

AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH

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REPORTS OF
CONFERENCES HELD BY
REICHSMARSCHALL GOERING
ON 6TH MARCH AND 16TH MAY, 1942

TRANSLATED BY

AIR MINISTRY, A.H.B.6

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Conference held on 6th March, 1942

Reichsmarschall Goering arranged to exchange documents on torpedoes with General Fougier in Italy. He then declared that experts and workers employed on the newest developments must be given monetary incentives as much as possible. He then asked Captain Brauchitsch to ask Dr. Goernert about Swedish flamethrowers.

Fieldmarshal Milch gave information on the results of the British air attack on industrial works in Paris.

General Jeschonnek reported that the success of the attack was assured by low flying on a brilliantly moonlit night. Only 2½ light batteries were engaged in the defence of Paris. It was decided to send 16 light batteries and 6 heavy batteries for the air defence of the city. The Fuehrer had not yet decided whether or not to use French A.A. guns. With the present distribution of industries in Paris it was impossible to arrange protection for the individual factories, but the defence of the whole city will be necessary.

General Jeschonnek then went on to say that at the last conference with the Fuehrer it seemed to be the Fuehrer's impression that the A.A. programme ordered was not being carried out with the necessary sense of urgency. The Fuehrer considered the fulfilment of this programme very important. At the same time the searchlight programme was to be completed. Fieldmarshal Milch pointed out that according to reports from the Army Ordnance Directorate the low monthly output was due to the shortage of copper. There ought to be sufficient supplies available, but there was not enough chromium steel for the fulfilment of the programme.

Reichsmarschall Goering offered the following suggestions for the completion of the programme: to make 28 cm. guns a block of steel was first hammered into shape, then the barrel was ground out. The residue after this operation was then forged together again. From this residue an 8.8 cm. gun could be forged, and from that residue a 5 cm. gun, and from that machine gun barrels. In this way materials and man-hours would be saved and work speeded up. At the moment Skoda were experimenting with moulded guns.

General Jeschonnek announced that the Fuehrer wanted the strongest forces possible to undertake reprisal raids on London as soon as the weather was suitable; Goering pointed out that the raid on Paris proved that even with small forces considerable damage could be done. Therefore Luftflotte 3 would have to attack several industrial targets one after the other with all available forces as soon as the weather permitted.

The Fuehrer also wanted the anti-aircraft defences in the east to be strengthened. This could only be done at the expense of the home defences. Goering thought that the remaining materials necessary for the furthering of the A.A. programme could be obtained from the small works which were no longer operating. There was chrome in the Ukraine, but there was no way of transporting it. A comprehensive list of materials required for carrying out the Fuehrer's A.A. programme was to be prepared and submitted.

Fieldmarshal Milch mentioned that chrome was no longer required for the armour-plating which the Luftwaffe needed, but in the production of guns the shortage was of chrome, not copper. A considerable amount of copper was required in the making of the big searchlights. Goering decided that General Mertitsch would have to make some constructional alterations so that other materials could be used. The 8.8 cm. 41 A.A. gun was doing good work, but it did not last very long. At the moment it could only shoot shells with a copper driving band. The inner tube of this gun lasted only 10% of the life of the 8.8 cm. 38. For the 200 cm. searchlight 1410 kg. copper would be necessary, for the 60 cm. searchlight 177 kg. would be needed, and 560 kg. for the 155 cm. searchlight. The copper required for the guns was negligible, but the amount needed for the searchlights was too high. At the same time the amount of copper needed for the production of ammunition would have to be heavily cut. A monthly maximum quota of 800,000 had been set for the 8.8 cm. explosive grenades. 1.3 to 1.5 million

