

## HITLER AND HIS ADMIRALS

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BY

ANTHONY MARTIENSSEN

*(Editor of "Fuehrer Conferences on Naval Affairs")*

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<i>Fuehrer Conferences on Naval Affairs</i> (issued by the Admiralty) . . . . .	(1)
Documentary evidence produced at Nuremberg Trials— general . . . . .	(2)
Evidence of Raeder . . . . .	(3)
Evidence of Doenitz . . . . .	(4)
Statements of German Admirals at the end of the war (issued by the Admiralty):	
Weichold— <i>War in the Mediterranean</i> . . . . .	(5)
Assmann— <i>Aspects of the War at Sea</i> . . . . .	(6)
Documents relating to the resignation of Grand- Admiral Raeder . . . . .	(7)
Documents relating to war in the Air (issued by Air Ministry) . . . . .	(8)
Files of the <i>Frankfurter Zeitung</i> . . . . .	(9)



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could not have been a fool; but lest there are some who think that cleverness is the sole criterion of greatness, I should like to quote from Hitler's sixteenth-century tutor, Nicolo Machiavelli: "Yet it cannot be called talent to slay fellow-citizens, to deceive friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion. . . . His barbarous cruelty and inhumanity with infinite wickednesses do not permit him to be celebrated among the most excellent men. What he achieved cannot be attributed either to fortune or to genius."

ANTHONY MARTIENSEN.

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS FROM THE GERMAN NAVAL ARCHIVES HAVE BEEN GIVEN AS APPENDICES TO AVOID SPOILING THE CONTINUITY OF THE HISTORY:

### Appendix I

#### GERMAN NAVAL RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

NAVAL relations with France during the critical years of 1941 and 1942 are best shown by the series of conferences with Admiral Darlan which took place in December 1941 and January 1942.

Contact with Darlan was first established by the German Admiral Commanding in France, Otto Schultze, who reported to Raeder:

"From the Commanding Admiral, France. Paris,  
To: Grand-Admiral Raeder. 4 December 1941.

SIR,

Attached I am forwarding you a report on my meeting with Admiral Darlan. It includes only the most important points.

I am checking once more the question of going into the locks at St. Nazaire. Admiral Darlan, however, insisted emphatically on his point of view. The most important item for the Naval War Staff is his proposal to forward French information of British fleet movements. I told Admiral Darlan immediately that I would forward this proposal to you as quickly as possible.

In case you should require further details of my conversation, I request a date when I and my adjutant, who sat next to Admiral Darlan at the table, can come to Berlin to make our reports.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) OTTO SCHULTZE.

*Enclosure.*

*Report on dinner, 3 December 1941:*

Guests: Admiral Schultze,  
Lt.-Commander Fischer,  
Lieut. Fudikar,  
Admiral Darlan,  
M. Monneraye (Commissaire General de la Marine),  
Capt. Fontaine,  
His Excellency Ambassador de Brinon,  
Madame Darlan,  
Comtesse La Rochefoucauld,  
Madame Mitre.

Coming from Vichy, Darlan had arrived in Paris on the evening of 3 December. At the table he very quickly lost his initial reserve and related a number of personal experiences from the China War and the World War. He also described the coronation ceremonies in London. He mentioned several times the fact that, generally speaking, he was not treated very politely in London. When the British Admiralty had had to look after him, he had been received cordially, but when he had been the guest of the British Government, as one of the three representatives of the French Government, the reception had not been in accordance with his position.

At the beginning of the war he had laid special stress to the proposal that the French Admiralty should leave Paris and its political atmosphere, although, after war had broken out, he was no longer subordinate to the Minister. He therefore made his headquarters at Chateau Maintenon and had moved his whole staff there and had been very comfortable.

He commented very unfavourably on the co-operation with the British Admiralty. He said that the organization of the whole of British naval warfare was suffering from a lack of personalities and a lack of responsibility among the leading officers. He mentioned that while preparing the Norway operation he had tried to get in touch with the British Commander responsible. He had not succeeded in this, but had finally been referred to a committee. He had fared similarly on numerous other occasions. The British Admiralty lacked all offensive spirit. He had proposed in

December 1938 to occupy Narvik and Trondheim which at that time would have been possible with weak forces. This proposal, however, had been refused.

