

World War II Inter-Allied Conferences



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Photo: *British and American Combined Chiefs of Staff with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill. Left to Right (seated) GEN G. C. Marshall, ADM W. D. Leahy, President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, Field Marshal Sir John Dill; (standing) MAJGEN L. C. Hollis, GEN Sir Hastings Ismay, ADM E.J. King, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Charles Portal, GEN H. H. Arnold, ADM Sir A. B. Cunningham. Quebec Conference, Quebec, Canada, September 1944.*

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ARCADIA (Washington, D.C., 24 December 1941–14 January 1942). Roosevelt, Churchill, and the U.S. and British Chiefs of Staff conducted their first post-Pearl Harbor strategy conference. The political leaders drafted and signed the Declaration of the United Nations. The military chiefs discussed an invasion of North Africa, completed arrangements for American forces to relieve British troops in Iceland and Northern Ireland, made plans for American reinforcement of the South Pacific, and set up a combined allied command for Southeast Asia.

POST-ARCADIA (Washington, D.C. and London, 23 January 1941–19 May 1942). At twenty meetings, the Combined Chiefs of Staff worked out the details of implementing the ARCADIA decisions. They dealt with force deployments to the Pacific and Great Britain, command arrangements, and the allocation of shipping and supplies. The Combined Chiefs discussed the U.S. relief of British forces in Iceland and Northern Ireland, arrangements for the American buildup in the British Isles, and the availability of landing craft for possible invasions of the European continent in 1942 and 1943.

CASABLANCA CONFERENCE - VOLUME 1 OR VOLUME 2 (Casablanca, Morocco, 14–23 January 1943). This was the first of the great Allied mid-war conferences, with Roosevelt, Churchill, their military chiefs of staff, and the French leaders Henri Giraud and Charles de Gaulle in attendance. In the major U.S.-British debate, the British prevailed. The Allies postponed the cross-Channel invasion until 1944, but organized a combined staff to plan for it. For the immediate future, they would continue the Mediterranean campaign with an invasion of Sicily. They also decided to launch a combined strategic air offensive against Germany, and the Americans were to mount a Pacific offensive against Japan. Roosevelt and Churchill issued the Unconditional Surrender doctrine.

TRIDENT (Washington, D.C., 15–25 May 1943). Principal participants were Roosevelt, Churchill, their military chiefs of staff, and Generals Wavell, Chennault, and Stilwell from the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater. The Americans secured British agreement to a cross-Channel invasion with a target date of 1 May 1944. The allies reaffirmed their commitment to the strategic air offensive as preparation for the invasion. They agreed to continue the Mediterranean offensive with the aim of knocking Italy out of the war. The Americans won support for a stepped-up offensive in the Pacific, and the allies discussed operations to assist China.

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QUADRANT (Quebec, 14–24 August 1943). Roosevelt, Churchill, and their military chiefs of staff decided that the cross-Channel attack, codename OVERLORD, was to be the main Anglo-American effort in Europe for 1944, with a target date of 1 May. They approved the outline plan developed by the combined Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC) staff and authorized preparations. The combined bomber offensive was to continue with the "highest strategic priority." At the same time, the offensive against Italy was to continue. Planning was authorized for an invasion of southern France as a companion to OVERLORD. The allies approved the U.S. schedule of operations in the Central and South Pacific and established the Southeast Asia Command in the CBI. The leaders discussed the shift of forces to the Pacific after Germany's defeat and established a twelve-month target for finishing off Japan after Germany surrendered.

SEXTANT/EUREKA (Cairo and Tehran, 22 November–7 December 1943). Principal participants were Roosevelt, Churchill, the U.S. and British chiefs of staff, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (Cairo), and Josef Stalin (Tehran). The Americans, British, and Chinese discussed plans for the CBI. The Big Three (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin) stated that OVERLORD and the invasion of southern France would be the "supreme operations" in the west in 1944. Stalin promised to attack in the east simultaneously with the cross-Channel invasion. The Americans and British agreed that General Eisenhower would command the invasion. Stalin stated that the Soviet Union would enter the Pacific war after Germany was defeated. The allies agreed that the United States would continue its Central and South Pacific drives, including seizure of the Marianas as a base for B-29 raids on Japan. The allies discussed the future United Nations organization and post-war Polish boundaries. In the Cairo Declaration, the United States, Britain, and China stated their intention to strip Japan of all her pre-war and wartime conquests.

OCTAGON (Quebec, 12–16 September 1944). Roosevelt, Churchill, and their military chiefs of staff convened in the last of their mid-war conferences. They agreed on British and American occupation zones in Germany. Roosevelt and Churchill initialed the Morgenthau Plan for post-war German de-industrialization. Decisions on the Pacific war included approval of the U.S. invasion of Leyte and plans for British fleet participation in the final campaigns against Japan.

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ARGONAUT (Malta and Yalta, 20 January–11 February 1945). Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and their military leaders reached agreements on the occupation of Germany and Austria, including the creation of a French zone in Germany. Roosevelt and Stalin made a secret agreement on Soviet territorial gains in the Far East in return for Soviet participation in the war against Japan. The Big Three settled the issues of United Nations voting rights and Poland's government and frontiers. The three leaders issued a Declaration on Liberated Europe in which they committed themselves to free elections and democratic governments in the countries freed from the Nazis.

TERMINAL (Potsdam, 17 July–2 August 1945). This conference saw a changing of the guard among American and British leaders. Harry S. Truman replaced President Roosevelt, who had died on 12 April. In mid-conference, Clement Atlee replaced Churchill, whose party had lost Britain's first post-war election. The conferees discussed surrender terms for Japan, boundaries and peace terms for Europe, and Poland's frontiers and government. The Potsdam Declaration reaffirmed the Allies' demand for Japan's unconditional surrender and divestiture of its empire but promised to respect the human rights of the Japanese people. Privately, Truman informed Stalin that the United States had successfully tested a super-bomb.

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