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rounds were being delivered each month. There were considerable difficulties in connection with the storage of excess production. The Army Ordnance Directorate was demanding too much copper for the A.A. programme. The entire supply of copper for the Luftwaffe would only satisfy 74% of this demand. The completion of programmes for munitions and aircraft would always be hampered by supplies of copper, as long as the production of munitions required so much of it. The A.A. programme received a higher percentage of copper than the aircraft programme, and the aircraft programme required another 700 tons of copper a month to reach its target. All these programmes would have to be revised. Also the lists of strengths and equipment would have to be revised. Radiators which did not need copper or tin were being introduced in the Luftwaffe. The oil radiators would have reached the same standard by the end of 1942. This would mean that the weight would be 23% less, and consequently efficiency increased. Only the oil radiator of the BMW 801 would require copper. The army still used 23% of copper and 2.3% of tin for the radiators of the trucks. Experiments in the Luftwaffe have found radiators of iron and zinc, separate parts of which need only 2 or 3% of copper. At the same time no aluminium was being used. The experiments were being continued.

Fieldmarshal Milch then said it would have to be decided which Bomber B (four-engined bomber) was to be adopted. There was a choice between the Ju 288 and the FW 191.

After a discussion with Milch and Jeschonnek, Reichsmarschall Goering decided that the Ju 288 would have to be adopted, as it was 1 year in advance of the FW 191. Choice between the two types on the basis of their individual achievements was very difficult, and the Ju 288 had been chosen only because of the fact that it was a newer type. The delivery of Me 109s was continuing satisfactorily, but deliveries of the Ju 87 were very irregular. The question of fast bombers had still not been settled.

General Jeschonnek pointed out that the crews could not be expected to fly the Me 210 as it was at present. It very easily went into a flat spin, and nobody could discover the cause of this. There were also considerable difficulties in connection with the building in of the engines. Twice already the motors had broken off in the air. Looping the aircraft would probably lead to the death of the airmen. It was extremely doubtful whether it would be possible to use the Me 210 in the spring of 1942. As the aircraft was at the moment, it could not be used for the purpose for which it was originally intended. Professor Messerschmitt was going to try to improve the aircraft by lengthening the fuselage. Reichsmarschall Goering ordered that Professor Messerschmitt, a representative from the Director General of Luftwaffe Equipment, Major Storp and Captain Diesing be present on Monday, 9th March 1942, to discuss the Me 210. As an alternative, in case the Me 210 would not be available, it had to be decided whether it would be possible to increase the production of the Me 109 or the Me 110. The 6 Gruppen planned for the spring, to be supplied with Me 210s, would have to be provided with Me 109s or Me 110s. The necessary armour-plating would have to be done in good time.

General Jeschonnek remarked that it would be necessary for the Chief of the Training Branch to comb out the Ju 87 and Me 109 crews once again, to guarantee the required crews for these Gruppen, as increases in the production of the Me 109 and the Me 110 could only be effected very slowly.

Reichsmarschall Goering considered that the question of increasing production of the Me 109 and Me 110 would have to be settled. A decision could only be reached after a conference with Professor Messerschmitt and Captain Diesing.

Milch went on to say that in order to satisfy the Fuehrer's desire for the use of a fast bomber the Me 109 had been considered. It could carry a

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250 kg. bomb, and the maximum would be a 500 kg. bomb. With extra tanks its flying range could be increased to 1300 kilometres. Goering agreed. In place of the Me.210, the Arado 240 could be used, which was the first aircraft used by the Rowehl Gruppe for reconnaissance purposes. The question of bomb loads would have to be decided, but the aircraft gave a good performance. Its maximum speed with a DB 601E engine was 645 kilometres an hour, with 2 DB 614 engines 775 km. per hour, and with 2 DB 605 engines 685 km. per hour. When the aircraft is used as a T.E. fighter, it is equipped with 1 MG 151, 2 MG 17s and 2 MG 81zs. At present there is no bomb bay, although experiments are being carried out.

Reichsmarschall Goering decided that the experiments to discover whether the Arado could be used in place of the Me 210 should be done thoroughly. At the same time tests should be made to see whether it would be possible to increase production. A report was to be submitted on all decisions taken.

