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HERMANN GOERING TALKING

I. SOURCE

GOERING, Hermann, REICHSMARSCHALL. Source is by no means the comical figure he has been depicted so many times in newspaper reports. He is neither stupid nor a fool in the Shakespearean sense, but generally cool and calculating. He is able to grasp the fundamental issues under discussion immediately. He is certainly not a man to be underrated. Although he tried to soft-pedal many of the most outrageous crimes committed by Germany, he said enough to show that he is as much responsible for the policies within Germany and for the war itself, as anyone in Germany. GOERING took great pride in claiming that it was he who was responsible for the planning and successful execution of the paratroop landing in Crete, that it was he who had drawn up the plans for a capture of Gibraltar, a plan which was never carried out because HITLER was opposed to it at the last minute, that it was he who was responsible for the development of the Luftwaffe. On the other hand he denied having had anything to do with the racial laws and with the concentration camps, with the SS and the atrocities committed both in Germany and outside. GOERING is at all times an actor who does not disappoint his audience. His vanity extends into the field of the pathological, as is exemplified by the pearl-grey uniform, the heavy, solid gold epaulettes and an enormous diamond ring on his right hand, even though his medals were limited to two, including the Grand Cross of the Knight's Cross with Swords and Diamonds. Just as much a part of GOERING are two of his aides, OBST (Col) VON BRAUCHITSCH, son of the Field Marshal, and HPTM (Capt) KLAAS. GOERING was only too pleased to be able to discuss the history of the past 12 years, and he gave all information more than willingly to a group of interrogators.

II. THE WAR

Outbreak And The Polish Campaign

GOERING claims that he tried to prevent HITLER from launching the Polish campaign, and when he did, and France and Britain did not declare war immediately, he attempted once more to bring about a peaceful solution to the problem. From 1 - 3 Sept 1939 the German forces were advancing into Poland without a declaration of war. GOERING received a message through his personal courier in SWEDEN at noon on 3 Sept from Viscount HALIFAX, in which the latter asked him once more, and for the last time, to halt the operations before it was too late. GOERING begged HITLER to stop the German forces and to make an offer to Britain and France to the effect that they would be willing to solve the problem peacefully, if they would be allowed to keep the territory already occupied in the first three days of Sept. This would have meant the elimination of the Polish corridor--all this territory had been overrun in the first three days--and would have given Germany an area, which for a long time was being jealously watched and very much coveted by Germany. GOERING feels that the offer might have been acceptable to Britain and France, on the grounds that it would have left Poland a buffer state between Germany and Russia. However, before these proposals could be submitted to Britain and France, the declaration of war arrived from both these countries.

The Invasion Of France And The Lowlands

GOERING credits HITLER for the plan of the invasion of France and the Lowlands. Originally it was intended to invade France at a much earlier date, sometime during the winter of 1939-40. HITLER asked GOERING to inform him as soon as a period of fine weather was in sight, so that the Luftwaffe could be committed for at least five days in a row, a period which was considered sufficient to disorganize the French lines and to launch a powerful offensive, the main effort of which was to come around NAMUR. GOERING claimed that at that time he was very much opposed to the invasion of France, and suggested repeatedly that it be postponed until Spring. He

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was in constant fear all through the winter that a period of fine weather might precipitate the offensive against Franco.

It was during the winter of 1939-40 that a certain mishap occurred which almost resulted in GOERING's end, at least as a political figure, and might have meant Germany's end, if the accident would have been exploited properly by the Allies. A German courier was given the complete plans for the invasion of France and the Lowlands, which were to be delivered at a General Staff Conference at Cologne. The pilot, according to GOERING, got lost and landed in BELGIUM by mistake. The papers were promptly captured, but everybody refused to believe that they were anything but a fake. When the courier discovered the mistake and found that the plane had landed, not on the destined airfield on the right bank of the RHINE, but in BELGIUM, he made an attempt to burn the papers, but he succeeded only partially, and most of them were captured either intact, or at least, in such large fragments, that the main gist of the documents could not be mistaken. When the news broke of what had happened, HITLER raved at GOERING and told him that the Luftwaffe was responsible for this faux pas. GOERING told his audience how he sat at home by the fireside with papers trying to reconstruct what had happened, and he even burnt his fingers trying to find out whether or not the courier had had time to burn most of the papers. At the instigation of his wife, he called in several diviners and fortune tellers who finally reached the conclusion that the detailed part of the plan for the invasion must have been destroyed.

