

NHS-443
104 FITTES

Box 7-61

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

FUEHRER CONFERENCES

ON MATTERS.

DEALING WITH

THE

GERMAN NAVY

1941

VOL. I

CONFIDENTIAL

OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

Foreword

1. Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1941, appearing in two volumes, complete the series of Fuehrer conferences published by this office. Herewith all important conferences between the Fuehrer and the Commander in Chief, Navy occurring during the war years 1939-1945 for which records have been found will be available in English. For the most part the documents translated in this volume are the result of notes taken for the Commander in Chief, Navy during his conferences with the Fuehrer. After these notes were subsequently typed, they were signed by the Commander in Chief, Navy, in this case Grand Admiral Raeder.

2. The over-all purpose of these translations is to provide materials which may be used as a basis for the study of naval problems arising from total war. The references given for each conference denote the microfilm reels and sections thereof on which the documents may be found in the microfilm library of Naval Records and Library.

3. By January 1941 Hitler was fully convinced that Germany had so well fortified her position in Europe that the situation there could no longer develop unfavorably even if North Africa should be lost completely. Great Britain's only hope of winning the war lay in beating Germany on the Continent, and this Hitler considered impossible. At the same time the German Navy was faced with ever-increasing problems. At home the manpower and raw material situation was becoming severely strained. Naval quotas were falling far below requirements and demands. The Navy felt that partiality was being shown the Army and the Air Force at its expense. In the conference of 18 March we find the complaint that the obvious neglect of the Navy was causing actual and psychological harm. Complications at sea were reflected in lengthy and repeated discussions on the treatment of U.S. vessels. American tactics were hampering German naval warfare in the Atlantic. Consequently the Naval Staff pressed for more drastic steps against U.S. ships, but Hitler, even after the occupation of Iceland, issued restrictive orders in an attempt to avoid incidents which might cause the U.S. to enter the war. The Naval Staff did not believe that actual participation in the war by the U.S. could make matters much worse. Hitler, however, was anxious to postpone the war with the U.S., even though for a short time. Moreover, he believed that German successes against Russia might substantially change the attitude of the United States.

Thos B. Inglis

THOS. B. INGLIS
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Chief of Naval Intelligence

Washington, D. C.
1947

Commander in Chief of the Navy

Report on Conferences with the Fuehrer and Supreme
Commander of the Armed Forces at the Berghof
(Obersalzberg) on 8 and 9 January 1941.

Present: Rear Admiral Fricke, Chief of the Operations Division,
Naval Staff
Chief of General Staff, Army
Chief of General Staff, Air
Minister for Foreign Affairs
and others

1. The main purpose of the conference was discussion of land operations in the Balkans and in Libya. It was also possible to discuss at some length various questions connected with naval and air warfare, and the Fuehrer gave an evaluation of the general situation.

2. Situation in the Mediterranean.

The Fuehrer is of the opinion that it is vital for the outcome of the war that Italy does not collapse, but remains a loyal member of the Axis. The Duce is emphatically pro-Axis. On the other hand, the military and political leaders are not pro-Axis and reliable to the same extent. Count Ciano has sharply been attacked by Fascist and military circles. However, the Fuehrer does not believe that in the present situation Ciano would oppose Germany.

The well-known Italian mentality makes it difficult for the Germans to influence the Italian leaders. The Fuehrer is of the opinion that if the Italians are to be kept in line he must not go too far in matters of leadership. We should not make demands; too great demands may cause even Mussolini to change his attitude. Besides, there is the danger that then the Italians in turn might make undesirable demands. (For example, the Italians may desire information about German operational plans. The Fuehrer considers that caution is necessary especially in this connection, and he does not wish to inform the Italians of our plans. There is great danger that the Royal Family is transmitting intelligence to Britain!!)

The Chief, Naval Staff, Operations Division expresses the view that the Italian armed forces need to be strictly organized under German leadership. The Fuehrer feels that the main difficulty in regard to exerting influence in an advisory capacity lies in the fact that the Italians are not able to follow our plans and our advice for reasons having to do with personnel and materiel. The chief reason is that the Italians feel very inferior to the British; they suffer from an inferiority complex. This factor alone makes it absolutely impossible for them to fulfill the tasks that confront them. They do not wish to commit their fleet.

3. The Fuehrer is determined to do everything in his power to prevent Italy from losing North Africa; he fears the very detrimental psychological effect this would have on the Italian people. It would also mean a great loss of prestige for the Axis powers. The possibilities for the Germans to bring aid to Africa are small, since the

Italians themselves badly need the few available ports for unloading their supplies.

The Fuehrer no longer considers it possible for either the Italians or ourselves to re-open the offensive against Alexandria and Egypt with any success. (The Italians themselves go so far as to believe that at best they can attempt defensive actions there; even this appears doubtful to them!!)

The Fuehrer is firmly determined to give them support. German formations are to be transferred as soon as possible, equipped with anti-tank guns and mines, heavy tanks, and heavy and light anti-aircraft guns. The Fuehrer, however, wishes on no account to lose these formations. Hence the Italians are to be requested to do all in their power to stop the British offensive. Materiel is to be shipped by sea, personnel by air. Good results are anticipated from the use of German air units. The German formations should be given air support from bases in Sicily; advance units will be stationed in North Africa (as far as Benghazi). The opportunities are limited, since the Italians are using most of the airfields. If we succeed in defending the rest of Libya, a large-scale offensive against Alexandria and Egypt would still be possible later, but probably not before winter 1942 (!!)

According to Italian information, the defense units for Libya cannot be transferred until the middle of February because of Italian transports. The transfer will then take about five more weeks from the time of loading. (Twenty German steamers are available in Italy; a selection must be made from them.)

4. Albania.

The Italian line in Albania must be held. The Greeks must not be allowed to mass against Bulgaria in the region of Salonika, but must be fully engaged in Albania. It is necessary to aid the Italians. The Fuehrer orders that sufficient troops be transferred, that is, two and a half divisions, including one mountain division, parts of a panzer division, and a motorized infantry division. Conditions for unloading are very difficult. The transport route is from Brindisi to Durazzo. The possibilities for unloading must be very carefully checked (Captain von Pufendorf is at present in Albania). The Fuehrer states that in the near future he will discuss with the Duce the use of these troops and will make certain claims concerning operational control. The transfer of German troops to Albania should begin immediately. The Albanian operation is to take place before the Bulgarian-Greek front is occupied.

The Duce has requested three additional German steamers for Italian transport purposes, besides the three which have already been given him. The Fuehrer has ordered the transfer.

5. Operation "Marita".

In order to be able to carry out the operation according to plan, it is intended to begin at once with the transfer of troops to Bulgaria. After the advance detachments have arrived, the 1st Division is to be moved across the frozen Danube into Bulgaria. (Only one bridge is available, hence use must be made of the frozen river.) Bulgaria should be requested to permit garrisoning of troops in towns. The

troops will be self-supporting, and will be no burden to the Bulgarian population. On the contrary, there are prospects of supplying the population with food. No Italian offensive against Greece is expected until March. The Fuehrer is determined to do everything in his power to assure a speedy advance in Albania. The troops for operation "Marita" will be assembled and ready by 26 March. Certain troops are reserved for defense against Turkey. The Fuehrer does not believe that any offensive action will be taken by the Turks, however.

6. The question of a possible occupation of Toulon.

If France becomes troublesome she will have to be crushed completely. Under no circumstances must the French Fleet be allowed to get away from us; it must be either captured or destroyed. Hence Toulon must be occupied at the very outset by means of airborne troops and transport gliders. The harbor and coastal batteries must be taken immediately. Naval guns will be brought up in gliders. Toulon harbor is to be mined by an air squadron. After the speedy occupation of Toulon, the troops will push on to Marseilles. The position and the nature of fortifications at Toulon and along the coast must be accurately ascertained as soon as possible.

The Commander in Chief, Army reports that in view of the army operations planned, the preparations for operations "Felix" and "Seeloeve" would have to be held up for a time. The Fuehrer confirms this view. The operational measures will be carried out in the following sequence: Transports to Albania; transports to North Africa; Toulon (only in the event of operation "Attila").

7. General situation.

The Fuehrer states his opinion concerning the strength and importance of Germany's economic potential in the German and European area as over against the limited possibilities found in Britain and America. He is firmly convinced that Europe's armament and economic resources offer far greater possibilities. He stresses the great importance of Norway, where we must be particularly on our guard. Our relations with France are rather obscure. The French were stunned by the course of the war, but are now collecting their wits and beginning to realize what has happened. Those who were not in leading positions have no conception of the situation as a whole. Hence there are many pitfalls for the Petain government. It is not improbable that Petain will still be exposed to much pressure from external sources. General Weygand, well known as a rabid Germanophobe, has demanded the immediate arrest of Laval. The Fuehrer regards Weygand as unreliable and dangerous; he must be watched carefully. At first Petain will adopt a passive attitude, as he is well aware that the Germans intend to occupy the remainder of France if the French prove troublesome.

Spain. The Fuehrer fully recognizes the strategic value of Gibraltar, which has so often been emphasized by the Naval Staff. Despite that fact, there is for the time being no prospect of Spain's becoming our ally. She is not willing to do so. This was made perfectly clear by Franco's remark that he will not take part in the war until Britain is at the point of collapse. The Fuehrer has offered Franco a million tons of grain to relieve the acute economic situation. Despite this offer of food, Franco did not feel that he could acquiesce to the Fuehrer's plans.

CONFIDENTIAL

Yugoslavia is ready to conclude a non-aggression pact, but at present does not wish to become a signatory of the Tripartite Pact.

Rumania. The situation is clear; whatever may happen, the oil fields must be protected. The Training Division is being reinforced.

Bulgaria. Russia's attitude is causing complications here. Russia needs this country in order to assemble her forces against the Bosphorus. Hence King Boris is very cautious. The King has explained to the Fuehrer that for reasons of foreign policy he cannot officially sign the Tripartite Pact, but that the Fuehrer should proceed as though this were the case.

Russia's attitude in the event of German action in Bulgaria is still not clear.

General observations.

The Fuehrer is firmly convinced that the situation in Europe can no longer develop unfavorably for Germany even if we should lose the whole of North Africa. Our position in Europe is so firmly established that the outcome cannot possibly be to our disadvantage. The invasion of Britain is not feasible unless she is crippled to a considerable degree, and Germany has complete air supremacy. The success of an invasion must be absolutely assured; otherwise the Fuehrer considers it a crime to attempt it.

The British can hope to win the war only by beating us on the Continent. The Fuehrer is convinced that this is impossible.

Regarding our warfare against Britain, the Fuehrer explains that all attacks must be concentrated on supplies and on the armament industry. Terror raids by our Air Force have small value and accomplish little; the supplies and the ships bringing them must be destroyed. Combined assaults by the Air Force and Navy on imports might lead to victory as early as July or August. Even today the Fuehrer is still ready to negotiate peace with Britain. However, Britain's present leaders will not consider such a peace.

Britain is sustained in her struggle by hopes placed in the U.S.A. and Russia. British diplomatic overtures to Russia are apparent. Eden is very pro-Russian.

Stalin must be regarded as a cold-blooded blackmailer; he would, if expedient, repudiate any written treaty at any time. Britain's aim for some time to come will be to set Russian strength in motion against us. If the U.S.A. and Russia should enter the war against Germany, the situation would become very complicated. Hence any possibility for such a threat to develop must be eliminated at the very beginning. If the Russian threat were non-existent, we could wage war on Britain indefinitely. If Russia collapsed, Japan would be greatly relieved; this in turn would mean increased danger to the U.S.A.

Regarding Japanese interest in Singapore, the Fuehrer feels that the Japanese should be given a free hand even if this may entail the risk that the U.S.A. is thus forced to take drastic steps.

Report of the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Fuehrer
in the afternoon of 4 February 1941.

Present: Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command
General Jodl
Commander von Puttkamer

I. Naval Situation.

1. The Commander in Chief, Navy explains with the aid of a map the operations carried out by auxiliary cruisers.

2. The battleships, which are to carry on warfare in the Atlantic in conjunction with cruiser HIPPER, have gotten under way. At present the ships are in the Norwegian Sea. The first attempt to break through had to be postponed because enemy forces were sighted. The ships were in contact with a task force consisting of cruisers and destroyers south of Iceland in quadrant AL from 0700 until 1300. After refueling in the Norwegian Sea the ships will make another attempt. The HIPPER operation will be launched simultaneously from Brest.

3. It has meantime been established that the appearance of enemy forces in the sea area off Stavanger was intended to assist Norwegian steamers in running the blockade from Swedish ports. Our inadequate reconnaissance did not reveal the plans of the enemy in time.

4. The scanty submarine successes are due first to the few boats in operation and second to the hampering effect of the weather. An increase in submarine operations may be expected shortly. Twenty one more submarines will become available for operations in a few weeks due to the fact that ice conditions make it necessary to discontinue submarine training temporarily.

5. It has not yet been possible to clear the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal completely, since ice conditions complicate the work. At present the passage of the BISMARCK and TIRPITZ through the Canal is out of the question. It is therefore best that the two ships remain at Hamburg and Wilhelmshaven, where there is a much greater anti-aircraft protection than at Brunsbuettel.

6. Ice conditions in the Baltic Sea are greatly hampering ship movements. The Belts are closed to shipping. Weather conditions also handicap the training program.

7. Blockade-running. After consultation with the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Economics, it has been decided to import vital raw materials by sending German and neutral blockade-runners to South America. Blockade-running likewise has great propaganda value.

8. A meeting with Admiral Riccardi at Merano has been planned provisionally for the middle of February in order to discuss naval strategy and to attempt to influence Italian naval warfare through

the Naval Liaison Staff at Rome. Escorts for German troop transports are also to be discussed.

9. See Annex 1 for an evaluation of the strategic situation if America and Japan should enter the war. A copy was given by the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Fuehrer.

II. Operation "Marita".

1. Rumania. The Naval Commission under Admiral Fleischer has not yet returned. Thus no complete picture can as yet be formed of the measures to be adopted. The transfer of two coastal batteries, one with three 28 cm. guns, and one with three 17 cm. guns, is in progress.

By adding German batteries to the defenses of Constanta it becomes necessary to obtain control over the whole Rumanian coastal defense system because of its importance as flank protection for the Army. A German admiral is necessary to coordinate the use of German and Rumanian forces along the coast. To do this, he must have authority to direct the Rumanian units of the coastal defenses: Fleet units, Danube flotillas, coastal batteries, mining vessels, and naval reconnaissance. Liaison officers must be attached to the German Commanding General and to the Rumanian Naval High Command.

2. Bulgaria. Although there is little or no German naval personnel in Bulgaria, here it is also necessary to have some control over the coastal defenses, due to the importance of protecting our flank. However, a liaison staff attached to the Bulgarian Naval High Command will be sufficient, as the matter is on a much smaller scale and the Bulgarian coast is less important than the Rumanian.

3. Greece. After Greece has been occupied, her coasts will require defenses against attacks from the sea, as the British Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean will still be able to maintain naval supremacy for a time, although threatened by our air forces. Besides, Greek coastal waters will gain particular importance; oil shipments to Greece and Italy from the Black Sea and exports from Turkey must pass through them, since the open sea cannot be used.

Fortification and patrol of the rugged coasts of Greece will demand a vast amount of personnel and material, which the German Navy no longer has at its disposal. It is therefore vitally necessary to get Italy and Bulgaria to take over as many of these tasks as possible. Italy should be responsible for the west coast and the Peloponnesos, and Bulgaria for the coast of Macedonia, while the German Navy would be in charge of the east coast, where the main harbors of Salonika, Volos, and Piraeus are situated.

In order to support the Army in occupying and exploiting the ports and to assure immediately at least the most essential protection against attacks from the sea, it is planned to provide a naval shore commander for each of the three harbors named, and to provide crews to man Greek batteries, consisting of one medium battery at Salonika, one at Volos, and two at Piraeus.

The means necessary for fortifying the Greek coast, even if limited to the east coast, in a way comparable to the defenses along the Norwegian and French coasts cannot be made available without causing

extremely vulnerable gaps in the coastline defenses of Norway and France. The German personnel and materiel needed for the task are not available due to commitments made to Rumania and Bulgaria, and for operation "Felix".

A naval commander who will be in charge of the naval units stationed in Greece must also be appointed.

4. In order to achieve proper coordination between the naval units operating in the entire southeastern area and to guard all naval interests there, a Commanding Admiral (Commanding Admiral, Balkans) is required as supreme authority. He would have his headquarters first at Sofia and later in Greece (Salonika or Athens).

The Fuehrer sanctions the proposals made in Paragraphs 1 to 4.

III. Operation "Attila".

Lasting success can hardly be expected from the measures planned so far for the purpose of holding French naval vessels at Toulon. It may be possible to limit the operational readiness of the French warships through measures suggested by the Italian Armistice Commission; these include surrender of ammunition and fuel, granting of leave to crews, etc. These measures would, however, cause great ill feeling and might thus have an undesirable political effect. Hence they would serve a useful purpose only if operation "Attila" really takes place within a reasonable length of time.

IV. Operation "Barbarossa".

1. All naval forces in the Atlantic, all destroyers and torpedo boats, and the bulk of the defense forces in the west are being concentrated against Britain as planned.

All mine layers and PT boats together with a small part of the anti-submarine and mine-sweeping units are to operate in the Baltic Sea. Finnish harbors are to be used.

The number of submarines operating in the Atlantic will probably increase owing to the curtailment of submarine training; training boats are to be transferred to Trondheim. Several submarines are intended for the Baltic.

Nevertheless in the face of the increased British activity which must be expected, operations by the Air Force will be of the utmost importance, particularly in Norway and in the defense of the Skagerrak and Kattegat. In these areas it is only the danger from our planes which restricts British operations.

2. Plan of attack against Russia:

a. Coastal protection must be provided by coastal artillery, defensive mine barrages, and by declared mined areas from Oeland to Memel and from Sweden to Bornholm to Kolberg.

b. The entrances to the Baltic Sea will be closed by navigational obstacles and a strong threat from the air, as well as by coastal guns and mine and net barrages. If necessary, use will

be made of the floating batteries SCHLESSEN and SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN; Loaded mine layers are being held in readiness.

c. It will be necessary to stop all merchant shipping in the Baltic Sea. Especially troops can be transferred to southern Sweden at first only through the Baltic Sea entrances west of Gjedser. If the Russians respect Swedish territorial waters a certain volume of traffic may be possible under Swedish protection. A crossing from Sassnitz to Trelleborg will be possible only if the situation develops in our favor. Perhaps later it may be possible to move gradually farther east.

d. Offensive measures must be taken in the form of surprise attacks by the Air Force against Russian bases and ships in the Baltic Sea, Arctic Ocean, and Black Sea. The locks of the White Sea Canal must be destroyed in order to prevent the escape of ships to the north. PT boats, submarines, etc. will be used for mine laying. Mine barrages are to be laid from Finland to block the western entrance to the Gulf of Finland. For this purpose Finnish forces will be used; German mines will be supplied.

e. The Air Force must operate in the Arctic Ocean against Polyarny and Murmansk; this is very important in order to prevent the British from gaining a foothold there. In the Black Sea support will be given to Rumania and Bulgaria by providing mines and coastal guns.

f. Vast mine-sweeping operations will probably be necessary once the Russian fleet is eliminated. Assistance will be rendered by Finland, Sweden, and possibly by captured Russian units.

3. Special proposals:

a. Support by the Air Force:

- (1) Immediate surprise attacks on bases and ships in the Baltic Sea, Arctic Ocean, and Black Sea.
- (2) Destruction of locks in the White Sea Canal.
- (3) Support in warding off British attacks.

b. Preparations for collaboration:

- (1) An agreement should be reached with Finland, pertaining to participation of Finnish forces and use of Finnish bases.
- (2) The support of Rumania and Bulgaria should be enlisted for the defense of the Danube River and the Black Sea coast.
- (3) Sweden: Inquiries should be made concerning the defense of Swedish territorial waters and of German shipping in those waters.

The Fuehrer emphasizes the necessity of providing a mine-free channel as soon as the bases have been eliminated, in order that supplies can be shipped by sea as far as possible. The Commander in Chief, Navy replies that once enemy naval opposition has been overcome this

task can be carried out rapidly, possibly with Finnish and Swedish help. Nevertheless heavy Russian mining and submarine activity must be expected (see "2 f" above).

V. Naval Air Forces.

1. Systematically planned attacks must be made by the Air Force on supply lines, docks, ships, and harbors.

The effective British attacks against the north coast of Germany show the unbroken striking power of the Royal Air Force, which is also operating simultaneously in considerable strength in the Mediterranean. American airmen are participating.

American Douglas bombers, DB 7, were used for the first time during the night attacks on Bremen on 2 and 3 January. This is an indication of the effective aid already being given to Britain by America, and demonstrates the importance of cutting off as much as possible the supplies of war material to Britain.

Submarine warfare alone is for the time being not in a position to cut off imports effectively because of the small number of submarines available and because of present weather conditions. Hence the Air Force must attempt to hit Great Britain where it hurts most, by attacking her imports. To achieve this raids must be made on her main ports of import and lasting damage must be inflicted on naval bases, especially shipyards.

Despite heavy attacks on individual armament manufacturing centers, results have shown that output has not been decisively affected and the morale of the population has remained unshaken. On the other hand, measures taken by the enemy government and their propaganda reveal that the problems of imports, and this means shipping space, is Britain's most vulnerable spot. Britain's naval and merchant vessels must be the main target for attacks.

Aerial photographs of attacks on Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Cardiff show how ineffective the night attacks were, although some were carried out with considerable forces. Despite the laying of large numbers of mines by planes, the volume of supplies entering London has not noticeably declined. So far we have not succeeded in seriously damaging British ports of import from the air, with the exception of Bristol and Southampton and possibly a few of the docks at Liverpool. The enemy has created sufficient auxiliary ports north of the line Liverpool Hull to compensate for losses.

Attacks by the Air Force on enemy shipping will yield better results if production plants and repair shops in Great Britain and ships in the harbors are destroyed than if individual ships at sea are attacked. Thus attacks on the shipyards in the Tyne and Clyde areas, in Barrow, and, in Chatham and Devonport on the southern coast of England, are especially important. This elimination of shipyards is not merely of importance for naval warfare; it is absolutely vital for the prosecution of the war as a whole.

The growth of Britain's sea power by the addition of four more battleships, three aircraft carriers, and twelve cruisers requires no comment. In addition, there is the great increase in the number of

smaller vessels, such as destroyers, torpedo boats, submarines, subchasers, gunboats, and mine sweepers, the continuous production of which will have an unfavorable effect on our submarine warfare. Working in close cooperation, our planes and submarines are capable of exerting a decisive influence in the struggle against Britain and America. To this end, however, coordinated, well-directed operations against enemy shipping are essential. Ships afloat must be the target of the submarines; ships in harbors and shipyards must be the target of the Air Force.

The Fuehrer agrees; he is of precisely the same opinion.

2. See Annex 2 with regard to the organization of the coastal air forces.

The Commander in Chief, Navy hands the Fuehrer a copy of the memorandum dealing with this matter and explains it in detail. The Commander in Chief, Navy emphasizes particularly that for reasons of economy of forces the air reconnaissance provided for submarine warfare be likewise utilized for operations carried out by battleships and cruisers; otherwise these operations cannot be justified. A Commander, Naval Air should be attached to Group West for this purpose. According to the present arrangement the Commander in Chief, Navy is not authorized to use the planes in this manner. The Fuehrer feels that the Commander in Chief, Air would greatly resent this interpretation, since he is always anxious to assist the Navy. The Fuehrer thinks it would be better if the Commander in Chief, Navy would attach an officer to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines whose duty it would be to direct air reconnaissance to provide information for operations carried out by battleships. (This would be the Commander, Naval Air.) When the Fuehrer refers to a new memorandum drawn up by the Commander in Chief, Air, the Commander in Chief, Navy requests that General Jodl further clarify and finally decide this matter in conjunction with General Jeschonnek and Admiral Schniewind, with due regard to the two memorandums.

3. The question of the designation of the naval officers assigned to the Air Force. The Commander in Chief, Navy reports on this matter, on the basis of his discussion notes. The Reichsmarschall has already broached the subject. The Fuehrer therefore points out the effect this would have in practice: A subordinate cannot recognize and correctly address an officer as lieutenant j.g. or lieutenant s.g., etc., if the officer in question is wearing an Air Force uniform. The Commander in Chief, Navy insists that the officers have been deprived of their rights; he declares that he shall continue to address them by their former ranks, and requests that in spite of the fact that for practical reasons the Air Force rank is used while the officers are on duty, their right to use their old rank be confirmed.

VI. Miscellaneous.

1. Agreement has been reached with the Danish government on the purchase of Danish torpedo boats. Eight boats will be handed over. The transfer is to be carried out soon, but is being delayed by the ice conditions.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. Despite considerable misgivings regarding security, it has been decided to accept employment of foreign workers (Danish, Dutch, and French) in the naval shipyards. The Fuehrer has grave scruples, and suggests that the French workers might be employed by civilian firms in other towns in order to free Germans for the naval shipyards. The Commander in Chief, Navy explains that the enormous shortage of skilled workers has caused this dilemma, which is equally undesirable to the Navy.

3. A certain slackening in the preparations for operation "Seeloewe" was sanctioned during the previous conference. The results are as follows: For as long as operation "Seeloewe" must be maintained as a blind, the measures cannot be further reduced; it is considered essential to continue training activities on their present scale if the deception is to be kept up. Apart from this, everything possible is being done to avoid increasing the preparations if this involves the use of men and materiel.

As things now stand, the Navy needs six months to prepare operation "Seeloewe" if it is to be carried out. This includes the completion of the barge construction program. If operation "Seeloewe" is to be carried out with present resources, without the barge construction program, (perhaps merely to police Britain after she has been conquered) two months will be sufficient.

The Fuehrer states that the deception must be kept up particularly during the spring.

signed: Raeder

Observations on the Question of Japan and the Tripartite Pact.

I. Basis for the observations:

1. Comparison of the decisive naval forces:

a.	<u>U.S.A.</u>	<u>Japan</u>
Battleships	15	9
Aircraft carriers	7 (plus 2 sea-plane tenders)	6 (plus 7 sea-plane tenders)
Heavy cruisers	18	12
Light cruisers	19 (9 modern)	25 (6 modern)
Submarine cruisers	6	8 (at least)
Large submarines	25	25
Medium-sized submarines	38	24

b. Judged by European standards the cruising ranges of the various types are wide, in keeping with the vast sea areas concerned, and the two navies differ little from one another in this respect. The ranges of the vessels are as follows:

Battleships	about 10,000 miles
Heavy cruisers	13,000 to 14,000 miles
Light cruisers	9,000 to 10,000 miles
Submarine cruisers	18,000 to 20,000 miles
Large submarines	about 8,000 miles
Medium-sized submarines	about 5,000 to 11,000 miles

In the immediate future it is probable that there will be a greater increase in vessels in the United States than in Japan.

2. Areas in which Japan is interested, and her supposed aims:

a. She wishes to dominate Asia, including Hong Kong, Indo-China, Siam, Burma, and Singapore.

b. She is interested in the oil in Borneo; therefore she is interested in the Philippines and Guam, since they are bases

belonging to a strong hostile power.

c. In her attempts to expand in the direction of Australia she is confronted by obstacles in the form of Guam, Wake Island, and the Gilbert Islands, which either lie across the route to Australia or menace it from the flanks.

d. Alaska, the Aleutians, and Hawaii are the advance bases of the United States against the Japanese sphere of influence in East Asia.

