

France and the Armistice of 1918

Robert A. Doughty

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As future militarily professionals, it is important for you to study not only the waging of war but also the making of peace.

All too often military professionals become enamored with putting "steel on a target" or seizing an objective and fail to think through the challenges of terminating a conflict or shaping the "outcome" of that conflict. As our recent experience in Iraq suggests, terminating a conflict sometimes can be more difficult and costly than accomplishing a mission. Our experience also has reminded us that the manner in which a conflict is terminated can shape its long-term outcome.

By itself the phrase "conflict termination" is a cold, technical term that implies a simple and direct process. Most political and military leaders, who are on the victorious side, obviously prefer an ending similar to that of World War II when the Germans and the Japanese surrendered. In reality, conflict terminations can assume many forms, including surrenders, cease fires, truces, and armistices, all of which can end a conflict locally, temporarily, or permanently. None of these methods of conflict termination, however, guarantees or even ensures conflict resolution. In some cases the manner in which a conflict is terminated can increase chances of the conflict not being resolved.

To gain insights into the challenges of terminating a war, I would like to talk tonight about France and the armistice of November 11, 1918. As I begin, note there were two major events associated with ending the war with Germany, the armistice of November 1918 and the Treaty of Versailles of June 1919. I will talk tonight about France's role in ending the fighting, not in its role in crafting the Treaty of Versailles. I will consider why France accepted the armistice of November 11 and chose not to continue fighting and force Germany to surrender unconditionally.

To give my presentation better focus, I am not going to deal with the separate armistices with Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria.

To begin, recall how World War I ended. The initial pressure for an armistice came from German military leaders, generals Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff, who appealed to German political leaders on September 29 for peace. The request of the two military leaders came in the wake of the Germans' having failed to break through Allied lines with the spring offensive that began in March 1918 and the Allies' having seized the initiative in Marshal Ferdinand Foch's counteroffensive of July 1918. In subsequent operations, the Allies drove the Germans out of the territory seized in their spring offensive and launched a massive offensive on September 26. Adding to Germany's woes, its allies began falling away. Between September 30 and November 5, Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire, and Austria-Hungary signed armistices with the Allies and left the war. In the face of the Allied offensive on the Western

Front in late September, the Germans could do little to support their allies or keep them in the war. On the Allied side, however, the arrival of American forces on the battlefield, especially in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, ensured an ever-increasing margin in favor of the Allies. As the strategic balance shifted, Germany saw its hopes for victory disappearing under the weight of Allied personnel and matériel.

Despite the negative turn of events, the Germans conducted a surprisingly effective defense on the Western Front. In the face of mounting losses and increasing Allied combat power, the Germans withdrew, thereby reducing the length of their front line. At the same time they consolidated their combat power by reducing the number of their divisions and filling the remaining units by diverting workers from factories (who previously had escaped conscription), returning wounded soldiers to the front line, sending recently released prisoners of the Russians to the Western Front, and incorporating conscripts from the Class of 1920.¹ They also pushed more divisions into the front line and deployed front-line units in three echelons. This left few reserves for tactical or operational counterattacks but maintained significant resistance against the Allies. As the Germans withdrew, French intelligence officers noted their deteriorating discipline but also observed their building bridges across the Meuse River, moving weapons and matériel from Belgium toward Germany, and placing explosives on bridges across the Rhine.² They identified five different defensive lines between the Franco-Belgian frontier and the Rhine River. While they knew the subsequent defensive lines were not as well prepared as the forward ones, they reported significant efforts in the German rear to strengthen subsequent positions, and they anticipated a massively destructive defense in depth. By November 11, the Germans had reduced their front line some 190 kilometers and the number of divisions in the West, said French intelligence, from 207 to 184. Meanwhile, the number of divisions available behind the front line went from 68 on September 24 to 17 on November 11.³ Although German defenses resembled, as one German officer said, a "spider's web of fighters,"⁴ key French planners believed the enemy somehow would assemble two or three "great maneuver masses" to meet the Allied attack.⁵

As for the armistice, the German government sent a note to President Woodrow Wilson on October 3 asking for a peace based on the Fourteen Points. This diplomatic move occurred, as I mentioned, after generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff had urged the German government on September 29 to ask for an armistice. While fighting continued, Berlin and Washington exchanged notes over the next several weeks. Between October 29 and November 4, Allied political and military leaders met to discuss terms of an armistice with Germany. On November 5, President Wilson, who initially had not consulted other Allied leaders but finally had done so, sent the Germans a note accepting the Fourteen Points as the basis for peace but maintaining reservations about

reparations for damages and freedom of the seas. At about the same time revolution broke out in most major German cities. Finally, on November 11, the Germans signed the armistice and the fighting ended.

Returning to the question of France and the armistice of November 11, French political and military leaders did not lose sight of their war aims in the final month of the war. France had not entered the war with clearly articulated goals, but over time political and military leaders had accepted three basic goals: regaining the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine that Germany had taken from France in 1871; establishing international conditions that would ensure the post-war security of France; and acquiring reparations from Germany for damages inflicted on France. In the final month of the war, however, France's premier, Georges Clemenceau, had to confront the fatigue of the French people. He told his military assistant on the morning of October 30, "All the people are so tired of this long and terrible war that they would not comprehend or want to comprehend [why] we continue hostilities when the Germans themselves want them ended."⁶ France had come perilously close to collapsing in mid-to-late 1917 and even the sweet scent of victory did not guarantee public support for continuing the war until its goals were accomplished.

Additionally, Clemenceau feared the British and Americans would seek a compromise peace with Germany, one that would end the fighting but not guarantee France's security in the future. He feared, as he told his military assistant, that the other Allies could sabotage France's victory.⁷ British political and military leaders had made it very clear that Great Britain had its own goals and had doubts about France's motives. Clemenceau knew, as Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig wrote in his diary, "[T]he British Army would not fight keenly for what is really not its own affair."⁸ Similarly, the United States had designated itself an associated power and refused to be bound to the demands of France or Great Britain. Additional concerns came from the battlefield performance of the Americans. On his visit to the Meuse-Argonne area on September 28-29, Clemenceau was appalled by the chaos in American rear and deeply feared the mistakes of General John J. Pershing and the Doughboys could cost the French "much blood."⁹ When General Philippe Pétain submitted a damning report on October 6 about the performance of the Americans in the offensive and warned of a possible disaster,¹⁰ the specter of an American failure allowing the Germans to repair their desperate situation was more than he could bear. Whatever the shortcomings of the Americans may have been, four years of terrible fighting had demonstrated that France could not defeat Germany on its own. Clemenceau had to devise a way to keep the support of France's allies, place realistic demands on the Americans, and achieve its war aims.

