

# American Patriots Against The British Imperialists

by Dean Andromidas

*A longer version of this article can be found at [www.larouche.pub.com](http://www.larouche.pub.com).*

Mark Perry's *Partners in Command* is, above all, a study of the exercise of cooperative leadership between Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower, during World War II and through the Truman Presidency. Perry draws on official documents, and especially the correspondence between the two generals, elucidating their exercise of leadership, and adding a sense of drama not often seen in books of this nature.

Asserting that one principle of war they shared was, "Never fight unless you have to, never fight alone, and never fight for long,"<sup>1</sup> Perry shows how both men served that principle. He also documents the struggle between the American high command and that of the British, especially over the schemes of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

For Perry, the root of this conflict lay in two very different conceptions of how to win the war. On the one side, was Marshall's plan to launch a direct assault on Germany through a cross-Channel invasion of France. This would serve as the left-wing pincer of a double envelopment, where the Soviet Army, attacking from the East, would be the right-wing pincer. For Marshall, the assault should have taken place by the end of 1942, a full two years before it finally occurred.

Churchill, however, had an "indirect approach," which involved strategic bombing of German cities and limited attacks on the periphery of Axis-occupied Europe. Churchill's various schemes included the conquest of Italy and an attack through the Balkans, the "soft underbelly of Europe," all at the expense of the cross-Channel invasion. Marshall opposed these schemes, knowing they would prolong the war, while providing little support for the Soviet Union, which had been struggling against the full power of Germany's war machine.

The purpose of this article is to serve as an addendum to Perry's work, covering ground he does not cover. The Anglo-American conflict was not only over how the war should be fought, but one of fundamental principle, between the republican idea at the foundation of the United States, and the imperialist or Anglo-Dutch oligarchical principle of the British Empire. Both Marshall and Eisenhower were aware of this conflict from the very beginning of their Army careers, from their own experience in the First World War and the inter-war period. Scrutiny of this matter can contribute to a deeper appreciation of the struggle Perry documents during the later war.

## Alliance With Our Potential Enemy

At the center of Perry's book is the U.S. alliance with Great Britain. But what was the nature of that alliance? It was not actually an alliance with a nation called Great Britain, but rather with His Majesty's British Empire—a tyrannical empire that, under different circumstances, would have been every bit as much an enemy of the United States as the tyrannical Axis powers became. Britain was our enemy in 1776, and again in 1812; it supported the Confederacy during the Civil War, and as late as 1921, had an explicit war plan on the shelf, for a pre-emptive strike against the United States.

The U.S. military, especially the Navy, which found itself, as a result of the naval treaties of 1922, out-gunned by Japan and Great Britain, took this threat deadly seriously. In the 1920s and 1930s, the U.S. Army and Navy drafted their own series of color-coded war plans. War Plan Red was for potential war against the British Empire; Red-Orange was for war against a coalition of the Japanese and British empires, since the two had an official naval alliance until 1923. These and other war plans were all kept up-to-date, until they were withdrawn in 1939, at the point that it was clear the next war would be with Germany, Japan, and other Axis powers.

## The British vs. American Military Systems

Britain's entire political-military structure and doctrine reflected its imperial nature. Winston Churchill was the quintessential imperialist. FDR was forever denouncing Churchill's "18th-Century methods." As in the 18th Century, British military doctrine in the 20th Century was one of Cabinet warfare, a routine instrument for maintaining and expanding the Empire. "Winning" a war, even one as global and catastrophic as World War II, did not have as its purpose, laying the basis to end such wars. Indeed, World War I was just as catastrophic as World War II, yet the Anglo-French-dominated Versailles Treaty assured that its sequel would follow, a fact that was broadly discussed within the U.S. military in the inter-war period. The danger of Churchill laying the foundations for a Third World War was keenly understood by both Marshall and Eisenhower.

