I WAS THERE

THE PERSONAL STORY
OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO
PRESIDENTS ROOSEVELT AND TRUMAN
BASED ON HIS NOTES AND DIARIES
MADE AT THE TIME

BY

FLEET ADMIRAL WILLIAM D. LEAHY

With a Foreword by
PRESIDENT TRUMAN

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CHAPTER XIV

CAIRO, TEHERAN, AND A BROKEN PROMISE

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT HAD NO superstitions about the figure "13," which many people regard as an ill omen, but he did share the sailors' superstition that Friday is an unlucky day on which to start a long voyage. So the huge U.S.S. *Iowa* remained at her berth Friday night, November 12, 1943, and did not get under way for Oran, the first leg of the trip to Cairo and Teheran, until 12.01 a.m., Saturday, November 13. We soon passed the Capes of the Chesapeake and headed toward the Straits of Gibraltar, escorted by three destroyers. Our course was 105° true, speed 25 knots.

The *Iowa* was our latest and best-armed battleship, displacing 45,000 tons. With a possible speed of 33 knots, she was expected to take us through submarine-infested waters with little danger. Every effort was made to keep the expedition secret. No communication whatever with the shore was permitted. It was hoped that the President, with his staff, could reach the port of Oran in Africa before the enemy learned of his whereabouts and his intentions. The President had with him on board the *Iowa* General Marshall, Admiral King, General Arnold, Lieutenant-General Somervell, and about fifty American staff officers of subordinate rank attached to the joint staff organization.

Roosevelt was in high spirits. He was looking forward to his first meeting with Premier Stalin. The President would use a plane when necessary, but a sea voyage was his favourite way of travelling. He had his mess in the Captain's cabin, where his personal staff—Harry Hopkins, Rear-Admiral Wilson Brown, Dr. Ross McIntire, Major-General E. M. "Pa" Watson and I—had our meals with him. We usually had an apéritif before dinner and frequently saw a moving picture in the President's quarters immediately afterward.

Roosevelt always enjoyed manœuvres, and on the second or third day out the *Iowa* put on a battery drill in which all of the anti-aircraft guns participated. The escorting destroyers were manœuvring to repel a mock air attack. The President

was on the starboard side of the deck forward of his cabin, where he frequently sat during the day. I was chatting with him, probably about some aspect of the manœuvre, when suddenly we heard over the loud-speaker these directions to the gun batteries:

"This is *not* a drill. *Repeat*—this is *not* a drill."

Instantly the anti-aircraft guns were deflected and started firing vigorously toward the water between us and one of the destroyers. The ship rang up full speed and as the powerful engines responded perfectly she made a radical change in course while picking up speed rapidly. We were informed almost immediately that a torpedo had been discharged accidentally from one of our escorting destroyers, which had been using the *Iowa* for a "target."

No attempt was made to move Roosevelt. He just sat in his chair, showing no excitement, but intense interest. We watched the firing and were told by some officer of the *Iowa* that the guns were being used in an effort by the gunners to score a hit near the torpedo—which they could not see, but whose approximate location they knew. This went on for what seemed quite some time and then we heard an explosion that was unquestionably the torpedo warhead. The sound made it evident that the torpedo had exploded not very distant from the *Iowa*.

The big battleship settled down on her normal course. At the next meal most of the conversation centred on the incident, with everyone wondering how it happened. I do not know yet how that torpedo was fired from its tube. We were told that the destroyer radioed the *Iowa* the instant it was realized what had happened. Fortunately, this gave sufficient time to manœuvre the battleship and thus reduce the potential danger to the President. I thought the *Iowa* was very smartly handled during the entire affair. She was under the command of Captain John L. McCrea, who previously had been Naval *Aide* to the President.

The torpedo "scare" recalled to me a time in February, 1939, when, as Chief of Naval Operations, I was with Roosevelt on board the cruiser *Houston* anchored off St. Thomas in the Caribbean. The *Houston* was in one of the opposing forces in the famous Fleet Problem XX then being worked out in the Caribbean area. I sat in a cabin with him interpreting the "Battle reports" being flashed to our ship. Suddenly I received

"bad news." I turned and said: "Mr. President, we have just been sunk by an enemy submarine."

Roosevelt laughed heartily.

"That is too bad, Bill," he said, and we continued right on watching the "battle" on the charts. (The *Houston* was actually sunk in the Battle of the Java Sea early in 1942.) It was on this trip that the President told me that he wished me to go to Puerto Rico as Governor when my term as Chief of Naval Operations should be completed.

Staff meetings were held on the *Iowa* almost daily during the voyage, as final preparations were made for the important conferences soon to come with the British and our Chinese Allies at Cairo and with the "Big Three" at Teheran. In previous planning we had recommended that the entire strategic air force from England be placed under the control of the officer in supreme command of the projected cross-Channel invasion of France. We had asked the British how they felt about this. On our first day out we received a reply from the British Chiefs of Staff. The latter said that it was impossible to separate any substantial part of the available British air arm from control of the Air Command Headquarters in England. The British were adhering steadfastly to their utterly inefficient manner of handling the air component of an invasion force. They said:

"When the Supreme Commander has decided in consultation with his Air Commander-in-Chief how he wishes to employ the air force, he will pass his requirements to the Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command, who is then bound to meet those requirements as far as he is able with the air force that has been allotted by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to the support of the expedition. If the Supreme Commander wants a particular railway system disorganized, his Air Commander informs the Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command, who has been told to put a certain percentage of his effort at the Supreme Commander's disposal. The Commander-in-Chief of the Bomber Command is then under orders of the Combined Chiefs of Staff to do his utmost to achieve the task given him by the Supreme Commander with the means allotted."

This completely divided control was serious enough, in my opinion, to account for most of the British air failures in the war. Unity of command of all available forces—land, sea, and air—was essential to success. It was my intention, if the

British persisted in exercising operational command of the Royal Air Force from England, to insist that our American air arm be divorced completely from the British Air Command and turned over to the Supreme Allied Commander of the area concerned.

