

*Letter of Report to President*  
TRANSLATION.

48.06

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C O P Y.

At present Lindow/Mark, November 3 / 42

My dear Mr. Reich Marshal:

In an administrative way I have seen your order with respect to the drafting of 15 year old students for auxiliary military service. As you know, I have since the end of 1937 been only nominally a Reich Minister without portfolio. Cabinet meetings have not taken place since 1938. I have never been asked to attend any conferences of Ministers. I am living entirely in the country, completely retired. For several months now I have been explicitly forbidden to listen to foreign broadcasts so that my entire knowledge concerning the military, economic and political situation may be drawn from no other source as that of any other thinking German whose number, also among the broad masses, should, however, not be underestimated. Since I am not a member of the Reich Defense Council, I will ~~have~~ not have to participate in the passing of the bill. In spite of the fact that I will have no responsibility, I am forced by my conscience and by the desire not to assume guilt by an act of omission, to write this letter.

I would like to say beforehand that I have always pointed out to the responsible authorities that economically we were not sufficiently prepared for a long war. That this war would be a long one should have been clear to anyone who knows the Anglo-Saxon mentality, after England had made known its decision to consider a German attack on Poland as a "casus belli". In the beginning of 1940 I proposed to the Fuehrer that I go to the United States in order to attempt to slow down the armament supply of ~~English~~ England by America, and if possible to prevent the further involvement of America in the war. The Reich Foreign Minister declined my offer which had been considered sympathetically by the Fuehrer. Another suggestion on my part in the fall of 1941, the high point of our successes so far, was disregarded.

It may be a military necessity to draft 15 year olds but it will turn out to be a heavy burden ~~of~~ trust in victory of the German population. The facts which the German people see, are the following:

1. The original promise of a short war has not been fulfilled.
2. The quick defeat of England by the Air Force which the people were led to expect, has not occurred.
3. The proclamation that Germany would be spared from enemy air attacks, has turned out not to be true.
4. The repeated statement that the Russian power of resistance has definitely been broken, has turned out not to be true.
5. The supply of Russia with armament materiel from the Allies, and the manpower reserves of Russia have, on the other hand, sufficed to make possible heavy counterattacks against our Eastern front.
6. The initially successful advance against Egypt has so far failed after repeated attempts.

7. The landing of the Allies in North- and West Africa which was declared to be impossible, has nevertheless taken place.
8. The extraordinarily large tonnage necessary for this landing has shown that our submarine weapon, in spite of its big successes, was not sufficient to prevent these transports from getting through.

Added to this must be the restrictions, visible to each German comrade, in the supplies to the civil population, in the transportation system, in armament materiel, and in the labor market. The drafting of 15 year olds will aggravate the misgivings as to how this war is to be ended.

I am taking the liberty, in order to avoid any misuse, of sending you this letter, sealed, through State Councillor Gritzbach.

Heil Hitler

(sign.) Dr. Hjalmar Schacht