OFFICE OF U. S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL
FOR THE PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of WARLIMONT, Walter

By: Lt. Colonel Minkel, 12 November 1945, a.m.

Persons and organizations implicated, and subjects

1. Warlimont
   a. Russian Campaign
      (1) Hitler's order for elimination of captured Russian Political Commissars (1-2)
      (2) General Zeitzler's objection to above order in 1943 (3)
   b. Campaign against Greece
      (1) Order directing Navy to prepare to transport German troops to Tripoli and Albania (4-5)
   c. Marita operation against the Balkans (6-7)
      (1) Massing of troops in Rumania (10)
      (2) Attack on Yugoslavia (11)
      (3) Use of Bulgarian Forces with Germans against Greece (12)

2. Ribbentrop
   a. No conversations with Warlimont (8)

3. Jodl
   a. Orders to Warlimont to issue directive to Navy for preparation to move German troops to Albania and Tripoli (4-5)

Warlimont's last position with the German armed forces was that of Deputy Chief of Staff of the Wehrmacht Führungsstab.

Says he is only partly familiar with the policy of the German government toward political functionaries and commissars of the Soviet Army during the German campaign against Russia.
Shortly before this campaign, Hitler made an announcement to a group of commanders in chief of the Wehrmacht (with their chiefs of staff) and of the air forces and navy—including Warlimont—that special measures were to be taken against political functionaries and commissars of the Soviet army. Hitler stated it would not be an ordinary campaign but the clash of conflicting ideologies; that the political functionaries and commissars were not to be regarded as POW's but were to be handed over to special groups of the SIPO and SD—accompanying the German forces to Russia. According to intelligence received, Russians would on their part not treat German POW's in the customary manner; particularly members of SS and Police, since U.S.S.R. was not a signatory of Genewa Convention, etc. He demanded unconditional obedience to his order although they might not be understood by the officers' corps. (1-2)

Warlimont recognizes the document entitled "Directives regarding treatment of authorized political representatives of the Russian state, etc.", an excerpt from a proposed directive drafted by the OKH, dated May 12, 1941 (2), as a true and accurate statement of the OKH proposals regarding captured Soviet political functionaries and military commissars. He admits that this document calls for the elimination of captured Soviet political functionaries and commissars; that it bears his initials indicating he had seen it; that he added Parts 2 and 3 to the document before submitting it to J.W.I, his immediate superior. (2)

On his own initiative, Warlimont sent a copy of the document to the Legal Department of OKW for information. (2)

In 1943, General Zitzler, Chief of Army General Staff, several times pressed the argument that this particular action against Soviet political functionaries and commissars must be stopped. (3) Because of this particular policy, the Russian soldiers were exhorted to fight to the last rather than surrender (3).

Warlimont at first does not remember any special order, but on being shown a photostat of document dated January 14, 1941, admits that the signature on the document is his own. The document requests the Supreme Commander of the Navy to prepare for the movement of German forces to Tripolitania and Albania. The intention was to support Italy's campaign against Greece. (4)
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Warlimont does not recall any conferences preceding the issuance of the directive. Says he did not attend those conferences with Hitler, learned of the results merely in telephone calls from Jodl. This was true particularly in January 1941: Hitler and his inner circle were at Berchtesgaden for several month, while Warlimont's division and operations staff were at Berlin. Consequently he saw, or telephoned with, Jodl once every 2 or 3 weeks. Warlimont got the orders, put them in writing and dispatched them to the persons interested. (3)

The operation contemplated in that directive was not a special one. Hitler intended to lend support to the Italians in Albania. The mention of Tripolis means that, at the same time, troops were to be transported to Africa. It was planned to send one mountain division to Albania. (5)

Says he cannot recall the sequence of the various stages of the developments, despite the fact that the man in charge of his war diary at Oberursel has refreshed his memory somewhat. He feels sure that the Italians started the campaign against Greece without Hitler's knowledge. (6)

Hitler hurried back from a trip in the West, where he had seen Pétain and Franco, and against his original intentions went to see Mussolini at Florence. After this meeting, Warlimont learned that Hitler's first words to Mussolini were: "I understand that Italy is going to attack Greece," and that Mussolini is said to have replied: "We just started this morning." (6)

Warlimont is unable to recall Germany's intentions towards Greece on January 14, 1941. Repeats that Hitler planned to support Italy in Albania, and that the transport of troops was involved only. The operation department of the Navy was acting in this matter. The chief at that time must have been Admiral Schniewindt, or Admiral Frick; the chief of the operation department of the Navy, Admiral Wagner, who is here ought to know more about it. (7)

Warlimont never spoke to Ribbentrop except at Mendorf—rather, Ribbentrop never spoke to him, felt much too superior. (9) He never had a conference with Ribbentrop. (9)

Adds that reconnaissance in Albania showed that support for Italy was impossible there, which realization led to the idea of the Balkan campaign. (8)
The operation "Marita" was based, first, on the idea of supporting Italy "the other way"; and secondly, on Hitler's idea that the British might occupy the Greek part of Thrace to bomb the Rumanian oil fields from there. Thus Hitler decided to start the "Marita" operation against the Balkans. (8)

Warlimont admits that the signature on the postscript of a document dated February 19, 1941, is his own. He says that, apparently this document was drawn up after the return from a visit to Berchtesgaden, and that Keitel, in his own handwriting, put the dates in. Does not know what conferences were held in connection with this directive; says he had only a conference with Jodl, but cannot recall its nature. (9) He was informed by telephone from Berchtesgaden how to draw up the document; he sent it to Berchtesgaden but had not taken part in the conference in which Hitler decided on operation "Marita" (9).

Denies ever having had discussions in the matter with Ribbentrop or his representatives. (9) Says he always gave a copy, as general instructions, to the Ausland Abwehr (Foreign countries, Defense) for information. (10)

The purpose of the directive was the beginning of the operation "Marita"; the German troops assembled in Rumania were to cross the Danube to go to Bulgaria. (10)

No attack on Yugoslavia was contemplated at that time. The resolution to attack Yugoslavia was not taken before the close of March. When the directive (February 19, 1941) was issued, German policy aimed at getting Yugoslavia to join the Three Power Pact. The idea to attack Yugoslavia came only after Yugoslavia refused to sign the pact (10).

Warlimont claims that the plan "Marita" was to prevent the defeat of the Italians by Greece (11) The idea of a campaign in the Balkans was conceived only after the Italians had started their attack against Greece. (11)

Wants to explain the reason for attaching his signature to such important document, which he calls unusual: It had to be done because "they were separated. He and his staff were near Berlin and the higher-ups were at Berchtesgaden (11)

To his knowledge, it was not contemplated to use Bulgarian forces along with the German forces against Greece (12).