The Joint Chiefs hammered out an agenda of subjects to be discussed by the President with Chiang Kai-shek, Churchill, and Stalin. One that required much time was a proposed sub-division of Germany into separate areas, wherein, after Germany surrendered, military control of the civil government would be exercised by the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union respectively in sectors to be assigned to them.

We were prepared to hear British objections to the Burma operation, particularly its amphibious phase, but the President seemed determined that we formulate the best possible plans to support the Chinese war effort. As a possible alternative, King had an idea of going into the Malay Peninsula north of Singapore and taking Bangkok. We also were well aware that there would be a demand for more landing craft than we had available at that time for large-scale amphibious operations. While these Joint Chief Conferences were going on, the *Iowa* was steaming along at an average of 23 knots in soft, pleasant weather and smooth seas.

The danger of submarine attack was ever-present, particularly during the last half of our voyage, and that danger increased as we neared Oran. When about sixty miles off the coast of Morocco, our "squadron" was joined by the cruiser *Brooklyn* and six destroyers, providing additional protection. We also had planes patrolling the skies above the *Iowa*.

The Nazis apparently were completely unaware of the prize target now within range of their planes as well as their U-boats. Conceivably the course of the war might have been changed if the enemy could have broken through our protection and killed the President. However, this part of the trip was made without incident, and we eased inside the torpedo net at Mers-el-Kebir at 8 a.m., November 20, 1943.

General Eisenhower, smiling and pleased to see his Commander-in-Chief, greeted us, and the party was taken by auto to an airfield near Oran. The General rode in the President's plane, one of four that took the entire staff to Tunis. None of us, least of all Eisenhower, knew then that on the return flight two weeks later (December 7), the vital

question of command of "Overlord" would have been decided and Roosevelt would have some very important news for the commander who had led our forces to victory in North Africa.

Eisenhower showed no signs of worry about the success of the Italian operation, for which he had complete responsibility and for which many of us did not think he had sufficient force.

When we reached Tunis, the President was taken to General Eisenhower's villa in the town of Carthage. The rest of us were quartered in a guest house operated by the Army for distinguished visitors. This residence was purely Arabic in arrangement and decorations. All floors, walls and ceilings were covered with tiles of various colours, with different designs for each room. That afternoon I visited the remains of a Roman amphitheatre and a coliseum. We also saw some crudely excavated remains of the very ancient pre-Roman Carthage. These explorations pointed to the probability of interesting discoveries. That evening I dined with the President at a dinner of fourteen which included two of his sons, Colonel Elliott Roosevelt, A.U.S., and Lieutenant Franklin Roosevelt, Jr., U.S.N.R. Also present was Air Chief Marshal Tedder of the Royal Air Force, who later was to become Eisenhower's Deputy Commander-in-Chief in "Operation Overlord."

For the first time during the war I saw the effects of aerial bombing when we spent Sunday afternoon (November 21) visiting the city of Tunis. The water front had been thoroughly destroyed by American bombers during the period when German troops were attempting to escape to Italy. Other parts of Tunis seemed to have suffered very little, indicating a high degree of accuracy for our bombardiers. The streets were crowded with soldiers and sailors of many nations and native Arabs. Bar-rooms, cinemas, and curio-shops were doing a rushing business. The very few women and children seen appeared to be Italians or Jews or a mixture of white races and Arabs. On the return trip to Carthage, we passed a number of natives ploughing their fields with oxen and the Biblical plough, consisting of a wooden blade with one handle.

After dinner with Roosevelt, the entire Presidential party boarded a four-engine transport plane and left at 10.30 p.m. for Cairo. Sleeping in the chair of a transport plane was not restful, which is a polite understatement, and I was more than pleased when we landed at 9.30 a.m., Cairo time, November 22, on a British airfield about fifteen miles from the city. We had

flown over a portion of the Sahara Desert, which gave one a picture of utter desolation and then a couple of hundred miles down the Nile Valley, where the land was green with fertility and humming with industry. My first view of the Pyramids from an altitude of 8,000 feet was disappointing, due to the reduction of their size by distance. When we reached Cairo, we found that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Mme. Chiang were already there and that the Prime Minister and his staff had been in Cairo for two days. We had no doubt that Churchill had used the two extra days to good advantage. The President and a few others of us were quartered at a villa belonging to the United States Minister, Kirk. We were looking forward to a busy and probably controversial conference.

The Prime Minister, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Hopkins, and I dined with the President the first night at Cairo. The Combined Chiefs came in after the meal and we got down to business quickly. Mountbatten outlined his plans and his needs for the Burma campaign which had been assigned to him at the Quebec Conference held in August, 1943. He made an excellent presentation of his problem, which I believed would be solved by his energy and aggressive spirit.

The next day (November 23), after a staff meeting, the Combined Chiefs met in the President's villa with Roosevelt, Churchill, Chiang, and Mme. Chiang for a high-level discussion of the Burma campaign. Mountbatten went into details of a plan prepared by his staff, but not yet approved by the Combined Chiefs. The Generalissimo did not offer any objection, nor did he express his approval. He wanted to know what naval forces would be available at the time of our planned attack on Burma. The British were not able to give him that information. Chiang wanted Rangoon recaptured. The British experts pointed out the many real difficulties involved in trying to capture that Burmese port.

Chiang Kai-shek was a slight, studious-appearing man with no resemblance whatever to the bandit that he was reported to have been before the war commenced. Mme. Chiang followed the discussion intently. Several times she corrected the interpreter or amplified his translation. She wore an attractive Chinese costume and appeared to be in excellent health and spirits.

At the afternoon session the Chinese Chiefs of Staff met

with us to hear further discussion on Burma. Probably acting under instructions, they declined to make any comment or recommendation. They said they had not had time enough to make a careful study of the proposed plan. The Chinese Generals seemed to be fairly well informed on the whole situation, and they knew what they wanted—sufficient help to recapture Burma, so that supply lines to China could be reopened.

I "escaped" from the President's small dinner for the Chiangs that night in order to be with Admiral King and General Arnold and the British Chiefs of Staff. It was an exceedingly interesting party. Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, told us the history of the Knights of Malta, of which he obviously had made a study. Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham told a vivid story of his experiences in command of the Mediterranean Fleet in this war. Sir Andrew and I had discussed this often when he was the British representative on the Combined Staff in Washington.