After dinner the conversation was continued among the gentlemen. Admiral Darlan as well as his companions were very open, nearly comradely. Moreover, he proposed to me that a direct teleprinter line should be installed between the French naval command in Vichy and the German naval authority in Paris. Based on his co-operation with the British Admiralty he had a very well-informed intelligence service and was in a position to supply Germany with valuable information about British ships' movements and intentions. For example, in the case of the *Bismarck* he had had knowledge of the positions and intentions of the British forces at the time when it would have been possible for the *Bismarck* to have avoided destruction by escaping to the North East.\* A few similar cases had occurred in the Mediterranean.

Admiral Darlan warned us not to take the 35,000 ton battleships into the dock at St. Nazaire. If it was at all possible to get these ships in when fully equipped—slack water, a quarter hour before and a quarter hour after high water—it would not be possible to get them out again in time, because, in spite of dredging, the depth of water and local conditions were exceedingly unfavourable. He was one of the most experienced French seamen and probably one of the greatest experts on the French Atlantic coast, and he described the attempt to take a battleship into St. Nazaire as the certain loss of this ship for at least a year.

To the question of further training and a possible active participation of the French Fleet, Admiral Darlan mentioned that this was mainly a question of oil as well as a question of manufacturing ammunition. In case of action he had sufficient oil stocks to supply the French Fleet for one month. In an action like the one off Dakar his ships had fired off all their ammunition. He said about the battleship *Dunquerque* that she was ready to go to sea, but as she had only been provisionally repaired she could only make good 9 or 10 knots. Owing to the good English intelligence service he could not risk moving her to Toulon as he would have to reckon with attacks from the British forces.

\* This is correct. (Author.)

He spoke further of the difficulties of victualling the Fleet and obviously was anxious to obtain French sailors from the occupied areas and to extend recruiting there too, especially in Brittany. He also mentioned that apart from the French naval liaison officer in Paris, he intended to appoint liaison officers at Cherbourg and Bordeaux as well.

Admiral Darlan criticized violently Italian Naval warfare in the Mediterranean. He described the Italian attitude with contempt. He mentioned again in this connection his knowledge of English ships' movements in the Mediterranean which he thought would be exceedingly valuable to German-Italian warfare. He particularly pointed out that it was impossible to forward such information to the German Armistice Commission in Wiesbaden as the time delay of several days would make it impossible in many cases to evaluate this information. . . . Darlan also mentioned the five merchant ships which the British had seized at the Cape of Good Hope, and he related that as a reprisal he had ordered two French submarines to sink British merchant ships in the area round Madagascar. One of these submarines had put into Madagascar the day before yesterday and reported the sinking of one merchant ship. This had been confirmed by British reports.

He spoke then of the success of the French Fleet off Dakar. He obviously wished that the British Fleet should be driven out of the Mediterranean as soon as possible. On the possibility of the participation of France to attain this end, he said that the French Fleet was united in its dislike of England. There was, however, not the necessary response among the people and that it was impossible to act alone in such questions. Added to this was Italy's suspicion of France. Italy seemed to fear that he, Darlan, would one day attack them in the rear with this Fleet. He said that nothing was further from his mind and he intended no such action.

Finally, Admiral Darlan repeatedly expressed his pleasure at meeting for the first time in this war German Naval officers at a private dinner party. He expressed a hope to meet the Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy at a future date.

(Signed) OTTO SCHULTZE."

To this report, Raeder replied as follows:

" From: C.-in-C., Navy.

18 December 1941.

To: Commanding Admiral, France,  
Admiral Schultze,  
Paris.

DEAR SCHULTZE,

Many thanks for your letter and report of 4/12.

I have informed the Fuehrer about the remarks made by Admiral Darlan concerning information he could supply on the movements of the British Fleet as well as his wish to meet me.

The Fuehrer has agreed to both proposals.

I would therefore be grateful if you would inform Admiral Darlan in a suitable manner that the Navy would gladly accept his proposal. For this purpose a direct teleprint connection would be installed between him and the Commanding Admiral, France.

At the same time I would ask you to inform Admiral Darlan that I gladly accept his offer for a meeting and that I hope to be able to name a date very shortly.

I have instructed the Chief of Naval Communications to make the necessary arrangements for the teleprint line between Vichy and Paris, and I expect that he will get in touch with your authorities.

With the best greetings and Heil Hitler !

Yours,

(Signed) RAEDER,  
*Grand-Admiral.*"

Raeder met Darlan at Evry-le-Bourg on 28 January 1942. Darlan repeated what he had told Admiral Schultze. Co-operation was arranged in most naval matters except the operational use of the French Fleet. On this question, though Darlan was willing and indeed anxious to use his ships, Hitler had apparently instructed Raeder not to accept. He evidently distrusted Darlan, whose readiness to turn against his former Allies probably made Hitler fear that if circumstances altered Darlan would as readily turn against Germany.

