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AUSTRALIA AND ALLIED STRATEGY IN THE PACIFIC

1941-1946

by

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CHAPTER NINEAUSTRALIA AND THE PHILIPPINES CAMPAIGN,June-October 1944The American Debate over the Philippines

By mid 1944 General MacArthur had secured increased control over the strategy of the South-West Pacific Area. Not only did the greater numbers of American divisions reduce his reliance upon the Australians, but the victories of late 1943 enabled him to exploit his increased resources. Thus while Curtin and Blamey were overseas and the Australian troops were recuperating on the Atherton Tableland, MacArthur's forces advanced rapidly westward along the north coast of New Guinea. On 27 April American troops landed at Aitape and Hollandia, on 18 May at Wakde and on 27 May, Biak. Therefore, although heavy fighting continued in some areas, with an advance of twelve hundred kilometres in just over a month, MacArthur forced early consideration in Washington of the plans to invade the Philippines. An advance of a further similar distance would bring him almost to Mindanao.

During the first half of 1944 the American Joint Chiefs of Staff had become increasingly concerned that the British might try to extend their influence on the Pacific War. They had not been persuaded that Churchill's question to Roosevelt of March 1944, asking 'whether the US fleet could get along without British help in the Pacific', was the 'end of British maneuvering [sic]'.¹ As a result of further British enquiries this problem was examined by the US Joint planners, who in their report were adamant that the Pacific was a US responsibility, pointing out that when the US had endeavoured to participate in planning for Mountbatten's South-East Asia Command they had been rebuffed by the British. They considered, therefore, that the US should 'endeavour to "steer"

1. Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p.452.

the major part of the British forces released after Germany's defeat to a subsidiary area'. Nevertheless, they realised that they could not expect to exclude the British from over-all planning for operations for the defeat of Japan, and they recommended that the Joint Chiefs delay British participation in planning while at the same time accelerating and determining their own strategy.²

This was the American attitude when the Joint Chiefs visited England in June 1944. The Americans had received information of the plans for the British Commonwealth advance to Ambon, but they also had a report that 'the British Chiefs were not serious about this proposal, but could use it to try to commit the Prime Minister to the Pacific and permit an Australian build-up'.³ At informal conversations on 11, 12 and 14 June the Americans pointed out that they planned to occupy Mindanao on 15 November 1944 and Formosa on 15 February 1945, but that this programme would probably be accelerated. Thus the British-Australian plans to capture Ambon would be too late and contribute little. During the discussions with the Australians Churchill had not objected to the 'Middle Strategy' but now, reinforced by American disagreement, he returned to his original demands that the British should concentrate on the Indian Ocean. Throughout June and July Churchill and the Chiefs of Staff argued over the Middle Strategy. The Chiefs pointed out that the Australian and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff welcomed the project which would enable their troops to take their place in the forefront of the battle, but Churchill remained unconvinced.⁴ Unbeknown to Blamey, the hopes of an early advance by British forces from Darwin to Ambon, were becoming slimmer every day.

2. Policies, Combined Planning for the Defeat of Japan, Joint Planning Staff, 3 May 1944, RG 165, ABC 384, Japan (3 May 1944), Sec 1-A, National Archives.

3. Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, p.453.

4. COS (44) 236 (0), 14 July 1944, PREM 3 160/5. The arguments throughout June and July are covered in this file.

In accordance with their hopes to accelerate the Pacific War the Joint Chiefs of Staff, still in London, asked MacArthur and Nimitz on 13 June their opinions on methods for speeding up operations. The Joint Chiefs' proposals implied that the Philippines should be by-passed.⁵ Yet two days later MacArthur issued a plan, RENO V, for future operations against the Philippines. He envisaged a preliminary operation to seize Sarangani Bay in Mindanao on 25 October, and then an amphibious operation on 15 November to capture airfields and bases on Leyte.⁶ The proposals from the Joint Chiefs struck at these plans and MacArthur's often stated intention to 'return' to the Philippines.

On 18 June 1944 MacArthur replied, declaring that he did not have the resources to further accelerate the advance, and that there were good military reasons for re-occupying the Philippines as it would be 'unsound' to bypass the islands and strike at Formosa. Furthermore, 'We have a great national obligation to discharge' in liberating the Philippines.⁷ Marshall replied that Magic and Ultra information indicated that the Japanese were strong in the peripheral areas but not Formosa. The swift defeat of Japan, which he expected to follow, would enable the liberation of the Philippines. Nimitz's reply had not yet been received, and so for the moment the matter remained unresolved.⁸

A Serious Miscalculation by General Blamey

Unlike Curtin who returned by ship, Blamey flew back to Australia from America, thus enabling him to inspect a jungle training school in

5. M.H. Cannon, *Leyte, The Return to the Philippines* (OCMH Washington, 1954), p.3.

6. *Ibid.*, pp.2, 3.

7. Signal CX 13891, MacArthur to Marshall, 18 June 1944, Marshall Library.

8. Signal WAR 55718, Marshall to MacArthur, 24 June 1944, Marshall Library. In this context Ultra referred to intercepted Japanese naval and air signals based on codebooks, not cypher machines.

Hawaii,⁹ before flying via Noumea to Lae and Port Moresby. During his journey home Blamey must have given some thought to the forthcoming operations. The stop-overs in New Guinea were designed to enable him to assess the situation there, and from Port Moresby he flew to Mareeba on the Atherton Tableland arriving on 19 June 1944.¹⁰ Some idea of the plans developing in Blamey's mind at this early stage can be gauged by a comment in the diary of Lieutenant-General F.H. Berryman, the GOC of the 1st Australian Corps: 'Atherton, 20 June 1944, C-in-C explained future possibilities and in certain eventualities I may be posted as C of S to a big army'.¹¹ Thus before speaking to MacArthur Blamey had already begun preparations for the British Commonwealth command.

Blamey met MacArthur in Brisbane on 25 June and immediately raised the matter of the new command. MacArthur reported two days later that 'he had been disturbed' when informed by Blamey that a new command, responsible to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, was to be set up. Blamey appeared to be under the impression that MacArthur was aware of the matter, but MacArthur claimed that he had received no previous advice. This seems difficult to believe since he knew that Admiral Daniel was in Australia, but obviously he said nothing. 'Upon detecting MacArthur's unawareness of the proposals, Blamey had apparently sensed his indiscretion and closed down on the further discussion of them'. During the conversation Blamey had criticised MacArthur's plans and had thrown doubts on the availability of the Australian forces by stating that the divisions would require a long time to be brought up to strength. According to MacArthur, Blamey 'stated

9. Dwyer, Interlude with Blamey.

10. Hetherington, *op.cit.*, p.335, says Blamey arrived in Australia on 20 June. Berryman noted in his diary on 19 June 1944: 'Left for Mareeba, and met Sturdee and Lady B- and CinC arrived from Lae ex USA at 1240 hrs'. Blamey's Diary noted that he arrived at Mareeba at 1330 on 19 June. Blamey Papers DRL 6643, item 144.

11. Berryman's Diary

19 June 1944, the day of his return to Australia, Blamey examines a sand model on the Atherton Tableland. Bending over the model is Lieutenant-General Sturdee, the GOC of the First Army. On the right is Lieutenant-General Berryman, GOC of 1st Corps.

(AWM Negative No.66968)



Lieutenant-General F.H. Berryman photographed in Melbourne, 1 August 1944: 'I may be posted as C of S to a big army'.

(AWM Negative No.67710)

Blamey being greeted by General Wynter on his return to Melbourne after his visit to England and America. On the left, Generals Northcott and Beavis.

(AWM Negative No.66943)



that he had instructed Lieut-General Berryman to take over the command of the British Forces which might be sent to Australia, and from this, MacArthur assumed that Blamey was taking the adoption of the new proposal for granted'.¹²

The day after his discussions with Blamey, MacArthur met Curtin and Shedden, who had arrived that day from America.¹³ Curtin gave MacArthur a letter outlining the discussions in London and Washington about the Australian war effort and the employment of United Kingdom forces in the Pacific.¹⁴ Shedden recorded that:

MacArthur stated that he had been somewhat disturbed about the strength of the Australian Divisions and the AIF Divisions in particular. They had been under strength for some time and the advice that he had received from the Chief of the General Staff was that they could not be brought up to strength for many months. Though he had originally contemplated that the AIF Divisions would be used in his advance on the Philippines, he did not now intend using them until later on, when he proposed to attack Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies. From the information furnished to him, the AIF Divisions would not be battle-worthy until after the Philippines campaign.

MacArthur then went on to strongly oppose any plan that would affect the present boundaries of his command and stated that if any additional Australian or United Kingdom forces became available they should be allotted to him. At this, Curtin drew MacArthur's attention to his letter which emphasised that the Australian government was loyal to the current

12. Notes of Discussion with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, 27 June 1944 (present, MacArthur and Shedden) MP 1217, Box 3.

13. Before landing at Brisbane Shedden wrote ahead to MacArthur requesting him to meet Curtin. He added that the Prime Minister did not want Blamey to be present on this occasion. Shedden also requested a separate meeting to discuss 'some background aspects to be mentioned privately'. Letter Shedden to MacArthur 26 June 1944, at sea, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

14. The following account is based on Notes of Discussions with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area. 26 and 27 June 1944, (present, MacArthur, Curtin and Shedden) MP 1217, Box 3. The letter from Curtin to MacArthur is held in the Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

command arrangements. On the other hand Curtin was concerned at MacArthur's statement that the Australian divisions would take time to become battle-worthy:

He said he was anxious that the Australian Forces should be associated with General MacArthur's advance and that they should be represented in the operations against the Philippine Islands. He wished to make it quite clear to General MacArthur that the Australian Forces having been assigned to him, their use was a matter for decision by him.

MacArthur and Curtin then discussed the relation between MacArthur's timetable and the dates by which the Royal Navy forces could become available in Australia. MacArthur pointed out that his naval forces were weak and he presented Curtin with a draft cablegram to send to Churchill requesting the use of a British naval task force. Curtin promised to consider this, and, as will be discussed shortly, did send a similar cable to Churchill.

Following the discussions with Curtin, MacArthur had further talks with Shedden.¹⁵ MacArthur said that it was evident that Blamey, in his discussions in London, had been disloyal to him and to the command organisation in the South-West Pacific Area, and, since Curtin supported the command organisation, also disloyal to the Prime Minister. He was convinced that it was Blamey's ambition to be Commander-in-Chief of the new command, and that he also wished to command all the Australian defence forces. He said that Blamey had suggested that to overcome the difficulties between Air Vice-Marshals Jones and Bostock he should be given command of the RAAF as well as the army.

Shedden had previously enquired whether MacArthur's plan of operations entailed a change in the system of command. MacArthur said:

that the position of Commander of the Allied Land Forces had now become a fiction - Blamey had refused

15. The following account is based on Notes of Discussions with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, 27 June 1944 (present, MacArthur and Shedden) MP 1217, Box 3.

to associate himself closely with MacArthur in the same manner as the Commanders of the Allied Naval and Air Forces, and because of his duties as Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces, he was rarely available when required. Accordingly MacArthur had resorted to the system of the task force commanders, and intended to take personal charge of the operations against the Philippines.

In conclusion MacArthur said that, following Blamey's interview with him, he had instructed Sutherland, his chief of staff, to prepare a plan for the conduct of operations in the South-West Pacific Area by the use of American forces only, in view of the possibility that the assignment of the Australian forces to him would be withdrawn. An AIF division was to have been available in September, but he had been informed that it would not be ready in time. It is difficult to fathom MacArthur's real complaint here, since at that time the Leyte landing was scheduled for some time in December. MacArthur referred to an instruction sent by Blamey from overseas to the CGS, Northcott, to hold up the advance of Australian troops on the northern coast of New Guinea. Northcott had protested to MacArthur that Blamey did not understand the position. MacArthur said that this instruction had a new significance for him since his interview with Blamey, who was apparently intent on holding back the Australian troops for the new command.¹⁶

MacArthur also spoke frankly about these matters to General Lumsden, Churchill's liaison officer at MacArthur's Headquarters. In April Lumsden had reported that 'General Blamey ... works in the closest collaboration with and under General MacArthur, who, for his part, is very ready to listen to and defer to General Blamey's opinion on all military matters'.¹⁷

16. When Shedden saw MacArthur in Tokyo in May 1946 MacArthur again referred to his belief that 'with the proposed creation of a new British Commonwealth area, General Blamey was holding back the Australian Forces from him. He added that General Blamey had no doubt ambitions to be appointed to the command of the new area'. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with General MacArthur, Tokyo, May 1946, MP 1217, Box 3.

17. Letter, Lumsden to CIGS 12 April 1944, WO 216/96. Brigadier W.G. Carr, Lumsden's deputy, recalled that MacArthur had 'complete confidence in General Lumsden'. Letter, 22 March 1979.

But now MacArthur told Lumsden that Blamey was so unreliable that, despite the fact that he was in his opinion 'the most able soldier in the Australian Army, Mr Curtin would be well advised to make a change'. MacArthur said that it would 'be contrary to his normal custom for him to try and influence Mr Curtin' but he seems not to have had the same reserve in talking to Sir Frederick Shedden.¹⁸ For Shedden, and Curtin to whom the minutes of Shedden's conference were available, MacArthur's opinion of Blamey would have reinforced that formed by them during the overseas trip.¹⁹

In the opinion of General Lumsden Blamey 'returned full of admiration and loyalty towards all things British' and was 'not now on a good terms as formerly with General MacArthur'. He believed that Blamey appeared to favour the operation of imperial forces under an independent command on an axis separate from that of the American forces. The Americans would advance on the Philippines from New Guinea, and the Commonwealth forces on Borneo from Australia.²⁰

Other observers saw things differently. Brigadier Barham, heading the Advanced LHQ staff at the time, received no news of Blamey's hopes for the Commonwealth force,²¹ but the reality of the situation was less important than the construction placed upon it by MacArthur, who was only too willing to find fault with Blamey. Thus, through his over-enthusiastic advocacy of the use of Commonwealth forces on a separate

18. Letter, Lumsden to Ismay 15 July 1944, PREM 3 159/4.

19. During the conference MacArthur told Shedden that Blamey had said that he returned from America by air because 'he could not possibly bear the journey back with the Prime Minister's crowd'. (Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief Southwest Pacific Area, 27 June 1944, MP 1217, Box 3.) The feeling appeared to be mutual. Mrs Curtin expressed her pleasure that Blamey had not accompanied them on the return journey. Shedden Diary, MP 1217, Box 16.

20. *Ibid.* Lumsden wrote: 'The above comments are the outcome of a number of conversations with high-ranking persons whose opinions were frequently conflicting'.

21. Major-General L. de L. Barham interview 11 December 1978.

axis, Blamey provided MacArthur with a ready-made excuse for not using Australian troops in the assault on the Philippines. For Blamey, whom Lumsden described as being the 'vital force' of the Australian services, with 'a better strategical and military technical knowledge' and the capability of 'taking a wider view militarily and politically, than any other Australian high commander',²² his reliance on the militarily unsound 'middle strategy' must be seen as a serious miscalculation.

For a period of two months following his return to Australia Curtin worked hard with MacArthur to secure a British Naval task force for the South-West Pacific. On 4 July Curtin cabled Churchill, following very closely the draft cable prepared by MacArthur. He told Churchill that MacArthur's operations were gaining pace, and that if Britain waited until the defeat of Germany to send forces to the Pacific, then she would be too late. Since MacArthur was weak in naval strength he suggested that a British fleet should be sent immediately as it was 'the only effective means for placing the Union Jack in the Pacific alongside the Australian and American flags'.²³ The next day Curtin reported on his overseas trip to the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Cabinet.²⁴ He briefed the members on his talks with MacArthur and read his cable to Churchill. With regard to the Philippines W.M. Hughes said that the Australian forces should not be sent to the Philippines until the islands north of Australia were cleared, but the Council decided that the employment of Australian troops should remain in the hands of Douglas MacArthur.²⁵ Thus Blamey, who was forging ahead with plans for the

22. Letter, Lumsden to Ismay, 15 July 1944, PREM 3 159/4.

23. Cable, Johcu No.78, Curtin to Churchill, 4 July 1944, CRS A2684, item 1496.

24. One aspect of his trip which Curtin did not seem to think important enough to mention was that Churchill had asked him to investigate uranium sources in Australia. E.H. Cox interview 20 November 1978. See also F.T. Smith Papers, NLA MS 4675/108, 3 July 1944.

25. Advisory War Council Meeting, 5 July 1944, CRS A2682 item Volume VIII. War Cabinet Agendum, 342/1944, CRS A2680 item Agendum 17/1944 [Part 1].

British Commonwealth force, was working at cross purposes to Curtin and MacArthur.

The Basing of United Kingdom Forces in Australia

By the beginning of July plans for the British Commonwealth force were well underway. It will be recalled that in March 1944 Admiral Daniel had been ordered to Australia to investigate base potentialities.²⁶ After some delay, he had arrived in Australia at the end of April and soon reported favourably to the UK Chiefs of Staff.²⁷ Then, on 27 May, as a result of representations by Curtin and Blamey in London, the role of Daniel's mission had been changed so that the British officers in Australia were to be integrated with the Australian staff and the report was to be prepared by the Australian Chiefs of Staff.²⁸ Consequently, a Joint Planning Staff was set up in Australia consisting of two committees, the Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee, and a Base Planning Committee under the chairmanship of Brigadier C.M.L. Elliott.²⁹ In addition, when the

26. See p.351.

27. Daniel met the Advisory War Council on 2 May 1944, and gave them a detailed statement covering the Cairo conference and the discussions then taking place in London as to the direction of the British Pacific Strategy. Advisory War Council Minute No.1352, Canberra 2 May 1944. CRS A2684, item 1461.

28. See p.377. This revised directive is referred to in a memorandum from the UK Services Representatives to the Australian Chiefs of Staff, 30 June 1944, in COS (4) 44/1, Berryman Papers. The instruction that British representatives were to be attached to the Australian staffs is contained in Cable 97126, British Chiefs of Staff to Dewing, Daniel and Milford, 24 May 1944, and Cable 579, Dominions Office to Australian Government, 26 May 1944, WO 106/3423.

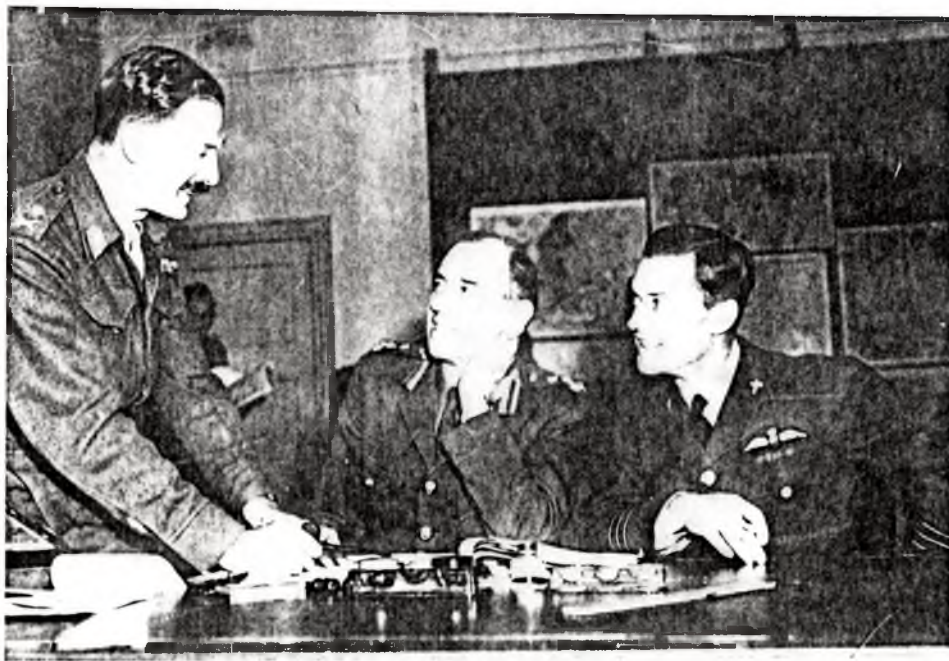
29. Notes for Information by Brigadier Elliott, June 1944, Berryman Papers. Elliott was appointed Chairman of the Base Planning Committee on 17 May 1944. The British claimed the credit for the establishment of these committees and tried to get as much work done as possible before the return of Blamey and Shedden. Dewing, who shortly was to become ill, wrote to the War Office on 2 June 1944: 'TAB has no use for Joint Planning. He does not think it gets anybody anywhere and is likely to hold this view more than usually strongly in connection with the project which we are examining ...

Shedden is a great centraliser and will I am sure want to get everything under his personal control; and this might well set things back'. WO 106/4847.



Brigadier C.M.L. Elliott, Chairman of
the Base Planning Committee.

(AWM Negative No.22924)



Members of the British Service Mission to
Australia, Melbourne 16 October 1943.
Left to right, Major-General R.H. Dewing,
Brigadier H. Bartlett and Wing Commander
F.W.P. Dixon.

(AWM Negative No.141828)

Chiefs of Staff sat to consider the problem they became known as the Chiefs of Staff (X) Committee, and usually Daniel, Dewing and Brigadier E.W. Milford of the British Army were invited to attend.³⁰

Preliminary planning continued throughout June, but it took more direction after a Chiefs of Staff (X) Committee meeting on 27 June, when Northcott outlined what Blamey had indicated as the probable future commitment of the British Commonwealth in the Pacific. He said that advice had not yet been received of its acceptance by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, but, he added, 'When this was given the work of the Joint Planning Staffs would cease to be merely hypothetical and logistic, and would become positive planning for definite operations'.³¹

On 30 June Admiral Daniel presented the detailed United Kingdom requirements. Assuming that Germany would be defeated by 1 October 1944 the UK representatives estimated that the British fleet based on Australia would include initially two or three battleships, two or three large carriers, ten cruisers and corresponding numbers of smaller vessels. This fleet would eventually be increased to four battleships, a total of 28 carriers of all types, 12 cruisers, 88 LST's, a substantial Fleet Train, and other craft. Daniel's staff assumed that the Commonwealth

30. CRS A 816, item 7/301/32.

31. Chiefs of Staff (X) Committee, Minute, 27 June 1944, CRS A 816, item 7/301/32. This meeting is also described by the U.K. Army Staff Progress Report No.1, 24 April-31 July 1944, WO 106/3423. The report says Blamey was present, but since the report has a number of mistakes (for example it says Blamey arrived in Melbourne on 23 June, when he was still in Brisbane on 25 June) it may also be wrong in this respect. However the report outlined almost exactly the account above, and added that Brigadier Milford complained that the object of the investigation was to determine the feasibility of having troops in Australia, and there could be no assurance that they would arrive.

land forces would consist of six divisions from Australia, one from New Zealand, and five divisions, two tank brigades, some commandos and base troops from Britain. The British troops would total 225,000. It was estimated that 40,000 base troops would arrive from India in February 1945, one division from the Mediterranean in March, two divisions from India and one from England in April, and a division from England in May. The divisions were to be ready for operations at various dates between August and October 1945.³²

Soon after returning to Australia Blamey added increased impetus to the planing when he ordered Berryman, the commander of the 1st Australian Corps on the Atherton Tableland, to report to Melbourne to head the planning staff.³³ Berryman arrived in Melbourne on 4 July 1944 and noted in his diary that 'my new job is likely to be the most important and lead to a Chief of Staff appointment to a big operation later'.³⁴ Two days later Northcott gave Berryman more details. Brigadier Barham and the

32. Memorandum, U.K. Services Representatives to Australian Chiefs of Staff, 30 June 1944, COS (X) 44/1, Berryman Papers.

33. Berryman Diary, 4 July 1944. On 14 July 1944 Curtin said that Berryman's 'recall from the north fitted in with the government's policy of giving brilliant officers with good war records experience in administration for post-war purposes'. F.T. Smith Reports NLA MS 4675/114. The CAS and CNS, however, were not enthusiastic about Berryman's appointment. They thought that it raised the level of planning too high and they could not produce officers of equivalent rank to join the planning staff. U.K. Army Staff in Australia, Progress Report No.1, 29 April-31 July 1944, WO 106/3423.

34. Berryman Diary, 4 July 1944.

planners at Land Headquarters, and also the Base Planners (under Brigadier C.M.L. Elliott) were to come under his control, and he was to solve two problems:³⁵

- a. The overall plan to maintain the total British force, stating what assistance could be provided by Australia.
- b. The administrative arrangements necessary to maintain overseas the combined forces which would be available.³⁶

Thus, although Blamey acknowledged that Berryman was heading a planning staff, it is clear that with the inclusion of the LHQ staff he was forming a headquarters to control the combined force.

This notion became clearer the following week when Blamey told Berryman not to worry about the strategic situation but to supervise the planning as ordered.³⁷ Brigadier Barham, who was present noted:

No British/Australian GHQ nucleus will be formed yet. If and when formed later, it will probably work under command of General MacArthur. This planning is NOT to be discussed with GHQ SWPA. Brigadier Barham is to remain at Adv. LHQ as BGS. Adv. LHQ planning will be under direction of General Berryman. General Berryman will take charge of all Army planning, including Adv. LHQ Planning Section ...³⁸

Therefore, although there is no written evidence that Blamey was planning on forming a new GHQ, it is obvious that he had placed all his planning staff under his senior and most capable staff officer whom he designated Chief of Staff. An indication of Blamey's thinking is contained in a letter from Brigadier Rogers, the Director of Military Intelligence, to Berryman on 12 July; Rogers referred to the need to increase the Australian

35. Berryman Diary 6 July 1944.

36. Notes for Lieut-General F.H. Berryman by Brig C.M.L. Elliott, 7 July 1944, Berryman Papers.

37. Berryman Diary 11 July 1944.

38. Notes of Discussion with C-in-C, 11 July 1944, signed by Brigadier Barham, 11 July 1944, Berryman Papers.



Commander H.M. Burrell, Director of Plans, RAN.

(AWM Negative No.



Blamey and his Director of Military Intelligence, Brigadier J.D. Rogers, August 1944. Blamey asked Rogers to be prepared to form intelligence units which could operate separately from the Americans.

(AWM Negative No.100210)

component of the Central Bureau and the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section:

... there has been at the back of our minds the necessity for our being independent if at any time our future activities were to run along a line quite different from that of GHQ SWPA ... the C-in-C asked me to let you know that he would like you to keep this question in mind in your planning arrangements.³⁹

As previously indicated, Blamey's enthusiasm for the new project was not matched by Shedden and Curtin. Indeed Shedden refused to allow Berryman and his staff to use a suite of rooms in a new block at Victoria Barracks, forcing the planning staff to seek offices further down St. Kilda Road.⁴⁰ But this was not Berryman's main worry.

The biggest obstacle to the planning was the insistence of Admiral Daniel that he was heading a separate mission which was not be integrated as part of the Australian staff. This was in direct contravention of the agreement which Blamey had secured from the UK Chiefs of Staff.⁴¹ In an effort to keep things running smoothly Berryman made Brigadier Milford his deputy,⁴² but on 23 July Milford was found dead in his bed,⁴³ and Berryman appointed Brigadier A.R.W.S. Koe, a British

39. Letter, Rogers to Berryman, 12 July 1944, Personal and DO letters April 1944, Berryman Papers. Berryman also refers in his diary to discussing this matter with the CGS on 15 July 1944.

40. Berryman Diary 19 July 1944.

41. See p.377. Not all the British were disgruntled: Lieutenant-Colonel Cuppage, a senior member of the British staff, wrote to the War Office at the end of July: 'The Australian staffs here have been charming and most helpful throughout. However, they suffer from a lack of experience of fairly large scale planning, as the Australian military installations in this continent have grown up like "Topsy" and have naturally been directed more to the defence of Australia from external aggression'. WO 106/3423.

42. Berryman Diary 13 July 1944.

43. Berryman Diary 23 July 1944. For the details concerning Milford's death see WO 106/4848.

officer who was dealing with Combined Operations Training, to take his place.⁴⁴ In Berryman's diary there are repeated references to difficulties caused by Daniel's refusal to be integrated with the Australian staff, and on 24 July he noted:

In evening discussed with CGS need for Admiral Daniel to come in on DCOS [Deputy Chiefs of Staff] level. I object to his present position of arch critic of work he should take his part in producing.⁴⁵

Nevertheless the planning continued with Blamey keeping closely in touch.⁴⁶ On 24 July he approved of various projects commencing at Darwin and told Berryman that he could plan on training the British divisions on the Atherton Tableland.⁴⁷ On 28 July Blamey told Berryman that he did not expect a decision from the UK government for some time,⁴⁸ but on 3 August Blamey again showed keen interest in the planning,⁴⁹ and when, the next day the Prime Minister discussed means of reducing the Australian Army, Blamey told him that Darwin could not be reduced further 'pending the decision as to whether the Australian Military Forces were to fight with the United Kingdom Forces or with the United States Forces'.⁵⁰ Curtin himself hinted to journalists at a confidential, off-

44. Berryman Diary, 3 August 1944.

45. Berryman Diary, 24 July 1944. Commander H.M. Burrell, the RAN Director of Plans, recalled that he had a desk alongside that of Commander Duckworth, RN, and that there was close cooperation between the RAN and the RN. (Letter, 21 November 1979). But perhaps Daniel himself had little contact with Navy Office.

46. Blamey also kept in touch with Brooke in London; Cable G5493, CIGS to Blamey, 4 August 1944, Blamey Papers 1.2 and WO 106/3411. The CIGS said that no decision had yet been reached on the Japanese strategy.

47. Berryman Diary, 24 July 1944. On 24 July Blamey wrote to the Minister for the Army that the Northern Territory 'must be prepared for the impact of an unprecedented burden'. Blamey Papers 25.32.

48. Berryman Diary, 28 July 1944.

49. Berryman Diary, 4 August 1944.

50. Notes of Conference between the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, Melbourne, 2 August 1944, CRS A 2680, item Agendum No.17/1944 Part 1.

the-record press conference that something might be happening at Darwin.⁵¹

The senior planning officers at the headquarters of the Australian Services were certain that the United Kingdom forces would definitely be coming to Australia.⁵²

As the plan neared completion Admiral Daniel, whom Royle, the CNS, described as 'the brightest man in the British Navy',⁵³ again caused problems. Berryman explained the situation in his diary on 7 August:

Brigadier Elliot informed me of the lobbying going on about the form of report of the BP Committee. I spoke to CGS, explained position and said DCOS (X) were charged with responsibility and that Admiral Daniel had given his advice and now he proposed to get senior British officers together and submit his report in their form. CGS agreed that it was an Australian responsibility and the instrument was the Australian staff with British officers integrated.

Daniels rang me and said he was having a meeting of the senior British officers and I told him I would instruct Brigadier Koe not to attend as it was not his business. I saw Koe and explained the above with which he agreed and advised him not to be a party to further action as he was an integrated member of the Australian Army Staff - he said he did not agree with Daniel in trying to get the senior British officers to press it and would tell him so and that his proper action was to confine his attention to the CNS.⁵⁴

Some days later the matter was again raised:

CGS went to a Defence Committee meeting at which CNS desired to call in Admiral Daniel but other two members did not agree. Daniel

51. F.T. Smith Reports NLA MS 4775/113, 31 July 1944.

52. Major-General A.G. Wilson interview, 13 December 1978. The Director of Plans, RAN, Commander H.M. Burrell, also believed that the project was certain to take place, and indeed he was told to work on the assumption that it would take place. Interview, 1 February 1979, and letter, 21 November 1979.

53. F.T. Smith Reports NLA MS 4675/104, 3 May 1944. However Churchill had other views and on 27 March 1944 wrote to Ismay: 'I formed my own opinion about Admiral Daniel when I was in contact with him at the Admiralty. He was, if I remember, a good flotilla officer; but I always thought he was a maker of difficulties and on many points a defeatist and certainly he does not carry my confidence'. PREM 3 160/1.

54. Berryman Diary, 7 August 1944.

is acting as an independent British mission and has power to sway Sir Guy Royle who I'm afraid looks at the problem from RN rather than from an Australian point of view.

It is extraordinary the length to which Daniel has gone and how he has interfered with the working of the Base Planning Committee on relatively a trivial question such as the 'form' of part I of the report - a matter in which no one else is vitally interested but we are interested in working the BP Committee and DCOS according to rules.⁵⁵

The arguments continued, and on 19 August 1944 Berryman wrote in his diary:

Admiral Royle informed me Daniel was willing to play and said we [DCOS] had not consulted the British mission - I said we had - he then said 'as they were our ships we should have a say in the form of the report' ... CGS told me that COS had a heated meeting - the reason is that Admiral Daniel is a mission whereas Army and RAF officers are integrated.⁵⁶

Eventually, on 21 August, agreement was reached on the form of the report,⁵⁷ which was presented on 23 August.⁵⁸

The report on the Basing of UK Forces on Australia was a 200 page study of the accommodation and supplying of the proposed forces. In essence, it indicated that to accommodate and supply the British force of 675,000 personnel would be a massive undertaking. To enable the necessary work to be completed a decision about United Kingdom plans would have to be made by mid-September.⁵⁹ But by late-August it was already too late for the British forces to have a separate role on MacArthur's flank. Evidence will be presented shortly to show that Blamey had not given up

55. Berryman Diary 18 August 1944.

56. Berryman Diary 19 August 1944.

57. Berryman Diary 21 August 1944.

58. COS (X) 44/1, The Basing of U.K. Forces on Australia, Report by the Australian Chiefs of Staff to the Australian Government, 23 August 1944, Berryman Papers. Copies are also held in CRS A816, item 7/301/48.

59. *Ibid.*

hope, but he now had to readjust his plans, and on 24 August Berryman left his planning job and flew to Brisbane to take up the correct function of Chief of Staff, Advanced Land Headquarters,⁶⁰ where the problems concerned cooperation with the Americans for the invasion of the Philippines, rather than British-Australian planning.

Sincerity, Amour-Propre and Loyalty

Since the Second World War debate has revolved around whether MacArthur deliberately excluded Australian troops from taking part in the Philippines campaign. It has already been related how on 17 March MacArthur told Curtin that the three AIF divisions would form the spear-head of his advance to the Philippines,⁶¹ but that this did not seem to be in accord with his RENO plans. Then on 27 June he had told Curtin that because the AIF divisions could not be ready in time they could not be used in the Philippines. Although Curtin had told MacArthur that he wanted Australian troops to be represented in these operations, he had left the decision to MacArthur.⁶²

Obviously Curtin was worried by MacArthur's claim that the troops could not be ready and on 5 July he wrote to Blamey requesting the strength of major formations and when they could be ready for operation.⁶³ On 11 July Blamey replied, commenting somewhat ^{dis}ingenuously that he had no idea why Curtin would require the information. Blamey told Curtin that the 6th Division was 'available at short notice if necessary', the 7th Division would be available in November and the 9th Division in October.⁶⁴ Superficially, therefore, there seemed no reason why

60. Berryman Diary, 24 August 1944.

61. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Canberra, 17 March 1944, MP 1217, item Box No.3.

62. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, 26 and 27 June 1944, MP 1217, item Box No.3.

63. Letter, Curtin to Blamey, 5 July 1944, Blamey Papers 23.11. Curtin wrote to Blamey on a suggestion from MacArthur.

64. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 11 July 1944, Blamey Papers 23.11.

all three divisions should not have been available for the first operations in the Philippines, scheduled for November. When Sir Ronald Cross discussed the apparent discrepancy of MacArthur's claims with Curtin, the Prime Minister told him that MacArthur must have been misled by his own staff.⁶⁵

It is not clear whether MacArthur heeded Curtin's special plea of 27 June, or whether he determined to present Blamey with a plan which he knew the Australian would find unacceptable.⁶⁶ Whatever the reason, on 12 July MacArthur issued a directive for the employment of the Australian forces which is hard to reconcile with his earlier statements that the Australians could not be ready in time. The directive stated:

1. The advance to the Philippines necessitates a redistribution of forces and combat missions in the South-west Pacific Area in order to make available forces with which to continue the offensive.
2. It is desired that Australian Forces assume the responsibility for the continued neutralisation of the Japanese in Australian and British territory and Mandates in the South-west Pacific Area, exclusive of the Admiralties, by the following dates:

Northern Solomons-Green Island-	
Emirau Island	... 1 Oct 1944
Australian New Guinea	... 1 Nov 1944
New Britain	... 1 Nov 1944
3. The forces now assigned combat missions in the above areas should be relieved of all combat responsibility not later than the dates specified in order that intensive preparations for future operations may be initiated.
4. In the advance to the Philippines it is desired to use Australian Ground Forces and it is contemplated employing initially two AIF Divisions as follows:

One Division - November 1944
One Division - January 1945

65. Letter, Cross to Churchill, 30 August 1944, PREM 3 159/4. The British Chiefs of Staff, at a meeting of 14 December 1944, commented on the discrepancy between MacArthur's and Blamey's claims of when the Australian Corps would be ready. They decided that Blamey's view that 2 divisions had been ready in July and one more would be ready before the end of the year represented the true picture. WO 106/3473.

66. In an interview with Lumsden on 1 August MacArthur said that he 'had agreed to fall in with' Curtin's wishes, but had been unable to discover what Blamey really wanted. CAB 127/33.

5. It is requested that this headquarters be informed of the Australian Forces available with the dates of their availability to accomplish the above plan and your general comments and suggestions.⁶⁷

Blamey received further information when Brigadier Barham met Brigadier-General Chamberlin on 20 July. The plan was that the 6th Australian Division was to be paired with the 25th US Division from Noumea under the 14th US Corps HQ (Major-General O.W. Griswold) then located in the Solomons. The 6th Division was to leave Cairns on 1 November, for the assault on Leyte. The 9th Australian Division was similarly linked with a US Division in a US Corps and was to leave Cairns on 1 January 1945 for the Lingayen Gulf landing. All corps and base troops were to be American, and Australian supplies and stores were to be reduced to a minimum. Hospitalisation and casualty evacuation was to be organised by the Americans.⁶⁸ As might be expected Blamey would not agree to this plan.

On 21 July Blamey met MacArthur and told him that the proposal to employ the Australian divisions separately and as part of a US Corps, but without a reciprocal arrangement, was not acceptable.⁶⁹ Blamey wrote later that he 'pointed out that the Australian Corps command and staff were highly trained and were long and well experienced and I saw no reason why it should not be entrusted with this task'. MacArthur had always insisted on the difficulties of operating with two separate systems

67. Letter, MacArthur to Blamey, Blamey Papers, 23.11; Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Allied Land Forces.

68. Notes of Discussions between Brigadier Barham and Brigadier-General Chamberlin, 20 July 1944. AWM 519/6/49.

69. Draft of Report by General Blamey c.11 August 1945, Blamey Papers. Memorandum, Blamey to GHQ, 21 July 1944, MP 1217, Box 570, and RG 200, Part 2, National Archives. Initially Blamey had agreed that one Australian division could operate under an American corps commander, but he asked MacArthur to reciprocate by placing an American division under an Australian corps commander. Only when MacArthur would not agree to a separate area for an Australian corps, albeit with an American division, Blamey insisted that the Australian Corps should operate as an entity. Notes of an Interview with General Blamey, 9 August 1944, by General Lumsden, CAB 127/33.

of supply, but Blamey proposed to overcome this by using the complete 1st Australian Corps.⁷⁰ This was a prospect which MacArthur could not allow as the landing in the Philippines had to be seen to be American.⁷¹ Indeed MacArthur told Lumsden on 1 August that 'he did not consider that public opinion in America would countenance the first landing on the Philippines being shared with the Australians'.⁷²

General Barham, who was BGS at Advanced LHQ, recalled this episode:

Blamey was *very keen* to use the AIF in the Philippines. In fact he feared political pressure to reduce the AIF to increase civil man-power in Australia ... But the *crux* of this matter of Aust.-U.S. combined operations [was that a] division is a *fighting* formation. A corps is the lowest formation which provides support, supply and maintenance. Unless the AIF were armed, equipped and supplied with U.S. weaponry and supplies, an AIF fighting formation could not be used within a U.S. support formation ... I talked this over and over with the Yanks and their conclusion was we would be a damned nuisance. Add this to the political considerations!!! Blamey was keen and willing - the U.S. was (legitimately) not.⁷³

Other observers put a different construction on this disagreement. On 15 July Lumsden wrote to General Ismay:

I hear from Major-General Lloyd, who is Adjutant-General, that General MacArthur is very anxious for the 1st AIF Corps to be part of the spearhead of his forces for the attack on the Philippines, but that General Blamey is by no means enthusiastic regarding this suggestion... Blamey is, I am told, in favour of conserving the AIF Corps for employment in conjunction with British forces of an independent mission ... Blamey is, I understand, not at all anxious for the AIF divisions to be employed prematurely or to get them bogged down on operations in rearward areas such as Bougainville and New Britain or on mopping-up in New Guinea.⁷⁴

70. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

71. Signal, MacArthur to Marshall, 18 June 1944, Marshall Library.

72. Memorandum of Interview with General MacArthur, 1 August 1944, CAB 127/33.

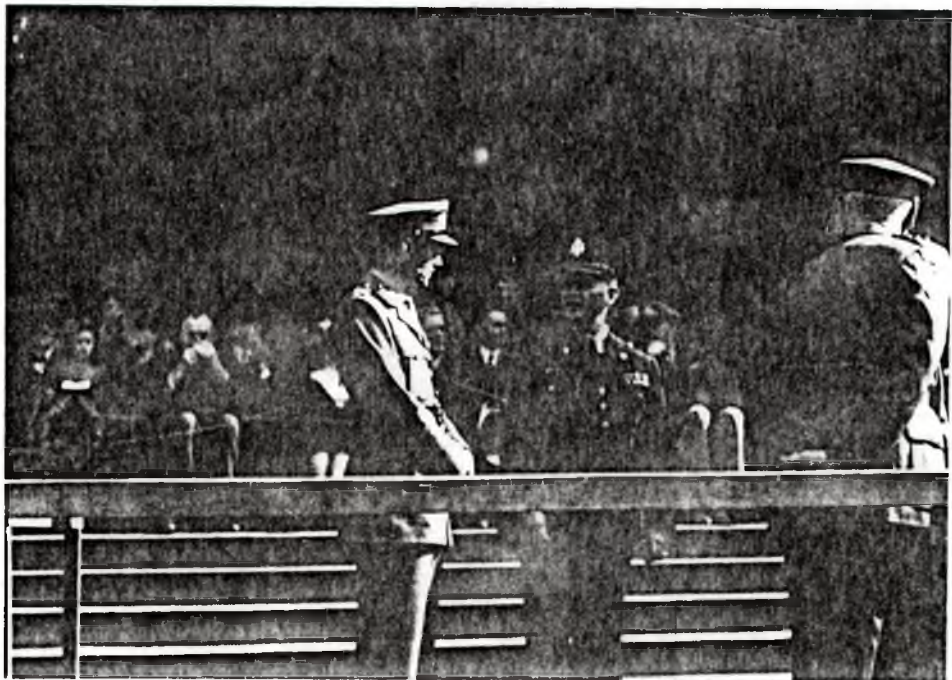
73. Letter from Major-General L. De L. Barham, 21 November 1978.

74. Letter, Lumsden to Ismay, 15 July 1944, PREM 3 159/4.



Brigadier L. de L. Barham, Brigadier-General Staff at Advanced Landforce Headquarters, 1944-1945.

(AWM Negative No.



Lieutenant-General H. Lumsden, liaison officer for the British Prime Minister at GHQ SWPA with a senior US army officer on the saluting dais while waiting for the start of the 7th Division march through Brisbane, 8 August 1944.

(AWM Negative No.68221)

But after an interview on 1 August Lumsden wrote that MacArthur

said that he found General Blamey extremely difficult to deal with at the present moment; that he found himself unable to discover what it was that General Blamey really wanted or what his real wishes and intentions were for the employment of the AIF. He thought it possible that General Blamey had made his proposal regarding the employment of the AIF as a Corps, knowing that it ran contrary to General MacArthur's wishes and intentions, in the hope that he would then decide not to employ them.

MacArthur said that he had come

to the conclusion that General Blamey had something on his mind; that he was more interested and employed in pursuing some project of his own, possibly one with political implications, and took remarkably little interest in his soldiers; that, although nominally he was Commander of all the land forces, he was never au fait with the situation on land in the various theatres and had to come to him (General MacArthur) to obtain the latest information. Instead of making Brisbane his chief Headquarters, he was primarily concerned with his duties in Melbourne and his relations with the politicians.

MacArthur repeated that Blamey no longer retained Curtin's confidence, and that as soon as the war finished the post of Commander-in-Chief would be abolished.⁷⁵

What ever the reason, following MacArthur's discussion with Blamey the Australian divisions were removed from the plans for the Leyte and Lingayen landings.⁷⁶ MacArthur had many reasons for excluding the Australians from the Philippines, but through his desire to preserve the AIF for the Commonwealth operations Blamey had given MacArthur the excuse that the troops were not ready. Furthermore, Blamey had left himself open to MacArthur's charges of disloyalty to the Prime Minister, thus making it even more certain that Curtin would support MacArthur.

75. Notes of Interview with General MacArthur, 1 August 1944, CAB 127/33. In a paper entitled 'Co-operation Between Allies in Time of War', Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney Rowell wrote that MacArthur told Morshead that 'He was thoroughly disillusioned over this refusal [by Blamey] and said he would never come back to Australia'. Rowell Papers AWM.

76. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 5 March 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

Blamey did have some grounds for believing that MacArthur was not completely sincere. One reason given why the Australian troops could not be moved forward was a lack of shipping.⁷⁷ But MacArthur seems to have found enough ships for the replacement of the 14th US Corps in the Solomons by Australian troops. Surely it would have been more economical in shipping to take the Australians directly from Australia to Leyte, than to re-embark the Americans in the Solomons! With regard to MacArthur's comments about shipping, Blamey wrote later that he could not 'accept this as a sincere and complete statement of the matter'.⁷⁸

Australia 'could not escape the logic', as Curtin put it, 'of the decision that Australian troops should garrison the islands which formed our outer screen of defence, and which were mostly our own territory'.⁷⁹ But Blamey's concept of how to fulfill that requirement was different to that of the Americans. His plan was to relieve the American divisions in New Guinea with a total of seven Australian brigades. MacArthur considered such forces 'totally inadequate',⁸⁰ and on 2 August GHQ directed that the following minimum forces should be used:

Bougainville	... 4 brigades, 2 to take over on 15 November 1944 and 2 on 1 January 1945;
Emirau, Green, Treasury and New Georgia Islands	... 1 brigade to take over on 1 October 1944;
New Britain	... 3 brigades to take over on 15 November 1944; and
New Guinea mainland	... 4 brigades to take over on 15 October 1944. ⁸¹

77. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11. Also Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with General MacArthur, Tokyo May 1946, MP 1217, item Box No.3.

78. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

79. Advisory War Council Minute 1406, Canberra, 7 September 1944, CRS A2684, item 1461.

80. MacArthur said that 'as soon as the Japanese realised that they were opposed by such inferior forces, he felt certain that they would attack and that we should be risking a major disaster'. Notes of an Interview with General MacArthur, 1 August 1944, CAB 127/33.

81. Letter, Sutherland to Blamey, 2 August 1945, MP 1217, Box 570. Sutherland noted that 'Objections to the proposed use of Australian AIF divisions have required a change of plan of employment of forces. Under these circumstances the AIF divisions cannot be committed to operations until about 1 February'.

To meet this commitment of an additional five brigades Blamey was required to use the 6th Division, thus reducing his striking force to the 7th and 9th Divisions, and making it even less likely that the AIF could be used in the Philippines.⁸²

Gavin Long wrote of this incident:

The decision that Blamey should employ more troops in New Guinea than Blamey considered necessary was a puzzling one in view of American staff doctrine that when a commander had been allotted a task he himself should decide how to carry it out, and the question arises whether considerations of *amour-propre* were involved: whether GHQ did not wish it to be recorded that six American divisions had been relieved by six Australian brigades (taking into account that one of the seven Australian brigades already had a role in New Guinea and was not part of the relieving force).⁸³

What is surprising is that Long does not mention the possibility that MacArthur wanted to keep the Australians occupied in New Guinea providing less AIF divisions for the Philippines and also less AIF divisions to be used by any new command which might be set up. This attitude of MacArthur is revealed by his reactions to the suggestions of a British command in the South-West Pacific Area.

In late July MacArthur met with Roosevelt and Nimitz at Pearl Harbour to discuss the strategy for the Pacific. Although it was not definitely agreed that Luzon would be invaded, MacArthur was, at least, given grounds for hope.⁸⁴ While at Pearl Harbour MacArthur received a memorandum from Admiral King regarding 'the British plans for taking over a large

82. Draft of Report by General Blamey, c. 11 August 1945, Blamey Papers 43.4.

83. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.23.

84. James, *op.cit.*, Vol.2, p.536.

portion of the South-West Pacific Area after the establishment of our forces in the Philippine Islands'.⁸⁵ MacArthur therefore raised the matter with Roosevelt who assured him that it would not be permitted,⁸⁶ but MacArthur was not completely convinced. In a vigorous letter to Admiral King on 5 August MacArthur attacked what he believed was the British plan to take command in his area:

The British have contributed nothing to this campaign and, in fact, opposed the Australian proposal to make available Australian troops for the defense of their own country. They now propose to enter this theatre at the moment when victory lies clearly before us in order to reap the benefits of our success ...

The British proposal will meet bitter opposition on the part of the Dutch whose representatives have expressed to me their great apprehension regarding British motives. The Australian Prime Minister has expressed to me his opposition to any change in the area ... The proposal ... would be destructive of American prestige in the Far East and would unquestionably have the most deleterious effect upon future economic trends.

MacArthur went on to welcome British forces but so long as they were under his command.⁸⁷

MacArthur had a willing ally in the Australian Prime Minister, for while MacArthur put his case to Washington Curtin put a complementary one to London. He had received no reply to his cable of 4 July, and on 12 August cabled Churchill pressing for the early despatch of a British naval force to the Pacific. 'I am deeply concerned' he said 'at the

85. Letter, MacArthur to King, 5 August 1944, Marshall Library. It appears that in this memorandum King deliberately attempted to stir MacArthur into opposing the British plans. He did not tell MacArthur the full story. Thorne, *op.cit.*, p.484. On 19 August Marshall pointed out to MacArthur that the proposed Ambon expedition would be under his command. Marshall to MacArthur, 19 August 1944, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

86. James, *op.cit.*, Vol.2, p.531.

87. Letter, MacArthur to King, 5 August 1944, Marshall Library.

position that would arise in our Far Eastern Empire if any considerable American opinion were to hold that America fought a war on principle in the Far East and won it relatively unaided while the other allies including ourselves did very little towards recovering our lost property'.⁸⁸

On 23 August Churchill replied to Curtin that if the US Chiefs of Staff were unable to accept the support of a British fleet then the alternative was the formation of a British Empire task force under a British commander, consisting of British, Australian and New Zealand land, sea and air forces, to operate under General MacArthur's supreme command'. The South-West Pacific Area would then come under the control of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and thus Britain would have direct influence.⁸⁹ Four days before Curtin received this cable MacArthur had received a similar message from Marshall.⁹⁰

Curtin and MacArthur protested strongly against this proposal. Curtin said that Australia should have been consulted, and that the Government and Opposition agreed that there should be no variation to the command arrangements.⁹¹ In Churchill's opinion Curtin had misunderstood his cable and pointed out to Curtin that the force would be under MacArthur, but Curtin was adamant that if the South-West Pacific Area came under the Combined Chiefs of Staff this would mean a change in the command arrangements. Furthermore, Curtin resented the suggestion of a British commander for the new Commonwealth force.⁹²

88. Cable, Johcu No.81, Curtin to Churchill, 12 August 1944, CRS M100, item August 1944.

89. Cable No.5, Churchill to Curtin, 23 August 1944, PREM 3 159/4.

90. Signal, Marshall to MacArthur, 19 August 1944, RG4 MacArthur Memorial.

91. Cable, Johcu 82, Curtin to Churchill, 1 September 1944, CRS M100, item September 1944.

92. Cable, Churchill to Curtin, 9 September 1944, PREM 3 159/4. When Curtin told Churchill on 16 September 1944 that he had not misunderstood Churchill's cable, the latter scribbled in the margin: 'What change?' *loc.cit.*

MacArthur's protest was equally vociferous, and he told Marshall that

any proposal to alter drastically the present command set-up ... should be met with complete firmness; that any form of appeasement will be followed in due course by deterioration not only of British American relationships, but of American prestige and commercial prospects throughout the Far East.⁹³

MacArthur also made full use of the available channels of communication to Churchill, and it is here that it can be observed that MacArthur linked the Philippines campaign directly with his opposition to the British plan. Thus MacArthur told Sir Ronald Cross on 17 August that he would welcome working with the Royal Navy, remarking that 'it would be a great thing that an American General should sail into Manila under the British flag'. He said that he would be definitely taking an Australian corps of two divisions with him to the Philippines. Cross was surprised by this since Blamey had told him that he was still awaiting a decision, and Curtin had said that MacArthur had told him that the Australians were not ready.

MacArthur, therefore, told a different story to Cross, which he hoped Cross would pass to the British government; after all, if the Australians were occupied in the Philippines then they would not be available for the British operations. Cross sent an account of the interview to Churchill, and added his impressions of the American general:

The question mark that surrounds him is centred upon his absorption with the business of being a great man. I do not deny him elements of greatness, and I am ready to grant his integrity of purpose. But I think that his objectives dictate his emotions, and his emotions dictate his argument. That is not to say that he is not a great man.⁹⁴

93. Signal, MacArthur to Marshall, 27 August 1944, RG4, MacArthur Memorial. MacArthur added that Curtin had said that the British had applied considerable pressure in an effort to get him to accept the separate British command.

94. Memorandum, Cross to Churchill, 30 August 1944, PREM 3 159/4. In a later letter Cross wrote of MacArthur: 'In some respects he has I think the sensibilities of a very feminine woman'. Letter, Cross to Mountbatten, 28 November 1944, PREM 3 53/14.

Cross was as surprised by Curtin's protests as Churchill was and in a message to Ismay tried to give the UK government some idea of the atmosphere in Australia. He repeated Lumsden's views on Blamey's ambition to command a separate force and concluded:

The parties concerned are both jealous of their commands ... General Blamey tends to hang on to every vestige of authority ... Mr Curtin is much influenced by General MacArthur and is inclined to support any Australian authority in upholding anything that may touch Australian nationhood. Thus, this triumvirate is hypersensitive on command questions, and tends to 'smell a rat' where none exists.⁹⁵

As a result of Cross's communications Churchill replied directly to MacArthur, through Lumsden, reassuring him that he had not 'the slightest idea of diminishing your command'.⁹⁶ MacArthur deeply appreciated this 'reassuring message' and told Churchill that he had received incorrect information through informal sources.⁹⁷ Later MacArthur told Eichelberger that Churchill had backed up his 'attitude almost 100% in refusing to let the British occupy Dutch islands'.⁹⁸

MacArthur also sought to enlist Dutch aid in keeping the British out of the Netherlands East Indies. In August he told a Dutch official in Australia that Blamey and 'a powerful group' sought to split the Netherlands Indies from his South-West Pacific Area as a step towards annexing them.⁹⁹ Although the Dutch were not unanimous in their suspicion of the British, they sought to 'safeguard their interests in more direct fashion by

95. Memorandum, Cross to Ismay, 4 September 1944, PREM 3 159/4.

96. Cable, Churchill to Lumsden for MacArthur, 6 September 1944, RG4 MacArthur Memorial.

97. Cable, Lumsden to Churchill, 6 September 1944, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

98. Luvaas, *op.cit.*, p.155.

99. Notes of Interview with General MacArthur, 22 August 1944, by General Lumsden, PREM 3 159/4. For an examination of this issue and evidence that at one stage Evatt talked of Australian control of the NEI, see M.L. George, *Australian Attitudes and Policies towards the Netherlands East Indies and Indonesian Independence, 1941-1949*, Ph.D Thesis, ANU, 1973.

obtaining Australian agreement to the arrival and training in Australia of 30,000 Netherlands troops, who would thus, they hoped, be ready to move quickly into the East Indies when the moment came'.¹⁰⁰ MacArthur supported the Australian decision to approve in principle this request, so long as the force arrived as a complete fighting unit to be handed over to him for operations in Dutch territory.¹⁰¹

Given this evidence of MacArthur's vigorous diplomatic effort to prevent the formation of a separate British-Australian command, and his efforts to keep the Australian divisions earmarked for the Philippines while not actually using them,¹⁰² it is not unreasonable to suggest that there was more than *amour-propre* in MacArthur's plans for the relief of the American troops. Blamey can be excused for questioning MacArthur's sincerity. Nonetheless, having cast doubts on Blamey's loyalty, MacArthur continued to have Curtin's support.

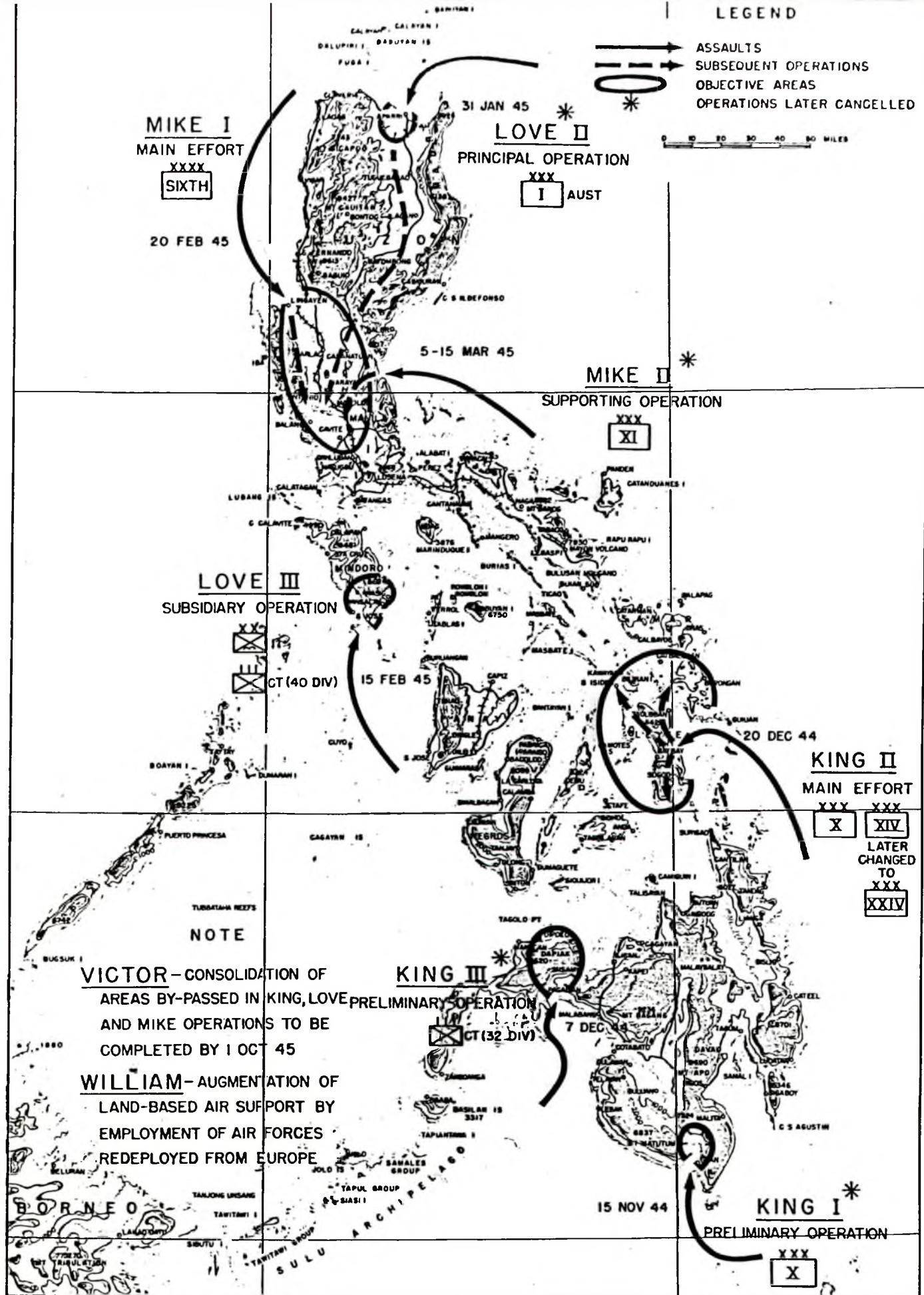
Uncertain Plans for the Philippines

Throughout August 1944 planning continued at both LHQ and GHQ. After discussions with MacArthur and Blamey, General Lumsden concluded that it was now clear to Blamey that the arrival of British troops in Australia would be so delayed that it was impossible 'to withhold

100. Thorne, *op.cit.*, p.483. Also George, *op.cit.*

101. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with the Commander-in-Chief Southwest Pacific Area, 20 September 1944, MP 1217, item Box No.3.

102. On 1 August MacArthur 'said that he was unable to use the Australian Corps for the attack on Leyte, as he proposed making his own Headquarters in that area and therefore must have American troops there, but would very much like to have had one Australian division to help, as he anticipated that there would be more severe fighting in that area and, although it was never his intention to ask the Australian Army do not more than his American troops, he did realise what good, rugged fighters they were, even if he thought their logistical arrangements left much to be desired'. Notes of Interview with General MacArthur, 1 August 1944, by General Lumsden, CAB 127/33.



MAP 11

The 'Musketeer II' Plan.

From: Reports of General MacArthur,
Vol.1, p.171.

Australian divisions for operations on an independent axis; and therefore he has agreed with a good grace to conform with Mr Curtin's direction and General MacArthur's wishes for two Australian divisions to take part in the Philippines campaign'. Lumsden noted that Blamey had 'won his point that Australian divisions should not operate separately under American commanders'.¹⁰³

At LHQ on 11 August Blamey outlined his plans for the occupation of the American held areas of New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomons,¹⁰⁴ but he was still not certain about MacArthur's Philippine plans. MacArthur himself was uncertain, and it was not until 27 August that he was able to give Marshall a timetable; on 31 August he issued his first formal directive for the Philippine landings, planning to land at Sarangani Bay in southern Mindanao on 15 November, on the northwest coast of Mindanao on 7 December and on Leyte on 20 December.¹⁰⁵ For the Australians MacArthur had concocted a plan for landing a corps of two divisions at Aparri on the north coast of Luzon on 31 January 1945, as a preliminary to the landing at Lingayen Gulf on 20 February.¹⁰⁶

When General Berryman arrived in Brisbane on 24 August he immediately turned his full attention to an examination of the Aparri plan.¹⁰⁷ By

103. Letter, Lumsden to Ismay, c.11 August 1944, CAB 127/33.

104. Draft of General Blamey's Report, c.11 August 1945, Blamey Papers 43.4.

105. Cannon, *op.cit.*, p.7, 23. See Map 11.

106. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.28 states that the Aparri operation was planned for 20 February. *The Reports of General MacArthur*, Vol.I, p.171 quotes from the Musketeer II plan and gives the Aparri date as 31 January. The first mention of the Australians at Aparri is in the draft GHQ directive of 14 August which gives a D Day of 20 February. The draft GHQ directive of 23 August also mentions 20 February, but the planning was finalised on 30 August when part of the GHQ planning section met the Adv. LHQ planning section and told the Australians that the Aparri date was 31 January and Lingayen, 20 February. These documents are held in the planning file in the Berryman Papers.

107. Berryman Diary, 25, 26, 27 August 1944.

the evening of 27 August Berryman and his staff had completed a draft appreciation indicating that the operation would require three divisions.¹⁰⁸ Blamey agreed with Berryman,¹⁰⁹ and on 4 September wrote to MacArthur requesting the use of the 6th Division which by then would be at Aitape.¹¹⁰

On 5 September Berryman presented his letter to MacArthur, who, although he thought that the paper 'was a scholarly production', did not agree with Blamey. MacArthur said that the intelligence estimate 'was over generous' and that there would be little opposition. His plan was that once the 6th Division had accomplished its task at Aitape it would be brought to the Philippines, where it would be landed in the Lingayen Gulf to participate in the final drive on Manila. This would probably occur in March. After the capture of Luzon MacArthur proposed to drive south and use the AIF in British Borneo.¹¹¹ MacArthur said that he hoped to bring the AIF together again and that he had invited Blamey and his headquarters to accompany him to Manila. MacArthur also predicted that the end of the war against Japan would be reached in about one year.¹¹²

In preparation for the Philippines operations, on 1 September Advanced GHQ began moving to Hollandia,¹¹³ and on 7 September Berryman and a Forward Echelon of LHQ joined MacArthur's HQ in Hollandia to 'safeguard Australian interests'.¹¹⁴ From his hut overlooking Lake Sentani and with view of the

108. Berryman Diary, 27 August 1944.

109. Berryman Diary, 28 August 1944.

110. Letter, Blamey to GHQ SWPA, 4 September 1944, AWM 519/1/8, also in C-in-C letters file No.1, Berryman Papers.

111. Letter BDO/1, Berryman to Blamey, 5 September 1944, AWM 519/1/9. Also, C-in-C letters file No.1, Berryman Papers.

112. Berryman Diary, 5 September 1944. This was a remarkable prediction; the Japanese surrender was signed on 2 September 1945.

113. Signal, Chapman to Blamey, 20 August 1944, Blamey Papers 30.12.

114. Berryman Diary, 7 September 1944. Blamey to Forde, 26 October 1944 quoted in Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.24.

spectacular Cyclops Mountains Berryman now attempted to ascertain the exact role of the 1st Australian Corps. No better officer in the Australian Army could have been found for this difficult task. For most of the time since September 1942 Berryman had been Blamey's principal operational staff officer, and knew the mind of his Commander-in-Chief. Furthermore, he was highly respected by the Americans,¹¹⁵ and had drawn praise from MacArthur for his command of the 2nd Australian Corps.¹¹⁶ He had already established a fine working relationship with MacArthur's G3, General Chamberlin and G4, General Whitlock,¹¹⁷ and if he was not in as strong a position as Blamey in pressing a case with MacArthur, he did not antagonise the Americans as Blamey's continued presence might have done.¹¹⁸ But this did not mean that Berryman was likely to give in to the Americans without a solid fight, and with the possibility of summoning Blamey's support.

Berryman knew that, until MacArthur received orders to capture Luzon, he would receive no definite instructions on the role of the 1st Australian Corps. Furthermore, there would be no decision on Luzon until the Octagon conference between Roosevelt, Churchill and the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Quebec, later in the month, decided the role of the United Kingdom forces in the Pacific. Berryman's diary and his letters to Blamey abound with descriptions of the speculation at GHQ as to the likely employment of the 1st Australian Corps, ranging from the Aparri operation, to assisting the Americans on Luzon, or to landing on Mindanao in preparation for an advance to Borneo.¹¹⁹

115. Major-General A.G. Wilson interview, 13 December 1978; letters from American officers to Berryman in Berryman Papers; Hetherington, *op.cit.*, pp.295, 296.

116. See MacArthur's comments to Curtin, p.358. On 7 June 1944 Berryman wrote in his diary: 'Had discussion with General MacArthur who congratulated me warmly on the "very brilliant Huon Pen campaign"'.
117. Barham interview, 11 December 1978.

118. Wilson interview, 13 December 1978. Hetherington, *op.cit.*, p.295.

119. Berryman Diary, 16, 17 September 1944; Letters BDO/4, BDO/5, BDO/6, Berryman to Blamey, 14, 15, 16 September 1944, Blamey Papers 170.71.

While Berryman at Forward Echelon LHQ was struggling with the staff at GHQ, Blamey had not yet given up hope that the arrival of United Kingdom forces might still resolve the difficulties over the employment of the AIF. It was realised that as GHQ moved to Hollandia, Forward Echelon LHQ would take over much of the functions of Advanced LHQ, but Blamey was determined that Advanced LHQ should remain as a headquarters, because if the United Kingdom forces came to the area 'the conceptions of requirements might change'; Forward Echelon LHQ might fade out and Advanced LHQ would continue.¹²⁰ In other words, Advanced LHQ had to be maintained as an army headquarters for use when the United Kingdom forces arrived.

With this in mind, Blamey would have been cheered to receive a message from Brigadier Rogers who was visiting England and had been instructed to keep Blamey in touch with developments. Rogers told Blamey that the US Chiefs of Staff had signalled the War Office on 9 September 'agreeing that a Combined British task force under British Commanders should operate in SWPA under General MacArthur'. This force was to consist of 3 Australian, one New Zealand and 5 or 6 British divisions'.¹²¹ The next day in a cable to Northcott Smart confirmed the above and added that the task force would include the British Eastern Fleet.¹²²

This was misleading information, for at the opening session of the conference Churchill offered the British Main Fleet to take part in Pacific operations and Roosevelt replied that it 'was no sooner offered

120. Minutes of Conference held by Chief of Staff Forward Echelon, LHQ at Advanced LHQ, 4 September 1944, AWM 213/3/16.

121. Cable, Rogers to Blamey, 13 September 1944, AWM 9/2/3, also Blamey Papers 1.2.

122. Cable LM 3950, Smart to Northcott, 14 September 1944, Blamey Papers 1.2.

than accepted'.¹²³ At this conference the British seemed more sensitive to Australian interests than on previous occasions,¹²⁴ and on 15 September Churchill cabled Curtin that,

There is no question of disturbing MacArthur's command in any way. On the contrary, we shall be able to supply from our main fleet a satisfactory naval component to guard his left flank.¹²⁵

Three days later Churchill elaborated on this message and gave Curtin details of the British commitment:

Thus you will see that there neither was, nor will be, any variation in the relationship between the Australian force and General MacArthur. There is no question of a British Force or a Military Command.¹²⁶

During the conference Curtin kept the frequent messages from Churchill to himself,¹²⁷ and this was to cause some embarrassment to

123. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.V, p.518. Rogers and Smart could be excused for sending this seemingly misleading information. After all, the US JCS had intended to agree to a British Task Force under MacArthur (Major-General J.E. Hull, Assistant Chief of Staff, to MacArthur, 11 September 1944, RG4, MacArthur Memorial). When the British Chiefs of Staff made their offer of the British Pacific Fleet, the US Joint Chiefs had no option other than to accept. 'For our government', wrote Marshall, 'to put itself on record as having refused agreement to the use of additional British and Dominions resources in the Pacific or Southwest Pacific areas was unthinkable'. (Marshall to MacArthur, 12 September 1944, *loc.cit.*)

124. For example, without prompting from Australia Churchill had asked the Australian High Commissioner to Canada to meet him. Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p.434. Curtin arranged for Sir John Lavarack, the head of the Australian Military Mission in Washington, to come to Quebec to be 'available in the unlikely event of any call for information or advice as to any Australian question'. (Blamey to Lavarack, 14 September 1944, Blamey Papers 1.2.) After the conference Lavarack wrote to Blamey: 'Dill and Ismay ... have been 100% helpful throughout'. Ismay offered Lavarack the opportunity to cable Australia the results of the conference, but Lavarack declined on account of security as he knew that Churchill was informing Curtin. (Blamey Papers 1.2.)

125. Letter, Churchill to Curtin, 15 September 1944, PREM 3 159/4.

126. Cable Winch 8, Churchill to Curtin, 18 September 1944, PREM 3 159/4: CRS A816, item 7/301/33.

127. Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1941-1945*, p.435.