Hence, Japan's aims are to encircle China; to get a foothold on Borneo while at the same time eliminating the Philippines and Singapore; to obtain space for settlements on New Guinea and in Australia; and finally to eliminate American pressure on the Japanese sphere of interest.

3. British interests in the Far East:

a. Britain is supporting China in order to counterbalance Japan; this requires the maintenance of trade relations and the retention of Hong Kong as a base.

b. Singapore is the key position on which depends the expansion of British power in the Far East. Without Singapore the British position in the Far East is untenable.

c. British oil interests in Borneo and Burma (Rangoon) have a great influence on the situation as a whole, since through them the British have ample supplies for themselves and at the same time ensure a shortage in Japan.

Japan must be kept out of the Dutch East Indies to avoid disruption of sea communications between the Indian Ocean on the one hand and the China Sea and the Central Pacific on the other.

d. Despite the apparent independence of Australia and the surrounding possessions, they are indispensable to the maintenance of the high standard of living in Britain and also as a source of wealth and manpower for any British wars.

e. The interests enumerated under "a" to "d" presuppose the maintenance of British sea communications in the Indian, Malayan, and Pacific areas.

4. U.S.A. spheres of interest:

a. She has a very strong commercial and political interest in East Asia.

b. The basis of U.S. power politics lies in the triangle Hawaii-Upolu-Guam with the point lengthened to Manila. Without this basis, power politics in East Asia are unthinkable.

5. Geographical factors:a. Some of the distances involved:

Panama - Hawaii	4,500 miles
Panama - Marshall Islands	6,600 miles
San Diego - Hawaii	2,200 miles
Hawaii - Upolu	2,300 miles
Hawaii - Guam	3,300 miles
Guam - Manila	1,500 miles
Upolu - Guam	3,000 miles
Guam - Yokohama	1,400 miles
Nagasaki - Singapore	2,500 miles
Yokohama - Sydney	3,500 miles
Hakodate - Unalaska	3,000 miles

b. Great distances prevent or hamper actions between large fleet formations or attacks on enemy bases. However, the vast sea areas simplify war against merchant shipping and warfare waged by small task forces operating independently with their own supply vessels. The value of aircraft carriers and seaplane tenders both for reconnaissance and for attacks on enemy bases, harbors, etc., is enhanced by the vastness of the sea areas, which can hardly be spanned by land-based planes.

By reason of the great distances the conditions for submarine operations are different from those in Europe. On the one hand the long approach routes to the focal points of shipping render it difficult to station submarine packs; on the other hand, the convoy system for protection against submarines can be used only in the vicinity of the coast or of a base because of the length of the sea routes to be protected. Both the Anglo-American coalition and Japan are dependent on sea communications. With Japan, however, this will no longer be the case once she is at war; from then on her supply lines will be severed either automatically, that is by blockade of the export centers, thus cutting off supplies from foreign sources except for those from Manchukuo. A similar situation has existed in the case of Germany since the beginning of the war. Thus shipments to Japan from more distant areas will practically cease.

From this moment, the Anglo-American powers, primarily, will therefore be interested in maintaining sea communications. Thus they will be forced into a defensive role, while Japan, like Germany, will be able to concentrate on the task of attacking sea communications.

The only exception will be transports to and from China and Manchukuo, and military transports to other locations depending on developments in the war situation.

II. Ways in which a neutral Japan could support the German war effort:

1. We must aim to get every possible kind of support which can be designated as "short of war" according to the American example. The United States provide the best model for this.

2. We must use our influence to increase Japanese support gradually, in spite of the fact that as a result the American attitude toward Japan and Germany may become more unfavorable.

3. The following measures seem to be practicable:

a. Supplies: Permission must be obtained for full utilization of Japanese naval bases and harbors for supplying German warships. If necessary, Japanese naval supply vessels and Japanese tankers should be used to supply German ships at sea or at submarine stations. Friendly diplomatic treatment on the part of Japan will make it possible to repair German warships and auxiliary warships in Japanese naval shipyards. (Compare the attitude of the South American countries with relation to Britain.)

b. By declaring a neutral zone around the Japanese Islands and island possessions according to American pattern, the measures given under "a" would be facilitated, and if Japan took a sufficiently firm stand, it would be difficult for the enemy to interfere with them.

c. Procuring intelligence: Japan would place her entire intelligence system at the service of the German naval war effort. The indirect route would run from the Japanese source (warship, merchant vessel, shore station, agent, or Japanese Consulate) via the appropriate office in Japan to the Japanese Admiralty, thence to the Attache at Tokyo, from him to the Naval Staff and from there to the German vessel in the Pacific area; in exceptional cases, directly from the Attache to the vessel. (Example: American procedure in the Atlantic.)

In addition, it is possible to arrange a direct exchange of intelligence between Japanese and German warships.

The term "intelligence" covers all movements of warships and their disposition, movements of enemy transports and merchant vessels, information on the mine situation and on any other enemy defense measures or installations, and on the supply situation at enemy bases; this last item is important for predicting enemy strategy.

d. Every effort should be made to get Japan, and Japanese ships to supply Italian East Africa with fuel, food, and finally war materiel. These supply shipments might well be carried out under escort of Japanese warships. As Britain is still weak in the Indian Ocean and is concerned about the attitude of Japan, no energetic countermeasures need be expected for a time. The technical side of the problem would have to be solved by taking supply vessels along.

e. Neutral Japan must exert strategic pressure on the enemies of the Axis powers by taking suitable measures. Among these are the following: Surface task forces should be concentrated in specially selected operational areas, for example, the South China Sea, the region south of the Aleutians, the waters around the Philippines, the vicinity of the Marshall Islands, etc. Submarines should appear in distant operational areas, for example, the coast of Australia, the Sunda Strait, the Macassar Strait, the Samoa Islands, and the Gulf of Panama. Certain pieces of false intelligence should be released, concerning for instance the equipping and training of large forces of invasion troops for landings on islands, operations against Indo-China, Burma, Siam, etc.

III. Which is more favorable for the outcome of the war - a neutral or a belligerent U.S.A.?

If such Japanese "short of war" measures multiply, the American attitude will stiffen to an increasing extent.

In evaluating briefly a possible U.S. entry into the war as the result of the above measures, with Japan living up to her commitments under the Tripartite Pact, the following becomes apparent:

1. The situation if the U.S.A. remains neutral:

a. As long as America remains neutral she can keep herself supplied without interference. She can build up her armament industry and her own war potential, and increase her deliveries to Britain without being affected directly by the war. To be sure, at first all possibilities will not be utilized as fully as would be the case during a state of war or possibly if Roosevelt were to assume emergency powers. In any case, the British war potential is increased.

b. Our own operations in American waters are greatly hampered by the American Neutrality Zone.

c. The unneutral conduct of the United States from the strategic aspect, including aid to the enemy by supplying intelligence, shadowing, capturing our merchant vessels, etc., injures German warfare and our attempts to resume overseas shipping.

d. American ships sail unmolested all over the world, with the exception of the closed area off northwestern Europe, and to some extent directly or indirectly relieve Britain. (Compare reports and war diaries from auxiliary cruisers in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean.) The declared zone, however, prevents American vessels from supplying Britain directly.

2. The situation if the U.S.A. enters the war:

a. In this case the U.S. would need a large part of her armament production herself, which, however, would now be increased to the limit of capacity through the influence of wartime legislation. Despite this, material aid to Britain would probably decrease. On the other hand, there is the possibility that the U.S.A. would give Britain active support with air and naval forces, not all of which would be needed for her own defense and for war in East Asia.

b. The American flag would no longer afford protection.

c. Because of their great length, U.S. sea communications in the Pacific are very vulnerable; consequently relief to British shipping would be diminished in the new situation.

d. The American naval forces, which have so far given only undercover aid to Britain, would openly appear as enemies of Germany and strengthen resistance on the high seas.

3. The following points are important in evaluating how the European theater of operations and the outcome of the war as a whole would be affected if Japan entered the war on our side and the U.S. on the side of the enemy:

a. Everything depends upon what attitude the U.S. may be expected to take. It must and can be assumed that if America's entry into the war is provoked by steps taken by Japan, the United States will not commit the main part of her fleet to the European theater. She is far more likely to keep it in the Pacific as protection against the danger from Japan, which she considers great. Even though this danger is slight from the purely strategic and operational aspect, still it plays a large role in the thinking of the American people and also of their leaders. Any attack, even if it were small, by Japanese forces anywhere along the Pacific coast of America from Alaska to Balboa or against American possessions in the Pacific would expose the American leaders to the strongest criticism if the fleet happened to be somewhere else at the time, for instance, in the Atlantic. For the same reason it seems highly improbable that strong American forces would be sent to defend Singapore, since there are no purely American interests to protect there, and since in view of the Japanese forces a very large number of units would be necessary.

b. Thus America's probable line of conduct would not result in any considerable strengthening of the enemy coalition in the European area of naval warfare; because of the necessary orientation towards East Asia, the naval forces of the United States would have to be kept for that theater. The same applies to the army and the air force, which in all probability would be employed mainly for the defense of the numerous bases and the protection of the Pacific coast.

c. When estimating the extent of Japanese initiative, the attitude of Russia and the possibility of a cessation of the Chinese war must be taken into consideration, besides the unknown factor of the actual Japanese war potential. How soon and how strongly the Japanese can take the initiative depends on how soon a settlement with Russia is reached or to what extent that power can be tied down at another place. The effects on the European theater of war and on the outcome of the war as a whole will depend on the extent of Japanese activity. Apart from tying down American forces and damaging vital Anglo-American sea communications, the European theater of war could also be relieved at sea, on land, and in the air by the withdrawal of British forces from the home area or from the Mediterranean.

Japan is in a very favorable strategic position for launching attacks on enemy shipping in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific. Determined warfare on her part would hardly permit America to use a considerable proportion of her merchant shipping for the British; strong financial reasons and public opinion would also speak against such a procedure. On the other hand, if Japan should pursue a hesitant and inactive war policy or should be greatly hampered by lack of oil and raw materials and by political obligations to Russia or China, the effect of her entry into the war would diminish very soon. It remains an open question whether in this case the focal point of the American war effort would shift to the European theater, so that the disadvantages of American participation in the war would outweigh the advantages of Japan's entry.

4. The pros and cons set out under "1", "2", and "3" show that in view of America's increasing unilateral support for Britain it may be advantageous for the German war effort if the United States enters the war under the following conditions:

a. If Japan, according to her commitments under the Tripartite Pact, enters the war on our side immediately after the U.S.A. commences hostilities, i.e., without hesitation.

b. If Japan has created the essential basic conditions for carrying out a war in the Pacific and in Malayan waters by immediately putting into effect a suitable supply policy and by limiting her aims in China.

c. If after entering the war Japan does not pursue purely selfish aims which are not directly connected with the total war effort, but rather regards herself as part of the Axis front against the Anglo-American powers, and if she is capable of waging war with the greatest energy and the necessary tenacity.

d. It follows from what has been stated that it is in our interest to encourage Japan to take any initiative she considers within her power in the Far Eastern area, as this would be most likely to keep American forces from the European theater in addition to weakening and tying down British forces.

We can accept the risk that such action by Japan might bring about America's entry into the war on the side of Britain, since, so far as naval warfare is concerned, the total advantages outweigh the total disadvantages.

IV. Japanese tasks:

It is vital that Japan should play her part in the common war aim of the signatories of the Tripartite Pact, which is to overthrow the Anglo-American coalition.

It must be made absolutely clear that any selfish interests must for the present be subordinated to this common aim; they can be fulfilled by means of the peace treaty after final victory.

1. Before Japan can be instructed as to her war tasks it is of prime importance to have an exact knowledge of her war potential. This knowledge must cover not only the characteristics and condition of all naval vessels, etc., but also the state of the armament industry and supplies of oil, raw materials, and food.

This foundation for rational cooperation must be created now in a spirit of mutual trust.

2. As shown in section "I", Japan has several strictly limited national aims in her sphere. She must be made to realize very definitely that, regardless of these aims, the primary war aim is to combat the supply lines of the Anglo-American powers. This will be the task of the Japanese Navy in the Pacific and in the Dutch East Indies area.

On no account should primary importance be accorded to landings or to seizure of areas which involve tying down essential parts of the Japanese fleet permanently, unless the execution of such projects is essential to the main task. The war on the supply lines can be carried out in the vast area of the Pacific Ocean with task forces, auxiliary warships, and submarines. These measures could be supplemented by mines layed by camouflaged mine layers after the pattern of our auxiliary cruisers.

3. It must be assumed that if America enters the war her forces will make considerable use of Empire bases, such as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, etc.

Allowances must be made for this factor in operations by Japanese submarines and Japanese task forces. Even though annihilating blows can hardly be struck at American surface forces, and in any case are not the main task of the Japanese surface forces, the latter must strive to tie down the largest possible portion of the U.S.A. fleet in the Pacific and to wear it down by keeping it constantly on the move. This diversionary activity would have a decisive influence on warfare in European waters.

4. Occupation of enemy or pro-enemy bases must be subordinated to the above-mentioned tasks. Such action might be necessary, however, in order to protect the rear. This situation would appear to exist in the Philippines and Guam. If these bases were occupied, America would be eliminated to a very great extent from the western Pacific, and Japan would have more freedom to move to the south and the southeast. It is impossible to judge whether these measures are feasible and can be recommended to the Japanese until their actual strength is known.

A foothold on Borneo would be of great importance for oil supplies. However, such occupation appears possible only if strategic obligations in other theaters of war keep superior British and U.S. forces away from the Singapore area. (The Mediterranean.)

Close coordination of the measures taken by the signatories of the Tripartite Pact must be striven for. The present weakness of Britain in the Far East invites an attack on Singapore. It appears that such an attack might be successful; if it should succeed, Britain's supremacy in East Asia would be at an end. Despite this, considering the common war aims such action must be secondary in importance to the war on supplies, as even under the most favorable conditions it would tie down strong Japanese forces for a long period, and considering the enemy's tenacity would probably entail serious losses. The presence of American forces in Singapore will influence the decision to carry out this measure even if other tasks no longer exist.

V. If Japan enters the war, strict coordination by a combined staff seems necessary if we are not to repeat the error of two allies conducting warfare independently of one another, as was the case when Italy entered the war. It would be well to have the headquarters of this staff in Berlin, with Japan represented by a plenipotentiary from the Japanese Naval Staff. It would be necessary to have the best possible direct radio communication between the two naval staffs.

This combined staff or "Supreme War Council" would be responsible for coordinating the policy of the signatories of the Tripartite Pact by constant discussions of the strategy to be followed, so that all war measures from the time of Japan's entry into the war would form a strategic whole in all theaters of war. This procedure should be continued to assure coordination of all measures even though the situation should change. Only in this way can the war be carried on in a unified manner and the enemy be prevented from proceeding according to the principle "divide and conquer", as he did in the case of Italy.

Naval Air Units.

1. In the course of the first year of the war, 1939 to 1940, the Naval Staff in cooperation with the Air Force gained valuable experience, which clearly showed not only the close inter-dependence of these two branches of the Armed Forces in the war against Britain, but also the operational limitations of their respective air forces.
2. By mutual agreement in autumn 1939 the size of the naval air units was fixed at six coastal air groups and two ship plane squadrons. At the same time the German Navy relinquished all claims to the development and construction of specialized types of seaplanes with the exception of long-range reconnaissance planes and ship planes, as it recognized the need for concentrating on the Air Force construction program. The air forces then at the disposal of the Navy represented the minimum required to fulfill naval tasks.

These tasks have not diminished after a year of war with Britain. On the contrary, they have increased considerably. The coastline of the Reich now extending from Kirkenes to Bayonne must be defended. On the strength of this fact alone, sufficient air forces should be made available to enable the Naval Staff to carry out the additional tasks which have arisen in connection with the defense of this enormous stretch of coastal waters and which must be carried out independently of the air war against Britain.

As the result of numerous transfers to the Air Force, all of which were to be of a temporary nature as stipulated beforehand, the naval air forces were weakened further, however, and it became necessary again and again to request help from the Air Force in order to carry out tasks for which the units of the latter were not adequately trained. The Air Force regards these frequent requests as highly prejudicial to its operations against the British Isles.

The temporary transfer of Coastal Air Group 506 must be noted in this connection as well as the transfer of Coastal Air Groups 606 and 808. Squadrons 3/406 and 3/906 were placed at the disposal of the Air Force for general purposes, and considerable support in men and equipment was given the Air Force in forming the II Air Corps; this included transfer of Squadrons 2/106 and 3/106.

It seemed necessary to make this brief summary, which illustrates the Navy's constant readiness to assist, in order to prove by concrete facts that the Navy has taken a completely objective view of the situation and avoided whenever possible to let its own air forces remain idle even for a short time. However, in the light of the foregoing, the Navy feels that the increase in the demands made upon it entitles it, in all fairness, to request the return of the trained air units; these are commanded by naval officers and were created and trained for naval warfare.

3. In this war against Britain the Air Force and Navy can render effective support to one another only if their most important tasks are fully recognized and they have the means to carry them out. Air forces under the direct tactical and operational command of the Navy are weapons of vital importance to successful naval warfare.

Among their duties are coastal patrol (as far as 300 miles off shore), convoy escort duty and submarine pursuit, as well as long-range reconnaissance for the purposes of submarine warfare and operations by surface forces.

Naval tasks in the extended area of coastal waters of the North Sea were considerably increased by the occupation of Norway. With the resumption of westbound traffic they were increased further.

With the shifting of the focal point of submarine warfare and operations of surface forces based on the French Atlantic coast, additional defense tasks have arisen which demand considerable forces in view of the threat to our flank from the British fleet operating from bases along the south coast of Britain.

The fact that long-range reconnaissance in the submarine zones of operations and along the suspected British convoy routes is of vital importance for submarine warfare was repeatedly pointed out by the Commander in Chief, Navy at Fuehrer conferences and called to the attention of the Air Force by the Naval Staff. The request for long-range reconnaissance has gained added weight now that the war on merchant shipping is to be intensified by surface forces making surprise attacks from the west coast of France.

For the purposes of naval warfare such long-range reconnaissance must constantly provide surface forces and submarines operating in the Atlantic with a clear picture of the situation there. The value of the reports depends on the factual accuracy of information about positions and types of vessels and the tactical situation. The correct recognition and reporting of types of vessels is especially important for surface operations, as the tactical and operational conduct of our units is determined by this information.

By Fuehrer decree Bomber Group I/40 was put under the tactical command of the Commanding Admiral, Submarines to fulfill the demands of submarine warfare; in order to increase the strength of this unit plans were made to build up a supernumerary long-range reconnaissance squadron through addition of He III H 5 planes with personnel from the coastal air units. Much as the Naval Staff welcomed such a move, the fact that the unit was placed under the tactical command of the Commanding Admiral, Submarines limits operations in support of the surface forces. The Naval Staff feels that this emergency solution confirms its conviction regarding the necessity to provide the requisite number and types of planes for carrying out the tasks of naval war.

4. Recognizing that it would be impossible for the Air Force to take over all the tasks for which planes are necessary, the Commander in Chief, Air in the Protocol of 1939 endorsed the Navy's views both in respect to the tasks themselves and the types of planes. Thus he committed himself in favor of independent naval air units. The most important points with which the Protocol of 1939 deals are summarized as follows:

a. Zones of operations - It is agreed that Britain proper and those sea areas that are closed to naval warfare form the focal point for operations by the Air Force. An agreement must be reached with the Navy whenever the range of the air forces permits operations beyond their own zones of operations and in the territory assigned to the Navy.

b. Reconnaissance - The Commander in Chief, Air is not responsible for any naval reconnaissance duties. Reconnaissance at sea for naval purposes is the special task of the Navy.

c. Participation in naval engagements - Planes of the Air Force will participate in naval engagements (engagements between ships) only upon request of the Navy or by previous agreement.

d. Equipment of naval air units - The Commander in Chief, Air agrees to increase the efficiency of the naval air forces according to suggestions of the Commander in Chief, Navy, and to assure under all circumstances that the planes provided fulfill the strategic demands of the Navy.

The Commander in Chief, Air agrees emphatically that all air squadrons should be equipped in accordance with the Navy's requirements, so far as this is technically feasible from the standpoint of the Air Force as a whole. It is left to the Navy to decide what use it wishes to make of the individual units. In this connection it must be remembered that whenever large formations of naval planes are put into action, especially for bombing attacks, the Commander in Chief, Air must be informed beforehand.

5. In 1939 the Commander in Chief, Air acknowledged the need for a naval air force, and the principles laid down in the Protocol at that time have proved absolutely correct. The Naval Staff feels therefore that in the interest of the general war effort it is the obligation of the Commander in Chief, Air to furnish the means which will enable the Navy to carry out its tasks.

While giving full credit to the Air Force for the excellent results achieved in operations over the sea, the Navy needs the following units under its own tactical command:

In the North Sea Area:

a. For reconnaissance in coastal waters (to a distance of 300 miles), for convoy escort, and anti-submarine duties - two coastal air groups.

b. For long-range reconnaissance - one coastal air group.

c. For additional patrol tasks in the eastern part of the Channel - one ship plane squadron (parts of the squadron presently not on board ship).

In the Western Area: For the same duties described above.

a. Two coastal air groups.

b. One coastal air group.

c. One ship plane squadron.

In the entrances to the Baltic:

Two squadrons - for close escort and submarine pursuit.

This allocation of duties corresponds to the present size of the naval air forces: Six coastal air groups, two ship plane squadrons, and

two supernumerary squadrons. It is therefore necessary to distribute the forces as follows:

In the North Sea Area:

For duties as under "a": Coastal Air Groups 506 and 406.

For duties as under "b": Coastal Air Group 606.

For duties as under "c": Ship Plane Squadron 1/196.

In the Western Area:

For duties as under "a": Coastal Air Groups 106 and 906.

For duties as under "b": Coastal Air Group 806.

For duties as under "c": Ship Plane Squadron 5/196.

In the entrances to the Baltic:

Squadron 1/706

3rd Replacement Training Squadron

6. The arrangement made in the meantime concerning Bomber Group I/40 enables the Navy to forego requesting the return of Coastal Air Group 806, if in return the bomber group and the He 111 H 5 planes attached to it are placed under the tactical command of the Commander in Chief, Navy (i.e., Group West, not solely the Commanding Admiral, Submarines). Administratively the group should be placed under the Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief, Navy (or the Commander, Naval Air), i.e., it should be transferred from the 3rd Air Force to the Commander, Naval Air.

These planes would continue to carry out all weather reconnaissance necessary for air warfare.

7. In order to carry out the tasks enumerated under "5" with the forces at hand, a suitable type of plane must be supplied.

For duties given under "a"

Coastal Air Groups 506 and 106 must be equipped with He 111 H 5 planes. At least one of these two coastal air groups must be equipped in this manner, so that after the He 115 planes have been expended, the Navy will have an up-to-date torpedo-carrying aircraft available, which would not only employ this weapon against the enemy in the course of its reconnaissance duties, but also provide the means for training our own units with a view to using the crews later for service on the aircraft carrier.

The other coastal air group is to be supplied with Ju 88 A 5 F planes.

For extended reconnaissance, for constant patrol of remote sea areas, etc. as set forth under "a", Coastal Air Groups 406 and 906 must be equipped with Bv 138 B planes.

For duties given under "b"

Coastal Air Group 606 and if necessary 806 (see Paragraph 6) are to be supplied with planes of very long range.

8. The Naval Staff summarizes its demands, the need for which has been substantiated by the course of the war to date, as follows:

a. All the air squadrons and groups placed at the disposal of the Commander in Chief, Air must be returned.

b. Groups 406 and 906 are to be supplied with Bv 138 B.

c. Coastal Air Groups 506 and 106, or at least one of these two groups should be equipped with He 111 H 5 planes; if only one is equipped in this manner, the other one should be equipped with Ju 88 A 5 F planes (long-range reconnaissance).

d. Coastal Air Groups 606 and 806 should be re-equipped with planes having the longest possible range.

e. A more satisfactory arrangement should be made concerning Bomber Group I/40.

Berlin 22 February 1941

Data supplied by the Naval Staff with regard to questions concerning the air forces to be discussed between the Fuehrer and the Commander in Chief, Navy.*

1. By order of the Fuehrer the Army has obtained thirty squadrons for the purpose of long-range reconnaissance. The Fuehrer made this decision despite the very pronounced overlapping caused when the Army and the Air Force operate in the same area. The mere fact that the Navy is one part of the Armed Forces, justifies the claim to equal rights as far as the provision of air forces is concerned. As, however, the reconnaissance requirements of the Navy and the Air Force over the sea hardly overlap at all, the Navy's claim to reconnaissance forces under its own command is a necessity.

2. The Navy does not wish any changes made in the organization of its coastal air units. The Navy merely desires the return of its own units, which are at present at the disposal of the Air Force. It requests that these shall be tactically subordinated to the Naval Group Commands.

3. The basic demand is as follows:

All units so far placed at the disposal of the Air Force must be returned and equipped with the types of planes demanded in the memorandum (see Annex 2, conference 4 February 1941), so that the following forces will be available:

a. Two groups of BV 138B planes

b. Two groups of reconnaissance planes with very long range.

4. (This paragraph crossed out in the original.)

The return of the units temporarily loaned to the Air Force is especially urgent in view of operation "Barbarossa".

5. The Naval Staff demands that its planes be permitted to make use of weapons, i.e., both bombs and torpedoes. This must be made possible by providing suitable types of planes as agreed in the Protocol. It is essential for the war strategy as a whole to attack the enemy wherever possible; it is immaterial whether the bombs are dropped by planes that are tactically subordinate to the Navy or the Air Force.

6. The Naval Staff must insist on having control over long-range reconnaissance over the sea, since it is carried out for purposes of naval warfare, i.e., for the benefit of submarines and surface forces.

*For a detailed presentation of the controversy going on over a period of years between the Navy and the Air Force see German Naval Air 1933 to 1945, Office of Naval Intelligence, Washington, D.C., 15 January 1947. This publication makes reference to a Fuehrer conference on 22 February 1941. As indicated by the heading, the above document was drawn up for discussion with the Fuehrer. While conferences took place between the Chief of the General Staff, Air and the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff, it appears that Raeder himself did not participate in any Fuehrer conference between 4 February and 18 March 1941.

CONFIDENTIAL

The primary purpose of the long-range reconnaissance directed by the Navy is to find the enemy in order to be able to wage naval warfare with submarines and surface forces; bombing attacks by reconnaissance planes on enemy vessels must be looked upon as a means of achieving additional success.

Hence, the request for well-armed long-range reconnaissance planes.

7. Long-range reconnaissance operations over the sea must be directed by an expert, in other words, the Commander, Naval Air, subordinate to the Group Command of the area in question.

8. The course of the war up to the present, not least of all the events of 24 January, as well as the assignment of Bomber Group I/40 to the command of the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, bear out the correctness of the views held by the Naval Staff.

Report by the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Fuehrer on
18 March 1941 at 1600.

Present: Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command
General Jodl
Commander von Puttkamer

1. Warfare in the Atlantic.

a. The HIPPER is due back in home port after 15 March. The operations of the SCHARNHORST and the GNEISENAU and their successes to date are discussed. Submarines are being directed to the MALAYA convoy. They are important for relieving pressure in the Mediterranean and Norway. More vigorous action will be taken against the British convoys as soon as four battleships are available.

b. The SCHEER and auxiliary cruisers are discussed. The SCHEER is returning after the HIPPER. Successes scored by ship "16" and ship "33" are reported. The whalers and the PORTLAND have entered port.

