



CONFERENCE HELD ON 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1944

Western Front

Waizenegger said that enemy landings had been reported at a point west of Arnheim. 30 freight gliders had been seen. (Jodl later said that these landings involved about 15,000 men - a division, in fact.)

Simultaneously, the enemy had broken out to the north from his bridgehead at Neerpelt, and his forward units, according to unconfirmed reports, were 2.5 Km. south of Valkanswaard. Parachute Army Command I was assembling all available forces to annihilate the hostile airborne forces.

From Arnheim it had been reported that landings had been made between the Ede and Veenedaal, with the main pressure being applied 10 Km west of Arnheim.

The impression given by these moves was that the enemy would attempt to cross the Maas, Waal and Rhine, by using the forces from the bridgehead in conjunction with the airborne troops. The ultimate object seemed to be the Zuider Zee.

Jodl quoted unconfirmed reports that the enemy had broken through south of Epinal with 25 tanks.

In the fighting near Fogerolles, German outposts had been pushed back.

An attack in battalion strength on Lantenot had been repelled.

There were no reports from further south.

The Fuehrer advised everyone to be on his guard, in case another plot (similar to the one on July 20th.) were being prepared. It would be possible to kill the Fuehrer himself, his entire General Staff, the Reichsfuehrer SS, the Reichsmarschall, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Certainly a prize worth having. The Fuehrer added that he would willingly risk a couple of parachute divisions if he could dispose of the whole of the Russian High Command at one blow.

Buechs stated that he had just been speaking to the airfields at Deelen, Soesterberg, and Leeuwarden, and all was quiet. But it had to be expected that the enemy would be over again the next day.

The Fuehrer said that they would certainly come the next day, since they were making such a fuss, with appeals to the Dutch and so on.

Von Sonnleithner said that there was a message from the Turkish envoy in Chungking, in which he quoted American opinion, official and unofficial, as forecasting armed conflict between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

END OF CONFERENCE

Russian Front

Guderian reported to the Fuehrer that the enemy had penetrated into Bucharest, had taken Ploesti, and pushed into the mountains where the Winkler Gruppe were stationed, and that parts of the army had already come to grief and were retreating fast. Parts of the Mieth Gruppe were in the district south of Bacau. According to the Russian radio General Mieth had been killed.

The Fuehrer was disappointed to hear this, although Guderian pointed out that this was only according to the Russian reports. He went on to report that near Kronstadt the Roumanians had formed a defence front.

Poland

Guderian said that advances had been made in Warsaw, and that the bank of the Vistula was in German hands.

The Fuehrer said that he had the impression that nothing could now infiltrate into the city from the outside.

Guderian stated that during the past night they had attempted to get into communication, but had not succeeded.

Fegelein thought that the difficulty would be in surrounding all the blocks of houses, which Guderian considered would cost a large amount of ammunition; although Fegelein pointed out that this was the only practical thing that could be done.

The Fuehrer replied that when things had come to such an impasse, then the only thing was to bring in the Luftwaffe, dropping only mines, and then they could destroy the whole lot.

Fegelein reminded him that when this was done in the Ghetto it took six months to complete.

The Fuehrer told him to look at the German towns, where mines had been used. When the houses were burnt out, there were just walls left standing there, which were flattened at once by the mines.

Later, Buechs reported that single targets had been attacked from the air in the region to the north of Bucharest. As these attacks had taken place in the late afternoon it was to be supposed that the raiders had landed somewhere, started up again, and then in the afternoon flown back to Italy. 10 Stukas had been detailed to watch over shipping traffic on the Danube, and of these 3 had carried out an attack on a Roumanian ship near Calafat, and done serious damage, leaving it listing badly. The German air forces had not yet got through the Iron Gate.

Buechs then stated that the Slovakian fighter wing was no longer in existence. In all about 20 of the Slovakian aircraft had flown over to the Russians.

Voss later reported that the movements of the Peipus Lake fleet were limited by renewed air attacks. There were 10 boats and 2 naval artillery lighters ready for action. In the Gulf of Finland and in the Narva Bight the enemy had continued his clearing activities.

The Fuehrer asked what the enemy had on the Peipus Lake, and Voss replied that they had some gunboats and fast vessels, and some smaller vessels.

Doenitz pointed out that these ships had been somewhat damaged by air raids.

Voss reported that the enemy had mined the entrances to the Baltic Sea and the region of southern Norway very heavily. On the previous day 65 vessels and 12 aircraft had been detailed to sweep mines. 22 mines were cleared away. Shipping traffic in that part of the Norwegian coast had to be temporarily stopped as 150 enemy mine-laying aircraft flew in. The rest of the Norwegian shipping carried on as usual. In northern Norway also traffic was allowed to continue. There was nothing special to report from the North Sea.