As the French contemplated the possibility of an armistice, they recognized the decline in their own forces. No one

understood this decline better than Marshal Foch, who was appointed supreme commander of Allied forces in March 1918, and General Pétain, the commander of French forces in northeastern France. They knew French soldiers had performed magnificently during the German spring offensive of 1918, but they also knew French combat power had ebbed slowly in the heavy fighting that year. Out of a population of about 38,000,000, France lost about 300,000 soldiers killed or "disappeared" from March through November 1918. The 74,000 soldiers lost in June represented the highest monthly loss in the war since 1914.¹¹ Heavy losses forced the French to dissolve some divisions and face the horrible prospect of running out of men.

Transferring weapons and equipment to the Americans hampered efforts to increase French combat power. The French and British tried to convince the Americans to amalgamate small units (companies, battalions, and regiments) into Allied divisions and corps, but the Americans wanted to build an army of their own and agreed to amalgamation only on a temporary basis. In exchange for the Americans giving priority to the transportation to Europe of soldiers, not equipment, the Allies--especially France--assumed the responsibility of providing heavy equipment to the Americans. By the end of the war the French had supplied more than three quarters of the artillery, tanks, and aircraft used by the Americans.¹² Much of the transfer of equipment occurred when French soldiers desperately needed additional support to sustain their momentum and keep them moving forward.

In the final weeks of the war, the French offensive gradually lost momentum. Heavy casualties and mental and physical exhaustion reduced their combat power. Poor roads and communications interrupted the delivery of food and supplies, and unusually heavy rains soaked the soldiers, many of whom suffered from the flu. General Émile Fayolle, commander of the Reserve Army Group, which consisted of General Eugène Debeney's First Army and General Charles Mangin's Tenth Army, noted in his diary the difficulty of continuing the advance. Fayolle's concerns are notable because in the final weeks of the war the French had only four armies between the British north of St. Quentin and the Americans in the Argonne Forest, and he commanded two of those armies. In early October he noted the seizing of St.-Quentin and Laon and the unfavorable German situation. The Germans, he wrote, "will be obliged to withdraw before winter to the Meuse [River]." Yet, as the French pushed forward over the next two weeks their attacks made only small gains. On October 17, Fayolle noted, "The attack of Debeney has yielded little." Two days later he noted Mangin's attack had made "little progress." The advance slowed further in subsequent days. On October 24 Fayolle wrote, "The attack of Debeney is not moving...." and the following day that Mangin's attack was "not very useful." On October 30 he noted Debeney's attack had "yielded few results" and the following day he added, "And still nothing. It's messed up." On November 1 he complained, "I fear that we are attacking

on too large a front with insufficient means. Better to concentrate our efforts on a limited number of points." The next day he noted, "The Boches are still holding in front of us."¹³ Fayolle feared the Germans would not stop fighting until they had no other choice.

The combat log of Fayolle's Reserve Army Group recorded heavy fighting but only small advances in the final days of October and first days of November.¹⁴ Not until November 5 did the Germans resume their withdrawal and the pace of the French advance increase. The French launched their last attack on the night of November 9-10. After crossing the Meuse River just west of Sedan, soldiers of the 163rd Division (part of the Central Army Group) gained a precarious foothold on the northern bank of the river. The intensity of the fighting clearly demonstrated that German resistance had not ended.¹⁵ Yet, the 163rd Division was about one hundred kilometers from the German frontier, two hundred from the Rhine River, and five hundred from Berlin.

As diplomatic messages about an armistice flooded the world's capitals in late October, French soldiers sensed the approaching end of the war and became more cautious. On October 20, a French general officer told Colonel Émile Herbillon, the liaison officer between the French government and military, "The poilu is pleased to see that a victorious peace is close, but he also says to himself, 'This is not the moment for me to have my face smashed.'"¹⁶ As German resistance continued, rumors circulated through French ranks that German women had been chained to machine guns and forced to fight to their death.¹⁷ Formal reports on soldiers' morale, which were derived from reading letters written by soldiers, reflected their desire for an end to the four years of fighting. After receiving news of the Germans' having sent their first note to Wilson about an armistice, French soldiers wrote many letters home about the prospect of peace, and as the possibility of peace became more likely, their comments became more numerous. Morale reports from individual divisions documented the soldiers' anxiety. In many French divisions the number favoring an immediate peace tripled or quadrupled those favoring a "complete victory."¹⁸ The difference between an immediate peace and a complete victory, of course, pertained to whether Allied forces halted their advance along the German frontier or fought their way into Germany. In some divisions the number of soldiers favoring a complete victory was small. On November 8 staff officers from the 71st Division reported the results of reading 2,360 letters: "The correspondents expect the signature very soon of Germany on the armistice.... Three soldiers desire to continue [the war] until its destruction."¹⁹ Like American soldiers in World War II who dreaded the possibility of invading Japan and who welcomed the dropping of the atomic bomb, French soldiers dreaded the possibility of having to fight their way into Germany and preferred an armistice that would end the fighting and give the Allies significant advantages. Whatever steps France took to

terminate the conflict, those steps had to take into account the will and capability of French forces.

But what did French leaders know about developments in Germany? As the end of the war approached, French intelligence provided political and military leaders an enormous amount of information. Consider the main channels of information. The French had established intelligence gathering stations in Annemasse and Belfort, France, both of which were near the border of Switzerland. They also had military attachés in Switzerland and the Netherlands, two neutral countries that occupied key positions around Germany. And they used radio listening sites (including at least one in a Belgian enclave in the Netherlands) to monitor official and unofficial communications inside Germany. Among other activities, military attachés collected newspapers from most major German cities, and they talked to businessmen, military officials, and tourists who traveled through Germany. Officers at the intelligence gathering sites (especially Annemasse) interviewed numerous "repatriated" soldiers from Alsace and Lorraine who had deserted from the German army. Officers at the sites and military attachés also managed a variety of "agents" who operated in Germany, as well as in neutral countries. One extensive study of French intelligence, for example, credits the French with having about 200 agents in the Netherlands.²⁰ Additionally, the French had access to British intelligence, especially in the sharing of important information at Folkestone. The French and British had agreed in October 1914 on the general function and structure of Folkestone, and not long after Foch's appointment as supreme commander, he attempted to centralize Allied intelligence more and strengthen the role of intelligence specialists at Folkestone.²¹ Important information from French and British sources thus flowed through huge openings (Switzerland and the Netherlands) on the German frontier.