At the moment there were considerable difficulties concerning the engines of the He 177. Of 25 aircraft delivered, 5 had been burnt out, 2 of them certainly because of breakage of the connecting rod, and one possibly. Heinkels were attempting an alteration in the exhaust duct. Production would be considerably reduced until the danger of fire had been eliminated.

General Jeschonnek produced a demand for the new development of a suitable twin-engined bomber as successor to the Ju 88 and the Do 217. It would not be desirable and would be too costly to equip the whole of the Luftwaffe with the Bomber B. This bomber which was to be developed would have to be provided with the strongest of defence weapons, and all the latest ideas must be considered in its construction.

Increased efficiency was now to be achieved not by aerodynamic principles, but almost exclusively by increasing the powers of the engine. Therefore an aircraft which was being newly developed would only be improved if it was given a more powerful engine. This possibility could also be extended to the aircraft types already in existence. Therefore a new development could not bring any special progress. The strengthening of the defensive capacity as well as the increasing of efficiency in respect of loading and flying range could only be done by improving the engine.

Experience had shown that the FW 190 was no better than the Me 109F and the Me 109G. The Me 109 would always be further developed than the FW 190. The air-cooled engine in the FW 190 had not proved a success as yet, and so it had been planned to install the liquid-cooled engine. The BMW 801 was to be built into the JU 88A and E. With the installation of the reinforcement armaments planned for the Me 109, concentration was being centred on the Me 109 and not the FW 190, although the flying crews had so much praise for the FW 190.

Reichsmarschall Goering considered that a conference with Colonel Galland would be necessary on this point.

As for the engines, the following must be mentioned: Junkers were using the Jumo 211 and Jumo 213, and Daimler-Benz were using the DB 603, 605, 610 and 613. Also both firms were developing engines of the 3,000 horse-power class. BMW were developing an 802 4-way radial engine with the power of a 3,000 horse-power engine, but results were doubtful. At BMW Spandau they had a liquid- and air-cooled 3,500 horse-power 4-way radial engine 803. It had been planned in future to install the Jumo 213 in the FW 190, the DB 603 in the Dornier 217, and first the BMW 801, later the DB 603 in the Ju 88.

Goering ordered the experiments with aircraft to be carried out in closest collaboration between the Director General of Luftwaffe Equipment and the personnel. The Commander of the experimental station was to be placed directly under the command of the head of the technical office of the Air Ministry.

/General Jeschonnek

General Jeschonnek pointed out that the experimental station has not as yet done all that was required of it. An instance was the Me 210. Major Petersen had considerable obstacles to overcome, as even General Reidenbach opposed him.

Fieldmarshal Milch considered that the promotion of Colonel Vorwald to General and Major Petersen to Lt. Colonel would be necessary. (General Kastner was informed of this.)

There followed a discussion on the figures of production. It was obvious that the production of the Ju. 87 at the Weser aircraft factory had dropped considerably. The most energetic measures had been taken to remedy this.

Reichsmarschall Goering ordered court martial proceedings to be taken against General Ploch and General Tschersich concerning the forming of programmes and the drop in efficiency.

After discussion with General Jeschonnek, Reichsmarschall Goering agreed that Geschwader Staff KG.30 and II/KG.30 should be transferred to Norway.

NOTE: The following statistics appear as an appendix to the conference report, and it may be assumed that they were submitted to those present at the conference.

Monthly production figures for operational
(including transport) aircraft during 1941

January	463	July	878
February	671	August	857
March	931	September	807
April	1018	October	782
May	920	November	697
June	794	December	756

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Conference held on 16th May, 1942

Goering began by commending the performance of the units concerned, for the attacks on Bath and Exeter, and for successes in attacks on shipping and in fighter-bomber operations.

England was taken by surprise at their striking power and believed that they had withdrawn units from the East to support the Western front.