## Appendix II

## THE QUESTION OF INVADING IRELAND

THE question of whether to occupy Ireland cropped up towards the end of 1940, after the virtual cancellation of Operation 'Sea Lion'.

*(Extract from Fuehrer Conference, 3 December 1940.)*

"The Fuehrer . . . makes the following statement regarding Ireland: a landing in Ireland can be attempted only if Ireland requests help. For the present our envoy must ascertain whether De Valera desires support and whether he wishes to have his military equipment supplemented by captured British war material (guns and ammunition), which could be sent to him in independent ships. Ireland is important to the Commander-in-Chief, Air, as a base for attacks on the north-west ports of Britain, although weather conditions must be investigated. The occupation of Ireland might lead to the end of the war. Investigations are to be made."

The Naval Staff duly carried out a survey of the possibilities of invading Ireland and reported as follows:

1. The first condition necessary for the transfer of troops (to Ireland) is naval supremacy along the routes to be used. This naval supremacy could never be attained by us in view of the vastly superior British Home Fleet, not even for the duration of one transport operation. . . . The possibility of surprise is ruled out due to the necessity of starting from the French coast.

2. The geographical position is extremely unfavourable, since the coast of Wales and Cornwall extends like a wedge to our line of approach; the distance from enemy bases to Ireland is less than that from the ports of embarkation in north-west France. In contrast to the Norway operation, it would not be possible by surprise attack to establish a supply

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line which could be defended. Such a supply line is of decisive importance for the success of the operation.

3. The island has no defended bases or anchorages at all. Although the Irish might willingly open their ports to us, they would also be open to the enemy pursuing us. There would be no time for planned harbour and coastal fortifications and undisturbed disembarkation of the expeditionary force is unlikely. It would not be possible to send supplies in view of the superior sea power of the enemy and the limited area through which the approach would have to be made.

4. To a defending force, cut off and left to its own devices, the topography of the country does not afford us much protection. . . . Without supplies and reinforcements they would soon feel the increasing pressure of a British expeditionary force brought over under the protection of British naval power; sooner or later our own troops would face a situation similar to Namsos or Dunkirk.

5. Support by the Air Force would depend upon the weather. Ireland, the westernmost island of any size in the Atlantic, is known to have a heavy rainfall and consequently low clouds and very frequent damp and foggy weather. Air support would have to come primarily from the mainland since the airfields in Ireland would not meet our requirements—it would scarcely be possible to expand them because we could not supply equipment. Every attempt at transporting troops by Ju 52's would be in great danger from British fighters which are again increasing in numbers.

6. It is therefore concluded that it would be impossible to follow up an Irish request for help . . . in view of the enemy's superior naval force, the unfavourable geographical conditions and the impossibility of forwarding supplies. Troops landed in Ireland without supplies of foodstuffs, weapons, and ammunition would sooner or later be wiped out by an enemy whose supply routes are difficult to attack.

7. It will be possible in the winter months to bring occasional blockade runners with weapons and ammunition into Irish harbours and bays as long as there is still no state of war between Britain and Ireland and as long as the Irish co-operate."



## Appendix III

## RELATIONS BETWEEN RAEDER AND GOERING

SOMETIME in June 1940 Goering sent a telegram—unfortunately destroyed—to Raeder commenting rudely on the part of the German Navy in the Norwegian campaign. The telegram infuriated Raeder who at once reported the matter to Hitler. Goering was ordered to apologize and the following exchange of letters took place:

“ From: The Reichsmarschall Berlin,  
of the Greater German Reich. 8 August 1940.

**MOST ESTEEMED GRAND-ADMIRAL,**

Due to special circumstances it was only a few days ago that I read the actual contents of the telegram sent to you some time ago containing my opinion with regard to your part in matters concerning Norway. I can assure you that I was extremely shocked when I realized that, due to a chain of misunderstandings in my staff, this telegram was delivered to you in this form and with this wording. I alone am of course responsible, for I was in a state of excitement because your proposition was presented to me as so categorical that I saw therein an interference in my own sphere of command. Not for a moment, however, could I assume that my attitude would be so interpreted that such a telegram would be sent to you personally. You can rest assured, my dear Grand-Admiral, that I too share the point of view that such a tone in communications between the Commanders-in-Chief, and especially between two men whom nothing separates but much more unites, is absolutely unthinkable. I regret most deeply that such a thing has happened and I wish to apologize personally and in all due form for having, though quite by mistake, been responsible for such a grave offence.