What did the French learn? Perhaps the most important piece of information pertained to the deteriorating morale and discipline of German soldiers. Although German morale appeared to rise in May 1918 (with the German offensive on the Chemin des Dames), it deteriorated thereafter, especially after the Allied counteroffensive on July 18. Intelligence reports painted a picture of soldiers' losing trust in their officers and hope for victory. Numerous reports from German prisoners (those who were captured on the battlefield or deserted) described the "very bad" morale of German soldiers. Those who had been prisoners of the Russians and then sent to the Western Front or those who had been wounded and then hastily returned to the front line seemed to have especially bad morale. Many of those losing all hope deserted. Some found their way into Allied lines; others bought forged papers and tried to enter neutral countries.²² The French also received reports of mutinies and refusals to attack. According to one report, two German infantry regiments mutinied in Köln in late October, refused to leave the city, and sang the

Marseillaise.²³ Additional reports catalogued increasingly poor relations between Bavarian and Prussian soldiers. One report described the mutiny of a Bavarian regiment and a subsequent bayonet fight between the regiment and a Prussian unit.²⁴ Clearly, cohesion in the German army was cracking.

Despite the decline in morale, German defenses did not collapse. In mid-October the French general officer who was Pétain's director of operations told an American liaison officer, "A few days ago it was to be hoped that the German Army would crack and be routed. They have been put in difficult positions, but they have shown great skill in extricating themselves and there has not been any route [sic] or even disorder, but rather a well-conceived, orderly retirement everywhere they have retired and their rear guards have functioned excellently. The machine gun groups they have invariably left behind have acted with great skill and greatly hampered our following of the Germans. Of course the newspapers are full of a different sort [of information], but you must remember [that information] is for the consumption of the crowd.... The German Army has had some serious situations to meet and up to now they have met them well. A great reduction of moral[e] in their army is not apparent. The rear guards act with good judgment and yield us very few prisoners."²⁵ On November 1, General Edmond Buat, Pétain's chief of staff, told an American liaison officer, "The Boche army is far from licked. He is going to retire to a shorter line."²⁶

As the Germans withdrew but kept fighting, the French carefully tracked the increasingly dire situation and poor morale of German civilians. Unlike the French and Belgians, German civilians had not suffered widespread destruction of their homes and communities, but they had suffered from the effects of the Allied blockade and aerial bombing and by the enormous consumption of resources by fighting forces. Regular reading of numerous German newspapers revealed increasing anxiety and desperation in Germany, as well as strikes and public demonstrations. Using a variety of sources, the French tracked the Germans' rationing of bread, potatoes, and meat. They tracked the increasing death toll from the effects of poor nutrition, tuberculosis, and Spanish flu. They tracked the Germans' shortage of munitions and resources for the war.²⁷ They also tracked subtle but important changes in the public's attitude. A Swiss doctor who spent three months in Germany examining the internment of Allied soldiers had refused earlier in the war to provide information to French intelligence, but in late 1918 he finally spoke to French agents. He said Germany had changed more in the previous three months than it had in the previous three years. He noted the many shortages and the closing of many businesses. "Theft," he observed, "has become a public calamity." The intelligence summary noted that if the situation worsened, the German people would revolt.²⁸

An intelligence summary on October 30 concluded that the outcome of the war was "no longer in doubt."²⁹ Two days later

another intelligence summary said one could expect the "combat spirit" of German soldiers to increase as they defended their "own soil," but this final effort could be "only of short duration."³⁰ General Buat, Pétain's chief of staff, believed on November 1 that the end of the war was near. He said, "Yes we are likely to have an armistice with Germany very soon—a matter of days. But it is not because the German Army is defeated or likely to be defeated in the near future. The reason lies within; the reason is the internal situation of Germany."³¹ In an early, eerie articulation of the "stab in the back" theory, an intelligence summary said, "Alone among the elements that have collapsed, the German army remains standing, but to its rear is an exhausted nation that no longer supports it, and to its front are adversaries stronger than ever. Nothing can save it."³² Some of those in French intelligence believed, as a colonel in Pétain's headquarters observed, that the "once proud, haughty [German] people" could "leave their army in the lurch."³³

French leaders nonetheless had grave concerns about the Germans fighting to the bitter end. As the Allied offensive slowed in early October and Allied leaders revealed aspects of their demands on Germany, General Ludendorff, who had suffered a momentary collapse in late September, regained his composure and advised the German government to continue fighting. He advocated a battle of annihilation or an "*Endkampf*" that involved a massive mobilization of the German people and an enormously destructive final battle.³⁴ Given the wide-open windows in Switzerland and the Netherlands through which the French viewed internal German developments, information about the possibility of a final battle of annihilation quickly reached France. Intelligence came from newspapers, as well as diplomatic and military sources, some of which emphasized Germany's having organized itself as an "impregnable fortress."³⁵ Information about the possibility of a final destructive battle also came from prisoners. One German sergeant, a prisoner, laughed when questioned about the Allies penetrating into German territory. He said, "Never, they will not cross the Rhine, the dear Rhine, because the German people will never accept such a disgrace. The day when [they are] pushed to the end, they will rise in mass, they will be invincible."³⁶

Though the French sensed the end of the war was near, a wealth of information did not reveal what the Germans actually would do or how long the war would last. As late as November 7, intelligence reports emphasized preparations in Germany "for a supreme struggle of unknown duration" but noted the lack of German national unity or agreement on waging such a struggle.³⁷ This ambiguity created great concern among French leaders. In February 1919 Clemenceau told a parliamentary commission, "If we had been better informed, we would have imposed much harsher conditions."³⁸ In reality, better information would have made little difference since the Germans themselves did not know what they were going to do.

