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Interrogation of ... GERHARD WAGNER
by ... Lt.(j.g.) John B. Martin
on ... 12 November 1945 (AM)

Admiral Wagner was questioned with regard to his knowledge of the sink-at-sight policy. He states that prior to the beginning of the war extensive discussions had taken place among high naval officers regarding the kind of action which would properly be engaged in by German submarines and that when the war began commanders were under strict instructions to comply with the full letter of international law regarding the giving of warning and the respecting of neutral shipping rights.

He states that when the British armed their merchantmen it became impossible to follow these rules of Sea Warfare and that a modification of these rules was made permitting submarines to sink without warning. Furthermore, he acknowledged that in certain blockade zones submarine commanders were permitted to sink neutral shipping without warning. This corroborates the testimony of Korvetten-Kapitaen Salman. Wagner's only explanation of this policy was that it was felt that the warning to neutrals to avoid such blockade zones was sufficient and that if neutrals entered zones of this character, they did so at their own risk.

MARTIN