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OFFICE OF US CHIEF OF COUNSEL
APO 403, US ARMY
INTERROGATION DIVISION

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Brief of
Interrogation of OTTO OHLENDORF.

by
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OHLENDORF added to his previous statement concerning his meeting with Himmler at Flensburg in May 1945, that Himmler told him there could be no question about the Army having been well informed as to Hitler's orders for liquidation of Jews and Communist officials, and that, regardless of whether they agreed or not, OKW and OKH had gone along with the program.

During the several days that Himmler and Ohlendorf were together at Flensburg in May 1945, Ohlendorf suggested to Himmler that he disband the SS and give himself up to the Allies so he could clarify the position and responsibility of the SS and the police, otherwise thousands of SS leaders would be charged with crimes that were the responsibility of a few. Himmler said he could not agree to giving himself up because of his responsibility in connection with the concentration camps and liquidations; that Hitler had given instructions that all concentration camps were to be evacuated or all inmates liquidated. Himmler knew this order could not be carried out, but since it was an order from Hitler, such action as was possible would have to be taken. Ohlendorf urged that Himmler surrender and help fix the responsibility of the Army and the others because he was in a position to state the true conditions to the Allies and describe the various responsibilities. Ohlendorf was particularly anxious to clearly distinguish between those actions which had been taken on the basis of orders and those actions which had been taken on the responsibility of local commanders without orders. Himmler said to Ohlendorf: "You are afraid for yourself", to which Ohlendorf replied: "I have already decided to give myself up to explain what the SD Service means and what it has done". Ohlendorf failed to convince Himmler as to the desirability of surrendering or disbanding the SS, and Himmler hoped until his death to make contact with the Allies through Schellenberg for some opportunity to explain his position.

Himmler had not been in agreement with Hitler on many matters in the last months. Himmler hoped to establish a new order in Germany. A proposal for action on these lines originated with Obergruppenfuehrer Steiner, Obergruppenfuehrer Hildebrandt and Obergruppenfuehrer Gottberg. Ohlendorf said he had been aware of discussions by Steiner as to the possible reorganization of the Government beginning as early as January 1945; that Steiner knew he could not act without Himmler and his principal worry was whether the hesitant Himmler would act. Himmler was always indecisive and although he had a great preponderance of power, he was completely subordinate to Hitler and would act only on order. Himmler's hesitancy caused even Hitler to leave him out of some matters because of his inability to make decisions.

In the later months of the war Himmler's position with Hitler was weakened whereas Kaltenbrunner, through Fegeldein found himself in greater

favor. Bormann also continued to be constantly at Hitler's hand. Ohlendorf is unable to figure exactly how Kaltenbrunner stood in the later months and believes he was particularly interested in how own ambition. Ohlendorf and Kaltenbrunner had discussed the possible removal of Bormann sometime in December 1944 or January 1945. Ohlendorf had been in constant disagreement with Bormann over a period of several years in connection with the latter's desire to completely subordinate the SIPO and SD to the Party, making it necessary for the police to obtain approval before any party member could be arrested. There had been many other rifts based on actions by local leaders who interfered with arrests and assumed police power. Since Himmler would not protect the SIPO and SD from criticism by Bormann, Kaltenbrunner bore the brunt of Bormann's actions. In the end Bormann was successful in gaining new power by having Goering arrested on falsified facts. Ohlendorf was told by the Russians, after his capture, that Hitler had caused Himmler to be thrown out of the Party before the end and considers this possible on the basis of Bormann's probable representations to Hitler. Bormann's reputation for deception was well known, particularly among his closest associates in the Reich Chancellory.

Bormann's desire to control the police caused, among other things, the establishment by the Party of the Fohme Police in Berlin. Their function was to take care of defeatists and grumblers by such actions as cutting the women's hair and beating the men.

Ohlendorf prepared a memorandum of the intrigues in high places when he was interrogated previously. He says a copy of this memorandum was given to a Lieutenant Gosset, USA.

During the last few months of the war, Gauleiter Kauffman of Hamburg, was prepared to make an agreement with the Western Powers to hand over Hamburg without a fight.

Ohlendorf states that he has been discussing the matter of concentration camps and the responsibility therefor with Eigruber, a fellow prisoner in the Nurnberg jail, and the latter told him that during the later phases of the German collapse, Himmler prohibited further liquidation of Jews and other inmates of concentration camps. Ohlendorf states that of his own knowledge, Himmler used Schellenberg to try to get Jews out of the country through Switzerland, starting with the transportation of Hungarian Jews. Negotiations were carried on through the former Swiss President MUSY and are believed to have been made without Hitler's knowledge, leading to an additional friction between Himmler and Hitler when the facts became known to Hitler, who ordered such movements of Jews to Switzerland to stop. Eigruber told Ohlendorf the main responsibility for concentration camps rested with Pohl, and that Pohl demanded the liquidation of 60,000 inmates at Mauthausen in the face of an order from Himmler to the contrary during March and April 1945. Eigruber did not permit the execution of these 60,000 inmates. Ohlendorf believes Eigruber is willing to tell what he knows about these things. Ohlendorf believes that Kaltenbrunner participated in trying to make an arrangement through the Swiss for getting the Jews out of the country and has no knowledge or information indicating th Kaltenbrunner was opposed to such actions as is alleged in a statement attributed to Schellenberg.

Referring to the order issued in the winter of 1941-1942, regarding the combing out of prisoner of war camps to eliminate Jews and Communist officials, Ohlendorf believes he received this order through the RSHA but recalls that it was a specific order direct to the subordinates of Army Commands in which they were informed of the planned action and their full support was requested. It was a written order and he believes it covered four pages. Ohlendorf states that Schellenberg probably knows about all orders prepared in collaboration with OKW and OKH, because he negotiated in all these matters and helped to conclude these agreements.

During the afternoon session, Ohlendorf was unable to identify document 377b, but said under the form of "Schutzhafte" warrant, represented by this document, the responsibility was clearly that of Kaltenbrunner, and it was a standard German administrative procedure to hold the Chief of the Department responsible for all documents issued in his name. Ohlendorf says it is clearly evident that Kaltenbrunner had approved the form of the arrest warrant issued in this case, although it would have been impossible for him to have seen all of such documents as used locally in effecting arrests.

Ohlendorf examined documents 379b, 379d, and 379g, and explained that, while he had no knowledge as to the contents of the documents, the form of the signature used, "In Vertretung" or "i. V.", is commonly used in the issuance of documents by Section Chiefs. He said it was immaterial whether the words or the abbreviation were used, or whether the abbreviation is capitalized, but that the actions thus taken by such deputies were the responsibility of the Chief of the office which in the case of the RSHA, was Kaltenbrunner.

Ohlendorf made a detailed examination and commentary on IR-1, this being the organization chart of the RSHA as of 1 May 1945, prepared by the OSS. He found it essentially correct and noted such changes as he believed pertinent to make the document complete and accurate.

At the next session, Ohlendorf will be asked to identify numerous documents pertinent to the operations of the RSHA, SS, SIPO, and SD.