only too well aware of the diplomatic power of aircraft. Hitler had proven that at Munich. FDR was determined that the United States should never be placed in a position similar to Britain and France. If the United States had a large force of aircraft in hand, American foreign policy would be enhanced and American national security protected. In fact, the sheer deterrent force of those aircraft might guarantee that they would never be used. Thus, Roosevelt's thoughts apparently rested on large numbers of aircraft and on getting them quickly, while at the same time he ignored the infrastructure that normally must support aircraft. There was no mention of a systematic and careful expansion of training

facilities, airfields, support units, and combat-ready pilots and crews. Deterrence was the President's purpose; an air force ready for war was not.[119]

Although an increased air force would help to deter any threat to the nation, it might already be too late to arrest a European war. If so, America's large air program then would have the advantage of allowing the country, with proper modification or outright repeal of the neutrality law, to sell aircraft to Britain and France and, with the government aircraft plants that Roosevelt called for, to produce additional planes in large quantities.[120]

Yet there still remained the President's lingering hope that the mere knowledge of this air program and its possible availability to the Allies might act as a brake on Hitler's expansion. It was a hope that Congress destroyed when it failed to rethink the neutrality restrictions in the summer of 1939, though in hindsight it is hard to imagine any American action that would have influenced or stopped Hitler. Whatever the case, Roosevelt had no expectation at that time that his country would actually enter a war; hence, he saw little need to bring either air or ground units to a combat-ready status.

In the months before and immediately following Munich, the aviation assessments flowing to the Oval Office unanimously praised German aviation. From his position in Paris, Ambassador William Bullitt typed a steady stream of messages that warned of the patent superiority of German aircraft and production rates, bemoaned the disorganization of the French aviation industry, and complained of "ill-trained" British pilots.[121] In his apt words, the moral of recent European diplomacy was that "if you have enough airplanes you don't have to go to Berchtesgaden."[122] Ambassador Hugh Wilson's messages from Berlin seconded Bullitt's alarm. In an amazingly short time, Wilson found, Germany had created "an air arm second to

none in numbers and quality of first line fighting airplanes."[123] In his reports to the War Department, the American military attaché echoed the ambassador's observations.[124]

Private and industrial assessments reached the same conclusions. In early 1938, Joseph Kennedy, soon to be the American ambassador in London, forwarded to FDR a letter that he had received from Charles Lindbergh. Describing his recent two-week tour of Germany that included visits to Luftwaffe factories, aircraft, and research facilities, Lindbergh concluded that "German aviation development is without parallel."[125] Roosevelt forwarded this letter to Chief of Naval Operations William Leahy and Chief of Staff Malin Craig for their information and evaluation, and both replied that Lindbergh's assessment checked very closely with information that they had gained from other sources.[126] Other first-hand evaluations of European aviation by Lawrence D. Bell of Bell Aircraft Corporation and G. L. Martin of Glenn L. Martin Company confirmed the extent of German superiority and French inferiority; Bell described French military aviation as "pathetic," while Martin saw it merely as "pitifully weak."[127]

At the end of 1938, Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson described world aviation strength to the President with both statistics and graphs; the latter, Johnson insisted, depict, "as mere words cannot do, the airplane situation of the major powers." Johnson was correct, for the graph representing Germany almost climbed off the chart. Not only did the figures estimate that total German aircraft numbered ten thousand, but also that the Reich's medium and heavy bomber strength numbered 3400 at a time when no other world power deployed more than 960.[128]

Interestingly, the presentation ignored Japanese aircraft strength. This omission may have resulted from the lack of information, or perhaps it was simply symptomatic of the low regard

the United States held of Japanese aviation. As this essay will explore later, western racial perceptions of the Japanese colored the assessment of Japanese strength, especially regarding their aviation capabilities. National characteristics condemned that nation, so the United States believed, to perpetual weakness, since Japan depended on copies of western designs, technology, and facilities. The Japanese "lack of originality is a national trait," an Army War Plans Division study confidently observed.[129] United States' estimates reflected these beliefs: a 1941 projection determined that Japan was producing aircraft at a current rate of barely two thousand a year; in reality, the actual production rate was then exceeding five thousand.[130] In fact, racial bias played both ways in America's assessment, and it helps to explain why the United States consistently overestimated Germany and underestimated Japan.

Other problems undermined American prewar assessments. United States military and naval attachés in foreign capitals provided a potentially vital source of information. Yet the services traditionally looked at this assignment negatively: they derisively referred to it as "pink tea" duty, and considered that service as an attaché called primarily for excessive social graces, personal wealth in order to make the assignment comfortable, and a ready supply of the proper diplomatic inanities. Thus, attaché duty seemed anathema to a promising military career. Secretary of State Hull understood that problem, and when he first proposed the Standing Liaison Committee to Roosevelt in 1938, he stressed the need to select "highly competent officers to serve as military and naval attachés."[131]

Prior to Pearl Harbor the American attaché record was erratic. Some capitals benefited from excellent officers. Captain Alan Kirk and later Captain Charles Lockwood served as naval attachés in London and Commander Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter served in Paris.[132] Elsewhere

the quality could be mediocre. In 1939, Chief of Staff Malin Craig had to admit to the President that the army attaché in Moscow "has been of no use to the War Department for approximately a year."[133] Other examples come to mind, including the military attaché in Rumania who wildly insisted that Hitler had stockpiled a reserve of forty-thousand combat aircraft and crews.[134]

The same negative view of attaché duty extended to intelligence duty in Washington -- it would drag down rather than lift up a career. After returning from London, Captain Alan Kirk took the assignment as the Director of Naval Intelligence. But he did not stay long (March-October 1941), for his friend Admiral Adolphus Andrews warned him that he needed to get sea duty, and get it quickly, if he expected to make rear admiral. Kirk took his friend's advice.[135] As Kirk recalled after the war, the average tour of the Director of Naval Intelligence, in the ten years before we

> went in the war, was less than two years, always. Nobody was staying. It had very poor standing in the Navy Department, not because of the calibre of the officers, but everybody sort of thought Naval Intelligence was striped pants, cookie-pushers, going to parties and so on, abroad.[136]

Although continual turnover did not present quite the same problem within the army, there were defects nonetheless. The Military Intelligence Division, headed by Brigadier General Sherman Miles, did not represent a strength of the United States Army. General George C. Marshall considered it one of the weakest areas of the service, and later regretted that he had not pushed through reforms prior to Pearl Harbor. Eisenhower concurred in this negative estimate of MID, as did Stimson. In fact, the displeasure went all the way to the White House, for Roosevelt was upset with the performance of Miles but did not settle on a replacement before Pearl Harbor.[137]

Adding to the intelligence problem were bureaucratic rivalries and personalities. In August 1941, Major Haywood S. Hansell, Jr., had the priority task of collecting intelligence material for Air War Plans Division-1 (AWPD-1), which was the Army Air Corps estimate of aviation requirements necessary to defeat the Axis. In turn, AWPD-1 would be part of Roosevelt's larger "Victory Program" request of 9 July 1941 for the total production requirements needed for the United States to defeat its potential enemies. Hansell had previously served on the recently created Air Corps Strategic Air Intelligence Section and had just returned from gathering information in Britain on Royal Air Force bombing operations against Germany. When Hansell requested help from MID, he got none, for General Miles "was determined to preserve his turf."[138] As a result, MID was "totally uncooperative."[139]

Blocked by MID, Hansell sought alternative sources. For information on foreign aircraft, he turned to the Wright Field Foreign Technical Intelligence Branch. And for information on German industrial targets, he found much of the data in the financial and technical files of American banks and businesses which had lent money to build German power plants and factories during the 1920s.[140]

Although Hansell may not have realized it, his solution was one proposed by an Air Corps colleague a few years earlier. In a 1938 paper prepared at the Air Corps Tactical School, Captain Thomas D. White (later Air Force Chief of Staff) recommended:

> That more active cooperation by intelligence agencies in peace times be encouraged with such commercial organizations as the Standard Oil Company, General Electric and General Motors Corporations in order to obtain the detailed information of foreign vital elements known to their representatives resident abroad.[141]

After the war the Strategic Bombing Survey would reach the same conclusion.[142]

Similar rivalries hurt the navy. Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner headed the Navy War Plans Division. Known within the navy as "Terrible Turner," the admiral displayed ample quantities of brilliance, energy, and arrogance. "Abrasive as a file" was one of the nicer comments made by those who knew him.[143] He quickly became involved in a jurisdictional dispute to increase his power as War Plans director at the expense of ONI. Turner's success, in the opinion of some, seriously weakened the pre-Pearl Harbor effectiveness and credibility of naval intelligence.[144] And, still beyond these intra army and navy feuds, was the long-standing rivalry of MID and ONI with the FBI, to say nothing of their newer concern over Donovan, the Coordinator of Information.[145]

During much of the 1930s, information concerning espionage, counter-espionage, and sabotage had been handled by an informal, clearing-house committee comprised of representatives from the Departments of State, Treasury, War, Navy, Justice, and Post Office.[146] In June 1939, at the suggestion of the Attorney General, Roosevelt terminated this arrangement and ordered instead that all such investigations be concentrated within the FBI, MID, and ONI. "No investigations," he ordered, "should be conducted . . . except by the three agencies mentioned above."[147] To prevent any misunderstanding, the President in a separate memorandum to the Secretary of State stressed that this did not mean that the intelligence efforts of the State Department should cease in any way. Instead, FDR directed that "it should be carried on as heretofore but the directors of the three agencies should be constantly kept in touch by the State Department with the work it is doing."[148] During the crucial 1940-1941 period, Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle filled that intelligence liaison function with the FBI, MID, and ONI. At Berle's suggestion, a further organizational clarification came in June 1940

when the President directed that the FBI should be responsible for foreign intelligence within the Western Hemisphere, while MID and ONI would cover the remainder of the world.[149]

These efforts did not eliminate confusion and overlapping authority, however, for there were other players in the game. There was Stephenson, heading British intelligence in the United States; there was Donovan, the newly created COI; and there were Vincent Astor and John Carter, who operated independently of each other in their intelligence-gathering operations and reported directly to the President. Astor, until his 1941 appointment as the Intelligence Area Controller of New York, apparently did his work gratis, while the journalist Carter received financing from the President's Emergency Fund.[150] Astor may have had a hand in having Roosevelt make the FBI the contact point with Stephenson rather than having ONI or MID do it. In Astor's opinion, the FBI was "the best equipped and trained, and the most alert and competent of our various intelligence agencies."[151] With this variety of formal and informal organizations, confusion and anger were inevitable as groups tripped over each other.[152] Berle, the State Department liaison intelligence official, often found himself trying to salve hurt feelings or untangle knotted lines of authority, and this experienced diplomat admitted that he found these efforts "harder diplomacy than negotiating an inter-American agreement."[153] Even Roosevelt, who was normally so comfortable with jumbled bureaucracies, occasionally found himself confused as to what was happening or who was supposed to make it happen.[154]

Even if the country could look past these intelligence rivalries and weaknesses, there still remained the problem of commanders not being able to obtain a clear expression of national policy. Just as Ambassador Grew had asked Roosevelt to share his thoughts, so too did military commanders ask their superiors for the same information. In a letter of August 1940, Admiral

Thomas C. Hart, commander of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, plaintively wrote to the Chief of Naval Operations, "I will only add that I still feel very much out of touch with 'the management' and that does not make my lot easy."[155] Stark shared this letter with the President. Two months later Stark received a similar plea from Admiral J. O. Richardson, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet. In a strongly worded message, Richardson stated that he must know the national policy: "the Commander-in-Chief [U.S. Fleet] finds himself . . . without an applicable directive. He cannot, in the absence of a clear picture of national policy, national commitments and national objectives, formulate his own plans."[156]

It was the fall of 1940. The United States wanted both to help Britain and to avoid war. The country moved in the midst of a heated presidential campaign. And President Franklin D. Roosevelt had no clear directive to give.

* * * * *

The war plans that the Joint Board prepared in the 1920s and early 1930s viewed Japan as the only possible major enemy facing the United States in the post-Versailles world. Ever since the acquisition of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War, the United States had seen Japan as a possible threat to America's position and prestige in the Far East. While World War I seemingly had removed Germany as a potential enemy, the war had increased the possibility of a Japanese-American conflict. Japan had an impressive navy, and with the Versailles award of the mandated islands (Marshall, Caroline, and Mariana Islands) in the central Pacific to Japan, that Asiatic nation sat astride the American lines of communications to

the Far East. The Philippines, positioned seven thousand miles from the west coast of America, now floated within a Japanese bathtub.

The Joint Board faced a difficult if not impossible strategic problem: How does the United States defend the Philippines in light of the overwhelming regional Japanese superiority, especially within the political context of the naval reductions and fortifications freeze ordered by the Washington Naval Treaty, the low defense budgets of the post-World War I period, and the general American mood of pacifism, anti-militarism, and isolationism?

American war plans were color-coded, and the Joint Board plan for fighting Japan was ORANGE. In its various revisions, ORANGE envisaged primarily a naval war, with neither Japan nor the United States having allies. The Joint Board assumed that Japan would open hostilities with an overwhelming attack on the Philippines. In response the small American army garrison was to withdraw into its prepared positions on Bataan and Corregidor and hold those positions so as to deny the Japanese invader the use of Manila Bay. Simultaneously the United States Navy was to fight its way through the Pacific, destroy the Japanese navy in a great fleet action en route, and come to the relief of the American forces in the Philippines. Once this rescue was accomplished, Japan probably would surrender. If not, using Manila Bay as a base, the navy would then force capitulation on Japan through a naval blockade.[157]

Understandably, the army lacked enthusiasm for the plan. It believed that its garrison would be doomed under ORANGE, for it would take the navy months, more probably years, to make its way through to the Philippines. The small American outpost could not be expected to hold off the enemy for so long. And ORANGE assumed that the navy could indeed fight its way through, a belief the army questioned, especially with the Japanese aviation as well as naval

assets that would be confronted in the mandated islands.

Brigadier General Stanley Embick headed the Army War Plans Division in 1935. He had previously commanded the American forces at Corregidor. In communications to his military superiors, he made no effort to hide his beliefs regarding the planned navy role in ORANGE: "In the event of an Orange war under existing conditions, the early dispatch of our fleet to Philippine waters would be literally an act of madness."[158]

More importantly, the army questioned whether American interests in the Far East were vital or in any way commensurate with the probable cost of defending those interests. Military means and diplomatic obligations seemed woefully out of balance. In addition, there was the question as to whether American public opinion would support a war for the Philippines, especially a long drawn-out conflict that might begin with a major American defeat. The army believed that public opinion would not. Thus, it proposed instead that military capabilities and vital interests be merged by pulling American forces back to an Alaska-Hawaii-Panama defense line.[159] Army officers, however, were loath to press their opinions forcefully on policy makers. Their strong apolitical tradition and the lack of an effective structure to link military-diplomatic thought muted their protests. The result, as the historian Russell Weigley relates, was that "through most of the 1930s the army was therefore a bystander barely involved in the formation of national policy toward the Far East."[160]

Through the mid-1930s, the navy remained firm in its commitment to ORANGE. With the gospel of Mahan providing its commandments, the navy had a much more international outlook than the army. Foreign markets, geopolitical struggles, and colonial outposts seemed more natural to the navy than to the small and rather provincial army that thought mainly in

terms of continental or, at the most, hemispheric defense. In addition, ORANGE gave the navy a reason for being: for what did the United States need a large navy if not to fight Japan? Thus, ORANGE gave the navy primacy both in strategy and in budget demands. In the words of Admiral Richardson, ORANGE allowed the Navy Department to have "the maximum justification for the necessary enlargement of the Navy."[161]

The navy commitment to ORANGE, however, should not be construed as blindness to the difficulty that a real-life ORANGE entailed. In the inter-war decades the Naval War College had tested ORANGE continuously in its war games. Although other scenarios might occasionally be tested, Admiral Ernest King recalled that the war games "were most often concerned with the means of moving the fleet from Hawaii to the Philippines in the event of any hostile move toward those islands by ORANGE."[162] King's memory was correct: following World War I, the war-gaming drills at the War College practiced ORANGE over 120 times.[163] Where once the task had seemed difficult, by the late 1930s ORANGE seemed impossible. In any thrust across the Pacific the American navy would have to neutralize Japanese surface and submarine fleets as well as its land-based and carrier-based air forces. Advanced bases in the Marshall or Caroline region would have to be seized, and neither the army nor marines had the necessary troops to seize them. Once taken, island facilities would have to be developed, demanding a profligate expenditure of time and money. Additionally, in its current peacetime status the navy lacked the vital support ships to implement the plan, and inevitable wartime attrition would weaken it further. Even if a bloodied and bruised American fleet fought its way through to the Philippines, from where would it operate? Manila would have long since fallen. Where would ships be repaired and resupplied? And, through it all, would the American public support so

great an effort for so questionable a reward? The president of the Naval War College, Admiral Luke McNamee, warned the Navy General Board in early 1934 that a "war between Japan and the United States alone under present conditions would involve us in losses entirely out of proportion to any possible gain."[164]

Events in Europe forced a shift away from ORANGE. The United States no longer faced only the threat of Japan, but with the Japanese-German-Italian signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936, America saw the possibility of threats in the Atlantic and the Pacific simultaneously. So, too, did Britain. Navy reluctance to surrender ORANGE to its critics may have come from a hope that the United States and Britain might together face Japan in a future conflict. ORANGE, as the historian Michael Doyle argues, may have been the navy's way of keeping that option open.[165] But Britain's growing concern over Axis naval strength in the Atlantic and Mediterranean made a major deployment of the British fleet to the Pacific less and less likely.

With the possibility that the United States might become "involved in a general war" rather than in a regional conflict with Japan only, the navy began to move away from the idea of a power thrust through the Pacific that would culminate in a Jutland-style fleet action. Instead, the commander of the Asiatic Fleet, Admiral H. E. Yarnell, proposed in October 1937 that the navy should think in terms of an economic blockade. Yarnell assumed that the United States would be operating with allies; hence, the coalition would control "roughly ninety per cent of the world's reserves of iron, coal and oil." Economic strangulation of Japan would be enough to bring victory. As a result, a fleet battle "would not be necessary nor justifiable."[166] Leahy shared this proposal with FDR, and the President replied, "Yarnell talks a lot of sense."[167]

At the same time that Yarnell wrote his letter to Leahy, the Joint Board was also reconsidering its position: the United States might have to fight a war in conjunction with allies over more than one ocean and against more than one enemy. It was time for strategic planning to reach beyond the traditional ORANGE plan. After first producing a 1938 compromise version of ORANGE which tried to balance world events with previous army concerns by providing for an increased stress on flexibility, the Joint Board soon after the Munich Crisis ordered its planning committee to consider the problem of a simultaneous war with Germany, Italy, and Japan in both the Atlantic and Pacific. The following April, the Planning Committee reported that if such a conflict occurred, the United States would have to fight a defensive war in the Pacific. America's main emphasis must come instead in the Atlantic and in the Caribbean approaches to the Panama Canal, for the European Axis were a greater threat to American interests and security than Japan. Using this general outline as a foundation, the Committee recommended that specific war plans be prepared that would be based on the primacy of the Atlantic-Caribbean area and that would incorporate a variety of geopolitical assumptions. The RAINBOW war plans resulted.[168]

Under RAINBOW 1, the United States assumed that it would fight the Axis without major allies. Defense of the United States, Central America, and the northern part of South America would have priority. Any offensive operations in the Pacific would have to wait for the successful conclusion of Atlantic operations. RAINBOW 2 called for the United States to fight the Axis with Britain and France as allies. As a result, some American forces would operate in Continental Europe, and the United States could undertake offensive operations in the Pacific. RAINBOW 3 expected the United States to fight without allies, but conditions in the Western

Hemisphere would allow the country to undertake an early offensive in the Pacific. RAINBOW 4 assumed that the country would fight without allies and that Axis threats would force deployment of American troops throughout the Western Hemisphere. Again operations in the Pacific would wait for the conclusion of Atlantic operations. Finally, RAINBOW 5 anticipated that the country would be part of an alliance with Britain and France and that the nation would send major forces to operate either in Africa or Europe or in both. A defensive stance would be maintained in the Pacific until Germany and Italy had surrendered.[169]

Perhaps not surprisingly, Roosevelt had a hand in the navy's shift away from a Pacific priority to a greater consideration of the Atlantic and Caribbean. In 1938, he apparently played a role in determining that the February 1939 Fleet XX war games would test the ability of the fleet to move quickly from the Pacific, transit the Panama Canal, and protect the Caribbean.[170] Nor was a mere report on the games enough for the President. Instead, he viewed them personally from the bridge of the heavy cruiser USS Houston, which operated as the second ship in line of the BLACK fleet.[171]

Roosevelt was not the only national security player, however. Congress had its role under the Constitution, and that body often differed with the President and the armed services over the interpretation of security needs. The previously mentioned neutrality restrictions presented one example. The need for naval bases west of Hawaii furnishes a second example. At the direction of Congress in May 1938, Rear Admiral Arthur Hepburn and a navy board undertook a study of the need for additional naval bases for ship and air units in the United States and its territories. Presenting its findings in December of the same year, the Hepburn Report included extensive discussion of the need to develop Guam in the western Pacific. Guam, the report

warned, was now "practically defenseless" against a Japanese attack. However, the development of the island with air and submarine facilities could change that situation dramatically, making Guam secure "against anything short of a major effort on the part of any probable enemy." In fact, such defense preparations on Guam would not only allow the island "to hold out to the limit of time that its supplies lasted," but it would create an effective military presence on Guam that would dramatically improve the American position in the entire region; "so long as Guam existed as a strong air and submarine base hostile operations against the Philippines would be a precarious undertaking." In short, as the report emphasized, funds spent for Guam would be a force multiplier, for the effective defense of Guam would "greatly simplify the military problem of the defense of the Philippines."[172]

Since the fortification limitations which the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 mandated had lapsed some time before, there existed no legal restrictions to the proposed construction. Isolationists within Congress, however, disagreed with the navy's findings, arguing instead that such a building program would be a provocation to Japan that would needlessly exacerbate tensions between the two countries. In February 1939, Congress voted to deny funds for the Guam project.[173]

As with many issues before Pearl Harbor, the death of the Guam project was more complex than it appeared at first glance. Although Congress killed the proposal, the administration itself had a hand in the murder. The State Department had some of the identical fears of the isolationists, and it did not want to do anything to incite the militarists within Japan. Nor would the War Department lend the navy moral support, for the army believed that the United States should withdraw entirely from the western Pacific rather than entrench itself

further. At the top, Roosevelt seemed hesitant and uncertain, apparently fearful of what both American and Japanese reaction might be. His solution was to keep himself at arm's length from the proposal.[174]

Later that same year, the navy began internal studies regarding its ability successfully to prosecute a war. In early August 1939, the Secretary of the Navy directed the Navy General Board to prepare an "Are We Ready?" study. The General Board found that especially critical deficiencies existed in seaplane tenders, fast tankers, anti-aircraft guns, naval bases west of Hawaii, enlisted personnel, and torpedoes.[175] Along with the aforementioned issue of Guam, the last two problems had previously been brought to the personal attention of the President on multiple occasions.[176]

Acting on the recommendation of the 1939 report that "Are We Ready?" studies be made "a continuing activity," the Board followed with 1940 and 1941 studies. Each of these reports identified specific weaknesses of the navy and outlined steps to alleviate or, "by hook or by crook," at least lessen problems. Despite the navy efforts, however, the 1941 study -- like the previous two -- concluded that "the Naval Establishment is not ready to meet a serious emergency." Included in the 1941 report, which the navy completed six months before Pearl Harbor, was the strong plea for the creation of a Joint Military General Staff responsible only to the President. The Board also found critical deficiencies in the Fleet Marine Force, and pointed again to the still existing shortages in anti-aircraft guns, personnel, and torpedoes.[177]

The army undertook no similar studies. Perhaps it would have been superfluous, for the army certainly understood that it was not ready for an emergency -- major, minor, or in between. When Germany invaded Poland, army strength totaled less than 200,000 men. In

comparison to the armed forces of other nations, that figure placed the army 19th in the world, behind Portugal's land forces but ahead of Bulgaria's. A comparison of the percentage of population serving in the military placed the United States 45th in the world.[178] Much of the army's inter-war period had been spent on merely surviving as an institution in the face of a hostile or indifferent populace and Congress. The historian Russell Weigley finds that "the Army during the 1920s and early 1930s may have been less ready to function as a fighting force than at any time in its history."[179] After all, the nation faced no enemies to its north or south, and neither the country nor the army expected ever again to send a large army overseas.[180]

Even when the likelihood of a European conflagration became increasingly obvious, the President seemed surprisingly reluctant to expand and modernize the ground forces in conjunction with air and naval forces. The existing army plan developed to deal with a possible national emergency was the Protective Mobilization Plan (PMP), an outgrowth of army thinking during the 1930s. Designed for continental protection, it provided for the emergency expansion of the army to one million men through the activation of the National Guard and Reserves and the recruitment of volunteers. The Plan did not contemplate expansion beyond that number, instead providing for the freezing of the army at that total so that priority could be concentrated on producing a war-ready force through the emphasis on modernization and training.[181] In any national emergency, Army Chief of Staff Malin Craig (1935-1939) realized that manpower could be acquired more readily than modern weapons; therefore, his periodic requests to Congress centered on the lead-time necessary for any modernization. "The sums appropriated this year [1939]," the General stated in his annual report, "will not be fully transformed into military power for two years. Persons who state that they see no threat to the peace of the United States

would hesitate to make the forecast through a two-year period."[182]

When Roosevelt met with the War Department officials in November 1938 to outline his desires on the expansion of air power, the army also expected support for a balanced expansion of the ground forces under the PMP. It planned accordingly and included an expected increase in the ground forces of nearly 100,000 troops and the acquisition of equipment to support a PMP force expanded to its planned size of one million men.[183] Roosevelt quickly let the army know that it was mistaken; he wanted planes and more planes, not ground troops.[184] Even when the German invasion of Poland the next year brought the war that Roosevelt had been expecting, the President's response, along with proclaiming a "limited" national emergency, was to authorize a mere 17,000-man expansion of the army. He told the army that such a meager addition "was all the public would be ready to accept without undue excitement."[185] Roosevelt may have believed that was true, though in such a period of crisis it seems more likely that Congress and the public would have supported a larger expansion if the President had pressed for it vigorously. Roosevelt continued to be languid toward manpower expansion, including his ambivalent approach toward selective service in 1940. Again, political reasons undoubtedly played a part, but beyond those considerations was Roosevelt's judgment that America's role in the war would be limited to war materiel only or, at the very most, American materiel joined by naval and air units. In Roosevelt's mind, large American ground forces were neither needed nor wanted.

If the unexpected should occur, however, some of the immediate post-World War I planning of the army had examined the industrial mobilization that would be needed to build and deploy a major World War I-style American Expeditionary Force. While the Army General

Staff's role was to consider the military needs of a future mobilization, the Assistant Secretary of War was to concern himself with the business and industrial requirements of the mobilization. To help in this task, the Office of the Assistant Secretary received a Planning Branch whose work would be augmented by the creation of the Army Industrial College. Together the Assistant Secretary, the Planning Branch, and the Army Industrial College produced Industrial Mobilization Plans (IMP) in 1930, 1933, 1936, and 1939; each was then "duly published and open to public scrutiny and criticism."[186]

Bernard Baruch, the Wall-Street financier who had headed American World War I mobilization, took particular interest in these plans and served as an important civilian reviewer and critic. As World War II approached, Baruch and Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson gave increasing attention to the plans and strongly encouraged Roosevelt to activate the necessary agencies to put the 1939 plan into operation. Roosevelt refused. To him, it seemed clear that Baruch wanted to regain his mobilization role of World War I, something Roosevelt did not wish. In addition, the IMP linked the military and business communities at the expense of other segments of society, such as labor. It is understandable why Roosevelt held back from granting possibly excessive powers to a proposed military-business War Resources Administration, especially given both the public's fear that mobilization plans meant that the country was actively preparing for war and the public's easy acceptance of the "merchants of death" theory regarding the cause of World War I. To their regret, Johnson and Baruch had ignored the political context in which any mobilization must take place. Additionally, Roosevelt had firm opinions on mobilization from his service as Assistant Secretary of Navy in World War I.[187] And even more, the President had strong beliefs as to his power and role as the Commander-in-Chief. As

with so many other items, he saw to it that the road to mobilization led to the Oval Office.[188]

Until the spring of 1940, RAINBOW 2 (United States with Britain and France as allies fighting against the Axis) seemed the most likely scenario, and the Joint Board planners worked with that in mind. Hitler's stunning success in the west completely changed the strategic picture. France was now gone, and the fate of its battle fleet uncertain. Britain momentarily fought on but seemed likely to succumb to the same fate as France. If Germany gained control of both the French and British fleets, the Atlantic -- long the protector of the United States -- would become a German lake. Moreover, other nations, especially in Latin America, would hurry to reach an economic and political accommodation with Hitler's Europe. Many Latin American countries traditionally exported their goods to Europe; they would have no choice but to reach an understanding that would make Latin America an economic appendage of an enlarged Third Reich. Nor, for many of these countries, was democracy versus fascism an issue, since democratic roots were shallow or non-existent, while authoritarianism had a long and accepted tradition. Additionally, such key countries as Argentina, Brazil, and Chile had substantial German and Italian ethnic populations that could influence and perhaps even control events in their adopted countries.[189] Closer to American borders lay Mexico and Central America. The first seemed unstable. And in the latter, Roosevelt admitted, the United States "could stage a revolution in any Central American government for between a million and four million dollars."[190] If the United States could do it, FDR believed, so could the Axis. Thus, it was not too difficult to envision a future in which the United States, cut off from its traditional markets and holding on to a political system that seemed ineffective and anachronistic, would find itself, at best, a single island in a hostile sea; at worst it would battle alone against an Axis

invasion of the American hemisphere.

Roosevelt moved quickly to reevaluate America's strategic position, strengthen security relations with Canada and Latin America, and ascertain whether Britain could endure. He met almost daily with his military advisors in late May and throughout June.[191] The military consensus was that Britain could not survive, that there was little or nothing that the United States could do to change that fact, and that the United States needed to keep all available military equipment for itself.[192] Brigadier General George Strong, head of the Army War Plans Division, cogently expressed that belief when, in reference to the recommendation not to furnish any additional munitions to Britain, he stated:

> This is a recognition of the early defeat of the Allies, an admission of our inability to furnish means in quantities sufficient to affect the situation and an acknowledgement that we recognize the probability that we are next on the list of victims of the Axis powers and must devote every means to prepare to meet that threat.[193]

Marshall agreed with these views, as did Stark.[194] At the same time, diplomatic reports from Britain were heavy with gloom, and Joseph Kennedy characterized England's military capacity to carry on the war as "pitiful."[195]

In contrast, Roosevelt displayed a characteristic -- if admittedly cautious -- optimism. On 13 June 1940, the President shared his thoughts with the heads of MID and ONI and sketched an alternate scenario for the remainder of 1940 in which both the British Isles and British Empire would survive to continue the fight against the European Axis. France, though occupied, would continue resisting through its colonial holdings. And while the Mediterranean might be lost to German or Italian forces, the Atlantic barrier from Greenland to Morocco would hold firm. Lastly, the United States now would have an active role in the war, but its

participation would be limited to air and naval units only, and American industry would be moving to maximum aircraft production.[196]

While the Joint Board shifted its planning work to RAINBOW 4 (defense of the entire Western Hemisphere with no allies), Roosevelt sent Donovan to Britain for a personal inspection. At the invitation of Churchill, Roosevelt also dispatched General Strong and Major General Delos C. Emmons of the Air Corps to London. They would be joined a few weeks later by Rear Admiral Robert L. Ghormley. Donovan's report to the President came first and, as discussed earlier in this essay, was favorable toward the chance of Britain's survival in 1940. General Strong, who earlier had been deeply pessimistic, now agreed with Donovan, and the Strong-Emmons report in early October highlighted the spirited British morale, the nation's unity behind Churchill, and the relative strength of Britain's industry despite the German bombing. If the expected German invasion did not come by 15 October, Secretary of War Stimson related to the President, Britain's military position would be strengthened greatly. On the negative side, Britain's central weakness was its financial position, which was "dubious if not distinctly bad."[197] Soon afterward, Chruchill also made the economic plight clear to Roosevelt.[198] Convinced that Britain would and could resist, Roosevelt turned to the question of finances once his reelection was safely behind him. America, the President told the country, must become the "great arsenal of democracy." In March 1941, Roosevelt and Congress together eradicated the financial problem with Lend-Lease.

Though America had confirmed its aid to Britain, its military still lacked a clear expression of national policy. Where, under what conditions, and for what objectives should the United States fight? A few months before the enactment of Lend-Lease, Admiral Stark had

tried to remedy that lack. Stark had served on the staff of Admiral William Sims in London during World War I and needed no one to convince him of the primacy of the Atlantic to American interests or the need for the nation to enter the war if the Axis threatened the security of that ocean. To clarify his own thoughts and, quite likely, to push Roosevelt to a clear expression of policy now that the President's reelection seemed assured, Stark produced his well-known "Plan Dog" memorandum of 12 November 1940.[199]

In the first paragraph of his twenty-six page document Stark drove home the importance of the Atlantic and Great Britain:

> If Britain wins decisively against Germany we could win everywhere; but that if she loses the problem confronting us would be very great; and, while we might not lose everywhere, we might, possibly, not win anywhere.

Although the United States did not desire war, Stark stressed that war might come at any time. Thus, the United States must examine its options so that it guaranteed that such a war best served the national interests. Outlining four possible courses of action, he recommended that the fourth -- Plan D (or "Dog" in the military language of the period) -- best served the country's interests. Under this plan America would enter the war with Britain as an ally and give priority to defeating the European Axis, including the deployment of extensive American ground troops to the European theater. In conjunction with this priority, the United States would assume a defensive stance in the Pacific. Assuring the survival of Britain and its empire was the best way to guarantee the security of the American hemisphere. Hence, the Chief of Naval Operations recommended that Plan D "is likely to be the most fruitful for the United States, particularly if we enter the war at an early date." Accordingly, Stark urged that American army and navy leaders initiate staff talks with their British counterparts as soon as possible.[200]

In organizing his thoughts and encouraging the President to do the same, Stark had produced the basic outline of American strategy for the Second World War. In the opinion of Louis Morton, Stark's memorandum constitutes "perhaps the most important single document in the development of World War II strategy."[201] Despite Stark's best effort, however, Roosevelt would not be pushed into a clear expression of national policy. He may yet have held out hope that United States aid would be enough to allow Britain to win the war without America's formal participation. By the summer of 1941, he would apparently lose that hope, though such thinking was still in the future.[202]

Roosevelt did move the country closer to the war, however, by approving the proposed Anglo-American military staff talks, which were held in Washington, D.C. from 29 January to 29 March 1941. These talks, known as ABC-1, confirmed the European-first priority of the Stark memorandum. Though United States entrance into the war was still uncertain (in Roosevelt's words it would happen if the country were "compelled"[203]), the conference clearly secured the mutual interests of the two nations. As the British historian David Reynolds declares, the ABC-1 conference recognized "the core of Anglo-American co-operation -- a commitment to mutual control of the Atlantic as the key to both countries' survival."[204]

American planning had moved a long way from ORANGE. Plan Dog, RAINBOW 5, and ABC-1 expressed America's assessment of the world.[205] Europe would have the priority. Britain must survive. The European Axis represented the greater threat. Despite America's later rage and frustration over Pearl Harbor -- the compelling event of which Roosevelt had spoken -- the country would not deviate from that strategic judgment.

* * * * *

In assessing the Axis threat prior to Pearl Harbor, certain assumptions existed within the White House and within much of the administration from 1936-1938 onward. Even if the Axis somehow did not present a direct military threat to the United States -- and that was not the perception from the Oval Office -- there was little doubt as to the political and economic challenge facing the nation.

Germany, the United Sates believed, would use its diplomatic success and military power to dominate world trade and bully weaker countries, especially those in Latin America, into joining the German economic structure as satellite nations.[206] The result would produce an economic crisis for the United States. If Germany were victorious in Europe and gained control of the British Empire, it "would cut American exports at least 50 percent in volume."[207]

In the Pacific both official and informal sources left no doubt that Japan intended to drive all western nations out of China and the Far East and to establish that area as its own economic preserve, just as Germany would do for Europe, Africa, and Latin America. "If Japan has her way," one source predicted, "China will be as dark to the Occidental as Manchoukuo is now."[208] Captain Evans Carlson, USMC, echoed that statement. Writing Roosevelt in late 1938 after an extensive trip through China, Carlson asserted that the statement that Japan "is bent on world domination is not the twaddle of crack brained alarmists. That thesis is a religion with the Japanese military-naval clique."[209]

Cut off from both the traditional markets for American exports and the sources of such strategic materials as rubber and tin, America would face economic contraction, a lowered

standard of living, and a weakened strategic position. Increasingly isolated in a threatening world, the United Sates would see its democratic values suffer as it moved toward a garrison-state mentality. The survival of the nation would be at stake, and the result could be the ultimate irony for a democracy: "to fight totalitarianism we would have to adopt totalitarian methods."[210]

Although the United States correctly perceived that the German threat was greater than that of Japan, it magnified German danger to a size that was much larger than reality. Observers tended to believe that Germany could do anything. As a military attaché in Berlin warned: "Germany as a fighting nation is tremendously powerful. Under no condition should she be underestimated."[211]

The administration was already a true believer when it came to German military prowess.[212] The American fear of a German military attack on Latin America presents an example of this conviction. The documents demonstrate how seriously the administration feared an attack from west Africa over to Brazil's Natal. From there, it seemed only a quick flight by bomber to Colombia (where Germany had been active in pre-World War II commercial aviation) and the Panama Canal. Although such German plans never existed, Roosevelt and his advisors took seriously their possibility, even to the point that FDR suffered nightmares of German bombers flying over his home in Hyde Park and inquired whether federal buildings along the Mexican border might be constructed with machine gun or anti-aircraft positions in case the Germans attacked through that nation.[213] Such ideas may seem farfetched, but the concern was real. After all, the idea that Germany would conquer Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France in a little over two months would have seemed equally farfetched in March 1940.

Another factor in America's view of Germany appears to be racial stereotyping. German efficiency, unity, and organization became racial maxims in American minds. Germany could do almost anything militarily, and partially for the same racial reasoning the United States deep down suspected that Japan could do almost nothing.[214] This assessment of the Japanese went all the way to the White House, for as late as 1942 Roosevelt optimistically believed that the "defeat of Germany means the defeat of Japan, probably without firing a shot or losing a life."[215]

Though Roosevelt's assessment of Japan was clearly flawed, there seemed to be facts to support his view. Japan's weakness in raw materials was patent, and that flaw was coupled to a military that was suspect in quality. Though Japan had bested Russia in their war of 1904-1905, Russia's military had been of questionable quality. In the more recent 1939 border clashes between the two countries, Russia had punished the Japanese ground forces. Nor had the Japanese armed forces been able to finish its war with a militarily weak and politically disunited China. Such a record hardly inspired western awe.[216]

The United States expressed particular doubt about Japan's aviation capabilities, a crucial component in modern war. Numerous commentators opined that the Japanese as a race lacked creativity; thus, as a nation Japan had no choice but to copy western aviation designs and to accept perpetual inferiority. "Japanese aviation and industrial development," the American naval attaché in Tokyo concluded, "will remain from two to three years behind that of the United States."[217]

When Japan took steps to insure secrecy, the United States interpreted this action as Japan's dubious efforts to hide its inferiority. The United States Naval Institute Proceedings

asserted that the Japanese, bereft of originality, were imitators by nature. Aware of their national failings, the Japanese "seek to hide them from the world by every means in their power."[218] At the same time, however, military reports concerning Germany did not draw the same conclusion that the Third Reich's efforts toward secrecy had to represent an attempt to hide its inferiority.

Western observers consistently judged that Japanese training, pilots, and aircraft were inadequate. "The lack of originality is naively and unashamedly disclosed in their airplanes."[219] When Admiral Yarnell, commander of American naval forces in the Far East, first observed Japanese forces in the Shanghai area, he rated the Japanese navy quite highly. With their aircraft, however, he was "not greatly impressed," and he confidently predicted that "a few squadrons of our carrier planes would clear this river of Japs in 24 hours."[220] The British expressed the same confidence, opining at the ABC-1 talks that warships based at Singapore would be completely safe from Japanese air power, which they rated at or below the quality of their Italian counterparts.[221] Occasionally there surfaced a few reports that discussed the considerable combat experience that Japanese pilots had amassed China and warned that Japanese military aviation should not be derided, but these reports had little impact.[222]

Racial bias continued in the days following Pearl Harbor. Several American officers could not believe that the Japanese alone were responsible for Japan's success, believing instead that Germany must have provided help. In the early evening of 7 December 1941, Chief of Naval Operations Stark talked by telephone with Rear Admiral Claude Bloch at Pearl Harbor. When chronicling the damage, Bloch mentioned that a submarine had penetrated into the harbor and then had been sunk. Stark's first reaction was to ask if it were a German submarine.[223]

In his original communication to the Atlantic Fleet and to SPENAVO (U.S. Special Naval Observer, London), Stark reported that two of the attacking aircraft at Pearl Harbor "had swastikas on their side."[224] Two days later, General Marshall relayed to the White House General Douglas MacArthur's report that white pilots had flown some of the Japanese planes that bombed Clark Field.[225] And a later intelligence report forwarded to Roosevelt identified German pilots as operating Japanese aircraft in the Java area.[226]

Despite the prevalent United States assumption of Japanese inferiority, Americans presumed that the Japanese would act and think in a way identical with them. Perhaps this was a continuation of the American belief that the Japanese lacked originality, or perhaps it reflected the American confidence that their way was the only way. Most likely it was a combination of factors, with racial bias added to the more traditional problem of one country assuming that a potential adversary will behave as it would behave if in a similar situation. The war games that tested ORANGE at the Naval War College provide an example of this error, for throughout the exercises the officials presumed that Japan would react in the way American doctrine and thinking would have responded.[227]

Pearl Harbor presents another example of an incorrect assumption. In the administration's view, basing the fleet at Pearl Harbor served as a deterrent against war and a protection for Hawaii in case war came. As General Marshall told FDR, "presence of [the] Fleet reduces [the] threat of major attack."[228] Ignored was the fact that the Japanese might take what to the United States was an illogical and even self-defeating action by making the fleet the target, attacking Hawaii, and bringing the United States into a war against them. Ambassador Grew in Tokyo had warned that American standards of logic could not be used in predicting Japanese

action -- "Japanese sanity cannot be measured by our own standards of logic"[229] -- but it was a warning difficult for Americans to understand.

While the United States underestimated Japanese aviation, it overestimated its own, especially in the area of heavy bombers. Technical progress and doctrinal thinking in the 1930s produced an Air Corps belief in the independent offensive power of strategic bombing, with its instrument being the B-17 bomber. Much of this thinking germinated at the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell Field in Alabama. The air power prophecies of Billy Mitchell, Hugh Trenchard, and Giulio Douhet seemed about to be fulfilled. Technical limitations indicated, however, that a long-range single-engine fighter escort was an impossibility. Spurning the idea of inaccurate and inefficient area bombing at night, American bomber enthusiasts developed a doctrine of daylight precision strategic bombing without fighter escorts and tested the theory in prewar maneuvers. They claimed success.

Not all Air Corps officers agreed. Captain Claire Chennault argued that defensive fighters could intercept the bombers and charged that the Air Corps biased the tests to favor the offensive bombers as opposed to the intercepting fighters.[230] Some bomber supporters would later agree that the "exercises may well have been prejudiced in favor of the bombers."[231]

At the same time, however, Chennault and others who favored the role of interceptors expressed no interest in having their fighters serving as escorts for bombers. They presumed that a single-engine fighter escort was a technical impossibility.[232] Even if it had seemed possible, they would have vehemently resisted the idea of pursuit planes being used in the purely "defensive" mission of convoying a bomber formation. Thus, if strategic bombing were to become a reality, it would have to be done without fighter escorts. And the Air Corps was

determined to make it a reality, because only through this independent strategic role could the Air Corps prove that it should be independent of and equal to the army. Without the doctrine of strategic bombing, the Air Corps feared that there would be no United States Air Force. Thus, Air Corps strategic doctrine for war rested, like many other issues, within a political context.