#### Western Front

German batteries - the batteries "Todt" and "Lindemann" - in the region of the Cape Gris Nez had shelled Dover, one with 38 cm. and the other with 20 cm. weapons.

German minesweepers and outpost boats returning to Boulogne had had a sharp engagement with enemy aircraft, but had not received any serious damage.

Doenitz pointed out that prolonged resistance had been worthwhile, as St. Malo had not yet been used.

Voss reported that the destruction of the war harbours in Brast had begun, and would be carried through. The Ile Amorique (?) had been cleared. There had been a light naval artillery unit on it, which had belonged to the defences of St. Nazaire. Otherwise there was nothing to report from this district.

Doenitz wished to mention one thing more. He pointed out that if the enemy intended to make landings in Norway he would do it before the weather changed. There were not many days left in September, and it was doubtful if he would wish to do anything there after September.

END OF CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE HELD ON 18TH JUNE, 1944.

Western Front.

The Fuehrer said that it had now been definitely reported that the enemy had broken through; he wished to know for certain whether they were really through or not.

Jodl replied that they were really through. He went on to report on V1 operations. From 1800 hours on the previous day to 1630 hours on that day, 206 projectiles had been fired. Of these, 37, or 18% crashed.

At this point the order which had been issued from the Battle Headquarters concerning the position on the previous day was read.

After reading the order, the Fuehrer remarked that that was even better, as now there was a further possibility of attacking.

Jodl thought that with his present strength the enemy could not both safeguard himself from counterattacks at one point and continue his attacks at another point.

Jodl continued that in the western sector of the front it was not yet known whether the 15th American Division had arrived. He knew the position of the British 3rd Airborne Division, and the 38th Division, but did not know whether the 2nd Canadian Armoured Division, the 54th British Division, the 30th, and 10th American Armoured Divisions and the 15th British Guards Division had arrived yet.

Jodl reported that on June 16th, Army Group "B" had requested the transfer of one Battle Group from the Channel Islands to the mainland; the C.-in-C. West had refused the request.

In answer to a question asked on the previous day, Voss stated that pressure mines (Druckdosenminen) to the number of 50-60 had been used since the night of the 14/15th together with other mines. It was intended to increase this number by employing all available speedboats and other flotillas from Le Havre.

The Fuehrer ordered that two booms should be laid before Le Havre by the speedboats, so that the enemy could not do the same here as he had done elsewhere. Voss reported that the next task would be to lay a boom at the mouth of the Orne.

Italian Front.

Jodl reported that on the Italian front the German troops had succeeded in stopping the enemy from breaking through on the new front, the extent of which had not been made clear. There was only one point near Stefani (?) where a break-through had been made. He had to report though, that the enemy had extended his break-through north east of Grosseto, and pushed his bridgehead further to the east. The group which was enclosed in S. Fiori was still holding out, and according to wireless messages, had beaten off various attacks. The enemy succeeded in making his only comparatively deep penetration near Radofini (?).

The attacks which had been made on both sides of the main road to Perugia had all been beaten off. But at one point there were forward troops rather far to the south, and also to the north of Foligno. On the western flank there was no important engagement.

Jodl read a message from the commanding officer at Elba who said that events on the Island of Elba made it seem probable that, in spite of their courageous stand, the garrison there which could not depend on land, sea or air support, would not be able to hold the island more than a few days. The loss of this island would alter the position of at least the western flank of the southern front.

The Fuehrer remarked that he said that now, but a few days ago he had not mentioned this. He had been intending to give up the island.

Jodl said that he had wanted to retreat before, but now he had received the order to hold the country.

Jodl thought that the situation was not serious whilst the enemy was not in occupation of Elba. At that moment withdrawal was unnecessary, as the defence position was then quite firm. He said that they would have to find out whether the enemy was reinforcing his armies. It would be very unpleasant if the enemy occupied Elba, with the front so near.

The Fuehrer pointed out that if the proposed withdrawal was effected, the enemy would still be just as close. In that case he would come from the rear, from the Riviera coast, and that would be much more dangerous.

Later the Fuehrer considered the German air superiority in the first world war. For example, in the great offensive in France the British aircraft were chased out of the skies. The unfortunate air position which obtained at the present would not have been possible then. In 1917 at the Arras battle, the Richthoven Geschwader had swept the enemy aircraft away, and all British planes which broke through were sent back. In Flanders during the air battles which then seemed large-scale, when each side put up 70 to 100 aircraft, there were terrible losses, but nobody could say that the enemy had mastery in the air and could fly around where he pleased. Naturally in 1918 the enemy became bolder and things were worse then.

Buechs stated that there was nothing special to report from the air. According to reports received at the moment, 11 aircraft had been shot down during the raid on Hamburg. No fighters had arrived.

