

HAROLD MACMILLAN'S APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER AT ALGIERS, 1942: The Military, Political, and Diplomatic Background¹

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IN THE autumn of 1942, Allied forces operating under Dwight Eisenhower's direction invaded French North Africa. Because of unanticipated developments, the American general and his military and political advisers found themselves cooperating closely with Admiral Jean Darlan and other reputedly fascist officials²—this in seemingly flagrant disregard of the idealistic war aims announced in the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. The reaction to this strange and distasteful collaboration was a public uproar in liberal circles in the United States and a greater, more general, and more sustained wave of protest in Britain. British cabinet ministers, for moral and less altruistic reasons, likewise expressed their deep concern. Dissatisfaction was most profound among those dissident Frenchmen, notably General Charles de Gaulle, who remained at war against the Axis. Then, about six weeks later, the public indignation subsided when Darlan was replaced by a more reputable but ineffectual leader, General Henri Giraud. But the diplomatic controversies which had erupted over North African policies were not really eased until Washington agreed to the appointment of the future Prime Minister Harold Macmillan as the new British representative at Eisenhower's headquarters to share more fully in the political decision-making with the Americans.

I.

The invasion of Vichy-controlled North Africa was first considered at the Washington (*Arcadia*) conference between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill in December, 1941.

¹ The research for this essay, part of a larger study of Macmillan's political career, was made possible by a Rutgers University Faculty Academic Study Program fellowship.

² For a brief discussion of whether Vichy France was a fascist state, see Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944* (New York, 1972), pp. 228-33.

But the decision to give it preference over rival strategies, especially the "second front" favored by American military leaders to aid Russia, was made by the President in late July, 1942, after months of protracted arguments by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Roosevelt's motives were varied. He was anxious to seize the military initiative from the Axis powers. For some time, too, he had been concerned with the strategic significance of the French African empire for western hemispheric security. Churchill, dreading a cross-Channel attack on the European continent, welcomed Roosevelt's decision. He regarded the invasion of French North Africa as an opportunity to concert a predominantly American operation with a planned British counteroffensive against General Erwin Rommel's forces in Egypt and Libya. If the Allies proved successful, all of the Axis armies would be driven from North Africa, the Mediterranean made safe again for Allied shipping, and Sicily and mainland Italy opened to invasion from the south.³

The plans for Operation "Torch," as finally formulated, called for major landings at the Atlantic port of Casablanca and at the Mediterranean ports of Algiers and Oran. The invasion would be carried out by American assault divisions, followed closely by British supporting troops, with transport and air protection provided mainly by the British. The Americans would direct and assume ultimate responsibility for the entire campaign. A major policy decision, this was largely based on the Allied leaders' belief that the Americans, whose diplomatic relations with France remained unbroken until after the invasion, would encounter much less resistance than the British, who for two years had had no formal diplomatic relations with that country.

Roosevelt had perceived significant advantages for the American and French peoples in maintaining diplomatic ties with Vichy, despite the authoritarian and illiberal nature of the regime established by Marshal Philippe Pétain after the French military débacle in June, 1940.⁴ But

³ Leo J. Meyer, "The Decision to Invade North Africa (Torch)," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington, D.C., 1961), pp. 174-88; W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV: *The Hinge of Fate* (Boston, 1950), 432-39; Dwight David Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York, 1948), pp. 67-73; Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace* (New York, 1971 ed.), pp. 122-32, and *Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War* (London, 1968), pp. 22-35; George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West* (Washington, D.C., 1957), pp. 4-14; Richard W. Steele, *The First Offensive 1942: Roosevelt, Marshall and the Making of American Strategy* (Bloomington and London, 1973), pp. 167-82.

⁴ Roosevelt's controversial French policy is justified by William L. Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble* (New York, 1947), pp. 254-55. Cf. Arthur Layton Funk, *The Politics*

the British, from the outset, had felt directly menaced by Vichy's weakness and new pro-Axis orientation. Their efforts to forestall a German take-over of the French navy, climaxed by the bloody battle at Mers-el-Kebir, provoked a retaliatory raid on Gibraltar and a diplomatic rupture. Relations between the former allies worsened after the British imposed a naval blockade against metropolitan France and North Africa, granted encouragement and support to General de Gaulle and his London-based French National Committee, and joined with the Gaullists in attacks on Vichy's colonial empire.⁵

Thus, mainly because of Anglo-French tensions, the Combined Chiefs of Staff proceeded to appoint General Eisenhower as commander in chief of the Allied expeditionary forces and another American, General Mark Clark, as deputy commander. The high-ranking British officers who participated in the invasion were assigned to subordinate or less conspicuous posts. Political affairs and liaison with the civilian population were entrusted to Robert D. Murphy, counsellor to the American Embassy at Vichy, and William H. B. Mack, head of the French department at the Foreign Office, both of whom received appointments to Eisenhower's staff.⁶ Since it seemed imperative to avert suspicion of Mack's selection, which "might smack of behind-scenes interference of the British Foreign Office in France's colonial affairs,"⁷ he too was relegated to the background.

Murphy had unusual qualifications for his new assignment. A devout Roman Catholic with a conservative political outlook, he enjoyed the confidence of important Vichy officials, who kept him apprised of French factional intrigues and other developments. As early as 1940, he had discerned the political and military opportunities offered by French North Africa which, despite the presence of small German and Italian armistice commissions, still remained under the control of the Vichy authorities. In February, 1941, Murphy negotiated with the French an

of *TORCH: The Allied Landings and the Algiers Putsch 1942* (Lawrence, Manhattan, Wichita, 1974), pp. 3-8.

⁵ Paxton, *Vichy France*, pp. 56-57. Cf. Robert L. Melka, "Darlan between Britain and Germany 1940-41," *Journal of Contemporary History*, VIII (1973), 57-80.

⁶ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, pp. 67-73; Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 533-43; Howe, *Northwest Africa*, pp. 54-55.

