



Victory in Europe, 1944-1945

Student Name _____ Date _____

The Normandy Invasion—Document Analysis

Document 1:

Report by Joint War Plans Committee, Invasion of the European Continent from Bases in the Mediterranean in 1943-1944, May 8, 1943: <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box2/a18e02.html>

2. The courses of action examined and conclusions reached are indicated below:

- a. Invade Europe via the IBERIAN PENINSULA [Spain and Portugal]
 - 1) Rejected. Not suitable strategically [Spain was a neutral power during World War II]
- b. Invade Europe via SOUTHERN FRANCE
 - 1) Retained for further examination. Suitable—would create the “Second Front.” Feasibility questionable—would require seizure of SARDINIA and CORSICA; adequate land-based air cover cannot be provided and doubtful if shipping capabilities could support an operation of this magnitude until late 1944. Acceptable only if we are prepared to face heavy losses in ships and personnel.
 - 2) The inherent decisive possibilities warrant retention for further examination.
- c. Invade EUROPE via ITALY and SOUTHERN FRANCE
 - 1) Rejected. Suitable only in eliminating ITALY from the war. Not suitable as ITALY is not a vital AXIS area, would require substantial diversion of shipping to maintain Italian economy. Perhaps feasible but large forces required (estimated 40 to 50 divisions), adequate land-based air cover not available, and the shipping problem comparable to or worse than SOUTHERN FRANCE. Chances of a successful conquest of ITALY appear acceptable, but further exploitation toward FRANCE extremely doubtful.
- d. Invade EUROPE via ITALY and HUNGARY or GREECE and YUGOSLAVIA
 - 1) Rejected. The conclusion reached in c. above is equally applicable.
- e. Invade EUROPE via EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN – TURKEY, GREECE and the AEGEAN ISLANDS
 - 1) Rejected. Not logistically practicable [Turkey was a neutral power during World War II].
- f. Reexamination of “Invade EUROPE via SOUTHERN FRANCE.”
 - 1) Rejected. Reexamination in connection with other courses of action with a view to improving our chances of success indicate little hope of achieving such a position.

3. Conclusion

The application of the tests of suitability, feasibility, and acceptability to the various routes from the MEDITERRANEAN region for reentry to the Continent, and there to engage the AXIS armies in decisive combat, rejects them all as being unsound.

Document 2:

Report by Joint War Plans Committee, Invasion of the European Continent from the United Kingdom in 1943-1944, May 8, 1943: <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box2/a18d02.html>

[...]

7. The two most promising areas for assault operations, the CAEN and CONTENTIN PENINSULA sectors, will afford port facilities for a build up in 12 months of 912,000 men. By extending this bridgehead to include the SEINE RIVER and the ports of LE HAVRE and ROUEN, the build up in 12 months would be 4,012,000 men, or about 100 divisions. This force would be capable of major operations.

[...]

9. It is recommended that:

- a. The bomber offensive be given first priority in build up and its execution be facilitated.
- b. As the bomber offensive progresses, its effects should be continuously examined and integrated with other factors; the results of these examinations to be used in determining the date for cross-channel operations.
- c. A balanced invasion force be built up in the UNITED KINGDOM as rapidly as possible for the purpose of an early invasion in the event of a collapse of GERMANY.
- d. Production in landing craft be increased by:
 - 1) Increasing the tailing on program of LST's [a type of landing craft] to 12 per month for a total of 108 additional LST's.
 - 2) Increasing the present rate of LCI(L)'s [another type of landing craft] from 16 per month to 20 per month and the present program from 192 to 300.
- e. Planned allocations of UNITED STATES landing craft to the PACIFIC be changed as follows (figures in parentheses represent allocations as presently planned):

	1943		1944		
	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter
LST	25 (38)	0 (22)	0 (0)	35 (0)	0 (0)
LCI(L)	0 (34)	0 (36)	30 (36)	60 (24)	40 (0)

- f. With the exception of the above allocations, all UNITED STATES production be sent to the ATLANTIC area during this period.
- g. The target date of April 1, 1944 be accepted for operations from the UNITED KINGDOM. These operations to be conducted with the forces available in the UNITED KINGDOM on 1 January 1944. The target date coincides with the completion of the fourth phase of the bomber offensive and is subject to revision in the light of the results obtained.
- h. The area selected for the assault contain sufficient port capabilities to build up the 100 division force required for major operations on the Continent.