Churchill at a Combined Staff meeting on November 24 talked at length but unconvincingly about operations in the Ægean Sea and against the Island of Rhodes. The American Chiefs had rejected this idea completely weeks before, but the Prime Minister was not easily discouraged.

In the afternoon I assisted at a reception given by the President at his villa. One at a time, the following came in for a quarter-hour talk with Roosevelt:

The Turkish Prime Minister; the King of Greece, a young man with a gracious manner; the British Ambassador to Turkey; King Peter of Yugoslavia, accompanied by M. Pouritch, who had been a colleague of mine in France; and the heir-apparent of Egypt, Moballet Bey. That night at dinner we had Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt from Ankara, and Averell Harriman from Moscow as guests of the President in addition to our regular party.

November 25 was Thanksgiving Day. At the session of the Combined Chiefs, our British colleagues presented an alarming proposal to delay the cross-Channel operation in order to exert more effort in the Ægean Sea and in Turkey. The British bulldog tenacity did not like to let go of a desire to retain a controlling hold on the Mediterranean in the Near East. The American Chiefs followed their instructions from Roosevelt

not to agree to the diversion of any useful forces from "Operation Overlord." Again, no decision was reached.

British officers arranged for a Thanksgiving service in the All Saints' Cathedral in Cairo at 6 p.m. as a compliment to the Americans present. One of our sceptics called this polite gesture an example of "reverse Lend-Lease." That night the President gave a Thanksgiving dinner for twenty guests, complete with turkey and pumpkin pie. In addition to our regular group, the following were present as guests: Prime Minister Churchill with his daughter, Sarah, whose married name was Oliver; Foreign Minister Anthony Eden; American Ambassadors Winant and Steinhardt; United States Minister to Egypt Kirk; Colonel Elliott Roosevelt; Lord Leathers of England; Major Boettiger, son-in-law of the President; and two young *aides* to the Prime Minister. It was a very gay friendly dinner and certainly an unusual one for the banks of the Nile. Both the President and the Prime Minister were in excellent form.

After the morning staff meeting on November 26, I took an hour off to see the great Pyramids and the Sphinx, either of which would have provided absorbing interest for days of study. I always will regret that the pressure of war business at this Cairo conference prevented me from spending more time visiting these colossal antiquities. The face of the Sphinx had been badly damaged, according to our guide, by Napoleon's artillery.

That noon the President presented a Legion of Merit Medal to General Eisenhower, and I was particularly impressed with Eisenhower's response. He said he was more than pleased to receive the Legion of Merit decoration because it was available to every soldier in his command and was not limited to any rank.

The afternoon Combined Staff conference was given over to discussing a British proposal to abandon planned amphibious operations in the Indian Ocean in connection with the Burma campaign. The President had promised China that as a part of the drive to recapture Burma there would be an amphibious attack on the strategic Andaman Islands.

The Prime Minister seemed determined to remove his landing ships from that effort. The discussion became almost acrimonious at times. Carrying out the orders of Churchill, their Commander-in-Chief, the British staff, headed by

Brooke, insisted that the Andaman operation could not be carried out. I informed our British colleagues that the American chiefs could not recede from their present position on the Andaman attack without orders from the President. At the same time, the President, Prime Minister, and Chiang were in conference all afternoon, probably discussing the same question. We knew that Chiang would persist in his demands for the Andaman Island campaign, and we thought that the President should continue to support him, despite Churchill's objections.

The British obviously did not have the same deep interest in China that we had. They seemed to overlook the fact that the defeat of Japan would cost many more ships, lives, not to mention dollars, if Chiang's ill-equipped, ill-fed armies were not kept in the field. The Chinese were not winning many battles. Except for a few American-trained divisions, perhaps they didn't fight very well, but the fact could not be discounted that Chiang had several million men under arms and was forcing Japan to keep a large standing army in China and to keep it supplied. The American Chiefs of Staff were convinced that support of China was essential to our own safety and to the success of the Allied cause. As we closed these unproductive Combined Staff talks at Cairo on the afternoon of November 26, the question of implementing our promised support to Chiang by providing whatever was necessary to recapture Burma still was undecided. The commitment had been made months before. Chiang left Cairo for Chungking fully expecting his Allies to make good their promises.

We left Cairo at 7 a.m., November 27, after waiting more than three hours for an early fog to clear away. The air route to Teheran took us over Palestine, and the weather was excellent. The plane circled low over Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jericho, and the River Jordan—names that had been fixed in my mind since childhood. The Holy Land, from the air, appeared desolate and unproductive. Perhaps after forty years of wandering in a desert, any place with even a little water would look like a "promised land." Somebody on the plane speculated that when Moses saw from a mountain top the end of the long journey, he committed suicide rather than face the responsibility for his "promised land" that would be found there by his travel-wearied followers.

unoccupied building on the Russian property. The Soviet Legation and its surrounding park were guarded twenty-four hours a day by a great number of especially trained agents who stopped *everybody*. We had special passes, made out in Russian, with our names being the only words I could recognize. We all were advised to stop instantly if challenged. The advice was observed meticulously and we had no "accidents."

The first plenary session of "Eureka," code for the Teheran meeting, opened at 4 p.m. (November 28). The heads of the two most powerful nations in the world had met for the first time some forty-five minutes earlier and Roosevelt and Stalin apparently had become well acquainted when the Prime Minister and the British and American Chiefs of Staff, together with Hopkins, came in. Churchill had Foreign Minister Anthony Eden with him. Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov and Marshal K. E. Voroshilov joined Stalin. Roosevelt presided and was the first to speak. (A complete list of those present is given in the Appendix.)

Briefly, the strategy that had been worked out at previous Anglo-American conferences was reviewed by our President. He said that the United States shared equally with the Soviets and the United Kingdom a desire to hurry the day of victory in Europe. In the Pacific, our country was carrying the greatest burden, with some help from the British. Our strategy was one of constant attrition of enemy forces while advancing through the Pacific islands and keeping the Japanese away from American territory. It was proving successful to date, Roosevelt emphasized, in accomplishing its designed purpose.