The British Army of the 20th Century was a very curious phenomenon. At the lower echelons, owing to the requirements of modern weaponry, the British Army, on the surface, was not so different from that of the United States. But the General Staff reflected the oligarchical structure, in which



*President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Yalta, Feb. 4, 1945. The root of the tensions between U.S. and British military figures, was also the basis of the principled difference between FDR and Churchill: the American republican conception of man vs. the British oligarchical/imperial mind-set.*

warfare was conducted by a committee system.

The chief of the Imperial Staff, much like a prime minister, was only first among equals, and the service chiefs held almost equal powers. In contrast to Marshall's concept of Unity of Command, the British concept of high command was that of a committee, not much different than the British Cabinet. In any given theater of war, the various service chiefs were co-equals, and in place of a commander in chief, the war would be prosecuted by a committee, which in turn was supervised from London. Committees proliferated at every echelon. Eisenhower and Marshall, who had nothing but disdain for this system, wrestled constantly with it throughout the war.

Lyndon LaRouche, in his recent statements on the need for unity of action by the world's four key powers—the United States, Russia, China, and India—has defined such an alliance as the British Empire's worst nightmare. This statement held true during the war as much as it does now, and could be seen in Churchill's dislike of Roosevelt's support for China as one of the great Allied powers. Churchill wanted to assure a weak post-war China, for fear that a strong China, closely allied with the United States, would be a threat to Britain's Asian "possessions"—not as a military threat, but because it would spark the national aspirations of the British and French colonies, especially India. The latter would especially look towards the United States as its natural ally in its struggle for independence.

The constant British sabotage of opening a second front against the Axis powers in Europe (the cross-Channel inva-

sion), thereby weakening the Soviet Union, was key to implementing the above strategy.

In his memoirs, Eisenhower comments that Churchill "was quite personal in his relations with field commanders and never hesitated to suggest, from a location hundreds of miles from the scene of action, detailed plans of action; of course, he did not couch these messages in the form of orders, except when a major decision was required. He would send telegrams into the field, asking questions about the whereabouts and actions of particular regiments with which he was well acquainted. One evening I met him as he was drafting a message to a British Mid-East commander. It dealt with specific items of a tactical plan; when he had finished he handed it to me for comment. After reading it I told him that I was not familiar with the details and even if I were I would not

send such a message to a field commander. Why? He wanted to know. I replied that obviously the man in the field knew more about the detailed situation than anyone sitting in London. American practice was to give the commander a mission, and the means to carry it out, without interferences from superiors. Washington, of course, kept in touch with the situation, and sent such directions as were necessary concerning logistic support or changes in major programs. But so far as operations were concerned, our tendency was either to decorate a man or relieve him, depending upon success or failure. When he pressed me on the matter of his particular communication, I said, 'If as an American commander I received such a message from the President of the United States, he would expect my resignation to be on his desk tomorrow morning—and I would make sure that it would be there.' The incident was an illustration of the great differences between his and the American system of command."<sup>2</sup>

Eisenhower was even less generous to Churchill's chief lackey, Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, and in 1963 told author Cornelius Ryan, "First of all he's a psychopath. Don't forget that."<sup>3</sup>

Here we see Eisenhower's clear perception of the difference between the method of the British Empire's Cabinet warfare, and the American tradition of "mission tactics"—our own version of the German *Auftragstaktik*. Our military commanders are not expected to be the king's first minister's lackey, but are entrusted with a mission for which they have full responsibility, and the authority for its successful implementation.

This concept of “mission” and “authority” with “responsibility” lies at the core of American military tradition, where the soldier and officer is not simply part of a polity called a “democracy,” but a sovereign citizen of a republic, unique in that it is dedicated to the universal principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Britain’s Royal Military Academy Sandhurst was merely a two-year officers training school, capable of turning out officers credibly proficient for leading troops in times of war, and the Empire’s mercenaries in time of “peace.” But the U.S.A.’s West Point was modeled on France’s École Polytechnique, and became one of the foremost engineering schools in the world. In times of peace, its graduates provided the engineers who built the canals, roads, and railroads that would create the most economically powerful nation in the world, which, under the leadership of Commander in Chief Roosevelt, won World War II.

