

OFFICE OF U.S. OF COUNSEL
FOR THE PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY
INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of: Wilhelm KEITEL
By: Mr. T. J. Dodd, 27. August 1945, P.M. Nuremberg.

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED, AND SUBJECTS.

1. Keitel

- a) Knowledge of "Hossbach Minutes" (386 - PS) (p.1-3)
- b) Military plans for occupation of Austria (p.4-6, 9-11)
- c) Knowledge of Military Plans against Czechoslovakia (p.19)

PREPARATION FOR AGGRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST AUSTRIA.

Keitel was questioned with reference to the "Hossbach minutes" (386 - PS) of 5 November 1937 (not shown to him); and he was in complete ignorance of the meeting which formed the subject of the document (p.1-3) No plans had been made for military action against Austria until three days before the occupation (p.4-6). After the discussion with Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden in February 1938, no military plans were made until in March when a report was received of the order for new elections in Austria. At this point Hitler directed Keitel to confer with Brauchitsch and Halder in order to find out what troops were available for moving into Austria. As evidence of the lack of aggressive intentions against Austria, the weakness of the German Army at that time was mentioned. Rearmament began in 1936. The plan was to triple the existing seven divisions by 1938 or 1939. In view of the state of German military preparedness, Keitel regarded all preparations in advance of the occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia as having no serious implications from a military point of view. (p.9-11)

PREPARATION FOR AGGRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

He did not recall any plans for an operation against Czechoslovakia in 1938. At that time Beck, Chief of the General Staff, and Brauchitsch, Head of the Army, reported to the Fuehrer in Keitel's presence in September 1938 on the weakness of the German Forces. This meeting took place in Nuremberg on the Reichsparteitag. Beck had a map which he showed to Hitler displaying the forces available to march into the Sudetenland (p.12-13) There was no grand strategy to Hitler's programme such as would be suggested by the Hossbach minutes. Things developed from episode to episode and if there was any grand strategy developed he did not know about it. Even after war was declared on 2 September 1939, Keitel asked Hitler if it was planned to convert industry from a civilian basis to a military one, and Hitler said "No" (p.19)