Although the matter in question has been clarified and settled I beg of you, nevertheless, to destroy this telegram. The thought of having telegraphed you in such an impossible tone is absolutely unbearable to me. The high esteem which

I hold for you would at all times make such a tone toward you seem impossible to me. The only explanation which I can offer you is that the matter was presented to me at a time when other important things were passing through my mind, so that I did not read the telegram myself afterwards. Had I done so, the telegram would of course never have been sent. I would like to assure you once more that really no one ever drew my attention to this telegram up to the moment a few days ago when I myself saw it for the first time in the files. It was clear to me immediately that only a comprehensive apology to you could make amends for it. I would greatly appreciate it if you would not hold the matter against me in the future although you would certainly be entitled to do so. May I also beg that this letter be considered as a purely personal matter?

With comradely greetings and Heil Hitler !

Yours,

(Signed) GOERING."

Raeder replied:

" From: The Commander-in-Chief, Navy. Berlin,  
13 August 1940.

MOST ESTEEMED REICHSMARSCHALL,

It was with great satisfaction that I read your letter. I thank you most sincerely. In view of our mutual efforts to co-operate most closely and most effectively, it had depressed me very much of late that it could have appeared as though differences had arisen between us which in turn seemed to have affected the co-operation of the lower echelons.

The very comradely form in which you stated your point of view in this matter touched me deeply. The telegram is destroyed.

You may rest assured that my personal esteem and respect for you, my dear Reichsmarschall, has at no time undergone a change.

Heil Hitler !

Yours very respectfully,

(Signed) RAEDER."

## Appendix IV

THE following is a full transcription of a normal conference between Raeder and Hitler. It shows the variety of subjects discussed and the form of a "Fuehrer Conference." A fortnight before this conference, British forces had raided St. Nazaire. The raid was the biggest yet carried out on the European coast-line, and had as its object the destruction of the large lock which was capable of being used as a dry dock, the only one outside Germany big enough to take the *Tirpitz*.

The raid was led by Commander R. E. D. Ryder, V.C., R.N., in the ex-American over-age destroyer, H.M.S. *Campbeltown*. The *Campbeltown* was disguised as a German destroyer, and by using German recognition signals managed to lead the force to within 1½ miles of St. Nazaire before meeting serious opposition. The operation was entirely successful. The *Campbeltown*, loaded with high explosive, rammed the lock gates and later blew up exactly according to plan.

The attack disturbed the confidence of the German High Command. An inquiry was held and Raeder reported to Hitler:

"Naval Staff.

Berlin,

16 April 1942.

*Report by the Commander-in-Chief, Navy, to the Fuehrer at Wolfsschanze,\* 13 April 1942, in the evening.*

In the presence of the Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command; during the discussion of points IX and X, Lt-General Jodl, Vice-Admiral Krancke and Captain von Puttkamer were also present.

#### I. Attack on St. Nazaire.

The Situation in the Western Area since Summer 1941:

Enemy strength is increasing. Army and Air Force are weaker due to the situation in the East. Nearly all naval forces have been transferred to Norway. We have no means of repulsing an enemy landing attempt.

\* Hitler's headquarters at Rastenberg.

The situation provokes enemy operations like the one of 28 March 1942.

The following statements are taken from a British operations order:

- Mission: 1. Destroy the floodgates of the large dock that can accommodate the *Tirpitz*.
2. Destroy small locks and all submarines and other craft in the vicinity.

The enemy knew exactly the strength of our naval forces (5 torpedo boats) and could adjust his own strength accordingly. The attack was timed according to moon and tide (28 March to 31 March). The route from Falmouth to the objective took 35 hours at a speed of 12 knots. They flew the German flag and used German recognition signals. (Comment in longhand: 'Air Force recognition signals.')

One submarine was used as marker boat. The air attack was co-ordinated with the naval attack.

Mission of the Destroyer *Campbeltown*:

Force a lane through the torpedo net and ram the outer floodgate so that the forecastle extends over the floodgate. Land the troops, then sink the *Campbeltown*. Remove the crew in motor boats. *Campbeltown* was loaded with a demolition charge with a two-hour time fuse.