### What Conner Told Marshall and Eisenhower

Identifying the crucial role of Gen. Fox Conner as a mentor to Marshall and Eisenhower, in the preparation for the war Conner knew would occur, is one of the strongest points in Perry’s book. It is Conner to whom Perry attributes the principle, “Never fight unless you have to, never fight alone, and never fight for long.”

The role of Conner as mentor is a story told many times by many authors. Eisenhower himself, in a lecture at the National War College, said, “There was a very wise soldier under whom I served for a number of years—in my opinion the greatest military philosopher and thinker I have known—Fox Conner. . . .”<sup>4</sup> A gentleman officer from Mississippi, highly respected, Conner was considered an awesome intellectual. His library of 4,000 volumes covered military history, philosophy, and great literary works. Through the help of another of his protégés, George Patton, Conner identified Eisenhower’s potential for high command, shortly after the First World War. Conner secured Eisenhower a position as his executive officer, when he took command of the Panama Canal Zone in 1922. Eisenhower later wrote that his tour of duty with General Conner was “one of the most interesting and constructive of my life.” Conner “was a natural leader and something of a philosopher,” who quoted Shakespeare, and had Eisenhower read Plato and Cicero as well as Clausewitz. Under his direction, Eisenhower conducted an intense study of the Civil War, making a presentation on each battle to Conner, who would then ask searching questions, forcing his student to present his ideas in a forceful, effective manner.

Conner was not simply “mentoring” a young officer; he was, through Eisenhower, preparing the United States for a war that appeared inevitable. On those long evenings, Conner discussed how the foundations of a new war were being laid by the brutal conditions imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty, especially the impossible burden of reparations, and how revolution in Russia would doom Europe to yet another



*Maj. Gen. Fox Conner: a patriot, scholar, and mentor to both Eisenhower and Marshall. They carried his emphasis on “unity of command” into their leading roles in World War II.*

war. Moreover, there was the real threat that the British, French, and expanding Japanese empires posed to the United States.

As Gen. John Pershing’s Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations in the American Expeditionary Force during the First World War, Conner was among a handful of American senior officers who was at the center of all the war councils, both national and allied. In 1934, one year after Hitler took power, he gave a lecture to the Army War College, entitled “The Allied High Command and Allied Unity of Direction,” which, although on the First World War, is representative of what he no doubt told Eisenhower and Marshall on the struggle they would face to establish “unity of command” with allies who could, under other circumstances, be their enemies.

For Conner, it was not “national pride” that prevented allied cooperation, but “ulterior motives”—a not-too-veiled reference to the imperial and other interests of Great Britain and France. Conner said, “National pride plays some, though a small, part in preventing or postponing Unity of Direction and command. . . . The ulterior motives of the several members of a coalition form the principal obstacle to securing either Unity of Direction or Unity of Command. . . . With the exception of America . . . all nations or rather the politicians of all Nations, in the World War were filled with ulterior motives, and with grandiose ideas of the ‘compensations’ they would obtain at the peace table. It is likely to be so again. . . . ‘Open covenants, openly arrived at’ is beyond the realities of European statesmanship or politics.”

As for establishing a unity of command among allies, “only an actual or a threatened catastrophe is likely to bring about anything approaching either Unity of Direction or Unity of Command. . . . In spite of the assertion just made, America should, if she ever indulges in the doubtful luxury of entering another coalition, advocate, coincident with entering a war with allies, the establishment of a Supreme War Council. Such an institution is primarily necessary to provide decent



interment for ‘fool schemes.’ Unity of Command should be sought . . . in matters of strategy only. It is quite hopeless to expect a worthwhile nation, unless it reaches the state of Austria in 1916 and 1917, to surrender the tactical command of its troops.”<sup>5</sup>

The dictum of fighting wars with allies, was no simple doctrine that Conner instilled in the younger officers, but a *mission*. That mission was to succeed where the U.S. had failed in World War I, not only in terms of military capabilities, but most emphatically in winning the peace.