Turning to China, the President stressed that keeping our Eastern ally in the war was considered essential. This would be assisted shortly by a vigorous campaign led by Admiral Lord Mountbatten to recapture Burma.

In Europe, Roosevelt continued, the U.S. strategy for more than a year had been to relieve German pressure on the Russian front, but final plans to achieve this had not been possible until the conference in Quebec had agreed upon May, 1944, as the date for a cross-Channel invasion of Normandy. Doubtless having in mind the arguments the Prime Minister would make, Roosevelt added that many were in favour of further operations in the Mediterranean, but he was convinced that the vital thrust into France in May should not be delayed by any such secondary operations.

Stalin then spoke briefly, but in detail, to show that Italy was not a suitable place from which to launch an attack on Germany. However, he held that the Mediterranean Sea should be kept free for Allied shipping. Every American and British eye and ear were fixed on the Soviet leader. Most of us were hearing and seeing him for the first time. I happened to notice that Churchill did not always wait for Stalin's excellent interpreter to translate what his chief had said, but seemed to be getting the gist of Stalin's remarks. I learned later that the Prime Minister did know some Russian and was able to understand in part what Stalin was saying, although he never tried to converse in that language. The Marshal spoke quietly, without gestures and, as translated by Interpreter Pavlov, expressed himself in a convincing manner.

Churchill began his talk by saying that the United States and the United Kingdom had long been planning the Normandy invasion, that the delay had been very disappointing, but now they were determined to carry out the operation in the spring or summer of 1944. In the next breath, the Prime Minister began to talk about possible areas of operations against the Nazis from all parts of Europe, and he urged that Turkey be induced to enter the war. Churchill then asked if any of the possible operations in the Mediterranean were of sufficient interest to delay for two or three months the projected cross-Channel project.

Stalin answered quickly by questioning the wisdom of dispersing Allied forces. He did not believe the Turks could be persuaded to declare war and said that all additional Allied strength that would be available could be used to the best advantage in a flank attack in southern France, to be timed to support the Normandy attack. He considered an attack in southern France of much more value to the Allied cause than the capture of Rome. Churchill answered that with an interesting argument in favour of capturing Rome and the airfields north of Rome, which could be used to supplement the Allied air attack on Central Europe. The meeting adjourned without any major decisions being made.

The initial session had been pleasant, polite, and agreeable. The three principals stated their respective views and sounded out each other. The Soviets and Americans seemed to be nearly in agreement as to the fundamental strategic principles

that should be followed. In the hands of the three men gathered around a table in the Russian legation in Teheran rested the fate of millions of men organized into the largest armies and navies ever assembled in any war up to that time. Yet the atmosphere in this first session probably was more calm than that which might prevail at a staff meeting aboard a single ship or at some Army base.

The talk among ourselves as the meeting broke up was about Stalin. Most of us, before we met him, thought he was a bandit leader who had pushed himself up to the top of his Government. That impression was wrong. We knew at once that we were dealing with a highly intelligent man who spoke well and was determined to get what he wanted for Russia. No professional soldier or sailor could find fault with that. The Marshal's approach to our mutual problems was direct, agreeable, and considerate of the viewpoints of his two colleagues—until one of them advanced some point that Stalin thought was detrimental to Soviet interest. Then he could be brutally blunt to the point of rudeness.

The "Big Three" met again in the evening of November 28. I was not present, but the President later told me that the conversation centred around post-war treatment of France, the fate of German war criminals, and the eastern border of Poland. Stalin did most of the talking. Among other things, the Russian chief said that France, by its performance in the war, had not earned any consideration from the victorious Allies or any right to retain her former empire.

It was generally agreed that Germany must be deprived permanently of all military power. The question of post-war borders of Poland proved a touchy one, and it was decided that the matter should be studied further before reaching any conclusions.

Stalin and Churchill, the President told me, got into quite an argument about German militarism. It came up when Stalin said he had a list of 50,000 German officers who should be brought to trial. Churchill reacted violently. The Prime Minister insisted that he could not agree to any such "trials," because under British law it was not possible to obtain a conviction in English courts for alleged offences that were *not* crimes under the law at the time they were committed.

Churchill made it plain that he had no sympathy for the Nazi barbarians, but the President said the Prime Minister

pleaded eloquently for maintenance of the traditional English concept of justice, which rejected any proceedings under *ex post facto* laws.

In telling about the argument, Roosevelt recounted how he tried to quiet Stalin and Churchill with a remark he intended as a joke. Roosevelt suggested that if 50,000 German officers were too many to be tried, why not compromise on a smaller number, such as 49,000. The President smiled ruefully, and said Churchill at that moment was in no mood for jokes.

This was the night that the President suffered an acute digestive attack which alarmed us because of the possibility that poison might have been given to him. Dr. McIntire, his physician, very quickly found out that the trouble was indigestion. Rest in bed and careful dieting was prescribed for the President, and by the following morning he had entirely recovered from his indisposition.

The first business on Monday, November 29, was a small meeting attended by General Brooke, Marshal Voroshilov, Air Marshal Portal, General Marshall, and myself. It was the first time that top military advisers of the three major Allied Powers had met together for a Staff discussion. We talked about the military problems facing the conference, but little progress was made because of a British desire for postponing the cross-Channel operation.

Marshal Voroshilov, following up the good case Stalin had made the day before for a flank attack through southern France, pressed for a decision on this point. General Marshall and I were inclined to go along, but Sir Alan Brooke insisted stubbornly that all available Mediterranean forces should be used in the Italian and eastern Mediterranean campaigns, including the pet project of his Commander-in-Chief, the capture of the Island of Rhodes. Voroshilov was young and vigorous and could ask searching questions. He was probably just as inflexible as Stalin where Soviet interests were concerned, and he knew just as well as his Chief what the Russians wanted us to do in the war.

However, like all the Russians that we met, he did not understand the difficulties of transporting an army and its supplies across a 3,000-mile ocean. Navies had never played a major role in Russian history, with the possible exception of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, when such a navy as they had was sunk by the Japanese. In our conversations, the

Russians would insist that their armies could cross rivers, but they did not understand the difference between a river and an ocean. They sounded like Army or Air Force officers trying to understand naval operations.