2. Submarine warfare. The successes from 3 to 17 March have amounted to approximately 200,000 tons.

3. Mine warfare. Aerial mines equipped with acoustic firing mechanism have brought good results. Harbor entrances, e.g., on the Tyne River, are frequently blocked. However, the enemy is now able to sweep acoustic mines. A new combined type of firing mechanism is ready for operational use. Further progress is expected. A report will be made shortly by the Mining and Barrage Experimental Command.

4. Views on the success of naval and air warfare. The following reports confirm the correctness of the view always held by the Commander in Chief, Navy, namely, that only that naval and air activity which is concentrated on cutting off supplies will definitely help to bring about the defeat of Britain, i.e., attacks on merchant ships at sea, on harbor installations and merchant ships in port, on new constructions in the shipyards, on warehouses, on transport facilities for distributing supplies, and on armament factories.

a. When at the German Embassy in Paris, Jacques Serre, former French consul at Newcastle, expressed his surprise that Newcastle has not yet been attacked, although the Vickers Armstrong shipyards there contain an aircraft carrier (to be completed in five to six months), two battleships (to be completed in five to six months), one light cruiser, six or seven destroyers, and three or four submarines under construction. Besides these, about sixty merchant vessels are being built in other shipyards on the Tyne River. Up to the time of his departure not a single bomb had hit Vickers Armstrong's large ammunition plant in the Newcastle urban area which employs 20,000 workers. He also pointed out the importance of the three large Tyne bridges linking Scotland and England.

b. The German Naval Attache in Tokyo has reported that the British Attache there stated that air warfare alone can never force Britain to give up, especially if it is continued as heretofore with bombs dropped at random on strategic and non-strategic targets alike. Experience has shown that such action merely serves to strengthen the people's will to resist.

d. The operations against Halifax should be permitted. Points under "c" and "d" are to be discussed with the Foreign Office.

e. The Commander in Chief, Navy suggests that propaganda pertaining to the U.S.A. should now lay more emphasis on the extent to which that nation violates neutrality by legislation to render aid to Britain and by her entire conduct; for example it is possible that British naval vessels might be repaired in the U.S.A.

The Fuehrer agrees. In addition, if British naval vessels are actually undergoing repairs in the U.S., he will try to arrange for repair of German naval vessels in Japan.

8. The Commander in Chief, Navy calls attention to the need to secure Northwest Africa with the assistance of the French, in order to paralyze British and U.S. control over the eastern Atlantic from there. The Commander in Chief, Navy considers that it would be most dangerous if the U.S.A. should later gain a foothold on the coast of West Africa; this would be the best opportunity for the U.S.A. to intervene effectively. Therefore it is necessary to make an agreement with the French. See Annex 1 for the advantages and disadvantages of such a step.

The Fuehrer states that at present there is no possibility of negotiating with France, since she is harboring new hopes as a result of Italy's weakness. Spain's refusal to cooperate also complicates matters; she is playing an underhanded game due to the dissension caused by Suner. The Commander in Chief, Navy suggests that the French problem be clarified after the completion of operation "Barbarossa". The Fuehrer agrees. In the autumn he also wishes to force a decision in the Spanish question. It will become more and more difficult to occupy Gibraltar, however, because of British countermeasures.

9. Italy.

a. The conference with Admiral Riccardi in Merano is reported on.

The following points were discussed:

(1) The position of the Chief of the Naval Liaison Staff in Rome.

(2) The war situation in the Mediterranean. Offensive use of Italian naval forces. Use of mines in the Mediterranean, with special reference to the need for closing the Strait of Sicily. Escorts for transports to Libya.

(3) Increase in the freedom of action of the Italian Navy through the occupation of Greece.

(4) Italy's attitude toward France. Preparations for the occupation of Corsica. Matters dealing with Corsica are discussed, of which the Foreign Minister has also been informed through the report from Rintelen. The Commander in Chief, Navy particularly emphasized here that an agreement between the two governments is necessary before such action is taken.

b. The question of transferring mineral oils from German stocks to the Italian Navy is discussed, since otherwise the Italian naval

The only real danger lies in a concentrated German attack on British shipping by surface, submarine, and air forces. Shipping is Britain's most vulnerable spot. The destroyers available are far from sufficient to protect it. Britain will be done for if the tonnage sunk over a period of little more than six months will approximate the highest amount sunk during the World War, unless Germany in a sort of desperation should stage an invasion. No one doubts today that this would fail under any conditions. The repercussions of such a German catastrophe could not fail to lead to the internal collapse of Germany.

5. The "Westwall" barrage was recently extended to the Shetlands. The last two mine fields were laid by mine layers without any escorts, one off the Shetlands on 7 March at a distance of 130 miles from the Norwegian coast, and one on 11 March 120 miles southwest of Egersund.

6. Defense of the coast of Norway by Army coastal artillery was ordered by the Fuehrer after the British raid on Svolvær. Even these guns will not be able to prevent the enemy's big ships from shooting up such batteries some day, especially during operation "Barbarossa". The presence of air forces along the coast will always remain the greatest deterrent. The Fuehrer agrees with this view and states that the Commander in Chief, Air is providing air units composed of various types of planes for southern, central (Trondheim), and northern Norway (Bardufoss).

The defense of Narvik is the most important matter, and it is now being organized. A 30.5 cm. battery, a 21 cm. mortar, and torpedo batteries are being provided. A 28 cm. railroad battery is being used during the construction period.

The Commander in Chief, Navy again points out the need to occupy Murmansk and Polyarnoye by land and if possible also from the air, if operation "Barbarossa" takes place, as the British must be prevented from getting a foothold there.

7. We have information that American convoys, probably escorted by U.S. naval vessels, call at Iceland, where the escort duties are taken over by British naval vessels. The harbor installations at Reykjavik do not permit transshipment. Iceland is not included in the area designated by the U.S.A. as the Western Hemisphere.

The Commander in Chief, Navy suggests the following:

a. The closed area should be extended to include Iceland and the Denmark Strait (see attached map). However it must be established right from the beginning that in this closed area American ships will be treated in the same way as British and neutral ships in the original closed area, i.e., they can be attacked without warning. The matter is being discussed with the Foreign Office.

b. Germany should refuse to respect the Pan-American neutrality zone or should limit it to a distance of 300 miles from the coast.

The Fuehrer wonders whether we should extend recognition only to the three mile zone. This matter is to be discussed with the Foreign Office.

c. The present restrictions on the treatment of American ships should be lifted, i.e., they should be treated in the same way as all other neutral ships. That means they should be stopped for examination outside the closed area and brought in or sunk according to prize law.

forces cannot take an active part in the war. The Italians have stated that unless they receive assistance the big ships will have to be inactivated in June of this year and the submarines in February 1942.

The Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command declares that examination has shown that the Italians admit having 600,000 tons of fuel oil still, hence more than we have ourselves. They claim that they used 35,000 tons for the Genoa operation. It is being investigated whether we can return the oil that has been used for convoy escort duties. The Commander in Chief, Navy asks whether the 600,000 tons actually exist or whether the Italians gave this figure merely because it was the one that had been quoted to the Duce. This would explain the high consumption figures, which may have been given in order to reduce the high total. It is not known whether this is the case.

c. On the basis of a German report and an offer to deliver German mines, submitted to the Italian Admiralty at the beginning of February, the Italians have ordered mine material for protective barrages off Tripoli. The material has already been sent. Personnel to give tactical and technical advice has also been sent and is already there.

700 explosive floats, 650 cutting floats, 590 UMA, and 560 EMC mines have been delivered.

It is expected that mine laying will begin within the next few days.

d. The question of using German PT boats in the Mediterranean, as requested by General Rommel, has been examined by the Naval Staff on a previous occasion. In view of the tasks anticipated in connection with operation "Barbarossa", PT boats cannot be transferred until this operation has been completed. Until that time Italian PT boats will have to suffice for the tasks in the Mediterranean.

e. In order to enable the Navy to carry out its tasks in the Mediterranean, it is particularly important to take Malta.

In British hands this base represents a strong threat to our troop transports to Africa and later for the supply transports. Besides, it is an undesirable supply base for the shipping plying between the western and the eastern Mediterranean.

If Malta were in German or Italian hands, the convoy traffic between Italy and Africa would be considerably simplified and Italian naval forces now used only as escorts would be freed for operational purposes. Better patrol of the Strait of Sicily and new mine fields would inflict considerable harm on British shipping and on British naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

In the opinion of the Air Force, it appears possible to capture Malta by airborne troops; the Navy is in favor of this as soon as possible.

The Fuehrer states that more recent reports from the Commander in Chief, Air reveal that the difficulties are greater than anticipated, as the terrain is badly cut up by small walls, making it very difficult for airborne troops to function. Further investigations are being made.

10. Preparations for operation "Marita".

a. Materiel.

(1) The coastal batteries intended for use in Rumania and Bulgaria have been sent. The 17 cm. battery installed at Varna was reported provisionally ready for action at the beginning of March; it will be entirely ready on about 20 March. The heavy battery of two 24 cm. guns near Burgas is not yet ready for action because of damage to the crane, but it should be ready by the end of March. The 17 cm. battery for Rumania is ready for action; the heavy 28 cm. Tirpitz battery will be ready by the end of March.

(2) The Rumanians have requested us to let them have 2,000 explosive floats for the mine fields that are to be laid. They have been dispatched from our own stocks along with the requested gear for sweeping British aerial mines.

(3) Examination of the two 600 ton submarines being constructed in Rumania has shown that the boats will be launched at the end of May, will be completed at the end of November, and will be ready for action in March 1942. Delivery of the parts ordered in Germany will cause no great difficulties.

(4) Transport of small German submarines overland to Rumania would take four and one half to five months. Hence the Naval Staff has decided to give up the idea, especially as the boats cannot well be spared from home waters.

(5) Despite difficulties caused by the state of the German superhighways due to damage from frost, the transport of two Bulgarian PT boats that have been built in Holland has been ordered.

b. Personnel.

(1) The Naval Mission to Rumania (Rear Admiral Fleischer and staff) has taken up its duties.

(2) The barrage expert from the Naval Staff who was requested by Rumania has been in Rumania to advise the Rumanian Navy how to lay the mine fields. At his advice the necessary material has been sent and the German specialists required for technical matters are on their way.

(3) The Naval Liaison Staff, Bulgaria has taken up its duties in Sofia.

(4) The Admiral, Greece left on 8 March. The Admiral, Southeast will leave about 22 March.

(5) An attempt is to be made to obtain the active cooperation of the available Rumanian and Bulgarian naval forces in the war; for this purpose, besides the operational guidance to be given by the Admiral, Southeast and the liaison staffs, it is intended to intersperse German naval officers and German technical personnel among the crews, as far as the personnel situation permits. About 400 men in all will be required. This personnel must be taken from ships undergoing repairs.

(6) The Commander in Chief, Navy requests confirmation of the intention to occupy all Greece, even if a peaceful settlement is reached. The Fuehrer assures him that complete occupation is the first requisite for any settlement.

c. Agreement with the Italian Navy for operation "Marita".

The Italian Navy must be contacted at once in connection with preparations for this operation in the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean. The Commander in Chief, Navy requests the earliest possible indication of the line to be taken and permission to establish contact, as the Italian Navy works very slowly and cooperation must be ensured from the start.

The questions to be dealt with in connection with operation "Marita" will have to cover the following points:

(1) Plans for naval operations must be coordinated. The operational areas must be defined.

(2) The question of who is to control the naval forces involved must be settled.

(3) Measures to be taken against islands, such as Lemnos, and anchorages in western and southern Greece, particularly measures designed to prevent ships from leaving, must be arranged. The harbors and coastal shipping on the west coast must be organized.

(4) Agreements on communications and recognition signal procedure, etc., must be reached.

(5) An Italian liaison officer must be appointed to the staff of the Admiral, Southeast.

The Fuehrer promises that the Armed Forces High Command will give the signal for contacting Italy as soon as possible.

11. Operation "Attila".

The units which the Navy is to provide, i.e., a special group of fifty officers and noncommissioned officers and two battery crews for the XI Air Corps, and a special group of twenty men and the Naval Shock Troop Detachment for Army Group D, have been organized so that they can arrive at the points of departure within 72, or in some cases 48, hours.

12. Japan.

Japan must take steps to capture Singapore as soon as possible, since the opportunity is more favorable than it will ever be again: The entire British Fleet is tied down; the U.S.A. is not prepared to wage war on Japan; the U.S. fleet is inferior to the Japanese fleet. Japan is preparing this move, to be sure, but according to all the statements made by Japanese officers she will not carry it out until Germany invades Britain. Hence Germany must make every effort to get Japan to attack at once. If Japan holds Singapore, all other Far Eastern questions in connection with the U.S.A. and Britain will be solved, including Guam, the Philippines, Borneo, and the Dutch East Indies.

Japan wants to avoid war with the U.S.A. if possible, and she could do this if she would take Singapore by a decisive attack as soon as possible.

According to a statement made by Admiral Nomura, Minister Matsuoka has grave misgivings with regard to Russia and will raise questions mainly on this point.

The Commander in Chief, Navy recommends, in a personal discussion with the Fuehrer, that Matsuoka should be informed of plans regarding Russia.

13. General questions:

a. The manpower situation and problems connected with raw materials are discussed. (See Annexes 4 and 5.)

b. Result of "a": The monthly output of submarines will still remain approximately at eighteen during the second quarter, but after that will drop to fifteen, whereas if the demands for workers, etc., were met, it would rise to twenty by the end of 1941 and twenty four in 1942. (See Annex 6.)

As before, the Fuehrer states that he intends to concentrate the greatest efforts on enlarging the Air Force and Navy after operation "Barbarossa" has been completed.

c. Fire on the BREMEN. An investigation is in progress. It is not yet certain whether the fire was caused by sabotage or by a short circuit due to old material.

The Fuehrer orders investigation to be made as to whether the crane installations on the EUROPA, the POTSDAM, and the GNEISENAU could be strengthened to permit the loading of heavy tanks.

d. Dock facilities for the BISMARCK and the TIRPITZ are: In Bremerhaven, the Kaiser dock; in Kiel, the floating dock; in Hamburg, the Blohm and Voss dock, but only if the ships are greatly lightened.

e. Readiness of ships: The BISMARCK will be ready for operational use about the middle of May. The TIRPITZ should be ready for transfer to Trondheim by the middle of May. She will be able to continue combat training there, and by her presence will discourage British raids on Norway.

f. Displacement.

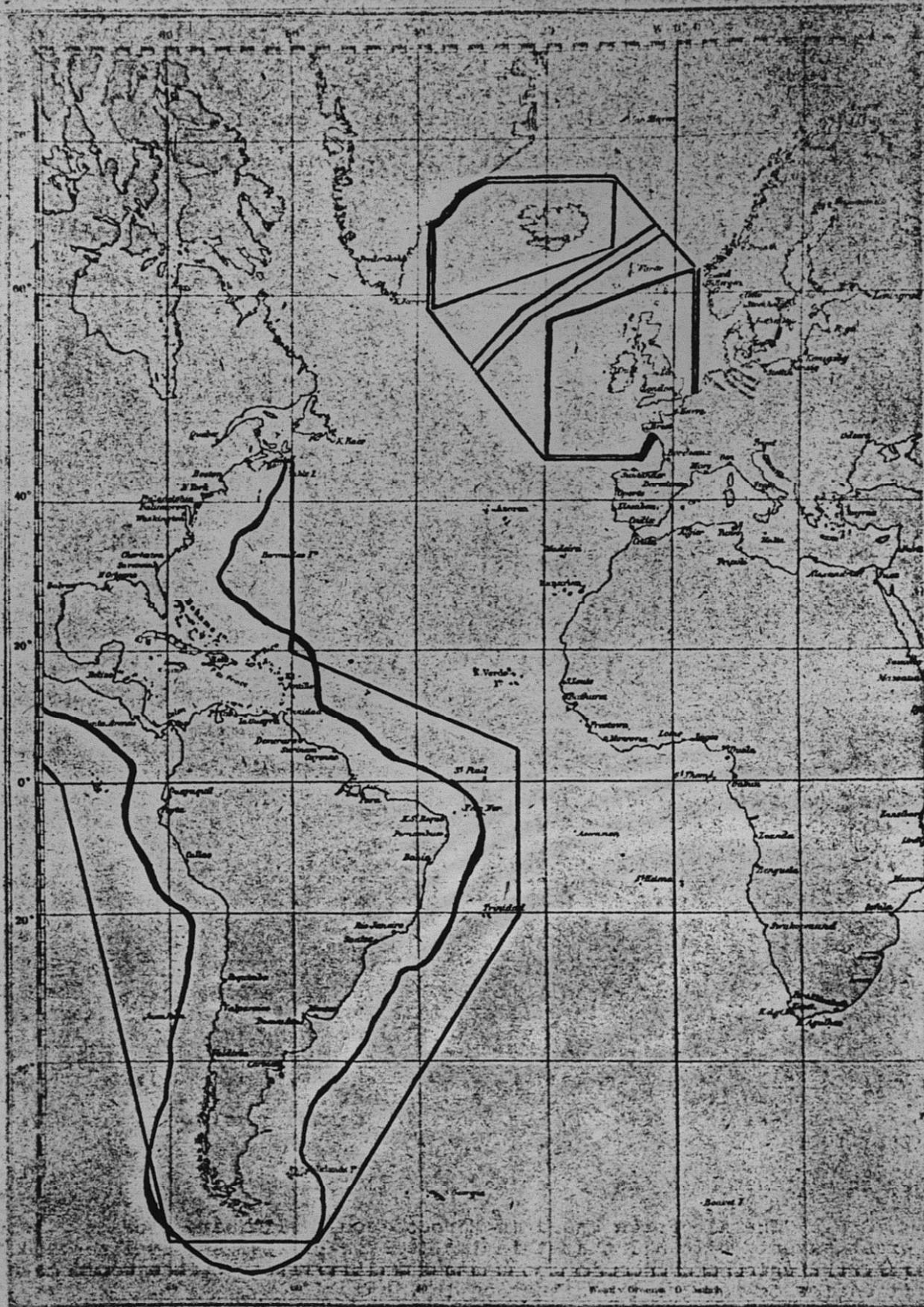
(1)	BISMARCK	-	RICHELIEU	-	Ship "H"
Washington:	42,343 tons		38,500 tons		56,500 tons
Fully loaded:	49,947 tons		46,453 tons		67,500 tons

(2) American battleships: From 1937 to February 1940 the keels of six ships of 35,000 tons were laid. Each has nine 40.6 cm. guns. The speed is 27 knots.

In 1940 the keels of two ships of 45,000 tons were laid. In 1941 the keels of two ships of 45,000 tons were laid. Each of the four has nine 40.6 cm. guns. The speed is 33 knots.

The beam of both classes is 32.9 meters. The locks of the Panama Canal are 33.5 meters wide. Our locks, ready in 1946-47, will be 41.5 meters wide.

signed: Raeder



France.

France offers the following possibilities for exploitation:

a. The military power that still remains, primarily the fleet and the forces in Africa, might be used.

b. The African area with its strategic and economic potentialities is important.

The following paragraphs set forth briefly what would happen if the French, sacrificing the mother country, were to resume the war against the Axis, and on the other hand what the possibilities would be if France became our ally.

I. If France should resume the struggle against Germany on her own initiative it would be impossible to prevent the remaining fleet from escaping from Toulon. Also the parts of the fleet at present in the British sphere would be active within a short time. This would have a detrimental effect on the conduct of the war in the Mediterranean; Italy would be entirely on the defensive; the employment of French forces to carry out escort duties and anti-submarine measures would render it more difficult to disrupt British supply lines. (However, it would be very difficult to reactivate the fleet for any length of time without the industrial facilities offered by continental France.) Italy's position in Tripoli would become untenable; she would be caught between British and French forces, since the enemy fleets would possess naval supremacy. Every bridgehead in Africa would be lost, so that Africa could not be attacked. This would be particularly grave if it later developed that Germany would have to gain her future colonies by military conquest. At a later date a strong center of power might be created in North Africa with American assistance. Germany would have to feed continental France as well as herself if she wished to benefit from French industry, as then all imports from Africa would cease. Deliveries of oils, ores, and rubber from French colonies to Germany herself, which are being increased at present, would be stopped.

All anti-Axis forces in the world would be given fresh encouragement both politically and propagandistically. France would be missing when it comes to rebuilding Europe.

II. Our aim must be more than merely to prevent this situation from arising; we must win France over to full political action against Britain and we must fully exploit the economy of the African area. The collaboration of France in military tasks and the use of her fleet would also be desirable if France is willing to do this without too great concessions on the part of Germany with regard to the future peace treaty. Thus we must strive to secure the French colonial empire against an Anglo-American attack and against De Gaulle, and to exploit the Franco-African area and its bases for German naval, air, and military forces.

We should then have the following possibilities:

a. The Air Force based in Morocco could eliminate Gibraltar to a great extent, with all that this implies for British supply lines and the strategic situation in the western Mediterranean. This would make it easier to restore the situation in Libya.

b. Sierra Leone could be captured, thus eliminating Freetown. It would not be at all impossible to attack Gambia and Nigeria. This would relieve the Italians in East Africa, and threaten the Egyptian Sudan. If the situation demanded it, our colonial empire could be acquired through military conquest.

c. Economically, North and Central Africa are of very great importance in a long war against the Anglo-Americans. If we control the Mediterranean and have the use of the French, Italian, and German fleets, it would be possible to exploit Africa economically even during the actual course of the war.

d. All cooperative pro-Axis forces would be encouraged; it would be a great political success with far-reaching effects. For all practical purposes Europe would be united against the Anglo-Americans. It is hardly necessary to mention that it might be of the greatest importance if French forces, particularly the fleet, could be induced to go beyond the tasks of defending French interests and to attack British positions, British supply lines, etc.

The possibility of guaranteeing the French retention of at least part of their colonial empire as an inducement for collaboration should be investigated.

Re: The Transport of Small German Submarines to Rumania;
the Rumanian Submarine Service.

The question of the possibility of transporting small German submarines, Type II, overland or by waterways to the Black Sea has been settled in the main in accord with the Ministry of Transportation and the German-American Petroleum Company.

Conditions are different from those in the last war. During the World War submarines of Type U BI, weighing only 125 tons, constructed in Germany, were transported by rail in completed, fully equipped pressure hull sections to Belgium and Pola, where they were assembled. In the case of the next type, the U BII submarine of about 250 tons, parts had to be transported separately. Construction of the pressure hull and installation of interior equipment had to be carried out in Pola.

At present no small submarines are under construction; hence we must fall back on completed boats. However, the separate parts of the modern pressure hulls are welded instead of being riveted together as in the case of the World War boats; it would hardly be possible to take apart and then reassemble welded boats without damaging some parts. Hence the complete submarines must be transported if possible, or at any rate the pressure hulls must be left intact.

The diameter of the pressure hull measures 4 meters and it is about 27 to 30 meters long. This rules out transport by rail.

The only remaining possibilities are the superhighways and river transport, which were utilized in the case of tankers for the Danube.

Submarines which can be considered are submarines of the Types U "1" to "6" and U "7" to "24".

The determining factor is the weight that can be carried on the superhighways; this is 145 tons. Kuhlemeyer trucks must be used on the superhighways. The weight permitted would probably allow us to transport the whole boat of the smaller type after detaching the engines and all easily removable parts. A difficulty arises from the fact that the whole weight must rest on two points. These points are not strong enough and would have to be specially reinforced.

In the case of the large type probably only the pressure hull could be carried as a unit; that is, parts of the outer hull would also have to be removed.

For road transport, it is suggested that the boat should be laid on its side, because the underpasses on the superhighways are not sufficiently high for the submarine standing on its keel. However, even in this case the conning tower would have to be cut off, or the width would be too great. With reference to the height, this is determined by the underpasses on the superhighways, not by the river bridges.

Transfer to the superhighways is possible only at one point, near Uebigau below Dresden; the tankers were also transferred to the superhighways at this point. For the same reason the boats must be launched on the Danube at Ingolstadt. Their draught will not permit them to

proceed either up the Elbe or down the Danube under their own power, so that the river transport will have to be carried out on special pontoons. Owing to the sharp contours of the submarines, transfer to the Kuhlemeyer trucks constitutes the main difficulty; another is the launching on account of the depth of the water. The simplest solution seems to be to transport the boats with pontoons attached on the Kuhlemeyer trucks. It is best to have the boats proceed to Hamburg, where all parts over the regulation weight can be removed. After the reinforcements have been built in, the boats are to be laid on their side on specially built pontoons and firmly attached so that they are ready for transport on the Kuhlemeyer trucks.

No further difficulties are anticipated during the transport on the Elbe. The voyage on pontoons down the Danube might possibly require waiting periods on the upper Danube up to a fortnight because of great fluctuations in the height of the water.

On the basis of past experience the German-American Petroleum Company estimates that transport will take about nine weeks. This does not include the possible fortnight's delay that may occur on the upper Danube. Preparation of the boats in Germany by detaching the engines and all easily removable parts, and reassembly of the boats in Rumania will require at least nine to twelve weeks. The larger boats will take a little longer because the bow and stern will presumably have to be taken off and the torpedo tubes completely removed. The entire length of time required is estimated tentatively at four and a half to five months. This presupposes that the preparation of the boats for transport, the construction of the pontoons, and the reassembly of the boats is carried out by efficient shipyards, and also that other urgent work is postponed in favor of this project.

In view of the length of time required for the transport, which would prevent the boats from being ready for action in the Black Sea in time for operation "Barbarossa", the Naval Staff has decided to give up the idea.

The state of the Rumanian submarine service is as follows: The Rumanians possess a 650 ton submarine, DELFINUL, which was built between 1927 and 1931 in an Italian shipyard in Fiume, but the Rumanian Navy did not take it over until 1936. However, only twelve Whitehead torpedoes that are ready to fire are available for the boat; besides these, the Rumanian Navy has twenty Whitehead torpedoes for its PT boats. No further British torpedoes can be obtained. These torpedoes leave a bubble track which in the present state of anti-submarine defense renders it very difficult or even impossible to wage submarine warfare by day. On account of the greater length of the German torpedoes it will not be easy to convert to them; at any rate it would put the boat out of action for several months.

One torpedo-carrying submarine and one mine-laying submarine, each of 600 tons, are being built according to German plans in Galatz. The Naval Industrial Experimental Station at the Hague is superintending the construction. The boats can be launched at the end of May or the beginning of June, and will be completed by the end of November 1941. They were to have been armed with British Whitehead torpedoes, which are no longer obtainable. The Industrial Experimental Station has made structural changes to permit the use of German torpedoes, although not with splashless discharge. At present an investigation is being made to see whether it is possible to make the necessary changes in the tor-

CONFIDENTIAL

pedo tubes without encroaching on the construction of tubes for German submarines.

The mine-laying submarine was to have used British mines, which are also unobtainable. It is probably not feasible to convert to the use of German mines. The development of a suitable new type of German mine would take about two years. As the mine-laying submarine has two bow and two stern tubes and can carry eight torpedoes, it appears more practical to complete the boat purely as a torpedo-carrying submarine and to substitute fuel tanks for the mine shafts, in order to increase the short range of at least that one boat. Both boats will require a trial period of at least three months with German crews, so that they cannot be ready for operations until the end of February 1942 at the earliest.

Japan.