Given the desire of the French people for peace, fatigue of the French army, specter of a massively destructive final campaign, and possibility of the other Allies sabotaging France's victory, what could France do to accomplish its goals? Several strategic alternatives came from the collapse of Austria-Hungary in late October. This collapse not only left Germany virtually alone in the war against the Allies but also increased Germany's vulnerability. First, there was the possibility of an attack into southern Germany. On November 5, the day after Austria-Hungary accepted an armistice, the Allied Supreme War Council, led by Marshal Foch, approved the launching of an operation into southern Germany with about thirty Italian and five French and British divisions. Planners foresaw a two-pronged invasion through regions of Austria heavily populated by ethnic Germans, one across the Alps from Innsbruck and the other along the Danube River from Linz.³⁹

Whatever the strategic opportunities may have been, it was clear an Italian-dominated drive across Austria into Bavaria would be neither simple nor easy, especially with winter approaching. An intelligence summary on November 4 noted Germany's efforts to encourage rebellion in Austria-Hungary or even to send troops to maintain order in Austria.⁴⁰ Moreover, the Italians demonstrated little enthusiasm for the campaign, and the French Premier, Georges Clemenceau, had to intervene personally "numerous" times to gain their cooperation.⁴¹ A frank assessment came from General Buat, Pétain's chief of staff, in a conversation with an American liaison officer. The American recorded Buat's words and facial expression: "Do you think the Italians would go to Bavaria? (Smiling knowingly), not on your life—never—. So what have you left? The French and British. Yes they'll go but there are not very many of them [only five divisions] and so practically the threat is not so serious as it sounds. It is a menace, an important menace, the idea of attacking Germany from the south, but it's a moral—a mental menace—more than a physical menace."⁴² German military leaders recognized the difficulty of an attack across Austria, and in a meeting with the German chancellor on October 17 General Ludendorff downplayed the danger from an attack into southern Germany.⁴³ Ironically, the threat of such an invasion ultimately had a greater effect on the morale of German civilians and the outbreak of revolution in Bavaria than it did on the strategic thinking of German military leaders.

The French also considered the possibility of strategic bombing. Throughout the war the French had been reluctant to bomb German cities because their own cities were close to the front lines and German cities more distant. Additionally, French commanders were unwilling to consider an independent role for heavy bombers; they wanted aircraft to support their sorely pressed troops.⁴⁴ In the final months of the war most French bombs fell beyond the Western Front in a triangular area bounded by Amiens, Metz, and Mézières, but some fell on German cities

along the Rhine River (Mannheim, Mainz, Koblenz, etc.) in attacks on factories and in reprisal raids.⁴⁵ With the collapse of the Austrians, new opportunities for strategic bombing emerged. The French recognized heavy bombers could fly one-way from France to Prague and by reducing cities in southern Germany to "ashes" could reveal the "horrors of war" to the German people. The French also recognized heavy bombers could fly out of Prague and inflict significant damage on Berlin.⁴⁶ In the final days of the war, the French began preparing for such a campaign. Although they had sufficient aircraft to damage some German cities, they knew they did not have enough aircraft for a war-winning campaign. Building the air fleet for such a campaign would take at least a year and would consume an enormous amount of resources. Thus, neither strategic bombing nor an offensive into southern Germany offered realistic possibilities for ending the war quickly.

Even though the news was filled with reports about a possible armistice, the French had no choice but to prepare for a massively destructive final campaign, should the threatened "supreme struggle of unknown duration" occur. They made a special effort to gain even greater output from their hard-pressed factories, especially artillery, tanks, and aircraft. Additionally, they looked to their colonies for new sources of manpower for an offensive into Germany. Soldiers from Indochina and Africa already had reinforced the French army. Many of these colonial subjects had performed superbly, a fact not overlooked by French leaders who cringed at the prospect of running out of soldiers from metropolitan France. Clemenceau optimistically talked about adding 100,000 Senegalese soldiers to the French army.⁴⁷ Strong resistance in France's colonies, however, demonstrated the colonial subjects' reluctance to become part of a "supreme struggle."

Practically speaking, the only realistic alternative for continuing an offensive into Germany came from the Western Front. French political and military leaders recognized the enormous challenges of a drive into Germany, across the Rhine, and toward Berlin. Yet, the Allies had no plans for crossing the Rhine River, even though--as Foch later asserted--"Once this barrier was conquered, Germany was at the mercy of the Allies...."⁴⁸ In fact, they had no significant bridging capability and their planning involved little more than maps with arrows drawn across them. When one considers the enormously detailed planning completed in World War II for crossing the Rhine River, one can only conclude that the Allies expected to seize intact bridges across the Rhine, much as American forces did at Remagen in World War II. One does not have to be an accomplished strategist to realize that crossing the Rhine could have become one of the most difficult and costly operations of the war, especially if the Germans had fought a final battle of annihilation. For obvious reasons, the French preferred to do something other than fight their way across the Rhine.

One alternative was to destroy the German army with a massive thrust from Lorraine into its rear. Initial planning for such an offensive began in early September 1918 and foresaw thirty divisions attacking across a front of sixty kilometers. Final plans anticipated the offensive beginning on November 14 or, in other words, three days after what became the day of the armistice. Though planning proceeded, many practical problems appeared in an operation that looked good on paper but tough on the ground. The region had few railways and roads, and the French encountered formidable challenges in getting units and supplies assembled for the offensive. In the aftermath of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, they also had trouble getting as much American participation as they desired.⁴⁹ Despite the Germans' vulnerability, the French did not accelerate preparations and launch the incompletely prepared offensive. As Foch later observed, an offensive in Lorraine could have succeeded only if German resistance collapsed in front of it. In his memoirs he noted the offensive initially would encounter only small enemy forces and have a "brilliant start and a rapid advance of several dozen kilometers." After this, however, "[I]t would undoubtedly encounter the devastation that was already slowing the march of the other armies. It would add its efforts to theirs, it would enlarge, reinforce them without changing their nature."⁵⁰ The offensive also ran the risk of failing and thereby reviving the Germans' will to fight.

