

MEETING OF 22 May 1945

Q. We have at first some introductory questions, then we would like to ask you to give us a short summary on the measures you consider necessary to start the whole thing again. What German arms expert did those written studies on the relative effects of the British and American bombs in the sense that we talked about?

Sp. I don't know that. There might have been attempts by the GAF in Rechlin. The men that could give you most information would be Col. Petersen, who probably is in Lechfeld near Augsburg, or Col. Knemcyer, who should be in the vicinity of Lubeck.

Dr. Ball:

Q. We have noticed a phenomena in the index curves which nearly all index curves have in common. They rise until June 1944, then there is a sudden drop in December 1944, but between July and December it remains on nearly the same level.

Sp. In the final accounts which you also know, I have explained on page 22 what was supposed to have been delivered. Here is the yearly average: The curve would have risen this far if no attacks had been made. The lack of deliveries compared to the program was about 30%. In the years 1942-1943, we fulfilled our program despite the air attacks which were not so strong at that time. According to the steel basis, we would have fulfilled the program in 1944. It had been allocated six months before that - after we had determined the six months the tremendous drop in December comes.

Q. Was that drop according to the program or not?

Sp. According to the program an increase had been planned for January, February and March. The sharp drop in December is due to the used coal stocks in the industry and at the same time a decreased raw steel production due to the lack of coal which only one-third was and due to the third factor, the many backlog trains which could not bring the parts to the firms.

Q. Was the policy of cannibalization which you practiced at the hydrogenation plants used in the other factories and did that contribute to the steadiness of the curve between June and December?

Sp. No, we only cannibalized the hydrogenation plants....nothing else. For the simple reason that we had an excess of machine tools and installations at the end, because we had evacuated many factories from the west and east. These factories could not practically be erected again so that the machine tools were idle. Shortage of coal due to the transport isolation of the Saar and Ruhr, bad transportation, clogging up of trains, these were the three factors which were in addition to the air attacks the reason for the curve not going up any more.

Q. Now a really important question arises. It is a question of your personal opinion. If no invasion, no landing in France would have taken place, would it have been possible to bring about a decision just by a continuous bomb war?

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Sp. Yes, if it would have been carried out still more according to a program. Naturally, the Russians had to attack; one has to attack. I always wondered about one thing, and that is that you attacked the outer tip. There was a much more interesting plan for me and one which I mentioned on the Obersalzberg. You were in the position to destroy all Rhine bridges within a few days. We had practically nothing at home. You could have gotten complete control of the whole of Northern Germany and could have landed airborne troops at Bremen or other cities easily. With the destruction of the Rhine bridges our whole forces in France would have been virtual prisoners. You could have been in Berlin in three (3) days. The General Staff ridiculed me but the Fuehrer took my plan seriously. Then the preparatory measures started, and they were used then for the putsch of July 20 in Germany.

Q. Do you consider this possible from the viewpoint of the Air Force - at that time there were about 126 bridges across the Rhine?

Sp. No, there was not even a single ferry - not even the materials for repairing the bridges was there - that was only produced after my orders. It was ordered that all soldiers on furlough at home would be organized so that they could be combined into units immediately. Besides I offered to get up our total capacity to a maximum. With the armament output we could have organized a home army. This organization was used to organize the Black Home Army, which was under the command of the Wehrbezirkskommandos and some of them took part in the July 20 affair.

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