With reference to the fight against England, the Reichsmarschall stated that Luftflotte 3 must form the backbone of defence against eventual enemy landings. Recently Luftflotte 3 had been considerably reinforced by bringing up replacement units, the Hermann Goering Regiment, paratroop schools, and so on, so that even the French had the impression of great striking power. The supply situation of Luftflotte 3 had of course been heavily burdened by these fresh allocations.

British landing operations could have only nuisance value. Every unit, airfield, A.A. battery and signals unit must form separate strongpoints in defence against them, especially in coastal areas. It was to be expected, and isolated actions by the enemy have proved, that the British would use Wild West tactics with much cunning and artfulness, as they really were masters of improvisation. The Germans had been in France for two years but were only a sleeping army without adequate security measures.

The Reichsmarschall especially emphasised that superiors must not "take a rise" out of sentries when asked for passes, as this would eventually lead to their not asking for passes at all and allowing unauthorised persons through. Every airfield must be capable of defending itself, even if they, unlike the British, could not provide a special defence battalion for every station.

Whether the British landed by sea or by air, all available units must be concentrated at strongpoints as quickly as possible and put into action. For that purpose an efficient ground organisation and an excellent signals network were necessary and these were to be built up with extreme care.

If the enemy penetrated the Luftflotte 3 fighter belt on the coast there were no more units to resist him in the Reich. For that reason every fighter pilot must realise that when bomber forces approached, he must remain in the air without consideration for fuel or home base until the enemy had been "bagged".

All crews must be instructed in the practice of reporting every important observation immediately. The group of naval units off St. Nazaire should have recognised this fact earlier. If the British were at hand, everyone must fight, whether soldier or not.

The Germans called St. Nazaire a victory. In reality it was a British victory, and German successes should be attributed rather to a stroke of luck. Operational planning practice must be carried out. Units must train and learn to shoot on the spot; Luftwaffe troops must be trained and receive continual instruction in ground fighting, down to the last baker and cook in the company. The Fuehrer attached great importance to the repelling of landings.

In the fight against England, bombing and mining operations against shipping targets had been very successful. It was certain that more vessels than they knew of had been sunk by mines. The attack on shipping targets was especially important, as it was hitting England's weakest spot. A combination of mining operations and bombing attacks on convoys would be the most effective method.

Goering asked if Luftflotte 3 had got moored mines yet.

Colonel Koller replied that none had been received yet; deliveries had been promised, but not before June, as the first of them had gone for use in the Black Sea.

Goering went on to say regarding the importance of aerial torpedoes that unfortunately they were behindhand in this field and could not equal the successes of the British, Italians and, in particular, the Japanese. The present aerial torpedo was not suitable for Luftwaffe requirements, as it had been developed for actions between surface vessels. Their present aerial torpedoes were only temporary solutions and further development was being speeded up. Japanese successes were attained by mass attacks and a combination of bombing and aerial torpedo attacks.

The question whether they should form aerial torpedo bomber units as a matter of course would not be decided until later. As the British could be dealt a serious blow only through shipping, vessels must not be attacked only at sea where they were difficult to locate, but could be attacked most advantageously in docks or harbours.

However, bombs and fuses were of decisive importance in attacking shipping targets. Examples of this were the *Illustrious* and the *Ark Royal*.

Fighter-bomber targets were difficult to attack, as the British had built up enormous defences. "Hedge-hopping" offered the only possibility of approaching such targets. That made observation more difficult and increased the chance of being hit. With regard to range, speed and bomb load, the best aircraft was the Ju 88. Special units were being formed for this purpose.

