

August 30, 1942

FROM THE PRESIDENT FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON PERSONAL AND
NO. 180.

I have considered carefully your numbers 136 and 139 in reference to the Torch operation. It is my earnest desire to start the attack at the earliest possible moment. Time is of the essence and we are speeding up preparations vigorously.

I feel very strongly that the initial attacks must be made by an exclusively American ground force supported by your naval and transport and air units. The operation should be undertaken on the assumption that the French will offer less resistance to us than they will to the British.

I would even go so far as to say I am reasonably sure a simultaneous landing by British and Americans would result in full resistance by all French in Africa whereas an initial American landing without British ground forces offers a real chance that there would be no French resistance or only a token resistance.

I need a week if possible after we land to consolidate the position for both of us by securing the non-resistance of the French. I sincerely hope I can get this.

Then your force can come in to the eastward. I realize full well that your landing must be made before the enemy can get there. It is our belief that German air and parachute troops cannot get to Algiers or Tunis in any large force for at least two weeks after

DECLASSIFIED

By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.

By W. J. Stewart Date FEB 24 1972

Churchill

Winston S. Churchill

(Folder 1)

HOPKINS FILES - FOR LIBRARY #136

initial attack. Meanwhile your troops would be ashore we hope without much opposition and would be moving eastward.

As to the place of the landings it seems to me that we must have a sure and permanent base on the Northwest coast of Africa because a single line of communication through the Straits is far too hazardous in the light of our limited joint resources.

I propose therefore that:

- (a) American troops land simultaneously near Casablanca and near Oran.
- (b) That they seek to establish road and rail communication with each other back of the mountains. The distance is little more than 300 miles. This gives to the enterprise a supply base in Morocco which is outside the Straits and can be used to reinforce and supply the operations in Algiers and Tunis.

The real problem seems to be that there is not enough cover and combat loadings for more than two landings. I realize it would be far better to have three with you handling the one to the eastward a week after we get in. To this end I think we should re-examine our resources and strip everything to the bone to make the third landing possible. We can give up the Russian convoy temporarily at that time and risk or hold up other merchant shipping. It is essential, of course, that all ships now assigned to Eisenhower for his two landings remain intact. Hence the eastward landing must be made on ships not now available to Torch. I will explore this at our end. Can we not get an answer on this within forty-eight hours

Winston S. Churchill

(Folder 1)

HOPKINS FILES - FOR LIBRARY #136

Winston S. Churchill
(Folder 1)

or less?

I want to emphasize however that under any circumstances one of our landings must be on the Atlantic.

The directive to the Commander-in-Chief of the operation should prescribe that the attack should be launched at the earliest practicable date. The date should be consistent with the preparation necessary for an operation with a fair chance of success and accordingly it should be determined by the Commander-in-Chief, but in no event later than October 30th. I still would hope for October 14th.

ROOSEVELT

HOPKINS FILES - FOR LIBRARY #136