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LETTER FROM HITLER TO MUSSOLINI, DATED OCTOBER 28, 1941

General Headquarters of Der Fuhrer

28 October 1941

Duce:

I'm writing this letter to you at a moment when I believe I can assume the responsibility of stating that the campaign in the East is not only won, but also - on the whole - definitely decided.

When I had the pleasure of greeting you and your following at my headquarters, I brought you up to date on the operations that had been projected and those which were then in preparation. The Command of the Russian Army Groups in the south, having absolutely no idea of the real situation, has waited until we finally realized our objective of closing the vise around the great Kiev bulge. This battle has yielded results even beyond my expectations; because I had counted on the possibility of raking about 300 to 500 thousand prisoners. Whereas, actually, at the closing of the mopping-up operations, over 700 thousand prisoners had been counted. The subsequent smash attacks by the Kleist Armored Group to secure the bridge heads around DNJEPROPETROWSK also gave your Divisions, Duce, the opportunity of mounting a victorious operation of their own in the general picture of the great battle of annihilation.

As it was expected, the attack which was, meanwhile, launched to the south of the DNJEPR against the Crimea, attracted, as if by magnetic force, the last remaining forces of the left wing of Budjenny's Army, between the DNJEPR and Melitopol, with the intention of hitting our 11th Army in a moment of crisis with an attack on our communication lines. We expected this. Kleist's Armored Group, being free once more, after having consolidated the bridgeheads of DNJEPROPETROWSK, from the very beginning, had been given the order to attack, when such a situation developed, the rear of the Russian Divisions which were being gradually concentrated and inflict on them a new defeat, (in cooperation with the German, Rumanian and Hungarian troops operating in the west.)

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*Handwritten notes:*  
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The result of this battle of encirclement brought about the annihilation of 13 more Russian Divisions. The entire operation could be considered closed at dawn, October 11. My personal body guard group, a Division of S.S. and two armored Divisions proceeded to chase the enemy in the direction of Rostov.

They represent the spearhead of powerful formations which will soon be free.

On October 2, the Army Groups under Timoshenko were completely smashed. That happened in three places, on a 500 km. long front. The Air Force, the tank forces, the motorized formations, and above all, the Infantry, have not only shown their calibre but have outdone themselves. It was possible to enclose 75 Russian Divisions into three pockets and then proceed to their total annihilation. Then powerful formations marched on Moscow on a broad front.

Two more operations for the annihilation of the Russian Divisions deployed on the North front are in sight. I hope the outcome will be equally successful. Leningrad, Duce, will not be attacked, because I do not intend to sacrifice one single man more than is absolutely necessary. Apart from this, we have had the experience at Kiev, and more recently in Odessa, of the Russians placing mines in the more important stretches of roads and buildings. They are delayed-action mines, which are made to explode either by themselves or by radio. According to some statements by the Russians, they have prepared for us, both in the Leningrad and Moscow regions, a few special surprises. At present, it is not our purpose to occupy cities. Our purpose is to destroy the enemy. Both Leningrad and Moscow will fall, without the necessity on our part of introducing into these cities a single soldier, with possible danger to his life.

The Finns share our opinion and this is very important, for they are holding the front encircling Leningrad all by themselves.

What is more, Bolshevism will be the victim of its own conflicting objectives, because the gignatic concentration of all its means of attack at the German border, as at the Finnish and Rumanian borders, has compelled the Russian Command to fight where the fighting was favorable to us.

The Russians' extraordinary concentration of war material for the attack against us prevented them from executing a retreat in depth and thus fighting at a distance of only a thousand or two thousand

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kilometers from the border. In any case, this aggravated their situation both at the source of their raw materials and in their great industrial centers. Very soon we will have occupied, or be in a position to occupy, 70 to 90 per cent of their industrial resources and raw materials. Under such circumstances, Duce, I don't think I am a very far-seeing prophet if I say that, regardless of what Stalin's decisions may be, the World Bolshevik Empire has been beaten.

Thus, Duce, the last great continental hope of the British is destroyed. However, it is doubtful that there are no illusions left in London. Therefore, it seems possible to me that at the last moment, under measure of public opinion, some senseless "relieving" offensive might be attempted.

With this concept in mind, from the first I considered all the possibilities remaining to the British in such a case.

1) Direct Help to Russia:

By examining it from the materiel point of view, it seems ridiculous. Besides, the materiel couldn't turn the tide in a matter of weeks because it would not reach the zones, where it was intended to be used, in sufficient quantities.

The same thing can be said for the so-called American help.

2) Personnel Help:

It's not worth taking into consideration. However, we are only too happy if England sees fit to send a few squadrons of airplanes to Russia. In a very brief time such help would be exhausted on account of the difficulties of the situation and above all for the lack of secure and regular supplies.