⁷ "Mr. Mack understands the delicacy of the situation," Eisenhower's diarist added, "and while thinking it a good idea to make clear to the French the close Anglo-American collaboration in the N.A. operation, is willing to serve under any title and in any inconspicuous capacity. (He is a good soldier.)" *Butcher Diary* (October 13, 1942), p. 314, Eisenhower Library.

economic agreement which enabled the Americans to station twelve vice-consuls throughout that region. Although ostensibly charged with the distribution of relief supplies, all were given preliminary briefing and training in intelligence work in Washington.⁸

Murphy and his agents intensified their clandestine activities after military preparations got under way for Operation "Torch." Their efforts were greatly aided when rumors began to circulate that the Allies were planning an attack on French Africa and, mistakenly, that the Germans were preparing to transport an army there to stiffen the Vichy government's defences.⁹ French officials now began to sound out Murphy about the possibility of cooperation: they asked whether the Americans and British were prepared to send an effective military force to assist them and would also guarantee the integrity of the French colonial empire.¹⁰ According to Murphy's informants, even Admiral Darlan, the Anglophobic minister in charge of Vichy's defence forces, was ready to shift his allegiance, bringing with him the powerful fleet at Toulon, if these conditions were met. Murphy asked whether Washington was willing to cooperate with Darlan and stated that his own recommendation was favorable. But General George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, and other high American officials seemed skeptical about working with Darlan.¹¹

Murphy simultaneously sought to enlist the support of another important Frenchman, the five-star General Henri Giraud. Giraud, taken prisoner when his Ninth Army surrendered in 1940, had managed a

⁸ In October, 1940, Roosevelt, whose interest was awakened by Murphy's reports, recalled him to Washington. He entrusted him with a special mission, giving him oral instructions about returning to Algiers and establishing close relations with General Maxime Weygand, then head of the French North African administration. "You're a Catholic and General Weygand's a Catholic, so you can go to Church with him Sunday morning." Roosevelt was apparently seeking to create an anti-Vichy resistance movement, to be headed by Weygand rather than by de Gaulle (who had just failed to take Dakar), and hoping that Weygand might win the support of the French battle fleet. Robert D. Murphy, "Eisenhower Administration" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1973. Cf. Funk, *The Politics of TORCH*, pp. 9-10).

⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1942, II, 321, 322-23, 341, 359, 372-73, 375, 387, 389, 392-94, 399.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1942, II, 228, 229.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1942, II, 248-49, 283-84, 392-94; Robert D. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, N.Y., 1964), pp. 113-15; Funk, *The Politics of TORCH*, pp. 22-25, 37, 128-29; Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. (ed.), *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The War Years* (Baltimore and London, 1970), I, 624-25 fn.

Churchill's view on this subject was much more pragmatic: "Kiss Darlan's stern if you have to but get the French Navy." Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York, 1946), p. 178a.

spectacular escape from a German fortress to unoccupied France in April, 1942. Thereafter, although professing loyalty to Pétain,¹² he established contact with other French military leaders, especially in Algeria and Morocco, and worked for an uprising in the spring of 1943, when he anticipated an Allied invasion of southern France. Giraud was strongly anti-German. He had also had a long and distinguished career in North Africa. Murphy, who thought he might serve as a rallying figure for patriotic anti-Axis elements, considered him "the Allies' best hope among Frenchmen."¹³

In the late summer of 1942, Murphy began secret talks with General Charles E. Mast, chief of staff of the Nineteenth Army Corps at Algiers, who headed a small underground pro-resistance group in North Africa and was also authorized to act as Giraud's spokesman. Murphy gave assurances that the French would be treated as a fully sovereign ally and furnished essential arms and other supplies if they were prepared to assist the landing of American troops. The discussions, which involved many lesser issues, got off to a satisfactory start; and Murphy was authorized to proceed. By mid-October, the negotiations became mainly concerned with the specific details of Allied-French military cooperation. General agreement on these issues was finally reached on October 22, during a secret rendezvous by General Clark and Murphy with General Mast and an aide at Cherchel, on the African coast.¹⁴ With only minor revision, the Cherchel agreement was accepted by Washington. A few days later, on October 27, Murphy was told when he might divulge the date of the North African invasion to Giraud or his representative. On November 2, he was likewise authorized to pledge Lend-Lease aid to the "French army fighting the Axis" and foodstuffs for the North African civilian population.¹⁵

Despite the prolonged earlier negotiations, there were still unsettled problems about Giraud's role even at the moment the Allies launched

¹² To avoid trouble with the Germans, who were demanding his return, Giraud sent a letter pledging his loyalty to Pétain. This letter was unknown to the Americans when they decided to negotiate with him. Funk, *The Politics of TORCH*, pp. 46-48; Brian Crozier, *De Gaulle* (New York, 1973), p. 197.

¹³ Chandler, *Eisenhower War Papers*, I, 624-25 fn.

¹⁴ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 394-96; Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, pp. 117-20; Mark Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York, 1950), pp. 79-86.

As late as October 17, 1942, the Americans were advocating an agreement between Giraud and Darlan and still undecided "as to which one of these two individuals we should make our chief collaborator. . . ." Chandler, *Eisenhower War Papers*, I, 556-57.

¹⁵ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 406, 415.

their invasion. Eisenhower met with the French general at Government House, Gibraltar, the temporary Allied headquarters, on November 7 and again on the morning of November 8. The main outcome of the lengthy and often heated discussions was that Giraud acknowledged Eisenhower's supreme authority as Allied commander in the western Mediterranean, while Giraud was recognized as chief of the French North African civilian and military administration and received Eisenhower's pledge of "fullest cooperation." The French general's arrogance and grandiose claims—he boasted, for example, that he outranked the Allied commanders and that he was "the incarnation of French resistance"—sorely irked the Americans and British. "All felt something had to be done with him . . .," Commander Harry Butcher noted in his diary, "even a little airplane accident. . . ." ¹⁶ But Eisenhower was preoccupied with the impending military action and, like Murphy, regarded Giraud's cooperation as highly important for its success. ¹⁷

The Allies justified their assault on North Africa, launched before dawn on November 8, as a preventive action to forestall a planned Axis attack against territories controlled by a friendly neutral nation. ¹⁸ They met with sporadic and occasionally bloody resistance from loyal Vichyite commanders during the next few days. Then an armistice was signed, the French forces in Algeria and Morocco ceased their resistance, and a British-led army moved rapidly eastward into Tunisia, the key to control of the central Mediterranean. Here bad weather, supply difficulties, and a prompt counter-invasion by German troops, which was unopposed by the French, delayed the Allied takeover until the following spring. To safeguard his dangerously-extended lines of communication and to control the large restive Arab population, Eisenhower needed the active cooperation of the local French military units, then numbering almost 140,000 men. But, contrary to Murphy's intelligence reports, most of the French officers and French civilians too, with the exception of a small pro-Gaullist minority, were either loyal to Pétain or unwilling to run any risk. ¹⁹ Giraud, who had delayed his arrival in Algiers to

¹⁶ *Butcher Diary* (November 8, 1942), p. Gib-22.

¹⁷ Lieutenant General F.N.M. MacFarlane, "Minutes of Meeting with Giraud," *Eisenhower Papers*, Personal Files, Box no. 143, Eisenhower Library; Chandler, *Eisenhower War Papers*, I, 582; Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, p. 171.

¹⁸ Roosevelt to Pétain, November 8, 1942. A. J. Toynbee (ed.), *Documents on International Affairs 1939-1946*, II: *Hitler's Europe* (London, New York, and Toronto, 1954), pp. 146-48.