In the summer and fall of 1941, the administration and its advisors saw the B-17 and its alleged power as a possible solution to the defense of the Philippines within a region dominated by Japan. The B-17s could smash any Japanese invasion fleet. In fact, by the fall of 1941, the United States thought that it could turn the liability of the Philippines into an advantage by controlling the sea lanes to the east and west of the Islands through air power and by threatening Japan's "paper cities" with its Philippine-based B-17s. These bombers would compel Japan to halt its expansionistic designs. The mere location of the American bombers in those islands, as General Marshall estimated, "has a better than 50% chance of forcing them [the Japanese] to practically drop the Axis."[233] Here was heady wine, and Roosevelt and his advisors drank deeply.[234] As in the case of Pearl Harbor, however, the United States found at Clark Field that Japan did not react as it believed it should and that a deterrent could itself become the target.[235]

There would be a final irony. Over Germany in 1943, the American air force found that deep-penetration daylight raids without fighter escorts resulted in prohibitive losses. To continue strategic bombing, a long-range fighter escort had to be developed. The answer came in 1944 with the use of jury-rigged disposable fuel tanks that would extend the range of the P-47 and P-51 fighters to that of the bombers. The fighters could then jettison the fuel tanks before going

into combat. Here was the technical breakthrough that assured the defeat of the Luftwaffe.[236] The irony is that the Japanese had come up with the idea at least two years before, and that General "Hap" Arnold himself had brought that fact to the personal attention of the President. Arnold had passed along early combat experiences and lessons in a March 1942 memorandum:

> Japanese bombardment formations are often accompanied by Zero fighters, which carry a "belly-tank," constructed of plywood and canvas. This materially increases their range. On going into action they drop these "belly-tanks" in order to improve their maneuverability in combat. It is reported that Zero fighters with the "belly-tanks" and probably without bombs can accompany their bomber formations during their entire flights.[237]

Here was the solution to the agony of the bombers in 1943. But somehow the connection of 1942 experiences in the Pacific and possible 1943 losses in Europe was never made. The doctrine had been developed that bombing could be carried out without fighter escorts. The Air Corps believed -- indeed for its future had to believe -- that this doctrine would work. In effect, the doctrine had been developed because no long-range escort was thought possible. Then when a technological solution to the escort problem became available, the doctrine was already in place and became an obstacle in itself. With it all, there is the lingering thought that if Arnold's report had concerned German combat experiences rather than Japanese, the crucial connection would have been made.

Other mistakes were committed, partially because of American trust in the accuracy of British intelligence assessments. Anti-submarine warfare (ASW) presents an example of this mistaken confidence. During the inter-war years, the United States Navy generally accepted the preeminence of the Royal Navy in the ASW field.[238] Britain assumed that the development late in World War I of its sonar-like device known as ASDIC (Allied Submarine Detection Investigation Committee) had solved permanently the submarine threat.[239] Thus, as World

War II approached, the Royal Navy demonstrated little worry over a possible German submarine campaign; "The submarine should never again be able to present us with the problem we were faced with in 1917."[240] Instead, the British gave their attention to the German surface and air threat. American naval attaché accounts from London reflected the British perception. Although the notes described in copious detail such British anti-aircraft defenses as barrage balloons, reports of British ASW preparations were conspicuously missing. ASW preparations were simply not a British concern.[241] ASDIC, they were confident, had won the U-boat war before it had even begun.

British confidence continued into the early days of the war, and naval attaché reports reflected that belief. German U-boats gained limited success in the opening months of the conflict. The Royal Navy gave the credit to ASDIC, rather than to the possibility that Germany was short of effective submarine bases or of adequate numbers of long-range U-boats. Nor did there appear to be any British thought that German captains might develop tactics that could neutralize ASDIC. Recalling the mutiny of the German navy in 1918, the Royal Navy blithely predicted that its current success would destroy the morale of the U-boat force.[242] It would be a repeat of World War I. In their conviction, the British ignored the possibility that the very memory and "stain" of that 1918 mutiny might make the German naval forces fight even harder in this new battle.[243]

Unfortunately for America, the Royal Navy was supposed to be the expert in the field. In 1939-1940, England was also the prime source of first-hand naval combat experience for the United States. In addition, English confidence in ASDIC confirmed the optimistic findings of the United States Navy during the 1930s in its own efforts to develop an effective device for

locating submerged submarines.[244] Thus, America gave little thought to a serious U-boat threat.[245] Here is a case where the acceptance of British intelligence assessments misled the nation, and both the United States and Great Britain would pay a dire toll for their errors in the later battleground of the North Atlantic.

Such mistakes were painful but ultimately not fatal. Other important technological issues were gauged correctly. Roosevelt's comprehension of the significance of the 1939 letter from Albert Einstein and the memorandum from Leo Szilard concerning the military implications of atomic energy presents a well-known example.[246] There were others, and although they may lack the ultimate significance of atomic weapons, they demonstrate a crucial point: Anglo-American willingness to explore systematically and to cooperate closely in the military uses of science. Here was a key piece of the Allied victory.[247]

Political instincts were even more important than scientific ones. In the case of the English in 1940, Roosevelt correctly judged that Britain would survive, even while his more conservative military advisors counseled that it was doomed. A year later military advisors provided the same grim assessment of Russia's chance to endure under the massive onslaught of the German invasion. Stimson quickly had advised that German victory would come within one to three months, and sources within the State Department during the next month agreed with the War Department prediction.[248]

Roosevelt refused to write off the Soviet Union. Instead, in a fashion reminiscent of the previous summer with Britain, he sent his personal emissary Harry Hopkins to Moscow, who reported back that Russia would hold.[249] As with England in 1940, the question of morale was crucial, and the President's envoy found it steadfast. "I feel ever so confident about this front,"

Hopkins observed. "The morale of the population is exceptionally good. There is unbounded determination to win."[250] Roosevelt took the risk that this former social worker was right and that his military advisors were wrong. Correct in both the summer of 1940 and the summer of 1941, Roosevelt's judgments produced the Grand Alliance and assured ultimate victory.

In the period before Pearl Harbor Roosevelt had understood that if the United States were to enter the war, the nation must be united in that action. To do otherwise in a democracy risked disintegration and disaster. Just as the unity of the country had been crucial if the nation were to enter the war, the unity of the alliance was crucial once the war was entered, and that meant working with the Soviet Union.

Roosevelt was quick to grasp the significance of the German invasion of Russia in June 1941. Within days of the German assault, FDR wrote Leahy: "Now comes this Russian diversion. If it is more than just that it will mean the liberation of Europe from Nazi domination."[251] Thus, the Soviet Union had to be helped with all available materiel, and it had to be helped quickly. Roosevelt made himself abundantly clear on this point, ordering aides to "use a heavy hand -- act as a burr under the saddle and get things moving! . . . Step on it!"[252] Along with sustaining the Soviet armed forces, the United States needed simultaneously to allay Russian suspicion of the West. Without full Soviet participation in the east, there could be no later Anglo-American invasion in the west, a point well understood by the President.[253] As a result, Roosevelt put much of his wartime effort into trying to build that trust, for there was always the memory of Brest-Litovsk and the 1939 German-Soviet nonaggression pact to spur him on. At times Roosevelt's efforts were most assuredly egotistical and naive, such as when he wrote to Churchill:

> I know you will not mind my being brutally frank when I tell you that I think I can personally handle Stalin better than either your Foreign or my State Department. Stalin hates the guts of all your top people. He thinks he likes me better, and I hope he will continue to do so.[254]

Silly as that statement may seem, the President's goal was correct, and he took very seriously what the historian Maurice Matloff would later call his role as the "guardian of the good relations of the coalition."[255]

Important to his emphasis on unity was Roosevelt's unlimited faith in American productive capacity. America would be an untouchable and inexhaustible factory. Its economic output would not only supply its own military forces with an abundance never before seen in warfare, but it would do the same for its allies. Materiel rather than manpower would bury the nation's enemies and assure the country's victory with a minimum loss of national blood. The President's concept of this "Arsenal of Democracy" furnished a fundamental part of his broad assessment of the Second World War and was a basic part of America's military strategy.[256] As FDR told Stimson soon after Pearl Harbor, the war will be won "by our overwhelming mastery in the munitions of war."[257]

The Commander-in-Chief intuitively understood that as long as the Grand Alliance held firm, the Allies would win. The necessary elements would be in place, the formula for victory secure. The ingredient of Anglo-American superiority in the realm of air, sea, and science, added to the twin inexhaustibles of Soviet manpower and American productivity, would finally crush the Axis. Concerning this ultimate assessment the thirty-second President of the United States had no doubt.

NOTES

1. The author would like to thank the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library [hereafter, FDRL], Hyde Park, New York, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and the Four Freedoms Foundation for their help in this study.
2. Letter, Franklin D. Roosevelt [hereafter, FDR] to Antonio C. Gonzalez, Minister to Ecuador, 16 October 1937, in Donald B. Schewe (ed.), Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs [hereafter, FDR & FA] (New York, 1979), Vol. 7, p. 111.
3. Quoted in Arthur Bryant, The Turn of the Tide: A History of the War Years Based on the Diaries of Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (New York, 1957), p. 234.
4. The successful American breaking of Japanese diplomatic codes was known as MAGIC, with the first complete text of a message being decoded on 25 September 1940. For additional information on MAGIC and the problem of striking a balance between the need to diseminate this vital information and the necessity to keep the code-breaking operation a secret, see Roberta Wohlstetter, Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision (Stanford, 1962), pp. 176-86. Ronald Lewin, The American Magic: Codes, Ciphers and the Defeat of Japan (New York, 1982), and Thomas Parrish, The Ultra Americans: The U.S. Role in Breaking the Nazi Codes (New York, 1986), provide additional information on MAGIC and other code-breaking efforts during the pre-Pearl Harbor period.
5. Letter, FDR to John Cadahy, Ambassador to Poland, 15 January 1937, in FDR & FA, Vol. 4, p. 78.
6. FDR & FA, passim.

7. Astor was a multi-millionaire friend of FDR. His estate, "Ferncliff," was in Rhinebeck, just north of FDR's home in Hyde Park. He used his contacts and position in the international business world to provide Roosevelt with economic and diplomatic information. Carter was a journalist with two syndicated columns written under the name of Jay Franklin. He first had provided the president with political intelligence in the mid-1930s and then in the late 1930s had moved into gathering information which dealt with national security. See President's Secretary's File [hereafter, PSF]: Subject: Vincent Astor; PSF: Subject: John F. Carter; and Official File [hereafter, OF] 4514, J. Franklin Carter files; FDRL.

8. Eric Larrabee, Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War (New York, 1987), pp. 1-95, passim.

9. Roberta Wohlestetter, Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision (Stanford, 1962), 180, uses this word to describe government use of MAGIC information, but it gives an apt description of Roosevelt's use of non-MAGIC material as well.

10. Quoted in J. Garry Clifford, "both Ends of the Telescope: New Perspectives on FDR and American Entry into World War II," Diplomatic History, vol. 13, no. 2 (Spring 1989), p. 220.

11. The United States Strategic Bombing Surveys: Summary Reports: European and Pacific Wars (Reprint, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 1987), pp. 11-12.

12. Quoted in FDR & FA, Vol. 4, p. v.

13. Ibid.

14. FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee held in the

White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, p. 214.

15. For a discussion of some of the views toward Germany and Japan that FDR brought with him to the White House, see Brooks Van Everen, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Problem of Nazi German," in Clifford Egan and Alexander W. Knott (eds.), Essays in Twentieth Century American Diplomatic History Dedicated to Professor Daniel M. Smith, (Washington, DC.,1982), pp. 137-58, and William L. Neuman, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Japan, 1913-1933," Pacific Historical Review, vol. 22, no. 2 (May 1953), pp. 143-53. Also see Roosevelt's own article, "Shall We Trust Japan," Asia, vol. 23 (July 1923), pp. 475-528.

16. Letter, FDR to Anthony J. Biddle, Jr., Ambassador to Poland, 10 November 1937, FDR & FA, Vol. 7, p. 196.

17. Letter, FDR to John Cudahy, Minister to the Irish Free State, 16 April 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 9, p. 423.

18. Letter, FDR to William Phillips, Ambassador to Italy, 17 October 1938, PSF: Diplomatic: Italy: Phillips, FDRL. Although it appears that FDR was speaking specifically about the Munich settlement when he made that comment, it is also possible that his statement referred to other concerns which Phillips mentioned in his messages of 29 September and 1 October 1938.

19. Letter, Arthur Murray to FDR, 15 December 1938, PSF: Diplomatic: Great Britain: Arthur Murray, FDRL.

20. Letter, FDR to Arthur Murray, 24 August 1939, PSF:Diplomatic: Great Britain: Arthur Murray, FDRL.

21. Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. 1, The Apprenticeship (Boston, 1952), pp. 46-47.

22. Ibid., p. 234.

23. Memorandum, FDR to Swanson, 12 February 1938, PSF: Departmental: Navy: Claude Swanson; letter, FDR to Admiral William Leahy, Chief of Naval Operations, 10 November 1937, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, october 1936-37; memorandum, FDR to Captain Callaghan, 1 July 1939, OF 18: Department of the Navy: July-December 1939; see the Navy files in the Secret, Confidential, and Departmental files, PSF, and OF, FDRL.

24. Freidel, Apprenticeship, pp. 164, 265; D. Clayton James, A Time for Giants: Politics of the American High Command in World War II (New York, 1987), p. 43.

25. William D. Leahy, I Was There: The Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time (New York, 1950), p. 3.

26. Fridel, Apprenticeship, p. 165; B. Mitchell Simpson III, "Harold Rynsford Stark," in Robert W. Love, Jr. (ed.), The Chiefs of Naval Operations, (Annapolis, MD, 1980), p. 120.

27. Letter, FDR to Stark, 22 March 1939, President's Personal File [hereafter, PPF] 166: Admiral Harold R. Stark, FDRL.

28. Note, Stark to Captain Daniel J. Callaghan, USN, Naval Aide to the President, 20 November 1940, PSF: Department: Navy, November-December 1940; note, Stark to FDR, 16 May 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy, May-June 1940; memorandum, Stark

to FDR, 15 September 1939, PSF: Departmental: Navy, January-September 1939; all FDRL.

29. Morgenthau Presidential Diaries, 22 May 1941, FDRL.

30. Russell F. Weigley, "The Role of the War Department and the Army," in Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (eds.), Pearl Harbor as History: Japanese-American Relations, 1931-1941 (New York, 1973), pp. 165-88; Russell F. Weigley, "The Interwar Army, 1919-1941," in Kenneth J. Hagan and William R. Roberts (eds.), Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History from Colonial Times to the Present (Westport, CT, 1986), pp. 257-77; John C. Walter, "Congressman Carl Vinson and Franklin D. Roosevelt: Naval Preparedness and the Coming of World War II, 1932-40," Georgia Historical Quarterly (Fall 1980), pp. 294-305; Calvin William Enders, "The Vinson Navy," PhD dissertation, Michigan State University, 1970; Michael Kedian Doyle, "The U.S. Navy: Strategy, Defense, and Foreign Policy, 1932-1941," PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 1977; Michael Allen West, "Laying the Legislative Foundation: The House Naval Affairs Committee and the Construction of the Treaty Navy, 1926-1934," PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1980.

31. FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, held in the White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, p. 200.

32. Quoted in William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation: The World Crisis of 1937-1940 and American Foreign Policy (New York, 1964), p. 597.

33. Robert Dallek, Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945 (New York, 1979.

34. Letter, Homer S. Cummings to FDR, 22 December 1937, PSF: Departmental: no file folder, FDRL.

35. PSF: Diplomatic: Great Britain: Arthur Murray, passim, FDRL.

36. Letter, W. Averell Harriman to FDR, 7 May 1941, PSF: Diplomatic: Great Britain: Harriman, 1941-1942, FDRL.

37. FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, held in the White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, p. 199.

38. Letter, FDR to William Phillips, Ambassador to Italy, 15 September 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 11, p. 172.

39. FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, held in the White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, p. 220.

40. For a discussion of some of these points, see letter, R. Walton Moore, Counselor of the Department of State, to FDR, 12 May 1939, PSF: Neutrality, 1939-1941; letter, Moore to FDR, 19 May 1939, PSF: Subject: Neutrality, 1939-1941; both FDRL.

41. Memorandum, FDR to Hull and Welles, 28 March 1939, PSF: Subject: Neutrality, 1939-1941, FDRL.

42. Quoted in Dallek, Roosevelt, p. 192.

43. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, Challenge to Isolation, p. 144; also see press conference, Hyde Park, 21 July 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 16, p. 116.

44. Letter, FDR to Representative Caroline O'Day, 1 July 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 16, p. 47; also see letter, O'Day to FDR, 7 July 1939, PSF: Subject: Congress, 1932-1940 (Folder I), FDRL.

45. Memorandum, FDR to William P. Gregg, 1 November 1938, PSF: Subject: Congress, 1941-1944 (Folder II), FDR: emphasis in the original.

46. Letter, Representative James F. O'Connor to FDR, 6 May 1941, PSF: Subject: Congress, 1941-1944 (Folder II), FDRL; emphasis in the original.

47. Letter, FDR to O'Connor, 19 May 1941, PSF: Subject: Congress, 1941-1944 (Folder II), FDRL.

48. Letter, FDR to Frank Knox, 29 December 1939, PSF: Departmental: Navy: Frank Knox, FDRL.

49. Memorandum, FDR to General Watson, 4 October 1940, PSF

50. Letter, FDR to Arthur and Faith Murray, 2 June 1941, PSF: Diplomatic: Great Britain: Arthur Murray, 1940-1944, FDRL.

51. Louis Morton, "Interservice Co-operation and Political-military Collaboration," in Harry L. Coles (ed.), Total War and Cold War: Problems in Civilian Control of the Military (Columbus, OH, 1962), pp. 132-33; Mark S. Watson, Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations: The War Department: United States Army in World War II (Washington, DC, 1950), p. 79.

52. Morton, "Interservice Co-operation," p. 136.

53. Ibid., pp. 138-39.

54. Ernest A. May, "The Development of Political-Military Consultation in the United States," Political Science Quarterly, vol. 70, no. 2 (June 1955), p. 167.

55. Quoted in ibid.

56. Ibid., p. 168.

57. Ibid., pp. 168-69; Morton, "Interservice Co-operation," pp. 146-47.

58. Memorandum, Captain Adolphus Staton, USN, to the Assistant Commandant, the Army War College, 25 February 1932, GB 425, RG [hereafter, RG] 80, National Archives [hereafter, NA].

59. Quoted in Vernon E. Davis, The History of the Joint Chiefs in World War II, Vol. 1, Origin of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff (Washington, DC, 1972), p. 3.

60. Letter, Joseph C. Grew to FDR, 14 December 1940, PSF: Confidential: State Department, 1939-1940, FDRL.

61. Waldo Heinrichs, Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II (New York, 1988), p. 39.

62. Hearings before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, Congress of the United States. 79th Cong., 1 Sess., Part II, p. 455.

63. Ibid., p. 151.

64. Letter, Cordell Hull to FDR, 28 March 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 9, p. 250.

65. Memorandum, FDR to Cordell Hull, 4 April 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 9, p. 319.

66. In the fall of 1934, Roosevelt directed that the War Department, the Navy Department, the Department of Commerce, and the Division of Territories and Island Possessions hold a confidential conference to discuss Hawaii's defense needs. Activities of both Japanese aliens and Japanese-American residents of the Islands formed a major topic. See the material in PSF: Subject: Congress, Message: National Defense, FDRL.

67. Memorandum, Local Joint Planning Committee to Rear Admiral H. E. Yarnell, Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, and Major General H. A. Drum, Commanding

General, Hawaiian Department, 25 May 1936, PSF: Departmental: War Department, 1934-1936, FDRL.

68. Memorandum, FDR to the Chief of Naval Operations, 10 August 1936, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Harry Woodring, FDRL.

69. Letter, Harry Woodring, Secretary of War, to FDR, 17 November 1937, and memorandum, FDR to Woodring, 26 November 1937, FDR & FA, Vol. 7, pp. 242-44, 315. For an example of another informal counter-espionage committee, see the letter of Frank Murphy, Attorney General, to FDR, 17 June 1939, PSF: Confidential: State Department, 1939-1940, FDRL.

70. Memorandum, Woodring to FDR, 21 May 1937, FDR & FA, Vol. 5, pp. 249-50; memorandum, FDR to Woodring, 22 May 1937, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Harry Woodring, FDRL.

71. Letter, Woodring to FDR, 8 September 1937, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Harry Woodring, FDRL.

72. Memorandum, Woodring to FDR, 2 July 1937, FDR & FA, Vol. 6, pp. 19-29.

73. Memorandum, Carter to FDR, "Japanese situation of the West Coast," 22 October 1941, PSF: Subject: John F. Carter, March-October 1941, FDRL.

74. Memorandum for the Secretary of War and the Acting Secretary of Navy, 25 August 1939, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department: Charles Edison, FDRL; Larrabee, Commander in Chief, 16-17; Davis, "Origin of the Joint Chiefs," pp. 40-41.

75. Morton, "Interservice Co-operation," p. 156.

76. Morgenthau Presidential Diaries, 22 May 1941, FDRL; Morton, "Interservice

Co-operation," p. 156.

77. Heinrichs, Threshold of War, p. 20.

78. Quoted in Forest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall, Vol. 2, Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942 (New York: 1966), p. 26.

79. Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, 1947), p. 334.

80. Letter, FDR to Winston Churchill, 11 September 1939, in Warren Kimball (ed.), Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence [hereafter C & R], (Princeton, 1984), Vol. 1, p. 24.

81. David E. Kaiser, "Churchill, Roosevelt, and the Limits of Power," International Security, vol. 10, no. 1 (Summer 1985), p. 204.

82. Memorandum, Ronald C. Lindsay, British Ambassador to the United States, to FDR and Cordell Hull, 28 February 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 14, p. 32.

83. Christopher Andrew, Her Majesty's Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community (New York, 1986), p. 467.

84. Letter, Arthur Murray to FDR, 4 March 1940, PSF: Diplomatic: Great Britain: Arthur Murray, 1940-1944, FDRL.

85. Letter, Lord Lothian to FDR, 19 May 1940, PSF: Diplomatic: Great Britain, Reports from London on Military Situation by Lord Lothian, May-August 1940, FDRL; letter, Lord Halifax to FDR, 28 February 1942, PSF: Diplomatic: Great Britain, Daily Reports, 1942, FDRL. Although the FDRL has the 1940 reports, it never received the reports from 1941.

86. One example of this view was General Stanley Embick, who headed the War Plans Division in the mid-1930s and served as an army delegate at the 1941 ABC-1 meeting. See Ronald Schaffer, "Stanley D. Embick: Military Dissenter," Military Affairs, vol. 37 (October 1973), pp. 89-95.

87. Adolph Berle, Jr., Papers, Diary, 13 February 1941, FDRL.

88. Kimball, C & R, Vol. 1, pp. 373-79 and 388-89.

89. "The Reminiscences of Alan Goodrich Kirk," Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1962, p. 133. A copy is in the Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center [hereafter, OA, NHC], Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC. On the subject of British hesitation to share complete information with the United States, also see telegram, Ambassador John Winant to FDR, 3 April 1941, PSF: Safe: Winant, FDRL.

90. "Reminiscences of Kirk," p. 144; letter, Chamberlain to FDR, 25 August 1939, and letter, FDR to Neville Chamberlain, 31 August 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 16, pp. 299-301, 400.

91. "Reminiscences of Kirk," p. 143. For additional discussion of English fears concerning American security leaks, as well as a general discussion of the positives and negatives governing the exchange of information, see James R. Leutze, "Technology and Bargaining in Anglo-American Naval Relations: 1938-1946," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, vol. 103, no. 6 (June 1977), pp. 50-61.

92. Letter, William C. Bullitt, Ambassador to France, to FDR, 10 January 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 8, pp. 64-65; letter, Churchill to FDR, 25 February 1942, C & R, Vol. 1, p. 371.

93. Letter, Captain Allan Kirk, USN, attaché in London, to Rear Admiral W. S. Anderson, Director, Naval Intelligence, 3 November 1939, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, October-December 1939, FDRL. This letter was brought to FDR's attention; memorandum, Captain D. J. Callaghan, USN, Naval Aide to the President, to FDR, 8 December 1939, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, October- December 1939, FDRL.

94. Letter, FDR to Frank Knox, 29 December 1939, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department: Frank Knox, FDRL. For an exploration of Roosevelt's earlier use of Donovan on intelligence missions, see Brian R. Sullivan, "William J. Donovan, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Genesis of the Modern American Intelligence System, 1928-1941," paper given at the meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association, Little Rock, Arkansas, March 1989.

95. Thomas F. Troy, Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency (Washington, DC, 1981), pp. 31-32.

96. Letter, Sumner Welles, to FDR, 12 July 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department: Frank Knox, FDRL.

97. Andrew, Her Majesty's Secret Service, p. 466; F. H. Hinsley, British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations (London, 1979), Vol. 1, p. 312; H. Montgomery Hyde, The Quiet Canadian: The Secret Service Story of Sir William Stephenson (London, 1962), pp. 33-36; Troy, Donovan, pp. 31, 36.

98. Troy, Donovan, p. 32.

99. Ibid., p. 33.

100. Ibid., p. 32; Anthony Cave Brown, "C": The Secret Life of Sir Stewart Graham Menzies, Spymaster to Winston Churchill (New York, 1987), pp. 265-66.

101. Kimball, C & R, Vol. I, pp. 214, 278-79.

102. "Some Pertinent Data on Restrictions on Japanese Trade," PSF: Departmental: Treasury Department: Henry Morgenthau, Jr., 1938, no date [late 1937 or early 1938], FDRL.

103. Memorandum, Admiral William D. Leahy to FDR, 24 September 1937, FDR & FA, Vol. 6, p. 518.

104. Memorandum, Anderson, ONI, to Stark, 6 May 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, May-June 1940, and memo, Anderson, ONI, to Stark, 19 September 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, July-October 1940; FDRL.

105. Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in World War II Meant Victory or Defeat (New York, 1987), p. 96.

106. Letter and memorandum, Anthony J. Biddle, Jr., to FDR, 7 April 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 14, pp. 276-82.

107. Memorandum, Bernard Baruch to FDR, 29 April 1938, PSF: Confidential: War Department, 1933-1941, FDRL; memorandum, Baruch to FDR, 28 June 1938, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Louis Johnson, FDRL; letter, Baruch to FDR, 31 July 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 16, p. 175-78; letter, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Chairman, Board of Directors, U.S. Steel Corporation, to FDR, 5 July 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 10, p. 369

108. Memorandum, Louis Johnson, Assistant Secretary of War, to FDR, 16 January 1939, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Louis Johnson, FDRL

109. Memorandum, Louis Johnson to FDR, 16 August 1939, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Louis Johnson, FDRL.

110. Jeffery M. Dorwart, "The Roosevelt-Astor Espionage Ring," New York History, vol. 62, no. 3 (July 1981), pp. 307-22; Phillip Knightley, The Second Oldest Profession: Spies and Spying in the Twentieth Century (New York, 1986), pp. 211-12; Brown, "C", pp. 123-24.

111. Letter, Astor to FDR, no date [summer 1940?], PSF: Subject Vincent Astor, FDRL.

112. Letter, Astor to FDR, no date [spring 1938], PSF: Subject: Vincent Astor, FDRL. See the additional material in the same file.

113. Memorandum, [March 1941] PSF: Subject: Vincent Astor, FDRL.

114. Memorandum, "Economic Significance of German Occupation of Norway," Harry Hopkins, Secretary of Commerce, to Marguerite LeHand, private secretary to the President, 7 May 1940, PSF: Subject: Harry L. Hopkins, FDRL; memorandum, "Summary of Oil Situation in Japan, Germany and German-Controlled Territory," 6 September 1940, PSF: Departmental: Treasury Department: Henry Morgenthau, Jr., 1940, Part II, FDRL; PSF: Safe: Germany, FDRL; letter, Sumner Welles to FDR, 21 February 1941, PSF: Departmental: State Department: Welles, January-May 1941, FDRL.

115. Letter, FDR to Secretary of the Navy, 14 July 1941, OF 4485: Office of Strategic Services, 1940-October 1941, FDRL.The same letter went to all cabinet departments, as well as the Federal Trade Commission, the Maritime Commission, the Federal Communication Commission, the Tariff Commission, and the Office of Emergency

Management.

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118. Memorandum, Major General H. H. Arnold to the Chief of Staff, 15 November 1938, OF25T: War Department: Chief of Staff (Army), 1935-1939, FDRL.

119. For a discussion of the obvious imbalances in Roosevelt's program, see Mark S. Watson, "First Vigorous Steps in Re-arming, 1938-39," Military Affairs, vol. 12 (Summer 1948), pp. 65-78. Also see the view of Michael S. Sherry, The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon (New Haven, 1987), pp. 76-88.

120. FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, held in the White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, pp. 7-8, 12-17, 26-27; press conference, in the White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, pp. 224-26.

121. As an example of some of Bullitt's messages, see letter, Bullitt to FDR, 16 September 1939, PSF: Safe: William C. Bullitt, FDRL; letter, Bullitt to FDR, 12 May 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 10, pp. 87-95; letter, Bullitt to FDR, 23 November 1937, FDR & FA, Vol. 7, pp. 280-93. Also see Orville H. Bullitt (ed.), "For the President--Personal and Secret": Correspondence between Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt (Boston, 1972).

122. Letter, Bullitt to FDR, 20 September 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 11, p. 194.

123. Emphasis in original; letter, Wilson to FDR, 11 July 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 10, p. 383.

124. Memorandum, Lt. Col. Truman Smith to War Department, 6 November 1938, PSF: Subject: Aviation (Folder I), FDRL.

125. Memorandum, Joseph P. Kennedy, Chairman, U.S. Maritime Commission, to FDR, with excerpt from Lindbergh letter, 9 February 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 8, p. 250.

126. Memorandum, William D. Leahy to FDR, 14 February 1938, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, January-February 1938, FDRL; memorandum, Malin Craig to Colonel Edwin Watson, Military Aide to the President, 11 February 1938, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, January-February 1938, FDRL.

127. "Report on Military Aircraft, Plants, and Production . . . ," 12 September 1938, PSF: Departmental: War Department, 1938, FDRL; memorandum, Colonel J. H. Burns, Ordnance Department, to Louis Johnson, Assistant Secretary of War, 23 June 1938, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Louis Johnson, FDRL.

128. Letter, Louis Johnson to FDR, 7 December 1938, with accompanying material, PSF: Confidential: War Department, 1933-1941, FDRL; also see "Joint Annual Army-Navy Aviation Report on Germany, as of July 1, 1938," PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, March-December 1938, FDRL.

129. "Aircraft Production: Germany-Italy-Japan," no date [Fall 1941?], WPD 4494, RG 165, NA.

130. Ibid.; Alvin D. Coox, "The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Air Forces," Aerospace Historian, vol. 27, no. 2 (June 1980), p. 81.

131. Letter, Cordell Hull to FDR, 28 March 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 9, p. 254.

132. Lockwood would later gain fame as the commander of the Pacific Fleet submarine force,

1943-1945, while after the war Hillenkoetter would serve as the first director of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1947-1950.

133. Memorandum, General Malin Craig to FDR, 1 February 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, p. 229.

134. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (Garden City, NY, 1950), p. 33.

135. "Reminiscences of Kirk," p. 182.

136. Ibid., p. 183.

137. Pogue, Ordeal, pp. 200-1; Eisenhower, Crusade, pp. 32-34; Berle Papers, Diary, 8 March 1941, FDRL.

138. Letter, Hansell to Robert F. Futrell, 5 July 1988; copy of letter sent to Calvin L. Christman by Hansell.

139. Letter, Hansell to Calvin L. Christman, 27 September 1988. Also see James C. Gaston, Planning the American Air War: Four Men and Nine Days in 1941: An Inside Narrative (Washington, DC, 1982), pp. 29-30; Haywood S. Hansell, Jr., The Air Plan That Defeated Hitler (Atlanta, 1972), p. 50.

140. Letter, Hansell to Futrell; Hansell, Air Plan, pp. 49-56; Gaston, Planning the Air War, pp. 30-31.

141. Captain Thomas D. White, "Japan as an Objective for Air Attack," Air Corps Tactical School, 1937-1938, Maxwell Field, Alabama, p. 36, 248.102-1, United States Air Force Historical Research Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama [hereafter, USAFHRC].

142. Strategic Bombing Surveys, p. 39.

143. Quoted in Edwin T. Layton, "And I Was There:" Pearl Harbor and Midway--Breaking the Secrets (New York, 1985), p. 96.

144. Ibid.; "Reminiscences of Kirk," pp. 179-80; Gordon W. Prange, Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History (New York, 1986), pp. 294-95.

145. "Reminiscences of Kirk," p. 181; Troy, Donovan, pp. 43-70.

146. Letter, Attorney General to FDR, 17 June 1939, OF10A-10B: Department of Justice: FBI, 1939, FDRL.

147. Memorandum, FDR to Attorney General, 26 June 1939, OF10A-10B: Department of Justice: FBI, 1939, FDRL.

148. Memorandum, FDR to Secretary of State, 26 June 1939, OF10A-10B: Department of Justice: FBI, 1939, FDRL.

149. Memorandum, Francis Biddle, Attorney General, to FDR, 22 December 1941, OF10A-10B: Department of Justice: FBI, 1941-1942, FDRL. For a discussion of the FBI during the World War II era, see Richard Gid Powers, Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover (New York, 1987), ch. 8 passim.

150. Memorandum, Harold Smith, Director, Bureau of the Budget, to FDR, 16 October 1941, OF4514: J. Franklin Carter, 1933-1945, FDRL.

151. Letter, Astor to FDR, 7 June 1940, PSF: Subject: Vincent Astor, FDRL. Also see letter, Astor to FDR, 14 March [1941], PSF: Subject: Vincent Astor, FDRL.

152. Numerous references to such problems can be found in Berle Papers, Diary, and in PSF: Subject: John F. Carter; both FDRL.

153. Berle Papers, Diary, 12 February 1941, FDRL.

154. Memorandum, FDR to the Attorney General, the Under Secretary of State, Donovan, MID, and ONI, 30 December 1941, OF10A-10B: Department of Justice: FBI, 1941-1942, FDRL.

155. Emphasis in original; letter, Hart to Stark, 20 August 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, July-October 1940, FDRL.

156. Memorandum, Richardson to Stark, 22 October 1940, SEC NAV CNO 1940-1941, Secret, A16/FF1, CINCUS to CNO, RG 80, NA.

157. Records of the Joint Board, JB 325, Serial 533, 533 (a), 546, 617 and 618, RG 225, NA; Louis Morton, Strategy and Command: The First Two Years: The War in the Pacific: United States Army in World War II (Washington, DC, 1962), ch. 1; Louis Morton, "War Plan ORANGE: Evolution of a Strategy," World Politics, vol. 2 (January 1959), pp. 221-50; Michael Vlahos, "The Naval War College and the Origins of War-Planning against Japan," Naval War College Review, vol. 33 (July-August 1980), pp. 23-41.

158. "The Defense of the Philippine Islands by the United States," War Plans Division, 2 December 1935, WPD 3389-29, RG 165, NA.

159. Ibid.; memorandum, Chairman of the General Board to the Secretary of the Navy, 4 May 1932, GB 425, Serial No. 1502, RG 80, NA. See also Mark A. Stoler, "From Continentalism to Globalism: General Stanley D. Embick, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, and the Military View of American National Policy during the Second World War," Diplomatic History, vol. 6 (Summer 1982), pp. 303-7.

160. Weigley,"Role of the War Department and the Army," p. 186. Also see Fred Greene, "The Military View of American National Policy, 1904-1940," American Historical Review, vol. 66 (January 1961), pp. 354-77.

161. Memorandum, Admiral J. O. Richardson, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet, to Admiral

Harold Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, 22 October 1940, SEC NAV CNO 1940-1941, Secret, A16/FF1, CINCUS to CNO, RG 80, NA.

162. Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record (New York, 1952), p. 236.

163. John Keegan, The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare (New York, 1989), p. 171.

164. Quoted in Michael K. Doyle, "The U.S. Navy and War Plan Orange, 1933-1940: Making Necessity a Virtue," Naval War College Review, vol. 23 (May-June 1980), p. 56.

165. Ibid.

166. Letter, Yarnell to Leahy, 15 October 1937, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, October 1936-1937, FDRL.

167. Letter, FDR to Leahy, 10 November 1937, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, October 1936-1937, FDRL. FDR had given his Chicago "quarantine speech" on 5 October. Yarnell had written his letter to Leahy from Shanghai on 15 October 1937.

168. Records of the Joint Board, JB 325, Serial 642-1, RG 225, NA; Morton, Strategy and Command, pp. 67-72; Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942: The War Department: United States Army in World War II (Washington, DC, 1953), pp. 3-8.

169. Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, pp. 7-8; Morton, Strategy and Command, pp. 71-72.

170. John Major, "William Daniel Leahy," in Love (ed.), Chiefs of Naval Operations, p. 114,

says that FDR personally ordered the war games to be held in the Caribbean.

171. See the material on Fleet Problem XX in Official File 200-MMM, Dispatches and Telegrams Caribbean Cruise 26 February-3 March 1939, FDRL.

172. Memorandum, Hepburn Report to the Secretary of the Navy, 1 December 1938, PSF: Subject: Aviation (Folder I), FDRL.

173. Samuel Eliot Morison, History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. 3: The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942 (Boston, 1948; reprint, 1963), pp. 33-34; Louis Morton, Strategy and Command: The First Two Years: The War in the Pacific: United States Army in World War II (Washington, DC, 1962), p. 43. Since Congress did pass funds for the construction of bases within the United States, a cynic might be tempted to observe that at least part of Guam's problems rested with the fact that it had no congressman who could wheel and deal to obtain part of the "pork" for his home district.

174. Langer and Gleason, Challenge to Isolation, pp. 149-50; Dallek, Roosevelt, p. 194; Frederick W. Marks III, Wind over Sand: The Diplomacy of Franklin Roosevelt (Athens, 1988), p. 113.

175. "Are We Ready?" 31 August 1939, GB 425, Serial 1868, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, January-September 1939, FDRL.

176. Letter, Swanson to FDR, 2 November 1934, PSF: Departmental: Navy: Claude Swanson; memorandum, Secretary of the Navy to the President, 31 March 1937, PSF: Confidential: Navy Department, 1933-1939; memorandum, FDR to Swanson, 8 April 1937, PSF: Departmental: Navy: Claude Swanson; letter, Leahy to FDR, 18 September

1937, PSF: Departmental: Navy: Claude Swanson; memorandum, "Expansion of Torpedo Production," 5 January 1938, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, January-February 1938; memorandum, Richardson, C-in-C, U.S. Fleet, to Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, 6 August 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, July-October 1940; "The Problem of Production of Munitions in Relation to the Ability of the United States to Cope with Its Defense Problems in the Present World Situation," [October 1940?] PSF: Departmental: War Department Draft (1940); memorandum, FDR to Knox, 23 December 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, November-December 1940; all FDRL.

177. "Are We Ready-III," 14 June 1941, GB 425, Serial 144, RG 80, NA; memorandum from Stark, 2 June 1941, GB 425, RG 80, NA.

178. Barbara W. Tuchman, Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45 (New York, 1972), p. 259.

179. Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York, 1967), p. 402.

180. Weigley, "Role of the War Department and the Army," pp. 165-88; Weigley, "Interwar Army," pp. 257-77.

181. Christopher R. Gabel, "The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941," PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1981, ch. 1.

182. Quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 30.

183. Letter, Louis Johnson to General Craig, 10 December 1938, PSF: Subject: Aviation (Folder I); memorandum, General Craig to Johnson, 19 December 1938; both FDRL.

184. Watson, Chief of Staff, pp. 142-43.

185. Quoted in ibid., p. 157.

186. Albert A. Blum, "Birth and Death of the M-Day Plan," in Harold Stein (ed.), American Civil-Military Decisions: A Book of Case Studies, (Tuscaloosa, 1963), p. 66.

187. Letter, FDR to Lindsay Rogers, professor of public law, Columbia University, 11 September 1939, in Elliott Roosevelt (ed.), F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945, (New York, 1950), Vol. 2, pp. 920-21.

188. Ibid., pp. 63-96; Jordan A. Schwartz, The Speculator: Bernard M. Baruch in Washington, 1917-1965 (Chapel Hill, 1981), ch. 7, passim.

189. Roosevelt quite clearly was concerned over these ethnic groups, just as he worried over the Japanese in Hawaii, California, and Mexico. Memorandum, Knox to FDR, 27 January 1941, PSF: Departmental: Navy: Frank Knox, FDRL; FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee held in the White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, pp. 205-7.

190. FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, p. 207.

191. PPF1-0 (3): President, Diaries and Itineraries (Combined), 1937-1940; PPF1-0 (2): President, Appointment Diary, 1940; Usher's Diary, 1940; all FDRL.

192. FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, p. 207.

193. Quoted in Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, p. 19.

194. David C. Haglund, "George C. Marshall and the Question of Military Aid to England, May-June 1940," Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 15 (December 1980), pp. 745-

60; Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, pp. 12-20

195. Telegram, Kennedy to Cordell Hull, 12 June 1940, PSF: Safe: Kennedy, FDRL.

196. Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, pp. 13-15.

197. Memorandum, Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, to FDR, 9 October 1940, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Henry L. Stimson, 1940-1941, FDRL.

198. Letter, Chruchill to Roosevelt, 7 December 1940, in Kimball, C & R, Vol. 1, pp. 108-9.

199. Mark M. Lwenthal, "The Stark Memorandum and the American National Security Process, 1940," in Robert William Love (ed.), Changing Interpretations and New Sources in Naval History: Papers from the Third United States Naval Academy History Symposium, (New York, 1980), pp. 352-59.

200. Emphasis in the original. Stark to Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, 12 November 1940, PSF: Safe: Navy Department: Plan Dog, FDRL:; Stark's draft memorandum of 4 November is in PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, November-December 1940, FDRL.

201. Morton, "Germany First," p. 26.

202. It is difficult to know when FDR reached this conclusion. The author believes that it occurred in the late spring of 1941 as Germany seemed everywhere victorious: Yugoslavia, Greece, Crete, North Africa, and the North Atlantic. Although intelligence reports pointed toward a forthcoming German attack on the Soviet Union, these same reports also speculated that Moscow might accede to Berlin's demands, thus canceling the need for an invasion. In that case, Germany might proceed with its previously delayed assault on Britain, or perhaps it might make a move against Iceland or

Greenland. Other reports indicated that Germany might push into Spain and Gibraltar. From there, the administration feared that Germany might jump to the Azores and Cape Verde islands, West Africa, and then to Brazil. For a discussion of some of these possibilities, see Berle Papers, Diary, Spring 1941, passim, FDRL, and Heinrichs, Threshold of War, chs. 3-4, passim.

203. Memorandum, FDR to Knox, 26 January 1941, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, January-June 1941, FDRL.

204. Reynolds, Alliance, p. 184.

205. Although Roosevelt never officially endorsed any of these statements, it is clear that they reflected his thoughts. If they had not, he would have made his objection quite clear, as he did to Louis Johnson and his work with the IMP.

206. Letter, George S. Messersmith, Assistant Secretary of State, to Cordell Hull, 29 September 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 11, pp. 272-77; memorandum, unsigned, 11 October 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 11; pp. 346-52; FDR, confidential conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, in the White House, 31 January 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 13, pp. 197-223; summary, prepared by U.S. embassy in London, 3 March 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 14, pp. 5-25; report, naval attaché, Berlin, 10 July 1941, PSF: Estimates of Potential Military Strength, Berlin, FDRL.

207. Summary, prepared by U.S. embassy in London, 3 March 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 14, p. 18.

208. Report, naval attaché, Tokyo, No. 236-38, 28 November 1938, PSF: Estimates of Potential Military Strength, Tokyo, FDRL. For similar warnings, see memorandum,

Admiral Leahy to FDR, 15 December 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 12, pp. 328-329; letter, Leahy to FDR, 6 January 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 8, pp. 30-33.

209. Letter, Carlson to Marguerite LeHand, private secretary to the President, 29 November 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 12, p. 219.

210. Summary, prepared by U.S. embassy in London, 3 March 1939, FDR & FA, Vol. 14, p. 20.

211. Report, military attaché, Berlin, 24 January 1941, PSF: Estimates of Potential Military Strength, Berlin, FDRL.

212. Bernard M. Bass and George Dunteman, "Biases in the Evaluation of One's Own Group, Its Allies and Opponents," Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 8, no. 1 (March 1963), pp. 16-20, argue that the normal tendency is to undervalue the opposition and to overvalue oneself. Although he United States followed that model toward Japan, it clearly did not follow it in assessing Germany.

213. Adolph Berle, Jr., Papers, Diary, 26 May 1941, FDRL; memorandum, FDR to Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, 1 April 1941, PSF: Departmental: Treasury Department Henry Morgenthau, Jr., 1941-1942, FDRL. For additional discussion of the administration's concern for Latin America, see Pogue, Ordeal, pp. 54-56; Dallek, Roosevelt, pp. 234-36; Conn, "Changing Concepts"; and David Haglund, Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought, 1936-1940 (Albuquerque, 1984).