*Advantages for the Enemy:*

- A. Poor, changing visibility, 200-4000m.
- B. At high water the sand bars are flooded, making it possible for the enemy to evade mines and other obstacles.
- C. Good reconnaissance through air attacks, which probably had the additional purpose of distracting our attention and drowning out engine noises of the E-boats. Nevertheless, shore batteries and anti-aircraft batteries observed the enemy boats as soon as they came into view. A short delay was due to exchange of recognition signals. The artillery fire was very effective.

*The Fuehrer* criticizes the exchange of recognition signals under such circumstances and also the delay (6½ minutes) before the alarm order was given.

(Comment added in longhand: New regulation: shore station demands recognition signal. If naval forces do not answer immediately with naval recognition signal, open fire. New, uniform alarm signal for the Navy has been ordered.)

*The Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, states that, considering the available means, the defence had been handled correctly in all essentials. However, it should be impossible for a destroyer to reach the floodgate; besides, due to inexperience, the search for the demolition charge and its subsequent removal were not carried out correctly. In other cases demolition charges in locks, etc., were expertly located and removed at great risk.

*Possible Counter-measures Necessary to Prevent Similar Raids :*

A. Aerial reconnaissance is a prime requisite for prompt recognition. The British were at sea for 35 hours; they approached during daylight. Even during the World War evening reconnaissance was carried out to protect the coast whenever the weather permitted. It is possible that some airfields at high altitudes (as in Norway) have different visibility conditions than prevail at sea. In such cases *sea planes* operating from the harbours must do the reconnoitring, since they can see as long as visibility allows enemy naval forces to enter coastal waters.

*Fuehrer* : Sea planes are too greatly endangered.

*Commander-in-Chief, Navy* : No more than patrol boats without proper rear protection. All ship-based planes are sea planes. Furthermore, to assure the necessary protection, some bombers will have to be used for reconnaissance along the entire West Coast. The Naval Air Force is of great importance.

B. Flotillas for patrolling and for protecting the harbours have been established as far as possible and additional ones are being built. There are not nearly enough of them to protect the bases and the long coast.

*The Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, using a chart prepared by the War Economy Section of the Naval Ordnance Division, demonstrates on the one hand the repeated efforts of the High Command, Navy, to obtain the workers and raw materials necessary for reinforcing escort and patrol flotillas;

on the other hand he shows how naval requirements continually had to yield to those of the Air Force and of the Army. If the Reichsmarschall is perhaps able to build more aircraft it proves that he has manpower and raw materials at his disposal which, by rights, should belong to the Navy. It is certainly not the fault of the High Command, Navy, that there are so few vessels. The cause lies in the distribution of men and raw materials no doubt always made in view of the particular war situation—in spite of continual requests made by the High Command, Navy, to the Fuehrer, to Dr. Todt, and to the Armed Forces High Command.

*The Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, also points out that patrol boats in coastal areas which do not have a rear protection of light naval forces are gravely endangered. It is not difficult for a few destroyers to sink them, once they have been located by enemy reconnaissance.

Even then one or another of the boats would be able to report.

#### C. Minefields:

1. Heavy ground mines are to be buried in the sand bars to prevent passage at such places.

2. A field of ground mines is to be laid which will be electrically detonated from the shore. Their success depends largely on a foolproof detonator cable.

D. Harbour booms have been placed wherever harbour and current conditions permit, for example Boulogne, Brest, Dunkirk. They have not been approved for St. Nazaire, since neither buoys nor dolphins can be used there. The former cannot hold the booms in place due to the swift current, and the latter cannot be driven into the rocky bottom near the mouth of the harbour. Trellis masts on concrete blocks will be tried out if they prove workable. Experiments will be made with a new type of obstacle consisting of a series of barges connected by iron chains.

E. Location finding devices: The number on the West Coast will be increased as more devices become available (two, possibly up to four a month).

F. Alarm signal in case of invasion: The Navy has such a signal, but all parts of the Armed Forces should know it and use it. All posts which see the signal must repeat it continuously until certain that it has been received everywhere.

*The Fuehrer* asks whether it would be possible to illuminate the coastal area with parachute flares.

*Commander-in-Chief, Navy* : The coastal artillery has star shells which illuminate the coastal area widely. The searchlights used in conjunction with artillery fire have the advantage of blinding the enemy.

*Summary by the Commander-in-Chief, Navy* :

Experiences gained as the result of this attack are being utilized to the utmost. Nevertheless, we have to consider the possibility of similar raids whenever the enemy is favoured by good visibility. The danger is particularly great as long as there is neither an effective naval defence nor an adequate air reconnaissance. In the absence of almost all naval forces as well as the Air Force from the home waters, due to the changed war situation, even islands in the German Bight, like Borkum and Wangeroog, greatly exposed by removal of guns to the occupied territories, must be better fortified again (e.g. by placing the *Gneisenau's* 15-cm. battery on Wangeroog).