¹⁹ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, p. 104; Sir Llewelyn Roodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London, 1970-71), II, 360-61.

avoid fighting fellow-Frenchmen, made a belated radio broadcast for support; but his claims to leadership were virtually ignored by the Vichy authorities.²⁰

The major immediate problem of the Allies and their sympathizers was the unanticipated presence in Algiers of the formidable Admiral Darlan, who had flown there on November 5. Although an extraordinary coincidence, his arrival in North Africa on the eve of the Allies' invasion was occasioned by his son's serious illness; and the timing is generally believed by historians to have been accidental.²¹ It was Darlan who issued the orders that the Allied landings be resisted. Then, during the evening of November 8, when he realized the strength of the invading force, he sent a startling message to Eisenhower's headquarters asking for the opening of negotiations. Clark and Giraud left Gibraltar for Algiers the next day to confer with Murphy and to see Darlan and the local French commanders. Darlan emphasized his continued loyalty to Pétain and flatly rejected Giraud's claim to leadership. On the following day, November 10, the two Americans decided that military considerations justified the conclusion of an immediate arrangement with the Vichy leader. In effect, the Americans agreed to accept Darlan and the Vichy colonialist regime in North Africa, with its internal structure intact, in order to obtain a cease-fire and to sustain the military offensive against Tunisia.²²

Military cooperation followed shortly as a result of Hitler's aggressive counter-measures. On November 11, when news arrived that the Ger-

²⁰ Chandler, *Eisenhower War Papers*, II, 672; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, p. 104. The Allies, after renewing earlier promises, had urged Giraud to depart immediately for North Africa and had asked him to issue a declaration that he intended "to repel Axis threat to North Africa with aid of Americans." Giraud's reluctance was partly due to his strong preference for an invasion of southern France. *Operational Papers of the Prime Minister's Office, May 1940 to July 1945*, Public Record Office, PREM. 3/16/45 (hereafter cited as PREM. 3).

²¹ Darlan had recently made a tour of inspection in French North and West Africa. About that same time, his son Alain, a young insurance official in Tunis then on active duty as a naval reserve officer, contracted polio and was sent to a hospital in Algeria. Shortly after returning to Vichy, Darlan was notified that the patient's condition had become critical; and he flew back to Algiers to join his wife at their son's bedside. Lincoln Barnett, "Mr. Murphy Paves the Way," p. 4. *Eisenhower Papers*, Principal Files, Box no. 77 (Murphy File), Eisenhower Library. Cf. Funk, *The Politics of TORCH*, pp. 194-95, and Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York, 1948), pp. 649-50.

²² The best accounts of the complicated Allied-French negotiations before and immediately after the North African landings are found in Arthur L. Funk, "Negotiating the 'Deal with Darlan,'" *Journal of Contemporary History*, VIII (1973), 81-117, and his previously-cited *The Politics of TORCH*. Cf. Clark, *Calculated Risk*, pp. 105-12 and Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, pp. 128-39.

mans had invaded unoccupied France and made Pétain a virtual prisoner, Darlan, pretending that he had secret instructions to act for the aged Marshal, ordered the French fleet to sail south from Toulon and directed the residents-general of Morocco and Tunisia to join him in fighting the Axis. Pressured by the Americans, he also reached an agreement with Giraud on November 13 whereby the latter would become head of the French armies in North Africa. General Auguste Noguès, who had strongly resisted the Allied landings in Morocco, rallied to Darlan's support. But the Tunisian resident, Admiral Jean Esteva, was evasive in his reply. The naval authorities in France chose to respect Pétain's authority for still another two weeks, until German troops advanced on Toulon; they then followed standing orders and scuttled their warships on November 27.

II.

Milton Eisenhower, the general's youngest brother who had served as head of the War Relocation Authority and was then associate director of the Office of War Information, has described in an interesting, but expectedly partisan, account his personal impressions of the American reaction to the developments in North Africa. Because of the time difference, the public learned of the invasion at 9 p.m. on Saturday night, November 7. "Radio reports poured in. Newspaper headlines were quarter-page high. Pictures of Ike [Eisenhower] and his staff were everywhere. . . . Everyone was joyful. At last we were in the real thing." The news of Darlan's cease-fire and adherence to the Allies was delayed until the following Saturday, November 14. "This was good. Now we could fight the real enemy." "Dr. Milton" attributed the sudden unfavorable shift in American opinion against the Clark-Darlan arrangement to a "terrible blast" the next evening against American dealings with "traitors" by Edward R. Murrow, the popular radio commentator broadcasting from London, and to "a very violent minority" of other anti-Vichy press and radio reporters. Wendell Willkie, the 1940 Republican presidential candidate, added to the uproar two days later by attacking the Darlan deal, the censorship of news from North Africa, and British colonial policies in India. Reports also came in that the London government had not been consulted and that Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and de Gaulle and the Fighting French were indignant. (Ostensibly to prevent "leaks," the latter had been denied any role in

the invasion or its planning.²³) Even so, Milton Eisenhower thought the issue was “about dead” a week later when High Commissioner Pierre Boisson of French West Africa responded favorably to Darlan’s appeal that he join him and the Allies, and “Dakar appeared to be in the bag.” But then a new serious incident arose over a letter issued by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, at Roosevelt’s request, authorizing Archduke Otto to recruit an Austrian legion in the United States to fight on the side of the Allies. Critics of the administration (for its dealings with the Pétain government) now asked whether the United States hoped to restore the Habsburgs in Austria and whether “we” had “more agreements up our sleeves that will affect Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.”²⁴

The President may be acquitted of any such intentions. He had not been consulted in advance of the Darlan deal. Trusting the judgment of his war advisers, he accepted their arguments that military exigencies made it imperative to maintain the Vichy regime in North Africa. But liberal observers at home and abroad were disquieted when he remained silent about the local fascistic organizations, the concentration camps for political prisoners, the Nuremberg-type anti-Jewish legislation, and the other violations of civil liberties and human rights. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who had been entrusted by the Combined Chiefs of Staff with responsibility for economic and other non-military affairs in North Africa, likewise seemed oblivious to these problems. Hull expressed great confidence in his subordinate, Robert Murphy, and, while urging the American diplomat “to cooperate fully” with the British, reminded him that the basic responsibility was “ours.”²⁵ Roosevelt and Hull both chose to disregard the repeated remonstrations and appeals of de Gaulle; the latter, although granted direct Lend-Lease aid one month earlier, was personally much disliked by the two Americans and was regarded by them as a British protégé. Murphy later also suggested that the President ignored the wishes of the Fighting French leader because

²³ Roosevelt was convinced that leaks within de Gaulle’s organization were responsible for his failure to take Dakar in September, 1940. More fundamental, however, was the Americans’ concern about the Vichy military leaders’ hostility towards de Gaulle. General Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower’s chief of staff, explained the problem to Commander Butcher: “If you take de Gaulle and his people into this operation, we would be simply adding to our existing complications all of the additional hatreds that are inherent in civil war.” *Butcher Diary* (September 9, 1942), p. 211.

²⁴ “Milton Eisenhower’s Summary, Principally of Home Reactions and Ducking re: Darlan,” *Butcher Diary* (December 15, 1942), pp. A 87-88.