214. For an examination of the role of racism in the war in the Pacific, see John W. Dower, War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War (New York, 1986).

215. Memorandum, Roosevelt to Hopkins, Marshall, and King, 16 July 1942, PSF: Safe:

Marshall, FDRF.

216. For an example of that point, see Sherman Miles, "Pearl Harbor in Retrospect," Atlantic Monthly (July 1948), p. 65.

217. Report, naval attaché, Tokyo, No. 178-39, 9 August 1939, PSF: Estimates of Potential Military Strength, Tokyo, FDRL.

218. "Professional Notes," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, vol. 67 (June 1941), p. 880.

219. Ibid.

220. Quoted in memorandum, Admiral Leahy to FDR, 11 October 1937, PSF; Departmental: Navy Department, October 1936-1937, FDRL.

221. Minutes, British-United States Staff Conversations, 31 January 1941, WPD 4402-89, part VI, RG 165, NA.

222. Report, naval attaché, Tokyo, No. 236-38, 28 November 1938, PSF: Estimates of Potential Military Strength, Tokyo, FDRL; letter, Captain Riley F. McConnell, Chief of Staff, Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, to Admiral James O. Richardson, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 27 January 1938, FDR & FA, Vol. 8, p. 339. For a further discussion of racial thinking, see Howard Young, "Racial Attitudes and the U.S. Navy's Unpreparedness for War with Japan," in New Aspects of Naval history: Selected Papers from the 5th Naval History Symposium (Baltimore, 1985), pp. 177-182. For a discussion of reports that did correctly judge developments in Japanese combat aviation, see William M. Leary, "Assessing the Japanese Threat: Air Intelligence Prior to Pearl Harbor," Aerospace Historian, vol. 34, no. 4 (Winter 1987), pp. 272-77.

223. Telephone conversation, Stark and Bloch, 7 December 1941, OPNAV Telephone Records, 1941-1942, OA, NHC.

224. Message, OPNAV to CINCLANT and SPENAVO, 7 December 1941, Pearl Harbor Liaison Office, RG 80, NA.

225. Memorandum, E. M. Watson to FDR , 9 December 1941, PSF: Diplomatic: Philippines, 1941, FDRL.

226. Interview, 20 March 1942, PSF: Safe: War Department, FDRL.

227. Doyle, "Navy and Orange," p. 53.

228. Memorandum, Marshall to FDR, 22 September 1941, PSF: Departmental: War Department, 1941, FDRL.

229. Telegram, Grew to Hull, 3 November 1941, PSF: Confidential: Japan, 8 May 1939 to 17 November 1941, FDRL.

230. Captain Claire L. Chennault, "The Role of Defensive Pursuit," Air Corps Tactical School, [1933] 248.282-4, USAFHRC; memorandum, Chennault to Commandant, Air Corps Tactical School, 7 March 1935, 248.282-27, USAFHRC. For additional discussion of Chennault, see Martha Byrd, Chennault: Giving Wings to the Tiger (Tuscaloosa, 1987), chs. 3, 4, passim.

231. Letter, Haywood S. Hansell, Jr., to Calvin L. Christman, 27 September 1988.

232. The British also assumed that a single-engine fighter escort was an impossibility. In the opinion of Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, "the proper escort fighter will be a ship exactly like the bomber it is going to escort." Memorandum, Colonel Ira C. Eaker to General Arnold, "Report on Trip to England," [October 1941] pp. 168.04-6, Part I, 24,

USAFHRC.

233. Telephone conversation between Marshall and Lieutenant Commander W. R. Smedberg, III, 25 September 1941, OPNAV Telephone Records, 1941-1942, OA, NHC.

234. Charts showing bombing radius from Philippine airfields, September 1941, PSF: Departmental: [no file folder], FDRL; memorandum, Brigadier General Gerow to Stimson, 8 October 1941, WPD 3251-60, RG 165, NA; letter, FDR to Stimson, 14 October 1941, PSF: Departmental: "War Department 1941," FDRL; letter, Stimson to FDR, 21 October 1941, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Henry L. Stimson, 1940-1941, FDRL; and memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel George to General Arnold, 21 October 1941, pp. 145.94-2 (WP-I) Bk.2, USAFHRC. Also see Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (eds.), The Army Air Forces in World War II, Vol. 1, Plans and Early Operations, January 1939 to August 1942 (Chicago, 1948; reprint, Washington, DC, 1983), pp. 178-193; Sherry, American Air Power, pp. 105-15; Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, pp. 69-73; and Daniel F. Harrington, "A Careless Hope: American Air Power and Japan, 1941," Pacific Historical Review, vol. 48 (May 1979), pp. 217-38.

235. For a further discussion of this point, see Chihiro Hosoya, "Miscalculations in Deterrent Policy: Japanese-U.S. Relations, 1938-1941," Journal of Peace Research, vol. 5 (1968), pp. 97-115.

236. William R. Emerson, "Operation Pointblank: A Tale of Bombers and Fighters," Harmon Memorial Lectures, no. 4 (Colorado Springs, CO, 1962).

237. Memorandum, Lieutenant General H. H. Arnold, Commanding General, Army Air Forces, to FDR, 23 March 1942, PSF: Departmental: War Department: General Henry

H. "Hap" Arnold, FDRL.

238. Interview with World War II American submarine captain Edward L. Beach, 23 September 1987.

239. Stephen Roskill, Naval Policy between the Wars, Vol. 2: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament, 1930-1939 (Annapolis, 1976), pp. 226-29, 336-37; Wesley K. Wark, "Naval Intelligence in Peacetime: Britain's Problems in Assessing the German Threat, 1933-39," in Daniel M. Masterson (ed.), Naval History: The Sixth Symposium of the U.S. Naval Academy, (Wilmington, DE, 1987), p. 201.

240. Quoted in Roskill, Reluctant Rearmament, p. 337.

241. "Estimate of Potential Military Strength," Documents A, Naval Attaché, London, Documents Numbers 1-141 (12 January 1937-2 August 1939), PSF, FDRL. Out of 141 reports from London from January 1937 to August 1939, only one mentioned British ASW preparations, and that was a brief comment in August 1939 on trawlers being obtained for ASW work. There were sixteen reports on anti-aircraft defenses and barrage balloons.

242. Naval attaché report, London, 11 March 1940, PSF: Departmental: Navy Department, January-April 1940, FDRL. His naval aide brought this report to FDR's attention.

243. Interview with World War II German submarine captain Erich Topp, 25 March 1988.

244. Letter, Swanson to FDR, 3 December 1935, PSF: Departmental: Navy: Claude Swanson, FDRL.

245. General Board, memorandum, "Lessons from the current war and their effect . . . ," 9 May 1940, General Board pp. 429-4, RG 80, NA.

246. Letter, Albert Einstein to FDR, 2 August 1939, and memorandum, Leo Szilard, no date, PSF: Safe: Alexander Sachs, FDRL. Again American overestimation of Germany played a role, since the United States saw its scientific resources in a race against German scientific resources to produce more efficient and effective weapons. In truth, Anglo-American use of science for military purposes was much more systematic and successful than Germany's efforts. Fear of German capabilities spurred Allied endeavors.

247. For a survey of the role of scientific research within the Allied victory, see James Phinney Baxter 3rd, Scientists Against Time (Boston, 1946), and Gordon Wright, The Ordeal of Total War, 1939-1945 (New York, 1968), ch. 5, passim.

248. Letter, Stimson to FDR, 23 June 1941, PSF: Departmental: War Department: Henry L. Stimson, 1940-1941; Berle Papers, Diary, 19 July 1941; telegram, Greene to Hull, 27 July 1941, PSF: Safe: Germany; all FDRL. Heinrichs, Threshold of War, chs. 5-7, passim, provides a detailed discussion of the various reports flowing into Washington and of the swings in opinions during the summer and fall of 1941 as to whether or not the Soviet Union would still exist by winter.

249. Conference held at the Kremlin between Stalin, Hopkins, and interpreter Litvinov, 31 July 1941, Part I, PSF: Safe: Russia, FDRL.

250. Telegram, Hopkins to FDR, Hull, and Welles, 1 August 1941, PSF: Safe: Russia, FDRL. For additional discussion of Hopkins and his mission to Moscow, see Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History, rev. ed. (New York, 1950), pp. 317-48, and George McJimsey, Harry Hopkins: Ally of the Poor and Defender of Democracy (Cambridge, MA, 1987), pp. 180-89.

251. Letter, FDR to Leahy, 26 June 1941, in Roosevelt (ed.), F.D.R., Vol. 2, p. 1177.

252. Memorandum, FDR to Wayne Coy, 2 August 1941, in Roosevelt (ed.), F.D.R., Vol. 2, pp. 1195-96.

253. Memorandum, FDR to Hopkins, Marshall, and King, 16 July 1942, PSF: Safe: Marshall; memorandum, FDR to Hopkins, Marshall, and King, 24 July 1942, PSF: Safe: Marshall; both FDRL.

254. Letter, FDR to Churchill, 18 March 1942, Kimball, C & R, Vol. 1, p. 421.

255. Maurice Matloff, "Mr. Roosevelt's Three Wars: FDR as War Leader," Harmon Memorial Lectures, no. 6 (Colorado Springs, CO, 1964), p. 5.

256. For an examination of the link between United States industrial power and military strategy, see Maurice Matloff, "The 90-Division Gamble," in Kent Roberts Greenfield (ed.), Command Decisions, (Washington, DC, 1960), pp. 365-81, and Kent Roberts Greenfield, American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration (Baltimore, 1963), pp. 74-75.

257. Letter, Roosevelt to Stimson, 3 January 1942, PSF: Confidential: War Department, 1942 (Folder I), FDRL.

JAPANESE NET ASSESSMENT IN THE ERA BEFORE PEARL HARBOR

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The Apparatus of Net Assessment[1]

Japan until 1945 was classified as a constitutional monarchy, though sovereignty resided entirely in the sacred and inviolable Emperor (Tenno), not in the bicameral legislature (Diet) whose function was only to give (or presumably to withhold) consent to legislation. Under the cabinet system, the Prime Minister was directly responsible to the Throne. Each cabinet minister was assisted by a vice minister, parliamentary vice minister, and counselor. As of mid-1941, the full cabinet included the following portfolios under the Premier, Prince Konoe Fumimaro (July 1940-October 1941):

Foreign Affair	Matsuoka Yosuke
Home Affairs	Hiranuma Kiichiro
Finance	Kawada Isao
War	Tojo Hideki
Navy	Oikawa Koshiro
Justice	Kazami Akira
Education	Hashida Kunihiko
Agriculture and Forestry	Ino Hiroya
Commerce and Industry	Toyoda Teijiro
Communications	Murata Shozo

Railways	Ogawa Gotaro
Overseas Affairs	Akita Kiyoshi
Welfare	Kanamitsu Tsuneo

There were also three ministers without portfolio.

Matsuoka was Foreign Minister from July 1940 to July 1941. His Vice-Minister was Ohashi Chuichi (November 1940-July 1941). Among subordinate Foreign Ministry entities relevant to net assessment,the America Bureau was headed by Terasaki Taro; the East Asia Bureau by Yamamoto Kumaichi; the Euro-Asiatic Bureau by Sakamoto Tamao. These three bureau chiefs were brought in by Matusoka in September 1940; they all "outlived" him, bureaucratically speaking, after he fell.

Apart from full cabinet meetings, called by the Premier, there were also periodic Four Ministers' meetings (Premier, War, Navy, Foreign) and Five Ministers' meetings (Finance added), bringing together core members of the cabinet to discuss specific issues for subsequent consideration by the whole body.

The Cabinet Planning Board, which performed statistical and resources-estimating functions, was headed since April 1941 by Suzuki Tei'ichi, a retired general.

Theoretically, a Privy Council constituted the highest consultative body to the Emperor, advising him periodically on state matters of "grave importance." Under a president and vice president there were 24 Councillors of the most senior rank. The Privy Council was unconnected with governmental administration. Retired Admiral Suzuki Kantaro was the President of the Privy Council since June 1940.

Appointed directly by the Emperor was a state functionary of the Imperial Household

with the ancient title of Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. Encharged with the innocuous duty of keeping the Imperial and State seals and of administering matters relating to Imperial decrees and documents, the Lord Keeper was in fact the most important civilian advisor to the Throne. In constant personal and confidential contact with the Emperor, the Lord Keeper also chaired meetings of the ex-premier (Jushin). Marquis Kido Koichi held the post of Lord Keeper from June 1940 to 1945. His Chief Secretary was Matsudaira Yasumasa (1936-1945).

So far as the Japanese armed forces were concerned, the Emperor possessed supreme authority over the army and the navy (according to the Meiji Constitution of 1889), and all Imperial orders were issued in his name. Responsibility to the monarch for supreme command or operational guidance lay entirely outside the administrative purview of the ministers of state including those of War and Navy, who handled matters of organization and military administration. It was the Chiefs of Staff of the two services who advised the Emperor about strategy and operations, and (like the service ministers) were privileged to be received directly by the monarch without going through civilian governmental channels such as the Premier, cabinet, or Diet.

As a matter of applied politics, the armed forces possessed life-or-death power over the formation of civilian cabinets by virtue of their ability to sanction or to withhold approval of a Minister of War or of Navy. Since 1936, too, the services had obtained the restoration of a requirement that their cabinet ministers be selected only from active-duty general or flag officer rosters; e.g., lieutenant general or full general, vice admiral or full admiral.

With responsibility for handling matters pertaining to national defense and operational direction vested in the General Staffs of the Army and the Navy (AGS and NGS), under the

direct command of the Emperor, the individual service Chiefs of Staff oversaw the necessary planning and attended His Majesty at periodic extragovernmental Throne Councils of War.

In November 1937, after the outbreak of hostilities with China, an Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) was established. Theoretically, IGHQ constituted a single instrumentality personally commanded by the Emperor. In practice, it consisted of two autonomous organs: the army and the navy, under their respective Chiefs of Staff, there being no independent air force. The sphere of IGHQ was thus a function of command and not of administration. Contrary to the wish of civilian leaders who had hoped in vain that IGHQ would include the Premier and would be authorized to coordinate highest-level civil-military affairs, IGHQ itself proved to be a sheerly military symbol of operational guidance.[2]

To try to bridge the gap between the civilian authorities and the High Command, an IGHQ-Government Liaison Conference structure was devised and increasingly employed after 1940. Coordinated by the Chief Cabinet Secretary for the government and by the chiefs of the Military Affairs and Naval Affairs Bureaus for the two services, the extralegal Liaison Conference would assemble, as necessary, the Chiefs and/or Deputy Chiefs of Staff with the Premier, the Foreign Affairs, War, and Navy ministers, plus other cabinet members on occasion. Though the Liaison Conference was a very useful device and though the numerical balance of power was always tilted preponderantly in favor of the armed forces, a number of military and naval officers were less than enthusiastic about it, ever fearful of any civilian "intrusion" into the services' cherished prerogative of supreme command. Still, the Liaison Conference eventually became more important, in foreign policy matters, than the cabinet, which tended to devote itself mainly to domestic affairs.[3]

When ultimate legal sanction by the sovereign appearing necessary in the decisionmaking process, above the Liaison Conference level, the Premier and the two Chiefs of Staff would call for an Imperial Conference -- a fullscale meeting held in the presence of the Emperor at the Palace. By the time that such an august conclave was convened, all preparatory discussions had been completed, and the pro-forma seal of Imperial approval was all that remained to be elicited after an additional but indecisive period allotted for statements and for some questions by the Emperor's proxies.

The Key Players

To this point, it will have been discerned that much of the Japanese net assessment apparatus was of a disjointed, often ceremonial nature, and that strong civilian input was lacking. Close students of the process have gone so far as to conclude that, to all intents and purposes, foreign policy questions were

> answered almost exclusively by the armed services. It was largely the nucleus group within the army and navy who specified the program to be followed in the immediate future and who led the fight for its acceptance by the nonmilitary members of the government, who had to give their consent though they were otherwise powerless. . . . Initially there was not the unanimity which always emerged, in on fashion or another, at the end.[4]

According to officer veterans and to observers of the prewar Japanese net assessment process, there was a greater tendency in the army than in the navy for decisionmaking to work its way upward from the above-mentioned "nucleus" layer in the services.[5] For the purposes of the present study, we shall now identify selected key players within the policy units of both services as of mid-1941.[6]

The War Minister since July 1940 was Lt. Gen. Tojo Hideki; his Vice-Minister, from

April 1941, was Lt. Gen. Kimura Heitaro. Maj. Gen. Muto Akira had headed the Military Affairs Bureau from September 1939, with Col. Sanada Joichiro as chief of the subordinate Army Affairs Section after February 1941. Other relevant War Ministry assessment elements included the following:

Military Affairs Section	Col. Sato Kenryo
Military Administration Bureau	Maj. Gen. Tanaka Ryukichi
Military Administration Section	Col. Yamazaki Masao
Economic Mobilization Bureau	Maj. Gen. Yamada Seiichi
War Materiel Section	Col. Okada Kikusaburo

Gen. Sugiyama Hajime had been Chief of the Army General Staff since October 1940; Lt. Gen. Tsukada Osamu, Deputy Chief, from November of that year. The most important AGS net assessment units follow:

1st (Operations) Bureau	Lt. Gen. Tanaka Shin'ichi (October 1940)
2nd (Operations) Section	Col. Doi Akio (September 1940)
2nd (Intelligence) Section	Maj. Gen. Okamoto Kiyotomi (April 1941)
" 5th Section (USSR)	Col. Isomura Takesuke
" 6th Section (Europe-America)	Col. Amano Masakazu
" 7th Section (China)	Col. Toko Kitaru
" 8th Section (Propaganda-Subversion)	Col. Karakawa Yasuo

In October 1940 a 20th (War Guidance) Subsection was set up under Col. Arisue Yadoru, reporting directly to the AGS Deputy Chief.

The Navy Minister since September 1940 was Admiral Oikawa Koshiro; Vice Adm. Sawamoto Yorio took over as Vice-Minister in April 1941. The center for political policymaking in the Navy reposed in the Naval Affairs Bureau. When Rear Adm. Oka Takazumi became chief of the Bureau in October 1940, he instituted a number of significant improvements. The main duties of the 2nd Section were changed from administration to policy, and in November 1940 Oka assigned an old subordinate, Capt. Ishikawa Shingo, to head the Section, which now became the counterpart of the Military Affairs Section in the War Ministry.

Naval Affairs Bureau chief Oka also formed an important National Defense Policy Committee made up of four subcommittees, the most influential of which was the 1st Subcommittee, dominated by Captain Ishikawa. The latter recruited experts on diplomacy and political strategy from the Naval Affairs Bureaus, notably his friends of long standing, Jin Shigenori and Shiba Katsuo. Other members of the 1st Subcommittee included the head of the Naval Affairs Bureau's 1st Section, Capt. Takada Toshitane, and, from the NGS, the chief of the Operations Section and the officer in charge of War Guidance (International Relations) (see below).

In the Navy Ministry too, from late 1940, a Naval Preparations Bureau had been established, under Rear Adm. Hoshina Zenshiro. His subordinate sections dealt with combat preparations, industrial mobilization, harbors, and labor.

Admiral Nagano Osami had become Chief of the Naval General Staff in April 1941. Vice Adm. Kondo Nobutake still served as the Deputy Chief, since October 1939. Read Adm. Fukudome Shigeru took charge of the 1st Bureau (Operations) in April 1941. Under him were Capt. Tomioka Sadatoshi, 1st Section chief (Operations, October 1940), and Capt. Okada

Tameji, 2nd Section chief (Defense, November 1939). Directly attached to the 1st Bureau chief as OIC for war guidance and international relations was Capt. Ono Takeji (since November 1939).

Rear Adm. Takagi Takeo directed the activities of the NGS 2nd Bureau (Logistics and Mobilization) since November 1939. The 3rd Section (Ships, Ordnance, and Facilities) came under Capt. Yanagimoto Ryusaku (November 1939); the 4th Section (Mobilization, Transportation, and Supplies), under Capt. Kurihara Etsuzo (November 1940).

The NGS 3rd Bureau (Intelligence) was headed by Rear Adm. Maeda Minoru (October 1940). Subordinate sections included the following:

5th Section (U.S., Latin America)	Capt. Yamaguchi Bunjiro (May 1940)
6th Section (China, Manchukuo)	Capt. Fujiwara Kiyoma (Oct. 1939) Capt. Kuwahara Shigetoh (June 1941)
7th Section (Europe-USSR)	Capt. Kojima Hideo (May 1939)
8th Section (UK-India)	Capt. Horiuchi Shigetada (Nov. 1939)

There was also and NGS War Preparations Analysis Committee (without a chairman per se), whose members were drawn from among the Naval Vice Ministers, Deputy Chief of Staff, and bureau and section chiefs as required.

Testing the System of Net Assessment: Japan, 1941

Prefatory Remarks

Having introduced the apparatus of decisionmaking in prewar Japan and identified the key players involved, we are in position to examine the specific process of net assessment invoked by the civil-military leadership when faced by the greatest crisis in the country's modern

era -- the case history of 1941. Our analysis will be informed by several hypotheses whose validity will be tested in due course:

(1) for all its faults, preconceptions, and weaknesses, Japanese net assessment in 1941 was rationally driven and deliberate;

(2) there was no single, full-blown decision for war or peace, but a series of interlinked, sequential decisions;

(3) the Japanese deliberations between June and August 1941 were of greater significance than those from September through November of the same year, which are usually discussed in the literature;

(4) one particular option originally transcended all others in importance -- the so-called Go-North Option, which has never received the attention it deserves for the simple reason that, although very seriously considered at the time, as we shall see, it was a choice that was ultimately not adopted, a "road not take" (to borrow the imagery of Robert Frost).

In view of the war-related destruction of much of the Japanese primary records, it is always difficult to reconstruct events within prewar and wartime Japan. For the time frame of the present study, however, the author has been able to supplement extant Japanese-language documentation with numerous personal interviews conducted in Japan with knowledgeable survivors of the period.

The Situation Prior to Summer 1941

Five months before the European war broke out in 1939, the Japanese Army's estimate of the situation and its prescriptions for dealing with envisaged international developments were

articulated by the AGS Deputy, Lt. Gen. Nakajima Tetsuzo, at the annual conference of chiefs of staff of all field armies held in Tokyo on 1 April.[7]

> The recent European situation [said Nakajima] is changing rapidly, but in general we judge that around 1941-42 Germany will have acquired the full strength to take the offensive against other nations. England and the United States, too, are aiming at the approximate date of 1941 for the buildup of their national strength and military preparations. Other countries are following their lead. As a result, worldwide changes can be expected around 1942.

For the sake of Japan's independent national policy, the AGS Deputy continued, it was necessary to respond to the challenge of changes in the world arena by tackling two primary tasks: disposition of the China conflict and attainment of a full wartime footing. "We cannot attend to one of these tasks and ignore the other," warned Nakajima.

Japanese postwar critics have pointed out that the army's underestimation by three years of the advent of global crisis caused immeasurable harm to Japan's overall national defense readiness. Neither of the tasks identified as priorities by the AGS had been effectively addressed by 1941-42.[8] The Nakajima prospectus, however, is useful in suggesting the fuzzy prognostications and platitudinous exhortations that characterized what passed for net assessment at the upper levels of the prewar Japanese High Command.

Even before the year 1939 had ended, and only nine months after General Nakajima's presentation, a series of cataclysmic events had already occurred on the international scene. First, Japan itself became involved in an undeclared but bloody war against the Russians on the border flatlands between Japan's puppet state Manchukuo and the Soviet satellite Outer Mongolia at Nomonhan/Khalkhin-gol (May-September).[9] Since the Japanese Army was concurrently still bogged down in hostilities with China since July 1937, the distracting conflict at Nomonhan added up to a one and one-half war situation unattractive to any strategist and taxing to any war

guidance assessor.

Second, the Nazis and the Russians consummated an epoch-making, unlikely nonaggression pact at Moscow on 23 August. Third, the Germans -- freed from concern about Soviet interference -- attacked Poland on 1 September. Fourth, England and France, which had done nothing to assist beleaguered Czechoslovakia in 1938, went to war with Germany over more-distant Poland on 3 September. Fifth, the Poles were overrun and conquered by the Germans from the west and the Russians from the east in a matter of weeks. Sixth, at the end of November, the Soviet Union manufactured a pretext for invading and eventually defeating neighboring Finland.

Most of these major events in Europe were not foretold accurately in Tokyo, causing problems of credibility for the incumbent prime minister and his cabinet. Hiranuma Kiichiro, for one, resigned amidst the turmoil of August 1939 engendered by the "treacherous and unpardonable" Soviet-German nonaggression pact. Hiranuma admitted feebly that an "extremely complex if not baffling situation" had developed in Europe. His successor, retired old General Abe Nobuyuki, was weak and ineffective, lasting only four and one-half months. No foreign minister could even be recruited for almost a month, and the daily workings or policy were left to career bureaucrats. For a while, according to one Japanese postwar critic, governmental and military estimates of the situation "lost objectivity and disarray grew."[10]

Some of the net assessment officials in Tokyo hoped that Europe's discomfiture might prove to be Japan's boon, whereby the China conflict could be solved and Chiang Kai-shek's stubborn regime brought down by a final ground offensive, by the breakoff of foreign assistance to China from such countries as England, France and Russia, and by the creation of a pro-

Japanese puppet regime in Nanking. Another approach, much debated in Tokyo, was to tighten military, economic, and political links with the European Axis powers. In due course, a Tripartite Pact was signed in Berlin with Germany and Italy on 27 September 1940.

Meanwhile the powerful German armed forces had defeated Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland, and France in a ruthless blitzkrieg campaign that achieved the pinnacle of victory when Paris fell on 13 June. Very much on Japanese minds now was the fate of the isolated yet resources-rich European colonies in the Far East -- especially the Dutch East Indies and French Indochina. By September 1940 the Japanese had compelled the impotent Vichy French authorities to allow the establishment of the first Japanese beach-heads in northern Indochina.

As for the United Kingdom, the Germans launched a mighty air offensive against the British home isles. Japanese net assessment officers now grappled with such issues as the prospects for German success in the air and in a land invasion of England. Then there was the question whether the United States, still a neutral, would enter the war on Britain's behalf or would be deterred by the Tripartite Pact, as hoped. Much centered on the question whether American interests were separable from those of the British, or whether the Anglo-Saxon powers would form a wartime coalition as in World War I.

The Soviet Specter

While a great deal of the discussion and cogitation occurring at the highest levels in Tokyo was devoted to matters involving Japan vis-à-vis the United States, England, France, the Netherlands East Indies, China, and the Axis, thinking about one other country was always very near the surface, whether openly expressed or not: the Japanese Army's traditional main enemy,

Russia.

Few Japanese officers would admit it, even today, but the thrashing that a goodly portion of the Kwantung Army incurred at Nomonhan in the summer of 1939 had caused Japanese Army leaders to become extremely apprehensive about the Russians afterwards and to think twice about tangling with the USSR. Cocky Japanese estimates of the inferiority of Soviet military strength had subsided after the experience at Nomonhan, and there was now a fear that, if the Russians chose to attack (as they might, once the Finnish war was over), they could overrun Manchukuo just as easily as the Germans had crushed Poland. By 1940, in fact, the number of infantry divisions in the Soviet Far East abutting Manchuria was thought to have increased ominously from 30 to 36. IJA operations analysts also estimated that if Soviet bombers based in Siberia attacked targets in the Japanese rear in Manchuria, it would prove impossible for the Kwantung Army to concentrate its forces in emergency.[11]

Three approaches to dealing with the Northern Problem (as the Soviet threat was called) seemed advisable: to lull the Russians into a condition of détente; to team up from the east with the Germans (since the Japanese obviously could not go it alone at this stage) in case Hitler decided to strike the USSR from the west; and, all the while, to build up military strength and the economic infrastructure inside Manchukuo. Even if the Japanese Army had to go into action in Southeast Asia to seize raw materials and to intercept foreign aid going to China, those operations were regarded as merely temporary. As soon as the southern sphere had been secured, the Japanese Army intended to redeploy to the Manchurian theater to face off against the Russians, their chief hypothetical foe.

In the spring of 1941, Foreign Minister Matsuoka -- voluble, tough-minded, experienced,

and imaginative -- decided on a grandiose scheme. He would visit not only Japan's Axis partners in Europe but also the Soviet Union, going and coming. In Moscow he would strive to resolve tensions outstanding between Japan and Russia, to the extent of perhaps enticing the USSR to join the Tripartite Pact, thereby forming a quadrilateral Continental Alliance that could be expected to restrain the United States and to help finish off England and China. In the event, on the way home on 13 April 1941, he settled for a surprising five-year Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact that took the pressure off the strategic rear of both countries. One astute AGS colonel wrote in his secret diary, as soon as he heard the news, that Stalin must have seized the chance to rush through the agreement with Matsuoka, out of dread of the unavoidability of hostilities with the Third Reich (despite the Soviet-German nonaggression treaty of August 1939).[12]

Early Signals of Russo-German Hostilities

Actually, the Japanese authorities were receiving a variety of authentic clues concerning a Nazi-Soviet war, months before the German invasion took place. Thus, when Kurusu Saburo, the departing ambassador in Berlin, came to pay his respects to the Führer on 3 February, Hitler himself dropped an unmistakable hint already about the deteriorating state of relations with the USSR. Four days later, an alerted Emperor shared his private concerns with Lord Keeper Kido in Tokyo. It was imperative, the monarch warned, to think very carefully about the current notion of taking action in Southeast Asia, for Japan would face a serious crisis if a simultaneous confrontation developed in the north as a result of obligations imposed by the Tripartite Pact.[13]

Kurusu's was not the only troubling indicator emanating from Europe. There were also

disquieting and highly specific reports from Balkan listening posts such as Bucharest and especially Sofia, noting the growing tension between the Third Reich and Russia, and the steady eastward movement of German military forces. Vice Admiral Nomur Naokuni, a member of the Yamashita inspection mission to the Axis countries in Europe, insisted that an impression of the inevitability of a Russo-German war was the subject of conversation all over the Continent. In March in Berlin he told his old friend Admiral Raeder that if, as rumored, Germany was going to fight the Russians, the Tripartite Alliance was as good as dead. A two-front war would repeat the mistake of the First World War. Since Nomura feared "unexpected results," every effort should be made to avoid war with the USSR, a statement to which Raeder did not respond.

An army member of the Yamashita mission, Maj. Gen. Ayabe Kitsuju, was impressed by the technical excellence and coordination displayed by the German armed forces, yet he felt that German officers characteristically underestimated the Russians. Everybody told Ayabe that the USSR could be defeated in a month, but already, in the spring of 1941, he believed that he could detect a "whiff of thought" among the Germans that the conquest of England was being abandoned and that the Germans were about to commence anti-Soviet operations. Ayabe often discussed with German officers the dangers of two-front operations; he became convinced that the German military was underestimating the problem and nurturing dangerous preconceptions.[14]

Reassuring messages about alleged quiescence on the Russo-German front, however, continued to reach Tokyo from the Ambassador to the USSR, retired Lt. Gen. Tatekawa Yoshitsugu, and till around 1 April from Oshima Hiroshi, the ardently Germanophile retired lieutenant general who was the new envoy to Berlin. Typical of IJA thinking at the time was

the view expressed to Prince Higashikuni on 7 April by Oshima's predecessor as military attaché in Berlin, Maj. Gen. Okamoto Kiyofuku, now chief of the AGS Intelligence Bureau. Germany, in Okamoto's view, was confronted by an untrustworthy Russia on the east, by an undefeated England on the west, and by a feeble Italian partner on the south. As Hitler, Ribbentrop, and the other Nazi leaders had been telling Oshima, the Germans could trust only the Japanese and would leave Far Eastern matters entirely to them. It was true that Germany had built up its army from 100 to 180 divisions since the beginning of the European war in 1939, and that 130 to 140 of those divisions were deployed on the eastern front. Still, Okamoto insisted, the Nazi leaders seemed cautious about becoming involved in hostilities with the Soviet Union and the United States, and they did not want Japan to become involved either. Okamoto stressed that, although Japan must remain loyal to its commitments, it should not rely excessively on the Germans.[15]

Nevertheless, by the time Matsuoka arrived in the German capital in late March, even Oshima seems to have come round to the view that a Nazi-Soviet war might break out in the near future and said as much to an IJA field-grade officer who belonged to Matsuoka's party. Though the Japanese foreign minister remained unconvinced, one of the first things that he asked the Nazi leadership when he visited Berlin was whether Germany would really attack the USSR. Ribbentrop replied that the Germans had no understanding with Russia about Finland, Bulgaria, and Turkey. The nonaggression treaty of 1939 had been engendered by "unavoidable circumstances," but "Germany would somehow or other like to defeat the Soviet Union." At present, this feat could undoubtedly be accomplished within three of four months of fighting, and the USSR would disintegrate when beaten. If the Japanese meanwhile sought to conquer

Singapore, they would no longer need to be concerned with the Northern Problem.

In conversations with Hitler as well as Ribbentrop, Matsuoka heard the "faithlessness" of the USSR castigated, and he learned that the Nazis were convinced the roots of trouble in Europe would never be eradicated unless the Russians were dealt a blow once and for all. Hitler's interpreter repeated the Führer's hint twice slowly: that a Russo-German clash was "not necessarily unexpected."

Uncertainties must still have been gnawing at Matsuoka as he headed back to Moscow in early April He may have been discouraged by Germany's unilateral policy of an early preventive war against the Soviet Union or he may have been encouraged by the broadness of the hints he had received in Berlin. Months later, when it was too late, he admitted to his colleagues in Tokyo: "As a matter of fact, I concluded a Neutrality Pact [with the USSR] because I though that Germany and Soviet Russia would not go to war. If I had known . . . I would have preferred to take a more friendly position towards Germany, and I would not have concluded the Neutrality Treaty." Yet after the signature of that pact in 1941, Ribbentrop is known to have said to Oshima in private, "We told [Matsuoka] unmistakably about the inevitability of the Russo-German war."[16]

Based on his conversations with the Nazi leadership, Oshima began to dispatch reports to Tokyo suggesting that the Reich was moving in the general direction of hostilities with the Soviet Union. On 10 April he had an especially important talk with Ribbentrop, who asserted that, depending on the attitude of the Russians, Germany might well fight the USSR that year. The Germans had ample strength now and could successfully terminate operations within several months of launching an invasion. It would be best to smash the Soviet Union before it could

complete its own preparations. This statement was an even clearer expression of intent than Ribbentrop had voiced to Matsuoka recently.[17]

It is true that Oshima had the advantage of possessing the single best entrée to Nazi policy makers. He could chat face to face with Hitler without interpreters. Since the Führer did not customarily ask advice of his entourage concerning vital issues, the Japanese Ambassador could derive the earliest and most authentic intelligence and could often sense the hidden drift of Reich policy.

The subjective assets of Oshima were, of course, counterbalanced by his natural tendency to ingest all information imparted to him as "gospel truth." For example, he seemed unable to accept whatever cautionary views existed. In particular, he downplayed the pessimistic appreciations transmitted repeatedly to Tokyo by the excellent Military Attaché in Stockholm, Colonel Onodera Makoto, to the effect that Germany lacked the miiitary and overall strength with which to overcome Russia in the long run. Perhaps it was not so much that Oshima was being taken in by the Nazis as that he simply did not want to dwell on matters unfavorable to his beloved second homeland.[18]

Victims of Disinformation

Oshima was particularly anxious to ascertain whether Germany had changed its stated policy and would instead conduct an assault against the USSR before conquering Britain. Here, we now know, he was the unwitting dupe of Hitler's secret ploy: to lull both foe and friend into believing that the vague plans for operation Sea Lion, the invasion of England, were both continuing and real. They were not. In this respect, Oshima was in very good company; even

Admiral Raeder and the German Naval High Command were among the last to learn about Hitler's true intentions for an offensive against the Soviet Union embodied in Operation Barbarossa. As early as 1940, the Führer had disingenuously assured Raeder that German troop movements to the east were only feints designed to mask Sea Lion, although in that very year Hitler had already abandoned any serious idea about invading England.

Indeed, the Nazi command went so far as to perpetrate a crafty double bluff by spreading word, almost till the end, that Barbarossa was a deception concocted to divert the British from coping with Sea Lion. Senior German officers were secretly instructed by Marshal Keitel in February 1941 that, after mid-April, "the misdirecting measures meant for Barbarossa itself must not be seen as any more than misdirection and diversion for the invasion of Poland."[19]

This is exactly what Oshima heard on the best authority and advised the net assessors in Tokyo. After consulting with army and navy colleagues in Berlin, on 16 April he wired his estimate of the situation to Premier Konoe, who shared it with Privy Seal Kido. The latter, in turn, conveyed the information to the Emperor. It was Oshima's impression that, sometime between May and October 1941 and undoubtedly before the winter of 1941-42, Germany might invade the Soviet Union simultaneously with an offensive against the British Isles, after overwhelming preparation. Such a war with Russia would arise, not from the Reich's frustration in the struggle against England but from Soviet interference since the winter of 1940-41. The Germans seemed confident about their prospects and did not necessarily expect Japan to enter the war; they would be satisfied if the Japanese impeded Soviet troop transfers westward from Siberia. Oshima did not want Japan to act hastily and strike north. Instead, the Japanese should seize the bet opportunity and concentrate on reducing Singapore, the key to Anglo-American

power in Southeast Asia.[20]

From Washington, Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburo, a retired admiral, also predicted the nearness of Russo-German hostilities. But whereas Oshima pressed for a Japanese thrust to the south in force, Nomura argued for Japanese neutrality to the last. The contradictions in the situation vexed the more astute assessors in Tokyo -- notably the fact that, although the USSR was the common enemy of Germany and Japan, the latter was still neutral, which meant that the vaunted intimacy between the Axis powers was out of kilter before the summer of 1941, apart from the matter of the timing. Colonel Tanemura Sako, a General Staff planner, recorded his private lament: "While epochal U.S.-Japanese negotiations are about to get under way [in Washington], our ally [Germany] and our Neutrality Pact co-signator [Russia] are going to fight. The world situation has become truly complicated."[21]

Soon afterwards, on 13 May, the current Japanese military attaché in Berlin, Maj. Gen. Sakanishi Kazuyoshi, reported on the basis of information from German Army Intelligence that Nazi-Soviet hostilities were inevitable, and he warned that the Yamashita Mission ought to hurry home from Germany. Other IJA attachés in Europe reported various stages of German troop movement eastward. Japanese Intelligence also knew that some redeployment of Soviet forces west from Siberia had begun from around March 1941.[22]

Despite the accumulating evidence, the civil and military net assessment analysts in Tokyo were clearly perplexed by the perennial challenge of weighing capabilities against intentions, Germany's in this case. Government officials agonized about an adjustment of national policy to deal with a possible Nazi-Soviet war. The General Staff took Oshima's and Sakanishi's reports with large doses of salt. Tantalized by the lure of the south, IJA leaders

recognized that Russo-German relations had deteriorated but doubted Germany's seriousness about commencing all-out hostilities against the USSR.

From Moscow, Ambassador Tatekawa was still dispensing cheerful predictions. He had conferred in mid-May with Foreign Minister Molotov, who conveyed the impression the Russians regarded the heavy concentration of German forces along their frontier as a mere "demonstration" designed to exert pressure on the Soviet Union to maintain the supply of essential commodities needed for the Reich's war machine, ranging from grain to oil and iron. Tatekawa expected no military clash between the Germans and the Russians unless the USSR suddenly reversed its policy, which was unlikely because Stalin had no real choice but to appease the Nazis. In short, Tatekawa judged that the likelihood of a full-scale war was slim.[23]

By the middle of May the thinking of the Japanese military had still not crystallized. There was some feeling that the concept of Sea Lion was very much alive but that no major German cross-Channel landings would be launched until the English were reeling; in the meantime the Germans would rely on a counterblockade of the British Isles emphasizing aircraft and submarines. There was also an opinion, held by personages such as Prince Higashikuni, that Japan should not allow itself to be exploited by the Germans and enslaved by the Tripartite Pact. Like Okamoto, the Prince affirmed on 12 May that Japan should use the treaty to its own advantage.[24]

With military attaché Sakanishi's most recent message from Berlin in hand, on 15 May the AGS convened a special meeting of bureau chiefs. The conferees concluded that Nazi-Soviet hostilities would not break out soon. German troop movements to Eastern Europe were apparently intended to support foreign policy. The Reich would not be so foolhardy as to

engage two major enemies -- England and the USSR -- at the same time.

Some effort was made to reopen the issue. Colonel Arisue's 20th (War Guidance) Subsection wanted to know what the AGS and the War Ministry thought about the stance that Japan should adopt in the event of a Russo-German war. From the War Ministry's Military Affairs section, Lt. Col. Ishii Akiho drafted a position paper, which he shared with his superiors and with the AGS. Since it was the consensus of net assessment, however, that war was not imminent, these activities stimulated little response.[25]

Much more on the military's mind was the increasing likelihood that the United States would go to war against Germany in order to save Britain. Kido discussed a number of related questions with Prince Higashikuni on 18 May: Was Japan bound to come in immediately to support the Reich in such an eventuality? Would the USSR take the Anglo-Americans' side and fight Germany too? If Tokyo decided to go to war with the U.S. and Britain out of obligation to the Germans, would not the Japanese find themselves surrounded by enemies on all sides (America, England, and China), become isolated, and left alone in the Far East? Could Japan withstand a protracted war under such circumstances? Dominating Kido's presentation was the desperate need for raw materials from the south, such as oil and rubber, but he wanted Japan to assess the situation very carefully -- entirely in terms of its own long-range perspective, and not to be railroaded into careless hostilities at such a decisive time in its history. The question of the probability of a Nazi-Soviet war did not figure in the discussion with Higashikuni.[26]

If Matsuoka had finally come round to the view that a Russo-German war was bound to erupt, at least he wanted it to be put off. On the basis of discussions in the Cabinet and the High Command, he sent a personal message to Ribbentrop on 28 May, requesting that hostilities

be avoided and that he be given a candid response. Ribbentrop replied to the effect that hostilities were inevitable but that Germany was sure of being able to end operations successfully within two or three months of their start. The results of such a conflict would certainly benefit Japan. "Considering the fact that everything I have said in the past turned out the way I predicted," said Ribbentrop, "trust me now."[27]

Conflicting intelligence continued to confuse the Japanese Government. Whereas the sources in Germany were predicting war, those in the Soviet Union were still denying it. In Moscow, at least two important persons did not share the general realization in the Russian capital that hostilities were coming: Stalin, who refused to believe it, and the Japanese military attaché, Colonel Yamaoka, who could not detect it, trapped as he was "like a bird in a cage." In Tokyo, it was Yamaoka's views which prevailed.

Nevertheless, the most able of the Soviet defectors -- G. S. Lyushkov, the chief of the NKVD in Siberia until his flight to the Japanese in mid-1938 -- monitored Russian-language radio broadcasts, reached the conclusion that a Russo-German war was at hand, and warned the Japanese to be ready, a month before the German invasion. Japanese Intelligence promptly issued a secret bulletin, distributed among the General Staff. It elicited no reaction.[28]

The Murk Begins to Clear Slowly in Tokyo

Despite the accumulating evidence of the imminence of Nazi-Soviet hostilities, the net assessment people in Tokyo still were wallowing in bafflement as June dawned. Senior German military sources had been assuring Oshima that, one begun, the fighting against the Russians

would probably be over in four weeks. "It should not, in fact, be called a war," boasted these authorities, "only a police action."

The Japanese wondered about the significance of Rudolf Hess's bizarre flight to England (11 May), but concluded that instead of heralding war between Germany and Russia, it might only imply a bilateral settlement between Germany and Britain. Even less was known about the implications of Hitler's conference with Mussolini at the Brenner Pass on 2 June.[29]

Some of the answers began to fall into place after Oshima was invited to chat with Hitler and Ribbentrop at Berchtesgaden on 3-4 June. German-Soviet relations said the Führer, had grown much worse, and war was probably unavoidable. Though the Russian attitude was ostensibly friendly, the facts belied it, especially with respect to the contest for Yugoslavia. Hitler found the Soviet activities unacceptable; he was the sort of person who drew his sword as soon as he discerned hostile intent in an opponent. It was imperative to crush the communists for the sake of the final offensive against England. Operations against Russia would end swiftly, and neither Britain nor the United States could do a thing about it. From Hitler's tone, Oshima judged that the Führer desired Japanese collaboration, yet would not demand actions that were not stipulated in the Axis alliance as obligations. In summary, Oshima warned Tokyo that war was inevitable and that it was coming soon.[30]

Although Oshima's access to the Nazi leadership was admired in Tokyo, the High Command tended to question the objectivity of his reporting to a certain degree. But when a strong confirming message also arrived on 5 June from military attaché Sakanishi in Berlin, conveying his own impressions of Oshima's most recent conversations with the Germans, the Japanese military authorities finally sat up and took notice. Judging from the atmosphere

surrounding Oshima's meetings, Sakanishi reported, hostilities were certain, and Tokyo should not err in reaching a decision as to national policy.