It is assumed that Japan will remain loyal to the Tripartite Pact. Only the nationalist organizations and the younger officers' corps are urging Japan to take advantage of the present favorable situation to attack Hong Kong and Singapore. The question as to whether this would suit German interests can be answered in the affirmative only if Japan has definite prospects of success, which is by no means certain due to many factors: Internal political conflict, the war with China, economic weakness, lack of airplane gasoline and of oil, considerable strengthening of British garrisons in Malacca, and supply of American bombers to Malacca and the Dutch East Indies. Aside from this, there are at present no indications that authoritative Japanese circles are considering taking offensive action in the near future, unless the defeat of Britain by means of a German invasion is definitely assured. The following points are of interest in this connection:

a. The Japanese Naval Attache and his staff are constantly inquiring as to the date of the invasion, so that Japan can then act in East Asia.

b. The same question and inference were discussed in great detail in the conversation between Admiral Nomura and Admiral Groos.

c. Japanese authorities have repeatedly stated that Japan is in a position to wage only a six months blitzkrieg. It is obvious that, given the present ratio of forces, six months would certainly bring some success but could not end the war in the Far East. Then the combined economic warfare of the Anglo-American powers might cause serious reverses. (According to a study made by Wenneker, the war economy situation permits a war lasting from one to one and a half years.)

d. Admiral Nomura says that Japan really does not wish to make war on the U.S.A., and that her Ambassador in Washington has therefore been given the task of improving relations. The Japanese actually fear an American attack.

e. In his speech delivered on battleship BISMARCK, the Admiral places great hopes on cooperation in the decisive struggle that will extend over the next ten to twenty years. Thus Japan has a different conception of time in attaining her objectives. The Naval Staff believes therefore that assistance rendered by Germany by delivering engines, releasing patents, transmitting information gained from war experience, etc., a matter which is at present being debated, would have no decisive influence on Japanese plans in the near future, although the contrary is often claimed. Any accommodation in this direction would thus be only of a political nature, as any such aid could not become fully effective until the war in Europe is decided. In view of a warning report from Tokyo from a reliable agent of the Air Attache, the Naval Staff is not convinced at all that valuable information is not being passed on to the U.S. and Britain in order to gain other advantages. There are many pro-British and pro-American Japanese. Not every Japanese is a friend of the Axis.

At the suggestion of the Ambassador in Tokyo, the Attaches of the various branches of the armed forces, in collaboration with the political and economics experts, have made an investigation of the possibilities

CONFIDENTIAL

and the effects of the entry of Japan into the final struggle with Great Britain for the purpose of insuring her own "Lebensraum".

The report coincides to a great extent with our views on the Japanese situation.

Japanese military potentialities were evaluated more favorably than we had done.

It would be expedient to refer to the preparations now being made for operation "Barbarossa" when Foreign Minister Matsuoka pays a visit.

Execution of the Naval Production Program.

The Navy's armament tasks have increased very considerably since the middle of last year as a result of the war situation. Despite all the restrictions and economy measures that have been imposed, demands in all fields have continued to rise steeply. In the main, they are due to the following causes: Submarine construction has been continued and increased; the production of torpedoes has been increased; repairs on the growing submarine fleet and on the surface vessels of the nucleus fleet and its auxiliaries have been augmented; heavy demands have been made on facilities for new construction and repairs in occupied territories for the tasks of coastal defense and the patrolling of sea areas from Kirkenes down to the Spanish frontier; the demands for anti-aircraft ammunition, and also heavy and medium ammunition, have risen.

On the other hand, the measures recently taken in respect to priority grading and allocation of workers and raw materials have not succeeded in easing the execution of the Navy's armament program. On the whole, the constantly increasing difficulties seriously affect the orderly completion of the submarine program and other urgent naval construction, and they threaten to cause delays in all fields which cannot be tolerated.

I. Manpower.

A. The allocation of workers in January augmented personnel once again, to be sure, but this merely sufficed to take care of the increased requirements already planned for, and has not in the least reduced the shortage that has existed since the outbreak of the war.

Compare the attached graph (Appendix 1) showing the development of the personnel situation at thirty five of the most important shipyards.

<u>Summary of increased labor requirements in total naval production as of 1 February 1941.</u>			
	Shipyards	Other armament concerns	Total
Shortage on 1 February 1941:	8,500	8,000	16,500
Further requirements up to 31 May 1941:	10,500	12,000	22,500
Further requirements up to 30 September 1941:	9,000	9,500	18,500
	28,000	29,500	57,500

B. In response to a request from the Commander in Chief, Navy that no workers should be withdrawn from the most important naval concerns and yards, the Fuehrer issued an order on 20 December granting particular protection to special concerns, "in the first place to shipyards and air force concerns".

But as a result of the extension of the designation of special concerns to cover the entire production of "SS" and "S" priority, the effectiveness of the order was considerably lessened. The following were expected:

1. Volunteers serving over a long period.
2. Men on labor leave; they are to return to their units on 31 March.

Through the inclusion of a greater number of concerns, the likelihood of being allocated additional workers naturally becomes even more limited.

C. The loss of long-term volunteers represents for naval production a monthly reduction of about 500 of the best workers. According to both the Army High Command, General War Office and the Bureau of Naval Administration, the field units urgently need these volunteers, beginning with men born in 1916, as noncommissioned officer material. SS troops (SS-"Verfuegungstruppen") and police divisions (not regular police) are treated in the same way as the field units. The Armed Forces High Command, War Economy Division has already submitted a request that the drafting of long-term volunteers from special concerns should be kept within reasonable limits, and be completely stopped in the case of SS and police divisions.

It is urgently necessary for naval production that this request be granted.

D. On the Fuehrer's orders, 22,200 men on labor leave are to have this leave extended beyond 31 March, but the Fuehrer expressly stipulated that this should be almost entirely for the benefit of tank production.

Note for the Commander in Chief, Navy: The Minister for Armament and Munitions subsequently placed 1,720 of these men on labor leave at the disposal of naval production; to what extent this was done with the consent of the Fuehrer is not known.

On 1 April about 10,000 men on labor leave will be withdrawn from naval production, all of them very valuable, highly experienced, specialized workers. This one-sided measure also has a grave psychological effect, as all the orders concerning priority rating and the vital importance of the submarine program to the war effort will be looked upon by the Armed Forces authorities, the offices for labor control, the concerns, and the people as completely reversed in favor of tank production.

The violation of the priority regulations through preferred treatment for buna production and mineral oil production above all other tasks must also have a damaging effect on allocations of workers for naval production.

E. The remaining naval production manpower requirements are as follows:

Shortage on 1 February	16,500
Withdrawal on 1 April of men on labor leave	10,000
Increased requirements up to 31 May	22,500
Increased requirements up to 30 September	18,500

Additional workers will be needed as the result of drafting into the Armed Forces (beginning 1 July applicable to concerns engaged in "SS" and "S" priority production); enlistment of long-term volunteers; losses through other causes.

On the other hand, all economy measures constantly being urged with extreme emphasis by all official quarters cannot bring about a really decisive improvement in the difficult situation or even approximately cover the shortage. Such measures are: Making adjustments within the concerns themselves, training men for different types of work and instructing new workers, checking through factories for dispensable workers, employing foreign workers, using prisoners of war, using occupied territories for war production, and finally the renewed drive further to limit, suspend, or shift civilian production and to transfer the workers thereby released.

II. Raw Materials.

A. Although the allocations of raw materials in the second half of 1940 were on the whole sufficient, and the work outstanding from the first half of the year could be covered to a considerable extent, in the first quarter of 1941 they were inadequate for the increasing requirements. Up to this point it had been possible by careful control to carry out the most urgent tasks of submarine construction and to avoid crippling production which is of vital importance to the outcome of the war.

B. The allocations for the second quarter that have just been made by the Armed Forces High Command are considerably below requirements. This is especially true in the case of steel, which will cover only 74 per cent of the amount demanded. (See Appendix 2.)

This applies also to copper, aluminum, lead, tin, antimony, and nickel, of which from 70 to 80 per cent of the required amount has been allocated; the situation is particularly difficult in the case of chrome, molybdenum, and tungsten. By very stringent restrictions and eliminations it has been possible to cut down the rubber requirements.

The cuts in allocations for "S" priority products are particularly drastic, and only 45 to 48 per cent of the requirements are covered.

The Armament program cannot be completed as planned with these allocations and it will not be possible to avoid making sharp cuts in even the urgent priorities.

C. In the figures given below no allowance has been made for requirements to cover the new demands for ammunition, especially ammunition for anti-aircraft guns. This will amount to about 18,200 tons per month in the case of steel, all of which will be needed as early as the second quarter of 1941.

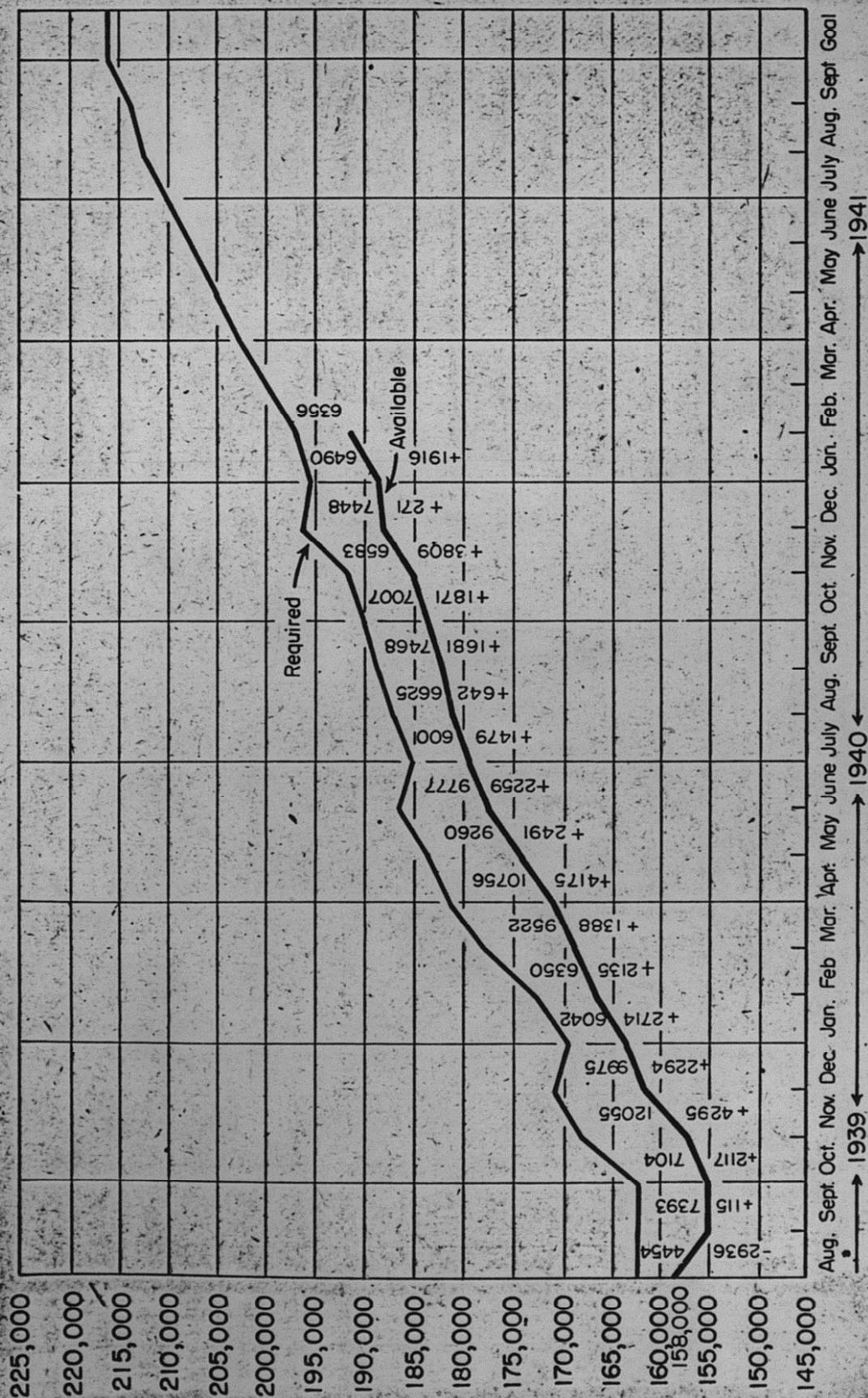
	Last quarter 1940		1st quarter 1941		2nd quarter 1941		Per cent
	Demand in tons per month	Allocation in tons per month	Demand in tons per month	Allocation in tons per month	Demand in tons per month	Allocation in tons per month	
Iron & Steel	155,000	155,000	180,000	155,000	228,000	170,000	74%
Copper	4,900	4,800	6,120	5,200	6,964	5,500	79%
Aluminum	4,668	4,500	4,880	4,500	4,924	4,000	81%

III. Construction Plans.

In addition to difficulties in production there are also very great difficulties in executing construction plans. The 1,380,000,000 reichsmarks for construction announced for the second fiscal year of the war was already a sharply reduced figure; now it has been reduced further by the Commissioner General for Construction to a total of 1,100,000,000 reichsmarks, which includes reserves for new construction projects. Instead of construction amounting to 283,000,000 reichsmarks which had been announced as urgent and of special priority, the Navy has been allocated merely 145,000,000 reichsmarks for construction in the new "O" priority grade. This affects especially the harbor construction plans and the particularly urgent housing program for the naval towns, which have had to be restricted and postponed time and again since the outbreak of war.

These projects are again being delayed through insufficient provision of labor and through difficulties in obtaining building materials and transport facilities.

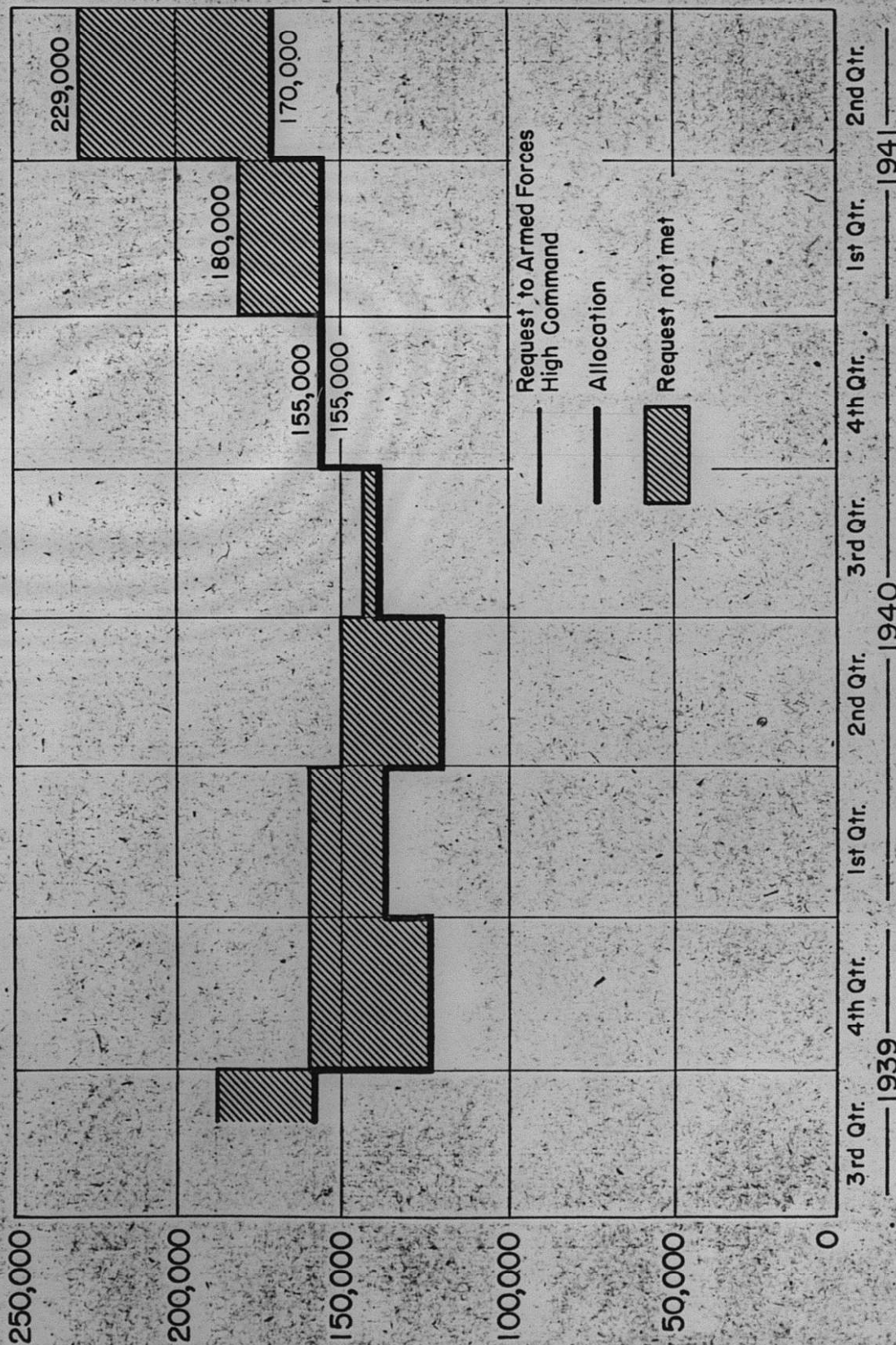
DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONNEL SITUATION IN THIRTY FIVE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SHIPYARDS MANPOWER REQUIRED AND AVAILABLE



IRON AND STEEL - REQUEST AND ALLOCATION OF THE GERMAN NAVY

From 1st September 1939 to 30th June 1941

To



CONFIDENTIAL

Annex 5

In addition to the 22,200 men released from the Armed Forces on labor leave in order to increase the output of tanks, the Fuehrer, acting on a suggestion from the Reichsmarschall, ordered on 11 March 1941 the release of another 21,000 to 22,000 men on labor leave for the aircraft industry.

This will be adjusted within the Air Force as follows:

a. 4,000 to 5,000 Air Force men on labor leave will not return to field duty for the present

b. 17,000 Army men are to go on labor leave; in return the Air Force will do as follows:

(1) On 31 March 1941 the Air Force will make available to the Army 1,500 men from anti-aircraft units

(2) On 1 May 1941 the Air Force will waive claim to 15,500 new recruits in favor of the Army

The result for the Air Force is that well-trained, experienced technicians will be retained in Air Force factories; the active service will have to do without this number of men.

Similar procedure in the case of the Navy is completely out of the question owing to the personnel situation and to the greatly increased tasks of vital importance to the outcome of the war which the naval authorities now have to carry out; this obvious, one-sided neglect of the Navy alone increases the psychological and actual harm that has already been referred to.

Monthly Output of Submarines.

A monthly average of ten submarines was produced during the first quarter of 1941.

Production for the first quarter can no longer be increased through allocation of additional workers.

During the second quarter an average of eighteen submarines will be produced with the personnel available at present.

Even if more workers were made available, the number of submarines constructed during the second quarter could not be increased, because the period required for the construction of each boat cannot be shortened to any great extent, and any additional submarines started would not be completed in less than about a year.

The lack of workers in the shipyards is making itself felt in the case of boats that have been started recently, because naturally the workers available are put to work first on the boats in a more advanced state of construction. Hence the effects of the shortage of labor will make themselves felt towards the end of the year. It must be expected that the number of boats will drop to about fifteen per month during the course of the year. If, on the other hand, the number of workers required can be supplied, the number of boats will rise to twenty per month by the end of the year and up to twenty four next year.

CONFIDENTIAL

Report of the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Fuehrer on
20 April 1941.

1. German operational situation:

Important points in present naval strategy:

- a. Cruiser warfare in foreign waters.
- b. Submarine warfare.
- c. Protection of all transport and convoy traffic to Norway and in the North Sea and Western Area.

Re a: Cruiser warfare is still successful, though restricted to a certain extent by necessary overhauling and replenishment of supplies. At present five auxiliary cruisers are still operating. Ship "10" is on return passage in the North Atlantic.

Ship "41", operating in the Atlantic, has reported sinking 56,000 BRT since the middle of December 1940. Apart from this, one other auxiliary cruiser is in the South Atlantic, two are in the western Indian Ocean, and one is in the eastern Indian Ocean.

The numerous supply ships engaged in replenishing the supplies of auxiliary cruisers and submarines in the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans have hitherto been remarkably successful. Only one prize tanker was lost. At the moment three prize ships are en route to Germany.

Re b: The northern submarine operational area is being shifted from the region just outside the North Channel to an area farther west, southwest of Iceland, on account of enemy patrols and the short, bright nights.

The number of submarines is gradually increasing. At present there are only thirty operational boats. Taking losses into account, the probable number of operational boats will be as follows: On 1 May, 37; on 1 June, 39; on 1 July, 45; and on 1 August, 52.

Re c: In spite of increased enemy efforts to stop or disrupt transport traffic by air attacks, transports to Oslo have continued without interruption. Losses on the west coast of Norway and in the North Sea and the Channel have been satisfactorily small up to now. This shows the effectiveness of the anti-aircraft guns aboard patrol vessels and mine sweepers!!

The next operation with battleships BISMARCK and PRINZ EUGEN is scheduled for the end of April, when the ships are to leave home waters for the Atlantic. (See Annex 1 concerning the question of recognizing the American safety zone.)

The questions of anti-aircraft defenses for the base at Brest, bomb and torpedo hits on the GNEISENAU, and bases on the west coast of France are discussed.

The Commander in Chief, Navy points out that the danger to ships under repair in Kiel and Wilhelmshaven is as great at present as it is in Brest, apart from the fact that a single plane can carry a greater bomb load to Brest. In spite of this, until further notice large ships will

put into Brest only in exceptional circumstances. The occupation of Ferrol, which the Fuehrer is determined to carry out in the autumn, is of great importance. If possible the Fuehrer would like to see the Todt Organization quickly construct a large dry dock in Trondheim. This is being investigated.

2. Intensification of the use of aerial mines:

A new firing device for aerial mines, combining magnetic and acoustic firing, will be ready in May. It is necessary to employ this new firing method at once and as extensively as possible before the enemy discovers the new principle and develops appropriate methods for sweeping the mines. In view of previous firing devices, a conjecture concerning the combination of the new firing device is comparatively easy, even for the enemy. In connection with the mining of the Suez Canal, a new combination of this sort was supposedly already suspected.

The mining of the Suez Canal, together with the threat to the British lines of communication through the Strait of Sicily by the X Air Corps, is a classic example of a practical mining operation which has achieved the desired strategic effect by being executed at precisely the right moment. Perseverance in laying the mines and patience in giving them time to take effect are necessary conditions for success.

Continual use of aerial mines at the entrance of harbors is the most effective way of supplementing operations by submarines, surface forces, and planes against British supply lines.

Considering that our mines present a grave threat to the enemy, while his countermeasures have reached a high degree of efficiency as the result of one and a half years of wartime experience, it is evident that the outcome of the race between offensive mine warfare and anti-mine defense will be of decisive importance. Offensive mine warfare has the advantage at this time, in view of the new firing device with which our mines will be equipped in the near future. However, it is certain that this advantage will prevail for a limited time only. It is therefore imperative that it be exploited at once to the fullest possible extent. Therefore both the Air Force and the Navy must lay aerial mines in large numbers immediately.

The Fuehrer will see to it that the Air Force acts accordingly.

3. The question of sending German submarines to the Mediterranean:

The present situation in the Mediterranean seems to indicate that operations by German submarines against British transport traffic in the eastern Mediterranean would be particularly desirable and promising. In addition to sinking ships, they would have a strategic effect on Army operations ashore! A detailed examination of the question of sending submarines to the Mediterranean, however, has shown that the disadvantages of doing this probably outweigh possible advantages. The suggestion is therefore to be disregarded.

Reasons:

a. The main objective of submarine warfare remains the attack on imports to the British Isles. The concentration of supply ships into convoys demands a similar concentration of the attacking forces, especially as sufficient reconnaissance is lacking owing to the fact that air reconnaissance cannot operate as far out as the submarine operational area. At present only thirty operational boats are available,

including those being overhauled. About half of this number are at sea, counting submarines either outward or homeward bound; therefore only one third, or ten, are in the operational area. This small number is sufficient for locating and attacking an occasional convoy in the two main operational areas west of Britain and west of Africa. Any division of forces necessarily reduces the chances for intercepting and destroying convoys.

b. For operations in the Mediterranean only boats manned by experienced crews come into question, and, only small ones, considering the conditions under which they would have to operate. The approach route is very long, and the first boat would not be available in the Aegean or the eastern Mediterranean before 7 May at the earliest; additional boats not until the middle of May.

c. The effect of single submarines would be very small. At present overhaul and repair is possible only in Italy, which means that boats would have to return to an Italian port after every ten days or two weeks of operations, involving a long voyage to and from the operational area. Really promising operations would therefore be possible only with at least ten boats. This would mean, however, that submarine warfare against the main target, British imports, would be weakened decidedly.

d. The establishment of an Italian base for our submarines, or a suitable base in Yugoslavia or Greece would require at least four weeks of preparation for installation of necessary workshops, provision of technicians and base personnel, supplies, etc. This would necessarily weaken our submarine bases in Germany and in the Atlantic.

e. The clear water and the necessity of remaining submerged for prolonged periods make the situation in the Mediterranean unfavorable for submarine warfare. For this reason alone single boats would not accomplish much.

In summary, the Naval Staff considers that the prospects of success for single boats do not compensate for the disadvantages ensuing from removing them from the main theater of operations in the Atlantic. It is therefore proposed, as already reported, to withdraw Italian submarines from the Atlantic and to concentrate a strong force of Italian submarines in the eastern Mediterranean.

The present is a good time for the withdrawal, since the Italians must realize that their submarines are badly needed in the eastern Mediterranean.

The Fuehrer is in complete agreement with the decision not to send German submarines into the Mediterranean, likewise with the withdrawal of Italian submarines from the Atlantic.

4. Restrictions on naval warfare as the result of the Pan-American Safety Zone: (See Annex 1.)

In the presence of the German Foreign Minister the Fuehrer decides as follows:

In view of America's present undecided attitude resulting from events in the Balkans, the zone as far as 20° N (that part which is off the U.S. coast) will for the present be recognized, but further south

only a 300 mile zone. No note is to be sent to the U.S.A., etc.

5. Sanction for warfare against merchant ships of the U.S.A. according to prize regulations: (See Annex 2.)

For the same reason as stated under "4", the following procedure is to be used:

For from ten days to two weeks there is to be no change; however, the BISMARCK and the PRINZ EUGEN can receive instructions for action according to Paragraph V of Annex 2, which can be put into force by means of a code word as soon as the Fuehrer has decided accordingly.

The Foreign Minister requests that, should any incidents occur, the wording of a public announcement should be worked out with him, since the U.S. must be made to appear the aggressor in order to have the Tripartite Pact become effective as regards Japan.

The Foreign Minister states that he agreed to attacks on neutral ships proceeding alone in the new closed area only providing they are doing escort duty for merchant ships. (According to the definite instructions received from the Armed Forces High Command, unrestricted offensive action was sanctioned against all naval and merchant vessels in the blockade area.)

6. Relations with Japan:

What were the results of Matsuoka's visit? Was operation "Barbarossa" mentioned during the conference? What views are held with regard to the Russo-Japanese pact?

The Fuehrer answers that Matsuoka was informed that Russia will not be attacked as long as she maintains a friendly attitude in accordance with the treaty; if this is not the case, he reserves the right to take suitable action. The Russo-Japanese pact was concluded with Germany's acquiescence. The above stand taken by the Fuehrer has had a salutary effect on the attitude of Russia, who will now conduct herself with great correctness and who expects no attack for the present.