### Lessons of the First World War

FDR’s own vision, or grand design, for the post-war world grew out of a reaction to the failure of the United States to win the peace after the First World War. It sought to suppress “ulterior motives” by transforming the coalition of allies that fought the war into the core of a coalition of sovereign nations, to be carved out of the 19th-Century colonial empires of Britain, France, the Netherlands, and others. The massive industrial and scientific power marshalled by Roosevelt to win the war, would be deployed to develop the world.

In the hands of Roosevelt, an enduring post-war alliance with the Soviet Union could serve as a counterweight to Great Britain, in achieving Roosevelt’s vision of dismantling the European empires. Marshall and Eisenhower, in their own way, shared in that vision.

Roosevelt’s vision appealed to a whole generation of Americans who had experienced the disillusionment of the First World War and its aftermath, and were committed to learning from its bitter lessons. This was especially true in the U.S. military, where a whole generation of young officers who had served in First World War, became the senior commanders in the Second, and developed a strong commitment not to repeat those mistakes. They built an army to win that war, so that a statesman like Roosevelt could win the peace.

There are important parallels between the U.S. military policy in the First and Second World Wars that are worth briefly reviewing.

On entering World War I, Pershing and the General Staff laid down three principles upon which the war would be prosecuted. The first was that the U.S. commanders emphatically rejected the British and French demand that the United States only provide soldiers that could be integrated into existing French and British units, thereby becoming more fresh meat for the British and French meat-grinders of static trench warfare. The second was for the United States to have its own unified command, responsible for its own front, while pushing for a unity of effort among the allies, so as to abandon the trenches and prosecute a war of movement and maneuver.



clipart.com

*The American junior officers in World War I, who rose to be the commanding generals in World War II, were determined not to repeat the blunders of the first war, when the United States was dragged into the meat-grinder of Franco-British trench warfare, among other horrific mistakes.*

With a commitment to eventually have a 5-million-man army on the continent, the United States would not only play a decisive role in defeating Germany, but would have the prestige and moral high ground at the peace table. The third principle was that the main, if not the only front, would be the Western Front to defeat Germany, whose aggression was the alleged reason for the war, as quickly and decisively as possible

These decisions were made explicitly to suppress British “fool schemes” aimed at expanding the war. As in World War II, these schemes were hatched most often by Churchill himself, who was a junior minister in the Lloyd George government. It was Churchill who conceived of the disastrous Gallipoli operation to capture the Bosphorus—its real purpose was to aid the secret Anglo-French plan to carve up the Ottoman Empire between them. Churchill even had a “soft underbelly” strategy, whereby 500,000 Allied troops were deployed to Solonika, Greece for an attack on Romania and Bulgaria. (It never happened.)

The U.S. entry into the war coincided with the March 17, 1917 revolution in Russia that overthrew the Czar, installing a Provisional Government (the Bolsheviks would take power in November). Churchill saw the opportunity to dismember the Russian Empire once and for all. On the claim that the Eastern Front had to be reopened, Churchill laid the basis for the Allied intervention, which was dubbed “Churchill’s War,”<sup>6</sup> and would last into 1920.

The prioritizing of the Western Front determined the U.S. military command’s policy towards revolutionary Russia. With an official policy of non-intervention, the U.S. military refused to be sucked into these schemes. Gen. Tasker Bliss, mentioned above, who served on the high allied military com-

mission, opposed U.S. participation in the intervention, writing at the time, "It seems to me our Allies want the United States to commit ourselves to various places where, after the war, they alone will have special interests." He then lamented, "I have often thought that this war, instead of being the last one, may be only the breeder of still more."<sup>7</sup>

The Army was ordered by President Wilson to send two regiments into Russia, one to Siberia and a smaller one to Archangel—a move which U.S. Army Chief of Staff Payton C. March would later call a "military crime." The regiment deployed to Archangel, which was put under British command, got sucked into "Churchill's War," while the much larger regiment, deployed to Siberia under the command of Gen. William S. Graves, maintained a strict policy of non-intervention, as stipulated in his original orders.