The result of all this was that a new plan was drawn up, which was better than the first, and which was finally executed, i.e. the breakthrough at SEDAN.

GOERING was very enthusiastic about the way in which HOLLAND was conquered, priding himself again and again for his own ingenuity in this connection. He tells the story of a Dutch first lieutenant who told about this incident: Gen WINKELMANN, Commander of the Dutch Armed Forces, was called up on the telephone by this Lt who was holding a certain bridge near the Albert Canal. The latter asked him for permission to blow up the bridge because there were parachutists dropping down in the immediate vicinity. Gen WINKELMANN refused to believe the story, and told him to refrain from blowing up the bridge. A few minutes later the Lt called again, and again Gen WINKELMANN refused to believe it, and adding that he refused to have two divisions cut off from retreat,--these divisions were being hounded by the Germans from the front--and that it was absolutely impossible that any paratroopers would dare to drop behind the lines. A few minutes later the Lt called for the last time, saying "General, I am about to be arrested", and at that moment the German paratroopers captured the Lt and the bridge intact.

The Bombing Of ROTTERDAM

GOERING's story of the bombing of ROTTERDAM was very much in divergence with the published stories and the known facts. GOERING claims that only one wave of 36 planes carrying incendiary bombs, none of which exceeded 50 kg, dropped its bombs. GOERING became very excited when he was asked for his explanation for the large number of dead and wounded. "What large numbers of wounded?" he cried. "I tell you what happened, the fire brigade was so scared to death (HAT SO EINEN SCHISS GEHABT) that it refused to move out and do anything about the fire. That's why such a large part of the city burnt down. The destruction could have been restricted to a very small area, if the fire brigade would have taken any action on it. You can ask the BUEGERMEISTER of ROTTERDAM about that, and he will tell you the same thing. All these stories of hundreds or thousands of dead and wounded are just inventions and fairy tales (ERFINDUNGEN UND MAERCHEN). At the most some twenty or thirty people could have died from fumes, while they were hiding in the cellar. When the second wave came over, Gen STUDENT ordered a red flare to be fired to prevent the dropping of more bombs, and this was done, and no further bombs were dropped."

GOERING's Plan For The Mediterranean

In 1941 GOERING had made plans for a massive offensive in the Mediterranean. The plan was about as follows: Three Army Groups were to take part in what was intended to

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be a vast envelopment operation. One Army Group was to go through Spain, capture Gibraltar, move into Morocco, and roll up the front as far as TUNIS, a second Army Group was to go through Italy and move into Tripolitania, and a third Army Group was to go through the Balkans and Greece and capture the Dardanelles, ANKARA, and cut through to the SUEZ Canal. Upon the completion of this move, it was planned to offer the following proposal to Great Britain: to present them with the fait accompli that the Mediterranean is no longer theirs, but that they could use it again, if they would ally themselves with Germany and fight against Russia. GOERING felt that this offer would have had to be accepted by Great Britain, since they could ill afford to lose the Mediterranean as a passage to the Far East.

Actually the original plan for the move through Spain was GOERING's brainchild. He claims that everything was prepared for this move, which was substantially as follows: fifteen divisions, including two parachute divs and three flak corps, were lined up for this purpose. Approx 500-88mm (sic) AA guns, and a number of specially constructed 80cm pieces, plus a number of "mailler" 60cm arty pieces were to bombard GIBRALTAR until it was pulverized. It was felt that no living soul could have remained in the galleries under such a bombardment. The new 80cm guns were already mounted on railcars and were ready to roll through Spain. The guns, when in firing position, occupied four railroad tracks. The two parachute divs, which were part of the fifteen divs, were held in readiness to jump on the plateaus which surround the rock of GIBRALTAR. GOERING believes that these two divs would never have been necessary, since the bombardment by all the guns, which was to be an incessant procedure, would have brought the garrison to its knees.