At noon (November 29) the Prime Minister, acting for King George of England, presented a sword of honour to Marshal Stalin for the city of Stalingrad. It was a token of the appreciation of the British people for the city's heroic and successful defence against the German invaders of Russia.

After the ceremony, the camera-men made group pictures of everybody participating in the conference. Here were the "Big Three" of the coalition seeking to destroy Nazi Germany. I felt that this meeting at Teheran might be recorded in history as being comparable to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, with this difference—the surroundings offered little pageantry but, instead, much suffering and squalor.

That afternoon, at another plenary session, the dispute over timing of the invasion of Normandy was again brought up. Stalin was insisting on fixing an early date. Churchill was asking for delay. The President was favourably inclined toward the Soviet view. Becoming exasperated with Churchill's tactics, Stalin said bluntly: "Do you really believe in 'Overlord,' or are you stalling on it to make us feel better?" The sense of Churchill's reply was that he did endorse the cross-Channel operation, but he believed sincerely that the other operations he was proposing would help insure the eventual success of the invasion of France. In order to delay a final decision on the date of "Overlord," Churchill proposed that the political aspects of his Mediterranean proposals be referred to the Foreign Ministers present at Teheran for their advice. (Secretary of State Hull had cabled Roosevelt from the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Moscow in October, 1943, that his health would not permit him to make the trip to Africa and Iran. Harry Hopkins was acting informally as a sort of Secretary of State for the President, attending meetings with Molotov and Eden.)

Stalin retorted quickly and brusquely: "Why do that? We are the chiefs of government. We know what we want to do. Why turn the matter over to some subordinates to advise us?" However, Stalin apparently saw some advantages in this parliamentary manœuvre. At subsequent "Big Three" conferences, a Committee of Foreign Ministers was established.

When some question arose about which an agreement could not be reached by the "Big Three," it was frequently referred to these same Foreign Ministers, who, in turn, were usually unable to reach an agreement.

When this happened at Yalta and Potsdam, it seems to me, in retrospect, that the result usually was unfavourable to the interests of the United States. The United States gained little or nothing from the action—or lack of action—on questions that were referred to this "subordinate" group of Ministers. So, at this afternoon session in Teheran, Churchill had introduced a very useful delaying, diplomatic manœuvre.

The heat of argument taxed the well-known skill and diplomacy of Roosevelt, who was presiding. At this same meeting, Stalin also confronted the President with an uncomfortable question. The Soviet leader asked bluntly who was going to command "Overlord." Roosevelt said frankly he had not made up his mind. I was sitting next to the President, and he leaned over to me and whispered, "That old Bolshevik is trying to force me to give him the name of our Supreme Commander. I just can't tell him, because I have not yet made up my mind."

Stalin agreed that the appointment was the business of Roosevelt, but he added sharply that until the Commander of "Overlord" was named he would not consider that the operation was actually under way. It was evident that Stalin wanted to have that appointment announced while he was in Teheran.

The President was absolutely honest in his reply. In my opinion, he preferred to give the job to Marshall, but felt that he could not ignore the adverse reaction that the appointment would cause back in the United States. At that time, I still thought he eventually would announce that Marshall would command "Overlord."

During this session Roosevelt presented a paper to Stalin which had been prepared by the Joint Chiefs containing certain requests for co-operation and information from our Soviet ally. The first question referred to use of Soviet bases for shuttle-bombing, and Stalin readily agreed. Some of the other items pertained to possible Russian co-operation in the war against Japan. Stalin had told General Hurley as far back as January, 1943, that when Germany should be defeated the Soviets would join in crushing Japan. He had renewed that

assurance to Secretary of State Hull during the Foreign Ministers Conference in Moscow the preceding month.

When confronted with specific requests which were in the nature of preparations for Soviet co-operation, Stalin said he would have to wait until he returned to Moscow before giving us the answers. I think it was at this point that the Marshal said to Roosevelt: "Mr. President, you tell me you frequently have to consult with your Government before making decisions. You must remember that I also have a Government and cannot always act without reference to Moscow."

Like the one of the day before, this session ended with no final decision as to the date of the cross-Channel operation and, as a result of Stalin's frank question, the problem of who would command that operation had again been thrust to the forefront.

The British finally fell into line at the forenoon meeting of the British-American Chiefs of Staff on November 30. They agreed to launch the attack on Germany in France during the month of May, 1944, and to support the southern France invasion with such force as could be handled by the landing craft available in the Mediterranean at that time.

I never asked Brooke, Portal, or any of our British colleagues what caused their change of heart, but the American argument was so logical that I cannot but believe that as professional soldiers they knew "Overlord" was the most sensible move to bring to an end the war with Germany in the shortest possible time. We had to come to grips with a German army that would be defending its homeland as soon as we should have the force available. If we could break that army, the road to Berlin and victory in Europe would be in sight.

This is pure speculation, but I have the feeling that the British Chiefs supported the American contention in their private talks with Churchill. The Prime Minister, devoted to the preservation of the power of the British Empire, apparently gave in, perhaps with reluctance, to the arguments of his own top military advisers. Before this is read, Churchill may have told us his reasons in his own excellent memoirs.

At 4.30 p.m., Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill accepted the agreement reached by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the morning session and Marshal Stalin agreed to so time his attack on the Eastern Front as to make the two efforts mutually supporting.

The Second Front decision overshadowed all other accomplishments of the Teheran meeting, but this gathering of the "Big Three" was equally important for the several other major problems that were discussed, amicably for the most part, even though no agreement was reached on some of them.

Roosevelt spent much time explaining the details of his "United Nations to preserve International Peace." Stalin did not seem to be favourably impressed by the President's proposal to give the smaller nations of the world an equal position in the preservation of world peace. Stalin stated his own ideas quite simply: If Russia, Great Britain, and the United States wanted to keep the world at peace, they had the military and economic power to do so and did not need the help of anybody else to police the globe.