## Geopolitics Leads to World War II

The following years saw the British playing the same geopolitical games that had led to the First World War; with full British backing, fascist governments were brought to power in Italy, Germany, and Spain, while Japan was given a free hand in its conquest of China.

In 1935, Japan completed its conquest of Manchuria, and on June 18, 1936, British Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare and Adolf Hitler's special envoy, Joachim von Ribbentrop, signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, in what Hitler reportedly said was the happiest day of his life.<sup>8</sup> While British historians have painted this agreement as either an arms limitations agreement or appeasement of Hitler, it was in reality an alliance, modeled on the Anglo-Japanese naval alliance of 1902, and just as that alliance had put the world on the road to the First World War, so it would start the march to the Second.

The agreement, initiated by the British without informing either France or Italy, repudiated the arms limitation clauses of the Versailles Treaty, and gave Germany the full right of rearming itself. The agreement provided for a ratio of 35/100 between the German and British fleets; thus, for every 100,000 tons of Britain's naval vessels, Germany was allowed 35,000 tons. This would give Germany a fleet as large as that of France, and, as observers at the time wrote, parity with the British Atlantic Fleet. The anti-Soviet implications of the alliance were obvious, in that it ceded control of the Baltic Sea to a very powerful German Navy. The British withdrew completely from the Baltic, which, within a few years, would allow Germany to act freely in its invasion of Poland, and later Denmark and Norway.<sup>9</sup>

Claims that the purpose of the pact was arms limitation are absurd, since no sooner was the treaty signed, than Britain, despite the fact that it was still virtually bankrupt, embarked on a £1.5 trillion<sup>10</sup> naval rearmament program, thereby initiating a naval arms race among all the major naval powers.

Further, the Anglo-German naval pact was widely seen, especially in Berlin, as giving Germany a free hand to act on



*Adm. Harold Stark (left) and Gen. Dwight Eisenhower. Stark warned in 1940 that if the United States didn't enter the war on Britain's side, it would soon have to fight against the entire world. His recommendation of a direct Allied assault on Germany would eventually take shape as Operation Overlord—a strategy which Churchill vehemently opposed.*

the continent. In 1938, at the infamous Munich conference, documents were signed reaffirming the agreement.

Although war broke out in Europe in 1939, it was not until the end of 1940 that the United States considered it essential to forge an alliance with Britain. One of the crucial military documents where this was discussed was "Plan Dog," a memorandum written in November 1940 by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Harold Betty Stark, for the Secretary of the Navy and President Roosevelt. While usually considered an unequivocal call for the United States to save the British Empire, if the U.S. wanted to win the war that in a year would be forced upon it, a close reading of the document shows that it is actually a careful assessment of the world strategic situation, in which the United States faced the very real possibility of fighting a war against the entire world, including Great Britain.

In the Fall of 1940, Hitler had overrun Western Europe, and Britain was being pounded by the German Luftwaffe and under imminent threat of invasion. It was under attack in North Africa, facing the prospect of the fall of Egypt and the loss of the Suez Canal. With non-aggression pacts with both Germany and Japan, the Soviet Union had yet to enter the war.

Stark argued that the British were overly optimistic about their ability to resist Germany. He wrote that a war with Japan would more than likely bring on a war with the Axis powers in Europe. If this were to happen and "the British Isles then should fall, we would find ourselves acting alone, and at war against the world. To repeat, we would be thrown back on our haunches." He also warned: "It is a fundamental requirement of our military position that our homeland remain secure against successful attack. A very strong pillar of the defense structure of the Americans has, for many years, been the bal-

ance 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 power for possible encroachment on this hemisphere.”