AGS Deputy Tsukada, for one, was jarred by the news. It was inexcusable, he told his staff, for Germany to go to war against the USSR without consulting Japan beforehand. Under the circumstances, grumbled Tsukada, the Japanese might opt for neutrality. Meanwhile he General Staff began serious consideration of national policy guidelines that ought to be adopted if the Reich did attack Russia. Colonel Doi's Operations Section, Maj. Gen. Okamoto's Intelligence Bureau, and Colonel Arisue's War Guidance Subsection worked on the first drafts of a plan.[31]

The tenor of the thinking in the General Staff at this time can be summarized as follows:[32] While the Germans might be planning an attack, they might also be bluffing for political and strategic reasons bearing on the relations between Japan and the USSR. In fact, the Soviet Union had recently become more cooperative toward Japan, probably for the very reason that German-Russian relations had worsened. Germany's bluster might be a stratagem devised to mask a final offensive against the British Isles. Hints were one thing, but the Germans had still not revealed any specific time of action. Even Oshima's reports indicated the following priorities of the German High Command: (1) assault on England; (2) destruction of the Royal Navy in the eastern Mediterranean; (3) Iraq; (4) Egypt and Suez; (5) West Africa; (6) Gibraltar. In any event, most AGS officers concluded that, if a Soviet-German war did break out, Japan must consult its own interests with respect to the Axis and the USSR.

Meanwhile, as soon as Premier Konoe received the latest information from Berlin, he communicated with Kido, who reported it to the Emperor. When the monarch's senior military

aide de camp sounded out War Minister Tojo, the latter responded that he did not regard the situation as urgent. Matsuoka himself went to the Palace and, despite all of Oshima's and Sakanishi's warnings, advised the Emperor that he regarded the chances for retention of the Russo-German status quo as 60 percent and assessed the prospect for war as only 40 percent.[33]

At a specially convened liaison conference, Matsuoka asserted that though he did not mean to contradict Oshima, he wondered if Hitler was really willing to go to war merely to smash communism. Instead, might not Hitler be expecting the war in the west to drag on for 20 or 30 years, in which case he needed to be rid of the danger from the east? There was a distinct possibility that Germany and Britain would achieve a separate settlement. Matsuoka than indicated that he subscribed to the idea (planted by the Germans, we now know) that there would be some warning of events to come -- that since Germany would need a pretext to declare war on the Russians, she would announce conditions in the form of an ultimatum before striking. Turning to the Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff, the Foreign Minister asked for their opinions. Those officers replied evasively that careful consideration should be given to the Russo-German question, but that (as Tojo had told the Imperial ADC) they did not regard it as pressing. They deferred clarification of their attitudes for another occasion.[34]

Intelligence Bureau chief Okamoto was vexed by the dillydallying of the brass. "When the head of state says he will do something," Okamoto muttered (referring to Hitler's intimations to Oshima), "he will do just that." To try to crystallize the nebulous net-assessment views and advance the process of developing an overdue national policy, the War Ministry's Military Affairs Section chief Sato and Army Affairs Section chief Sanada proposed conferring with AGS Operations Section chief Doi, Propaganda-Subversion Section chief Karakawa, and War

Guidance Subsection chief Arisue.

What the War Ministry officers had in mind became apparent from the three draft plans that Sato placed on the table: Option 1 -- drive south by force; Option 2 -- tackle the Northern Problem while conciliating the United States; Option 3 -- let matters stand. Sato and Sanada pressed for Option 1. Doi and Karakawa concurred, but Arisue objected. Privately, he wondered what on earth the hawks were thinking, after War Guidance had been developing a measured policy vis-à-vis the south for the past six months. The navy would have to be induced to accept any radical new policy. Arisue was troubled that the atmosphere was still murky and that a unified and decisive national policy could not be formulated. Did Sato even know the background? The discussion grew heated, and no progress was made.[35]

Within the General Staff, Arisue's subsection went back to the drawing board, trying to reconcile the discordant opinions. At the AGS conference next day, Doi argued for a contraction of Japanese operations in China immediately after war broke out between Germany and Russia. China Section chief Toko disagreed. With the Chinese capacity to resist nearing collapse, why cut back the front? Euro-American Section chief Amano took issue with Toko. China was not close to defeat, he argued, but even if the China problem could be solved, Japan could not survive without pushing south. What kind of a fuzzy policy was it, asked Amano, when Japan would not push north, when the China option was no good, and when Japan would not push south either? Toko did not seem to oppose a drive south but Arisue did, apparently because of concern that the navy could not be won over.

Again, no consensus could be reached, despite vigorous discussion. Doi, however, did go to see his NGS counterpart in Operations, Captain Tomioka, and tried to get him to accept

the southern option. The AGS diarist confided to his secret record on 6 June: "Now it is the turn for the Army and the Navy to be at loggerheads, while public opinion is not unified and national policy is not decided. What will be the fate of the nation? It truly is a source of anguish."[36]

Conference after conference ensued daily within and between the services. From one meeting between the AGS and NGS Operations Bureau chiefs and ministries' Military/Naval Affairs Bureau chiefs, the AGS diarist picked up contradictory signals:[37]

> When we sounded out the Navy, our Military Affairs Bureau chief derived the impression that they were in agreement with us, but our Operations Bureau chief thought the opposite. The Navy's intentions are simply unclear to us.

Particularly opaque to the army was the navy's attitude toward Japan's obligations under the Axis Pact and possible use of force against the United States and Britain. As for the proposed policy for dealing with a war between Germany and the USSR, the army staff deduced that the navy's position was far from unified internally and that the navy leaders themselves may have been confused and irresponsible. The army even feared that the navy might withdraw proposals that it had submitted as mere gambits to counter Matsuoka's "big talk." But some of the army staff officers railed privately against the so-called timidity and unclear outlook or their own superiors such as Military Affairs Bureau chief Muto and even AGS chief Sugiyama.[38]

As the days passed in early June, the net assessment officers in Tokyo were hung up on the question whether a Russo-German war would be good or bad for Japan. Clearly such a war would wreck the chances for a quadrilateral alliance designed to neutralize the United States and would upset the balance of power by pushing the USSR into the western camp. But could Germany knock out Russia as quickly as it claimed? Most IJA officers remained mesmerized

by the German military, as could be seen in Intelligence Bureau chief Okamoto's attitude. There might be some quibbling over the speed of Germany's victory but few doubted the eventual outcome. Instead, there was widespread concern lest Japan miss out on permanently eliminating the northern threat while it was pushing into the southern regions. Naval staff officers such as Captain Ishikawa, however, dreaded a northern war, often asserting that there were no raw materials in Siberia and that operations to the north would have to be an entirely army show.[39]

From a rare IJN document (perhaps a working draft) that has survived, we know that on 7 June the navy devised its own approach to dealing with a Russo-German war: Japan should not intervene at present but should make preparations to respond to changes in the situation, meanwhile adopting a wait-and-see policy. The present setup of the army and navy should be maintained in general vis-à-vis the USSR but this should not preclude the reinforcement of individual units. The preparations coupled with hints of aggressive action when the time was ripe should have the effect of not discouraging the Axis partners' hopes of seeing hostilities break out between Japan and Russia. Operations against China should be intensified; e.g., the Kunming campaign. In general terms, Japan should remain flexible for the time being, manifesting the effectiveness of the Triple Alliance by checking the United States, England, and the USSR. Intervention in a war against Russia would inevitably bring Japan into hostilities against the U.S., Britain, China, and Holland as well -- a confrontation for which Japan was not yet ready. Diplomacy should be used to accomplish the purchase of northern Sakhalin; force the Russians to stop helping Chiang Kai-shek; and get the USSR to promise not to cooperate politically and militarily with the British and Americans in the Far East.[40]

On the army side, in the temporary absence of AGS chief Sugiyama and Operations

Bureau chief Tanaka, Colonel Arisue came up with a strangely worded compromise called junbiiin taisei (preparatory-formation setup) on 7 June. This plan called for Japan to be ready to strike either north or south, but the choice of direction would depend on circumstances. All-out preparations would be undertaken only after that decision was made. Arisue must have had various rationalizations for this opportunistic scheme. The northern hawks would be assuaged, while a southern advance depended on the navy anyhow. Though Okamoto and Doi interpreted the junbiiin as sanctioning the southern notion, Arisue insisted that the plan reflected absolutely no commitment to go one way or another.

The AGS diarist was not charitable: Doi and Amano, he wrote, were star students; Arisue was a "dunce" who could not comprehend the problems of national strength and the handling of the China war. "Can't we devise a better plan? Do we have to settle for something inferior? This reflects the reality afflicting not only our War Guidance Subsection but also the nation."

When Sugiyama got back from Kyushu, a meeting of bureau chiefs was held on the 8th. Thought the basic idea of junbiiin was accepted, the Chief of Staff seemed dissatisfied, for the draft made no clearcut choice between north or south. The conferees decided to put off the official decision until Tanaka had returned to Tokyo.[41]

As soon as Tanaka got back from his trip to Manchuria, the AGS called a meeting of bureau chiefs on 9 June. Tanaka expressed his displeasure with a plan that apparently envisaged war, whether in the north or south, only in the event of a "good chance." Did this mean that Japan would utterly avoid fighting if no such opportunity arose? Tanaka did not seem to oppose parallel operations northward and southward. Nevertheless, since the navy could not be

expected to accept the new belligerent approach to the southern problem, the army might as well pursue the northern priority and de-emphasize the "good opportunity arising" prerequisite, at least where the south was concerned -- a roundabout way of saying Japan should head north.

Sugiyama, however, seemed to be contemplating operations in the north without beefing up the Kwantung Army in Manchuria; in the south he was prepared to fight the United States and England as soon as the Japanese had established bases in French Indochina and Thailand. Though a protracted war should be avoided, Japan would inevitably have to engage in hostilities, without being unfaithful to the Axis alliance; it was merely a question of <u>when</u> to fight.

Put off by the Chief of Staff's "lack of resolve" and by his willingness to keep a watchful but pointless eye on both south and north, the Operations Bureau chief did not hesitate to speak his mind. Sugiyama flared up, in turn, intimating that a plan embodying Tanaka's strong language would only complicate matters for the conferees and wreck the possibility of agreement with all concerned. Indeed, the meeting on the 9th broke up without reaching a decision.[42]

After the bureau chiefs' meeting, Arisue went to see Tanaka to try to iron out the notion of the "good opportunity arising" that was stymieing the staff. Tanaka was adamant: A good chance had to be <u>manufactured</u> deliberately, not merely hoped for. The opportunity that resulted could then be exploited, and force used to the south and the north. These things had to be stated explicitly in the planning document, Tanaka insisted.

Arisue raised objections about the practicability of going that far in the language of a national policy paper. Tanaka "blew up" and, according to the AGS diarist, was on the verge of literally indulging in fisticuffs with Arisue. The latter gave in and reluctantly accepted the general's belligerent wording.[43] Such were a few of the perils and a glimpse into the

subjectiveness of net assessment at the High Command level in mid-1941.

Another on-on-one meeting between senior officers followed in the evening of the 9th -- between AGS Lieutenant General Tanaka and War Ministry Lieutenant General Muto. Interpreting what the navy really had in mind figured prominently in the discussion but, as noted earlier, the navy's intentions remained obscure to both generals.

On the next day, 10 June, an additional bureau chiefs' conference took place. It was becoming apparent why Tanaka was opposing further contraction of the operations in China: Since he was so energetically contemplating drives north and south, Tanaka was concerned lest the Army High Command's freedom to conduct its own operational guidance might be curtailed if overt curbs were imposed on the China theater. The bureau chiefs also reviewed the question of how best to enunciate obligations within the spirit of the Axis alliance. Underlying the discussion of phraseology was the staff officers' inner conviction that, "though we would cling to the Pact, we were not going to commit double suicide because of it. We should make good use of it but decide the matter of waging war strictly on our own initiative." It is apparent that Tanaka's fundamental outlook was carrying the day so far.[44]

In the current discussions of strategic emphasis, questions bearing directly on the proposed advance into southern French Indochina and its implications distracted from and overlapped those concerning a hypothetical German-Soviet conflagration. On 13 June, however, a bit of progress was made in devising an overall policy. The War Ministry submitted a plan which was reviewed by the AGS War Guidance staff. Arisue then went back to convince Bureau Chief Tanaka that the idea of "deliberate manufacture" of a good chance should revert merely to prospects for an "opportunity arising" which Japan could seize. Tanaka finally gave

in.

The plan now called for military preparations to be made against Russia, in concert with changes in the situation. If German-Soviet hostilities developed favorably from the standpoint of Japan, the latter would use force to solve the Northern Problem. Care should be taken to avoid dispersing Japanese national strength, and the domestic wartime setup should be reinforced, especially regarding defense of the homeland.

As for the stance that Japan should adopt for the time being in case of a German attack on the Soviet Union, the leadership of the two services reached a very cautious agreement: the government should make no statement whatsoever; public discussion should not be allowed; and requests from Germany should be answered in the spirit of the Axis alliance.

The AGS diarist was disgusted with the waffling nature of the preceding policy: "In the event, our attitude is entirely unclear and 'wait-and-see.' The Intelligence Bureau is very unhappy with it. As for the AGS Deputy Chief, Lieutenant General Tsukada, he does not necessarily incline toward the Axis; his tone of guidance has been centering on disposition of the China conflict."[45]

Arisue briefed his navy counterparts concerning the IJA drafts on 14 June. There was considerable discussion of Japan's obligations to the Axis, about which the navy was not exactly enthusiastic, but there was no official IJN thought of abandoning the Alliance, since it was not believed that Japan's geostrategic position would be damaged by the outbreak of a German-Soviet war. In this sense, Arisue's greatest apprehensions about the IJN's attitude were assuaged.[46]

All of the many conversations and arguments in Tokyo from early to mid-June 1941

would have become moot unless the Germans did invade the USSR, but the signals were still so mixed that net assessment could not yet reach a definitive prognostication. From Berlin, Oshima reported on 17 June that Ribbentrop had told him Germany had no intention of conducting negotiations with the Russians. Soviet armor could be annihilated in a month or two of combat. Oshima, as usual, pressed for a time definite, to which Ribbentrop replied: "That is really a delicate question and I lack the authority to reply, but if it is necessary for Japan to get ready, kindly do so within the next two weeks at the latest."[47]

From Moscow, however, at much the same time, Naval Attaché Yamaguchi Suteji's report of 16 June reflected the wishful thinking of the Russians. Since the Soviet armed forces stood no chance of overcoming the German army and Luftwaffe, the USSR was behaving meekly toward the Reich and was making every effort to avoid hostilities. There might be great tension between the two countries and some border clashes, but there would be no all-out war.[48]

Even the hitherto-blinkered Japanese ambassador in Moscow, General Tatekawa, at the last minute began to question Foreign Minister Molotov's complacency and sanguine attitude. Tatekawa shared with the American Ambassador, on the 20th, his own prediction as to Japanese policy in the event of a German-Russian war: "I do not think we will come in right away. We will probably wait to see what happens and if the outcome is what I think it will be, we will pick up the pieces." In the strictest confidence, Tatekawa revealed that both the Germans and the Japanese had begun to evacuate Embassy personnel from Moscow. War would probably come by the end of June, and operations would last through July and August, at which time the Red Army would crumble.[49]

The Japanese High Command and Matsuoka remained inundated by concerns about the

Southern Problem and the economic and political pressures being exerted by the Americans and the British, and by the Dutch in the East Indies. Amidst the distractions, word suddenly reached Tokyo on 22 June that the Reich had indeed invaded Russia. The Foreign Ministry first heard about the war from International News Service in late morning. Matsuoka was at the Kabuki Theater with Wang Ching-wei, the head of the puppet regime in Nanking, when an urgent cable arrived from Oshima. Riobentrop had sent for the Ambassador at 4 a.m., an hour and a half before the German broadcast of Hitler's announcement, and had asked him to inform the Japanese Government that the Reich had been provoked into going to war.

Premier Konoe had been away in the Kyoto area in mid-June and, most recently, had been involved in hosting Wang since 17 June. Kido, in the bath when the news was phoned to him on the 22nd, promptly advised the Emperor. Ambassador Ott conveyed the information officially to Matusoka in the evening. Prince Higashikuni learned of the invasion from a newspaper extra. The duty officer at Kwantung Army headquarters in Hsinking heard about it from the Manchukuo National Press Agency. Yamashita's mission, aboard the train eastward from Moscow, was passing through Sverdlovsk when word reached them.[50]

Weeks and months of tantalizing speculation were at last at an end. Colonel Tanemura noted in this diary entry for 22 June: "The Japanese people, who were shocked by the fact that a nonaggression agreement had been signed between the Germans and the Russians [in 1939], are stirred by deep emotion at the news of war between them. What should be done by Japan, linked to one party by the Tripartite Alliance and to the other by the Neutrality Pact?"[51]

<u>The Crisis in Net Assessment: The German-Soviet Nexus, June 1941</u>

The befuddlement of Japanese net assessment concerning the German-Soviet relationship till mid-1941 was no longer tolerable after the Nazis invaded the USSR on 22 June. The German action caused consternation in Tokyo. A mortified Premier Konoe felt that Hitler had betrayed Japan a second time, the first having been when he suddenly negotiated the non-aggression treaty with the Russians in 1939. For a while Konoe even considered the idea of Japanese withdrawal from the Tripartite Pact, but events had progressed too far to make such a reversal practicable.[52]

It had clearly become necessary to face up to the Northern Problem, once and for all. At the governmental level Matsuoka performed a surprising and arbitrary flip-flop, with an alacrity that is still the subject of much controversy. Immediately after learning of the German assault on Russia, the architect of the Japanese-Soviet neutrality agreement of April rushed to see the Emperor, without first clearing matters with the cabinet. He told the monarch that Japan should now attack the USSR in concert with the Germans. This would mean putting off the drive southward for a while, though eventually Japan would have to engage not only the Russians but also the Americans and the British simultaneously.

Astonished by the foreign minister's unexpected prognosis, the Emperor directed him to confer immediately with Konoe. The monarch then conveyed the thrust of Matsuoka's report to Kido for relay to Konoe. Yet even after the foreign minister came to see Konoe later that day, the premier admitted in his diary that he could not fathom Matsuoka's true meaning. The most charitable interpretation was that the foreign minister must have wanted to share with the Emperor his personal assessment of the worst-case scenario.

On 23 June Konoe was received by the Emperor, whom he sought to reassure with

respect to Matsuoka's unsettling presentation. Still uncertain, however, whether the foreign minister was submitting only an estimate or was pressing for a specific but unauthorized course of action, Konoe decided to put off further high-level deliberations until he and Kido could clarify the situation. On the basis of further probing, they surmised that Matusoka meant the following: (1) Japan should definitely attack the Soviet Union. (2) War against the United States should be avoided. (3) If the Americans entered the war against Germany, Japan would have to fight the U.S. too.

That might be Matsuoka's own opinion but, as prime minister, Konoe would have to decide the policy of the government as a whole. He therefore conferred with the War Minister and the Navy Minister, and proceeded to convene five IGHQ-Government Liaison Conferences in a row (25-28 June), culminating in a climactic Imperial Conference on 2 July.[53]

At the High Command level, the War Ministry staff was generally less enthusiastic about the coming of the Russo-German struggle than was the AGS, whose diarist wrote as follows on 22 June: "Has Hitler overestimated German's national strength? If not, Germany is certain to win, in which case, 'Go ahead and do so!'" Asked later for his opinion of possible negative impact of the Soviet-German war on Japan, Operations Bureau Chief Tanaka replied in roundabout fashion:[54]

> There is no simple answer. For a fact, the hostilities were bound to improve our defensive posture in the north, so I did think it would help our operations in the south. One had to assess the war in global terms, however, and on that count there was some uncertainty about the prospects for German success. The AGS Soviet Intelligence shop was particularly uncertain, in contrast to the views of AGS German Intelligence. In general, though, there was much expectation of a German victory; so, viewing matters from the larger standpoint, I felt that the developments were not necessarily disadvantageous for Japan.

Typical of the more cautious AGS officers were Lt. Col. Kumon Aribumi and Lt. Col.

Hayashi Saburo. Kumon, an air staff officer in the Operations Sections drew the attention of his sanguine colleagues when he reacted strongly to news of the German invasion. "Hitler has made a grievous error," warned Kumon.

One of the AGS Soviet Intelligence officers to whom General Tanaka had alluded was Hayashi, an expert on the USSR. Originally, like the Operations staff, Hayashi had not expected the Reich to strike, out of concern for a two-front war. The most the Germans might do would be to conduct a feint designed to shift attention away from the main landing operations against England. But when Intelligence Bureau Chief Okamoto ordered Soviet Section Chief Isomura to come up with an estimate of the situation, it was Hayashi who prepared the draft. Two central questions concerned Hayashi: Had the German attack achieved surprise? Would the war be of long or short duration?

> I judged that the Germans did achieve surprise [Hayashi recollects], and I respected them highly for it. Since space was their strength, if the Germans did not win before winter set in, the Russians would revive. Those who judged that the USSR would not be defeated were low-ranking officers such as me. Bureau Chief Okamoto tended to accept the Germans' statements because of his prior service as military attaché in the Reich. As a result, that tendency spread throughout the entire 2nd Bureau. I once told Major General Okamoto that I would like him to include dissenting opinions in the estimates too.[55]

In the War Ministry, Military Affairs Chief Sato Kenryo was displeased with the Germans for having attacked the Soviet Union without consulting Japan beforehand.

> I was concerned [says Sato] lest the Germans' eastern invasion become a carbon copy of Napoleon's campaign or of our experience in China, for I did not expect the USSR to be defeated easily. Yet even if the Russians went down with little difficulty, I felt that the results would be bad for Japan, since England and America would still be unscathed. In other words, I foresaw ill effects from the Germans' strength being devoured by the Russians. Army Affairs Section Chief Sanada also said that Hitler had done an unwise thing.[56]

The preceding views were echoed by other War Ministry officers. Lieutenant Colonel

Ishii, senior staff officer in Military Affairs, told his superior, Major General Muto:

> The German forces may break through the Russians at first and push deeply to the east. But the Soviet territory is vast, the raw materials are plentiful, an the population is numerous -- the same features embodied in the slogans of the resistance front in China. In addition, the political system under the one-party dictatorship of the Communist Party has been ensconced quite strongly. The USSR will not give up easily, and I predict that a situation resembling the [protracted] China Incident will result.

To this, Muto replied, "I agree with you completely. It would be disastrous if anybody was so optimistic as to think that the Soviet Union will collapse." None of Ishii's colleagues disagreed.[57]

In Moscow, however, Ambassador Tatekawa was very negative about the prospects for the Russians' survival. "Speaking as a military man," Tatekawa expressed his opinion to the American Ambassador the "the Red Army, which . . was anxious to fight Germany, might make a creditable showing for a brief period of time but that when the break came it would be largely a question of the Germans collecting hundreds of thousands of prisoners." The Japanese envoy expected chaos and perhaps mob rule in Moscow; the Soviet Government leadership would probably run away.[58]

Before Military Affairs Bureau chief Muto and Operations chief Tanaka got together to coordinate their views, they received a detailed briefing by Intelligence chief Okamoto on 22 June. It soon became apparent that the Intelligence Bureau was of the opinion the Germans would knock out the Russians within a few months. If the Soviet forces had indeed been taken by surprise, then the USSR as a whole was in grave danger; yet if the Russians managed to conduct retrograde operations, a prolonged war might well result. Okamoto backed away from espousing the latter hypothesis, however, by wondering whether it was really probable.

Continuing to hedge his bets, the Intelligence chief balanced what he called the great likelihood that the hostilities would be quickly finished operationally, against the problem that in overall terms the prospects were difficult to assess.

Okamoto then engaged in an interesting effort at quantification. Assuming that the war could not last more than two or three months and that in the process the Russians would have lost Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov, the Donbas, and Baku, Japanese Intelligence estimated Soviet losses of national infrastructure as follows: electric power, 60%; iron ore, 50%; coal, 60%; oil, 75%; grain, 29%; and population, 75%.[59]

Armed with these rosy projections, Muto and Tanaka agreed that the Japanese Army's strategic thinking to date was sound. In this frame of mind, they participated in a four-hour meeting of IJA and IJN bureau chiefs in the afternoon of 23 June, with War Guidance Colonel Arisue and his navy counterpart Captain Ono in attendance too. According to Tanaka, though the navy voiced no particular dissent regarding the fundamental notion of "facing in two directions," it did not agree on details of implementation. The navy was clearly worried that there would be a threat to its cherished strategy of advance to the south and defense in the north -- a stance which implied "the Navy first, the Army second." Tanaka and his colleagues felt that, from the objections the navy raised, it had some distrust of the army's objectives. The navy also struck the army chiefs as fuzzy in its own intentions, and devoid of firm resolve to commit itself to fight. As for the continental theater, the navy wanted to intensify the pressure on China by severing the land routes which the Nationalists were using to bring in aid, but the army clung successfully to its insistence that the battle lines there not be expanded.

Tanaka was disappointed with the navy's stand. His skepticism regarding its alleged lack

of true resolve went so far as to surmise that the navy was merely concerned with justifying its quest for national funding and resources needed to build up its own strength. Tanaka feared that Japan would lose a great opportunity to solve the Northern Problem if the army's attention was diverted southward by the "wishy-washy" navy. "I demanded that we use force in the north," Tanaka remembers, "but the Navy did everything it could to prevent this." The army staff could not escape the impression that, no matter what the navy said openly, its planners were interested only in the South and nurtured the covert intention of checking the army from ever using force in the North. In the end, as Tanaka feared, the two services had to compromise on the vague principle of the "ripe persimmon."[60]

The metaphor about persimmons was much in vogue in Tokyo at the time, though interpretations of the exact meaning varied widely. As impatient person might knock persimmons off the tree with a pole when the fruit started to ripen. Others might say that persimmons were only ripe if they fell when the tree was shaken. Still others meant that persimmons should be picked off the ground only after they had fallen on their own weight.[61]

Matsuoka was not the only high official who wanted to knock persimmons off the tree. The more aggressive AGS staff officers were more than willing to use a pole against the ripening fruit. In the War Ministry, where there was a preference to wait for the persimmons to fall and to focus attention on the China conflict instead, stronger opinions also existed. A budget officer in the Army Affairs Section, Matsushita Yuzo, has said: "I thought the German-Soviet war would be a short one. I had the impression that Germany would be able to prevail. A number of us felt that Japan should not 'miss the bus' [another favorite phrase of the time] and ought to push north. . . . Regardless of our individual prediction, however, we were all devoted to the

ripe-persimmon principle."[62]

Naturally, Konoe wanted to know what the military experts thought, especially after Matsuoka made his brazen foray to the Imperial Palace. Retired Lt. Gen. Suzuki Tei'ichi, the head of the Cabinet Planning Board and an adherent of the hawkish old anticommunist Imperial Way Faction (Kodo-ha) within the army, had reputedly recommended the Northern thrust to the Foreign Minister. To sound out the views of another Kodo-ha confidant, retired Lt. Gen. Obata Toshishiro, Premier Konoe sent his Chief Cabinet Secretary, Tomita. The latter reported Obata'a unhesitant view that Germany would have beaten the USSR by the end of September 1941. An unconvinced Konoe wondered if such an estimate was not much too optimistic, though General Okamoto's Intelligence briefing was even more positive: Hostilities would be over by the end of August.[63]

The navy's attitude was another matter. Naval Intelligence spoke of the advisability for Japan to maintain "benign neutrality" toward Germany for the time being while making the necessary preparations to respond quickly to changes in the situation. With specific reference to the Nazi-Soviet war, IJN Intelligence had a large number of points to make:

(1) The strategic timing for Germany's assault made good sense, for the Russians had been building up and reorganizing their military strength since only the autumn of 1940 and were at a very weak juncture at the moment. German confidence in the outcome of their operations was warranted.

(2) There were two prospects for the campaign:

(a) In case matters went well for the Germans and they prevailed swiftly (in about two months, as they were predicting), the USSR would be split, probably along the Volga River line, and

would be neutralized for a while. Stalin's government might collapse, giving rise to a Partisan resistance movement. (Case (a) was deemed the more probable.)

(b) The Germans might be quite successful militarily but the Russians might be able to hold out well too, maintaining the Stalin regime (or at least an anti-German structure), confronting the Germans far inland, and waging protracted hostilities. (Case (b) was less likely but, if it materialized, a new government would most likely be set up inside the German zone of occupation.)

(3) As for the Soviet Far East, the Russians would make every effort to transfer forces westward, especially air force units. Consequently, the USSR would retain only minimum strength in Siberia, but what was left would be considerable. In particular, Soviet naval strength would not diminish.

(4) Depending upon the situation on the European front, the Russian Far East might break away from the Soviet Union and declare its independence. The military power of such a separate entity would be much weakened, however, because of Siberia's limited capability for self-sufficiency and the small population numbering only 2,000,000.

(5) The USSR could be expected to pursue a policy of appeasement toward Japan and to crave Japanese neutrality. Russian aid to Chiang Kai-shek would be cut off.

(6) The Japanese Navy had no real interest in Siberia, though Japan might go so far as to contemplate acquiring northern Sakhalin, Kamchatka, and the Maritime Province.

(7) The United States and England, much relieved by the German invasion of Russia, would make every effort to assist the USSR logistically, militarily, and diplomatically. Of greatest immediate concern to the Anglo-Saxon "pseudo-alliance" was the stance of Japan, which

they very much hoped would become enmeshed in war against the Soviet Union. But, in view of the diminished Japanese pressure to the north, the Americans and British were feeling greater pressure in the south and might pursue a reactive policy there. A prolonged German-Soviet war was what the Anglo-Saxon countries desired most, for they deemed that time was working in their favor.

It can be seen from the preceding assessment that, with respect to the larger picture though not the matter of harvesting the persimmons, IJA and IJN prognostication was not particularly dissimilar. There can be no doubt that Army Intelligence, with its far superior capabilities of collection within the USSR, fed documentation and opinions to the navy and greatly influenced IJN analyses of the situation. Captain Ishikawa has summed up the navy's contemporary thinking aptly:[64]

> The idea of solving the Northern Problem was not at all on the minds of the Naval High Command. I told Matsuoka that I disagreed with his notion. We in the Navy had our hands full, even coping with the submarines based at Vladivostok. If we attacked northward, the United States would surely enter the war, leaving us helpless. I explained that we would end up in a situation where we would have to give up without a fight.

Given the above outlook, the most that the navy might be expected to countenance would be the picking up of ripe persimmons already littering the ground in Siberia. Even Tsuji Masanobu, a Kwantung Army staff member and enfant terrible at Nomonhan in 1939, now an AGS Operations officer, was saying that Hitler had launched his attack on the USSR too late. The snows would commence in European Russia in late October, by which time the ultimate German military objectives could not have been achieved. Only the "weaker-minded" members of the AGS were keen to follow the lead of those who favored a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union now: "Many advocates of the northern movement insisted on striking at the Soviet, not

because they relied on the superior efficiency of their armies, but because they thought, according to the Hitler godhead, that at any moment Stalin would die mad." Added Tsuji: "Should we side with Germany just because of Hitler's and Ribbentrop's bluster?"[65]

Weighing what he had learned from his sources in both the army and the navy, Konoe leaned in the direction of a short-term, unsatisfying wait-and-see policy, regardless of the well-known preferences of Matsuoka and the Northern hawks. The latter had not at all abandoned hope of fighting Russia in 1941. When a certain Kwantung Army staff officer visited Tokyo and expressed views opposing a war with the Soviet Union, Operations Bureau Chief Tanaka and Personnel Bureau Chief Tominaga railed fiercely at him.[66]

The Final Week of Net Assessment in Japan

Very much on the minds of the Japanese leadership as soon as war broke out between the Nazis and the Russians on 22 June was the question of what to tell friends and foes about Japan's future policy toward the belligerents. By 24 June the net assessment people decided that the Axis Powers should be notified that Japan would remain faithful to the terms of the Tripartite Pact regardless of the language of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Agreement. There would be no mention of the possible use of force by Japan, and thus no revelation of geographical emphasis, either north or south.

On 25 June the 32nd Government-IGHQ Liaison Conference was held, attended by the following civilian officials and senior military officers in addition to Konoe, Matsuoka, and Cabinet Secretary Tomita:

Hiranuma (Home Affairs)

Tojo	(War)
Oikawa	(Navy)
Sugiyama	(AGS)
Nagano	(NGS)
Muto	(Military Affairs)
Oka	(Naval Affairs)

AGS Deputy Tsukada and NGS Deputy Kondo also were present, by special invitation.

At this meeting on the 25th, the military pressed Matsuoka to explain what he had said to the Soviet Ambassador in particular and what the latter's reaction had been. "I suppose he may have thought, from what he told me," replied the Foreign Minister, "that Japan's stance seemed calm but not particularly clearcut." Asked whether the Russian envoy may have deduced that Japan intended to be loyal to the Axis but disloyal to the Neutrality Pact, Matsuoka remarked that he did not think his words had exerted such a great effect, especially since he had made no mention of breaking the neutrality accord. Despite Matsuoka's rationale, AGS Deputy Tsukada drew the conclusion that the Soviet Ambassador must have interpreted the Foreign Minister's evasive wording to mean the Neutrality Pact was as good as dead.

As for German Ambassador Ott, Matsuoka stated that he had not spoken officially to him. The Foreign Minister wanted a definitive national policy to be determined soon, however, for Ott was talking a lot about the westward movement of Soviet Far Eastern forces. Tojo and Tsukada discounted the Nazi Ambassador's comments. While reports of Russian troop transfers undoubtedly exerted a great effect on the Germans, it was only natural that Japan should not be particularly exercised. Indeed, it was not advisable to pay heed to everything that the Germans

were saying.

Admiral Oikawa then voiced the unsolicited opinion of the navy, obviously directed to Matsuoka, regarding future Japanese diplomatic efforts:

> The past is the past, but now, when international relations are at such a very sensitive stage, you should not speak about the far-off future without consulting the High Command. The Navy is confident in the event of war against the United States and England, but not if the USSR is added to the lineup. If America teamed up with the Russians and was able to set up naval and air bases, radio observation posts, etc., in the Soviet Far Eastern territory; and if the Russian submarines stationed at Vladivostok were turned over to the United States -- such developments would render our naval operations very difficult.

In what amounted to a reprimand, Oikawa then told Matsuoka not to talk about striking the Soviet Union as well as heading south: "The Navy does not want the USSR riled up."

Matsuoka asked Oikawa why the navy was opposed to fighting the Russians since it said it was not fearful of a war against America and England. The question must have struck the admiral as sophomoric; wouldn't war with Russia mean the increase of major enemies from two to three? "Anyhow," grumbled Oikawa, "don't talk too much about the future." Matsuoka retorted that that was not his style, but that the discussion itself pointed up the urgent need for the conferees to finalize the basic principles of national policy.

Having ironed out and approved the agenda item calling for acceleration of the policy concerning the advance to the south (specifically Indochina), the conference of the 25th examined the text of the draft document that had been the product of army and navy discussion for weeks -- the important but rather inconclusive "Outline of National Policy in Terms of the Changes in the Situation." Sugiyama reviewed the main points, with which Matsuoka seemed to be in basic agreement although he wanted a more decisive stance. Since neither the army nor the navy was ready for war yet, their service chiefs voiced a number of uncertainties involving

China, the North, and the South. With respect to the Russians, the chiefs warned of the necessity to keep an eye on the transfer of Soviet forces from Siberia to Europe and on the survivability of Stalin's government. In particular, the chiefs warned against engaging the USSR prematurely, lest it bring about American entry into hostilities.

Matsuoka was not convinced that the United States would intervene in the event of a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union. He pointed out another consideration: When Germany had undoubtedly knocked out the USSR, Japan could not very well pluck the persimmons without having done a thing in return. It was necessary either to shed blood or to engage in diplomacy, preferably the former. What exactly would Japan do after the Soviet Union had been finished off by the Nazis? The Germans must be wondering too. Wouldn't the Japanese launch an attack after Russian Far Eastern forces left for Europe? Shouldn't Japan at least undertake a diversion?

The service ministers retorted that there were a variety of ways to create a diversion. The very fact that Japan stood firm could be regarded as one such move. Failing to be mollified by this response, which was not what he wanted to hear, Matsuoka called for a quick decision regarding Japan's course of action. This exhortation evoked a demand by an unidentified conferee that in any case, nothing hasty be done.

Following a discussion that had lasted for two hours, the liaison meeting ended without agreement as to the national policy draft under review. A one-hour Cabinet conference had already been scheduled to examine the Southern-advance document threshed out that day at the liaison meeting (exclusive of High Command matters). Thereupon, the Premier and the two Chiefs of Staff would report directly to the Emperor. Consideration of the national policy that

needed to be adopted in terms of the new international situation was put off until 10 a.m. next day.[67]

The participants in the 33rd Government-IGHQ Liaison Conference were the same as those of the 32nd but they came no closer to resolving the question of how to respond to the Soviet-German war. First, AGS Deputy Tsukada read aloud the army-navy draft document; next, AGS Chief Sugiyama explained the text, working from a background paper that had been prepared for an eventual Imperial audience and had been signed by Konoe and both Chiefs of Staff.

Matsuoka then conducted what might be called a cross-examination. The Foreign Minister had no objection, he said, to the pursuit or efforts to settle the China conflict or to the establishment of a basis for the self-sufficiency and self-defense of the country. Nevertheless, he could not understand what was meant about taking steps to move to the South or the language about solving the Northern Problem.

Sugiyama knew what Matsuoka was getting at -- the unspecified relative importance of the South vs. the North. "There is no difference in emphasis," the AGS Chief asserted. "Matters will be decided on the basis of changes in the situation." Did this mean, Matsuoka wondered, that the Southern advance would not be undertaken soon? Nonplussed, the NGS Chief Nagano called on NGS Deputy Kondo to bail him out. Kondo whispered to Nagano that it was the South which took precedence (by which he really meant the thrust into South Vietnam).

The Foreign Minister was disturbed (or elated?) by this evidence of a lack of unity in the views of the army and navy. AGS Deputy Tsukada tried to plug the gap by "speaking more

clearly":

> There is no difference in weight between the South and the North. The sequence and the method depend on the circumstances. It is not possible to do both at the same time, however. We simply cannot make a decision now whether to go North or South.

After some further discussion of matters involving China, Matsuoka returned to his favorite subject of the meaning of Japan's "deciding independently" whether or not to fight Russia. A lengthy debate ensued between the Foreign Minister and Lieutenant General Tsukada about the need to consult with Germany concerning the use of force. Tsukada, abetted by Tojo and Sugiyama, made the point that Germany had gone ahead and done what it wanted to do arbitrarily. The military requirements for speed and secrecy dictated that Japan do what it thought best too. The wording about "independent action," asserted Tsukada, referred to the fact that Japanese decisionmaking must not be impeded by delays which would be imposed by a process of consultation that was unnecessary in the first place.

When Matsuoka spoke of the advisability of faithfulness to the spirit of the alliance with Germany, Tsukada replied that matters of high policy must be separated from those involving the prerogatives of high command. Using military force, after all, was a matter of national victory or defeat. The Foreign Minister attempted a new tack: What did the military mean when it spoke of circumstances not developing "extremely favorably" for Japan? Tsukada's response was a model of the military net assessor's patronizing of a presumably ill-informed civilian:

> We would proceed if we deemed the situation to be very advantageous; we would not proceed if we did not think it was very favorable. That is why we used the wording "extremely favorable." Moreover, there are various ways of looking at things. Even if the Germans regarded the situation as very favorable, we would not proceed if we did not think so too. And even if the Germans

> perceived conditions to be disadvantageous, we would proceed if we reached the opposite conclusion.

Matsuoka did not desist. What was meant by the military's wording about insuring that there must be "no great obstacles" to the maintenance of the country's basic stance vis-à-vis the South? Tsukada supplied a short explanation no less patronizing than his preceding lecture:

> "Great" means "great." Small obstacles are to be expected. The High Command lacks optimal strength. Whether that will prove to be a "great obstacle" cannot be determined until the time comes.

Following a short statement by NGS Chief Nagano, who sought to reconcile the views of Tsukada and Matsuoka on several counts, the Foreign Minister asserted that, though he still entertained a number of reservations, he basically agreed with the army-navy draft. This encouraged Bureau Chief Muto to leap into the fray with the suggestion that Matsuoka signify his concurrence in writing. The Foreign Minister bluntly refused to do so. On this note, the meeting ended, still with no decision as to the document titled "Outline of National Policy in Terms of the Changes in the Situation."[68]

From 1 p.m. on 27 June another Government-IGHQ Liaison Conference (the 34th) was convened, with the same cast of characters, to endeavor to reach a decision on national policy. Matsuoka proceeded to offer a long disquisition on his views of the world scene from the standpoint of diplomatic strategy, and he tried once more to get the armed forces to reconsider their wait-and-see attitude. Basically, he wanted Japan to resolve right away to intervene in the German-Soviet war, attacking northward first and then heading south, while disposing of the China conflict in the meantime. As he had noted earlier, Matsuoka stressed, he was in general agreement with the army-navy draft, but he wanted an immediate decision on the question of fighting the Soviet Union. All the reports from Oshima in Berlin pointed to the fact that the

Germans would defeat the Russians soon, and also would end the war with England by autumn or at least by year's end. Japan should therefore not dally too long.

It was at this meeting that Matsuoka claimed he had been estimating the chances of a German-Soviet war at 50-50. (Kido's diary, however, says the Foreign Minister had put the probability of hostilities at 40 percent.) In any case, Matsuoka spoke of his efforts to devise plans that combined diplomacy and operations. Judging that there was no hope of dealing directly with the Chungking regime to achieve a far-reaching peace settlement, he had sought to contain China from all sides and had gone so far as to conclude the Neutrality Pact with the USSR. Although the Germans' assistance had not been requested, Matsuoka asserted that he had been able to join hands with them. The only remaining stumbling block to the Foreign Minister's grand design was the United States.

Matsuoka now warmed to his incessant theme of fighting Russia. While Japan could pursue a wait-and-see policy in the short term, it would be necessary to face up to the difficult situation with great resolve, sooner or later. If it was thought that the German-Soviet fighting would end shortly, Japan could not afford to stay out, going neither North nor South; it should clearly opt to strike North. To talk about solving the Northern Problem only after Germany had knocked out the Soviet Union would be meaningless from the standpoint of diplomacy.

If Japan took action to engage the Russians quickly, Matsuoka insisted, the United States would not intervene. For one thing, the Americans could not assist the USSR in point of fact; for another, the United States customarily disliked Russia. In case Japan did attack the USSR, Matsuoka expressed confidence that he could hold off the Americans by diplomatic means for three or four months. Deferring a decision, as IGHQ proposed, would not help. Such a course

would only allow the U.S. and Britain time to team up with the Soviet Union and surround Japan. Though Matsuoka admitted there might be some flaws in his assessment, he insisted that the main thing was to strike North before thrusting South, for (as an old Japanese proverb put it) "if your do not enter the tiger's den, you cannot seize the tiger's cub."

NGS Chief Nagano reverted to the point about three enemy powers ganging up on Japan. During the discussion on the preceding day, he had admittedly mentioned the possibility of America's intervening in the German-Soviet war. What he had meant to say was that he wanted Matsuoka to conduct diplomacy designed to prevent the Americans from entering, and thus to avoid a situation whereby Japan did have to fight three countries at the same time. "Fine," said the Foreign Minister.

War Minister Tojo then asked Matsuoka to address the connections with China. The Foreign Minister admitted that, until the end of 1940, he had been thinking that Japan should head South before striking North. In that way, the China problem might have been disposed of effectively -- an approach that no longer seemed viable. Now Matsuoka had come round to the view that the best way to exert pressure on Chiang Kai-shek was to push North, to invade Russia as far as Irkutsk. Even if the Japanese got only halfway there, it might be enough to force all-out peace with China.

Thereupon Tojo asked a very logical followup question -- whether Matsuoka meant that Japan should go North even if the conflict in China would have to be abandoned. The Foreign Minister replied, without particular vim, that that was indeed the better course, even if Japan had to give up on China "to a certain degree." Not unexpectedly, the War Minister demurred; the China incident must be pursued to the end.

At this point, Navy Minister Oikawa injected a confusing assessment that must have been intended to appease the different parties: The world war could be expected to drag on for a decade, during which time the China conflict would "evaporate" (presumably with a Japanese victory). In the meantime -- a statement not further defined by Oikawa -- Japan could engage Russia.