3) "Relieving" Offensive in Any Other Sector:

a) An attack through Turkey. I consider such a possibility out, because of the prudent wisdom of the responsible men in Ankara. Besides, it would be without any prospects.

b) An attack through the Caucasus. From the military point of view, this would be particularly desirable. The forces which England would put in the field could only be limited, because of the state of her reserves. Considering the fact, too, that their troops would be fighting not Arabs, but rather well-seasoned and battle-tried veterans, their destruction should be a matter of weeks.

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c) A landing; that is, an attempt at landing, in Norway.

I have left powerful forces in Norway. The situation, of course, is not what it was on April 9, 1939. Big and super calibre guns have been installed. All sorts of supplies, including fuel and ammunitions have been brought in to last a year. If, notwithstanding this, the British did set foot there, I would consider it rather advantageous, for the simple reason that they could only supply their forces with a continuous naval traffic, including cruisers, destroyers, etc., which would be employed to escort supply ships and transports. The same thing that happened in 1940 would be repeated again, but with the following difference: then it was we who had only a few miserable airfields, whereas this time there are in Norway about fifty first class airfields with great launching runways, safe from any possible air attacks. Besides, I have had prepared for Norway various armored groups which are being reinforced continuously, so they may be able to attack, together with the other motorized units, with lightning-like rapidity whenever the necessity presents itself. Oslo, Christiansund, Bergen, Drontheim, Narvik, Tromsø and up to Kirkenes, are under the safe protection of big and powerful batteries and mine fields, something which can only make me wish they would undertake such an enterprise. However, the British General Staff being what it is, defective - as I have had occasion to say in the past - it is not excluded that such an extent might take place.

d) Landing in Western Europe.

Since the British themselves do not take into consideration the possibility of landing on the German coasts, it must be assumed such a possibility applies only to Denmark, Holland, Belgium or Western France.

Substantially, I can not but wish for such an attempt on their part. Along the coasts of the above mentioned countries there have been distributed hundreds of batteries, including even 40.6 cm. cannon. Add to that vast mine field all over the territory and a network of defensive systems and you have a first line of insurmountable resistance to any such attempt. Apart such fortifications, I have left in the West, that is, in France, Holland and Belgium alone, a total of 45 Divisions, which, on the whole, are part of the best we possess. To that one must add two armored units supplied with French materiel and two armored Divisions supplied with German materiel. Independent of all that, the first shipments from East to West are taking place. This does not represent any major problem for our transportation system since with the same means we send to the Eastern front supplies and ammunitions and withdraw troops.

I repeat, we have already begun to ship troops from East to West, some destined for Germany, others directly for the West. We have also started pulling back the air force. I believe that within a few weeks the British will have lost completely their brief pleasure of dropping a few bombs on single German cities, because we intend to return these tenfold. Besides, we have started manufacturing, in large series, a new type

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of bomber, which, in radius, capacity and speed surely exceeds anything the British might have thought possible.

On the other hand, we are even now shipping out new armored Divisions towards Norway and France from the Reich itself.

If the British should attempt to land anywhere in Western Europe, it would bring them a major catastrophe, as it has already been proven.

To our troops which are stationed in the West and which day and night go through special training in expectation of such an eventuality, the landing would probably come as a relief. As a matter of fact, we have in the West many Regiments which until now have not had an opportunity to show their worth, as it happened in the East.

I do not know, therefore, Duce, if the British - under their completely negligible military leadership - will attempt anything of the sort. Be that as it may, I have prepared everything with great care for any such eventuality.

e) An attack in the Mediterranean, against the coasts of southern Italy or Sardinia or an attack against Libya and Cyrenaica.

I don't think that against Sardinia or Sicily they can attempt anything better than a simple "demonstration," for, even if the landing were to be successful at the beginning, this would soon bring about a heavy destruction of British tonnage, which in the end would not only put an end to the operation itself, but ruin all the last possibilities of maneuvering which England still has for her tonnage.

Should we want to consider the case whereby they might want to reach a definite objective with limited forces, then we would have to take into consideration - as we have done in the case of the Channel Islands, where we are already prepared - also the Island of Pantelleria in the Mediterranean. We must always keep an eye on this possibility, just as we must be on the alert for an attack against Corsica or Sardinia.

Under such considerations, there remains, Duce, the possibility they may undertake some action against Libya in order to forestall our own attacks. That might come by way of a frontal attack in the vicinity of Sollum backed up by a flank attack coming from the direction of Tobruk. Even though your forces there, Duce, as well as the German Afrika Corps, have been considerably reinforced recently, I still maintain something

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more must be done in that respect in order to show how vain is their reinforcing this threatening force.

In my opinion, we have ways of doing that:

- 1) Maximum safety for our transports.
- 2) Impede to the maximum the enemy's flow of supplies.

Concerning the first point, I think, Duce, that we must check continuously to see if everything possible has been done and if there is any other thing that can possibly be done in order to safeguard our transports.