Stark’s preferred option was a direct assault on Germany, as would become the cornerstone of Marshall’s policy. Naval assistance to Britain would not suffice: “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 was insufficient. Offensive troops from other nations will be required. I believed that the United States . . . would also need to send large air and land forces to Europe . . . to participate strongly in this land offensive.”

Stark warned that waging war with Britain as an ally would only be possible “if we insist upon full equality in the political and military direction of the war.”<sup>11</sup>

From his position as commander of U.S. naval forces in Europe, between 1942 and 1945, he was a close collaborator of both Marshall and Eisenhower, in fighting for U.S. interests at the war councils.

### Making an Enemy Your Ally: Sir John Dill

Perry has documented how Marshall and Eisenhower interacted in their struggle to exert American policy over the machinations of Churchill and his commanders. Central to that policy was Marshall’s conception of “Unity of Command,” where one Allied commander would be named as commander of an entire theater, as Eisenhower would later become Supreme Allied Commander in the European theater. This conception was almost unheard of in Britain and the United States. Marshall himself best defined it at the Arcadia conference in Quebec, 1941-42:

“With differences between groups and between services, the situation is impossible unless we operate on a frank and direct basis. I am convinced that there must be one man in command of the entire theatre—air, ground, and ships. We cannot manage by cooperation. Human frailties are such that there would be emphatic unwillingness to place portions of troops under another service. If we make a plan for unified command now, it will solve nine-tenths of our troubles. . . .

“If we could decide on a unified command now, it would be a great advance over what was accomplished during the [First] World War.”

While Eisenhower fully embraced Marshall’s conception of Unity of Command, Churchill and his commanders did not; the implications of this are presented by Perry.

But how did Marshall deal with an alliance with the British Empire, an historic and potential enemy? Marshall sought out, and found, a British counterpart with whom he could deal on a “frank and direct basis,” in other words, with a truthfulness and respect for the justifiable interest of both nations that would expedite the prosecution of the war for not only an early defeat of Germany, but also for a peace that would not lead to a World War III, as World War I had led to World War II. He



FDR Library

*U.S. Chief of Staff George Marshall insisted on the idea of Unity of Command, which went against what the British wanted. Here, Marshall (center) is with Gen. George Patton (left) and Gen. Henry “Hap” Arnold (right), in 1943.*

found this man in the person of Sir John Dill, who, upon their first acquaintance, at the Atlantic Conference of 1941, was the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS). Like Marshall, he was a veteran of the First World War, and they struck up what would become a warm and trusting friendship unparalleled in Anglo-American military relations. Dill no doubt heartily agreed with Marshall’s conception of Unity of Command. He earned the hatred of Churchill, who, in November 1941, had Dill “retired” as CIGS.

Churchill wanted Dill removed to India to become governor of Bombay, as far from Marshall as he could get him. But Marshall invited Dill to travel through the United States en route to his new assignment, and as a result, through the direct intervention of FDR himself, and his emissary Harry Hopkins, Churchill’s arm was given a hard twist, and Dill was named the head of the British Joint Staff Mission, which represented the Imperial General Staff in Washington, in dealings with the American General Staff.<sup>12</sup>

Dill proved to be an asset for presenting, and in many cases fully supporting, the U.S. position to the British Chiefs. Marshall continually sought the “frank and direct” approach, looking for British allies to counter Churchill’s constant scheming.

Marshall noted the crucial role Dill played at the major conferences, especially Casablanca and Cairo; at the latter, he figured prominently in the final decision to go for Operation Overlord, the long-delayed cross-Channel invasion. Dill’s positive role enraged Churchill, who by February 1944 began working for the general’s recall to London. Marshall wrote later: “There was a period commencing explosively at Cairo and more or less continuing up to the time of Dill’s death,



when the Prime Minister was antagonistic towards Dill. At Cairo in particular he was very emphatic in his expressions of disagreement and displeasure at Dill's forthright statements which bore on the Prime Minister's personal actions very directly. I am not familiar with the personal interchanges after that date but know that the Prime Minister was resentful of Dill's frank differences with him at a time when he, the Prime Minister, was heavily pressing his Chiefs of Staff."

