



## Turning the Tide in the Pacific, 1941-1943

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Allied Strategy in the Pacific, 1941-1942

Read the following documents and answer the questions that follow.

**Chiefs of Staff Conference, Washington, DC, December 24, 1941:**  
<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box1/t05d01.html>

#### 10. PACIFIC AREA. -

ADMIRAL STARK [U.S. Chief of Naval Operations] listed the joint aims in the Pacific, as follows:

- Protection of the Burma Road
- Aid to China
- Aid to the Netherlands East Indies
- To hold Singapore
- To hold the Philippine Islands
- Use of Australia as a base

ADMIRAL STARK then reviewed the Naval situation in the Far East as pertains to the Asiatic Fleet. GENERAL MARSHALL [U.S. Army Chief of Staff] reviewed the arrangements which had been made to get planes to the Philippines, not only from Australia, but by convoys; also by flying by way of the eastern route. GENERAL MARSHALL stated that the critical feature of assistance to the Philippines from Australia was the existence of fields in Borneo; and that the present issue is to elaborate our plans for building up bases in Australia.

ADMIRAL POUND [British Chief of Naval Staff] then reviewed what ships the British Navy has around Singapore.

The question was asked MARSHAL DILL [British Field Marshal] as to his opinion of the situation at Singapore, to which he replied that, with reinforcements, the British would be able to hold Singapore....

#### 11. BOMBARDMENT OF JAPAN. -

ADMIRAL STARK asked as to the situation in China for airfields to be used as bases for bombing attacks against Japan.

GENERAL ARNOLD [U.S. Chief of Army Air Forces] stated that General Brett had written for air transport planes for use in reconnaissance work and for supply. He stated that no bombing operations

should be undertaken against Japan unless they are strong enough to create substantial damage; that the minimum number of bombers should be 50; that unsustained attacks would only tend to solidify the Japanese people.

**Memorandum by the United States and British Chiefs of Staff, Washington War Conference on American-British Strategy: <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box1/t05s19.html>**

**I. GRAND STRATEGY**

1. At the A[merican] –B[ritish] Staff conversations in February, 1941, it was agreed that Germany was the predominant member of the Axis Powers and consequently the Atlantic and European area was considered to be the decisive theatre.
2. Much has happened since February last, but notwithstanding the entry of Japan into the War our view remains that Germany is still the prime enemy and her defeat is the key to victory. Once Germany is defeated, the collapse of Italy and the defeat of Japan must follow.
3. In our considered opinion therefore, it should be a cardinal principle of A[merican]-B[ritish] strategy that only the minimum of force necessary for the safeguarding of vital interests in other theatres should be diverted from operations against Germany.

**II. ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF OUR STRATEGY**

1. The essential features of the above grand strategy are as follows. Each will be examined in greater detail later in this paper.
  - a. The realization of the victory programme of armaments, which first and foremost requires the security of the main areas of war industry.
  - b. The maintenance of essential communications.
  - c. Closing and tightening the ring around Germany.
  - d. Wearing down and undermining German resistance by air bombardment, blockade, subversive activities and propaganda.
  - e. The continuous development of offensive action against Germany.
  - f. Maintaining only such positions in the Eastern theatre as will safeguard vital interests ... and denying to Japan access to raw materials vital to her continuous war effort while we are concentrating on the defeat of Germany....

**MAINTENANCE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

**10. THE MAIN SEA ROUTES WHICH MUST BE SECURED ARE:**

- a. The routes in the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to India and Burma, to the East Indies and to Australasia.

- b. The Pacific routes from the United States and the Panama Canal to Alaska, Hawaii, Australia, and the Far East....

11. THE MAIN AIR ROUTES WHICH MUST BE SECURED ARE:

- a. From Cairo [Egypt] to Karachi, Calcutta [India], China, Malaya, Philippines, Australasia.
- b. From the United States to Australia via Hawaii, Christmas Island, Canton, Palmyra, Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia.
- c. The routes from Australia to the Philippines and Malaya via the Netherlands East Indies.
- d. From the United States to Vladivostok, via Alaska.

12. THE SECURITY OF THESE ROUTES INVOLVES:

- a. Well-balanced A[merican] – B[ritish] naval and air dispositions.
- b. Holding and capturing essential sea and airbases....

THE SAFEGUARDING OF VITAL INTERESTS IN THE EASTERN THEATRE

The security of Australia, New Zealand, and India must be maintained and the Chinese war effort supported. Secondly, points of vantage from which an offensive against Japan can eventually be developed must be secured. Our immediate object must therefore be to hold:

- a. Hawaii and Alaska.
- b. Singapore, the East Indies Barrier, and the Philippines.
- c. Rangoon and the route to China.
- d. The Maritime Provinces of Siberia.

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**Joint Planning Committee Report to Chiefs of Staff, Supporting Measures for the Southwest Pacific (The Far East Area and Adjacent Regions):**

**<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box1/t05t01.html>**

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Our basic strategic concept is to maintain initially the strategic defensive in the Southwest Pacific Theatre. The present strength of forces in that area is insufficient to maintain that defensive position.

After providing immediate reinforcements for defense, and as additional forces become available, it will become possible to undertake offensive operations and ultimately to conduct all all-out offensive against Japan. Accordingly, although our operations in the near future must be primarily for defense, they should be so conducted as to further our preparations for a future offensive.

The general strategic policy should therefore be:

- a. To hold the Malay Barrier, defined as the line Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, North Australia, as the basic defensive position of the Far East Area, and to operate air and sea forces in as great depth as possible forward of the Barrier in order to oppose the Japanese southward advance.
- b. To hold Burma and Australia as essential supporting positions for the Far East Area, and Burma as essential to the support of China and to the defense of India.
- c. To reestablish communications with Luzon and to support the Philippines' Garrison.
- d. To maintain communications to Burma and Australia and to and within the Far East Area.
- e. To obtain in the Far East Area and Australasia all possible supplies to relieve shipping requirements.