

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

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of: HERMANN GOERING
By: Col. J.H. Amen, 29 August 1945, PM.

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED, AND SUBJECTS

1. Hermann GOERING
 - a) Use of Luftwaffe in war on Poland (p.10)
 - b) Attack on Crete (pp.18-19)
 - c) Knowledge of Plan Barbarossa (pp.30-23)
 - (1) Protests to Hitler (pp.20-23)
2. HITLER
 - a) Speech at Obersalzberg (pp.1-6)
 - b) Plans for attack on France (pp.11-13)
 - c) Plans for attack on Belgium (p.15)
 - d) Occupation of Denmark (pp.15-16)
 - e) Knowledge of Italian campaign against Greece (p.18)
 - f) Preparation for attack on Russia (pp.20-23)
3. OKW
 - a) Orders for opening of Polish campaign (pp.9-11)

HITLER'S SPEECH AT OBERSALZBURG

Further citations of Hitler's speech in Obersalzberg by the interrogator were denied by Goering as never having been made by Hitler. He declares its contents as senseless. (pp.1,2,3)

Recapitulating in substance Hitler's speech in Obersalzberg, Hitler was determined to solve the Polish Corridor question either by war against Poland alone or also by war against the Western Powers. He discussed with the generals all eventualities and possibilities, and the necessity of a speedy completion of the campaign to prevent a major war at all. He stressed the fact that a friendly attitude of Russia would also prevent a major war. His (Hitler's) opinion was not to make any air or naval attack against the Western Powers, to facilitate the maintenance of peace. (pp.4-5) Hitler's speech was something like a pep talk to the generals for the impending attack on Poland. While the Prime Minister of Poland, Beck would have been willing to compromise, Hitler did not expect that from the military circles, and was very skeptical of a friendly solution. (p.6)

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MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLAND

Preparations for the campaign against Poland were supposed to be completed by the end of August 1939 and the final orders to start the attack came after the conclusion of the treaty with Russia about the middle of August. The action was planned for 25 August but was postponed on the 24th until the 1st September. (pp.8,9)

The OKW issued the orders for the beginning of the action and the time was so chosen that the OKW could always cancel twenty hours before the proposed date.

Concentrations of Panzer divisions on the Southern wing were prepared. The southern wing was the most successful one, while the northern wing had to be reinforced on order of Hitler, changing the original plan of the OKH. The bulk of the Luftwaffe was committed in Poland, which was also the original plan. There were forty divisions including about five panzer divisions employed and the remaining ten divisions were kept in the West Wall with the main strength between Luxembourg and Switzerland. During the period from 25 August to 1st September important orders for mobilization were put through upon pressure from the OKH (pp.9-11)

MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST FRANCE AND LOWLANDS

When the Polish campaign surprisingly ended so quickly (in September 1939) Hitler intended to attack France between the middle of October of 1939 and the following winter. Weather was the main reason for postponing of the attack till March, 1940. (pp.11,12) The final order to attack was given on or about 7 May for the 10th of May. OKW had previously concluded that it was impossible for the German Army in its present condition to attack France. (p.13)

Air-borne troops were previously planned to occupy the Ghent area in Belgium, but afterwards those plans were changed in that way namely to occupy Dutch bridges, Nordyke, Dortrecht, Rotterdam -- all in the Netherlands. In Holland there had to be occupied the Albert Canal and bridges, to secure the north and south line. The change in the plans was caused by the loss of the former plans in Belgium (p.15).

OCCUPATION OF DENMARK

The occupation of Denmark was motivated by the desire to secure communication overseas and the bridgehead to Norway. Another reason was to prevent England from taking a foothold in Jutland lying between Norway and Denmark. English landings in Norway were expected since January, 1945, and the start of the attacks was postponed till the 9th of April on account of bad weather. A further postponement would have taken place if there was not definite proof that England was getting ready to make the landings in Norway. The original plan called only for occupation of the most important harbors and airports from the land and the sea. Heavy weapons should precede the landing in Narvik.

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Several coal and ore boats were loaded with guns. (pp.15,16)

ITALIAN CAMPAIGN AGAINST GREECE

The attack of Italy against Greece happened without prior knowledge of Goering and Hitler who tried to stop it, but came too late to see Mussolini. Italy, realizing and foreseeing what Hitler intended, started with the attack earlier than it was originally planned. Hitler did not want the invasion of Greece because of Turkey and because he could not expect to gain anything from it. After the landing of English troops in Greece and the threatening encirclement of the Italian Army by the Greeks, Hitler decided to intervene in Greece. At the same time he pleased Bulgaria with such a step. In September, 1941, Hitler moved troops in the direction of Roumania in order to prevent a Russian attack. (p.18)

MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST CRETE

After finishing the Greek campaign Goering received the order to occupy Crete for two reasons:

- 1.) to get a base against the Suez Canal, and
- 2.) to prevent a connection between the Russian and English fleet.

Another purpose of the Greek campaign was to seal off the Aegian Sea against Russia. The occupation of Crete was mainly the task of the Luftwaffe, but fleet and army had also some responsibility in it. As Chief of Staff, General Jeschonek was responsible, and for the air General Richthofen. (pp.18,19)

PREPARATIONS FOR ATTACK ON RUSSIA

In November 1945 an order was given to increase preparations for the security of the Eastern Frontiers against attacks by Russia. It was true the attack against Russia would have happened earlier if the Yugo-Slav affair had not happened. In the Fall of 1940, there were only orders, the so-called Barbarossa orders, for definitive action against expected attacks from Russia. It is possible that Hitler had spoken about that with Jodl and Keitel. Goering heard about a planned preventive war against Russia after the visit of Molotov in Berlin in February, 1941, during his visit in Berchtesgaden.

Reasons for a preventive war was the increased massing of Russian forces in Poland, the fear of an economic pressure by Russia and especially the demands Molotov made in Berlin, namely, a free hand for Russia in a war against Finland and in Roumania and the Balkans with respect to the Dardanelles, and finally a demand made to Ribbentrop for bases at the exit of the Baltic Sea. Goering and Hitler feared that all the demands of Russia were nothing but excuses to outflank militarily Germany. A report of Stalin's speech to his generals that Russia considers the treaty with Germany only as a curtain for better manipulations was the most important reason for starting that preventive war. Goering objected to this reasoning, to Hitler, and pointed

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out to him that America would enter the war and then three world powers would be allied against Germany, which would be beyond its strength. Although convinced of the possibility of a quick victory over Russia, his dissenting opinion was based upon the fact that such a large space as Russia could not be controlled by Germany and especially also the fact that the Luftwaffe would have to be employed against Russia, while at the time she was in the middle of successful attacks against England, which in that case would have to cease.(pp.20-23)