The problem of trusteeships came up during the United Nations discussion. Roosevelt was convinced that his proposed world organization could exercise the necessary sovereignty over such areas as the mandated Japanese islands, which Tokyo had exploited so fully while ostensibly these islands still were under the control of the League of Nations. In our own conversations, I had argued vigorously that the United States, for its own future security, should keep and exercise sovereignty over any of the Japanese mandated islands that we captured.

There was a general discussion on demilitarizing Germany. Stalin advocated the occupation of strong strategic points within Germany or on the borders or even at more distant points. No decision was reached, but there appeared to be a general agreement in principle that the war potential of Germany should be destroyed.

Stalin agreed to allow Soviet air bases to be used in setting up a shuttle-bombing operation against Germany from England. A request for use by the Army Air Force of Soviet bases in the maritime provinces of Asia to facilitate attacks on Japan was deferred. Stalin was asked to permit joint preliminary planning for the employment of Soviet forces against Japan when Germany had been eliminated from the war, but could not give an answer at Teheran.

Russia had been insisting on immediately getting her one-third share of surrendered Italian warships and merchant shipping. Roosevelt at Teheran maintained the position he had taken previously: that these ships should be used during

the war wherever they were most needed and that their disposition could wait until the peace was made. A compromise was reached under which some ships were to be turned over to the Soviet command about the end of January, 1944.

Polish boundaries caused little argument at Teheran. After a more or less general acceptance of the Curzon Line as Poland's Eastern frontier, to which Roosevelt made no specific agreement, the matter of the western border was left undecided—except that the Big Three seemed to accept as a principle that Poland should get some German territory to compensate for the area claimed by Russia on her side of the Curzon Line.

Likewise, no definite decision was reached on the dismemberment of Germany, to which Roosevelt had given much thought although his plan seemed to meet with approval—again in principle. The President's idea was to break up the Reich into five major subdivisions or states as follows: (1) Prussia, which would be reduced in area and made powerless; (2) Hanover and a north-west section of Germany; (3) Saxony and Leipzig areas; (4) Bavaria, Baden, and Würtenberg; and (5) Hesse-Darmstadt, Hesse-Kassel and an area south of the Rhine. Hamburg, the Kiel Canal and the Ruhr-Saar area were to be under some form of international control.

The President had some difficulty in persuading Stalin and Churchill to accept a "Declaration of Iran," which acknowledged that nation's contribution to the war effort. Recognizing the economic difficulties created by the war, this Declaration pledged such assistance as was practicable, and stated that the Big Powers favoured the maintenance of Iran's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin signed this Declaration and gave it to General Hurley to take to the Shah. It apparently was not as specific as the Shah desired, but Hurley got his signature on the document and rushed back to the conference as pleased as a small boy who had just landed a big fish in the mill-pond. He saw me in the hall and fairly shouted: "Bill, I got it!"—meaning, of course, the three-power Declaration. The General felt it really was a successful ending of a difficult mission Roosevelt had assigned to him.

When the three Commanders-in-Chief accepted the final report of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the work of the conference was completed. If the decisions made at Teheran

should be adhered to, our journey halfway round the world to get together would be fully justified. While the post-war political questions raised did not affect directly the work of our Joint Chiefs, we all recognized that the peace of the world might hinge on their amicable solution.

Churchill was sixty-nine years old on this November 30, 1943, so the day ended with the Prime Minister being host at a large dinner in the British Legation. Russian custom was followed, which meant that toasts were proposed and drunk to nearly all of the thirty-four persons at the banquet table, an exceedingly tiresome procedure. The President, Stalin, and Churchill made speeches. Our abiding friendship with the Bolsheviks and our common hopes for a new order in the world were stressed. As the party went on, the monotonous exchange of international compliments was enlivened now and then with some acid humour. Stalin particularly was quick in repartee, sometimes delivered with a sinister expression on his face.

The Prime Minister remarked that the political complexion of the British people was undergoing an orderly change, and it might now be said to have gone almost so far as to be termed "pink." Whereupon Stalin interjected: "That is an indication of improved health." Hopkins commented amusingly that England did not have any Constitution or charter, which left Churchill free to do whatever he liked at any time. Stalin proposed a toast to the miracle of American production. Indeed, at this memorable dinner, it appeared that the grand coalition had achieved a degree of harmony that should insure a speedy defeat of Nazism, and a peaceful solution of the difficult problems of a post-war world. Unfortunately, the next morning after such affairs usually brings a return to realism.

The Combined Staff left by plane for Cairo on December 1. The President asked me to remain behind with him, although I did not attend the final high-level political discussion he had with his two colleagues, which lasted until 10 p.m. Two hours later, we were bedded down in an American Army camp some distance from Teheran.

The next morning, riding in a jeep with Major-General Connolly, Roosevelt inspected camp installations, including the hospital where wide-eyed lads stared in amazement at the sight of their Commander-in-Chief from far-away Washington, D.C. The President gave a short talk to the troops, expressing

his appreciation for their important work at this isolated Army base. The sight of an American President thoughtfully taking the time between important conferences with world leaders to visit lads serving in the U.S. Army in ancient Persia was a striking example of the global nature of a war in which American supply ships plied sea lanes in the Arctic Circle and American soldiers trained for future operations in the distant "down under" country of Australia. Returning to Teheran, we left at 9.45 a.m. (December 2), and were in Cairo in time to have dinner with the Prime Minister.

During the dinner Roosevelt and Churchill compared their reactions to Stalin and reviewed the military and political discussion with our Russian ally that had just ended. The Prime Minister clearly indicated that he was inclined toward the American point of view on matters that up to then had produced much controversy between the U.S. and British staffs, particularly on the timing of the cross-Channel attack on Germany. He did not bring up the Burma campaign or his pet Rhodes project. He was well aware that at Staff talks beginning the next day his representatives were to resist stubbornly any attempt to carry out a promise made to our Far East ally—the promise Roosevelt had made to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to carry out a vigorous campaign to recapture Burma with land operations in the north co-ordinated with an amphibious attack on the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal in the south.

Throughout the morning and afternoon Combined Staff sessions on December 3, the British pursued two objectives: to have the Andaman Islands project dropped and to secure American agreement to an expedition against the Island of Rhodes. That evening, we reported the impasse to President Roosevelt. He was firmly against the eastern Mediterranean project and gave us no indication that he had changed his mind about the Burma plans.