²⁵ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 438, 449-51.

he did not want "the French to create a single, well-established central government which can have a big trading position when and if we reach . . . the peace table" and preferred to deal with provisional local French governments, until after the war, "in each of the bits and gobs of French territory taken by the Allies."²⁶

The first public response in Britain to the Allied invasion of French North Africa was also one of great jubilation. The favorable reports here had been preceded by good news four days earlier from Egypt where the British Eighth Army, under Sir Harold Alexander and Sir Bernard Montgomery, had opened a major offensive against General Rommel, in anticipation of "Torch," and had achieved a decisive breakthrough. Then word arrived of the Americans' new political arrangements with the Vichy French, and the initial joy evaporated quickly. Churchill admits, in his war history, that "passion ran high in England about the Darlan deal. It affected poignantly some of my friends who had been most affected by Munich. . . . Many of those with whom I was in closest mental and moral harmony were in extreme distress." Churchill blamed the press and, more especially, de Gaulle and the Fighting French organization in London for fanning these hostile emotions. At the same time, because of diplomatic considerations, Churchill felt that "the facts could not be stated nor the arguments deployed in public."²⁷

During the closing weeks of 1942, opinion in both Britain and the United States continued in a disturbed and agitated mood. The President found it necessary to make reassuring press statements. Allied headquarters in Algiers, although preoccupied with military problems and French intrigues, frequently reviewed the arguments justifying Eisenhower's political decisions. British ministers disagreed about North African policy, although most were opposed, and the War Cabinet²⁸

²⁶ *Butcher Diary* (January 4, 1943), p. A-101; cf. Anthony Eden, *Memoirs*, II: *The Reckoning* (Boston, 1965), 460-61.

²⁷ Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 637. Churchill omits any reference here to the angry denunciations of his left-wing critics. Aneurin Bevan, for example, writing in *Tribune* against the Darlan arrangement, asked, "What kind of Europe have we in mind? One built by rats for rats?" Michael Foot, *Aneurin Bevan: A Biography* (New York, 1963-74), I, 404.

²⁸ The composition of the War Cabinet varied considerably during 1940-45. In the autumn of 1942, the members who attended the meetings in London regularly were Winston Churchill (Prime Minister and Minister of Defence), Clement Attlee (Deputy Prime Minister and Dominions Secretary), Sir John Anderson (Lord President), Anthony Eden (Foreign Secretary), Ernest Bevin (Minister of Labour), Oliver Lyttelton (Minister of Production), and Herbert Morrison (Home Secretary).

met in frequent session. De Gaulle's fulminations contributed to the atmosphere of mistrust and tension.

The initial diplomatic exchanges between the British and American governments were based on incomplete and confusing reports. On November 11, Churchill sent a telegram to Roosevelt stressing the importance of unifying "all Frenchmen who regard Germany as the foe." Britain was "under quite definite and solemn obligations" to de Gaulle, who was ready to send a mission to North Africa to cooperate with Giraud. ". . . You and I ought to avoid at all costs the creation of rival French émigré Governments, each favoured by one of us." Roosevelt, replying the next day, declared that he had no objections to de Gaulle's sending an emissary to Algiers but reminded Churchill that there was still "a cat-fight in progress" between Giraud and Darlan. The President thought that all three French "prima donnas" should be told that "the situation today is solely in the military field" and that any decision "by any one or all of them" had to be subject to review and approval by Eisenhower.²⁹

Churchill read the text of both telegrams a few hours later at a meeting with the War Cabinet in his room at the House of Commons. Concerned mainly with war operations and harmonious relations with the United States, which he recognized as vital to Allied victory, he claimed that he and the President were agreed on "the importance of fusing all anti-German French forces together to make a united Government."³⁰ But the directors of the Foreign Office took a more skeptical view of American intentions. Their responsibilities included the conduct of relations with the Fighting French and the various governments in exile and also postwar European and world planning. Anticipating future problems, they thought that de Gaulle was needed to rebuild a strong, friendly France which would have a common interest in controlling the defeated Germans, in checking Russian and communist expansionism, and in resisting growing American trade and anti-colonialist pressures.

More immediately, the Foreign Office vented its strong animosity against the Vichy leaders at Algiers. Sir Alexander Cadogan, the permanent under-secretary, complained in his diary on November 12 that the arrangement with Darlan was "a dirty deal," adding that "If Darlan would give us fleet and Tunisia, I should be very grateful—and

²⁹ Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 630; *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/109.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 65/28/107.

then throw him down a deep well.”³¹ Eden, using a draft prepared by Cadogan, sent a telegram to William Mack, the civil liaison officer in Algiers, instructing him to convey to Eisenhower the British doubts about working with Darlan. As for Giraud, he would be acceptable as commander in chief of the French forces in North Africa, but his authority would not be recognized in the French colonies which “owed allegiance to de Gaulle.” Eden likewise made known his concern to the American ambassador John Winant and sent a cable to Lord Halifax, the British ambassador in Washington, asking him to make it plain to the President or Secretary Hull that “the inclusion of Darlan in a French administration would be most unpopular in Britain unless Darlan delivered the goods in the shape of the French navy.” Even, so, neither de Gaulle nor any of the other Fighting French leaders would be willing to collaborate with him. If the Americans persisted in supporting the Vichy leader, “all hopes of unifying the French Empire in the war against the Axis would be frustrated.”³²

Officials in Washington now began to display similar divisions. At the President’s request, Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles, who favored the de Gaulle movement,³³ prepared a draft telegram on November 13 instructing Murphy to exclude certain notorious Vichy officials from the Darlan administration, to secure the release of Gaullist and other political prisoners, and to remove the Nazi-inspired legislation directed against the sizable Jewish population in North Africa. Welles had been told to show this directive to General Marshall before it was sent. Marshall, after discussing the precarious military situation in North Africa with the President, replied several days later that these reforms should be introduced only if Eisenhower thought them practicable. The message, as revised by Marshall, was sent on November 20. Eisenhower and Murphy concluded that Vichyite French opposition and Arab dislike of the Jews were so strong that it would be extremely dangerous to attempt to carry out these reforms immediately.³⁴

Meantime, the London authorities had received messages from the

³¹ David Dilkes (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945* (New York, 1972), pp. 491-92.

³² Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 403; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 365.

³³ Arthur Layton Funk, *Charles de Gaulle: The Crucial Years, 1943-1944* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1959), p. 27.

³⁴ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 442-43, 448; Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, pp. 147-48; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, p. 128; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 369.