Blamey. Acting on the cables from Rogers and Smart Blamey signalled Berryman that the 'plan on which you have been recently working is to be put into practice ... suggest you see General MacArthur and inform him privately'.¹²⁸ But MacArthur had, by this time received word of the Quebec decision that the Americans would accept the British Pacific Fleet,¹²⁹ and Berryman informed his Chief that 'No change will take place in SWPA'.¹³⁰ Thus Blamey's hopes of a separate command were terminated.¹³¹

If Blamey was somewhat deflated at least now there could be a firm basis for planning. The War Cabinet and Advisory War Council were 'gratified' at the result,¹³² and Shedden told MacArthur that he was 'glad that the position originally established when you came to Australia, is to be maintained'.¹³³ MacArthur would have been equally satisfied.

128. Blamey to Berryman, 18 September 1944, Blamey Papers 1.2.

129. See signals from General George C. Marshall to MacArthur in RG4, MacArthur Memorial. During this time MacArthur's Deputy Chief of Staff, Major-General R.J. Marshall, was in Washington keeping his Chief informed. See letter R.J. Marshall to MacArthur, 28 September 1944, *loc.cit.*

130. Signal, Berryman to Blamey, 19 September 1944, Blamey Papers 1.2. Also Berryman Diary. Hetherington, *op.cit.*, p.346, claims that a few days after arriving at Hollandia 'Berryman seized an opening to sound MacArthur about the plan for an Australia-based British task force, as outlined by Blamey. MacArthur shook his head, "It will never come off", he said'. MacArthur did, in fact, visit Hollandia from 10-12 September but Berryman's diary does not record the above conference. Furthermore, there is no record of Berryman informing Blamey by letter or signal. It is likely, therefore, that Hetherington is referring to Berryman's approach to MacArthur on 18 September.

131. On 28 September 1944 Blamey wrote to Major-General A.S. Allen, 'it seems that the matters on which you have been working hard are likely to be scrubbed in the main, as a result of the Quebec parleys'. Blamey Papers DRL 6643, item 92.

132. Cable Johcu 85, Curtin to Churchill, 21 September 1944, quoted in Hasluck, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.435.

133. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 18 October 1944, MP 1217, Box 75.

The Leyte Landings

Plans for the Philippines were now taking their final shape. Between 7 and 14 September Halsey's carrier force struck vigorously at Yap, the Palaus, Mindanao and the central Philippines.¹³⁴ Finding little opposition he reported excitedly to Nimitz that he believed that Yap, Talaud and Sarangani could be by-passed and the forces scheduled for there used against Leyte. This information was passed to the Joint Chiefs, then meeting at Quebec, and after checking with MacArthur's headquarters, on 15 September they ordered MacArthur to invade Leyte on 20 October.¹³⁵

On 15 September the 24th US Corps had left Hawaii believing it was to invade Yap; now it received orders for the invasion of Leyte.¹³⁶ MacArthur had been pressing the Australians to relieve his 14th Corps on Bougainville for the Leyte operation, but the availability of the 23th Corps already afloat in its own ships simplified the operation.¹³⁷

In view of previous American claims of lack of shipping Blamey saw something sinister in this move. He said later:

A whole American Army Corps was brought across from Hawaii in one convoy. The Americans protested that they didn't have sufficient ships, but they held these vessels at Leyte until the close of the campaign, when this Corps was returned to Hawaii.¹³⁸

134. Cannon, *op.cit.*, p.8.

135. *Ibid.*, p.9. See also signal, Sutherland to Marshall, 13 September 1944, RG4, MacArthur Memorial, for the fact that Sutherland at GHQ agreed with the plan without approaching MacArthur who was at sea, observing radio silence, at the Morotai landing.

136. Cannon, *op.cit.*, p.41.

137. GHQ SWPA Operations Instruction No.70, 21 September 1944, reproduced in *The Reports of General MacArthur*, Vol.1, p.184.

138. Commander-in-Chief Press Conference, 9 July 1945, Blamey Papers 139.3.

This was less than generous to MacArthur, since this corps had been offered fully loaded by Nimitz. It did mean, however, that MacArthur could have used the ships earmarked for the 24th Corps on Bougainville, to move the Australian Corps to staging areas at Aitape or Hollandia, had he wished to do so. He did not.

The Australian contribution to the Philippines now became even less certain. On 20 September GHQ told the Australians to take no further action on the Aparri operation and raised again the possibility that the 1st Australian Corps might land at Sarangani.¹³⁹ Three days later Chamberlin told Berryman that for planning purposes the roles of the 1st Australian Corps were, in order of priority:

- a. Aparri with an earliest date of 20-30 December.
- b. Sarangani after Lingayen.
- c. After Sarangani an advance down the west coast of Borneo with Java as an ultimate objection.

But it was realised that the planning depended upon the decision of the Joint Chiefs in Washington, who were debating whether to strike next at Formosa or Luzon.¹⁴⁰ GHQ had recommended that Aparri should be cancelled and that Luzon should be invaded on 20 December.¹⁴¹

If the Australian land force contribution to the forthcoming operations now hung in the balance, the air contribution was equally

139. Letter BDO/8, Berryman to Blamey, 20 September 1944, Blamey Papers 170.71.

140. Letter BDO/9, Berryman to Blamey, 24 September 1944, Blamey Papers 170.71; Berryman Diary, 23 September 1944. On 21 September Sutherland wrote to Blamey and told him that the principal role of the Aparri operation was to seize airfields and that the maximum Australian force should be two reinforced divisions. AWM 519/1/9.

141. Letter BDO/10, Berryman to Blamey, 26 September 1944, Blamey Papers 170.71; James, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.539.

uncertain.¹⁴² In early September General Kenney dropped No.10 Group, the Australian air strike force, from his current operation instructions, causing Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, the commander of the RAAF Command, to ask, on 11 September, for 'some indication of your intentions regarding employment of this group during the next few months'.¹⁴³

Bostock was anxious that the RAAF should not be confined to garrison duties in New Guinea and conferred with both Brigadier-General Beebe, Kenney's Chief of Staff, and Curtin. On 14 September Curtin detailed the principles to be followed:

- (a) That the RAAF operational squadrons have been assigned to the Commander-in-Chief, South-west Pacific Area, and their employment is therefore a matter for his decision.
- (b) The first requirement is adequate air support for Australian Land Forces by the Allied Air Forces.
- (c) Wherever major Australian Land Forces are stationed in operational areas in contact with the enemy, RAAF air cover should be available to them to the greatest extent practicable within our resources.
- (d) For the purposes of co-operation with the Australian Land Forces in the forthcoming offensive operations in the South-west Pacific Area and for other operations therein, it is desirable that a RAAF Tactical Air Force should be maintained as an integrated formation of such strength as may be practicable.

Should circumstances prevent the retention of a 'tactical air force' as an integrated formation, every effort should be made to ensure that the RAAF is represented with the Allied Air Forces by individual Wings, or even by separate Squadrons in the advance against Japan in the South-west Pacific Area.

142. A year earlier, Sir Henry Tizard, after a visit to Australia, advised Bruce that when the battle moved forward the Americans would probably try to 'leave the Australians to cover the home front and use the American squadrons. This he was very emphatic would destroy the soul of the Australian Air Force and he even suggested that where it was politically possible it would be even better to send Australian Squadrons to operate in Burma'. Interview with Sir Henry Tizard, 30 October 1943, CRS M100, item October 1943.

143. Odgers, *op.cit.*, p.246.

- (e) Mopping-up and in garrison duties in -
 - (1) British and
 - (2) Foreign
 re-occupied territories would be undertaken by the RAAF in that order, only after the commitment set out above are provided for.

These principles, which were agreed to by Bostock, were approved at the Advisory War Council meeting on 21 September.¹⁴⁴ Curtin also agreed that No.10 Group should be renamed the First Tactical Air Force. But like the 1st Australian Corps, the First Tactical Air Force was to have no direct role in the Philippines operations, for it was assigned to the US Thirteenth Air Force and not the Fifth Air Force which was to play the major role in the Philippines.¹⁴⁵

During the discussions with Curtin in late June MacArthur told the Prime Minister that he contemplated two RAAF operational commands, one based on Darwin and the other in New Guinea.¹⁴⁶ A simple extrapolation from this would have indicated that there was to be no RAAF role for the Philippines. Yet although Curtin realised that the role of the RAAF was linked closely to that of the 1st Australian Corps, he raised no objection.

In early September the Australian government still believed that Australia would be represented by two divisions in the Philippines. On 7 September Curtin told the Advisory War Council that 'we would have two Divisions for the Philippines operations, and this would ensure the

144. Advisory War Council Minute No.1423, Canberra, 21 September 1944, CRS A2682, item Vol.VIII.

145. Odgers, *op.cit.*, p.297. In his memoirs the CAS, Air Marshal Jones, recalled that he arranged with MacArthur for there to be an expeditionary force under Bostock with the necessary supply, maintenance and other ancillary units allotted to it. MacArthur then changed his mind and would not pursue it further. Jones wrote: 'The incident warned me that MacArthur was not above distorting the facts to suit his purpose. The real reason for his rejection of my idea was that he did not want to take our forces further north, and on to the Philippines'. Papers in possession of Air Vice-Marshal Sir George Jones.

146. Notes of Discussion with the Commander-in-Chief South-west Pacific Area, 26 and 27 June 1944, MP 1217, item Box No.3.

Australian flag going forward with that of the United States'.¹⁴⁷ On 21 September Blamey assured the Council that notwithstanding the operations in New Guinea and adjacent islands he would still have adequate forces to support two divisions in the Philippines.¹⁴⁸ On 28 September the CGS told the Council that, despite the acceleration in MacArthur's plans, 'no alteration had been made to the original arrangement whereby two AIF Divisions would play an active part in the second wave of the forthcoming operations against the Philippines'.¹⁴⁹ By that, he meant the Aparri operation.

On 30 September 1944 Curtin had an opportunity to obtain exact details of the role of the Australian forces when he met MacArthur for the last time in Canberra.¹⁵⁰ MacArthur told Curtin that the Australian operations would consist of 'firstly, the garrisoning role for neutralisation of Japanese pockets on the various islands and, secondly, the operational activities of the two AIF Divisions which were to accompany the United States Forces in the advance against the Japanese'. He believed that there should be no effort 'to liquidate' the Japanese pockets, but he appreciated that 'Australian local commanders would possibly find the garrison duties irksome and might desire to undertake some active operations'; but this was a matter for Australian authorities.

MacArthur went on to explain his operations in the Philippines. He said that the Australian divisions would take part in the capture of

147. Advisory War Council Meeting, Canberra, 7 September 1944, Minute No.1406, CRS A2682, item Vol.VIII.

148. Advisory War Council Minute No.1419, Canberra, 21 September 1944, CRS A2682, item Vol.VIII.

149. Advisory War Council Minute No.1430, Canberra, 28 September 1944, CRS A2682, item Vol.VIII.

150. The following account of the discussions is taken from Notes of Discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, South-west Pacific Area, 30 September 1944 (Present, MacArthur, Curtin and Shedden). MP 1217, item Box No.3.

British Borneo, and later again in an attack on Java. Thus MacArthur laid to rest the Aparri operation.

Since Curtin offered no comment, he gave tacit approval to this employment of the Australian troops, and therefore, since his principles for the employment of the RAAF were tied to that of the army, he also approved the proposed RAAF employment. He would have been strengthened in this view during the meeting because MacArthur read the statement of principles and expressed his complete approval of them.

The discussions then turned to the decision of the Quebec conference. MacArthur welcomed the British offer of assistance in the Pacific, but thought the British fleet would arrive too late to take part in pending operations. Furthermore, he believed that Australia was stretched to capacity maintaining her own squadron, and that if the British fleet was based in Australia it would be operating some 4,000-5,000 miles from its base. He hoped that the British naval forces would be available to support the Australian troops in their operations in the Philippines and Borneo. He added that it was his objective to gradually withdraw all American forces north from Australia.

Speculation about future operations came to an end on 3 October when the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered MacArthur to invade Luzon on 20 December.¹⁵¹ Nimitz was to provide carrier support, thus making it unnecessary to seize Aparri. As a result, Sutherland told Berryman that the 1st Australian Corps would probably not move until 1 February 1945.¹⁵² On the other hand Chamberlin believed that the AIF would be in Mindanao before the Luzon operation.¹⁵³ He thought that the 1st

151. Cannon, *op.cit.*, p.9.

152. Berryman Diary, 5 October 1944.

153. Berryman Diary, 6 October 1944.

Australian Corps would begin to move about 1 December and would stage through Aitape and Hollandia in preparation for the landing on Mindanao.¹⁵⁴ It should be remembered that whilst his planning staff was at Hollandia, MacArthur was, at this time, still in Brisbane.

This was the confusing situation which greeted Blamey, Lieutenant-General Sir Leslie Morshead, the Commander of the 1st Australian Corps, and Major-General J.H. Cannan, the Quartermaster-General, when they arrived at Hollandia on 7 October to plan the movements of the Australian Corps from Australia.¹⁵⁵ Berryman explained the situation and then Blamey met Sutherland 'who confirmed it and *said it was not politically expedient for AIF to be amongst first troops into P.I.*'¹⁵⁶ Berryman believed that MacArthur was keen to use the Australian troops,¹⁵⁷ and indeed Sutherland told Berryman that Curtin desired the AIF to be used and that MacArthur agreed with him,¹⁵⁸ but the senior American staff officers wanted to exclude the Australians. Lumsden wrote to Ismay that 'American officers on the "Colonel" level are doing their utmost to persuade the "Planners" to exclude all except American troops from their recommendations for these operations'.¹⁵⁹

154. Berryman Diary, 7 October 1944.

155. Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

156. Berryman Diary, 7 October 1944. Emphasis in the original. Blamey also recalled this statement in a letter to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

157. Berryman interview, 10 October 1978.

158. Berryman Diary, 10 October 1944.

159. Letter, Lumsden to Ismay, 15 July 1944, PREM 3 159/4. On 18 November 1943 General Dewing had reported to the War Office: 'MacArthur himself is more amenable to reason than his Chief of Staff. But his own aloofness and the rigidity and apparent narrow mindedness of the small clique which surrounds him and dominates GHQ, create an atmosphere of intrigue, secrecy and hostility to outside interests, to which I have never met a parallel'. WO 106/4839.

Some controversy has surrounded these discussions in Hollandia. Lieutenant-Colonel G.N. Godsall, a twenty-seven year-old regular soldier on Berryman's staff, believed that Morshead had arrived to discuss the use of the 1st Australian Corps as the assault force for the landing at Lingayen Gulf. In Godsall's opinion, Morshead 'rejected the outline plan on the grounds that the available intelligence concerning Luzon and the Japanese forces was inadequate for such a large scale operation involving Australia's best troops'. Godsall gained the impression that Blamey 'was extremely disappointed by Morshead's rejection of the operation.¹⁶⁰

There is no other evidence to support this account. The War Diary of the 1st Australian Corps mentions that the Aparri operation (Love II) was discussed and subsequently cancelled, and that the new plan was for the Corps, under the command of the 8th US Army, to land on Mindanao (King I).¹⁶¹ This account is confirmed by Berryman's diary. On 9 October Chamberlin submitted the Mindanao plan to Sutherland, and the next day Sutherland told Berryman that he had ordered Chamberlin to go ahead with it.¹⁶² Sutherland, however, was not keen to bring Morshead into the discussion as the plan was so indefinite.¹⁶³ All Morshead could do was to discuss with Eichelberger, the commander of the 8th US Army, the plan for the staging of his troops at Aitape and Hollandia.¹⁶⁴

This account would seem to indicate that Godsall was mistaken about the use of the Australian Corps in the Lingayen Gulf. But there is

160. Letter by G.N. Godsall in *Army Journal*, June 1975.

161. Entries for 9, 10 October in War Diary. HQ I Corps, G Br, AWM 1/4/1, October 1944.

162. Berryman Diary, 9, 10 October 1944.

163. Berryman Diary, 12 October 1944.

164. Entry for 11 October in War Diary, HQ I Corps, *op.cit.* Also Berryman Diary, 11 October.

still the perplexing comment in Berryman's diary for 8 October:

Spent morning with C-in-C and he gave many decisions - he was still astounded at what General MacArthur had told him about I Australian Corps and Lingayen opns.¹⁶⁵

The following year, in a press conference, Blamey indicated that he had received different instructions from MacArthur.

... a few days before General MacArthur left Brisbane I interviewed him because the project of the Philippines *was on*. I took General Cannan and Brigadier Steele with me. When we got up to Hollandia we found there was a complete different plan. General Sutherland of GHQ, in the presence of General Berryman, told me it was impossible for political reasons to use Australian troops in the Philippines ... I am quite assured in my mind that at the time that General MacArthur discussed the matter with Mr Curtin and myself [in June 1944] he fully intended to use the Australian Corps.¹⁶⁶

On 15 October MacArthur left Australia and conferred with Blamey at Port Moresby.¹⁶⁷ The next day he flew on to Hollandia and on 16 October sailed for Leyte.¹⁶⁸ The only Australian component in the Leyte operation was the naval force commanded by Commodore John Collins. When preparing for the operation Collins had asked MacArthur for two large American destroyers to replace two Australian destroyers because they had better anti-aircraft firepower. MacArthur had replied that this was impossible because 'for political reasons' the Australians had to be there.¹⁶⁹

The American landing at Leyte on 20 October marked the end of a phase in American-Australian military relations. MacArthur had left

165. Berryman Diary, 8 October 1944.

166. Commander-in-Chief's Press Conference, 9 July 1945. Blamey Papers 139.2. Author's emphasis.

167. James, *op.cit.*, p.550.

168. MacArthur, *op.cit.*, p.248.

169. Collins interview, 9 October 1978. It may be wondered whether the additional anti-aircraft fire of two more American destroyers would have prevented a Japanese dive-bomber crashing into the foremast of HMAS *Australia*.

Australia and New Guinea, never to return. Over the following weeks GHQ moved progressively to Leyte, but Berryman was forced to remain at Hollandia until January 1945, thus making it increasingly difficult to put the Australian case to the Americans. In the final event the Australians were not employed in the Philippines, but they were to wait until February 1945 until MacArthur completely dismissed the possibility of their being used.

On 25 September MacArthur had destroyed the myth that Blamey had any role as Commander of the Allied Land Forces, when Alamo Force was dissolved and orders were given directly from GHQ to HQ Sixth Army.¹⁷⁰ Already New Guinea Force had changed its title to First Australian Army,¹⁷¹ and now MacArthur intended to eliminate completely Allied Land Force Headquarters from the chain of command. GHQ had hinted at this plan as early as 14 August when, in a draft directive for the Aparri operation, an organisation chart had shown the First Australian Army directly under GHQ, and the 1st Australian Corps under the Sixth US Army. Allied Land Force Headquarters did not figure at all.¹⁷²

During the preceeding nine months Blamey had made strenuous efforts to influence allied strategy in the South-West Pacific Area. It has been suggested that he made a severe miscalculation in pressing for the use of United Kingdom forces, but although this might have given MacArthur an excuse to exclude the Australians from the Philippines, the evidence shows that MacArthur's staff had determined to exclude the Australians. MacArthur's views are more difficult to pin down, but it seems that he was not willing to go out of his way to ensure Australian participation.

170. Cannon, *op.cit.*, p.26.

171. Letter, Blamey to Sturdee, 2 September 1944; letter, Sturdee to Blamey, 8 September 1944, Blamey Papers 30.2.

172. This topic will be developed further in the next chapter. Appendix 3B to Draft LHQ Directive, 14 August 1944, Planning File, Berryman Papers. Berryman noted in the margin: 'GHQ set up puts NGF and 1 Corps under the direct control and omits A.L. Forces or LHQ'.

Indications of this policy came as early as 1943 with the issue of the RENO III Plan, so it does seem that MacArthur had misdirected Curtin with his statement in March 1944. Blamey too was misinformed. He said later:

General MacArthur said to both myself and Mr Curtin, 'I will go into the Philippines and take the First Australian Corps with me'. That never eventuated, and there were many good reasons why it didn't. The Americans didn't wish anyone else to take part.¹⁷³

Even when Curtin found that MacArthur's claim that the Australians were not ready was false, he applied no pressure to the Americans.

It is difficult to know whether Curtin was blinded by his loyalty to MacArthur, or whether, in his heart, he was happy for Australian lives to be spared.¹⁷⁴ On the one hand he was faced by pressure from Evatt in the Advisory War Council for offensive operations to strengthen Australian post-war prestige,¹⁷⁵ coupled with Blamey's desire to maintain the strength and effectiveness of the army (and his own position). On the other hand Chifley and Dedman were anxious to get Australia working again. Moreover, Hasluck has suggested, with little evidence, that MacArthur would have advised Curtin that 'Australia should not seek to play a more active part in operations beyond the South-West Pacific Area'.¹⁷⁶ During August 1944 the War Cabinet finally set down a

173. Commander-in-Chief's Press Conference, 9 July 1945, Blamey Papers 139.3.

174. Interview with Air Vice-Marshal Sir George Jones, 24 January 1979. Jones is the only surviving member of the war-time Chiefs of Staff. On 12 January 1944 Nelson Johnson, the US Minister, reported that a number of members of the Cabinet 'apparently do not wish to see any Australian troops taken further north than is absolutely necessary'. Political Report for the Month of December 1943, Records of Department of State, RG59, file 847.00/416, National Archives.

175. Landau interview, 14 December 1978.

176. Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p.436.

manpower policy directing the release of 45,000 personnel from the Services in the next ten months.¹⁷⁷ It is little wonder, then, that Curtin adopted a largely passive and conservative approach to Australian strategy in 1944.

The question still remains as to whether Curtin in his own mind 'had chosen what he thought best or whether he did what he could not avoid doing'.¹⁷⁸ But whatever Curtin's private views, the non-use of the Australians in the Philippines was another example of the fact that in an alliance between unequal allies, the lesser ally can say whereher forces may not fight, but, especially when the greater ally has the ships and planes, the lesser ally has little capacity to direct where her forces might be employed. In giving full support to MacArthur, Curtin showed a keen awareness of this reality of international relations.

177. Butlin and Schedvin, *op.cit.*, p.687. Some of the problems encountered in the implementation of the government's manpower policy and the relationship to strategy are discussed in Appendix 7.

178. Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p.437.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FINAL ROLE OF THE AMF,

October 1944-July 1945 .

Uncertainty over the Employment of the 1st Australian Corps

From the first day of the Leyte operation, 20 October 1944, until 4 January 1945, General Berryman and the Forward Echelon of Advanced Land Headquarters languished at Hollandia.¹ During this period MacArthur was at Leyte, where he was joined in due course by Advanced General Headquarters. Although Berryman had been informed that the 6th, 7th and 9th Australian Divisions would attack Mindanao on 1 March 1945, Jolo Island on 1 April, Kudat on 1 May and Labuan in British Borneo on 1 June,² an air of uncertainty still hung over the employment of the 1st Australian Corps. On 23 October 1944 Berryman wrote to Blamey:

The G3 section is concentrating on the Lingayen and other operations planned for Luzon and everything else is subordinated to this planning. Consequently little attention is being given to our projected operations in Mindanao and the most definite information I can get from G3 is that the move of I Aust Corps from Australia is not likely to start before mid-December.³

Four weeks later the situation had changed very little, and Berryman told Blamey:

The position of the GHQ staff here is rather difficult at present as General MacArthur with a small staff is forward at Leyte and the bulk of the executive staff is back here ... I have pressed G3 General Chamberlin on the subject and also the Chief of Staff General Sutherland but could get nothing firm as being back here they are not sure what General MacArthur's plan will be ... Opinion here has hardened against a

1. Berryman did visit MacArthur's headquarters at Tacloban from 5-8 December 1944. Berryman Diary, 5-8 December 1944.

2. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.28.

3. Letter BDO/15 Berryman to Blamey, 23 October 1944, Berryman Papers.



Forward Echelon Land Headquarters, Hollandia,
November 1944.

(AWM Negative No.77874)



The senior staff at Forward Echelon LHQ. Seated,
Brigadier L. de L. Barham, BGS, Lieutenant-General
F.H. Berryman, Chief of Staff, Brigadier V.C.
Secombe, DA & QMG, Captain H. Russel, Berryman's
PA.

(AWM Negative No.77864)

landing at Aparri in the NE season and no doubt you will smile when you recollect the role that was originally cast for I Aust Corps.

Whilst our projected role is the Mindanao operation it is quite possible that I Aust Corps may be employed in Luzon if there is strong and prolonged enemy opposition there.⁴

Three days later, on 23 November, Berryman noted in his diary that the Americans were planning to use the 9th Division in the Lingayen Gulf.⁵

Towards the end of November Sutherland and then Chamberlin left for Leyte, and little executive work remained to be done at Hollandia.⁶ Berryman realised that the Americans were losing interest in the Australians, and when, on 23 November Chamberlin told Berryman that no Australians could be sent to Leyte, Berryman replied that 'it would be necessary to have some contact and General Blamey would certainly expect' him to go.⁷

On 5 December Blamey visited MacArthur on Leyte, and Berryman took the opportunity to accompany his Chief. Blamey was keen to discuss the future role of the Australian forces and to obtain some indication regarding the forward movement of the forces; however he received 'very little satisfaction' from the discussion.⁸ MacArthur said that he thought that a tough struggle lay ahead and that he would probably want the AIF to clean up Luzon.⁹ Before leaving Leyte Blamey asked Sutherland to move Berryman's Forward Echelon to Leyte and also begin the movement of the 1st Australian Corps to the staging areas.¹⁰

4. Letter BDO/25, Berryman to Blamey, 19 November 1944, *loc.cit.*

5. Berryman Diary, 21 November 1944.

6. Letter BDO/25, Berryman to Blamey, 19 November 1944, Berryman Papers.

7. Berryman Diary, 23 November 1944.

8. Letter, Northcott to Smart, 24 February 1945, reproduced in letter, Smart to Major-General F.E.W. Simpson, ACIGS (O), 24 March 1945, WO 106/3438.

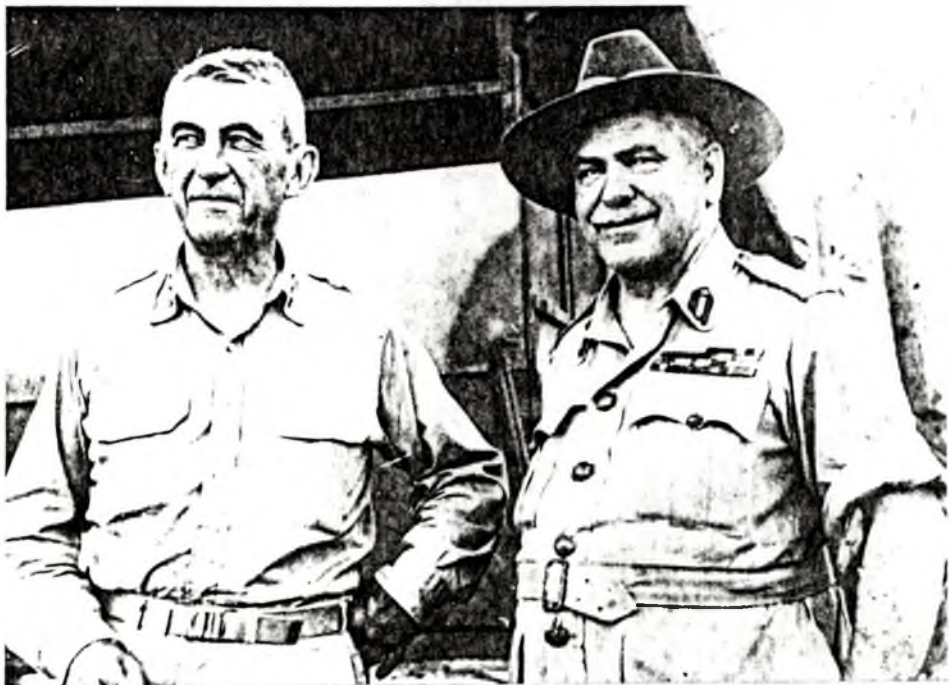
9. Berryman Diary, 5 December 1944.

10. Berryman Diary, 7 December 1944.



MacArthur and General Kenney at Leyte in December 1944.

(AWM Negative No.17792)



Blamey and Krueger at Leyte, 14 December 1944.

(AWM Negative No.17892)

By 8 December Berryman was back at Hollandia, and on 13 December he sent a message to Chamberlin that if he was not allowed to go forward by 20 December, he would signal MacArthur as instructed by Blamey.¹¹ Berryman was convinced that Sutherland was trying to hinder Australian liaison with GHQ,¹² and on 19 December he signalled MacArthur:

General Blamey desires direct liaison and would appreciate attachment of Lt Gen Berryman and small personal staff to Adv GHQ as early as convenient to you.¹³

Nevertheless by 27 December Berryman had still received no word of a move to Leyte, and it was not until 30 December that he learnt that he was to move on 4 January 1945.¹⁴ Berryman's arrival at Tacloban on Leyte brought the Australians little closer either to affecting allied strategy or to gaining definite instructions as to the employment of the 1st Australian Corps. This was, to some degree, understandable, since MacArthur was preoccupied with the invasion of Luzon scheduled to begin on 9 January.¹⁵ Leyte had proved to be a difficult proposition and Eichelberger's Eighth Army had been brought forward to release Krueger's Sixth Army for Luzon. On 15 December Mindoro had been seized to provide air support for the Luzon operation. Obviously MacArthur wanted to keep the 1st Australian Corps in reserve in case he met unexpectedly severe opposition in Luzon.¹⁶ Furthermore, he was unwilling to plan operations to follow those in the Philippines until the discussion between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in February had concluded.

11. Berryman Diary, 13 December 1944.

12. On 19 December 1944 Berryman wrote in his diary: 'Personally I'm far more comfortable here than I would be at Leyte but it is getting more difficult to get in the picture. Sutherland is not so keen on our Aust liaison as the C-in-C'.

13. Letter BDO/26, Berryman to Blamey, 19 December 1944, Berryman Papers.

14. Letters BDO/27, Berryman to Blamey, 27 December 1944, BDO/30, Berryman to Blamey, 30 December 1944, *loc.cit.*

15. Letter BDO/44A, Berryman to Blamey, 4 January 1945, *loc.cit.*

16. Letter, Lumsden to CIGS, 28 December 1944, WO 106/3429. Lumsden wrote that the Australian Corps would be employed 'only in case of dire necessity'.

Berryman's diaries and letters to Blamey reveal this uncertainty. On 5 January Sutherland told Berryman that ten US divisions would be sufficient to take out Luzon and that afterwards eight divisions, including the AIF, would concentrate on Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies.¹⁷ On 11 January, with the American divisions pushing rapidly inland on Luzon, Berryman informed Blamey that the date of movement for the 1st Australian Corps would probably be postponed.¹⁸ Five days later, with the news that Nimitz had requested the return of three divisions which had been loaned for Leyte, Berryman reported that GHQ was reconsidering the employment of the 1st Australian Corps. Chamberlin was making arrangements to move the Corps forward to Morotai and Hollandia. It was anticipated that shipping could be made available and that the staging-area troops would begin moving before 1 March 1945. GHQ was contemplating using the 6th Australian Division in North Borneo.¹⁹

On 20 January GHQ informed Berryman that no ships would be available in Australian ports before 1 February and that sixty days would be required to embark the Australian units.²⁰ Four days later Berryman reported that it did not appear that American shipping could be made available before 7 February.²¹ On 29 January this date was amended to 15 February,²² and on 1 February it was 'not before 22 February and probably not before 1 March'.²³ Clearly the constant changes were

17. Letter, BDO/44A, Berryman to Blamey, 4 January 1945, Blamey Papers.

18. Letter BDO/48, 11 January 1945, *loc.cit.*

19. Letter BDO/52, Berryman to Blamey, 16 January, *loc.cit.* Berryman set his staff to work investigating how the 6th Division could be released. Brigadier Barham suggested abandoning the Aitape area, but Berryman did not agree. He believed that the 8th Brigade at Madang and a brigade from New Britain or the Solomons could relieve the 6th Division. This was, eventually, the scheme put forward by GHQ. Memorandum, Barham to Berryman, 20 January 1945, and Berryman's comments. *loc.cit.*

20. Letter BDO/54, Berryman to Blamey, 20 January 1945, *loc.cit.*

21. Letter BDO/60, Berryman to Blamey, 24 January 1945, *loc.cit.*

22. Letter BDO/61, Berryman to Blamey, 29 January 1945, *loc.cit.*

23. Signal, Berryman to Blamey, 1 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

becoming unsettling for the Australians, and on 24 February Northcott wrote to General Smart in England: 'Quite frankly, we have been just as much in the dark as you have'. The delays were also affecting the troops. In November-December they were 'at the peak of efficiency and had completed their training, and were "on their toes"'.²⁴ In February 1945 they were still waiting.

By the beginning of February an end to the major campaign in the Philippines was in sight. MacArthur hoped that Manila would be cleared quickly and without much damage. Indeed, as the American official historian put it, 'GHQ SWPA had even laid plans for a great victory parade, a la champs Elysées, that the theatre commander in person was to lead through the city'.²⁵ To General Berryman these plans seemed to typify the American reaction to the Australians and the Philippines campaign, and he noted in his diary:

Gen MacArthur now busy staging his triumphal entry and to date no Senior Australian officer has been invited to participate - one would think the AMF are not part of the SWPA or that we did the bulk of the fighting in the critical stages of the campaign when our resources were so limited.²⁶

Nevertheless, MacArthur did have his mind on his general strategy, and before Krueger had secured Manila he began to withdraw troops from the Sixth Army to enable Eichelberger to begin operations in the Southern Philippines. This was partly to extend the area of American control, but also to secure vital sea and air approaches to Manila and Luzon, which was to be the base for his advance to Japan.²⁷ For some time

24. Letter, Northcott to Smart, 24 February 1945, WO 106/3438.

25. R.R. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (OCMH, Washington, 1963), p.249.

26. Berryman's Diary, 4 February 1945. A week later Berryman criticised MacArthur's 'lack of courtesy' in not inviting Australian officers to the victory march. 'In his hour of victory his ego allows him to forget his former dependence on the AMF and is in keeping with GHQ policy to minimise the efforts of Australia in the SWPA'. Berryman Diary, 11 February 1945.

27. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, pp.362-364.

MacArthur had been contemplating the desirability of seizing the oilfields of British and Netherlands North Borneo to provide oil to support operations against Japan.²⁸ To the Joint Chiefs of Staff, then at Yalta, he reported that he was planning amphibious operations into Borneo that would be launched about 1 April 1945 using the 1st Australian Corps. But to bring the corps to the staging area of Hollandia - Morotai would require more shipping than was then assigned to the South-West Pacific Area, and he sought permission to retain 48 Liberty ships and 10 trans-Pacific troop ships for this task.²⁹ Berryman informed Blamey of the contents of this signal, and also of MacArthur's plans to use the 9th Australian Division against the Jesselton-Brunei Bay area on 1 April and a brigade of the 7th Australian Division against Tarakan on 25 April.³⁰

The Joint Chiefs looked favourably upon the use of Australian rather than American troops for mopping up in the Netherlands East Indies, but they told MacArthur that since there was 'an unmanageable shipping deficit' in both the Atlantic and the Pacific the shipping could not be provided. Furthermore, they believed that the Borneo oil supplies would have little effect on the war against Japan. MacArthur would have to reconsider his plans;³¹ in the meantime the Australians would be kept waiting.

28. Letter, Lumsden to CIGS, 28 December 1944, WO 106/3429.

29. MacArthur to Marshall, 3 February 1945, Berryman Papers, also Blamey Papers 43.68.

30. Letter BDO/67, Berryman to Blamey, 3 February 1945, Berryman Papers, letter BDO/73 Berryman to Blamey, 6 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

31. Grace P. Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II, The War Against Japan, Vol. II, The Advance to Victory* (Historical Section, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1954), Held National Archives, Washington, pp.365-366. Also letter BDO/78 Berryman to Blamey, 10 February 1945, Berryman Papers. MacArthur should not have been surprised at the reaction of the Joint Chiefs. In July 1944 they had declared that there was no advantage in seizing the oilfields in NEI. Cable JSM 157, JSM Washington to AMSSO, 26 July 1944, WO 106/3429.

A Feeling of Being Side-tracked

During the preceding months Blamey had become increasingly concerned, observing that a 'feeling that we are being side-tracked is growing strong throughout the country'.³² This attitude had certainly begun to develop within the government. On 26 January 1945 Bruce had cabled Curtin with an outspoken criticism of Churchill's failure to inform Curtin of the subjects likely to be discussed at the forthcoming Malta and Yalta conferences. Bruce believed that the Pacific strategy would be discussed, and he told Curtin that it was 'clearly intolerable that we should be faced with a series of faits accomplis but this would appear to be what is again going to happen'.³³

Shedden agreed with Bruce that Curtin should cable Churchill,³⁴ for a number of incidents had taken place to lead him to believe that the British Prime Minister had still not grasped the nature of Australia's independent role in the war. On 29 January Berryman had written to Blamey that Churchill's Chief of Staff, Ismay, had signalled the British Liaison Officer (Brigadier Carr)³⁵ at MacArthur's headquarters asking for information concerning the use of the 1st Australian Corps.³⁶ In Shedden's opinion this enquiry was an illustration of the use of Churchill's liaison officer 'for a purpose which might be misunderstood, in view of

32. Signal, Blamey to Berryman, 17 February 1945, Blamey Papers, 43.68.

33. Cable A 13, Bruce to Curtin, 26 January 1945, CRS M100, January 1945.

34. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 12 February, MP 1217, Boxes 75, 577, 750.

35. Lieut-General Lumsden, Churchill's representative, had been killed in a Japanese attack on the battleship *New Mexico* during the Luzon operation. Lumsden was eventually succeeded by Lieut-General C.H. Gairdner. For Carr's problems see CAB 127/44. On 13 January 1945, Carr, who was then a Colonel, wrote to Ismay: 'There is an unusually rigid military etiquette in this Headquarters, and it is difficult for a Colonel to obtain personal access to General MacArthur'.

36. Cable 693, Ismay to Carr, 25 January 1945, WO 106/3438, Also letter BDO/61, Berryman to Blamey, 29 January 1945, Berryman Papers.

its relation to high Government policy'. It was a matter which Churchill should have addressed to the Australian Prime Minister. Shedden saw a connection between this enquiry, and a letter from R.G. Casey, then Governor of Bengal, regarding the use of Australian forces in Mountbatten's South-East Asian Area.³⁷

Shedden may well have been right for after the Octagon conference, on 30 September 1944 the British Chief of the Air Staff had suggested to Churchill that Britain could invite the voluntary participation of Australia and New Zealand Air Forces in the South-East Asian Area and/or in the very long range bomber operations against Japan.³⁸ Then in December 1944 Mountbatten raised the question of an Australian division being made available to his area. The British Joint Staff Mission in Washington approached Marshall who informed MacArthur.³⁹ MacArthur's reply was to the point:

The Australian Army is completely integrated into the forces of this area, comprises an essential part of the present operations and none of its divisions could possibly be removed unless additional troops not now contemplated be sent from the United States. This matter has been discussed a number of times with the Australian authorities including the Prime Minister, all of whom are bitterly opposed to the use of Australian troops in other operations than those of the Southwest Pacific Area. I advise most strongly that the matter be dropped as quietly as possible. If it should

37. Memorandum to Curtin, 23 February 1945, MP 1217, Box 238. On 4 February 1945, Casey wrote to Curtin: 'I happen to know, arising out of my private and personal contacts with General Leese, that the presence of Australian troops to assist in the liberation and clearing of South East Asia would be greatly appreciated'. When questioned by the Prime Minister Blamey said that all the available forces were committed to MacArthur's operations, MP 1217, Box 570, File No.2.

38. Memorandum, CAS to Churchill, 30 September 1944, PREM 3 63/13. A few days later, on reflection, the CAS made it clear to Churchill that he had not intended the forces to come from the SWPA, but rather from the Australian and New Zealand elements of the RAF. CAS to Churchill, 2 October 1944, *loc.cit.*

39. Signal W 76804, Marshall to MacArthur, 14 December 1944, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

reach the Australian public it would arouse a degree of heated controversy that could only have the most adverse effect.⁴⁰

MacArthur did not, apparently, inform the Australian government.

Furthermore, the plan may well have appealed to Blamey and the Army.

Two months later the Australian Opposition was to suggest such a scheme.

It was against this background that Shedden prepared a draft reply to Bruce's cable which included the paragraph:

If any change is contemplated in the present set-up in the Pacific ... or decisions are to be taken on the establishment of machinery for the drafting of armistices with Japan and Thailand and the setting up of armistice control arrangements, I would remind you of the views that have been expressed by the Australian Government from time to time that the dimensions of our war effort in the Pacific, both directly in fighting forces and indirectly in material aid to the United Nations, have earned us the right to the fullest consultation in any contemplated arrangements, and adequate Australian representation on and participation in any special machinery that may be created.⁴¹

After reflection Curtin decided that this restatement of views expressed previously should not be sent as it might be misunderstood,⁴² but with regard to the basing of the British Pacific Fleet on Australia, the constantly reiterated statements on Australia's limited capacity were ignored. 'In such circumstances', wrote Shedden, 'repetition though tiresome was the only prudent course to follow'.⁴³

A further incident which strengthened Blamey's belief that Australia was being side-tracked was the lack of official news of Australian operations. Only after pressure from Blamey did a meagre bulletin appear covering the Australian operations in New Guinea, New Britain and

40. Signal C-54850, MacArthur to Marshall, 14 December 1944, *loc.cit.*

41. Draft cable, Curtin to Dominions Office, 2 February 1945, MP 1217, Box 577.

42. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 12 February 1945, MP 1217, Boxes 75, 577, 750.

43. Shedden manuscript, Book 4, Box 3, Chapter 14, p.5. For a discussion of the problems with the British Pacific Fleet see Appendix 5.

Bougainville. 'Probably never in the history of modern war', wrote Gavin Long, 'had so large a force, although in action, been hidden from public knowledge for so long'.⁴⁴ When Shedden wrote to MacArthur about the criticism of his communiques,⁴⁵ MacArthur replied that it was incongruous for the press to criticise him for failing 'to aggrandize their current minor operations to make them appear to be of major importance. This represents an attitude of incorrigibility'.⁴⁶

It is little wonder that with the expression of this attitude Blamey wrote to Shedden on 13 February 1945 enclosing a draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to MacArthur.⁴⁷ Obviously Curtin agreed with Blamey,⁴⁸ for not only did he use the main part of Blamey's letter, but he expanded it from two to five types pages and on 15 February forwarded it to MacArthur. Curtin began by reviewing the earlier decisions concerning the strength of the Australian forces and their relation to MacArthur's plans. He continued:

I have been informed by General Blamey that your recent request to Washington for the retention of certain shipping to move the 1st Australian Corps to staging areas in preparation for further operations has not been accepted. It is understood that this attitude is in accordance with the priority allotted to further operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, after the capture of the Philippines, in relation to the war in Europe.

Elements of the 1st Australian Corps have been on the mainland for period of up to eighteen months and have taken no part in the

44. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.37.

45. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 31 January 1945, MP 1217, Box 75.

46. Letter, MacArthur to Shedden, 12 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

47. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 13 February 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570.

48. Cable 40, Curtin to Churchill, 14 February 1945, WO 106/3438. Curtin said: 'Our land forces have not been very active in last six months though their role has been in accord with plans [of] General MacArthur'.

war since 1943. You may have gathered from press reports that there has been considerable public criticism of the inactivity of the Australian Land Forces which, in a large degree, has arisen from the members of the Forces themselves, a considerable number of whom have been under arms for four and five years ...

In view of the great stringency of the manpower position and the heavy pressure that is being brought to bear on the Government to remedy manpower shortages and life restrictions, I shall be confronted with a difficult situation if so many Australian troops are to be retained in an ineffective role, for it would appear that an all out effort against Japan is unlikely for a considerable period.

It would also seem that when such an effort is mounted, the forces allotted by the respective Allied nations will be much less than the totals now being utilised for the war in the various theatres in Europe and Asia. If these premises are correct, then it would seem that Australia's allocation of forces should be considerably reduced ...

... after the defeat of Germany, Australia, on the present basis of her effort, will be under greater strain in relation to her resources than the other United Nations. She entered the war in 1939. Except for continued participation in the air war in Europe, her military effort since Japan entered the war has been concentrated in the Pacific. She will therefore experience no direct relief on the defeat of Germany, as will the nations fighting in Europe ...

Curtin stressed that the government considered 'it to be a matter of vital importance to the future of Australia and her status at the peace table in regard to the settlement in the Pacific, that her military effort should be concentrated as far as possible in the Pacific and that it should be on a scale to guarantee her an effective voice in the peace settlement'. If the considerations of global strategy were to retard the use of the Australian forces then perhaps the manpower could be used in another way. Curtin concluded:

I shall be grateful if you will furnish me with your observations on the various points I have raised in so far as they relate to your responsibilities as Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Pacific Area.⁴⁹

49. Letter, Curtin to MacArthur, 15 February 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11, MF 1217, Box 570; Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

Accompanying Curtin's letter was a letter from Shedden who told MacArthur that:

There is a tendency in Government quarters to ask why the AIF Division were not used earlier. Australian opinion considered it a point of honour to be associated with operations in the Philippines as an acknowledgement of American assistance to Australia.⁵⁰

MacArthur's Plans for the 6th Division

Curtin received an early answer to his worry over shipping, for on 17 February Berryman informed Blamey that GHQ anticipated that from early March one Liberty ship would berth daily at Cairns or Townsville for 34 days, and that 8 to 10 troop ships would be available over the same period. These ships would lift the 9th Australian Division to Morotai by 5 May, and that shipping would be available to move the 7th Division and corps troops.⁵¹ Two days later Blamey wrote to Shedden:

It would seem that, although Washington refused to allow the retention of ships by General MacArthur, the suggestions contained in the Prime Minister's letter have promptly produced them out of the hat.⁵²

The implication is that MacArthur had been deliberately withholding shipping from the Australians, and indeed the official historian supports this notion by noting that Curtin's letter 'produced swift action'.⁵³ This may not, however, have been the case, for although MacArthur had asked for, and had been refused, additional shipping, he had already determined to use the Australians in Borneo. When additional shipping was denied he had to reallocate his existing resources. Furthermore,

50. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 15 February 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

51. Signal B230, Berryman to Blamey, 17 February 1945, Berryman Papers.

52. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 19 February 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570.

53. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.43.

Curtin's letter of 15 February was despatched by safe-hand from Melbourne on 16 February and would not have reached MacArthur before the despatch of Berryman's message on 17 February.⁵⁴

General Berryman's diaries and his letters to General Blamey indicate that as early as September 1944, a month before the Leyte landing, MacArthur had planned eventually to use Australian troops in the Borneo-Java area.⁵⁵ Although MacArthur had been preoccupied with the Philippines, he had remained determined to continue operations towards the Netherlands East Indies. Thus Curtin's letter did not cause him to alter his plans; rather it provided him with additional ammunition in attempting to persuade the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the value of his proposed operations. He told Marshall that he proposed to use the AIF to capture Balikpapan about 18 May and begin operations against Java on 27 June. There might be a necessity to seize an airfield on Tarakan before the Balikpapan operation. He raised the dubious proposition that under the international agreement establishing the SWPA the United States had an obligation to clear the Netherlands East Indies. Not to do so 'would represent a failure on the part of the United States to keep faith'. The re-establishment of the Netherlands East Indies government in Batavia 'would raise the prestige of the United States to the highest level'. As a final argument MacArthur told Marshall that the Australians were 'becoming restive because of the inactivity of their troops'. If the Australian troops were not 'thrown into action' then they might be demobilized to increase the 'Australian contribution through greater production'.⁵⁶

54. Memorandum, Shedden on Curtin, 23 February 1945, MP 1217, Box 238, Box 570.

55. Berryman Diary, 16, 17 September 1945.

56. Signal CA 50688, MacArthur to Marshall, 26 February 1945, RG 218, CCS 381 Pacific Ocean Area (6-10-43) Sec 11, National Archives.

The Joint Chiefs were not impressed with the political necessity of retaking the Netherlands East Indies, but they recognised the value of the area in employing the Australian forces.⁵⁷ While the Joint Staff Planners examined the options, MacArthur went ahead with his plans.

MacArthur's aim was to turn over to the British, Australian and Dutch authorities all responsibility for the SWPA except for the Philippines. This would permit him to concentrate his resources for the major operations against Japan.⁵⁸ Throughout his planning MacArthur had intended to use all three divisions of the AIF.⁵⁹ He now issued more detailed instructions for their employment. One brigade group of the 6th Division was to attack Tarakan on 13 April, then the 9th Division Balikpapan on 7 May, a brigade group of the 9th Division Bandjermasin on 27 May, and the 1st Corps including the 6th and 7th Divisions Sourabaya (Java) on 1 July. The 6th Division at Aitape was to be relieved by the headquarters of the 11th Division (in Australia), 8th Brigade (Madang), and 23th Brigade (outer Solomons Islands). The First Army was to provide 5,000 base troops.⁶⁰ When General Sturdee at First Army informed Blamey that, if he lost 5,000 base troops he would be unable to maintain the troops in the operational areas, Blamey signalled Berryman to defer action on the 6th Division until further orders; the matter was under consideration by the government.⁶¹

57. Hayes, *op.cit.*, Volume II, p.367.

58. Signal CA 50688, MacArthur to Marshall, 26 February 1945, RG 218, CCS 381 Pacific Ocean Area (6-10-43) Sec 11.

59. For example, letter BDO/52, 16 January 1945, Berryman to Blamey, Berryman Papers. See p.438.

60. Signal B 239, Berryman to Blamey, 20 February 1945, Signal B 240, Berryman to Blamey, 21 February 1945, Berryman Papers. It will be recalled that this was the scheme worked out by Berryman a month earlier. See Fn.19, p.438.

61. Signal Z 1306B, Blamey to Berryman, 22 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

It will be recalled that in July 1944 Blamey had suggested to MacArthur that he should use seven brigades to garrison New Guinea, New Britain and Bougainville. MacArthur had ordered him to use twelve brigades, thus making it possible for Blamey to conduct more offensive operations.⁶² Now MacArthur proposed to reduce the twelve brigades to nine. During January 1945 Berryman's staff had studied the means of meeting this reduction, and were convinced that it could be achieved.⁶³ Thus Berryman was surprised at Blamey's order, and he signalled Blamey pointing out that First Army had ample base troops: 'Lae base has 10,000 troops and they are largely employed looking after each other'.⁶⁴ Gavin Long has argued that the First Australian Army 'had become involved in two offensives which were soon to fully tax its strength',⁶⁵ but these offensives could have been reduced. Obviously, if Blamey had wanted the 6th Division to take part in MacArthur's offensive towards Java, the commitment to New Guinea and the islands could have been reduced to allow it.

The decision to use the 6th Division rested, therefore, upon Blamey's perception of the strategic value of the operation towards Java, and the government's perception of the scale of operations necessary to guarantee an effective voice in the peace settlement. Blamey already knew that Marshall had informed MacArthur 'that operations in Borneo would have little immediate effect on the war against Japan'.⁶⁶

62. See Chapter Nine, p.410.

63. Memorandum, Brigadier Barham to Berryman, 20 January 1945, Berryman Papers.

64. Signal B 2444, Berryman to Blamey, 23 January 1945, *loc.cit.* The Lae base was the subject of criticism in parliament by Mr Percy Spender during 1945. CRS A2671, item 150/1945. Each time Berryman visited Lae he remarked in his diary on the elaborate base. On 21 March 1945 he wrote 'no wonder they are always asking for engineers'. On 27 March he noted that the work was 'overdone' and that the base was 'very comfortable'.

65. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.46.

66. Letter BDO/44A, Berryman to Blamey, 10 February 1945, Berryman Papers.

The Higher Command Organisation for the Final Phase

Meanwhile, Blamey was becoming alarmed at another aspect of MacArthur's plans. On 13 February General Chamberlin told Berryman that the forthcoming operations would be controlled by the Eighth US Army. Berryman demurred; although Blamey had agreed to that arrangement for the Philippines, the new operations were in Borneo.⁶⁷ Blamey supported Berryman,⁶⁸ and indeed, in anticipation of such a move he had ordered that the term 'Task Force' should not be applied to the 1st Australian Corps.⁶⁹ Blamey therefore suggested that Berryman should continue discussions with Chamberlin. He preferred that the matter should not be pressed to the highest level, but he was prepared to do so if necessary.⁷⁰

Berryman immediately approached Chamberlin who said that he had received instructions that Morshead's 1st Australian Corps would come directly under GHQ and not the Eighth Army. Berryman pointed out that the 1st Corps headquarters was not organised to command a task force. Furthermore, Berryman believed that the appointment of Morshead as task force commander was a matter for the Australian government, not GHQ. The discussions were 'completely frank and friendly', but Chamberlin would not yield. He was acting on orders, and he said that 'with General Blamey in Melbourne' MacArthur wanted direct access to the tactical commander.⁷¹ With this impass Berryman urged Blamey to visit GHQ.⁷²

67. Berryman Diary, 13 February 1945.

68. Signal B 228, Berryman to Blamey, 15 February 1945; signal Z 1294, Blamey to Berryman, 1020 hours, received 1340 hours, 17 February 1945, Berryman Papers.

69. Letter, Lieut-Colonel H.K. Oxley to Brig E.W. Woodward, DSD, GHQ, 5 November 1944, AWM 721/1/38, Pt.3. Also letter Berryman to Morshead, 20 December 1944, Berryman Papers.

70. Signal Z 1294, Blamey to Berryman, 17 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

71. Berryman Diary, 17 February 1945, and signal B 229, Berryman to Blamey, 1620 hours, 17 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

72. Letter BDO/16, Berryman to Blamey, 17 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

After many months of uncertainty about the role of the AIF, and the tendency to disregard Advanced LHQ, Berryman's information that MacArthur intended to eliminate Blamey from operational control of the AIF spurred the Australian Commander-in-Chief to act. On 19 February he wrote to Shedden requesting that he pass the letter to the Prime Minister.

You will recall [wrote Blamey] that, on the establishment of the South-West Pacific Area, General MacArthur was appointed Commander-in-Chief and I was appointed Commander, Allied Land Forces. I understand my appointment was made as part of the general agreement for the acceptance of the set up of the command of the S.W.P. Area. Except during the offensive campaign in the field in New Guinea up to the end of 1943, I have never operated as such.

My requests for American officers to establish a joint staff were met with a face-saving acceptance that was completely ineffective. American troops were brought to this country and later an American army command established. At no stage was I given any information as to the proposals for their arrival or the development of the organisation. In fact, General MacArthur took upon himself the functions of Commander, Allied Land Forces and my own functions were limited to command of the Australian Military Forces.

I have never raised this question definitely before, as I was always of the opinion that the Prime Minister and General MacArthur worked in close consultation and the former was fully informed of and acquiesced in the position, in view of para 4 of his letter of 25 April 1942.⁷³ I was satisfied therefore to continue my responsibility for the control of the development in administration and operations of the Australian Military Forces.

With the forward advance, however, the situation has undergone a further change. It has been, throughout this war, a definitely accepted principle that our

73. Curtin's letter to Blamey of 25 April 1942 outlined the relation between Blamey and the government. Para 4 stated: 'My functions as Minister for Defence relate to questions of higher policy and important subjects, such as the strength and organisation of the Forces and appointments to higher posts, which will be submitted to War Cabinet through me. I am also the link between the Government and Commander-in-Chief, and you, as adviser to the Government on Australian Army Policy, also have direct access to me'. Military Board Minutes, Misc 41/1942, and Blamey Papers 23.7.

Australian national forces should be under the control of our own Australian commanders. Where, on those odd occasions, this restriction has been lifted it has been very greatly to the detriment of the Australian Army.

In the position which has now arisen, the Australian Army has been sharply divided into two components:

- (a) The First Australian Army, which is dealing with the enemy elements left behind in the New Guinea and adjacent islands area.
- (b) The First Australian Corps, which has been made available for offensive operations.

GHQ, SWPA asserts its authority to exercise direct control over the First Australian Army and ... intends to assume direct control of First Australian Corps for operations now under consideration ...

It is obvious to me that the intention of GHQ, SWPA is to treat my headquarters as a purely liaison element ...

With regard to the command of New Guinea area, the position is completely unsatisfactory. GHQ claims to exercise direct command, whereas effective command of the land forces is exercised by myself. This is inevitable but, unfortunately, the means to secure fully effective control are not at my disposal.

In addition to the army command, there is an independent air force command, the control of which is exercised by General Kenney from the Philippines. The command of naval forces is also an independent command as far as New Guinea army command is concerned ...

The set-up of command in New Guinea is completely unsatisfactory. It is impossible to secure reasonable attention even to maintenance requirements ...

It would be a long story to give all the details of the difficulties of supply and provision resulting from the fact of distant, and I cannot help but feel not sufficiently interested, control of the First Australian Army ... It is my view that, unless the authority of the Australian command over Australian national forces is effectively asserted, an undesirable position will arise as far as the Australian troops are concerned, by which they will be distributed under American control and Australian national control of its forces will be greatly weakened.

The insinuation of American control and the elimination of Australian control has been gradual, but I think the time has come when the matter should be faced quite squarely, if the Australian Government and the Australian Higher Command are not to become ciphers in the control of the Australian Military Forces.⁷⁴

74. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 19 February 1945, Blamey Papers, 23.11. Also MP 1217, Box 570, File No.2.

Blamey was determined to bring to a head a problem which had existed since 1942 when his dual position had contributed to the command crisis which had resulted in the relief of Rowell. Blamey had avoided discussion of the question, since once asked it would have to be answered. The solution would have been either to make Blamey the operational commander, which would have stripped him of his administrative authority in Australia, or to select a new operational commander, which would have removed him from a position of influence with MacArthur. It was now clear that MacArthur intended to unilaterally eliminate Blamey from the chain of command, and characteristically Blamey fought back.

Blamey's case was hurt by his acquiescence during the two years from the arrival of Krueger's Sixth Army in January 1943. Blamey's attempt to explain in his letter to Curtin this acquiescence as stemming from the Prime Minister's letter 25 April 1942 was, in the opinion of Frederick Shedden 'to say the least, very naive'.⁷⁵ Blamey had the right of direct access to the Prime Minister if he had chosen to exercise it. The Prime Minister had been acquiescent because Blamey had remained silent. He was not silent now.

A good case could have been made for changing the command structure completely in 1944 or 1945. For example, Gavin Long has suggested that there should have been three land forces - the Australian Army Group under Blamey, and the Sixth and Eighth US Armies.⁷⁶ A number of Australian generals, for example, Rowell and Berryman, believed that command could have reverted to a Military Board system with a

75. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 44, p.12.

76. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.599.

separate commander of the operational forces.⁷⁷ Whether Blamey would have filled the CGS or Commander-in-Chief position is open to conjecture.

Blamey's letter had to be considered in conjunction with a letter from the Minister for the Army suggesting the reconstitution of the Military Board.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the Minister for Air suggested that all RAAF formations outside Australia in the SWPA should be under the command of the AOC RAAF Command, and that all RAAF formations, including operational units, within Australia should revert to the Air Board.⁷⁹ Shedden forwarded these letters to Curtin on 23 February with the comment that he did not attempt 'to assess the merits of the conflicting views of General MacArthur and General Blamey'.⁸⁰

On 24 February Blamey, Forde and Shedden met the Prime Minister to discuss this matter and the employment of the 6th Australian Division. Like Shedden, Curtin felt unable to adjudicate on the question of Blamey's role,⁸¹ and as he had done on previous occasions he put the matter to MacArthur in a letter which dealt with principles and skirted around Blamey's position. First, however, he informed MacArthur that the 6th Division would not be available. He had understood that two AIF divisions would be used in the advance to the Philippines, and the 6th Division was being used elsewhere.

77. Berryman interview, 22 July 1974, Rowell interview, 26 June 1974.

78. Letter, Forde to Curtin, 13 February 1945, quoted in memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 23 February 1945, MP 1217, Box 238.

79. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 7 February, *loc.cit.*

80. Memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 23 February 1945, *loc.cit.*

81. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with Commander-in-Chief, AMF, MP 1217, Box 4.

82. In anticipation of MacArthur's reply Shedden warned the Prime Minister that 'you may be confronted with a choice between the acceptance of the views of General MacArthur and those of the Minister for the Army and others on the one hand, or the acceptance of the different views of General Blamey on the other'. Memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 27 February 1945, MP 1217, Box 287.

I had hoped that by now it would have been possible to associate the Australian forces in greater or lesser strength with the reconquest of the Philippines, as a reciprocal Australian gesture to the aid which the Commonwealth has received from the United States, as well as military desirability of using the Forces which have been inactive for some time. Their earlier use would also have been the logical preliminary step to the re-adjustment of the Australian manpower position which is indicated to be necessary in my letter of 13th February. However, it is necessary to await advice of your plans in order to determine the stage at which this can be done. In the meantime, I feel that we should adhere to the basis of our previous discussion and limit the Australian component of your spearhead forces to the 7th and 9th Divisions.

Curtin then turned to the question of the higher operational control of the Australian Forces and the plan that the 1st Australian Corps was to be under the direct command of GHQ:

It was laid down in the 1914-18 war that the Australian Forces serving outside Australia should be organised into and operate as a homogeneous formation appropriate to their strength, and that they should be commanded by an Australian officer. This course was followed in the Middle East in the present war. When the Southwest Pacific Area was established, Commanders of the Allied Naval, Land and Air Forces were appointed in your General Order No.1 of 18th April 1942. The principle which I have mentioned was achieved by the Royal Australian Navy operating under its own Flag Officer who is responsible to the Commander, Allied Naval Forces. In the case of the Royal Australian Air Force, an RAAF Command was created for operation control of the RAAF under an Australian Officer who is responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces. General Blamey was appointed Commander of the Allied Land Forces which provided for the observance of the principle in respect of the command of the Australian Army. I shall be glad, therefore, if you could inform me of the arrangement that is contemplated in regard to the operational control and command of the First Australian Corps in particular, and of the Australian Land Forces in New Guinea and adjacent islands, and of the manner in which it is proposed to ensure the observance of the basic principle I have mentioned.

Curtin said that there was a similar question of principle involved with the RAAF and he suggested that RAAF Command should move to New Guinea to take command of all RAAF formations in the forward area.⁸³

While Shedden had been reticent in putting his views on paper for Curtin, there can be no doubt of the way his mind was working, and he wrote a personal letter to MacArthur. Shedden noted that the Prime Minister's letter raised a number of questions 'which it was known would ultimately have to be answered'. He then recalled the discussions he had had earlier with MacArthur on this topic, and said that he had asked Blamey whether as C-in-C AMF he

contemplated controlling the forces on the mainland, those in New Guinea, New Britain in the Solomons, and the 7th and 9th Divisions, operating in your offensive campaign. He replied that such was his idea.

Shedden continued:

There is, of course, not only your own aspect, as Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Pacific Area, but also that of the Australian Government in regard to the current problems of administration of the Australian Army, on which General Blamey is the Government's adviser.

My own private and personal opinion, for what it is worth, is that it has to be seriously considered whether the responsibilities for the higher direction of the Australian Military Forces should be divided into two major spheres as follows:

- (i) Responsibility for the command and administration of the forces on the mainland and the provision of supplies and reinforcements for the forces serving outside Australia...
- (ii) Responsibility for the command, operational control and administration of the forces serving outside Australia, subject to:
 - (a) Responsibility to the Australian authorities on certain major questions, such as appointments to the command of the higher formations.
 - (b) Responsibility to the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, for the operational control of the Australian forces outside Australia.

83. Letter, Curtin to MacArthur, 27 February 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

If you considered a change on these lines should be made, in so far as operational control is concerned, and the Government agreed from its point of view, I don't know which command, if any, would be acceptable to General Blamey. In (i), he would remain the Chief Military Adviser to the Government, but would not have an active operational command. In (ii), he would be subordinate to the authority in (i), as he was when in the Middle East. Having been Commander-in-Chief of the whole show, this might not be acceptable to him.⁸⁴

Thus Shedden made it clear that the question concerned the role and personality of General Blamey, and he pressed MacArthur to offer an opinion. MacArthur replied on 5 March. After reviewing the original plans to use the AIF in the Philippines he outlined the current plans to re-establish the Netherlands East Indies government, and stressed the need to use all available Australian forces. He noted that his assault forces would be limited to the 7th and 9th Divisions and added, 'I hope you will not eliminate entirely the possibility of using the 6th Division if the operation outlined above becomes a reality'. He wanted the RAAF Command to move to the operational area.⁸⁵ With regard to the command organisation, he was quite frank.

We have followed a fixed pattern since the Lae operation. The Commander-in-Chief exercises personal and direct command of assault forces coordinating the action of three principal subordinates:

- (a) Naval forces under the Commander, Allied Naval Forces.
- (b) Air Forces under the Commander, Allied Air Forces.
- (c) Ground forces under a Task Force Commander whose organisation is specifically prescribed according to the operation to be undertaken ... In the forthcoming operation in which assault forces will include Australian troops, it is contemplated that the Commander would be an

84. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 27 February 1945, RG4, MacArthur Memorial. Also MP 1217, Box 75 and Box 570.

85. However he added that there were difficulties to be resolved before such a move could be arranged. In the meantime the Defence Committee with Bostock present, agreed to defer a decision on operational and administrative control until the conclusion of the operation then about to begin. In the long run the question was not resolved until the war ended. Odgers, *op.cit.*, pp.438, 439.

Australian officer. While General Morshead has been proposed and is entirely acceptable, I am prepared to accept another officer if designated by the Australian authorities. I consider that the assignment of the Australian Commander should be a matter for determination by the Australians. It is considered to be impossible, however, from an operational viewpoint, for the officer so designated to be concerned with command of Australian troops in New Guinea and Australia. It is essential that the Task Force Commander remain in the field with his troops and that he have no other duties of any kind. Any other course of action would unquestionably jeopardize the success of the operation and impose a risk that could not be accepted.⁸⁶

Blamey's position as Commander of the Allied Land Forces was not mentioned at all in MacArthur's three-page letter. Perhaps MacArthur thought that it was prudent not to express his opinion upon Blamey's role. Nevertheless he told Lieutenant-General Gairdner, Churchill's liaison officer at his headquarters, that 'Blamey's dual position was an intolerable situation'. On the one hand Blamey was under his orders, and on the other he was quite independent. Unless Blamey was assigned entirely to MacArthur's command, the latter 'was not prepared to take him as commander of the Australian forces for any future operations which might arise'.⁸⁷

Curtin should not have been surprised by MacArthur's reply. After all, MacArthur had described his concept when he met Shedden and Curtin in June 1944. While Blamey had, in fact, exercised command over the Australian forces in action during early 1944, by late 1944 MacArthur had given ample evidence that Advanced LHQ was to be eliminated from

86. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 5 March 1945, RG4, MacArthur Memorial. Also Sutherland Papers and Blamey Papers 23.11.

87. Letter, Gairdner to Ismay, 30 May 1945, WO 216/137. Yet during 1943 MacArthur had been happy to exercise strategic direction over Halsey's forces in the Solomons while Halsey nominally, and for administrative purposes, effectively, remained under the command of Admiral Nimitz.

the chain of command. Consequently, when Curtin replied to MacArthur on 23 March 1945 he promised to consult Blamey about the 6th Division, but he merely noted the statement that the 1st Australian Corps would report directly to GHQ.⁸⁸ Blamey had been correct. The Australian government had acquiesced in a situation which he believed was intolerable. Unable to argue with Blamey and his dual position, Curtin and the government had been equally unable to be firm with MacArthur. Blamey's influence would depend, therefore, upon the outcome of his conference with MacArthur in Manila.

The Manila Conference

While the letters had travelled back and forth between Manila and Melbourne, GHQ had shown no evidence that it was prepared to give way. Indeed Berryman was having great difficulty obtaining GHQ approval for Advanced LHQ to move from Hollandia to Morotai.⁸⁹ GHQ was afraid that if Advanced LHQ moved to Morotai it would be in a position to take control of the AIF operations while GHQ wished to deal directly with the Corps Commander.⁹⁰ Finally on 3 March GHQ relented and approved the move of Advanced LHQ to Morotai, but made it clear that the question of command would be settled when Blamey arrived in Manila.⁹¹

Blamey arrived in Leyte on 11 March and told Berryman that he would have to compromise with the Americans. By keeping Berryman at GHQ Blamey hoped to retain some degree of control over Australian operations.⁹² On 13 March Blamey and Berryman flew to Manila where

88. Letter, Curtin to MacArthur, 23 March 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; Sutherland Papers; MP 1217, Box 570.

89. Signal B 246, Berryman to Blamey, 27 February 1945, Berryman Papers.

90. Letter BDO/47, Berryman to Blamey, 28 February 1945.

91. Berryman Diary, 3 March 1945.

92. Berryman Diary, 11 March 1945.

they met MacArthur.⁹³ During discussions on 13 and 14 March MacArthur described how he planned for the British, Dutch and Australians to take over the SWPA excluding the Philippines. MacArthur still believed that he could persuade Curtin to release the 6th Division,⁹⁴ but Blamey pointed out what he believed to be an inconsistency in this policy. American forces were being retained in the Philippines to clear out the Japanese, while Australian forces were being withdrawn from New Guinea before a similar stage had been reached there. MacArthur replied that he intended to use the Philippines as a base for the invasion of Japan. Blamey pointed out that if the Australians were withdrawn from New Guinea they would have to return later to complete their task. Nevertheless GHQ made sufficient landing craft available to enable the 6th Division to seize Wewak.⁹⁵

Berryman had a similar discussion with Sutherland whom he told 'that as they were mopping up the P.Is we should mop up some British territory'. Sutherland said that the British were keen on getting a base in North Borneo. 'It is obvious', wrote Berryman in his diary, 'that British interests are being subordinated and that General MacArthur hopes to get into the war against Japan proper and leave us over 250,000 Nips to look after - a secondary role'.⁹⁶

The command arrangements were discussed and the compromise was confirmed. GHQ would deal directly with the 1st Australian Corps while 'the necessary administrative functions would be performed by Advanced

93. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.597, claims that Blamey met MacArthur on Leyte on 18 March, but Berryman's Diary shows that the meeting was at Manila on 13-14 March.

94. Berryman Diary, 14 March 1945.

95. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570.

96. Berryman Diary, 13 March 1945.

LHQ from Morotai'.⁹⁷ Copies of correspondence were to be sent to Berryman's Forward Echelon at GHQ. Furthermore, in view of 'the complicated nature of the command that has developed by reason of its widespread, amphibious and international nature', MacArthur invited Blamey to be present for the operations.⁹⁸ Yet ironically, Blamey was not to be present at the beginning of any of the final operations by the 1st Australian Corps.⁹⁹

MacArthur did not obtain the use of the 6th Division. On 5 April Blamey reported to Curtin that although it had been strategically correct to seize the Philippines, the next logical sequence would have been to move down the west coast of Borneo, thus isolating the Japanese in Borneo and gaining control of the South China Sea. This contrasted with MacArthur's proposal 'to seize two or three points on the east coast of Borneo and to advance from there into Java'. Blamey informed Curtin of the inconsistency of withdrawing the 6th Division from New Guinea and concluded:

In view of the intention of the American forces to destroy completely the Japanese in the Philippine Islands, it is my considered opinion that further Australian forces should not be withdrawn from New Guinea until such time as Japanese forces on Australian territory are destroyed also. It will be difficult to explain the inconsistency of policy otherwise.

I except from this Rabaul. The Japanese forces in this region have been pressed into a comparatively small area. They are well supplied and apparently strong and I consider any attempt to capture this stronghold should be deferred for the present and we should be satisfied to contain it, since we can do so with lesser strength than the enemy force there ...¹⁰⁰

97. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.47.

98. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570.

99. The preliminary Tarakan landings took place on 30 April with the main landing on 1 May. On 30 April Blamey was with the 2nd Corps on Bougainville. He flew back to Morotai and arrived late on 1 May.

100. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570.

Although MacArthur indicated to Marshall that he might have to use one or two American divisions 'if found necessary' in Java,¹⁰¹ and he told Blamey that he would include a US division in the plans,¹⁰² there is no doubt that the withholding of the 6th Division halted MacArthur's plans to assault Java in early July. On 23 February Chamberlin told Berryman that if the 6th Division was not available then 'the basis of the plan' was destroyed,¹⁰³ and on 27 February he said that without the 6th Division the 1st Australian Corps would not be strong enough to carry the operation into Java.¹⁰⁴ Thus for the first time since February 1942 Australia altered allied strategic planning by making use of her only really effective weapon - the denial of forces to the allied supreme commander. Although other factors may have prevented MacArthur carrying out the plan, his most assiduous biographer has noted that 'It was most fortunate for the lives of the soldiers of the Australian I Corps' that MacArthur did not get 'his way on the Java plan, for that two-division invasion could have produced the most tragic blood bath of the Pacific War'.¹⁰⁵

101. Signal CA 50688, MacArthur to Marshall, 26 February 1945, RG 218, CCS 381 Pacific Ocean Area (6-10-43) Sec 11, National Archives.

102. Berryman Diary, 13 March 1945.

103. Berryman Diary, 23 February 1945.

104. Berryman Diary, 27 February 1945. Blamey later commented on MacArthur's suggestion to use the 6th Division in Borneo and Java: 'In view of the effect on 6 Aust Div of the strenuous campaign which it had been fighting in the highly malarious area of Aitape-Wewak since November 1944, I considered it inadvisable to employ it on another prolonged operation without prior rest and refitting. This decision was ratified by the War Council and I advised GHQ that 6 Aust Div would not be available initially on the Borneo operations ... Accordingly the plan was amended to provide for the capture of Tarakan by a brigade group from 9 Aust Div'. Report on Operations by Australian Military Forces in Boreno, 1 May 1945 to 15 August 1945, Blamey Papers DRL 6643, item 86.

105. James, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.716, 717.

The North Borneo Operations

Despite the loss of the 6th Division, MacArthur continued with his plans to advance via Borneo to the Netherlands East Indies. But in late March the notoriously anti-British Admiral King put a new aspect on the plans when he proposed that the Brunei area should be captured to serve as a base for the British Pacific Fleet. The British planners in Australia were already preparing to use Manus Island as a forward base, but King considered it undesirable for the British to use it. Furthermore, he disapproved of any British base in the Philippines.¹⁰⁶

MacArthur was not enthusiastic, explaining to Marshall that if he were to capture the Brunei area his attack on Java would be delayed by two months and would use all available Australian troops.¹⁰⁷ The Joint Chiefs, as mentioned earlier, were not impressed with the arguments to capture Java.¹⁰⁸ Their more immediate task was the elimination of Japan, and on 3 April they issued a directive re-organising the command in the Pacific. MacArthur was to command all army forces and Nimitz all naval forces. MacArthur retained command of the SWPA. At the same time MacArthur was ordered to:

- a. Complete the occupation of Luzon and conduct such additional operations in the Philippines as would directly contribute to the defeat of Japan and the liberation of the Filipinos;
- b. Make plans for occupying North Borneo using Australian troops; and
- c. Plan and prepare for the campaign against Japan, cooperating with Admiral Nimitz in the naval and amphibious phases of the invasion.¹⁰⁹

106. Signal W 58839, Marshall to MacArthur, 27 March 1945, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

107. Signal MacArthur to Marshall, 30 March 1945, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

108. See p.448.

109. *Reports of General MacArthur*, Vol.1, p.367.

These instructions made no mention of Java and MacArthur dropped those plans, but he was still keen to continue with the attacks on Tarakan and Balikpapan, and he planned to follow these operations with the Brunei assault about 25 June.¹¹⁰ King objected that this date was too late and that Balikpapan was unnecessary.¹¹¹ Consequently MacArthur advanced Brunei to 23 May but he was unwilling to sacrifice the Balikpapan operation which he now planned for 28 June. He explained his reasons to Marshall.

All ground troops in these movements [Borneo] are Australian. The execution will not affect the ultimate timing of operations against the mainland of Japan. The Australian troops have been out of action for more than a year and are prepared to carry out the plans that have been perfected. I believe that cancellation at this time and the postponement for many months of employment of Australian troops will produce grave repercussions with the Australian government and people.¹¹²

Initially MacArthur had declared that Balikpapan was essential to provide air cover for the Brunei operation. Since Brunei was now to come before Balikpapan this argument was no longer valid, but MacArthur's claim that repercussions would follow in Australia persuaded the Joint Chiefs, and the plan was approved.¹¹³

110. Signal CAZ 51420, MacArthur to Marshall, 7 April 1945, RG 165, ABC 234, Pacific (1-17-43) Sec 9, National Archives.

111. Signal Berryman to Blamey, 6 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11. Hayes, *op.cit.*, p.367. King wrote to the JCS: 'I do not consider that the capture of Balikpapan is essential either to the future operations which have been directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or to carrying out the directive relative to North Borneo, in particular the seizure of the Brunei Bay Area'. Memorandum, 9 April 1945, RG 165, ABC 384 NEI (23 Sep 44). The army planners urged the JCS to tell MacArthur 'categorically' to 'go to Brunei and stop'. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 10 April 1945, *loc.cit.*

112. Signal CA 51543, MacArthur to Marshall, 12 April 1945, RG 218 CCS 381 Pacific Ocean Area (6-10-43) Sec 11, National Archives.

113. Signal WAR 70717, Marshall to MacArthur, 20 April 1945, *loc.cit.* For the effect on the Australians see Report of Joint Staff Planners to JCS, for consideration 17 May 1945, RG 218 CCS 323.361 POA (8-18-44) Sec 1.

Although the operation against North Borneo was being planned to provide a British base, the British had no desire to develop Brunei as a base. In late April the British Chiefs of Staff informed the Joint Chiefs that they preferred to continue using Manus Island but they hoped to gain a base much closer to Japan, for example, in the Philippines.¹¹⁴ They considered, therefore, that the Brunei operation should be abandoned. Admiral King was adamant that the 'seizure of the Brunei Bay area is considered an essential operation whether or not it is utilized for an advanced British naval base'.¹¹⁵ The British were still not convinced and on 24 May, a fortnight before the operation, they informed the Americans that to develop Brunei 'would be a waste of the constructional resources at our disposal'.¹¹⁶

When Curtin asked Blamey for his opinion of the operation,¹¹⁷ the general replied that the occupation of the Tarakan, Brunei, Labuan area was a strategically sound operation since it tended to increase the control of the sea area between Malaya and Japan. Furthermore, he understood that it had 'been approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff'.¹¹⁸ As mentioned, only the American members of the Combined Chiefs had supported the operation, and they had done so to hasten the assumption of British responsibility for the SWPA, thus leaving America free to concentrate on Japan.

114. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.225; Hayes, *op.cit.*, p.368.

115. Hayes, *op.cit.*, p.369. Marshall succeeded in altering 'an essential' to 'a desirable' in the final paper. King also argued that Manus Island was too far from the main theatre. Whilst it was true that a British force at Brunei could operate in the South China Sea, the main theatre was surely Japan. Manus Island is about 2,800 sailing miles from Tokyo. Brunei is about 2,900 miles from Tokyo.

116. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.226.

117. Letter, Curtin to Blamey, 17 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11, MP 1217, Box 570.

118. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 19 April 1945, *loc.cit.*

Curtin had trusted MacArthur to put the Australian case through the Joint Chiefs to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, yet Australia clearly received less than a complete statement of the facts from the Americans. On 12 April 1945, after receiving news that the Brunei attack was to be accelerated, Berryman, who was now with GHQ in Manila, wrote in his diary, 'The British evidently want a naval base in N.W. Borneo'.¹¹⁹ Yet when General Gairdner, Churchill's liaison officer, asked MacArthur in the second week of May whether Brunei would be a suitable base for the British Pacific Fleet, MacArthur said 'No'. Furthermore, MacArthur was disappointed that the British Pacific Fleet had not been placed under his command. If that had occurred he claimed that he would have had them operating from Manila already.¹²⁰ During this period MacArthur continually expressed a willingness to cooperate with the British, but Gairdner found many of MacArthur's staff to be biased against Britain.¹²¹ Indeed on three occasions they broke open the British Mission's safe in an endeavour to obtain the British codes.¹²²

119. Berryman Diary, 12 April 1945. Berryman's Forward Echelon found office space on the fourth floor of City Hall where GHQ was located.

120. Letter, Gairdner to Ismay, 13 May 1945, CAB 127/51. See also Cable GA13, Gairdner to Churchill, 12 May 1945, *loc.cit.*

121. Interview with General Sir Charles Gairdner, 11 April 1979. Gairdner said that MacArthur treated him well, and that he was the only officer with ready non-official access to MacArthur. This upset MacArthur's staff. When Gairdner was assigned to MacArthur's headquarters Churchill told him to fly via Australia and not via USA so as not to create suspicion that he was collaborating with the US JCS or the CCS. This account is confirmed by cables between Ismay and Field-Marshal Wilson in Washington in March and April 1945. When Wilson tried to have his ADC made a liaison officer in Manila, Gairdner refused, saying MacArthur would look upon him as a 'spy' from Washington. Letter, Gairdner to Ismay, 12 May 1945, CAB 127/51.

122. Letter, Brigadier W.G. Carr, Gairdner's deputy, 22 March 1979. Gairdner in an interview on 11 April 1979 agreed that Carr was possibly right.



Rear-Admiral Forrest Royal (USN), Lieutenant-General Sir Leslie Morshead and Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock on Morotai for a conference which planned the Australian landing at Tarakan.

(AWM Negative No. RAAF OG 2415)



E.J. Ward, the Minister for External Territories, arriving at Wau during a tour of inspection of New Guinea, 24 April 1944. From left, Lieutenant-Colonel A.A. Conlon, Director of Army Research, Ward, and J. Donovan, private secretary to the minister.

(AWM Negative No. 72710)

The operations in North Borneo had another influence on international relations. Colonel Alfred Conlon, the enigmatic Director of Research and Civil Affairs,¹²³ has been criticised by the Australian official historian for his attitude towards the British members of the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU), which had the task of re-establishing civil government in North Borneo. Considerable evidence is presented to show that Conlon and Blamey attempted to exclude the British officers from civil affairs operations in North Borneo.¹²⁴

It has been suggested that one reason for Conlon's action was that he wanted to make it possible for Australia to gain control of North Borneo. Australia could then exchange North Borneo with the Dutch for their part of New Guinea.¹²⁵ In his autobiography Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Kerr, Conlon's deputy, has denied the existence of any such plans,¹²⁶ but Lieutenant-Colonel W.E.H. Stanner, one of Conlon's senior staff officers, thought that a plan existed, and even if it did not, the British members of the BBCAU were convinced that accounts of it were true.¹²⁷ There is no doubt that Evatt had plans to gain control of some of the islands to the north of Australia, but he had no love for Conlon, at one time warning him 'to keep out of foreign affairs or he'd break his wrist'.¹²⁸ It is hard to imagine Conlon and Evatt working together.

123. Aged 36 in 1945, Conlon had been a student at Sydney University before joining the army in April 1942. He had an important influence on Blamey, but the papers of the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs (DORCA) have not been discovered. For a description of Conlon's personality and methods of operation see B. Sugerman *et al.* (eds), *Alfred Conlon, A Memorial by Some of His Friends* (Benevolent Society of NSW, Sydney, 1963).

124. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, pp.396-405, 497-499. The British had agreed that the Australians would be responsible for civil affairs in North Borneo for six months after the invasion. Cable NOD 75-7, AMSSO to JSM, Washington, 13 May 1945, ADM 116/5355.

125. Interview with Professor W.E.H. Stanner, 4 June 1979.

126. J.R. Kerr, *Matters for Judgment, An Autobiography* (Macmillan, Melbourne, 1978), pp.102, 104. A polemical and poorly researched biography of Kerr has suggested, without evidence, that Kerr initially described the plans as being one of Conlon's 'wild ideas'. Richard Hall, *The Real John Kerr, His Brilliant Career* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1978), pp.57, 58.

127. Stanner to Long, 16 September 1945, Gavin Long Notes, 99, AWM.

128. Stanner interview, 4 June 1979.

There is no evidence that the government had any plan to gain control of North Borneo, but the incident reveals some of the difficulties of allied cooperation. The account in the official history must be balanced by other evidence. In the opinion of the British civil affairs liaison officer at LHQ, Colonel L.M. Taylor, the problem was caused by the fact that the British officers in the BBCAU had previously been civilians with the Colonial Office, and they refused to accept that they were under Blamey's command.¹²⁹ Referring to a senior British officer in Borneo, Taylor reported to the War Office:

If any mistake has been made by the Australians, it has been the showing of a tenderness to UK officers generally and to this officer in particular, in sending him to Borneo in the first instance, and then in overlooking many things which would never have been tolerated had he been an Australian officer.¹³⁰

Both the War Office and the Colonial Office expressed satisfaction with the Australian handling of the situation,¹³¹ and the Director of Civil Affairs at the War Office told the Permanent Undersecretary that

the Australians have played exceedingly well in filling the gaps between London planning and operational requirement which only the Commander on the spot could have done.¹³²

Clearly more research must be undertaken before all motives and actions during this episode are understood.

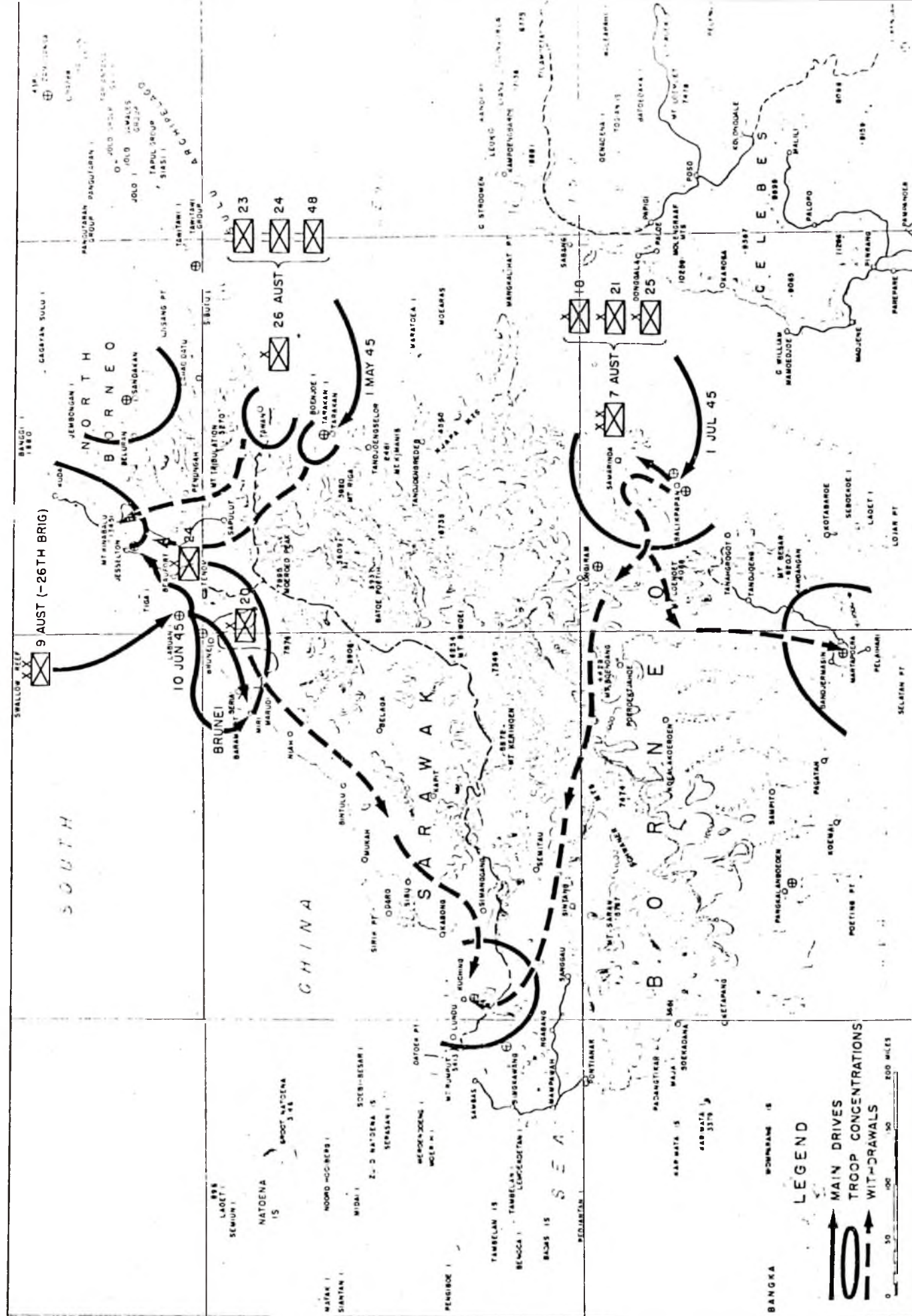
But the details of civil government should not obscure the doubtful value of the strategy. The 26th Australian Brigade landed at Tarakan on 1 May. During the fighting 215 Australians lost their lives, and the airfield

129. Letter, Taylor to Drew (War Office), 22 September 1945, WO 220/49.

130. Letter, Taylor to Drew, 11 October 1945, *loc.cit.*

131. Letter, Sir Frederick Bovenschen to Blamey, 13 July 1945 and other papers in WO 258/77.

132. Memorandum, General Anderson to Sir Frederick Bovenschen, 5 July 1945, *loc.cit.*



MAP 12

The Borneo Operations, May-July 1945.

From: Reports of General MacArthur,

could not be repaired in time to be used for subsequent operations. The landings by the 9th Division at Brunei Bay began on 10 June; 114 Australians were killed and the bay was not used by the British Pacific Fleet.

Criticism of the Operations of the First Australian Army

From October 1944 until July 1945, while discussions were pursued in Hollandia, Leyte, Manila and Canberra over the role of the 1st Australian Corps, the First Australian Army fought a series of grim and unrewarding campaigns which have aroused controversy in succeeding years. The controversy began in the early months of 1945 when Blamey was subjected to severe criticism in both Parliament and the press.¹³³ This criticism took a number of directions, not all of which are pertinent to Australian strategy, but in this respect it was claimed that the Australian troops should have been employed in areas other than New Guinea and the Australian mandated territories, and that in those areas they should not have adopted the offensive. The Australian government's efforts to find employment for the 1st Australian Corps has already been discussed. Although the government supported Blamey and the conduct of the operations in Parliament, the remaining questions are whether the government authorised the offensives, whether they were in accordance with allied (i.e. MacArthur's) strategy, and whether there were any alternatives.

In his order to Blamey of 12 July 1944 MacArthur had directed 'that Australian forces assume the responsibility for the continued neutralization of the Japanese in Australia and British territory and mandates in the Southwest Pacific Area'.¹³⁴ In subsequent discussions MacArthur

133. For an account of the criticism see Long, *The Final Campaigns*, Chapter 3.

134. Memorandum, MacArthur to Blamey, 12 July 1944, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570.

had required Blamey to use substantially more forces than the Australians had considered necessary for the task.¹³⁵

Before the Australans assumed responsibility MacArthur discussed the operations with Curtin. Colonel A.J. Wilson, Shedden's deputy, recorded that MacArthur told Curtin that the 'Australian local commanders would possibly find the garrison duties irksome and might desire to undertake some active operations, but this would be a matter for direction by the Australian authorities'. For the present, the correct policy was 'to garrison the islands and leave the Japanese gradually to waste away'.¹³⁶

MacArthur recalled later that Curtin had said that he was not quite satisfied with the methods suggested by General Blamey. MacArthur had replied that 'if he was doing the job himself, he wouldn't jeopardise a single Australian life in an offensive in these back areas'. He believed, however, that the government had supported the offensive policy.¹³⁷

Gavin Long has claimed that the government was not consulted in advance,¹³⁸ but the above account indicates that Curtin was at least aware of Blamey's intended policy. It is surprising that Curtin did not, at this stage, raise the matter with Blamey. Furthermore, it is surprising that Blamey did not seek to enlist the government's support to reduce the garrison strengths. It should be remembered, however, that during this period Blamey was under pressure to reduce the army's drain on

135. See Chapter Nine. Blamey does not appear to have protested at the increased allocation of troops. Letter, Blamey to MacArthur, 9 August 1944, MP 1217, Box 570.

136. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Canberra, 30 September 1944. MP 1217, Box 3.

137. Letter, Gairdner to Ismay, 30 May 1945, WO 216/137.

138. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.71.

national manpower. Had he secured government support he would certainly have had to also reduce the army manpower intake.¹³⁹ On the other hand Blamey may have seen his disagreement with MacArthur in purely military terms which he preferred to keep out of the political arena. He had displayed this attitude, remarkable in one so forceful and disdainful of politicians, on a number of previous occasions.¹⁴⁰ Some months later, in a letter to R.G. Menzies, Blamey reiterated his approach:

The allocation of Australian troops to operations is entirely the responsibility of General MacArthur and I have no real say in the matter beyond carrying out the orders I receive. While I have pretty strong feelings on certain of these allocations, I have no right to criticise them.¹⁴¹

In October 1944, soon after Curtin's meeting with MacArthur, the Prime Minister became seriously ill, and did not resume work until February 1945.¹⁴² No evidence has been discovered to indicate that he either explained the policy to the Advisory War Council, or directed Blamey to alter the policy. Nevertheless, the CGS did not give some indication to the Council. On 14 March he said that the Australian strength on Bougainville was being built up 'for a move against the enemy',¹⁴³ and on 21 March he said that since November there had been 1,108 Australian casualties in the Solomons and New Guinea.¹⁴⁴

139. For evidence of this assertion see Appendix 8.

140. For example, in the discussions before the expedition to Greece in 1941, and in Blamey's acceptance of the direction to take command in New Guinea in September 1942.

141. Blamey to Menzies, 1 March 1945, Blamey Papers 136.21.

142. F.M. Forde was officially Acting Prime Minister from 13 November to 22 January.

143. Advisory War Council Minute 1496, Canberra, 14 March 1945, CRS A 2682, Vol.VIII.

144. Advisory War Council Minute 1500, Canberra, 21 March 1945, *loc.cit.*

Despite the tacit agreement of the Prime Minister, Blamey was aware of the sensitive nature of his offensive policy. His Operation Instruction of 18 October ordered General Sturdee, commanding the First Army, 'By offensive action to destroy enemy resistance as opportunity offers without committing major forces'. Sturdee had difficulty interpreting this order, particularly the restriction on 'committing major forces', and he sought Blamey's advice, pointing out that on Bougainville there were 'signs of commanders spoiling, quite laudably, for an all in fight with the resources at their disposal'.¹⁴⁵ Blamey hedged the question. 'My conception', he wrote on 7 November, 'is that action must be of a gradual nature'. Sturdee was to initiate patrol action to gain information. If the operation of light forces led to the conclusion that larger operations were necessary, Blamey was to be consulted.¹⁴⁶

Yet there was no doubt what Blamey meant, and he said later, 'As soon as we landed we commenced aggressive operations'.¹⁴⁷ General Barham, who was Blamey's chief operational staff officer, recalled that he wrote numerous orders, but all were rejected by Blamey because they explicitly ordered an offensive. Yet when Blamey saw Sturdee and his commanders he personally ordered offensive operations.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless,

145. Letter, Sturdee to Blamey, 31 October 1944, Blamey Papers 30.2.

146. Letter, Blamey to Sturdee, 7 November 1944, *loc.cit.*

147. Commander-in-Chief Press Conference, 9 July 1945, Blamey Papers 139.3. After an interview with Blamey on 9 August 1944 General Lumsden recorded that the Bougainville garrison would 'adopt a more offensive attitude and eliminate the estimated 10,000 Japs still existing on the island'. Notes on an Interview with General Blamey, 9 August 1944, CAB 127/33. There were in fact almost 40,000 Japanese on the island. On 1 October 1944 Lumsden reported that the Australian force on Bougainville would 'adopt a more offensive role and in due course eliminate the Japanese garrison'. The force at Aitape would 'neutralise and finally destroy the remnants of the 18th Japanese Army at present concentrated about Wewak. Notes of Projected Operations, PREM 3 159/5.

148. Barham interview, 12 December 1978.

From: Reports of General MacArthur,

until the Australian forces had been built up, an offensive could not be contemplated, and therefore the government could be excused if it thought that the low level operations between October 1944 and March 1945 were all that Blamey intended. Berryman later described the change in policy:

When the Australians took over from the Americans ... their original role was one of defence, as it was not the policy of the Australian First Army command to suffer casualties ...

It was not until the end of March that the defence policy was altered and facilities were made available to the 6th Division to put into operation the plan which led to the capture of Wewak, and not until early in April that the Australians in Bougainville were let off the leash.¹⁴⁹

There is no evidence that the government was informed of this change in policy at the time.

After the Australians took over from the American garrison units, MacArthur lost interest in the First Australian Army, which by GHQ's reckoning came directly under their command, not Blamey's. Thus incidentally, on a technical point, Blamey had no direct responsibility for the conduct of operations by the First Army. MacArthur did not renew his interest in the First Army until 20 February, when he requested the use of the 6th Australian Division and suggested withdrawing troops from the Solomons.¹⁵⁰ It seems more than coincidence that this request came only four days after MacArthur's communique announced that, 'for all strategic purposes this [the capture of Green Island] completes the campaign for the Solomon Islands'.¹⁵¹

149. GHQ 'Spokesman' quoted in Melbourne *Herald*, 1 August 1945. Berryman Diary, 30 July 1945, indicates that Berryman was the spokesman.

150. Signal B 239, Berryman to Blamey, 20 February 1945, Berryman Papers. See above p.448.

151. GHQ SWPA Communique No.677, 16 February 1944, MP 1217, Box 570.

It will be recalled that Curtin had written to MacArthur informing him that the 6th Division was not available but that he had promised to consult further with Blamey after the latter's visit to Manila. On 5 April Blamey advised Curtin not to release the 6th Division,¹⁵² but before Curtin gave a final answer to MacArthur he wrote to Blamey seeking his assurance that the operations were in accordance with MacArthur's directive of 12 July 1944.¹⁵³

In the meantime the government had drawn criticism that the Australian forces engaged in these operations were insufficiently equipped. Hence on 17 April Curtin wrote to MacArthur seeking his comments. Curtin said that he assumed that the operations were in accordance with MacArthur's directive of 12 July 1944.¹⁵⁴ MacArthur replied the next day:

Forces in Bougainville, New Britain and New Guinea have the mission of neutralising the enemy garrisons that have been isolated. These hostile forces are strategically impotent and are suffering a high rate of natural attrition. Australian forces now engaged are continuing the missions previously assigned American elements. A local commander in such situations has considerable freedom of action as to methods to be employed. The Australian commanders have elected to carry out active operations in effecting neutralisation where other commanders might decide on more passive measures. I consider that the local missions have been carried out with skill and energy and constitute an excellent accomplishment.

He added that the equipment was sufficient for these missions.¹⁵⁵

When MacArthur sent this message he was aware that Curtin was still considering whether to release the 6th Division.

152. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 5 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

153. Letter, Curtin to Blamey, 17 April 1945, *loc. cit.*

154. Letter, Curtin to MacArthur, 23 March 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

155. Signal, MacArthur to Curtin, 18 April 1945 RG4 MacArthur Memorial, also Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

Before the government could react to this message Blamey replied to Curtin's letter of 17 April:

The operations referred to have been discussed fully with General MacArthur. No specific instructions have been given by him in regard to them. It would not be in accordance with the acknowledged system of command if all details of operations were submitted for approval except when specifically required.

The operation of 6th Division could not be carried out without the allocation by General MacArthur of the necessary landing craft which he approved.

It is therefore a proper claim that these operations meet with General MacArthur's approval.¹⁵⁶

It will be recalled that after their disagreement in Manila about the value of these operations MacArthur had made sufficient landing craft available to Blamey to allow the 6th Division to seize Wewak.¹⁵⁷

Paradoxically, with the intention of releasing the 6th Division to MacArthur, Sturdee and Blamey had originally planned for it to complete its task in April.¹⁵⁸ The lack of air and naval support had delayed the operations.

It should be noted that although the Australian force at Aitape lacked air support,¹⁵⁹ the bulk of the 1st Tactical Air Force of the RAAF, based at Morotai under American command, was not being fully utilised. A number of RAAF officers at Morotai felt so keenly about this misuse of their unit that they applied to resign.¹⁶⁰ Although

156. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 19 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

157. See p.460.

158. Letter, Sturdee to Blamey, 7 March 1945, Blamey Papers 30.2.

159. The *Beauforts* at Aitape had no bombs for a fortnight and had to use captured Japanese bombs. General Sturdee wrote to Blamey on 7 May 1945 that this was 'just another example of RAAF bad administration'. Blamey Papers.

160. For an account of this incident see Odgers, *op.cit.*, Ch.26.

the discontent at Morotai was linked to the general question of whether the operations by the Australian forces were militarily justifiable, it seems likely that the airmen would have felt happier giving greater support to Australian troops rather than raiding Japanese barges in the Netherlands East Indies.

Curtin was 'somewhat concerned about the reservations which appeared to be indicated in' MacArthur's reply, and wanted to discuss that matter personally with MacArthur¹⁶¹ but he again fell ill, and with Forde and Evatt overseas, the Treasurer, J.B. Chifley, became Acting Prime Minister. On 7 May Chifley wrote to MacArthur and informed him that in view of his supply of landing craft for operations by the 6th Australian Division it was assumed that the operation met with his approval. The subsequent use of the 6th Division was to be decided in further discussions between Blamey and MacArthur.¹⁶²

MacArthur replied on 20 May and repeated his earlier statements that although he thought the operations were 'unnecessary and wasteful of lives and resources' it was a matter for the Australian commanders:

When in spite of this the operation was undertaken this headquarters insofar as possible met requests for its support, and it was in pursuance thereof that the boats to which you refer were assigned. You are in error in construing such routine action as an approval of the undertaking of the operation.

I and my headquarters have never favoured it, and while its execution has been successful and efficient in every way and worthy of every praise, I regard its initiation as having been unnecessary and inadvisable.¹⁶³

161. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 21 July 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

162. Quoted in MacArthur to Chifley, 20 May 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

163. *Ibid.* MacArthur later told Shedden that when Blamey had asked for the ships he assumed that the government had agreed to the operation. GHQ had queried the operation but MacArthur had felt that it could not be allowed to fail and had provided the requirements. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with General MacArthur, Tokyo, May 1946, MP 1217, Box 3.

The operations also met criticism from another quarter, for in April the Acting Minister for the Army, Senator J.M. Fraser, visited New Guinea. Fraser was critical of the operations, which he claimed, were wasteful of lives because there was insufficient air and sea support. He concluded that

such battle operations should not have been undertaken, except under necessity, until complete fighting, mechanical, engineering and small craft equipment ... had been transported to the operational bases and were available for use.¹⁶⁴

Chifley did not agree completely with Fraser, and reminded him that MacArthur was responsible for the operations. Furthermore in Parliament on 24 April Curtin had defended the operations.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless Chifley agreed to request Blamey to give his views on the paragraph quoted above.¹⁶⁶ Thus on 7 May Chifley wrote to Blamey that although the government had accepted responsibility for the operation a stage had 'now been reached at which the Government should have fuller information in regard to your plans for the future use of the Australian Forces'. Blamey was requested to attend a War Cabinet meeting as soon as was convenient.¹⁶⁷

In one sense Blamey took Fraser's comments lightly. After all, much of Fraser's criticism concerned the Wewak campaign and Blamey received Chifley's letter with Fraser's observations on 12 May, in Lae, one day after Wewak was captured.¹⁶⁸ But in another sense Blamey was furious. Fraser had not discussed his criticism with Blamey, nor, he

164. Observations of Acting Minister for the Army, 18 April 1945, attached to letter, Chifley to Blamey, 7 May 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

165. Curtin said: 'The Government accepts full responsibility for the operations that are being carried out. 'Speech by PM', MP 1217, Box 570.

166. Observations of Acting Prime Minister, Blamey Papers 23.11.

167. Letter, Chifley to Blamey, 7 May 1945, *loc. cit.*

168. Berryman Diary, 12, 13 March 1945.

Blamey and Berryman
visit Major-General
J.S. Stevens, GOC
of the 6th Division,
during the Aitape-
Wewak campaign, 14
June 1945.

(AWM Negative
No.93115)



Senator J.M. Fraser, the
Acting Minister for the Army,
arriving at Soraken plantation,
Bougainville, April 1945.

(AWM Negative No.18395)

Troops of the 7th
Division landing at
Balikpapan, 1 July
1945. 'The
wreckage that had
been Balikpapan was
of no value to
anybody except the
scrap-metal traders'.

(AWM Negative
No.18812)



said, even with the CGS who had accompanied him.¹⁶⁹ Blamey wrote later that 'ministerial ineptitude reached an all time low' during Fraser's period as Acting Minister.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless Blamey ordered Berryman to prepare a reply for the Acting Prime Minister.¹⁷¹

Blamey's Forward Planning

Although most of MacArthur's forces were involved in operations in the Philippines, New Guinea, the Solomons and Borneo, the invasion of Okinawa by Pacific Ocean Area forces on 1 May 1945 meant that all of MacArthur's current operations lost any prime strategic importance, for the seizure of airfields on Okinawa effectively cut any remaining link between Japan and the occupied territories to the south. This, however, did not unduly worry MacArthur. After all, on 3 April the Joint Chiefs had ordered him to concentrate on the invasion of Japan,¹⁷² his plans ensured that most of his American forces would be released from their 'mopping up' operations in time for the invasion, and the

169. Fraser later wrote that he did confer with Northcott, 'who naturally confined his advice to the operational role of our forces in the local areas and refrained from comment on the directive of the Supreme Command'. Fraser to Chifley, 2 June 1945, MP 1217, Box 587.

170. Blamey Memoirs. At one stage Fraser ordered Brigadier Lemaire not to leave Australia until he understood the reasons for his appointment to 1 Australia Base Sub Area. When he heard of this Blamey, who was at Morotai, instructed the CGS that under the power vested in him as Commander-in-Chief he ordered Lemaire forward; he would explain to the Minister when he returned to Australia. Berryman Diary, 23 June 1945; Signal Z 1775 Blamey to Northcott, 23 June 1945, Blamey Papers 23.2. On 13 June 1945 Northcott wrote to Blamey: 'The Minister is becoming more and more difficult over many of these matters which are now coming up for consideration, and the result is we are getting endless detailed questions from him regarding everything that is submitted by us'. Blamey Papers 23.12. See also letter, Blamey to Minister for the Army, 18 July 1945, Blamey Papers, DRL 6643, item 46.

171. Berryman Diary, 12 May 1945.

172. See p.463.

liberation of the Philippines and the NEI would contribute to American status. The Australians received first notice of these plans for the invasion of Japan when Berryman and Morshead met MacArthur in Manila on 19 April. MacArthur said that he hoped to use the three AIF divisions for the operations against Japan and trusted that Blamey would support his request to the Prime Minister. He was planning on landing on Kyushu (Operation Olympic) on 1 October 1945, and on Honshu (Coronet) early in 1946. He proposed to use the AIF for Coronet, but the Australians would have to use American weapons and supplies. MacArthur 'stressed the advantage to [Australian] national prestige and said it was unthinkable that the AIF should be separated from the U.S. forces after they had been fighting together for three and a half years'. If the RAN were still under his command, MacArthur said that he would hoist his flag in an RAN ship for Coronet or Olympic.¹⁷³

During April the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington began discussing the transfer of responsibility for the SWPA to the British.¹⁷⁴ The British were not enthusiastic, fearing that they would find themselves in control of an area but without the resources to carry out operations. They noted that the details of resources would have to be worked out in consultation with the Australians,¹⁷⁵ but Australia's views were not, at this stage, officially sought.¹⁷⁶

The British proposed two alternative courses. One, SEAC to take control of Borneo and Java and to set up a new, mainly Australian, Command

173. Berryman Diary, 19 April 1945. Letter BDO/50, Berryman to Blamey, 20 April 1945, Berryman Papers.

174. For an account of these discussions see Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, Chapter VI, and Hayes, *op.cit.*, pp.365-374.

175. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.229.

176. When the British representative in Washington, Field Marshal Wilson, sought details of Australian plans from General Lavarack, the head of the Australian military mission in Washington, Blamey informed Lavarack that since the Australian forces were under MacArthur's command, the information would have to come from him. Cables Lavarack to Blamey, 6 April 1945, Blamey to Lavarack, 18 April 1945, Blamey Papers 6.1.

to the east; or two, to form a new South-West Pacific Command embracing all of the old SWPA less the Philippines.¹⁷⁷ Blamey received a garbled account of these proposals from General Smart who said that the discussions were of a 'delicate nature' and that the message was for Blamey's 'personal information only'.¹⁷⁸ In his reply to Smart Blamey stressed the great distances involved, and conscious of the lack of interest shown by GHQ in Manila in the operations of the First Army, he warned of the danger of setting up large geographic areas.¹⁷⁹

It is probable that Blamey discussed these proposals when he met MacArthur in Manila on 4 May, for the following day Brigadier Barham was ordered to work out an order of battle for a corps of two divisions and a separate reinforced division. The orders of battle were to be based in one case on operating with the Americans and in another case with the British.¹⁸⁰ A little later Barham submitted a paper to Berryman detailing how with existing strengths, the Australian garrison force, covering the Solomons, New Britain, New Guinea, and Borneo could be reduced to two divisions, leaving three divisions for an expeditionary force.¹⁸¹

The surrender of Germany on 7 May made it even more important that Australia should begin planning for the final phase of the operations against Japan. With these considerations in mind, on 16 May Blamey outlined for the Acting Minister for the Army, the effects on the

177. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, pp.230, 231.

178. Quoted in signal GS 31902, Northcott to Blamey, 30 April 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

179. Signal Z 1645, Blamey to Smart, 3 May 1945, *loc.cit.*

180. Berryman Diary, 4, 5 May 1945.

181. Letter, Barham to Berryman, 10 May 1945, AWM 721/12/6. Further relevant papers were 'Forecast of Situation Borneo and NEI as at 31 August 1945' by Lieut-Colonel Finlay, 24 April 1945, 'Organisation of AIF for Mobile Operations', by Lieut-Colonel E.S. Eyres, 27 April 1945, and a memorandum by Colonel A.G. Wilson, 29 April 1945, *loc.cit.*

Australian Army. In relation to the Australian population he believed that Australia should contribute three divisions. This could only be achieved by continuing the offensives in the Wewak area and on Bougainville, for once the Japanese in these areas had been destroyed as organised forces the Australian forces there could be reduced.

Of the force of three divisions, two would be occupied in New Guinea and one would be available to MacArthur. Blamey added that MacArthur would be glad to receive any organisation which may be allotted by the Australian government, and this force would probably reach Japan. He also suggested allotting a 'token force' to the South-East Asia Command 'to ensure that Australia is represented in the operation' to regain Singapore. Blamey recognised that the question as to where the Australian forces should be employed and in what strength was not a strategic question, but 'purely a political one for determination by the Australian Government'.

Until the plans of the Combined Chiefs of Staff were received there was little that the Australians could do, but Blamey was concerned that if the 7th Division were committed to the Balikpapan operation, scheduled for 1 July, then Australia would be committed to a 'very large garrison'. He therefore recommended that the 7th Division should be withdrawn from the operation.¹⁸²

Blamey was not willing to go into 'the merits or demerits' of the operation, but in his letter to Curtin on 5 April he had disagreed with the advance down the east coast of Borneo. Indeed the Corps Commander, the 7th Division Commander, and the navy and airforce commanders

182. Letter, Blamey to Fraser, 16 May 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11. Also MP 729/7, item 38/422/704. When Blamey sent the letter Berryman said to him: 'Don't you think you are putting the Government in a spot? MacArthur has all the forces ready to do this operation and I don't think the Government has any choice but to go on with it'. Hetherington, *op.cit.*, p.365.

all expressed the view that the Balikpapan operation lacked 'any real object'.¹⁸³

Chifley and the Acting Minister for Defence, Beasley, immediately put Blamey's suggestion to MacArthur,¹⁸⁴ who replied promptly.

The Borneo Campaign in all its phases has been ordered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff who are charged by the Combined Chiefs of Staff with the responsibility for strategy in the Pacific. I am responsible for execution of their directives employing such troops as have been made available to me by the Governments participating in the Allied agreement. Pursuant to the directive of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and under authority vested in me as Supreme Commander Southwest Pacific Area, I have ordered the 7th Division to proceed to a forward concentration area and, on a specific date, to execute one phase of the Borneo Campaign.

Australian authorities have been kept fully advised of my operational plans. The concentration is in progress and it is not now possible to substitute another division and execute the operation as scheduled. The attack will be made as projected unless the Australian Government withdraws the 7th Division from assignment to the Southwest Pacific Area. I am loath to believe that your Government contemplates such action at this time when the preliminary phases of the operation have been initiated and when withdrawal would disorganise completely not only the immediate campaign but also the strategic plan of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If the Australian Government however does contemplate action along this line, I request that I be informed immediately in order that I may be able to make the necessary representations to Washington and London.

With reference to General Blamey's fears regarding additional garrison commitments, I have been informed that the Australian Government has agreed to undertake to equip and train a number of Dutch battalions. I had anticipated that those elements, when available, would garrison Dutch territory. There are no specific plans so far as I know for employment of Australian troops after the Borneo campaign. The subject of operations in the Pacific is now under intense consideration in Washington and London. I do not know whether Australian troops are contemplated for use to the north.

Consideration is being given by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to a proposal to turn over to Great Britain

183. Letter, Barham to Berryman, 2 June 1945, Berryman Papers.

184. Signal, Chifley to MacArthur, 20 May 1945, MP 1217, Box 570, File No.2.

full responsibility for that part of the Southwest Pacific Area which lies south of the Philippines. In that event undoubtedly all Australian formations would come under British Command for ensuing operations to the South. Your manpower problems are appreciated in this.¹⁸⁵

There is a certain irony in this statement. It will be recalled that the Joint Chiefs had agreed to the Balikpapan operation only because MacArthur had said that not to carry it would 'produce grave repercussions with the Australian government and people'.¹⁸⁶ Now the Australians were being told that it had to be carried out because it had been ordered by the Joint Chiefs. Had the operation been cancelled it is hard to see how it would have disorganised completely 'the strategic plan of the Joint Chiefs'. MacArthur's threat to make representations to Washington and London must be seen as a bluff. His last paragraph would appear to repudiate his promise to Berryman that the AIF divisions would accompany him to Japan.

The use of the 7th Division was discussed when Blamey met the War Cabinet in Canberra on 22 May. Without going into his own opinions, Blamey made it clear that his concern was with bringing Australia's contribution in the Pacific on to a relatively comparable basis to that of the United Kingdom and the US. Curtin, who was in hospital, was consulted,¹⁸⁷ and the War Cabinet Minute noted that the Prime Minister, the Acting Prime Minister and the Acting Minister for Defence 'considered

185. Quoted in teleprinter message 1238, Shedden to Fraser and Blamey, Blamey Papers 23.11. Also MP 729/7, item 38/422/704; MP 1217, Box 570, file No.2.

186. MacArthur to Marshall, 12 April 1945, see p.464.

187. On 21 July 1945 Shedden wrote to MacArthur: Curtin's 'last administrative act relating to the war was on 20th May when I mentioned to him my anxiety that the Government should give you a re-assuring reply on the use of the 7th Division in Borneo. It was a Sunday and the Ministers were scattered in various parts of the Commonwealth, but he had no hesitation in approving the reply that was sent'. Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

that the use of the Division, as planned by General MacArthur, should be agreed to, and that he had [already] been advised accordingly'. This action was endorsed by the War Cabinet.¹⁸⁸

Thus the Balikpapan operation went ahead on 1 July. A total of 229 Australians were killed and 634 were wounded. Japan did not surrender one minute earlier as a result of this action. Gavin Long has summed up the Borneo operations:

the operations in Borneo in 1945, which MacArthur approved, are open to criticism on similar grounds [to those on Bougainville and at Aitape-Wewak] ... the airfield at Tarakan was not useful, the British Pacific Fleet did not need Brunei Bay, and the wreckage that had been Balikpapan was of no value to anybody except the scrap-metal traders.¹⁸⁹

Blamey's Offensive Policy

Before Blamey had received Chifley's letter of 7 May requesting an explanation of his operations, the landing of the 26th Brigade at Tarakan on 1 May and the seizure of Wewak on 11 May, had begun to defuse the criticism of the operations.¹⁹⁰ The criticism is revealed, therefore, to have been based more on emotion and politics than on a carefully reasoned military appreciation.

188. War Cabinet Minute 4194, Canberra, 22 May 1945, CRS A 2671, item 209/1945. On 4 July, after the landing, the Advisory War Council discussed the strategic value of the operation. It seems that not all members of the Council were convinced of its strategic value. Advisory War Council Minute 1579, Canberra, 4 July 1945, CRS A 2682, Vol.VIII. In a teleprinter message, (no.CS 2326) to Shedden the following evening, Quealy, the Council minute secretary, said that there was 'a long and uncomfortable discussion about the position of the Government and the council in relation to information on the general strategic plan of General MacArthur, with special reference to the Balikpapan operation'. Fadden, Page and Spender were not critical, but were not happy. MP 1217, Box 587.

189. Gavin Long, Review of E.G. Keogh, *Southwest Pacific 1941-45*, in *Australia Army Journal*, November 1965.

190. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.63.

Nevertheless, it remained for the government to scrutinise Blamey's policy. Blamey replied to Chifley on 18 May and keenly attacked Senator Fraser's view that the operations should not have been undertaken.

In dealing with the enemy it is a completely new theory that he should not be brought to battle and destroyed as soon as possible, provided the means for that destruction are adequate. I must reject any other theory of war and any commander, who is prepared to remain with superior forces, equipped to a degree greatly superior to that of the enemy, and who does not bring him to battle rapidly, is deserving of censure.¹⁹¹

Accompanying Blamey's four-page typed letter was a further seven-page appreciation of the operations.¹⁹²

It seems that Blamey had over-reacted to Fraser's letter, which, if read carefully, shows that Fraser did 'not cast any reflection on the tactics of General Blamey' but rather was anxious 'to ensure that the operations that the Government had directed to be undertaken were supported to the fullest' extent.¹⁹³ Indeed Fraser later told Chifley that he believed that the operations were 'fully justified'.¹⁹⁴ Fraser's letter was an attack on Blamey's administration, not his tactics, and in his opinion the cause of the administrative shortcomings was Blamey's occupancy of the position of Commander-in-Chief, whereby he was responsible for both administration and operations.

Blamey's role had, in fact, formed a major part of Fraser's letter of 18 April to Chifley, but that particular part had not been circulated or sent to Blamey for comment. Fraser had included a letter from a

191. Letter, Blamey to Chifley, 18 May 1945, Berryman Papers. This letter is reproduced in Appendix 12.

192. *Ibid.* The appreciation was substantially the same as that written by Berryman. The letter was entirely different from Berryman's draft which was milder in tone.

193. Letter, Fraser to Chifley, 2 June 1945, MP 1217, Box 587.

194. *Ibid.*

Chaplain at Jacquinot Bay which stated that the troops had no confidence in Blamey:

They trust neither his abilities or his motives. Many are convinced that his personal ambitions have over-riden^(as) any sense of justice and fair play that he may possess.

... at the showing of the Army Christmas film, in which General Blamey spoke to the troops, there were loud jeers, derisive hoots, catcalls, and such comments as 'Get back to your brothels Blamey'.¹⁹⁵

Fraser reported that his own investigations confirmed these views, and he said that Blamey's dual position was 'a very heavy responsibility for one man to be required to undertake'.¹⁹⁶

Chifley replied that Forde had already suggested the reintroduction of the Military Board but that Curtin had decided 'in view of the operations plans, that the matter should be considered again at the end of the next phase'.¹⁹⁷ Chifley also pointed out that Fraser was 'entirely incorrect' in referring to 'operations that the Government had directed to be undertaken'. Rather, responsibility for the operations was vested in General MacArthur, although it was true that the government could withhold troops from operations with which it did not agree.¹⁹⁸

It is apparent, therefore, that not only Blamey, but also Chifley, had been slightly misled as to the thrust of Fraser's original letter. Nevertheless the main consequence was Blamey's lengthy appreciation which was presented to the War Cabinet on 22 May 1945. At the meeting Blamey stated that 'MacArthur was in complete agreement with his plans

195. In fairness, an opposite picture should be presented. Berryman wrote to his wife that Blamey was cheered by the soldiers when he visited Torokina. Berryman Papers.

196. Letter, Fraser to Prime Minister, 18 April 1945, MP 1217, Box 587.

197. Letter, Chifley to Fraser, 28 May 1945, *loc.cit.*

198. Letter, Chifley to Fraser, 30 May 1945, *loc.cit.*

for operations'.¹⁹⁹ Blamey did not consider that the enemy forces were 'strategically impotent' as stated by MacArthur, since they were still operating as organised forces with adequate supplies.²⁰⁰

Although the War Cabinet Minute did not signify that the government approved of Blamey's policy, Shedden told the Prime Minister that:

In so far as the general question of strategy is concerned it is considered that General Blamey has made a very sound case in justification of the operations which he has been carrying out.²⁰¹

Blamey's appreciation was scrutinised again when he met the Advisory War Council on 6 June, and although his appreciation was attacked by two of the non-government members, the Council finally agreed to the objectives he had outlined.²⁰²

Gavin Long has criticised the military aspects of Blamey's appreciation, pointing out that if the policy had resulted in a release of troops it would have been difficult to employ them.²⁰³ In this respect Long appears to have overlooked the fact that Blamey was not to know that the war was to finish in August, and that Blamey's policies were aimed at reducing the army from six to three divisions and to make one of those divisions available to MacArthur. Long has also criticised Blamey's contention that the morale and health of the Australian troops

199. MacArthur said that Blamey had 'inferred' that he had approved of the policy. MacArthur 'considered that this was less than a half truth which gave, and purposely gave a completely wrong impression'. Letter, Gairdner to Ismay, 30 May 1945, WO 216/137 and CAB 127/31.

200. War Cabinet Minute 4194, Canberra 22 May 1945, CRS A 2671, item 209/1945.

201. Notes on W.C. Agendum No.209/1945, 22 May 1945, MP 1217, Box 570, file No.3.

202. Advisory War Council Minute 1550, CRS A 2682, item Volume VIII. See also CRS A 2670, item 21/1945, which contains a copy of Blamey's appreciation.

203. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.71. A number of senior officers interviewed by the author agree that the offensives were a waste of lives. When it was put to one senior officer that if troops were not to be idle, the organisation detailed by MacArthur forced the offensive upon Blamey, he agreed in part. But he then raised the relevant question as to why Blamey should have followed the organisation detailed by MacArthur.

would deteriorate if not involved in an offensive.²⁰⁴

Long argues that Blamey should have sought the direction of the government before deciding that there was a political necessity for the offensive.²⁰⁵ The propriety of Blamey's judgment, which he was neither authorised nor competent to make, but which was supported retrospectively by the government, is not the concern of this work. However it is emphasised that had Blamey disregarded the political implications, and in absence of advice from the government made his plans purely according to military principles, he would surely have been condemned by many critics. Given the paternalistic attitudes of the government and its advisers at the time, the aim of the operations as stated by Blamey seemed unchallengeable.²⁰⁶

Just as it is necessary [he wrote] to destroy the Japanese in the Philippines, so it is necessary that we should destroy the enemy in Australian territories where the conditions are favourable for such action, and so liberate the natives from Japanese domination. Were we to wait until Japan was finally crushed, it could be said that the Americans, who had previously liberated the Philippines, were responsible for the final liberation of the natives in Australian territories, with the inevitable result that our prestige both abroad and in the eyes of the natives would suffer much harm.²⁰⁷

Historians and anthropologists have, in subsequent years disputed the value of these operations to liberate the natives,²⁰⁸ but it is noticeable that an Angau officer, Peter Ryan, with first hand knowledge of the situation, has been ambivalent regarding the question:

204. *Ibid.*

205 *Ibid.*

206. J. Robertson, 'Australian War Policy 1939-1945', *Historical Studies*, Vol.17, No.69, October 1977.

207. Appreciation on Operations of the AMF in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands, 18 May 1945, Berryman Papers.

208. Mrs J.M. Herlihy, Department of Human Geography, ANU, interview, 27 February 1979; Dr H.N. Nelson, Department of Pacific and South East Asian History, ANU, March 1970. Professor W.E.H. Stanner, Department of Pre-history and Anthropology, ANU, and a war-time member of the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs, says he 'basically agrees' with Blamey's policies. Interview, 4 June 1979.

it is probably now beyond the wit of man to judge whether, on balance over all the areas involved, the native people suffered more or less from the policy pursued.²⁰⁹

The international reasons for continuing the operations were equally persuasive. At various stages during the war Americans in both official and unofficial positions spoke of securing economic advantages in, and sometimes even annexing the areas liberated by their troops.²¹⁰ Furthermore, Curtin and some members of his Cabinet felt that 'a continued fighting role would strengthen their position in the coming peace treaty negotiations'.²¹¹

The role of Conlon and the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs should not be overlooked. Conlon influenced Blamey, Curtin and the Minister for External Territories, E.J. Ward, into anticipating a wider and more powerful Australian presence in the Pacific.²¹² Conlon

209. P. Ryan, 'World War II' in P. Ryan (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Papua and New Guinea* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1972), p.1222.

210. Thorne, *op.cit.*, p.536. The *Chicago Tribune* urged that territories reconquered from the Japanese should become US property. *Argus*, 13 July 1943.

211. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p.1222. At a History of Australian Foreign Policy and Defence seminar in July 1978, Mr Charles Grimshaw of Queensland University recalled meeting Evatt during the war. Evatt had assured Grimshaw, as a young soldier, that he was the man responsible for continuing the operations in New Guinea.

212. J.K. Murray, 'In Retrospect 1945-1952: Papua New Guinea and Territory of Papua and New Guinea', in Second Waigani Seminar, *The History of Melanesia* (Canberra, 1968), p.177. Murray said Conlon 'influenced directly' the formulation of New Guinea policy. In a letter to Blamey on 20 October 1944 the Minister for External Territories, Ward, requested the services of Conlon to be Chairman of the Australian Territories Research Council. Blamey Papers, DRL 6643, item 92. Also Stanner interview, 4 June 1979. On 12 April 1944 Blamey wrote to Morshead that Conlon was 'the instrument of continuous liaison between the Commander-in-Chief and the Minister and between Army and the Department of External Territories'. Morshead Papers 101/11, AWM.

approached New Guinea from not just a position of local Australian administration, but with an international view fuelled by reports from DORCA officers visiting or on courses in Britain and America. Nevertheless Blamey still saw the subject from a defence point of view, for, as he wrote to the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction:

The Australian external territories are not only undeveloped dependent areas, they are also Australia's defence rampart.²¹³

The government's approach to this issue reveals its general attitude to strategic matters. Initially it had taken little interest in the details of the strategy, preferring to leave it all to MacArthur.

Indeed Curtin emphasised this approach when he said in Parliament:

I make no pretence to being, in any way, a strategist in defence matters. I have a plain and simple rule to which I have adhered. It is that in all matters relating to the operational direction of the war, the sole responsibility shall rest upon the High Command. The duty of the Government consists in allocating to the High Command such forces as it seeks and such equipment as it calls for.²¹⁴

The episode emphasised that the Australian government had little capacity for making strategic decisions where they concerned national policy.

Nevertheless, MacArthur's reply to the government on 20 May stating that it was in error in construing the provision of landing craft as an approval of the operation,²¹⁵ was deeply disturbing.²¹⁶ Clearly Chifley did not know quite what to do.²¹⁷ Perhaps he was hampered by the fact

213. Letter, Blamey to Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, 12 June 1944, Blamey Papers 27.

214. Parliamentary Debates, 11 February 1943.

215. MacArthur to Chifley, 20 May 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

216. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 21 July 1945, *loc.cit.*

217. He was confused by Fraser's first letter which seemed to imply that the operations were wrong. Subsequent letters from Fraser made it clear that he was in favour of the operations but was concerned that the troops should have the maximum available support and equipment. Chifley to Fraser, 28 May 1945; Fraser to Chifley, 30 June 1945, MP 1217, Box 587.

that he was only Acting Prime Minister. But eventually, on 21 July, soon after he became Prime Minister, and two months after MacArthur's letter, he replied.²¹⁸ The letter, which expressed the views of the late Prime Minister, began by reminding MacArthur that as Commander-in-Chief SWPA he was responsible for the operation of the forces assigned to him. The only right possessed by Australia was to withhold forces. Thus the government had worked on the assumption that 'even within the limits of discretion allowed subordinate commanders, their plans would be subject to your broad approval'.

Chifley then pointed out that since MacArthur had left Australia the government had 'not been fully and continuously in touch with all variations in your plans'. For example, MacArthur's letter of 5 March was the first knowledge the government received of the variation to plans for the employment of the Australian forces in the Philippines.

When the Australian Forces became more active against the Japanese in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands, it appeared reasonable and logical to the Government for it to assume that there must have been some variation in the views expressed by you to the Prime Minister in Canberra, and that the exercise of the freedom of action of a local Commander referred to in your reply of 19th April would be vetoed by you by virtue of your powers as Commander-in-Chief, if the operations undertaken by him did not meet with your approval.

I regret to say that the Government is greatly embarrassed by your reply. It has publicly defended the wisdom of these operations...²¹⁹

Thus in the strongest letter written by an Australian Prime Minister to MacArthur, Chifley acknowledged that the Australian government had

218. Accompanying Chifley's letter was an explanatory letter from Shedden stating that Curtin had been concerned at MacArthur's reply and that he had hoped to arrange a personal discussion. Shedden stated that Chifley's letter expressed Curtin's viewpoint and that the only people aware of the letter were Chifley and himself. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 21 July 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

219. Letter, Chifley to MacArthur, 21 July 1945, *loc.cit.*

abdicated strategic responsibility. Ten days later the government informed Blamey that his objectives had been approved,²²⁰ but by then the war was almost over.²²¹ No reply was received from MacArthur.²²² The lessons, however, were not lost on Chifley in the discussions with Britain and America over the invasion and surrender of Japan.

220. Letter, Beasley to Blamey, 31 July 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11. MP 1217, Box 570, file No.3. Shedden had become concerned at the delay in informing Blamey, and on 20 June he told one of his assistants: 'We should inform General Blamey of the decision which was reached [at War Cabinet on 22 May] and insure ourselves against any deviation from the future plan'. Shedden to Quealy, 20 June 1945, MP 1217, Box 570, file No.3.

221. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.69, suggests that Blamey did not see the letter until 14 August, the day on which Japan accepted the terms of surrender.

222. At least no reply has been found in the Shedden, MacArthur or Sutherland Papers or in the GHQ Historical Record Card Index.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AN OCCUPATION FORCE FOR JAPAN, 1945-1946

Australian Proposals for a Reduced War Effort

Throughout 1944 and the first part of 1945 the Chiefs of Staff and General Blamey had resisted vigorously the government's attempts to release men from the Services. While Blamey fought a skilled administrative action to retain the army's numbers,¹ the decisive factor, in early 1945, had been MacArthur's advice that he intended to use all of the Australian units assigned to him.² Furthermore, to secure greater Australian influence some members of the government had been keen for Australian troops to take part in the offensive against Japan.

By mid 1945, however, the situation had changed. The defeat of Germany brought announcements from Britain, Canada, and America that their forces were to be reduced, and it also resulted in plans for a greater British and American effort in the Pacific. At Yalta, in February, Russia had agreed to enter the war against Japan about three months after the defeat of Germany. The American landing at Okinawa on 1 May meant that the Australian campaigns underway in and projected for Borneo could add little more to the defeat of Japan than the controversial offensives in the New Guinea Mandated Territories.

At home, in Australia, the Acting Prime Minister, J.B. Chifley, was more committed to social reform than had been the now seriously ill Curtin,³ who had determined to remain loyal to MacArthur and the agreement

1. For most of this period the brunt of the battle with the politicians was fought by the CGS, General Northcott, and the Adjutant-General, General C.E.M. Lloyd. The LGA, General Wynter, who had also been involved, died in early 1945, and his position of LGA then ceased to exist.

2. Advisory War Council Minute 1503, Canberra, 21 March 1945, CRS A2682, Vol.VIII.

3. For a biography of Chifley see L.F. Crisp, *Ben Chifley* (Longmans, Melbourne, 1960). Had Curtin not been ill he too would have had to concentrate more on social reform, but may not have moved as quickly as Chifley.

signed when the strategic situation was vastly different. The aggressively nationalistic Dr Evatt and Curtin's nominal deputy, F.M. Forde, were both in San Francisco at the conference to establish the United Nations. The added burden of the British Pacific Fleet made it increasingly important that the Australian war effort should be re-assessed, and the final impetus came on 16 May when General Blamey, the former champion of a large army, advised the government to start planning for a smaller army.⁴

When Blamey returned from the Philippines in mid May to discuss his offensive policy with the War Cabinet he was dismayed at the lack of progress in forward planning.⁵ The Defence Committee had begun to look at these problems, and on 11 May had suggested the preparation of a strategic appreciation. To this end the committee suggested that MacArthur should be asked to advise upon:

- a. The likely disposition of Australian Forces abroad at the cessation of hostilities.
- b. The shipping facilities likely to be available for the return of such forces to Australia.
- c. The areas outside Australia and its territories in which it is likely that the services of Australian forces will be sought after the cessation of hostilities.
- d. The size of the Australian Forces that Australia may be requested to make available for service outside Australia and its territories after the cessation of hostilities.⁶

4. This letter is discussed in the previous chapter.

5. Signal Z1533, Blamey to Berryman, 31 May 1945, Blamey Papers, 23.11. Although Blamey wrote to the government on 16 May about forward planning, it was brushed over at the War Cabinet meeting of 22 May. Shedden noted that Blamey's letter was not treated with urgency because the government had intended to deal with the future strength of the forces 'at the end of the next phase of operations'. Notes for War Cabinet Discussion, 22 May 1945, by F.G. Shedden, no date, MP 1217, Box 570, File No.2.

6. Defence Committee Minute, 11 May 1945, signed by Admiral Royle, General Northcott, Air Vice-Marshal Jones and Shedden's deputy, A.J. Wilson, Blamey Papers 27.

In Blamey's opinion these affairs had nothing to do with MacArthur, and he thought 'it entirely wrong in principle that any foreign officer should be invited to advise upon matters which are entirely Australian'. Blamey believed that the questions concerned obligations between national governments and were issues for the Australian Cabinet to determine. Thus Blamey wrote to General Northcott, one of the signatories of the Defence Committee Minute, stating that both the 'Post Hostilities Planning Committee and the Defence Committee seem to me to be lacking in a versatile approach to the problem of post war defence forces'.⁷

Finally, on 28 May the government made a decision about the future Australian war effort,⁸ and an outline of the decisions was cabled on 1 June to Forde and Evatt in San Francisco.⁹ They were requested to convey the information to the US government, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

After summarising the government's policy during the preceding year the statement went on to announce that a further 50,000 men were to be released from the Army and Air Force by the end of 1945. It was hoped that the Navy could be maintained at its present strength. The Army was to be reduced to an operational force of three divisions and there would be a corresponding reduction in the Air Force. The three divisions would be disposed with two infantry brigade groups in New Guinea and Bougainville, an infantry division of three brigades in New Britain, a division available to MacArthur and probably a brigade assigned to the SEAC. The government had received no official advice of the

7. Letter, Blamey to Northcott, 28 May 1945, Blamey Papers 27.

8. War Cabinet Minute 4217, Canberra 28 May 1945, MP 1217, Box 587.

9. The cable was also addressed to Bruce and the New Zealand Prime Minister. Blamey received a copy and MacArthur in due course received a copy. Bruce was directed to put the Australian case to the United Kingdom government and Chiefs of Staff. Cable 116, Chifley to Bruce, 1 June 1945, Blamey Papers 23.12. On 28 May Chifley forwarded a draft cablegram to Blamey for his comments. Blamey suggested only slight alterations. Chifley to Blamey, 28 May 1945; Blamey to Chifley, 29 May 1945, *loc.cit.*

planned changes to the command organisation, but stated that if changes were contemplated it believed that for operational purposes all forces including other allied forces in Australia and New Guinea should come under Australian control.¹⁰

For operations outside the Australian area the government would assign land, sea and air expeditionary forces to operate under Australian commanders, and it was desired that these expeditionary forces should be involved in the 'forward movement against Japan under General MacArthur'. The reasons for this request were:

- (i) Australia received considerable aid from the United States when this country was in grave danger of attack. It would probably be the desire of the Australian people that their forces should fight alongside the Americans to the end of the war as a co-operative expression of their gratitude ... it should do much to strengthen future Australian-American relations which are of paramount importance from the aspect of security in the post-war period.
- (ii) The Australian Forces have fought with the Americans since 1942 and formed bonds of comradeship. [Blamey] has stated that it is the popular desire of the land forces to be associated with the forward offensive.
- (iii) There have been criticisms that the liquidation of by-passed Japanese Forces is not by itself a worthy effort for our Forces. With the American progress towards Japan, the operations against Borneo, the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya have assumed the nature of localised campaigns which have little immediate or direct influence on the final defeat of Japan. From the aspect of prestige and participation in the Pacific peace settlement and control of machinery it is of great importance to Australia to be associated with the drive to defeat Japan.

In addition, 'for reasons of British and Australian prestige and co-operation', Australia wished to assign a token force to the SEAC forces allotted for the recapture of Singapore. There was the possibility of

10. Field Marshal Wilson in Washington observed: 'it is clear that [the Australians] knew of the proposition which is now under consideration by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Presumably MacArthur has been quite open about it'. Cable FMW 107, Wilson to Ismay, 10 June 1945, PREM 3 63/8.

assigning an RAN squadron to the British Pacific Fleet,¹¹ and it had already been proposed to include three RAAF squadrons in the very long range RAF task force.¹²

Although General Blamey did not write the cable, his strong hand can be seen in the above statement.¹³ The proposals contained in his letter of 16 May had been largely accepted, and the suggestion of the Defence Committee to seek answers from MacArthur was not followed. Nevertheless, MacArthur probably overstated the situation when he claimed that since Chifley was 'very ignorant of military matters', he was 'completely dominated by General Blamey'.¹⁴ Chifley looked to Shedden, rather than Blamey, for military advice, and although Blamey had recommended that no action should be taken to attack Rabaul, Chifley reminded MacArthur on 14 June that he had promised to supply 'Allied Forces' to liquidate the Japanese at Rabaul. Despite the fact that Netherland Forces would not be available to relieve the 7th and 9th Divisions in Borneo, Chifley requested MacArthur to release those divisions 'as soon as your plans will permit'.¹⁵

It is possible to detect a general hardening of the government's attitude towards cooperating with the allied strategy. Since April Australia had been trying to persuade the American Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide the means to capture Nauru and Ocean Islands, the

11. This had been proposed by the C-in-C of the British Pacific Fleet, Admiral Fraser, and was favoured by the CNS, Cable 97, Chifley to Forde and Evatt, 8 June 1945, Blamey Papers 23.12.

12. Cable 117, Australian Government to Bruce, 1 June 1945, CRS M100, June 1945. Also Blamey Papers 23.12, Sutherland Papers 901-1000. The RAAF suggestion had been discussed by the Minister for Air in London and was supported by the CAS. Cable 97, Chifley to Forde and Evatt, 8 June 1945, Blamey Papers 23.12.

13. On 7 June Blamey cabled Lavarack. 'Proposals outlined in External Affairs Cable 85 based on my appreciation submitted War Cabinet regarding our future War Effort and present and future commitments. Draft cable was endorsed by me'. Blamey Papers 23.12. See also Cable 97, Chifley to Forde and Evatt, 8 June 1945, *loc.cit.*

14. Cable, Gairdner to Ismay, 30 May 1945, WO 216/137.

15. Letter, Chifley to MacArthur, 14 June 1945, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government.

production of phosphates from which were vital to Australian primary production.¹⁶ Very strong representations by the British Joint Staff Mission were 'turned down flat' by the Joint Chiefs.¹⁷

Blamey's attitude would not have been softened by a letter from Smart in London saying that General Ismay had told him that 'the success of the strategic planning for Europe was due largely to the forbearance of the Dominions in not insisting on taking an active part in the formulation of plans, and that insistence on representation and reference would have produced a state of chaos'. Hence Smart warned Blamey that Australia should stake a claim to have her views heard.¹⁸ Before Forde had approached the Joint Chiefs, Blamey had already cabled Lavarack urging him to put the Australian case to the British Joint Staff Mission, and requesting information on British and American plans.¹⁹

Forde and Evatt in San Francisco agreed with the government's statement and replied to Chifley:

We have stressed here repeatedly that the major effort Australia has made and intends to continue until Japan is defeated entitles us to special consideration of our views and this is generally accepted.²⁰

Forde then flew to Washington,²¹ and saw President Truman, the British Joint Staff Mission and the US Joint Chiefs. He explained the details of the Australian war effort, and made representations on Nauru and Ocean Islands. Truman was sympathetic, but Field-Marshal Wilson warned

16. Cable 60, Chifley to Forde, 18 May 1945, A 816, 101/302/10.

17. Letter, Lieut-Colonel J.P. Minogue to Lavarack, 30 May 1945, *loc.cit.*

18. Letter, Smart to Northcott, 6 June 1945, Blamey Papers 2.1.

19. Cable Z 1704, Blamey to Lavarack, 7 June 1945, Blamey Papers 23.12.

20. Cable SFC 38, Forde and Evatt to Chifley, 5 June 1945, *loc.cit.*

21. On 8 June Chifley had cabled Evatt and Forde with a further definition of the government's position (Cable 47, *loc.cit.*). Forde was accompanied by General Lavarack, A.J. Wilson, Assistance Secretary, Department of Defence, and P.E. Coleman, Assistant Secretary (Post-Hostilities Planning), Department of Defence (Cable SFC 47, Forde and Evatt to Chifley, 9 June 1945, *loc.cit.*).

Forde that MacArthur would have to be consulted, and that it would be three to four months before the views of the Combined Chiefs would be known.²²

The Australian proposals had an immediate effect on the discussions between the British and Americans. The reduction in Australian forces meant that American support units could be reduced - a question which the British and Americans had not till then resolved. The Australian statement also made it clear that the best command organisation would be for the SEAC to extend to Borneo, Java and the Celebes, leaving New Guinea and the surrounding area as a separate command.²³

The idea of a separate Australian command was not attractive to some British planners who were concerned ^{as to} whether Australia had enough skilled staff to provide a headquarters to command combined operations. Perhaps the British were unaware that Australian forces had carried out three important assault landings during the previous three months. There were also reports that the British wanted a British field marshal to command the area.²⁴

MacArthur had now lost interest in the area south of the Philippines,²⁵ and he recommended that the area should be turned over to the British. Although the Australians wanted to withdraw from Borneo MacArthur considered that this problem could be left to be resolved by the British Dutch and Australians. He was 'glad to have the suggested force of Australians during the final drive against Japan'.²⁶

22. Cables E 48, E 50, Forde to Chifley, 12 June 1945, *loc.cit.* Forde spent two days in Washington, having flown from San Francisco on 9/10 June and back again on 12/13 June.

23. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, pp.232, 233.

24. Extracts of letter probably from a member of the Directorate of Research, dated 14 July, London, to Blamey. Blamey forwarded extracts of the letter to Shedden on 28 July 1945, MP 1217, Box 570.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Signal C 21640, MacArthur to Marshall, 27 June 1945, RG 4, MacArthur Memorial.

