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TOP SECRET

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SUMMARY

(A) Letter of Minister of National Defence to General Stuart, February 13th, 1944.

(1) Suggested the establishment of a procedure whereby Canada would be "in on" the planning at a high level. Our Commander would then know well ahead of what is in mind as to the tactical disposition of our troops and would be prepared to be in a position to offer his opinion early and not be faced with a completed plan to which he had not been a party, and with the heavy responsibility of having to question, or in the ultimate analysis reject, that plan so far as it affects Canada.

(a) It may be said that the Canadian component is only a small part of the force; but Canada constitutionally is just as sovereign in respect to her own forces as is the United States.

(b) It may be said that if that right were granted to Canada other dominions would claim the same right; but as a matter of fact there are no other dominions interested.

(c) I am not talking about strategic direction of the war; I am talking about the technical dispositions to carry out that strategy.

(d) New Zealand was treated with special consideration in Italy by General Montgomery. General Freyberg was treated as a Corps Commander and had direct access to General Montgomery without having to go through the Corps.

(2) In the matter of appointments it is highly proper that we should consult Generals Montgomery and Dempsey and Brooke and the rest who have official positions in the Forces in which our army is to work but in the last analysis the recommendation and the decision is a Canadian one based on all the information we can get from those who are qualified to speak. There should be no assumption that because the Canadian Army has been reduced in England by the sending of the Corps to Italy that our Allies have more control over and more to say about the Canadian component in the cross-channel force.

(B) G.S. 518. From General Stuart to Colonel Ralston. February 18th, 1944.

(1) I cannot see any possibility of initiating in the field any such procedure as you suggest without the most unfortunate consequences. It would imply a lack of confidence which would be an unreality as far as the Canadian army is concerned. The Army here has complete confidence in Montgomery's ability to plan and conduct a campaign successfully. Montgomery would look upon the proposal you suggest as being expressive of lack of confidence in himself.

(2) There is a great deal more time for planning in the initial stage and consequently there is ample opportunity to discuss the general and detailed plan on high level.