I dined with the President, the Prime Minister, and Anthony Eden. The four of us remained at the table until midnight discussing the Andaman-Rhodes controversy. Churchill used every artifice in his large repertoire to induce Roosevelt to agree to drop the amphibious expedition in the Bay of Bengal and to use those naval, air, and ground forces to seize his pet island of Rhodes. The British Minister made a good case for his side, but the President didn't budge. Roosevelt insisted

that promises made to Chiang Kai-shek be fully carried out.

Eden did not assist his chief to any extent in the Burma argument, but the two of them teamed up together in the other main topic of the evening—the prospective sectors of Germany to be occupied by British and American troops. Churchill and Eden insisted that Britain take over the northern sector. Roosevelt thought the Americans should be in that area. The British said, with logic, that this part of Germany was nearest to England, which would relieve transport difficulties. It was expected that the Russians would police the eastern end. The United States eventually took over the middle sector, between the French and the British.

The Burma *versus* Mediterranean word battle continued throughout December 4, with a Combined Staff meeting at noon with the President and Prime Minister. Neither side would yield. It was the same story up to 5 p.m. on December 6. At no time in previous or later conferences had the British shown such determined opposition to an American proposal.

When the American chiefs met with Roosevelt at five o'clock, he informed us that, in order to bring the discussions to an end, he had reluctantly agreed to abandon the Andaman plan and would propose some substitute to Chiang. He was the Commander-in-Chief, and that ended the argument. It must have been a sad disappointment to Chiang. The Chinese leader had every right to feel that we had failed to keep a promise.

There was merit in a contention advanced by the British that, if they should not be used at Rhodes, the landing craft assigned to the Andaman operation could be employed in our attack on Germany through southern France. The British may have had in mind other uses for these ships, but it was a good point to make at that time.

I felt that we were taking a grave risk. Chiang might drop out of the war. He never had indicated much faith in British intentions, but had relied on the United States. If the Chinese quit, the tasks of MacArthur and Nimitz in the Pacific, already difficult, would be much harder. Japanese manpower in great numbers would be released to oppose our advance toward the mainland of Japan. Fortunately for us, the courageous Chinese stayed in the fight.

When the American chiefs met with the British Staff on December 6, we formally agreed to the British position in

regard to the Andaman Islands, a final draft of a report of the conference was made and approved without change by our respective leaders at noon. Field-Marshal Smuts of South Africa was present at this final meeting.

The original purpose of coming back to Cairo had been to talk to the Turks about entering the war. President Inönü and some of his leading advisers arrived in response to the Allied request for a meeting, and President Roosevelt on December 4 gave a dinner in honour of the Turkish President. It was an interesting affair, all the conversation being in French, which the President spoke without hesitation.

After the dinner, the Prime Minister joined the party and promptly laid siege to President Inönü to induce him to cast the fate of his country with the Allies. Churchill did most of the talking. Inönü just listened. Later, the President told his British colleague that if he, Roosevelt, were a Turk, he would require more assurance of aid than Britain had promised before abandoning neutrality and leading his nation into war.

The next night, December 5, it was Churchill's turn to entertain at dinner for Inönü. Same scene. Same cast. Almost the same lines, except that the Turkish President talked a little more freely and impressed me with his direct approach to the question. He made it clear that before Turkey could come into the war, he would have to have enough planes, tanks, guns, etc., to make a strong resistance against invasion by the Nazis.

It was most interesting to watch the dinner-table manœuvres of the Prime Minister as he pleaded, cajoled, and almost threatened the soldier President of the once-powerful Ottoman Empire in an effort to commit him to taking his people into the war. Inönü was told he would have to come in eventually if he was to have a place at the peace table. The Americans did not urge the Turks as vehemently as did the British. I have pointed out earlier in this narrative that the U.S. Joint Chiefs felt that if the Turks were our allies and got into trouble, the task of bailing them out of a difficult situation would fall in large measure to us, and it might interfere with our major plans to defeat Germany. However, I thought that Inönü might be well advised to insure his country's participation in the peace talks, in order to protect Turkey from the avarice of the victors.

The President made another important decision while at

Cairo. He selected General Dwight D. Eisenhower as Supreme Commander of "Operation Overlord." He told me about his decision as we were flying from Cairo to Tunis on December 7. His selection was something of a surprise. The Joint Chiefs never recommended Eisenhower or anyone else. We had thought it was going to be George Marshall. At the time it appeared to me that the failure to name Marshall was taking a chance. The complete success of "Operation Overlord" under Eisenhower's command has proved that the President's choice was a wise one. This decision, so long delayed, also meant that Marshal Stalin had his final assurance that the Second Front, which the Russians had been demanding since 1942, would materialize in the spring of 1944.

From the time we left Cairo until the *Iowa* was well out to sea, the President had particularly heavy air coverage because of the possibility of being intercepted by German planes. Shortly after leaving Tunis by air for Malta on the morning of December 8, further precautions were taken to insure his safety should the Presidential plane be shot down or forced down over the Mediterranean. Together with the rest of us riding with him, Roosevelt was instructed in the correct use of the type of life-preserver known in the service as the "Mae West." We kept our "Mae Wests" within reach throughout the trip. Although the Allies had achieved superiority in the air in the Mediterranean area, we all felt that if the Germans knew of this particular flight they would make a desperate effort to shoot down the President of the United States. The huge four-engined transport landed at Malta without incident. We were met by Field-Marshal Viscount Gort and high military and civil officials of the local Government.

Before a hollow square of British soldiers, sailors, and marines, the President formally presented to Lord Gort an illuminated scroll commemorating the heroic defence of the small island, which for two years had withstood almost constant attack by the German and Italian air and naval forces.

Our plane had developed some trouble in the landing mechanism, and we took advantage of the hour's delay to visit those parts of the island which had been most seriously damaged during the siege. The enemy had concentrated its bombs in and around the Navy Yard, and the destruction there was almost complete. The damage that I saw elsewhere on Malta did not appear to be serious.