These remarks induced Matsuoka to reaffirm his devotion to "moral diplomacy." He would not hear of quitting the Tripartite Pact, though he had no compunctions about suspending the Neutrality Agreement with Russia. There was also a pragmatic advantage for Japan to drive against the USSR now: At this juncture the Germans had not yet won the war. In other words, the Japanese possessed important leverage that might be lost later.

The Minister of Home Affairs, Hiranuma, asked Matsuoka to think carefully about the problems confronting Japan. Had the Foreign Minister really meant to say that, as a matter of national policy, Japan should attack the USSR immediately? Matsuoka replied in the affirmative. Thereupon Hiranuma went on to observe that speed was not the only prerequisite; so was excellent preparation. Indeed, implementing national policy as well as using force of arms both demanded preparation, didn't they? Matsuoka did not respond directly but addressed the two matters that were dominating his thinking. The main concerns, he insisted, were to reach a decision to head north first and to forewarn Germany.

The recurring subject of notifying the German agitated General Sugiyama. While morality and honor were admirable elements of diplomacy, the army faced problems that militated against exclusive reliance on righteousness at a time when large forces were deployed in China. Though the High Command would certainly make preparations, it was impossible at

this point to decide whether or not to strike. It would take 40-50 days for the Kwantung Army alone to get ready. Additional time would be needed to covert to an overall wartime setup and to prepare to assume the offensive. By that point, the outcome of the German-Soviet hostilities ought to have become clearer. If the situation seemed very favorable, then and only then would Japan take action.

This was not good enough for Matsuoka, who objected to the terminology "very favorable" and wanted the military to opt for an outright attack on the Soviet Union. To this, Sugiyama bluntly replied, "No." Once more the navy, in the person of Nagano, tried to bridge the gap by assuring the Foreign Minister that the High Command would consider the "rather big problem" he was raising. Matsuoka, in turn, repeated his earlier assertion that he had no objections to the IGHQ draft in general, but he wanted to know if his opinion would be accepted or not. Sugiyama offered to mention diplomacy in the document. Though Matsuoka willingly accepted the addition, he was pessimistic about the prospects for the negotiations with the United States. Hiranuma closed out the day's proceedings with a request that the Tripartite Alliance be regarded as the basis for policy insofar as Germany was concerned, an idea that continued to be dear to Matsuoka's heart.

In reviewing the discussion of 27 June, the AGS diarist noted that the army utterly disagreed with the Foreign Minister's argument. While it could sympathize with Matsuoka's feeling, the army could not agree with the notion of going to war right away, and clung to its old concept of the "favorable opportunity." Indeed, the military was impaled on the horns of a dilemma: to start preparations only after a decision was made would preclude the chances of fighting successfully; but if no decision was made at all, full-scale preparations would be

impossible. The truth, admitted the diarist, was that the army simply lacked the confidence to reach the immediate, definitive decision Matsuoka was demanding.[69]

The sequential workings of the day-to-day Japanese net assessment process are revealed by the activities which immediately followed the Liaison Conference of 27 June. At 6:30 p.m. on the same day, an IJA bureau chiefs' conference was held at the War Minister's official residence. The agenda centered on the best way to deal with Matsuoka's stubborn opinions.

At the core of the chiefs' discussion was reconciliation of the need to reach a definitive decision to use force. It is known that Muto suggested wording that would authorize secret armed preparations against the Russians. The sources, however, do not agree whether such action was to be accompanied by a decision to use force immediately, or indeed whether the conferees were opposed to both ideas: preparations plus resolve to fight. In any case, Naval Affairs Bureau Chief Oka did not go along with Muto's notion, and Tanaka apparently had some other reservations at first.

One of the things that was bothering Tanaka, he later explained, was the fact that, although preparations surely had to get started right away, it was impossible at the moment to convince the navy to resolve on war. To Tanaka it seemed that time would work in favor of striking North -- once the persimmon grew ripe. Meanwhile, he nourished the covert intention of building up to fight the Russians -- the old desire of the Japanese Army, exploiting the current opportunity "whether or not we actually did go North."

Ultimately, the bureau chiefs agreed to suggest proceeding with the agreed-upon plans to establish bases in the South, with a view to reining in the United States and England, but also reinforcing preparations against the Russians and thus checking them too. Notification to the

Germans about the specific method and the exact time that Japan intended to dispose of the Northern Problem would be determined later. These recommendations were to be submitted to the next IGHQ-Government Liaison Conference, scheduled for the following day.[70]

First, on the morning of 28 June, the Military Affairs and Naval Affairs Bureau Chiefs discussed with Matsuoka and his Vice Minister Ohashi, the various matters bearing on diplomacy discussed by the bureau chiefs the preceding evening. Basic agreement on addenda was reached, though the Foreign Minister retained some reservations.

In the afternoon of the 28th, the scheduled IGHQ-Government Liaison Conference was convened, with the same participation as on previous days. Matsuoka had still another opportunity to voice the same old concerns, centering especially on his fear that a drive to the South would involve Japan not only in distracting hostilities against the United States and England but also against Japan's priority foe, Russia, to boot. Such an unselective course, he argued, was like playing with fire. Though the time was not quite ripe to commence actual operations against the Soviet Union alone, the Foreign Minister remained convinced that the decision to do so in due course had to be made right now. Since Germany had to be told sooner or later why should Japan wait to be asked?

Already, Admiral Nagano had informed General Sugiyama privately that the navy was utterly opposed to telling the Germans about Japanese intent to attack Russia. Consequently neither the IJA nor the IJN leaders said a word when Matsuoka was exhorting them to make up their minds to engage the USSR once and for all, and to alert Germany accordingly. Exasperated by the High Command's silence, the Foreign Minister finally asked Sugiyama for his direct opinion. The Army Chief of Staff did not budge from his often-expressed insistence

that Germany could not very well be told about a decision that was not yet clear to the Japanese military themselves. Indeed, it would be strange if premature notice was given to Berlin but then things did not turn out as desired. To this, Nagano spoke up that the navy was in full agreement with Sugiyama's stan.

After a week of haggling and indecision, the net assessors and the decisionmakers had basically reached a dead end. Unable to allay every concern, they finally declared their adoption of the "Outline of National Policy in Terms of the Changes in the Situation." There would be another Liaison Conference on 30 June, at which time the conferees were to decide upon the text of a government communiqué and of a notification to be sent to the Germans. The following morning, on 1 July, the full Cabinet would discuss the Outline. After that, a rubber-stamp Imperial Conference would be convened, to which the Finance Minister and the heads of the Privy Council and the Planning Board would be invited. Till then, the Japanese diplomats abroad would be told nothing about the substance of the high level deliberations in Tokyo.

Two noteworthy features had characterized the whole convoluted process: (1) Never had there been so many Government-IGHQ Liaison Conferences in succession. (2) The Prime Minister, Konoe, apparently spoke not a word throughout the discussions that surged around him.[71] Sheer opportunism, fashioned by a consensus of the lowest common denominator, had won out over the preferences of either the hawks or the doves.

Conclusions

The Japanese system of net assessment in the period prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 was relatively unsophisticated, parochial, fragmented, adamantine, spasmodic, and often

vague or waffling to boot. A host of reasons can be adduced for this unsatisfactory state of affairs;

(1) The independence of the supreme command prerogative;

(2) The nature of the monarch, which reigned but did not rule;

(3) The tradition of military supremacy over civil rule;

(4) A consensual approach to decisionmaking;

(5) Ideological inflexibility;

(6) Psychological hangups at the national level;

(7) Idiosyncratic educational patterns nurturing leadership.

To the cultural and historical differences from western practice must be added problems stemming from an often non-specific, ideographically-couched language of expression and circumlocutory modes of communication.

Our specific analysis of the crisis year of 1941 suggests the following main findings:

(1) There was no single, full-blown decision for war or peace, but a series of interlinked sequential decisions.

(2) One particular option originally transcended all other in importance -- the so-called Go-North Option, which has never received the attention it deserves for the simple reason that, although very seriously considered at the time, as we have seen, it was a choice that was ultimately not adopted, a "road not taken."

(3) For all its faults, preconceptions, and weaknesses, Japanese net assessment was rationally driven and deliberate.

NOTES

[Circumstances beyond the editors' control prevented the inclusion of footnotes for Professor Coox's "Japanese Net Assessment in the Era Before Pearl Harbor." Readers interested in further information should contact the author at the Department of History, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92182, Tel. (619) 594-5304/5262.]

Appendix 1

Guidance Essay: Net Assessment in the 1930s Project

APPENDIX 1

GUIDANCE ESSAY

Net Assessment in the 1930s Project

Williamson Murray and Barry Watts

> "The conceptual problems in constructing an adequate or useful measure of military power have not yet been faced. Defining an adequate measure looks hard, and making estimates in real situations looks even harder."[1]

The Project

This project will endeavor to examine the problems posed by net assessment in the historical context of the late 1930s. Consequently, the studies which will constitute the project are to investigate the processes by which the major powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Japan) carried out and were affected by the processes of national net assessment in the decade preceding the Second World War. This task poses some unusual difficulties for the historian, not the least of which is that few of the countries in question, either now or then, possessed formal net assessment organizations. Outside of post-World War II American practice, national-level net assessments have, to one degree or another, developed in an informal, ad hoc manner.

In considering how the major powers assessed their military capabilities relative to those of potential adversaries in the 1930s, there is a natural tendency to focus on intelligence

rather than on net assessment.[2] Nevertheless, the top decision makers in earlier historical periods have had to accumulate judgments about the state of the military and diplomatic balance that confronted their nation, whether they directed that formal assessments be done or whether they raised explicit questions about the balance or not. Above all the resulting process of net assessment is both different from and far broader and more complex than the business of intelligence assessment. It involves interplay among political authorities, military leaders, diplomats, and other crucial bureaucratic players, and difficult-to-quantify factors such as cultural and intellectual biases, national Weltanschauung, and traditional policies -- all inevitably impact on how national leaders assess their national security environment. Finally, when one deals with the concept of net assessment, it is clear that one does not deal with a single assessment but rather a number of assessments dealing with complex military, economic, and diplomatic aspects of the balance. These assessments, moreover, can be performed at different levels of the bureaucracy and to answer substantially different questions.

The purpose of this project, then, is to examine how the process of net assessment worked in the period of the late 1930s. While no explicit organizations existed in Europe in this period to assess the shifting net balance among the powers, it is clear that government leaders had little choice but to move beyond the elementary data provided by intelligence agencies and, for better or worse, to make the best net assessments that they could. Given the absence of formal net assessment organizations and processes, the task of the historians in this project is above all to piece together the often implicit, informal, or even unconscious ways in which judgements about military balances were reached. Since most of the decisions that have played crucial roles in history have occurred under considerable internal turmoil, an historical examination of the process of net assessment should not aim at creating a neat model or

framework for explaining events. Rather it should hope to to uncover the complexities and ambiguities involved in the net assessment process.

The essays aim, therefore, at laying out the failures as well as the successes in national net assessment efforts during the late 1930s as a basis of addressing larger questions. What were and are the pitfalls in making national net assessments? Why have they generally tended to miss the mark? What are the elements in the process that might have been correctable and what lay beyond the reach of policy makers? The following sections aim to provide the authors first of all with a guide to and explanation of the present efforts at net assessments in the US government and second the questions that the Office of Net Assessment would like to see addressed in the historical setting of the late 1930s. They should serve as a guide to the project's examination of the lessons of the past.

U.S. Net Assessment Organizations following World War II

The American experience with net assessment in the twentieth century reflects the intrinsic difficulties created by the Constitution and American political culture. Since the Constitution divides responsibility for defense between the executive and legislative branches, it is inevitable that both branches would seek independent judgments on the likely performance of the American armed forces against their potential enemies. Traditionally Congress performed this task by interrogating executive branch witnesses and outside "experts," but after World War II it supplemented this process by creating elaborate committee staffs to provide independent evaluation. It also created a "think tank" within the Congressional Research Service. The process of assessment, thus, can be easily influenced by the Presidential-Congressional rivalry, often enhanced by party and electoral politics. One tool of

Congress, or those parts of it unsympathetic to a particular administration, is to exploit differences within the executive branch over military issues. These differences can be interbureaucratic, interservice, and intraservice. One result of the Constitutional division of responsibility, however, has been to put ever greater pressure on the executive branch to organize itself in order to accommodate bureaucratic differences in assessing enemy threats and friendly military performance. Since 1945, of course, this pressure has also been related to the emergence of the United States as a superpower, the immediacy of the threat posed by the other post-World War II superpower, the USSR, and alliance diplomacy.

The American experience in World War II dramatized the need for a more integrated system for assessing enemy threats and likely American military performance. Traditional military intelligence departments -- the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Military Intelligence Division or G-2 of the War Department General Staff -- worked diligently on enemy capabilities, especially at the operational level, and passed on their assessments to naval and military planners. The only place where enemy and friendly capabilities were assessed on interservice basis was the Joint Army-Navy Board, which evolved into the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the war. The service secretaries, however, did not create separate staffs to examine the evaluations, which proved no great handicap since President Franklin Roosevelt dealt directly with the JCS himself.

Roosevelt did his own net assessments. He was aided by two new wartime agencies, the Office of Strategic Services and the Office of War Information, as well as the State Department, which always had an opinion if not convincing alternative evidence. By the end of the war, however, the President's advisors felt the need for greater interagency cooperation and formed the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (1944), which served as a prototype

of the National Security Council planning staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, did not feel any immediate need for integration with other federal agencies, since they had developed a very elaborate staff planning system of their own that included both intelligence analysis and operational judgment.[3]

Despite its eventual support for the National Security Act of 1947, the Truman administation did not prove adept in evaluating Soviet military behavior against American military capabilities. The shocks to American perceptions that began at Potsdam and ended at the 38th Parallel in Korea reflected the fact that Truman, distrusting the executive branch and avoiding clear interagency relations, still thought and acted like a member of Congress. Under Dean Acheson and James V. Forrestal, however, the State and Defense departments saw that effective containment required greater interagency collaboration, including the evaluation of intelligence and military requirements. Forrestal, for example, forced the JCS to create the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (1948) to do joint service analysis of nuclear weapons.

The most historic effort, the ad hoc study group that produced NSC-68 (1950), had its impact muted by Presidential economizing, the rise of McCarthyesque attacks on foreign policy experts, and Forrestal's defeat by madness. The Korean War's outbreak, which dramatized serious flaws in the assessment process, should have produced changes, and it did, but only small ones. The Defense Department relied principally on the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide assessments; the State Department drew its evaluations from the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), created in 1947, gradually returned to the process through its Office of National Estimates, but no well-developed agency existed to integrate the assessments in the only place it could have functioned -- the White House.[4]

When Dwight D. Eisenhower became president in 1953, he brought to the office unusually rich experience in assessing defense requirements -- experience greater than any of his predecessors or successors. In dealing with the Department of Defense, he accelerated the process of strengthening the Office of the Secretary of Defense, a process that culminated in the 1958 amendments to the National Security Act. He relied upon the Central Intelligence Agency -- which he encouraged to widen its influence in policy -- and worked in more real harmony with the State Department than Truman, largely through his manipulation of John Foster Dulles. To make his basic defense policy -- the "New Look" -- work, Eisenhower needed more personal influence on the policy-process within the executive branch, and he had no confidence that Congress could provide any real foreign policy leadership. (In the days of Joseph McCarthy, Robert A. Taft, and William Knowland, Eisenhower gauged Congress correctly.) Eisenhower decided to expand the role of the staff that supported the National Security Council, the rump cabinet for foreign and defense policy. He provided the NSC staff direct access through the special assistant for national security affairs, and he created two important interagency committees, the Planning Board (PB) and the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), chaired by the special assistant. He also created a Net Evaluation Subcommittee to support the deliberations of the PB and the OCB.[5]

The rising influence of the CIA and the NSC staff gave the Department of Defense new incentive to broaden its own analytic capability beyond that of the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Although Robert S. McNamara's tenure as Secretary of Defense (1961-1967) is most often interpreted as an epic struggle between McNamara and the service departments, McNamara also recognized that the Secretary of Defense could not rely -- if only for political purposes -- on the intelligence/strategic assessments of the JCS and the armed service

intelligence agencies. He ordered the creation of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 1961 and strengthened the role of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. He introduced systems analysis to the Defense Department's budget process, thereby forcing the JCS to use the same methods in the justification of the Joint Strategic Objective Plan (JSOP), which always bore the odor of interservice accommodation.

McNamara's approach showed substantial signs of success; the Congress protested against his methods, and the JCS felt cowed. In retrospect, McNamara's arrogant dovishness and the limitations of systems analysis in dealing with non-nuclear force structuring issues doomed most of his initiatives at net assessment, for neither the military departments nor Congress could accept McNamara's reforms. McNamara's aggressiveness did, however, reduce the influence of the NSC staff as the arbiter of military-performance evaluation, even if it did not change the system until the Vietnam war discredited both McNamara and the JCS. The CIA retained more power, largely by the ultimate accuracy of its Vietnam analyses, but also because of the interservice feuding within DIA. When the Net Assessment Group (now the Office of Net Assessment) began to function in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in 1971, it drew its strength from a fragile agreement between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger that CIA, DIA, and the JCS could not perform an objective comparison of Soviet and American force performance.[6]

The Current DoD Net Assessment Process

The current Office of Net Assessment (ONA) within the Pentagon was established in December 1971 by Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5105.39. This directive, which was not updated until September 1985, specified that the Director of Net Assessment: (1)

develop net assessments of current and projected United States and foreign military capabilities; (2) develop, or provide for the development of, specific net assessments of current and projected United States and foreign major weapons systems; (3) prepare the net assessment portion of the Secretary of Defense's Annual Defense Report; (4) and provide staff assistance for the Secretary of Defense in the develpment of national net assessments by the National Security Council.

Simply stated, the Office of Net Assessment has viewed its basic task as that of measuring and evaluating the overall military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Net assessment, in other words, has been fundamentally understood as a systematic approach to answering the question: How do the military capabilities of the two contending powers stack up relative to one another?[7] Because the Soviet Union has been the United States' principal military competitor since the end of World War II -- and because there is every reason to think that this competition will endure for the foreseeable future -- ONA has tended to phrase this baseline question in terms of asking how well the United States and its allies are doing relative to the Soviets and their allies in the long-term competition.[8] This baseline characterization, in turn, has generally been elaborated with a series or supporting questions: With what efficiency have the United States and its allies produced military forces relative to those of their adversaries? What are the mission objectives and purposes of friendly as well as adversary forces? What are the major trends and asymmetries in the capabilities of friendly versus adversary forces? And what are the areas of technology, military operations, strategy, etc. in which we possess competitive advantages -- and are we exploiting those advantages? or, looking at the opposite side of the same coin, what are the areas of doctrine, force posture planning, operational style, and so on in which the Soviets have problems -- and can we force

them to invest more of their finite resources in these areas?

What these rather broad questions suggest is that net assessment is not a specific analytic tool or technique like systems analysis or anlytic war gaming (although a given balance assessment may utilize the results of both). Rather, it is an eclectic approach to comparative military-capabilities analysis generally characterized by a simultaneous focus on two or more opponents (or competitors). One can, therefore, liken a net assessment of a given military balance to the notion of "scanning the environment" in order to assess your side's position relative to the opponent's as a basis for developing a more effective strategy than the competitor.[9]

Over the years, members of the Office of Net Assessment have noted the requirement for other kinds of assessments than military balance papers aimed at assessing long-term the US-Soviet competition. One example would be policy assessments for top leaders aimed at answering the question: What are we doing versus what should we be doing? Here the intent would be an assessment for senior officials like the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or individual service chiefs tailored to helping them manage the success of their total enterprise. Another example would be net techical assessments focused on the question: What is the technical effectiveness of our military equipment versus that of the Soviets and their allies? Historically these kinds of assessments were most often the responsiblity of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering or one of the individual Services. Another type of assessment identified by ONA would be operational net assessment focused around the question: How might our forces best exploit the vulnerablities of the opponent's doctrine, operational practices, or tactics? Obviously operational vulnerability analyses were primarily done for and by individual service chiefs and operational commanders. Needless to

say, these different types of assessments tend to overlap in many areas and suggest a certain diffusion of responsibility for assessments within DoD. This diffusion, in turn, indicates that access to senior decision makers can be a key problem in the net assessment process. Of course, by and large, net operational assessments and, especially, net technical assessments would presumably fall below the level of the national net assessments which are the focus of this project.

As a practical matter, ONA has found itself forced over time to partition the complex problem of assessing the global balance between the two superpowers into a series of functional and regional balances or "sub-competitions." The United States-Soviet Union strategic nuclear and worldwide maritime competitions illustrate functional military balances; the NATO-Warsaw Pact and East Asian competitions illustrate regional balances. The only assessment area that has attempted to encompass the US-Soviet military competition as a whole has been the military investment balance. However, the problems that have attended adequate measurement of Soviet military expenditures relative to our own have led ONA to see this balance as, at best, providing a rough picture of the overall US-Soviet competition and some leading indicators of where it may be headed.

In most cases, ONA's balance assessments have included a framework (or context) for thinking about the balance, various characterizations of what has been happening in the competition (side-by-side, head-to-head, and major systems comparisons using static and dynamic measures, as well as data on trends and qualitative factors), key asymmetries, major uncertainties, and emerging issues or opportunities that key decision makers might be able to work or exploit. As these analytic DoD categories indicate, ONA has been inclined to view the task of net assessment as being mainly diagnostic. Particularly during the period when

Harold Brown was Secretary of Defense, the Director of Net Assessment argued that it was not the business of his office to make policy or programmatic decisions; instead Net Assessment's charter was to draw attention to adverse trends, emerging problems, or opportunities to which top level decision makers might respond.[10]

There are three aspects of the personnel history of ONA that bear mention because of the obvious impact they have had on the organization's practice of the net assessment "art." First the current Director of Net Assessment, Andrew W. Marshall, has been at his post since October 1973, when he left the National Security Council to take over the net assessment function for the Secretary of Defense.* Second, Marshall has intentionally kept his office small -- at most 10-12 civilian and military assistants working directly for him on various balances. Implicit in this practice has been a conviction that the goal of producing high-quality balance assessments would be ill served if the Office of Net Assessment was allowed to grow substantially larger. And third, Marshall has insisted upon personally picking his assistants, rather than acceding to the selections of various personnel systems. Consequently, hirings have largely been keyed to work on specific military balances. In the case of his military assistants, who historically have comprised the majority of his staff, Marshall has generally sought field-grade officers who combined operational experience (including combat if possible) with demonstrated analytic ability, although at any given point over the last decade there has usually been one or more military assistants with intelligence backgrounds. In the case of his civilian assistants, Marshall has typically sought promising young academics just beginning their careers.

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*Andrew Marshall first began thinking and writing about the problems of addressing the US-USSR military balance in the mid-1960s while working for the RAND Corporation.

Andrew Marshall's long experience as Director of Net Assessment has indicated that any adequate balance assessment requires evaluation from at least three perspectives: deterrence, likely war outcomes, and long-term competition in peacetime. While these three perspectives undoubtedly overlap somewhat, Marshall's 1982 explication of them in the context of the American-Soviet strategic nuclear balance reveals quite a bit about the net assessment process:

> (1) [Deterrence:] Since the major American objective is deterrence of the Soviet Union from a wide range of activities, a major component of any assessment of the adequacy of the strategic balance should be our best approximation to a Soviet-style assessment of the strategic balance. But this must not be the standard US calculations done with slightly different assumptions about missile accuracies, silo hardness, etc. Rather it should be, to the extent possible, an assessment structured as the Soviets structure it, using those scenarios they see as most likely and their criteria and ways of measuring outcomes. This is not just a point of logical nicety since there is every reason to believe that the Soviet assessments are likely to be structured much differently from their US counterparts. The Soviet calculations are likely to make different assumptions about scenarios and objectives, focus attention upon different variables, include both long-range and theater forces (conventional as well as nuclear), and may at the technical assessment level perform different calculations, use different measures of effectiveness, and perhaps use different assessment processes and methods. The result is that Soviet assessments may substantially differ from American assessments.
>
> (2) [Likely War Outcomes:] If deterrence fails, we wish US forces to perform well and to attain US and Western objectives. This, however, requires examining a wider range of contingencies than is currently feasible. The standard calculations tend to focus on surprise attacks beginning with large exchanges. By contrast, US analysts need to look at the performance of forces in a wide range of situations, from crisis to conventional theater war under the threat of strategic systems, escalation from theater conventional to theater nuclear war to all-encompassing general nuclear war, with a protracted period of warfare that may ensue beyond the large exchanges.
>
> (3) [Long-Term Competition:] One of the functions of US military

> programs is to promote alliance cohesion and the continued development of adequate overall military forces in the West. The US nuclear guarantee has had a central role in our alliances, and therefore, American allies' perception of the state of the strategic balance is also a matter of interest to US decisionmakers. A comprehensive assessment of the adequacy of the strategic balance therefore should contain an assessment of the perceptions of allies and other major third parties.[11]

Perhaps the foremost thing that emerges from this account of the three major perspectives necessary for an adequate assessment of the American-Soviet strategic nuclear balance is a sense of the sheer complexity of the process coupled with the inadequacies of available analytic tools. As far back as 1972, Marshall argued that if the US government were to do a better job of monitoring how the United States was doing relative to the Soviets, new analytic methods of force posture analysis (including gaming techniques), intelligence analysis, and estimating procedures (for such things as improved risk balancing) needed to be developed.[12] By 1974, as the Director of Net Assessment, he had concluded that there were major failings in virtually all of the standard static measures of the strategic balance (which characterize most public and political discussions of such issues) and the traditional dynamic indices (that come from the so-called "canonical" exchange calculations). One eventual outgrowth of Marshall's bleak judgment of existing tools and measures for assessing military balances has been the RAND Strategy Assessment Center (RSAC),[13] whose development ONA has largely supervised since 1979 (and which was still on-going as of 1987). Thus, a central feature of the net assessment enterprise has been the sustained search for improved assessment tools, methods, and techniques, and even seemingly modest improvements have often taken years to achieve.

A related observation about the net assessment process is that a snapshot of US

military capabilities versus those of the USSR at a specific time or place cannot constitute an adequate balance assessment. Perhaps, if one could identify in advance when a war was actually going to occur, then such a snapshot might suffice. Historians, of course, do have the luxury of such knowledge, and so snapshots of force balances on the eve of war usually suffice for their purposes.[14] Policy makers, faced with making defense decisions under conditions of major uncertainty as to when, how and in what form war may come, obviously cannot be satisfied with snapshots. Among other things, a snapshot of a military balance taken just as one side completes a major force modernization but before the other has begun fielding comparable systems can prove fundamentally misleading, and a competitive strategy such as exploiting the United States' early lead in low-observables technology to impose disproportionately greater stresses on the Soviets is not the sort of thing that will bear fruit overnight. Net assessment, therefore, has had to cope with the complex problem of trying to gauge where a given military balance will be in the future, usually based on thoughtful evaluations of long-term trends describing where it has been in the past.

The different perspectives necessary for an adequate strategic balance assessment also explains why net assessment cannot be reduced to intelligence. One reason stems from the tendency of intelligence organizations to concentrate single-mindedly on potential adversaries. By and large, intelligence specialists are not expert in the doctrine, tactics, organization, and capabilities of their own military forces. In the US, for instance, DIA has long been prohibited from assessing US field forces; DoD control of data on US forces has traditionally made genuine net assessments difficult even for the CIA; and it is often argued that detailed knowledge of American forces potentially taints the judgment of an American intelligence analyst looking at Soviet forces. Consequently, even in war, but certainly in peacetime, the

absence of knowledge about the capabilities, doctrine, and operational concepts of one's own forces (or those of one's allies) has made the sort of hard-nosed "Red-on-Blue" comparative analysis that lies at the heart of assessing likely war outcomes difficult-to-impossible for pure intelligence organizations.

Another reason for not equating net assessment with intelligence stems from the fact that any adequate balance assessment demands far more than simply identifying and cataloging the measurable attributes of potential enemy forces. From a deterrence perspective, bare tabulations of the numbers of Warsaw Pact tanks, divisions, and combat aircraft deployed opposite NATO in central Europe tell very little about Soviet objectives, operational style, or theater strategies for war in what the Soviet General Staff calls the ZTVD (Western Theater of Military Action); such "bean counts" reveal even less about the Soviet assessment of this particular balance.[15]

As a result, one area in which ONA has repeatedly sought to push the US intelligence community to do more has been that of the Soviet assessment. The advent of nuclear weapons combined with ballistic missiles capable of reaching intercontinental targets within 25-35 minutes after launch has, of course, added special urgency to the problem of deterring Soviet leaders from ever deciding to go to war with the US. Nevertheless, the psychological reasons that have, time and again, led American intelligence analysts and net assessors alike to project their own values, analytic frameworks, scenarios, and measures of effectiveness onto the Soviets are deeply rooted, and progress toward assessments that reflect our best judgments as to how the Soviets see and assess given military balances has been slow. A classic case in point is the Soviets' preference for systemic solutions to military problems based on a hierarchy of long-term objectives served by a hierarchically-organized set of interrelated subsystems:

> This perspective leads the Soviet planner to view both Soviet and opposing forces as systems and look for systemic weaknesses on both sides. In a peacetime planning environment such analysis helps him to develop operational plans for future conflict that will take maximum advantage of his own future strengths and forecasted enemy shortcomings. This, in turn, guides Soviet force development and long-term deception in ways that will maximize the effectiveness of Soviet operational planning for future conflict. The product of this process is almost always surprising for Western planners because the Soviet systemic approach is not recognized for what it is, and the Soviet response to a given type of superior Western hardware is rarely, if ever, predominantly a race to develop even better Soviet hardware of the same type [emphasis added].[16]

Moreover, there have been well known instances in which the tendency of US analysts to presume that Soviet balance assessments be fundamentally a mirror-image of their own has demonstrably affected American strategic assessments.[17] A case in point is provided by the evident influence of American intellectual predispositions concerning the logic of deterrence on US national intelligence estimates (NIEs) of the Soviet strategic nuclear threat during the early 1970s. The crux of the matter appears to have been an unspoken assumption within CIA (albeit encouraged by the Nixon White House) that if it made no sense for the US to seek superiority over the USSR in strategic arms, then Soviet decision makers, likewise recognizing the irrationality of seeking nuclear superiority over the US, refrain from expanding their strategic force structure beyond "general parity." As a consequence, during this period the annual NIEs on Soviet strategic forces (11-3/8) understated the trends on the Soviet side, a fact which led the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board in late 1975 to recommend that the preparation of the next 11-3/8 be done competitively.

It was this recommendation that produced the alternative "A Team" and "B Team" strategic estimates of 1976. The idea was for CIA's group, charged with drafting the official

NIE, to do its assessment that year independent of the various B teams which, though given the same data, were comprised of outside experts charged with developing their own conclusions about Soviet air defenses, missile accuracies, and strategic objectives.[18] The persistence a decade later of controversy over this unique experiment in "competitive analysis" seems to confirm the potentially pivotal role analytic and even political assumptions can play in national net assessments. Indeed, the episode appears to offer strong evidence that estimates of the intentions of potential adversaries will always be subject to considerable uncertainty. Yet without an estimate of enemy intentions, how can the adequacy of Soviet strategic forces, for example, be assessed from the Soviets' perspective?

Turning from the Soviet assessment to likely war outcomes, here too the process of net assessment encounters analytic problems for which there still are no easy answers. To begin with there are a host of qualitative or intangible factors that are known to affect war outcomes in the real world but which are also known to be extremely difficult to assess. How, after all, can one accurately estimate things such as elan, relative doctrinal flexibility (or rigidity), the adaptability of individual combatants to changing circumstances, logistics sustainability, the realism of peacetime training, or the impact of untried technology? Even more problematic are estimates of intangibles such as the effectiveness of a country's strategic leadership, the role of surprise in future war, and the willingness of a belligerent population to fight. Clearly all of these factors are essential elements in the effectiveness of military organizations.[19] Yet they are extraordinarily difficult to gauge (much less to calculate) even under the best of conditions.

As for assessments of the peacetime competition, forecasting investment trends between economies as different as those of the United States and the Soviet Union has raised

on-going disputes over such things as CIA-DIA "dollar cost" estimates of Soviet defense efforts.[20] From a historical viewpoint, the persistence of these problems should not be surprising, for even historians, possessing almost complete economic data about the relatively similar economies of Britain, France, Italy, and Nazi Germany before World War II, did not begin calculating such basic indices as the percentage of gross national product devoted to military expenditures until the early 1980s.[21] Still, if the long-term competition in peacetime is to be assessed, such calculations appear to be a fundamental point of departure. Moreover, forecasting other pivotal parameters of the competition such as allied perceptions and the future political cohesion of alliances appears even more difficult.

The 1982 war between British and Argentine forces in the Falkland Islands provides a concrete illustration of the immense and enduring difficulties of adequately assessing relative military capabilities in real situations. All too many of the assessments during the prefighting phase, public as well as governmental in the United States, merely contrasted the numbers of Argentine aircraft and troops available with what the British could deploy in the South Atlantic; in the air especially, the small number of British Harriers was widely thought to represent a force far inferior to what could be brought to bear by the Argentinians.[22] Yet in the event, it was almost entirely the intangible, hard-to-quanify factors that led to the catastrophic defeat of Argentine forces in the May-June battles. Numerically superior, their weapons fully as modern as those of their British opponents, and possessing superiority in firepower, the Argentinians nevertheless lost because they fell far short in battlefield doctrine, the leadership of both their commissioned and noncommissioned officers, unit cohesion, and overall military effectiveness. But as easy as this assessment may be to make today with the aid of "20-20 hindsight," few were able to reach it prior to the Argentinians' surrender at Port Stanley.

The point therefore is clear: if it proved difficult to weigh the relative balance between the small forces deployed (on each side, somewhat less than a division in strength plus air and naval support) in the Falklands prior to the decision of actual combat, then the problem of providing an adequate net assessment of NATO versus Warsaw Pact forces throughout Europe seem, by comparison, to be monumental in scope and complexity. Or, as Andrew Marshall wrote in 1966, the conceptual problem of defining adequate or useful measures of military power "looks hard, and making estimates in real situations looks even harder."

Project Questions

The following questions and examples are meant to provide the authors in this project with general guidance as they examine their historical case study. One must note that not all of the questions may be applicable to each of the case studies; moreover, the authors may find it easier and more logical to answer the questions in a different order. Nevertheless, the success of the project does depend on the authors addressing their case study in the spirit suggested by the questions below.

I. The Organization of Net Assessment

1. While formal net assessment efforts have been relatively rare, to what extent did top governmental leaders responsible for political and military decision making in the 1930s have available or attempt to conduct some form of net assessments?

Historically governments and statesmen in evaluating strategic options have had to [illegible]ach issues in defense policies and in the weighing of the international balance in a fashion similar to that of the Office of Net Assessment. Nevertheless, the 20th century has seen a move towards a greater systematization of such efforts. Before the First World War the British government attempted to assess the international balance through the mechanism of the Committee of Imperial Defense (CID), but that effort remained fundamentally flawed for both conceptual and bureaucratic reasons. As Paul Kennedy has noted:

> In fact, the very concept of "the balance of power" was never deeply explored, in either the political or the military sense. As an expression, it was, of course, much employed; in early August 1911 [Sir Henry] Wilson noted that it was 'an axiom that the Policy of England is to prevent any Continental Power from attaining a position of superiority that allow it to dominate and to dictate to the rest of Europe' . . .[O]ne can concede that certain Britons who studied German advances in industry and technology (say, James Louis Garvin, Leo Avery, Eyre Crowe) became alarmed at the prospect of this new and formidable economic might being at the disposal of the Prusso-German elite; yet did this reasoning move those many other Britons, especially the military, who took little interest in economic matters?[23]

Nevertheless, by the 1930s several of the world's powers had evolved more complex bureaucratic mechanisms for judging the strategic balance. In Britain the growth of a panoply of committees underneath the CID resulted from a desire to expand strategic assessment capabilities or at least to provide a clearer mix between political desires at the top and military realities.[24] The Chiefs of Staff Committee itself came into existence by accident: during the Chanak crisis it had met on an informal basis. But its contribution to British policy making had been such that the Cabinet's secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey, succeeded in pushing through

its establishment on a permanent basis.[25] The success of that Committee in turn spawned a number of other committees, all supporting a complex machinery of assessment.

The evolution of strategic assessment in France followed a course in line with the idiosyncracies of a government constantly in the throes of cabinet changes. Nevertheless, French strategic and diplomatic assessments in the late 1930s suggested a similar willingness to grapple with issues of net assessment. Even the Germans in the late 1920s, when Wilhem Groener was the Minister of Defense, displayed some interest in weighing the strategic balance.[26] Unfortunately for Germany after 1932, Hitler had no interest in any bureaucratic or systematic approach aimed at weighing the balance between Germany and her future opponents (in this case it is futile to speak of potential opponents, since the Führer understood that his goals made war inevitable).[27] But Hitler himself possessed a sense that the "correlation of forces" be important when Germany did go to war. In summer 1938, in response to the army Chief of Staff's arguments against an invasion of Czechoslovakia, he remarked to his entourage that what mattered was not whether the army was ready for war, but rather whether Germany was superior to her opponents at that time. To wait until the army was completely ready only mean that Germany's opponents also be prepared.[28]

a) How were the top levels of the government in question organized to conduct national-level net assessments?

l) To what extent were such assessments carried out by explicit organizations, formal bureaucratic arrangements, or ad hoc groups?

The British at least had evolved in the 1920s and early 1930s a coherent bureaucratic system of strategic assessment. By the late 1930s they possessed a carefully structured bureaucracy that funneled intelligence, diplomatic reporting, and military judgments through a series of committees in weighing the overall strategic situation. Ironically, the system may have been too structured to assess the balance efficiently and its very tidiness may have been a hindrance to coherent or timely action. One suspects that Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister in the late 1930s, manipulated the system in the post-Munich period in order to prevent a serious alteration in defense policies. As the government's senior diplomatic advisor, Robert Vansittart, noted earlier in the year:

> The other point which I wish to make is relating to procedure. It seems clear that all the machinery here contemplated will involve the maximum delay and accumulation of papers. We surely do not want any more written 'European Appreciations.' We have been snowed under with papers from the Committee of Imperial Defense for years. Moreover, this procedure by stages implies a certain leisureliness which is not what we want at the present moment.[29]

In contrast to the British system, neither the Japanese nor the Germans established a bureaucracy to address strategic or balance of power questions. In the German case, the Third Reich's first Defense Minister, General Werner von Blomberg, tried to establish a strategic evaluation forum within the Defense Ministry. Hitler provided no support for this effort, while the three services deliberately and consciously sabotaged Blomberg's efforts: the army by direct confrontation; the Luftwaffe by relying on Göring's political status within the regime; and the navy by using the other services' opposition as a shelter. Interestingly, in summer 1938 when the chief of the general staff, Ludwig Beck, seriously considered resigning because

of his opposition to Hitler's excessive risk taking, he received a letter from his chief protegé, General Erich von Manstein. The future field marshal urged Beck not to resign, but not because of any deep seated worries over Germany's strategic position. Rather, Manstein spent most of his letter arguing that the army high command (OKH) must fight to prevent the Armed Forces High Command (OKW) from supplanting the army's traditional position as the government's chief strategic advisor.[30] While the military squabbled over position rather than strategy, Hitler himself in the 1930s did an extraordinary job in drawing the various threads together and in weighing the choices open to German diplomatic and strategic policy (at least in terms of reaching for his megalomaniacal goals).[31]

In the cases of the other major powers in the interwar period, the examples run the gamut from Italian chaos to a French organization that reflected many of the same outward forms of the British across the channel. In the case of Fascist Italy, net assessment boiled down to little more than Mussolini's views of what he might eventually want. As one commentator has noted:

> Interest, not meticulously calibrated bureaucratic position, presided over Fascist Italy's assessment of its enemies. 'These are the tired progeny of a long series of affluent generations,' Mussolini contemptuously remarked after Chamberlain and Halifax made their abject pilgrimage to Rome in January 1939. 'They will lose their Empire.' In the long run the prediction was accurate, but the Duce's assumption that they lose it to him proved disastrously wrong.[32]

The major powers during the 1930s appear to run the gamut insofar as the existence of formal net assessment organizations or structures is concerned. At one extreme some nations, notably Germany and Italy, opted for little more than the ex cathedra insights of a single national leader. At the other extreme, the British and the French had, by the 1930s, evolved

fairly elaborate structures of committees and bureaucratic arrangements aimed at evaluating intelligence, economic developments, and diplomatic reporting with the aim of melding them into systematic assessments of their nation's strategic position. What matters in this context is not so much the results of strategic policies but the mechanisms and processes by which governments and leaders evaluated and interpreted strategic and technical intelligence along with diplomatic and economic reporting. In some cases the historical record may suggest a well-ordered bureaucratic process; in others an idiosyncratic hit or miss affair, very much influenced by the whims of a dictator or cultural biases, but here, at least, it is the process that matters.

2) Where and with whom did responsibility for strategic assessments lie? And what sort of access to top decision makers did those responsible have?

In states such as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, the responsibility for strategic assessment lay at the very highest levels of government: namely in the mind of the dictator himself. Both Stalin and Hitler placed a high premium on the intelligence and on the assessments of their chief administrators or even in some cases of the functionaries within the bureaucratic system -- as long as such assessments agreed with their own perceptions. The problem for these regimes may not have lain in the level of accessibility, but in the basic assumption on which most tyrannies run: information must in fundamental ways agree with the preconceptions of the leader. Nevertheless, at least through 1941, the fashion in which the German system functioned was agreeable to both dictator and supporting cast. As one commentator has noted: "For the most part . . . there was a division of labor in which Hitler

developed and announced the overall assessment that guided policy, while the military and other agencies concentrated on the operational assessments."[33]

In the British and French cases assessments generally took place at such a high level that access to those who made policy was not an issue. There were, however, instances where those at the top deliberately filtered out opinions or assessments that might conflict with government policy. In the British case, the Chamberlain government recalled its military attaché in Berlin to testify as to the weaknesses of the Czech army (an army with which he had little acquaintance), while at the same time making sure that the views of his counterpart in Prague received no attention.[34]

Another instance of inadequate access adversely affecting British policy-making was that those who worked out the general strategic principles for the economic strategy required by a war against Nazi Germany were unable to influence the actual decision making processes in at least two critical cases: first, British strategy towards Fascist Italy in summer 1939 and, second, the problem of cutting off German iron ore exports through Narvik by means of the Norwegian leads.[35] The Advisory Committee on Trade Questions in Time of War outlined Britain's economic strategy as follows:

> Our aim should, therefore, be:
>
> 1) The maximum interruption of supplies of these goods in all cases where it is practicable . . . to create a shortage of them in Germany.
>
> 2) Any diminution of Germany's economic resources as a whole. With regard to the former the necessary conditions will be:
>
> a) that Germany cannot obtain adequate supplies except with the assistance of supplies, direct or indirect, coming from overseas or otherwise within our control.
> b) that steps can be taken to prevent neutrals from constituting a channel for such supplies.

> With regard to the latter, it may be that, even where there is no prospect of causing any special shortage in Germany, some measure of economic pressure may yet cause her substantial loss.[36]

The problem was that this basic strategic guidance played little role in the actual decision-making process. Consequently, those making British policies toward Italy and Scandinavia followed courses that were directly counter to the stated overall strategy. Well down in the bureaucratic pecking order, the Advisory Committee on Trade in War had virtually no input into these decisions.

3) How did governmental organization contribute to or detract from the smooth flow of questions and assessments between policy makers and their diplomatic, military and intelligence advisors?

The governmental structures of the 1930s may not have been a major inhibiting factor in the smooth flow of information, intelligence, and assessments. The size of government in the late 1930s was small in comparison with the current situation; as a result those at the top or at least their civil service advisors had contacts throughout the structure. Lord Vansittart may be the best example of a well-placed civil servant who acquired a wide range of information within and without the government.

Nevertheless, there were problems with the systems, as there are today. While the general flow of questions and assessments within the British Government may have smooth, there were times when the British failed to address essential questions until too late. Not until 16 September 1938 did a member of the Cabinet raise the issue of what the balance might look

like should Germany absorb Czechoslovakia without a fight and should Britain then have to fight Hitler at a later date.[37] So late was the question posed that only a brief draft memorandum by Sir Hastings Ismay, Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, appeared before the Munich Conference.[38] Interestingly the question as to whether it be disadvantageous to give up Poland without a fight did emerge early in British strategic decisions the next year.[39] The explanation for this peculiar British blindness in 1938 to what was an essential strategic question probably lies in the familiar bureaucratic tendency to concentrate on today's problems at the expense of long-range prospects.