Allied commander in chief, and also from the Allied naval commander Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, explaining local problems and the Allies' dependence on Darlan.³⁵ But the British remained doubtful of the military leaders' political judgment. On November 15, one week after the first North African landings, Churchill had a lengthy exchange of views with Anthony Eden and another old trusted friend, Field Marshal Jan Christian Smuts, the South African prime minister who was then visiting London. All three expressed suspicion of the good faith of the Vichy leader and his associates.³⁶ That same day, Churchill sent a personal telegram to the President informing him that, while seeing no practical alternatives to Eisenhower's political arrangements, "our doubts and anxieties were not removed. . . ."³⁷ On November 16, the Prime Minister met again with the War Cabinet. He informed his colleagues that he had recently received a cable from Eisenhower justifying his policies and that he had just sent a telegram to Roosevelt indicating his doubts. The Prime Minister also discussed an emotional meeting he and the Foreign Secretary had had with de Gaulle earlier that morning. De Gaulle had bitterly protested against the Allies' "dealings with a traitor" and, despite the British ministers' reassurances, had insisted on issuing a critical communiqué. He announced that he was withdrawing his earlier offer to send emissaries to North Africa now that Giraud had agreed to serve with Darlan.³⁸

President Roosevelt, belatedly responding to his critics, made a lengthy statement at his press conference on November 17 to explain American policy in North Africa. This statement had been prepared by Elmer Davis and Milton Eisenhower, of the Office of War Information, and by Archibald MacLeish, one of the White House assistants, but it had been greatly revised by the President, particularly to dispel Churchill's fears. Roosevelt declared that he was accepting Eisenhower's conduct of political policy in North Africa "for the time being." He understood and approved the popular objections and agreed that "no permanent arrangement" should be made with Darlan. The arrangement with Darlan was a "temporary expedient," applying only to the immediate local situation and was justified "solely by the stress

³⁵ Chandler, *Eisenhower War Papers*, II, 707-10; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 369.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 367.

³⁷ Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 631-32.

³⁸ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/112; Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 404; de Gaulle, *War Memoirs*, II, 57.

of battle.” The United States was opposed to all Frenchmen “who support Hitler and the Axis.” The future French government would be established, Roosevelt pledged, not by anyone in the American army and “not by any individual in Metropolitan France or overseas, but by the French people themselves after they have been set free by the victory of the United Nations.”³⁹

Milton Eisenhower thought that the President’s statement had quelled the violent storm that was developing, although he also thought that it “contained the word ‘temporary’ to the point of redundancy” and feared its effect on the “tenuous arrangements” in North Africa.⁴⁰ Even so, Roosevelt chose to make an even stronger statement several days later at an off-the-record conference with members of the press. He quoted an old Orthodox Christian proverb of the Balkans that it was permitted “in time of grave danger to walk with the devil until you have crossed the bridge.”⁴¹

The Foreign Office, still uninformed of Roosevelt’s November 17th press statement, sent a brief memorandum that same day to the Prime Minister repeating all of the criticisms of Darlan, warning that he should not be allowed to become the head of a permanent administration, and calling for the abrogation of the notorious Vichy laws still being enforced by the North African officials. Eden also instructed Halifax to insist to the American authorities that all Allied internees and pro-Ally political prisoners be released.⁴² That same night, Churchill sent another personal message to the President warning that he was not “sufficiently impressed with the surge of feeling, and certainly not of British feeling.” Darlan had “an odious record” and now “plays the turncoat.” A permanent arrangement with him, Churchill concluded, “would not be understood by the great masses of ordinary people. . . .”⁴³

The President’s conciliatory reply, along with a copy of his first press statement, reached London the following morning. He hoped that Churchill would like it and accept it “at face value.”⁴⁴ Churchill writes that he was much “relieved” and that the press statement “met my

³⁹ Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1942* (New York, 1950), pp. 479-80.

⁴⁰ “Milton Eisenhower’s Summary,” *Butcher Diary*, p. A-88.

⁴¹ Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 635-36.

⁴² *FRUS*, 1942, II, 446-47; Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 404; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 369.

⁴³ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 445-46; Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 523.

⁴⁴ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/112.

view and the public need." "Your public statement about Darlan," he cabled Roosevelt a few days later, "has settled the matter in the best possible way."⁴⁵ Ambassador Winant also sent a cheerful message informing Secretary Hull that "the President's statement has cleared the Darlan situation here."⁴⁶

At the War Cabinet meeting on November 18, Churchill discussed his recent correspondence with the President. But Ernest Bevin, the powerful trade union leader who served as Minister of Labour, expressed his concern about the status of labor unions under Darlan. It was desirable, Bevin argued, to annul "any legislation extending to French North Africa a law which had been passed by the Vichy Government, the effect of which had been to recast them in a Fascist mould." The War Cabinet tabled the matter by suggesting that Bevin take it up in consultation with Foreign Secretary Eden.⁴⁷

The Anglo-American controversy flared up again almost immediately, however, after Eisenhower sent a cable to Washington on November 19, asking that he be authorized to sign a protocol formalizing the November 10th Clark-Darlan agreement. The text of this document, along with Eisenhower's urgent arguments that it be approved, was circulated to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on November 20. After brief consultations at the White House, the Combined Chiefs responded that the President approved the draft generally but he asked that all diplomatic terms implying formal negotiations with Darlan should be avoided and that reference be made to the temporary nature of the agreement. The document, as modified to meet the President's wishes, was signed on November 22.⁴⁸

Churchill was inclined to accept Eisenhower's protocol, even in its original form. Smuts had recently sent a telegram from Allied headquarters in Algiers, which he visited on his way back to South Africa, warning the Prime Minister that recent unfavorable statements published about Darlan had had "unsettling effects on local leaders, and it would be dangerous to go farther on these lines." Smuts was reassuring that "Darlan and his friends have burnt their boats and are doing their best to fight the Axis. . . ."⁴⁹ Moreover, Churchill had received another message from Roosevelt on November 20, quoting his off-the-

⁴⁵ Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 633-34.

⁴⁶ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 448.

⁴⁷ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/128/123.

⁴⁸ *PREM.* 3/442/10; Chandler, *Eisenhower War Papers*, II, 737-38; *FRUS*, 1942, 453 fn.; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 373-74.

⁴⁹ *PREM.* 3/442/10; Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 634-35.

record press statement stigmatizing Darlan as a devil and, more significantly, proposing to share greater future political responsibility with the British. "In regard to North Africa and possibly additional future areas," the President suggested, "I think you and I might give some consideration to the idea of appointing one Britisher and one American to whom would be given authority not to administer civil functions but to hold a veto power over French civil administrators, and to direct them in rare instances to follow out certain policies." The President's next remarks were doubtless intended to disarm his British critics. "For example, I sent word to Eisenhower that all political prisoners in North and West Africa must be released. If Darlan fails to carry out this directive Eisenhower must at once exercise his authority as Supreme Commander and take independent action in the matter."⁵⁰

Eden disagreed strongly with both the President and the Prime Minister. He was much more sympathetic than either to the complaints of de Gaulle and the Fighting French; he was also resentful that the Foreign Office had not been consulted. In a diary entry of November 20, he wrote that he had engaged in a shouting match with Churchill over the protocol and that he had stopped him from approving it. Eden later explained that he wanted the inclusion of certain amendments particularly in the first part, which seemed to accord Darlan recognition as France's legitimate representative. Churchill, seeing that his arguments were not persuasive, agreed to refer the issue to a special Saturday meeting of the War Cabinet.⁵¹ It was only after a long debate and after Churchill's arguments were strongly supported by General Sir Alan Brooke, the chief of the Imperial General Staff, that Eden agreed that the "right course was to accept the President's view of matters." Before disbanding, however, the War Ministers were warned by Lord Cranborne, the leader in the upper house, that Lord Vansittart, a former permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, intended to ask for a debate on the Darlan issue some time during the following week. Cranborne was instructed to make representations to Vansittart that such a debate should not be held "at this juncture, more particularly in open session."⁵²

British opinion remained generally critical of the protocol even as revised by Roosevelt. De Gaulle was openly hostile. On the same day that it was signed, the Prime Minister, to avoid offending the Ameri-

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, 635-36.