The Fuehrer values the Russo-Japanese pact because Japan is now restrained from taking action against Vladivostok and should be induced to attack Singapore instead. Matsuoka and Oshima have assured him that all preparations will be completed by May. The Commander in Chief, Navy draws attention to the extremely vague and non-committal statements of Nomura; he intends to continue to try to influence him.

7. Relations with Russia:

What is the Fuehrer's opinion of the present change in Russia's attitude in an obviously pro-German direction? The Fuehrer replies in the same vein as under Paragraph 6. The Commander in Chief, Navy points out the need for taking effective steps to mine the White Sea Canal so that submarines and destroyers cannot escape into the Arctic Ocean, and the urgent necessity for heavy air bombardment of the locks in the canal, as it is of little use to mine the Neva.

The Fuehrer agrees.

8. Conferences between the Army General Staff and the Finnish General

Staff have already begun. When can the naval conferences be expected to begin? The Fuehrer replies that the conferences so far have been of a very general nature. The time for naval conferences has not yet arrived. Nevertheless the Fuehrer fully realizes the importance of this matter.

9. Relations with France:

Does the Fuehrer still consider operation "Attila" necessary? The Fuehrer replies that it must be held in readiness for the present, even though he is inclined to believe that Darlan's attitude is trustworthy.

10. Italo-German cooperation in the Aegean Sea:

The following arrangements have been agreed upon:

a. Territorial limits. The east coast of Greece, including the Gulf of Athens, comes under the command of the Admiral, Southeast; also the islands off the coast and the islands in the Aegean Sea, as far as they are occupied by German troops. The Peloponnesos and the west coast of Greece come under the command of Italy.

b. Enlistment of Italian naval forces for duty along the German coastal sector for the defense of harbors and inshore waters and as escorts for coastal traffic and island transports. Request has been made for two torpedo boat or destroyer flotillas of four ships each, three mine-sweeping and three patrol flotillas of six vessels each, two subchaser flotillas, two or three PT boat flotillas of eight boats each, six mine layers, and six submarines, as well as several small transports, tankers, and other supply ships.

The Italian Naval Staff has agreed to provide these vessels, but has pointed out that all available submarines are at present engaged in operations against British transports in the eastern Mediterranean. Apart from the forces applied for, the Italian Naval Staff plans to put Italian forces stationed permanently or temporarily in the Dodecanese Islands at the disposal of the Admiral, Southeast, should he require them.

c. Liaison between Italian naval forces and the Admiral, Southeast. An Italian Chief of Staff, who will also be the commander of the above Italian naval forces, will be attached to the Admiral, Southeast. The Admiral, Southeast is permitted to transfer sections of these forces to commanders subordinate to him. The Dodecanese naval forces temporarily placed at the disposal of the Admiral, Southeast will be operationally and tactically under his command during this time.

Captain Count Peccori-Giraldi has been selected as Chief of Staff.

signed: Raeder

Restrictions on German Naval Warfare as the result of the Pan-American Safety Zone.

The establishment of the Pan-American Safety Zone was not agreed to at the time on strategic grounds, because German warfare would have been restricted considerably by it. After subsequent rejection on the part of Great Britain, Germany sent notification that "the German Government could not see any prospect of success in continuation of the Safety Zone plan, unless the Anglo-French standpoint were basically revised".

The private order to naval forces to respect the zone just the same incurred all the strategic disadvantages which an official rejection of the zone was supposed to have prevented. On the other hand, the advantages from a strategic, political, and propaganda point of view which would have accompanied an official recognition were not forthcoming.

In February 1941 a new note was dispatched, pointing out that in view of the numerous violations of the Pan-American Zone by Great Britain a change in the negative British attitude towards the zone cannot be expected.

Strategic disadvantages:

The operational freedom of our own naval forces is considerably restricted, as, in some parts, the zone covers half the Atlantic. All contraband traffic from South, Central, and North America moves as far as possible within the zone (see map, Appendix 1). The enemy can therefore concentrate his escort forces in the area where merchant shipping is forced to leave the zone, thereby making possible a considerable increase in escort forces and making attack difficult not only for submarines and auxiliary cruisers, but also for cruisers and battleships.

This is of importance for the forthcoming operation of the BISMARCK and the PRINZ EUGEN in the Atlantic.

Therefore it is again suggested that offensive operations be permitted within the zone. The Naval Staff predicts an increase in sinkings of merchant ships as a result of the widely scattered distribution of enemy forces which will be necessary to cover the whole Atlantic. It also seems absurd that oil transports en route to Freetown, and American deliveries of arms and aircraft to Takoradi, which are transferred from there to Egypt, should be immune from attack by us during the greater part of the voyage. The Naval Staff considers it both unnecessary and inexpedient to dispatch a note. It will suffice to give naval forces freedom of operation.

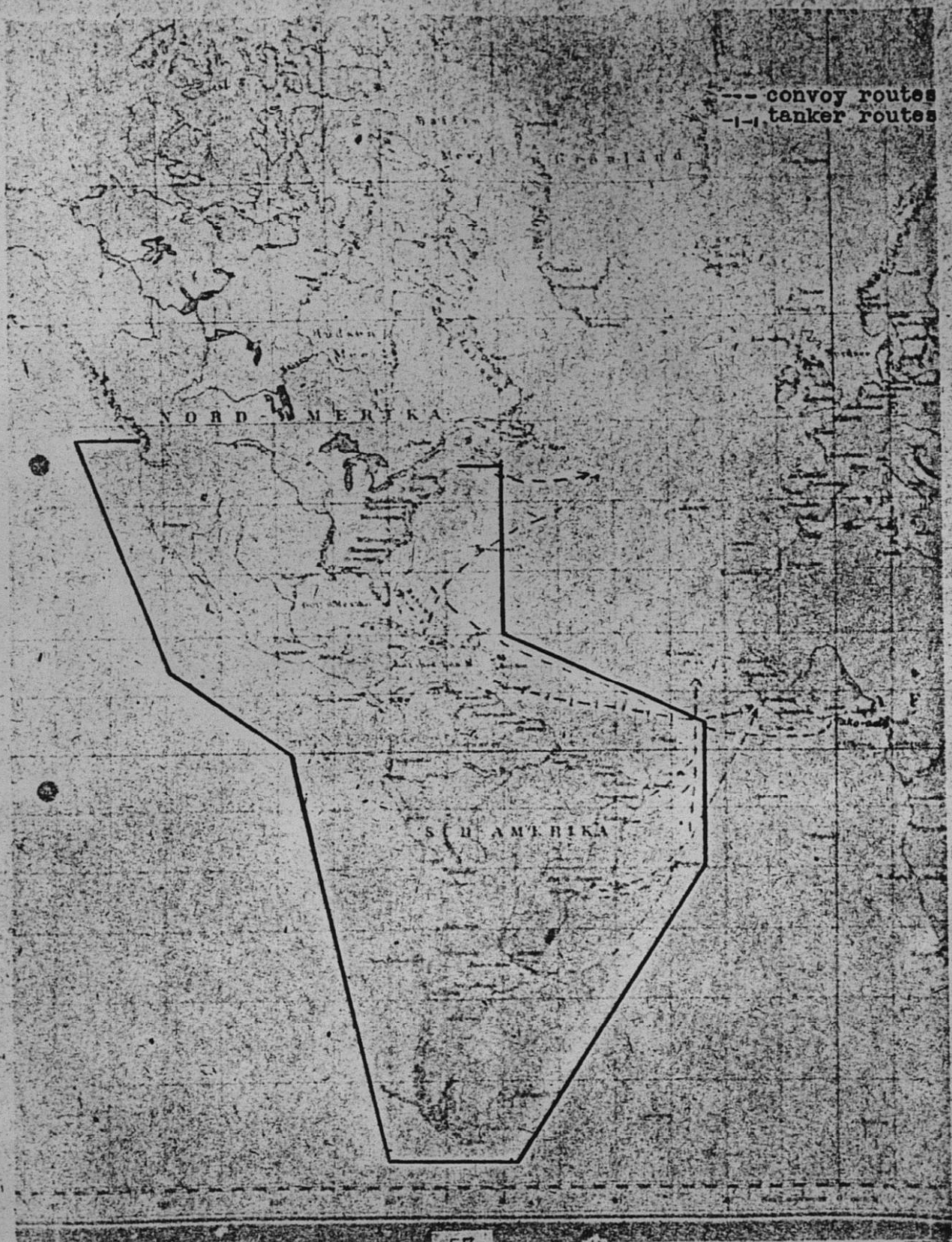
The following points must be emphasized:

1. The British have never respected the zone (see Appendix 2).
2. By mistake, a German auxiliary cruiser respected only the 300 mile zone, sank five steamers and fought two actions, with the ALCANTARA and the CARNAVON CASTLE, within the zone. There were no repercussions of any sort. The U.S. State Department confirmed that the action took place outside the zone.
3. The following are to be considered as compromise suggestions:

CONFIDENTIAL

a. The part of the zone off the U.S. coast, i.e., roughly north of 20° N, might be respected, but not the part off South America.

b. The same as under "a", but recognizing a 300 mile zone off South America.



British Violations of the Pan-American Safety Zone.

1. The tanker EMMY FRIEDRICH was stopped by the British cruiser CARADOC in the vicinity of the Yucatan Strait on 24 October 1939 and was scuttled by her own crew.
2. The steamer USSUKUMA was stopped by a British naval vessel on 6 December 1939 off Bahia Blanca, Argentina, inside the safety zone, and was scuttled by her own crew.
3. The motor vessel DUSSELDORF was stopped by the British cruiser DESPATCH on 15 December 1939, six or seven miles off the Chilean coast near Caldera. The sea cocks were opened, but the ship did not sink, and she was brought in by a British prize crew.
4. The steamer ARAUCA was stopped by the British cruiser ORION on 19 December 1939 inside North American territorial waters off Ft. Lauderdale (within the three mile zone), fired on and finally escorted by three American planes.
5. The steamer COLUMBUS was stopped by the British destroyer HYPERION on 19 December 1939 within the safety zone, 300 miles northeast of Cape Henry, Virginia, and was scuttled by her own crew. The COLUMBUS was escorted by the American cruiser TUSCALOOSA, which directed the British naval vessel to the German ship.
6. The steamer WAKAMA was stopped by a British cruiser on 13 February 1940 inside the safety zone off the Brazilian coast (between Cabo and Sao Thome), and was scuttled by her own crew. Lifeboats were fired on with machine guns.
7. The steamer TROJA was stopped by a British cruiser off Aruba in the Caribbean Sea on 1 March 1940, was set on fire and sunk by her own crew.
8. The motor vessel HEIDELBERG was stopped by a British cruiser on 1 March 1940 off the north coast of Venezuela in the Caribbean Sea, and was scuttled by her own crew.
9. The motor vessel HANNOVER was stopped by a British (or French) destroyer on 8 March 1940 off the east coast of the Dominican Republic inside territorial waters, and after opening of the sea cocks was set on fire by her own crew.
10. The motor vessel WESER was captured by the Canadian auxiliary cruiser PRINCE ROBERT on 26 September 1940 west of Manzanillo, Mexico, probably inside the safety zone, and taken to Esquimalt, British Columbia.
11. The motor vessel PHRYGIA, 4,137 BRT, of the Hamburg-America Line, was scuttled by her own crew on 16 November 1940 shortly after leaving Tampico in order to escape capture.
12. The steamer IDARWALD, 5,033 BRT, of the Hamburg-America Line, was scuttled by her own crew on 9 December 1940 off Cuba in order to escape capture. She sank on 10 December in spite of British efforts to salvage her.

13. The motor vessel RHEIN, 6,031 BRT, of the Hamburg-America Line, was stopped by a Dutch naval vessel on 11 December 1940 in the Caribbean Sea and thereupon scuttled by her own crew.

14. The motor vessel MUENCHEN, 5,619 BRT, of the Hamburg-America Line, was stopped by an enemy naval vessel on 2 April 1941 west of Callao shortly after putting to sea, and was thereupon set on fire and sunk by her own crew.

15. The motor vessel HERMONTHIS, 4,833 BRT, North German Lloyd, was treated like the motor vessel MUENCHEN.

16. The French passenger ship MENDOZA, 8,199 BRT, was captured by a British cruiser on 13 January 1941 inside Uruguayan territorial waters, set free again on 14 January, and was captured again on 18 January on the boundary of Brazilian territorial waters, five miles from the island of Santa Catharina, and taken to Freetown.

Warfare against American Merchant Shipping according to Prize Regulations.

I. Present situation.

a. The greater part of American supplies of arms, aircraft, and other war material are sent to West, Central, and East Africa, and from there to Egypt, by routes which avoid the war zone declared by the U.S. Government. The chief routes are as follows:

Atlantic: New York to Bermuda to Takoradi (Gold Coast) or Matadi (Congo); New York to Bermuda to Cape Town; Gulf ports to Fernando-Noronha to Cape Town.

Indian Ocean: From Durban through Mozambique Channel to East Africa or India (Bombay).

This shipping plays a very considerable part in helping the enemy to guarantee military supplies to the most important strategic British positions (Egypt and the Near East). The American plans of bringing ships around the Cape or through the Pacific and Indian Oceans to the Near East must be counteracted.

b. The enemy and the U.S.A. both know, from the course of the war up till now, that German naval forces do not attack American steamers. This fact leads to the following results:

1. American shipping sails unhindered over the direct routes.
2. It serves as a medium of reconnaissance for enemy shipping.
3. British ships can camouflage themselves as American ones without giving themselves away either to us or the world at large. Proof of this is the fact that the first and only American steamer captured by us since Autumn 1939, CANADIAN CRUISER, captured and sunk by the SCHEER on 20 February, was a camouflaged British steamer!!

II. The effects of applying prize regulations to American shipping.

a. It is difficult to estimate the success in terms of tons, but it promises to be considerable, especially in the first weeks, particularly if this action coincides with an operation of the fleet in the North Atlantic. In the following period captures will remain within the normal limits of warfare against enemy shipping.

b. The following indirect advantages will result:

1. American shipping will be forced to choose new routes. This will incur detours, reduction in the amount of material transported, higher cost of transport, and lower profits.
2. The danger to shipping as well as the losses themselves will necessitate an increase in freight and insurance charges, hence profits will be reduced and shipping may be shifted to safer areas, e.g., the Pacific Ocean.

3. The U.S. Fleet, strong though it may be in relation to other fleets, is not in a position to provide sufficient vessels for escort duty considering the length of the sea routes involved; this is all the more true since the greater part of her forces are tied up on account of the political situation in the Indian Ocean, and there is greater need for organizing convoys in the North Atlantic for protection against submarines.

c. One special advantage is the fact that enemy ships can no longer gain protection by camouflaging themselves as American ships.

III. For the above reasons the Naval Staff requests permission to conduct warfare against American merchant shipping according to prize regulations.

IV. Sparing the lives of U.S. citizens.

A definite guarantee that no American lives will be lost cannot be given, as even if the principles of prize law are adhered to the use of armed force is permissible under certain circumstances, even though the vessel concerned is sailing under neutral flag:

a. Against all ships proceeding under escort of enemy naval vessels or aircraft; ships are assumed to be proceeding under convoy when enemy surface forces, submarines, or air forces are within sight of a number of merchant ships proceeding sufficiently close together.

b. Against vessels which transmit useful information to the enemy concerning fighting forces or naval operations. This includes any radio message transmitted while measures in accordance with prize law are in progress.

c. Against vessels which resist by force or take part in any combat action.

d. Against vessels which ignore the order to stop, to keep on a certain course, not to make use of radio apparatus, or not to make signals. Use of radio by a vessel proceeding in company with others without enemy escort after the order has been given to stop and to refrain from using the radio entitles the opponent to take ruthless action against all the ships in the company, when it cannot be established which one of the ships made use of the radio.

e. Against vessels of whom it is known or becomes known that they are carrying enemy troops aboard.

In spite of the right to employ armed force in the above cases, naval forces already have orders to endeavor to rescue crews after action. It is not to be expected that these instructions should be modified in favor of American crews to the disadvantage of our own forces, or that the above-mentioned permissible use of armed force should be restricted in favor of American ships.

V. If for political reasons restrictions cannot be lifted altogether, it seems a matter of urgent necessity that an order should be issued at least once to the fleet forces to capture and bring in as many American ships as possible during the next operation, in order to deprive enemy shipping of the possibility and protection of neutral camouflage, and also to bring home to the U.S.A. the seriousness of the situation caused by their continuous support of the enemy.

Commander in Chief of the Navy

Conference of the Commander in Chief, Navy with the Fuehrer
at the Berghof on 22 May 1941.

Present: Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command
General Jodl
Captain von Puttkamer
The Foreign Minister

1. Situation.

a. Submarine warfare: Since the beginning of May there has been a further increase in the number of ships sunk by our submarines. Eleven boats are at present in the northern operational area and seven are in the southern area. In the course of the last few days about 85,000 tons were sunk from a convoy. The enemy has adopted a very flexible convoy system, combined with a far-reaching and excellent direction-finding and locator network; the sighting and location reports are evaluated very rapidly for the purpose of convoy control. Enemy defense for convoys has been considerably strengthened; a close watch of the sea area west of Britain is being kept by air reconnaissance, anti-submarine groups, surface forces, and single steamers. The losses incurred by us in March and April made it necessary to move the submarines further out into the Atlantic. Some of the waiting positions are outside the declared blockade area. Successful submarine operations have been carried out in the area off the West African coast near Free-town. One boat has set out on a mine-laying mission in the Takoradi-Lagos area.

b. Cruiser warfare in foreign waters: Four auxiliary cruisers are still on operations, one in the South Atlantic and three in the Indian Ocean. Ship "10", commanded by Captain Kaehler, returned to Hamburg after nearly eleven months of operations. The ship sank 96,000 BRT. Engagements were fought with three superior enemy auxiliary cruisers, one of which was sunk and the other two badly damaged.

Ship "33", commanded by Captain Krueder, sank at noon on 8 May in the Indian Ocean west of Somaliland during an engagement with the heavy British cruiser CORNWALL, which has eight 20.3 cm. guns. Only fifty three survivors were taken prisoner. The enemy himself reported damage to the CORNWALL during the engagement.

The Commanding Officer's character is a sufficient guarantee that the auxiliary cruiser fought a gallant battle after vainly attempting to escape from the enemy cruiser through use of deception. Ship "33" was the most successful German auxiliary cruiser, which carried out extremely well all the tactical and operational demands made of her.

Her successes amounted to 120,000 BRT, including several prizes brought to home waters amounting to over 50,000 BRT. Three large whale ships from the Antarctic, carrying 22,000 tons of whale oil, were among the prizes; also eight smaller whalers, a valuable tanker, and a steamer carrying wheat. At least two further ships, the names of which are unknown, were captured before the engagement with the CORNWALL. Mine-laying missions in Australian waters were brilliantly executed. Apart

from sinkings directly caused by the mines (three to four steamers and one mine sweeper have been sunk as far as is known at present), these mine operations have great operational effect with extremely far-reaching consequences for enemy shipping. The total success achieved by ship "33" exceeds that of cruiser EMDEN or auxiliary cruiser WOLF in the World War.

Proposal: These facts, together with the name of this outstanding commanding officer, should be mentioned and given recognition in one of the next reports of the Armed Forces High Command.

The Fuehrer agrees. He also agrees to announcing the loss of Lt. Comdr. Prien at a time when substantial submarine successes are reported.

The prize SPEYBANK put into Bordeaux on 11 May with a very valuable cargo of 1,500 tons of manganese, 300 tons of rubber, jute, and tea.

The supply ship DRESDEN put into a harbor in southern France with 140 Americans, some of them women and children, who were taken aboard auxiliary cruisers during the capture of an Egyptian steamer. It is inexcusable of the U.S. Government to allow American citizens, including women and children, to travel on ships belonging to belligerents.

The captain of the DRESDEN treated the American passengers with great consideration, so that no protests are likely.

c. Warfare by surface forces against merchant shipping: The BISMARCK-PRINZ EUGEN task force is en route to its mission in the Atlantic; the ships left Norwegian waters near Bergen on 21 May. The purpose of the operation is war against merchant shipping in the North and Middle Atlantic. Fleet Commander Admiral Luetjens is in command of the operation.

d. German merchant shipping overseas: Of the four blockade-runners sent to South America, the first is on the return voyage and will arrive at the end of May; the remaining three are discharging and taking on cargo in Brazil. Up to now goods valued at 19,000,000 reichsmark have been exported.

Two German merchant ships, carrying 7,000 tons of rubber in all, are at present en route from Dairen. In a few days a third one will follow with an additional 4,000 tons. The first vessel is to arrive about the end of June; she will proceed by way of Cape Horn.

Five vessels put out from Chile for Japan.

2. The enemy's air forces are very active in attacking German convoy and coastal traffic on the Norwegian and German coasts and the occupied Channel coast. Up to now the enemy has achieved no great success, and our defense forces have had good results in shooting down planes.

3. Extension of inland waterways in Holland.

The Navy is very much interested in developing the inland waterways from the Ems River and the city of Delfzijl to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and the Rhine River in order to reduce traffic on the sea route, which is exposed to great danger from air attacks, PT boats, and mines, and in order to economize in the use of our limited escort forces. The Navy has ascertained that it is altogether possible to increase the number

of barges on the canals and to utilize them better. Even partial expansion would mean a substantial increase in the amounts transported and would be of advantage to the over-all conduct of the war, not to mention its great importance for peacetime purposes. Up to now the Ministry of Transportation has opposed this project. The Naval Staff cannot judge the reasons for this. It is proposed that the Fuehrer should recommend this expansion.

The Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command will attend to the matter.

4. Continuing use of aerial mines.

In view of the importance of our new mine fuse and the necessity for exploiting it to the fullest possible extent before the enemy counter-measures become effective, the Naval Staff has recommended mine-laying operations on a large scale to the Commander in Chief, Air. (A copy of the suggestion was sent to the Armed Forces High Command.) Mines with the new fuses should be laid suddenly and uninterruptedly for several days in as many of the harbors on the east and west coast as possible at one and the same time. All efforts should be concentrated on these operations, even if this would mean a temporary reduction of forces for other tasks. The Naval Staff anticipates very great results from surprise attacks of this kind.

As far as is known the Operations Staff of the Commander in Chief, Air agrees in principle with the views of the Naval Staff, but considers that the number of planes available would not be sufficient for large-scale operations because of the withdrawal of large forces for the Eastern Campaign.

In view of experience gained from earlier operations, the great importance of properly using this new and important type of fuse should be emphasized. The over-all effect of the mine offensive will suffer if too few mines are laid and the operations are not sufficiently concentrated. Fully convinced of the success of such an undertaking, the Naval Staff believes that large-scale use of mines with the new fuse would fully justify the temporary neglect of other operational tasks of the Air Force against Britain.

General Jodl states that the Air Force has agreed to undertake a large-scale mine-laying operation with all available aircraft.

5. For the discussion of the present problem of naval warfare in the Atlantic due to the attitude of the U.S.A., see Annexes 1 and 2.

6. Possible exploitation of French bases in West Africa. (See Annex 3.)

The Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command states that there are prospects that the French will agree to all our demands. The French have made far-reaching preparations for defending Northwest Africa against British and American attacks.

7. Canary Islands.

Spanish Navy:

a. The Commander in Chief, Navy recommends speedy measures for reinforcing the defenses of the Canaries so that the islands can be

held at any time against the British and Americans. Such measures would include importing and installing 15 cm. guns and building up supplies of food and ammunition. Enemy occupation of the Canary Islands would endanger our position in West Africa.

The Fuehrer agrees that the Armed Forces High Command should make preparations for these measures and that they should be carried out.

b. During negotiations between the German and Spanish Navies regarding equipment for Spain, agreement was reached on most points; e.g., German mines are to be delivered. This could be done at once and would be in the interest of the German Navy. Delivery is being delayed, however, by trivial bickering on the part of the Ministry of Economics. The Commander in Chief, Navy requests that the Foreign Office clarify the matter.

The Foreign Minister will attend to the matter.

8. Occupation of the Azores.

This subject was brought up by the Fuehrer. Judging from an earlier summary of the situation, which has not undergone any changes since, it would be possible to carry out the initial occupation of the Azores, using combat forces. It is extremely unlikely, however, that the islands could be held and supplies brought up in the face of British, possibly also American attacks. Moreover, all our combat forces, including submarines, would be necessary to achieve this, and they would therefore have to be withdrawn from all offensive action against Britain. This would mean abandoning decisive offensive activities in the Battle of the Atlantic; this is intolerable. The Navy must therefore reject the idea of occupying the Azores.

The Fuehrer is still in favor of occupying the Azores, in order to be able to operate long-range bombers from there against the U.S.A. The occasion for this may arise by autumn. In reply to the Commander in Chief, Navy, the Fuehrer confirms that the Navy's main task in summer 1941 must be the disruption of British supply lines.

9. Plans for operation "Barbarossa":

It is essential that contact and conferences with the Finnish Admiralty be approved soon, at least as regards negotiations on fundamental operational matters, the settlement of which must be considered an essential factor for any operations. Such conferences require lengthy preparation; questions to be discussed include fuel supplies, anti-aircraft defense of bases and anchorages, supplies of foodstuffs, prompt transfer of vessels from the shipyards, etc.

The Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command states that following the return of Minister Schnurre within the next few days, negotiations will take place between the Armed Forces High Command and the Finns. Subsequently, discussions on the part of the Navy will be possible.

Transports to Finland will, as ordered, be carried out in ten instead of twenty one days. Twenty five steamers will be withdrawn from merchant shipping for this purpose.

10. Organization in the southeastern area:

According to Fuehrer Directive No. 29, it is intended that the Army

shall hand over the defense of the whole Greek area, up to Salonika, to the Italian Armed Forces after completion of operation "Merkur". The directive leaves open for later settlement the question of who is ultimately to provide the occupational forces for Crete. Attention is called to the decisive importance of defending the main strategic points such as Salonika, Lemnos, Piraeus, Melos, and Crete. These points are of decisive importance as strategic bases for any further operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is essential that they be adequately protected against all eventualities and be ready to offer determined resistance to any enemy action. This is a necessary condition for successful operations by the X Air Corps. Such protection, however, can be guaranteed only if coastal defense and occupation of the hinterland is in the hands of German forces. The Naval Staff is therefore of the opinion that the bases in question should be firmly held by German forces until the Mediterranean operation as a whole has been concluded, more specifically, until British operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, including Alexandria and the Suez, have been eliminated. This applies especially to Crete, which is essential to the X Air Corps.

The Fuehrer agrees, and gives the Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command appropriate instructions.

11. Italian submarines:

The Commander in Chief, Navy once again requests withdrawal of Italian submarines from the Atlantic. The time is propitious, since they are urgently needed in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Foreign Minister proposes that he raise this point with Count Ciano or that the Fuehrer discuss it at his next meeting with the Duce, which is to take place soon. The Fuehrer agrees.

12. The Commander in Chief, Navy asks the Fuehrer for his opinion on Japan's attitude, as he is under the impression that the Japanese are rather cool. (Nomura is negotiating in Washington!)

At the present time the Fuehrer has no clear picture of the situation but obviously there are internal political difficulties in Japan.

The good friendship policy is to be continued.

The Commander in Chief, Navy reports on information received from Admiral Nomura regarding new ships built by the Japanese.

The Fuehrer emphasizes the necessity for complete secrecy.

13. The Commander in Chief, Navy stresses the need for deepening navigational channels to accommodate very heavy new vessels after the war. The depth of the Kiel Canal, the Belts, and Jade Bay should be increased to fifteen meters. This work is to be carried out by the Navy, while the Elbe and Weser Rivers should be deepened as a large-scale project of other governmental agencies.