The Commonwealth Contribution to the Invasion of Japan

The reorganisation of commands in the Southwest Pacific was now confused by discussions over the British Commonwealth contribution to the invasion of Japan. It will be recalled that on 19 April MacArthur had told Berryman that although he was keen to use Australian troops in Japan, they would have to use American weapons and supplies.²⁷ It is probable that when Blamey met MacArthur on 14 May, they discussed this matter. Blamey was prepared to accept American rations but not American weapons and ammunition and asked for shipping to maintain a line of communication (L of C) to Australia. MacArthur said that he did not control allied shipping; he had a few ships but he could spare none for a separate L of C. Indeed once established in Japan MacArthur intended to switch his strategic L of C direct to America.²⁸

There the matter rested, but when in late June Lavarack informed Blamey that the Canadians were intending to provide a division fully equipped, trained and organised on American lines, the latter replied that he intended to organise only the artillery on American lines.²⁹ While there were many good military reasons for Blamey's attitude it antagonised MacArthur. Thus when MacArthur's plans to hand over all the SWPA south of the Philippines to the British became firmer, he told Berryman that 'whilst he would be sorry to lose I Aust Corps he would NOT press for their retention'.³⁰ General Gairdner at GHQ gained the impression that few Australians would take part in the final assault.³¹

27. See p.479, Letter BDO/50, Berryman to Blamey, 20 April 1945, Berryman Papers.

28. Cable CHG, 11, Gairdner to Ismay, 20 May 1945, WO 216/137, and CAB 127/51. In the cable Gairdner said that MacArthur 'no longer trusts General Blamey and he gave me several instances in which he considered General Blamey was guilty of double-dealing'.

29. Signal GS 49287, Northcott to Blamey, 28 June 1945, Blamey Papers, 23.12.

30. Signal B 303, Berryman to Blamey, Blamey Papers 23.11.

31. Cable, Gairdner to Ismay, 30 May 1945, WO 216/137 and CAB 127/51.

The British too had their ideas about the nature of the Commonwealth contribution. 'The effect on our non-participation', wrote Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador in Washington, 'would be in the highest degree unfortunate for us'.³² The British Joint Planners hoped for one British, one New Zealand and one Indian division in the assault with possibly one Australian division in the build up. The Canadian division which was included in American plans could be transferred to the build up.³³ These plans were to be discussed at Potsdam in late July.

The Australian government received its first official news of the plans for a Commonwealth force when Churchill cabled Australia on 4 July. He said that it might now be possible to provide a British Commonwealth force of some three to five divisions supported by British naval forces and a small tactical air force. He suggested that the Australian component could be one division and elements of the RAN and RAAF. This force 'would form a striking demonstration of Commonwealth solidarity', and, if Australia concurred, Churchill would approach the President.

Churchill also proposed that the US should hand over responsibility for the SWPA except for the Philippines and the Manus Island bases. The SEAC under Mountbatten would take over the area east of the Celebes, and the remainder would be controlled by the Australian Chiefs of Staff via the British Chiefs.³⁴

Bruce provided further information a few days later. The operation against Japan involving the British Commonwealth force was not likely to

32. Thorne, *Unequal Allies*, p.524.

33. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, pp.268, 286. The Canadian Prime Minister saw the Canadian obligation as 'Token forces and nothing more', but the Canadians do not appear to have been consulted in advance. Stacey, *op.cit.*, pp.56, 62.

34. Cable 219, Churchill to Curtin, 4 July 1945, Blamey Papers, 23.11. Also MP 1217, Box 570, WO 106/4977 and CRS A2679, item 35/1945.

The Australian Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Royle, Lieutenant-General Northcott, Air Vice Marshal Jones, with the Governor-General the Duke of Gloucester, mid 1945.

(AWM Negative No.42909)



Blamey at a press conference in Perth, 9 July 1945.

(AWM Negative No.52339)



Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock, Lieutenant-General Charles Gairdner and Lieutenant-General F.H. Berryman. Gairdner gained the impression that few Australians would take part in the final assault on Japan.

(AWM Negative No.19065)



begin before March 1946 and it was hoped that Australia and New Zealand would provide most of the fifteen squadrons for the Tactical Air component. Bruce urged a reply not later than 15 July.³⁵

This was a busy time for the government. On 2 July Forde returned from San Francisco, and when Curtin died on 5 July, became Prime Minister. Curtin's funeral took place in Perth on 8 July, and on 13 July Chifley was elected Prime Minister by the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party. J.A. Beasley became Minister for Defence.

Churchill's cable of 4 July was referred to the Defence Committee on 9 July,³⁶ and General Northcott immediately signalled the details to Blamey who was in Perth.³⁷ The committee was due to meet the following day, but Blamey perceived problems. At an off-the-record press conference that afternoon he told newspaper editors that 'I am quite convinced in my own mind that no British troops will be allowed to participate in the move to Japan. When National interests begin to arise there are always some bright boys prepared to seize opportunities to gain an advantage'.³⁸ Thus Blamey replied to Northcott:

Proposals are of great importance and require close examination and study. You will therefore refuse to be rushed into hasty decision and will secure adjournment of meeting until my return ... I propose to present my views to Government on them after full consideration.³⁹

35. Cable 110, Bruce to the Acting Prime Minister, 6 July 1945, CRS M100, July 1945. In fact the British Chiefs of Staff did not think that the British Commonwealth force could be ready until April 1946, COS (45) 192nd Meeting, 7 August 1945, AIR 8/1175.

36. Memorandum, Shedden to Secretary of Defence Committee, 9 July 1945. Blamey Papers 23.11.

37. Signal GS 52569, Northcott to Blamey, 9 July 1945, *loc.cit.*

38. Commander-in-Chief's Press Conference, 9 July 1945, Blamey Papers 139.3.

39. Signal Z 1797, Blamey to Northcott, 9 July 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

Blamey saw no urgency to reply to Churchill's cable, and on 12 July he returned to Melbourne. The following day the Defence Committee considered Blamey's draft reply, which stated that the proposal was 'most desirable' but appeared to be 'unrealistic and impracticable'. Blamey pointed out that the Commonwealth force could not be prepared before April 1946 as provision of the British component was dependent on the opening of the Malacca Straits. By that time American forces would have begun the main invasion of Japan. But Blamey believed that Australian forces should be involved in the main invasion. 'Public opinion has been restive under the allocation of our troops to secondary roles for so long, and this has been the cause of considerable discontent amongst the forces'. However, until the Australian divisions involved in active operations in the Solomons, New Britain, New Guinea and Borneo could be relieved, Australia would have no forces available for Japan. Blamey offered no immediate solution to this problem but stated that it did 'not appear to have been fully appreciated'.⁴⁰

Blamey's draft was endorsed by the Defence Committee,⁴¹ but Beasley was not satisfied with it. He complained that the reply had been delayed and he queried some of the paragraphs.⁴² For example, Blamey had described the possibility of 'a series of arduous and inglorious jungle campaigns' to clear up the Netherlands East Indies. Shedden changed this to read 'unspectacular' jungle campaigns. Where Blamey said that the operations by Australian forces in New Guinea, New Britain and the

40. Draft Cablegram attached to Minute by Defence Committee at Meeting held on Friday, 13 July 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11.

41. Minute by Defence Committee, *loc.cit.*

42. Minute, Beasley to Shedden, 17 July 1945, *loc.cit.* In a reply to Beasley's complaint that the Defence Committee had taken too long to consider the matter Blamey pointed out that he had been absent in WA, and the importance of the matter required close examination and consideration. The CNS had been in hospital, the CAS was overseas and by the time of Blamey's reply, the CGS was in hospital. Teleprinter Message M3102, Wilson to Shedden, 17 July 1945, MP 1217, Box 570.

Solomons were 'in accordance with the tasks assigned to them by General MacArthur', Shedden altered the sentence to read 'the tasks carried out by them under General MacArthur's directive'.⁴³ On 19 July the draft reply with Shedden's amendments was considered by the Advisory War Council and the non-government members observed that if, as seemed probable, the British Commonwealth force could not be organised in time for the main assault, it should be ensured that Australia would take part separately.⁴⁴

The Australian government replied to Churchill, now in Potsdam, on 20 July. The main points of Blamey's draft were incorporated as were the suggestions of the Advisory War Council, but the reply also raised the principle of control of Australian forces. The government objected to the insertion of the British Chiefs of Staff between Australia and the British and American governments. The cable concluded that 'the Government reserves the right to determine the nature and extent of the Australian War Effort'.⁴⁵

In the meantime the Joint Chiefs had consulted MacArthur who replied that he preferred to limit the Commonwealth force to three divisions - one British, one Canadian and one Australian. They should

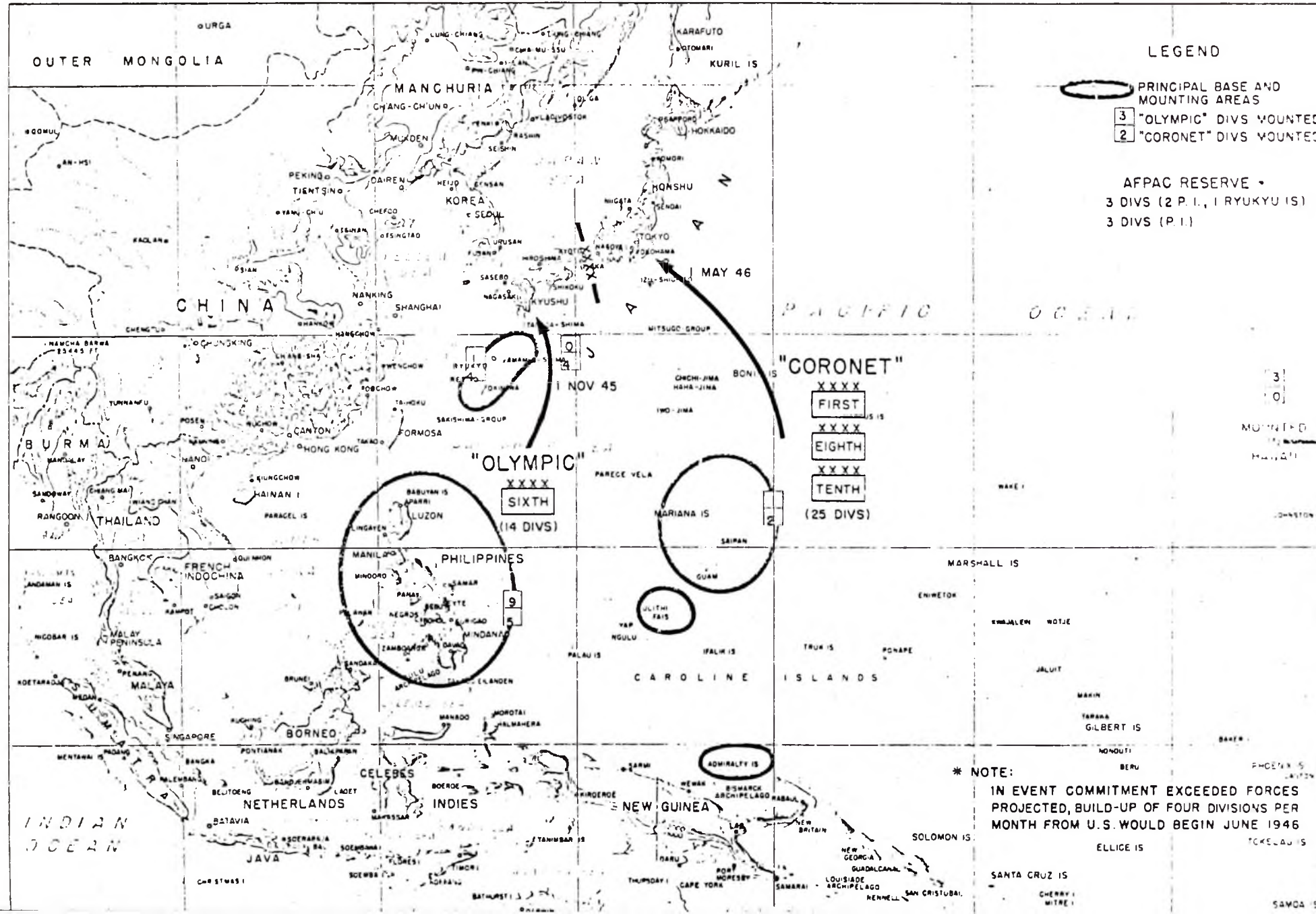
43. Memorandum, Shedden to Minister, 18 July 1945, MP 1217, Box 570.

44. Advisory War Council Minute 1583, Canberra, 19 July 1945, CRS A 2682, Vol.VIII. This was Chifley's first Advisory War Council meeting as Prime Minister. See also CRS A 2679, item 35/1945 for the draft cable submitted to the Advisory War Council.

45. Cable 197, Chifley to Churchill, 20 July 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570 and WO 106/4977. When Major-General C.E.M. Lloyd met the British Chiefs of Staff on 7 August 1945, it was agreed that there had been a misunderstanding over Churchill's cable of 4 July. It had never been the British intention to prevent the Australians from taking part in the invasion of Kyushu scheduled for October. (COS (45) 192nd Meeting, AIR 8/1175.) But the British Chiefs still did not realise how quickly MacArthur would organise his forces. He hoped to be well ashore on Honshu long before the British could be ready by April 1946. (*Reports of General MacArthur*, Vol.1, p.423.)

The 'Downfall' Plan for the Invasion of Japan, 28 May 1945.

MAP 14



be trained in American methods, use American equipment and operate as a corps within an American Army. They would be the assault reserve for Coronet (the invasion of Honshu).⁴⁶ MacArthur added that he intended to withdraw American troops from Morotai which would have to be garrisoned by Australian troops.⁴⁷

Berryman learnt of MacArthur's proposals from Sutherland in Manila, who added that GHQ had requested that the Australian personnel in the Central Bureau, ATIS, Section 22 and AGS should remain with those units.⁴⁸ Berryman and a small liaison staff was welcome to stay at GHQ.⁴⁹ During this period Mountbatten had visited MacArthur to discuss the coming operations. Berryman reported to Blamey that MacArthur 'sympathised with Admiral Mountbatten on having the Cinderella theatre, an experience not unknown in the SWPA'.⁵⁰

On 27 July Chifley informed MacArthur of the British proposals for a Commonwealth force. He reminded MacArthur of the Australian wish that a division should be included in the plans for the invasion of Japan and urged the early relief of Australian forces in Borneo.⁵¹ That same day Chifley explained in Parliament that the Australian Army was to be reduced to three divisions and that Australia proposed to send an expeditionary force to Japan.⁵²

46. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.269. For a detailed account of MacArthur's plans see *The Reports of General MacArthur*, Volume I, Chapter XIII. This work states that 'only American troops would be engaged initially in central Honshu, but plans were made for the use of Australian, Canadian, British, and French divisions in subsequent stages of the campaign. They would be employed in case Japanese resistance should continue even after the heart of their homeland was in American hands', p.427.

47. Signal, MacArthur to Marshall, 21 July 1945, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

48. For an explanation of these units see Chapter Five.

49. Berryman Diary, 25 July 1945.

50. Letter, BDO/52, Berryman to Blamey, 18 July 1945, Berryman Papers.

51. Letter, Chifley to MacArthur, 27 July 1945, MP 1217, Box 570.

52. Statement by Prime Minister in House of Representatives, 27 July 1945, *loc.cit.*

The Australian reply to Churchill of 20 July reached him in Potsdam, but by now the Combined Chiefs of Staff had agreed in principle with MacArthur's plans. Churchill saw no problem in resolving the Australian misgivings and told Chifley:

We hope ... that the appointed British Commanders in consultation with General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz will be able to formulate a practical and acceptable plan.

Churchill suggested that 'an Australian officer' should meet the British commanders at MacArthur's headquarters, and also send a representative to London to be present during discussions between Mountbatten and the Chiefs of Staff.⁵³

This was yet again another example of Churchill's attitude towards the dominions. Shedden observed that it 'was the traditional United Kingdom method ... of roping a party into a commitment, which determined the pattern of the subsequent consultation on principles yet to be resolved'.⁵⁴

The government decided that Blamey would be its representative in Manila and that Major-General C.E.M. Lloyd, the Adjutant-General, would fly immediately to London. Blamey received explicit instructions on the government's policy when he met Chifley, Beasley, Forde and Shedden in Canberra on 31 July.⁵⁵ All proposals and recommendations were to be referred back to the government. It was also agreed that Air Vice Marshals Jones and Bostock would represent Australia at Manila. Blamey said later

53. Cable 260, Churchill to Chifley, 26 July 1945, received 27 July 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11; MP 1217, Box 570 and WO 106/4977. The cable was worded carefully, as the RAF Director of Plans put it, 'to give the impression that what we have in mind is a liaison officer and not General Blamey himself'. Memorandum, 24 July 1945, AIR 8/1176.

54. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 54, p.5.

55. Notes of Discussions with Commander-in-Chief, AMF, Canberra, 31 July 1945, MP 1217, Box 4. This file is interesting for it reveals that Shedden recommended that Blamey should meet Chifley, and he provided the minister with a detailed memorandum of *Subjects of Discussion*. This memorandum proved to be almost identical to the final minutes.

that Chifley was firmly behind his (Blamey's) desire that the Australian forces should not be 'submerged' in a British Commonwealth army which would not be ready before the final stage of operations.⁵⁶

These decisions were transmitted to Clement Attlee, the new British Prime Minister on 1 August. Australia's main concern was Churchill's reference to the appointment of 'British commanders':

There are, of course, in the Australian forces, officers who have distinguished themselves in the campaigns in the Middle East and the Pacific who have claims for consideration in the appointment of Commanders and Staffs. It was necessary to make representations on the claims of Australian senior Commanders to command formation comprising British Commonwealth Forces when the AIF was serving in the Middle East.⁵⁷

To this the British government proposed that the naval commander should be Vice-Admiral Sir William Tennant, the army commander, Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Keightley, then commander of the 5th Corps in Italy, and suggested that Australia should nominate an airforce commander. The British did not think that Keightley would be handicapped by the fact that he had not fought the Japanese.⁵⁸

By this time Japan was already suing for peace, so the question was irrelevant, but, as Gavin Long noted, 'it is unlikely that the Australian Government would have concurred in the appointment of an army commander who had had no experience of fighting against the Japanese when so many tried commanders far senior to Keightley were available in

56. Berryman Diary, 5 August 1945.

57. Cable 208, Chifley to Attlee, 1 August 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11, MP 1217, Box 570 and WO 106/4977.

58. Cable 283, Attlee to Chifley, 9 August 1945, MP 1217, Box 570 and WO 106/4977.

the Australian Army and in Burma'.⁵⁹ Shedden agreed with this and saw it as an extension of the British attitude to Australian commanders demonstrated in 1941 and 1942 in the Middle East. In his view, General Morshead was the obvious choice as corps commander.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the British reply was presumptuous because the Australian government had decided not to participate until the principles were decided. No British reply was ever received on the question of the control of the force.

The Japanese Surrender and the Question of an Occupation Force

The news on 15 August that the Japanese had agreed to accept the Potsdam Declaration brought great rejoicing in Australia and two days holiday was proclaimed, but the government was disturbed.⁶¹ They had not been consulted about the Potsdam Declaration, nor had they been consulted over Japan's offer to surrender, broadcast early in the morning of 11 August.⁶²

Although the new British Labour government might have been expected to be more sympathetic to its counterpart in Australia,⁶³ during this

59. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.549. However at a meeting with the British Chiefs of Staff on 7 August 1945, General C.E.M. Lloyd, the Australian representative, said that he foresaw 'no difficulty' regarding the appointment of a United Kingdom Land Forces Commander, 'provided the Australian Government were fully consulted'. Extract from COS (45) 192nd Meeting, AIR 8/1175. After the meeting, Brooke noted in his diary that Lloyd 'was quite excellent and clear brained', but that Mountbatten 'was as usual quite impossible and wasted a lot of time. Always fastening onto the irrelevant points, repeating himself, failing to recognise the vital points, etc. etc.' Diary, 7 October 1945, 5/11, Alanbrooke Papers.

60. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 54, p.9.

61. See A 1066, P45/10/1/1, CRS A 3300, item 290, and PREM 8/8.

62. Prime Minister's Statement in House of Representatives, 29 August 1945, A 1066, P45/10/1/2.

63. On 20 August 1945 Bruce wrote to Chifley that the change of government in the United Kingdom might result in greater cooperation with Australia. He added that 'the necessity of consulting the Governments of the Dominions always irritated [Churchill] and at times during the war that irritation has developed into very real anger'. M100, August 1945.

period it soon demonstrated attitudes similar to those demonstrated by Churchill's government. Thus on 12 August the British government invited Australia and the other dominions to attach a senior service representative to Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser who was to represent Britain at the formal acceptance by General MacArthur of the Japanese surrender.⁶⁴

This was unacceptable to the Australians. Colonel Conlon, Blamey's Director of Research, who was at the Department of External Affairs in Canberra, told Blamey: 'Evatt's concentrated entirely on questions of political status and is taking all possible steps to rectify omission of great powers to consult Australia beforehand'.⁶⁵ Hence Shedden recommended that Blamey, then at Morotai, should represent Australia,⁶⁶ and when the government agreed, Britain was informed that Blamey would represent the Australian government 'directly and not as attachment to your representative'.⁶⁷

In the meantime the British government had been considering wider problems, and on 13 August a cable was despatched to Australia suggesting the formation of a British Commonwealth force to take part in the Japanese occupation. It was suggested that there should be a brigade group from each of Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and India, with a tactical airforce contingent. In addition the South-West Pacific Area should pass to British and Australian control, and Australia was requested to

64. Dominions Office cable, D 1435, 12 August 1945, quoted in signal 63676, Shedden to Blamey, 14 August 1945, Blamey Papers 23.9. On the other hand there is evidence that Britain initially advocated that Australia should be represented separately, but that the US State Department wanted only four allied countries, Britain, China, USSR and USA, to be represented. Signal WX 50043, Marshall to MacArthur, 15 August 1945, received 16 August, RG 316, Box 74, National Archives.

65. Signal Z 1585, Conlon to Blamey, 14 August 1945, Blamey Papers 23.9.

66. Signal 63675, Shedden to Blamey, 14 August 1945, *loc.cit.*

67. Australian Government to Dominions Office, 14 August 1945, quoted in Signal 63895, Shedden to Blamey, 14 August 1945, *loc.cit.*

provide a brigade to occupy Hong Kong. This was to be relieved by British forces as soon as the Straits of Malacca were opened.⁶⁸

By this stage of the war Blamey had developed what might almost be described as a shadow diplomatic service. Before the receipt of the British cable he had already received advice from Lavarack in Washington and Lloyd in London.⁶⁹ Conlon in Canberra had also received these warnings and informed Blamey of the situation in Canberra:

when request in above telegram reaches Aust Govt I consider they will be unable [to] deal with the matter without your personal advice given verbally on issues involved ... Australian participation in any force to occupy Japan should be preceded by careful consideration of Allied plan which in my considered opinion is in chaotic condition ... Am rather apprehensive about possible government consideration of matter in absence of you personally.⁷⁰

Blamey could not, of course, return to Australia as he had to be ready to proceed to Tokyo. In his absence Conlon continued to provide a running commentary, and when the British cable arrived Conlon signalled Blamey that the tone of the cable was an improvement on previous ones. This, said Conlon, was because Britain was in a predicament; she did not have the capacity to fill the vacuum created by the Japanese surrender. Conlon saw the possibility of gaining an advantage and urged the government to press for an Australian to command the British Commonwealth force.

Blamey reacted quickly. With the reservation that the Americans should retain responsibility for the Celebes and Halmahera, he recommended that the British and Australians should take over the designated area of

68. Cable 290, Attlee to Chifley, 13 August 1945, CRS A 2671, item 379/1945; AIR 8/1116.

69. For Lavarack's advice see Signal, Northcott to Blamey, 12 August 1945, Blamey Papers 23.9; signal WM 2341, Lavarack to Northcott, 11 August 1945, MP 1217, Box 570; also Berryman Diary, 13 August 1945. Berryman wrote: 'personally I think Admiral Fraser with the British Fleet has resources to do Hong Kong'. Lloyd's advice: Cable LM 4388, Lloyd to Blamey, 12 August 1945, Blamey Papers 23.9.

70. Signal Z 1583, Conlon to Blamey, 13 August 1945, *loc.cit.*

the SWPA. He considered that the government should agree to the occupation force for Japan, and he tentatively allotted the 26th Brigade for the occupation of Hong Kong.⁷¹

Conlon had judged correctly the attitude of Evatt and the new Minister of Defence, Beasley. Thus, although the Defence Committee recommended that because of the importance of securing Hong Kong 'from an Empire-defence point of view', the task of occupying it should be undertaken,⁷² the government disagreed.⁷³ Indeed the government stressed that the questions 'were for government consideration only'.⁷⁴ The British were therefore informed that a brigade would not be provided for Hong Kong, although a number of minesweepers would be made available. Nevertheless, Australia desired to take part in the occupation of Japan and proposed to provide a naval squadron, two army brigades and three fighter squadrons. This force was contributed in the capacity of a separate belligerent under an Australian commander, who would be subject only to the Supreme Allied Commander (MacArthur). The Australian government concluded by pointing out,

that, in making these contributions Australia is doing so not as a subsidiary but as a Principal Pacific Power which has for so long borne the heat and burden of the struggle against Japan. We cannot help feeling that this has not had sufficient recognition in the Armistice arrangements and this view is reinforced by the advice ... regarding our representation in our own right at the acceptance of the surrender of Japan.⁷⁵

71. Signals Z 1850, Z 1856, Blamey to Shedden, 15 August 1945, CRS A 2671, item 379/1945.

72. Defence Committee Minute No.350/1945 of 16 August 1945, *loc.cit.*

73. War Cabinet Minute 4350, 17 August 1945, *loc.cit.*

74. Teleprinter message Coleman to Quealy, 4 September 1945, A 816, 52/301/222.

75. Cable 240, Chifley to Attlee, 17 August 1945, quoted in War Cabinet Minute 4350, 17 August 1945, *loc.cit.* Also AIR 8/1116. The British government replied: 'We are sorry to read ... that you feel that Australia's effort has not been sufficiently recognised in the armistice agreements. But the matter is not entirely or even primarily one for us alone and it is impossible for us to go beyond what we can persuade our American and other major allies to accept'. Cable 316, Dominions Office to Australia, 20 August 1945, quoted in Signal COM 65436, Shedden to Blamey, 22 August 1945, Blamey Papers 23.9.

This did not mean that Chifley's Cabinet thought that Australia would be able to control directly a large segment of the Japanese population, but they hoped that by contributing to an occupation force they might increase Australia's chances of becoming a partner in the Allied council to decide the future of Japan, and in particular the form which a peace treaty would eventually take.⁷⁶

Despite the earlier exchange of cables the Australian representation at Tokyo had not yet been resolved. Only after representations by Evatt to Washington supported separately by MacArthur, was it agreed that Australia, along with Canada, France, the Netherlands and New Zealand, should sign the surrender in Tokyo.⁷⁷ Thus on 2 September Blamey signed on behalf of Australia in Tokyo Bay.

In the meantime the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff had discussed Australia's proposals for a separate occupation force. The Dominions Office was in favour of abandoning the idea of a joint British Commonwealth force as it felt that any attempt to re-open the issue would meet with a further rebuff from Australia.⁷⁸ However the Chiefs of Staff thought that 'it would be a dangerous precedent from the point of view of future imperial defence for Australia to act independently'. As a solution to the problem it was suggested that Australia might provide

76. Draft of unpublished manuscript by R.J. O'Neill.

77. Signal unnumbered, Evatt to Blamey, 18 August 1945, Signal Z 1915, Blamey to Evatt, 19 August 1945, Signal Z 1926, Blamey to Evatt, 21 August 1945, Blamey Papers 23.9. Letter, Berryman to his wife, 25 August 1945, Berryman Papers. Berryman Diary 19, 20, 21 August 1945. When Berryman gave a letter to Brig-General Bonner Fellers to give to MacArthur requesting the latter's support, Fellers said that Australia had a great champion in MacArthur, who had already recommended the inclusion of Australia, 20 August. See also letter, Blamey to MacArthur, 19 August 1945, RG4 MacArthur Memorial.

78. After a meeting between the British Chiefs of Staff and representatives of the Dominions Office, Brooke observed that the 'Dominions Office are not showing much guts in returning to the attack'. Diary, 30 August 1945, 5/11, Alanbrooke Papers.



The Australian delegation to the surrender ceremony in Tokyo. Front row, Rear-Admiral G. Moore, General Blamey, Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock. Back row, Captain J. Balfour, Lieutenant-Colonel D.H. Dwyer, Air Vice-Marshal G. Jones, Lieutenant-General F.H. Berryman, Commodore J.A. Collins.

(AWM Negative No.19136)

Lieutenant-General Sir John Lavarack, the head of the Australian Military Mission in Washington.

(AWM Negative No.80473)



the commander of the force.⁷⁹ They believed that Commonwealth unity was a factor of great importance in future British/US relations, and it was 'worth going a long way to preserve it'.⁸⁰

On 1 September Attlee again tried to persuade Chifley of the advantages of a combined force which would augur 'for our future close cooperation in defence matters'. Furthermore a single commander would carry more authority. Attlee suggested that an Australian should command the force and that Australia might provide the bulk of the headquarters. The British Pacific Fleet would remain under Sir Bruce Fraser.⁸¹

Chifley was unmoved by these concessions and restated the Australian position on 10 September in a vigorous telegram. He pointed out that throughout the war Australia had 'consistently advocated the importance of the maintenance of the prestige of the British Commonwealth in the Pacific'. Australia had done her part and was 'entitled to a degree of recognition and status that is fairly and justly commensurate with the contribution which we have made to the final victory over Japan'. The proposed force would not include Canadian and South African forces, nor would it include the British Pacific Fleet, and would not therefore be fully representative of the British Commonwealth, nor would it be

79. It is interesting to note that when the British Defence Committee discussed the occupation force on 13 August 1945 'they had mentioned the possibility of an Australian commanding the force but they had decided not to include the idea in the cable which the Prime Minister sent to Australia that same day'. Minute Defence Committee, 13 August 1945, DEFE 2 1313B.

80. Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 30 August 1945, and JP (45) 217 of 28 August 1945, AIR 8/116.

81. Cable 349, Attlee to Chifley, 1 September 1945, CRS A2671, item 426/1945; A 816, item 52/301/222. This cable was very carefully worded. The British Chiefs of Staff had advised deleting the words 'we welcome' increased Australian participation: 'In the mood they are in the Australians are apt to see things which are not intended. The word "welcome" might seem patronising and add to their obsession that we, as the senior partners, are thanking them for a contribution'. COS Meeting, 30 August 1945, AIR 8/116.

a unified force under one Commander-in-Chief. Australia intended to proceed with its independent force and had informed MacArthur.⁸²

The Australian reply caused immediate consternation in London, and the British Chiefs of Staff described Chifley's arguments as 'fallacious and irrelevant'.⁸³ Major-General Rowell, serving in the British War Office, wrote to General Northcott:

Everybody here is completely shaken over Australia's refusal to play in connection with the unified command of the occupation forces in Japan. It seemed to be a splendid move to try to offset the unfortunate argument about the terms of surrender. It rather looks as if any question of Imperial defence cooperation can be put in the background for ever. This business of posing as a great power is just too ludicrous for words and all we are doing (Canada included) is to weaken very seriously the position of this country in the Councils of the great without getting any other compensating advantage for ourselves.⁸⁴

The British Chiefs thought that their only hope was to put the matter to Evatt when he arrived in London,⁸⁵ and when Evatt learnt of Chifley's reply on 14 September he said that he had not been aware of the British proposals before he left Australia.⁸⁶ Hence that same day he cabled Chifley advising the government to have another look at the decision: 'what occurs to me is that providing that executive authority is exercised from Australia and that the Australian Government nominates Commander, it might be possible to use the occasion to demonstrate Australian leadership in Pacific affairs and Pacific settlement'.⁸⁷

82. Cable 236, Chifley to Attlee, 10 September 1945, *loc.cit.*

83. Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 12 September 1945, AIR 8/1116.

84. Letter, Rowell to Northcott, 10 September 1943, Northcott Papers ML MSS 1431/14, Mitchell Library.

85. Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 12 September 1945, AIR 8/1116.

86. Dominions Office Meeting, 14 September 1945, *loc.cit.* Evatt was delighted when his approach to the Australian government was successful, and Attlee wrote a special note thanking him. PREM 8/192.

87. Cable EC 10, Evatt to Chifley and Beasley, 14 September 1945, War Cabinet Agendum 426/1945, CRS A 2671 426/1945; A 816, item 222.

During the earlier discussions Shedden had been very ill, but now he argued for a revision of the decision. Evatt's cable was considered by the War Cabinet on 19 September and several members favoured continuance with an independent force, but Northcott, who was present, said that this was impossible. The force would be dependent upon the British or American for shipping and base supplies, and would 'become nothing more than a minor detachment under a subordinate American Commander'.⁸⁸ Shedden supported Northcott, and eventually the Australian attitude was restated. Australia was to provide a force of two cruisers and two destroyers (subject to review), one brigade group with consideration to be given to the raising of a second, and three Mustang fighter squadrons. The Commander-in-Chief would be directly responsible to MacArthur on operational matters, and on policy and administrative questions to the governments concerned through the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia, comprising the Australian Chiefs of Staff and a representative or representatives of the UK Chiefs of Staff.⁸⁹ In addition a service mission was to be sent to Tokyo. These decisions were cabled to Britain on 21 September,⁹⁰ and the British concurred.⁹¹ It now remained to secure the agreement of the Americans and the cooperation of MacArthur, and although the British had already laid some groundwork in Washington, the solution of these problems was left to the Australians.

88. Letter, Northcott to Rowell, 30 October 1945, Northcott Papers. ML MSS 1431/14. On 23 August the Defence Committee had pointed out that the Australian Force would be dependent upon British and American support. Defence Committee Minute 357/1945, 23 August 1945, A 816, 52/301/222.

89. War Cabinet Minute 4400, 19 September 1945, CRS A 2671, item 426/1945.

90. Cable 305, Chifley to Attlee, 21 September 1945, A 816, item 52/301/222. Also draft history of BCOF written for HQ 8th Army, C. mid 1947, AWM 130/1/23 Part I and AIR 8/1116.

91. Brooke was relieved to receive news of the Australian agreement and wrote: 'Thank heaven for if they had been allowed to refuse our last effort of Australian Command and of a Combined Chief of Staff organisation with the Australians, on similar lines to the one we have had with the Americans, then it would have been the end of all Imperial cooperation!' Diary, 27 September 1945, 5/11, Alanbrooke Papers.

Securing American Agreement

From mid August the British had begun pressing Washington for the role of the occupation force to be defined, for although they had no desire to assume responsibility for a zone in Japan as they had in Germany and Austria, they wanted to ensure that British prestige was maintained.⁹² The Americans made it clear that the details of the occupation would be left to MacArthur.⁹³ In the meantime they set about organising a Far Eastern Advisory Committee to facilitate full Allied consultation on all problems relating to the treatment of Japan after the surrender. This led to a great diplomatic effort by Evatt to ensure Australian participation on what was eventually the Far Eastern Commission. The details of these negotiations are dealt with elsewhere,⁹⁴ but from a military and strategic point of view the vital concern was MacArthur's relationship to the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces. When Sir Frederic Eggleston, the Australian minister in Washington, reported that:

The peace terms with Japan have been arranged hurriedly in such a way that it has been impossible for Australia to exact the influence to which she is entitled.⁹⁵

he was referring to the political situation, but he might well have also been referring to the military situation.

On 6 September the Joint Chiefs informed MacArthur that his authority as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) had been approved by the President.⁹⁶ This information was received in Australia on 18 September, and two days later an outline of US policy was received. This stated that:

92. Cable D 1481, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Australian Government, 17 August 1945, CRS A 816, item 19/304/395.

93. Cable WM 2954, Plimsoll to Conlon, 23 August 1945, *loc.cit.*

94. R.N. Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan, 1945-1951* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1962), pp.14-24; Bell, *op.cit.*, pp.196-203.

95. Letter, Eggleston to Evatt, 14 September 1945, A 1066, P45/10/33.

96. Message JCS to MacArthur, 6 September 1945, quoted in Cable WM 3116, Lavarack to Northcott, 18 September 1945, CRS A 816, item 19/304/395.

... participation of the forces of other nations that have taken a leading part in the war against Japan will be welcomed and expected. The occupation forces will be under the command of a Supreme commander designated by the United States.⁹⁷

Thus the British Commonwealth contribution appeared to be welcome to the Americans, and this was confirmed on 3 October by the *unofficial* news that the Joint Chiefs of Staff would accept in principle the participation of British ground forces.⁹⁸

By mid October the British and Australians had agreed on their policy for the organisation of the occupation force,⁹⁹ and on 20 October the Australian Legation in Washington, on behalf of Australia, Britain, New Zealand and India (which in anticipation of independence was seeking separate consultation), sought approval from the US government for an occupation force along the lines agreed between Britain and Australia. This force was to include a British-Indian Division of two brigades, an Australian brigade and a New Zealand brigade. Command and administrative arrangements were to be worked out directly between the SCAP and the Commander-in-Chief of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) who was to be Lieutenant-General John Northcott. Responsibility for a zone of occupation was not desired but the force should take part in the occupation of the Tokyo prefecture. The US government was told that the approval of these proposals would

be a further manifestation to Japan and the world at large of that co-operation between British and American peoples and their forces which have marked their common war effort.¹⁰⁰

97. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Australian Government, 20 September 1945, *loc.cit.*

98. Cable 297, Rourke to Shedden, 3 October 1945, A 816, 52/301/222.

99. Cable 409, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Australian Government, 15 October 1945, A 816 52/301/222.

100. Cable No.1500, Department of External Affairs to Australian Legation, 18 October 1945, CRS A 816, item 52/301/222. The proposals were put to the State Department on 20 October 1945 in Note 473/45, RG 165, ABC 381, Australia (1-23-42), National Archives.

While the Australian government was waiting for an official American reply, unofficial discussions had already begun in Japan. Commodore J.A. Collins had sailed to Tokyo with the Australian squadron for the surrender ceremony and Brigadier W.M. Anderson, who had been on Eichelberger's staff, moved to Tokyo to head the Australian Liaison Section with MacArthur's headquarters. On 25 September the Defence Committee decided that Collins, Anderson and Air Commodore F.R.W. Scherger would form a Services Mission,¹⁰¹ with the object of making preliminary investigations and advising the Australian Chiefs of Staff regarding the proposed disposition and maintenance of the British Commonwealth Force.¹⁰²

The Mission was established on 5 October in the NYK Building in Tokyo,¹⁰³ however the early discussions with the Americans elicited little definite information. The first advice was that the Americans planned to locate the army component of the British Commonwealth Force on either Honshu and North Kyushu, or on North Kyushu alone,¹⁰⁴ but the Americans were reluctant to give firm details.¹⁰⁵ On 5 October General Chamberlin wrote that 'we are stopped until we get something definite from the Joint Chiefs of Staff'.¹⁰⁶ Commodore Collins, the head of the mission, recalled that he 'couldn't take a trick' because of lack of seniority in rank. He had great difficulty arranging a meeting with MacArthur and said that the Americans 'successfully fobbed me off'. Collins did admit that, with the war over, few instructions, and little support from Australia, he may not have been forceful enough.¹⁰⁷

101. Defence Committee Minute 413/1945, 25 September 1945, A 816, item 52/301/222.

102. Appendix A to Minute No.3/1945, Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 12 October 1945, *loc.cit.*

103. War Diary, Australian Liaison Section AFPAC, AWM 1/11/8.

104. Cable, Anderson to Landforces, 5 October 1945, AWM 1/11/8.

105. Cable, Anderson to Landforces, 13 October 1945, *loc.cit.*; Letter, Anderson to Berryman, 9 October 1945, Blamey Papers 170.

106. Letter, Chamberlin to Berryman, 5 October 1945, Berryman Papers.

107. Collins interview, 9 October 1978.

It was not until the Australian proposals of 18 October were made known that MacArthur stated his attitude. He had not received instruction from Washington, but, in 'a very frank and cordial interview' with the Mission, in which he expressed pleasure to be again associated with the Australians, MacArthur said that he was determined to organise the occupation forces as they had been in the South-West Pacific Area; namely, with the army component under a land force commander, the air component under an air commander and the navy under a naval commander. The Mission was of the opinion that this was a practical plan since 'the situation may at any time require the operational employment of the forces of occupation'.¹⁰⁸

The Australian Chiefs of Staff disagreed with this view. They believed that MacArthur's intention was 'to divide the British Force up into small components consisting of each service and to place them under local American Commanders'. The identity of the British Commonwealth force should be preserved and its commander should have direct access to MacArthur.¹⁰⁹ However in Washington both Field Marshal Wilson, the British Representative, and General Lavarack, believed MacArthur's plan was sound. Northcott could command, both operationally and administratively, the ground forces, and would be administrative commander only of the air forces. He would have the right to appeal directly to the Supreme Commander, and, if necessary to his government. The airforces and ground forces should be in adjacent areas.¹¹⁰

108. Cable, Collins to Australian Commonwealth Naval Board, 17 October 1945, CRS A 816, item 19/304/376. There is some difficulty determining the sequence of events. The report implies that the government's proposals of 18 October had already reached Tokyo, but Teleprinter message MAB 245 of 19 October 1945 (CRS A 816, 52/301/222) indicates that MacArthur was sent the details on 19 October. The Australian Liaison Section War Diary mentions a meeting on 18 October. Anderson described the meeting to Berryman in a letter on 19 October, Blamey Papers 170.

109. Minute 7/1945, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 19 October 1945, CRS A 816, item 52/39/222.

110. Cable E 12, Evatt to Chifley, 1 November 1945, *loc.cit.*

Meanwhile, the Australian government was becoming concerned at the delay and pressed Evatt to obtain American agreement in principle.¹¹¹ Evatt replied that he had been 'working very hard' to secure this, but the Americans feared that to approve the British force would give weight to a Russian request for a similar force.¹¹² Eventually, on 24 November the US government officially accepted, in principle, the participation of the British force and envisaged that it would be integrated operationally into US forces under MacArthur. It was assumed that the Commonwealth would maintain the forces which would be balanced and self-supporting and that MacArthur could use them 'in any area or manner when, in his opinion, the military situation may require.'¹¹³

At a Chiefs of Staff meeting in Melbourne on 26 November the CIGS, Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, who had just arrived from Tokyo, urged the Australians to accept the American plans. He explained that MacArthur had told him that the Australian plan was unsound since 'he already had

111. Cable 1776, Chifley to Evatt, 21 November 1945, *loc.cit.*

112. Cable E 42, Evatt to Chifley, 23 November 1945, *loc.cit.* Indeed when the Americans informed the Soviet Union that their forces would have to be under MacArthur's command, the Soviets withdrew their request for an occupation force. (E.J. Lewe Van Aduard, *Japan, From Surrender to Peace* [The Hague, 1953], p.9). Some idea of the problem faced by the Americans is revealed in a memorandum prepared by an army planner, General Lincoln, on 13 November 1945. After mentioning a news report that 40,000 British and dominion troops were expected to arrive in Japan by 1 January 1946, he commented: 'the State Department might be faced by some such situation as a message from the British stating that the occupation force has sailed and "Where does the Supreme Commander desire them to debark"'. RG 165, ABC 014 Japan (13 April 1944), Sect 16-B, National Archives.

113. Cable E 50, Evatt to Chifley, 24 November 1945, CRS A 816, item 52/301/222. For information on American attitudes see RG 165, File ABC 014 Japan (13 April 1944), Sec 16-B, Sec 16-B-1, Sec 17-A, Sec 16-C.

three Service representatives working under him, and a small Supreme Commander in the middle would upset the whole organisation'.¹¹⁴

Brooke thought MacArthur's plan was 'legitimate', but he had difficulty persuading Shedden who was present at the meeting. Brooke observed that Shedden had assumed what he described as 'too much power',¹¹⁵ and was 'exercising too great an authority' over the Australian Chiefs of Staff.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, Brooke thought that he was influential in persuading the Australians and he wrote later that without his visit to MacArthur and Australia there might have been endless delays:¹¹⁷

'I believe that had I not paid this visit this force might never have materialised'.¹¹⁸

Brooke probably over-emphasised the importance of his visit, because when the Australian Chiefs of Staff met the following day they still found the American proposals 'unsatisfactory'. They believed that the British Commonwealth force could operate as a task force 'for such operations as may be allotted to it' as MacArthur had done during his operations in the Pacific. To clarify the points of difference it was decided that Northcott should proceed to Tokyo to see MacArthur.¹¹⁹

In the meantime, before Northcott departed, Evatt and Lavarack sounded a note of warning:

Having carefully tested out the position here and weighed all the probabilities if we resist the United States proposals ... we both feel strongly that in the interests of Australia we should accept

114. Diary, 21 November 1945, 5/11, Alanbrooke Papers.

115. Diary, 26 November 1945, 5/11, *loc.cit.*

116. Notes on My Life, re diary entry, 25 November 1945, 3/B /XVII, *loc.cit.*

117. Notes on My Life, re diary entry, 26 November 1945, 3/B /XVII, *loc.cit.*

118. Notes on My Life, re diary entry, 4 December 1945, 3/B /XVII, *loc.cit.*

119. Minute 486/1945, Defence Committee Meeting, 27 November 1945, *loc.cit.* The views of the Australian Chiefs of Staff were transmitted to Evatt on 29 November.

the proposals. We both feel that Northcott will be able to make very satisfactory arrangements on the spot with MacArthur.

If we resist the United States will probably take up the position that the Russians will insist on a share of the occupation on the same lines, and this we know the United States cannot accept in the present circumstances.

Therefore, in order to avoid further delay and a possible review of the acceptance in principle we feel that we should agree to the proposals ...

We think that the principle which has been established in this matter regarding Australian leadership among British Commonwealth Nations will be of the utmost value on political and military levels. Both the President and the Secretary of State have expressed their interest in this to Doctor Evatt.¹²⁰

Eventually, on 8 December the Australian government received from America a 'Statement of General Principles' which were to be the basis of the discussions between MacArthur and Northcott. These were:

- a. The ground forces would be integrated into the occupation forces under MacArthur.
- b. The strength of the air forces was to be decided by discussion.
- c. MacArthur would be free to locate and move the forces within Japan as he saw fit.
- d. No area would be assigned to the British forces as an exclusive area of control.
- e. The British commanders would be free to communicate with their governments.
- f. The Commonwealth governments would be responsible for supply and maintenance of their forces.
- g. The timings of movements of the Force would be arranged between Northcott and MacArthur.¹²¹

It now remained for Northcott to make the final arrangements with MacArthur.

120. Cable E59, Evatt and Lavarack to Chifley, 30 November 1945, CRS A 816, item 52/301/222.

121. Cable E65, Evatt and Lavarack to Chifley, 8 December 1945, received 9 December 1945, CRS A 2671, item 550/1945.

The MacArthur/Northcott Agreement

During the preceding seven weeks of discussions the Australian government had kept the British, Indian and New Zealand governments informed of their course, but the Australian Chiefs of Staff had been the sole source of advice. The initial British reaction had been to leave all details to Australia. Thus on 24 October Smart, who was in close touch with the War Office, had cabled Blamey and Northcott,

It is hoped here that task organising force will help to bring Australian Chiefs of Staff into more direct touch with United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff. This may pave way for freer and more constant touch being kept between both Chiefs of Staff bodies in relation [to] future defence problems. United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff therefore would require an early lead from Australian Chiefs of Staff in proposals for Commonwealth force.¹²²

Smart followed this with another cable two days later:

It is considered that initiative in organizing force and arranging details is entirely in Australian hands and that since you will command you should have full latitude in deciding organizing of your HQ. Unless there is a particular objection for some technical reason your suggestions to UK Chiefs of Staff are likely to be passed without question and problem of integrated HQ will not be examined here by joint staffs until Australian Chiefs of Staff suggestions arrive.¹²³

Nevertheless, the British Chiefs of Staff were determined to retain their influence and they selected senior officers of each service as representatives on a committee known as the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia (JCOSA). General Rowell tried to persuade the War Office that during the war Australia 'had been able to deal competently with large forces and that all we needed was one senior British officer to sit with us', but these

122. Cable LM 5111, Smart to Blamey and Northcott, 24 October 1945, Blamey Papers 23.91.

123. Cable, Smart to Blamey and Northcott, 26 October 1945, *loc.cit.*

representations were to no avail, and Rowell said later that since the British and Indian representatives had quite large staffs with not much to do, 'in some respects they became a hindrance rather than a help'.¹²⁴

The British representatives were Rear-Admiral R.H. Portal, Major-General J.C. Haydon and Air Vice-Marshal R. Graham. Major-General W.J. Cawthorn represented the Commander-in-Chief, India, who had responsibility for the three services, and the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were represented by Brigadier G.H. Clifton.

During November General Blamey had resigned as Commander-in-Chief and had been succeeded by General Sturdee as Acting Commander-in-Chief. In December it was announced that Sturdee was to become CGS in the new year and Rowell would return to Australia as Vice Chief of the General Staff.¹²⁵ Air Vice-Marshal Jones continued as Chief of the Air Staff and the Chief of the Naval Staff was Admiral Sir Louis Hamilton who had arrived in Australia in mid 1945.

The first meeting of the JCOSA was held on 4 and 5 December 1945. A planning staff was formed and it was agreed that the actual control and administration of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force should be exercised by the Australian Chiefs of Staff. The JCOSA committee was an advisory body only with no executive authority; it represented the Chiefs of Staff of the four countries involved.¹²⁶

When Northcott left for Tokyo the JCOSA had not yet examined the American 'Statement of General Principles', but it met on 12 December,

124. Rowell, *Full Circle*, p.162. Eventually British representation was reduced to one senior officer, Rear-Admiral Mark Pizzey. On 18 October 1945 the British Director of Military Operations wrote about the job of the British representative in Australia: 'I do not know whether it will be practicable to combine this job with any other in Australia, but if not the incumbent is going to have a very idle and dull time'. Minute to M05, WO 106/2510.

125. War Cabinet Minute 4587, Canberra, 18 December 1945, AWM 721/12/39.

126. Minutes of JCOSA Meeting 2/1945, 4 and 5 December 1945, CRS A 816, item 31/301/375A.

the day Northcott arrived in Tokyo,¹²⁷ and considered that the American reply 'advances very little, if at all, the situation previously reached'. Three alternatives were possible; first, to stand firm on the original conceptions, second, to permit the Commonwealth army and air forces to be placed under American army and air commanders respectively, and third, to accept the American principles. The JCOSA believed that the second course was the most practical,¹²⁸ and they provided Northcott with a suggested rewording of the American 'Statement of General Principles'. The main paragraph was:

When active operational conditions do not govern the situation the British Commonwealth Forces of Occupation in Japan will be so positioned as to retain their identity as a single force under the effective command of the Commonwealth Commander-in-Chief appointed by the Commonwealth Governments and satisfactorily disposed in relation to the L. of C. and base facilities allotted to it. Due regard will be paid to the location of detachments of the Commonwealth Forces in the Tokyo prefecture.¹²⁹

Northcott was reminded that the views of the JCOSA should be considered as background information since the respective governments had not yet given their approval.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the government was anxious that Northcott should do everything possible to solve the problem and he was advised by the JCOSA:

You may find ... that MacArthur is unable to talk. On other hand, he may be ready to talk unofficially and without commitment on either your side or his.

127. Cable, Northcott to Shedden, 13 November 1945, A 816, 52/301/223. Northcott was appointed C-in-C BCOF with effect from 1 December 1945. War Cabinet Minute 4003, Canberra, 18 December 1945, CRS A 2676, item 4603.

128. Cable, JCOSA to Northcott, 121100Z, December 1945, CRS A 816, item 52/301/223.

129. Cable JCOSA to Northcott 121200Z, December 1945, *loc.cit.*

130. Cable JCOSA to Northcott, 12 December 1945, *loc.cit.* These views were transmitted to London, Wellington and the Australian Legation in Washington on 13 December, CRS A 2671, item 550/1945.

It is desired you should do all you can to hold unofficial discussions with SCAP with a view to eliciting ... MacArthur's interpretation of the American proposals ...¹³¹

Northcott's discussions with MacArthur commenced on 12 December and continued over several days. On 14 December Northcott reported that he had been 'received very cordially by General MacArthur who is most anxious to meet our requirements to the maximum extent'. MacArthur proposed that the Hiroshima Prefecture should be allotted to the British Commonwealth force which would be responsible to the Commanding General of the 8th US Army. Policy matters would be discussed between MacArthur and the Commander-in-Chief BCOF. The air component would be in general support of the BCOF. It was suggested that the Australian Service Mission should be disbanded but that the staff should remain to continue planning for the arrival of the force. Northcott strongly recommended the acceptance of these agreements.¹³²

The JCOSA examined the proposals on 17 December and recommended that the other Commonwealth governments should accept the terms of the MacArthur/Northcott Agreement.¹³³ The Australian government believed that the agreement was 'a substantial advance on the United States Government's proposals ... The earlier objections that the British Commonwealth Force would cease to be a separate entity and could be split up into small parties are removed'.¹³⁴ Pending replies from the Commonwealth governments, planning was to go ahead on the general lines of Northcott's report.¹³⁵

131. Cable JCOSA to Northcott, 11 December 1945, A 816, 52/301/223.

132. Signal TOO 140230Z, December 1945, Northcott to Shedden, CRS A 816, item 52/301/223.

133. JCOSA Minute No.13/1945, 17 December 1945, *loc.cit.*

134. Notes on War Cabinet Agendum No.350/1945, 18 December 1945, CRS A 816, item 550/1945.

135. War Cabinet Minute 4595, Canberra, 18 December 1945, *loc.cit.*

The MacArthur/Northcott Agreement was formalised by the signing of a 'Memorandum for Record' by Northcott and Major-General R.J. Marshall in Tokyo on 18 December 1945. It was agreed that the British Commonwealth Force would be responsible for the military control of the Hiroshima Prefecture under the direction of the Commanding General of the 8th US Army. The area did not constitute a national zone and military government would be conducted by US agencies as directed by the Supreme Commander.

The ground forces of the BCOF were to function as a corps of two divisions under the Commander-in-Chief BCOF as corps commander. The corps was to operate under the operational control of the Commander of 8th US Army. The air component of the BCOF was to operate under the control of the 5th Air Force. The C-in-C BCOF was to be responsible for the maintenance and administration of the force as a whole.

The command and administrative channels were detailed. On matters affecting the operational capabilities of the force, the C-in-C BCOF had right of direct access to MacArthur. On administrative matters affecting the force Northcott had right of direct communication with the JCOSA. On matters of government concern affecting the policy and operation of the BCOF, the Australian government was to communicate directly with the US government which could then refer matters to MacArthur. In administrative matters pertaining to relations with US forces or the Japanese, American policies would be followed. Thus in a purely operational sense the BCOF was under the command of the 8th US Army and the 5th US Air Force, which were both responsible to MacArthur. He in turn was responsible to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. Furthermore, the Agreement stated clearly that the BCOF was required to 'conduct such military operations outside normally allocated areas as may be directed by the CG Eighth Army for Ground Forces and the CG Fifth Army for Air Forces'.¹³⁶

136. The 'Memorandum for Record' is appended to JCOSA Minute No.22/1945, CRS A 816, item 52/301/223, and is reproduced as Appendix 13.

The Agreement did not, however, mention the role of the BCOF in the event of a major attack on Japan,¹³⁷ and this was to prove a point of contention during the following years. It is noticeable that there was no mention of the Far Eastern Commission, of which Australia was a member.¹³⁸ This body was concerned with essentially political matters - the control of Japan and the execution of the Terms of Surrender - not operational and strategic matters.

Inter-government discussion continued over the MacArthur/Northcott Agreement. The New Zealand government was prepared to participate on that basis, but added:

We would be less than frank, however, if we did not say that in view of the time elapsed ... and the way in which negotiations have dragged, that enthusiasm for it has flagged very considerably in New Zealand. There is a general feeling that this force is not needed and it appears questionable whether, in the circumstances it is likely to yield any increase in British Commonwealth prestige.¹³⁹

Lavarack in Washington advised the government that it would be 'probably useless time wasting to attempt to persuade the United States government to withdraw their statement of general principles in favour of 'the MacArthur/Northcott Agreement but he pointed out that the two statements were not incompatible and indeed MacArthur had applied the 'Statement of General Principles' when working out the agreement.¹⁴⁰

137. Major-General T.F. Cape, who was a senior staff officer on HQ BCOF in 1946, has stated that the possibility of outside interference in 1946 seemed very remote. Interview 23 March 1979.

138. For a discussion of the Far Eastern Commission see Bell, *op.cit.*, pp.192-203; Rosecrance, *op.cit.*, pp.14-45; W. MacMahon Ball, *Japan: Enemy or Ally* (Cassell, Melbourne, 1948); G.H. Blakeslee, *The Far Eastern Commission* (The Department of State, Washington, 1953).

139. Cable 221, PM of New Zealand to Australian Government, 19 December 1945, *loc.cit.*

140. Cable 1176, Lavarack to Department of External Affairs, 20 December 1945, *loc.cit.*

Eventually Australia accepted the US principles to be implemented in accordance with the Memorandum of Record.¹⁴¹ The American government agreed on condition that Australia undertook to reduce the BCOF correspondingly with future US reductions, and this agreement was formally announced to the press on 31 January 1946.¹⁴²

The operation of the BCOF in the six year occupation of Japan was governed by the MacArthur/Northcott Agreement,¹⁴³ and in the opinion of Lieutenant-General H.C.H. Robertson, who succeeded Northcott as Commander-in-Chief BCOF in mid 1946, it was 'an iniquitous document'. Robertson wrote that

Sutherland who was Chief of Staff to MacArthur, drove a very hard bargain with Northcott and gave the impression that British Commonwealth troops were not wanted in the occupation, and that they would only be accepted on the terms specified in the document. Northcott therefore found himself compelled to agree to certain factors with which he was not in accord in order to get the force into Japan, but he was not happy about the document and I was even more unhappy when I inherited it.¹⁴⁴

The British and Indian representatives on the JCOSA harboured similar thoughts. In their view:

The text of the Northcott/MacArthur agreement contains several clauses, and the manner of its intended interpretation, many trends which might not have been included at all had it been drawn up between the US Government and some power or powers other than the British Commonwealth.¹⁴⁵

141. Note No.544/45, Australian Legation to US Secretary of State, 31 December 1945, RG 165 ABC, 014 Japan (13 April 1944) Sec 18-B, National Archives, Cable 80, Australian Legation, Washington to Department of External Affairs, 23 January 1946, A 816, 52/301/309. R. Singh, *Post-War Occupation Forces: Japan and Southeast Asia* (Combined Inter-Services Historical Section, New Delhi, 1958), p.16.

142. BCOF History, AWM 130/1/23, Part I. See also Memorandum, Acheson to Eggleston, 22 January 1946, RG 165, ABC 014 Japan (13 April 1944) Sec 18-B, National Archives.

143. Japan surrendered on 2 September 1945 and the Peace Treaty was signed on 8 September 1951. Because of the Korean War allied troops remained in Japan beyond that date.

144. Untitled History of BCOF by H.C.H. Robertson, p.94, Robertson Papers.

145. Memorandum, UK/Indian Element of JCOSA to Shedden, 4 January 1946, A 816 52/301/223.

The American command in Tokyo believed that the document committed the BCOF to defending Japan against external aggression, and said that if British Commonwealth countries disagreed then they could discuss their objections with the US government. Robertson saw things differently, and 'insisted that no matter what powers might have been signed away to General MacArthur ... the sovereignty of the British Commonwealth Governments did not allow them to hand over the unrestricted use of their forces to any allied commander no matter how close the relations might be'.¹⁴⁶

This important question was not resolved for three years and the Americans and British continued to operate from different premises. It was not until 1949, one year before the Korean War, that Robertson received authority from the Australian Chiefs of Staff 'that the defence of Japan should be regarded as included in occupation duties'.¹⁴⁷ Even then it is inconceivable that the commander of the 8th US Army would have ordered the BCOF into battle without MacArthur seeking the prior approval of the C-in-C BCOF.

The negotiations to establish the BCOF had been long and tortuous. Firstly, there had been the necessity to compromise between the Australian desire to take part as a separate belligerent, and the United Kingdom's wish to retain control of the force. Then the Americans had objected to a joint-force commander which had been one of the principles of the Australian-British agreement. MacArthur's influence had been important throughout the negotiations and he was forced to make less concessions than Northcott. In fairness to the Americans, however, they did not want to create a situation which the Russians might have been able to exploit.

146. Robertson, *History of BCOF*, p.93.

147. *Ibid.*, p.101. JCOSA had by then been dissolved since the British, Indian and New Zealand contingents had been withdrawn.

It does seem that the Americans had no desire to hurry the discussions, but the Australians appeared to hold out for concessions which were never likely to come. Since they were representing the British Commonwealth, not just themselves, the Australians believed that they would have considerable negotiating power. That did not prove to be the case.

In one respect the delay had unfortunate repercussions, for by December 1945 the Australian troops of the 34th Brigade, which had concentrated at Morotai ready to move to Japan, were becoming restive. It was not realised, wrote an Australian Army historian, that 'the instrument for which the Australian Government had fought so hard to gain a responsible, significant and independent role was now in grave danger of collapse'.¹⁴⁸ The discontent amongst the soldiers who had volunteered for the BCOF and had not returned to Australia after the end of the war, culminated in early January 1946 with an unauthorised brigade parade in which the soldiers presented their grievances. The incident was resolved intelligently by military authorities, but it showed that the government had not taken into account the problems of maintaining a military force indefinitely in suspended animation. It was not until 21 January 1946 that the men of the 34th Brigade learnt that they were to sail for Japan in early February nearly six months after the Japanese surrender.

The Australian leadership of the BCOF and the appointment of W. MacMahon Ball as the Commonwealth representative in the Allied Council for Japan was evidence to the Americans that Australia was no longer a colony of

148. Draft of an unpublished manuscript by Dr R.J. O'Neill.

Britain, as some Americans had appeared to believe during the war.¹⁴⁹ MacMahon Ball said that his appointment was 'a generous acknowledgment by Great Britain of the part played by Australian fighting forces in the war, particularly in the war against Japan',¹⁵⁰ and Evatt said that Australia was now 'a principal Pacific Power'.¹⁵¹ This may have been an exaggeration,¹⁵² but it was some distance from the situation six months earlier when, on orders from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the Australians participated in the landing at Balikpapan although they expressed doubts about the strategic value of the landing.

If the establishment of the BCOF marked a subtly changing relationship between Australia and the USA, it marked a more fundamental change in military relations with Britain. At the end of 1946 J.J. Dedman, the Minister for Defence, observed that the organisation of the BCOF was 'a noteworthy development in British Commonwealth Defence cooperation'.¹⁵³ In 1948 he went further and stated that it was the first time that United Kingdom forces had been placed under the control of a dominion government. This was an expression of the 'sovereign equality' of all Commonwealth members

149. In private the British were opposed to the appointment of MacMahon Ball, believing him to lack 'the degree of standing, influence and experience required' for the job. Letter, Ernest Bevin to Lord Addison, 26 January 1946. Bevin wrote to Attlee on 19 February 1946: 'I think it is a bad appointment and will give us trouble but if you think we must accept the risk I suppose we must. But Australia's attitude is not encouraging'. The British suggested the appointment of Keith Officer. The Australian High Commissioner, Beasley, agreed but Evatt would not change the appointment. Letter, Addison to Attlee, 6 February 1946; Cable 47, Attlee to Chifley, 8 February 1946; Cable 82, Chifley to Attlee, 15 February 1946, PREM 8/191.

150. Transcript of newsreel interview with MacMahon Ball, 16 March 1946, CRS A 1066, item P45/10/33/14.

151. Cable 469, Evatt (Ottawa) to Makin (Canberra), 15 December 1945, CRS A 1066, P45/10/33/2.

152. Bell, *op.cit.* (p.194) wrote: 'Only by participating in a combined force with Britain could Australia ensure that it not be completely excluded from the occupation on the grounds that it was not a leading Pacific power'.

153. Christmas message, 16 December 1946, CRS A 816, item 52/301/304.

and it represented 'a recognition of the special position of Australia in Pacific affairs and her willingness and ability to carry increased responsibilities for British Commonwealth defence in this area'.¹⁵⁴

Problems of Commanding the Occupation Force

From the time when MacArthur arrived in Australia in March 1942 until the end of the war, the senior Australian serviceman with whom he had to work was General Blamey. But with the establishment of the BCOF, his most senior allied subordinate became the Commander-in-Chief, BCOF, Lieutenant-General John Northcott. In many respects Northcott was well suited for the task. As CGS from September 1942 until the end of 1945 he had gained a keen insight into the problems of administration, allied cooperation, strategy and politics.¹⁵⁵ While Blamey had been overseas in April and May 1944 he had acted as Commander-in-Chief, and he knew MacArthur.¹⁵⁶ He had been disappointed at not receiving an overseas command during the war, and the appointment to Japan was some compensation.¹⁵⁷ Northcott had many fine qualities to fit him for command of an allied force; hardworking, imperturbable, cooperative and reliable, he had won the respect of politicians and the army.

Nevertheless, the British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, had observed that there 'might be difficulties' with Northcott's appointment,

154. Quoted in Bell, *op.cit.*, p.104.

155. One former senior public servant in the Department of Defence described Northcott as one of the great unsung heroes of the war: 'it was the CGS who advised the Government daily and carried the load of grand strategy and the home front infrastructure'. Lecture by Mr Garry Armstrong to Australian Staff College, 8 May 1978.

156. In his report Northcott wrote that it was valuable that he had served previously with MacArthur. Northcott Papers, MSS 1431/29, Mitchell Library.

157. Letter, Sturdee to Blamey, 25 September 1945, Blamey Papers 170. At a meeting with the War Cabinet on 4 October 1945 Blamey recommended Northcott to command BCOF and Berryman to be CGS. CRS A 2676, item 4478.

and indeed he claimed that MacArthur himself had anticipated problems with Northcott.¹⁵⁸ There is no evidence that this proved to be the case, but even Northcott's admirers have admitted that he was short of experience of command. Perhaps he lacked the flamboyance and imagination to succeed in a command where the chief objective was to maintain British prestige.¹⁵⁹ Yet in the early months few better officers could have been found to weld a headquarters from the navy, army and air officers of four nations into an effective instrument of command.¹⁶⁰

In February 1946 Northcott was offered the appointment of Governor of NSW and in June he was succeeded by Lieutenant-General Horace Robertson.¹⁶¹ 'Red Robbie' was a different proposition; vain, self-centred, arrogant, but with a flamboyant flair for command, he had the ability to match his own estimations. Yet he never bore a grudge and

158. Letter, Bevin to Dominions Secretary, Lord Addison, 26 January 1946, PREM 8/191.

159. The objects of BCOF were:

- a. To represent worthily the British Commonwealth in the occupation of Japan;
- b. To maintain and enhance British Commonwealth prestige and influence in the eyes of the Japanese and of our Allies; and
- c. To illustrate to, and impress on, the Japanese people, as far as may be possible, the democratic way and purpose in life.

Directive to C-in-C, BCOF, CRS A816, item 31/301/367.

160. The description of Northcott is drawn from interviews with Brigadier L.C. Lucas, 20 February 1975, Major-General R.N.L. Hopkins, 12 August 1974, Mr Garry Armstrong, 17 August 1978, Major-General T.F. Cape, 23 March 1979, Major-General A.G. Wilson, 13 December 1978, Mr B.J.F. Wright, 12 October 1978, Air Marshal Sir George Jones, 24 January 1979, Mr J.P. Buckley, 22 January 1979. See also the Northcott Papers, MSS 1431, Mitchell Library, Berryman's Diary, Luvaas, *op.cit.*, p.30 and R.N.L. Hopkins, *Australian Armour, A History of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps 1927-1972* (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1978), p.50.

161. Telegram, Chifley to Northcott, 25 February 1946, Northcott Papers MSS 1431/15, Mitchell Library.

could be most generous.¹⁶² When Blamey had required 'an officer of very firm character and great administrative ability' earlier in the war, he had chosen Robertson.¹⁶³ In selecting Robertson for the appointment Sturdee had described him as 'an outstanding commander of troops, possessed [of] a strong and magnetic personality, and ... our best field commander'.¹⁶⁴

The problems faced by the BCOF were numerous, and will not be dealt with here.¹⁶⁵ It is sufficient to say that it is generally agreed that Robertson's work was outstanding.¹⁶⁶ There were few disagreements with the Americans over operational policy. The dispute over the use of the force for the defence of Japan has been mentioned,¹⁶⁷ but when this difference was manifested by instructions for Australian aircraft to fly with guns loaded and cocked, the Americans agreed to modify their orders:¹⁶⁸

162. This description of Robertson is drawn from interviews with Brigadier L.C. Lucas, 20 February 1975, Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Berryman, 1 May 1974, Brigadier J.D. Rogers, 25 June 1974, Major-General R.N.L. Hopkins, 12 August 1974, Brigadier Sir Charles Spry, 8 August 1974, Major-General A.G. Wilson, 13 December 1978, Major-General Sir Ivan Dougherty, 23 July 1974. See also Vasey Papers 2/6 and 2/8, Gavin Long Notes No.27, December 1943, Long, *To Benghazi*, p.83 and G.D. Solomon, *A Poor Sort of Memory* (Roebuck, Canberra, 1978), p.85.

163. Letter, Blamey to Sturdee, 5 December 1940, Blamey Papers, DRL 6643, item 2A3.

164. Memorandum, Sturdee to Forde, 2 April 1946, and teleprinter message, Coleman to Shedden, 3 April 1946, CRS A 816, item 98/301/186. On his appointment Robertson wrote to Sir John Latham: 'I did not seek the appointment as I felt I had wandered enough and it was time for me to try and settle down, but I cannot but feel very proud of having been given it and that being so one can but do one's best to make it a success'. Letter, 23 April 1946, Latham Papers, MS 1009/1/5501 NLA.

165. For an account of these problems see R.N.L. Hopkins, 'History of the Australian Occupation in Japan, 1946-1950', in *Journal and Proceedings, Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol.XI, Part II, 1954.

166. Rowell, *Full Circle*, p.161. Transcript of interview with Air Marshal Sir John McCauley, 23 October 1973, NLA. Interview with General Sir Charles Gairdner, 11 April 1979. Letter MacMahon Ball to Evatt, 27 October 1946, Evatt Papers-Japan. F.K. Norris, *No Memory for Pain* (Heinemann, Melbourne, 1970), p.244.

167. See above p.530.

168. Interview with Air Marshal Sir John McCauley, 31 August 1979.

From the point of view of command Robertson believed that he faced two difficulties. The first was a reluctance by some subordinate commanders to surrender control of matters that should have been administered centrally. Probably there had been some misunderstanding by the British and New Zealand commanders for these differences were soon rectified.¹⁶⁹

The main difficulty, however, was of fundamental importance, for it struck at heart of the agreement between Britain and Australia. As C-in-C BCOF Robertson had absolute control over the operation of the Commonwealth forces. He was subject only to the Americans for occupation policy, and to the Australian Chiefs of Staff for internal policy matters. In turn the Australian Chiefs of Staff sought the advice of the JCOSA. But Robertson believed that the British were trying to circumvent this arrangement, and that their main instrument was the British Prime Minister's special representative with MacArthur, Lieutenant-General Cairdner.