Concentrated night attacks on industrial targets, reprisal attacks; only fire could cause lasting destruction. In future, therefore, more consideration would be given to loading aircraft with incendiaries. New incendiaries were being developed - some with sectional charges, bombs released in containers which open later, and so on. If an aircraft dropped one or two heavy bombs which did not hit the target accurately, then the whole attack failed; but if a large number of incendiaries were dropped, a great deal of damage was always caused by extensive dispersal. Unfortunately present armament conditions would not yet permit the charge they preferred. However, new developments were also progressing in that field. It would be an interesting experiment if a small town, where the fire brigade system was not organised as well as in large cities, were attacked only with incendiaries. Unfortunately industrial targets lay outside towns. For this reason aircrews must be instructed more definitely than before to attack the target actually ordered. That also applied to harbour targets, where there was no sense in always releasing loads over residential areas. Actual attack on the target ordered was of considerable importance in reprisal raids. The British had succeeded in continually hitting churches, castles and works of art in the beautiful old German cities, while the Germans had left such splendid edifices standing every time.

As regards serviceability the situation of Luftflotte 3 was considerably easier than that of formations in the East. The degree of serviceability must therefore be higher than in the East. In making reports on commanders, their ability to maintain the serviceability of units at the highest level must be taken into consideration. Acceleration of repairs was necessary, as was an extension of aircrews' and technicians' training in and knowledge of weapons and aiming devices. Outstanding mechanics were to be awarded special privileges.

Considerable importance must be attached to the training of young aircrews. It was better to send fewer veteran crews on operations than a greater number of young inexperienced men. Otherwise unnecessary losses would arise, as was the case to a certain extent with the British. Fighter pilots must have a knowledge of terrain; bomber crews must be instructed in night flying and navigation. This also applied to crews returning from the East or from other theatres of operations.

The success of an attack depended mainly on detailed preparation, knowledge of target data and precise carrying out of plans. Swotting up every lever in the aircraft according to the drill book was an old trick.

If Goering had had the opportunity of training and instructing the Luftwaffe for another year before the beginning of the war, many crews who did not return would still be with them. The best example was the formation dive of the Ju 88 which would never go right before. However, since Captain Pelz had been giving instruction in the formation dive to crews in Foggia, it had suddenly started to work, as recent successes in the Mediterranean (3 destroyers sunk out of 4) had proved.

Accurately timed commencement of the attack and the avoidance of night fighter and concentrated A.A. areas were important. Goering wondered why it was possible only in isolated cases during the recent reprisal attacks to come down to 300 - 500 m., while the rest of the aircraft found it necessary to remain at heights of up to 5,000 m. In their attack on Paris the British were not afraid of the flak and came down to almost rooftop level. Targets of reprisal raids in particular had such weak A.A. defences that it was possible to come down to 30 m. without risk. Illumination by flares to aid correct recognition of the target was especially important. New flares were being prepared, and the problem of simultaneous loading with H.E. and flares was being solved.

Goering had discussed the correct choice of bombs and fuses countless times. The effect of an attack could be unnecessarily reduced to a minimum by unsuitable bombs and fuses.

All available navigational aids, both on the ground and in the air, as well as weather situation reports, were to be exploited.

During the return flight the satisfaction of a successful operation put a crew off its guard, tension relaxed and unnecessary losses arose.

In checking the effects of attacks, by photographic reconnaissance, dummy targets must be looked for (see attack on Liverpool). Extreme caution must be exercised when estimating photographs, as the enemy often deceived photo-reconnaissance by immediate camouflage.

Fieldmarshal Sperrle said that at present forces were not adequate for large scale operations. Luftflotte 3 was too weak for operation "Opennball". Its intruder Gruppe would be allocated again to the Nachtjagdkorps (night fighter corps) as soon as possible. There was an urgent need for intruder operations, as the British in their turn had been harassing them a great deal since April, by night operations. For example, 2 aircraft of Coastal Reconnaissance Gruppe 506 were shot down over Dinard in 3 minutes. Fieldmarshal Sperrle again urgently requested that the intruder Gruppe - at present in Sicily - should be transferred for operations against England. Captured British airmen had expressed their astonishment that the Germans did not continue night fighter operations, as they were very unpleasant for the British. By conducting regular operations against British night fighter and bomber bases some formations would at least be prevented from taking off, thus making night operations easier for their own units.