Leaving Malta at 1.10 p.m., a short flight brought us to the Castel Ventrano Airfield in Sicily, where General George Patton was in the group of officers who met the President's plane. In conversation with the President, General Patton brought up the widely publicized incident of his indiscretion of slapping a soldier whom he believed to be a shirker. Apparently the General was still worried about possible repercussions and their effect on his own future. Roosevelt indicated that the matter was a closed incident as far as he was concerned.

The President awarded decorations to six officers who had particularly distinguished themselves in the Sicilian campaign. Then, again riding in a familiar Army jeep, he made an inspection of the troops stationed at the airfield. An hour's flight brought us back to Tunis, where all hands, including the President, went to bed early in preparation for a long flight to the west coast of Africa.

We left Tunis before sunrise on December 9, and almost immediately ran into white cloud banks. Surgeon-General McIntire did not consider it wise for the President to fly at the altitude which would have been necessary to get completely above the cloud banks. With occasional glimpses of the earth, we remained in or slightly above these clouds until noon, flying at about 8,000 feet. South of the Atlas Mountains we ran into light rain and turbulent air. Ice formed on the plexi-glass enclosing the pilot's compartment. Our Army pilot, Major Bryan, skilfully avoided the cloud banks, which now had changed to black, and navigated with such accuracy as to make his expected landfalls. He stayed on his course, and we soon left the storm behind us.

The plane following us, which was carrying some Secret Service men, was struck by lightning while passing through a rain-cloud. Neither the plane nor any of its passengers were injured, but the pilot thereafter flew above the clouds at an altitude which, without oxygen, was uncomfortable. The third plane in the Presidential group flew around the storm and was an hour late in reaching Dakar.

We landed at the Dakar Airport on schedule after a twelve-and-half-hour flight of over 2,400 miles, most of it over the Sahara Desert. The President was met by the French Governor, Cournarie, and taken to the U.S.S. *Iowa* in a French naval escort vessel.

Roosevelt was swung aboard the battleship in a bos'n's

chair, after which the *Iowa* got under way, escorted by three destroyers. She set a course of 226°. True to pass south of the Cape Verde Islands, speed 23 knots. Hopkins wrote up an amusing story of the Presidential party climbing aboard the *Iowa* at Dakar which was printed, with illustrations, in the ship's paper. The drawing showed the President in his bos'n's chair, General "Pa" Watson climbing up on his hands and knees on a board, Hopkins walking a tight rope. I was pictured jumping aboard, as any sailor would.

After a restful sea voyage, we transferred from the *Iowa* to the President's yacht, U.S.S. *Potomac*, at Hampton Roads, Virginia. At 9.15 on December 17, 1943, the long but important and interesting journey to Morocco, Egypt, Persia, Malta and Sicily ended with our arrival at the Washington Navy Yard.

During the first week after our return several conferences were held by the President and General Marshall, the Secretary of War, and others to work out details of an announcement of the selection of Eisenhower to command the invasion of France. The news was released on Christmas Eve. It was also announced that the British General Sir Henry M. Wilson would assume command of the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean area.

On Christmas Eve, also, Roosevelt made an inspiring address which was broadcast all over the world to the Armed Forces of America wherever they might be.

During Christmas week we had several messages from Churchill inquiring about the possible use of landing-craft and men in the Italian campaign. To have granted them might have caused a delay in the planned landings in France. It was vexing, to say the least, to have to deal with still another attempt to extend operations in the Mediterranean, even at a cost of prolonging the war with Germany. The President replied to the Prime Minister that he would not consent to any diversion of men or landing-craft which would in any way interfere with "Overlord."

On December 28, the President took over the administration of railroads because of a threatened strike by railway employees. This was a matter of serious concern to the Joint Chiefs of Staff because of the heavy shipping schedules required to build up our supplies in England for the invasion. However, although I discussed the problem with the President, the Joint Chiefs did not recommend any specific, drastic action. There

were other agencies of the Government charged with the shipment of equipment for the war effort. The President delegated to the Army the responsibility for operating the railroads until the strike should be settled, which it was on January 18, 1944. Another civilian problem that arose as 1943 drew to a close was a dispute between General Strong, Head of Army Intelligence, and Byron Price, Director of the Office of Censorship. Price came to the office and told me the General was sending a letter to the Joint Chiefs which would charge that the civilian censorship organization was making it impossible for Strong to carry out his duties as Chief of Military Intelligence. Strong also, according to Price, had prepared a letter addressed to the President and designed for signature by the Joint Chiefs which would, as Price put it, "put me in my place."

The Censorship Director, whose agency had made an excellent record, said he wanted no part of any censorship dominated by the military. His office was completely independent of the Armed Services and responsible directly to the President. If the Joint Chiefs and the President felt he was not doing a good job, he said he should be asked to resign, and he would willingly do so. I thought his position was absolutely correct. The source of trouble was that Strong wanted information about the confidential sources of newspaper stories.

I discussed this with the J.C.S., and the general position of the Office of Censorship was supported. We recognized that the matter was a delicate one for the Civilian Censor, and asked only that he give the Joint Chiefs, in confidence, information in specific instances where it might be requested. Price replied that if a request was made by me as the direct representative of the President, he would comply on that basis. That settled the matter, and I think there were only one or two occasions when I did ask Price for information concerning certain stories. Not long afterward, General Strong was succeeded as Chief of Military Intelligence by General Bissell.

The last day of 1943 found the World War definitely progressing in favour of the Allied nations. Russia was carrying out a vigorous and successful offensive in the Ukraine. The British-American campaign in Italy was moving forward slowly under adverse weather conditions and stubborn opposition. Preparations were being rushed for a combined British-American invasion of Normandy in the spring.

In the Pacific our naval operations were forcing the Japanese westward through their heavily fortified islands, and MacArthur's northward movement from Australia through New Guinea was gaining speed and momentum. Only in Burma, because of a disinclination on the part of both the British and the Chinese to make a vigorous military effort, and a continuing dispute between Chiang Kai-shek and the American Army Commander, General Stilwell, did the planned campaign show signs of being a failure.

Unless we should make some stupid tactical or strategical error, the Axis appeared certain to be defeated, although, with desperate enemies on both sides of the world, the cost to us in lives and treasure would be very high.