As C-in-C BCOF Robertson considered himself to be senior to all service personnel from the British Commonwealth in Japan, but Cairdner, who was actually senior in rank, insisted on taking precedence over Robertson at parades. He tried to confine Robertson's activities to the BCOF area, and when a House of Commons delegation visited Japan he accompanied them in their tour of the UK component of the BCOF. At this time Cairdner told Robertson that the British Commonwealth Air Forces were not under his command. Robertson immediately corrected him, but it did not stop Cairdner writing directly to Air Vice-Marshal Bouchier,

169. Report by C-in-C BCOF to JCOSA, 31 August 1946, AWM 130/1/10; Cape interview, 23 March 1979; McCauley interview, 31 August 1979. Robertson wrote in his memoirs that 'some officers of the British and Indian Army looked upon us from Australia and New Zealand as they looked upon the Indians, and were prepared to avoid being publicly commanded by us'.

the commander of the British Commonwealth Airforce, with special demands. This was an intolerable situation, but Robertson later admitted that he had 'unfortunately trusted people and assumed that they were working for the good of the British Commonwealth whereas ... they were working for themselves and their own country'.¹⁷⁰

Gairdner has denied these accusations,¹⁷¹ but there is evidence to support them. For example the papers of the UK Chiefs of Staff show that Gairdner had suggested expanding the BCOF area to look after 'British commercial interests'. This recommendation had not been channelled through the JCOSA.¹⁷² In the opinion of a senior staff officer at the BCOF headquarters the British wanted to use the force to further their commercial interests and there was 'nothing more perfidious than the British in this way'.¹⁷³ Robertson's feeling at the time is revealed in a letter written to Northcott in November 1946:

I see a little of Charles Gairdner, who, as you say, has a pleasant time and I fear that sometimes things happen from UK through him, instead of through JCOSA and myself ...

if you do a little serious thinking you may guess why [Marshal of the Air Force Lord] Tedder is visiting here. He is seeing the airforce, but his real duties

170. Robertson's Memoirs. Robertson provides numerous examples of this attitude. The problem is also mentioned in a letter from Mr Chambers, the Minister for the Army, who had just visited Japan, to Dedman, the Minister for Defence, on 15 January 1947, CRS A 816, item 19/304/388.

171. Interview with General Sir Charles Gairdner, 11 April 1979. Gairdner admitted that Robertson had been upset when he (Gairdner) had been given precedence at parades.

172. JP (46) 43 (Final), 27 February 1946, AIR 8/118. Papers in PREM 8/190 show that Gairdner's role was 'to safeguard British interests and to report to the United Kingdom Government'. This was despite the fact that Mr Gascoigne, the Head of the UK Liaison Mission, and later Ambassador, was there to fill just that role.

173. Interview with Major-General T.F. Cape, 23 March 1979.

relates to the army ... Short-cutting JCOSA completely. Most of us have believed that Australia or New Zealand might be inclined to diverge from the joint effort, but few of us would have guessed that UK would be the initiator.¹⁷⁴

In such circumstances Robertson did all he could to maintain the prestige and influence of his position, and no better man could have been found, but his difficulties focus attention on the JCOSA committee, which if it had been working properly might have made Robertson's task easier.

Some idea of the difficulties of operating the JCOSA and the associated organisations can be detected in the discussions concerning the production of the 'Plan for BCOF'. On 12 February 1946 the Acting Minister for Defence, Forde, expressed concern that no comprehensive planning paper had been submitted setting out the various aspects of the task of establishing and maintaining the force.¹⁷⁵ The Defence Committee (extended) which was in effect the JCOSA sitting with representatives of the Defence Department, indicated that a plan was being prepared and would take about a month to complete. They did not think that the delay would prejudice the organisation and movement of the force.¹⁷⁶

A first draft was prepared and circulated by the Planning Staff on 15 March 1946. A second draft was prepared by 15 May, and subject to certain provisos the C-in-C BCOF was authorised to act on it pending the issue of the approved printed plan. The final draft (less the financial section) was completed by 21 November, but due to an arrears of work the Army Printing Service could not print it until July 1947.¹⁷⁷

174. Letter, Robertson to Northcott, 28 November 1946, Northcott Papers, MSS 1431/18, Mitchell Library.

175. Minute by Acting Minister for Defence, 12 February 1946, CRS A 816, item 31/301/372.

176. Defence Committee Minutes 100/1946 and 114/1946, 20 and 27 February 1946, *loc.cit.*

177. Details are in CRS A 816, file 31/301/373.

The Commander-in-Chief of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, Lieutenant-General H.C.H. Robertson, inspecting troops soon after his arrival in Japan.

(AWM Negative No.132020)



The British Prime Minister's personal representative at MacArthur's headquarters, Lieutenant-General Charles Gairdner.

(AWM Negative No.19066)



Even more difficulties were experienced in attempting to define the organisation and responsibility of the JCOSA. The fundamental problem was that the JCOSA operated through the Australian Department of Defence and the British would not accept the organisation of the department.¹⁷⁸ When he had visited Australia in November 1945 Brooke had written in his diary that the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee was completely subservient to Shedden who had acquired too much power.¹⁷⁹ On 25 April 1946, after speaking to Air Vice-Marshal R. Graham, who had just returned from Australia, he wrote of 'the puny restricted clerical outlook of Shedden and its detrimental effect on an Imperial COS [Chiefs of Staff] organisation'.¹⁸⁰ General Hollis was equally forthright: 'I am very nervous about sending our innermost thoughts to Australia because their Chiefs of Staff system is different to ours. This is due to the subordinate position which they hold vis-a-vis Shedden and the Australian Defence Ministry'.¹⁸¹

With this background, the Australians viewed the British suggestions for operating the JCOSA organisation as attempts to alter the defence machinery. The British claimed that 'they were only concerned with helping the Australian defence machinery'.¹⁸² Finally, on 24 July 1946, General Sturdee, as Chairman of the JCOSA, attempted to define clearly the functions of the members of the JCOSA. He stressed that the JCOSA committee and its Planning Staff were responsible for policy matters, but that the

178. For a diagram outlining the lines of responsibility of JCOSA and the Department of Defence see Appendix 19.

179. Diary, 25 November 1946, 5/11, Alanbrooke Papers.

180. Diary, 25 April 1946, 5/12, Alanbrooke Papers.

181. Memorandum, Hollis to Group-Captain Stapleton, 10 March 1947, CAB 127/49.

182. This dispute is covered in detail in CRS A 816, item 31/301/348. Note of Remarks by Air Vice-Marshal Graham, 1 February 1946, *loc.cit.*

Australian service headquarters were responsible for implementing the instructions from the JCOSA. Members of the JCOSA had no right to query each Australian service branch as to the implementation of the instructions.¹⁸³ The overseas members took strong exception to this approach, and one of them wrote:

If the agent was perfect, many questions could be left entirely to him after policy had been decided. But he is not perfect and that is one reason why, in my opinion, we cannot accept the proposal that the overseas representatives should sit in a darkened room and view British Commonwealth Occupation Force by such shafts of light as the Service Headquarters may choose to turn on from time to time.¹⁸⁴

Nevertheless, as one historian has observed, this supervisory role 'was incompatible with the independence of a self-governing nation'.¹⁸⁵

These differences were never completely resolved, for although the Australian government, on behalf of the Commonwealth governments, issued a formal directive to the JCOSA in December 1946, it was not ratified by all the governments until August 1947.¹⁸⁶ By that time the British brigade had been withdrawn from Japan, and Indian troops were to follow in October. Consequently the JCOSA committee was dissolved and Australia took complete responsibility for the Australian-New Zealand group in Japan.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia proved, in general, to be an unsuccessful experience,¹⁸⁷ and the Prime Minister said that it was not 'a suitable model on which to base future Imperial defence

183. Memorandum by the Chairman, JCOSA, 24 July 1946, *loc.cit.*

184. Quoted in Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.40-41.

185. *Ibid.*, p.41.

186. Memorandum, Shedden to Acting Minister for Defence, 2 August 1947, CRS A 816, item 31/301/398.

187. See papers in CRS A 816, item 11/301/657.

developments'.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless the account of the establishment of the BCOF and the attempts to provide joint allied control has been included to show how the Australian Chiefs of Staff were guided in their thinking by their experiences during the war. They had gained in confidence, they deferred less to the British, and at the risk of being stubborn they were determined that Australia should be recognised as an independent nation.

However there were other legacies which it is not possible to examine here. One was the reorganisation of the Department of Defence in 1946. Another was Australia's efforts to ensure that British Commonwealth defence planning in the Southwest Pacific should be centred in Australia.. Indeed at the Prime Ministers' conference in May 1946 Chifley took up some of the suggestions made by Curtin at the 1944 conference in pressing for the establishment of machinery for cooperation in Commonwealth Defence. It was realised that strategic isolation was irreconcilable with the realities of modern war and the formation of a Commonwealth planning staff was essential.¹⁸⁹ But while the establishment of the BCOF was to some extent a postscript to the Second World War, the deliberations over defence policy in 1946 marked the beginning of a new era. And although these developments were highly important, a discussion of them rightly belongs in another work.

188. Quoted in Singh, *op.cit.*, p.41.

189. Report to Parliament by the Rt. Hon. J.B. Chifley, Prime Minister of Australia, 19 June 1946, CRS A 816, item 11/301/586.

CONCLUSION

Australia's experience of strategic decision-making in the Second World War illustrates the multi-faceted nature of the conduct of modern warfare by an industrial democracy. The problem of the separation of the national leader and his senior military commanders at the strategic level is a wholly modern military-political dilemma, one which came with the French and American Revolutions and - as Clausewitz put it - 'the participation of the people in this great affair of state'. And by the Second World War the lines of demarcation between policy and military strategy were even less clear than previously.

These developments were not uniform in extent throughout the Western democracies. In the United States, military leaders retained considerable control over American strategy during the Second World War. The result was that American strategy lacked a political basis, but it might equally be argued that it suited Roosevelt to hide behind Marshall in not advancing towards Berlin, or behind MacArthur in keeping the Australians out of the Philippines. An overt political commitment might have been politically suicidal for Roosevelt. Nonetheless, in an effort to remove uncertainty, since then the American defence organisation has been changed to ensure a greater civilian and political contribution. Moreover, new institutions such as the National Security Council have been established in an attempt to rectify such weaknesses in the traditional modes of strategic decision-making.

Unlike America, Britain during the Second World War was faced with an extreme national emergency, and the Prime Minister played a vital role in strategic decision-making. Indeed at times he interfered with his commanders' handling of their battles, even offering suggestions at the tactical level. With a vast experience of warfare from both the

military and the political sides, Churchill felt confident of his own ability to direct grand strategy, but his example is not a reliable guide for the future.

By contrast, the Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, was a 'man of the library' with a 'deep-seated and life-long' distrust of the army.¹ It is true that King had an able assistant for military matters in Lieutenant-General Maurice Pope, who filled for a while a position somewhat similar to that held by General Ismay in Britain, but Pope lacked Ismay's power and intimacy with the Prime Minister. Canada made little effort to affect allied strategy, and Pope wrote later:

No opportunity was ever given us to proffer advice as to how the war should be directed and if it had been I wonder if our knowledge of the general situation and our limited experience in matters of this kind would have made us competent to give it effectively. As a consequence, we remained in the second rank.²

Yet in the pre-war and early wartime agreements at Hyde Park King had made important defence arrangements with Roosevelt which, if on the one hand could be described as turning Canada into an American satellite, on the other hand took care of Canada's long term strategic interests for the next half century. Furthermore, although Canada rushed untrained men to England during the Battle of Britain, its troops did not experience combat until over two years after the outbreak of war when they helped defend Hong Kong in December 1941. Their next action was at Dieppe in August 1942.

Australia's situation was quite different, for by July 1941 Australian troops had taken part in five campaigns in the Middle East, and the Australian government was also faced by the developing Japanese threat. Thus even if the Australian government was ill-equipped

1. Stacey, *op.cit.*, p.139.

2. Lieutenant-General Maurice A. Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians*, (University of Toronto Press, 1962), p.175.

to comment on imperial strategy, it was forced to take a keen interest and did not hesitate to offer comment during 1940 and 1941. Moreover, the limited consultation between the British and Australian governments over the campaigns in the Middle East and in planning for the defence of the Far East made the Australian government acutely aware of a need to ensure adequate representation in the allied councils of war.

The Japanese attack in December 1941 and the consequent threat to Australia inclined the government to make domestic policy decisions in the context of grand strategy. Most political decisions became strategic decisions, and in effect the Prime Minister became the Commander-in-Chief for the defence of Australia. Of course there was nothing remarkable about this development; Churchill had filled a similar role in Britain in mid 1940.³ But the development tended not only to make domestic policy decisions a part of grand strategy, but also to blur the distinctions between what we might now describe as grand and military strategy.

Paradoxically, the magnitude and complexity of the problems faced by the Australian government between December 1941 and March 1942 meant that there were few alternatives in deciding national policy. Australia's limited resources, isolation and lack of preparation made its position precarious. This lack of preparation meant that the national capacity was, to some degree, limited to reacting to enemy initiatives. Moreover, the intensification of the war had the effect of narrowing Australia's national objectives. Aspirations for improvement in social and economic standards of living ranked well below the need for survival in national priority. This phenomenon was not, of course, unique to Australia.

3. At one stage Churchill suggested that Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Trenchard should become C-in-C for the defence of the UK. Trenchard replied that he would have to become Deputy Prime Minister. See Ronald Lewin, *Churchill as Warlord*, (Batsford, London, 1973).

To some extent the higher direction of Australian war policy between December 1941 and March 1942 exemplified what now might be recognised as a classical pattern of civil-military relations in a liberal democracy.

It is not suggested here that there is a single model of proper relationships between politicians, officials and the military. Even among the liberal Western democracies the experience of civil-military relations has varied greatly during the present century, reflecting the differences in the structures of the societies of the different countries. Nevertheless, the responsibilities of military leaders to the state, and to duly constitutional authority, as described by Huntington, appear to have won general acceptance. These are: first, the military have a representative function, to argue for the resources necessary for pursuing national security; second, they have an advisory function, to analyse and report on the implications of alternative national policies from the military point of view; third, they have an executive function, to implement the government's decisions on military matters, whether they agree with those decisions or not.⁴

These responsibilities were well discharged by the military in Australia in early 1942. For example, the Chiefs of Staff produced numerous appreciations which set out the probably Japanese moves and recommended Australian responses. The War Cabinet did not always accept the recommendations. The military leaders provided a military strategy which the political leaders tested against the requirements of the grand strategy. Shedden's role in this process was to help Curtin to decide whether the military strategy proposed

4. Huntington, *op.cit.*, p.72.

by the Chiefs of Staff was in accordance with the government's concepts of grand strategy. This is not to suggest that the Chiefs developed their military strategy without giving any thought to other factors. For example, they knew that the Rabaul defenders could not resist an invasion in early 1942, but for psychological reasons they were loath to withdraw the ill-fated garrison.

Yet, despite the positive aspects of this system of civil-military relations, there were shortcomings. Some members of the government tended to panic, and for the month following the fall of Singapore, strong leadership was lacking. Although during this period Curtin ordered the return of the 7th Division, he lacked confidence in his grasp of strategic matters. General Sturdee threatened to resign if the government did not follow his recommendation for the recall of the 7th Division in order to strengthen the government's resolve. Fortunately for Australia, Curtin agreed with Sturdee, but the strain on the Prime Minister forced him to enter hospital. Curtin's reaction to MacArthur's arrival in mid-March shows that the former's nerves were still none too steady.

Despite the later comments of critics, such as MacArthur and E.J. Ward, the appreciations tendered by the Chiefs of Staff during the first three months of war with Japan were shown by subsequent events to have been generally sound. Valid criticism might be made of the selection of some senior commanders in northern Australia, but experienced officers from the Middle East had not yet returned. Burnett's advice about the development of the organisation of the RAAF did not prove wise. But, on balance, the Chiefs of Staff performed creditably during this vital period.

Yet the government was not satisfied. The Chiefs of Staff system did not appear to be suitable for the defence of Australia, and the war

Cabinet talked of appointing commanders-in-chief for the army and airforce. More importantly, the Australian Chiefs of Staff had little standing with allied Chiefs of Staff. An allied commander-in-chief was therefore needed to draw attention to the defence problems of Australia.

The government was strengthened in these attitudes by Shedden, who was not averse to criticising the Australian Chiefs of Staff. Shedden's personal influence on policy decisions exceeded that of the Chiefs of Staff. He derived that influence not merely from his position within the government administrative structure, but also from his long experience as a policy adviser at the political-military interface. At times the Chiefs approached problems from a service point of view. Shedden saw the problems not only from a national point of view, but also in terms of the political philosophy of the government of the day.

The arrival of MacArthur and Blamey in Australia in March 1942 altered the government's approach to the higher direction of the war. Ostensibly the classical model of civil-military relations continued to function. MacArthur provided advice and the government accepted or rejected it. But in practice Curtin surrendered civilian control of grand strategy to MacArthur. As an experienced soldier of a great democracy MacArthur knew that in the long run the military must be the servant of the government. At least his writings indicate that he understood this principle, even if his actions, culminating in his eventual dismissal by President Truman in 1951, were not always consistent with it. Nevertheless, on occasions such as at the end of October 1943, when the Australian government stood firm in its manpower policy, he knew he had to give way. But with that exception, the Australian government accepted MacArthur's advice even when it went beyond the limits of military strategy. Indeed Curtin's courageous

move to amend the Defence Act at the end of 1942 was begun after advice from MacArthur.

Fortunately for Australia, during the first eighteen months of the Pacific war, MacArthur's interpretation of American strategy in the South-West Pacific was almost the same as the Australian government's grand strategy. MacArthur did not have to persuade the members of the Australian government of the wisdom of his strategy; he found them in general sympathy with its aims, and respectful of his authority. But at times he played upon the Australian fears. Curtin's appeals to Roosevelt in September 1942 were clearly initiated by MacArthur.

The Australian government's reliance upon MacArthur had a stultifying effect on its ability to develop its own strategic view. The Australian government had to rely upon Shedden for its resources allocation policy for the last two years of the war, because both the politicians and the other professional advisers had failed to agree on one. After it was realised that Australia was no longer directly threatened with invasion, the spectrum of national objectives became broader, and the government became less able to identify and articulate a strategy. One historian described the situation in America as follows:

The United States was not involved in international politics continuously enough or with enough consistency of purpose to permit the development of a coherent national strategy for the consistent pursuit of political goals by diplomacy in combination with armed forces.⁵

The same might be said of Australia. Before the war Britain had provided strategic and diplomatic direction. Considering the lack of experience in Australia in general, and amongst the Labor politicians in particular, it is remarkable that the Australian government displayed

5. Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (Macmillan, New York, 1973), p.XIX.

as much independence as it did in the latter stages of the war. Perhaps it was the anti-imperialist attitude of many Labor politicians which inclined them to view Australian problems from a national rather than an imperial standpoint. Nonetheless a clear national strategy was not articulated and in this respect political leadership was at fault.

In defence of the political leadership it might be argued that at times it is not in the ultimate national interest to be too specific and coherent in articulating national strategy. Roosevelt and Mackenzie King had excellent internal political reasons for keeping their declared national policies vague, and like Curtin their primary duty in preserving national security was to maintain national cohesion. But in Australia's case it is hard to justify the administrative tangle in the areas of manpower and resources allocation, not to mention the loss of lives in the skies over Germany, and on the beaches and in the jungles of Borneo, in the terms of preserving national cohesion. There were also severe organisational difficulties in the way of developing national strategic policy.

The main organisational difficulty was that there was no independent coordinating authority for administering national strategic policy. The War Cabinet was a suitable political controlling authority, but its secretariat was the Department of Defence, which usually approached strategic problems from a purely military point of view.

Furthermore, the Australian Chiefs of Staff lacked a measure of influence in policy-making by comparison with their British and American counterparts. Although the Chiefs were often invited to attend the Advisory War Council and the War Cabinet, neither they nor General Blamey were on close terms with the Prime Minister. Any recommendation to the government by the Chiefs of Staff had to be filtered through Shedden's secretariat and then passed to MacArthur for his comments.

The only Australian commander who could offer direct advice to Curtin was Blamey. It may well be that in attempting to fill the two positions of Commander, Allied Land Forces and Commander-in-Chief of the AMF Blamey performed each task inadequately. But considering that the government had handed over most of the defence forces and resources to MacArthur, and that Curtin lacked military expertise and confidence in strategic matters, some Australian official was required to watch over and ensure that Australia's interests were safeguarded. That official had to possess considerable military experience as well as have access to Curtin and MacArthur. As argued in Chapter Four, there seemed little alternative to giving Blamey 'two hats' in early 1942, even if later in the war the command structure should have been changed.

Blamey was well equipped for the task of safeguarding Australian interests. He had strong views on the need to maintain Australian sovereignty, and unlike many other Australian generals, realised that wars are fought for political purposes. Yet Blamey's critics assigned personal motives to all of his actions. To them he was a self-seeking, devious manipulator who cared little for Australian lives and who struggled to retain his powerful position and to fuel his own ego. But to others he was Australia's greatest general. To them he revealed a deep experience of military and political affairs and proved a wise and forceful administrator. He fought relentlessly to maintain Australian independence in military matters and he had a genuine concern for the welfare of his troops. Without his efforts MacArthur would have more easily disregarded Australia's wishes.

The most credible evaluation of Blamey's character lies somewhere between these two views, probably closer to the second view than the first. He walked a tightrope between maintaining his own position and protecting Australian interests, between risking his own replacement and risking the distrust of his subordinates. He made few concessions

to his critics. He advanced his own point of view ruthlessly - a course which, like MacArthur, he saw as one *identical* with the best interests of his army and nation. Blamey's contribution to Australia's military achievement in the Second World War has not yet been assessed adequately, but the admiration in which he is held by a score of senior officers thirty-five years after the war is an indication of the value of his work. Yet Blamey's detractors seem to believe that, as A.J. Sweeting observed, 'by some mysterious power the senior officers still dance to the beat of the dead field marshal's baton'.⁶

One of Blamey's problems was that he knew that if his advice was contrary to that offered by MacArthur the latter would prevail. Moreover, he could not rely on Shedden's assistance. When there was a conflict in views, for example over Blamey's role as Commander of the Allied Land Force, Shedden did not seek an independent solution but deferred to MacArthur. Shedden claimed that he was an advocate of Australian independence, but it is clear that like Curtin he fell under MacArthur's spell. Although he was willing to challenge the Australian Chiefs of Staff and present an alternative point of view to the Prime Minister, Shedden failed consistently to scrutinise the advice offered by MacArthur. Indeed he questioned MacArthur's advice on only one occasion, over the appointment of an Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief towards the end of 1944. On all other occasions Shedden accepted MacArthur's views, despite Blamey's opposition to them. Often the memoranda forwarded by Shedden to the prime minister consisted merely of historical accounts of the questions under review followed by a short recommendation. It was rare to find Shedden providing the prime minister with alternatives, except when he disagreed with the Chiefs of Staff.

6. A.J. Sweeting, 'The War in Papua', *Stand To*, Vol.6, No.6, November 1958-January 1959.

By siding with MacArthur, Shedden strengthened Curtin's reliance upon the American Commander-in-Chief, and at the same time reinforced his own position as Curtin's principal Australian adviser. Nevertheless, considering Curtin's lack of experience, Australia was fortunate that a man of Shedden's calibre was in that position. It is relevant to recall Shedden's own summary of his views on Australian defence strategy, written some twenty-five years after the war:

For years I was a warm advocate that collective defence could make a predominant contribution to the strengthening of the Commonwealth, but that hope faded prior to the Second World War, owing to the non-cooperation of the other Dominions, except New Zealand. During the war, security through collective Empire defence proved to be a myth. Individual nations now have to seek their security by regional arrangements with powerful neighbours, as Britain has done under NATO, and Australia with the United States of America under ANZUS.⁷

It is worth reflecting that Shedden was one of few Australian civilians with any expertise in strategic policy matters. Hence his status as one of the government's principal advisers was almost unassailable.

Curtin has been accorded recognition, even by his opponents, as one of Australia's great prime ministers. He restored cohesion to the Labor Party, rallied Australia in the dark days of 1942, and put aside his party's socialist aims in the pursuit of national unity. He finally died in office, worn out by the worries of the war.

Yet although Curtin succeeded as a political leader, he showed many inadequacies as the ultimate director of national strategy. His most important contribution to national strategy was his concern to maintain national cohesion. In this respect his decision to leave any restructuring of the social order until after the war was vital.⁸ But the other major decisions, such as to appeal to America, to demand

7. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 1, Introduction, p.8.

8. Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p.56.

the recall of the AIF, and to request an American Commander-in-Chief, were urged on him by his political and military advisers. This is not to suggest that these decisions were not in accord with his own opinions, but he did not originate them. He does not appear to have had any overall strategic view of his own, and once MacArthur arrived, Curtin was content to concur in his views. His reliance upon MacArthur was demonstrated particularly by his hesitancy in issues in which MacArthur was loath to offer direct advice, such as in balancing the Australian war effort. Thus apart from the decisions mentioned above, Curtin's reputation in the area of grand strategy rests on the wisdom of his decision generally to accept MacArthur's advice. The one issue in which Curtin provided some initiative after MacArthur's arrival was his attempt in London to formalise British Commonwealth defence cooperation.

It was perhaps because of his lack of confidence in military matters that, despite the fact that the distinctions between grand strategy and military strategy were almost inextricably blurred, Curtin sought to separate them. Thus he gave his generals a free hand in the planning and execution of military strategy without confirming that their plans conformed to government policy. Referring to Curtin's relationship with MacArthur, John Robertson observed that the Prime Minister

gave in without a protest on an issue on which there have been many contests, the right of a nation's political leaders to control the generals' campaign strategy.⁹

In fairness to the Prime Minister, Robertson added that 'Curtin and his advisers could not be expected to devise in a few months a perfect solution to an almost insoluble problem',¹⁰ that of how to cooperate effectively with a great power.

9. John Robertson, 'Australian War Policy 1939-1945', *Historical Studies*, Vol.17, No.69, October 1977, p.498.

10. *Ibid.*, p.499.

But although Robertson might be correct about the problem of allied cooperation, Curtin may be criticised for not displaying any desire to control military strategy. His remoteness from responsibility for military strategy is emphasised by the fact that he never visited a battle zone. Yet every other British Commonwealth prime minister who was in office for more than a few months visited his combat forces. Even the crippled President Roosevelt visited the US 5th Army training in Morocco in January 1943, and Mackenzie King visited his troops in Italy. During the critical fighting in New Guinea Blamey suggested to Curtin that he might visit Port Moresby,¹¹ but MacArthur advised against it. Nevertheless, it is difficult to discover any reason why Curtin should not have visited New Guinea at a later stage. While a prime minister should not seek to interfere with his field commanders, direct contact with his fighting troops reinforces his status as the leader who bears the ultimate responsibility for the success of a campaign. Such visits are important not only to the servicemen, but also to the political leader who can see for himself the execution of his decisions. Personal contact of this kind is perhaps even more important if the prime minister has never seen battle.

The tenuous connection between Australian grand strategy and military strategy was shown particularly during the last year of the war, when the government gave MacArthur almost a free hand in the employment of the 1st Australian Corps. Blamey had doubts as to whether some of the proposed operations were of strategic value either to Australia or to the allied cause, but the government accepted MacArthur's advice to the contrary.

With respect to the operations of the 1st Australian Army in the Mandated Territories of New Guinea, Blamey conceived his policies in terms of both military and grand strategy. Yet as far as matters of grand strategy were concerned, they should have been decided by the government. Had the Opposition not pressed the Government, Blamey

11. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 3 October 1942, MP 1217, Box 266.

might not have been required to explain his intrusion into politico-strategic issues.

Blamey's inability to win Curtin's approval for an offensive in Bougainville and New Guinea in October 1944 reflected a serious lack of frank discussion between himself and Curtin. When Curtin ordered him to New Guinea in September 1942 Blamey 'raised no question' although he knew that there was likely to be trouble with Rowell. When MacArthur altered the command structure in early 1943, Blamey waited a further two years before complaining to Curtin. Yet when Blamey complained to Curtin in mid-1943 of excessive American control over Australian supplies, equipment and services, he received little assistance from the Prime Minister, who readily accepted MacArthur's explanations. These incidents also attested to the lack of a close working relationship between Shedden and Blamey.

It has been suggested that Blamey made a severe miscalculation in mid-1944 in promoting the British advance northward from Darwin. It eventuated that Curtin and Blamey were working at cross purposes. The lessons seem obvious: if a small power is to extract the maximum advantage from its relations with a great power, all parts of its decision-making machinery must work in harmony. Otherwise a masterful political general such as MacArthur can play off the disunited parties against each other. Put another way, if a small nation is to have any influence over allied strategy, then it has to have a coherent and clearly defined policy which takes account of both national and allied objectives. This policy must be pursued by both political and military leaders in close cooperation and with mutual confidence. The luxury of several competing national policies, promoted by different organs of the one government, can be enjoyed only by a great power. Ultimately the responsibility for achieving harmony and cohesion rests with the prime minister. Curtin may well be remembered as a great

minister, but a close scrutiny of his performance as a strategic policy-maker reveals considerable shortcomings. As Robertson put it, 'why should a small-town journalist turned politician, who was very good at rebuilding a shattered Labor Party, be expected to have any expertise in running a war?'¹²

Australia's experience of coalition warfare therefore revealed severe limitations in the national strategic decision-making process. The limitations were most obvious in the allocation of Australia's most scarce resource - manpower. Despite the valuable pre-war work of Shedden and Blamey as Controller General of Recruiting, mobilisation plans had not been developed sufficiently by 1939. The biggest problem faced by the government was that of balancing commitment of the nation's efforts to meeting the requirements of the military forces on the one hand, and to supplying food and equipment for consumption at home and by the allies abroad on the other. It was never resolved satisfactorily by positive action on the part of political leaders.

There were also other political factors which affected the management of coalition warfare. For example, Australia's experience points to the necessity for a strong diplomatic effort by a smaller power to keep its claims before the major powers. The success of Australian diplomacy in the Second World War is open to debate, and is worthy of further study. Although Menzies, Casey, Bruce, Curtin and Evatt put the Australian case strongly to allied governments, they were but a small force in the shaping of allied policy. Nonetheless, it was important to Australian national interests that Australian views should have had a sympathetic hearing. The need to argue a case forced Australian policy-makers to appraise their policies in terms of allied objectives. Furthermore Australian political leaders could claim publicly

12. *Ibid.*, p.504.

to be exerting some influence, even when it was marginal, thereby strengthening both public morale and their own political positions.

Nowadays Australia's political position *vis a vis* Britain, America and the world has altered substantially. Australia's national sovereignty is no longer subject to such limitations as in the years to 1945. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs is much larger and its diplomats are more practised than forty years ago. It hardly seems necessary to observe that the need for a strong diplomatic service, so clearly demonstrated during the Second World War, has been met. Indeed the expansion of the department was well under way before the end of the war.

During the Second World War, although diplomatic considerations had an important role in influencing allied strategy, military factors were generally of greater importance. It was in this area that Australia was able to influence the formulation and execution of allied strategy.. The only certain way in which Australia could influence allied strategy was by denying allies the use of her forces. The most celebrated example was Curtin's insistence on the return of the 1st Australian Corps to Australia rather than allowing it to be diverted to Rangoon. A less well-known example was Blamey's refusal to release the 6th Division for the invasion of Java in 1945.

Although the Australian government rarely refused allies the use of its forces, the possibility that it might do so ensured that allied commanders or governments consulted either the Australian government or the senior Australian commander before committing Australian forces to an operation. Significantly the Australians found the British less willing to consult than the Americans. The Americans recognised that Australia was a sovereign country;¹³ many British still tended to look

13. At times the Americans found it convenient to treat the dominions as British colonies when they wished to exclude them from allied conferences.

upon Australia as a colony. British commanders often viewed the Australian forces as an integral part of an imperial army (or navy or airforce) and they expected the Australians to conform, without question, to British strategic direction. Not all British commanders held these views, but as late as August 1945 these attitudes still appeared during discussion of a Commonwealth Force for Japan.

Despite the attitudes of some British leaders, both Britain and the US acknowledged that when Australian forces were involved in an allied campaign, the Australian government had a right to be consulted before any major decision was made. In addition it was accepted that the commander of the Australian component of an allied force should have the right of direct communication with his own government. Sometimes it was necessary for the Australian government to remind the commander of his duty in this regard, but by the end of the war the principle was well established.

The success of attempts by Australian military and political leaders to influence allied strategy was shown to be dependent largely on the nation's military credibility. Where the armed forces lacked balance, as did the RAN and the RAAF, it became difficult to provide task forces which could play an important role in the campaigns. Thus the lack of an aircraft carrier and heavy bombers limited the strategic value of the navy and the airforce in the Pacific. Yet Australian crews were flying heavy bombers in Europe. If a small country is to exact political value from its limited forces they must be concentrated as much as possible. The lack of balance in the Australian Forces stemmed not merely from an inability to concentrate elements, but also from inadequate preparation before the war. It encompassed the fields of both logistics and major items of military equipment.

These considerations aside, Australia's population and resources severely limited the size of the forces which could be provided for operations. If a small country wishes to attain more strategic influence it must accept limits in other areas in order to maintain the necessary forces. This point was made strongly by Blamey in October 1944 when he argued for the retention of six divisions.

Military credibility is also determined by performance on the battlefield. There is need for a high level of expertise both in battle and in staff work. When the country's soldiers are perceived to be performing poorly, its generals and politicians are in a weak position to bargain with their allies. Thus Blamey was in no position to resist MacArthur's orders to travel to Port Moresby in September 1942 and he felt that he had no option but to replace General Allen on the Kokoda Trail.¹⁴ But after the Americans had failed at Buna, Blamey was able to take a stronger stand against MacArthur.

It is obviously counter-productive for the leaders of one ally to criticise publicly or capriciously the performance of their partners, or to make bragging claims about their own fighting ability. Bennett appeared to fall into this trap in Malaya and thus weakened Australia's negotiating position in early 1942. Similarly the American criticisms of the Australians in New Guinea in September 1942, and their boastful expectations of an early victory, made it difficult for them to oppose Blamey and Herring a few months later, after the Buna fiasco.

It might be preferable that allied forces should operate in separate national areas. However such separation carries the disadvantage that the forces have no opportunity to develop rapport and that mutual respect and trust which derive from service together in combat.

14. For further discussion of this incident see the author's *Crisis of Command*, Ch.9.

Nevertheless, in the case of a small nation there is a danger that it might lose control of its force if it operates as a component of a larger allied force. If a nation is seeking to gain political influence through the conduct of military operations or the action of its armed forces, achievement of this aim can be enhanced if the forces are seen to have important and independent roles. Thus Blamey demanded that the whole 1st Australian Corps should be employed in the Philippines, while MacArthur wanted to use only one Australian division. MacArthur was aware of the political consequences of allowing the Australians to play an important military role. This consideration also explains in part why Blamey favoured the British expedition north from Darwin. In that campaign the Australians might well have provided the majority of the forces.

Strategic influence is also determined by the command structure. Just as the commander of a small national force must have access to his own government, so too must he have direct access to the allied commander-in-chief. Thus Blamey, as Commander, Allied Land Forces, had far more influence with MacArthur than Air Vice-Marshal Jones, the Chief of the Air Staff, who had no standing in the allied command structure. That Blamey was aware of these considerations is shown by his opposition to the American plan to place the 1st Australian Corps under command of the 8th US Army in 1945. The corps commander would not have had direct access to MacArthur. And when the BCOF was placed under command of the 8th Army in Japan, the Australians ensured that the C-in-C BCOF had direct access to MacArthur. Thus, on the outbreak of war in Korea, MacArthur dealt directly with General Robertson in requesting and co-ordinating Australian support for the Americans.

During the Second World War Australia failed to obtain full political value from the use of its armed forces. Not only did they lack balance and, in the case of the RAAF, an adequate command structure,

but, in the case of the army, they were afflicted by the division between the AIF and the militia. There is no doubt that restrictions on overseas employment of the militia damaged Australia's reputation in the sight of its allies and hampered Australian leaders in their efforts to balance the war effort. The details of the political controversy over the necessary amendments to the Defence Act in this connection are outside the scope of this work, but its effect was relevant to Australia's international standing.

The role of Australian intelligence was significant in shaping allied strategy in the Pacific. For a relatively small expenditure on manpower and equipment, Australia was able to contribute to the allied war effort in the Pacific to a degree out of proportion to her military strength and to the role allowed to her military forces. Mutual confidence was developed and the basis for future intelligence co-operation was established. More importantly, an independent intelligence capability is essential if a country is to pursue an independent strategic policy. The events before the war demonstrate that if a nation is to have an independent defence and foreign policy, it is essential that it should have not only its own diplomatic but also its own intelligence services. The Second World War enabled Australia to develop these services more rapidly than otherwise would have been the case, and thereby strengthened Australia's capacity for making independent judgments on foreign policy after the war.

Any nation's strategic situation is constantly undergoing change. Weapons and equipment are improved by technological development. Power balances and the strengths of alliances are dependent on many factors. Changes in these areas exacerbate the problems of strategic decision-making. Nonetheless there are some factors which do not change as rapidly, and Australia's experience in strategic decision-making in the Second World War has many lessons which are relevant to present and future security problems.

The principal lesson for Australia is the necessity for a sophisticated and cohesive approach to national strategic decision-making. Adequate organisational machinery must be established to ensure that the mistakes of the Second World War are not repeated. The system of managing the war through a War Cabinet, which in a future conflict might be revived and called a National Security Council,¹⁵ proved to be sound, but the War Cabinet lacked its own secretariat which could play a coordinating role between the several departments involved in national security. In the Second World War Shedden and the Department of Defence provided the secretariat for the War Cabinet, but they were not well placed to adjudicate between the demands of other departments. The experience of the war shows that foreign, economic and social policies are as important as defence policy in the development of effective national strategy.¹⁶

Consideration must also be given to the control of the defence forces in war. T.B. Millar has argued that Australia's essential requirements for command and control in a defence emergency are threefold: first, the command of field forces must be separated from and subordinate to the central command authority of the war; second, that central command authority must combine all those responsible for both command and administration of the armed forces and must be chaired by the responsible

15. A sound argument could be made for a National Security Council to be established in time of peace. The Americans have established an NSC, and the experience of the Second World War, and other conflicts, points to the need for the secretariat and ministers of such a body to examine security problems before the outbreak of war. Perhaps the formation of an NSC might also add credibility to Australia's defences in time of peace.

16. For an expansion on this point see Robert O'Neill, *Structural Changes for a More Self-reliant National Defence*, Working Papers No.3, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, Canberra, 1975).

minister; third, the minister must act with the authority of the government, preferably through a war committee of the Cabinet.¹⁷

Australia's experience in the Second World War confirms the wisdom of these conclusions. It is particularly important that the command structure should be established and trained before a war. As Millar noted, once war comes

there will be confusion enough without adding to it confusion over the vital question - the life and death question - as to how the direction of the war is going to be managed in such a way as to reconcile military necessity with political responsibility.¹⁸

But the need for a sophisticated and cohesive approach to national strategic decision-making goes beyond the establishment of adequate organisational machinery, however necessary that may be, and should include the training and preparation of the personnel who will be involved in strategic decision-making. For example, not only civilians within the Defence Department, but also a large percentage of service officers should be given a broad liberal education to enable them to understand policy matters and the implications of military action for national policy. For many officers, the most important contribution they can make to Australia's security is not commanding ships, squadrons or battalions, but providing the best possible advice to the government on strategic matters.

The politicians, who ultimately bear responsibility for Australia's security, must apply themselves to understand the complexities of strategic decision-making - a process which involves a vast range of imponderables and which cannot be described in any concise terms. The civilian and military advisers acquire familiarity with these problems

17. T.B. Millar, *The Political-Military Relationship in Australia, Working Paper No.6*, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, Canberra, 1978), p.15.

18. *Ibid.*, p.16.

in the normal course of their duties in peace, but most politicians will probably take an interest in strategic and defence matters only when under pressure from public opinion or external events.¹⁹ Ultimately, the competence of politicians in this area depends on a strong, continuous and informed public debate on defence and foreign policy issues.

The quality of advice provided to the politicians will depend, in part, on the intelligence available. The need for timely and accurate intelligence information and assessments at the strategic level was evident in the Second World War, and is even more evident today. Similarly, the need for a continuing diplomatic effort to maintain Australian influence in the councils of the great powers has been recognised.

But an important lesson of the Second World War, the need for a close study of mobilisation procedures covering industry and equipment as well as manpower, has not been given sufficient attention in recent years.²⁰ Warning times may be less in the future than in the past, and, since wars may also be shorter than before, plans will have to be highly developed on the outbreak of hostilities. Moreover, political decisions will have to be made before war begins, so that the appropriate plans can be prepared and executed in time.

Some of the military lessons from the Second World War are also relevant to current defence planning. There would seem to be a necessity for a continuing study of inter-allied cooperation, and officers might need to be trained specifically to deal with these problems. Operational and organisational principles might need to be established. For example,

19. In a speech to the Australian Naval Institute in Canberra on 24 July 1980 the C-in-C of the NATO naval forces in the North Atlantic, Admiral Sir James Eberle, noted that although the military continually practised the procedures for decision making in times of crisis, it was imperative that politicians should also practise their procedures.

20. See Desmond Ball & J.O. Langtry (eds), *Problems of Mobilisation in Defence of Australia* (Phoenix Defence Publications, Canberra, 1980).

commanders should have direct access to their own government and also to the allied commander-in-chief. Australian commanders might need specific directives to ensure that their forces are not fragmented but are always retained under their control. Perhaps the Australian government should always insist on a separate operational area for its units. Recent experience has shown that these principles have not always been followed.²¹ It hardly seems necessary to add that both the Australian government and its military commanders should constantly be aware that allies have their own separate interests and may act in a fashion detrimental to Australian interests.

If Australia is to be accepted as a credible allied partner, the armed forces will need to display a high level of expertise not only in the traditional military skills on the battlefield but also in staff work. In this latter respect the Australians will need to understand allied procedures; there will be no guarantee that the larger allies will understand Australian methods. Australian credibility will also depend on the Australian force having an independent logistic capability, as well as its own combat support such as heavy and medium artillery and air support.

A further requirement is detailed knowledge of allied command structures. Australia will need to be represented on allied headquarters at several levels, and the best men available will need to be assigned to this task. The lines of responsibility to the allied commander and the Australian government will need to be defined carefully.

If Australia is to win political influence by the action of its armed forces, these forces will have to be able to operate independently,

21. For example the Australian monitoring force in Zimbabwe was not allocated to one operational area, and at times British commanders issued orders, which were not approved by the Australian commander, to Australian soldiers.

in respect to both combat power and logistics. To meet this requirement the nation may have to accept some sacrifices in social and economic development. The alternative is to accept a less significant role in any allied venture. Furthermore, regulations will need to be framed to ensure that the defence forces are homogeneous with respect to conditions of service. If parts of the defence force are restricted from operations in certain areas, Australian military co-operation may lose feasibility in the eyes of its allies, and Australian planners will be hampered in providing a balanced force.

The nature of the problems faced by the Australian political and military leaders in making strategic decisions within a coalition framework during the Second World War have continued to beset Australian defence planners. These problems include the imbalance in strength between Australia and her major allies, the lack of public and political interest in defence issues in Australia, the competing claims of social and military security in allocating resources, the difficulty of providing balance in a small military force, and the ever present considerations of geography. In a political and technological sense, the world has become more complex, and the problems have become more sophisticated. But in the long run Australia's strategic decisions will need to be taken by men filling positions somewhat similar to those in the Second World War. As Liddell Hart put it:

Human nature ... changes but slowly, if at all,
and human nature under stress of danger, not at
all.²²

Although there were shortcomings in strategic decision-making in the Second World War, in the long term Australia's interests did not suffer greatly because of them. If similar shortcomings are displayed in the future, the nation may not be so fortunate.

22. B.H. Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War* (Faber & Faber, London, 1944), p.219.

APPENDICES

- A. Dr Evatt's Strategic Diplomacy.
 - 1. Dr Evatt's Early Strategic Diplomacy.
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- B. Special Problems in High Command Relationships and Strategic Diplomacy.
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 - 7. Joint Planning, May 1944.
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- C. Directives, Memoranda and Letters.
 - 9. Directive to MacArthur, 30 March 1942.
 - 10. Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive, 28 March 1943.
 - 11. Curtin's Memorandum to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 2 June 1944.
 - 12. Letter, Blamey to Chifley, 18 May 1945.
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- D. Organisations.
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 - 15. Command Organisations, South-West Pacific Area, July 1943.
 - 16. Organisation of the AIB, 6 July 1942.
 - 17. Organisation of the AIB, 16 April 1943.
 - 18. Allied Intelligence Organisation in SWPA, May 1943.
 - 19. JCOSA and the Australian Defence Machinery.

DR EVATT'S EARLY STRATEGIC DIPLOMACY

Although the overseas mission of Dr Herbert Evatt, the Minister for External Affairs, from mid March to mid June 1942, has been described in several books, it is nevertheless relevant to analyse to what extent he was able to influence the strategic situation in the South-West Pacific Area. Some authors have concentrated on Evatt's impact on Australian-Americans relations. Thorne, Edwards and Watt have argued persuasively that Evatt's diplomatic methods were detrimental to Australia's relationship with the United States.¹ Tennant and Dalziel have suggested that Evatt had no alternative but to 'bang on closed doors'.² Bell, in a more scholarly fashion, has admitted that Evatt's style might have been abrasive, but has claimed that it made little difference to relations between the countries.³

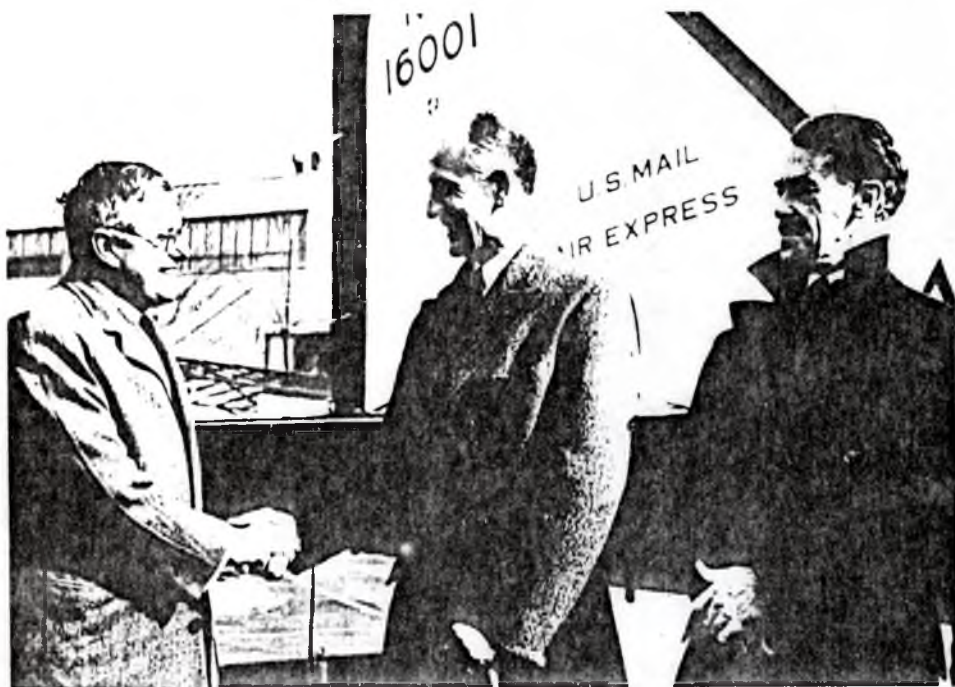
The most thorough attempt to survey the results of Evatt's mission has been made by Watt in *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy*.⁴ He concluded that Evatt was entitled to much of the credit for the establishment of the Pacific War Council in Washington, but that his efforts would not have been successful without enthusiastic support from Harry Hopkins. Australia did not achieve membership of the Munitions Assignment Board or the Raw Materials Board, but not through lack of effort by Evatt. Evatt's presence, however, kept Australia's precarious

1. C. Thorne, 'When Dr Evatt Drove Churchill to Bed', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 May 1974, and Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*; P.G. Edwards, *Evatt and the Americans*; A. Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965* (Cambridge University Press, 1967) and Watt, *Australian Diplomat*.

2. Tennant, *op.cit.*, p.141; Dalziel, *op.cit.*, Ch.2.

3. Bell, *op.cit.*, Ch.3 and 6.

4. Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy*, pp.66-68.



Dr H.V. Evatt being greeted by the US Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, on his arrival in Washington, 20 March 1942. On the right is R.G. Casey, Australian Minister to the USA.

(AWM Negative No.42779)

position in the minds of the British and American leaders. Nevertheless Watt pointed out, quite rightly, that the American decision to base its forces in Australia and to defend Australia was made in December 1941 - long before Evatt reached America. Yet Watt still does not answer satisfactorily the question of the extent to which Evatt influenced strategy in the South-West Pacific Area in the first half of 1942.

Evatt's impact has been covered, to a limited degree in Chapter Four, where it was shown that he urged the Australian government to persuade MacArthur to make strong representations to Washington. And Evatt's report on 24 April that the US planned to limit the first line aircraft in Australia to 500 spurred MacArthur to make increased demands. As shown in Chapter Four, Evatt's cables at the end of May about the allied plan to 'beat Hitler first' had an important influence on strategic thinking in Australia.

There were, of course, several other important issues, one of which was the discussion in Washington in March 1942 on the establishment of the South-West Pacific Area. At the request of the Australian government Evatt succeeded in having the US naval forces of the old ABDA Command under Vice-Admiral W.A. Glassford placed under the command of Admiral Leary's Southwest Pacific Force. But he was not successful in having New Zealand included in MacArthur's command.⁵ When MacArthur's directive was issued on 3 April, Evatt reported that Australia had no alternative but to agree and he recommended that the government should approve it.⁶ The government believed that Australian commanders should have the right of direct communication with their government and instructed Evatt to ensure that the directive was so amended.⁷ Therefore it is seen that

5. Cable PMS 20, Evatt to Curtin, 1 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 571.

6. Cable S22, Evatt to Curtin, 3 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 474.

7. Cable 31, Curtin to Evatt, 7 April 1942, and Cable S37, Evatt to Curtin, 12 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 571.

Evatt played little direct part in the negotiations relating to the establishment of the South-West Pacific Area.

Evatt also had little influence on the provision of aircraft and ground forces to the South-West Pacific Area. On 18 April he reported to Curtin that the President had informed him that it had been decided to send 490 planes of all types for US forces in Australia, plus 50% reserves of each type, and 80 fighter planes for the RAAF plus 50% reserve.⁸ But the 80 planes had actually been assigned to the RAAF in February, and on 9 April there were already 500 aircraft in Australia for the US Air Force. It is doubtful whether the US allocation to Australia was increased between mid-March and 18 April.⁹ Similarly, the ground forces listed by Evatt in a cable on 23 April were either already in Australia or were allocated before his arrival.¹⁰ It does not appear that Evatt's mission achieved any increase in the allotment of US air or ground forces to the South-West Pacific Area.

With regard to aircraft, Evatt did have one minor success. Before he arrived in Washington the Dutch had ordered 214 B25 aircraft of which 50 were at Los Angeles ready to be flown to Australia to form Netherlands squadrons. However, the Dutch decided not to send the planes to Australia but rather to retain them for training purposes in America. By 17 March seven aircraft were en route to Australia. The Dutch then suggested that they might sell 36 of the planes to Australia and retain 18 for a Dutch squadron. However the Combined Chiefs of Staff thought that any aircraft not used by the Dutch should be allocated as part of the general pool. Evatt vigorously opposed this proposal; as he

8. Cable E.S.10, Evatt to Curtin, 18 April 1942, CRS A 663, item 056/1/110.

9. Dr Evatt's Mission - Survey of Results Achieved, Paper prepared by Department of Defence, 4 May 1942, MP 1217, Box 474.

10. Cable ES 17, Evatt to Curtin, 23 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 229 and Box 471; Morton, *op.cit.*, p.212, indicates that the second of the US Divisions allocated to Australia, the 41st, left the USA before 12 March 1942.

wrote to Curtin: 'It has been a constant struggle and the number of high officials whom it has been necessary to interview to press Australia's claims is astounding'.¹¹ Eventually, as a result of Evatt's efforts, it was decided that 19 B25 bombers, for which arrangements for flight delivery had already been made, should be retained for use in the South-West Pacific Area.

As far as equipment and munitions were concerned Evatt found that the existing machinery for allocation made it practically impossible for increased supplies of army equipment to be obtained by representations in Washington. After a careful study the Australian Department of Defence concluded in May 1942 that Evatt's mission was not successful in obtaining any actual allotment of equipment of munitions, except possible 8,000 sub-machine guns and ammunition. He did however, take 'general hastening action' and was able to provide a general survey of the supply position in America.¹²

Evatt therefore achieved only limited success in his efforts to influence allied strategy while in America, but what was the American reaction? On 9 March 1942, before Evatt departed from Australia, Felix Frankfurter warned Roosevelt of possible strife:

You know how sensitive poor relations are, and the Australians feel like poor relations. What is needed is to satisfy them psychologically.¹³

By all accounts, Evatt's meeting with General Marshall did not go well. The Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, described it as 'a rather rambunctious interview',¹⁴ and Marshall was aggravated by Evatt whom he said had gained a reputation for creating 'a tempest wherever he came', and 'for dressing

11. Letter, Evatt to Curtin, 6 April 1942, CRS A 816, item 58/301/80A.

12. Dr Evatt's Mission - Survey of Results achieved MP 1217, Box 474.

13. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, p.264

14. Stimson Diary, 23 March 1942, Library of Congress.

down everybody he came in contact with'.¹⁵ The meeting with Stimson was also 'rather stiff':

I told him [said Stimson] that I was more tempted to depart from good principles for Australia than anyone else, but I was not going to yield to anything. He on his part was fair-minded with me when he found how I felt and we ended up in a very good temper on both sides.¹⁶

Evatt's visit also created problems for the Australian Legation in Washington, and the First Secretary, Alan Watt, wrote in a letter on 16 April 1942 that the 'last month has been far the worst of my public service life'.¹⁷ And when Evatt moved on to London, the reaction in Australia House was much the same. Bruce, the High Commissioner, noted after a conversation with Evatt:

There is little use in recording the conversation as it showed, to my mind, the most astounding lack of clear thinking on the part of a man who has a legal mind and who has held high judicial office.¹⁸

The British reaction to Evatt was likely to be even more wary than the American reaction. In January Cross, the British High Commissioner in Australia, had reported that Evatt was reported to be 'anti-Whitehall if not prejudiced against the Home Country'.¹⁹ And Evatt's messages to Churchill added to British apprehension. For example, before he left America Evatt cabled urgently to Bruce seeking reinforcements for Australia

15. F.C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope 1939-1942* (New York, 1966), p.372.

16. Stimson Diary, 23 March 1942, Library of Congress. In true diplomatic style Roosevelt wrote to Curtin on 4 May 1942 that Evatt had 'made a fine impression on everyone here and I am sure he has enabled us to see the situation in Australia more clearly'. Roosevelt Papers, Map Room, Box 12, Roosevelt Library.

17. Quoted in Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p.49.

18. Notes by Bruce of conversation with Evatt, 22 May 1942, M 100, item May 1942.

19. See Chapter Two, p.86.

and directing him to show the cables to Churchill. Evatt requested the British to release the 9th Division from the Middle East, and to provide additional aircraft and munitions. He reminded Churchill of his promise of August 1940 to come to Australia's aid if the country was 'in deadly peril'.²⁰ Unless a grand emergency plan was 'put into operation forthwith the country may have only six weeks to live'.

I do not want salvation of Australia [added Evatt] to appear to depend upon United States soldiers and United States equipment. British support should be equally in evidence; equally spectacular ... Churchill would emerge as the author of the plan and as Saviour of Australia.²¹

Churchill took immediate exception to these cables. Bruce recalled that when he tried to persuade Churchill to send a friendly reply, he

was greeted by a tirade from the Prime Minister which was more or less down the lines that the Australian Government was impossible and quite unhelpful; that they had pinned their hopes on the U.S.A., but now having found in Washington that those hopes were not likely to be realised they were falling back on the old country. As instances of the unhelpfulness of the Government he went back to the question of our taking our troops out of Tobruk, and referred to the refusal to allow the 7th Division to go to Rangoon.

Churchill criticised the Australian government over its complaint about the appointment of R.G. Casey as Resident Minister in the Middle East. But Bruce was persistent and eventually Churchill agreed to send a friendly reply.²²

Churchill therefore replied that if Australia was 'heavily invaded' two British divisions 'rounding the Cape' could be diverted. Nevertheless he pointed out that in August 1940 he had promised to help Australia

20. Cable 39, Evatt to Bruce, 23 March 1942, CRS M 100, March 1942, and PREM 3 151/2.

21. Cable, Evatt to Bruce, 31 March 1942, PREM 3 151/2.

22. Notes by Bruce of Conversation with Churchill, 31 March 1942, CRS M 100, item March 1942. See also Cable E7, Bruce to Evatt, 1 April 1942, CRS M 100, item April 1942.

'if Australia is being heavily invaded', not, as Evatt had said, 'if Australia is in deadly peril'. He still preferred the 9th Division to remain in the Middle East.²³

Bruce's reaction showed that he was aware that unless carefully handled Evatt's visit could have an adverse effect on Anglo-Australian relations, and clearly others thought the same way. For example, Cross in Australia, asked the Dominions Office at the end of March 1942 to treat Evatt well:

I think it of special importance that Mr Churchill should if possible see a good deal of Evatt who has been inclined to disparage him.²⁴

W.M. Hughes, the leader of the United Australia Party, advised Churchill that Curtin was easily the best man on the Labor side, but that some of his ministers were 'extremists and anti-British'.²⁵ He urged Churchill to be friendly towards Evatt.²⁶ Halifax, the British Ambassador in Washington, cabled Churchill that he had spoken to Evatt and, 'having expected to dislike him, I found myself largely and rather pleasantly disappointed'.²⁷ And Field Marshal Dill in Washington reported that he had found that Evatt was not anti-British or anti-Churchill and was interested in improving relations with Britain.²⁸

23. Cable S 20, Evatt to Curtin, 2 April 1942, CRS A 316, item 52/302/142. See also letter, Churchill to Bruce, 3 April 1942, PREM 3 151/2 and CRS M 100, item April 1942.

24. Cable, Cross to Dominions Office, 27 March 1942, PREM 4 50/6.

25. Telegram, Hughes to Churchill, 30 March 1942, *loc.cit.*

26. Letter, quoted in cable 39, Evatt to Bruce, 23 March 1942, CRS M 100, item March 1942.

27. Cable 1709, Halifax to Churchill, 24 March 1942, AIR 19/246.

28. Cable JSM 137, Dill to British Chiefs of Staff, 24 March 1942, WO 106/3427.

Whatever the fears of various observers, when Evatt arrived in England cordial relations were soon established with Churchill.²⁹

Indeed, as P.G. Edwards has observed:

Someone as secure as Bruce in his personal self-confidence and his sound credentials could hardly be 'duchessed'; Evatt, the ambitious son of a publican, was perhaps the more vulnerable.³⁰

Whilst in England Evatt sat in the War Cabinet as the Accredited Australian Representative, but to Bruce's disgust he did not seek definite assurances from Churchill about the rights of the Accredited Representative.³¹

The CIGS, General Brooke, has left vivid accounts of Evatt's visit. After a meeting on 4 May 1942 he noted in his diary that Evatt was 'Not very attractive at first sight'.³² Later he added that Evatt 'did not grow any more attractive on further acquaintance. I formed the poorest of opinions from what I saw of him'.³³ On 12 May Evatt met with the Chiefs of Staff and Brooke observed:

[Evatt] produced 3 strong blackmailing cards, and then asked for greater allocation of aircraft from America to Australia! In fact if we did not ensure that MacArthur's requests were met we should probably be forced to part with the 9th Australian Division from Middle East, or the Australian Squadron from England, or the diversion of the 2nd (British) Infantry Division and 8th (British) Armoured Division to Australia! He is a thoroughly unpleasant type of individual with no outlook beyond the shores of Australia ...³⁴

29. Notes by Bruce of Conversation with Evatt, 4 May 1942, 1 May 1942, CRS M 100, item May 1942.

30. Edwards, 'The Rise and Fall of the High Commissioner', p.44.

31. Notes by Bruce of Conversation with Evatt, 18 May 1942, CRS M 100, item May 1942.

32. Diary, 4 May 1942, 5/5, Alanbrooke Papers.

33. Notes on My Life, 1-6 May 1942, 3/A/V, *loc.cit.*

34. Diary, 12 May 1942, 5/5, *loc.cit.* The Australian liaison officer to the British Chiefs of Staff, Colonel A.W. Wardell, told Shedden on 17 March 1943 that Evatt had created a very bad impression in London. Notes of Discussion, MP 1217, Box 14.

I did my level best to make him listen to a short statement of the global situation, and where the main dangers existed. He refused to listen and gave me the impression that as far as he was concerned he did not mind what happened to anybody else as long as Australian shores could be made safe. It was quite impossible to make him realize that the security of Australia did not rest in Australia. He failed to see that defeat in the Middle East, India and Indian Ocean must inevitably ultimately lead to the invasion of Australia, no matter what reinforcements were sent them now.³⁵

Again, on 28 May, after a further meeting, Brooke wrote in his dairy:

Then we had Evatt again for an hour pleading that Australia should be crammed full of forces at the expense of all other fronts! However he left with no more than he had come!³⁶

As mentioned in Chapter Four, during the first half of May there was a constant exchange of cables between Curtin and Evatt. Curtin's cables reiterated the views of General MacArthur - that the 9th Division should return to Australia and that increased naval and air power should be sent to the South-West Pacific. Evatt's theme was that MacArthur's mandate was to defend Australia and to operate offensively within a reasonable time. This mandate had been agreed by the governments concerned, and therefore MacArthur had to be supplied with sufficient forces to carry out his directive.³⁷

Evatt used every means available to try to persuade the British to increase the forces in the SWPA. 'My difficulty', he explained to Curtin, 'arises from the necessity of being persistent without being importunate'.³⁸ Indeed one of Evatt's advisers, W.S. Robinson, was afraid that he had already gone as far as it was possible: 'If you attempt to go further',

35. Notes on My Life, 12-17 May 1942, 3/A/V, *loc.cit.*

36. Diary, 28 May 1942, 5/5, *loc.cit.*

37. Cable E4, Evatt to Curtin, 8 May 1942, MP 1217, Box 571.

38. Cable 4501, Evatt to Curtin, 17 May 1942, *loc.cit.*

he advised, 'you will risk grave damage to Australia's cause'.³⁹ And Shedden has observed that in Australia Curtin 'viewed with equanimity Evatt's tireless ambition, and the possibility that a false step in the higher direction of the war effort might lead to a political upset'.⁴⁰

But Evatt did not hesitate to continue his agitation, advising Sir Stafford Cripps that the question was 'not what is going to happen after invasion takes place and the integrity of the Nation is broken, but what can be done to prevent that tragedy from occurring'.⁴¹ Clearly Churchill was persuaded that Britain had to make a demonstration of friendship. On 17 May he informed the First Lord of the Admiralty that Evatt had made the strongest appeals for an aircraft carrier. Churchill said that Britain had to consider its permanent relationship with Australia, and it might be 'very detrimental to the future of the Empire for us not to be represented in any way in their defence'.⁴²

A strong argument used by Evatt was that until he arrived in London neither he nor the Australian government had been aware of the 'written agreement' that the allied strategy was to defeat Germany first. Yet the government knew of the agreement signed between Britain and America in early 1941 to give priority to Germany if America and Japan entered the war. Australia might not have been formerly informed of the decision of January 1942 to maintain the earlier policy, but Evatt's complaint was a tactical move in trying to win greater British support. Evatt

39. Letter, Robinson to Evatt, 18 May 1942, Evatt Papers, W.S. Robinson 1942-45, Flinders University Library. For an account of Robinson's experiences during the overseas visit see G. Blainey (ed), *If I Remember Rightly, The Memoirs of W.S. Robinson, 1876-1963* (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1967).

40. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 57, p.6.

41. Letter, Evatt to Cripps, 20 May 1942, CAB 127/65.

42. Minute, Churchill to First Lord and First Sea Lord, 17 May 1942, PREM 3 151/2.

emphasised three points. First, Australia had never been consulted as to the agreed strategy. Second, that a strong case could be made against the agreed strategy. Third, that accepting the agreed strategy, there was a joint obligation upon America and Britain to provide MacArthur with sufficient forces to carry out that part of the grand strategy detailed in his directive.⁴³

The results of Evatt's representations in London are summarised in a letter from Ismay on 27 May 1942. This states in part:

(1) Although Australia, forming part of the South West Pacific area is within the sphere of the United States strategic responsibility, it is the firm intention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that this circumstance will not in any way lessen their regard for Australian interests, and their solicitude for her safety. Instructions to this effect have been sent to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, and he has been told to press the United States Chiefs of Staff for assurances that measures will be taken to ensure the safety of Australia. This is in accord with the statement made in the War Cabinet to General Marshall during his recent visit, that the plan which he proposed was accepted on the understanding that adequate forces must be allocated to safeguard the defence of Australia and the islands connecting that country with the United States.

(2) Mr. Churchill reaffirmed and the War Cabinet endorsed, the ... understanding given to the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand in his telegram of August 11th, 1940 ...

(3) Recognising the need for accelerating the flow of army equipment to Australia to make good deficiencies, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have undertaken to assure delivery for shipment in June or July of important equipment agreed upon by yourself and Mr. Lyttleton. This may entail some slight diminution of assignments in subsequent months, but it is the intention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to do their utmost to ensure that equipment which Australian forces need will be sent to them. Special steps have been, and will continue to be, taken to speed up shipment of American equipment assigned to Australia.

43. Cable E.T.30, Evatt to Curtin, 28 May 1942, CRS A 330, item [228].

(4) Finally, at the instance of the Prime Minister the United Kingdom have decided to adopt a special plan for air support of Australia, under which a wing of 3 Spitfire squadrons, complete with aircraft, 2 of the squadrons being R.A.A.F., and 1 R.A.F., will be shipped to Australia in a convoy leaving in the middle of June and will be fully maintained. This special reinforcement of well established squadrons is over and above any assignment of aircraft which may be made from United Kingdom, or which may be secured for Australia from output of United States. It is an expression of mutual support which should bind together the countries of the Empire, and will go some way towards repaying the sacrifices made by Australia in the Imperial cause.⁴⁴

Thus the only definite commitment of help was the promise to send the three *Spitfire* squadrons, and the CAS, Portal, had opposed sending the *Spitfires* since Australia was a '*Kittyhawk* area'.⁴⁵ The Americans were never consulted and showed a surprising amount of resentment when they heard of it. Since two of the three squadrons were RAAF, the reasons for the American resentment were not apparent, but the US government,⁴⁶ and in particular, General Arnold, the Chief of the US Air Forces, had already decided that all aircraft sent to the SWPA should, wherever possible, be manned and operated by American personnel.⁴⁷

As it turned out, the *Spitfires* did not reach Australia until early 1943. Initially they were delayed by a mistake in shipping planning for which the UK Air Member for Supply and Organisation accepted full responsibility.⁴⁸ But it was a measure of Evatt's erratic approach that he

44. Letter, Ismay to Evatt, 27 May 1942, PREM 3 150/7.

45. Interview by Gavin Long with Evatt, 18 March 1943, Gavin Long Diary No.1, p.19, AWM. Evatt added that when in Canada he had met Squadron Leader 'Bluey Truscott', a famous Australian pilot, who advised him to ask for *Spitfires*. Till then he had not known that the *Spitfire* was better than the *Hurricane*.

46. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 2, Ch.28, p.9. The US representative on the London Munitions Assignment Board asked that it should be recorded that they had not been consulted. Furthermore, they ensured that all additional allocations of equipment secured by Evatt were balanced by reductions in later allocations. Thus, as Shedden observed: 'no improvement had been effected in the net position, but a feeling of resentment had been aroused against us'. Notes of Discussion with Colonel Wardell, 17 March 1943, MP 1217, Box 14.

47. Cable ET 30, Evatt to Curtin, 28 May 1942, MP 1217, Box 229.

48. Memorandum, Air Member for Supply and Organisation to CAS, 22 July 1942, and Memorandum, CAS to Churchill, 25 July 1942, AIR 8/678.

blamed Bruce for failing 'to protect Australia's interests'. Indeed he thought that W.S. Robinson might make a better High Commissioner.⁴⁹

The British Minister for Information, Brendan Bracken, told Evatt that his criticism of Bruce was 'based on a misunderstanding'.⁵⁰ Delivery of the *Spitfires* was also delayed by British reverses in the Middle East.

Apparently Evatt achieved a minor success in persuading Churchill to release the two Australian brigades at Ceylon. These brigades had been temporarily held in March while British forces were being built up. On 4 March Churchill had written to the British Chiefs of Staff that the Australian brigades 'ought to stay seven or eight weeks, and shipping should be handled so as to make this convenient and almost inevitable'.⁵¹ A month later, General Hollis, on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff, suggested to Churchill that if holding the two brigades in Ceylon was likely to prejudice the retention of the 9th Division in the Middle East then the two brigades should proceed to Australia.⁵² Churchill replied: 'I agree, but let us see what they say'.⁵³

When, at the end of April, Curtin requested the diversion of a British division to Australia until the return of the 9th Division and the two brigades in Ceylon,⁵⁴ Churchill replied that he hoped to relieve the two brigades by the end of May.⁵⁵ But Churchill had no intention of releasing the brigades until absolutely forced by Australia. For example, on 21 May, some eleven weeks after the original decision to hold the brigades, the British Chiefs of Staff reported to Churchill that Wavell did not want to release the brigades before the middle of

49. Cable, Evatt to Brendan Bracken, 25 June 1942, PREM 3 150/7.

50. Cable, Bracken to Evatt, 26 June 1942, *loc.cit.*

51. Churchill, *op.cit.*, Vol.IV, p.154.

52. Minute, Hollis to Churchill, 2 April 1942, PREM 3 151/2.

53. Churchill Minute, 3 April 1942 on *ibid.*

54. Cable, Curtin to Churchill, 28 April 1942, PREM 3 151/1.

55. Cable, Churchill to Curtin, 30 April 1942, *loc.cit.*

August. The Chiefs realised that this was probably unacceptable to Australia and suggested that Churchill ask Curtin if he would accept a delay of until the end of July.⁵⁶ Churchill replied: 'It might be better to let sleeping Bdes lie. Gen. Wavell should meanwhile continue his preparations for relief at end of June'.⁵⁷

Evatt was not, however, willing to let the matter lie. Thus, on 30 May he wrote to Churchill: 'I have a feeling that perhaps the Army authorities need a jogging from you, else the movement might be postponed too long'.⁵⁸ Churchill agreed that if he did not act Wavell would keep the brigades until he received a definite order, and therefore a signal was sent immediately to Wavell.⁵⁹ The brigades eventually sailed from Colombo on 13 July and disembarked at Melbourne between 4 and 8 August. The first brigade (the 16th) began arriving in New Guinea on 21 September.

