

## INTERROGATION

of the former Plenipotentiary of the German Government in Denmark, Dr Werner Best, in Kastell.  
Copenhagen, 1 August 1945

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It was pointed out to the subject that it is up to him if he wants to be interrogated and no force will be used. However, he must understand that his statements might be used to his disadvantage and for his later indictment.

The subject stated that he came here on 5 November 1942, the immediate reason being the political unrest resulting from the telegram of the King thanking Hitler for his birthday greeting.

Before his departure for Denmark, the subject met Hitler, von Ribbentrop, v. Renthe-Fink and others in Hitler's headquarters. The subject received oral instructions for his activity in Denmark. Hitler said personally that he will preserve the legal status of Denmark, and would like to have a completely legal but new government. The relation between the two countries should be preserved according to the agreement. However, v. Ribbentrop remarked - but not in the presence of Hitler - that he wants National-socialists to be represented in the Government. Accordingly, Foreign Minister Scavenius was called to Berlin later on and presented with a list of ministers which included among others National-socialists such as C.O. Jorgenson, Popp-Madsen, and perhaps Arildskov.

It was the absolute intention of the subject, in accordance with his general views on the relations between Germany and the occupied countries, to conduct a considerate policy of agreements, even though he might come in conflict with the general wishes of the German National-socialist Party. He claims that he followed this line during the conferences for the formation of the new government which resulted in the first government of Scavenius.

Before his departure to Denmark, the subject was informed by telegrams of April 40, according to which the Reich Plenipotentiary was authorized to assume complete command of the policy of the country, even in direct relation to the armed forces. Therefore, it was the subject who should confer with the government in questions of military nature, with the exception of purely technical questions which should be settled between the military authorities. These telegrams were confirmed by a letter which the subject already received in Berlin and which, in his opinion, is now in British hands as it was taken at his arrest.

The subject has been informed only very briefly about the political situation in Denmark by v. Renthe-Fink. v. Renthe-Find was rather irritated about his transfer and therefore very brief in his information - which did not give an exact picture of the situation in Denmark.

The subject was therefore of the opinion when he came to Denmark that he had complete authority to issue decrees also concerning the military forces and later on the police. However, it became obvious that General v. Hanneken had different instructions from the Supreme Command. These instructions were to the effect that he was the sole authority on all military matters. This caused several difficulties between the subject and the General already in the beginning. The subject reported the situation to the Foreign

Ministry and was supported to the effect that his instructions were valid. He conferred afterwards with Hanneken and they agreed on these points. The formal situation remained that way during the entire occupation except during those periods when martial law was declared during which the General had the full powers.

Regarding the German police in Denmark, the development was such that at the arrival of the subject no active police existed. There were only scattered police officials to maintain liaison with the Danish police. These police officials were subordinate to the subject, whose next subordinate in line was Mr. Kanstein. When a German police force, commanded by Gen. Pancke, was established in Denmark in Fall 1943, it was done by Hitler's own decision in a letter signed by him. This writing stated that Pancke was "attached" to the subject. The subject interpreted that to the effect that the police general was completely subordinate to the subject. Pancke however, supported by Himmler, interpreted the letter to the effect that in coordination with the subject he was independent in all police questions. He therefore obtained on one hand all orders directly from Himmler and on the other hand he wished to confer with the Danish instances himself. The subject complained to the German Foreign Ministry regarding this interpretation. He knows that in this question repeated conferences were held between v. Ribbentrop and Himmler. However, neither the subject nor von Ribbentrop succeeded in obtaining recognition of their point of view. During the entire period of occupation the situation remained such that Pancke acted completely independently from the subject. This became most conspicuous at the deportation of the Danish police which was carried out without the knowledge of the subject and about which in particular he complained to the Foreign Ministry and after which requested to be transferred. Hitler rejected this request. The subject refers in this respect to a report from v. Ribbentrop to Hitler which was confiscated by the British.

Regarding Bovensiepen the subject states that he was subordinate to Pancke in general, but that he could also short circuit Pancke's office and had direct connections with the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin commanded by Kaltenbrunner. Bovensiepen received direct orders from this section and could give direct reports without presenting the matters to Pancke. Those were problems regarding the security police. The subject knows that Pancke had nothing to do with these problems, coming from Berlin, neither in general nor in separate actions.. Otherwise he could give orders in matters concerning the security police.

The subject knows about the activity of Skorzeni only that he belonged to a special section in the security service and was used essentially for separate actions at home and abroad; for instance, the liberation of Mussolini. It is not known to the subject that Skorzeni had charge of actions here in this country or had ordered them from Berlin. He paid a visit here once in the first half of the year 1944 but the subject does not know the purpose of this visit. He rather understood that he was just passing through from Oslo. Skorzeni did not talk about his activity except that he stated he was employed for separate actions. In this connection, he praised his own men for the liberation of Mussolini. The subject heard later on that it was Skorzeni who brought Horthy to Berlin when he wanted to abdicate.