The Fuehrer agrees entirely, but points out also the urgency of expanding Trondheim.

14. The Commander in Chief, Navy states that very careful and detailed preparations have been made for holding back the important materials to be delivered to Russia. The Russian Navy will be informed in

CONFIDENTIAL

the near future that the German Navy is having to draw on some of the things in view of the state of emergency, so that slight delays will occur, but that deliveries as a whole are not jeopardized. The Fuehrer agrees. The Foreign Minister has been informed.

15. The Commander in Chief, Navy reports that it will take eight months to complete constructing the aircraft carrier, including installations of anti-aircraft guns, if the work is resumed at the conclusion of operation "Barbarossa". An additional year will be needed for trials. As soon as it has definitely been decided to continue work on the carrier, the Fuehrer should order the Commander in Chief, Air to make the necessary planes available in time.

signed: Raeder

The Present Problem of Naval Warfare in the Atlantic in
view of the Attitude of the U.S.A. May 1941.

1. Situation.

The flow of supplies carried by convoys and single vessels across the North Atlantic is still continuing, and constitutes as ever the decisive lifeline for Great Britain. In view of the distressing conditions prevailing in Britain, particularly in matters of shipping space, a great effort is being made to utilize available shipping space to the fullest, and certain supply routes in remote areas have been discontinued. At the same time it is apparent that more and more of the supplies are shipped via the North Atlantic, particularly via the shortest route from North America to Britain, which can be safeguarded most effectively. Here lies the focal point of the Battle of the Atlantic and here, therefore, the all-out campaign against British supplies must be concentrated as the vital aim of German naval warfare. Enemy convoy and supply traffic, escorted by auxiliary cruisers, cruisers, and battleships, comes from Canada and the West Indies, makes a wide sweep to the north, and proceeds across the northern North Atlantic; or else, coming from the South Atlantic and Gibraltar, it proceeds to the north along the wide north-south route between 19° and 29° W. As the convoys approach the British Isles, at about 25° W they are met by strong naval and air forces which escort them through the area endangered by submarines. A growing intensification of escort and defense is apparent in the rendezvous area. British escort forces are limited, however. Any appreciable increase at one point means that another area is weakened. The British escort forces must be forced to scatter by a constant threat at various points. The effects of submarine warfare, cruiser warfare in foreign waters, attacks by battleships and cruisers on merchant shipping in the Atlantic, and air warfare will all help to bring this about.

Enemy measures for escort and defense have determined the development of German submarine warfare as the main factor in operations against British supplies. As regards the two main submarine operational areas, eleven boats are at present in the north, in the area southeast of Greenland and south of Iceland, and seven in the south off the West African coast. In view of the strong enemy defenses in the area west of Britain it will be necessary, during the summer months with their light, short nights, to shift the northern operational area far to the west, beyond the declared blockade area.

As regards surface forces, one battleship group is at present en route to operations against merchant shipping in the North Atlantic.

2. American support.

Whereas up to now the situation confronting submarines and naval forces on operations was perfectly clear, naval warfare in the North Atlantic is becoming increasingly complicated as the result of the measures taken by the U.S.A.

In order to help Britain, the American neutrality patrol, which was hitherto confined to the area within the American neutrality zone, has been reinforced and considerably extended toward the east to about

38° W, i.e., as far as the middle of the Atlantic. The true character of the American neutrality patrol is shown by the fact that vessels on patrol have also been instructed to report by radio any battleships encountered. Fast merchant vessels are being converted into improvised aircraft carriers for reconnaissance and intelligence duty on the convoy routes. It appears that preparations are in progress to establish far-reaching air patrols for the protection of convoys by means of bombers and long-range reconnaissance planes with bases on Newfoundland, Greenland, and Iceland. Such plans have been voiced repeatedly. Recently U.S. vessels have been reported a number of times in the vicinity of the Azores. In numerous U.S. discussions the demand has been made that the Azores, the Cape Verdes, and Dakar be occupied as a precautionary measure. Plans are being made regarding establishment of convoys under the protection of American warships, and these plans are the subject of lively discussions. Until this question is finally settled, American consignments of weapons, planes, and other war material are being transported for the present only in British merchant ships directly to Britain. In American ships they are sent to West, Central, and East Africa, avoiding the war zone declared by the American Government; i.e., they reach Britain in a roundabout way.

We have laid down the following rules for naval warfare in order to comply with German political aims with regard to the U.S.A.:

No attacks should be made on U.S. naval forces and merchant vessels.

Prize regulations are not to be applied to U.S. merchant ships.

Weapons are not to be used, even if American vessels conduct themselves in a definitely unneutral manner.

Weapons are to be used only if U.S. ships fire the first shot.

As a result of these instructions and of the constant endeavors on the part of Germany not to react to provocation, incidents with the U.S.A. have been avoided up to the present time.

It is unmistakeable that the U.S. Government is disappointed about this cautious attitude on the part of Germany, since one of the most important factors in preparing the American people for entry into the war is thus eliminated. The U.S. is therefore continuing its attempt to obliterate more and more the boundary line between neutrality and belligerency, and to stretch the "short of war" policy further by constantly introducing fresh measures contrary to international law.

On 17 May a submarine reported for the first time the appearance of an American battleship, escorted by destroyers, at a longitude of about 35° W, i.e., in the midst of the area in which our submarines are disposed at present. The orders in force were supplemented immediately by additional instructions which restrict offensive action by submarines and also by surface forces to such an extent that incidents with American warships will be prevented as far as is humanly possible.

3. The consequences of the American action for German naval warfare.

a. Submarine warfare: Although the instructions issued do not put insurmountable obstacles in the way of the submarines, they must be regarded as an extremely unsatisfactory solution in the long run.

CONFIDENTIAL

The present situation entails uncertainty for the submarine commander and constantly increasing difficulties in submarine operations. Consequently successes can be expected to decrease. Even though the possibility of incidents has been reduced to a minimum by our own precautionary measures, situations which may well result in incidents of the most serious nature are bound to arise in the course of further operations, particularly if the situation is made more acute by inept conduct of American vessels, or if American ships proceed without lights through our submarine area.

b. Warfare by surface forces against merchant shipping: Operations by our battleships, cruisers, and auxiliary cruisers will be greatly hampered by the appearance of American warships and by the instructions issued in compliance with present political policy. The possibility of encounters with American warships must constantly be reckoned with in the regions east of Newfoundland, in which operations have proved to be the most remunerative, and also along the whole convoy route across the North Atlantic. In such cases the conduct of the Americans will determine our own operational activities.

Reconnaissance and shadowing: Any encounter with U.S. forces means that the positions and movements of our ships are reported to the enemy by American reconnaissance signals. Such a report on German naval forces constitutes in itself an unneutral act which hinders and even jeopardizes German operations; if in addition to this, American naval forces and planes begin to maintain contact with German forces, the latter will be unable to engage in further operations. As a matter of fact they run the risk of being annihilated by superior British forces called to the scene. Special danger is involved for the slow auxiliary cruisers and for the supply ships and tankers, which are essential for warfare in the Atlantic; the danger will be greatest during actual refueling operations.

It would seem that this intolerable situation can be remedied only if German naval vessels are permitted to make prompt use of their weapons to shake off the American forces following them, in order to preserve their freedom of operations.

Proceeding without lights: Apart from hindering and endangering our forces by day, the present situation means practically that it is impossible to attack at night any targets proceeding without lights which are detected by location devices, since in every case the target in question may be American. On the other hand, every ship proceeding without lights must be regarded as an enemy one, in view of the danger which threatens our own ship, since it is impossible to determine the neutrality of a ship proceeding without lights. Since the beginning of the war neutral merchant shipping has, therefore, repeatedly been advised of this fact and warned against proceeding without lights, in order to avoid any confusion with enemy warships. This applies to an even greater degree to neutral warships.

From the point of view of war strategy, therefore, it is urged that German forces be allowed to open fire immediately on any vessel proceeding without lights, in the interest of their own safety.

Establishment of convoys: Should further developments in American aid to Britain lead to the establishment of American convoys escorted by American warships, under the present ruling the situation would be as follows if our naval forces encountered such convoys:

(1) Conduct towards American convoy escorts: Weapons should not be used unless the enemy makes the first move. Attacks by night are permitted, if the ships are proceeding without lights, and if the situation demands it.

(2) Conduct towards American merchant ships in American convoys: No action at all is permitted against American merchant ships in view of the definite Government policy up to now to refrain from taking measures against U.S. merchant ships.

Attacks by night are permitted if the ships are proceeding without lights.

(If it were not for the German orders issued because of political considerations, it would be possible according to current international law to take action against the American merchant ships in convoy by requesting the escorting warships to make a declaration that no contraband, particularly no war material, is being carried on the escorted vessels.

If the U.S. convoy escorts refused to make this declaration, this would necessarily give rise to the first incident with the Americans.)

(3) Conduct towards British merchant ships in American convoy: Neutral escort for the protection of enemy merchant vessels cannot be respected. Enemy merchant vessels escorted by American warships may be attacked without warning at any time. (American warships will certainly not stand by and do nothing, so there is a possibility of complications!)

4. Necessity of altering existing conditions.

This survey of the present situation shows with what difficulties German naval warfare is faced, especially in the North Atlantic, as a result of the hostile tactics adopted by the U.S.A. contrary to international law. The U.S. is giving the British very far-reaching support by her policy of aid "short of war". This is being accomplished not only by supplying large quantities of war material but also by active measures on the part of the U.S. neutrality patrol and by the patrol service in general. Further drastic measures, including the establishment of a convoy system, are being considered by the American Government and are to be expected if the situation becomes more critical.

For important military considerations and reasons of internal politics the President of the U.S.A. does not believe that the time has come to enter the war; he will therefore continue the "short of war" aid for the time being. In the opinion of the Naval Staff, however, the moment has come when it is necessary to point out to the President and the people of the U.S.A. the limits to which the aid to Britain can go. This should be done in an appropriate manner and with great care to avoid the possibility of provocation. Unless a firm stand is taken and Germany stops tolerating everything in her desire to avoid an armed conflict, there is danger that the U.S.A. will take measures which either will greatly reduce our chances to disrupt British supply lines or will lead to an outbreak of hostilities. Various observations of late justify the assumption that Roosevelt will respect rather than ignore a German statement regarding the dangers involved in further measures on the part of the United States.

CONFIDENTIAL

In the opinion of the Naval Staff, therefore, there are only two alternatives for further procedure:

Either:

a. We adhere to the previous policy of taking no action at all against American naval and merchant vessels, even if they conduct themselves in an unneutral manner.

This means in practice that the U.S.A. will continue active support of the British against Germany to an increasing degree, without our taking any countermeasures for our protection. It will also mean that Germany abandons warfare against merchant shipping in the North Atlantic and thus foregoes a chance to inflict damage on the enemy. This may prove a decisive factor in the outcome of the Battle of the Atlantic. And still the possibility of incidents with the Americans will not be eliminated.

Or:

b. We clearly define the action German forces can take without abandoning our previous policy of avoiding anything which might cause an incident. In other words, the possibilities for action afforded by international law are clearly pointed out. Further, clear orders which are in compliance with our strategic requirements and operational necessities are issued to our naval forces and submarines. These measures would serve to clarify our position as well as that of the United States; they would establish a clear policy for the conduct of German naval warfare, and would go a long way toward eliminating the possibilities for conflict.

The Naval Staff has come to the conclusion that naval operations in the North Atlantic must be continued in view of the fact that the vital lifeline of British supplies passes through this area. In the following suggestions the Naval Staff sees a possibility of meeting the requirements of our own naval warfare and of putting a stop to American aid to the enemy without provoking the U.S.A.:

(1) Permission should be given to carry out warfare according to prize law against U.S. merchant shipping.

(2) Permission should be given to take offensive action against American reconnaissance forces whose conduct endangers our vessels.

(3) Permission should be given to take immediate offensive action, without warning, against all vessels proceeding without lights, regardless of origin.

(4) In the event that American convoys with American escort are established, or that American merchant ships are incorporated into British convoys, permission should be given to take action, in accordance with international law against American merchant ships escorted by British or U.S. warships.

(5) Permission should be given to take offensive action against neutral naval or air escorts attempting to interfere with measures taken by German forces and permissible under international law.

The Naval Staff would consider that the demands of German naval warfare arising from the present situation have been met if these proposals are approved. The statements to be made by the Commander in Chief, Navy at a press conference are considered by the Naval Staff as political and strategic preparation for release of the proposed measures and as a warning to the U.S. Government. (See Annex 2; this is the version amended and approved by the Foreign Office.)

5. If the measures planned should not bring about the desired result or should not be sufficient for further successful operations against merchant shipping, and if the situation in the Atlantic should become more acute, the Naval Staff sees the following later possibilities for achieving satisfactory operational conditions for warfare in the North Atlantic:

a. The western boundary of the blockade area could be extended everywhere to longitude 38° W.

b. The whole North Atlantic could be declared an operational area for German naval forces, bounded on the west by the Canadian coast and on the south by the Pan-American safety zone and latitude 45°.

Fuehrer's decision:

The Fuehrer considers the attitude of the President of the United States still undecided. Under no circumstances does he wish to cause incidents which would result in U.S. entry into the war, especially since Japan will probably come in only if the U.S. is the aggressor.

The Fuehrer agrees, however, with the proposal of the Commander in Chief, Navy that the interview should be published as a warning at the latest on 24 May in order to stop the U.S. from taking the steps they have planned and in order to be able to judge the reaction of the U.S. to this warning from the President's speech scheduled for 27 May.

Permission to put into effect the measures proposed by the Naval Staff in (1) to (5) above depends on this reaction and on future steps taken by the U.S.A.

If the situation develops as set forth in 5a and 5b, the Fuehrer would approve following the suggestions made there. In addition, however, he would recommend a closed area off the West African coast, so that American ships could be intercepted there.

Draft of an Interview with Grand Admiral Raeder.
(As approved by the Foreign Office.)

Question: No doubt, sir, you have followed the lively discussions in the United States on the question of how, with American aid, it would be possible to bring the war material destined for Britain safely to her shores and to the various theaters of war, and to reduce the severe British losses in warships and merchant ships. What views are held by the German Navy regarding the possible consequences of such an endeavor?

Answer: We regard them as very serious, especially since not only the press but also responsible members of the North American Government have expressed themselves in a manner which leaves no doubts as to the aggressive character of the measures already taken. They are definitely contrary to international law. This holds true above all of the additional measures proposed. No expert on modern warfare who values his reputation considers an attack from across the ocean possible and practicable. Anyone who in spite of this attributes aggressive plans to Germany does so against his better judgment and for the purpose of justifying his own aggressive plans and his desire to interfere. The warmongers are not afraid of a German attack, but rather that it will not be possible to bring about the desired incidents. In order to cause these nevertheless, everything is being done to obliterate the borderline between neutrality, aggression, and war, and to extend still further the "short of war" policy by constantly resorting to new measures which are contrary to international law.

Question: When you make this statement, are you thinking mainly about the proposals to extend the so-called patrol activity of the American Navy or Air Force into the Atlantic to afford protection to British war transports, or rather about those for setting up a convoy system of some kind with the intention of provoking a conflict?

Answer: Both measures have been demanded by such high official sources and in such a positive manner that it is necessary to prepare ourselves accordingly and to establish from the very start where the responsibility lies; we must also once more voice a serious warning. As regards convoys, I can only endorse the views of President Roosevelt: "Convoy means shooting". Since it must be taken for granted that the type of cargo carried by the escorted vessels would certainly be contraband, as admitted by the Americans, this type of convoy system would not represent neutral escort activity in accordance with international agreements, also signed by the U.S.A., but it would be open warfare and a barefaced, unprovoked attack. According to the rules of naval warfare, German naval forces would therefore be justified in taking action against these vessels carrying contraband. If anyone, including U.S. naval forces, were to interfere with the application of these rules, the German forces would have to resort to armed force.

As regards the so-called patrols, their aggressive character has already become apparent. Since a German threat to America is out of the question, and since this patrol system already actually amounts to support for the British, we must urgently advise against extending it. Thus far already this system has not been operating in the interest of American security and defense, but in order to gather intelligence for

CONFIDENTIAL

the benefit of the British. German merchant ships, e.g., the COLUMBUS, have become victims of this policy. No commanding officer of a German warship can be expected to stand by and allow his position to be reported to the enemy by an American warship, especially when she follows him until heavy British forces are called to the scene. Such action not only prevents him from carrying out his mission, but also leads to annihilation of his ship and his crew. In this case, as in that of the convoy, he would be faced with an actual act of war and he would be justified, according to the recognized rules of warfare, in demanding that the ship in question should desist from hostile action, if necessary compelling her to do so by using armed force.

I should like to take this opportunity to touch on another matter. Neutral merchant ships were warned some time ago against proceeding without lights, since in so doing they are liable to be mistaken for enemy warships, and are therefore in danger of immediate attack. This applies even more to neutral warships. Modern warfare has reached a point where for the sake of safety it is necessary to open fire immediately on any ship proceeding without lights. Any ship that does so in spite of this fact has something to conceal and has hostile intentions; therefore she must expect to be attacked without warning.

Anyone who exposes himself to such dangers in full realization of the actual situation according to international law is looking for trouble. Since the war does not come close to America, the American warmongers must run after it for thousands of miles across the sea and seek out danger far from the coasts of the American continent in order to be able to declare that they are threatened and to bring about the desired incidents. The German Navy will not permit this to interfere with its operations. The responsibility for any conflict so arising, however, is exclusively that of the persons who knowingly proceed to the areas where war is being waged, and do this not only in the face of German warnings but also against the will of the majority of the American people.

The Question of Utilizing Dakar; Negotiations with France.

Utilization of the facilities afforded by the French bases on the west coast of Africa is a matter of special importance for naval warfare. The interests of the Naval Staff are centered more on the Dakar area than on the west Moroccan coast, which is threatened by air attacks from Gibraltar and is not very favorably situated in relation to the operational area of German naval forces. A decisive factor is Dakar's favorable situation in relation to the operational area, especially as far as submarines and auxiliary cruisers are concerned; likewise it has facilities for repair and equipment, and its fortifications afford adequate protection against enemy attacks.

The Naval Staff is thinking along the following lines:

1. Dakar would be very useful for our submarines; possibly a fully equipped base could be established.
2. Surface forces, including battleships and auxiliary cruisers, would have a chance to come into base occasionally.
3. Prizes and escort ships could put into port at Dakar.
4. Supply ships for the war against merchant shipping by submarines and surface forces could be made ready at Dakar.

Any substantial support for German naval warfare by France can come only from the area around Dakar. The Naval Staff has proposed that the question of utilizing Dakar should be pursued at the negotiations at present taking place in Paris. It appears to be necessary to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible and to extend cooperation with France, now in its initial stages, particularly to the area around Dakar, since the problem of Dakar will undoubtedly have to be solved at some time during the course of the war. This is the most endangered section and is strategically the most important for us. The present time appears propitious for negotiations, since France seems particularly compliant just now. It seems advisable for Germany to attempt to settle the Dakar problem at this time in view of the following facts: Relations between France and the U.S.A. are strained anyway at present as a result of "collaboration", and any deterioration in their relations would be to our advantage; the U.S.A. will accept German occupation of Dakar for the duration of the war more easily now than later, since they are still not ready for active intervention.

If there should be any political scruples, it should be pointed out that, even if the negotiations are now successful, it will take considerable time before Dakar can actually be utilized, and, if necessary, this can be done secretly.

Naval Staff

Report of the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Fuehrer
on 6 June 1941 at the Berghof.

Present: For "1" and "2" only the Fuehrer
Afterwards Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command
Colonel Schmudt
Captain von Puttkamer

1. The course of the BISMARCK operation is discussed. See Annex 1.

The Fuehrer inquires why the Fleet Commander did not return to port after the engagement with the HOOD.

The Commander in Chief, Navy replies that a break through the northern straits would have been a far more dangerous undertaking than a withdrawal to the Atlantic. The Fleet Commander was doubtless trying to achieve this as long as his fuel supplies permitted, in the hope of shaking off shadows and finally making for St. Nazaire. Tankers were available in the Atlantic. A return break-through to the north would have incurred great risk of attack from numerous planes and light naval forces. The Fleet Commander's original intention of making a big detour before setting course for St. Nazaire is indicated by the fact that he hoped to draw the enemy across the line of submarines established by Group West and the Commanding Admiral, Submarines on 25 May. This plan had to be given up when it became clear that the loss of oil was too great to permit such a detour. Even the suggestion from Group West (Radiogram 1842 of 24 May) to lie low for some time in a remote area after shaking off the enemy could not be followed.

The Fuehrer inquires further why the BISMARCK did not rely on her fighting strength and attack the PRINCE OF WALES again in order to destroy her after the HOOD had been sunk, even if it meant an all-out fight. Even if this had led to the loss of the BISMARCK, the final score would have been two British losses against one German one.

The Commander in Chief, Navy replies that the BISMARCK re-engaged the PRINCE OF WALES on 24 May in order to make the withdrawal of the PRINZ EUGEN possible. After the HOOD sank, however, the PRINCE OF WALES carefully retired out of effective firing range, just as the other heavy enemy ships evidently did later. (The BISMARCK's speed is only 28 knots.) Furthermore, the Fleet Commander had to keep his main object in view, that of "damaging enemy merchant shipping", as long as the BISMARCK and PRINZ EUGEN were in a position to do so. Had he forced an action with the PRINCE OF WALES, he would have had to count on severe damage even if he were successful, which would have interfered with operations against merchant shipping. His task was to fight only when the enemy prevented him from attacking merchant shipping. If it had not been for the fatal hit in the steering gear, in all probability the BISMARCK would have reached the area in which the German Air Force could have provided effective support and could have carried out repairs in St. Nazaire. Seen in retrospect a defeat of the PRINCE OF WALES would naturally have been a greater achievement than the BISMARCK's heroic sinking without having accounted for a second enemy ship.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. See Annex 2 for considerations concerning continuation of operations by surface forces against merchant shipping in the Atlantic.
3. See Annex 3 concerning declaration of extended or new zones of operations.
4. Permission to wage warfare against U.S. merchant shipping according to prize regulations is discussed. (See Annex 2, conference of 20 April 1941).

With reference to "3" and "4", the Fuehrer is of the opinion that for the time being no change should be made in the present situation.

The question of searching American merchant ships is to be postponed until units of the fleet are sent to operate in the Atlantic.

5. Considerations with reference to the strategic situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and the further conduct of the war in this area are discussed. (See Annex 4.)

Re "5": The Commander in Chief, Navy makes a very brief summary of Annex 4. He requests that the Italian Naval Staff should be pressed to intensify attacks on British supply routes with light naval forces, and to improve protection of Italo-German supply lines. The transport of supplies in fast vessels via Greece and Crete to Benghazi and Derna should be organized.

The Fuehrer approves a meeting between the Commander in Chief, Navy and Admiral Riccardi on this matter. He will write to the Duce to facilitate this. He suggests that old torpedo boats, etc., be converted for fast transport of ammunition, etc. They would have only anti-aircraft armament; the transport would take place during the day with good air support and reconnaissance.

The Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command has discussed the withdrawal of Italian submarines from the Atlantic with the Chief of the Italian Armed Forces. Both reasons necessitating this were given: Our own need of Bordeaux, and the need for Italian submarines in the Mediterranean.

6. Special items: The Fuehrer sanctions release of an official report concerning the BISMARCK operation.
7. The Fuehrer permits that Admiral Feige be informed of the general plan for operation "Barbarossa" so that he can take the necessary measures for withdrawing valuable personnel.

signed: Raeder

The Operation of the BISMARCK Task Force for Purposes of Warfare against Merchant Shipping in the Atlantic.

1. Planning.

Besides achieving considerable tactical successes, the first operation of battleships GNEISENAU and SCHARNHORST in the Atlantic from January to March 1941 and the operation of cruiser HIPPER, confirmed the fact that such use of surface vessels has far-reaching strategic effects. These effects were not restricted to the waters chosen as the zone of operations, but extended in widely diverging directions to other theaters of war, that is, also to the Mediterranean and the South Atlantic.

Hence naval warfare had to attempt to preserve and intensify the effects of the initial operations by repeating similar operations as frequently as possible, making the most of the experiences gained. In view of the decisive significance which British supplies in the North Atlantic have for the outcome of the war, German naval warfare can most effectively achieve its object only right in the North Atlantic. The strong battleship escort of enemy convoys encountered during the first battleship operation in the Atlantic made it impossible for the German battleships of the GNEISENAU type, with their comparatively light armament, to attack. However, it seemed possible to undertake attacks on convoys with battleship escorts in an operation of the battleship BISMARCK, with her particularly powerful armament. The plan was to engage the enemy escort by gunfire from the BISMARCK; at the same time the second warship was to attack the merchant ships of the convoy. In such an event the BISMARCK was not, however, expected to destroy equally strong enemy ships in an all-out effort; she was to attempt to hold them in a delaying action, during which she was to preserve her own combat strength as far as possible.

The operational directive of the Naval Staff thus specifically emphasized that the main object of these operations was the destruction of enemy merchant shipping; attacks on enemy warships were to be undertaken only if the main task necessitated them, and if they could be carried out without incurring too much risk.

The lessons of the first battleship operation were fully respected during the planning and direction of the operation. Before the operation we thoroughly examined the question of whether it was practical in the present situation to postpone sending the BISMARCK into the Atlantic until the second 35,000 ton battleship, TIRPITZ, was also ready. In agreement with the opinion of the Fleet Commander, we rejected a further postponement of the battleship operation, as the time when the TIRPITZ or the SCHARNHORST would again be ready for action was too uncertain, and it was strategically most undesirable to put off any longer participation by surface vessels in the Battle of the Atlantic. In addition, it was to be expected that the appearance of the task force in the Atlantic would have considerable diversionary effect and would thus relieve the Mediterranean theater.

On 26 April at the conference at the Naval Staff, the Fleet Commander emphasized the importance of reconnaissance for the success of the break-through; ice conditions and enemy patrols in the Denmark Strait must be investigated and observed. He requested that the number of

planes, fishing vessels, and submarines available be increased for this purpose. We were in complete agreement with the Fleet Commander regarding the operational procedure of the task force.

2. Mission.

The mission stipulated by Group West in the operational directive for operation "Rheinuebung" was as follows: Enemy supply traffic in the Atlantic north of the equator was to be attacked. The operation was to last as long as the situation permitted. The route out to the Atlantic was through the Great Belt, the Skagerrak, and the Norwegian Sea. The ships were to attempt to break through unobserved. Even if the break-through into the Atlantic were observed, the mission remained as defined in the operational directive. It was left to the discretion of the Fleet Commander to shorten or break off the operation as the situation developed. According to the Group's directive the main aim throughout the entire operation was the destruction of enemy shipping. As far as possible they were to shun risks which would jeopardize the operation. Hence they were to avoid encounters with ships of equal strength. If an encounter were inevitable, then it should be an all-out engagement. For the return to harbor the directive contained instructions that if the operation proceeded normally the ships were to put into the French west coast only if no extensive repairs were necessary, or if the condition of the ship or the enemy situation excluded any other possibility. For longer overhaul or repairs the ships were to return to home waters or as an alternative put into Trondheim.

