

Example of essay on eisenhower's broad front strategy argument

[War](#), [World War 2](#)



Introduction

Perhaps no decision in world war two from the Allies was as significant as that of Dwight Eisenhower's decision to follow a broad front strategy in a bid to enter the war in Europe. This paper argues that the broad front strategy followed by Ike was the right choice as opposed to Montgomery's single thrust strategy. The reasoning given in this thesis statement is that the objective at that time was to end the war in Europe quickly and win against the Axis powers and in such a situation, an all out offensive was the best form of defense. While historians have long debated over whether this strategy was the right one, it needs to be mentioned that the benefit of hindsight that is available to the historians is something that the generals lack especially in times of war. Hence, the decision to go in for a broad front strategy is to be examined and analyzed from the perspective of the conditions prevailing at that time and the situation in Europe during the closing months of World War 2. This decision has indeed generated controversy and historians point out that even at that time, the decision evoked strong resistance from Ike's own generals including Montgomery (Greenfield, 1982, 7).

The decision to go in for a broad front strategy is backed up by evidence that is political, strategic, and operational as can be seen from the sections below that analyze this decision in detail. It would suffice to state here that the imperative to end the war in Europe overrode all other political, strategic, and operational considerations. From the perspective of the political reasons, it can be said that ending the war in Europe meant that unlike in the Eastern Theatre where the political decision to Atom Bomb Japan into submission

was taken, the broad front strategy made eminent sense as the victory could be achieved without significant civilian casualties. From the perspective of the strategic angle, the envelopment of the Ruhr (the German Industrial corridor that was a symbol of German might and to this day, the pride of the country) made eminent sense as crippling the enemies' industrial infrastructure is akin to damaging the very basis on which the German army depended for their sustenance. From the operational perspective, the pincer movement that was the core of the broad front strategy meant that the Allies were more comfortable in this tactic that would enable them to surround the enemy and debilitate them (Baer, 1994, 188).

Now that we have considered the thesis statement and the political, strategic, and operational imperatives that contributed to this decision, it is worth considering the historical aspects as well. Eisenhower was a diligent student of history and from his vast knowledge of history; he was able to conclude that the broad front strategy would be particularly effective considering the historical Carthaginian general, Hannibal, who pursued a similar strategy in defeating Rome. The implications and the lessons from history were not lost on Eisenhower who fancied himself a modern day Hannibal would not only outwit the enemy but also annihilate them and thus turn the advantage to his benefit. Indeed, as subsequent events proved, the Allied Invasion of 2012-45 is considered one of the greatest military victories of all time. With this background in mind, we can now examine the broad front strategy from multiple perspectives and discuss whether Ike's strategy was better than Montgomery's single thrust strategy. The sections following this introduction are meant to be a detailed exposition of the argument

made so far in the thesis statement that was articulated in the beginning of this paper

.

As has been discussed in the previous section, the thesis statement of this paper is that Eisenhower's broad front strategy was a better choice when compared to Montgomery's single thrust strategy in the Allied Invasion of Europe in the years 1942-45 during the Second World War. This section argues why this thesis statement has been articulated from the political, strategic, and operational aspects. The key theme about the thesis statement is that Ike's strategy helped the Allies win the war without too much collateral damage as well as in terms of achieving the objectives. From a political standpoint, these are excellent reasons as Europe was not only culturally similar to the United States but also the two continents have a long and shared history going back a few hundred years. Hence, any political decision taken in the war against the Axis powers in Europe has to be weighed against these aspects and the inevitable comparison that such a strategy invites with that of the war on the eastern front especially with regards to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that proved to be a disastrous albatross on the neck of the Americans even to this day. Hence, from a strictly political perspective, the broad front strategy followed by Ike is significant and makes sense if not for anything other than winning over the people of Europe. Considering the fact that the Holocaust ranks among humanity's worst nightmares, Ike's decision to overwhelm the Wehrmacht or the German war machine through his broad front strategy can be considered

as one of the biggest political coups to have been executed during wartime. Indeed, as subsequent events including Ike's election as president show, the decision went down well with the American people as well as the survivors of the holocaust and the other nations of the world that welcomed the Allied victory in Europe. This goes on to show that Ike's broad front strategy was especially effective from a political angle and hence, this forms the key point of the argument in support of the thesis statement. The next couple of paragraphs examine the decision from a strategic and operational perspective and the final paragraph in this section sums up the arguments in favor of the thesis statement that Eisenhower's broad front strategy was more effective than Montgomery's single thrust strategy in the closing months of the Second World War (Murray, 2000, 417).

