

## Combined Chiefs of Staff: Conference Proceedings, 1941-45

### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The ten volumes of conference proceedings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff cover the dates of December 24, 1941, the date of the first Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting (ARCADIA Conference), through July 26, 1945, the date of the U.S.-Soviet Union Chiefs of Staff Military meeting (TERMINAL Conference). Each conference was composed of a series of meetings attended by high-ranking military officials, most generally of the U.S. and Great Britain which formed the Combined Chiefs of Staff. However, on occasion military officers of the U.S.S.R. were also present. In addition to the Combined Chiefs of Staff meetings, most of the conferences included Plenary Meetings which were attended by the President of the U.S. and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. There were also several Tripartite Meetings when these heads of state were joined by Marshal Stalin of the Soviet Union. The Conference volumes are divided into two sections, the minutes of the meetings and the approved documents created at the meetings.

The membership of the conferences varied somewhat, but basically the same military officers were involved throughout. The most prominent participants includes:

British Officers - Admirals Sir Dudley Pound and Sir Charles Little, Field Marshal Sir John Dill, General Sir Alan F. Brooke, Lieutenant General Sir Colville Wemyss, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, Air Marshal A.T. Harris, Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham.

U.S. Officers - Admirals H.R. Stark, W.D. Leahy and E.J. King; Rear Admirals W.R. Sexton, F.J. Horne, J.H. Towers, and R.K. Turner; Vice Admiral R. Willson; Generals George C. Marshall and B.B. Somervell; Lieutenant Generals H.H. Arnold; Brigadier Generals D.D. Eisenhower and L.T. Gerow.

U.S.S.R. Officers – Army General Antonov, Marshal of Aviation Khudyakov, Admiral of the Fleet Kuznetsov.

In content the minutes and documents are almost exclusively concerned with military matters. The intent of the conferences was centered upon the creation of a unified command for combined operation with the goal of achieving the earliest possible conclusion to the war. Topics of discussion included theaters of war, proposed operations, various strategic plans, troops, movement of forces, munitions, equipment, defense, relief, officers, and situation reports.

The first volume covers the ARCADIA Conference which consisted of twelve meetings of the American and British Chiefs of Staff. The meetings were held in the Federal Reserve Building in Washington, D.C. The dates for this conference were December 24, 1941 to January 14, 1942. Discussions included establishing priorities and a grand strategy, the Southwest Pacific, the joint planning committee, Atlantic theater projects, defense of island bases, assistance to China, and SUPER GYMNAST.

POST-ARCADIA involves 20 meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (C.C.S.) (1<sup>st</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> meetings) which were held from January 23 to May 19, 1942. These meetings were

also held in Washington, D.C. Seemingly important topics were the ABDA area, aircraft, Burma, munitions, the Southwest Pacific area, and strategic responsibility.

The CASABLANCA Conference is covered in two volumes. The first handles the C.C.S. 55<sup>th</sup> through the 69<sup>th</sup> meetings which were held from January 14 to 23, 1943 at ANFA Camp. Also included in the Conference were three ANFA Meetings presided over by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. These were held on January 15, 18, and 23, 1945 and discussed the situation in North Africa, general strategy for 1943, various operations and theaters, and assistance to Russia. The second volume of CASABLANCA Conference contains the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Meetings presided over by President Roosevelt on January 15 and 16, and 1943; and the 50<sup>th</sup> through the 59<sup>th</sup> meetings of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff held from January 13 to 23, 1943. All meetings were held in Casablanca.