Instead of a relatively narrow thrust into the German rear, Marshal Foch preferred converging attacks along the Western Front by the French, British, and Americans. In essence, he sought a series of blows to keep the Germans off balance, prevent them from shifting reserves from one part of the front to another, and keep them from reviving or reconstituting their forces. He illustrated this strategy by punching with his right fist, then his left, and then again with right, followed by a powerful kick. Recognize that this campaign strategy took advantage of American power on the right and British success on the left. It also kept the increasingly fatigued French army in the fight and gave the enemy no respite. In essence Foch wanted to maintain relentless pressure on the Western Front and expected the Germans eventually to collapse under this relentless pressure. Whether the collapse came from the German people leaving their army in the "lurch" or from the German army losing its cohesion and discipline was important to Foch but not enough for him to oppose an armistice.

As Foch kept pressure on the Germans, Allied leaders met to discuss armistice terms. What was the purpose of this armistice? Clemenceau answered this question in discussions with other Allied leaders on October 31. He said, "One should not confuse the terms of an armistice with the conditions of peace. The armistice has the objective of assuring the victorious armies such a situation that their superiority is clearly established."⁵¹ In private discussions with the President of the Third Republic, Raymond Poincaré, however, he had insisted the

while terms of an armistice should be "prudent and moderate," the terms of a peace would not be.⁵² In short, Clemenceau wanted an armistice that would ensure the Germans could not resume fighting but would leave the Allies free to dictate harsh terms in a subsequent peace treaty. Such an armistice, he thought, would ensure termination of the conflict, enable France to achieve its war aims, and create a situation in which the conflict could be resolved.

The terms for an armistice with Germany came together in a relatively hasty manner at the end of October.⁵³ Though the process ostensibly was an Allied one, Clemenceau and Foch played important roles and ensured France's victory was not "sabotaged."

Foch first proposed armistice terms on October 8 and then discussed them behind closed doors with Clemenceau and Pétain. With Clemenceau's concurrence, Foch convened a meeting of the other Allied military leaders on October 25 and then, acting on his own as supreme commander, modified the list. The modified terms were discussed and approved by Allied political leaders from October 29 through November 4. British and Italian representatives at these meetings expressed concerns that Foch was asking too much and thereby risked delaying or torpedoing any chances of a halt to hostilities.⁵⁴ Although the final list of terms differed somewhat from Foch's initial proposal, the terms ensured the Germans could not resume hostilities after accepting an armistice. That is, the Germans had to agree to evacuate the territories they had seized (including Alsace and Lorraine); leave their heavy weapons and equipment behind; permit the Allies to occupy bridgeheads across the Rhine River; and relinquish control of the Rhineland (the left bank of the Rhine) as a guarantee for reparations.

Among those privy to the private thoughts of Clemenceau, Foch, and Pétain was General Henri Mordacq, Clemenceau's military assistant. He notes that on November 11, he heard no one, including military leaders, express regrets about not continuing the war.⁵⁵ As Pierre Renouvin has noted, a few French leaders expressed reservations about ending the war too quickly but, in the actual discussion of terms, none of them objected to the armistice. Renouvin also notes that the best known critic of the armistice, Poincaré, primarily feared "false negotiations" by the Germans and did not call for an invasion of Germany and a signing of the armistice in Berlin.⁵⁶

As the terms of the armistice were being crafted, the main objection to an armistice came from General Pershing. Though Pershing had concurred on October 25 with the main terms of the armistice, he later had doubts and on October 30 he wrote: "I believe the complete victory can only be obtained by continuing the war until we force unconditional surrender from Germany...."

In that same letter he expressed support for an armistice with terms "so rigid that under no circumstances could Germany again take up arms."⁵⁷ When an American colonel delivered Pershing's letter to Foch, the French marshal was leaving shortly for a

meeting of the Supreme War Council and could spend only a few minutes with him. After reading the letter quickly, Foch instructed the American to "tell General Pershing that I am in agreement with his views, and he need not be anxious regarding this matter; what I am demanding of the Germans is the equivalent of what he wants and when I have finished with them they will be quite powerless to do any further damage."⁵⁸ Foch clearly had no desire to derail the armistice.

A few days before the armistice, Clemenceau and Foch met to discuss the terms, and the Tiger asked the Marshal if he had any reservations about signing the armistice. Foch responded that rejecting the armistice and continuing the war would be "gambling for high stakes." He foresaw another fifty to a hundred thousand French soldiers being killed for "very questionable results," and he saw no need for any further bloodshed.⁵⁹ Foch said the same thing to Colonel Edward M. House, Wilson's personal envoy in the final days of the war. He said, "Fighting means struggling for certain results. If the Germans now sign an armistice under the general conditions we have just determined, those results are in our possession. This being achieved, no man has the right to cause another drop of blood to be shed." When queried by the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, on how long it would take to drive the Germans across the Rhine if they refused to sign the armistice, Foch responded: "Maybe three, maybe four or five months. Who knows?"⁶⁰ In none of these discussions did Foch suggest delaying the armistice.

Foch met with the German delegates on the morning of November 8 near Rethendes northeast of Paris. After receiving the armistice terms offered by Foch, the Germans complained strongly about their severity. Much to the surprise--and pleasure--of the French, however, they--after getting permission from Berlin--accepted the tough terms. On November 11, they signed the armistice and the fighting ended. By yielding bridgeheads across the Rhine to the Allies and by abandoning much of their heavy equipment, the Germans gave up any capability they may have had to continue the war; they also opened the way for Clemenceau to seek harsh terms in the Treaty of Versailles.