4) How responsive were intelligence organizations to questions from policy makers that dealt with the balance of power?

This is really a two-edged question because there were cases in the 1930s where individuals involved in making strategic assessments found either intelligence organizations, policy makers, or fellow assessors completely unreceptive to their analytic perspective. Ishiwara Kanji, head of the Japanese army general staff's operations section in the mid-1930s, created a War Leadership Section as a result of his dissatisfaction "with the Intelligence Division's limited focus on troop dispositions, military geography, and railway capacity."[40] Ishiwara directed this office to concentrate on gathering intelligence on the overall economic capabilities of Japan's potential opponents, "as well as other, far ranging matters involved in grave foreign and defense policy decisions."[41] The response of the rest of the general staff and the Japanese army's senior leadership was direct and unambiguous: Ishiwara's career ended and the War Leadership Section disappeared in autumn 1937 as a result of its opposition on

strategic grounds to the China adventure.

The German case is similar. The chief of the general staff in 1938, Beck, challenged Hitler's assessment of the political, strategic, and operational balance; in retrospect he gauged all of the factors except the strategic good sense of the Western powers more accurately than did the Führer. Nevertheless, he was unable to bring any of Germany's other major military figures into a considered policy of resistance to Hitler's brinkmanship.[42] Consequently, neither military leaders nor intelligence organizations were willing to support Beck's challenge to Hitler's reading of the balance of power. Their rejection of Beck's interest in the strategic balance fully accorded with Hitler's view of how the military should behave in his National Socialist state. As General von Manstein obliquely stated in his letter to Beck, the political and diplomatic situation was irrelevant to the chief of staff: after all, "Hitler . . . always estimated the political situation correctly."[43]

On the whole, however, the problem has most generally worked from the top down: the inability of those making the strategic assessments to respond fully to those at the top. One example in the British system in spring of 1939 occurred when the Chiefs of Staff responded to a crucial question from the Cabinet: what was the strategic importance of Russia in the European-wide balance of power? In casting the terms of reference for the committee, Chamberlain attempted to restrict its field of survey; he directly ordered them not to discuss the military arguments for or against accepting Soviet overtures.[44] The Chiefs of Staff, when they reported at the end of April 1939, for the one of the few times in the 1930s stepped outside the narrow focus to "draw attention to the fact that the various countries in which we visualize in this report that Russian forces might be used may themselves be most unwilling to admit the entry of Russians into their territory."[45] In a sense, the Chiefs were responding to

the Prime Minister's policy by supporting his position against those in the Cabinet who were leaning in favor of an approach towards Russia. Unfortunately for the Chiefs, they were soon arguing that Britain could not overlook the "danger which result from rapprochement between Germany and Russia -- an aim which has been on the minds of the German General Staff for years. A combination of German capacity for organization with the material and manpower resources of Russia not only eliminate all hope of saving Poland and Russia but have repercussions throughout Europe and India, the serious nature of which be hard to exaggerate."[46] Their earlier argument had, unfortunately, already done much to shape the government's policy of disinterest in a Soviet-Western alliance.

Unquestionably, the responsiveness of intelligence organizations to questions about the adversary's assessment was as much of a problem for national leaders during the late-1930s as it is today. In general, however, the impact on past national-level net assessments of "mirror-imaging" one's own analytic perspectives onto the adversary does not seem to have been extensively explored by historians.

b) What were relations between top political leaders, intelligence organizations, and military planners and military leaders?

1) How adaptable were the organizations involved in doing net assessments to the changing realities of the world of the late 1930s?

The most interesting case in terms of the adaptability of intelligence and strategic assessment bureaucracies in the late 1930s occurred in Britain. From the arrival of Hitler on

the scene as Germany's leader, it was apparent that Nazi Germany represented a strategic factor, the assessment of whose strength was of crucial importance in determining British policy. The shift in moods among British evaluators is one of the more interesting phenomena of the 1930s.[47] From 1933 through 1935 they generally remained blasé about the speed and direction of the Nazi rearmament. However, during 1936 the mood shifted to a thoroughly pessimistic appreciation of the balance. Each of the services had developed different views as to Britain's potential enemies and the nature of the threat (the RAF worried about the Luftwaffe, the Royal Navy about Japan and Italy, and the army about German ground forces and protecting Egypt). Consequently, their combined views ended up depicting Britain's strategic position as hopeless. On the operational level, their views were equally grim. Such remained the British assessment through to spring 1939, when suddenly the planners became far more optimistic. By the end of April 1939 the Chiefs of Staff went so far as to suggest that: "Up to now, Germany has followed a methodical plan which consists in demolishing one after another each of the key parts of the barrier which might contain her or threaten her in Eastern Europe. The entering of Poland into a pact with Great Britain and France means the failure of this plan."[48] If one were to plot the actual growth of Germany military strength against British assessments of the threat one have a steadily rising curve in the former case and a bell shaped curve in the latter case.

Aside from the British, the French and Russians appear to have made the most consistent effort to assess the threat. How adaptable they were, however, remains open to question. The French from 1936 on depicted the strategic balance in hopelessly bleak terms with few of the hopeful glimmerings that marked British calculations in 1939.[49] In the case of Russia, Stalin got many things right and some things terribly wrong. Certainly his overconfidence in his own

ability to delay war with Germany until 1942 or 1943 did much to bring about one of the greatest catastrophes in Russian history.[50] Nevertheless, those advising him found it virtually impossible to decipher the nature of the French defeat in 1940 and its implications for the Soviet Union. One should not be surprised at that state of affairs: the French military themselves got virtually everything wrong in their own analyses of their defeat.[51] For the Russians, the explanation for France's defeat, as with most western observers, lay in the political degeneration of the Third Republic.[52] Consequently, the nature of the German victory remained largely opaque to Russian analysts:

> The failure to comprehend the essentials of German military doctrine in a tactical, operational sense and German 'war doctrine' in its widest context was the prime cause of disaster; the effect of this was and had to be devastating, for such a failure impeded and inhibited effective operational planning. This same failure contributed also to the misinterpretation, or the manipulation, even the discarding of intelligence. Within this framework, accurate intelligence could very plausibly be regarded as 'disinformation.'[53]

2) What were the backgrounds and capabilities of those who were involved in the process of net assessment?

[a] at the higher levels of bureaucratic and administrative assessment?

The level of analysis above intelligence organizations is dependent on a number of factors, not the least of which are those idiosyncratic factors that go into the determination of national leadership. In the British case one can draw a clear distinction between the capabilities of the Prime Ministers in the 1930s, none of whom had either experience or intellectual

education in strategic issues and the intellectual background that Winston Chruchill brought to office on 10 May 1940. The interests and attitudes of policy makers had a direct impact on those who directed and advised on the course of British policy. While Nevile Henderson may not have been picked to be ambassador to Berlin for his Weltanschauung, his world view certainly accorded with those directing British policy: As he wrote to Lord Halifax in summer 1938: "Personally, I just sit and pray for one thing, namely that Lord Runcimon will live up to the role of impartial British liberal statesman. I cannot believe that he will allow himself to be influenced by ancient history or even arguments about strategic frontiers and economics in preference to high moral principles."[54]

Nevertheless, within the British assessment system there was a considerable capacity to address strategic questions within a broader perspective. "Pug" Ismay, secretary of the Chiefs of Staff, Sargent and Vansittart at the Foreign Office, and Warren Fisher at the Treasury were men of capacity and vision in assessing the larger issues of British policy. In fact, the real problem in Britain may have rested with those who controlled the government; the bureaucratic system and its personnel worked extraordinarily well once a driving, intelligent leader arrived at the center of power.

It is worth underlining the substantial difference between the collective assessments done within the British system with those turned out by the Germans. In the latter case, the studies are almost exclusively the result of individual efforts by officers such as Beck or Admiral Guse of the Seekriegsleitung or civilians such as Ernst von Weisäcker of the Foreign Office. Such analyses reflect individual rather than collective efforts and they possessed little of the sophistication that mark British analyses. The contrast lies between professional bureaucratic efforts on one hand and individuals, who no matter how sophisticated have neither experience

nor training to assess the strategic balance. This comparison be as sharp between the French and the Germans as between the British and the Germans. This inability to assess questions above the level of the tactical or operational seems to be a mark of the German military[55] and may explain Hitler's ability to drive his generals along a course that was so fraught with danger to national existence.

[b] at the basic intelligence analyst level?

This question is not aimed at addressing the question of entry level intelligence officers, but rather those in the middle to high level of intelligence organizations that provide intelligence analyses on which policy makers cast national net assessments. Here, there were considerable similarities between the backgrounds of intelligence analysts in the cases of the British, Germans, and the French. All these nations seem to have viewed their military intelligence services as a dumping ground for officers whose employment elsewhere was of doubtful utility. In the case of the Germans, officers who performed least satisfactorily at the Kriegsakademie or at the Luftkriegsakademie found themselves working in either logistics or intelligence.[56] For the British, low grades at the staff college may not have guaranteed a position as an intelligence analyst; instead general mediocrity was the norm for appointment to service intelligence positions.[57]

Military intelligence, given both the interests and the routine of the Soviet Union, obviously enjoyed a higher reputation than it did in the Western powers. However, Stalin's purges not only devastated the Soviet intelligence services, but made the atmosphere for the survivors less conducive to honest and intelligent assessment. Thus, whatever the capabilities

of the survivors, who saw a rapid increase in their prospects, the post purge atmosphere was hardly conducive to innovative thought or discerning assessment. What the "boss" thought was clearly of far greater importance to career advancement and survival than the accuracy of product.[58]

In the Japanese case the background and capabilities of those doing the intelligence analyses varied widely from section to section. The army made a consistent effort to gather an accurate and thorough picture of Czarist Russia and later the Soviet Union. In fact, the Japanese beefed up the Soviet section with some of their best regular officers; however, "the Intelligence Division's China Section, burdened by too many second-rate officers and years of accumulated prejudices, provided consistently poor evaluations of China's capabilities and intentions."[59] Similarly, the American section of Japanese army intelligence proved hardly more accurate in its assessments of American strength and the possible impact of that potential on a prolonged Japanese-American struggle.

c) How did governments go about the business of assessing their own military forces?

1) How well regarded were the estimations of military advisers on the state of one's own military forces?

As suggested above, intelligence organizations gave little thought to evaluating their own military forces to support a comparative analyses. In the British and French cases, intelligence products tended to fall considerably short of strategic surveys produced at higher levels.[60]

Nevertheless, the real issue is the fashion in which those at the top viewed estimates on their own national capabilities provided by the services. For the British, the government had little reason to criticize the service picture since the worst-case analysis of friendly and potential enemy force capabilities was a useful tool to support the policy of appeasement. The only time when the Chamberlain government held a substantially more optimistic view of Allied military potential (in the Mediterranean against the Italians in 1939), the Chiefs of Staff found it relatively easy to change the government's mind.[61]

On the other side, the experiences of the Germans are instructive. Hitler received a steady flow of information from the services (from the army in particular) suggesting that substantial problems existed in German training and capacity to fight. As late as fall 1939, many of the senior generals were arguing that analysis of the Polish campaign indicated serious deficiencies that demanded correction before the German army launched an offensive against the Western powers.[62] On the other hand, the Luftwaffe, the most optimistic of the German services on operational matters (none were concerned with the strategic level of war), produced in June and July 1940 a picture of the coming Battle of Britain that heavily overestimated its own capabilities (ignoring the serious attrition of Luftwaffe units in France). When combined with a minimization of the RAF's capacity to resist, it is not surprising that the Germans did as badly as they did in the Battle of Britain.[63]

What is of interest here is how perceptive political leaders and statesmen were to the self evaluation performed by their own military. Ironically in the Soviet system, the realistic and somewhat pessimistic estimations of Tukhachevskii and his supporters in the general staff may have been a contributing factor to their demise in Stalin's savage purge of the army.[64] Certainly the message that the survivors received was clear about Stalin's interest in perceptive

critiques on the preparedness of the Red Army.

2) Did evaluations from outside the military on the state's own military forces play a role in net assessment?

Here again, the British may serve as the best example. In the 1930s a group of civilian "experts," analogous to the current military reform group heavily influenced the British government. These experts ranged from strategic pundits like B.H. Liddell Hart to those who echoed the gloomy predictions of the RAF that the next war be an Armageddon of the sky.[65] Liddell Hart had considerable impact on selling the Chamberlain government on his strategic theory of "limited liability": namely that Britain need not prepare an army for continental deployment, but rather depend on continental allies in Europe, while the Royal Navy and the RAF won the war. The implications for British ground forces were direct: not until March of 1939 did Chamberlain agree to a continental role for the army.[66] The impact of fearmongers about the air threat was also direct. Chamberlain's often quoted remark about flying up the Thames and imagining German bombers taking the some course was manifestation of the deep-seated fears both within and outside of the government in September 1938.[67]

Outside influences on estimates of military power were less direct in the other European nations, especially in the dictatorships. In Stalin's Russia there were no outside pundits of any kind after June 1937, when it was announced that the flower of the Red Army command had been tried and executed for treason. Power centers such as the NKVD may have suggested before May 1937 that the army was a haven for free thinkers, but it is unlikely that Stalin required prompting to see that the army needed a cleansing of those who were too independent.

In Hitler's Germany, there were plenty of military experts outside of the military services themselves (the Waffen SS became a home for many refugees from the army's conservatism), but such experts had little influence on Hitler's judgments of military capabilities. The most amusing case as usual involves the Italian military. Unable or perhaps unwilling to count its aircraft accurately, the Regia Aeronautica forced Mussolini to order his secret police in September 1939 to count the number of aircraft on Italian airfields in order to establish an accurate order of battle for the Italian air force.[68]

II. The Process of Net Assessment

2. How did governments actually do substantive net assessments?

The following three questions are clearly related and not meant to be exclusive. In fact, the answers to a), b), and c) may need to be folded together to obtain a coherent picture of the processes of strategic assessment. This section is very much open to the discretion of the authors as to how they wish to answer these questions.

a) Clearly bureaucracies form consensus views of the world as they assess potential threats over periods of months or years. That process and the resulting Weltanschauung have an impact on the capability of governments to do net assessments. What was the impact of such views on the ability of bureaucracies to evaluate the potential threat?

The issue here involves the fact that over a period of time bureaucracies develop a manner or, to use the current political science term, a model through which they filter the outside world as they assess capabilities and intentions. By the mid-1930s (at least after the Abyssinian fiasco), the British services had developed a picture of the threat that largely resulted from the "inclinations of the services themselves."[69]

Similarly in Germany, the intellectual Gleichschaltung of the bureaucracy and of the military leadership gathered steam through the 1930s. There were, of course, a small number of individuals who remained immune from a growing consensus as to the Führer's genius: Beck and Weizaäcker were clear examples. But the majority of decision makers and governmental advisers followed the path Manstein suggested in his letter to Beck. By 1941, that consensus led not only to an acceptance of Hitler's "genius" but to an ideological convergence in which the senior military leadership was in agreement with Hitler's preconceptions that the Soviet Union was a rotten semi-Asiatic, decaying power due to Jewish influences.[70] As sophisticated a general officer as Günther Blumentritt could claim in summer 1941 that "Russian military history shows that the Russian as a combat soldier, illiterate and half-Asiatic, thinks and feels differently."[71]

b) When top political-military leaders thought their country might be going to war in the near future, what sorts of information, analyses and assessments did the top decision makers seek?

This is an interesting question that may in fact reflect an attempt to place too logical a framework on human processes. For some of the statesmen in the 1930s such as Adolf Hitler,

war was not only a condition of life but the basis of foreign policy. Consequently, as he told his generals within the first week of his coming to power: if France had any statesmen among her politicians, Germany face war in the immediate future.[72]

For others, particularly in the democracies, the problem of recognizing the proximity of a major war was very difficult. In terms of the British, it is worth noting one significant shift from 1938 to 1939: the British strategic analyses recognized the issue of surrendering Poland without a fight as a significant issue in analyzing the future of the balance between Nazi Germany and the Western Powers. In terms of the British, the Germans, and the French, the general contrast between 1937 and 1939 in the requests from the senior leadership is not that the forms of analyses changed or that they asked new questions but rather that more (much more) of the same types of analysis appeared. The Germans busied themselves with more war games and war plans for the next "operation"; the British and French did more strategic surveys, but the same basic patterns imprinted themselves over the last series of crises.

c) In making net assessments, what assumptions were made about enemy intentions and how did these assumptions color the conclusions that were reached?

By the late 1930s a set of assumptions had become firmly ingrained in the minds of the political and military leadership of the European powers about their possible future opponents. Initially, when he came to power Hitler had possessed a set of preconceived notions that consistently colored his interpretation of the world. In the early to mid 1930s he had viewed Britain as Germany's future ally, certainly the Reich's racial kin, if in a degenerate form due to liberal and Jewish influences. Britain's performance in 1938-1939, however, moved Hitler

in two somewhat contradictory directions. On one side, the Germans embarked on a massive building program for the navy, the so-called "Z" plan, aimed at challenging Britain's naval security; on the other hand Hitler's impression of British and French leaders at Munich ("Our enemies are little worms. I saw them at Munich.")[73] led him to discount (but not ignore) the possibility that Britain and France intervene at Poland's side. In a sense Hitler was closer to the mark in September 1939 than many historians have allowed: after all, the Western governments hardly displayed much stomach for the conflict in the first days of the attack on Poland. Nevertheless, what Hitler had missed was the substantial shift in Western public opinion; and his assumptions on the nature of British resolve almost certainly caused him to miss the impact of Churchill on Britain's leadership.[74] Interestingly enough the Italians (at least Ciano), who, like the Germans, had subscribed to views on British degeneracy, caught on to Churchill's impact far earlier than did their allies.[75]

With their fundamental preconceptions about the nature of the world, the Soviets must have found the late 1930s an excruciatingly difficult time for evaluating what was happening to the strategic and political balance in Europe. When France fell, Stalin compounded the Soviet Union's strategic and operational difficulties by his assumptions. Through Marxist lenses, Stalin assayed the threat as largely one of real-politik; consequently, one could reach an accommodation with Hitler if the price was right. However, such a view insured that Stalin and his advisors were incapable of understanding the ideological thrust of German policy.[76] The result was that Stalin was unable to interpret the meaning of the storm clouds gathering in the west, while his ideological assumptions probably made him particularly vulnerable to German disinformation.[77]

d) What methods of net assessments were used and how did the different governmental agencies weigh the factors of national strength? Were strategic surveys used? Static or dynamic force comparisons? War games? Economic analyses?

For the British and French, strategic surveys tended to be the most common form of assessment: the former attempting to grapple with the world wide commitments of the empire, the latter more narrowly focused on European concerns. In the British case, economic analyses also played a role in the evaluation of British strategy which undoubtedly resulted from the heavy emphasis that a blockade of Germany received in British strategy. Within these strategic surveys the British emphasized static force comparisons: The strategic survey of March 1938 for example gave heavy emphasis to a numerical comparisons of numbers of divisions, numbers of ships, and (more quaintly in terms of air force comparisons) the tonnage of bombs that a bomber fleet could drop in a day as well as the frontline aircraft available in European air forces.[78]

In line with their disinterest in strategic issues, the German military concentrated on war games rather than strategic surveys. The few efforts at a strategic survey of the European balance were performed by individuals rather than the result of cooperative bureaucratic efforts. While Beck's memoranda reveal a clear conception of the complexities of the European strategic equation, the German officer corps evinced little interest in his efforts. Hitler's reaction, of course, needs little comment.[79] Instead the Germans concentrated on war games. On the operational level, such gaming was a useful tool in laying out the issues and problems that the army face on the battlefield. Certainly, the war games of 1939 and early 1940 played

crucial roles in pushing the general staff towards the Manstein variant of "Case Yellow." In fact, these war games may have resulted in an even more effective plan than Army Group A's suggestions.[80] But such war gaming did little to answer strategic questions and it turned the attention of the officer corps away from strategic issues. In summer 1938, the German war games dealt almost exclusively with the problems involved in smashing Czechoslovakia. The war game of June 1938 indicated that by the twelfth day of an attack German forces have broken the back of the Czech army and that within seven days the Germans could begin withdrawing units from the Czech front for transfer to the west.[81] Many of the army's senior leadership drew the conclusion from the June game that Beck was wrong and Hitler right; but Beck never argued that the army could not conquer Czechoslavakia. His worry was over the strategic and diplomatic consequences of a German-initiated war.

e) What measures (of military capability) were used and how accurately did they catch the nuances in the actual balance?

1) Numerical and technical assessments such as divisions, ships, men, numbers of aircraft, etc.?

Numerical indicators played a major role in the assessments done by the major powers. Naval balances as they are often done were perhaps the easiest to do; the classifications of ships made it easy to do comparative analysis.[82] Nevertheless, imponderables did enter into the strategic assessments of naval strength. None of the western powers seem to have given the Japanese navy its due weight; the misestimates only be corrected fully at Pearl Harbor and

Savo Island.[83] All three of the eventual Axis powers consistently lied about the tonnage of the ships they had in service or planned for future use.[84]

The number of available aircraft was more difficult to estimate. As mentioned above, the Italian government found it difficult to get the numbers right on its own air force. The British moved beyond straight numerical accounts to the bomb carrying capacity of the Luftwaffe. But the efforts to estimate capabilities of air forces for sustained operations proved difficult to do and the products were generally unrealistic -- not surprisingly given the fact that so little was known about the parameters of air war. What is surprising is that the RAF was so adamant about the capability of the Luftwaffe to find and hit targets when British airmen were having such difficulty in performing these tasks themselves.[85]

Identification of regular army orders-of-battle did not prove difficult to do. Even with early Nazi efforts to cover rearmament, Anglo/French estimates on the size of the active duty army were not far off. Where estimates went wrong lay in reserve force calculations of German strength. As early as the first years of Nazi rearmament, French intelligence was counting SA and SS strength as a serious reserve force immediately available to the army in war.[86] By 1938 there was less emphasis on the SA in Western analyses, for by this time the Germans had the potential to mobilize more conventional reserve forces. Consequently, the British strategic survey of March 1938 talked about the Germans having the capacity to mobilize eighteen reserve and twenty-four Landwehr divisions.[87] The French were even more pessimistic on the strength of German army reserves. A March 1938 strategic survey suggested that before the Anschluss the German army's fighting strength had been 40 peacetime backed up by 80 reserve divisions. That survey suggested that incorporation of Austria now add 60 peacetime and sixty reserve divisions (a ludicrous exaggeration of Austria's potential).[88] The

depressing reality of the one reserve division mobilized for the Anschluss suggests how far off the French and British were in estimating the real availability of reserve forces in the Reich in 1938.[89]

2) How effectively did governments weigh training, doctrine, surprise, initiative, leadership, national will, intentions, and other more difficult to quantify factors in estimating potential enemy strength?

Here the answer appears to be that governments did not do a good job in estimating the intangibles involved in military power. On the naval front, the British and Americans severely underestimated Japanese naval leadership, initiative, training and intentions. It took a number of disasters in the Pacific to convince the Anglo-Saxons just how formidable an opponent the Japanese navy was. On the other hand, the Royal Navy consistently overestimated the Italian navy's general potential throughout the 1930s.[90] Air forces were even less open to coherent judgments. As we now know, the Luftwaffe had relatively little interest in "tactical" airpower (although considerably more than the RAF and the US Army Air Corps) and "strategic" air power played a major role in its conception of a future war involving Germany.[91] In fact, the British were right to think that the Germans were preparing seriously for "strategic" bombing; the problem was that the British were not even capable of recognizing their own inabilities to find and identify targets in wartime.[92]

The question of weighing the doctrine and training of land forces remained well beyond the interest and capabilities of those involved in making assessments. The basic problem for the Soviets in the 1940-1941 period lay in their inability to understand how the Germans had

actually operated on the battlefield in Poland and in the French campaign of 1940. The problem of understanding how the Germans operate on a future battlefield was compounded in the late 1930s by the fact that the Germans themselves were still putting together the pieces of their armored-mechanized operational concepts. Consequently, the doctrine and approach that play such a key role in the 1939-1941 victories were still as unclear to many in the German leadership as to outside observers. The 1937 maneuvers, for example, suggested the ruthless efficiency towards which the Germans were working. Both Field Marshal Edmund Ironside and Benito Mussolini noted that efficiency in September 1937 and in the latter case, acted upon the impressions that those maneuvers suggested.[93] But the 1937 maneuvers indicated little beyond conservative operational concepts to other European armies.

Interestingly, in the late 1930s British official historians were on the way towards deciphering the tactical principles and concepts involved in development of German offensive and defensive doctrine in the last years of World War I. G.C. Wynne's articles on those developments, which clearly suggested the direction that German ground doctrine take in the coming war, not only appeared in articles in the Army Quarterly but were published in a book that appeared in early 1940. Unfortunately, the title of that book (If Germany Attacks) was misleading on the book's subject matter; as a result it exercised little influence on the British army's understanding of how the Germans fight in World War II.[94]

The problems involved in weighing issues such as national will and national intentions were as intractible as today; and those involved in policymaking were as prone to judgments on the basis of prejudice, ignorance, or other idiosyncratic factors. Both Hitler and Mussolini believed firmly in the degeneracy of the West -- right to the end.[95] But the British were no less open to illusions; in December 1940 the future chief of Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, and

the Chief of Air Staff, Sir Charles Portal, watching a burning city of London, reassured each other that while the British people could stand such blows, the German people clearly could not.[96]

Of all the gray areas, that of national intentions was the most difficult to read. Hitler provided innumerable indications for western statesmen in his writings and speeches on the drive and aggressive nature of the Nazi regime. For the British, the Anschluss, Berchtesgaden, Godesberg, Munich, and the Crystal Night had little impact on perceptions of many in the British government as to Nazi intentions. The occupation of Prague did not really alter that attitude, even though the public reaction constrained the government's room for maneuver.[97] The French may have divined the German intentions the best; but none of the policy makers or senior military leaders came up with approaches that did not involve substantial strategic and diplomatic support from Great Britain; and the British were simply not willing to provide much of either until March 1939.

3) What role did technological comparisons play?

Technology and technological developments played a relatively small role in the development of strategic analyses in the late-1930s. This is not surprising since the technological revolution was only just beginning; intelligence agencies did not have the expertise to do even basic technical intelligence gathering. In spring 1939, the Germans, for example, attempted to discover the frequencies that the British were using in their radar system by having the Graf Zeppelin fly up and down the English Channel. However, because they expected the British to use a technical approach similar to their's, they did not pick up the radar

signals; the British were on the other end of the spectrum.[98]

There was one area where technological comparisons played a crucial role in pushing important decisions: the development of the atomic bomb. In the late 1930s, the Western powers held German science in high regard. As a result, one of the driving forces that pushed the Manhattan Project through to a successful conclusion by summer 1945 was the fact that the United States remained convinced through fall 1944 that German science had a good prospect for developing the bomb. Conversely, the Germans, feeling a superiority over British and American science, never pushed their program into a substantial effort to develop the technology.

4) Were trends in categories such as ground, naval or air forces, or the economic balance used in the strategic evaluative process?

In the largest sense, strategic trends both in military power and its supporting base were of concern to statesmen and military leaders. British leaders were directly and consistently concerned with the economic balance, and particularly with the general decline of Britain's economic position. Most analyses tended, however, to focus on one's own economic difficulties as opposed to a true comparative economic balance. The British Treasury remained firmly convinced as late as summer 1939 of rising German economic strength. On 5 July, Sir Richard Hopkins, the Treasury's chief civil servant, testified before the Cabinet on the impact of massive rearmament on Britain's capacity to wage a long war. Unlike previous Treasury arguments, his report distorted, rather than ignored, Germany's economic difficulties. After stressing the erosion of Britain's financial position due to rearmament, Hopkins highlighted the

supposed strengths of Germany's military, economic, and financial situation. Although he was "not qualified to speak on the capacity of Germany to wage war," Germany could only expect to import limited supplies from adjacent countries in case of war. Therefore, "her plans had . . . been laid on the basis of self sufficiency." He further asserted that Germany could indefinitely maintain her military expenditures. Such a claim was too much for Lord Halifax, who suggested that if Britain had serious problems with rearmament, it was likely that the situation was more difficult for Germany.[99]

The trends in the military balance were perhaps easier to track. Naval procurement programs were well known; and it was hard to hide when major fleet units came into dry dock for major overhaul. Tracking air force strength, however, was harder. It was difficult, if not impossible, to uncover bottom line strengths of potential enemy air forces. The process was further confused by the problem of evaluating logistical and maintenance support for air force front line strength. Thus, the fact that the Germans were running a 50 percent operationally ready rate in summer 1938 represented a factor that the British could not incorporate into calculations of Luftwaffe strength.[100] Further contributing to misestimates of Luftwaffe strength were German deception efforts that played a major role in hiding the real situation. The mid-August 1938 visit of the French air chief of staff, General Joseph Vuillemin, to Berlin that thoroughly terrified the French is a case in point.[101]

Active duty army strengths were not necessarily difficult to calculate in the case of even the Germans; the question that was ambiguous was that of the effectiveness of reserve forces. Through to the end of 1939 the Western Powers considerably overestimated the strength and capabilities of Germany's reserve forces. Unfortunately the fall and winter training program of the German army in late 1939/early 1940 brought its reserve forces up to the level of regular

formations; and the contrast between German reserve forces in the 1940 battles to the French "B" divisions that collapsed along the Meuse was all too obvious. The point here is that while one could perhaps track the numbers, the question of doctrine training, expertise, and readiness remained intractable and opaque.

3. What sorts of things did those involved in net assessments say about the military balance(s) in question?

a) How was the threat first perceived and judged in initial net assessments?

b) How did they perceive and assess the trends between the initial threat perceptions and the outbreak of war? (a & b together)

In this area there was wide disparity in how quickly major powers first perceived the threat. The cases of even the Axis powers suggest some substantial differences. Through 1935, the Italians regarded the Germans as the major threat to their position on the continent; thereafter, as a result of Abysinnia, they now saw the French and the British as the major block to their aspirations. Nevertheless, there was considerable vacillation between which of those powers was the main enemy, since the Italians were patently incapable of handling both powers even with German help. The Germans viewed France as the most immediate threat to Germany's rearmament, but the Soviet Union represented the great ideological and racial opponent for the long run. Interestingly, the Germans prepared rather well for the first threat, but their preparations, particularly in an intellectual sense, were most inadequate for the issues

that a war against the Soviet Union raise.

The British and French offer a sharp contrast in their perceptions of the threat. On the French side, Foch exclaimed at the signing of the Versailles Treaty that the treaty represented a twenty year truce. With what Winston Churchill aptly characterized as a national sense of "haunting dread," the French perceived the Germans as a great, over-arching threat to their security.[102] The problem was that the French consistently confused the long-term threat with current short term strategic realities. That confusion, which contributed to a pattern of overweighing German military strength, reinforced a policy of inaction. On the British side, the leading civil servants recognized almost immediately the emergence of a German threat with Hitler's coming to power. Their initial, relatively calm reaction had changed to panic by 1936, when in fact German military power had barely emerged from its cocoon. Ironically, the British in 1939 began to assess the strategic balance in less gloomy colors, almost precisely at that moment when German capabilities for the first time gave the Reich the capacity to wage a major European war.

c) How and why did assessments change between the outbreak of war and major defeats/victories such as the fall of France?

The question is not so much the shift in assessment between the opening of hostilities and major defeat or victories, but the immediate reaction to those events by the great powers. In the case of the fall of France, Britain and Germany reacted differently. Both obviously judged the short-term results in similar terms: that the fall of France had substantially tilted the balance in favor of the Third Reich. But in their long-term estimates the Germans judged that

they had won. As General Alfred Jodl noted in his diary in late June 1940: "the final victory of Germany over England is only a question of time."[103] The British on the other hand (and not just Churchill) judged that the issue was not yet settled and that both the United States and the Soviet Union have major roles in determining the outcome of the war. While the Soviet Union judged the strategic situation in a fashion similar to the British, they failed to see their own vulnerability to the operational and tactical skills displayed by the German army on the battlefields of France.

d) How did perceptions of potential enemy intentions and capabilities influence inter-allied relations?

In the case of the Axis powers it is difficult to speak of a true alliance. At best these powers hoped that their allies drain off substantial enemy forces so that they might best take advantage of enemy weaknesses. In the case of Britain and France differing perceptions of the threat played a major role in the relations between the powers. As late as February 1939, Chamberlain was still unsure as to whether it be necessary to send a large army to the continent to support Britain's ally. That tension between the British and French in the 1930s undoubtedly influenced the almost complete break and the considerable Schadenfreude that statesmen, on both sides of the Channel, exhibited in the aftermath of the May/June debacle.[104]

III. The Results of Net Assessment

4. What did governments get right and why?

a) In those cases where accurate assessments were made, what were the factors that contributed to the assessment?

We have not asked a number of questions under this heading because it is our reading of the 1930s that there were few instances where either governments or leaders made accurate assessments. Nevertheless, in those cases where individuals or governments got the balance right, it is essential that the authors examine the basis on which those estimates were made. Whatever the reasons for correct decisions (and here one may be speaking of suppositions or the underlying causes), the essays should aim to illucidate why and how such correct judgments came to be made.

5. What did governments get wrong and why?

The wrong assessments will be easier to identify -- after all that is the advantage of the historian. But the whys should be no easier to identify in this case than in the above question. And it is the whys that should be particularly useful to current policymakers.

a) To what extent were those involved in net assessments able to judge asymmetrical approaches on the part of potential enemies? In other words, did they have any sense how differently enemy analysts might assess the strategic situation and, if so, how was this folded into the assessment?

Even in a simple sense this appears to have been difficult area for policy makers and

military leaders. In 1936, the Deputy Chiefs of Staff, discussing a Joint Planning Committee report, admitted that a German staff officer studying the same material might well come to a conclusion that was different from the Joint Planning Committee's assumption that "Germany has great superiority in land and air forces."[105] Outside of that enigmatic comment, it is difficult to identify in the German and British cases instances where national assessments looked at the strategic balance from anything other than a narrowly based position of their own nation. In one British case, a high Treasury official assured the British Cabinet in late summer 1939 that Germany's war "plans had . . . been laid on the basis of self-sufficiency" -- undoubtedly because that was what the British have done.[106] Similarly, the air staff misestimates on the subject of the pace of Luftwaffe rearmament in 1930s reflected a self-satisfied belief that the Germans rearm in the same fashion with which the RAF approach such an effort: with careful meticulous planning.[107] The reality was of course, quite different and only when the British began to grasp that the Germans were operating on a different basis did they grasp the fact that there was an emerging threat.[108] (In fact one could argue that they grasped it too well.)

b) How strongly did cultural and methodological biases prevent accurate assessment of enemy intentions and capabilities?

Cultural biases clearly played a major role, if not the major role, in misestimations of enemy intentions and capabilities. The Germans seem to have been particularly prone to this disease -- one which grew progressively worse as they entered the Second World War. Their misjudgment of the strategic and industrial power of the United States and the Soviet Union in 1941 stands as a case in point. And one should remember that it was not just Hitler but the

great majority of the German civil and military leadership who shared in these misjudgments.[109] But the disease had been alive and well before 1941. If some such as Beck believed that Britain and France resist an unrestrained German push into Eastern Europe, the great majority of the German leadership by 1939 subscribed to the Führer's assessment that the democracies, undermined by Jewish influences, were incapable of sustained resistance. As early as May 1933 a German exponent of "strategic" bombing was arguing that "the terrorizing of the enemy's chief cities and industrial regions through bombing lead that much more quickly to a collapse of morale, the weaker the national character of his people is. . . ."[110]

But one should note that cultural biases were as prevalent in other powers. Certainly, neither the British nor the Americans were willing to give Japanese military forces, ground, air and naval, their full due and the debacles of Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, the Prince of Wales, and Singapore were the direct result.[111] On the other hand, ideological preconceptions rather than national stereotypes played a major role in distorting Soviet assessments of the threat. Stalin's misreading of the danger posed by Hitler and Nazi ideology resulted in the decimation and destruction of the Communist Party in Germany in 1933. It is hard to see where the Soviet reading of the ideological nature of the Nazi threat improved over the period from 1933 to June 1941. Even in the case of tiny Finland, the Soviets' belief that the Finnish peasants and workers not fight appears to have played a major role in the ill-timed, ill-prepared, and ill-conceived attack on Finland in November 1939.[112]

c) To what extent did budgetary and other domestic considerations distort the assessments?

In the largest sense, British leaders believed that Britain's economic decline had severely handicapped their ability to protect the Empire. Such worries over their own economic difficulties contributed to the British willingness to appease the Nazi regime through 1939. On the other hand, Stalin's purges of the Soviet military and intelligence bureaucracies to strengthen his control had two monumental and direct effects. First, it removed the slightest willingness to exhibit anything less than slavish obedience to the party line. Second, it eliminated those who were most realistic about the German threat. While one might not go so far as some modern historians have gone in stressing the impact of domestic politics on foreign policy, it is clear that domestic concerns are of major importance in the evolution of assessments as well as policy.

d) How much did intellectual dishonesty and deliberate "miscounting of the quantitative balance" distort assessments?

In some cases, it may be difficult to differentiate between deliberate "miscounting" and straight out incompetence. Still the contrast between British estimates of the French army in 1938 and those for 1939 do raise interesting questions about political or worst-case tampering with the evidence. In March 1938, the British Chiefs of Staff reported that France could only mobilize an army (including reserve formations) of fifty-three divisions and that the French economy could only maintain thirty to forty of those divisions in the field.[113] In fact as they show a little over a year later, the French were able to mobilize nearly double the British estimates and to keep those forces in the field. In the same strategic survey, the Chiefs managed to suggest that the navies of their putative opponents (Germany, Japan and Italy) were

almost equal in naval strength. This total was achieved by juggling the books and counting three German "pocket battleships" as battleships, by including a German battle cruiser that not be ready until the following year and by counting two Italian battleships undergoing major refit, while subtracting out two British battleships undergoing similar modification.[114] On the other hand, it is difficult to suggest that French intelligence was fiddling with the figures when the chief of military intelligence, Col. Ferdinand Gauche, gave the same wildly pessimistic estimates in his memoirs after the Second World War that he had given the French government in the 1930s.[115]

e) How much did a lack of basic military knowledge about one's own forces and capabilities (basic military knowledge) distort the capability to make accurate assessments?

We have already discussed this problem at the analyst level; here we want the authors to address the problems involved in a national leadership's ability to make strategic assessments on the basis of their estimate of their own military forces as well as those of their opponents. It appear that of all the leaders of the interwar period, Adolf Hitler was most knowledgable on the state of his own military forces. At least in the period from 1933 through 1936 he had few illusions about the readiness of Germany's military forces to undertake major military operations. And the major foreign policy successes that he achieved, such as the remilitarization of the Rhineland, rested on his ability to bluff and to argue persuasively that Germany was not embarking on an ambitious foreign policy; she only wanted what was legitimately hers.

Hitler's performance in the late 1930s was more open to question. While he did show some recognition of the value of armored and motorized forces, he was hardly realistic on the capabilities of the Wehrmacht in either 1938 or 1939. He was far too amenable to the Luftwaffe's claim as to how well prepared for war it was. The July 1939 visit to the Luftwaffe's test facility in particular helped to persuade him that his air force had few if any weaknesses. Ironically, the Luftwaffe had designed its "Potemkin village" of future technology[116] to gain a larger share of the defense budget rather than to persuade the Führer how ready for war it was. The visit appears to have confirmed Hitler's impression that his military were ready for a major European war. In 1942, Göring was to recall: "The miracle was that things worked out as well as they did and that the consequences were not far worse."[117]

In the British case a subtler misunderstanding of the capabilities and prospects of Britain's military forces may have misled policy makers and strategists. This misunderstanding probably also explains the far more optimistic judgments of the strategic situation that occurred after March 1939. The public outcry after the German occupation of Prague in fact forced the Chamberlain government to embark on a wholesale rearmament program -- one in which military needs rather than financial considerations dominated defense requirements. For the first time in twenty years the British services were able to get what they needed in the sense that their orders were now placed with British industry. But as the Reagan administration was to discover in the early 1980s, it is difficult for an industrial base to fill a major upswing in orders when it has been substantially run down over previous decades. Thus, it was the perception that things were moving in terms of increased defense spending and British diplomacy rather than the reality that helped to persuade British analysts that the balance was

moving in their direction. As the Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, told the French in late May 1939:

> It should be remembered that the position of France and Great Britain is quite different than it was six months ago. They had embarked upon a policy which was both decisive and firm and which had had great effect upon the psychology of the whole world. Great Britain, France, Poland, Turkey, and it was hoped, Russia had been rallied together and the United States was very close to them. Our industrial output, particularly in the area of aircraft, had grown faster than at one time we had dared to expect. Conscription [in Britain] had been introduced. The general effect was to place our partnership in a position of evident strength.[118]

f) How much did honest misinterpretation, wishful thinking, or "mirror-imaging" affect the assessments?

On the last question, the instincts as well as analytic abilities of the historians must play a major role in suggesting what happened in strategic analyses in the late 1930s. Did Chamberlain recognize the nature of the German danger after Prague in March of 1939? Or was it that the British government well into the early months of the war found it difficult to gauge the nature of the challenge?[119] On the German side, did wishful thinking so becloud the Führer's eyes in the late 1930s that he was unable to perceive the changes that occurred in Western policy (especially in Britain) or did Hitler misinterpret the signals coming out of Britain and France in summer of 1939 (such as the Ball-Wohlthat negotiations) to the extent that he did not fully recognize the danger of a European-wide war? This final section of the analysis should aim to tie the loose ends together: to explain or examine those intangibles such as misinterpretation, wishful thinking, or "mirror-imaging" that got in the way of statesmen and

strategists as they attempted to weigh the shifting international balance and their prospects should another great world war occur.

NOTES

1. Andrew W. Marshall, "Problems of Estimating Military Power," Rand Corporation, P3417, August 1966, p. 9

2. See in particular the essays in Ernest R. May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars (Princeton, 1984).

3. On planning during World War II, see Grace Person Hayes, The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan (Annapolis, MD, 1982); Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942 in United States Army in World War II (Washington, DC, 1953); Maurice Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944 (Washington, DC, 1959); James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt, The Soldier of Freedom, 1940-1945 (New York, 1970); Thomas B. Buell, Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Admiral Ernest J. King (Annapolis, MD, 1980); Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942 (New York, 1965) and George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943-1945 (New York, 1973).

4. Richard F. Haynes, The Awesome Power: Harry S. Truman as Commander in Chief (Baton Rouge, LA, 1973); Steven L. Rearden, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1947-1950 (Washington, DC, 1984); Norman A. Graebner (ed.), The National Security: Its Theory and Practice 1945-1960 (New York, 1986); James F. Schnabel et al., The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1945-1953, 3 vols. (Wilmington, DE, 1979); Paul Y. Hammond, "NSC-68: Prologue to Rearmament," in Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder, Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets (New

York, 1962), pp. 267-378; Alfred D. Sander, "Truman and the National Security Council: 1945-1947," Journal of American History vol. 59 (September, 1972), pp. 369-88; Sam Postbrief, "Departure from Incrementalism in U. S. Strategic Planning: The Origins of NSC-68," Naval War College Review vol. 32 (March-April, 1980), pp. 34-57; John Prados, The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Soviet Strategic Forces (Princeton, 1982); Lawrence Freedman, U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat (Princeton, 1986).

5. Douglas Kinnard, President Eisenhower and Strategy Management (Lexington, KY, 1977); Samuel P. Huntington, The Common Defense (New York, 1961); Paul Y. Hammond, Organizing for Defense (Princeton, 1961). By and large, the focus of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee was on assessing which superpower, the US or the USSR, would be in a worse position after an allout nuclear exchange, and how such a conflict might be terminated (Interview with Wallace E. Seidel, 5 October 1986). The Net Evaluation Subcommittee was headed by an Air Force general and lasted about a decade.

6. Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, How Much Is Enough? Shaping The Defense Program, 1961-1969 (New York, 1971); Ralph Sanders, The Politics of Defense Analysis (New York, 1973); Richard K. Betts, Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises (Cambridge, MA, 1977); Freedman, Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat, pp. 30-61; Vincent Davis, "The Laird Pentagon, 1969-1973: Some Impressions," unpublished paper, IUSAF&S, 1973. See also Douglas Kinnard, The Secretary of Defense (Lexington, KY, 1980); Mark M. Lowenthal," The National Security Council: Organization History," CRS 78-104F (1978), and "The Department of Defense: Organizational History," CRS 78-188 F (1978), Congressional Research Service.

7. Andrew W. Marshall, "Net Assessment in the Department of Defense," Office of Net Assessment Memorandum, 21 September 1976, p. 1.