The Fuehrer asked whether there was any very great damage in Hamburg.

Buechs replied that there was not. Only according to the advance report, there was serious damage at the Bloehm and Voss works.

In reply to a question from the Fuehrer, Voss stated that there had apparently been no damage to the U-boat constructions.

The Fuehrer said that it was all well and good to attack an airfield where aircraft were concentrated, but on the other hand, no matter how much damage has been inflicted on the aircraft, the most important of all was to destroy the flying personnel, they could not be destroyed by attacks on airfields.

Buhle then reported that out of the equipment captured from the Russians there were still 2,000 light field howitzers, 12.2 cm. with a firing range of 7,000 metres, and over 1,200 15.2 cm. heavy field howitzers with 10,000-12,000 m. range. But there was no ammunition for them, and it could not be produced. There were also 1,000 infantry gun-howitzers. Of these 900 were still in Germany. That was the modern gun. Some hundreds of them had been given to the Roumanians, and a few 15.2 cm. were to be given to the Finns, because they had the ammunition for them.

The Fuehrer thought that under certain conditions ammunition for them could be made. He considered that mistakes had been made in Czechoslovakia in 1938/39. The most valuable guns had all been scrapped. That had been madness. If only the Czech howitzers had been saved! The Czech howitzer had been better than ours. Unfortunately, he had made a great mistake at that time; he should have had more of these guns made. The same had happened with the 21 cm. gun. The Skoda gun had been put

on the shelf, because the new German 21 cm. gun was supposed to have a greater range, of 22 km., while the Skoda had a range of only 30 km. But the Skoda had been available, and had been tested; it had been an outstanding gun, perfect for coastal defence. At that time a very large order had been placed (i.e. by the German army) and somebody, whose identity had never been discovered, had cancelled the order; that was after the war had started. During the war the order had again gone astray, and so many months had been wasted; otherwise they would certainly have had 160 21 cm. guns.

END OF CONFERENCE.

CONFERENCE HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER, 1944

Russian Front

Wenck began by saying that the position in the south (Heeresgruppe Sued) still remained extremely tense, particularly in the area of Szolnok. In the Budapest sector, the situation had been stabilised, primarily by the advance the previous day of an armoured group, in the course of which a large enemy column had been attacked and considerable damage inflicted. But in the face of continued pressure, it was necessary to call upon more forces. Perhaps another division ..... The only reserves immediately available were a Hungarian Sturmbrigade and a training regiment.

More Hungarians could be brought into the line, but Wenck expressed the view that they were not sufficiently reliable.

Jodl said that the 71st Division was in Istria and could be used. Of course, it would mean one division less for the southern front, but seeing it was winter.....

Continuing his survey, Wenck said that all attempts to cross the Theiss had failed on the part of the front held by the Germans. In the area held by the Hungarians the enemy had been able to effect two crossings. It was always impossible to rely on the Hungarians.

Wenck then gave details of Soviet losses sustained in the three-day fighting around Goldap: 1,739 dead, 246 prisoners, 59 tanks and mobile guns, 134 pieces of artillery and 54 mortars.

The Fuehrer revealed that he had deleted the "1,739 dead" from the communique, because the total of killed and prisoners, 2,000 in all, bore no relation to the 59 tanks and 134 pieces of artillery. For 2,000 men constituted a regiment, and 134 guns to a regiment were too many; that would mean one gun to every 15 or 20 men.

Wenck suggested that many of the Russians had run away.

The Fuehrer agreed, but said there was another possibility; that the so-called divisions were so weak that the enemy was bluffing when he called them divisions. The Russians placed all their trust in artillery, and their divisions were otherwise weak. He thought the explanation of a reduction in Russian pressure at one point was that if the Soviet troops were allowed to advance too deeply into a country where things were good, Bolshevism would be made to look ridiculous; he did not think the Russians would like to take that risk. German losses had been quite small, and of the losses suffered, most had been inflicted in those backward moves to gain "operational freedom". When the front held, losses were far from serious.

Naval activity

Voss said that bad weather had restricted operations in the North Sea and off the Dutch coast; nevertheless enemy positions in the Scheldt estuary had been under fire.

A U-boat, back from the Atlantic, reported the sinking of a steamer of 8,000 tons; more successes might be revealed later when the submarine reached its base, because only the first part of its radio message had been received.

Air Activity

Buechs then detailed air activity.

In the east 118 bombers had been used in the Hungarian sector, south east of Budapest, in attacks on traffic between Szeged and Keckskemet.

In operations over the Reich, anti-aircraft fire claimed 17 aircraft: the enemy admitted an extremely large total of losses - 61 in all, including 31 heavy bombers and 30 fighters.