As heretofore, the first portion of the undertaking, that is, the break-through into the Atlantic, if possible unobserved, was regarded as the most difficult part of the operation. Previous experience had shown that enemy forces might appear in the Denmark Strait as well as in the Iceland-Faroes Strait. Under suitable weather conditions it was considered certain that there would be enemy air reconnaissance in the Denmark Strait. The lightness of the nights made an unobserved break-through all the more difficult. On the other hand we could expect that air reconnaissance over the northern part of the North Sea would provide an adequate picture of the enemy's disposition, and that in the Denmark Strait, at the ice border, poor visibility would favor the break-through. Since so far it had not been established that British ships are equipped with radar, as a matter of fact, observations made so far seemed to indicate that they definitely were not so equipped, an unnoticed break-through was feasible.

A certain amount of risk is involved in every break-through into the Atlantic. We had to run that risk, if German naval warfare were not to give up entirely the idea of disrupting British supply lines by means of surface forces.

3. Course of the Operation.

Originally the beginning of the operation was planned for the end of April, but on account of damage to the coupling on the PRINZ EUGEN and repairs to the crane on the BISMARCK it was postponed twice and finally fixed for 18 May. The intention of joint operations with the battleship GNEISENAU had to be abandoned because of severe damage inflicted on this ship by bombs and torpedoes in Brest.

The BISMARCK and the PRINZ EUGEN put out from Gdynia the evening of 18 May. Two supply ships and five tankers were waiting at various

points in the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic to supply the operation. To improve the operational chances of the task force, two scouting vessels were sent out from the Atlantic coast into the Atlantic. All these ships succeeded in breaking out from coastal waters into the open ocean without difficulty. Four submarines were en route to their positions for operating in conjunction with the task force on the North Atlantic convoy route. In contrast with these extensive preparations for the operation in the Atlantic itself, the possibilities of support during the outward passage through the Norwegian Sea and the Iceland area were very limited, since our naval air forces were numerically few and were inadequately equipped, and since the Air Force has very few powerful long-range reconnaissance planes. The chances of carrying out extensive air reconnaissance in the remoter areas, such as the Denmark Strait and the area between Iceland and Greenland, (sic, Tr.N.) were extremely slight. On the other hand, reconnaissance covering the entire central and northern parts of the North Sea and close air cover and fighter escort in coastal waters would give full protection on the first part of the outward voyage.

19 and 20 May. During 19 and 20 May the task force, protected by mine sweepers, planes, and submarines, proceeded without incident and according to plan through the Great Belt, the Kattegat, and the Skagerrak and on the evening of 20 May lay off Kristiansand South.

The enemy situation was deemed favorable. On the morning of 20 May photographic reconnaissance located the main body of the British Home Fleet with two battleships (apparently of the KING GEORGE class), the battle cruiser HOOD, an aircraft carrier (possibly VICTORIOUS), six cruisers, and several destroyers in Scapa Flow. No enemy forces were sighted in the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea. Weather conditions handicapped the Focke-Wulf 200 in reconnaissance and in investigation of ice conditions north of Iceland. The drift ice border north of Iceland was about seventy to eighty miles away. The flight was broken off fifty miles northwest of North Cape in low-lying fog.

21 May. At 0900 on 21 May the group put into Kors Fjord near Bergen according to plan. There they refueled during the day and kept out of sight of the enemy. From British radio reports it was clear, however, that the enemy had learned that our battleships had put out to the north. Early on 21 May radio intelligence intercepted enemy radio instructions, in which at 0620 planes were ordered to keep a look-out for two battleships and three destroyers reported to be proceeding on a northerly course. Group North, in charge of the operation, concurred with the Naval Staff in the opinion that the enemy received this information from agents in the Great Belt. It was not clear whether the intensified enemy air reconnaissance along the Norwegian coast, caused by this report, had picked up the task force early on 21 May before its entry into Kors Fjord or in the Fjord itself. Our own observation yielded no conclusive evidence on this point, but the possibility did exist. According to a British Admiralty report of 27 May, planes of the coastal command are supposed to have sighted the BISMARCK group on the Norwegian coast off Bergen; however, this announcement might have been a deliberate invention, in order to avoid compromising the agents on the Great Belt and the Norwegian coast.

The report on sighting German battleships led to intense reconnaissance activity by the enemy's 18th Reconnaissance Group during 21 May, further intensified towards evening and at night. Our own radio reconnaissance located enemy planes over the northern parts of the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the Norwegian coast, and the Faroe Islands area. On the

CONFIDENTIAL

other hand radio traffic of the British Home Fleet did not point to anything out of the ordinary. Ground and high fog unfortunately prevented planes sent out over Scapa Flow from completing reconnaissance which should have observed any outward movement of the enemy ships. The investigation of the ice situation and reconnaissance in the Denmark Strait also had to be abandoned.

At 2300 the Fleet Commander with his group put out of Hjelte Fjord to continue north. A few hours later several enemy planes flew over the islands near Bergen and dropped flares in their search for the German task force.

In the evening of 21 May it was clear from his air activity that the enemy knew that the BISMARCK group had put out to sea, but he was obviously uncertain of its position. There was no indication in radio traffic that naval forces were being sent out.

Actually from the British announcements of 27 May it can be deduced that as early as 21 May the British Admiralty took certain measures to strengthen the patrol of the Denmark Strait and of the sea area south of Iceland. It can be assumed that the heavy cruisers NORFOLK, commanded by Captain Phillips, with Rear Admiral Wakewalker on board, and SUFFOLK, commanded by Captain Ellis, received orders as early as 21 May to take up positions for observation in the Denmark Strait. The orders to the units concerned escaped our notice, as the enemy was able to send them out as early as 21 May by telegraph.

22 May. On 22 May the Fleet Commander proceeded according to plan through the Norwegian Sea. The escorting destroyers were dismissed off Trondheim. With the exception of continued brisk enemy air reconnaissance activity over the north and central parts of the North Sea, nothing unusual was observed in enemy radio traffic. Our own air reconnaissance did not sight any enemy forces in the North Sea or in the Norwegian Sea. Unfortunately weather conditions made the planned photographic aerial reconnaissance of Scapa Flow impossible; however, a partial visual reconnaissance in the afternoon supposedly located four battleships in Scapa Flow, one of them presumably an aircraft carrier, six cruisers, and several destroyers. On the basis of this reconnaissance report Group North came to the conclusion that there had been no change in the enemy disposition after 21 May. Hence this report was a decided relief to the operational control and to the Fleet Commander, who was on the point of undertaking the break-through.

Group North thought that the BISMARCK task force would take advantage of the fog and break through into the Atlantic as soon as possible, but as a precaution made preparations for refueling from the tanker waiting in the Norwegian Sea.

In the evening of 22 May the prevailing impression was that in spite of his knowledge that the BISMARCK task force had put out, the enemy was still uncertain about the passing of the group through the Shetlands-Norway narrow. There was no sign that any naval forces were being sent into operation, and indeed, according to the air reconnaissance over Scapa Flow, such an operation could definitely be ruled out. The Fleet Commander decided, in view of the unusually helpful hazy weather combined with the apparently favorable enemy disposition, to forego refueling in the Norwegian Sea and to wait no longer, but rather to undertake the break-through via the Denmark Strait at once. The Fleet Commander was confirmed in his purpose by Group North, who radioed the favorable disposition of the enemy. Group North also called attention to the

great successes of the Air Force against the British forces in Crete, and pointed out that if the fleet were to appear on the Atlantic routes soon, additional severe damage might be inflicted on British sea power.

If the visual reconnaissance in Scapa Flow in the afternoon correctly observed the actual situation, it must be presumed that the British forces, including the PRINCE OF WALES, the HOOD, and the VICTORIOUS, left Scapa Flow in the evening of 22 May and proceeded at high speed to take up waiting positions in the area southwest of Iceland.

On 23 May the Fleet Commander proceeded north of Iceland to break through via the Denmark Strait. The weather conditions were extremely favorable for his purpose: East wind, overcast, rain, moderate to poor visibility. At times visibility went down to 200 meters. Cruising speed of the group was 24 to 27 knots. The Fleet Commander considered the enemy disposition favorable. Air reconnaissance over Scapa Flow was impossible because of the weather. Again on 23 May the investigation of ice conditions in the Denmark Strait had to be abandoned.

At first there was nothing unusual to be observed in the enemy radio traffic, with the exception of an operational radiogram through blind transmission intercepted at 1254. This message, however, did not give any direct indication of enemy operations.

At 2015 the evening of 23 May, the cruiser NORFOLK contacted the BISMARCK group at the ice border in the Iceland Strait (quadrant AD 29), and reported it on a southwesterly course. The distance was about 11,100 meters. There was a brief encounter without results. In spite of very poor visibility conditions, due to fog, snow, and hail, the enemy succeeded, obviously by the use of efficient radar sets, in maintaining contact with the BISMARCK group. The Fleet Commander reported that the range of British radar sets was 35,000 meters. The task force was unable to shake off the enemy in the fog. Two enemy ships, NORFOLK and SUFFOLK, kept contact throughout the night and reported all movements of the BISMARCK group by reconnaissance signals.

In addition, radio interception picked up various urgent operational messages, which pointed to the commitment of heavy enemy forces. The course of the BISMARCK group was given by the enemy as varying from 240° to 220°, speed 28 knots.

Considering the general evaluation of the enemy disposition, the encounter with an enemy cruiser patrol in the Denmark Strait to a certain extent came as a surprise to the Fleet Commander, but owing to the complete calm in the enemy radio traffic there was no reason to suppose that any extensive enemy operation was under way to prevent a suspected German advance into the Atlantic. When cruisers SCHEER and HIPPER made a break-through via the Denmark Strait on their return from the Atlantic, they had also noticed heavy cruisers on patrol and were able to elude the enemy in good time. Hence on sighting the heavy cruiser there was no reason for the Fleet Commander to break off the operation and retire to the east, especially as the very poor visibility made the chances for maintaining contact or for using reconnaissance planes seem very small. But what was most surprising, and of decisive importance for the further course of the operation, was the probability, established for the first time, that the enemy possessed evidently excellently functioning radar equipment. This eliminated entirely the advantage of poor visibility for the break-through of the task force, and prevented a swift escape from the enemy.

24 May. At 0543 on 24 May the battle cruiser HOOD (Captain Kerr), fly-

ing the flag of Vice Admiral Holland, and the battleship PRINCE OF WALES (Captain Leach) made contact with the BISMARCK and the PRINZ EUGEN. A running fight at a range of between 20,800 and 18,000 meters developed. Of the enemy ships, the HOOD was ahead, the PRINCE OF WALES astern. Both ships concentrated fire on the BISMARCK. The BISMARCK and the PRINZ EUGEN were proceeding in column. Both ships opened fire on the HOOD, which was leading. She received several hits, and five minutes after the engagement began a hit on the stern, probably in the magazine aft, blew her up. Hydrophone observation enabled our ships to avoid several torpedoes from the HOOD. After the destruction of the HOOD both ships concentrated fire on the PRINCE OF WALES. After certain hits from both ships had been observed she turned off amid clouds of black smoke and then was lost from sight for several hours. The BISMARCK fired only 93 rounds from her main battery. The BISMARCK received two hits from the PRINCE OF WALES, one of them a low shot beneath the side armor in section 13-14, the other in section 20-21. As a result the BISMARCK's speed was reduced; she went down by the bow¹⁰ and the oil tanks were pierced, consequently leaving very strong traces of oil. The maximum speed of the BISMARCK was 28 knots. In spite of several near hits, the PRINZ EUGEN did not suffer any damage.

After the victorious engagement the Fleet Commander continued to proceed south. The position at 1400 was in quadrant AK 11, which is about 240 miles east of the southern tip of Greenland. The PRINCE OF WALES made off for the time being and the cruisers NORFOLK and SUFFOLK maintained contact, which was later resumed by the PRINCE OF WALES also. At noon the Fleet Commander announced his intention of making for St. Nazaire and of releasing the PRINZ EUGEN to carry on warfare against merchant shipping. If no further engagement ensued, he planned to withdraw during the night.

In the evening Group West sent a radio message (Radiogram 1842) agreeing with the Fleet Commander's proposal to send away the PRINZ EUGEN to take part in the war against merchant shipping, and expressing the opinion that in case the Fleet Commander is able to elude the enemy, it would seem expedient for the BISMARCK to wait for some time in a remote sea area.

The task of shaking off the enemy was obviously made more difficult by the reduced speed, the enemy's long-range radar sets, and the heavy traces of oil resulting from the hit. It is not known whether after the engagement the Fleet Commander considered the possibility of turning back to the north or the east towards Norway, or what was responsible for his decision to put into St. Nazaire. Presumably the Fleet Commander thought that the chances of throwing off the enemy were much better in the south than in the north, and in particular his fear of enemy destroyers and planes, especially planes from the carrier VICTORIOUS, probably led him to rate the danger in the southern area as less than in the northern area.

Group West, directing the operations from Germany, intended in agreement with the Naval Staff, to move our forces so as to draw the enemy forces into our submarine operational area. Preparatory orders were given to the submarines and to the Fleet Commander, who himself suggested assembling the submarines that were in the west in quadrant AJ 68 for an attack on the heavy enemy forces at dawn on 25 May. During 24 May the Fleet Commander did not succeed in throwing off the contact which the enemy, apparently using very good radar sets, very skillfully maintained on the edge of the horizon. At 1944, in the evening, when visibility was very poor, the BISMARCK again advanced to attack the PRINCE OF WALES and the shadowing cruisers and thereby enabled cruiser

PRINZ EUGEN to withdraw to refuel and to carry on warfare against merchant shipping. The Fleet Commander failed in his subsequent attempt to escape during the fog, since the enemy maintained contact with the BISMARCK by radar. In the evening growing fuel difficulties arising from loss of oil forced the Fleet Commander to decide to make straight for St. Nazaire. For this reason the plan for the attack by submarines next morning in the rendezvous quadrant unfortunately had to be abandoned.

In the meantime the enemy had succeeded in bringing up additional British naval forces. Constant reports from the shadowing forces made it possible to send torpedo planes from the carrier VICTORIOUS (Captain Bovell) to attack the BISMARCK.

At 2238 came the first torpedo attack by the carrier planes on the BISMARCK, which was evidently unsuccessful. The attacks were repeated in the course of the evening, and towards midnight, as reported by the Fleet Commander, at 0028, there was a torpedo hit on the BISMARCK. It had no effect on the ship's combat readiness, but possibly caused a further reduction in her speed. According to survivors' statements the torpedo attacks were carried out by twenty seven carrier planes; of these apparently five were shot down by anti-aircraft gunfire. Only one plane is supposed to have reached the carrier again, according to information presumably obtained by the ship's radio intelligence service from the carrier's radio traffic. As according to the Admiralty report the attack was carried out from a great distance, it is highly probable that there were severe plane losses, particularly since there were no air attacks on the following day.

As the submarines in the west could no longer contact the enemy on the BISMARCK's present course, five submarines which were en route to or from the zone of operation were ordered to take up positions in a line across the course of the BISMARCK between BE 64 and BF 44.

Preparatory measures were taken for reconnaissance and escort planes and light naval forces to meet the BISMARCK in the coastal waters of the Atlantic coast. Long-range air reconnaissance far to the west was ordered for 25 May.

The PRINCE OF WALES, which since the first encounter early on 24 May had kept at a very great distance from the BISMARCK, maintained contact throughout the night, along with NORFOLK and SUFFOLK.

25 May. Radio monitoring fixed the time of the last enemy contact report at 0213, the location, 56° 49' N. Enemy radio continued to be busy with urgent operational and tactical messages. Evidently at this time the enemy had temporarily lost contact. However, he regained it at dawn and according to the report of the Fleet Commander at 0700 on 25 May the PRINCE OF WALES and the two cruisers were still shadowing the BISMARCK in quadrant AK 55. From the radio traffic it can be gathered that the BISMARCK, presumably making use of poorer visibility, succeeded in withdrawing from the enemy at about 1100 in the morning. As before, the enemy radio traffic was extremely busy. In the course of the day and in the evening and night several urgent operational messages from the British home area and the western part of the Channel were picked up, as well as messages communicating with the H task force and with the 3rd Battleship Squadron (Canada), all pointing to comprehensive measures for searching for the BISMARCK. The H task force, which with battle cruiser RENOWN, aircraft carrier ARK ROYAL, and cruiser SHEFFIELD under the command of Vice Admiral Sir James Somer-

CONFIDENTIAL

ville, had already put out from Gibraltar on an unknown course during the night of 23 May, was presumed by radio monitoring to be on convoy escort in the eastern Atlantic. Actually, on 25 May the force was on its way north from Gibraltar. According to a British Admiralty report of 27 May, the enemy, besides bringing up the H task force, committed the main strength of the Home Fleet under the command of Admiral Tovey on battleship KING GEORGE V (Captain Patterson), which advanced from northern Scottish waters to the southwest. At the same time the two battleships RODNEY and RAMILLIES approached from convoy escort duties in the North Atlantic. The movements of the naval forces were supported and supplemented by comprehensive air reconnaissance by planes of the Coastal Command in Britain and from the Canadian base on Newfoundland. At noon on 25 May the prevailing impression was that the enemy was concentrating his superior heavy forces for attack on the BISMARCK in the sea area between 43° N and 52° N beyond the range of German combat planes, i.e., somewhat west of longitude 15° W. The enemy did not succeed in re-establishing contact in the course of 25 May. There could be no doubt about the gravity of the BISMARCK's situation at that time, however. There was no possibility of relieving her with our naval or air forces. In view of this situation, the Naval Staff suggested to the Fleet Commander to consider putting in at a harbor in northern Spain, should further developments make such action necessary. It is probable that the Fleet Commander, when he escaped from the enemy on 25 May, considered the possibility of withdrawing into the open Atlantic. If he had done so for the purpose of refueling from one of the tankers north of the Azores, the Fleet Commander might have succeeded in preventing the enemy from quickly regaining contact. Even a temporary withdrawal would have forced the enemy to stop his convoys or to resume the protection of convoy routes by means of his fast forces as soon as possible. It must be assumed that owing to the fuel situation the Fleet Commander was unable to push out into the Atlantic in such a manner, and hence was forced to proceed directly to St. Nazaire, in spite of the great risk involved in such a course. Possibly the oil traces influenced his decision also.

The Fleet Commander was confirmed in his decision by a radio message from Group West on the night of 25 May, communicating the assumption of the Group that the BISMARCK would proceed directly to a harbor in western France, even if there were no longer any contact with the enemy. The BISMARCK, however, did not succeed in evading enemy contact much longer. In spite of the unfavorable weather the determined enemy air reconnaissance succeeded in renewing contact; at 1030 on 26 May the BISMARCK was sighted by a Catalina plane of the Coastal Command, approximately in square BE 16, 600 miles west of Land's End. Anti-aircraft gunfire from the BISMARCK caused the plane to lose contact, but a little later carrier planes from the ARK ROYAL (Captain Maund) finally located the ship and with short interruptions maintained contact throughout the day. The weather was: Northwest wind 7 to 8, showers, varying visibility. The task of our reconnaissance planes, which set out from the Atlantic coast as planned, was rendered much more difficult by these weather conditions.

About 1115 a wheeled plane from the carrier ARK ROYAL located the BISMARCK and thus established contact for the H task force coming from the south. This marked the beginning of the unfortunate developments in the withdrawal of the BISMARCK.

At 1115 the Fleet Commander reported his position in quadrant BE 27, 600 miles west of Brest. In the afternoon he received instructions to make for Brest, since he would not be able to pass the bar off St. Nazaire

CONFIDENTIAL

if the bad weather in the Bay of Biscay continued. Our Air Force received orders from the Reichsmarschall to safeguard the BISMARCK's return passage with all forces available in the western area and to insure her protection in coastal waters. In spite of unfavorable weather conditions, four FW 200 reconnaissance planes, exploiting their full range, attempted to cover loosely the sea area between 43° 30' N and 54° N up to longitude 25° W. Other forces tried to insure an adequate survey of the northern part of the area, as far as about 19° W, and the southern part as far as 14° W. The northwest storms in the Bay of Biscay unfortunately did not allow use of the destroyers available on the Atlantic coast to relieve and later meet the BISMARCK.

Throughout the day the enemy maintained contact with the BISMARCK with carrier planes from the ARK ROYAL and reconnaissance forces from the Coastal Command. At 1620 a British plane reported the position of the BISMARCK as 47° 40' N, 18° 15' W, course 120°, speed 22 knots.

The commander of the H task force sent the cruiser SHEFFIELD (Captain Larcom) to contact the BISMARCK while he himself with the RENOWN and the ARK ROYAL kept outside the range of the German Air Force throughout the day.

British reports stated that carrier planes from the ARK ROYAL, sent to carry out a torpedo attack on the BISMARCK in the afternoon, met with no success. Obviously, due to the prevailing weather conditions the planes did not get near the BISMARCK but passed her.

In the afternoon reconnaissance signals from the planes led the cruiser SHEFFIELD to the BISMARCK. At 1824 the Fleet Commander reported the SHEFFIELD's position in quadrant BE 5311, course 115°, speed 24 knots.

The establishment of visual contact with the BISMARCK by the cruiser SHEFFIELD was of particular importance for the further course of the action, since the enemy was now in a position to direct the torpedo planes in an attack on the BISMARCK.

Our Air Force was considerably hampered by the prevailing weather conditions and by the distance involved. In the afternoon the BISMARCK was still outside the effective range of our bomber units. In spite of this, at 1620 air reconnaissance succeeded in locating an enemy battleship escorted by three destroyers in quadrant BE 2120, 200 miles from the position of the BISMARCK, course 170°. This was the RODNEY (Captain Dalrymple Hamilton) who had been diverted from convoy escort in the eastern North Atlantic to the attack against the BISMARCK. No other enemy forces were sighted during the afternoon. Six of our submarines, four with and two without torpedoes, were sent as a protection north-east of the route to be followed by the BISMARCK. At 1900, U "48", which was in quadrant BF 71, received orders to proceed at top speed to operate against the shadowing cruiser SHEFFIELD. The submarine did not come to the point of firing, however.

In the meantime a report from the Fleet Commander indicated that the fuel supply of the BISMARCK had become still worse as a result of oil losses caused by gunfire and torpedo hits; the Fleet Commander requested information as to the possibilities for refueling. Group West thereupon made plans to send out the supply ship ERMLAND for refueling during the night of 26 May.

The evening of 26 May the BISMARCK, followed as she was by vastly superior forces, was in a very difficult position. However, there was still

CONFIDENTIAL

reason to hope that, with her guns and engines still unimpaired, she could manage to evade attacks from torpedo planes throughout the night and could be afforded substantial relief and support in the morning within easy range of our Air Force.

The decisive turn for the worse came in the evening of 26 May. As a result of successful all-out torpedo attacks by carrier planes from the ARK ROYAL between 2050 and 2115, the enemy made two torpedo hits on the BISMARCK; the first hit the ship astern, the second amidships. Severe casualties were caused. Survivors stated that of the thirty five attacking planes, seven were brought down by the ship's anti-aircraft guns.

The torpedo hit astern was the decisive blow; by destroying the steering gear it made the ship incapable of holding a course for our bases.

In the meantime the enemy carried out the final moves necessary to surround the ship, now most severely handicapped in maneuvering. At 2000 U "566" (Lt. Wohlfarth) in quadrant BE 5332 made contact with a battleship of the KING GEORGE class and the aircraft carrier ARK ROYAL, which passed unescorted on a straight course quite near the submarine. It was a tragic accident that just this very submarine, returning from an operation, had no torpedoes left. After a short time the submarine lost contact in a squall of rain. At 2015 a German weather ship reported a heavy cruiser of the LONDON class at 45° N 20° W proceeding at high speed on an easterly course. Urgent operational messages, including some addressed to the Commander, 4th British Destroyer Flotilla (Captain Vian) and some to the H task force, ordered the destroyers to attack and gave directions to the H task force. At 2325 the Fleet Commander himself reported that he was surrounded by the RENOWN and light naval forces.

According to reconnaissance and radio intercept reports, the following British vessels were in the battle area around the BISMARCK in the evening:

Battleships:	KING GEORGE RODNEY RENOWN possibly also the PRINCE OF WALES RAMILLIES is en route
Aircraft carrier:	ARK ROYAL
Heavy cruisers:	NORFOLK another cruiser of the LONDON class (probably DORSETSHIRE)
Light cruisers:	SHEFFIELD, and probably another light cruiser
Destroyers:	4th Destroyer Flotilla with several modern destroyers of the TRIBAL class (COSSACK, MAORI, ZULU, SIKH). More destroyers approaching.

In view of the vast enemy superiority the BISMARCK, incapable as she was of maneuvering, was in a hopeless position. This fact was all the more tragic since, according to a report from the Fleet Commander,

the ship was perfectly fit for action as regards guns and engines, despite the heavy hits sustained; it was only the damage to the steering gear, which under the very unfavorable weather conditions made her incapable of holding to a course towards the coast.

At 2352 the Fleet Commander reported:

"Ship unmaneuverable. We shall fight to the last shell. Long live the Fuehrer!"

A further radio message to the Fuehrer of the German Reich, Adolf Hitler, ran as follows:

"We shall fight to the last in our faith in you, my Fuehrer, and in unshakable trust in Germany's victory.

Fleet Commander"

In reply the Fuehrer thanked the Fleet Commander and sent the following message to the crew of the battleship BISMARCK:

"All Germany is at your side. Everything still possible will be done. Your exemplary conduct will be an inspiration to our people in their struggle for existence.

Adolf Hitler"

The appraisal of the situation on the evening of 26 May resulted in the impression that the enemy had obviously not decided to make a strong attack in order to destroy the BISMARCK. It was to be expected that he would first attempt to cripple the BISMARCK further by additional torpedo attacks by planes and light forces during the night; afterwards he would bring up the heavy forces and force the BISMARCK to the final engagement.

A survey of the possibilities of coming to the aid of the BISMARCK led to the following conclusions:

The BISMARCK was 400 miles distant from Brest. In order to decrease the prospects of attack from enemy torpedo planes and possibly from enemy submarines, the ship was forced to keep moving as fast as feasible in the rough sea. This would probably use up the remaining fuel supply, already very low.

The attempt to refuel could be made only if the BISMARCK were able to get in the direct vicinity of our coast, where our coastal forces, in particular the Air Force, could drive off the enemy and make attack by his surface vessels difficult or even impossible. But in view of developments there was no such prospect. It seemed hopeless to try to take the supply ship through the surrounding enemy forces to the rudderless BISMARCK.

Tugs were made ready to leave in case there should be a change in the situation or in the weather which would enable the ship to make for a point near the coast after all. From the point of view of seamanship it would be impossible for one or two tugs, together with the ship's engines, to restore the BISMARCK's ability to maneuver.

The weather conditions still made it impossible for us to send out destroyers. Neither the GNEISENAU nor the SCHARNHORST could be used,

CONFIDENTIAL

since both ships were under repair and were not ready for operations.

Hence the possibilities of supporting the BISMARCK were limited to the determined efforts of the Air Force and the submarines available in the Biscay area. All the submarines in question, with or without torpedoes, were sent to the supposed position of the BISMARCK. In the further course of the action they found it impossible to approach the enemy and to affect developments.

According to the available reports, during the night of 26 May there were various encounters between the BISMARCK and light enemy forces, whose contact reports were constantly picked up by radio monitoring. The greatly varying accounts of the course of the BISMARCK revealed the fact that she was unable to steer and showed that the enemy was also aware of her complete unmaneuverability. According to observations by the submarines, which reported gunfire and star shells, and according to the reports from the British Admiralty, light naval forces attacked the BISMARCK particularly between midnight and 0100 and between 0400 and 0500. The British Admiralty report that during the night attacks by destroyers of the TRIBAL class torpedo hits had been scored on the BISMARCK, damaging the engines, was not confirmed by statements of the survivors. According to these statements the BISMARCK did not receive any torpedo hits during the night, and she succeeded in sinking one of the attacking destroyers with gunfire, and set another on fire. At 0430 U "74" (Lt. Kentrat) observed three loud explosions, but was not able to determine any further details.

