The thoughts and opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily of the U.S. Government, the U.S. Department of the Navy or the Naval War College.
The Southwest Pacific Command of the United Nations came into final being today with General Douglas MacArthur in the position of Commander in Chief operating from headquarters in Australia.

Together with the announcement of General MacArthur's directive as supreme commander came an announcement of instructions to him by the United Nations to "prepare to take the offensive against Japan."

The final organization of the command and the assumption of supreme direction of the military forces in the Southwest Pacific area by General MacArthur became known in Australia through an announcement from the United States headquarters and a statement by John Curtin, Australian Prime Minister.

The announcements reveal that General MacArthur is in command of land, sea and air forces in the Southwest Pacific area but they do not define its geographical limits. New Zealand was not mentioned in the announcement of the United States headquarters.

The Philippines are included in the area and it is presumed that it also incorporates the Netherlands Indies. The United States headquarters said:

"By agreement among the governments of Australia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United States the Southwest Pacific area has been constituted, effective from midnight Saturday night. General MacArthur formally assumes command by virtue of that authority."
The announcement then detailed commands that had been set up in the area together with the officers in charge of them.

Mr. Curtin's announcement said that as from midnight last night the government of Australia assigned to the command General MacArthur, Commander in Chief of the Southwest Pacific area. All combat sections of the Australian defense forces. Mr. Curtin stated that from midnight last night all orders issued by the Commander in Chief would be considered by the commanders of the Australian forces as emanating from the commonwealth government. He added that it would not be in the public interest to disclose the strength of the forces that had passed to General MacArthur.

Details of the Southwest Pacific Command were contained in a letter to General MacArthur from Mr. Curtin, which the Premier released today together with a statement that it had been written on receipt of an advice from Herbert V. Evatt, special Australian envoy to Washington, that General MacArthur's directive had been approved by President Roosevelt.

Stating that he had directed the Australian Government's advisers to submit to General MacArthur a statement of the Australian forces assigned to him, Mr. Curtin said:

"You have received a charter as supreme commander, not from your own government alone, but also from the governments of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands.

"At the request of a sovereign State you are being placed in supreme command of its navy, army and air forces so that with those of your own great nation they may be
welded into a homogeneous force and given that unified direction which is so vital for the achievement of victory.

"Your directive, among other things, instructs you to prepare to take the offensive. I would assure you of every possible support that can be given you by the government and people of Australia in making Australia secure as a base of operations in assisting you to marshal the strength required to wrest the initiative from the enemy and in joining with you in ultimate offensive to bring about the total destruction of the common foe."


Today's announcement here merely regularized and formalized a situation that has actually existed for some weeks. Excepting that he lacked directives and clarifying instructions regarding the scope and aim of his duties, General MacArthur has been in command here since he arrived from the Philippines. The subordinate commands were also selected some weeks ago by General MacArthur in agreement and consultation with the Australian and United States Governments, and the names made public.

General MacArthur's headquarters' spokesman today declined to say from where the General's di-
rective had come. He also refused to comment on whether or not New Zealand was included in General MacArthur's command.

A United States Army spokesman declined to comment on the details of General MacArthur's directive, but Mr. Curtin's reference to the fact that it contains instructions to prepare to take the offensive drew immediate attention.

Within the scope of these instructions, General MacArthur's task is seen to be to continue building up the strength of Australia and other points in his area and to take offensive action when and where feasible, and in coordination with military operations of the United Nations elsewhere.

General MacArthur, his subordinate commanders, Mr. Curtin and other Australian Government leaders are scheduled to go into conference on Monday. Selections are believed already made for most of the posts on General MacArthur's staff and the staffs of the other commanders, and announcements of the names is expected on Monday.

It is expected that General MacArthur will have Australian as well as American staff officers and similarly that General Blamey will have American staff officers. General Barnes, who commanded the United States forces in Australia for a short time after their arrival, will have only the service command of the United States forces under the new set up. His command will extend to administrative duties and special units, but General Blamey, as commander of the Allied land forces in the Southwest Pacific, will command the American troops in the field.
General Blamey is a former commander of the Australian forces in the Middle East and was deputy commander in chief there. General Brett was formerly deputy commander in chief to General Sir Archibald P. Wavell when the latter was commander in chief of the Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific with headquarters in Java. Admiral Leary was former commander of the Allied naval forces in what is known as the Anzac area, that is Australia and New Zealand waters.

General Wainwright has commanded the United States forces in the Philippines since General MacArthur's departure.

A good part of the organization of military affairs in the Southwest Pacific area is already done. General MacArthur has been busy since he arrived in Australia with no details of organization and much has been accomplished in anticipation of the formal authorizations that have now arrived. Australia has already completed the reorganization of her forces.

**XLIII. DEVELOPMENTS IN MARTINIQUE**

(Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 150, May 9, 1942)

The President has directed a visit by Admiral John H. Hoover, as Commander of the Caribbean Sea Front, accompanied by a representative of the Department of State, to Martinique for the purpose of seeking with the French High Commissioner there an understanding with respect to the local problem presented by the French possessions in the Caribbean area arising out of the collaboration policy of Monsieur Laval.