11 Lightnings had attacked the Eder dam with heavy bombs. All the bombs had fallen in open country or into the water, and no damage had been done to the dam itself.

German aircraft had been active up near the front line; 92 aircraft were involved and they met no enemy interference. One German aircraft was lost.

In the previous day's attack on Vienna, fighters had shot down 4 four-engined bombers; flak had claimed 5 more, a total of 9; the English had admitted the loss of 12.

In Italy there had been large-scale activity against railway installations in the area of Trieste. 4 twin-engined bombers had been shot down without any loss to the defence.

The Fuehrer interrupted to express his dissatisfaction with the results of the recent air fighting. He calculated that only 20 enemy planes had been shot down in 260 sorties. He considered such figures disappointing. He did not want to imply criticism of the air-crews, but there was no getting away from the results.

Buechs went on to say that the partisans in the Balkans were receiving supplies from Italy. Reconnaissance had reported the presence of motorised columns north-west of Belgrade.

Two waves of Mosquitos, with about 36 aircraft in each wave, had attacked Stuttgart.

36 He.111 had taken part in V1 attacks against London, and 17 planes had attacked defence installations.

There was slight air activity to report from the front line area, south of Bologna.

Buechs then went on to give a detailed report on weather conditions.

The Fuehrer then suggested the transfer of the 44th Division, the Vienna Division, to a point further down the Danube, so that the troops would have the impression that they were actually defending Vienna.

Von Sonnenleithner said that already the people in Vienna were growing afraid of the Russians.

Jodl said that certain areas were unsafe, as they were threatened by partisans - the region of Serajewo, for instance. In Croatia the front had been stabilised south of Mostar; attacks by partisans from the south had been repelled.

The Fuehrer said he had news from Finland that opposition was beginning to be organised: the White Guard would not allow itself to be disarmed. Skilful propaganda could take advantage of this situation: a Finnish "Freedom Corps" should be formed and an appeal should go out, but from Finnish sources, not German. Stockholm had reported an infringement of Swedish neutrality, but he had the feeling that this incident was being used by the Swedes as an excuse for further defensive measures. These steps were being taken, not through fear of the Germans, but through fear of the Russians. But they were afraid to say officially that they were against the Russians, so they alleged that the Germans had stolen a handful of straw and on the basis of this, they had called up another division. They should not be so cowardly; they should come out into the open and say that they were taking these measures because they feared the Russians, not because a German soldier had stolen some straw from a Swedish stack.

Western Front

Jodl then discussed the situation in the West.

The bridges near Moerdijk had been blown up, and during counter-attacks, part of the new 28th American Division had been cut off and encircled.

In the town of Middelburg, a few hundred German troops were under fire from all sides. German troops still held a bridgehead before the crossing at Moerdijk, and all the heavy equipment had been got away. At Hartogenbosch the situation was more difficult. Enemy pressure was intensive, but here, too, the heavy equipment had been evacuated. The 712th Division had counter-attacked to gain time.

On the 4th-5th November, Antwerp had been subjected to fire from the V weapons. 63 salvoes of V1s, with 5 crashes, and 14 salvoes of V2s.

German outposts south of the Moselle had been attacked; in bitter fighting three tanks had been destroyed, but German outposts had to be withdrawn from south of the Moselle, and the bridgehead had been given up.

There had been brisk fighting in the sector held by the 19th Army. Two enemy attacks had been thrown back, one near Raon l'Etape, and the other near St. Die.

When Jodl mentioned the presence of the 2nd French Tank Division, the Fuehrer interrupted to condemn what he called the "impudence" of de Gaulle: he should not forget that France had been defeated. But he found the impudence of General Franco even more amazing.

The C.-in-C. in the south-west was worried by the recent high volume of traffic on the railways. At that time he had no rail facilities; the line from Trieste to Verona had been cut at 11 points; the alternative route to the west was destroyed. At present the only possibility was to go via Villach and Udine as far as Treviso, and then a little further.

On being told that the C.-in-C. had asked for fighter support, the Fuehrer said that this was impossible.

Jodl agreed that nothing more could be sent to Italy; in the event of an attack on the northern stretch of the front, perhaps fighters could be sent over from the Munich area.

Jodl added that 130 prisoners had been taken in Slovakia, and 15 tons of explosives captured, in addition to 1,000,000 rounds of rifle ammunition and considerable quantities of food.

The Fuehrer said that he had seen in the foreign press a report that the Japanese suicide squads had succeeded in sinking 4 aircraft carriers and damaging another. If only the Germans could damage an aircraft carrier..... he exclaimed. Then he handed the press cutting to Christian, telling him to take it for the Luftwaffe to study.

END OF CONFERENCEA.H.B.6. Distribution

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