At the last minute HITLER refused to carry out the plan, which ultimately included the entry into Portugal for the purpose of securing the ports and establishing new U-boat bases to substitute or supplement those on the French Atlantic Coast. GOERING felt that HITLER's refusal to carry out the plans was a big mistake.

The War With Russia

GOERING says that one of his greatest shocks was experienced when HITLER decided to wage war against Russia. GOERING told him that what he was doing was against his own beliefs and contrary to what he had written and promised the people in "MEIN KAMPF". HITLER told him that it was unavoidable, that the Russians were becoming a greater menace every day, and that he would smash the Russian Army before winter. GOERING pointed out to him that even if he smashed the Russian Army, Germany would still not be able to make peace with the Russians, but HITLER refused to listen.

It was in the winter 1941 that GOERING had his first disappointment in HITLER. Forced to retreat some distance in Russia, HITLER became increasingly more ill-tempered and unreasonable. GOERING then realized that HITLER was not able to withstand setbacks. This was in evidence even more during the days of the battle of STALINGRAD. HITLER refused to let the Army of 200,000 men under VON PAULUS cut its way out, despite the fact that he was implored to do so by GOERING and a great majority of the military. HITLER called GOERING one day and asked him for a statement on the total number of transport planes available and their total loading capacity. GOERING told him but added that the number of planes would be inadequate for the task ahead. HITLER then asked GOERING whether it was possible to carry in supplies by bomber, and GOERING told him that it could be done, but that it was not advisable, since many bombers were being used in the battle against Britain. HITLER calculated that by the use of all available transport planes and bombers, including the use of a brand new wing of He 177's, which was just in the process of training for a spring offensive, and for which GOERING had a particularly soft spot in his heart and which he was desperately trying to keep intact during the training period--he (HITLER) could supply the Army of 200,000 with ease. GOERING protested bitterly, stressing the impossibility of the job due to a number of factors, including the weather; GOERING told HITLER that he could not expect to have constant flying weather, and that some days it would be impossible to fly at all, and in that case, the quantity of supplies required the following day would be doubled. HITLER persisted and GOERING tried to comply with the orders. The attempts to supply the surrounded Army soon

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broke down for just the reasons indicated by GOERING. The weather was atrocious and most of the planes were either wrecked on the ground or lost in the air through accidents. The result of this venture was that after a short time, most of the transport planes, many bombers and the entire Ho 177 wing were immobilized, and that the battle of STALINGRAD was lost anyway.

GOERING states that from that time on, the relationship between himself and HITLER steadily deteriorated. HITLER would give and countermand orders so often, that GOERING was completely unable to keep abreast of the situation. He would have a conference with him in the afternoon, and return to his quarters in the evening to find a certain order waiting there for him which the FUEHRER had not mentioned to him during the conference. Many of these orders were quite impossible to carry out. As an example of one of these controversies, GOERING cites an order from HITLER which ordered the entire Luftwaffe to make an all-out attack on LENINGRAD in an attempt to knock out the city. When GOERING told him that he could not possibly transfer the entire airpower against one objective, and leave all other objectives, especially LONDON, untouched, HITLER accused the Luftwaffe of cowardice, claiming that it was afraid of the AA guns in LENINGRAD. It was useless to tell him that the AA protection of LONDON was considerably stronger than that of LENINGRAD, and that the German fliers had not shied away from the task of bombing LONDON.

GOERING's attitude with regards to the Russian war was as follows during winter 1941: "It would be the best thing to hold on to what we have got--the Ukraine--and not attempt to penetrate any further. Let us build an East Wall with all the millions of workers which we have at our disposal, and no Russian Army will ever break through, because we have a superior Luftwaffe, and they can never break through the defenses without an effective Air Force". However, the following spring the offensive was renewed with the well known results.

GOERING claimed that during the first few days of the Russian campaign, the Luftwaffe had terrific successes. On one day they knocked out 2,700 Russian planes, almost all of them on the ground. The Russians, he claims, did not have any idea of what was happening in the first few hours of this devastating attack. GOERING, supported by VON BRAUCHITSCH, then went on to say that they themselves did not believe the phenomenal success at first, and only announced the loss of 1,900 Russian planes.

