Pacific Theater and Principles of War

• Economy of Force
  – Germany First strategy made Pacific a secondary theater

• Unity of Command
  – Interservice rivalry leads to twin drives, one from the south Pacific and one across the central Pacific

• Island hopping
  – Japanese control so many Pacific Islands, Allied forces must choose strategically
Pacific Theater and Principles of War

• Maneuver
  – Sea power gave the US the ability to go where it wanted

• Security
  – intelligence intercepts gave the US an advantage [Navajo code-breakers]

• Objective
  – MacArthur strongly influenced by desire to return to the Philippines
Compromise

- King’s drive would move first against the Gilbert Islands and then toward the Philippines
- MacArthur would likewise advance toward the Philippines
  - Joint Chiefs gave no clear priority to either drive
  - “Mutual supporting” or “mutually competing?”

Doughty, p. 554, 558
Twin Drives
Hiroshima and Nagasaki

- US planned to invade Japan with eleven Army and Marine divisions (650,000 troops)
- Casualty estimates for the operation were as high as 1,400,000
- Truman decided to use the atomic bomb to avoid such losses
- Hiroshima 6 Aug 1945
- Nagasaki 9 Aug 1945
- Surrender 2 Sept 1945
Post-war Impact of Atomic Bomb

• Changed the very nature of war
  – Presented the possibility of annihilation of humankind
• US comes to place great strategic reliance on atomic bomb
  – War plans emphasize sudden atomic attack against USSR to allow time for conventional mobilization
• US holds atomic monopoly until 1949
  – Huge US-USSR arms race follows
  – Eventually leads to Mutually Assured Destruction (1967)
• Massive retaliation strategy (1954) meant US was prepared to respond to Soviet aggression with a massive nuclear strike
• Nuclear weapons prove to not be a reasonable option in limited wars