In retrospect, the armistice terminated the conflict but it did not resolve it or prevent a future conflict. It also did not ensure France's security in the post-war period. One powerful myth that came out of the armistice was the famous "stab in the back" myth. German critics of the armistice (people such as Adolf Hitler) insisted the German army had not been defeated but instead had been stabbed in the back by German politicians. To use another phrase, German politicians had left the army in a "lurch." On the other side of the hill French critics of the armistice insisted the armistice had ended the war prematurely. Within days after the signing of the armistice, critics charged Foch with having accepted a "premature" peace and complained about France's not launching an offensive in Lorraine. They watched with regret as German forces returned to Germany,

sometimes as cohesive units without the stigma of defeat. At the end of November the American liaison officer to Pétain's headquarters participated in a discussion that included Pétain's chief of staff (General Buat) and his operations officer (General Duval); he reported "their great regret that the war had not continued for almost two weeks." In that same report the American liaison officer reported the assessment of a French colonel in Pétain's headquarters: "Viewed in the light of history, it is quite possible that it will appear that the war terminated a little prematurely and thus left the seed for further difficulties, difficulties which might have been entirely obviated by a crushing military defeat of the German Army."⁶¹ As the colonel predicted, the French official history of the events of 1918 lamented the suspension of hostilities which had enabled the Germans to avoid a "certain and irremediable disaster."⁶²

After the war Pétain reinforced criticisms of the supposedly "premature" peace by saying he had asked Foch to delay the armistice. He insisted--long after the opportunity for action had passed--that he had asked Foch to delay the armistice and launch the Lorraine offensive. Seeking to enhance his own reputation, Pétain disingenuously, I believe, highlighted Foch's having missed an opportunity to end the war decisively, not his own inability to make such an ending possible. Some of France's leading historians of the Great War (Pierre Renouvin, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Guy Pedroncini) have examined Pétain's claim and found no evidence of his having urged Foch to delay the armistice.⁶³ While Pétain may have met privately with Foch and urged him to launch the Lorraine offensive before completing an armistice, he did not do so in writing or in meetings with other people present or with minutes being taken. He also did not convey his reservations to key members of his staff. In the dining room of Pétain's headquarters, officers openly criticized Foch and Pétain for not unleashing the Lorraine attack and crushing the German army. An American liaison officer, who witnessed the discussions, observed an officer, Colonel Node Langlois, object to the criticisms. The French colonel insisted every effort had been made to organize the attack but roads and railways had proved inadequate. He likened the situation to driving a horse until it had spent its last ounce of strength and dropped in its tracks.⁶⁴

In reality, France's willingness (and Foch's willingness) to accept an armistice in November 1918 rested on the weakened condition of French forces, as well as the uncertain support of its allies. By late September the cumulative effect of four years of war and the extraordinary demands of halting the Germans' spring offensive and launching a counteroffensive had drained the French of much of their combat power and effectiveness. The French army, the "horse," had been pushed to its limit; not even an opportunity to deliver a death blow to the German army could breathe new life into it.

As French forces struggled to advance, Marshal Foch

recognized that General Pétain could not charge forward in Lorraine and would advance only when given additional resources at the expense of the Americans in the Meuse-Argonne and the French on other portions of the front. He also did not expect the British or Americans to assume the main burden of a massive offensive given British doubts about French motives and given Pershing's difficulties in marshaling and employing his forces. And he saw little chance of Allied forces, composed primarily of Italian troops, advancing into southern Germany. By maintaining pressure on the Germans on a broad front along the Western Front, he expected the Germans eventually to yield. And by demanding and getting bridgeheads across the Rhine River, he ensured the Allies would not have to fight their way across the Rhine. In essence, Foch chose the option that ensured victory for the allies while minimizing the cost in soldiers' lives. His option, however, allowed the German army to remain together and for reactionaries later to claim it had been stabbed in the back. In the end his option had a profound effect on the remainder of the twentieth century.

What does all this mean to us today?

First, it suggests the complexities of ending a conflict. Under the most optimum circumstances, the Allies and the French could have continued the war, destroyed the German army, and avoided any possibility of a myth of a "stab in the back." Yet, the French did not have the confidence in their own forces, or in those of their allies, to risk the cost and failure of a march to Berlin. Instead, French leaders favored placing continued pressure on the Germans and waiting for the German government or military to yield. Though a few political and military leaders expressed doubts privately about the armistice, none argued publicly for rejecting an armistice and seeking a complete victory. U.S. leaders may face similar difficult choices in the future and, even if they prefer a complete victory, may have to accept an armistice, truce, or cease fire.

Second, it reminds us that options during wartime are shaped by the capabilities of a country's or an alliance's forces, not just the weaknesses or failures of opponents. The French had performed magnificently against the German spring offensive of 1918, but by October they had reached the limits of their endurance. Continuing the advance against the Germans would have required significant rest and refitting, as well as the clearing of significant obstacles and the building of important roads and railways. France's options thus were limited by the capabilities of its forces, not by the absence of grand ideas. Such limitations will undoubtedly influence American options at some point in the future.

Third, it suggests the difficulty of drawing a line between political and military domains in the making of peace. Marshal Foch saw controlling the Rhine as an essential part of any armistice or peace. His desire for bridgeheads across the Rhine and guarantees from the Germans, however, raised questions about

the political future of the Rhineland and brought sharp clashes among Allied political leaders and between Clemenceau and Foch. Separating political issues from military issues is always complex in a war but it can be even more difficult in the crafting of an armistice or a peace. And adding religious extremism to the process can only complicate the process.

Fourth, it shows us the limits of intelligence. The French had remarkably good intelligence about the internal situation of the Germans, but this intelligence did not paint a complete picture of the enemy and left political and military leaders with significant concerns about the eventual outcome of the war. It was relatively easy to measure the Germans' military capability but it was difficult if not impossible to predict what the Germans actually would do. Intelligence is never perfect and can never erase ambiguity completely. Political and military leaders in the future will be fortunate to have as much information about opponents as the French had.

Finally, it reminds us that hope is always part of an armistice: hope that the killing will stop; hope that the destruction will end; hope that peace will endure. All of you know that the hopes of 1918 and 1919 were eventually smashed in 1939 when an even more destructive war began. In France's case, its most important war aim, security, did not come from the armistice of November 11 or the Treaty of Versailles. Instead came disillusionment, distrust, anger, and eventually another war. Over the decades historians have pondered whether a different ending in 1918 may have produced a more enduring peace. Let us hope that historians will not have as many doubts about the termination of future American conflicts.

In conclusion, while the prospect of Germany's unconditional surrender appealed to French leaders such as Clemenceau and Foch, obtaining one--to use a phrase from World War II--seemed a "bridge too far." The exhaustion of French soldiers, the specter of greater casualties, and doubts about France's allies compelled French leaders to seek an end other than unconditional surrender. What they got was a temporary victory, one that seemed permanent at the time but one that later proved illusory at best. They achieved conflict termination but they did not achieve conflict resolution.

