

39.03
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Field Marshall ret.

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Origin of directives ("Weisungen") of the
supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

1.) The Fuehrer gave his directives, recommendations and orders in his capacity as the supreme commander of the armed forces directly and orally to the supreme commander of the army for the military actions in Austria Checko-Slovakia and for the Polish Campaign, since principally the army with the exception of the Air Force participated in these actions or was committed in them. The Supreme Command of the Army (the Supreme Commander and the Chief of Staff) wished to deal with the Fuehrer directly; they rejected as unnecessary directives ("Weisungen") which were addressed to the army only. It was a principle still in the Polish Campaign that the Army requested the collaboration of the Air Force; the Navy received their special missions orally.

11.) Only with the preparation and the groundwork for the war in the West was the transmission of commands gradually effected by the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, by the means of directives and the formulation of them in the Leadership Staff of the Wehrmacht (Wehrmacht Fuehrungstab) in the OKW. (Wehrmacht Fuehrungstab-Generalstab der Wehrmacht). --Air Forces and the Navy were involved in this in the most important manner already before the actual ground operations commenced.

III.) There are four different possibilities for the origin of such directives ("Weisungen") of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

a.) Case 1. The Fuehrer in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, at his own initiative and upon his own judgement, requested the formulation of regulations, which were then published in his "directives", for the preparation of military operations and plans of deployment and for the possible initiation and commencement of military measures of organisational, operational and "war-economical" nature.

b.) Case 2. During the course of military operations, directives were the result (or effect) of the daily discussion of the situation, at which the necessity or the advisability was recognized to intervene by orders, or to publish new "Directives" for the continued conduction of operations by parts of the Armed Forces or for their coordination.

c.) Case 3. The supreme commanders of the branches of the Armed Forces requested a new directive ("Anweisung") at their initiative for themselves or for their cooperation with the others, which happened more frequently with the Air Forces and the Navy.

d.) Case 4. Ambiguities, contrary concepts or other misunderstandings resulted from the daily collaboration between the Leadership staff of the Wehrmacht (Wehrmacht Fuehrungsstab) with the General Staffs of the Army, the Air Forces as well as with the Navy, which had to be cleared up or corrected, if

an understanding could not be reached by the Chief of the Leadership Staff of the Wehrmacht. A decision by the Fuehrer or a "directive" was imperative, as the Chief of the OSA had no command-jurisdiction over the branches of the Armed Forces.

IV.) In the event of case 1, the Fuehrer asked me and General Jodl to report to him, (Jodl, chief of Lead, St. Wehrm.) and gave a description of his point of view on the situation according to the prevailing conditions, and then gave the precise mission to formulate a "directive" which was accomplished after varied readings, corrections and possibly alteration. The formulation was directed by General Jodl.

Case 2. During operations in a theater of war, the military situation was reported twice daily to the Fuehrer personally, once at noon, concluding the previous day, and once late in the evening or at the beginning of the night for additional material coming up in the course of the day. These reports on the situation were effected by General Jodl. When Supreme Commanders of the Armed Forces or their Chiefs of Staff were present from the fronts or the theaters of war, the Fuehrer frequently gave them the floor, for their particular department. Discussion about needed direction, intervention and orders resulted automatically from the reports of Gen. Jodl for the branches of the Armed Forces, eg. Air Forces, etc. Out of these talks and the thus obtained considerations, the necessity was created to give orders in the way of "Weisungen" (directives) Gen. Jodl then gave the order either orally or by buck-slips to the Deputy C.O. Lead. St., after the reports on the situation, for the preparation of a "Fuehrer Directive".

This was done, in case Jodl's deputy chief of staff was not present at the report, which I ordered later, and thus heard the manifestations of the Fuehrer's wishes. After the Fuehrer also took over the job of Supreme Commander of the Army, the Chief of the General Staff reported daily on the Eastern Front. Except for that, reports on the situation, Liaison and cooperation of the branches of the Armed Forces, and the Theaters of war remained the task of the Chief of the Wehrm. Leadership. St., Col. Gen. Jodl, along with the formulation of all Fuehrer orders and directives. The Fuehrer maintained contact in all these questions directly, with Jodl, although I was present almost without fail. If I was not present for some reason, Gen. Jodl and the Fuehrer usually kept me informed about the missions which he had received from the Fuehrer. If my duties did not force me to be absent, I participated in every report on the situation, and therefore I knew the requests of the Fuehrer and the manifestation of his views. In the talks I participated only rarely, when the Fuehrer asked me to, otherwise he did not wish me to make any statements in this circle. If I had a dissenting point of view, I went to see the Fuehrer alone and later talked with Jodl.

Case 3. The Fuehrer decided at the report of the situation whether a directive was necessary or whether he was going to instruct the concerned Commander orally.

Case 4. The Chief of the Wehrm. Lead. St. (Gen. Jodl.) was informed either orally or by a buckslip about the matter; he then decided in what direction and what formulation a directive was to be prepared, upon which he reported to the Fuehrer

himself, after first informing me, and gave the reasons for the formulation.

V.) The "directives" were examined by Hitler ^{very} critically not only as to their contents but also as to their style, and he corrected them before he would authorize them by his signature. Many times I only saw them when they were submitted to the Fuehrer or immediately before that and then initialled them "K", so that I was always informed about official communications, and thus knew the "directive". I only emphasized dissident views and advocated alterations, before the Fuehrer had ordered Gen. Jodl to consider the eventual manifestation of his will as correct, (my report alone with him), or when Hitler expressly asked me.

The Fuehrer wanted to make the decisions alone, he wanted to lead himself and wished to be responsible for the decisions himself.

Signed: Keitel.