By early June Evatt was back in Washington, and when the results of the Midway Battle became known, it was clear to him that a more active policy would now be pursued in the Pacific.⁶⁰ But this change in policy could not be directly contributed to Evatt's pleading. Indeed, even before the battle MacArthur had advised Curtin that Evatt should return to Australia. MacArthur told Curtin frankly that

he considered that Dr. Evatt was undoubtedly a brilliant advocate who, by the skilful manner in which he had put his case, had aroused a live interest in the English people as to the security

56. Memorandum, Ismay to Churchill, 21 May 1942, PREM 3 154/2.

57. Minute, Churchill to Ismay, 21 May 1942. *loc.cit.*

58. Letter, Evatt to Churchill, 30 May 1942, *loc.cit.*

59. Gavin Long interview with Evatt, 18 March 1943, Gavin Long Diary, No.1, p.19 AWM. See also letter, Long to Blamey, 31 July 1947, Long Correspondence - Blamey, AWM.

60. Cable ES 65, Evatt to Curtin, 10 June 1942, MP 1217, Box 474.

of Australia, and had achieved a good press for his case. He had no doubt evoked a sympathetic hearing from Mr. Churchill and other Ministers, but from the practical military point of view little had been achieved. He added, however, that probably no one could have done better. As the cables showed, the efforts he had exerted had been those of a great pleader, but the agreement between Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt on grand strategy was a high hurdle to get over.⁶¹

Evatt seemed to agree with this view for he advised Curtin that 'the best results for Australia could flow from General MacArthur's representations to General Marshall'.⁶²

Therefore, in terms of definite commitments Evatt's achievements during his three months overseas were exceptionally modest. But at least one unsympathetic observer thought that his visit had been worthwhile. Bruce told Curtin in a personal cable that Evatt had 'worked unceasingly both day and night'.

Since his departure I have heard many comments on his visit. On every hand I have found them favourable. To my mind the most satisfactory feature is the attitude in governmental and press circles. Both were inclined to regard him before his arrival with a certain measure of suspicion. This has disappeared and has been replaced by a feeling of friendliness. This changed atmosphere will undoubtedly be helpful not only to the Government but to Australia as a whole. It was remarkable how quickly Evatt sensed the atmosphere here.⁶³

Perhaps Bruce, a former conservative Prime Minister, was taking the opportunity to flatter the Labor government for these views hardly agreed with those expressed in private. Yet when Evatt called on the US Secretary of War, Stimson, on the return trip from England, the

61. Minutes of Prime Minister's War Conference, 1 June 1942, *loc.cit.*

62. Cable ES 65, Evatt to Curtin, 10 June 1942, *loc.cit.*

63. Cable S35, Bruce to Curtin, 5 June 1942, *loc.cit.*

American thought Evatt 'had been educated' and he was 'very glad to see him'.⁶⁴

When Evatt returned to Australia he informed the Advisory War Council that he trusted both Admiral King and General Marshall not to allow the Pacific to become static.⁶⁵ Nelson Johnson, the US Minister, reported to Roosevelt that Evatt had said that he now realised that the defence of Australia was only part of a 'vast naval problem covering the entire Pacific Ocean'.⁶⁶ Sir Ronald Cross reported in similar terms to London. He thought that Evatt had returned 'a changed man' and that the visit was looked upon as 'an immense success'.⁶⁷ The Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, expressed parallel views and he told Churchill that before Evatt

left Australia his vision was limited to the Pacific Zone and he was inclined to the belief that Australia's danger was not appreciated at Home and that she might be left to fend for herself while the best of her fighting material was engaged overseas, and murmurs that 'the Old Country was letting us down' were becoming audible. Evatt and his followers were more responsible for this atmosphere than anyone else and his visit to England, the reception which you gave him and his reports on what he saw, are having a good effect and I don't think we shall hear any more of these murmurs in the future ... Once again thanking you for your handling of Evatt. He is a curious creature and could easily be a thorn in one's side if taken the wrong way.⁶⁸

But when Bruce, Stimson, Johnson, Cross and Gowrie all spoke of Evatt's mission as a success, they did so from a different viewpoint to that of the Australian government. To them, the 'success' was that Evatt had not wrecked allied strategy, and that he had returned to Australia reasonably happy but with little definite commitment from the major allies.

64. Stimson Diary, 5 June 1942.

65. Advisory War Council Minute 978, Canberra, 1 July 1942, CRS A 2682, Vol.V.

66. Quoted in Ross, *op.cit.*, p.296.

67. Letter, Cross to Churchill, 26 June 1942, PREM 4 50/7A.

68. Letter, Gowrie to Churchill, 6 July 1942, PREM 4 50/6.

The truth surely was that Evatt had not succeeded in either altering allied strategy or securing an effective voice in strategic decision-making. The best that can be said is that during his three months overseas he had alerted Britain and the United States to Australia's position, and had gained a deeper insight into the realities of global strategy. When he returned to Australia in June 1942 it was already apparent that strategy in the South-West Pacific Area was in the hands of Douglas MacArthur.

DR EVATT'S SECOND OVERSEAS MISSION

The main object of Dr Evatt's second overseas mission was to obtain additional aircraft for the RAAF. As mentioned in Chapter Six, during the early months of 1943 the Australian government had sought increased forces for the South-West Pacific Area, and on 1 April, just as Evatt was about to depart for America, Curtin had informed him that MacArthur had advised him to seek additional aircraft to allow the RAAF to expand to 72 squadrons. The aircraft could come from the British allocation and would, therefore, be additional to the aircraft already provided to the US Airforce in the SWPA.¹

Over a year earlier, in February 1942, the Australian government had decided, on the recommendation of the CAS, Sir Charles Burnett, to plan on the expansion of the RAAF to a force of 73 squadrons.² On 20 May 1942 the Air Board decided to make 45 squadrons the objective to be achieved by the end of the year, and after it was found that not enough aircraft were available, in October 1942 it was decided to aim at a force of 35 squadrons by April 1943.³

These target figures, however, were never agreed upon by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Indeed at the CCS meeting on 10 June 1942, General Arnold, the Chief of the US Air Forces stated that when the over-all air allocations for the SWPA had been determined, it would be up to MacArthur to decide which units would be manned by Australian and US pilots.⁴ Yet MacArthur seemed unwilling to undertake this task,

1. Letter, Curtin to Evatt, 1 April 1943, CRS A 2684, item 1500 Part 2.

2. Gillison, *op.cit.*, p.485. The planning figure for the RAAF is variously described as 71, 72 and 73 squadrons, depending on whether certain units serving in the Middle East were included.

3. *Ibid.*, p.486.

4. Minutes of Combined Chiefs of Staff 24th Meeting - 10 June 1942, CAB 122/206.

possibly because to do so might have restricted in some way his ability to obtain more aircraft for his command. Thus when asked by Washington to comment on Australia's ability to operate 73 RAAF squadrons.⁵

MacArthur replied in ambivalent terms. He said that the Australians could not at present man the 73 squadrons but were planning on doing so. He urged the development of the RAAF to reach 73 squadrons. At the same time it was imperative that this should not be done at the expense of the US Airforce in the area: 'It is evident that the force that will drive through to culmination will be predominantly American, and it is essential that the American Air Force be developed to this end in view'.⁶

Meanwhile in the Combined Chiefs of Staff the British representatives were arguing in favour of increasing the RAAF. 'The main trouble', explained the British CAS, Portal, to Churchill, was 'that the Americans have appeared to be concentrating on building up their own air forces in Australia while neglecting the RAAF which has trained personnel but few aircraft'.⁷

Eventually it was decided to equip and maintain the RAAF at 30 squadrons by 1 April 1943, which was 5 squadrons less than that planned by the Australian government. However, the 30 squadrons included the 3 *Spitfire* squadrons promised to Evatt by Churchill in May 1942, so the target was in fact only 27 squadrons.⁸ Since to increase the RAAF further might have resulted in the transfer of American units from Australia MacArthur agreed with the CCS allocation.⁹

5. Signal, 410, Marshall to MacArthur, 17 July 1942, Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with War Department.

6. Signal C-136, MacArthur to Marshall, 19 July 1942, *loc.cit.*

7. Memorandum, CAS to Churchill, 28 August 1942, AIR 8/993.

8. Letter, Curtin to MacArthur, 16 September 1942, MP 1217, Box 169.

9. Signal C-337, MacArthur to Marshall, 24 August 1942. Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with War Department.

In January 1943, as part of their plan to increase the forces in the South-West Pacific, the Combined Chief of Staff decided to increase the RAAF to 45 squadrons by 31 December 1943, but it was obvious that in attempting to increase this allocation to 73 squadrons Evatt was faced with a challenging task. And the memories of his performance in Britain and America a year earlier were not likely to help his chances of changing the strategic allocation of aircraft. For example, Brigadier Jacob, of Churchill's staff, wrote to the Air Ministry on 8 April 1943:

I am making preparations for the forthcoming visit of Dr. Evatt which, if the last occasion is any guide, is likely to be troublesome ... I am writing all this to you because I think the Air Staff should be ready to meet what is likely to be a fairly heavy attack.¹⁰

The heavy attack began in Washington in mid April with Evatt appealing to the American public through the press. It is difficult to say to what extent this approach helped or hindered the Australian case. Joseph C. Harsch, of the Columbia Broadcasting System, told Evatt that his appeal to the American public had injured his case,¹¹ and the US Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, personally criticised Evatt for approaching the press. Stimson recalled in his diary that Evatt

has been the head and front of the drive that is being made on us on behalf of Australia to shift the entire strategy over from the Atlantic to the Pacific and he has been talking quite freely to the press about it. There has always been planned together a great set-up or frame-up by the Australians, MacArthur, and the Navy who all, each in their own separate ways, want to get the Pacific theatre preferred over the Atlantic theatre.¹²

10. Letter, Brigadier E.I.C. Jacob to R.S. Crawford, Air Ministry, 8 April 1943, AIR 8/994.

11. Letter, Harsch to Evatt, 23 April 1943, Evatt Papers, Evatt Overseas Trip 1943, Flinders University Library.

12. Stimson Diary, 17 April 1943, Library of Congress.

On the other hand Evatt had built up such a reputation for bad temper and rudeness, that a number of officials in Washington were surprised, on meeting him, to find him reasonable and moderate, and were thus more inclined to listen to him.¹³

Evatt's method of operating can be gathered from a report by Admiral J.F. Somerville, who was visiting Washington during the Trident Conference in May 1943. Somerville reported that he had said to Evatt that he was sorry that the 9th Division had not been able to participate in the final victory in North Africa. Evatt had flared up and had said that this was the 'dirtiest crack that he had ever had'. Later Churchill had tried to smooth over the episode, but Somerville noted that 'Evatt was singularly ill-informed of the general strategic situation, that he was anxious to pick a quarrel and that he took no trouble to avoid being offensive'.¹⁴ Bruce observed later, on being told this story, that there was 'no getting away from the fact that Evatt did not put the Australian story very well in Washington or create a very favourable impression'.¹⁵

It is likely that Evatt's second overseas mission was counter-productive. Some State department officials saw it as unnecessary and essentially a propaganda exercise. Australia's efforts to gain additional support for the SWPA were interpreted as alarmist and exaggerated.¹⁶ Views in Washington may well have been shaped by a report from John Minter of the US Legation in Canberra in May 1943:

13. Stimson wrote: 'I was prepared for war with Evatt. But when he came, he was quite moderate'. *ibid.*

14. Minute, Somerville to CNS, 17 May 1943, PREM 3 163/6.

15. Notes of Interview by Bruce with Admiral Sir James Somerville, 1 June 1943, CRS M100, item June 1943.

16. Bell, *op.cit.*, p.140.

I feel that I can safely tell you now that I have felt for more than a year that all the howls from out here were for the purpose of aggrandizement of MacArthur; for Curtin's part aggrandizement of Australia; for Evatt's aggrandizement of Evatt ... I think I need not elaborate the statement that Evatt is chiefly interested in Evatt.¹⁷

The first problem faced by Evatt was that General Kenney, the commander of the Allied Air Forces in the SWPA who was visiting Washington, had told the US Joint Chiefs that Australia would not be able to man the additional squadrons. But Evatt received advice from Australia that although sufficient crews were not yet trained, they would be ready by the time the planes for the additional squadrons arrived.¹⁸

Armed with this information, on 22 April 1943 Evatt presented a five and a half page memorandum to Roosevelt seeking 474 aircraft to bring the RAAF to 73 squadrons. He pointed out that both Curtin and MacArthur were convinced of the necessity for expanding the RAAF.¹⁹ Roosevelt referred the memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who immediately opposed the Australian request.²⁰ But Evatt did not falter and he gave the impression to Admiral William Leahy, the President's personal representative on the JCS, that he was seeking 'planes for votes',

17. Minter to Stewart (Australian Desk, State Department), May 1943. Quoted in Bell, *op.cit.*, p.85 and fn.97, p.248.

18. Cable SW11, Curtin to Evatt, 20 April 1943, CRS A 2684, item 1500 part 2.

19. Memorandum, Evatt to Roosevelt, 22 April 1943, RG 165, ABC 452.01 RAAF (4-26-43), National Archives.

20. Notes on JPS 71st Meeting, 28 April 1943, *loc.cit.* The request was opposed for the following reasons:

(a) In CCS 144/1 the British and Dominion representatives agreed to accept the aircraft allocation for the 45 squadron program.

(b) It would require a corresponding reduction in other commitments if any additional are allocated to Australia.

(c) The British have already expressed concern over the amount of resources we have allocated to the Pacific. Granting the Australian request would further aggravate the situation.

(d) It is doubtful if the Australian manpower situation can efficiently support expansion.

by stressing the Australian government's political difficulties'.²¹ Nevertheless, on 5 May Roosevelt informed Evatt that 'it was not possible to permit of any revision of allocations and that the recent conference of higher ranking United States Commanders of the Pacific had resulted in decisions materially strengthening the combined airforces in the Pacific theatre'.²²

Evatt now turned his attention to Churchill who had just arrived in Washington for the Trident Conferences. The British CAS, Air Chief Marshal Portal, who was accompanying Churchill, strongly opposed the Australian application. He explained to Churchill that the Australian share in the SWPA was a matter between Australia and the USA, but he admitted that there were strong psychological and political reasons for giving the Australians their full share in future operations.²³ Although he could not give Evatt any definite promise Churchill did provide substantial support to the Australian request,²⁴ and when he raised the matter at the Pacific War Council on 21 May, Roosevelt agreed to supply more aircraft to Australia.²⁵

In arriving at this position Roosevelt appears to have been influenced by political aspects, and also by a new argument. Strongly advised by the RAAF Representative in Washington, Air Marshal Richard Williams, Evatt explained that the proposed RAAF force of 45 squadrons made no provision for even a single heavy bomber squadron, and there was no provision for the maintenance of the existing light bomber

21. W.D. Leahy, *I Was There* (Gollancz, London, 1950), pp.182, 205-6.

22. Cable E157, Evatt to Curtin, 12 June 1943, CRS A 2684, item 1500, part 2.

23. Memorandum, CAS to Churchill, 18 May 1943, PREM 3 150/8.

24. Cable 157, Evatt to Curtin, 12 June 1943, CRS A 2684, item 1500, part 2.

25. *Ibid.*, and Memorandum, Churchill to CAS, 21 May 1943, PREM 3 150/8.

squadrons. The RAAF would not therefore develop into a balanced force and it would have a negligible striking power; it could not take its full part in the operations against Japan.²⁶

The military authorities did not, however, accept Roosevelt's announcement of the Pacific War Council as the final decision and they were irritated by Evatt's manner. For example, Marshall complained to Roosevelt that Evatt 'has pounded us with propaganda and personal pressures'.²⁷ Portal told Churchill that the Australian application was an indirect way of increasing the overall allocation to the theatre which had been decided upon purely military grounds.²⁸ Before he left Washington Churchill told Evatt: 'if you can get this approved - and I cannot be sure that you will - you will get it in spite of the military machinations and not because of it.'²⁹ The attitude of the British Military Mission is revealed in a cable from its head, Field Marshal Dill, to Churchill on 9 June 1943, after Churchill had returned to London:

I strongly sympathise with Dr Evatt but none of us can justify his claims on strategical grounds. Americans really should send fewer units of their own and arm more Australians, but that is not so easy to arrange.³⁰

Despite the views of his military advisers, Roosevelt had committed himself to providing the additional planes to Australia. In early June the US Joint Chiefs of Staff prepared a noncommittal letter for Roosevelt to sign and forward to Evatt. General McNarney, representing

26. Memorandum, Williams to UK Secretary, Combined Chiefs of Staff, 29 July 1943, and attachments. RG 165, ABC 452.01, RAAF (4-26-43), National Archives.

27. Quoted in Bell, *op.cit.*, p.85.

28. Memorandum, CAS to Churchill, 24 May 1943, *loc.cit.*

29. Cable E167, Evatt to Curtin, 12 June 1943, CRS A 2684, item 1500, part 2.

30. Cable, Dill to Churchill, 9 June 1943, PREM 3 150/8.

the Joint Chiefs, explained to the President that in effect they were offering 'obsolescent planes' to the Australians. But Roosevelt refused to sign the letter. He said that he had to give something to Australia 'for political reasons' and he did not want to give obsolescent craft.³¹

Eventually the Joint Chiefs rewrote the letter and on 11 June 1943 it was signed by Roosevelt. It stated briefly:

This Government, under lend-lease arrangements, is prepared to give Australia approximately 475 planes prior to the end of 1944. This is in addition to any previous commitments made by us to your government. Some of these planes, in all probability dive bombers and fighters, will be sent at once.

No commitments can be made at this time as to the type of the balance of the planes that are to be delivered to you but that will be canvassed immediately.

It is impossible, furthermore, at this time, to give the exact dates when the planes can be delivered to you but you can be sure that this will be done early as the strategic requirements permit.³²

Evatt was jubilant at this apparent success and he cabled happily to Curtin:

I cannot tell you how relieved and proud I am to inform you that I have discharged the sole mission entrusted to me by you in relation to aircraft as stated in your instruction dated 1st April.

He added that he had 'never worked so hard or so untiringly on anything in my life'. It was the most difficult job he had ever had. General MacArthur had told him that it could not be done.³³ And despite the fact that Evatt irritated Churchill immensely when he visited London

31. Extracts from Minutes, JCS 91st Meeting, 8 June 1943, RG 165, ABC 452.01 RAAF (4.26.43).

32. *Ibid.*, and also Evatt Papers, RAAF, Flinders University Library.

33. Cable E 157, Evatt to Curtin, 12 June 1943, CRS A 2684, item 1500, part 2.

later in June,³⁴ he managed to obtain two more *Spitfire* squadrons for service in Australia.³⁵

But Evatt's success in the United States was an illusion. Of the promised 474 aircraft only 132 were delivered, and the aircraft which were delivered were types then being superseded. This was obvious to Air Marshal Williams as early as a month after Roosevelt's letter to Evatt, when he received details of the aircraft to be supplied. On 11 July he wrote to Evatt:

The only conclusion that can be reached after a study of these figures, is that the allotments are quite unrelated to the building up of an efficient force, soundly organized from a service point of view. On the other hand there is every indication that they are [related] directly to the disposal of aircraft coming forward from manufacturers and of types the manufacture of which is being discontinued. In such a case the formation of new squadrons of that type late in 1944 would be madness and a waste of valuable manpower ... although perhaps meeting the letter of the President's undertaking to you, it is directly opposed to the spirit of your discussions with him.³⁶

An example of the type of aircraft sent to Australia was the *Vultee Vengeance* dive-bomber, which had a comparatively short range, poor performance and light armament. When they arrived in the South-West Pacific Area they were found to be unsatisfactory and were withdrawn from service in New Guinea.³⁷ Furthermore many of the aircraft

34. See article by C. Thorne entitled 'When Dr Evatt drove Churchill to bed', in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 May 1974.

35. Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p.215.

36. Letter, Williams to Evatt, 11 July 1943, Evatt Papers - RAAF, Flinders University Library. In an interview on 25 January 1979 Williams said that since the allocation of aircraft for the following year had already been made, Evatt received only 'the dregs'.

37. During an interview with Sir Walter Layton in Brisbane on 18 October 1943 MacArthur stated: 'The Vultees which Dr Evatt got in Washington - I object to them. Dive-bombing has seen its day'. Layton Report, 3 February 1944, PREM 3 159/2. MacArthur expressed similar views to Curtin in discussions between 29 November and 1 December 1943, MP 1217, Box 2.

arriving in Australia were found to be second-hand and in need of an overhaul.³⁸

Clearly, after claiming in Parliament that his mission was a success, Evatt was embarrassed by these events.³⁹ During 1944 the availability of new aircraft came under discussion in the Advisory War Council. The Australian CAS, Air Vice-Marshal George Jones recalled later:

Dr Evatt got up from his chair and came around to my side of the table and whispered, 'Don't you say anything about those bloody *Vultee Vengeance* aircraft that I got for you'. Fortunately this type did not come up for discussion. They had proved a hopeless failure, and I had cancelled an order for 150 of them on my own authority.⁴⁰

In mentioning the 150 aircraft Jones was probably referring to the *Shrike*, but his point is well made. Moreover, later in 1943 Jones visited the USA with General Kenney and they managed to secure orders for *Mustangs*, *Liberators* and *Dakotas*. Jones recalled that on returning to Australia he found Curtin 'astonished' by this success after Evatt's failure a few months earlier.⁴¹

In retrospect it is obvious that Evatt made no impact on allied or Australian strategy during his second overseas mission. As mentioned in Chapter Six, the essential decisions on strategy in the SWPA were made before he arrived in Washington. His main concern appears to have been to increase his own prestige. For example before leaving Australia he had privately requested the American government to defer any decisions until he arrived. He did not want his own department or even the Prime Minister to be aware of his request.⁴²

38. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 31 December 1943, MP 1217, Box 232, File, Condition of Aircraft Received from USA.

39. In early 1944 Evatt requested Hopkins to 'remove any misunderstandings that the promises' made by the US 'are not being fully implemented'. Quoted in Bell, *op.cit.*, p.84.

40. Jones Memoirs.

41. *Ibid.*

42. P.G. Edwards, 'Evatt and the Americans'.

Whatever the domestic impact in Australia,⁴³ neither Evatt's nor Australia's international prestige was helped by his 1943 overseas visit. Later in the year Sir Henry Tizard reported to Bruce after visiting Washington that Evatt was 'loathed' and not trusted by anyone.⁴⁴ The reports reaching Bruce and his own observations led him to warn Curtin when he visited London in May 1944 that in Britain and in America 'Evatt had done incalculable damage by his manners'. Curtin agreed 'and said he had seen signs of the damage done ever since he had left Australia.'⁴⁵ So Australia had indeed gained little from Evatt's overseas mission in 1943.

43. At Evatt's request Curtin made a speech praising his role in changing allied strategy, *Ibid.*

44. Notes of conversation with Sir Henry Tizard, 30 October 1943, CRS M 100, item October 1943.

45. Notes of interview with Curtin, 25 May 1944, CRS M100, item May 1944. When Evatt visited London in June 1943 Bruce found him to be insultingly rude. Notes of interview with Evatt, 16 June 1943, CRS M100, item June 1943. Also interview with Sir Alan Watt, 6 June 1980.

HIGHER DIRECTION OF THE RAAF 1942-1945

Throughout the thesis, discussion about Australia's influence on Allied strategy has revolved around the role of the army, but this is easily explained by the fact that the navy and air force had negligible influence. Yet a cursory glance at the numbers of personnel in the three services might lead to the conclusion that perhaps the RAAF should have had at least some influence. After all, on 31 December 1944 the strengths in personnel of the services were as follows: Navy, 34,520, Army, 411,321, and Air Force, 179,544.¹ That is, the air force was 43 percent of the strength of the army, but it had only about 5 percent of the influence of the army in strategic discussions. The reason is to be found in the unsatisfactory command arrangements which afflicted the air force throughout the period of operations by the South-West Pacific Area.

Organising the Allied Air Forces in Australia

As related elsewhere, at various times during 1941 the government gave consideration to the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief for the Army, but although a GOC-in-C, Home Forces was appointed, the government hesitated to take the final step to appoint a Commander-in-Chief.² Then, on 11 December, following the outbreak of war with Japan the Prime Minister discussed with the Minister for the Army the possibility of recalling General Blamey from the Middle East to become Commander-in-Chief, and they considered the possibility of the Commander-in-Chief

1. Defence Committee Minute 251/1944, 10 January, 1 February 1945, CRS A 2671, item 55/1945.

2. Horner, *Crisis of Command*, Chapter 4.

also commanding the air force.³ The latter course was not pursued, and it was not until 5 March that the final decision was taken to appoint Blamey.⁴ On 11 March the Advisory War Council agreed that an Acting Commander-in-Chief should be appointed until Blamey arrived in Australia.⁵

That same day the Advisory War Council discussed the means of unifying the control of the Australian and American air forces in Australia. The CAS, Air Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, and the Commanding General of the US Army in Australia, Lieutenant-General Brett, himself a former Chief of the US Army Air Forces, had been discussing the need for unified control, and the Australian Chiefs of Staff advised the Advisory War Council of the need for such control. The Council therefore recommended that Curtin should send a message to President Roosevelt.⁶

Curtin's cable was sent the following day and he recommended that a combined US-Australian air staff and planning staff should be set up to coordinate air operations. Australia was willing to place its air force under control of General Brett at once to ensure the maximum use of the air forces in Australia.⁷ Roosevelt replied immediately that the plan was 'common sense and should be done at once'. It did 'not prejudice any larger plan that may be agreed upon'.⁸ Curtin

3. Advisory War Council Minute 812, 5 March 1942 CRS A 2682, Vol.IV.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Advisory War Council Minute 831, 11 March 1942, *loc.cit.*

6. Advisory War Council Minute 821, 11 March 1942, *loc.cit.*

7. Cable SW 13, Curtin to Australian Minister, Washington, 12 March 1942, MP 1217, Box 238.

8. Cable S 6, Casey to Department of External Affairs, 13 March 1942, *loc.cit.*

therefore ordered Brett and Burnett to prepare an outline of the organisation to give Brett operational control of the combined air forces.⁹

It is noticeable that the foregoing discussion was about 'control' and 'coordination', but in fact Burnett and Brett had been thinking in more ambitious terms and indeed were planning to amalgamate the two air forces in Australia. On 27 February Burnett had submitted a memorandum to the Minister for Air stating that it was undesirable for two independent air forces to be built up in Australia.¹⁰ Yet as Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams has pointed out, the proposed organisation would have resulted in even the Overseas Headquarters RAAF in London coming under Brett's command.¹¹ Burnett suggested that the Air Board should cease to exist and that the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief would operate through a combined American and Australian staff. There would be two Assistant Chiefs of Staff, one in charge of operations and the other administration. Subordinate commands would be staffed by both Australian and American officers. This was substantially the plan presented by Burnett and Brett on 20 March,¹² and after a conference with Curtin, attended also by Drakeford, the Minister for Air, the Prime Minister gave his approval.¹³

During the following days Brett and Burnett refined the organisation of the combined air force, and on 6 April Brett presented a suggested

9. Letter, Curtin to Brett, 19 March 1942, CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A.

10. Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams, *These Are Facts* (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977), p.293.

11. *Ibid.*, p.294.

12. Memorandum, Burnett and Brett to Curtin, 20 March 1942, MP 1217, Box 238.

13. Minute of 20 March 1942 by Prime Minister, *loc.cit.*

organisation. His chief of staff was to be Air Commodore W.D. Bostock, who was then DCAS. His Senior Air Staff officer was to be Brigadier-General Royce of the US Air Force and the Air Officer-in-Charge of Administration (AOA) was to be Major-General Lincoln (US Air Force). The deputy AOA was to be Air Commodore George Jones, then Director of Training.¹⁴

Brett had originally intended that Bostock should be the Senior Air Staff officer with the appointment of AOA going to Air Marshal R.M. Drummond. Burnett's term as CAS was about to expire and the Australian government had made a tentative approach to Drummond, a distinguished Australian officer of the Royal Air Force.¹⁵ But Drummond, while deeply appreciating the offer, was hesitant about accepting an organisation where he might not be able to offer advice to the Australian government.¹⁶

Meanwhile Drakeford had requested Air Marshal Williams, then commanding the RAAF Overseas Headquarters in London, to return 'for consultation'.¹⁷ Drakeford was aware that it had been earlier intended that Williams should succeed Burnett.¹⁸ On arrival in Australia Williams pointed out the shortcomings of Burnett and Brett's plans, in particular that they made no provision for a Minister for Air, a Department of Air or an Air Board.¹⁹

14. Memorandum, Brett to Curtin, 31 March 1942 and letter, Brett to Curtin, 6 April 1942, *loc.cit.*

15. Cable 24A, Bruce to Curtin, 4 February 1942, CRS M100, February 1942.

16. Cable 53A, Bruce to Curtin, 1 April 1942, CRS M100, April 1942.

17. Williams, *op.cit.*, p.283.

18. D. Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force, 1939-1942* (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962), p.475.

19. Williams, *op.cit.*, p.294.

As a result, on 8 April Drakeford wrote to Curtin suggesting that the AOC-in-C (Brett) should be responsible for the operations and that the Minister for Air should retain responsibility for the administration of the RAAF.²⁰ Nevertheless, on 13 April the Defence Committee recommended the abolition of the Air Board.²¹ The next day Brett informed Curtin of his staff arrangements: Bostock was to be his Chief of Air Staff, Lincoln was to be the AOA, Jones was to be the Assistant AOA, Royce was to be the SASO (Operations) and Air Commodore Hewitt (RAAF) was to be the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Administration).²² In line with his earlier letter Drakeford vigorously opposed the appointment of Bostock as CAS under the AOC-in-C. He was happy for Bostock to be Chief of Staff with a responsibility for operations, but not with authority over RAAF administration, for this would give Brett authority over Australian administration.²³

Until this point the Prime Minister had been willing to accept the advice forwarded by Burnett and the Defence Committee, but faced with Drakeford's dissent he now sought the advice of General MacArthur at the Prime Minister's War Conference on 20 April. Curtin told MacArthur that Drakeford had found Bostock to be 'inacceptable' as CAS and that he had been trying to secure the services of Drummond. MacArthur agreed that for the most effective direction of the combined air forces Brett's command should not be limited to operational control. But he stated that when the air force operational headquarters moved north, the chief of staff to the Commander of the Allied Air Force (Brett) would have to move north too. This officer therefore could not

20. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 8 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 238.

21. Defence Committee Minute 55/1942, 13 April 1942, *loc.cit.*

22. Memorandum, Brett to Curtin, 14 April 1942, *loc.cit.*

23. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 20 April 1942, *loc.cit.*

be the CAS who would have to remain in Melbourne. It was observed that Drummond might find the appointment to this position of a purely administrative CAS to be 'unacceptable'.²⁴

As a result of his discussion with MacArthur, Curtin modified the responsibilities of the Air Officer-in-Chief. Brett was to be given operational control of the RAAF squadrons assigned to MacArthur, and the CAS was to retain responsibility for administration, training and the RAAF in Europe. It was anticipated that Drummond would become CAS. Curtin deferred a decision on the abolition of the Air Board.²⁵ In a letter to Drakeford, Curtin made it clear that he had changed his decision as a result of the Air Minister's representations, and that if the organisation did not prove satisfactory it would have to be changed.²⁶

The remaining task was to appoint an Australian CAS, and at the Advisory War Council on 28 April it was agreed that Drummond should be appointed.²⁷ But on 1 May Bruce cabled from London that the 'Air Ministry did not feel that Drummond's exceptional operational experience would be adequately used in the functions now allotted' to the CAS. They strongly opposed his appointment.²⁸ Drakeford supported the appointment of Williams but Curtin would not agree.²⁹ Williams had been

24. Prime Minister's War Conference, 20 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 1.

25. Letter, Curtin to Drakeford, 25 April 1942, and letter, Curtin to Brett, 25 April 1942, CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A.

26. Personal letter, Curtin to Drakeford, 25 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 238.

27. Advisory War Council Minute 917, 28 April 1942, *loc.cit.*

28. Cable 3999, Bruce to Curtin, 1 May 1942, CRS A 2684, item 926.

29. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 20 April 1942, MP 1217, Box 238.



Air Commodore G. Jones, Air Member for Training, Air Commodore W.D. Bostock, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, Chief of the Air Staff, April 1942.

(AWM Negative No.12249)

Air Marshal Sir George Jones, Chief of the Air Staff 1942-1952.

(AWM Negative No.19432)



CAS for almost the entire period between the wars, but in the long struggle to maintain the independence of the RAAF he had developed a reputation for being difficult. At one stage Drakeford threatened to resign if Williams was not appointed, but he relented and, when pressed to provide another name, he selected the next name after Bostock on the organisation chart provided by Brett.³⁰ This was Jones, and therefore, on 5 May, he was appointed.³¹ In January 1940 he had been twelfth on the gradation list, and had had no active service during the Second World War. A little later the government decided not to abolish the Air Board.³²

Jones immediately found himself under great strain. He was promoted to Air Vice-Marshal, but was still junior in rank to the navy and military representatives on the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Moreover he had no responsibility for operations, but at the Advisory War Council ministers often questioned him closely about operations.³³ Jones also had to organise a new air staff, for Bostock had taken with him the original air staff, responsible for operations, intelligence and plans, when he had become chief of staff to Brett's Allied Air Force.³⁴

Thus was established a recipe for divided control of the RAAF. Nevertheless the appointment of Bostock as Brett's chief of staff and the almost mechanical alternation of Australian and American staff officers right down the line of command was an assurance that Australian wishes would not be overlooked. Furthermore, RAAF officers held a majority

30. Williams, *op.cit.*, pp.295, 196.

31. War Cabinet Minute 2129, Canberra, 5 May 1942, CRS A 2684, item 926.

32. Letter, Curtin to Drakeford, 23 May 1942, CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A.

33. Jones interview, 24 January 1949.

34. Gillison, *op.cit.* o.478.

of the key command posts.³⁵ Under such an organisation there was every possibility that Australia might be able to exercise considerable influence over air strategy and the employment of the Australian squadrons.

The Establishment of the RAAF Command

The adverse reaction in Washington to Brett's attempts to amalgamate the air forces in Australia has been described in Chapter Four, and General Marshall soon raised the possibility of relieving Brett of his command. MacArthur was sympathetic to such a proposition. For a short while it had looked as though Brett might have become Commander-in-Chief of the SWPA, and relations with MacArthur were always cool with neither party making any attempt to improve the situation. MacArthur felt that the air force had let him down in the Philippines, and Brett represented that air force. MacArthur referred to 'those incompetent, bungling nincompoop airmen who were with me in the early days of the war'.³⁶

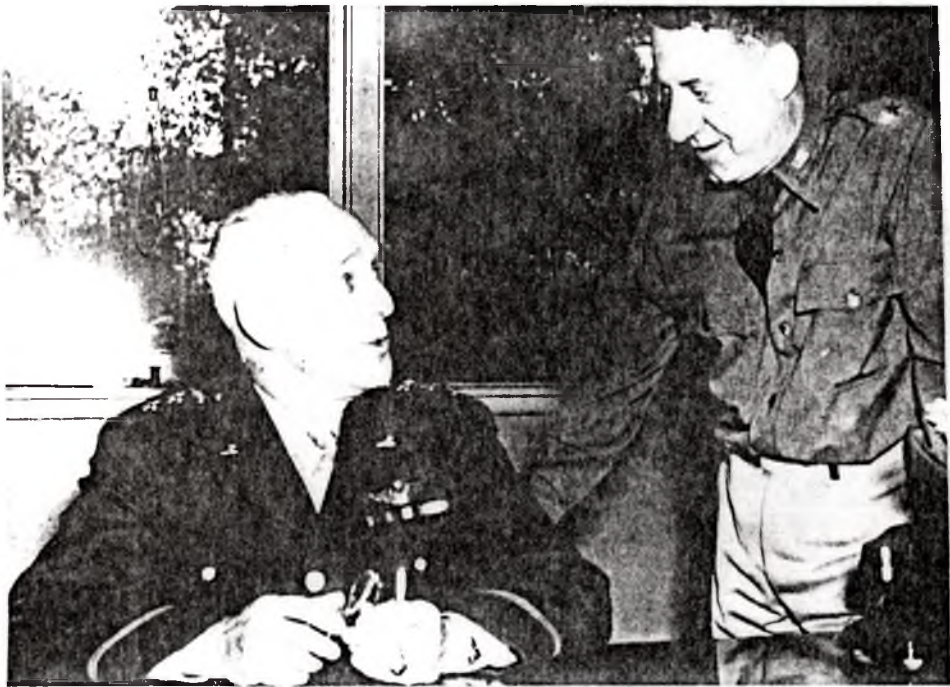
Hence, in reply to Marshall's enquiry, MacArthur let his feelings be known in definite terms. 'Brett is unquestionably highly qualified as an Air Technician', he told Marshall on 30 June.

He is an unusually hard worker but his very industry leads him to concentrate at times on unimportant details which tend to obscure a true perspective of more important matters; he is naturally inclined towards more or less harmless intrigue and has a bent, due, perhaps, to his delightful personality, for social entertainment and the easy way of life; he is unpopular with the Australian Administration who resent his lack of confidence of the younger of fighting elements of the Air Corps here, I would rate his service during the last three months under my command as only average.³⁷

35. Gillison, *op.cit.*, p.478.

36. R.H. Rovere and A. Schlesinger, *The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy* (Farrar, Straus & Girouse, New York, 1965), p.52.

37. MacArthur to Marshall, 30 June 1942, National Archives (Washington). Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall, who had been with Brett in ABDACOM, found him 'very agreeable and easy to work with. One can treat him as an Englishman - almost. He's a bit volatile and apt to go off the deep end from first impressions. But if one steadies him up his second thoughts are good ones'. (B. Bond (ed), *Chief of Staff, The Diaries of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall*, Vol.2 (Leo Cooper, London, 1974), p.81.)



Lieutenant-General George H. Brett, CG Allied Air Forces and Brigadier-General Stephen J. Chamberlin. MacArthur reported that Brett had a bent 'for social entertainment and the easy way of life'.

(AWM Negative No.11743)



Air Vice-Marshal Jones and General Kenney in Manila, July 1945.

(AWM Negative No.42916)

The man chosen to replace Brett was Major-General George C. Kenney and in early July he was ordered to Australia. The decision to replace Brett was confirmed when a report from General Richardson who was visiting Australia reached Washington, and Kenney was briefed to take 'corrective action' to change the situation that had caused Richardson to complain that 'no American Commander should be placed in the position of being dependent on foreigners'.³⁸ Obviously Kenney was instructed to separate the command of the American and Australian air units, for as he wrote later, Marshall 'had told me in Washington that he didn't think much of mixing nationalities in the same organisation'.³⁹

Kenney arrived in Australia in late July and took command of the Allied Air Forces on 4 August. He entered the offices of MacArthur's headquarters like a breath of fresh air. Short, cocky, competent, highly regarded by his men and a firm believer in air power, he was quick to grasp the situation. He knew that Brett had been sent home because MacArthur doubted his loyalty, so from the beginning he gave his new Commander an affirmation of his loyalty. This is what MacArthur wanted to hear, and Kenney knew how to flatter him. After a brief clash with Sutherland, who thought that he could run the air force, Kenney asserted himself in his position as Commander of the Allied Air Forces and as MacArthur's chief air adviser.

Kenney's importance to MacArthur should never be underrated. When he arrived in Brisbane he found MacArthur 'a little tired, drawn and nervous',⁴⁰ but Kenney, a newcomer from outside of what Rowell called the 'Philippine performing circus',⁴¹ was just the man to raise his

38. The AAF in Australia to the Summer of 1942, p.34.

39. Kenney, *op.cit.*, p.63.

40. Kenney, *op.cit.*, p.31.

41. Letter, Rowell to Vasey, 1 September 1942, AWM 225/2/5.

confidence. Soon MacArthur began to rely on Kenney for advice on matters of overall strategy as well as conduct of the air war. More importantly, Kenney made him believe in the Air Corps, whereas previously he had mistrusted it. Kenney listened to everyone who might have ideas and was prepared to use the GHQ staff to present them to MacArthur. MacArthur's opinion of Kenney rose as the war continued and in his *Reminiscences* he described him in most complimentary terms:

Of all the brilliant air commanders of the war, none surpassed him in those three great essentials of combat leadership; aggressive vision, mastery of air tactics and strategy, and the ability to exact the maximum in fighting qualities from both men and equipment.⁴²

As described in Chapter Four, the replacement of Brett caused some disquiet in the Advisory War Council, but of even more concern was the reorganisation initiated by Kenney. All the US air units were separated from the Allied Air Force and formed into a new unit, the Fifth Air Force, which Kenney was to command. It was intended that the Australian squadrons would be formed into a command to be known as the 'Coastal Defence Command, Allied Air Force'. This formation was to be under the operational control of Bostock, who retained his position as Kenney's Chief of Staff. It was intended that the Fifth Air Force was to be the force used for offensive operations, and although Australian squadrons could be assigned to it, it was to be a completely American formation. When Jones heard of this development he wrote to Shedden that

42. MacArthur, *op.cit.*, p.157.

he viewed it with 'great concern', as it would 'deny RAAF units an equal share in offensive operations outside Australia'.⁴³

On 7 August MacArthur had requested Washington to form the Fifth Air Force, and approval was received on 3 September.⁴⁴ Hence the next day MacArthur wrote to Curtin to inform him of the changes which had been underway for almost a month. Significantly, he began by informing Curtin that the changes had been directed by the War Department in Washington. After describing the reorganisation outlined above MacArthur added that 'no essential change [was] contemplated'.⁴⁵

Despite Jones's letter of concern Curtin did not know quite what to make of MacArthur's letter. Therefore on 7 September he sought the views of General Blamey, who suggested that Curtin ask the following questions:

(i) What will be the position of RAAF squadrons in the Coastal Defence Command in regard to allocation of aircraft? There would appear to be a grave danger that the tendency of circumstances may be prejudicial to their equipment being the latest and best types of aircraft that are available.

(ii) What assurances can be given that RAAF squadrons in the Coastal Defence Command will be given opportunities for operational experience in combat areas to which the Fifth Air Force will be primarily allotted? If this cannot be assured, the RAAF will become a second line force and its morale will suffer accordingly.⁴⁶

43. Memorandum, Jones to Shedden, 22 August 1942, MP 1217, Box 229. On 23 August Jones wrote to Drakeford with news of the intention to form the 5th US Air Force. He observed that it had 'been brought about largely through failure of senior RAAF and American officers of [the] allied air force to co-operate successfully'. Jones suggested that the RAAF operational units should revert to his command. In a later note Jones wrote that Brett and his staff could not co-operate with Bostock. Jones Papers Folder No.2, Bostock's papers (if any) have not been located, but he put his case forcefully in a series of articles in the *Melbourne Herald* in June 1946.

44. Craven and Cate, *op.cit.*, Vol.IV, p.98.

45. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 4 September 1942, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

46. Prime Minister's War Conference Minutes, Canberra, 7 September 1942, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

These questions formed the basis of Curtin's letter to MacArthur on 11 September.⁴⁷

MacArthur replied on 20 September that 'due to unavoidable conditions', the majority of units in the Coastal Defence Command would be Australian, although it would not necessarily include the majority of the RAAF units. The new command would have no bearing on the allocation of aircraft to the RAAF. He assured Curtin that the organisation would not affect the full employment of the RAAF in active combat operations and that he intended to use all his air units to capacity.⁴⁸ A few days later (24 September) MacArthur informed Curtin that following representations from Drakeford, Jones and Bostock he had issued an order that the Coastal Command was to be redesignated as the RAAF Command.⁴⁹

Curtin now requested the Chiefs of Staff to consider the reorganisation, and in a report submitted on 26 September they drew attention to certain difficulties. With regard to command and administration they reported:

that, subject to directions from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, operational control of the R.A.A.F. will be vested in the A.O.C., R.A.A.F. Command [Bostock], while administrative control of the whole of the R.A.A.F. will be vested in the Chief of Air Staff [Jones]. In the opinion of the Chiefs of Staff, it is not possible to separate operational and administrative control without loss of efficiency, and any attempt to do so may give rise to differences of opinion between the operational and administrative Commanders. The anomalous position would be created whereby, if there were a difference of opinion between the operational Commander and the Chief there would be no one to give an authoritative decision. Such a system of divided control, it is felt, might result in the formation of groups within the Air Force itself, which would be destructive both of morale and efficiency.

47. Letter, Curtin to MacArthur, 11 September 1942, *loc.cit.*

48. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 20 September 1942, *loc.cit.*

49. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 24 September 1942, *loc.cit.*

With respect to operational efficiency they observed that:

the role of the R.A.A.F. will inevitably affect any future supplies of aircraft allocated to it, whether those allocations are made in Washington or Australia. It was further thought that the acceptance of a defensive role for the major part of the R.A.A.F. would deprive R.A.A.F. personnel of fighting experience, notwithstanding that it is proposed that there will be the usual rotation of flying personnel and of flying units between the zone of active operations and the areas in which the strain upon flying personnel is less pronounced... acceptance of the proposed organisation would not be conducive to the maximum operational efficiency of the R.A.A.F.

The solution presented by the Chiefs of Staff was that the RAAF Command should be established under the command of the CAS (Jones). Operational responsibility would be subject to the direction of Kenney's headquarters and would be exercised through Bostock. Thus the principle of unified control of the RAAF would be preserved.⁵⁰

The Chiefs of Staff report was strongly supported by the Minister for Air, Drakeford, who in a letter to Curtin on 14 October 1942 urged that the RAAF Command should be directly concerned in operations rather than have RAAF units transferred to the Fifth Air Force for operations.⁵¹ As a result, Shedden wrote a detailed letter to MacArthur outlining the concern of the Australian government and suggesting the organisation recommended by the Chiefs, but the letter was not sent.⁵² Instead, Curtin requested Shedden to discuss the matter when he visited MacArthur in Brisbane at the end of October.

In his discussions with Shedden MacArthur pointed out that if Jones were given command of the RAAF Command the same position would be created in the RAAF as existed in the Australian Army 'where General Blamey

50. Report by Chiefs of Staff, 26 September 1942, *loc.cit.*

51. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 14 October 1942, *loc.cit.*

52. Draft letter to MacArthur, *loc.cit.*

sooner or later [had to] choose between going forward with the Land Forces in offensive operations or remaining in Australia to command the forces allocated for the defence of the base'. He therefore favoured retaining the organisation of Bostock commanding the RAAF Command, which could form an air expeditionary force when the time came to move forward. Jones would then remain in command in Australia.⁵³

It is clear from the documents that MacArthur did not, at any stage, seek permission from the Australian government to alter the organisation. Indeed, in his view there was 'no essential change' in the organisation. So when the government failed to react to the Chiefs of Staff report and the letter from Drakeford, the organisation continued to develop in the manner planned by MacArthur.⁵⁴

But in absence of clear directions from the government the dispute between Jones and Bostock rapidly developed into a bitter and personal struggle. The only indication of Curtin's views to reach Jones appear to have been passed on by Shedden in an interview on 19 November. Shedden said that Curtin intended to discuss the problem with MacArthur when he returned to Australia from New Guinea. At that time Curtin intended to raise the matter of Blamey's dual appointment.

In the meantime Jones decided to set up a section of RAAF headquarters in Brisbane with the title of Directorate of Operations Communications and Intelligence. The position would be held by Bostock who would control RAAF operations.⁵⁶ Bostock immediately appealed to Kenney and raised the

53. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief South-West Pacific Area, Brisbane, 20-26 October 1942, MP 1217, Box 2.

54. The organisation of the Allied Air Force at the end of 1942 is shown in Annex A.

55. Memorandum by Shedden, 19 November 1942, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A. The Minister of Air received formal notification of this intention in a letter from Curtin dated 24 December 1942, *loc.cit.*

56. Letter, Jones to Bostock, 20 November 1942, MP 1217, Box 238.

possibility that he might have to resign.⁵⁷ Kenney reacted by requesting Jones not to set up the Directorate. He would not consider accepting Bostock's resignation and assured him of his support.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, on 5 December the Air Board issued an order formalising the establishment of the Directorate of Operations, Intelligence and Communications in Brisbane.⁵⁹

Obviously the government had to take some action, and in late December 1942 the Defence Committee was ordered to report on the extent of the powers of the RAAF Command.⁶⁰ Bostock prepared a written statement for the Defence Committee and was present when it met on 7 January 1943.⁶¹ Bostock claimed that he was in an 'untenable position' as he was unable to control the administrative arrangements to ensure the execution of his orders from Kenney. He therefore requested full powers of command. The Defence Committee decided on a compromise by which Bostock had full operational responsibility while administrative details were worked out by close cooperation between RAAF Headquarters and the RAAF Command. Bostock agreed with this decision, and it was approved by Curtin on 11 January.⁶²

57. Letter, Bostock to Kenney, 25 November 1942, *loc.cit.*

58. Letter, Kenney to Bostock, 29 or 30 November 1942, *loc.cit.*

59. Air Force Confidential Order No.391 of 5 December 1942, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

60. Letter, Bostock to Secretary, Defence Committee, 3 January 1943, *loc.cit.* In a letter to Drakeford on 16 December 1942, Jones recommended that Bostock should be relieved of his appointment and posted to an area where he could cause less 'friction between the different sections of the Services and our allies'. Jones Papers, folder 2. See also Air Board Minute 225/1942 of 28 December 1942 and letter, Jones to Drakeford, 28 December 1942, *loc.cit.*

61. Memorandum by Bostock, 3 January 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

62. Defence Committee Minute 6/1943, 7 January 1943 with Curtin's approval noted on 11 January, *loc.cit.* Curtin informed MacArthur and Drakeford of his decision in letters dated 11 January 1943, *loc.cit.*

The Decision to Appoint an AOC-in-C of the RAAF

It might be thought that the problem of command of the RAAF had now been resolved. Drakeford was confident and hoped that the 'arrangements would ensure fullest co-operation and smooth working so essential for the well-being and efficiency of the RAAF generally'.⁶³ But MacArthur did not agree, and on 16 January he wrote to Curtin and informed him that the proposed arrangement for control of the RAAF Command completely violated sound military principles and he could not concur. He urged that Bostock should have full powers of command of the RAAF Command.⁶⁴

MacArthur's letter was referred to the Defence Committee, which noted that it had originally advocated that Jones should have complete command of the RAAF Command. MacArthur had opposed this. The Defence Committee therefore reaffirmed its earlier decision that Jones should be given complete command.⁶⁵

As a result, on behalf of Curtin, Shedden wrote to Blamey seeking his opinion as to whether an Air Officer Commanding RAAF should be appointed and the Air Board abolished.⁶⁶ Blamey agreed completely and suggested that the AOC should assume a position similar to that held by him as C-in-C of the AMF. The only difference would be that Blamey was also Commander of the Allied Land Forces.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, Bostock had complained to Kenney that the measures to ensure increased cooperation between RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command agreed by the Defence Committee had not been instituted.

63. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 12 January 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A.

64. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 16 January 1943, CRS A 826, item 31/301/196A, also Blamey Papers 23.4.

65. Defence Committee Minute 36/1943, 23 January 1943, *loc.cit.*

66. Letter, Shedden to Blamey, 9 March 1943, Blamey Papers 23.4.

67. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 11 March 1943, *loc.cit.*

MacArthur therefore wrote to Curtin to reiterate the comments made in his letter of 16 January. He concluded:

My recommendations are again urged in the strongest terms. The basic issue is a military one which does not properly admit of doubt. Reduced to its simplest terms it is that the forces placed at my disposal shall not vitiated by outside control. This is fundamental and to deny it would produce a situation the gravity of which I cannot overemphasize. May I ask that decisive action be taken in the matter.⁶⁸

Strengthened by advice from Blamey and MacArthur, Curtin now decided that there was no alternative to the appointment of an Air Officer Commanding, and the abolition of the Air Board.⁶⁹ But these changes would take time to institute and meanwhile the Minister for Air was instructed to undertake certain measures to ensure the smooth working of the RAAF.⁷⁰

Over the following week MacArthur took every opportunity to encourage an early solution to the problem. On 21 March he advised Curtin that the interim measures were 'a poor palliative' and stressed 'the vital importance' of an early decision.⁷¹ The next day he sent Shedden a file which, as he wrote, showed 'how acute and dangerous a situation [was] developing'.⁷² Shedden replied by teleprinter that 'as drastic action [was] proposed to remedy the matter, the Prime Minister [had] been forced to move somewhat slowly'.⁷³ On 23 March Shedden informed MacArthur of Curtin's intention of trying to obtain the services of Air Vice-Marshal Drummond.⁷⁴ MacArthur replied on

68. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 10 March 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

69. War Cabinet Agendum 107/1943, 16 March 1943, *loc.cit.*

70. Letter, Curtin to MacArthur, 17 March 1943, *loc.cit.* Letter, Curtin to Drakeford, 17 March 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A.

71. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 21 March 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

72. Quoted in War Cabinet Agendum 107/1943, Sup 1, 15 April 1943, *loc.cit.*

73. Teleprinter message, 22 March 1943, quoted in letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 23 March 1943, *loc.cit.*

74. *Ibid.*

27 March that the plan would be workable if the officer was 'a man of goodwill and understanding', and that it was 'imperative' that there was 'mutual cooperation and a willingness to subjugate special interests to a general good'.⁷⁵

While Curtin was discussing ways to appoint an Air Officer Commanding, the Air Board was continuing with interim measures to relieve the situation,⁷⁶ and on 6 April Drakeford informed the Prime Minister that the Air Board had decided to transfer Bostock from the RAAF Command Brisbane to Command of the Northwestern Area based at Darwin, and to appoint Air Commodore Hewitt to the RAAF Command. Curtin directed that the instruction for the posting should be withdrawn.⁷⁷ But the Air Board was adamant and Jones advised Drakeford that Bostock's 'insubordinate attitude' had 'created an intolerable situation'.⁷⁸

It is interesting to note that during these deliberations Kenney sent a signal directly to the Air Board, over which he had no jurisdiction, stating that the appointment of an officer to command the RAAF Command was 'not properly a matter for unilateral action'. He suggested that the Air Board rescind its order.⁷⁹ The Air Board disregarded this advice, and on 15 April Drakeford wrote to Curtin that the Air Board considered that the change was essential to the interests of the RAAF.⁸⁰ Again Curtin was unwilling to authorise the change in appointment, adding that any change would have to be subject to MacArthur's approval. Drakeford was to discuss the proposed change with Kenney.⁸¹

75. Personal letter, MacArthur to Shedden, 27 March 1943, *loc.cit.*

76. Air Board Minutes, 6 April 1943, Jones Papers, Folder 2.

77. Memorandum, Drakeford to Jones, 7 April 1943, *loc.cit.*

78. Letter, Jones to Drakeford, 8 April 1943, *loc.cit.*

79. Signal, Kenney to Air Board, 7 April 1943, *loc.cit.*

80. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 15 April 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

81. Letter, Curtin to Drakeford, 17 April 1943, *loc.cit.*

Drakeford met Kenney in Brishane on 27 April and Kenney said that since the government was attempting to secure the services of Air Marshal Drummond, it might be best to wait until he was appointed before changing Bostock from the RAAF Command. It was agreed that Bostock would definitely be moved once a new AOC was appointed. After the discussions with Kenney, Drakeford met briefly with MacArthur, and in a letter to Curtin he reported that MacArthur appeared to be in agreement with the conclusions of the conference.

On 15 April the War Cabinet finally decided to appoint an AOC and to abolish the Air Board,⁸³ and on 17 April Bruce was instructed to again seek the services of Air Marshal Drummond.⁸⁴ Bruce replied in a number of cables that it was unlikely that the British government would release Drummond, and that they had suggested Air Marshal Joubert or Air Chief Marshal Longmore.⁸⁵ Curtin reminded Bruce that it was a 'matter of vital national importance' that Drummond be appointed and said that he thought it so important that the United Kingdom government should be willing to inconvenience itself.⁸⁶ But Bruce was unsuccessful in obtaining Drummond, and he cabled details of the careers of Longmore and Joubert to Australia. Bruce thought that Joubert might be the better selection.⁸⁷ Blamey, who had served with Longmore in the Middle East, thought that the latter would be a 'very successful' AOC in Australia.⁸⁸

82. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 1 May 1945, *loc.cit.*

83. War Cabinet Minute, 2782, Melbourne, 15 April 1943, *loc.cit.*

84. Cable 58, Curtin to Bruce, 17 April 1943, *loc.cit.* On 6 April Blamey wrote to Curtin that General Morshead had discussed the appointment with Drummond while in the Middle East, and the latter had been keen to serve in Australia. Blamey Papers 23.4.

85. Cables 81 of 20 April 1943, 83 of 22 April and 85 of 29 April 1943, from Bruce, CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A.

86. Cable 63, Curtin to Bruce, 28 April 1943, *loc.cit.*

87. Cables 90 of 8 May 1943 and 94 of 22 May 1943, Blamey Papers 23.4.

88. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 1 June 1943, *loc.cit.*

On each occasion when it felt hesitant about proceeding with a matter under discussion the government turned to MacArthur for advice, and accordingly, in late May, Shedden journeyed to Brisbane for discussions with MacArthur. MacArthur began by stating that he was not in agreement with the conclusion of the conference with Drakeford. If Bostock was replaced he would insist on a replacement of equal ability. He did not consider that Hewitt was an adequate replacement. MacArthur's recommendations were to the point:

he considered the Government would be most unwise to accept either Air Marshal Joubert or Air Chief Marshal Longmore. They were what he described as 'culls'. They each had doubtful marks against them in their records and this would prejudice any possibility of giving inspiring leadership to the younger men. They were also too old. He said that he was disappointed with the attitude of the United Kingdom Government, who apparently were not anxious to assist the R.A.A.F. with a good man. In the circumstances, he suggested that the present arrangement, unsatisfactory though it was, should be carried on.⁸⁹

The Australian government accepted this advice and decided to rely on a conference between Kenney, Sutherland, Bostock and Jones to improve the existing arrangement.⁹⁰

Drakeford had little alternative but to accept the government's decision, but he continued to have reservations about MacArthur's role in advising on a matter which was entirely for the government to decide. He was adamant that MacArthur had agreed to the changes during his discussions at the end of April.⁹¹ Curtin dismissed Drakeford's complaint by pointing out that since MacArthur had to consult the Australian government on changes to the commanders of the Allied Naval,

89. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Brisbane, 25-31 May 1943, MP 1217, Box 2.

90. Cable 65, Curtin to Bruce, 11 June 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A.

91. Letter, Drakeford to Curtin, 25 June 1943, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

Land and Air Forces, the government felt bound to consult MacArthur on the appointment of the officer responsible for operational control of the RAAF.⁹²

This incident emphasises again Curtin's uncritical acceptance of advice from MacArthur. Yet Shedden observed that it seemed that neither MacArthur nor Kenney wished to have a senior British air officer in the South-West Pacific Area.⁹³ And Kenney made his feelings quite clear: 'except for the feud [between Bostock and Jones] which sometimes was a nuisance, I liked the situation as it was'.⁹⁴

The Divided Control Continues

The plan, put forward by MacArthur, for a conference between Kenney, Sutherland, Bostock and Jones never came to pass, and the feud continued throughout the remainder of 1943 and into 1944.⁹⁵ At one stage Bostock requested to be relieved of his command, but MacArthur took no action and sought to arrange a further series of conferences between Drakeford, Bostock and Jones.⁹⁶ Eventually it was agreed that Bostock would command the operational forces based in New Guinea, and Jones would move to Brisbane and command all of the RAAF. Bostock would have complete control over the operational forces. This seemingly acceptable solution was rejected by Curtin, who pointed out that it would involve the supersession of Bostock by Jones while originally Bostock had been appointed to the senior operational appointment in the

92. Letter, Curtin to Drakeford, 17 July 1943, *loc.cit.*

93. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 2, Chapter 25, p.15.

94. Kenney, *op.cit.*, p.30.

95. See letters in the Jones Papers and CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

96. Teleprinter Message, MacArthur to Shedden, 5 February 1944, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

RAAF. As a result, Curtin concluded that the only solution was for him to discuss, during his visit to London, the possibility of obtaining a suitable officer as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF.⁹⁷

In London Curtin consulted Churchill, the Secretary of State for Air and the British CAS, and two officers were considered for the Australian appointment, Air Marshal Sir Keith Park and Air Vice-Marshal H.W.C. Saunders.⁹⁸ It was agreed that the most suitable officer would be Park, who had been born in New Zealand.

When Curtin met MacArthur in June in Brisbane on return to Australia, the Commander-in-Chief said that the only practicable manner in which the administrative and operational functions of the RAAF could be integrated appeared to be by the selection of 'a suitable officer from the RAF who would be in a position superior to both Air Vice-Marshals Bostock and Jones'. MacArthur promised that he would give the officer 'his fullest co-operation'.⁹⁹

With this encouragement, Curtin presented the plan to the War Cabinet, which decided on 4 August to appoint Park as Chief of Staff,¹⁰⁰ but still the government hesitated to act. It was not until 5 September that Curtin instructed Bruce to approach the British government.¹⁰¹ Before releasing Park the British government sought an outline of the policy for the command and administration of the RAAF.¹⁰² Consequently,

97. Higher Direction of the RAAF, etc., CRS A 816, item 31/301/300A. Also, letters, Drakeford to Curtin, 25 February 1944, and Curtin to Drakeford, 1 April 1944, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

98. Letter, Curtin to Churchill, 24 May 1944, PREM 3 63/13 and letter, Curtin to Drakeford, 13 July 1944, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

99. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with the Commander-in-Chief South-west Pacific Area, 26 and 27 June 1944, MP 1217, Box 3.

100. War Cabinet Minute 3693, Melbourne, 4 August 1944, CRS A 816, item 31/301/196A.

101. Cable 130, Curtin to Bruce, 5 September 1944, CRS M 100, September 1944.

102. Cable 116, Bruce to Curtin, 28 September 1944, *loc.cit.*

when Curtin saw MacArthur on 30 September the topic was raised and, changing his mind from June, MacArthur now told the Prime Minister that 'the tempo of the campaign had gone so fast and conditions had changed to such an extent that it was no longer necessary to proceed with the proposal'. He said that there would have been advantages if the government had acted when the change was first discussed, but that 'any differences that had existed in the past were now quiet'.¹⁰³

The government could still not decide. Meanwhile the situation was becoming increasingly embarrassing to Bruce, for the British government had already arranged alternative employment for Park.¹⁰⁴ Shedden tried to help Curtin with the decision and in a memorandum on 30 October set out the facts as he understood them. He pointed out that MacArthur was not correct in his claim that the differences between Bostock and Jones were 'now quiet'. Rather, the position was 'still unsatisfactory'. Shedden continued:

It must not be overlooked, in connection with General MacArthur's views, that the opinion is held by senior R.A.A.F. officers that the Americans do not wish to have a senior R.A.F. officer in the Southwest Pacific Area, and prefer the divided arrangement, because they can play one side off against the other, whereas a Senior Officer with unified control would be in a stronger position to assert the views of the R.A.A.F. I regret to say that I incline to the correctness of this opinion.

General MacArthur said in June 'that the appointment of a senior officer in the R.A.F. was entirely one for the Australian Government, and if it wished to make an appointment as proposed, he would give the officer his fullest co-operation.' This was construed as meaning that he would be agreeable to whatever arrangements were desired, subject of their conformity with the principle of an Allied Air Force Commander. His latest views now threaten to add a

103. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with the Commander-in-Chief Southwest Pacific Area, Canberra, 30 September 1944, MP 1217, Box 3.

104. Cable 186A, Bruce to Curtin, 23 October 1944, CRS M 100, October 1944.

complication to negotiations with the Air Minister for Air Marshal Park, if it should still be decided to obtain him. While expressing his opinion on the proposed appointment, General MacArthur has not offered any observations on the queries raised by the Air Ministry, and his attitude may make them reluctant to release Air Marshal Park.¹⁰⁵ The officer also may not be willing to accept the appointment for the same reason. As mentioned earlier, it was refused by Air Vice Marshal Drummond.¹⁰⁶

Shedden had therefore cast serious doubts on MacArthur's motives.

But, after two days of discussions with Shedden, Curtin decided to accept MacArthur's advice,¹⁰⁷ and on 2 November he told Bruce that he had discussed the situation with MacArthur. Curtin said that he 'felt that the proposed appointment would be beneficial to the RAAF', but that 'it would now appear inadvisable to proceed with it'.¹⁰⁸

Clearly Shedden was not happy with this decision, and two days later he made his feelings known to Curtin in a private memorandum:

Some day there will be an outcry about the relatively poor RAAF effort in the Southwest Pacific Area in relation to the resources allocated to the air effort. It is not the fault of the personnel in the squadrons, who are magnificent, but is due to the set up, under which it has also been necessary to send senior officers to Europe to get operational experience which should be provided in the Southwest Pacific Area.¹⁰⁹

The discussions in September 1944 over the strategic employment of the RAAF have been described in Chapter Nine.¹¹⁰ On 15 March 1945

105. The Air Ministry had enquired whether MacArthur was satisfied with the proposed arrangement by which Park would command all the RAAF and have the right of direct access to MacArthur if necessary. Cable 116, Bruce to Curtin, 28 September 1944, CRS M 100, item September 1944. Apparently MacArthur offered no comment.

106. Memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 30 October 1944, MP 1217, Box 238.

107. Shedden notes, on *ibid.*

108. Cable 167, Curtin to Bruce, 2 November 1944, CRS M 100, November 1944.

109. Memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 4 November 1944, MP 1217, Box 238.

110. See Chapter Nine, pp.424-426.

Bostock opened an advanced headquarters of RAAF Command on Morotai, and he was given command of all air operations south of the Philippines.¹¹¹ But in essence these operations consisted of supporting the campaigns of the Australian army which themselves had little strategic significance. The argument between Bostock and Jones still continued and was not adequately resolved.¹¹² Although the removal of the RAAF Command from Australia to the forward area might have eased the difficulties between Jones and Bostock, such antipathy had been engendered that neither party seemed willing to compromise. Bostock retained control of air operations within Australia, and in turn Jones retained control over administration in the RAAF Command. By mid 1945 the Americans had lost all interest in the argument.¹¹³

The command crisis at the Headquarters of the First Tactical Air Force at Morotai between January and May 1945, when a number of officers tried to resign, was a more extreme example of the dissatisfaction of the RAAF with a strategic role which seemed to lack any significance in the total war effort.¹¹⁴ Even the Australian army, which had had vastly more influence than the RAAF over the direction of strategy in the SWPA, had by this time been relegated to a minor role. So it cannot be claimed that the division of control within the RAAF led directly to the crisis on Morotai. Nevertheless the crisis underlines the fact that Australia had little influence over the strategic use of the RAAF. Inevitably a minor country has less influence than one whose resources are more than ten times as strong. But by agreeing to the Empire Air Training Scheme early in the war the Menzies government

111. Odgers, *op.cit.*, p.435.

112. See Jones Papers, folders 3 and 4.

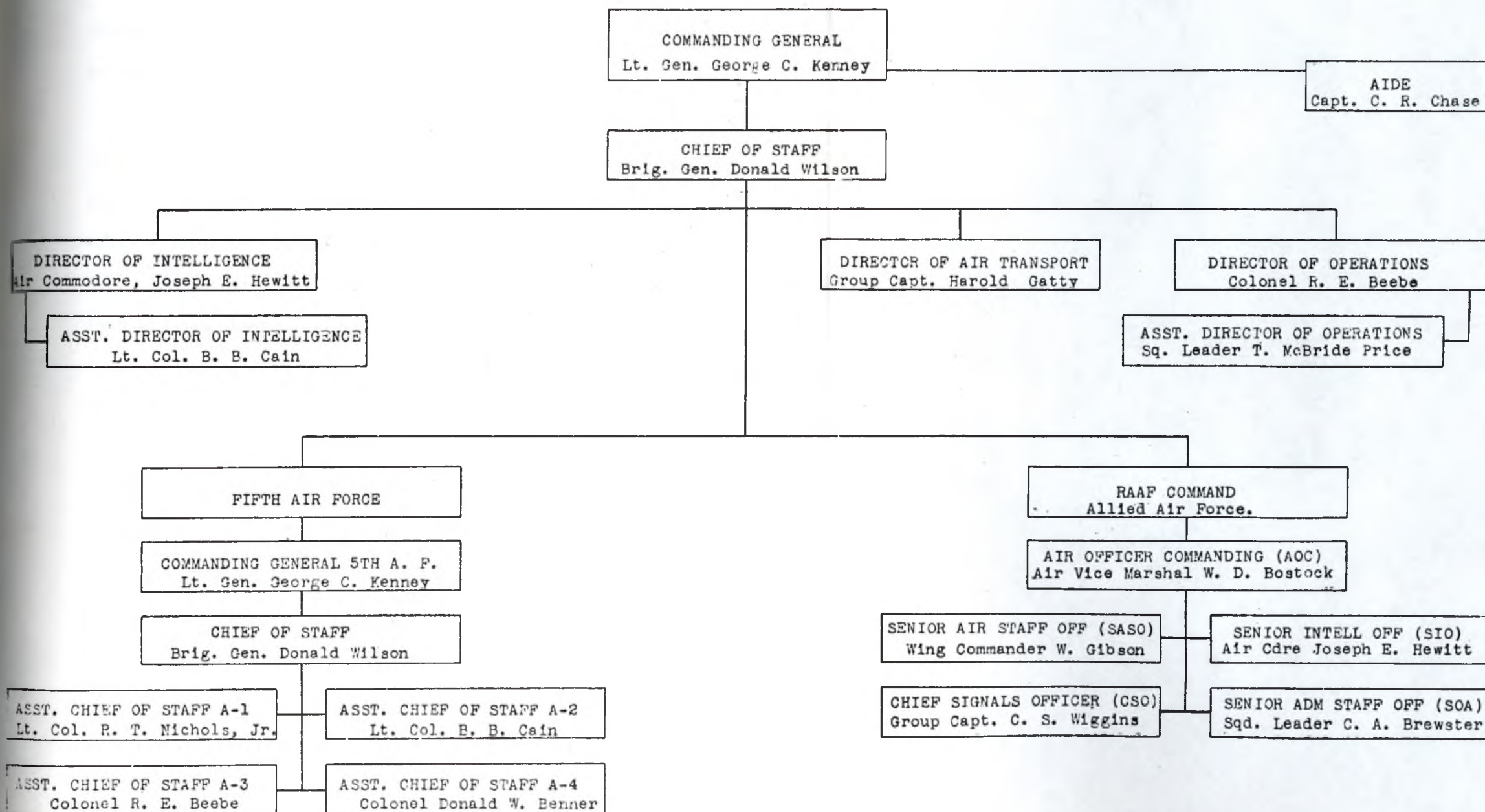
113. Letter, Air Commodore F.R.W. Scherger to War History Section RAAF HQ, 17 June 1946, Gavin Long Correspondence.

114. Odgers, *op.cit.*, pp.443-450.

initiated a course of events which meant that Australia had few air officers with experience in high operational command. And the inexperience of the Australian government in 1942 allowed a situation to develop whereby the RAAF was not properly organised until after the end of the war.

ALLIED AIR FORCE

S.W.P.A.



Appendix 4HIGH COMMAND IN THE RAN, 1942-1945

High command in the RAN during the period 1942-1945 did not pose as many problems as it did in the Army and the RAAF. The RAN had been trained and indoctrinated to operate as part of the RN, and both the commanders of the ships and the naval staff in Melbourne were able to operate relatively easily with American formations. Lacking an aircraft carrier or a battleship the RAN had to accept the fact that its ships would usually have to operate in support of heavier British or American units.

Problems of command and strategy were also simplified by the fact that the Allied Naval Forces in the South-West Pacific Area formed only a small part of MacArthur's forces. The brunt of the naval war against Japan was borne by the naval forces of Nimitz's Pacific Ocean Area. MacArthur's navy was concerned directly with supporting his land and land-based air operations.

