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GENERAL MARSHALL: THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT

The period covered by my first two Biennial Reports was a time of great danger for the United States. The element on which the security of this nation most depended was time—time to organize our tremendous resources and time to deploy them overseas in a worldwide war. We were given this time through the heroic refusal of the Soviet and British peoples to collapse under smashing blows of the Axis forces. They bought this time for us with the currency of blood and courage. Two years ago our margin of safety was still precarious but the moment was rapidly approaching when we would be prepared to deal with our enemies on the only terms they understood—overwhelming power.

In no other period of American history have the colors of the United States been carried victoriously on so many battlefields. It is with profound satisfaction and great pride in the troops and their leaders that this report is submitted on the campaigns which crushed Italy, Germany and Japan.

It is necessary to an understanding of the Army's participation in these campaigns that reference be made to the decisions which launched them. The forces of the United States and Great Britain were deployed under a single strategic control exercised by the group known as the Combined Chiefs of Staff. As described in a previous report, this structure of Allied control was conceived at the conference of December 1941, when Prime Minister Churchill, accompanied by the chiefs of the British Navy, Army, and Air Forces, came to Washington and met with the President and the American Chiefs of Staff. It was the most complete unification of military effort ever achieved by two Allied nations. Strategic direction of all the forces of both nations, the allocation of manpower and munitions, the coordination of communications, the control of military intelligence, and the administration of captured areas all were accepted as joint responsibilities.

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