*The Fuehrer* stresses the fact that he must demand that at least the most important naval bases, like submarine bases, be so well protected that successful raids would be impossible. In his opinion this was *not* the case at St. Nazaire.

*The Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, mentions experiences with British explosives which should not only be brought to the attention of the entire Armed Forces, but also of the civilian population in order to prevent sabotage. He hands a large number of photographs to the Chief of Staff, Armed Forces High Command.

*The Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, reports that the population of St. Nazaire and its vicinity strongly favours De Gaulle. Two days before the attacks a successful police raid was staged.

## II. Naval Situation in March 1942.

### *Home Waters and the "German" Sphere of Influence* :

A. Norway. The cruiser *Admiral Hipper* was transferred to Trondheim as planned. *Luetzow* will presumably follow in mid-May. *Prinz Eugen* will probably return for repairs at the end of April. Since there are very few destroyers in

the Arctic Sea future operations of surface forces must depend on the possibility of effective air reconnaissance, so far as fuel permits.

The twenty submarines assigned to the protection of the northern area have the following missions:

1. To paralyse enemy convoy traffic in the Arctic Sea and near the ports.
2. To recognize and thwart promptly any enemy plans to land in the Norwegian area.

B. The attempt made by Norwegian merchant ships to break out of Swedish harbours, which we have been expecting since the beginning of January, was completely unsuccessful. Reports have furnished us with the details.

C. Traffic of merchant ships during March: Traffic between German and German-occupied harbours consisted of 1274 merchant vessels of 2,566,017 tons. Of these, 1011 ships of 2,177,136 tons were convoyed. They were distributed as follows:

Norway . . .	405 ships totalling 1,062,666 tons.
North Sea . . .	519 ships totalling 1,145,351 tons.
Western Area . . .	330 ships totalling 358,000 tons.

No traffic in the Baltic due to ice.

#### *Foreign Waters :*

A. Cruiser warfare. Ship '10' operated without success in the Antarctic. However, in the South Atlantic five enemy steamers were captured without firing a shot. These were *Pagazitikos*, *Wellpark*, *Wellesden*, *Aust*, and one other. Ship '10' will be supplied by *Regensburg* and proceed to the western part of the Indian Ocean as planned.

An agreement was reached with the Japanese Navy reserving the area west of 80° East longitude and south of 10° South latitude for ship '10,' and possibly permitting Japanese submarines to operate in an area 300 miles wide along the eastern coast of Africa. *We recommended to the Japanese the use of submarines near the entrance to the Persian Gulf.*



Ship '28' is en route in the South Atlantic. *Doggerbank* successfully fulfilled her minelaying mission off Capetown. She received new orders to lay mines near Cape Agulhas with the coming new moon. Meanwhile she is waiting in the South Atlantic.

B. Blockade runners. Supply ship *Regensburg* in the Indian Ocean and *Tannenfels* in the South Atlantic are both en route to Japan. The tanker *Charlotte Schliemann* is in the waiting zone in the south-west part of the South Atlantic.

Of the five blockade runners returning home, two have already arrived in Bordeaux: the *Osorno* and the *Rio Grande*, the latter with 3700 tons of rubber and 3800 tons of whale oil. The *Fusiyama* is in the South Atlantic, and the *Portland* and the *Muenster* are still West of Cape Horn.

The Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The *Valiant* left Alexandria after three and a half months of repairs. The *Queen Elizabeth* docked there. Since no sign of the *Valiant* has been found in the Mediterranean for several days, it is assumed that she left by way of the Red Sea. It is not known whether she is ready for action. The *Malaya* sailed westward from Gibraltar. Attacks made by German and Italian submarines and planes have seriously weakened light enemy forces. In short, the situation in the Mediterranean is extremely favourable right now.

Therefore the 5th and 6th Transport Squadrons were sent to Tripoli as planned.

The 3rd E-boat Flotilla is to be used to lay mines off Malta in connection with the current major operation against that island.

The 6th Motor Minesweeping Flotilla is to be transferred to Tripoli for escort duty.

Four more E-boats, now at Cologne, are being assigned to the Mediterranean. These could ultimately be sent to the Black Sea through the Dardanelles.

The *Fuehrer* permits them to attempt passage through the Dardanelles camouflaged as merchant vessels without previous political negotiations.