The RAN did not suffer from any major dispute along the lines of the Jones-Bostock dispute in the RAAF. In the first place, the main RAN operational force, the Australian Squadron, was not under command of an officer senior to the CNS, Sir Guy Royle. Secondly, Sir Guy Royle had substantial operational responsibilities of his own embracing the close maritime defence of Australia and the escort of convoys to the limits of the Australia Station. To encompass these responsibilities he was designated the Commander, South West Sea Frontiers under the loose control of the Commander, Allied Naval Forces, South-West Pacific Area.¹ When the South-West Pacific Area was established Royle soon

1. Interview with Admiral Carpenter by Lieut J.S. Tarbell, 7th Fleet Historian, 11 July 1945, AWM 423/11/202.

developed a good relationship with the American naval commander, Admiral Leary, and his successor in September 1942, Admiral Carpenter.²

An interesting problem in command relationships developed in early 1942 when Admiral Crace's term as Rear Admiral Commanding the Australian Squadron was about to end. Although Crace had been born in Australia, like Royle, he was an RN officer. The two senior Australian captains, Collins and Farncombe, were considered for the appointment, but Royle claimed that while their records and performance had been 'excellent' they still did not have enough experience to command the squadron.³ As Royle explained to the Minister for the Navy:

The fact that a United States Flag Officer [Leary] who has had no active service experience in this war will now have operational command of HMA Squadron is a further reason for requiring a fully experienced officer to command and administer the British section of the [allied] force.⁴

Therefore, another RN officer, Rear Admiral V.A.C. Crutchley, VC, was appointed to the command. In general terms the Australian government had few complaints about the operations of the RAN under MacArthur. However the battle in the Solomon Islands in August 1942 when the *Canberra* was sunk was a cause for some concern. At that time the Australian Squadron, under Crutchley, was operating with Admiral Ghormley's South Pacific Force rather than Leary's South West Pacific Force. The only reports received by the Australian government were brief statements

2. *Ibid.* On 20 August 1942 Admiral Crace, who had returned to England after commanding the Australian squadron, told Bruce that 'Leary and Royle were on the most admirable terms and practically lived in each other's rooms and were working excellently together'. CRS M100, item August 1942. On 5 April 1943 Rear Admiral William Tenant reported to the Admiralty that he had a conversation with Royle who said that there was close cooperation with Carpenter. WO 216/120.

3. Memorandum, Royle to Minister, 17 January 1942, CRS A 2671, item 95/1942.

4. Memorandum, Royle to Minister, 5 February 1942.

from MacArthur, who in turn received his information only because he had a copy of the South Pacific Force cypher.⁵

The Australian minister in Washington was instructed to take up the problem with Roosevelt and the US Chiefs of Staff,⁶ and received the reply that MacArthur had as much information as anyone.⁷ Yet neither MacArthur nor the Australian government were able to obtain a copy of the report covering the loss of the *Canberra*,⁸ causing Evatt to cable Washington that 'The position is not satisfactory and is causing endless anxiety and embarrassment'.⁹

It turned out that Crutchley had reported to Admiral Carpenter, the new Commander Allied Naval Forces, and he had sent a copy to the Australian Naval Board, so the report was available to the Australian government.¹⁰ Nevertheless the incident drew attention to the problem of control of naval forces which could move rapidly from one command to another. MacArthur promised therefore that in future he would inform Curtin whenever forces assigned to him were allotted to other areas.¹¹

The desirability of appointing Australians to senior positions was the main point of discussion concerning the high command of the RAN during the latter stages of the war, and although MacArthur had less

5. Minutes of Conference Between MacArthur, Curtin and Brisbane, 17 August 1942, MP 1217, Box 537.

6. Cable, Evatt to Australian Minister, Washington, 19 August 1942, *loc.cit.*

7. Cables S108 and S109, Dixon to Curtin, 22 August 1942, *loc.cit.*

8. Teleprinter message, MacArthur to Curtin, 27 August 1942, letters, Curtin to MacArthur, 14 October 1942, MacArthur to Curtin, 19 October 1942, *loc.cit.*

9. Cable SW 105, Evatt to Australian Minister, Washington, 30 October 1942, *loc.cit.*

10. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 12 November 1942, *loc.cit.*

11. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, 20-26 October 1942, *loc.cit.*

influence over the RAN than over the command of the RAAF, his influence can nonetheless be detected. Although he had a high opinion of the professional ability of the CNS, MacArthur believed that Royle was critical of the command arrangements in the South-West Pacific Area. Shedden recorded MacArthur's views in the minutes of a conference held in Brisbane in May 1943:

It had ... been reported to [MacArthur] that Sir Keith Murdoch obtained information from Admiral Royle. Admiral Royle worked in close co-operation with Admiral Carpenter, who was also disloyal to the set-up in the Southwest Pacific Area. They were secretive in regard to Naval information, and Admiral Royle strongly opposed the disclosure of details of operations and sinkings, of which the Commander-in-Chief considered the public should be aware. General MacArthur considered this was due more to Naval reluctance than any other reason.¹²

Furthermore, MacArthur objected to Royle communicating directly with the Admiralty on operational matters, for example over the sinking of the hospital ship the *Centaur*.¹³

There appears to be some evidence to support MacArthur's views. For example, on 8 October 1942 Royle told Colonel G.H. Wilkinson, a British liaison officer, that he thought that the divided command whereby New Zealand was in the South Pacific and Australia in the South-West Pacific was unnecessary.¹⁴ This might be construed as criticism, yet MacArthur would have agreed with the sentiment. But Royle went further, criticising MacArthur's exhibitionism, and writing in similar terms to the Admiralty.¹⁵

12. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief, South-west Pacific Area, Brisbane, 26 May 1943. MP 1217, Box 2.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Journal of Colonel G.H. Wilkinson, 8 October 1942, Churchill College, Cambridge.

15. Typescript of journal article by C. Thorne in Wilkinson Papers, *op.cit.* See Somerville Papers, Churchill College and PREM 3 151/4.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when Royle's term was extended in 1943 MacArthur commented that had he been consulted he would have urged that Captain Collins should be appointed as CNS instead of granting an extension to Royle.¹⁶ Admiral Carpender agreed with MacArthur, and claimed that he could not understand why the Chief of the Naval Staff was not an Australian.¹⁷

This matter was raised early in 1944 as the term of duty of Admiral Crutchley, commanding the Australian Squadron, drew to a close. Royle believed that Crutchley should be replaced by another British officer because the Australian contenders were still too junior. It was important, he said, that officers of the RAN should maintain 'relative seniority' with those of the RN. Furthermore, the Americans were unlikely to accept a junior officer to command the Allied Task Force 74 which had been commanded by Crutchley.¹⁸ The Minister for the Navy, Norman Makin, agreed with Royle.¹⁹

Curtin did not agree and in February 1944 the War Cabinet decided to appoint Collins to replace Crutchley with the rank of Commodore.²⁰ It is interesting to note that in a detailed brief prepared for the Prime Minister, Shedden reiterated almost exactly the same argument put to him by MacArthur nine months before. This was that Collins was 44 years of age while Lord Mountbatten, when appointed Commander-in-Chief of Combined Operations in February 1942, with the rank of Vice-Admiral, was only 41.²¹

16. Minutes of Prime Minister's War Conference, 7 June 1943, MP 1217, Box 2.

17. Berryman Diary, 25 September 1943.

18. Memorandum, Royle to Makin, 13 December 1943, CRS A 2671, item 29/1944.

19. Note, Makin to Curtin, no date appended to *ibid*.

20. Letter, Shedden to Makin, 8 February 1944, CRS A 2671, item 29/1944.

21. Notes on War Cabinet Agendum No.29/1944, 21 January 1944, *loc.cit*.

Throughout 1944 a successor for Royle was discussed, with the Admiralty vigorously opposing the appointment of Collins on the grounds of lack of experience.²² Although urged by Shedden that it was 'desirable that we should have Australians in the top positions, if possible',²³ Curtin went along with the Admiralty for the time being, but the argument became academic when Collins was badly wounded at Leyte. Curtin's attitude over these events is revealed in comments to newsmen while he was visiting Perth on 22 October 1944:

News came this morning that Collins is wounded in action. How badly no one knows. It may mean the end of our dream of an Australian Navy under an Australian-born Admiral.²⁴

To Curtin this was a tragedy, and the government now sought a British officer.

On 19 October 1944 Bruce cabled that the Admiralty had suggested Vice-Admiral Sir Harold Burrough, whom he said was a 'first class man'.²⁵ Forde, the Acting Prime Minister since Curtin was ill, replied in an extraordinary cable that the present command arrangements in Australia would 'not necessitate the services of an officer possessing such high operational qualifications' as Burrough.²⁶ The Minister for the Navy, Makin, observed that there was a need for someone like Burrough,²⁷ but with the death of Admiral Ramsay, the Admiralty withdrew Burrough.²⁸

22. Letter, A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, to Curtin, 26 May 1944, MP 1217, Box 509.

23. Memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 31 July 1944, *loc.cit.*

24. Lloyd Ross, 'I'm too tired to live', in *Sun-Herald* (Sydney), 17 August 1958.

25. Cable 143A, Bruce to Curtin, 29 October 1944, MP 1217, Box 509.

26. Memorandum, Forde to Makin, 25 October 1944, also cable to Bruce, 13 October 1944, *loc.cit.*

27. Letter, Makin to Forde, 30 November 1944. It is odd that Makin took over a month to reply to Forde.

28. Cable 1, Bruce to Curtin, 4 June 1945, *loc.cit.*

Finally, on 8 March 1945 the War Cabinet approved the appointment of Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Hamilton to succeed Royle as CNS.²⁹

29. War Cabinet Minute 4085, Canberra, 8 March 1945, CRS A2671, item 329/1944.

Appendix 5THE BRITISH PACIFIC FLEET IN AUSTRALIA

As indicated in the main body of the thesis, much of the Australian government's concern over the employment of her forces during the last years of the war stemmed from the acute manpower and resources crisis which had been growing during preceding years. The arrival of the British Pacific Fleet in Australian waters at the beginning of 1945 exacerbated this already stressful position.

Australia neither had, nor wished to have, any control or say in the employment of the British Pacific Fleet which was based on Australia. The British Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, received his instructions from Admiral Nimitz, who in turn worked to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹ Nevertheless, the provision of support for the fleet reveals the British attitude to working with the Australian government. Indeed the operation of the Fleet under its Commander-in-Chief can be compared in its relation to the Australian government, to that of the American Army under MacArthur. At no stage did MacArthur have as acrimonious a dispute with the Australian government as did Admiral Fraser in mid 1945.

The incident stemmed from the decision at the Octagon conference when Roosevelt accepted Churchill's offer of a 'self-contained' British Pacific Fleet. The fleet was not, of course, self contained, and on 24 September Churchill gave Curtin a 'broad picture' of the fleet's requirements from Australia.² Curtin replied: 'You can rely on our

1. For an account of the British Pacific Fleet see J. Winton, *The Forgotten Fleet, The British Navy in the Pacific 1944-1945* (Coward-McCann, New York, 1970).

2. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.221.

complete cooperation in regard to the provision of facilities in Australia to enable the main British fleet to operate against Japan'.³

It will be recalled that when Curtin had visited London in May 1944 he had given Churchill a paper outlining Australia's manpower problems. Thus when Curtin assured Churchill that Australia would make 'as full a contribution as possible to meet the needs of the United Kingdom Forces',⁴ this contribution would depend on Australian manpower.⁵ Obviously the judgment of what could be done rested with the Australian government.

A Joint Administrative Sub-Committee was set up to examine the British requirements, but throughout October the British estimates increased, and by early November Curtin was concerned. Not only were the demands beyond Australian resources, but in Australian eyes,

It looked as though the United Kingdom Board of Trade policies in the post-war period were exercising some influence over the extent of the demands being made on Australia.⁶

Hence Bruce in London was directed to take up the matter with the Admiralty.

On 27 November Bruce replied that he had told A.V. Alexander, the First Lord of the Admiralty, that it appeared that the British had been trying to shift some of their own manpower embarrassments onto Australia.

All this Alexander took quite well [wrote Bruce]. He repudiated any idea of trying to unload their troubles onto us, said that the Admiralty fully realised Australia's manpower difficulties and stated that the sole

3. Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p.552.

4. Cable 170, Curtin to Bruce, 9 November 1944, quoted in *ibid.*

5. This was made clear in a cablegram to the Dominion's Office on 13 October 1944, Blamey Papers 1.2.

6. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 53, p.2.

object of their telegram had been to discover what men Australia could provide so that the best solution could be reached of the manpower problems involved in implementing the Octagon decisions.⁷

Shedden described the Admiralty's reply as 'either stupid or cunning',⁸ and it did little to help Admiral Fraser when he arrived in Sydney on 10 December 1944.⁹ Two days later the Acting Prime Minister, F.M. Forde, announced the expenditure of £21,156,000 towards the maintenance of the British Pacific Fleet. This had been the amount recommended by the Joint Administrative Planning Sub-Committee.¹⁰

The expenditure had, of course, to be balanced against the requirements of the Australian and American forces. Thus in January 1945 both Curtin and Shedden wrote to MacArthur seeking 'to ensure that everything which is done by Australia for its own Forces and for those of the United States and the United Kingdom should be determined on the basis' of the best contribution to the war effort.¹¹ MacArthur agreed that since the British Fleet had joined the war against

7. Cable 142, Bruce to Curtin, 27 November 1944, CRS A 2684, item 1461.

8. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 43, p.3.

9. Ehrman, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.222.

10. *Age*, 12 December 1944, Gill, *Royal Australian Navy, 1942-1945*, p.476. See also Report of Joint Administrative Planning Sub-Committee, 20 November 1944 and covering letter Shedden to Ismay, 12 December 1944, in ADM 110/5404. The report noted that Curtin had warned that Australia's contribution would be severely limited by the extreme pressure of other commitments on Australian resources.

11. Letter, Shedden to MacArthur, 31 January 1945, MP 1217, Box No.75, Note, Curtin to MacArthur, 31 January 1945, CRS A 2671, item 36/1945. Also RG 200, Part 5, Box 3.

Japan, US stocks in Australia should be included for consideration.¹² Indeed Australia's capacity to provide for the British Pacific Fleet was rendered possible only by the unexpected cancellation of US and Australian service demands.¹³

The main elements of the British Pacific Fleet arrived at Sydney during late January 1945 and during March and April conducted exercises off the New Hebrides. Meanwhile the Australian government was becoming increasingly concerned at the mounting cost of the works programme. Admiral Fraser too was becoming worried and on 19 April sought an interview with the Acting Prime Minister, Chifley.¹⁴ Fraser had arrived in Australia with a great reputation, having previously commanded the British Home Fleet. One Australian newspaper described him as 'one of the war's greatest experts in air-sea strategy',¹⁵ but he now required the skills of a politician, not a fighting naval commander.

On 15 May Fraser met with Chifley and seven other ministers.¹⁶ Chifley outlined the Australian effort pointing out that £26 million had been authorized to date and that with the end of the war in Europe the

12. Letter, MacArthur to Shedden, 12 February 1945, MP 1217, Box No.75. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 12 February 1945, quoted in War Cabinet Agendum 36/1945, CRS A 2671, item 86/1945. At initial meetings between the Australian CNS, Royle, Admiral Daniel and senior staff officers of GHQ, the Americans had been unforthcoming with stores. Shedden had then persuaded Curtin to take up the matter with MacArthur. See Cable VA(Q)BPF (Daniel) to Admiralty, 25 January 1945, and letters, Shedden to Daniel, 12 and 28 February 1945, ADM 1/17365.

13. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 48, p.2.

14. Letter, Fraser to Chifley, 19 April 1945. MP 1217, Box 588. Fraser included an 'Aide Memoire' covering six topics requiring considerable consultation among a number of departments.

15. Article by F.J. Howard in *Herald* (Melbourne), 11 December 1944.

16. The following account, except where indicated, is taken from the Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 53, pp.4-9.



Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, C-in-C British Pacific Fleet, (seated) with Vice-Admiral C.S. Daniel, formerly head of the British Admiralty Mission and then Vice-Admiral (Administration), British Pacific Fleet.

(AWM Negative No.107005)

the United Kingdom was better able to provide for her own forces.¹⁷

The procedure for the authorization of commitments had been used throughout the war. Admiral Fraser gratuitously rejected the observations of the Acting Prime Minister and said that the Australian procedures were 'circumlocutory'. He felt that he could not instruct his representative on the Defence Committee (Admiral Daniel) to complain as this would be going behind the back of the Australian Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Royle, who was a Royal Navy officer.¹⁸

Yet having declared his reluctance to go behind the back of the CNS, Fraser had no qualms about going beyond the back of the government in complaining to the press about the delay in docking British ships. This delay had been caused by strikes, and on 12 April Fraser had telegraphed the Prime Minister.²⁰ The next day the government had assured him it was doing all that was practicable.²¹ Fraser claimed that since the government had made no further public announcement he 'felt that he had to say something publicly himself'.

J.A. Beasley, the Acting Minister for Defence, was furious and asked Fraser whether he would have acted similarly in Britain. Fraser said he would not as he would have reported through the Admiralty to the UK government.²² Beasley enquired why this would not also be the

17. The figure of £21,156,000 quoted earlier had been increased by the Australian government.

18. It was agreed at the conference that Admiral Daniel should represent Fraser on the Defence Committee when the requirements of the British Pacific Fleet were discussed. Letter, Chifley to Fraser, 16 May 1945, MP 1217, Box 588.

19. *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 9 May 1945. Fraser said that shipping was being sent forward without receiving proper docking in Sydney.

20. Telegram, Fraser to Curtin, 12 April 1945, MP 1217, Box 588.

21. The government was, in fact, very concerned by the trouble on the docks. Advisory War Council Minute No.1530, Canberra, 17 May 1945, CRS A 2682, Vol.VIII.

22. Memorandum by Shedden, 14 June 1945, MP 1217, Box 588.

case in a self-governing dominion; the admiral should not have gone over the head of the government in making a statement to the Australian people.

The government's anger was understandable since Fraser's statement had caused criticism of the government in both Parliament and in the press.²³ Shedden too was critical of Fraser. A month later he wrote to Rear Admiral L.S. Bracegirdle, Military and Official Secretary to the Governor General:

As one who, for some time, has been actively associated with Empire Cooperation from the aspect of Imperial Defence, and has worked to this end with Lord Hankey and others, I feel that well-meant indiscretions, such as those of Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser ... are rather unfortunate.²⁴

In contrast, at no stage during the war did MacArthur comment publicly on matters of Australian government policy, and indeed his only contact on matters of policy was with the Prime Minister.²⁵

Beasley's vigorous cross-examination could be explained by the fact that Fraser was staying, while in Canberra for the interview, at a home maintained by one of the Sydney newspapers. Furthermore, Beasley claimed that gossip in the Sydney clubs, which was critical

23. For example, *Melbourne Herald*, 12 May, CPD II of R, Vol.182, p.1560, 10 May 1945. The government had already found cause to complain to the Admiralty about a press statement made in England by Rear Admiral G.C. Muirhead-Gould, whose last appointment had been as an officer on loan to the RAN. Cable 88, Curtin to Churchill, 30 January 1945, ADM 1/19039.

24. Letter, Shedden to Bracegirdle, 16 June 1945, MP 1217, Box 508.

25. On 28 May 1945 Chifley wrote to Fraser and told him that it was his duty and right to represent any matter he wished to the Australian government. He could equally report to his own government. 'The soundness and efficacy of this principle were fully demonstrated', wrote Chifley, 'when MacArthur had his headquarters in Australia', *loc.cit.*

of the government, emanated from high officers of the British Pacific Fleet.²⁶

Admiral Fraser said that the government's attitude at the conference was 'deplorable'. J.J. Dedman, the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, recalled that when Chifley explained that the government did not have the labour resources to do more, Fraser replied, 'I cannot accept this as final; I shall appeal to Whitehall'.²⁷ In Fraser's view, Australia had asked for the fleet to be sent to the Pacific and had promised to provide for its needs. This was palpably untrue, and Shedden later told Chifley that 'either Admiral Fraser has not been suitably instructed, or is pursuing an independent policy of his own'.²⁸ As a parting comment Fraser offered to have the RAN ships attached to his fleet, but Chifley said that there could be no change to the arrangement already made with MacArthur. Furthermore, in the view of Admiral Collins, the Australian Navy preferred to stay with the American fleet.²⁹

Chifley reported this conversation to Churchill on 23 May and re-emphasised that Australia had limited resources.³⁰ Nevertheless, requests for expenditure for British forces continued to come in.

26. Fraser might have been somewhat politically naive, for he wrote later that: 'My relationship with the Government was very good. In fact the first time I went to call on them Sir [then Mr] Robert Menzies showed me round the Canberra'. Since Menzies was the Leader of the Opposition, and no longer a member of the Advisory War Council, the move would not have endeared Fraser to the government. Letter, 26 May 1979.

27. J.J. Dedman, 'The Labor Government in the Second World War: A Memoir, Part III, Rebalancing the War Effort', *Labour History*, No.23, November 1972, p.58. Dedman says Curtin was present, but the files reveal that Chifley was Acting Prime Minister and presided. On 2 February 1945 Dedman had succeeded Chifley as Minister for Post-War Reconstruction. On 19 February Dedman's former department, War Organisation of Industry, was abolished and became a Directorate in the Department of Post-War Reconstruction.

28. Memorandum, Shedden to Chifley, 23 May 1945, MP 1217, Box 508.

29. Shedden Manuscript.

30. Cable 133, Chifley to Churchill, 23 May 1945, MP 1217, Box 508. Also ADM 1/18401. Significantly, when Fraser reported the conference to the British government he omitted all reference to the argument over his statement to the press, and expressed surprise at the general reaction of the Australian government. Cable 310801Z May 1945, Fraser to Admiralty, 31 May 1945, ADM 1/18401.

Included in the planned expenditure was an amount of almost £2 million on buildings or extending air stations for the British Fleet Air Arm.³¹ On bearing of this Blamey wrote vehemently to Shedden:

I see a sum of nearly £2,000,000 required for building airfields on the mainland of Australia as far south as Menangle to fight a war in the Northern Pacific. I must admit I am surprised ...

He explained that there were many American airfields in New Guinea abandoned because they were too far from the war. The request for expenditure was 'completely absurd'.³² To his CGS Blamey wrote: 'I hope you will fight this very vigorously. It looks to me the method of conducting war in drawing rooms and hotel lounges'.³³

Eventually the War Cabinet agreed to spend £6,562,500 on British naval works, but Fraser was not satisfied,³⁴ and on 7 July wrote to the Prime Minister reiterating his belief that the fleet had been sent at Australia's request. He continued:

If the British Fleet begins to think that we are not supported in Australia I naturally could *not retain my responsibilities* ... The position is that we must arrive at some conclusion by Saturday 14th July ... the matter is of great importance as I feel that the failure of the prestige of the British Commonwealth of Nations is at stake.³⁵

On 11 July the War Cabinet reaffirmed that it would spend no more than £6,562,500,³⁶ and on 16 July Chifley replied to Fraser saying that if the contingency described by Fraser came to pass it would be a matter

31. Joint Administrative Sub-Committee Report 22/45, 4 June 1945, Blamey Papers 1.2.

32. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 7 June 1945, *loc.cit.*

33. Letter, Blamey to Northcott, 7 June 1945, *loc.cit.*

34. Minutes of Conference between Fraser and members of the government, 6 July 1945, MP 1217, Box 508.

35. Letter, Fraser to Forde (Prime Minister following Curtin's death), 7 July 1945, *loc.cit.* My emphasis.

36. War Cabinet Minute 4328, Canberra, 11 July 1945, Blamey Papers 1.2.

for regret, but 'it could in no way be ascribed to any omission on the part of Australia to fulfil such limited obligation, which, from the outset it had been indicated it could accept'.³⁷

Chifley cabled this letter to Churchill for information, and the British Prime Minister replied naively in the same vein as the Admiralty seven months earlier:

We have hitherto assumed that the simplest way of tackling the problem of maintenance of the British Pacific Fleet was first to ask Australia for what it wanted, and then to try to make up from our own depleted resources whatever Australia could not provide.³⁸

In Shedden's opinion Churchill's method was a 'try on', and it reminded him of Bagehot's cliché on the Dutch:

In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch,
Is offering too little and asking too much.³⁹

The end of the war ended this debate, but Attlee, the new British Prime Minister, felt bound to try to remove any bad feeling. On 8 August he informed Chifley that if Churchill's reply had 'unwittingly given cause for misunderstanding we are the first to regret it and I trust that this telegram will remove it'.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, other events were to indicate that the United Kingdom government had not yet grasped the realities of Australian independence.

37. Letter, Chifley to Fraser, 16 July 1945, MP 1217, Box 508.

38. Cable 267, Churchill to Chifley, 29 July 1945, *loc.cit.* Also ADM 1/18401.

39. Shedden Manuscript. Shedden told General Berryman that with regard to the business with the British Fleet, Britain tried to treat Australia as a Crown Colony. Berryman Diary, 4 December 1945.

40. Cable 365, Attlee to Chifley, 8 August 1945, ADM 1/18401.

THE BRITISH LIAISON OFFICERS IN AUSTRALIA

On 22 July 1942 the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Australia, Sir Ronald Cross, forwarded an aide-memoire to the Australian Prime Minister informing him that the British government proposed to send senior army and air liaison officers to Australia for liaison with GHQ SWPA and the Australian service authorities.¹ Curtin immediately sought the reactions of Blamey and Air Marshal Jones. Jones supported the proposition,² but Blamey opposed it. He thought that the proposal tended to undermine the unity of the General Staffs of the Empire by introducing a new relationship which was more like that between two foreign powers than between two parts of the Empire. The Australian army representative in London, Lieutenant-General Smart, would be able to supply any information required to British authorities.³

With these views in mind, Curtin replied to Cross on 6 August 1942 stating that there was no objection in principle to the appointment of UK liaison officers, but he raised the problem mentioned by Blamey. He also went further and pointed out that MacArthur was responsible to the Combined Chiefs of Staff through the US Joint Chiefs. There were therefore 'potential difficulties' in providing a liaison officer to short circuit the established chain of command.⁴

The Australian reaction caused considerable surprise in London and Bruce cabled Curtin: 'That it would not be welcome to Australia

1. Aide-memoire from United Kingdom High Commissioner, 22 July 1942, MP 1217, Box 463. Also paper entitled United Kingdom Services Representations in the South West Pacific Area, MP 1217, Box 649.

2. Letter, Jones to Shedden, 30 July 1942, MP 1217, Box 463.

3. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 29 July 1942, *loc.cit.*

4. Letter, Curtin to Cross, 6 August 1942, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

never crossed anyone's mind'. He added that every facility was afforded to the Australian liaison officer in England and it was not understood why reciprocity should not be accorded in Australia.⁵ The British government replied by suggesting that the precise scope of the liaison officers could be worked out once they reached Australia.⁶

Curtin was still not satisfied, and on 10 September reiterated his earlier views.⁷ But perhaps he was influenced by a cable from Bruce warning that:

This matter is creating an amount of feeling so out of relation to its importance that I feel that you should personally intervene to get it settled.⁸

Eventually, after a discussion between Cross and Shedden, Curtin stated that he was happy to welcome the United Kingdom liaison officers. Nevertheless he informed Cross in definite terms about the limitations to be placed on the function of the liaison officers:

the suggestion that the Liaison Officers are to be [the] source of information on operations and plans in the Southwest Pacific Area to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, either directly to Washington or indirectly through the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, and that matters of policy will be communicated through the United Kingdom High Commissioner, is one that threatens to cross more direct lines of responsibility and interest, particularly if the Liaison Officers formed conclusions which differed from those of the High Command in the Southwest Pacific Area.⁹

Meanwhile the British government requested the US War Department to assent to the ranking British officer in the liaison group having access to GHQ SWPA.¹⁰ MacArthur replied firmly:

5. Cable 138, Bruce to Curtin, 20 August 1942, CRS A 1608, item G/33/1/5.

6. Letter, Cross to Curtin, 21 August 1942, MP 1217, Box 463.

7. Letter, Curtin to Cross, 10 September 1942, RG 4, MacArthur Memorial.

8. Cable 149, Bruce to Curtin, 8 September 1942, CRS A 1608, item G/33/1/5.

9. Letter, Curtin to Cross, 15 September 1942, RG 4, MacArthur Memorial, and MP 1217, Box 463.

10. Signal, Marshall to MacArthur, 30 September 1942, *loc.cit.*

One of the original purposes was 'to help in maintaining for the United Kingdom authorities the prompt supply of information as to operational plans, in order to facilitate the exercise of general responsibility for grand strategy in all theatres by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.'

Later the British Government dropped the definite specification in writing of that proposal stating that 'the precise scope of the missions activities could be left to work itself out on the spot.'

This background is given to you in order that you may have knowledge of the basic intent of the British Government. The accomplishment of this purpose would violate the normal channel of communications to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and would provide a bypass of information direct to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom which would not be subject to the knowledge of the Australian Government or the Joint Chiefs of Staff or myself. It would be violative of the terms of the agreement upon which my directive was based. The disadvantages are so evident that they need not be enumerated.

He added that he would have no objection to visits from the Senior British Liaison Officer on the same terms as an observer or military attaché, but he could not become part of GHQ SWPA.¹¹ The US War Department followed MacArthur's suggestion that the head of the British Liaison Mission, Major-General R.H. Dewing, should be looked upon as a military attaché or observer,¹² and on 13 November MacArthur advised Curtin that contact with GHQ SWPA would be limited to Dewing.¹³

During the previous two months a British liaison officer had, in fact, been operating in Australia. He was Colonel G.H. Wilkinson, formerly a businessman in Manila who had served with MacArthur in the Philippines. Wilkinson's activities in Australia at the end of 1942 have been considerable publicity in recent years in several

11. Signal C-614, MacArthur to Marshall, 2 October 1942, RG 165, OPD Exec 10, item 23a and 23b, National Archives.

12. Memorandum by Major-General Handy, Assistant Chief of Staff, 1 November 1942, RG 165, OPD 336.2, Great Britain, Case 6, National Archives.

13. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 13 November 1942, RG 4, MacArthur Memorial.

articles,¹⁴ and it appears that MacArthur was on friendly terms with Wilkinson who kept the General informed of the information he had gleaned from various sources in Australia. MacArthur felt that it was good to have Wilkinson making reports directly to London.¹⁵ Nevertheless when Curtin informed MacArthur that Wilkinson, 'a member of MacArthur's staff', would be joining the UK Army and Air Force Liaison Staff, the American general replied in strong terms:

In your letter you refer to Colonel G.H. Wilkinson of the British Army as an officer now serving on my staff. Colonel Wilkinson is not a member of my staff and has no connection whatever with General Headquarters. He was a liaison officer at my headquarters while I was in the Philippines, but since his departure therefrom last February, has had no connection whatever with me nor my headquarters.¹⁶

Whatever Wilkinson's status, MacArthur seemed willing to talk to him about the proposed British mission. After an interview with MacArthur on 19 September Wilkinson wrote in his journal:

Curtin and Co. obviously fearful of Whitehall usurping control of some of their Dominion powers, through medium of Mission which they had energetically opposed. M says they regard Cross as wanting to use Mission to increase his own power.¹⁷

Wilkinson raised this question with Cross who denied the story, but MacArthur remained suspicious. In particular, since Dewing had served

14. C. Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British, 1942-43; The Secret Journal of MacArthur's British Liaison Officer', Part 1, *Australian Outlook*, April 1975, Vol.29, No.1; Part 2, *Australian Outlook*, August 1975, Vol.29, No.2. See also articles by Thorne in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 May, 1 June, 1974, and *Australian*, 3, 4, 5, 6 June 1974.

15. Letter, Brigadier-General L.A. Diller, MacArthur's Public Relations Officer, to Major-General N.J. Anderson, Director of the MacArthur Memorial, 29 June 1974, files at MacArthur Memorial.'

16. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 13 November 1942, RG 4, MacArthur Memorial, MP 1217, Box 463. Wilkinson had been described as 'a member of MacArthur's staff' in a letter from M.E. Antrobus, official secretary of the UK High Commission, to Curtin, 21 October 1942, MP 1217, Box 463.

17. Wilkinson Journal, 19 September 1942, quoted in Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British', Part 1.

with Eisenhower, MacArthur looked upon it as a hostile appointment. Wilkinson recorded that MacArthur applied the word 'sinister' to Dewing's appointment.¹⁸

Meanwhile General Blamey was showing that he was equally suspicious of the Dewing Mission. On 31 October General Smart in London had warned Blamey that there might 'be a tendency to deal with broad strategic questions' through the British mission in Australia.¹⁹ Blamey now warned the Australian CGS, General Northcott, that he viewed the arrival of the British mission 'with great misgivings'. He pointed out that originally it was to be headed by a brigadier, but now it was to be a major-general. He continued:

This, of course, was intended by the United Kingdom people from the beginning, and the whole business is marked by the absence of frankness so characteristic of their dealings...

Unless we are most guarded and stand firm in our relationships, we will soon find them dictating to us as to what we ought to do and getting backing from Washington to ensure that what they want is carried out ... General MacArthur saw through the matter from the beginning.²⁰

At the same time Blamey warned Shedden that the Mission should not be allowed to enter into the inner councils in any way'.

I am perfectly sure [he added] that this Mission will be out to prevent as much as possible our direct dealing with America and to ensure British control of Australian requirements.²¹

A few days later Blamey instructed Northcott to 'show the Mission every politeness but ensure that they were not admitted to the inner councils of the Department'.²²

18. Wilkinson Journal, 3 November 1942. *loc.cit.*

19. Letter, Smart to Blamey, 31 October 1942, Blamey Papers, 2.1.

20. Letter, Blamey to Northcott, 30 November 1942, Blamey Papers, 2.2.

21. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 30 November 1942, *loc.cit.*

22. Letter, Blamey to Northcott, 5 December 1942, *loc.cit.*

When MacArthur met Curtin in January 1943 after returning from New Guinea, he stated that he would control the activities of the British Mission 'with the utmost care, as he feared that they might be prejudiced to the interests of the Southwest Pacific Area'. He added that he had already had some difficulty with Wilkinson and had had to insist that his communications be forwarded through allied Headquarters and not through Australian Army channels as he had desired. MacArthur said 'that the activities of Colonel Wilkinson required careful watching, as he had expressed views which were critical of Australia'.²³ Furthermore, MacArthur had reservations about Wilkinson's connection with the British Secret Intelligence Service.

By this time Dewing had arrived in Australia, and he recalled later that he found Blamey particularly hostile. To Dewing, the atmosphere 'in the upper circles of Curtin, Shedden and Northcott, seemed ... thick with reservations'.²⁴ When Dewing met MacArthur on 27 January 1943 he found the American to be 'most friendly', but in subsequent conversations with MacArthur's Chief of Staff, Sutherland, it was made quite clear that Dewing was to be given no access to operational or strategic information. Dewing assured Blamey that he would 'treat this frankly and I have no intention of surreptitiously doing anything contrary to MacArthur's wishes'.²⁵ Dewing also informed the War Office that he would not be able to do any useful work connected with future operations and plans'.²⁶

23. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with Commander-in-Chief Southwest Pacific Area, 16-20 January 1943, MP 1217, Box 2.

24. Letter from Dewing, 25 November 1973, quoted in Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British', Part 1.

25. Personal Note, Dewing to Blamey, no date but probably February 1943, Blamey Papers, 56.2.

26. Cable 5, Dewing to VCIGS, 3 April 1943, WO 106/3416.

Yet clearly Dewing had been instructed to advise the CIGS, General Brooke, on matters of higher strategic policy. In a discussion with Shedden he admitted that he would be in an 'extremely delicate position' if his views differed from those of MacArthur and the Australian government. Shedden recorded that: 'Dewing said that he did not have any intention of entering the field of higher strategical policy until he had been here for some time', and that he would first have to establish an atmosphere of mutual confidence.²⁷

Despite this hesitant beginning, it does appear that Dewing achieved something of value while he was in Australia. To the official historian, Gavin Long, Dewing appeared 'as a first-rate English regular officer. Lean, nervous, enthusiastic, educated and game'.²⁸ The Australian CGS, Northcott, reported to the War Office:

Dick Dewing is firmly established here now and although everything has not been so easy with GHQ, I think we will gradually find that he will get all he wishes.²⁹

When Dewing returned briefly to London for consultations in June 1943 he told Bruce that 'there was something in MacArthur's point of view' that he had to keep a tight control over strategic information. But he added that he had managed to establish liaison on intelligence and equipment matters and that he was working 'very quietly and patiently' to improve the situation. Before leaving Australia MacArthur had, in fact, given him a frank and open picture of the strategic and operational situation to be passed on to Churchill.³⁰ A year later a War Office minute noted that Dewing had

27. Memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 6 February 1943, recording conversation of that morning, MP 1217, Box 463.

28. Gavin Long Notes No.44, interview with Dewing, 20 January 1944, AWM.

29. Letter, Northcott to Major-General F.H.M. Davidson, 10 March 1943, Northcott Papers, ML MSS 1431-14.

30. Notes of Interview by Bruce with Dewing, 30 June 1943, CRS M100 item June 1943.

succeeded, beyond anything we thought possible originally and with little assistance from us, in establishing a position of the highest confidence and respect among all with whom he has come into contact.³¹

Nevertheless Dewing was never given full and continuous access to GHQ plans. And indeed in early 1943 Curtin set out in strict terms the channel of communications to be observed by the Mission:

- (a) Future operations and plans and liaison activities associated with military and air intelligence are primarily matters for General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area, and any questions of procedure in this connection are for the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area.
- (b) Questions of higher strategy and policy and matters connected with the higher direction of the war are not within the scope of the activities of the Liaison Staff. Communications on these matters must continue to pass through the existing Governmental channels.³²

Churchill was not satisfied with the lack of information about MacArthur's intentions. By this time Wilkinson had returned to London, and several times during April and May 1943 Churchill tried to get MacArthur to take Wilkinson back as a liaison officer. When MacArthur replied that his instruction limited him to official communications with the US Joint Chiefs of Staff,³³ Churchill tried other tacks, suggesting that Wilkinson be attached to the staff of the Australian Governor General, Lord Gowrie.³⁴ But Gowrie said that Curtin's approval would have to be obtained. Then Churchill raised the matter

31. Minute, DDMO (H) to A CIGS (O) ? June 1944, WO 106/3411.

32. Letters, Shedden to CAS and Blamey, 22 April 1943, and Shedden to MacArthur, 28 April 1943, MP 1217, Box 649. See also Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Brisbane, 26 May 1943, MP 1217, Box 2.

33. Letter, MacArthur to Cross, 6 April 1944, RG4, MacArthur Memorial.

34. Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British', Part 2.

with Dr Evatt who was visiting London, but when Evatt cabled Curtin the Australian Prime Minister consulted MacArthur who advised him not to reply.³⁵ The question was not raised again.

In June 1943 the United Kingdom government decided to send a mission to Australia under the command of Major-General J.S. Lethbridge with the task of studying unit establishments, formations, equipment and tactics in the Pacific.³⁶ The Australian government consented in September and the mission arrived in Australia in late October.³⁷

There was no suggestion that the Lethbridge Mission, known as 220 Military Mission, actually exceeded its stated intention,³⁸ but Australian suspicions are revealed in a letter from Blamey to Northcott before the Mission's arrival. He directed the CGS to 'issue a very confidential instruction to those officers only who are liable to have any communication with the Mission that future operations are not to be discussed with this Mission or any members of it.'³⁹

On 25 August 1943, following the Allied Conference in Quebec, Churchill informed Curtin that he had arranged with General Marshall and Admiral King for his personal liaison officer to be given access to MacArthur's headquarters to enable him to follow more closely developments in the Pacific.⁴⁰ Curtin agreed, provided it did not

35. The United Kingdom Services Representatives in the South West Pacific Area, MP 1217, Box 649 and documents in Box 463.

36. Cables, Smart to Northcott, 23, 25 June 1943, CRS A 2684, item 1269.

37. Cable 252, Australian Government to Dominions Office, 23 September 1943, *loc.cit.*

38. See War Diary of 220 Military Mission, 11 June 1943-22 May 1944, WO 178/45, and 220 Military Mission Report, Vol.1, April 1944, ADM 199/1369. The other senior members of the mission were Rear Admiral F.B.W. Goolden, Air Commodore L.L. MacLean and Brigadier H. Bartlett.

39. Letter, Blamey to Northcott, 10 September 1943, Blamey Papers, 2.3.

40. Cable, Winch 14, Churchill to Curtin, 25 August 1943, MP 1217, Box 649.

interfere with the existing machinery,⁴¹ and on 8 October Churchill advised that his representative would be Lieutenant-General Herbert Lumsden.⁴²

But again Blamey was suspicious of British motives, and on 22 October 1943 he suggested to Shedden that since Dewing had originally been appointed as the liaison officer, his appointment should now be terminated.⁴³ Shedden replied that Dewing and Lumsden would have different roles; Dewing reported to the CIGS and Lumsden to Churchill. He advised Blamey that Curtin had decided that Dewing should stay.⁴⁴ Nevertheless Blamey was concerned by what he saw as the breaking down of the old imperial defence system with an Imperial General Staff in London advised by an Australian representative. In a long letter to the CIGS, Brooke, on 29 November 1943 Blamey expressed his concern that the imperial system was being replaced by military missions.⁴⁵ Brooke replied that since it was a matter of policy it could wait until the Prime Minister's visit in May 1944.⁴⁶

Blamey's suspicions of ulterior British motives were shared by Shedden. In his opinion the naive statement by the British government 'that the precise scope of the Liaison Officers be left to work itself out on the spot' soon confirmed suspicions of actions which violated both inter-governmental procedure and the prescribed procedure for the South-West Pacific Area.⁴⁷ In particular Shedden took exception to

41. Cable, Johcu, 70, Curtin to Churchill, 31 August 1943, *loc.cit.*

42. Cable, Winch 17, Churchill to Curtin, 8 October 1943, *loc.cit.*

43. Letter, Blamey to Shedden, 22 October 1943, Blamey Papers 2.2.

44. Letter, Shedden to Blamey, 18 November 1943, *loc.cit.*

45. Letter, Blamey to Brooke, 29 November 1943, *loc.cit.* and WO 106/4843.

46. Letter, Brooke to Blamey, 2 February 1944, *loc.cit.*

47. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 3, Chapter 37, p.7.

a request from Ismay to the liaison officer with MacArthur for information on the use of the 1st Australian Corps. This, and the incident involving the enquiry from General Leese of the South East Asia Command about the use of Australian troops has been described in Chapter Ten.⁴⁸ Shedden also complained about the role of Lumsden's successor, General Gairdner, in Tokyo, which has been covered in Chapter Eleven.⁴⁹

It is difficult to determine whether Churchill deliberately sought to interfere with the established chain of command. But whatever his intention it is clear that the Australian government believed that was the case. In private, Curtin described Lumsden's appointment as 'somewhat abnormal and unconstitutional'.⁵⁰ The role of the liaison officers therefore provides an important element in any discussion of Australia and Allied strategy in the Pacific in the Second World War.

48. See Chapter Ten, p.442.

49. See Chapter Eleven, p.536-537.

50. Lumsden to Churchill, 19 November 1943, quoted in Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British, 1942-1943', Part 2.

JOINT PLANNING, MAY 1944

Amongst the wide range of topics dealt with by Curtin, Shedden and Blamey when they visited London in May 1944 was post hostilities planning. This matter had important repercussions because it was in this field that Britain and Australia came closest to formulating some sort of joint long term war aim. Furthermore, the discussion provided a good insight into the formulation of Australian defence and foreign policy, and also of Australian efforts to take part in joint planning.

Whilst the Australian Departments of External Affairs and Post-War Reconstruction were keenly interested in post-hostilities planning, it is significant that Curtin did not take any representatives from those departments with him to England. Indeed it will be recalled that although Evatt had wanted to accompany Curtin he had been denied permission. Shedden therefore remained Curtin's chief adviser. Paul Hasluck, who was in charge of post-hostilities planning in the Department of External Affairs, commented in 1954 that:

The Defence Department, as contrasted with the Department of External Affairs in those days, was the stronghold of orthodoxy in Australian foreign relations, and I think had a much stronger influence with the Prime Minister than either the Minister or Department of External Affairs had.¹

Writing some twenty six years later Hasluck was more forthright in his views. He thought 'that Curtin's contribution to the Prime Ministers' Conference harked back to the pre-war mood of the old Imperial Conference rather than looking forward to the post-war conditions affecting relationships within the Commonwealth'. He attributed the views

1. P. Hasluck, 'Australia and the Formation of the United Nations', *Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings*, Vol.XL, 1954, Part III, p.154.

expressed by Curtin at the conference to the strong influence of Shedden. Thus while Curtin claimed that Australia should be better informed and was better qualified to give advice on allied policy in the Pacific, Hasluck noted that 'his general tone was deferential'. Hasluck added that Curtin's approach

did not reflect the views held in the Australian Department of External Affairs at that time nor did it arise from any analysis by the Department of External Affairs of present or prospective world conditions. Nor as far as I can judge, did it reflect the outlook of the Minister for External Affairs.²

Although Evatt and the Australian Department of External Affairs had no influence on the policy discussions in Britain, Shedden did not have it all his own way. Indeed Lieutenant-Colonel A.A. Conlon, the army's Director of Research and Civil Affairs, had directed two of his senior officers, Lieutenant-Colonels W.E.H. Stanner and J.R. Kerr, to travel to London to examine joint planning, post-hostilities planning, civil affairs, and relations between Civil Affairs and the Colonial Office.³ In essence, Stanner and Kerr had the task of advising Blamey on political matters, and it is not likely that Shedden would have welcomed this intrusion into what he saw as his area of responsibility.⁴

Hasluck is sceptical of the influence of Conlon and the Directorate of Research, and he recalled that both Hodgson, the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, on behalf of Evatt, and Shedden were anxious to ensure that Conlon did not intrude into areas of high policy.⁵

2. Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p.137. For further comments about the different approaches of Curtin and Evatt, and also for an examination of the decolonisation aspects of the Prime Ministers' Conference, see Louis, *op.cit.*, Chapter 21.

3. 'Report for Lt.Col Conlon, Director of Research, LHQ' by Lieutenant-Colonels Stanner and Kerr, 28 May 1944, MP 729/8, File 49/431/71.

4. Stanner to Gavin Long, 18 April 1944, Gavin Long Diary, No.4, p.62 AWM; Stanner interview, 4 June 1979 and letter, 13 June 1979.

5. Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p.132.

Nevertheless, the undisputed fact was that in May 1944 representatives of the Directorate of Research attended important conferences on post-hostilities planning in London.

Before Kerr and Stanner had arrived in London Bruce and his staff had already begun their own investigations into post-hostilities planning. In his role as Australian Accredited Representative to the British War Cabinet Bruce had three invaluable staff members at the War Cabinet offices at Westminster. From the Australian Department of External Affairs was Alfred Stirling who worked long hours and kept Bruce informed of the deliberations of the Foreign and Dominion Offices.⁶ But during the war the most important policy making area was the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and Bruce's contact with this body was the experienced and able Colonel H.G. Rourke.⁷ Rourke had close relations with the members of the Joint Planning, Joint Intelligence and Post-Hostilities Planning Committees.⁸ In August 1943 Bruce described Rourke's role.

He is a Colonel in the Australian Army but really is my Ismay, in the sense that he covers the Army, Navy and Air and is responsible to no one except to me, i.e. although he is a soldier and Smart is my senior military adviser, Rourke is not under Smart's

6. See A. Stirling, *Lord Bruce: The London Years* (Melbourne, 1974).

7. Rourke had been BGS of the 1st Australian Corps in New Guinea during the Kokoda and Milne Bay Battles. He had been sent back to Australia in September 1942 with a nervous breakdown (Horner, *Crisis of Command*, p.168), but Rowell, his former Corps Commander, had written to the CGS that Rourke was 'far too valuable an officer to put on to the discard. It's no fault of his that he has cracked up now. It might happen to any of us' (letter, Rowell to Northcott, 21 September 1942, Northcott Papers, ML MSS 1431/14). To Blamey, Rowell wrote that 'I would like to make it abundantly clear that there is no question involving Rourke's personal courage or his ability to face up to a difficult situation' (letter, 17 September 1942, Blamey Papers DRL 6643, item 92, AWM). In the view of General Ismay, whilst in England Rourke did 'a first-class job' (Ismay to Shedden, 26 August 1946, CAB 127/49).

8. Stanner and Kerr Report, 28 May 1944.

control. The way this situation operates is that Rourke is with me in the Cabinet office and has established the most admirable relations with the whole Chiefs of Staff organisation and has the closest contact with it, particularly with the Joint Planners. In this way I probably have more information with regard to strategic and operational questions than any of the members of the War Cabinet with the exception of the Prime Minister himself.⁹

Bruce's third assistant at the War Cabinet offices was Admiral Colvin, who, although Bruce found him valuable, was working only part-time.¹⁰ There was no Air Force assistant, although Bruce could receive advice from the Air Force liaison officer at Australia House.

As early as February 1944 the British Post-Hostilities Planning Committee had started work on the general strategic requirements of the British Empire and Commonwealth in the Pacific. The British planners had determined that 'the focal strategic point in S.E. Asia and S.W. Pacific was considered to be the Bengal area of the Indian-Burmese frontier'. Rourke had disagreed with this, but he was labouring under the difficulty of having little information about Australian strategic thinking, if indeed there was any.¹¹ This pointed to the necessity of establishing in Australia committees similar to those operating in England. Furthermore, despite Rourke's good relations with the War Office, the British were reluctant to release all their staff-level post-hostilities contingency papers to the Australians. The British

9. Letter, Bruce to Sir Keith Officer, 6 August 1943, Office Papers, NLA MS 2629, Series 1, item 920.

10. Memorandum on Higher Defence Organisation by Shedden, 16 August 1944, CRS A 816, 31/301/344.

11. Stanner and Kerr Report, 28 May 1944.

were afraid that Evatt might see them and cause embarrassment by dealing with them at a high political level.¹²

Bruce had given the matter some thought and he now sought to persuade Shedden of the merit of the British system of establishing sub-committees under the Australian Defence Committee or Chiefs of Staff Committee. At one stage Bruce had conversations with Lord Hankey with the intention of enlisting his aid in persuading Shedden, but Bruce did not proceed with this approach.¹³

In essence, there were two problems: first, joint planning for operations, and second, joint planning on post-war problems. It was recognised that since all planning for the South-West Pacific Area was done at MacArthur's headquarters little work could be done on joint planning for operations. But there was the possibility that 'part or the whole of Australia may ultimately be detached from his command as the war proceeds North', and in this event joint planning could and should develop between the Australian and British Services. However post-war problems were not MacArthur's concern and the British believed an immediate start could be made in this field. Later the field could spread to operational joint planning and joint intelligence. The British, Blamey, Rourke and Bruce believed, with a number of reservations, that an Australian inter-services committee should be set up in London to study British plans. Colonel Rourke was to be chairman of this

12. Stanner recalled that Rourke told him this. Letter, 13 June 1979 and interview, 4 June 1979. Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p.130 has claimed that at the official level the British kept the Australians fully and regularly informed, and shared information with the Australians. He does admit that the Department of External Affairs was happy for the Department of the Army and External Territories to look after planning of civil administration in reoccupied territories (p.131).

13. Stanner and Kerr Report, 28 May 1944.

committee and it was to be under the general direction of either Smart or Bruce.¹⁴

Shedden resisted these proposals vigorously. Stanner and Kerr outlined the problem in their preliminary report of 28 May 1944:

We are greatly impressed by the detailed planning done here by Service personnel under the Chiefs of Staff on matters claimed, in Australia, to be 'defence matters', i.e. matters for the (civilian) Defence Department. The problem in everyone's mind here is whether Sir Frederick Shedden can be persuaded to concentrate in civilian hands in the Defence Department matters which are here considered by Service personnel working together and with representatives of the Foreign Office and, where necessary, other civil departments. We had a long talk with Col. Rourke and Rear Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin on this question, and the Admiral expressed what is the general view of everyone from Mr Bruce down, viz - that unless Sir Frederick Shedden can be induced to consider the problem sympathetically somewhere along the lines Rourke has suggested there will be little prospect of success.¹⁵

Shedden's attitude was confirmed when he discussed the matter with Brigadier Ian Jacob, the Assistant Military Secretary to the War Cabinet. Shedden told Jacob that he would like a civilian from his department to be stationed in London to act as the interpreter of the Australian services views on high defence policy.¹⁶ Jacob said

14. Report by Lieut-Colonels W.E.H. Stanner and J.R. Kerr to Director of Research. LHQ, 12 June 1944, MP 729/8, File 49/431/72. Stanner believed that Bruce did not give up the plan lightly, because Bruce later asked Stanner to join his staff. Stanner declined. Stanner letter, 13 June 1979.

15. Stanner and Kerr Report, 28 May 1944.

16. It may be of interest to note Shedden's attitude when he accompanied Menzies to London in 1941. Brigadier Wardell, the Australian liaison officer, wrote to Northcott on 26 March 1941 that Shedden 'has played a lone hand and little use has been made of the liaison officers. I am a little concerned at what may be the outcome of dealing direct with the War Office and Ministry of Supply without regard to the liaison already existing here'. Wardell, who was later replaced by Rourke, noted that when Shedden met the three service representatives he told them what he was doing, but did not seek any information. [AWM 425/11/7 Part 2.]

that it did not matter to him who was secretary of the inter-services planning committee, but that the committee must contain 'three professionally competent members of the Services to work with the British Service planners'. Before Jacob would release secret material he insisted that there had to be a *low-level* inter-service staff organisation in Australia to receive the material from London, and that this body should be the *single source of instructions* for its representatives in London. Jacob suggested to Shedden that the British experience had definitely shown that a civilian Department of Defence was unable to handle war problems smoothly. He suggested to Shedden:

that there should be in the Australian Defence Department a Services Secretariat for the Defence Committee, Chiefs of Staff, and the planners and indeed that Shedden could obtain much advantage from having a high-powered Services collaborator, of equal status with himself, and in much the same relation to him as General Ismay ... stands to Bridges, the Secretary of War Cabinet.¹⁷

Shedden was not persuaded by this gratuitous advice. Indeed perhaps he thought that Blamey had enlisted British help to try and break down the civilian character of the Department of Defence. There is no evidence to support this supposition, and when Blamey met Bruce on 25 May 1944, it was the latter who emphasised the need for the Services to send first class men to the Defence Secretariat. Bruce told Blamey that such an organisation would be 'a great contribution he could leave as a legacy to Australia'.¹⁸

17. Stanner and Kerr Report, 12 June 1944.

18. Notes of Discussion with General Sir Thomas Blamey, 25 May 1944, CRS M100, May 1944. As a result of the trip to London Shedden began work on the Higher Defence Organisation for Australia, and in August secured Curtin's general approval. Shedden saw the value of Rourke's work and asked for his assistance but Blamey could see no way of releasing Rourke. The result of these deliberations was an increase in service officers in the Department of Defence. But Blamey's request for a Deputy Secretary (Military) along the lines of Ismay, was not acceded to. With regard to Bruce's comments about sending the best men, it cannot be said that Blamey provided an officer of the first order to the Department. The officer selected had not had a particularly distinguished career. CRS A816, 31/301/344.

Whilst joint post-hostilities planning was foundering upon what Stanner and Kerr described as Shedden's 'great caution and reservation of judgment',¹⁹ Blamey was going ahead with cooperation in the field of civil affairs. Australian and British views were presented at a conference between Blamey, Major-General H.R. Hone, the Chief Civil Affairs Officer designate for Malaya, Sir Frederick Bovenschen, the Permanent Under Secretary of the War Office, and Sir George Gater, the Permanent Under Secretary of the Colonial office. Blamey urged the British officials to place their civil affairs staffs in uniform and under the formal command and discipline of the Army in the field, and the British generally speaking agreed. There was considerable discussion about American designs in the Pacific. Bovenschen mentioned that when in America he had encountered the attitude that 'if U.S. lives and treasure are to be spent in recovering Malaya, we (the British) could not expect to go back there'. Whilst stressing the 'extraordinarily good relations between HQ SWPA and the Australian Government' Blamey mentioned the unsatisfactory attitude at lower levels of the American forces. He was afraid that the Americans 'might try to hold the Admiralties after the war, and New Caledonia also'. Later, at lower level discussions, tentative plans were made for British civil affairs officers to be attached to the Australian Army for operation in Borneo.²⁰

One impression gained by the Australians was of the good inter-departmental cooperation in Britain where the civil affairs organisation functioning under the immediate control of the War Office, operated in one respect as an instrument of considered British foreign policy. This contrasted with the situation in Australia where the Department of

19. Stanner and Kerr Report, 12 June 1944.

20. Stanner and Kerr Report, 28 May 1944. For a detailed discussion of British and American attitudes to decolonisation during the Second World War see Louis, *op.cit.*

External Affairs had 'a mass of information on PHP [Post-Hostilities Planning], of vital interest to the Services, not yet made available to the Services, possibly not yet wholly available to the Defence Department'.²¹ Thus can be glimpsed a picture of the lack of direction and co-ordination in Australian defence and foreign policy. Blamey is seen to be playing an independent role, without close collaboration with the cautious Shedden, both of whom had little contact with the Department of External Affairs. Furthermore, as Hasluck observed, Evatt and Curtin 'were out of touch with each other'.²² Stanner and Kerr have the final say:

Apathy on the part of the Services and the Defence Department has resulted in the PHP papers being available, to date, only in External Affairs, and continued apathy or failure to agree would mean that the Services and the Defence Department would not participate to the extent proper and necessary in detailed and continuous thought and planning on strategic issues.²³

21. Stanner and Kerr Report, 12 June 1944. For an account of post-hostilities planning in the Department of External Affairs see Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, Ch.13.

22. Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p.139.

23. Stanner and Kerr Report, 28 May 1944.

MANPOWER AND STRATEGY IN 1944

As mentioned in Chapter Six, in October 1943 the Australian government finally decided upon the size of the national war effort, and the policy remained basically unchanged until mid 1945.¹ But throughout 1944 there was a constant battle between the Services, and the Departments of Munitions and Manpower over the means by which the government's policy was to be implemented. This struggle had an impact on Australian strategy, and in particular, it sheds revealing light upon the Australian decision-making process.

At the end of 1943, while the War Commitments Committee was reviewing the problem of resources, the Chiefs of Staff were ordered to review the general strategic basis of the war effort. As usual the three services could not agree on the division of the available manpower. As Butlin and Schedvin have observed, 'during the first half of 1944 War Cabinet groped for an answer and found none was satisfactory ... nobody was prepared to grasp the nettle'.²

The Offer of British Ships

In such a situation there was always the possibility that the Services might seek their own separate solutions. Thus, at the Advisory War Council on 21 March 1944, the CNS, Royle, unexpectedly referred to the review of the War Effort and pointed out that the war in the Pacific was increasingly a naval one. He had obviously been in contact

1. On 1 October 1943 the policy mentioned an RAAF strength in the SWPA of 48 squadrons. In June 1944 Curtin presented a policy of 53 squadrons to the CCS.

2. Butlin and Schedvin, *op.cit.*, p.383.

with the Admiralty, for he suggested that Australia might be able to man one aircraft carrier, one or two cruisers and six destroyers if they could be made available by Britain. The Prime Minister was not prepared to give a decision but agreed to confer with Royle.³

Shedden was particularly disturbed by Royle's action, for he thought that the CNS had 'sought to get a flying start by making a break ahead of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Chief of the Air Staff'. Shedden saw Royle's approach to Curtin as a direct threat to his position and in a memorandum to the Prime Minister he warned that differences between services could 'only be resolved by the Minister for Defence, after considering the advice of the Permanent Head of his Department'. He urged Curtin not to commit himself with Royle and to reserve any decision until the matter could be studied further. In any case, Shedden was firmly opposed to Royle's suggestion. The manpower problem has not been resolved; there were already sufficient naval forces available in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and from the aspect of post-war policy the best approach would be to build up the RAAF to the maximum strength.⁴

Curtin saw Royle on 1 April 1944, just before leaving Australia for America and Britain, but as Shedden requested, he did not commit himself. The Prime Minister's attitude is revealed in a letter from Shedden to A.J. Wilson, who was to act as Secretary of the Department of Defence while he was overseas:

The Prime Minister went so far as to say that if Mr Churchill did not choose to reply to his representations about the concentration of the Australian war effort in the Southwest Pacific

3. Advisory War Council Minute, 1322, Canberra, 21 March 1944, MP 1217, Box 305.

4. Memorandum, Shedden to Curtin, 23 March 1944, *loc.cit.*

by the return of naval crews and RAAF squadrons, he certainly was not going to adopt such a humble attitude as to offer him gifts by manning additional ships.⁵

Royle did not give up. At the War Cabinet meeting on 3 May he referred to the government's policy statement of October 1945 which stated that it was 'of vital importance to the future of Australia and her status at the Peace Table in regard to the settlement in the Pacific that her military effort should be concentrated as far as possible in the Pacific, and that it should be on a scale to guarantee her an effective voice in the peace settlement'. Royle pointed out that the RAAF strength was out of proportion to that of the army and navy. The RAAF was approximately a quarter to a third of the Japanese air strength, and if the other two services were to be maintained to the same proportions then the army would need nineteen to twenty-five divisions, and the navy two to three battleships, three to four aircraft carriers, seven to nine cruisers and twenty destroyers. Royle concluded:

I feel it my duty to press to the utmost, this opportunity of achieving a stronger Navy. The increased national prestige which will be gained by the possession of this additional Naval strength, as well as by its participation in the final action against the Japanese mainland, will be appreciated. Ships steaming and fighting side by side with those of the British Forces will be highly tangible evidence of our active participation in the war to the very end.⁶

The Minister for Air opposed Royle's suggestion since it was contrary to the programme approved by the War Cabinet. But most members of the War Cabinet agreed that Royle's suggestion held advantages for Australia. The non-government members of the Advisory War Council agreed with Royle. However since Curtin was absent no decision was recorded.⁷

5. Letter, Shedden to A.J. Wilson, 1 April 1944, *loc.cit.*

6. War Cabinet, 3 May 1944, *loc.cit.*

7. Cable 40, Forde to Curtin, 4 May 1944, *loc.cit.*

When Curtin in London received news of the discussions in Australia he warned Forde, the Acting Prime Minister, that the project to base British Forces in Australia would be a heavy drain on Australian resources, and if Royle's suggestion were followed Australia would never extricate itself from its manpower difficulties. He concluded:

I cannot fail to comment on the comparison between the tardy manner in which War Cabinet's decision of 1st October on Naval overseas commitments has been handled in certain quarters and the urgency with which additional commitments have been pressed.⁸

Clearly Curtin viewed Royle's suggestion as part of an Admiralty plot, and there was plentiful evidence to support such a view. For example, on 23 May the First Lord of the Admiralty, A.V. Alexander, informed Churchill that Curtin might offer to man British ships. He observed that Blamey would oppose such a scheme and that it would therefore be better if Curtin raised the matter. But he noted that Curtin had said nothing. Alexander told Churchill that he had recently had lunch with Sir Keith Murdoch, who had asked if Curtin had raised yet the question of manning warships. Alexander suggested that Churchill should ask Curtin outright.⁹ The question was raised three days later,¹⁰ but of course Curtin declined the British offer. And in informing Forde, Curtin noted with disgust that the views of the Australian War Cabinet had been communicated to the Admiralty 'through Naval channels'.¹¹

Although there might well have been an Admiralty plot, there was also much truth in Royle's assertion that the Australian war effort

8. Cable 28, Curtin to Forde, 18 May 1944, *loc.cit.*

9. Letter, 1st Lord of the Admiralty to Churchill, 23 May 1944, PREM 3 63/8.

10. Churchill's note on *ibid*, and Memorandum 1st Lord of Admiralty to Curtin, 26 May 1944. In a letter to Curtin on 27 May Churchill denied that the 1st Lord had raised the question, but went on to raise the question himself. MP 1217, Box 5.

11. Cable 45, Curtin to Forde, 29 May 1944, MP 1217, Box 305.

was balanced unnaturally in favour of the RAAF. On 1 July 1944 there were approximately 14,000 RAAF personnel in the United Kingdom of whom 12,400 were air crew.¹² Yet there was no RAAF Bomber Group within Bomber Command where most Australians were operating. And, as the official historian has observed, 'few Australians (except air gunners) who arrived [in England] after the launching of OVERLORD reached combat units, and some who had arrived even earlier still lacked active employment at the end of the war'.¹³ Of course Australia had no way of determining whether the Australian forces in Europe really were vitally necessary, but it is certain that they did not contribute to the government's declared aim of giving Australia status at the Peace table in the Pacific.¹⁴

Royle was persistent. On 2 June 1944 he wrote to MacArthur of his efforts to have RN ships manned by Australian personnel and he suggested that MacArthur might take it up with Curtin.¹⁵ However the records of the discussions between Curtin and MacArthur in June show that the topic was not raised.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the British offer was not yet totally rejected, and on 5 July the War Cabinet instructed the Defence Committee and the Production Executive to report on manpower requirements for the Forces, including the personnel required to man a light fleet carrier

12. John Herington, *Air Power Over Europe, 1944-1945* (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1963), p.277.

13. *Ibid.*, p.285. Herington added that their presence was a necessary measure against large-scale reverses or undue prolongation of the air war. About 1,400 airmen arrived in the United Kingdom after June 1944.

14. Curtin pressed the CAS, Jones, to reduce the Australian contribution to Bomber Command in Europe, but Jones claimed that to do so would result in heavier casualties among the remaining forces. Jones interview, 24 January 1979.

15. Letter, Royle to MacArthur, 2 June 1944, Sutherland Papers.

16. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with the Commander-in-Chief Southwest Pacific Area, Brisbane, 26 and 27 June 1944, MP 1217, Box 3.

in December 1944, and two cruisers in September 1945.¹⁷ The manpower required was not large; the carrier required 1500 men and the cruisers 350 each,¹⁸ but there were other considerations. On 30 September 1944 Curtin met MacArthur for the last time and discussed the question. MacArthur said that the proposal was too late to be of value in the present war, and if the ships remained in Australia after the war they would be out of date. He said that Australia could not hope to provide and maintain sufficient naval forces for her security, and that she must look to greater nations to provide naval strength to guard her. Although he knew nothing of the development of the atomic bomb, MacArthur believed that 'science would so develop aircraft and explosives that posterity would view our present equipments as completely antiquated'. He concluded with the comment: 'Australia must watch the air'. With the receipt of these views Curtin then stated that he would not agree to the Admiralty proposals.¹⁹

Despite these views, the War Cabinet was still attracted by the idea and on 9 February instructed the Prime Minister to reopen negotiations with Britain.²⁰ But finally, on 6 June 1945 the War Cabinet decided that 'in view of the overwhelming American and British naval strength in the Pacific and the acuteness of the Australian manpower position generally, the proposal should not be proceeded with as a war project'.²¹

17. War Cabinet Minute 3655, Canberra, 5 July 1944, CRS A 2680, item 17/1944 Part 1.

18. War Cabinet Minute 4044, Canberra, 9 February 1945, Blamey Papers 23.1.

19. Notes of Discussions [by Curtin] with the Commander-in-Chief Southwest Pacific Area, Canberra, 30 September 1944.

20. War Cabinet Minute 4044, Canberra, 9 February 1945, CRS A 2671, item 55/1945.

21. War Cabinet Minute 4241, 6 June 1945, quoted in Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, p.472.



Admiral Sir Guy Royle and General Sir Thomas Blamey
at a dinner held in the Officers' Mess of the
Signal Officer-in-Chief, Melbourne, 5 April 1943.

(AWM Negative No.50476)



Forde with Major-General H.C.H. Robertson, GOC
Western Command and Major-General C.E.M. Lloyd, the
Adjutant General. Lloyd was selected 'because he
could lie to Frankie Forde'.

(AWM Negative No. 51024)

Blamey and the Manpower Problem

In Chapter Nine it was postulated that the growing coolness between Blamey and Curtin following their return from overseas in late June 1944 contributed in part to Curtin's acceptance of MacArthur's views to the exclusion of those of the Australian Commander-in-Chief. One result, which was perhaps inevitable, was that Australian forces did not take part in the Philippines campaign.

But tension between Blamey and the Prime Minister did not revolve completely around the question of forces for the Philippines or Blamey's hopes for a British expedition based on Darwin. Rather, the tension sprang from the strategic implications of the government's efforts to balance the Australian War Effort. An example of the effect of limited manpower occurred in July 1944 when the British government asked Australia for assistance in garrisoning British Islands in the Pacific and Borneo.²² Colonel Hodgson, the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, noted that, in view of the general policy of 'developing Australian interests' in the area, it was desirable that Australia should contribute to the garrisons.²³ The Defence Committee said flatly that Australia just did not have the forces.²⁴

This did not mean that the army was insensitive to matters of foreign policy. Blamey recognised that one of the roles of the Army Directorate of Research was to do 'special work for us in the field of international affairs as they effect the structure and activities of the armed forces'. One of the tasks given to Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Kerr, of the Directorate, on his visit to London and Washington in mid

22. Aide Memoire from United Kingdom High Commissioner, 14 July 1944, CRS A 816, item 52/302/129. See also CRS A 1608, item S/41/1/9.

23. Memorandum, Hodgson to Shedden, 25 July 1944, CRS A 816, item 52/302/129.

24. Minutes of Defence Committee, 8 August 1944, *loc.cit.*

1944, was to investigate the handling 'of politico-strategic matters by the planning staff'.²⁵

Blamey realised that if he could gain information on the details of British and American post-hostilities planning and their civil affairs preparations, then he would have insight into their war policy. Consequently, on 4 August he requested General Lavarack in Washington to make discreet enquiries:

It will be rather delicate to attempt to tap American sources at this stage, although it is most desirable for us to know as much as possible about the substance of American policy on these matters, whether disclosed in Service or political quarters, the method of approach, and the degree of pressure or urgency attaching to these activities.²⁶

Lavarack found it extremely difficult to obtain the required information,²⁷ but on 18 October he told Blamey that the US War and Navy Departments were accelerating civil affairs training and suggested that Australia should do the same.²⁸ In this fashion Blamey attempted to anticipate US Pacific strategy and ensure that Australia was not caught off guard.

It also indicated the way Blamey attempted to play a lone hand in controlling Australian strategic policy. He knew that he was unpopular with many members of the Cabinet,²⁹ and he kept his plans to himself. Operational planning was kept from General Northcott, the Chief of the General Staff, for fear that he would inadvertently reveal

25. Letter, Blamey to Lavarack, 4 August 1944, Blamey Papers 6.1. A British Officer in Australia at the time described the Directorate of Research as 'a rather nebulous but, at the same time, most important Directorate with no charter and no limit to what it may have to undertake on the non-operational aspect of any problem'. Letter, Colonel L.M. Taylor to War Office, 30 December 1944, WO 208/103.

26. Letter, Blamey to Lavarack, 4 August 1944, Blamey Papers 6.1.

27. Letter, Lavarack to Blamey, 1 September 1944, *loc.cit.*

28. Letter, Lavarack to Blamey, 18 October 1944, *loc.cit.*

29. E.H. Cox interview, 20 November 1978.

the plans to the Minister.³⁰ It was for this reason that Blamey had made the bluff, plausible C.E.M. Lloyd the Adjutant-General - as Berryman commented, 'He could lie to Frankie Forde'.³¹ The Directorate of Research, headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Conlon, reported directly to Blamey, and Blamey's senior staff at Advanced Land Headquarters were kept ignorant of the planning carried out by Berryman in preparation for the United Kingdom Forces.³²

Blamey had, therefore, concentrated power firmly in his own hands.