8. A. W. Marshall, Long-Term Competition with the Soviets: A Framework for Strategic Analysis (U) (Santa Monica, CA, 1972), p. v.

9. The characterization of net assessment as "scanning the environment" was introduced by Captain James G. Roche (USN, ret.) in the mid-1970s based on Robert Anthony's approach to teaching strategic planning at the Harvard Business School.

10. Andrew W. Marshall, "Theater-Level Gaming in the Formulation of Plans and Policies (Net Assessment)," Theater-Level Gaming and Analysis Workshop for Force Planning (Vol. 2, Proceedings) (Menlo Park, CA, 1977), pp. 17-18.

11. A.W. Marshall, "A Program to Improve Analytic Methods related to Strategic Forces," Policy Sciences, vol. 15 (1982), pp. 48-49.

12. Long-Term Competition with the Soviets, pp. 48-49 and 51.

13. The best overview of the RSAC, now officially called the Rand Strategy Assessment System (or RSAS), remains Paul K. Davis and James A. Winnefeld, The Rand Strategy Assessment Center: An Overview and Interim Conclusions about Utility and Development Options, Rand Report R-2945-DNA, March 1983. The original intent of this effort was to "attempt to develop new methods for strategic analysis that combined the best features of war gaming and analytic modeling" (ibid., p. 5).

14. It is worth noting that despite the fact that virtually all the documents on German military forces and diplomatic policy have been open since the early 1960s, that all the relevant British documents have been available since 1970, and that much of the French material has been available since the mid-1970s, not until 1984 did a historian systematically

evaluate the strategic balance at the time of the Munich crisis. See Williamson Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939 (Princeton, 1984).

15. The bridge between intelligence and the user and the inability of intelligence organizations to understand what is of real importance even in wartime is suggested by an Ultra dispatch of 5 September 1944 that was passed from Bletchly Park twelve days before "Operation Market Garden" began. It read as follows: "For rest and refit of panzer formations, Heeresgruppe Baker (Army Group B) ORDERED FOURTH [4 Sep] . . . to remain in operation with battle worthy elements: 2 panzer, 116 panzer, 9 SS and 10 SS panzer divisions. Elements not operating to be transferred by AOK 5 [Fifth Army] for rest and refit in area Venloo-Arnheim-Hertogenbosch."

16. Lt. Col. John G. Hines and Cmdr. George F. Kraus, "Soviet Strategies for Military Competition," Parameters vol. 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1986), p. 28. When this article appeared in 1986, both officers were working for Andrew Marshall in ONA.

17. The term "strategic assessment" has at least two meanings within the context of this project. From a historical standpoint, a 1930s strategic assessment would correspond best to ONA's comprehensive notion of net assessment in the sense of addresssing the question: How do the military capabilities of one major power stack up aginst those of its potential adversary? In comtemporary American usage, however, the terms "strategic balance" and "strategic assessment" have come to refer primarily to the balance of intercontinental nuclear forces between the US and USSR. While in many respects the US-Soviet strategic balance may be -- at least from an American viewpoint -- the most important of the various functional and regional areas of military competition between the two superpowers, from Marshall's standpoint it would only be one of a number of

balances that would be required for a comprehensive net assessment of the US military position relative to the USSR.

18. Richard Pipes, "Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth," Commentary (October 1986), pp. 30-31.

19. For an examination of the broad spectrum of the problems involved in military effectiveness, see Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (eds.), On the Effectiveness of Military Institutions, Vol. I, World War I, Vol. II, The Inter-War Years, and Vol. III, World War II (London, 1987).

20. Even the U. S. intelligence agencies charged with estimating responsibilities have disagreed over Soviet defense expenditures. For example, while both CIA and DIA now agree that the dollar cost of Soviet weapons procurement only grew at a rate of roughly 1% per year between 1975 and 1981, as of early 1986 DIA was estimating 3-4% annual real growth in weapons procurement for 1982-84 whereas CIA believed that Soviet procurement expenditures had been flat ("The Soviet Economy Under a New Leader," CIA-DIA Report to the Subcommittee on Economic Resources, Competitiveness, and Security Economics of the Joint Economic Committee, 19 March 1986, p. 8).

21. See MacGregor Knox, Mussolini Unleashed (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 294-96. The failure to investigate pre-World War II defense spending trends appears to have an oversight among the historical community. Nevetheless, it should suggest that the obvious is not always obvious.

22. After the fighting for the Falklands was over the British were astounded by the numbers of prisoners who fell into their hands once the garrison at Port Stanley surrendered. British intelligence was not even able to get the size of the Argentine garrison correct.

23. Paul M. Kennedy, "Great Britain Before 1914," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, p. 194.

24. For a simple account of the British "system" see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 55-57. For a description of the various committees which fed into the British strategic assessment process see D.C. Watt, "British Intelligence and the Coming of the Second World War in Europe," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, pp. 237-70.

25. See Stephen Roskill, Hankey, Man of Secrets, Vol. II, 1919-1935 (Annapolis, 1972), pp. 290, 344-46.

26. See in particular the discussion of Groener's approach to strategic decision making in the late 1920's in Wilhelm Deist, The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament (London, 1981), pp. 4-20.

27. See in particular Hitler's remarks to Germany's senior military leadership in "Aufzeichnung Liebmann," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1954).

28. Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 48-49.

29. Public Record Office [hereafter, PRO] CAB 371/22922, C1545/281/17, Minutes by Sir Robert Vansittart, 10.2.38., critizing CP 40 (30), "Staff Conversations with France and Belgium."

30. Letter from Manstein to Beck, 21.7.38, in the Beck Nachlass, N 28/3-4 Bundesarchiv/Militärachiv [hereafter, BA/MA].

31. See in particular Gerhard Weinberg's superb volume, The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, Vol. 1, Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933-1936 (Chicago 1970). See also

Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 359-63.

32. MacGregor Knox, "Fascist Italy Assesses Its Enemies, 1935-1940," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, p. 347.

33. Michael Geyer, "National Socialist Germany: The Politics of Information," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, p. 343.

34. For the relevant documents see PRO FO 371/21770, C 10759/4786/18. From the military attaché Berlin for the War Office, 26.9.38.; PRO FO 371/21770, C 10908/4786/18, Newton to Halifax, 27.9.38.; PRO CAB 21/550, Czechoslovakia: Diary of Events, 27.9.38., p. 40; and PRO CAB 23/95, Cab 46 (38), Meeting of the Cabinet, 27.9.38., 9:30 p.m., p. 261.

35. For a full discussion of these issues see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, Ch. X.

36. PRO CAB 47/14, A.T.B. 181, "Plan for Economic Warfare Against Germany," 22.7.38.

37. PRO CAB 53/41, COS 766, COS Committee, "Appreciation of the Situation in the event of War against Germany: Minute by the Minister for the Coordination of Defense," p. 10.

38. PRO CAB 21/544, "Note on the Question of Whether it would be to our Military Advantage to Fight Germany Now or to Postpone the Issue," by General Ismay, 20.9.38.

39. See Chamberlain's comments in the meeting of the Cabinet 30 March 1939, as the British discussed the Polish problem: PRO CAB 23/98 Cab 16 (39), Meeting of the Cabinet, 30.3.39., pp. 156-69.

40. Michael A. Barnhart, "Japanese Intelligence Before the Second World War 'Best Case' Analysis," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, pp. 430-31.

41. Ibid, p. 451.

42. For Beck's strategic analysis see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 174-76; see ch. VII for a discussion of the strategic factors involved in the Munich crisis.

43. Letter from Manstein to Beck, 21.7.38., in the Beck Nachlass, N 28/3-4, BA/MA.

44. PRO CAB 27/624, FP (36) 43rd Meeting, 19.4.39., Cabinet: Committee on Foreigh Policy, p. 203.

45. PRO CAB 53/48, COS 887, 24.4.39, CID, Chiefs of Staff Committee, "Military Value of Russia: Report."

46. PRO CAB 24/286, CP 108 (39), 10.4.29., "Balance of Strategical Value in War as between Spain as an Enemy and Russia as an Ally: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee," pp. 95-96.

47. For a brilliant study of these shifts and their impact on the evolution of British assessments of the threat see Wesley K. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939 (Ithaca, 1985).

48. PRO CAB 53/49, COS 914, C10, Chiefs of Staff Committee, "Conversations with France (AFC 25), Anglo-French Staff Conversations, 1939 Report on Stage II, Annex I," p. 226, April 1939.

49. For French estimates see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 162-66, and 242-43.

50. G. Zhukov, Reminiscences and Reflections Vol. I, (Moscow, 1985), p. 339.

51. For how badly the French did in interpreting the causes of their own defeat see Robert Paxton, Parades and Politics at Vichy (Princeton, 1966).

52. The major reasons were military rather than political; see Robert Doughty, Seeds of Disaster (Lexington, 1986).

53. John Erickson "Threat Identification and Strategic Appraisal By the Soviet Union, 1930-1941," in May (ed.), Knowing One's Enemies, pp. 418-19.

54. Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP), 3rd. Ser., Vol. II, Doc. 590, 6.8.38., letter from Henderson to Halifax.

55. See Williamson Murray, "JCS Reform: A German Example?," Naval War College Review (December 1985).

56. For the status of intelligence within the Luftwaffe see Horst Boog, Die deutsche Luftwaffenführung, 1935-1945. Führungsprobleme, Spitzengliederung, Generalstabsausbildung (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 76-91. See also Horst Boog, "Higher Command and Leadership in the German Luftwaffe, 1935-1945," in Col. Alfred F. Hurley and Major Robert C. Ehrhart (eds.), Air Power and Warfare (Washington, DC, 1979), p. 145.

57. For a generally critical view of the capabilities of British intelligence analysis in the interwar period see F.H. Hinsley, British Intelligence in the Second World War, Vol. I (London, 1979), pp. 3-45. For a more detailed and idiosyncratic examination of individual analysts (and far more amusing) in British intelligence see Christopher Andrew, Her Majesty's Secret Service (New York, 1986).

58. See Erickson, "Threat Identification and Strategic Appraisal By the Soviet Union 1930-1941."

59. Barnhart, "Japanese Intelligence Before the Second World War: 'Best Case' Analysis," p. 435.

60. That British and French intelligence products during the 1930s paid little attention to British and French forces is very much the impression that one of us (Murray) has received from reading the documentary evidence for the late 1930s. In the case of Britain, the reader's attention is called to MI6 (SIS)'s report on the Czech crisis (PRO, FO371/21659, C14471/42/18, Secret Intelligence Service, 18.9.38.) for an indication of a far weaker product then those coming out of the Chiefs of Staff Committee on the Joint Planning Committee.

61. See Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 314-21.

62. See Williamson Murray, "German Response to Victory in Poland: A Case Study in Professionalism," Armed Forces and Society (Winter 1981).

63. See Williamson Murray, Luftwaffe (Baltimore, 1985), pp. 48-49.

64. For Tukhachevskii's estimations and the results of the purges see John Erickson, The Road to Stalingrad, Stalin's War with Germany (New York, 1975), pp. 1-9.

65. For B.H. Liddell Hart see Brian Bond's splendid short biography: Liddell Hart (New Brunswick, 1977); on J.F.C. Fuller see Anthony J. Trythall, 'Boney' Fuller, The Intellectual General, 1878-1966 (London, 1977); on the overall impact of those outside of the defense establishment see particularly Jay Luvaas, The Education of an Army (Chicago, 1964); and Robin Higham's two works: Armed Forces in Peacetime (Hamden, CT, 1962), and The Military Intellectuals in Britain, 1918-1939 (New Brunswick, 1965).

66. See particularly Peter Dennis, Decision by Default, Peacetime Conscription and British Defense, 1919-1939 (London, 1972).

67. PRO CAB 23/95, Cab 42 (38), Meeting of the Cabinet, 24.9.38., pp. 178-80.

68. Galeazzo Ciano, The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943 (New York, 1946) p. 147.

69. PRO CAB 53/37 COS 698 (Revise), CID, COS Sub-Committee, "Military Implications of German Aggression against Czechoslovakia," 28.3.38., pp. 145-46. For virtually the same wording during the Munich crisis see Cabinet Paper CP 199,14.9.38. (CAE 24/278). This had only minor changes from COS paper 764 (JP), (CAB 53/41), which the Joint Planning Committee wrote. The Chiefs of Staff produced their own version of the report, COS 765 (Revise) (CAB 53/41), 4.10.38., which differs from the other versions only in minor respects. Just to make sure that no one missed the point the Defense Policy Committee released this paper to its members on the same date as DP (P) 32, (CAB 16/138a).

70. For the most forthright discussion of this acceptance of Nazi ideology by the Wehrmacht's officer corps see Jürgen Förster's contribution's to Horst Boog, Jürgen Förster, Joachim Hoffman, Ernst Klink, Rolf-Dieter Müller, and Gerd R. Ueberschär, Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Vol. IV, Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion (Stuttgart, 1983), pp. 3-37, 413-50. See also Jürgen Förster, "Hitler's War Aims Against the Soviet Union and the German Military Leaders," Militärhistorik Tidskrift (Stockholm, 1979).

71. Klaus Reinhardt, Die Wende vor Moskau Das Scheitern der Strategie Hitlers in Winter 1941/1942 (Stuttgart, 1972), p. 21.

72. "Aufzeichnung Liebmann."

73. L. B. Namier, Diplomatic Prelude, 1938-1939 (London, 1948), p. 302.

74. See Murray, Luftwaffe, pp. 46-59 for the results of German misreadings of British leadership and resolve.

75. Ciano, The Ciano Diaries, p. 286.

76. Since until recently modern European historians have had a difficult time in untangling the ideologic basis of Fascism and Nazism, one should not be too harsh on Stalin's inability to understand what was happening in the Third Reich. For a brilliant unraveling of the reality of fascist and Nazi ideology see MacGregor Knox, "Conquest, Foreign and Domestic, in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany," Journal of Modern History (March-December 1984).

77. See Barton Whaley, Codeword Barbarossa (Cambridge, 1973).

78. See in particular PRO CAB 53/37. COS 698 (Revise), COS Sub-Committee, 28.3.38., pp. 145-46.

79. For a discussion of the reaction of Germany's senior leadership see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 182-84.

80. See Telford Taylor, The March of Conquest (New York, 1958), pp. 172-76.

81. See Klaus-Jürgen Müller, Armee, Politik und Gesellschaft in Deutschland, 1933-1945 (Paderborn, 1979), pp. 96-99.

82. It is worth noting that today's world of naval capabilities possesses significantly greater imponderables than the world of 1939 where ship classification was very similar from navy to navy.

83. See Alvin D. Coox, "Japanese Military Effectiveness of Armed Forces in the Inter-War Period, 1919-1941," in Millett and Murray (eds.), The Effectiveness of Military Institutions, Vol. 2.

84. See in particular MacGregor Knox, Mussolini Unleashed (Cambridge, 1983), for how the British discovered the correct tonnage of Italian cruisers.

85. See Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 78-84.

86. Even after the war was over and the real strength of German reserve forces became clear, the head of the French army's intelligence during the 1930s, Col. Ferdinand Gauché, was still giving a wholly unrealistic picture of the strength of German reserve forces in that period. See Col. Ferdinand Gauché, Le Deuxième Bureau au Travail (Paris, 1953).

87. PRO CAB 53/37. COS 698 (Revise), COS Sub-Committee, "Military Implications of German Aggression against Czechoslavakia," 28.3.38., p. 147.

88. DDF, 2nd Ser., Vol. VIII, Doc. 432, Note du Chef D'Etat-major général de la Défense nationale et de L'Armée, "Sur les conséquences de la réalissation de L'Anschluss," 14.3.38.

89. Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 144-45.

90. PRO CAB 55/18, JP 470, 12.7.39., CID, Joint Planning Committee, "The Attitude of Italy in War and the Problem of Anglo-French Support to Poland."

91. See Murray, Luftwaffe, pp. 8-12.

92. In the late 1920s, when asked how trained aircrews would find their targets, the Future Lord Tedder replied: "You tell me." Jerry Hartcup, The Challenge of War (London, 1967), p. 126.

93. See R. Macleod and A. Kelley (eds.), The Ironside Diaries' 1937-1940 (London, 1963), for Ironside's reaction. Knox, Mussolini Unleashed, covers the Italian dictator's reaction.

94. In fact it is only relatively recently that historians have really begun to use the wealth of information and analysis in the Wynne book. Both Murray's work on the German army in The Change in the European Balance of Power and Timothy Lupfer's, The Dynamics

of Doctrine (Leavenworth, 1981) draw heavily on Wynne.

95. The Ardennes offensive of December 1944 for example was based on the idle strategic hope that the "soft" West would collapse before a German operational success and make peace.

96. John Terraine, The Right of the Line (London, 1985).

97. For a fuller discussion of British attitudes towards France, see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power.

98. Brian Johnson, The Secret War (London, 1978), pp. 63-64.

99. PRO CAB 23/100, Cab 36(39), Meeting of the Cabinet, 5.7.39., pp. 108-28.

100. See Air Historical Branch, Air Ministry, Vol. VII, Translations: Luftwaffe Strength and Serviceability Statistics, G302694/AR/9/51/50.

101. Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, p. 193.

102. Winston Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston, 1948), p. 6.

103. Chef WFA, 30.6.40, "Die Weiterführung des Krieges gegen England," International Military Tribunal, Trial of Major War Criminals, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 301-3.

104. For some of the background to British-French relations see Murray, The Change in the European Balance of Power, pp. 66-71.

105. PRO CAB 54/3. DCOS 24, December 1936, Deputy COS Sub-Committee: "Appreciation of the Situation in the Event of War with Germany," (Discussion of COS 513 [JP]).

106. PRO CAB 23/100, Cab 36 (39), Minutes of the Cabinet, 5.7.39., pp. 108-28.

107. See Wesley K. Wark, The Ultimate Enemy, British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939 (Ithaca, 1985) pp. 37-58.

108. See Murray, Luftwaffe, pp. 4-23.

109. See Reinhardt, Die Wende vom Moskau, pp. 21-27.

110. Heimann and Schunke, "Eine geheime Denkschrift sur Luftkriegs - Konzeption Hitler - Deutchlands vom Mai 1933," p. 72-86.

111. For a careful analysis of the role of national misperceptions in the making of strategy in the Far East see Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind, the United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945 (New York, 1978).

112. For the best account of Soviet foreign policy during this period see Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1967 (New York, 1971).

113. PRO CAB 53/37, COS 698 (Revise) (Also see paper DF[P]22), CID COS Sub Committee, "Military Implications of German Aggression against Czechoslovakia," 28.3.38., pp. 145-46.

114. Ibid., Appendix I, p. 153.

115. See Ferdinand Gauche, Le Deuxième Bureau au Travail (Paris, 1953).

116. The Luftwaffe had much experience in preparing Potemkin villages to awe foreign dignitaries. In 1937 they had done much the same thing to a visiting RAF delegation, and in 1930 both the French Chief of Air Staff (in August) and the American airman, Charles Lindberg, had received very misleading tours as to the state of Luftwaffe capabilities.

117. Quote in David Irving, The War Path, Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939 (New York, 1978), p. 225.

118. Documents on British Foreign Policy, 3rd Ser., Vol. V., Doc. 570, 20.5.39., "Extract from Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and M. M. Deladier and

Bonnet at the Ministry of War, in Paris."

119. For this line of argument see Peter Ludlow, in L. Kettenacker (ed.), Zweiten Weltkrieg (Stuttgart, 1977).

Appendix 2

"Plan Dog"

APPENDIX 2

["Plan Dog"]

November 12, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

Referring to my very brief touch in a recent conference as to the desirability of obtaining at once some light upon the major decisions which the President may make for guiding our future naval effort in the event of war, and in further immediate preparation for war, you may recall my remarks the evening we discussed War Plans for the Navy. I stated then that if Britain wins decisively against Germany we could win everywhere; but that if she loses the problem confronting us would be very great; and, while we might not lose everywhere, we might possibly, not win everywhere.

As I stated last winter on the Hill, in these circumstances we would be set back upon our haunches. Our war effort, instead of being widespread, would then have to be confined to the Western Hemisphere.

I now wish to expand my remarks, and to present to you my views concerning steps we might take to meet the situation that will exist should the United States enter war either alone or with allies. In this presentation, I have endeavored to keep in view the political realities in our own country.

The first thing to consider is how and where we might become involved.

(a) War with Japan in which we have no allies. This might be precipitated by Japanese armed opposition should we strongly reinforce our Asiatic Fleet or the Philippines Garrison, should we start fortifying Guam, or should we impose additional important economic sanctions; or it might be precipitated by ourselves in case of overt Japanese action against us, or by further extension of Japanese hegemony.

(b) War with Japan in which we have the British Empire, or the British Empire and Netherlands East Indies, as allies. This might be precipitated by one of the causes mentioned in (a), or by our movement of a naval reinforcement to Singapore, or by Japanese attack on British or Netherlands territory.

(c) War with Japan in which she is aided by Germany or Italy, and in which we are or are not aided by allies. To the causes of such a war, previously listed, might be added augmented American material assistance to Great Britain, our active military intervention in Britain's favor, or our active resistance to German extension of military activities to the Western Hemisphere.

(d) War with Germany and Italy in which Japan would not be initially involved and in which we would be allied with the British. Such a war would be initiated by American decision to intervene for the purpose of preventing the disruption of the British Empire, or German capture of the British Isles.

(e) We should also consider the alternative of now remaining out of war, and devoting ourselves exclusively to building up our defense of the Western Hemisphere, plus the preservation by peaceful means of our Far Eastern interests, and plus also continued material assistance to Great Britain.

As I see it, our major national objectives in the immediate future might be stated as preservation of the territorial, economic, and ideological integrity of the United States, plus that of the remainder of the Western Hemisphere; the prevention of the disruption of the British Empire, with all that such a consummation implies; and the diminution of the offensive military power of Japan, with a view to the retention of our economic and political interests in the Far East. It is doubtful, however, that it would be in our interest to reduce Japan to the status of an inferior military and economic power. A balance of power in the Far East is to our interest as much as is a balance of power in Europe.

The questions that confront us are concerned with the preparation and distribution of the naval forces of the United Sates, in cooperation with the military forces, for use in war in the accomplishment of all or part of these national objectives.

I can only surmise as to the military, political, and economic situation that would exist in the Atlantic should the British Empire collapse. Since Latin America has rich natural resources, and is the only important area of the world not now under the practical control of strong military powers, we can not dismiss the possibility that, sooner or later, victorious Axis nations might move firmly in that direction. For some years they might remain too weak to attack directly across the sea; their effort more likely would first be devoted to developing Latin American economic dependence, combined with strongly reinforced internal political upheavals for the purpose of establishing friendly regimes in effective military control. The immediacy of danger to us may depend upon the security of the Axis military position in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, the degree of our own military preoccupation in the Pacific, and the disturbing influence of unsatisfied economic needs of Latin America.

The present situation of the British Empire is not encouraging. I believe it easily possible, lacking active American military assistance, for that empire to lose this war and eventually be disrupted.

It is my opinion that the British are over-optimistic as to their chances for ultimate success. It is not at all sure that the British Isles can hold out, and it may be that they do not realize the danger that will exist should they lose in other regions.

Should Britain lose the war, the military consequences to the United States would be

serious.

If we are to prevent the disruption of the British Empire, we must support its vital needs.

Obviously, the British Isles, the "Heart of the Empire," must remain intact.

But even if the British Isles are held, this does not mean that Britain can win the war. To win, she must finally be able to effect the complete, or, at least, the partial collapse of the German Reich.

This result might, conceivably, be accomplished by bombing and by economic starvation through the agency of the blockade. It surely can be accomplished only by military successes on shore, facilitated possibly by over-extension and by internal antagonisms developed by the Axis conquests.

Alone, the British Empire lacks the manpower and the material means to master Germany. Assistance by powerful allies is necessary both with respect to men and with respect to munitions and supplies. If such assistance is to function effectively, Britain must not only continue to maintain the blockade, but she must also retain intact geographical positions from which successful land action can later be launched.

Provided England continues to sustain its present successful resistance at home, the area of next concern to the British Empire ought to be the Egyptian Theater.

Should Egypt be lost, the Eastern Mediterranean would be opened to Germany and Italy; the effectiveness of the sea blockade would be largely nullified; Turkey's military position would be fully compromised; and all hope of favorable Russian action would vanish.

Any anti-German offensive in the Near East would then become impossible.

The spot next in importance to Egypt, in my opinion, is Gibraltar, combined with West and Northwest Africa. From this area an ultimate offensive through Portugal, Spain and France, with the help of populations inimical to Germany, might give results equal to those which many years ago were produced by Wellington. The western gate to the Mediterranean would still be kept closed, provided Britain holds this region.

This brief discussion naturally brings into question the value to Britain of the Mediterranean relative to that of Hong Kong, Singapore, and India. Were the Mediterranean lost, Britain's strength in the Far East could be augmented without weakening home territory.

Japan probably wants the British out of Hong Kong and Singapore; and wants economic control, and ultimately military control, of Malaysia.

It is very questionable if Japan has territorial ambitions in Australia and New Zealand.

But does she now wish the British out of India, thus exposing that region and Western China to early Russian penetration or influence? I doubt it.

It would seem more probable that Japan, devoted to the Axis alliance only so far as her own immediate interests are involved, would prefer not to move military forces against Britain, and possibly not against the Netherlands East Indies, because, if she can obtain a high degree of economic control over Malaysia, she will then be in a position to improve her financial structure by increased trade with Britain and America. Her economic offensive power will be increased. Her military dominance will follow rapidly or slowly, as seems best at the time.

The Netherlands East Indies has 60,000,000 people, under the rule of 80,000 Dutchmen, including women and children. This political situation can not be viewed as in permanent equilibrium. The rulers are unsupported by home country or by an alliance. Native rebellions have occurred in the past, and may recur in the future. These Dutchmen will act in what they believe is their own selfish best interests.

Will they alone resist aggression, or will they accept an accommodation with the Japanese?

Will they resist, if supported only by the British Empire?

Will they firmly resist, if supported by the British Empire and the United States?

Will the British resist Japanese aggression directed only against the Netherlands East Indies?

Should both firmly resist, what local military assistance will they require from the United States to ensure success?

No light on these questions has been thrown by the report of the proceedings of the recent Singapore Conference.

The basic character of a war against Japan by the British and Dutch would be the fixed defense of the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Java. The applied army, naval, and air forces now in position are considerable, and some future reinforcement may be expected from Australia and New Zealand. Borneo and the islands to the East are vulnerable. There is little chance for an allied offensive. Without Dutch assistance, the external effectiveness of the British bases at Hong Kong and Singapore would soon disappear.

The Japanese deployment in Manchukuo and China requires much of their Army, large supplies and merchant tonnage, and some naval force. It is doubtful if Japan will feel secure in withdrawing much strength from in front of Russia, regardless of non-aggression agreements. The winter lull in China will probably permit the withdrawal of the forces they need for a campaign against Malaysia. The availability of ample supplies for such a campaign is

problematical.

Provided the British and Dutch cooperated in a vigorous and efficient defense of Malaysia, Japan will need to make a major effort with all categories of military force to capture the entire area. The campaign might even last several months. Whether Japan would concurrently be able successfully to attack Hong Kong and the Philippines, and also strongly to support the fixed positions in the Mid-Pacific, seems doubtful.

During such a campaign, due to her wide dispersion of effort, Japan would, unquestionably, be more vulnerable to attack by the United States (or by Russia) than she would be once Malaysia is in her possession.

This brings us to a consideration of the strategy of an American war against Japan, that it, either the so-called "Orange Plan," or a modification. It must be understood that the Orange Plan was drawn up to govern our operations when the United States and Japan are at war, and no other nations are involved.

You have heard enough of the Orange Plan to know that, in a nut-shell, it envisages our Fleet's procedure westward through the Marshalls and the Carolines, consolidating as it goes, and then on to the recapture of the Philippines. Once there, the Orange Plan contemplates the eventual economic starvation of Japan, and, finally, the complete destruction of her external military power. Its accomplishment would require several years, and the absorption of the full military, naval, and economic energy of the American people.

In proceeding through these Mid-Pacific islands, we have several subsidiary objectives in mind. First, we hope that our attack will induce the Japanese to expose their fleet in action against our fleet, and lead to their naval defeat. Second, we wish to destroy the ability of the Japanese to use those positions as air and submarine bases from which to project attacks on our lines of communication to the mainland and Hawaii. Third, we would use the captured positions for supporting our further advance westward.

Most of the island positions are atolls. These atolls, devoid of natural sources of water other than rainfall, and devoid of all supplies, are merely narrow coral and sand fringes around large shallow areas where vessels may anchor. Alone, they are undefendable against serious attack, either by one side or the other. They do, however, afford weak positions for basing submarines and seaplanes. Our Fleet should have no difficulty in capturing atolls, provided we have enough troops, but we could not hold them indefinitely unless the Fleet were nearby.

We know little about the Japanese defenses in the Mid-Pacific. We believe the real islands of Truk and Ponape in the Carolines are defended with guns and troops, and we believe that some of the atolls of the Marshalls may be equipped as submarine and air bases, and be garrisoned with relatively small detachments of troops.

The Marshalls contain no sites suitable for bases in the absence of the Fleet, though there are numerous good anchorages. With the Fleet at hand, they can be developed for use as

seaplane and submarine bases for the support of an attack on real islands such as Ponape and Truk. With the Fleet permanently absent, they will succumb to any serious thrust.

Our first real Marshall-Caroline objective is Truk, a magnificent harbor, relatively easily defended against raids, and capable of conversion into an admirable advanced base. When we get this far in the accomplishment of the "Orange Plan," we have the site for a base where we can begin to assemble our ships, stores, and troops, for further advance toward the Philippines. It would also become the center of the defense system for the lines of communications against flank attack from Japan.

Getting to Truk involves a strong effort. We would incur losses from aircraft, mines and submarines, particularly as the latter could be spared from the operations in Malaysia. We would lose many troops in assaulting the islands.

Going beyond Truk initiates the most difficult part of the Orange Plan, would take a long time, and would require the maximum effort which the United States could sustain.

Truk is not looked upon as a satisfactory final geographical objective. It is too far away to support useful operations in the China Sea. It can not be held in the absence of fairly continuous Fleet support. No matter what gains are made in the Mid-Pacific, they would undoubtedly be lost were the Fleet to be withdrawn to the Atlantic. We would have then to choose between a lengthy evacuation process, and a major loss of men, material and prestige.

In advancing to the capture of Ponape and Truk, the Orange Plan contemplates proceeding promptly, delaying in the Marshalls only long enough to destroy Japanese shore bases, to capture the atolls necessary to support the advance, and to deny future bases to Japan.

We have little knowledge as to the present defensive strength of the Marshall and Caroline groups, considered as a whole. If they are well defended, to capture them we estimate initial needs at 25,000 thoroughly trained troops, with another 50,000 in immediate reserve. If they are not well defended, an early advance with fewer troops might be very profitable. Several months must elapse from the present date before 75,000 troops could be made ready, considering the defense requirements of Alaska, Hawaii, and Samoa, and our commitments with respect to the internal political stability of the Latin American countries.

We should consider carefully the chances of failure as well as of success. An immediate success would be most important morally, while a failure would be costly from the moral viewpoint. Before invading Norway, Germany trained for three months the veterans of the Polish campaign. Remembering Norway, we have the example of two methods of overseas adventure. One is the British method; the other is the German method.

The question of jumping directly from Hawaii to the Philippines has often been debated, but, so far as I know, this plan has always been ruled out by responsible authorities as unsound from a military viewpoint. Truk is 1900 miles from Yokohama, 5300 miles from San Francisco,

3200 miles from Honolulu, and 2000 miles from Manila. I mention this to compare the logistic problem with that of the Norway incident. An enormous amount of shipping would be required. Its availability under present world conditions would be doubtful.

Of course the foregoing, (the Orange Plan), is a major commitment in the Pacific, and does not envisage the cooperation of allies. Once started the abandonment of the offensive required by the plan, to meet a threat in the Atlantic, would invoive abandoning the objectives of the war, and also great loss of prestige.

A totally different situation would exist were the Philippines and Guam rendered secure against attack by adequate troops, aircraft, and fortifications. The movement of the Fleet across the Pacific for the purpose of applying direct pressure upon Japan, and its support when in position, would be less difficult than in the existing situation.

Should we adopt the present Orange Plan today, or any modification of that plan which involves the movement of very strong naval and army contingents to the Far East, we would have to accept considerable danger in the Atlantic, and would probably be unable to augment our material assistance to Great Britain.

We should, therefore, examine other plans which involve a war having a more limited objective than the complete defeat of Japan, and in which we would undertake hostilities only in cooperation with the British and Dutch, and in which these undertake to provide an effective and continued resistance in Malaysia.

Our involvement in war in the Pacific might well make us also an ally of Britain in the Atlantic. The naval forces remaining in the Atlantic, for helping our ally and for defending ourselves, would, by just so much, reduce the power which the United States Fleet could put forth in the Pacific.

The objective in a limited war against Japan would be the reduction of Japanese offensive power chiefly through economic blockade. Under one concept, allied strategy would comprise holding the Malay barrier, denying access to other sources of supply in Malaysia, severing her lines of communication with the Western Hemisphere, and raiding communications to the Mid-Pacific, the Philippines, China, and Indo-China. United States defensive strategy would also require army reenforcement of Alaska and the Hawaiian Islands, the establishment of naval bases in the Fiji-Samoan and Gilbert Islands areas, and denial to Japan of the use of the Marshalls as light force bases. We might be able to reenforce the Philippine garrison, particularly with aircraft. I do not believe that the British and Dutch alone could hold the Malay Barrier without direct military assistance by the United States. In addition to help from our Asiatic Fleet, I am convinced that they would need further reenforcement by ships and aircraft drawn from our Fleet in Hawaii, and possibly even by troops.

Besides military aid for the allied defense forces, our intervention would bring them a tremendous moral stimulus.

An alternative concept of the suggested limited war would be to provide additional support from the main body of the Fleet either by capturing the Marshalls, or by capturing both the Marshalls and Carolines. This, or a similar fleet activity, would be for the purpose of diverting away from Malaysia important Japanese forces to oppose it, and thus reducing the strength of their assault against the Dutch and British.

But we should consider the prospect that the losses which we would incur in such operations might not be fruitful of compensating results. Furthermore, withdrawal of the Fleet from captured positions for transfer to the Atlantic would be more difficult.

It is out of the question to consider sending our entire Fleet at once to Singapore. Base facilities are far too limited, the supply problem would be very great, and Hawaii, Alaska, and our coasts would be greatly exposed to raids.

One point to remember, in connection with a decision to adopt a limited offensive role, as in both of the alternative plans just mentioned, is that, in case of reverses, public opinion may require a stronger effort. For example, should Japanese success in the Far East seem imminent, there would be great pressure brought to bear to support our force there, instead of leaving it hanging in the air. Thus, what we might originally plan as a limited war with Japan might well become an unlimited war; our entire strength would then be required in the Far East, and little force would remain for eventualities in the Atlantic and for the support of the British Isles.

Let us now look eastward, and examine our possible action in the Atlantic.

In the first place, if we avoid serious commitment in the Pacific, the purely American Atlantic problem, envisaging defense of our coasts, the Caribbean, Canada, and South America, plus giving strong naval assistance to Britain, is not difficult so long as the British are able to maintain their present naval activity. Should the British Isles then fall we would find ourselves acting alone, and at war with the world. To repeat, we would be thrown back on our haunches.

Should we enter the war as an ally of Great Britain, and not then be at war with Japan, we envisage the British asking us for widespread naval assistance. Roughly, they would want us, in the Western Atlantic Ocean from Cape Sable to Cape Horn, to protect shipping against raiders and submarine activities. They would also need strong reinforcements for their escort and minesweeping forces in their home waters; and strong flying boat reconnaissance from Scotland, the Atlantic islands, and Capetown. They might ask us to capture the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands.

To their home waters they would have us send submarines and small craft, and to the Mediterranean assistance of any character which we may be able to provide. They would expect us to take charge of allied interests in the Pacific, and to send a naval detachment to Singapore.

This purely naval assistance, would not, in my opinion, assure final victory for Great Britain. Victory would probably depend upon her ability ultimately to make a land offensive against the Axis powers. For making a successful land offensive, British manpower is

insufficient. Offensive troops from other nations will be required. I believe that the United States, in addition to sending naval assistance, would also need to send large air and land forces to Europe and Africa, or both, and to participate strongly in this land offensive. The naval task of transporting an army abroad would be large.

To carry out such tasks we would have to exert a major naval and military effort in the Atlantic. We would then be able to do little more in the Pacific than remain on a strict defensive.

Were we to enter the war against Germany and Italy as an ally of Great Britain, I do not necessarily anticipate immediate hostile action by Japan, whatever may be her Axis obligation. She may fear eventual consequences and do nothing. We might be faced with demands for concessions as the price of her neutrality. She might agree to defer her aggressions in the Netherlands East Indies for the time being by a guarantee of ample economic access to the Western Hemisphere and to British and Dutch possessions. But she might even demand complete cessation of British and American assistance to China.

The strong wish of the American government and people at present seems to be to remain at peace. In spite of this, we must face the possibility that we may at any moment become involved in war. With war a prospect, I believe our every effort should be directed toward the prosecution of a national policy with mutually supporting diplomatic and military aspects, and having as its guiding feature a determination that any intervention we may undertake shall be such as will ultimately best promote our own national interests. We should seek the best answer to the question: "Where should we fight the war, and for what objective?" With the answer to this question to guide me, I can make a more logical plan, can more appropriately distribute the naval forces, can better coordinate the future material preparation of the Navy, and can more usefully advise as to whether or not proposed diplomatic measures can adequately be supported by available naval strength.

That is to say, until the question concerning our final military objective is authoritatively answered, I can not determine the scale and the nature of the effort which the Navy may be called upon to exert in the Far East, the Pacific, and the Atlantic.

It is a fundamental requirement of our military position that our homeland remain secure against successful attack. Directly concerned in this security is the safety of other parts of the Western Hemisphere. A very strong pillar of the defense structure of the Americas has, for many years, been the balance of power existing in Europe. The collapse of Great Britain or the destruction or surrender of the British Fleet will destroy this balance and will free European military power for possible encroachment in this hemisphere.

I believe that we should recognize as the foundation of adequate armed strength the possession of a profitable foreign trade, both in raw materials and in finished goods. Without such a trade, our economy can scarcely support heavy armaments. The restoration of foreign trade, particularly with Europe, may depend upon the continued integrity of the British Empire.

It may be possible for us to prevent a British collapse by military intervention.

Our interests in the Far East are very important. The economic effect of a complete Japanese hegemony in that region is conjectural. But regardless of economic considerations, we have heretofore strongly opposed the further expansion of Japan.

We might temporarily check Japanese expansion by defeating her in a war in the Far East, but to check her permanently would require that we retain possession of, and militarily develop, an extensive and strategically located Asiatic base area having reasonably secure lines of communication with the United States. Retaining, and adequately developing, and Asiatic base area would mean the reversal of long-standing American policy.

Whether we could ensure the continued existence of a strong British Empire by soundly defeating Japan in the Far East is questionable, though continuing to hold on there for the present is a definite contribution to British strength.

Lacking possession of an Asiatic base area of our own, continued British strength in the Far East would doubtless prove advantageous to us in checking Japan permanently.

The military matters discussed in this memorandum may properly receive consideration in arriving at a decision on the course that we should adopt in the diplomatic field. An early decision in this field will facilitate a naval preparation which will best promote the adopted course. As I see affairs today, answers to the following broad questions will be most useful to the Navy:

(A) Shall our principal military effort be directed toward hemisphere defense, and include chiefly those activities within the Western Hemisphere which contribute directly to security against attack in either or both oceans? An affirmative answer would indicate that the United States, as seems now to be the hope of this country, would remain out of war unless pushed into it. If an when forced into war, the greater portion of our Fleet could remain for the time being in its threatening position in the Pacific, but no major effort would be exerted overseas either to the east or the west; the most that would be done for allies, besides providing material help, would be to send detachments to assist in their defense. It should be noted here that, were minor help to be given in one direction, public opinion might soon push us into giving it major support, as was the case in the World War.

Under this plan, our influence upon the outcome of the European War would be small.

(B) Shall we prepare for a full offensive against Japan, premised on assistance from the British and Dutch forces in the Far East, and remain on the strict defensive in the Atlantic?

If this course is selected, we would be placing full trust in the British to hold their own indefinitely in the Atlantic, or, at least, until after we should have defeated Japan decisively, and thus had fully curbed her offensive power for the time being. Plans for augmenting the scale

of our present material assistance to Great Britain would be adversely affected until Japan had been decisively defeated. The length of time required to defeat Japan would be very considerable.

If we enter the war against Japan and then if Great Britain loses, we probably would in any case have to reorient towards the Atlantic. There is no dissenting view on this point.

(C) Shall we plan for sending the strongest possible military assistance both to the British in Europe, and to the British, Dutch and Chinese in the Far East? The naval and air detachments we would send to the British Isles would possibly ensure their continued resistance, but would not increase British power to conduct a land offensive. The strength we could send to the Far East might be enough to check the southward spread of Japanese rule for the duration of the war. The strength of naval forces remaining in Hawaii for the defense of the Eastern Pacific, and the strength of the forces in the Western Atlantic for the defense of that area, would be reduced to that barely sufficient for executing their tasks. Should Great Britain finally lose, or should Malaysia fall to Japan, our naval strength might then be found to have been seriously reduced, relative to that of the Axis powers. It should be understood that, under this plan, we would be operating under the handicap of fighting major wars on two fronts.

Should we adopt Plan (C), we must face the consequences that would ensure were we to start a war with one plan, and then, after becoming heavily engaged, be forced greatly to modify it or discard it altogether, as, for example, in case of a British fold up. On neither of these distant fronts would it be possible to execute a really major offensive. Strategically, the situation might become disastrous should our efforts on either front fail.

(D) Shall we direct our effort toward an eventual strong offensive in the Atlantic as an ally of the British, and a defensive in the Pacific? Any strength that we might send to the Far East would, by just so much, reduce the force of our blows against Germany and Italy. About the least that we would do for our ally would be to send strong naval light forces and aircraft to Great Britain and the Mediterranean. Probably we could not stop with a purely naval effort. The plan might ultimately require capture of the Portuguese and Spanish islands and military and naval bases in Africa and possibly Europe; and thereafter even involve undertaking a full scale land offensive. In consideration of a course that would require landing large numbers of troops abroad, account must be taken of the possible unwillingness of the people of the United States to support an operation of this character, and to incur the risk of heavy loss should Great Britain collapse. Under Plan (D) we would be unable to exert strong pressure against Japan, and would necessarily gradually reorient our policy in the Far East. The full national offensive strength would be exerted in a single direction, rather than be expanded in areas far distant from each other. At the conclusion of the war, even if Britain should finally collapse, we might still find ourselves possessed of bases in Africa suitable for assisting in the defense of South America.

Under any of these plans, we must recognize the possibility of the involvement of France as an ally of Germany.

I believe that the continued existence of the British Empire, combined with building up a strong protection in our home areas, will do most to ensure the status quo in the Western Hemisphere, and to promote our principal national interest. As I have previously stated, I also believe that Great Britain requires from us very great help in the Atlantic, and possibly even on the continents of Europe or Africa, if she is to be enabled to survive. In my opinion Alternatives (A), (B), and (C) will most probably not provide the necessary degree of assistance, and, therefore, if we undertake war, that Alternative (D) is likely to be the most fruitful for the United States, particularly if we enter the war at an early date. Initially, the offensive measures adopted would, necessarily, be purely naval. Even should we intervene, final victory in Europe is not certain. I believe that the chances for success are in our favor, particularly if we insist upon full equality in the political and military direction of the war.

The odds seem against our being able under Plan (D) to check Japanese expansion unless we win the war in Europe. We might not long retain possession of the Philippines. Our political and military influence in the Far East might largely disappear, so long as we were fully engaged in the Atlantic. A preliminary to a war in this category would be a positive effort to avoid war with Japan, and to endeavor to prevent war between Japan and the British Empire and the Netherlands East Indies. The possible cost of avoiding a war with Japan has been referred to previously.

I would add that Plan (D) does not mean the immediate movement of the Fleet into the Atlantic. I would make no further moves until war should become imminent, and then I would recommend redistribution of our naval forces as the situation then demanded. I fully recognize the value of retaining strong forces in the Pacific as long as they can profitably be kept there.

Until such time as the United States should decide to engage its full forces in war, I recommend that we pursue a course that will most rapidly increase the military strength of both the Army and Navy, that is to say, adopt Alternative (A) without hostilities.