Dill was never recalled, but by November 1944, he was dead. A grief-stricken Marshall arranged for his funeral and interment in Arlington Cemetery, "as a reminder of a perfect example by a British official of absolutely unselfish and objective dealings with British-American affairs."

In a personal message to Churchill thanking the latter for a letter of condolence upon Dill's death, Marshall was both "frank and personal," and betrayed an eye to the troubled future: "Few will ever realize the debt our countries owe him for his unique and profound influence toward the cooperation of our forces. To be very frank and personal, I doubt if you or your Cabinet associates fully realize the loss you have suffered, and the United States also has suffered for that matter, in purely post-war adjustments, by his death. I am hopeful that his interment in the American Valhalla of Arlington, where his services may be memorialized, will result in a continuation of his great and beneficent influence in the troubled years to come."<sup>13</sup>

### Truman, Churchill's Lackey

Perry's treatment of the post-war Truman years, while continuing the careful documentation that characterizes this entire work, suffers by carrying forward the myth that Truman, as President, was anything other than an unmitigated disaster. After the death of Roosevelt, Truman fully reversed the grand design of his predecessor and became an ardent follower of the anti-Soviet and preventive war policies of both Churchill and Bertrand Russell. The struggle that Marshall and Eisenhower waged against Churchill continued into the post-war years, right up to and through the Eisenhower Presidency.

Throughout the Truman years, the Eisenhower-Marshall



*Sir John Dill, who had been Chief of the Imperial General Staff, was "kidnapped" by his friend General Marshall, who brought him to Washington as a liaison to the United States. Churchill hated Dill, whom he considered too close to the Americans, and had tried to stick him out of the way, in Bombay. Upon Dill's death, Marshall arranged for him to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery, where this equestrian statue was erected in his honor.*

circle clearly saw themselves serving a deeply flawed President in the thrall of the British. Their actions may very well have prevented the outbreak of another world war. On April 12, 1945, the very day that Roosevelt died, Churchill commissioned the Imperial General Staff to draft a war plan envisioning an Anglo-American attack on the Soviet Union. Entitled "Operation Unthinkable," it was completed and delivered to Churchill on May 22, 1945, two weeks after Germany surrendered, on May 7. This document envisioned an attack on Soviet forces through Poland, to commence on July 1, 1945. It laid out a scenario that reads like something from an H.G. Wells novel. Even Churchill's most enthusiastic lackeys expressed deep doubts about its success, and even deeper doubts that the United States would even think of participating in it. Churchill nonetheless presented this document for official review by the Anglo-American Joint Staff in the United States. To Churchill's disappointment, the plan was never implemented.<sup>14</sup>

Truman's decision to play the tough guy with Stalin at the Potsdam conference, and to drop two atomic bombs on Japan, played directly into Churchill's hands. Although Marshall is mute on the question, Eisenhower and many of the senior commanders at the time bitterly opposed the decision to drop the bombs on Japan, as not only a inhuman act but as a clear provocation directed at the Soviet Union.

Within a few short months of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Churchill, on the invitation of Truman, delivered his infamous "Iron Curtain" speech, with its threat of war, in Fulton, Missouri. He was echoed by Bertrand Russell's call for preventive war against the Soviet Union, "The Atomic Bomb and the Prevention of War," in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Oct. 1, 1946.

There was opposition to Truman's decision to drop the bomb throughout the military establishment, including from Adm. William Leahy, chairman of the Joint Chiefs and principal military advisor to Roosevelt and then Truman; Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Adm. William Halsey, and even the Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy. Eisenhower's memoirs, *Mandate for Change*, describe his reaction when

told of Truman's intentions by Secretary of War Henry Stimson:

"During his recitation of the relevant facts, I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save lives. It was my belief that Japan was at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of 'face'. The Secretary was deeply perturbed by my attitude, almost angrily refuting the reasons I gave for my quick conclusions..."<sup>15</sup>

Just prior to the bombing of Japan, Eisenhower was invited by Soviet Marshal Grigori Zhukov, with whom he had a warm relationship, to visit Moscow, where he also met Stalin. During that trip he told a reporter, "I see nothing in the future that would prevent Russia and the United States from being the closest possible friends."