Operationally, Eisenhower's strategy was a success as it kept the supply routes open to the Allied forces instead of throttling these lines that were so critical to the progress of the Allied forces through Europe. It needs to be remembered that the Second World War was a time when logistics and operational aspects were more important to military planners than in this age as the capabilities for refueling and sustenance were not as advanced as they are now. Hence, the apparent limitations of providing support to the ground forces was one of the key operational considerations that was engaging Ike as he planned his strategy. Further, with the German V2 rockets still capable of causing damage, the only way for the Allies to win was by encircling the enemy and this was what precisely happened in the actualization of Ike's strategy. In contrast, Montgomery's strategy of single thrust would have meant that the Allied forces were also vulnerable to the

pincer movement by the Germans and hence, even minor failures would have exacerbated the conditions for the Allied ground troops. Apart from this, the fact that the war was wearying the Allies as well as the Axis troops meant that the broad front strategy would be a better operational tactic rather than a single thrust strategy as it would allow the Allies to decisively move into Europe as opposed to a war of attrition that would have made matters worse for the Allies. The point to be noted is that the Allied forces were in enemy territory whereas the Germans were on home ground and hence, the home advantage had to be nullified and this was done through Ike's strategy. In the final analysis, Eisenhower's broad front strategy made sense from all the perspectives discussed in this paper and hence, with hindsight there are many who believe that that was the better strategy considering the exigencies of the situation and the prevailing ground scenario. This section closes with the restatement of the argument supported so far in this paper and which has been articulated in the thesis statement (Ruppenthal, 1959, 427).

Counter-Argument

The discussion so far has focused on how Ike's broad front strategy made eminent sense from the political, strategic, and operational perspectives. The argument was used to bolster the thesis statement articulated at the beginning of the paper. If we consider the counter argument to Eisenhower's broad front strategy, we find that Montgomery's single thrust strategy was a possible alternative that would have paid rich dividends if that was followed. The counter argument for this single thrust strategy is that it would have

allowed the Allies to target Berlin directly instead of making a pincer movement that cripple the Ruhr and took away the German might. The key point about targeting Berlin directly is that it would unseated the Nazis by focusing on them in a dedicated and exclusive manner and at the same time would have not resulted in the dispersal of the Allied forces which happened because of the broad front strategy. Montgomery's argument was that the Allied forces would be unable to sustain themselves in the broad front strategy which would sap their energies and which would result in greater casualties. Further, Montgomery was convinced that the SHAEF and Eisenhower would be incapable of running the ground war in two or multiple fronts and hence, a single thrust that would decide the war once and for all should make a better option for the Allied invasion on D-Day at Normandy. Finally, the counter argument against the broad front strategy is that there were personality clashes between Eisenhower and some of his generals including Montgomery and hence, a compromise between the single thrust and the eventual choice of the broad front strategy would have been better. However, history has been kind to Eisenhower rather than Montgomery and as the subsequent election of Ike as the president of the United States shows; he was more feted than Montgomery (Larrabee, 1987, 472).

Conclusion

This paper has argued for the proposition that Eisenhower's broad front strategy made eminent political, strategic, and operational sense when compared to Montgomery's single thrust strategy. Without reiterating the key points made in this paper so far, it would be pertinent to note that the

Allie Invasion of Europe is one of the greatest military strategies of all time and hence, it is strongly argued that this strategy more than anything else helped the Allies to win the war in Europe. The key point here is that the focus of the broad front strategy was effective and efficacious when compared to the single thrust strategy that was suggested by Montgomery. Considering the counter argument that was made against this strategy and which has been covered in the previous section, it would be fair to say that though Montgomery has had his reasons, they paled into insignificance when compared to the eventual success of Ike's strategy. Further, the fact that the D-Day invasion at Normandy was a brilliant example of a strategy that was well executed, it is clear with hindsight and evidence from multiple war strategists and historians that the broad front strategy was the best possible one from political, strategic, and operational perspectives. In conclusion, Eisenhower's broad front strategy helped the Allies to finish the war in Europe unlike in Japan where the use of the atom bomb was necessary. Hence, from this perspective alone, Ike is a true war hero and an All American hero who not only helped the Allies win the war in Europe but also did so in a convincing manner without having had to resort to the insanity that marked the Allies campaign in other fronts where the collateral damage was too high.

References

Baer, G. (1994). *One Hundred Years of Sea Power. The U. S. Navy, 1890-1990*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Emerson, W. (1962). *Operation Pointblank: A Tale of Bombers and Fighters*.

Colorado Springs: USAFA.

Greenfield, K. R. (1982). *American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration*. Malabar: Kreiger Publishing Co.

Larrabee, E. (1987). *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants and Their War*. New York: Harper & Row.

Matloff, M. (1986). *Allied Strategy in Europe, 1939-1945*. In P. Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy* (pp. 687-696). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Murray, W. a. (2000). *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Cambridge: Mass.

Ruppenthal, R. G. (1959). *Logistics and the Broad-Front Strategy*. In K. R. Greenfield, *Command Decisions* (pp. 419-427). New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company.