⁵¹ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 406-07.

⁵² *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/123-30.

cans, had to take steps to prevent the prickly Fighting French leader from broadcasting a public attack.⁵³ On November 24, the War Cabinet discussed a private notice question by an opposition member of Parliament, who had made public this censorship episode earlier that same morning, and authorized Churchill to make a reply.⁵⁴ The War Cabinet received even more disquieting news when it met on November 27. Five members of the House of Commons, led by the fiery Welshman Aneurin Bevan, had given notice of their intention to introduce a censure motion, "That this House is of the opinion that our relations with Admiral Darlan and his kind are inconsistent with the ideals for which we entered and are fighting this war. . . ." Though Churchill thought it unlikely that this motion would attract much support, it was stated, doubtless by Eden (the *Cabinet Minutes* often fail to identify the speaker), that "there was an under-current of anxiety among a number of persons well disposed to the Government but who were not in full possession of the full facts, and who feared that the action taken in North Africa presaged agreements with Quislings in other countries." The War Cabinet decided that Eden, now also leader in the House of Commons, should announce that the motion could be debated on a day "to be found" during the week beginning Monday, December 7. The debate, however, would be held in secret session "since affairs of other countries besides our own were concerned."⁵⁵

Simultaneously, in late November, the British authorities devoted much attention to other French issues. The Foreign Office carefully considered Roosevelt's proposal of November 20, suggesting the appointment of new British and American representatives to supervise the French civil administration in Algiers. Eden, although favorable to the idea, took the position that these representatives should not be accredited to the Darlan administration but should act as political agents of their respective governments and relieve Eisenhower of his civil responsibilities. Churchill cabled this suggestion to Roosevelt on November 24.⁵⁶ Other problems arose over Governor Boisson's delay in releasing the Fighting French and British prisoners taken at the time of the attack on Dakar, the continued neutrality of the immobilized French warships under Admiral Godfroy at Alexandria, and Darlan's despatch of mes-

⁵³ De Gaulle, *War Memoirs*, II, 57-59.

⁵⁴ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/133. The questioner was R. R. Stokes, the member for Ipswich. The reply was actually made by Eden, not Churchill.

⁵⁵ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/143.

⁵⁶ Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 371.

sages to Vichy politicians and heads of diplomatic missions abroad seeking their political recognition and adherence to his regime. This last news was of particular concern to Eden. On November 26, he sent a note to the Prime Minister warning of the grave risks in dealing with officials associated with the Vichy government and of the moral damage to Allied propaganda efforts in France and elsewhere in Europe; he asked for new discussions with the United States. But Churchill refused, arguing that the responsibility was primarily on the Americans and that he preferred to wait on developments.⁵⁷

On December 3, William Mack, the Foreign Office representative at Allied headquarters, arrived back in London with an optimistic report about North African prospects and a request from the Allied commander in chief asking the British to exercise greater patience.⁵⁸ Eden, obviously dissatisfied, tersely writes that "we briefed him with our opinions."⁵⁹ Eden's hostility was evidently aggravated by disturbing reports which continued to reach the Foreign Office. Darlan, with Boisson's cooperation, was now actively engaged in projects to combine North and West Africa and other French colonial territories into a "French Imperial Federation," as a rival to de Gaulle's National Committee. Furthermore, as Darlan made clear in letters to Eisenhower and Clark, he intended to retain power not on a temporary basis, i.e. until the capture of Tunisia, but until "the integrity of France's sovereignty is an accomplished fact. . . ."⁶⁰ Eisenhower, although cautioned by the State Department, seemed inclined to tolerate the Vichy leader's political ambitions.⁶¹

Reports of continued strong British criticisms led Eisenhower to send a personal telegram to Churchill on December 5, assuring him that "We are not entering a cabal designed to place Darlan at the head of anything except the local [North African] organization" where, because

⁵⁷ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 410; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 374-77.

⁵⁸ "The general conclusion which emerged [from Mack's report] . . . was that, if we exercised patience and allowed the situation to develop, there was some prospect of bringing to the head of the French administration leaders well disposed towards the Allied cause who would be prepared to work together . . . [and] would be able themselves to get rid of the unreliable elements now included in the administration." *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/159. Cf. Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 411, and Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, p. 226.

⁵⁹ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 411.

⁶⁰ Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 636-37; Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, pp. 206-07.

⁶¹ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 472-78.

of the fighting in Tunisia, "he is entirely necessary. . . ."⁶² But Eden remained unconvinced. Believing that Allied headquarters in Algiers were ignoring the President's pledges, he wrote another strong note warning Churchill against Darlan's ambitions. He now also proposed going ahead with a modified version of Roosevelt's November 20th proposal: the British and American governments, he thought, should send new political advisers "of high authority" to Algiers.⁶³ Eden discussed his idea with Ambassador Winant and prepared an urgent draft telegram which, with the Prime Minister's approval, he sent off to Lord Halifax on December 5. The British ambassador was instructed to make known to the Americans the profound British anxiety regarding Darlan's efforts to entrench himself in power. Referring also to a recent statement by Eisenhower that had offended the Fighting French, Eden argued that "A commander in the field should not be called upon to make political pronouncements." It was urgent, he concluded, that Britain and the United States should carry out the President's suggestion that new political representatives be sent to Algiers to deal with such questions.⁶⁴

Eden discussed Mack's report with the War Cabinet on December 7. He argued that it was necessary to relieve Eisenhower of his political responsibilities "at the earliest possible moment." The War Ministers were also told that such a proposal had already been made to the President.⁶⁵ Churchill, however, was becoming increasingly uneasy about the whole North African situation and the possible political and diplomatic repercussions; he privately asked Eden to postpone the House of Commons secret debate, now definitely scheduled for December 10. But the latter, supported by Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee and James Stuart, the Government chief whip, refused, arguing that the "House would resent postponement and country's suspicions of Darlan [would] be increased."⁶⁶

On the very next day, December 8, Halifax reported back to London that his interviews with Hull and Roosevelt, arranged in response to Eden's message three days earlier, had not proceeded at all well. The

⁶² PREM. 3/6/71; Chandler, *Eisenhower War Papers*, II, 801-04.

⁶³ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 411.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 411-12.

⁶⁵ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/159.