A few weeks later, in August 1945, and after the bombs were dropped, Eisenhower told a reporter who asked if he still felt the same way, "Before the atom bomb I would have said yes. I was sure we could keep the peace with Russia. Now I don't know. I had hoped the bomb wouldn't figure in this war. . . . People are frightened and disturbed all over, everyone feels insecure again."

As for Marshall and others of this circle, including Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, who served as Truman's ambassador to Russia and director of the CIA, they worked within the administration to prevent Truman from bringing the United States into yet a new war. Preemptive war plans and doctrines were being drafted in the basement of the Pentagon as soon as World War II ended, by circles that Eisenhower would later famously refer to as the "military-industrial complex": people such as Dillon Reed banker Paul Nitze. The drafting and implementation of National Security Council Directive NSC 68 by Nitze, which called for a massive offensive military buildup that could only be interpreted as an intention of conducting preemptive war, clearly contributed to the outbreak of the Korean War.

Parallel to this penetration of the institutions of the Presidency by the military-industrial complex, the wartime leaders, still loyal to FDR's foreign policy vision, were also striving to build up the institutions of the Presidency. Walter Bedell Smith, as CIA director, was exemplary of this process. But it was a hopeless struggle as long as Truman, or someone like him, held the Presidency. Therefore Eisenhower's decision to run for President was far more than a personal decision to seek the nation's highest office, but, like that of FDR, was intended to save the country from the road to disaster upon which Truman had put it.



Credit: National Archives

*President Truman and Winston Churchill. Truman became an ardent follower of Churchill, reversing Roosevelt's legacy. Marshall and Eisenhower struggled to keep Truman's bellicose policies within bounds.*

## References

1. Mark Perry, *Partners in Command: George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2007), p. 46.
2. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-56: The White House Years* (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday and Co., 1963), pp. 30-31.
3. "Bitter Rivalry of 'Dreadful Leader' and a 'Psychopath,'" *The Times*, Nov. 9, 2007.
4. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Commander in War*, National War College, Oct. 30, 1950; Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission.
5. Fox Conner, "The Allied High Command and Allied Unity of Direction," delivered in Washington, D.C., Army War College, March 19, 1934; cited in William F. Aldrich, *Fox Conner*, Army War College, April 15, 1993.
6. Noel Monks, "After 24 Years: The Story of Another 'Forgotten Army,'" *Daily Express*, 1953.
7. Richard Goldhurst, *The Midnight War, The American Intervention in Russia, 1918-9120* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978), pp. 6, 10.
8. Sir Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 558.
9. I. Jerukhimovich, "The Anglo American Naval Pact," *New Internationalist*, Vol. 2 No. 5, pp. 156-158.
10. Commander Russell Grenfell, *Sea Power in the Next War* (London: Geoffrey Bless, 1938), p. 46.
11. Admiral Harold R. Stark, "Memorandum for the Secretary," Navy Department, Office of Naval Operations, Washington, Nov. 12, 1940, FDR Library.
12. Alex Danchev, "Very Special Relationship: Field Marshal Sir John Dill and General George Marshall," [www.marshallfoundation.org/pdfs/essays/Dill+Marshall.pdf](http://www.marshallfoundation.org/pdfs/essays/Dill+Marshall.pdf).
13. George C. Marshall, Number 4-570, "To Winston S. Churchill," Nov. 7, 1944, Washington, D.C. Marshall Foundations.
14. War Cabinet, "Operation 'Unthinkable,'" Report by the Joint Planning Staff, May 22, 1945.
15. Eisenhower, *Mandate*, op. cit., p. 380.