In reply to the Reichsmarschall's question, Fieldmarshal Sperrle explained night fighter areas and the effects of reprisal attacks. The successful operations with the Y-procedure were especially mentioned (only 100 m. margin of error). The Fieldmarshal requested that the 6 aircraft available with Y-equipment should be reinforced by a further 6 as quickly as possible.

The attack on Bath was the most effective. The attack on Norwich was also satisfactory. The Reichsmarschall gave orders for Canterbury to be attacked also. Dover was the best objective for young crews and was also a good secondary target, as British M.T.B. operations, which were especially unpleasant for the Navy, started from there. Germany had only a few S-boats and even those were experiencing engine and replacement troubles.

Goering said that Hull was a target for night attacks. Fieldmarshal Sperrle emphasised the necessity of attacking Belfast, as the dockyard had been repaired again. During recent attacks in the south the X-procedure was disturbed by electrical effects.

A technical discussion followed on the merits of the Do 127, Ju 88 and the BLW 801 engine. Then Goering went on to say that now that all the difficulties of the Ju 88 had been overcome, the aircraft was being commended by everyone as a night fighter, fast bomber, and dive-bomber. It would therefore be an advantage to concentrate on one type so that greater numbers could be produced.

Lt. Colonel Pasewaldt said that no complaints had been submitted regarding the Do 217; moreover crews could easily be trained for operations with the Ju 88.

When Goering asked who had the He 177, Colonel Mehnert replied that KG. 40 had it, but there were only 2 planes available. General Kessler and Colonel Mehnert emphasised the high degree of manoeuvrability of the aircraft, which was highly commended by crews. Goering replied that it was good as regards flying, but the engine (DB. 606) was troublesome. Major Storp requested that the repair organisation be overhauled at once and Colonel Koller reported that this was already being done. Lt. Colonel Hahn requested allocation of Ju 52's to increase serviceability.

Then followed a discussion on small arms.

General Coehler mentioned that during the British attack on Paris, he himself observed that there were always about 30 flares illuminating the target simultaneously. Colonel Koller said that KG. 2 reported single-engined night fighters over Evreux, and also over Gilze-Rijen. A Hurricane night fighter had been shot down there. They had definitely observed single-engined night fighters in their sectors as well as over England. Reichsmarschall Goering commented that in that event the British were more capable than the Germans. Captain Paepke said that after sundown, during the summer, it was bright as day at heights exceeding 5,000 m.; he himself had seen Spitfires in those regions at night.

Goering rejected Paepke's report as exaggerated. So far they had had more night fighter victories than the British. The British single-engined night fighters were only experiments, and he hoped the German bomber crews would not allow themselves to be intimidated by them. British night fighter operations had not yet become a definite threat to them. They had also achieved great successes in the winter and had stopped attacking targets in the north at the right moment in the summer. The single-seater fighter would never become a completely efficient night fighter, as their experiments with the Me 109 had proved.

Major Storp objected that the Me 109 did not have a bank and turn indicator at that time and that the experimental area of Cologne was unfavourable owing to industrial haze. If fighter control, navigational aids and training improved in the future, they could try again with the single-engined night fighter, in spite of everything.

Goering said that the Me 110 and Ju 88 made better night fighters and had had successes in even worse weather conditions. Lt. Colonel Pasewaldt referred to intruder operations again and reported that bomber crews had volunteered to carry out night fighter operations over advanced landing grounds in Britain. Colonel Koller said that the best way to hold off British night fighters was by allowing our night fighters to operate over British bases, then the enemy could not take off in such large numbers. Intruder operation areas would be distinguished from those of bomber formations according to region and height.

Goering ordered that if British night fighters were observed over airfields, the units were to be sent to alternative bases. Colonel Koller said that this would be done. The Reichsmarschall promised that he would discuss with the Fuehrer the reintroduction of intruder operations.

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