⁶⁶ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 413. Attlee also wrote Churchill a note the next day warning that the Labour party strongly disapproved the Darlan deal and was concerned that a similar deal might be arranged with the Italian Fascists if they overthrew Mussolini. Funk, *The Politics of TORCH*, p. 260.

Secretary of State had been very sensitive to the criticism implied in the British request for new political representatives at Algiers. The President, more conciliatory, had agreed on the need to restore civil rights and to revoke all discriminatory measures still in force in North Africa. He had also spoken vaguely of creating a new North African governmental commission, of which Darlan would be only one of the members. But he felt that the Allies would have to act slowly because of military considerations. He still thought well of his idea of sending qualified British and American representatives to Algiers, wondered why more progress had not been made with the proposal, and mentioned as likely nominees either Robert Murphy or H. Freeman Matthews, the American chargé in London who was serving as Murphy's deputy during the invasion. In any event, whatever representatives were chosen, their actions should always be subject to Eisenhower's final authority.⁶⁷

Eden's reaction to this news was that Roosevelt had probably changed his mind about the whole idea. In suggesting that the proposed new representatives in Algiers be subject to Eisenhower's final authority, the President was evidently bent on maintaining existing arrangements. The nominees proposed by the President also seemed unsatisfactory: both were identified with the Darlan deal and were strongly anti-Gaullist. Eden thought that the British should force the hand of the Americans by naming their own new North African representative and by announcing that they intended to send him to Algiers at an early date.⁶⁸

The War Cabinet held a troubled meeting on December 9. The discussions centered about a recent message from the British consul-general at Casablanca reporting that Axis agents had been allowed by Vichy officials to cross the border freely between Spanish and French Morocco. The War Cabinet then approved a telegram, prepared by the Foreign Office, which Churchill sent off to Roosevelt that same evening. The Prime Minister criticized the continued existence and activities of French fascist organizations, the reinstatement of known German sympathizers in official positions while "our good friends" were denied employment, the absence of secure frontier controls, and the continuing hardly-disguised anti-Allied propaganda. He closed with the statement that "all

⁶⁷ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 413-14; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 378.

⁶⁸ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 414.

of this reinforces the need for immediate political and administrative help for Eisenhower.”⁶⁹

The next day, the long-scheduled debate over North African affairs took place in the House of Commons. Aneurin Bevan opened the attack even before the House went into closed session.⁷⁰ No report of the secret debate was officially recorded, but the full text of Churchill’s speech is now available at the Public Record Office.⁷¹ Churchill’s arguments were blunt. This was essentially an American operation, and the Americans were providing most of the ground forces and air power. They regarded Northwest Africa “as a war sphere which is in their keeping just as we regard the E. Mediterranean as a theatre for which we are responsible.” Unlike certain Britons, they were more concerned with the lives of their soldiers than with the “past records of French political figures.” Finally, Eisenhower was only being realistic in thinking that most Frenchmen still regarded de Gaulle as a rebel, Pétain as their lawful chief, and Darlan as his accredited agent. Churchill writes in his war history—over-optimistically, as was subsequently evident—that he felt the opinion of members changed perceptibly as he spoke and that “all further opposition stopped after the Secret Session quenched the hostile press and reassured the country.” A few days later, he cabled Halifax in Washington, who in turn relayed the news to Sumner Welles, that “the secret session of the House of Commons with regard to the Darlan question had been practically unanimous in favour of the position taken by the British Government, and that Mr. Churchill had absolutely no ‘political difficulty’ in connection with this matter.”⁷²

Already, however, the American authorities had begun to display a greater willingness to respond to their British critics. Late on December 9, Secretary Hull sent a message to Ambassador Winant, outlining a proposed new occupation arrangement for French North Africa and asking for British concurrence and cooperation.⁷³ Hull’s proposal, which stipulated that Murphy and the State Department should retain preponderant control over civil affairs, was unsatisfactory to the London government. Roosevelt then sought to liquidate the various problems arising from the North African invasion in typically subtle fashion. On

⁶⁹ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/164.

⁷⁰ *Parliamentary Debates*, Fifth Series, CCCLXXXV, 1713.

⁷¹ *PREM.* 3/412/12.

⁷² *FRUS*, 1942, II, 484; Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, 642.

⁷³ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 477-79.

December 12, through his personal chief of staff, Admiral William Leahy, he informed the British that they might act unilaterally, if they wished, and appoint a more senior representative to Algiers.⁷⁴ Next, on December 15, the President formally designated Murphy as his personal representative in North Africa, simultaneously promoting him to the rank of minister. Having thus endorsed the American occupation policies publicly, he made known the following day a "liberalization statement," assuring better treatment to pro-Ally sympathizers, Jews and trade unionists, which he had succeeded in extorting from Darlan.⁷⁵ That same day too, Roosevelt extended, through his representative Admiral Harold Stark, an official invitation to de Gaulle to visit him in Washington immediately after Christmas. In the interim, de Gaulle's deputy, General François d'Astier de la Vigerie, would be allowed to visit Algiers for discussions of some sort of military liaison with the American and French officials.⁷⁶

On December 21, Eden informed the War Cabinet that the Americans were now anxious to strengthen the North African administration by infusing "new blood" but that the Fighting French leaders were still unwilling to serve under Darlan. Churchill, who thought de Gaulle was unwise in maintaining "his present aloof attitude," then reviewed the discussions of the past month regarding the appointment of new British and American representatives in North Africa. He had thought, he said, to strengthen the British position there by appointing a junior Government minister to Algiers with the title of "Agent General." The President, however, had recently named Murphy as his personal representative on Eisenhower's staff. Since the British constitution made it difficult to designate a member of His Majesty's Government to an equivalent position, he needed to give the matter more consideration.⁷⁷

The next day, Churchill concluded, after consulting with several colleagues, that he could resolve his problem by creating the new post of "His Majesty's Government's Political Representative at General Eisenhower's Headquarters." In effect, the British envoy would enjoy a status equivalent to Murphy's and, since not officially a member of Eisenhower's staff, would still be an independent agent. Churchill then ten-

⁷⁴ PREM. 3/6/210.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 3/6/255; *Bedell Smith Papers*, Box no. 5 (cable logs), Eisenhower Library; FRUS, 1942, II, 482-83.

⁷⁶ Funk, *De Gaulle: The Crucial Years*, pp. 44-48.

