

# **CHURCHILL PLANNED WAR WITH SOVIETS IN MID-'45 CONTINGENCY IDEA HAD ENVISIONED DEPLOYING 100,000 JUST-DEFEATED GERMAN SOLDIERS.: [NORTH SPORTS FINAL Edition]**

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## **Abstract**

World War II was hardly over in Europe when British Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered contingency plans to be drafted for a third world war against the Soviet Union, according to newly released documents.

Churchill said an Anglo-American attack on the Soviet army was "purely hypothetical," but he ordered such a plan because he was worried that Soviet dictator Josef Stalin might not adhere to Allied agreements in Europe, the Telegraph reported.

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## **Full Text**

World War II was hardly over in Europe when British Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered contingency plans to be drafted for a third world war against the Soviet Union, according to newly released documents.

The strategy was called Operation Unthinkable and was thought out in detail and even contemplated the use of 100,000 defeated German troops.

The plan was handed to Churchill just two weeks after the Germans surrendered in Europe, the Daily Telegraph reported Thursday, quoting from the long-secret documents.

Churchill said an Anglo-American attack on the Soviet army was "purely hypothetical," but he ordered such a plan because he was worried that Soviet dictator Josef Stalin might not adhere to Allied agreements in Europe, the Telegraph reported.

"The overall or political object is to impose upon Russia the will of the United States and British Empire," said the Operation Unthinkable report devised by Churchill's war cabinet staff and given to the prime minister on May 22, 1945, by his chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Hastings Ismay.

Historians said the documents would have a great effect on Russian interpretations of the origins of the Cold War.

Russian historians "will now say that the Soviet position of being defensive, of being mistrustful of the Allies, was essentially correct," said professor John Erickson of Edinburgh University, an expert on Soviet history.

He said the report was so sensitive that he was surprised it had not been destroyed long ago.

The papers were discovered by a Telegraph reporter who was studying recent releases in the Public Records Office in suburban London, where top-secret papers are made public decades later.

Operation Unthinkable envisaged using as many as 100,000 German troops to back up 500,000 British and American soldiers attacking the Soviet forces through Germany and Poland, with July 1, 1945, as a possible starting date.

The strategy reflected Churchill's concern that Poland should get a "square deal" after the war, and it was hoped that 10 divisions of Polish troops would join the assault.

But the papers noted the Soviet army's numerical superiority and said there was no reason to think an Anglo-American force could succeed in invading the Soviet Union after Adolf Hitler had failed.

"A quick success might induce the Russians to submit to our will at least for the time being, but it might not," said the Operation Unthinkable plan, according to the Telegraph.

"That is for the Russians to decide. If they want total war, they are in a position to have it."

The plan said that ingrained fear of the "Bolshevik menace" should make the defeated Germans inclined to side with the Allies. But it was not overly optimistic about the odds, saying: "Superior handling and air superiority might enable us to win the battle, but there is no inherent strength in our strategic position and we should, in fact, be staking everything upon the tactical outcome of one great engagement."

When Britain's military chiefs of staff saw the plans, they suggested that Britain should be thinking of defense instead. Churchill then wrote to Ismay on June 8 requesting a defense plan, expressing concern that the Russians "have the power to advance to the North Sea and Atlantic. Pray have a study made of how we could defend our island."

"By retaining the code word 'unthinkable,' the staffs will realize this remains a precautionary study of what, I hope, is still a purely hypothetical contingency," he wrote.

In the original draft, Churchill described Operation Unthinkable as "a highly improbable event," but this was crossed out and the new words "a purely hypothetical contingency" written underneath in red ink, the Telegraph said.

## Details

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