In the Black Sea new minefields are being laid off the Roumanian and Bulgarian coasts.

The plan to mine the Crimean coast had to be dropped

temporarily because the necessary Roumanian naval forces were refused.

*The Fuehrer* orders that none of the German batteries be given to either Bulgaria or Roumania.

C. Submarine warfare. We had 288 submarines on 1 April 1942, of which 122 are operational units. Location of the 125 boats in operation areas on 9 April is as follows:

- (a) Arctic Ocean: Total 19; 5 are at Kirkenes, Narvik and Trondheim, and 14 at sea.
- (b) Atlantic: Total 81; 45 in North Atlantic and U.S. coast; 2 in South Atlantic; 34 in bases on the western coast of France.
- (c) Mediterranean: Total 20; 7 at sea.
- (d) Home ports: Total 5; 3 overdue.

Submarines sank these vessels in March (confirmed):

German submarines: 89 vessels totalling 524,286 tons.

Italian submarines: 19 vessels totalling 82,000 tons.

Japanese submarines: 19 vessels totalling 101,098 tons.

Total enemy losses for March 1942 in ships sunk or captured (Great Britain, U.S.A., Russia, and the Netherlands): 362 vessels of 1,095,393 tons.

*The Fuehrer* agrees with the Commander-in-Chief, Navy, that victory depends on destroying the greatest amount of Allied tonnage possible. Thus all offensive operations of the enemy can be slowed down or even stopped entirely. *The Fuehrer* believes that attacks on the Murmansk convoys are most important at the moment.

*The Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, states that construction of submarines should be stepped up to the very limit. He requests permission to get copper on the black market in France and Belgium.

*The Fuehrer* wants confirmation whether this is still actually possible.

### III. *Support of the German offensive in the East by Japanese naval warfare in the Indian Ocean.*

It is of decisive importance that Japanese forces attack British supply lines to the Red Sea and Persia in the northern part of the Indian Ocean. The purpose would be to disrupt Russian supplies and thus aid our eastern offensive. The Armed Forces High Command must therefore point out to the Japanese Liaison Staff that a strong Japanese attack on British supply lines would support German operations most effectively.

*The Fuehrer* has already given Ambassador Oshima some general indications of the spring offensive.

### IV. *Germany's relations with France.*

The Fuehrer is asked for his opinion in regard to further developments.

*The Fuehrer* believes that Marshal Petain plays a very insignificant role, being very old and easily influenced. He thinks it likely that Laval will replace Petain, but he does not consider the French capable of energetic action of any kind at present. Their whole attitude is weak (witness the Rion trial). According to Ambassador Abetz 5 per cent. of the population is for collaboration and 5 per cent. for De Gaulle; the rest are watching and waiting. *The Fuehrer* believes that the French will try to repulse attacks on West Africa.

### V. *The fuel oil situation in 1942.*

The Commander-in-Chief, Navy, refers to the report made to the Fuehrer.

(This report stated that the supply of fuel oil which had become critical in the last quarter of 1941 was even more serious by April 1942. The Italian Navy was in continual need of supplies and German stocks were running low. The passage of the Brest Group through the Channel and on to Norway had consumed 20,000 tons of fuel oil alone, and by April 1 the reserve stocks of the German Navy were down to 150,000 tons.

Roumanian deliveries fell from 46,000 tons per month to 8000 tons, and as this had been promised to the Italians, who urgently required it for the Mediterranean campaigns, further withdrawals had to be made from the German reserve stocks.

The total allocation to both the German and Italian navies for April 1942 was cut from 97,000 to 61,000 tons.

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The shortage of fuel oil did not affect submarines and pocket battleships, however, as they operated on diesel oil which was still in plentiful supply.—Author.)

#### VI. *Completion of the aircraft carrier Graf Zeppelin.*

A. It will take at least until the summer of 1943 to complete the hull and instal the engines.

B. The total time necessary to complete the carrier does not depend on completing the hull and engines but on changing the flight installations for the use of aircraft adapted from the Ju 87D and ME 109F.

About two years are required to develop, construct and test the catapults necessary for these planes. If it is possible to convert the existing catapults the time limit will be reduced by six months. New winches for the arresting gear are needed. The company producing these winches has not yet announced when they can be delivered.

*The carrier cannot therefore be completed before the winter of 1943.*

*The Fuehrer* points out that in general the Armed Forces set their requirements too high.

C. Aircraft. Only ten converted fighters and twenty-two converted bombers (including reconnaissance planes) will be available. There are *no* torpedo planes. If a new type of special carrier aircraft is developed, mass production cannot be attained until 1946 !