⁷⁷ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/183; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, II, 383-84.

tatively offered this position to his old friend and fellow-Conservative *frondeur* Harold Macmillan, the under-secretary at the Colonial Office, who had had long political experience and seemed well qualified otherwise for the assignment.⁷⁸ The following morning, December 23, Churchill sent a cable to the President explaining that, while the British system of government made it impossible to achieve exact similarity with the American appointment, he proposed to send out a junior minister to Algiers who would report directly to the Prime Minister and would enjoy "exact equality of rank with Mr. Murphy."⁷⁹

The Americans, now evidently prepared to accept Churchill's proposal, sought to extract some *quid pro quo* for their concession. On December 24, Secretary Hull told Lord Halifax that he was ready to approve the appointment of a British minister at Algiers who would "act jointly" with Murphy under Eisenhower's direction. But he made his approval conditional on British acceptance of an American representative, with similar status and powers, on General Alexander's civil affairs staff in newly-liberated Tripoli. The ambassador thought such an arrangement would be agreeable to the London government.⁸⁰

Progress towards a final settlement was suddenly interrupted when Admiral Darlan was murdered at his official residence in Algiers that very same night, on Christmas eve. The young assassin (who was tried before a military court and executed two days later) was a fanatical supporter of the pretender, the Count of Paris, who aspired to establish an authoritarian regime in North Africa and ultimately in France. But there were widespread allegations that the Gaullists were directly implicated in the plot. Even though de Gaulle denounced the murder as "a detestable crime,"⁸¹ Washington reacted by cancelling the Fighting

⁷⁸ Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War 1939-1945* (New York and Evanston, 1967), pp. 168-70. Macmillan, a partner in the famous publishing firm and an independent conservative member of Parliament since his first election in 1924, had been critical of Chamberlain's appeasement policies and had cooperated with Churchill and Eden in opposing them. Personally charming and married to a duke's daughter, Macmillan had important social contacts in America, as well as in Britain, and counted Roosevelt among his acquaintances.

⁷⁹ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/190. It is difficult to explain Churchill's erroneous statement (*The Second World War*, IV, 669-70) that Macmillan was appointed to serve *under* and not *jointly* with Murphy. "The essential point," so he told the War Cabinet on December 23, "was that, while working in close consultation with the United States authorities and relieving General Eisenhower of part of his political burdens, our political representative should be free to make reports to his own Government."

⁸⁰ *FRUS*, 1942, II, 490.

⁸¹ De Gaulle, *War Memoirs*, II, 78-79; Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 416. While condemning the assassination, de Gaulle was also reported as saying that Darlan's death had elimi-

French leader's visit to the United States only hours before his planned departure. Moreover, Giraud, who was quickly chosen as a result of American pressure to head both the civil and military administration in French North Africa, delayed replying to de Gaulle's urgent proposals for an early meeting on French soil.⁸²

The war ministers met on December 28 for a briefing on the North African crisis. De Gaulle, they were informed, was very anxious to see created "a strong, united, national French authority"; he was ready to cooperate with Giraud and his associates (although he had reservations about some of the latter); and he had suggested an early meeting on French-controlled territory. Giraud, while agreeing with the idea of a meeting in principle, had replied that "the moment was not opportune." Moreover, Roosevelt had suggested that de Gaulle delay his visit to the United States "until the situation in North Africa had clarified." For the same reason, too, the President had suggested that the British defer the appointment of their new representative at Eisenhower's headquarters. The Prime Minister had sent a cable to Washington advising against any further delay on this matter. The war ministers generally agreed that "the political situation in North Africa should not be allowed to drift."⁸³ No mention was made at this meeting of the now-scheduled Allied military conference at Casablanca, where Roosevelt and Churchill also hoped to effect a settlement of the French factional disputes.

Two days later, on December 30, Churchill met again with the War Cabinet. This time he had better news. He stated that the President had finally acceded to the British request, that the British government intended to announce shortly Macmillan's appointment as "Minister

nated "the obstacles to practical cooperation of all French forces under Allied auspices. . . ." *Bedell Smith Papers*, Box no. 5 (cable logs).

⁸² Crozier, *De Gaulle*, p. 205. Giraud told Eisenhower on December 28 that he shared de Gaulle's desire for a reconciliation, but he favored "time for reflection" and a preliminary meeting of subordinates because of the hostility of many army officers towards de Gaulle. *Bedell Smith Papers*, Box no. 5 (cable logs).

⁸³ In his cable of December 26, Churchill urged a settlement between de Gaulle and Giraud. He also told Roosevelt that the "War Cabinet attach much importance to Macmillan's appointment and arrival *and we cannot regard Murphy as likely to do justice to our point of view.* [The italicized clause was omitted from the cable as actually sent.] We feel quite unrepresented there yet our fortunes are deeply involved and we are trying to make a solid contribution to your enterprise. Murphy's appointment has already been announced and I hope you will agree to my publishing Macmillan's appointment. He will be I am sure a help. He is animated by the friendliest feelings towards the United States and his mother hails from Kentucky." (Actually, Macmillan's mother was from Indiana.) *PREM.* 3/442/14.

Resident at Allied Headquarters,"⁸⁴ and that he was asking Eden to prepare a short draft directive for Macmillan's guidance.⁸⁵ Soon after the cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister's office issued a formal announcement of Macmillan's appointment and this appeared in the press the next day. That same night, on December 31, Macmillan, accompanied by his assistant, John Wyndham, and two women secretaries, left by plane for Algeria.

III.

According to Anthony Eden, Macmillan's dual position as a minister in His Majesty's Government and as Britain's political representative at Algiers "helped his authority, with good results for all."⁸⁶ Eden's statement is indubitably correct. Macmillan, despite initial confusion on the Allied commander's part,⁸⁷ was able to establish cordial relations with both Eisenhower and Murphy. He assisted Allied headquarters in dealing with the continuing French controversies, which remained unresolved by the Casablanca conference, and contributed to their eventual settlement in a manner favorable to de Gaulle. He also cooperated with the Americans in Italy's surrender negotiations and in administering Allied occupation policies in that country. His successful performance in the Mediterranean war theater provided a powerful impetus to his later advancement to high party and cabinet positions. And later still, after the 1956 Suez crisis, when he and Eisenhower were Prime Minister and President of their respective countries, the two leaders' friendship, first formed at Algiers during 1943, contributed significantly to the easing of Anglo-American frictions and to the renewal of mutual cordiality and understanding.

⁸⁴ Churchill offered no reason for this changed designation. The title "Resident Minister" had been created in July, 1941, for Oliver Lyttelton, when he was appointed adviser on political questions to the commander in chief in the Middle East and co-ordinator of British diplomacy throughout that area. Similar appointments were also held briefly by Britain's wartime representatives in the Far East and West Africa. Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, I, xxv-xxvii.

⁸⁵ *Cabinet Minutes* 65/28/198.

⁸⁶ Eden, *Memoirs*, II, 415.

⁸⁷ Eisenhower, after learning of Macmillan's appointment from Mack (who was to remain for a time on the commander in chief's staff), cabled Washington on December 31 that he was "delighted to work with anyone who can help in the present confused situation but I am uncertain as to the definition of my relationship to Mr. Macmillan and request your instructions." Churchill, to whom this cable was evidently referred, responded that "We meant MacMillan [*sic*] to be in the same relationship to you as Murphy, who I presume reports on political matters direct to the President as Mac-Millan will to me." *Bedell Smith Documents World War II*, "Eyes Only Cables," Eisenhower Library.