The TRIDENT included six White House meetings of military officials, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, held May 12-25, 1943; and the 83<sup>d</sup> through 96<sup>th</sup> meetings of the C.C.S. held during the period of May 13 to 25, 1943 in Washington, D.C. Items considered during these meetings included HUSKY, global strategy, India-Burma-China theater, U-boat warfare, conduct of the war in 1943-44, defeat of the Axis Powers in Europe, and operations UPKEEP and QUEENS. Also in the TRIDENT Conference volume are the minutes of the ALGIERS Conference which consisted of three meetings (May 27 and 31 and June 3, 1943) at General Eisenhower's villa in Algiers. Present at these meetings were U.S. and British members of the C.C.S. plus Prime Minister Churchill and Anthony Eden. The concern in these meetings was centered on HOBGOBLIN, Post-HUSKY, operation SOAPSUDS, and the situation in the Mediterranean.

In the volume on the QUADRANT Conference, the papers and minutes of C.C.S. meetings 106 to 116 are presented. These were held from August 14 to 24, 1943, in Quebec at the Chateau Frontenac. Also included in the conference were two meetings at the Citadel, Abraham, attended by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill on August 19 and 23, 1943. A wide range of topics were presented including various aspects of the war against Japan and operation OVERLOAD.

During the SEXTANT Conference five plenary meetings were held (between November 23 and December 6, 1943). These were held at the Villa Kirk and were attended by both President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. Also in attendance at the first of these sessions was a Chinese delegation headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. In addition, the conference held the 127<sup>th</sup> through 138<sup>th</sup> meetings of the C.C.S. at Mena House ( November 22 to December 7, 1943). General D.D. Eisenhower was present at one of these sessions.

Included in the SEXTANT Conference volume are the minutes of the EURKEA Conference held in the Russian Legation in Tehran, Iran. The parties involved were the U.S., Great Britain, and the U.S.S.R. The Conference consisted of three plenary sessions (November 28, 29 and 30, 1943) attended by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Marshal Stalin; and one military conference (November 29, 1943) attended by military officials of the three countries. Discussions included a general survey of the war and the Soviet strategic concept of the war in Europe.

The OCTAGON Conference consisted of the 172<sup>d</sup> to the 176<sup>th</sup> meetings of the C.C.S. held from September 12 to 16, 1944 in Quebec. Also, the conference included two plenary meetings at the

Citadel in Quebec on September 13 and 16, 1944, attended by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. A part of this volume presents the minutes of the C.C.S. 162<sup>d</sup> to 166<sup>th</sup> meetings held in London from June 10 to 15, 1944, which were not a part of the OCTAGON Conference.

There are four different series of meetings included in the ARGONAUT Conference. First there were the C.C.S. 182<sup>d</sup> to 188<sup>th</sup> meetings held at Montgomery House, Malta, from January 30 to February 9, 1945, with U.S. and British military officials participating. Secondly, there were two tripartite military meetings with many of the above military figures being joined by officers from the U.S.S.R. These sessions were held on February 5 and 6, 1945 at the Soviet Headquarters at Yalta. Thirdly, there were two ARGONAUT Conference Plenary Meetings with the President and Prime Minister. One of these was on February 2, 1945, on board the USS Quincy, at Malta and the other was on February 9 at Livadia Palace which included a Soviet delegation headed by Marshal Stalin.

The final volume is concerned with the TERMINAL Conference. Included are the C.C.S. 193<sup>d</sup> through the 200<sup>th</sup> meetings held in Babelsberg, Germany, from July 16 to 24, 1945. In addition there was one plenary meeting, also held in Babelsberg, on July 24, 1945, attended by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. A tripartite military meeting was held July 24, 1945, attended by military officials of the U.S., Great Britain and U.S.S.R. Finally, there was a meeting of the chiefs of staff of the U.S. and the Soviet Union held on July 26, 1945, also at Babelsberg. The emphasis by these dates was on the war against Japan and the U.S.-U.S.S.R. zones of operations.

All of these materials were classified secret or top secret by the participants of these conferences and were only declassified in 1973. The documents and minutes offer detailed accounts of what the Combined Chiefs of Staff was attempting to accomplish during the years 1941-1945. Part of the value lies in the organized arrangement of these materials, the volumes having both tables of contents and complete indexes (with the exception of the ARCADIA Conference volume).

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