The Naval Staff maintains that the results of our efforts so far do not justify continuing work on the carrier. While the technical problems concerning ship construction and plane conversion can evidently be solved, the disadvantages which still remain reduce the carrier's tactical value to a critical point.

*The Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, will approach the Fuehrer again, if the discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, Air, in regard to carrier aircraft do not have satisfactory results.

*The Fuehrer* believes that torpedo planes are necessary in any case; it is furthermore important that our own types of aircraft are a match for those of the enemy.

#### VII. *Miscellaneous.*

A. The steamer *Scharnhorst* is in Japan and can be sold to the Japanese.

B. Distribution of the *Gneisenau's* guns: Three guns, 280 mm., from turret A were installed on coast defence gun mounts near the Hook of Holland. Turrets B and C were mounted whole in Norway (by blasting into solid rock).

VIII. *Admiral Krancke reports on manpower of the Navy:*

Upon information about the composition of the First Naval Brigade, the *Fuehrer* admits that the Navy is very short of officers (only 15,000 officers for 500,000 men). On the other hand it is not advisable to use Army divisions which can be employed in combat for occupation of the French islands, for if they should be needed in the East they would then not be available. The division on the Channel Islands, for instance, is practically lost to the Army. The protection of the coastal islands is a part of the Navy's coastal defence assignment, and as such is particularly a naval responsibility. Since the Army is in urgent need of additional forces, he must give this task to the Navy in spite of the shortage of naval officers. The Army has had tremendous losses among its officers; it can transfer officers temporarily, but cannot dispense with them permanently. The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, proposes that the Navy be given until October to complete this task. *The Fuehrer* considered October too late.

*Additional remarks.*

On 14 April 1942 the following telegram was sent confirming the results of the above conference:

To the *Fuehrer* and Supreme Commander personal; copy to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff.

'Request confirmation of yesterday's conference on naval brigades: Navy entirely responsible for defence of islands in Western Area to be designated by Armed Forces High Command. Necessary personnel and *matériel* to be determined in collaboration with Commanding General, West, and to be installed as soon as possible. Troops to be trained on the islands. Army ordered to furnish necessary officers temporarily until Navy can train its own. Army and Air Force to provide arms and equipment which Navy lacks. This method of taking over naval defence of the islands seems quicker and more economical than adhering rigidly to previous orders.'

GRAND-ADMIRAL RAEDER.

IX. *Definition of authority in the Netherlands* among the Commanding General, West; the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Netherlands; and the Commanding Admiral, North Sea Station.

*Vice-Admiral Krancke* reports on organization:

According to the Fuehrer's order No. 40, the Commanding General, West, is responsible for the conduct of the war along the coast in the French, Belgian and entire Dutch area, without referring to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Netherlands. In Holland, therefore, he is responsible not only for the area of the Commanding Admiral, Netherlands, but also for that part of the Dutch area commanded by the Admiral, Coastal Defences, German Bight. The Commanding General, West, is responsible not only for coastal warfare, but also for its preparation as regards tactics, organization, personnel and *matériel*.

The Netherlands belongs to the North Sea area as far as *naval* organization is concerned (ship traffic, coastal and anti-aircraft defence, widespread dock and supply systems and replacement units). The Commanding Admiral, Netherlands, is subordinate to the Admiral, North Sea Station.

This means that both the Commanding Admiral, North Sea Station *and* the Commanding General, West, are in charge of the *same* coastal defence. Their orders overlap. The authority of the Commanding General, West, has to deal continuously with matters coming under the jurisdiction of the Commanding Admiral, North Sea Station. The organization must therefore be changed. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, is asked to investigate this question and to define clearly the respective spheres of command.

*The Fuehrer* will decide.

X. *The question of a naval representative at the Fuehrer Headquarters.*

In a private conference *the Commander-in-Chief, Navy*, explains why it is necessary to have a permanent representative of the Commander-in-Chief, Navy, at the Fuehrer Headquarters. He compares the Navy with other branches of the Armed Forces.

*The Fuehrer* approves a permanent representative of the Commander-in-Chief, Navy, at the Fuehrer Headquarters. He will be a flag officer authorized to move freely between the Naval Staff and the Headquarters; he has the right to report to the Fuehrer on all matters pertaining to the Navy, and to be present at all conferences dealing with the general conduct of the war.

(Signed) RAEDER. /

(Countersigned) ASSMANN."

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