General Lumsden wrote in July 1944:

General Blamey rules his own roost with a rod of iron and has assiduously eliminated all those who might approach too close to the throne.³³

MacArthur told Shedden that Blamey 'was surrounding himself with his own special selections, and even when General Blamey might ultimately retire, the Government would find itself saddled with a dynasty of the same type of officer'. In MacArthur's view the promotion of Lieutenant-General Savage over Major-General Vasey was 'outrageous'.³⁴

Towards the end of 1943 Blamey began to suffer increased pressure from the political side.³⁵ By February 1944 he was being attacked in

30. Barham interview, 11 December 1978, Hopkins interview, 12 August 1974. On 13 June 1945 Northcott wrote to Blamey, 'I consider the staff and services at LHQ are not sufficiently informed as to the detailed requirement of the overseas forces to enable [plans for a new order of battle] to be prepared with sufficient accuracy here'. Blamey Papers 23.12. See also Verbatim Record of Discussions, LHQ Conference, 8-9 May 1944, Blamey Papers, DRL 6643, item LHQ Conference May 1944.

31. Berryman interview, 22 July 1974.

32. Barham interview, 11 December 1978.

33. Lumsden to Ismay, 15 July 1944, PREM 3 159/4.

34. Notes of Discussions [by Shedden] with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, 27 June 1944, MP 1217, Box 3. On 10 February 1944, Savage, a militia officer and a long-standing friend of Blamey, was promoted to command the 1st Australian Corps. Vasey, a Staff Corps officer, who had commanded a division in two successful campaigns compared to Savage's one, was passed over.

35. For example, the resistance to his efforts to promote Ramsay and Berryman. See CRS A 816, item 58/301/112.

Parliament,³⁶ and he wrote to Berryman of the 'pressure of politicians such as Foll, Page and particularly Cameron. It is always interesting to know how completely the flea understands the dog'.³⁷ Brigadier Rogers recalled that Blamey said:

This command of mine would be the greatest ever enjoyed by an Australian, if I didn't have to be looking over my shoulder wondering what next the Government would be doing.³⁸

Blamey's attitude was one of total cynicism towards politicians. He completely disregarded Forde and the only politicians he trusted was Curtin, who on many occasions protected him.³⁹

Unlike the other two services, throughout the war the army played a major role in a number of Allied campaigns, and thus provided Australia with some influence, however small, over Allied strategy. In his position of Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and senior Australian military adviser to the Prime Minister, Blamey could therefore attempt to influence Allied strategy, but he could continue to do so only so long as the army continued to play a major offensive role. Clearly, if the AIF offensive role was eliminated, then the army would require less personnel. There was, therefore a sense of self preservation in Blamey's advocacy of an offensive role for the AIF. But, through Conlon, Blamey had also developed a view of the need for Australian influence to be extended to the islands to the north, and he knew this depended on a military presence.⁴⁰

36. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.57.

37. Letter, Blamey to Berryman, 25 February 1944, AWM 225/1/16.

38. J.D. Rogers, *Say Not the Struggle*, unpublished MS.

39. E.H. Cox interview, 20 November 1978. For an example of Blamey's blunt approach to politicians see his correspondence with Senator Fraser over the appointment of a new Judge Advocate-General in AA 78/64 - one item series.

40. P. Ryan, *op.cit.*, p.1222.

It followed that Blamey could only maintain his influence so long as he retained control of the AIF destined for offensive operations. Curtin's failure to oppose MacArthur's task force scheme in June, thus making Blamey's task harder, must be seen, therefore, as not only an abdication to MacArthur, but as an indication of a lack of close consultation between Blamey and Curtin over the central matter of the implementation of national policy and the higher command organisation. Curtin appears to have been happy to let matters remain unchanged, and to leave the employment of the Australians in MacArthur's hands. Similarly, with regard to basing United Kingdom forces in Australia, Curtin followed MacArthur's line completely.

The essential question was manpower. As mentioned, on 5 July 1944, the War Cabinet instructed the Defence Committee to report on manpower requirements for the Services.⁴¹ Curtin understood from Blamey's comments while they were overseas that the reduced war effort policy decided upon by the government on 1 October 1943 and ratified by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in June 1944 would lead to a reduction in the army of 50,000 men, eventually increasing to 90,000.⁴² But the Defence Committee now recommended that there should be no net reduction in total enlistments. At the same time the War Commitments Committee estimated a need for 78,602 men in high priority industries by the end of 1944, and a gap of at least 39,000 men between labour requirements and supply.

To resolve this problem Curtin met Blamey on the morning of 2 August and requested an explanation of the difference between the Defence Committee report and Blamey's statements. Surprisingly, Blamey said that

41. See p.662.

42. Notes of Conference between the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, Melbourne, 2 August 1944, CRS A 2680, item 17/1944 Part 1.

he had not seen the Defence Committee report, on which his representative was the CGS, General Northcott. Curtin then directed Blamey to investigate a way of releasing 50,000 men from the army. Blamey replied that 50,000 would be a 'severe blow' and he suggested 20,000 or 25,000. The remainder could be released by the RAAF. Curtin appeared to agree with this point of view and asked Blamey whether he should give his instructions without Blamey having considered the Defence Committee report. Blamey advised Curtin to issue the instruction.⁴³ When Curtin met the Minister for Air and the Chief of the Air Staff later that day, the CAS had to admit that a reduction in air force personnel would not greatly impair RAAF operations.⁴⁴

Following these discussions, later that day, Curtin wrote to the Defence Committee that he was disappointed with its report. He directed that the army was to release 30,000 men and the RAAF 15,000 men. Of these 45,000 men, 20,000 were to be released by 31 December and 25,000 by 30 June 1945.⁴⁵

Butlin and Schedvin have written that in submitting its report the 'Defence Committee seriously misjudged the Prime Minister's growing command of the strategic situation and his increasing concern with the manpower problem'.⁴⁶ This might have been the case, but Shedden viewed Curtin during this period in a different light. Following the overseas trip he thought the Prime Minister was listless, lacking energy and unable to face up to issues.

For example [wrote Shedden] the chief object of the visit abroad was to obtain agreement to the reduction of the strength of the Army by 50,000 men, as it was the solution of the manpower difficulties and the growing industrial unrest

43. *Ibid.*

44. Notes of Conference between the Prime Minister, the Minister for Air and Chief of the Air Staff, Melbourne, 2 August 1944, *loc.cit.*

45. Minute, Curtin to Defence Committee, 2 August 1944.

46. Butlin & Schedvin, *op.cit.*, p.686.

in Australia. However, Curtin agreed under Army pressure that the reduction should be 30,000 only.⁴⁷

A.A. Calwell, one of Curtin's Ministers, has agreed with Shedden. He thought Curtin was losing his grip: 'He was sick and contemplating retirement'.⁴⁸

Worried by the Prime Minister's condition Shedden discussed the situation with Chifley, who said that he too had noticed Curtin's 'defeatist' attitude since he had returned from abroad, and that he had discussed it with Scullin who also had detected the change in attitude. Chifley gave examples of Curtin's lack of fight over financial matters, and Shedden observed that as well as Curtin's failure to stand up to Blamey over manpower, he 'had also abandoned the idea of obtaining Sir Keith Park as CAS which was an essential step in the proper control of the RAAF'.⁴⁹

It is likely therefore that the sharp letters from Curtin to Blamey during August 1944 were initiated by Shedden.⁵⁰ On 2 August, in informing Blamey of the decision communicated to the Defence Committee, Curtin again raised the matter of the advice given by Blamey in Washington and London that 90,000 men would be released.⁵¹ Blamey replied that in fact between 1 October 1943 and 1 July 1944 92,000 men had been released. Further reductions would 'greatly reduce the status of Australia and our

47. Shedden Manuscript, Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 57, p.3.

48. Calwell, *op.cit.*, p.57. See also Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p.127, and Lloyd Ross, 'I'm too tired to live', *Sun Herald* (Sydney), 17 August 1958, for Curtin's deteriorating condition in late 1944.

49. Extract from Shedden's Diary, 6 November 1944, MP 1217, Box 14.

50. The Shedden Manuscript reveals that Shedden was convinced that Blamey was not completely honest over the question of releases from the army. He quoted the minutes of the Combined Chiefs of Staff which stated that Blamey said that 'the reduction to 6 divisions would progressively release some 90,000 men'. Book 4, Box 4, Chapter 48, p.4.

51. Letter, Curtin to Blamey, 2 August 1944, Blamey Papers 23.1.

voice later in important matters of policy'.⁵² In turn Curtin rebutted a number of Blamey's arguments,⁵³ and he again countered in a letter on 15 September.⁵⁴

In the same letter Blamey now linked strategic policy directly to the manpower problem:

I desire to invite your attention that Operation Instructions recently issued by GHQ and received since my letter of 11th August entail large overseas commitments for the Australian forces and will require the employment of 19 Inf Bdes and 1 Armd Bde in areas held by the enemy in strength...

I must inform you therefore, that I have grave misgivings as to the maintenance of our offensive forces in the event of protracted operations in 1945.⁵⁵

It is therefore obvious why Blamey was not in a position to seek the government's support in his efforts to persuade MacArthur that the garrison force could be reduced by five brigades. The government might have seized the opportunity to demand an increased release of personnel from the army. Yet Blamey still might have had a strong argument, for if the garrisons could have been reduced by five brigades he would have been able to provide an AIF striking force of three rather than two divisions. Perhaps Blamey realised that by this stage Curtin was no longer committed to the three division striking force described in the government's policy statement of October 1943. On 26 September Blamey wrote a further letter to Curtin warning that the scope and duration of the operations of the AIF Corps would have to be reduced. He suggested further reductions in the RAAF.⁵⁶

52. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 11 August 1944, *loc.cit.*

53. Letter, Curtin to Blamey, 23 August 1944, *loc.cit.*

54. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 15 September 1944, *loc.cit.*

55. *Ibid.* The GHQ Instruction is described in Chapter Nine, p.410. It is noted that the instruction was issued on 2 August but in Blamey's letter he claimed that he had not received it by 11 August.

56. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 26 September 1944, *loc.cit.*

But on 18 October the War Cabinet ordered the Defence Committee to report on a proposal to release a further 40,000 men from the Services as soon as possible. Blamey again protested strongly:

I agree the civil population is short of housing and that there is also a shortage of a number of commodities, some of which are important and some of probably less consequence. The same conditions obtain in Britain and elsewhere to a much greater degree. These countries have accepted the conditions of essential privation and stepped up production in order to preserve their striking power, for they appreciate that by this method, and this method alone, can the enemy finally be brought to his knees ... The Army deficiency by June 1945, is estimated at 26,000 plus 37,000, total 63,000. During recent weeks references have been made by Ministers to the arduous and difficult times that lie ahead of the armed forces in operations in the very near future. There will be casualties and losses, on what scale nobody knows. One thing, however, is certain. All six divisions and one armoured brigade, with their supporting forces overseas, will be in action. If the Army is to be deficient of 63,000 men as estimated at this vital stage, when the whole of its effective operational strength is employed in operations at one time (which is the maximum effort the Army has been called upon to undertake during the war), then the total force fighting the enemy cannot be adequately supported throughout these operations. The situation is indeed very grave ...

If the further reduction of 40,000 is decided upon, I have no alternative but to advise the Government to inform General MacArthur that the Australian Army cannot be maintained at the strength allotted and that it will be necessary to reduce the expeditionary force from one army corps of two divisions and essential service elements to one division. This will bring the Australian expeditionary force to approximately the same dimensions as that of New Zealand.⁵⁷

Curtin replied that so far no direction that an additional 40,000 be released had been given.

The decision was not considered until 9 February 1945 when the War Cabinet requested Curtin to seek MacArthur's advice on the employment of Australian forces.⁵⁸ After MacArthur advised that his plans contemplated the use of all the Australian forces assigned to his

57. Letter, Blamey to Curtin, 27 October 1944. *loc.cit.*

58. War Cabinet Minute, 4044, Canberra, 9 February 1945.

command,⁵⁹ the War Cabinet agreed that no further steps should be taken to reduce the operational strength of the army until the next phase of operations had ended.⁶⁰ The details of the exchange of letters between Curtin and MacArthur in February and March 1945 are dealt with in another context in Chapter Ten, but the important point is that while the government seemed loath to accept the advice of its own military advisers, it was willing to accept MacArthur's advice.

The difficulties faced by Blamey are exemplified by his argument with the Acting Minister for the Army, Senator J.M. Fraser, at the end of 1944 and early 1945 over the retention of the headquarters of the Second Australian Army.⁶¹ In retrospect it seems that Blamey erred in retaining the headquarters into 1945; its retention provided ammunition for his political opponents and the staff officers needed as a reserve for the operational headquarters could have been held in other headquarters. Nevertheless, in a draft of a letter which was not sent to Fraser, Blamey summed up his feelings about the matter.

I am, personally, more concerned than any other individual, by 'man-power' considerations in relation to the Australian Army as a whole, more particularly as the 'man-power' authorities are not, and have not for some time past, fulfilled the Army 'intake' allocation approved by the Government.

In this matter, my primary consideration is to maintain the fighting efficiency of the operational forces; and in order to maintain that efficiency, I impose economy in 'personnel' in other parts of the Land Forces including the Second Australian Army, in which I am at present making reductions.

I would suggest that, as I am charged with the general responsibility and as I have a measure of

59. Letter, MacArthur to Curtin, 5 March 1945, Blamey Papers 23.11 and Sutherland Papers, Correspondence with Australian Government, CRS A 2671, item 55/1945. The Blamey Papers file includes the Defence Committee report on the proposal to release a further 50,000 men.

60. War Cabinet Minute 4116, Canberra, 20 March 1945, CRS A 2671, item 115/1945.

61. For an account of the dispute see Long, *The Final Campaigns*, Appendix 2.

Army knowledge and experience my advice in this matter is worthy of mature consideration and adoption.⁶²

That Blamey should have contemplated such a letter in January 1945 is a telling commentary on the state to which his relations with the government had deteriorated during the previous six months.

62. Draft letter, Blamey to Fraser, mid January 1945, AWM 721/12/39.

Directive to MacArthur

30 March 1942

DIRECTIVE TO THE SUPREME COMMANDER IN THE
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA
(CCS 57/1)BY AGREEMENT AMONG THE GOVERNMENTS OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, UNITED
KINGDOM, AND THE UNITED STATES.

1. The SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA has been constituted as defined in Annex One. Definitions of other areas of the PACIFIC Theater are as shown therein.
2. You are designated as the Supreme Commander of the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC Area, and of all armed forces which the governments concerned have assigned, or may assign to this area.
3. As Supreme Commander you are not eligible to command directly any national force.
4. In consonance with the basic strategic policy of the governments concerned your operations will be designed to accomplish the following:
 - a. Hold the key military regions of Australia as bases for future offensive action against Japan, and in order to check the Japanese conquest of the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA.
 - b. Check the enemy advance toward Australia and its essential lines of communication by the destruction of enemy combatant, troop, and supply ships, aircraft, and bases in Eastern Malaysia and the New Guinea-Bismarck-Solomon Islands Region.
 - c. Exert economic pressure on the enemy by destroying vessels transporting raw materials from the recently conquered territories to Japan.
 - d. Maintain our position in the Philippine Islands.
 - e. Protect land, sea, and air communications within the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC Area, and its close approaches.
 - f. Route shipping in the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC Area.
 - g. Support the operations of friendly forces in the PACIFIC OCEAN Area and in the INDIAN Theater.
 - h. Prepare to take the offensive.
5. You will not be responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under your command, but you are authorized to direct and coordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials.
6. You are authorized to control the issue of all communiques concerning the forces under your command.
7. When task forces of your command operate outside the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC Area, coordination with forces assigned to the areas in which operating will be effected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the Combined Chiefs of Staff, as appropriate.
8. Commanders of all armed forces within your Area will be immediately informed by their respective governments that, from a date to be notified, all orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with this directive will be considered by such commanders as emanating from their respective governments.
9. Your staff will include officers assigned by the respective governments concerned, based upon requests made directly to the

national commanders of the various forces in your Area.

10. The governments concerned will exercise direction of operations in the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC Area as follows:

a. The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction over grand strategic policy and over such related factors as are necessary for proper implementation, including the allocation of forces and war materials.

b. The Joint U.S. Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to operational strategy. The Chief of Staff, U.S. Army will act as the Executive Agency for the Joint U.S. Chiefs of Staff. All instructions to you will be issued by or through him.

ANNEX ONE

DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN INDIAN THEATER AND PACIFIC THEATER

From CAPE KAMI in the LUICHOW PENINSULA around the coast of the TONKIN GULF, INDO-CHINA, THAILAND, and MALAYA to SINGAPORE: from SINGAPORE south to the north coast of SUMATRA, thence around the east coast of SUMATRA (leaving the SUNDA STRAIT to the eastward of the line) to a point on the coast of SUMATRA at Longitude 104° East, thence south to Latitude 08° South, thence southeasterly towards ONSLOW, AUSTRALIA, and on reaching Longitude 110° East, due south along that meridian. The PACIFIC THEATER extends eastward of this dividing line to the continents of NORTH and SOUTH AMERICA.

DEFINITION OF SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA

The westerly boundary of the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC Area is the westerly boundary of the PACIFIC Theater, the Area including necessary naval and air operational areas off the West Coast of Australia. The north and east boundaries of the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC Area run as follows: From CAPE KAMI (LUICHOW PENINSULA) south to Latitude 20° North; thence east to Longitude 130° East; thence south to the Equator; thence east to Longitude 165° East; south to Latitude 10° South; southwesterly to Latitude 17° South, Longitude 160° East; thence south.

DEFINITION OF SOUTHEAST PACIFIC AREA

From the MEXICAN-GUATEMALA western boundary southwesterly to Latitude 11° North, Longitude 110° West; thence south.

DEFINITION OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN AREA

The PACIFIC OCEAN Area includes all of the PACIFIC Theater not included in the SOUTHWEST and SOUTHEAST PACIFIC Areas, and is subdivided into the:

NORTH PACIFIC AREA, North of Latitude 42° North;

CENTRAL PACIFIC AREA, between the Equator and Latitude 42° North;

SOUTH PACIFIC AREA, South of the Equator.

Appendix 10

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF DIRECTIVE:
OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST
PACIFIC AREAS DURING 1943, 28 MARCH 1943
(JCS 238/5/D)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff directive communicated in COMINCH dispatch 022100 of July 1942 is cancelled and the following directive is substituted therefor.
2. Command.
 - a. The operations outlined in this directive will be conducted under the direction of the Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area.
 - b. Operations in the Solomon Islands will be under the direct command of the Commander, SOPAC Area, operating under general directives of the Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area.
 - c. Units of the Pacific Ocean Area, other than those assigned by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to task forces engaged in these operations, will remain under the control of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area (CINCPAC).
3. Forces will be allocated for these operations as determined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
4. Tasks.
 - a. Establish airfields on Kiriwina and Woodlark Islands.
 - b. Seize Lae-Salamaua-Finschhafen-Madang Area and occupy Western New Britain.
 - c. Seize and occupy Solomon Islands to include the southern portion of Bougainville.
5. Purposes. To inflict losses on Japanese forces, to deny these areas to Japan, to contain Japanese forces in the Pacific Theater by maintaining the initiative, and to prepare for ultimate seizure of Bismarck Archipelago.
6. Plans. Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area, will submit general plans including composition of task forces, sequence and timing of major offensive operations to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[From: Morton, *op.cit.*, Appendix K.]

Appendix 11

Curtin's Memorandum to the Combined Chiefs of Staff,
2 June 1944

THE AUSTRALIAN WAR EFFORT
MEMORANDUM BY THE PRIME MINISTER

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to state the broad position confronting the Commonwealth Government in regard to the nature and extent of the Australian war effort. This effort is, of course, primarily based on the strategical plan in the South West Pacific area which is a part of the general scheme for the defeat of Japan.

2. Australia, in addition to maintaining Forces of considerable strength in the South West Pacific area, as well as continuing its part in the Empire Air scheme and manning certain ships for the Royal Navy, has accepted responsibilities for the provision of works, supplies and services for the American Forces as well as its own. It has also to maintain the civil economy on certain austerity standards, and to meet commitments for the supply of foodstuffs to the United Kingdom to assist in the maintenance of the rations of the British people.

3. The following was the distribution of Australian manpower in December, 1943:

	<u>Per cent</u>
Navy, Army and Air Force	26
Munitions industries	14.7
Other essential industries	<u>30.7</u>
Total for direct war activities	71.4
Less essential industries	21.7
Other	<u>6.9</u>
	100.0

An indication of the degree to which the national effort has been concentrated on direct war activities is to be obtained from a comparison between the figures for the United Kingdom and Australia. In the case of the United Kingdom 75.1 per cent of its manpower is absorbed in direct war activities; the figure for Australia is 71.4 per cent.

4. As Australia does not possess the manpower and material resources to meet all the demands being made upon it, I discussed our problem with the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific area in December, 1943. General MacArthur fully agreed with the action contemplated by the Government to provide for the following needs:

(a) The additional manpower necessary to sustain the level of activity in a number of basic industries on which the Australian direct military effort ultimately depends (transport, power, timber, minerals, food, clothing, etc.). In order to ensure a proper balance between the direct military programme and its industrial basis.

(b) Certain further requirements of manpower for the production of food for Britain, and of food and general supplies for the rapidly growing Allied Forces in the Pacific Areas.

5. While in London I discussed with Mr. Churchill the question of the additional demands likely to be made on Australia when British Forces are brought into the war against Japan. I agreed to a proposal by Mr. Churchill that British Staff Officers should be integrated into the Australian Staffs for the preparation of a report on the potentialities of Australia as a base. Mr. Churchill emphasized that this study will be made without any commitment on the part of the United Kingdom Government that the forces will be based on Australia, the latter aspect being reserved for later decision in the light of the military position when the forces become available.

6. Nevertheless, it is essential that the Commonwealth Government should have before it some broad ideas to govern its policy in regard to the Australian war effort. Australia can only maintain additional forces by adjusting her war effort in some other direction. The Government will be quite prepared to do this provided the Australian military effort is not permitted to fall below a certain point. Furthermore it is presumed that if strategical considerations indicate that additional forces should be sent to Australia, the resources of the United Nations will be capable of making good deficiencies which cannot be supplied by the Commonwealth.

7. Though a decision on the basing of British Forces on Australia is not possible at present, I pointed out to Mr. Churchill that the Australian Government would like a general view on the desirability of Australia proceeding with the measures necessary for supply and maintenance, in view of the fact that the resources can be absorbed in other directions in the war effort of the United Nations. A precise assessment of what Australia is capable of doing can then be worked out. The decision as to the nature and extent of its war effort is of course a matter for the Australian Government.

8. The following conclusions were reached by Mr. Churchill and myself:

(i) The Australian war effort should be on the following basis:

- (a) the maintenance of six divisions for active operations.
- (b) the maintenance of the Royal Australian Navy at its present strength plus additions arising from the Australian naval construction programme.
- (c) the maintenance of the Royal Australian Air Force at the strength of 53 squadrons to be achieved under the present programme by December, 1944.

This excludes:

- 3 R.A.F. squadrons in Australia
- 2 N.E.I. squadrons in Australia
- 2 Permanent R.A.A.F. squadrons serving overseas
- R.A.A.F. E.A.T.S. squadrons and personnel serving overseas

- (d) food for Great Britain (including India) to be exported on the 1944 scale.

- (ii) In the light of the strengths laid down for the Forces, the Commonwealth Government will review the extent and nature of other aspects of the Australian war effort. This will enable it to assess what can be done for the supply and maintenance of British Forces which may be based on Australia, in addition to the present similar commitments for the United States Forces. As demands will exist somewhere for supplies that could be produced, it may be feasible to go ahead with increased production. For example, if increases in food production should not be required for United Kingdom forces, they could be sent to the United Kingdom or the ceilings at present imposed on the United States Forces could be raised to some degree.

Mr. Churchill emphasised that agreement to this action does not imply any commitment or the adoption of any specific plan for the basing of British Forces on Australia.

9. As Australia is in a sphere of American strategic responsibility, Mr. Churchill agreed that I should discuss the matter in Washington.

2nd June, 1944

Prime Minister

[RG 4, MacArthur Memorial.]

Letter, Blamey to Chifley, 18 May, 1945

My Dear Acting Prime Minister,

1. With reference to your letter of 7th May, 1945, I find it necessary to deal with the attachment headed 'Observations of Acting Minister for the Army on Operations in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands' as a separate subject and at some length.

The Acting Minister for the Army, in his opening paragraph, correctly states the position in regard to the Japanese as far as our information goes at the opening of this campaign.

2. The Acting Minister then deals with his conception of modern warfare against such an enemy and states that this is: "That a concerted attack should be made on his defensive positions and his bases, firstly by sea and air concurrently to blast him from these strongholds, weaken his capacity to hold these positions, and destroy his morale so that an attack by land in force will be effective." This is an excellent conception as a conception but, like all general conceptions, it is an over-simplification when applied to particular and varying cases.

Here we have to deal with operations in three different theatres, each of which has its own peculiar conditions, and the correct decision can only be made by examining each set of conditions separately.

NEW GUINEA

3. Firstly the Acting Minister discusses the New Guinea operations, where he says sea attack was almost absent, while air attacks seemed to be subsidiary to land attack in penetrating enemy positions.

In the operations in New Guinea referred to, the enemy held the sea board in limited strength with small detachments extending over 100 miles, the main strength being concentrated at Wewak. At the same time he had distributed a very large proportion of his force in a area beyond the Torricelli Mountains, far from the sea, where he had developed considerable self-sufficiency and maintained his forces to a considerable extent on the natives' local food supply.

The Australian forces under consideration were placed in Aitape, over 100 miles from the enemy's main base, by orders of the Supreme Commander, GHQ, to relieve American forces located there. The latter had performed an inactive role over a long period. This long period of inaction enabled the enemy to develop his self-sufficiency to a very considerable degree and allowed him to organise supply by submarine of essential military stores such as medical supplies. He was well provided with most of the other essentials for the maintenance of his forces. His equipment for operations generally was on a low scale.

4. As to the air forces. More than adequate air forces for this operation were available. At Nadzab the Combined Replacement Training Centre of the Americans gave a large reserve of air force, which they were very happy to use for these operations, and which were freely used.

As against this, the enemy had practically no air forces at all. As the country in which the operations took place was of a very close nature, it was impossible for our air force to locate proper targets, save when these were disclosed by the action of ground forces.

As these were opened up by ground forces action, the close-set co-operation was maintained between the air and ground operations.

5. The location of our ground forces at Aitape naturally drew a considerable proportion of the remainder of the enemy's forces towards our advance, but he still maintained intact his main base at Wewak. The position therefore was that, while the enemy's main base remained at Wewak, a very considerable portion of his force was inland and the remainder was distributed in depth along the coast in opposition to our troops.

The operations therefore demanded first an inland operation, secondly an operation to clear the enemy in our immediate front and thirdly an operation to capture his main base. The plan determined upon was to advance on two parallel axes, one along the coast and one along the southern side of the Torricellis.

Had it been possible to commence the operation de novo, I would naturally have preferred to have made the landing in force by a combined sea, land and air operation in the vicinity of Wewak and seize the main base, and from there pursue the campaign inland and along the coast. But in view of the position where we were forced to place our forces and, as no naval force or landing craft could be spared at that stage, it was determined, with the full knowledge and concurrence of the Supreme Commander, that the plan which was put into operation was the best.

6. When the operations had reached such a stage that an attack could be made on the main base, the Supreme Commander undertook to make available, for a short period, sufficient naval support and landing craft to ensure an effective landing. This has recently taken place.

I have not the least doubt, nor have any of my commanders, that this was the best plan of operations, and I think we may reasonably assert that its overwhelming success, carried out at a maximum cost of lives to the enemy and the minimum cost to ourselves, more than justifies the plan and the decision.

BOUGAINVILLE

7. The second case, covered by the Acting Minister's generalisations, however, presented a completely different problem. This was Bougainville.

Here again our troops were placed at Torokina, in relief of the Americans, and I had no freedom of action to determine the base from which operations should take place. The Acting Minister's broad conceptions of war when applied to the circumstances of this case also fall down.

Except for the perimeter of Torokina, the enemy held the whole of Bougainville. Here he was able to harass as he pleased the garrison

within the perimeter area. He was also able to develop a high degree of self-sufficiency, both in the north and the south.

8. It would have been possible, given the means, to have made landing operations either in the north or the south, but a prime function, imposed upon me, was the protection of the airfields at Torokina. I would therefore have been obliged to divide my force into two parts had the broad conception of the Minister been carried out, and a landing made either in the north or the south. This would have allowed the enemy to bring practically all his forces into one concentration and to have attacked with all his strength on my weaker position, whichever it may have been; and I would therefore have broken one of the prime rules of strategy which is to concentrate the maximum forces under command for battle, while ensuring the dispersion of the enemy. The enemy was kept dispersed and we attacked as best suited us with our whole force in hand.

9. In regard to the Acting Minister's general conception, the remarks applied to the New Guinea operation with reference to air activities, apply equally to Bougainville. Ample air forces were available but they could not be used at first to the full, because of lack of definite targets. When these were disclosed by the operations of the ground forces a very great increase and improvement took place.

10. In regard to naval forces, the Supreme Commander was not prepared to make these available, owing to his other requirements, and is not even yet prepared to do so, so that there seems still to be an indefinite period before the naval forces, essential to a landing, can be made available in this area. Moreover, no definite enemy stronghold exists on the coast, the seizure of which would give any decisive gains. the enemy's self-sufficiency has been developed inland and, no matter where a landing took place, the same conditions of having to penetrate through jungle areas would be found to exist.

11. The plan adopted to locate the enemy by patrols and find the area of his strength has been carried out steadily. The patrols are followed up by light detachments and these are of sufficient strength to deal with him as he may be met. The success of this method is already obvious. Except for a small portion in the extreme north, the whole of the north-western area has been cleared.

The advance in the south is proceeding with reasonable prudence, and in no portion so far have our forces which engaged the enemy been greater than a company of infantry, plus a few supporting tanks and supporting artillery.

Targets have been steadily uncovered for the air force and there has been the closest and happiest co-operation between the ground and air forces. In fact, the air force, both in New Guinea and Bougainville, have expressed their great satisfaction at being provided with definite tasks instead of the vague bombing of target areas which they had been carrying out previously.

12. The continued success of the operations, where only small forces are engaged on each occasion and where the bulk of the troops can be retained in hand and their morale and health steadily maintained by a

limited amount of active operations, and an abundance of recreation and amenities, enable us to maintain a very low scale of sickness. The waste of manpower has been remarkably small. In action the careful control of operations has yielded an immense margin of destruction of the enemy personnel over our own losses. These are contained in a general table appended to this.

NEW BRITAIN

13. The third case is the case of New Britain.

Here effective co-operation upon land, sea and air has been possible, within the small limits required, owing to the fact that the whole of the enemy installations were coastal. It was therefore possible to confine land operations to a minimum.

GENERAL

14. I now come to the Minister's view that "such battle operations should not have been undertaken, except under necessity, until complete fighting, mechanical engineering, and small craft equipment, which was necessary for the success of these operations with a minimum casualty rate, had been transported to the operational bases and were available for use."

I regret I completely disagree with this view. Action of this kind would have been totally unjustified. In dealing with the enemy it is a completely new theory that he should not be brought to battle and destroyed as soon as possible, provided the means for that destruction are adequate. I must reject any other theory of war and any commander, who is prepared to remain with superior forces, equipped to a degree greatly superior to that of the enemy, and who does not bring him to battle rapidly, is deserving of censure.

The results of such an attitude would be to prolong the campaign unduly, to steadily reduce the morale of the force under command with the attendant discontent on the part of the troops, to develop in them a feeling of inferiority to the enemy, and to build up the enemy's morale by failure to bring him to action, when he knows of his inferiority in these matters.

It is the experience of all war that victories can only be gained by seizing the initiative and forcing the enemy to conform to one's own action.

15. From the very beginning in Bougainville, the Australian equipment was immensely superior to that of the Japanese. It was completely adequate to its task. The inland positions of the enemy and the nature of the jungle covered terrain did not permit the issue to be decided by a landing at any given point by combined sea and land operations.

It is, of course, true that, in the early stages of the campaign, the complete equipment of the later stages was not available. But in these stages the operations were adjusted in accordance with the force, its equipment and armament. In every operation which took place, commencing with patrols, we were superior in every particular, except

on one or two occasions the enemy had an actual superiority in numbers and personnel. Inferiority of his equipment, however, led to his defeat on each of these occasions and we had in hand ample resources which could be, and were, used as and when required.

16. Had the very superior forces of the Americans, whom we relieved, been properly utilised against the inferior enemy forces, there is no question that this campaign would have been completed long before the necessity arose for the Americans to move on and be relieved by the Australians. The total cost of Australian lives, equipment and money would have been saved had this been done.

The Minister appears to consider now that we should follow the same lines as the Americans, which would lead to a steady wastage of personnel and still leave, at some unknown future date, the task of eliminating the Japanese and liberating the natives for whom we are responsible. This comment also applies to operations in the Wewak area.

17. I have no hesitation in claiming that the historian of the future will say that our action was completely correct and, in the long run, by far the most economical in every way. The cost of the First Australian Army, including all troops in these various operational spheres, is approximately £200,000 per diem. The year lost by the Americans in action may therefore be regarded as costing somewhere in the vicinity of £72,000,000. These, of course, are broad figures.

There has definitely been a greater cost in human life, owing to the long period over which these operations have dragged out, both in sickness and casualties, than there would have been if the enemy had been dealt with promptly when he was first shaken by the American landings and, in the words of the Acting Minister, not given "an opportunity to reform his forces time and time again."

18. With regard to the Minister's note as to advice tendered him by members of the 6th Division, I have shown, and I think it has been amply proved, that equipment was available, including flame throwers, as and when they could be used.

Beyond that I have no comment to make, except to say that, regarding the theories put forward by the Minister dealing with the method of conduct of the war, he was attended on his visit by the Chief of the General Staff, who is, under my direction, the Government's Chief Adviser on military affairs, and it is regretted that so competent and qualified an officer should not have been called into discussion on such purely military matters before the Minister committed himself to these very erroneous views and comments.

NATIVE TROOPS

19. I make one further reference, viz to the question of native battalions. It would appear that the Minister's unknown adviser of the 6th Division is completely unaware of the methods and policy in regard to these, although he has heard probably that native battalions were being formed.

With a view to utilising the skill of the natives as bushmen to the maximum, natives were especially enrolled in a guerilla force by the AIB and a force developed which is now known as 'M' Special Unit, working with ANGAU personnel. These are the feelers, behind which our moves take place. Behind these are the more highly trained native infantry covering our advances.

When I took over in New Guinea, one Papuan Infantry Battalion was in existence. It had done very good work but was in a low condition, due to a somewhat long period of fighting in small detachments and separation from its base. I have since formed the Pacific Islands Regiment, which is now developed to such an extent that we have been enabled recently to place one full battalion in New Britain, one full battalion with the 6th Division and one full battalion at Bougainville. These work behind the 'M' Special Unit personnel as advanced patrols and scouts, covering our advances.

A fourth battalion is in course of organisation and a fifth battalion has been authorised. It is proposed to complete the organisation by forming a sixth battalion.

20. It is intended that the future role of these units, when the main enemy forces have been broken and disorganised, will be to pursue the broken remnants inland and gradually to destroy them both by their own action, and by developing partisan activity on the part of the natives under their direction in these territories.

21. I regret the length of this paper, but consider it necessary to traverse the comments of the Acting Minister at some length in order to remove such misconceptions as may exist. I regret exceedingly that the Minister did not take the advantage of discussing the purely military problems with the Chief of the General Staff, who accompanied him, as the latter was fully conversant with all the considerations affecting the development of operations.

Yours sincerely,

General
Commander-in-Chief
AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

[Berryman Papers, C-in-C's letters, file No.1. Enclosed with the letter was Blamey's appreciation of the same date which is reproduced as Appendix 3 to Long, *The Final Campaigns*.]

Appendix 13The MacArthur/Northcott AgreementGENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS

18 December 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:

Tentative arrangements covering establishment of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan have been affected between Staff Conferees of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and the British Commonwealth Force as enumerated below. These arrangements have been concluded on a staff level to facilitate establishment of the Force in Japan when directed. It is understood that they are subject to agreement between the Governments concerned and in no way constitute commitments of the parties to specific courses of action. The substance of these arrangements is being communicated by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to the United States Government, and by the GOC, British Commonwealth Force, to the Australian Government, for appropriate action.

1. COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS:a. Mission:

The British Commonwealth Force will constitute a component of occupation forces in Japan under the supreme command of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. It will be charged with the normal military duties of a force of its size and composition, including military control of Hiroshima Prefecture and such other ground and air areas as may be allocated to it for this purpose, demilitarization and disposition of Japanese installations and armaments within such

ground areas and measures necessary for the security of the Force. These areas do not constitute a national zone. It will accomplish such ground and air patrol and surveillance missions within allocated areas as may be directed. Military Government functions within areas allocated to the British Commonwealth Force will be conducted by U.S. agencies as directed by SCAP. Relationships of the British Commonwealth Force with the Japanese and routine security functions pertaining primarily to Eighth Army operations as a whole, will be prescribed by the CG, Eighth Army. The British Commonwealth Force will conduct such military operations outside normally allocated areas as may be directed to the CG, Eighth Army for Ground Forces and the CG, Fifth Air Force for Air Forces.

b. Command Organization:

SCAP will assign ground forces of the British Commonwealth Force to operational control of the CG, Eighth U.S. Army. SCAP will assign operational control of the air component of the British Commonwealth Force to the CG, PACUSA. Such air component will function as a separate air command under the Fifth Air Force. SCAP will assign operational control of Royal Naval Port Party, British Commonwealth Force, to the U.S Naval Commander exercising jurisdiction over Japanese ports, for operation of the port of Kure. Such assignments to operational control will become effective upon arrival of the Forces concerned at Japanese ports of debarkation. Ground Forces of the British Commonwealth Force will function as a corps of two divisions under the command of the GOC, British Commonwealth Forces as Corps Commander. The Corps will be composed of one British-Indian Division of two brigade groups with supporting troops, and an Anzac Division of one brigade and one brigade group with supporting troops. Logistic organization of the British Commonwealth Force will be as prescribed

by the Commander thereof. GOC, British Commonwealth Force will remain responsible for the maintenance and administration of the British Commonwealth Force as a whole.

c. Command and Administrative Channels:

(1) GOC, British Commonwealth Force will have the right of direct access to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for matters of major policy affecting the operational capabilities of the Force.

(2) GOC, British Commonwealth Force will retain the right of direct communication with the British Commonwealth Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia on administrative matters affecting the Force.

(3) It is understood that for matters of governmental concern affecting the policy and operations of the British Commonwealth Force, the channel of communication lies from the Australian Government as representative of the British Commonwealth of Nations through the United States Government and the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

(4) In administrative matters pertaining to relations with United States Forces or with the Japanese, the GOC, British Commonwealth Force will be governed by policies prescribed by Commanders exercising operational control. Such policies will in general conform to those prescribed for United States Forces. In case of conflict between such administrative instructions received from the CG, Eighth Army and the CG, PACUSA (or his designated representative), the matter will be referred to GHQ SCAP for decision.

d. Liaison:

GOC, British Commonwealth Force is authorized to exchange liaison officers by mutual arrangement with CG's, I Corps and Fifth Air Force. Provisions for liaison between British

Commonwealth Force and Japanese Central Liaison Committees in areas occupied, are subject to future arrangements between British Commonwealth Force Headquarters and CG, Eighth Army. Liaison between British Commonwealth Force Headquarters and GHQ, SCAP on Military Government matters will be conducted through the Eighth Army. Liaison between British Commonwealth Force and U.S. Naval authorities will be conducted through Naval Port Director of the port or ports concerned for local matters pertaining thereto. Liaison with U.S. Naval authorities on all other matters will be conducted through GHQ, SCAP.

2. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

a. The British Commonwealth Force will be allocating Hiroshima Prefecture for exercise of the functions and responsibilities enumerated in sub-paragraph 1a above.

b. If proven necessary by reconnaissance, the British Commonwealth Force may be allocated an additional area or areas by SCAP for air base purposes. Within such areas, British Commonwealth Force will exercise the security and surveillance functions and responsibilities prescribed for Hiroshima Prefecture, subject to local modification at the direction of CG, Eighth Army.

3. FORCES:

a. It is understood that the total strength of the British Commonwealth Force will be determined by inter-governmental decision. It is also understood that the British Commonwealth Force plans to maintain its basic organization as a Corps of two divisions of two brigades each, with suitable air and (air and ground) service supporting elements within the strength eventually determined. Major unit strength will be adjusted to meet the total strength determined by inter-governmental decision. Composition and strength of the air component of the Force is also subject to inter-governmental decision.

b. It is understood that the British Commonwealth Force may be withdrawn wholly or in part upon agreement between the Governments of the United States and Australia or upon six months notice by either party. It is also understood that reductions will be made in the British Commonwealth Force from time to time in conformity with progressive reductions in United States Occupation Forces in Japan.

c. GOC, British Commonwealth Force will provide SCAP with troop lists including units strengths, upon final determination of the composition of the force.

d. For planning purposes, the GOC, British Commonwealth Force has submitted tentative designation of units of the Force, current location and availability for arrival in Japan as follows:

UNIT AND LOCATION

Force Headquarters, Australia
 Headquarters Anzac Division, Australia
 34th Aust. Bde, Morotai
 New Zealand Bde, Italy
 British Indian Division, Bombay
 (Hq & 2 bdes)
 Force Troops, Australia and SEAC
 RAAF, Labuan (Borneo)
 3 Sqdns Mustangs
 Hq Staff Planes (2) & Det (Australia)
 RNZAF, New Zealand
 1 Sqdn F (Spitfires)
 RAF
 2 Sqdns Mosquitos (BR), Madras
 1 Sqdn Spitfires (Ind), Madras
 2 Sqdns Spitfires (BR), Singapore
 1 Sqdn TG (BR), Rangoon
 Com Flt (BR), Madras
 RN Port Party, Singapore
 AF Const Sqdn, Labuan
 Base and Port troops, various locations

TARGET ARRIVAL DATES IN JAPAN

RN Port Party - 28 Jan
 34th Bde - 1 Feb
 AF Const Sqdn - 1 Feb
 Adv Ech Force & Base Troops - 1 Feb
 1st Ser. Air Ground Ech - 1 Feb
 Hq Anzac Div - 23 Feb

TARGET ARRIVAL DATES IN JAPAN (cont'd)

Adv Ech B-I Div - 23 Feb
 Main Body Air Ground Ech - 23 Feb
 Main Body B-I Div - 15 March
 NZ Bde - 23 March

e. (1) It is understood that actual arrival dates of the above units are subject to clearance by SCAP upon evacuation by U.S. forces of areas to be occupied.

(2) Arrangements will be made by PACUSA for staging of air echelons of the Force to Japan via the Philippines and Okinawa, except for RAF Spitfires and airplanes of the New Zealand Squadron, which it is understood will be delivered by water transport.

5. MISCELLANEOUS:

a. Initial arrangements for establishment of British Commonwealth Force in Japan:

(1) The Australian Services Mission in Tokyo will be disbanded and its functions taken over by an Advance Echelon, Headquarters, British Commonwealth Force, made up of Australian Services Mission personnel, augmented by three or four additional officers to be designated by GOC, British Commonwealth Force.

(2) Direct communication between the GOC, British Commonwealth Force, or his authorized representatives, and CG, Eighth Army, CG, PACUSA and CG, Fifth Air Force, for matters pertaining to the establishment and operation of the Force, will be authorized by SCAP upon receipt of authority for entry of the Force from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(3) Pending further instructions, travel of staff officers of the Force Headquarters and of preliminary reconnaissance parties and individuals for inspection of areas and other orientation purposes is authorized subject to current clearance procedures by SCAP.

(4) Quarters, subsistence and transportation of advance parties of the British Commonwealth Force will be provided by the Force.

(5) Preliminary movement of casual airplanes of the British Commonwealth Air Forces to and in Japan for staff purposes will be subject to current clearance procedures by SCAP. Temporary use by such aircraft of U.S. facilities in Japan and en route will be arranged by PACUSA.

b. Signal Communications:

(1) It will not be necessary for the British Commonwealth Force to establish radio communications in Tokyo as SCAP will be able to handle its required traffic until such time as the Commonwealth Force moves into its proposed area. Matter of coordinating the use of codes and ciphers will be worked out by technical representatives of U.S. and British Commonwealth Forces at a later date.

(2) Existing wire facilities used by X Corps will be made available to the British Commonwealth Force.

(3) Courier service in Japan will be continued as presently established by the Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force and will be made available to the British Commonwealth Force.

c. Press Releases:

No press release concerning the British Commonwealth Force will be made pending governmental arrangements for simultaneous announcement in Washington, Tokyo, Canberra, Wellington, New Delhi and London of the formation of the Force. Necessary steps will be taken to insure against premature press reports in this respect.

6. LOGISTICS:

a. The British Commonwealth Force agrees to assume complete logistic responsibility for the support of the Force.

b. Transportation required for the Force will be furnished from British Commonwealth sources. (Rail within Japan excepted.)

c. The British Commonwealth Force will be equipped with tentage.

d. Considerable housing is known to be available in the area to be occupied. Details as to procurement will be worked out by the British Commonwealth Force and Eighth Army based on schedule of withdrawal of U.S. and arrival of Force units.

e. Maintenance of the Force will be furnished by the British Commonwealth Force. Plans provide for 90 days supplies to accompany troops, with ammunition stockages to conform to Eighth Army and PACUSA levels.

f. Inasmuch as strength of British Commonwealth Force is indefinite at this time, tonnages involved in troop and supply movement are undetermined. Preliminary investigation indicates a sufficient port capacity to handle the Force.

g. The British Commonwealth Force indicates that resupply will be from Australia.

h. Intransit and substantial permanent storage warehousing is available in contemplated areas. The British Commonwealth Force will be prepared to provide such additional storage as may be required.

i. Air Base facilities in areas allocated to the British Commonwealth Force for such purposes will be made available to the Force, subject to arrangements for continuation of essential United States functions therein. Additional construction and maintenance becomes the responsibility of the British Commonwealth Force.

j. Upon arrival of its port director personnel the British Commonwealth Force will assume port director functions for the entire port of Kure, under operational control of the U.S. Navy. U.S. personnel will be withdrawn. The Kure Navy Yard will remain under United States control.

k. The control of shipping schedules pertaining to the British Commonwealth Force will be a Force responsibility.

l. Requirements for a minor increase of the British Commonwealth Force Advance Headquarters in the Tokyo Area will be submitted to SCAP.

m. In area of occupation, requirements for office space, officers' billets, enlisted men's billets, warehouse and ammunition storage areas will be procured through the Eighth Army.

n. The British Commonwealth Force desires to secure three airdromes. Decisions on this point will be made after physical inspection of existing facilities in Hiroshima Prefecture and, if deemed essential, in adjacent areas. Inspection of Itami airdrome at Kobe as a possible alternate site is authorized.

o. Bulk petroleum products and packaged aviation lubricants will be furnished by the U.S. on a dollar reimbursement basis while all other packaged petroleum products will be furnished by the British Commonwealth Force. U.S. Forces will deliver bulk products to the water line. The British Commonwealth Force will be responsible for receiving and distributing bulk products. Informal reports indicate that adequate bulk tankage exists in the proposed area of occupation.

p. Local procurement for the British Commonwealth Force Area will be accomplished in conformance with Eighth Army directives.

q. Rail transportation will be procured through normal Eighth Army channels.

r. The British Commonwealth Force agrees to furnish such railway guards as may be required for its own operations.

s. Yen currency will be supplied through the Eighth Army with accounting in accordance with Eighth Army procedures. Current conversion rate on basis of 15 yen to 1 U.S. Dollar will obtain for the British Commonwealth Force.

t. The British Commonwealth Force will be prepared to furnish pay schedules both military and civil, to the Eighth Army when requested.

u. Improvements made to Japanese facilities with U.S. materials will be accepted by the British Commonwealth Force on a dollar reimbursement basis, when such facilities are needed and desired by the British Commonwealth Force.

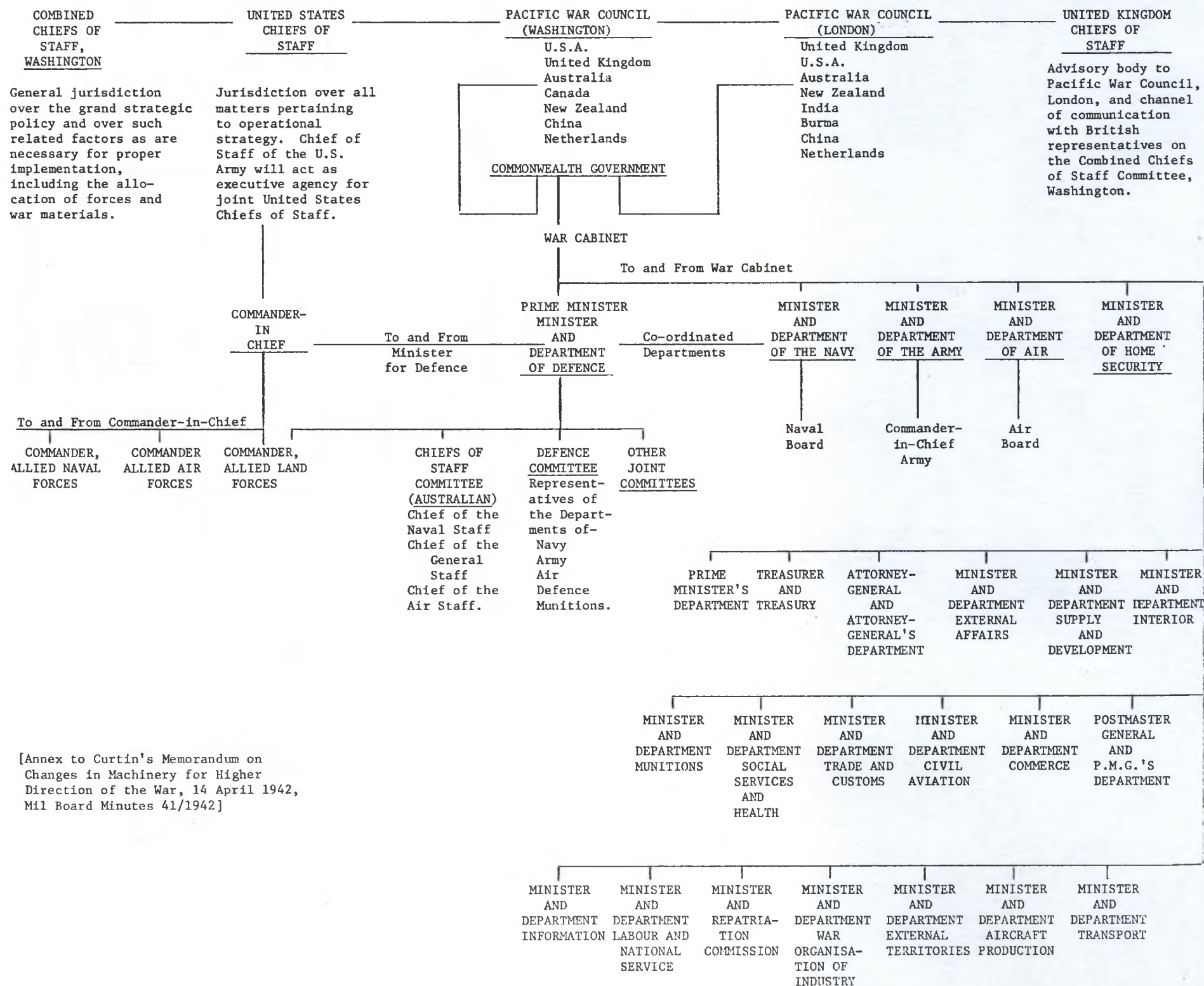
(Signed) J. NORTHCOTT,
Lieutenant General, A.I.F.,
Commanding, British Commonwealth Force.

(Signed) R.J. MARSHALL
Major General, G.S.C.,
Chief of Staff.

Supreme Commander for
the Allied Powers.

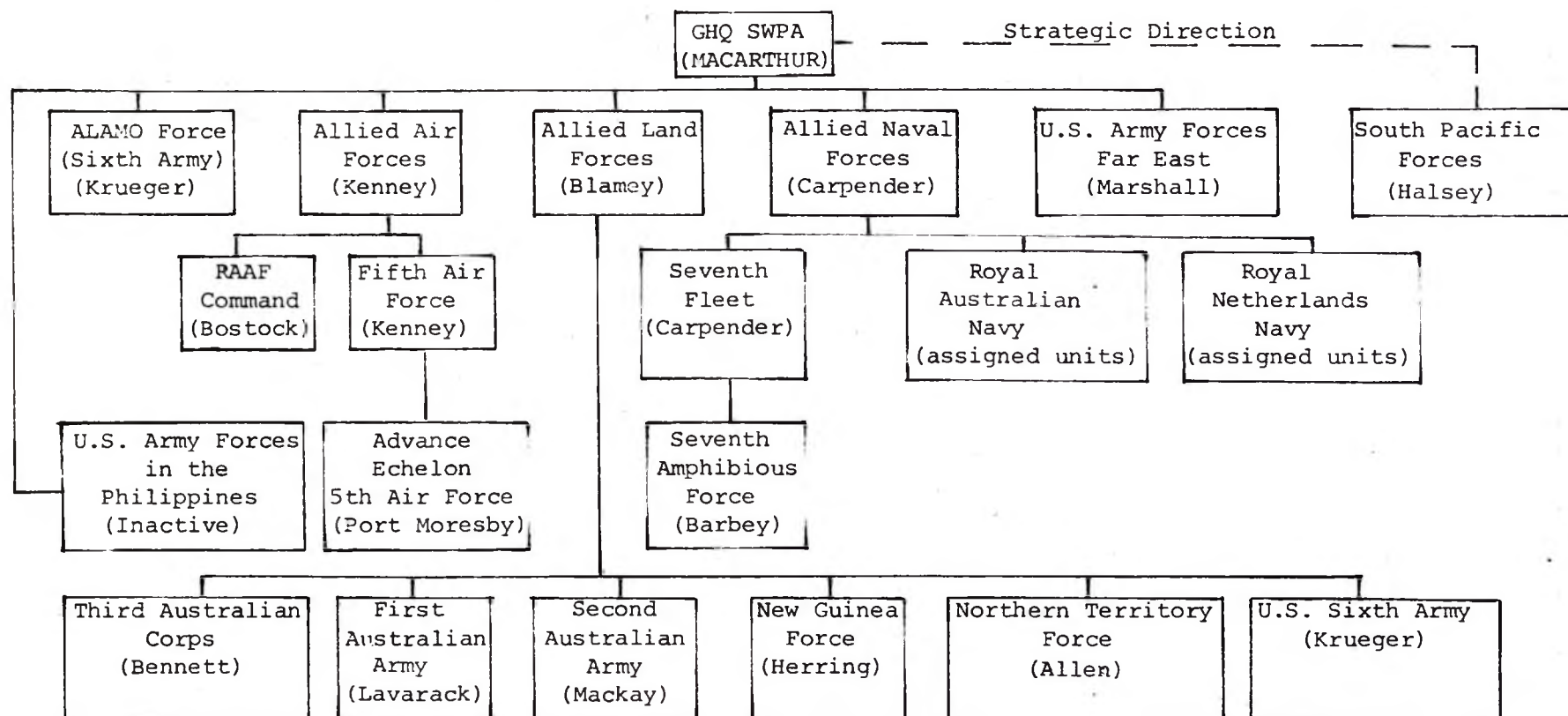
[Appendix A to JCOSA Minute No.22/1945, 24 December 1945 CRS A 816,
item 52/301/223.]

MACHINERY FOR HIGHER DIRECTION IN ITS RELATION TO
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MACHINERY



[Annex to Curtin's Memorandum on Changes in Machinery for Higher Direction of the War, 14 April 1942, Mil Board Minutes 41/1942]

COMMAND ORGANISATION, SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC AREA, JULY 1943

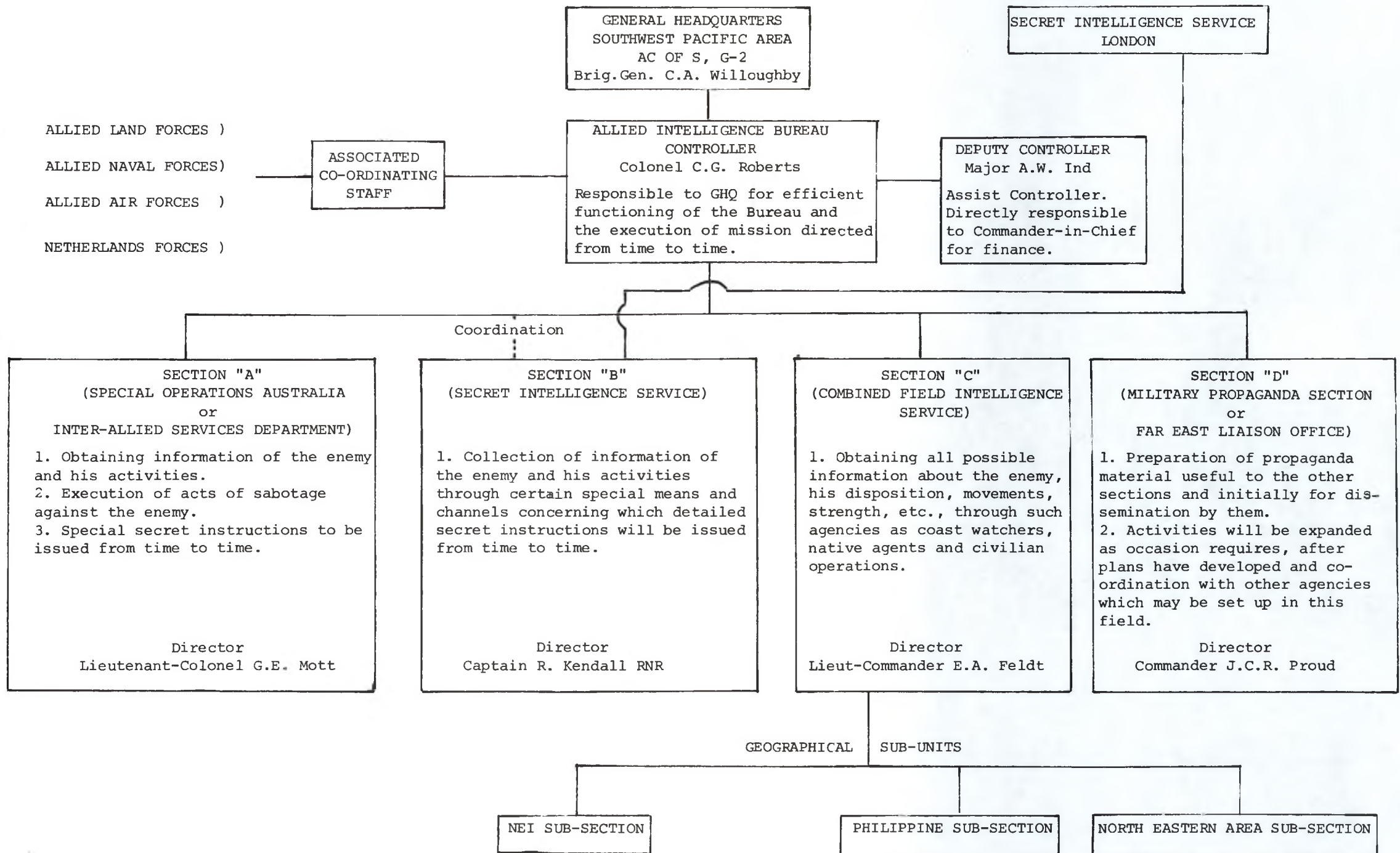


[From, Morton, *op.cit.*, p.409.]

ORGANISATION OF THE AIB

6 JULY 1942

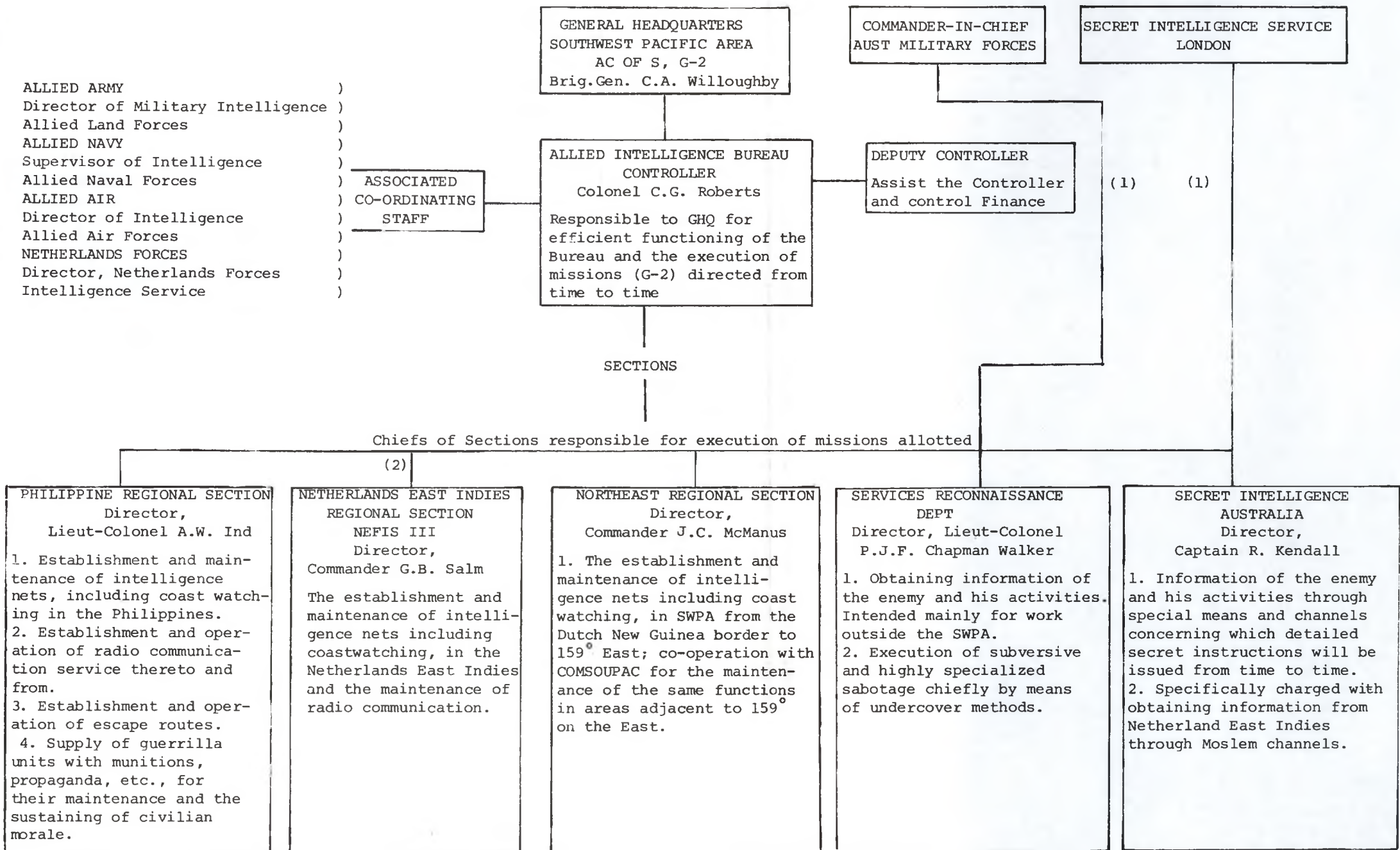
Appendix 16



ORGANISATION OF AIB

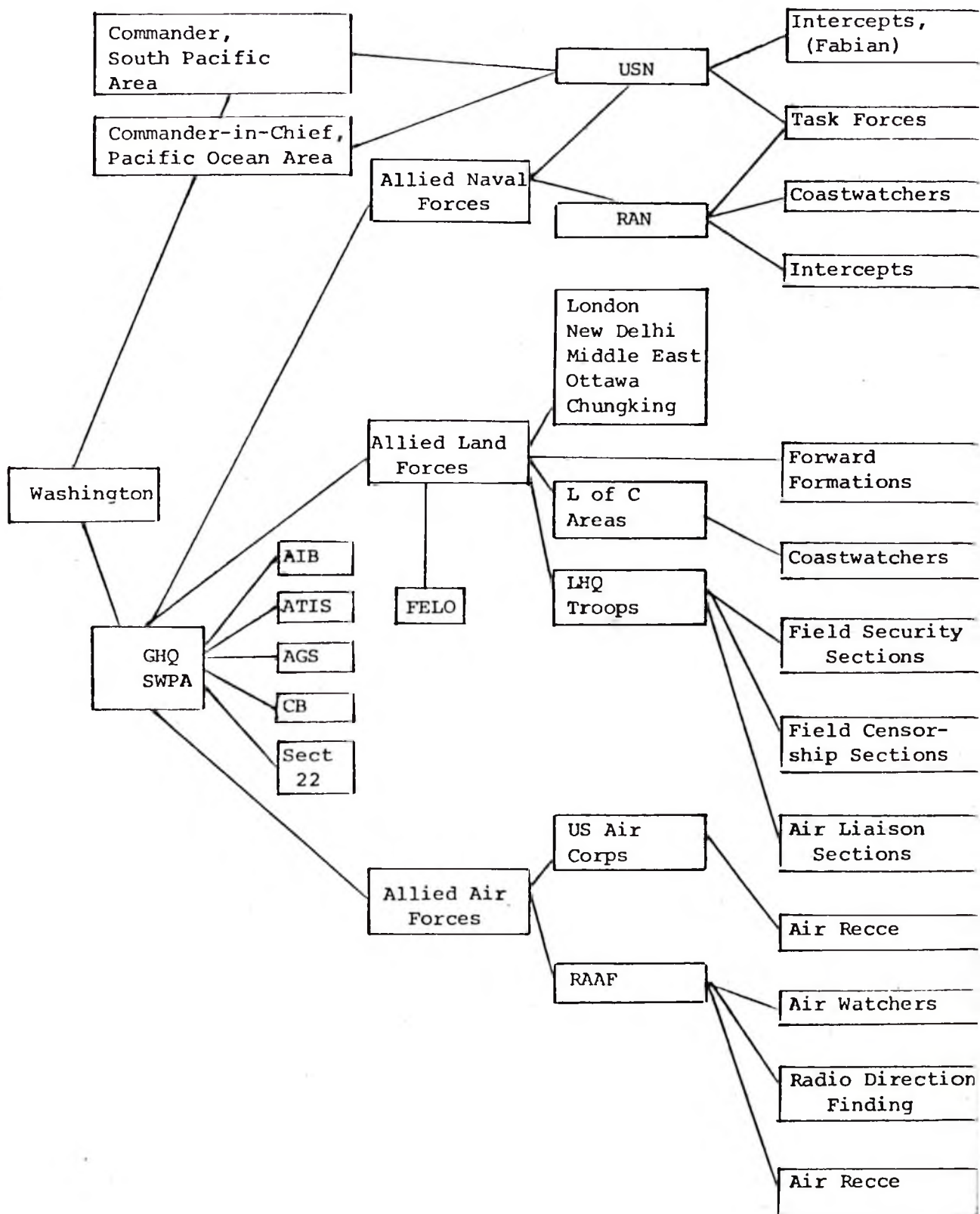
16 APRIL 1943

Appendix 17

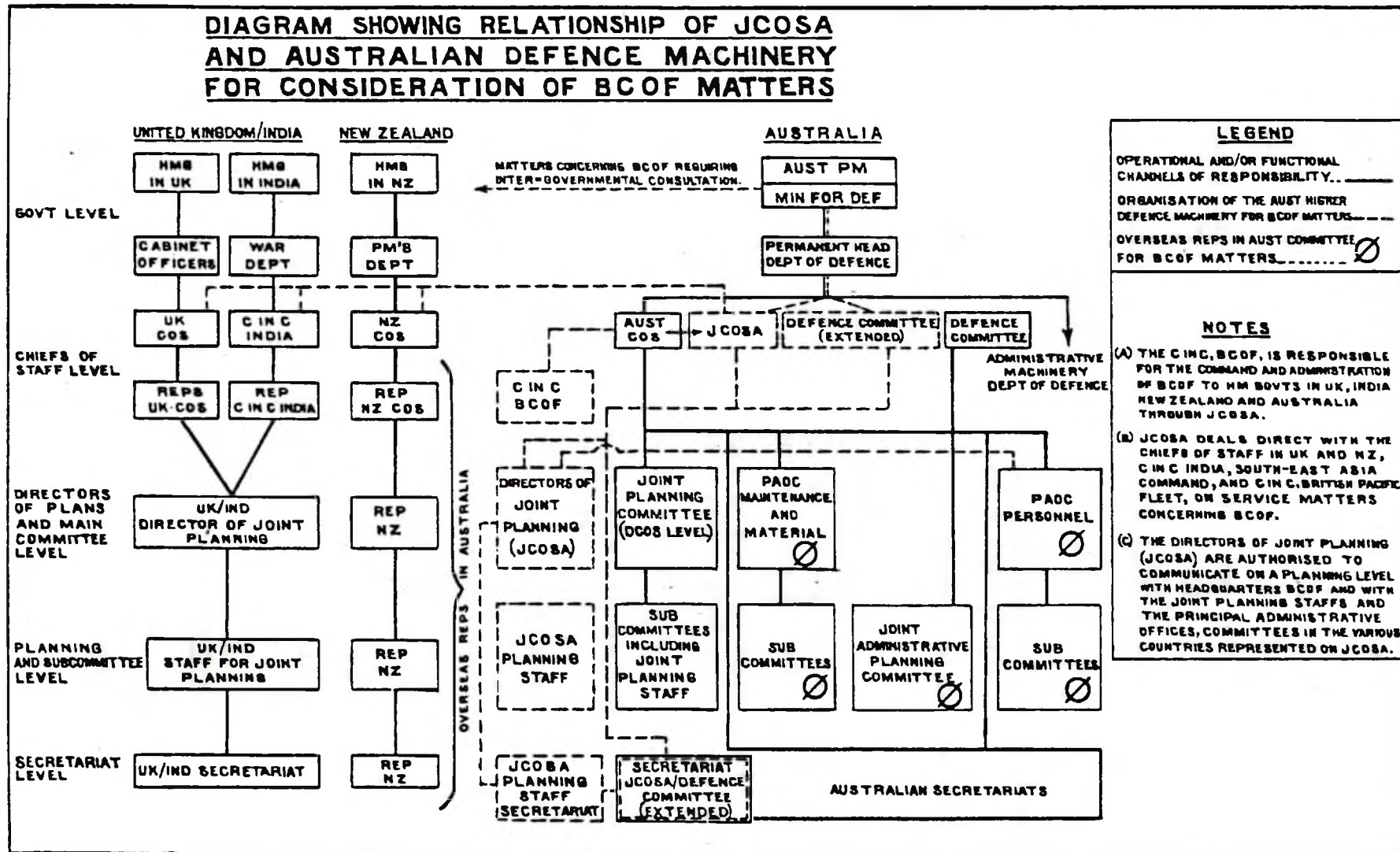


NOTE: All lines indicate operational control of activities *within* SWPA except lines marked (1) which indicate operational control outside SWPA. Line marked (2) indicates control through Director of NEFIS.

ALLIED INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION IN SWPA, MAY 1943



[From: Letter, Brig Rogers to Directors of Military Intelligence, London, India, Middle East, Ottawa, Wellington, 10 May 1943, Adv HQ AMF G Int Sect, War Diary, AWM 1/2/2.]



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Brigadier D.R. Jackson, Canberra, 3 July 1974.

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Brigadier L.C. Lucas, Sydney, 20 February 1975.

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