An enemy attempt to make a dawn attack by torpedo planes from the ARK ROYAL could not be carried out because of bad visibility. On the morning of 27 May we sent out all available reconnaissance planes and bombers to locate and attack the enemy forces surrounding the BISMARCK. Besides the long-range reconnaissance planes of the 40th Bomber Group and the 406th Coastal Air Group, the available bomber units of the 606th and 100th Bomber Groups, as well as Bomber Group I/28 were brought into action. The planes went to the very limit of their range under unfavorable weather conditions as before. Several times the planes were able to contact the enemy and to attack the cruisers and destroyers with bombs. In spite of all-out efforts they did not succeed in affecting the action around the BISMARCK.

We have no precise information about the last engagement of the BISMARCK. In his last message at 0625 the Fleet Commander reported the situation unchanged, wind 8 to 9. According to the British Admiralty reports and observations from our own submarines it must be assumed that between 0900 and 1000 the heavy enemy forces engaged the severely damaged BISMARCK; at the same time a torpedo attack was made by cruisers and destroyers. One of our reconnaissance planes reported that at 0945 the BISMARCK was at 47° 20' N, 15° 14' W in an engagement evidently with two heavy and two light cruisers. The British Admiralty reported that the final destruction of the BISMARCK was accomplished by a torpedo fired from the heavy cruiser DORSETSHIRE (Captain Martin).

Fighting a far superior enemy, who had concentrated all his available heavy naval forces for the attack, the battleship BISMARCK went down with her flag flying between 1000 and 1100 on 27 May.

signed:

Assmann

Views on the Further Conduct of Warfare against Merchant Shipping in the Atlantic with Surface Forces.

1. The sinking of the battleship BISMARCK makes it advisable to re-examine the principles which have governed warfare by surface forces against the supply lines, and to establish the directives for continuation of this phase of naval warfare.

2. Probable conclusions drawn by the enemy with regard to his own measures:

The course of events has proved to the enemy that, in spite of the loss of the HOOD, his procedure was correct and led to the defeat of one of his most dreaded enemies.

a. He will therefore continue to use the same procedure to prevent surface raiders from breaking through. This involves the following:

(1) Intelligence service from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

(2) As far as possible constant supervision of the departure routes through the middle and northern North Sea.

(3) On the basis of reports from (1) and (2), reconnaissance forces equipped to maintain contact with the expected enemy forces under any circumstances will be assigned to the Denmark Strait and between Iceland and the Faroes.

(4) A strong fighting force will be stationed south of Iceland as a result of the information obtained as per (1) and (2). It will operate against the enemy reported by the reconnaissance forces mentioned under (3).

(5) Aircraft carriers with their long-range torpedo planes will be committed for the purpose of breaking down the speed of the reported enemy, which is of vital importance in the chase.

b. Apart from showing the way in which the enemy will seek to prevent the break-through of surface raiders, and also their return if necessary, the methods which were revealed in the BISMARCK operation also throw light on the manner in which the enemy may be expected to deal with surface raiders on the high seas.

Here, too, such a task force will probably employ the aircraft carrier for the purpose of tracking down enemy warships and auxiliary cruisers in the areas indicated by distress signals. Carrier planes will be used to reduce the speed or the cruising radius of the enemy. Then the carrier's reconnaissance planes will guide the enemy's forces to the target, and in this way attempt to force our ship into an engagement.

The correctness of this assumption has been demonstrated by the composition of task forces sent into the Atlantic on the appearance of merchant raiders.

3. Review of the course of events:

a. Since the commencement of hostilities the naval war against Britain has been fought with vastly inferior forces. This was compensated for only by the daring of the operations and the determination with which they were executed. All along the Naval Staff has been conscious of the enormous responsibility and the great risk involved, for the means at its disposal were always completely inadequate. We were handicapped by the small number of forces, by lack of advanced bases, by too few naval air forces and too short range, by lack of aircraft carriers, and of suitable escort forces for operations by the large ships in the Atlantic. Intelligent, reliable, and extensive air reconnaissance, however, is a prerequisite for such operations conducted with inferior forces. The situation is becoming steadily worse; apart from the three new British aircraft carriers and two fast battleships just completed, additional ships of both types are under construction. From the very beginning the Naval Staff asked, and was promised, that ships under construction in the British shipyards be attacked and destroyed by the Air Force. Up to the present time no such operations have been included in the program of air warfare. The Commander in Chief, Navy repeats his request that this demand should at least be met in the future. British naval power stands in the way of the realization of the Fuehrer's plans as far as they concern the main struggle against Britain, e.g., the questions of Ireland, the Azores, supplies to Africa, etc. This power must be smashed by concerted action of all branches of the Armed Forces, principally the Navy and the Air Force, and under circumstances involving the fewest possible forces, owing to the limited means at our disposal. In the case of the new ships, this means air attacks on the shipyards where the vessels are under construction.

The Fuehrer admits this, and promises to instruct the Air Force accordingly once again.

The Naval Staff was aware of the fact that with their method of naval strategy great results might develop at any time from small causes, and that no matter how carefully they directed operations from both land and sea the fortunes of war could at some time change for the worse.

The guiding principles in directing surface forces were surprise and continuous changing of operational areas. Thus, even when battleships were involved, it was true cruiser warfare, in which combat with an evenly matched enemy must always be just the means to an end.

The BISMARCK-PRINZ EUGEN operation clearly lacked the element of surprise from the very beginning. Radio intelligence revealed that as early as 21 May enemy planes received instructions to be on the lookout for two battleships with three destroyers which had been sighted. The fact that enemy countermeasures were not suspected at once can be attributed to the lack of other indications of any kind in enemy radio traffic following that one message. We later discovered from enemy announcements that such countermeasures were started on 21 May and were obviously prepared as a complete operational order in such a way that no radio message was necessary. The fact that no photographic reconnaissance was carried out over Scapa Flow on the decisive day before the break through the Denmark Strait enabled the enemy to continue with the preparation of his countermeasures unobserved.

The encounter with the enemy in the Denmark Strait can therefore be ex-

plained by the absence of the surprise element, and this again by the fact that our ships had proceeded through the Baltic approaches and the islands off Bergen, where enemy agents had the chance of making reports. It is not clear whether the enemy statement that it was a plane which sighted the formation off Bergen is true or was made with the purpose of protecting agents.

In this case the enemy was able to forego use of radio, even to report sighting enemy forces, so that the course of the operation should not be disturbed, as a matter of fact to induce us to proceed according to plan.

b. Knowing nothing of the enemy movements and considering the favorable weather, the Fleet Commander had to make the break through the Denmark Strait without delay. Any delay would have meant another refueling, causing more delay, during which the favorable foggy weather might have changed.

The discovery of the enemy in the Denmark Strait was surprising, although not alarming at first, since both the HIPPER and the SCHEER had encountered heavy cruisers there before.

The Fleet Commander had planned to break through the Denmark Strait unobserved. The construction of radar equipment for enemy naval forces had been expected. Its first appearance in this situation, however, came as a surprise and had fatal consequences. On account of prevailing weather conditions the Fleet Commander was unable to get rid of the shadowers by using his armament, and the enemy was able to maintain uninterrupted contact by means of his radar apparatus.

The enemy's radar apparatus enables him to function under the protection of foggy weather. In the past fog had been favorable only to us in the break-through operations.

The influence which the very probable presence of enemy radar will have on naval surface strategy in the Atlantic in the future needs a thorough examination. On no account, however, must it be allowed to render this type of naval warfare impossible.

An apparatus for the purpose of establishing whether one's own ship is being located by enemy radar has been completed and is now to be installed.

c. The battle with superior forces showed that with luck and ability a great deal can be made of the most difficult situation, and that our battleships were equal to those of the enemy, both in their powers of resistance and in the ability of the crews. Certainly the Fleet Commander would have avoided battle had this seemed possible. The slight damage to the BISMARCK, combined with shadowing enemy forces which could not be shaken off, were the first steps towards her final destruction. This fact shows that the principle of "battle only as a means to an end" also holds good for battleships. On the other hand the outcome of the engagement shows that even a single TIRPITZ has excellent chances for success in attacking a convoy escorted only by one old battleship and therefore need not avoid such an encounter.

d. The successes of British carrier-borne planes and the skillful handling of the carrier during the course of the pursuit and destruction of the BISMARCK have demonstrated the value of aircraft carriers in

large-scale operations. If an aircraft carrier of our own had been included in the BISMARCK task force, the whole picture might have been entirely different.

4. Lessons learned from the events.

a. If the narrows on either side of Iceland are to retain their value as outlets to the Atlantic, an even greater effort than hitherto will have to be made to retain the element of surprise when breaking through. The longer the passage to these outlets, the smaller will be the probability of keeping it secret. It would therefore seem expedient that ships intended for warfare in the Atlantic, if operating from home waters, should not be sent out from the German Bight or the Baltic, but should be moved to Trondheim if possible several weeks beforehand, in order to be able to make the speediest possible break-through under cover of suitable weather conditions.

Departure from the bases on the west coast of France will always be easier than through the Iceland straits. This fact practically outweighs the danger from the air in these bases, especially when the threat from the air has been diminished by appropriate measures of every kind. The situation will improve greatly when Ferrol and Dakar are at our disposal.

The presence of radar equipment, which in a short while will probably also be carried by auxiliary vessels and auxiliary cruisers, will restrict the possibilities of the Denmark Strait to an increasing extent, especially for slow ships such as pocket battleships and auxiliary cruisers. The decision in each case for or against the use of this outlet must be dependent on reconnaissance by planes, submarines, or trawlers. The narrow south of Iceland thus again becomes important under favorable weather conditions. But for the reasons here presented, bases along the west coast of France are preferable.

Passage through the Channel is out of the question as far as battleships are concerned. But even for heavy cruisers of the HIPPER and SCHEER classes the risk would be so great that such passage could be considered only in a case of extreme urgency. At present our air forces are not sufficiently strong in the west to be able to hold down enemy air forces and attack light naval units. We do not have adequate escort forces and mine sweepers. Vessels must keep to a certain course with no possibility of detour, proceeding at a low speed to avoid mines, and being forced to sail in good weather on account of navigational difficulties, all this in the vicinity of enemy air bases.

As a precaution Group West has been asked to make a thorough examination and operational survey of the Channel passage for ships of the LUETZOW or HIPPER class.

b. Up to now the principle of the Naval Staff has been to carry on warfare against the supply lines with surface forces as far as possible by means of an unbroken series of operations, achieving successes as fast as possible so as to conquer the British before the end of this summer. Besides the operation of the SCHARNHORST and the GNEISENAU, this led to the independent operations of cruiser HIPPER and to that of the BISMARCK with only the PRINZ EUGEN as escort. It could appear that this was a mistake, as a more powerful task force could have put up a better defense against the enemy. This is a false conclusion, however.

Certainly several ships are more effective in combat than a single one; however it was not the aim of the operation to be involved in an engagement, but rather to reach the enemy's convoy lanes without being detected. The main objective of our German naval warfare consists in permanently disrupting the enemy's supply lines, and not in waging battles, which, even with a favorable start, could easily turn to our disadvantage owing to our lack of bases and of facilities for assisting damaged ships.

It must not be concluded, therefore, that the use of single battleships or cruisers in warfare on the supply lines is wrong in principle. It is precisely the mobility of such single ships or small task forces that is a prime factor of cruiser warfare and is thus to be striven for.

Nevertheless, in addition to continuous pursuit of this policy, it was the aim of the Naval Staff to create task forces of a homogeneous nature, as for example SCHARNHORST - GNEISENAU, and also BISMARCK - TIRPITZ, a fact which was once again emphasized to the Fleet Commander prior to the operation. In the future, too, we must strive to regulate operations and periods of overhaul so as to make possible the formation of such task forces, and at the same time to keep the war on merchant shipping by surface forces from being interrupted completely as seldom as possible.

c. There is no doubt that refueling at sea has been made more difficult by the enemy's use of a number of aircraft carriers and radar, particularly when only slow tankers are available. Here too, however, it is only a matter of increased enemy forces and equipment; there has been no basic change. In connection with the question of refueling the disposition of tankers will need to be re-examined. The maintenance of our tanker capacity is of decisive importance for the continuation of any sort of warfare against supplies by surface forces. The following principles must be even more closely observed in the future, if losses are to remain small.

(1) Tankers and supply ships should not remain continuously at refueling points, but should withdraw to more remote areas if possible.

This is a necessary measure, as refueling points must of necessity lie too close to operational areas, so that they run the risk of being sighted accidentally by single enemy ships, or by regular enemy and U.S.A. naval reconnaissance.

(For the northern group of tankers the Davis Straits and the Greenland drift-ice border could be considered as suitable areas for withdrawal, and for the southern group, the Sargasso Sea area or the area 600 to 1,200 miles southwest of the Azores.)

(2) The execution of the operations will require the constant presence at sea of a fast supply ship, which on account of her high cruising speed is able to cover long distances quickly for emergency refueling. This ship should be kept for such emergencies, or for use towards the close of operations, and apart from this should be held ready in a withdrawal area suitable for the current operational area.

d. In attempts to lighten the task of surface forces during the

break-through and during operations in the Atlantic, the seasons, with their varying degrees of darkness, will play an important part.

The longer nights from September to March facilitate a break-through, for example from the western French ports, and make it possible to shake off shadows more easily; planes can maintain contact and launch attacks only for short periods. It is also easier to conceal the movements of tankers.

On the other hand, in the Norwegian Sea fog is very common in July, and this would facilitate the break-through by way of the northern straits in spite of the light nights.

5. Operations during the next few months.

a. The LUETZOW will be ready to break through in July, the SCHEER in August. It is intended to transfer the LUETZOW to Trondheim shortly, where she can exercise a deterrent effect on any British operations during operation "Barbarossa". Besides this, reconnaissance of conditions in the northern straits is to be carried out by submarines, planes, and trawlers, for the purpose of clarifying the possibilities of a break-through in the summer. A decision is to be made on the basis of this information.

The SCHEER will probably also be moved to the north in July or August.

b. At the commencement of operation "Barbarossa" the TIRPITZ is to remain for a time in Kiel, which possesses the best anti-aircraft defense, and where the danger of air attack is not great during the short summer nights. She can be transferred to Trondheim at any time from there.

c. The HIPPER will not be ready until September.

d. The PRINZ EUGEN will be ready to put to sea about the middle of June; she will probably not operate alone. The SCHARNHORST will be ready to commence training on 18 June; two weeks in port, then two weeks at sea will be necessary. A decision will be made on the latter period as soon as conditions in the Atlantic become clearer. The GNEISENAU will not be ready before the autumn as a shaft has to be replaced. Decisions with regard to combined operations on the west and Norwegian coasts will have to be taken as the situation develops. (The Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command, Colonel Schmudt, and Captain von Puttkamer were present at this discussion.)

The Fuehrer explains his interpretation of the development of the situation in Britain, and the influence of operation "Barbarossa" on it: The situation in Britain is bad at present. A collapse could occur suddenly. By the middle of July at the latest he hopes to be able to judge how operation "Barbarossa" will progress and what effect it can be expected to have on the situation as a whole. Until then it would not be practicable to take great risks in naval surface warfare, unless there were prospects of definite major successes.

If Britain were on the point of collapse, it would perhaps be possible for us to acquire a naval base by a lightning attack, in which case surface forces might possibly play an important role.

The Fuehrer agrees to transferring the LUETZOW to Trondheim and stationing the TIRPITZ in Kiel. He asks to be kept informed of any further decisions.

The Question of Declaring Zones of Operations.1. Possibilities:

- a. Extension of the zone of operations to the west as far as Canada.
- b. Extension of the zone of operations to the south to include the triangle outside the Western Hemisphere.
- c. Declaration of a new zone of operations off the coast of West Africa.

2. Evaluation of Possibilities:

Regarding "a": If this measure were taken, the area would extend far into the Western Hemisphere. Open declaration of such a zone of operations, which would bring the war to America's doorstep, appears at present politically undesirable, because it would be interpreted as a direct threat to America and would thus strengthen the position of the warmongers. The Naval Staff therefore contends that for the time being it would be better to give naval forces the necessary operational freedom in some other way.

Regarding "b": This would be only a temporary measure, as enemy countermeasures might make it necessary at any time to station some of the submarines outside the zone of operations once more.

Regarding "c": Zones of operations off the west coast of Africa, no matter what form they take, affect not only shipping in the service of Britain, but also unavoidably our own and neutral interests. French shipping especially (and therefore German interests) would be affected by an unbroken zone of operations; Portuguese and Spanish possessions and Liberia would be blockaded. War measures would be brought close to the Cape Verde Islands. The political repercussions thereof would be highly unfavorable. The proposed measures would cause ill feeling in Portugal and Spain; Britain or America would find an excuse to take action against the Azores, the Cape Verdes, or the Portuguese colonies. There would be danger of a reversal in public opinion in French Africa. In the U.S.A. a declaration of this zone of operations would be interpreted as a threat to both the Americas, and its propaganda value would be fully exploited. The necessity of maintaining French and neutral merchant traffic would call for exceptions and concessions, which would contradict the whole purpose of declaring the zone and would greatly interfere with our operations. If declaration were made of a number of areas off British coasts only, as Gambia and Nigeria, French merchant shipping would be forced away from the coast and laid wide open to British attack. Compared with the great disadvantages, therefore, the advantages cannot be rated very highly.

3. Conclusions:

For the time being there should be neither extension of existing areas nor declaration of a new zone of operations off West Africa, but orders should be issued to give naval forces at least the most essential freedom of action within the present zone of operations. Hence the proposal is made for sanction of warfare against U.S. merchant shipping according to prize regulations.

Review of the Strategic Situation in the Eastern Mediterranean after the Balkan Campaign and the Occupation of Crete, and the Operations that are to Follow.

The decided improvement in the strategic position of the Axis powers in the Mediterranean area as a result of the Balkan campaign and the occupation of Crete demands a fresh review of the strategic and operational conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the tactical necessities arising from them.

As a result of Italy's independent attack on Greece in the autumn of 1940 and the ensuing Italian defeat, the Naval Staff made an urgent demand for the speedy occupation of the whole Greek mainland including the Peloponnesos; this demand has been fulfilled, and in addition has been expanded to an unexpected degree in the occupation of the whole Adriatic coast, the island of Crete, and all the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. The threat to our own position in southeastern Europe has been removed, and the domination of the Eastern Mediterranean is no longer entirely in enemy hands; it is exercised instead by the Axis powers in the whole Aegean area and the Ionian Sea, and is at least heavily contested by the defensive and offensive power of the Air Force within a wide radius around Crete. If escort forces are increased sufficiently, sea and air supremacy in the Aegean Sea will insure vital supplies, especially oil supplies from the Black Sea, for Italy, France, and Spain, and shipments via the sea route and Italy will considerably relieve the German grain and supply situation in the future.

Possession of the island of Lemnos gives us the possibility of controlling the Dardanelles and of insuring the safety of supply traffic from the Black Sea area. Operational facilities provided by the possession of the main bases of Salonika and Piraeus and the Aegean islands will secure the transport of supplies through the Aegean Sea, which are routed through the Corinth Canal or around the Peloponnesos to Italy, France, and Spain.

The possession of Crete and the Dodecanese cuts off the Aegean Sea from the south, and will enable the Air Force operating from Crete, or naval forces operating from Suda Bay, to patrol the comparatively narrow sea area between Cape Littinos (Crete) and Ras el Tin (North Africa), a distance of about 165 miles or 305 kilometers. Thus they can flank the British forces leaving Alexandria for the Central Mediterranean to attack Italo-German transports to Africa. It also provides the basis for intensified offensive activity by naval and air forces against the British fleet and bases in the Eastern Mediterranean, and shifts our own bases for support of the Italo-German offensive in North Africa decisively nearer to the British positions. The domination of the Adriatic and the Aegean Seas insures once and for all the position of the Axis Powers in relation to the Balkans and Turkey, who will now be forced to give up any idea of going over to the side of the enemy. Finally, the new strategic situation is of special significance in its effect on the tenacity of our Italian ally, whose internal political and economic position would seem thereby assured, while her military potential will be released to a great extent for other duties.

In summary, the capture of these new strategic positions in the Eastern Mediterranean will be of vital operational and strategic significance

for the future prosecution of the war.

The positions for launching the decisive battle against British supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean have been gained; the most vulnerable points in the British Empire now lie within effective range of the German offensive. The enemy is aware of the deadly danger, and he combines reinforcement of his own forces in this area with the hope for timely arrival of American support, which has been promised him in the form of extensive supplies of war materials to the Red Sea.

The powerful position of the British in the Eastern Mediterranean is gravely menaced as a result of the successful Balkan campaign and the occupation of Crete; it has not yet been broken, however, in spite of successful attacks by the Air Force against British light naval forces. All signs indicate that the British are not at all inclined to give up their position in the Eastern Mediterranean. On the contrary, Britain seems determined to retain her position in this area by all the means at her disposal. Here, as in all other vital areas of the British Empire, this depends on the exercise of naval supremacy by the British battle fleet, with its nucleus of battleships, aircraft carriers, and cruisers. The fleet alone is in a position to protect the sea communications necessary for supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean and to guarantee Britain's political influence in Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, and to a great measure in Turkey, too, with repercussions in Africa, India, and even in the Far East. The prestige of the British Empire depends on her battle fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean area. Thus the aim of Italo-German strategy remains, as before, to destroy the British fleet as the dominant power in these waters, to drive it from the Eastern Mediterranean, and to eliminate its bases and operational facilities in the Mediterranean.

It is the opinion of the Naval Staff that to achieve this aim German strategists, besides of course defending the occupied areas in Greece, Crete, and the Aegean islands, must make a determined effort not only to hold the strategic positions already gained, but to exploit them as quickly as possible by taking energetic and systematic measures for offensive action against the British position in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Operation "Barbarossa", which because of the magnitude of the undertaking naturally stands in the foreground of the operational plans of the Armed Forces High Command, must under no circumstances cause operations in the Eastern Mediterranean to be abandoned, reduced, or postponed, in view of the great strategic successes recently achieved in the southeastern area. On the contrary, it is the opinion of the Naval Staff that everything must be done to keep the initiative in the Eastern Mediterranean firmly in our own hands, and to continue and intensify the fight by a series of strong, energetic attacks. Past experience has shown that the Italian armed forces, as regards leadership, training, and military efficiency, are not capable of carrying out any phase of the required operations in the Mediterranean with the tenacity, speed, and drive which are necessary to success. On the other hand, recent experience appears to confirm the fact that Italian junior officers and troops are quite capable of successfully carrying out certain operations with courage and sufficient prudence, under German planning, German organization, and strict German discipline, or under strong German influence. Future strategy must therefore as a general rule take this factor into account.

The Naval Staff considers the following measures necessary for future operations in the Eastern Mediterranean:

CONFIDENTIAL

1. A maximum number of operations should be undertaken by German and Italian bomber formations, if possible under unified German command, using torpedoes and heavy caliber bombs against the British Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, and aiming at the systematic destruction of the large battleships and the aircraft carriers. (During the course of the war up to the present time not a single battleship or aircraft carrier has actually been destroyed or sunk by the Air Force. Therefore it is necessary to investigate the production of suitable bombs with the greatest possible penetration and explosive force, and planes should be equipped with effective torpedoes. The British are far superior to us in the production and handling of aerial torpedoes, which are the most dangerous weapon of the air forces against warships.)

2. The Italians should be asked to transfer their submarines from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean for the purpose of a planned, determined attack on British sea communications in the Eastern Mediterranean (from Alexandria to Turkey - Cyprus - Palestine - Port Said - Marsa Matruh - Tobruk - Malta), and against British naval forces in order to protect our own transport routes to North Africa. Here, too, we must endeavor to exercise controlling influence on operations through an experienced German liaison officer. (The Italian assertion that submarine operations in the Mediterranean are possible only to a very limited extent because of the clearness of the water and the special effectiveness of British anti-submarine measures in these waters is to be countered by reference to the British submarine successes.) (Marginal note: Italian anti-submarine measures are not so good as British anti-submarine measures.)

3. Planes operating from Crete and Rhodes should lay aerial mines in large numbers in the Suez Canal, off Port Said, both in and outside the port of Alexandria, along the coast of Egypt and off the Palestinian harbors.

4. The Italians should be made to abandon what has been until now a purely defensive and mainly passive and cautious strategy, and to employ their light fleet units (cruisers, destroyers, torpedo boats, and PT boats) to a greater extent than before to harass and damage enemy naval forces, supply ships, and transports, utilizing the bases in Crete and the Peloponnesos. With the limited basis of operation left to him, the enemy should no longer be able to control the Eastern Mediterranean to the previous extent, or to disrupt the Italo-German transports to Africa as effectively as in the past. Considering the strength of the Italo-German air forces and in view of the numerical strength of the Italian fleet, our newly acquired strategic bases should make it possible to endanger British movements in the Eastern Mediterranean to an increasing degree, and to prevent or very severely threaten constant British operations in the Central Mediterranean and against German supply lines to North Africa.

It seems most desirable, if not actually necessary, that the direction of future operations in the Eastern Mediterranean should rest as far as possible in German hands; or at any rate we must obtain a stronger influence on all Italian operations than heretofore.

5. France must be persuaded to strengthen her military position in Syria so as to rule out any British action against that country. We

CONFIDENTIAL

should examine the possibilities of Air Force operations from Syria against the Suez Canal and sea communications through the Red Sea, including mining operations, as well as against supply traffic to and from Cyprus. The war materiel necessary for the defense of Syria should be released to France, and operational facilities for possible later support of a German offensive against the British stronghold in the Near East should be prepared.

6. Malta should be taken in order further to restrict British operations in the Eastern Mediterranean and to eliminate to a great degree the threat to our supply lines to North Africa. (To arrive at a final settlement of the whole Mediterranean question, it will be necessary to capture Gibraltar at a later date.)

7. Italy must be induced to close the Strait of Sicily really effectively by all the means within her power, with German support, thereby permanently disrupting the communications between Gibraltar, Malta, and Alexandria, and cutting off further reinforcements and supplies to the Eastern Mediterranean from Gibraltar.

8. The Naval Staff considers that Tobruk should be eliminated or captured as soon as possible by routing more forces to Libya, and temporarily concentrating attacks on the Tobruk area by planes based on Crete. At the same time Italian submarine attacks should be intensified in order to prevent transport of further British forces to Tobruk or withdrawal of forces already there. These measures would serve to eliminate the threat to our flank on the North African front, forces would be released, and more operational freedom would be gained in the waters between Crete and the African coast. Apart from this, an early capture of Marsa Matruh would be of special value in the campaign against the British key position in the Eastern Mediterranean. The final goal of the whole North African military campaign remains Alexandria and Suez.

The Naval Staff is still firmly convinced that the Eastern Mediterranean area must come under our control, and every political or strategic manifestation of power by the British in this region, influencing as it does to a considerable extent the whole Near East and even India, must be eliminated. This necessity is of such vital importance for the whole conduct of the war that the problems in this area absolutely must be dealt with energetically, and all operational possibilities which exist at the present time must be utilized, in spite of other very heavy demands on the German armed forces (i.e., operation "Barbarossa"). Only thus can the recent great successes in the Mediterranean be fully exploited at a time when American aid to Britain still has not reached decisive proportions.

signed: Assmann