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REPORT OF HIGH COMMAND INTERROGATION No.14

Interrogator:

Flight Lieut. R. Benson *RD.*

Source: Reichsmarschall HERMANN GOERING

Date: 7 November 1945

Time: 9.45 - 10.45 a.m.

1. When dealing with the question of the building up of reserves of raw materials etc. for war purposes, source pointed out that it was only in August 1936 that he was first called upon to take charge of an overall plan known as the first 4-year plan which actually started on the 1 September 1936. In the initial stages it can be said that the 4-year plan was a purely economic one and it was not until some time in 1937 that the strategic reserves in case of war formed a vital part of the plan, although as source pointed out, it is only natural to admit that strategic reserves were always envisaged in case of war. When talking of the calculations of strategic reserves source mentioned that these followed their natural course and were subject to alterations from time to time depending on the growing requirements of the Luftwaffe, Army, Navy etc. During the course of his work on the 4-year plan, source naturally went flat out to increase production of petrol and other vital war requirements, but it should be stated here that the details concerning the exact manner in which strategic reserves were calculated could better be obtained from the perusal of statements prepared by people like Albert Speer, General Thomas and others who were closely associated with pre-war and wartime production.

2. Source stated that accumulation of raw materials up to 1939 can be considered not only to have been made for economic reasons but also for war, although war, as previously stated, whilst envisaged, was not hoped for. When it became fairly certain in 1939 that war would come, source told Adolf Hitler that he really needed two 4-year plans before Germany would really be ready for war; shortly before war broke out source told Hitler if war had to come he would rather wait at least two years. Hitler however, pointed out that during this period the "other side" would also be strengthening their defenses etc. Hitler believed that they were sufficiently stocked for war against Poland and relied on the other powers compromising once Poland was beaten. Source never considered that Germany would be able to carry on a long war and always regretted that his efforts to prevent war had failed.

3. Speaking about a talk he had with Kessler in 1938 source stated that Kessler (proposed Air Attache in London) mentioned to him that he considered Germany was not in a position to wage war and expressed other pessimistic views. Source considered that Kessler was unsuited to leave the country and had his appointment cancelled. Source believed that whilst he himself might have fears regarding a future conflict, such views in a junior officer were a bit "too much". Source was emphatic that he never had the slightest intention of appointing Kessler as Chef des Generalstabs der Luftwaffe.

4. Speaking about Hitler's inner circle of advisers, source mentioned that the Fuehrer's closest advisers were Hess, until his mad flight to England in 1941, Goebbels, Himmler, Blomberg, who was a great favorite until his dismissal, Himmler, Jodl, Keitel and Bormann. Of all these men perhaps Goebbels and Bormann had most influence and often managed to get source in a tough spot with the Fuehrer. Source quoted the story of November 1938 when von Rath was murdered in Paris. Goebbels ran the propaganda against the Jews and incited the people to action. Owing to the attacks on Jewish property tremendous quantities of glass were required and had to be imported from Belgium, thus interfering with his economy plan. Source gave Goebbels a real dressing-down, but was later asked by Hitler to "lay off". Goebbels was said to have lunched and dined every day with Hitler and Bormann, whereas source only called in after meals. He also quoted the fact that Hitler often visited Goebbel's theater where he met the "Aryan" beauties. Hitler never visited source's theater, one reason probably being the fact that some of his actors and actresses were half Jewish.

5. Source emphasized the fact that when one talks of advisers to the Fuehrer it should always be realized that in many ways it was impossible to advise a man who had already previously made up his mind and this was certainly the case insofar as foreign policy was concerned. Source repeated once again that criticism, whilst possibly allowed to one or two of his closer advisers when speaking to them singly and in private, was certainly not allowed when more than two people were gathered together. Any such criticism would certainly have led to instant dismissal and probably some more drastic action.

6. Jodl's influence was quite important especially after the middle of 1943. Only once did Jodl fall out of favor - this was during the Caucasian campaign. Hitler ordered a direct push through at one point, Jodl had the armies push in several directions via different passes and the whole move was held up. Hitler was furious and wanted Jodl dismissed. However, it all blew over and Jodl was once more in favor.

7. Before Hess flew to England, Bormann already exercised great influence on Hitler. After the Hess event this influence grew tremendously. Source stated that his own influence with the Fuehrer was not 10% of Bormann's. Speaking of Warlimont, source does not consider that he played any vital role until late in the day. However, he does not feel that Warlimont was entirely out of the picture.

8. On the subject of SS behavior source mentioned that the SS were only controlled by Army commanders for strategic and tactical purposes; discipline was in the hands of the SS itself and the SS had its own courts. Whilst Generals were usually glad to have an SS division on their strength, they being such good fighters, they were opposed to having them on the grounds that they had no control of discipline. Source emphasized the fact that the SS should not all be condemned as, in the later stages of the war, service in the SS was compulsory - he himself having to release 40,000 men from the Luftwaffe who would rather not have joined the SS.

9. Hitler's order re commandos was accepted by the Generals as an order and he cannot believe anyone would have opposed it. If they had they would have been "put aside" (I did not quote Kesselring to source !!!)

10. Regarding the lynching of airmen, Bormann certainly sent out an order to the Gauleiters who in turn passed it on to police etc. to the effect that no action should be taken against anyone acting against airmen. Source believed an order was also sent out to the Army but he is not certain about it. He was strongly opposed to any such action and quoted the Geneva Convention to Hitler who, however, paid no attention. In fact Hitler would dearly have liked to forget the Geneva convention. Source stated that no one in the Air Force would accept the order; many in fact, feared that if put into force it would lead to reprisals ! Source quoted one instance where a Munich policeman and a German Air Force officer protected an Allied airman. Hitler heard of this and ordered immediate action against both. The policeman it is understood was probably dealt with, but as far as the GAF officer was concerned, the order went no further than Goering's desk.

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