Interrogation of ... STEENGRACHT von HOYLAND.
on ... 8 November 1945 (PM)
by ... Lt.(j.g.) John B. Martin.

Steengracht was interrogated to determine his possible knowledge with regard to matters in which Ribbentrop was involved. His knowledge is limited by the fact that he was until March 1943 in charge of "technical" matters on Ribbentrop's special train which served as a field headquarters. During this time he was primarily concerned with administrative arrangements of various kinds and was not brought into Ribbentrop's confidence for conferences or consultations. In a few instances he served as relations officer between Ribbentrop and Hitler for the purpose of delivering telegrams and other documents when Hewel was ill or on vacation.

With regard to the formation of a Secret Cabinet Council, in February 1938, he has no knowledge other than the understanding that this council never met.

He is unfamiliar with the memorandum sent by the OKW to the Foreign Office regarding possible violations of the Hague Rules of Land Warfare in the projected invasion of Czechoslovakia. He did not know Henlein or anything with regard to funds or arms which might have been furnished to the Sudeten Germans. He knows nothing about planned incidents designed to create a reason for invasion. He states that von Stadtorf and von Heyden-Rynes of the Foreign Office would be the persons most likely to know about such matters.

In regard to the war against Poland he is also uninformed. He has no knowledge of a telegram which passed between Hitler and Mussolini at the time of the outbreak of war and has only hearsay knowledge of the incidents at Gleiwitz and Hohenlinden. The same persons as are mentioned above in connection with Czechoslovakia would be likely to know the facts with regard to the Polish invasion.

In connection with Norway Steengracht had no specific information although he had heard of Scheidt and understood that he had made arrangements for a quisling to come to Germany for a visit. The name, Hegelin, was unfamiliar.

He was unable to recall anything with regard to a conference between Mussolini and Ribbentrop in September 1940, but knows of a conference between Hitler, Ribbentrop and Petain at Chantilly at about the same time. His information was only hearsay to the effect that it had been impossible to obtain an agreement on Spain's entry into the war because Spain insisted upon having a portion of North Africa as a compensation for her entry and France was strongly opposed to any such concession being made. He was not present at any actual conferences held at that time.

He was unable to throw any light on the attack on Jugoslavia or on the attack on Russia.

-1-
With regard to the persecution of the Jews in Hungary he repeated his earlier statement that the Foreign Office was opposed to any harsh treatment of the Jews and to any measure for their deportation. He did not recollect that an ultimatum had been handed by the German Ambassador, Weesenstein, to the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs for the deportation of the Jews from Budapest, although he admitted that the Foreign Office might have agreed to steps being taken for the banning of Jews from certain offices. Questioned with regard to the Anti-Jewish Congress proposed by Rosenberg for July 1944 in Cracow, he admitted knowledge that this had been approved by the Foreign Office and that Ribbentrop had agreed to be an Honorary Member of this Congress. He also admitted that the Foreign Office had had the mission of inviting prominent foreigners to the Congress. When asked how this matter could be reconciled with the repeated protestations of Ribbentrop and himself that they favored less harsh treatment of the Jews, he advanced the extraordinary reason that it was the thought of the Foreign Office that the situation with regard to the Jews had become so bad that it could not become worse, and that this congress might, therefore, increase the opposition to the harsh solution adopted for the Jewish problem in that it would inform the people generally as to what was being done.

In regard to propaganda in F/N Camps, Steengracht was not familiar with a communication of Ribbentrop recognizing that a breach of the Geneva Convention was involved and stating that special camouflage was required. He was not familiar with the negotiations in May and June 1944 regarding the killing of allied airmen. He stated that Goebbels had at one time announced on the radio that this would be done and that he, Steengracht, immediately went to Ribbentrop, stating that he would resign if this policy were followed. Ribbentrop called Goebbels for a confirmation and was advised that the Fuehrer had already issued an order. He is not familiar with the subsequent negotiations in which the question was considered by the Foreign Office and Ribbentrop's approval given to the instructions on this matter.

(Document R-118)

MARTIN