With this in mind, I have ordered the Tenth Air Corps Command - even to the cost of giving up other tasks for the time being - to assume with reinforced formations the job of escorting all sea convoys from Italy to Greece, especially those convoys which are destined for Bengasi and Derna and eventually for Bardia. Likewise the struggle against the submarines before Bengasi and Derna must constitute one of the first jobs of the Tenth Air Corps Command.

Since along with those problems we must also consider the necessity of insuring the Aegean against British infiltrations which would subsequently upset our vital reserves in those waters, it is not possible to appropriate permanently a part of the Tenth Air Corps to escort the sea convoys from southern Italy - via Sicily and Tripoli. Nevertheless, I have ordered that in special cases where important transports are involved, the Tenth Air Corps contribute a supplementary escort force for said convoys using that route.

I am convinced, however, the main job of escorting here can be done by the Italian Air Force. It is absolutely necessary to see to it that the British Air Force based in Malta does not resume its activities on a vaster scale. Therefore, I see that the two important problems, that of weakening Malta and seizing the supremacy of the air and navigation, require the maximum effort on the part of the Italian Air Force.

If it is at all possible, I would suggest intensifying the work for better port facilities both at Bengasi and Derna. It would lessen land traffic, thereby saving material. It would also be very beneficial to make use of light field railroads, easily built and put in operation, to send supplies towards localities nearer the front. I have already heard

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people expressing such a wish. I would be very happy to see such a project put in operation, and in that respect I am ready, Duce, to do all I can in the way of putting at your disposal the necessary material.

Whether for this or any other similar tasks there should be a lack of manpower, I could, without delay, Duce, place at your disposal many more labor groups which I could take from the great masses of Russian prisoners presently at our disposal.

Along these lines, I would like to suggest, in the interest of speeding supplies to Greece and Crete, that it would be desirable to speed up the work for the reconstruction of the Bralo bridge near Lamia which, as per agreement, is the task of the Italian Army.

Concerning the second point, that is, "impede----the enemy's flow of supplies," I have already ordered the dispatching of submarines and speed boats to the Mediterranean to back up your fleet against the British sea traffic. I have also ordered a flotilla of mine sweeper to be put to use.

Besides, Duce, I am ready, if you think it advisable, to dispatch additional squadrons of the German Air Force, particularly long range night chasers, to Sicily or even Sardinia, to relieve the pressure on your southern Italian ports with a possible total neutralization of Malta and at the same time contribute to the efforts to insure the safety of our convoys. If you, Duce, agree with me on this point, the Marshal of the Reich will contact your designated personnel.

In this connection, there will be assigned to the German Afrika Corps, as the sea traffic will permit, anti-tank cannon, particularly effective at long range, mounted on self-propelled tractors, but also adaptable for fixed positions. I hope we will then be able to string along the entire front a series of effective 5 cm. anti-tank guns, and even bigger ones, so that any future British attacks will fail from the very beginning, with the greatest possible loss of materiel on their part.

I also propose to send to the German Afrika Corps (whenever it is considered possible from the sea traffic point of view) additional reserves of tank of the No. III and No. IV class. In addition, we must send a greater number of special weapons for the attack against Tobruk.

Going back over the matter, it seems to me the most important thing is to insure in Sicily as well as all over South Italy the supremacy of the air. It can be done, Duce, with a strong concentration of your air force, backed by the German Air Force. This way we must not only gain absolute supremacy of the air, but protect our convoys as well, besides repelling enemy attempts to attack and break through. A systematic collaboration with the submarine forces should also be worked out in order to starve Malta out.

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I shall forward to you, Duce, for your consideration, special proposals concerning such matters.

I take this opportunity to express to you, Duce, my cordial felicitations for the great success achieved by your flyers and special armed forces against the British Navy.

I was extremely sorry to hear that the battleship "Nelson" has not been sunk yet. Soldiers' bad luck! However, I'm sure the battleship will remain neutralized for many months to come and those which have been sunk will remain neutralized for ever.

Duce, if I objectively take into consideration recent successes and evaluate the situation of the forces on both sides, keeping in mind all the economic difficulties, I feel increasingly reinforced in my granite-like persuasion that this war is won.

I really don't know what the British intend to do, but, according to tradition, I'm sure it will be some senseless thing.

But regardless of what they may want to attempt, one thing is decided: They no longer have in Europe a continental power on which to lean in the future.

Their defense of Europe and North Africa, after the collapse of their last attempt to help on continental soil is Russia, which even now is at the mercy of our common forces, under any circumstances.

If you, Duce, happen to find any difficulties, I am ready to help you as much as it is humanly possible.

I can foresee nothing else but our common victory.

It's totally immaterial what England or even America may do; particularly in the economic field our situation cannot get any worse than it is - if anything, beginning at a certain moment, it will get better.

From the military point of view, no one can break us.

Allow me, Duce, as I close this letter, to thank you again most particularly for the cordial telegram which you sent me after your departure.

With the same strong bond of comradeship and loyalty,

Yours,

A. Hitler

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