Under any decision that the President may tentatively make, we should at once prepare a complete Joint Plan for guiding Army and Navy activities. We should also prepare at least the skeletons of alternative plans to fit possible alternative situations which may eventuate. I make the specific recommendation that, should we be forced into a war with Japan, we should, because of the prospect of war in the Atlantic also, definitely plan to avoid operations in the Far East or the Mid-Pacific that will prevent the Navy from promptly moving to the Atlantic forces fully adequate to safeguard our interests and policies in the event of a British collapse. We ought not now willingly engage in any war against Japan unless we are certain of aid from Great Britain and the Netherlands East Indies.

No important allied military decision should be reached without clear understanding between the nations involved as to the strength and extent of the participation which may be expected in any particular theater, and as to a proposed skeleton plan of operations.

Accordingly, I make the recommendation that, as a preliminary to possible entry of the

United States into the conflict, the United States Army and Navy at once undertake secret staff talks on technical matters with the British miliary and naval authorities in London, with Canadian military authorities in Washington, and with British and Dutch authorities in Singapore and Batavia. The purpose would be to reach agreements and lay down plans for promoting unity of allied effort should the United States find it is necessary to enter the war under any of the alternative eventualities considered in this memorandum.

H. R. Stark

Appendix 3

Excerpt from *European Appreciation*, 1939-40

APPENDIX 3

Excerpt from European Appreciation, 1939-40

PART I

SECTION I -- INTRODUCTION

1. THIS appreciation deals with the strategic situation which would obtain should we find ourselves, in alliance with France, ranged against Germany and Italy, with the possibility of Japan intervening against us.

We have cast the Appreciation as for April 1939, but we have included a Part showing how the position may be affected by further developments in the military strengths of the belligerents up to April 1940.

Appendices I-III dealing with the political and economic factors and showing the situation with regard to A.R.P. have been prepared, respectively, in conjunction with the Foreign Office, the Industrial Intelligence Centre and the Home Office [not included].

SECTION II -- EXAMINATION OF FACTORS

POLITICAL SUMMARY

2. The political factors affecting the situation in April 1939 are set out, so far as foreign countries are concerned, in a memorandum by the Foreign Office which is reproduced as Appendix I. Taking this memorandum as a basis we make the following political assumption:

The Dominions

(i) We assume that Australia and New Zealand would range themselves on the side of Great Britain on the outbreak of war; the initial attitude of Canada, and to an even greater extent of South Africa and of Eire, would largely depend on the cause for which Great Britain was fighting, and the extent to which the sympathies and interests of those countries were affected.

Allies and Friendly Powers in Europe and the Middle East

(ii) Portugal would, we assume, fulfil her treaty obligations, provided that present relations continue. Our other allies, Egypt and Iraq would similarly fulfil their treaty obligations, provided that they are satisfied with the result of the forthcoming discussions regarding Palestine

Policy, and provided they retain their belief in our power to defend them.

(iii) With regard to Turkey, we should be able to count at least on her benevolent neutrality, perhaps on her active intervention on our side. Greece would probably be benevolently neutral.

Other Powers

We make the following assumptions regarding other Powers:

(iv) The United States of America would be a friendly neutral, probably willing to modify the Neutrality Legislation in our favour, but not likely to intervene actively unless at a later stage.

(v) The Soviet Union would probably be unwilling to intervene actively except in the even of a direct threat to herself, but she may be expected to exercise a restraining influence on Japan.

(vi) Japan would be unlikely at first to join our enemies openly, but would be sure to intensify her campaign against British interests in the Far East, and likely to enter the war if the allies were in serious danger of defeat, provided that she did not think that this would bring in the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. against her.

(vii) The attitude of Spain might have far-reaching effects on the course of a European war. It would be in the interests of the Allies that she should at least remain neutral. We cannot however rule out the possibility of Nationalist Spain affording facilities to German and Italian Naval and Air forces.

(viii) It would be unwise to place any substantial reliance on assistance, active or passive, from Poland.

(ix) The lesser European Powers, though predominantly sympathetic towards the Allies, would probably attempt to remain neutral. They would, however, in varying degrees, be susceptible to political or economic pressure directed either towards preventing them from joining or assisting the Allies, or towards inducing them to supply material assistance to Germany.

ECONOMIC SUMMARY

3. The economic factors affecting the situation in April 1939 are set out in Appendix II. The more important deductions are summarised as follows:

Germany, Italy and Japan

4. (i) The Four-Year Plan is reducing German dependence upon imports, but in April 1939 she will still require regular imports of a number of essential raw materials and foodstuffs, including iron ore, manganese, non-ferrous metals, pyrites, liquid fuels,oils and fats, fruits, colonial products, textile raw materials, hides and skins, as soon as stocks are exhausted. Stocks of most foodstuffs may suffice for a year, but those of industrial raw materials will probably be low.

(ii) Given raw materials and adequate labour, German industry could maintain her forces in a war of national effort, but there is already in peace a labour shortage, and, at present, it is doubtful if the industrial capacity is sufficient to keep the forces of any allies of Germany supplied with armaments in addition to satisfying Germany's own requirements.

(iii) The Scandinavian countries and Holland are most important potential sources of German war supplies, both of foodstuffs and raw materials. In fact, Swedish iron ore supplies might prove vital to Germany's ability to continue hostilities.

(iv) Italy is largely self-sufficient in essential foodstuffs, but is deficient in most industrial raw materials, including fuels, and her manufacturing capacity is weak.

(v) So long as Italy could maintain her sea-borne trade in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea she might be able to obtain sufficient raw materials to enable her to maintain naval and air operations at maximum intensity for a considerable period. She could not, however, simultaneously maintain land operations on a large scale. The curtailment of the Black Sea trade would at once embarrass Italy and shorten the period of her resistance.

(vi) German influence in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe has been greatly increased as the result of events in the past year, and a considerable proportion of some, but not all, of Germany's and Italy's most serious deficiencies in raw materials could be satisfied from this area. Supplies from this source are, however, limited and the two countries would therefore compete against each other.

(vii) Moreover, the reserve of gold and "Devisen" of both countries is meagre, so that a continuation of imports will depend mainly on the maintenance of exports. Any action possible, therefore, against enemy exports will tend materially to shorten the power of resistance of both countries.

(viii) The economic difficulties of both countries would be increased in proportion to the success of action taken to reduce the output of the industrial area of the Ruhr in Germany, or of the triangle Milan-Turin-Genoa in Italy.

(ix) Japan is self-sufficient in foodstuffs so long as she can communicate freely with Formosa and the mainland, but is deficient in manufacturing capacity and in industrial raw materials, including iron, non-ferrous metals, petroleum, cotton and rubber. Stocks now held are believed to suffice for at least six months of war, notwithstanding her expenditure in China.

On the other hand, the loss of export markets consequent upon war with the British Empire and France would be a severe shock to her already strained financial strength. Discrimination against Japan by the United States of America in respect of the operation of the Neutrality Act would also react unfavourably on the Japanese economic situation and in connection with the "cash and carry" clauses the Japanese Mercantile Fleet is inadequate to carry unaided her own essential trade.

The Allies

5. (i) The Allies would have greater financial resources than Germany. They are superior at sea, and, subject to the possible effects of naval and air attack, with which we deal later, and the adequacy of shipping (in which France is weak), they should hope to be able to maintain an adequate inflow of raw materials, though some difficulty might at first be experienced in respect of certain commodities, e.g., flax, hemp, timber and cellulose.

(ii) Their ability to maintain their war effort would, however, depend upon the capacity of their own industry, and the extent to which they could import finished armaments from abroad. The capacity of our own armament firms will not suffice for our full wartime needs, and French industry is quite inadequate to provide for France's requirements. Some reduction in British and French industrial capacity, resulting from enemy attack, must be anticipated and may be serious particularly in the opening stage of a war (see paragraph 64 below).

(iii) Deficiencies could be made good from America in course of time if that country proved willing to modify her Neutrality Act to permit the export of armaments to the Allies. America, however, does not normally manufacture the types of equipment used by France and Great Britain, and some time would consequently elapse before this equipment could be produced in bulk.

(iv) If, as the result of Japanese intervention and the consequent despatch of a British fleet to the Far East, the Allies could no longer control the Eastern Mediterranean, German and Italian influence in South-Eastern Europe would be considerably increased and they would have less difficulty in obtaining supplies. Egypt and Iraq would both suffer, the first because of the increased difficulty of exporting her cotton, and the latter because both outlets for her oilfields lie in the Eastern Mediterranean.

COMPARISON OF FORCES

General

6. The capacity which a country possesses to wage war depends not only upon the

strength and efficiency of the fighting forces, but also upon the organisation of the whole of the industrial and financial resources and of the available man power of the nation and on the maintenance of civil morale. In the past it has been after the outbreak of war that a nation's industry has been adapted and expanded and her man power organised. In Germany and Italy these processes are now being perfected in time of peace. It seems doubtful whether this can be achieved without an equivalent loss of the hidden reserves which normally exist in a nation in time of peace, though it is difficult to assess the extent to which this may affect the lasting power of these nations in war.

7. The problem which the democratic countries have to face is how to make adequate preparations for war under their political systems. Although the efforts which we and the French have already made should result in our war potential being greater in April 1939 than it was in 1914, in relation to Germany and Italy we shall not be so strong, save in naval resources.

Navy.

8. Forecast of Fleet Strengths in April 1939

	British Empire	France	Germany	Italy	Japan	Anglo-French Total	German-Italian-Japanese Total
Capital Ships	12(a)	7(b)	2	2	10	19	14
Armoured Ships	...	...	3	...	...	...	3
Aircraft Carriers	6(c)	1	...	...	6	7	6
8-in Gun Cruisers	14(d)	7	2	7	12	21	21
6-in Gun Cruisers	40(f)	11	6	15	25	51	46
Contre-Torpilleurs	...	32	...	...	...	32	...
Large Destroyers (1500-1850 tons)	16	...	20	23	31	16	74
Other Modern Destroyers	81	38	24	64	52	119	140
Older Destroyers & TBs	48	2	6	39	39	50	84
Submarines	54	80	57	105	62	134	224
Motor Torpedo Boats	18	10	20	60(e)	3	28	83
Escort Vessels	30	25	10	9	...	55	19
AA Ships	4	...	...	...	...	4	...

(a) Of these Hood and Revenge may be at 1-2 months' notice. Three other ships not included in this number are undergoing large repairs and modernisation.
(b) Two are old.
(c) One of these employed in training duties, and maintenance personnel and aircraft will not be available for equipping all these ships.
(d) One other undergoing large repairs in Australia.
(e) There are 60 in commission, of which only about 40 are modern seaworthy boats. In addition, there are up to 300 boats capable of carrying torpedoes and a small gun.
(f) Of these, 4 will be at more than 14 days' notice.

9. The above table gives a broad comparison of the strength of the British, French, German, Italian and Japanese naval forces in April 1939. A period of about one month would

elapse from mobilisation being ordered before our ships in reserve would be ready for service, and before the whole of the available British naval forces would have taken up war dispositions.

It will be seen that the margin in capital ships in favour of ourselves and France would be small, and would barely suffice to implement our existing Imperial strategy in a world war.

10. It is assumed, however, in this appreciation, that in the first instance we should be opposed to Germany and Italy only, and our naval strength should prove adequate for controlling the North Sea, while providing a sufficient fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, together with anti-submarine forces at Gibraltar and light naval forces in the Red Sea. In addition, we must provide the forces necessary for the protection of trade and for the escort of military transports. Our serious deficiencies in destroyers, escort vessels and minesweepers were shown in the recent crisis, and, although the position will improve in 1939, we may be extremely hard pressed to deal with the submarines of Germany and Italy combined if they engage in unrestricted war, and particularly should they have the use of Spanish harbours.

11. A study of the above comparison will show how important to us is the maintenance of the Anglo-German naval agreement, by which future relative strengths of the British and German fleets have been determined at 100:35. If for any reason, Germany were to renounce this agreement, we should become faced with a more serious position, particularly in view of the fact that, with our present armour and armament production, we should be incapable of ensuring that we could keep pace with Germany and Japan in warship production. Germany has recently indicated her intention of increasing her submarine tonnage up to 100 percent of that maintained by the British Commonwealth. This increase is permissible under the naval agreement, by transference from other categories, after discussion between the two Governments.

Army.

12. Estimated Strengths of Army Divisions in the probable main theatres in April 1939

(Zero day is day on which mobilisation is ordered.)

	Great Britain	France	Germany	Italy	Japan(c) In China	Japan(c) Manchukuo, Japan & Formosa
Between Zero and Z + 18 days						
Active Infantry Divisions	...	28	39	32 \	28	16
Reserve Infantry Divisions	...	20	28	.../		
Landwehr Infantry Divisions	...	...	18	...	...	...
Alpine Divisions	...	...	...	5	...	...
Mountain Divisions	...	...	3	...	...	...
Armoured Divisions	...	1	5	...	...	...
Mobile Divisions	...	5	...	3	...	...

Light Divisions	...	...	4	...	...	...
Fortress Troops (equivalent divisions)	...	12	3	...	...	...
In North Africa	...	10(b)	...	4	...	...
In Egypt and Palestine (equivalent divisions)	3(a)	...	...	...	...	...
Total Z to Z + 18 days	3	76	100	44	28	16

Between Z + 18 days and Z + 1 month

Active Infantry Divisions	2(d)	...	...	...	...	...
Reserve Divisions	...	...	...	32(e)	...	...
Landwehr Divisions	...	...	18	...	...	...
Total at end of Z + 1 month	5	76	118	76	28	16

(a) Depending on the situation in Palestine there might be a mobile division, two horsed cavalry regiments, a field regiment R.A., five field companies R.E., and twenty battalions if the two on loan from Malta have been returned.

(b) The troops amount in peace to about 10 divisions and would probably be increased by a further 4 divisions raised on mobilisation.

(c) In addition in China there are 1 cavalry and 2 mixed brigades, and in other Japanese territories and additional 2 mixed and 3 cavalry brigades.

(d) The "Intermediate Contingent" deficient of many items of modern equipment and war reserves, would have 3 (A.C.) squadrons R.A.F. and corps troops. If it is decided by "Z" day to despatch the Intermediate Contingent, it can start embarkation on Z + 14; alternatively, if the decision is delayed, embarkation can start approximately 8 days after the decision is taken. The movement would be completed in a further 14 days.

(e) Would not have full complement of artillery and machine guns.

13. After the despatch of the British "Intermediate Contingent" of two divisions, a third division could be produced in about Z + 3 months. The provision of a fourth division would be dependent on post-mobilisation recruiting and training, and it would not be ready for several months. Even then the force as a whole would be deficient in many items of modern equipment. The mobile division would be fit for service as a complete formation about the middle of 1940, but the essential war reserves would not be available until 1941. A modified scale of training equipment only is being provided for the Territorial Army under the Army Defence Requirements Programme.

14. Subject to the situation at the time, India has provisionally accepted the following commitments, but it is unlikely that a total strength of more than three brigade groups would be initially available for operations outside India:

1 Infantry brigade group for reinforcement of Egypt and one battalion for Aden
1 Infantry brigade group for reinforcement of Singapore
1 Infantry brigade group for protection of the Anglo-Iranian oilfields
1 Infantry brigade group for reinforcement of Burma
2 battalions for reinforcement of Hong Kong

These forces are organised and equipped on a scale lower than that accepted in Great Britain.

15. Australia should by Z + 37 days be able to mobilise 2 Infantry brigade groups in some respects not fully equipped for warfare against a first-class enemy. No other Dominion has given similar information as to the forces which could be mobilised in the early stages of hostilities.

16. In October 1938 General Gamelin stated that France could mobilise 100 divisions. This figure would include the extra four divisions in North Africa (see second footnote of first table in paragraph 12), and the 20 second reserve divisions. It is doubtful whether French resources would be adequate to maintain a force of this strength in the field, except for a short period. It is certain, however, that in a war with Germany as the principal enemy, the French would fight stubbornly in defence of French soil.

17. German expansion still continues, especially in armoured units. It may well be that in April 1939 the total number of formations will exceed the figures given above.

18. In Italian East Africa there is a colonial army of about 38,000 white troops and 75,000 native troops, which are not included in the table in paragraph 12. It is estimated that the equivalent of one division would be available for operations outside Abyssinia. In addition, there would be a number of armed and partially trained irregular groups commanded by white officers, and about 50,000 labourers, or labourer colonists, who are all trained soldiers and have a militia organisation.

Since 1918 Italian troops have never been tested in war against a first-class Power. In such a war their morale would certainly be much lower than that of the Germans.

19. It will be seen that at no time in the initial phases will the combined British and French army formations available in Europe be numerically equal to those of Germany. A comparison of the numbers of divisions which each belligerent can mobilise, however, may be misleading. From a defensive point of view the French inferiority shown above is, to a great extent, mitigated by the existence of a strong system of fortifications along her Eastern frontiers. Germany, too, has now established powerful fortifications along almost the whole length of her western frontier, in addition to those already existing on the Polish frontier and in East Prussia. The fortifications and field defenses which at present exist in Western Europe are shown on Map 2 [not included] and are discussed in more detail in paragraph 109 [not included] and Appendix V [not included].

Air Force.

20. Estimated Maximum First-Line Strengths of Air Forces as at April 1, 1939

Country	Long-Range Bombers (a)	Short-Range Bombers	Fighters	Army Co-operation and General Purpose	Reconnaissance and Naval Co-operation (excluding Ship-borne	Total

					Aircraft)	
Great Britain--						
Metropolitan	488(b)	...	496	84	222	1290
Mid-East (including Sudan, Kenya, Aden, Malta, and Iraq)	84	92	42	20	8	246
India	...	48	...	48	...	96
Far East	...	24	...	4	10	38
France--						
Metropolitan	336	...	466	324	324(c)	1450
North Africa and Levant	37	66	54	124	42	323
Germany	1580	320	1000(e)	300	500	3700(d)
Italy--						
Italy	444	...	450	225	274	1393
Libya and Dodecanese	96	...	90	81	9	276
East Africa	120	...	...	18	...	138
Spain	72	...	108	18	...	198
Japan(f)	208	418	429	189	99	1343

(a) Bombers with an operational radius of over 350 miles.

(b) This is our mobilisable strength, i.e., the force available after we have provided for 6 weeks' reserves by rolling up certain squadrons. This will bring our air striking force on to a basis comparable with that of Germany in the matter of reserves. Italy and France would not have more than 30 per cent -- less than 14 days -- reserves for the whole of their first-line strengths. The British figure tends to be misleading, particularly when compared with foreign countries other than Germany who have not got reserves comparable to those behind the British or German first-line units shown. Actually our total strength in first-line units at April 1, 1939, will be 836 long-range bombers.

(c) Included in this total are 143 land reconnaissance aircraft available for use as bombers: long-range 13, short-range 130.

(d) Germany may be deficient in trained reserve crews as distinct from pilots.

(e) Including naval shore-based fighters.

(f) Japan's air services are mobilised, and it has been assumed that they will be in that state in April 1939.

21. The Dominions all maintain small air forces which are primarily intended to assist in local defence. These are not yet equipped with modern aircraft.

There is some reason to hope, however, that if we were attacked in the Mediterranean, South Africa would send two short-range bomber squadrons to our assistance. In course of time we should no doubt obtain valuable personnel reinforcements from all Dominions.

22. It must be admitted that the Allied Air Forces are very greatly inferior to those of Germany and Italy in air striking power, judged on the basis of firstline strength, and that in April 1939 the position regarding allied reserves will be most unsatisfactory. The position in Great Britain is, however, rapidly improving, and in war, subject to the possible effect of air attack, our potential would develop much more rapidly than it could have done a year ago. The position in France is far less satisfactory and there seems little hope of the output from her aircraft factories reaching a satisfactory level in less than two years.

23. In respect of morale French and British pilots would prove at least the equal of the

Germans, and should be superior to the Italians. Although individual Italian pilots have done well in Spain, the consensus of opinion is that as a whole they are unwilling to face serious opposition, particularly when engaged upon bombing raids.

The German Air Force has been expanded more rapidly than any other, and although we must expect to find that their flying crews are well disciplined and have a high morale, it is unlikely that they would have reached the same standard of training as our own by April 1939. As the war progressed, the difficulties of finding trained personnel in each country would increase, and we might therefore find that the potential threat from the German air striking force would decrease even if its first-line strength could be maintained.

Passive Defence

24. We attach so much importance to passive defence, and in particular to the progress in A.R.P. measures, that we have included in Appendix III a comparison of the situation with regard to A.R.P. measures in Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy. This information has been supplied by the A.R.P. Department of the Home Office.

As far as Great Britain is concerned it will be seen that in April 1939 there will still be serious deficiencies in the training of A.R.P. personnel and in the provision of certain items of equipment. By April 1940 these deficiencies will, to a great extent, have been made good.

A.R.P. measures in Germany have already reached an advanced stage of completion in almost all respects, but those of Italy are comparatively backward.

METHODS OF WARFARE

25. In this Appreciation we have assumed that we must be prepared to meet unrestricted submarine and air attacks, and that our enemies would use gas. A wide-felt hope exists that, on humanitarian grounds, air attack would be restricted and that, remembering the effect on neutral opinion in 1914-1948, our enemies might hesitate to adopt unrestricted submarine warfare. Both Germany and Italy have agreed to abide by Part IV of the London Naval Treaty, 1930, governing the rules for humanising submarine warfare. Both countries are also signatories of the Geneva Protocol of June 1925, by which they undertook not to initiate the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, but we know that both are training troops in the offensive use of gas. Moreover, Italy has already used gas in Abyssinia and she suffered little from such verbal protests as were addressed to her by other Powers, in which Germany did not join. We cannot therefore ignore these methods of warfare in our planning.

26. Propaganda, for home, enemy and neutral consumption, would be of an utmost importance, particularly in the opening stages of a war, and the passage of our aircraft over enemy country will offer the opportunity of disseminating propaganda. It was clearly brought out during the September crisis that there was a marked reluctance among the peoples of Germany and Italy to face the prospects of war with Great Britain. This weakness in resolution is likely to recur and should be exploited from the start. This matter is, we understand, being

closely considered by the appropriate sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and we strongly recommend that, in this connection, a high degree of pre-war preparedness should be aimed at. The people of this country should be protected against and also be prepared to reject propaganda for the dissemination of which it is believed large-scale preparation has been made, not only by aircraft, but also by wireless broadcasts.

SECTION III – THE BROAD STRATEGIC PROBLEM

27. We are considering a situation in which we would be engaged in war with Germany and Italy simultaneously, and when Japan would also be a potential enemy. Nor can it be assumed that Nationalist Spain will not be against us, or that, at any rate, she will not lend her territory and harbours to enemy forces. The British Empire would thus be threatened at home, in the Mediterranean an in the Far East at the same time, and it would be hard to choose a worse geographical combination of enemies. In addition to this aspect, the Powers concerned are those who are most strongly armed to-day, and whose Governments regard war as a natural means of enforcing policy. The advantage in armament has probably been achieved largely at the expense of latent strength, but this might not affect the opening stages.

28. We do not under-estimate the latent strength which the British Empire could develop if war should be forced upon us. In 1939, however, our state of readiness for war will not compare, as a whole, with that of the nations we have assumed as hostile.

France is in a worse state of preparedness than ourselves, except in so far as here Army is bigger and better organised for war, and in so far as her fortifications may serve to compensate for the inferiority of her man-power to that of Germany and Italy in combination.

29. In such circumstances our initial plans must provide primarily for the security of our vital interests. The military superiority of our enemies confers upon them the initiative on land and in the air, and our first task must be to hold off their attacks. Meanwhile, our control of sea communications should enable us at once to commence to exert economic pressure against our enemies, and this must be applied as rigorously and rapidly as possible. It will be essential, however, at first to dispose a large proportion of our forces for the defence of troop transports and trade against attack by both submarines and surface vessels. In addition, a propaganda offensive should be organised from the start.

30. The form, intensity, and direction of enemy attacks must remain matters of conjecture, but our review of the political situation has shown that it is unlikely that any large proportion of the German and Italian forces would be contained in operations in Eastern Europe.

31. The stringency of the internal economic measures which Germany and Italy are apparently obliged to exercise in peace, and the consequent reduction in their staying power, indicate that they hope to reach a decision fairly quickly once they decide to resort to war; moreover, it is in the initial stages that they must hope to reap the benefits of their greater state

of military preparedness. This again emphasises the importance to us of ensuring that the strength of our defence forces and our measures for passive defence are adequate to protect us in the initial period.

32. In this connection we emphasise that, should Germany decide to concentrate her initial attack on Great Britain, the civil population in this country may suffer heavy casualties, and their reactions and behaviour in such circumstances will prove one of the decisive factors in maintaining our resistance.

33. Alternatively, Germany might aim at the quick defeat of France by concentrating land and air forces against her. Italy might join in such an attack, and although the French fortifications and the physical features of the frontier would be of great assistance against land attack, they are no bar to air attack. In this event we should have to render all possible assistance, especially in the air, to France.

34. In the Mediterranean and Middle East we should be in a stronger position, so long as Japan remained neutral and the Arab States were not hostile. Politically, financially and economically we should be immensely stronger than Italy. Strategically, moreover, we could control with our naval forces both the proportion of Italy's normal imports and all her sea communications with her East African Empire. Her sea communications with Libya would be open to attack and, even with Turkey neutral, our naval operations might interrupt the Italian Black Sea trade.

35. On the other hand, Italy occupies a strong position in the Central Mediterranean, both geographically and by virtue of the concentration of her home resources in that area. Italian territory also lies on the flank of the Red Sea. Although our shipping would be diverted from the Mediterranean, reinforcements and supplies for Egypt would be exposed to Italian air and submarine attack in the Red Sea. The attitude of Saudi Arabia and the Yemen would have a bearing on the situation in this area. If Spain were hostile there would be a threat not only to Gibraltar, but also to Portuguese territory, and this might involve us in further commitments in this area. The use of Spanish harbours, including those in the Balearic and Canary Islands, by German and Italian Naval forces, especially submarines, would add considerably to our difficulties, particularly in the protection of trade in the Atlantic and of French communications in the Western Mediterranean.

36. In the Far East, where we may have to face the loss of Hong Kong, the possibility of Japanese intervention would necessitate the reinforcement of Singapore, while active intervention by Japan would affect not only our position in the Far East, but also at home and in the Mediterranean. The Defense Forces maintained by Australia and New Zealand in peace are based upon the assurance that a British Fleet would be sent to Singapore as soon as Japan became hostile.

37. It is clear, therefore, that in facing Germany and Italy, with France as our only major ally, we should be undertaking a considerable commitment, in that, though we shall be

stronger at sea and in the economic sphere, we should be inferior in strength both on land and in the air. The addition of Japan to our enemies would immensely complicate our problems and even at sea our resources would be inadequate, particularly in anti-submarine vessels. Our Fleet would, however, increase considerably in strength in the course of the following year.

. . .

Measures capable of adoption on the outbreak of war

47. Owing to the time required for bringing ships forward from reserve, redisposing our forces from their peace stations, etc., there would not be available in the early stages of a war sufficient forces to implement fully the above methods of protecting seaborne trade. Moreover, during this period it would be possible for the enemy to develop his maximum offensive, as his warships would then be unhampered by shortage of fuel and stores. Nevertheless, it would be essential that merchant vessels should continue on their voyages during this period with the least avoidable delays. Special measures, depending on the forces actually available, would, therefore, be necessary and it would normally only be possible to maintain forces in the most important local areas, e.g., the western approaches, the Straits of Dover, some of the focal areas in the Atlantic, the Straits of Gibraltar, the approaches to the Red Sea. It is most important that steps should be taken to enable the remaining vessels required for trade protection to be brought into service as rapidly as possible.

Self-defense of merchant ships

48. Approval has been given* for the defensive arming of merchant vessels to commence immediately on the outbreak of a major war, and it is proposed to arm vessels with both an anti-submarine and an anti-aircraft gun (in smaller vessels a combined gun will be provided) and to equip them with paravanes.

Much of the necessary armament and equipment for this purpose, required in the early stages of a war, will have been provided by April 1939, but it is important to press on with the provision of the remainder and particularly with the anti-aircraft guns.

(* C.I.D. Paper No. 1466-B.)

Conclusion as to the Protection of Seaborne Trade

49. It will be seen from the foregoing that, by April 1939, the general position with regard to the protection of seaborne trade will not be satisfactory, and the difficulties are enhanced by the necessity for providing escorts for reinforcements required to proceed to our defended ports abroad. We have included in our recommendations detailed action which we consider should be taken to improve this position.

SECTION III -- GERMAN ATTACK CONCENTRATED AGAINST BRITAIN

General

50. In April 1939 we should undoubtedly be regarded by Germany as her most formidable enemy, and she would have much to gain by acting effectively against us at the outset before the power of the British Empire could be developed. Our insular position, combined with our naval superiority, rules out any possibility of successful invasion. Germany might, however, concentrate her naval and air forces against us at once and attempt to secure an early decision by the exploitation of unrestricted naval and air attacks.

In this event her military occupation of the Low Countries and Northern France would improve her position for attacking us.

German Action at Sea

51. In the opening months of the 1914-1918 war a few German cruisers were able to cause considerable losses and interruption to Allied trade, in spite of large forces engaged in the task of location and destroying them. This experience should strongly commend a similar course of action to the Germans in April 1939.

52. We must, therefore, anticipate a vigorous German naval offensive against British seaborne trade in the Atlantic, and perhaps in more distant waters, for which the enemy might use battle cruisers, ships of the "Deutschland" class, cruisers, armed merchant cruisers, disguised raiders and submarines. The Germans would, however, have to retain in the Baltic the necessary forces to control that area in the face of possible Russian naval action. Some enemy ships might be outside the North Sea when war is declared. At the same time Germany's submarine forces, limited though they are, could be employed to attack shipping in the western approaches and the narrow seas, in conjunction with air attacks.

53. The effect of these attacks on our trade might at first be severe, causing dislocation of supplies, coupled with some shortage of food and consequent privation. On the other hand, Germany has no overseas bases, unless she was able to make use of Spanish ports, and once a raider was out on the high seas she would be cut off from German home bases for fuelling and would depend on intercepting neutral and allied fuel supplies on the high seas, apart from any prearrangements that had been made to provide fuel at secret rendezvous, or through "neutral" agency. With the passage of time, therefore, and the development of counter-measures, the scale of naval attack would certainly diminish, and must in the long run be brought to a standstill.

54. When considering her chances in war against Great Britain Germany would also be bound to take serious account of our power to restrict her sea-borne supplies, seeing that in April 1939 she would still be dependent on these for some of her essential requirements in war. She would, therefore, be likely to take any opportunity to attempt to reduce our naval superiority by means of submarine and air attack.

55. The threat from the former might be considerable if the Fleet were made the principal object of attack. Modern capital ships at sea with their heavy armour and armament together with their mobility are not the most favourable targets for air attack, provided they receive adequate warning. The effect of this form of attack is therefore conjectural, but must nevertheless be a matter of concern.

Air Attack on Great Britain

56. General -- On the assumption that Germany's strategy would be based on the necessity for a quick decision, there are, broadly speaking, three courses of action in the air which might appear to offer her some prospect of success:

(a) If by means of unrestricted and sustained air attack Germany could cause such heavy casualties and such general disorganisation among the civilian population in the large towns of England as to render life almost insupportable, she might hope that the people would bring immediate pressure on the Government to come to terms.

(b) She might employ her air forces (in close collaboration with her naval forces) in unrestricted attack upon our sea-borne supplies and internal distribution system, with the object of rapidly creating shortage of food and raw materials in this country similar to that which had such a great effect on Germany in 1918.

(c) Germany might hope, by direct air attack upon our armament factories and other selected objectives, to reduce our industrial capacity to such an extent that our war effort would rapidly weaken until we should be unable to continue our resistance.

57. In our opinion these are the courses which appear to offer Germany the best chance of bringing pressure to bear quickly upon Great Britain by means of air action. But it is reported that certain officers of the High Command in Germany are strongly of the opinion that the enemy air forces should be the first objective for attack, since their destruction would subsequently enable effective pressure to be brought to bear against the enemy much more rapidly and would have most serious psychological effects on the population. Germany might therefore direct her initial attack against our air forces. Our military preparations take account of this contingency, and, so far from such action facilitating her subsequent attacks, we should hope to impose casualties which might weaken her air striking power, and thus lessen, rather than improve, her chances of subsequent success in the attack of more vulnerable objectives. Moreover, the neutralisation of our air force would be a lengthy process.

58. Attack aimed at demoralisation of the civil population -- Air attack might take the form of an attempt to demoralise the will of the people, upon which, more particularly in a democracy, depends the ability of a Government to wage war. In this event the attack would be "unrestricted" in the widest sense of the word. No attempt would be made to confine the damage to any specific area in which targets of even a semi-military nature, such as steel industries, were concentrated. Crowded centres of population might be attacked in turn in the hope that widespread damage could be caused to essential services, such as power, water, light,

sewerage and transport, in addition to actual casualties. An attempt would also probably be made to exploit the effect of gas and incendiary bombs.

The deciding factor in determining whether or not to undertake unrestricted air action of this type may well be that which operated in the early days of submarine warfare, namely, that of time. From our information regarding German theories of warfare, we consider it would be quite unsafe to assume that the initial German attack would necessarily be restricted by considerations of humanity; it is far more likely to be dictated mainly by expediency. If they were convinced that widespread air attack would give them a quick decision before our war organisation could get into its stride,and before the effects of antagonising neutral opinion (an inevitable outcome of such action) could make themselves felt, then they might undertake it with the utmost ruthlessness and indifference to human suffering.

59. On the other hand, Germany might reflect that this form of action might serve to stiffen the national will to resist, and cause neutral opinion to react unfavourably. Past history gives Germany small grounds for expecting that the people of this country could easily be demoralised into submission, but there is an influential school of thought among the extremist leaders of the Nazi party, who at least pretend to believe that the British are decadent.

60. On balance, we are inclined to doubt whether the initial German attack would be aimed primarily at the demoralisation of the people. There have, however, been recent indications that the views of the German Air Staff are tending to turn in this direction, and action on these lines is clearly possible and might cause heavy casualties and damage to property, having regard to the weight of attack which the Germans could bring to bear, and the incomplete state of our defenses. We would again emphasise that one of the most important factors in deciding them against such a course would be to convince them that the country as a whole is really adequately prepared and organised to meet it and reply to it effectively.

Air attack on other objectives must, however, inevitably bring in its train much of the chaos and disorder which would attend a deliberate attempt at demoralisation.

61. Attack on our supply and distribution system -- Great Britain's dependence upon imported food is so well known, and the serious straits to which we were brought by the German submarine campaign in 1917 have been so clearly established, that Germany, by selecting this objective, might consider that she had a tangible basis on which to assess her chances of success. It would be a further advantage that Germany's naval forces could co-operate by attacking shipping at sea; and she might satisfy herself, and even persuade certain neutrals, that her attacks were legitimate, since it was partly as a result of measures of economic pressure, notably in regard to food-stuffs and raw materials, that Great Britain forced Germany to submit in 1918.

62. In order to achieve quick success Germany would not only have to destroy existing reserve stocks of food-stuffs, but also prevent the unloading and distribution of supplies reaching this country daily from overseas. German initial attacks would, therefore, probably be directed simultaneously upon our dock areas, which might result in damage to ships in harbour, warehouses, port machinery and clearance facilities, upon key points in our distribution system for important areas, and possibly to some extent upon shipping in the narrow seas. In addition,

our stocks of oil fuel at the main ports constitute attractive and vulnerable targets.

The habitations of the workers surrounding selected targets will also be very vulnerable, and arrangements for alternative accommodation should be put in hand.

Of these, London, at least in the initial stages of the war, could be regarded as the most likely to attract the enemy's attention, and the points subjected to attack might well include such places as the London markets and goods yards and those railways by which an alternative channel of supply in and out of London could be organised.

Such action must inevitably result in a considerable loss of civil life and be attended with many of the features we might expect in an attack aiming at demoralisation. Germany would be well aware of this and that the disorganisation of labour in the docks, railways and market areas would contribute appreciably to the general effect on any material damage which might be inflicted.

Should, however, the enemy casualties resulting from such action in the face of our strongest defences become excessive, we should probably find that the attack would be switched to an increasing extent on to our shipping in the estuaries, focal areas and narrow seas, through which it must pass in order to reach port.

63. Air action on these lines against our sea-borne supplies would affect not only our food, but also the imports of raw materials which are essential to the maintenance of our economic strength and war industry. We must also expect that it would be supplemented to the fullest possible extent by naval attack upon our trade at sea. In these circumstances we should certainly be forced to divert merchant shipping to ports in the west of England, and this would immediately throw a further strain upon a distribution system also subject to air attack.

64. Attack on our war industrial organisation -- In summarising the economic factors, we pointed out that the maintenance of the Allies' war effort would largely depend upon their industrial capacity, and we have shown that the French resources would be quite inadequate for their war requirement. Any considerable reduction in our own capacity might therefore have serious results. In particular, by April 1939 we should have very few reserves of aircraft, an almost from the outset we should have to depend to a large extent upon factory output to maintain our first-line strength.

Germany is probably aware of this and would be almost certain to make at least some attempt at the disorganisation of the aircraft industry, whose detailed location would be well known and which, unlike actual air forces, could not be dispersed or redisposed as a precaution on the outbreak of war. While, however we could draw on extensive outside sources to replace our own loss of industrial capacity, Germany would be far more limited.

On the whole, therefore, we incline to the view that she would not be so likely to attempt this course of action initially as the others we have discussed, though she would almost certainly submit our industry at least to sporadic attack. In any event the operation of the warning system would be bound to cause some loss of output.

Effect of Invasion of the Low Countries and Northern France

65. The geographical position of the Low Countries has for many years rendered them

of strategic importance both to France and Great Britain. In this Section, however, we consider only the extent to which their occupation by Germany might increase the threat from naval and air attack on this country.

66. The naval position would not be greatly affected unless Germany succeeded in overrunning the greater part of the Low Countries and controlling the western seaboard, when enemy submarines and light forces would have the use of Dutch and Belgian ports. Although these ports would be within striking distance of British and French air forces, our general inferiority in air striking power makes it improbable that any considerable numbers of aircraft could be assigned to their neutralisation.

In any event, German submarines and light craft should be able to make some use of these bases even in the face of air attack.

Our means of counter-attacking submarines are now much greater than they were and the diversion of trade which would have to be effected on account of air attack would in itself add to the enemy's difficulties. Nevertheless, the effect of invasion of the Low Countries and Northern France would increase the threat to our sea communications.

If the German invasion extended down into Northern France so that Dunkirk and Calais or even Havre and Rouen were occupied, the threat from submarines would be still further increased.

67. With regard to the air aspect, Map No. 3 [not included] shows the extent to which the Ruhr district in Germany is less accessible to our air attack if Holland and Belgium remain neutral. From bases in this country our bombers would have to fly round the neutral zone, and thus would pass through narrow zones in North-West and South-West Germany in which fighter and other defences could be concentrated. The German bombers, on the other hand, operating from bases in the North-West, would only have to make a small initial detour and could then approach this country on a wide front.

Against this, there is the fact that if Germany succeeded in overrunning the Low Countries to a considerable depth, she could bring London and certain other important targets within reach of her short-range bombers and even of escort fighters and thus increase the weight of her air attack on certain areas. Moreover, her crews need not be so highly trained as when their only route involved a full crossing of the North Sea.

68. As we show later, however, the German decision as to whether or not to invade the Low Countries and Northern France would be affected by considerations of land, as well as of sea and air, strategy. Once Holland and Belgium were in the war the actual depth of Germany's penetration would affect the air defence aspect, since the further west she went the greater dispersion she would obtain for her bomber force and the more depth she would obtain for her air defence, at the expense of our own. The possession of the French Ports by Germany would, moreover, produce a grave situation. It would therefore be important for the Allies to check her advance before it reached the Straits of Dover.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE GERMAN ATTACK ON BRITAIN

69. In spite of the measures that Germany has taken to make herself self-sufficient, and of the neutral resources which would probably be open to her in the event of war, she must appreciate that in the long-run the economic pressure which we can exert upon her by means of sea power will prove her undoing.

70. Germany is therefore faced with two broad alternatives: either she can try to force a rapid decision by attacking our supply and distribution system by means of unrestricted submarine and air attack, or, alternatively, she can concentrate her efforts on our Naval forces with a view to reducing our Naval superiority and relieving herself of the economic stranglehold.

We consider that Germany would regard the first alternative as the more promising.

71. Such action on her part assumes that she would be prepared to risk the consequences of initiating unrestricted naval and air attack as a method of warfare in the hope that she could force a decision before the political repercussions had time to take effect, and in spite of our reprisal measures. In such circumstances Germany would not hesitate to invade the Low Countries and Northern France if she judged that, on the balance, it was to her advantage.

BRITISH COUNTER TO GERMAN ATTACK CONCENTRATED AGAINST BRITAIN

General Considerations

72. Until the advent of air forces, very few points in the British Empire could be seriously threatened so long as we maintained control of the sea communications; London and the industrial areas of the United Kingdom, which are the main base of the British Empire, could be regarded as secure. Now, however, we should not enter the war from a secure base.

73. The rôle of the Navy would be to control sea communications, thereby denying their use to the enemy and securing them for ourselves and our allies. The Army's immediate task would be to participate in the defence of the United Kingdom, and to defend overseas bases and territories. If the Government so decided, another rôle might be to support France and Belgium on land. The primary task of the Air Force must be to counter the German air offensive against the United Kingdom, or against our shipping in port and in narrow waters, and at the same time to assist in defending our interests overseas.

British Naval Action

74. Defense of Seaborne Trade -- It is always possible that a certain number of German warships would be on the trade routes before war breaks out, and it is known that a number of German merchant vessels could quickly be converted into armed ships; our initial cruiser

dispositions for trade protection would be made with a view to covering the focal points, and our merchant ships would be evasively routed. Fast naval forces based on Scapa Flow, assisted by air and submarine reconnaissance, would be well placed to intercept and bring to action German surface forces attempting to break out of the North Sea. It is unlikely that intercepted W/T signals would give us the same accurate information of German movements as in 1914-18, seeing that the German navy must have learnt this lesson, but, on the other hand, we should have the benefit of air reconnaissance.

75. In the Western Approaches, trade converges on the United Kingdom ports through areas in which enemy submarines could conduct profitable operations, while in the Channel and the North Sea shipping would be within range of German air bases. To counter the effects of submarine attack, it should not be necessary to adopt the convoy system unless the Germans resort to unrestricted warfare, but measures to institute "convoy" immediately on the outbreak of war have been prepared. The number of German submarines available initially would not be so great as to present us with such a difficult problem as in the last war, nevertheless, considerable preparations must be made, such as the provision of the necessary escorts, auxiliary vessels and anti-submarine material. Given these preparations, our counter-measures should enable us to prevent Germany obtaining any decisive success by submarine warfare, even though unrestricted, although we must expect losses at the outset of the campaign. The problem of air attack on sea-borne trade is dealt with in paragraph 45 [not included].

76. The action of our air forces would do much to assist in the defence of overseas trade by air reconnaissance over the North Sea and Western Approaches, by direct action against submarines or surface raiders, and by close air escort of convoys.

77. British Naval Action -- The offensive measures to be undertaken by the Navy can be considered under the following headings:

(i) Attack on German seaborne trade
(ii) Operations in the North Sea
(iii) Operations in the Baltic
(iv) Attacks on German bases

78. Attack on German Seaborne Trade -- The disposition of our naval forces for securing the approaches for shipping to United Kingdom ports, together with control of the northern and Channel entrances to the North Sea, should enable us to stop seaborne trade to and from German ports except in the Baltic. German seaborne trade through the Mediterranean must also be stopped. On the outbreak or war, immediate action by naval forces throughout the world would be required to round-up all German shipping that does not find safety in neutral ports, and this requirement has been borne in mind in our general naval dispositions. The Swedish iron ore supplies, which, as stated in paragraph 4 (iii), might prove vital to Germany's ability to continue hostilities, come largely through Narvik, and then via the North Sea route to Germany. The passage of these supplies could be interrupted on the high seas, but in the 1914-18 war shipments of Swedish iron ore reached Germany regularly from Narvik in neutral ships,

which made almost the entire passage inside Norwegian and Danish territorial waters. (The plan for economic war against Germany indicates that we should also attempt by pre-emption to reduce the amount of Swedish iron ore sold to Germany).

79. Under modern conditions no form of close blockade of Germany is possible, and the principal method of preventing contraband from reaching Germany would be by the institution of a Contraband Control organisation. Completed plans are in readiness for the immediate setting-up of a world-wide Contraband Control Service, providing for:

(a) Contraband Control Bases where neutral shipping may voluntarily call for search

(b) Patrols at sea to capture enemy shipping and to intercept and send in for search at the Contraband Control Bases such neutral shipping as has not made a voluntary call

[end of excerpt]