ENDNOTES

1. See: État-Major de l'Armée, 2^{me} Bureau A, Situation Générale à la date du 30 septembre 1918, S.H.D. 7N680; Attaché Militaire en Hollande, Communiqué au Service de Folkestone, La Haye, 22 août 1918, Interrogatoire d'un déserteur, S.H.D. 16N1306; G.Q.G. des Armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, État-Major, 2^e Bureau, N^o 35.016, Bulletin de Renseignements, 25 septembre 1918, S.H.D. 6N282; G.Q.G. des Armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, Service de Renseignements aux Armées,, S.R. de Belfort, N^o 252/1, Compte Rendu des Renseignements, 6 septembre 1918, S.H.D. 23N89; État-Major de l'Armée, 2^{me} Bureau A, Résumé des Renseignements Parvenues dans les 24 heures, 26 septembre 1919, S.H.D. 7N680.

2. Attaché Militaire en Hollande, Communiqué au Service de Folkestone, La Haye, Renseignements sur la Belgique, 16 septembre 1918, S.H.D. 16N1306; Attaché Militaire en Hollande, Communiqué au Service de Folkestone, La Haye, Renseignements sur la Belgique, 28 octobre 1918, S.H.D. 16N1306; G.Q.G. des Armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, N^o 240/1, Service de Renseignements aux Armées, S.R. du Belfort, Compte Rendu des Renseignements, 28 août 1918, S.H.D. 23N89.

3. G.Q.G., 2^e Bureau, Répartition des divisions Allemandes sur le front occidental à la date du 24 septembre 1918, Annexe No. 771, p. 467; G.Q.G., 2^e Bureau, 24 octobre 1918, Remarques sur le repli Allemand, Annexe No. 781, pp. 478-479; G.Q.G., 2^e Bureau, Note sur les Forces allemandes en ligne et en réserve, 6 novembre 1918, Annexe No. 778, pp. 474-475; G.Q.G., 2^e Bureau, Répartition des divisions Allemandes sur le front occidental à la date du 11 novembre 1918, Annexe No. 774, p. 470. All are in: *Rapport du Maréchal Commandant en chef les Armées françaises du Nord est du Nord-Est sur les Opérations en 1918, La Campagne Offensive (18 juillet-11 novembre), V^e Partie, Offensives d=ensemble des armées alliées et Poussée vers la Meuse (26 septembre-11 novembre)* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1921).

4. Quoted in: Wilhelm Deist, "The Military Collapse of the German Empire: The Reality Behind the Stab-in-the-Back Myth," Trans. E. J. Feuchtwanger, *War in History*, 1996, 3 (2), p. 204.

5. Major Paul Hedrick Clark to General John J. Pershing, Report No. 234, 1 November 1918, p. 607, Special Collections in U.S. Military Academy Library.

6. Henri Mordacq, *L=Armistice du 11 novembre 1918* (Paris: Plon, 1937), p. 205.

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7. Henri Mordacq, *Le ministère Clemenceau, Journal d'un témoin*, 4 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1930-1931), 2:297; Mordacq, *L'Armistice du 11 novembre 1918*, p. 166.
 8. Robert Blake, Ed., *Private Papers of Douglas Haig, 1914-1919*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1952), p. 334.
 9. Georges Clemenceau, *Grandeurs et misères d'une victoire* (Paris: Plon, 1930), p. 59; Mordacq, *Le ministère Clemenceau*, 2:243-250, 258-260; Raymond Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, Vol. X, *Victoire et Armistice 1918* (Paris: Plon, 1933), 10:368, 373-375, 388.
 10. Mordacq, *Le ministère Clemenceau*, 2:258.
 11. France, Ministère de la Défense, État-Major de l'Armée de Terre, Service Historique, *Inventaire Sommaire des archives de la Guerre, Série N 1872-1919* (Troyes: Imprimerie La Renaissance, 1975), pp. 212-213.
 12. See: Robert Doughty, *Pyrrhic Victory: French Strategy and Operations in the Great War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 505; André Kaspi, *Le temps des américains, 1917-1918* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976), pp. 243-252.
 13. Émile Fayolle, *Cahiers secrets de la grande guerre* (Paris: Plon, 1964), pp. 304-309.
 14. Journal de Marche et Opérations du G.A.R., 18 février au 11 novembre 1918, pp. 169-172, S.H.D. 26N18.
 15. Alain Fauveau, "Le dernier combat: Vrigne-Meuse, 10 et 11 novembre 1918," *Revue historique des Armées*, No. 251, 2^e trimestre 2008, pp. 24-26.
 16. Émile Herbillon, *Souvenirs d'un officier de liaison pendant la guerre mondiale: du général en chef au gouvernement*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Tallandier, 1930), 2:335.
 17. Bruno Cabanes, *La victoire endeuillée: La sortie de guerre des soldats français (1918-1920)* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), pp. 29-30.
 18. See the reports from the 8th, 26th, and 125th divisions on 19, 21, and 22 October, respectively, in S.H.D. 16N1487.
 19. G.Q.G. des Armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, Service Spécial (Contrôle Postal aux Armées), 31 DI (3^o A), N^o 804/CP, 8 novembre 1918, S.H.D. 16N1487.