20 July Putsch

GOERING said that he was supposed to have been present at the meeting which was scheduled to take place between HITLER and MUSSOLINI at the FUEHRERHAUPTQUARTIER, in East Prussia, but that due to his dislike of MUSSOLINI, he decided not to attend the meeting. It was only due to this fact, that he avoided either being killed or wounded.

GOERING says that it was impossible to organize an effective anti-HITLER movement at the time. To do away with HITLER would have probably meant coming to an agreement with the SS on that matter, and the SS could not be trusted, GOERING felt. When asked why he did not protest to HITLER, and why he did not give up his position as Chief of the Luftwaffe, GOERING replied that he was afraid that he would consequently lose his place as successor to HITLER, and that he would be replaced by BORMANN, for whom he claimed to have a special dislike.

The Racial Policies Of Germany

GOERING's explanation for the racial policy in Germany was as follows: The persecution was not intended to take on the aspects which it did later on. It was originally intended to squeeze only those Jews who were in leading positions, since they "represented a serious danger for the German nation". "After all, those Jews who fought in the World War and received the Iron Cross 1st class, were allowed to

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remain. We even encouraged their emigration to Palestine, and helped them to leave Germany." GOERING made no attempt to hide the fact that he was very much in favor of the "aryanization" of Germany, it was just the "methods" with which he was not quite in accord. "Anyway, during the first few years of National Socialism we did not persecute the Jews." He admitted that the pogroms of 1938 were "pretty bad" (RECHT SCHLIMM), but claimed that this was the first instance of persecution of the Jews in Germany. "It was never intended that the "Aryanization" of Germany should take on such forms" (ES WAR NIE VORGESEHEN DASS DIE SACHE SOLCHE FORMEN ANNEHMEN SOLLTE).

Although GOERING openly admitted that he knew of the "existence" of concentration camps, he claimed that he never realized that they were particularly bad institutions. "I always thought that they were places where people were employed for some useful work." After seeing some of the pictures taken at DACHAU Concentration Camp, GOERING said "all this must have happened in the last few weeks". He said that he could not "understand" that there are some people in Germany who could commit such atrocities.

Atrocities In France

GOERING said that he did not believe in the atrocities which the Allies claim the Germans had committed in France. "You should have seen some of the bodies of German soldiers who were killed in France. It was simply ghastly, indescribable the way these people looked." He dismissed the mutilation of French patriots as "propaganda" and compared the stories with those of the last war where people were supposed to have been found with some limbs cut off. With this answer, he dismissed the matter.

GENOBST (Col Gen) BECK And Gen GAMELIN

GOERING considered Gens BECK and GAMELIN, both one-time Chiefs of Staff of the German and French Armies respectively, to be in the category of "drawing-room" generals (SALONGENERALE). GOERING felt that both generals knew only the theory and not the practice. Both of them would spend most of their time weighing the different possibilities, all of which sounded very nice on paper.

Italy And MUSSOLINI

GOERING did not have one good word for Italy and MUSSOLINI. He felt that Italy was a millstone around Germany's neck, and that Germany would have been much better off if they had never bothered about Italy. GOERING seems to have a personal dislike for MUSSOLINI. He imitated MUSSOLINI during his meeting at the BRENNER Pass, when HITLER had hurriedly arrived from Germany after hearing that Italy planned to march into Greece, HITLER apparently tried to persuade MUSSOLINI to refrain from such a venture.

GOERING said that he had full "sympathy" for the French if they despise Italy. He felt that Italy's entry into the war one week before the end of the French campaign was a "treacherous" move. "If I were a Frenchman, I would spit on the ground every time I saw an Italian". The most ridiculous thing of all, according to GOERING, was MUSSOLINI's speech at the conclusion of the French campaign, when he said that Italy's soldiers had accomplished the very difficult task of overcoming "tremendous fortified positions", and worst of all had triumphantly announced the capture of a certain mountain peak, which had always been Italian.

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