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20. Olivier Lahaie, "Renseignement et services de renseignements en France pendant la guerre de 1914-1918," Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Paris IV, 2005, 4 vols. with annexes, 3:1851, 2:902-905, 2:918.
 21. Lahaie, "Renseignement and services de renseignements," 2:905-916.
 22. É.M.A., 2me Bureau-S.R., Annemasse, N° 17017, 15 octobre 1918, Compte Rendu, S.H.D. 16N1275.
 23. Attaché Militaire en Hollande, La Haye, 24 octobre 1918, Renseignements sur la Belgique, S.H.D. 16N1306.
 24. G.Q.G. des Armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, Service de Renseignements aux Armées, S.R. du Belfort, 15 août 1918, N° 227/1, Compte Rendu des Renseignements, S.H.D. 23N89.
 25. Clark to Pershing, Report No. 219, 13 October 1918, pp. 566-567. Colonel Émile Herbillon, the liaison officer between the French military and the government, recorded similar views in his diary. See: Herbillon, *Souvenirs d'un officier de liaison*, 2:328, 337.
 26. Clark to Pershing, Report No. 234, 1 November 1918, p. 607.
 27. See: H.30, Epidémie de grippe dans l'armée allemande, 31 juillet 1918, S.H.D. 6N81; G.Q.G. des Armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, Service de Renseignements aux Armées, S.R. de Belfort, N° 231/1, Compte-Rendu des Renseignements, 19 août 1918, S.H.D. 23N89; É.M.A., 2me Bureau, Annemasse, N° 16580, Presse Allemande, La Vie en Allemagne, 30 Septembre 1918, S.H.D. 16N1274; É.M.A., 2me Bureau, Annemasse, N° 17110, 19 octobre 1918, Compte Rendu, S.H.D. 16N1275.
 28. G.Q.G. des Armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, Service de Renseignements aux Armées, S.R. du Belfort, 4 août 1918, N° 216/1, Compte Rendu des Renseignements, pp. 6, 8, S.H.D. 23N89.
 29. É.M.A., 2ème Bureau A, Situation Militaire, 30 octobre 1918, S.H.D. 7N680.
 30. É.M.A., 2ème Bureau A, Résumé des Renseignements, 1 novembre 1918, S.H.D. 7N680.
 31. Clark to Pershing, Report No. 234, 1 November 1918, p. 607.
 32. É.M.A., 2ème Bureau A, Situation Militaire, 30 octobre 1918, S.H.D. 7N680.

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33. Clark to Pershing, Report No. 219, 13 October 1918, p. 568.
34. Michael Geyer, "Insurrectionary Warfare: The German Debate about a Levée en Masse in October 1918," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (September 2001), pp. 474-475, 488-492, 496-497, 502.
35. État-Major de l'Armée, 2me Bureau, S. R. Annemasse, N° 16398, 30 Septembre 1918, S.H.D. 16N1274.
36. É.M.A., 2ème Bureau, Prisonniers de guerre en France, "vers" 1 novembre 1918, S.H.D. 6N81.
37. É.M.A., 2ème Bureau, N° 113, Résumé des Renseignements, 7 novembre 1918, S.H.D. 7N680.
38. Quoted in: Pierre Renouvin, *L'Armistice de Rethondes, 11 novembre 1918* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p. 267.
39. É.M.A., 3ème Bureau A, Note sur le plan d'action militaire de l'Entente, 2 novembre 1918, S.H.D. 6N81; G.Q.G.A, Procès de réunion, 4 novembre 1918, AFGG, 72, pp. 757-759; É.M.A., 3ème Bureau A, Note au sujet de la situation créée par la capitulation de l'Autriche, 30 octobre 1918, S.H.D. 6N71. See: Carte Ethnographique de l'Autriche Hongrie, n.d., S.H.D. 14N49.
40. É.M.A., 2ème Bureau, Résumé des Renseignements, 4 novembre 1918, S.H.D. 7N680.
41. Mordacq, *Le ministère Clemenceau*, 2:332.
42. Clark to Pershing, Report No. 234, 1 November 1918, p. 607.
43. Grosse Sitzung vom 17 Oktober 1918, Nr. 57, *Amtliche Urkunden zur Vorgeschichte des Waffenstillstandes 1918*, (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1928), pp. 143-144.
44. Philippe Bernard, "À propos de la stratégie aérienne pendant la première guerre mondiale: mythes et réalités," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, XVI (juillet-septembre 1969), p. 365-371.
45. René Martel, *L'Aviation française de bombardement* (Paris: Hartmann, 1939), pp. 262-276.
46. Général de Goÿs, "Preface," in Martel, *L'Aviation française*, pp. xiv-xv.
47. Mordacq, *Le ministère Clemenceau*, 2:337.

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48. Ferdinand Foch, *Mémoires*, 2 vol. (Paris: Plon, 1931), 2:269.
49. Traduction d'un télégramme, É.M. Mirecourt à É.M. Provins, 9 novembre 1918, Annex No. 826, p. 157; G.Q.G.A., Le maréchal Foch, commandant en chef les armées alliées, à Monsieur le général commandant en chef les armées du Nord et du Nord-Est, 29 octobre 1918, Annex No. 800, p. 112. Both in: *Rapport du Maréchal*, VI^e Partie, *Préparation d'une offensive en Lorraine*.
50. Foch, *Mémoires*, 2:264.
51. Conseil Supérieur de Guerre, 1^è Séance de la 3^è Session, tenue à Versailles le 31 octobre 1918, à 15 heures, p. 4, S.H.D. 6N64.
52. Poincaré, *Au Service de la France*, 10:378.
53. The French already had spent considerable time and effort in developing terms for an armistice and a peace. See: Joseph Joffre, *Mémoires du maréchal Joffre (1910-1917)*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1932), 2:369-381.
54. David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, 2 Vols. (London: Odhams, 1938), 2:1956.
55. Henri Mordacq, *La vérité sur l=armistice* (Paris: Tallandier, 1929), pp. 65, 55.
56. Renouvin, *L=Armistice de Rethondes*, pp. 256-260.
57. John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War*, 2 Vols. (New York: Stokes, 1931), 2:367.
58. T. Bentley Mott, *Twenty Years as Military Attaché* (New York: Oxford University, 1936), p. 267.
59. Mordacq, *La vérité sur l=armistice*, p. 58.
60. Charles Seymour, *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House: The Ending of the War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928), p. 91. Seymour is quoting from a letter from Paul Mantoux to Colonel House, July 6, 1920. Foch later said it would have taken at least six months to seize bridgeheads across the Rhine. See: René Lhopital, *Foch: L=Armistice et la Paix* (Paris: Plon, 1938), p. 110.
61. Clark to Pershing, Report No. 254, 29 November 1918, pp. 662, 661.
62. AFGG 72, pp. 338-339; *Rapport du Maréchal*, VI^e Partie,

Préparation d'une offensive en Lorraine, p. 30.

63. Renouvin, *L'Armistice de Rethondes*, pp. 255-267; Guy Pedroncini, *Pétain: Général en Chief, 1917-1918* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974), pp. 432-433; Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *La Grande Guerre des Français, 1914-1918* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), pp. 410-412.

64. Clark to Pershing, Report No. 254, 29 November 1918, p. 662.