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Helmuth GRINER  
Ministerialrat <sup>III</sup> M.D.  
Keeper of the War Diary

GRINER SERIES

OPERATION BARBAROSSA

Translator: A. HALL  
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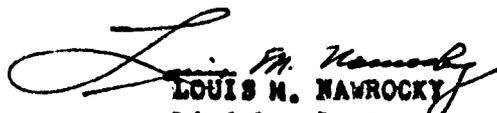
## FOREWORD

This manuscript is part of a narrative history of events in the German Armed Forces Supreme Command Headquarters during World War II. The writer, Hellmuth GREINER, was charged with writing the War Diary at that headquarters from August 1939 to April 22, 1943. He has based his work on notes taken at various conferences, copies of final drafts for entry in the War Diary, copies of HITLER'S directives, orders and documents he was able to save from destruction at great personal risk.

With the aid of these sources and the trained mind and memory of a professional historian, he has presented a vivid picture of HITLER'S method of command as well as his reaction to reverses and success and the various other factors which influenced decisions in both the military and the political spheres.

In addition to a general description of procedures in the supreme headquarters it includes details of organization and the composition of HITLER'S immediate staff. Brief graphic descriptions are also included of the outstanding characteristics of its chief members who served HITLER in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Commander in Chief of the Army.

The completed work to date is divided into a number of manuscripts. For easy reference the manuscripts have been listed chronologically for inclusion in the English copies.

  
LOUIS M. NAWROCKY  
Lt Colonel, Armor  
Chief, Foreign Military  
Studies Branch

MS # C-065 1

GREINER SERIES

OKW, WORLD WAR II	MS # C-065 b
WAR DIARY WEHRMACHT OPERATIONS STAFF, Aug-Nov 40	MS # C-065 j
SHEETS OF WAR DIARY OF THE DE- FENSE BRANCH OF THE WEHR- MACHT OPERATIONS STAFF	MS # C-065 m
RECORDS OF SITUATION EVALUATIONS OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE BRANCH 8 Aug 40 - 25 Jun 41	MS # C-065 l
WAR DIARY WEHRMACHT OPERATIONS STAFF, Dec - Mar 1941	MS # C-065 k
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AFRICA 1941 (VI)	MS # C-065 f
BALKANS 1941 (VII)	MS # C-065 g
Operation BARBAROSSA (VIII)	MS # C-065 i
Operation SEELÖWE (III)	MS # C-065

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Author

Helmut GREINER  
Ministerialrat im OKW\*  
Born: 30 April 1892  
Leipzig, Saxony.

Helmut GREINER joined the Army in December 1913, entering the 133d Prussian Infantry Regiment as an officer candidate, and in July 1914 was promoted second lieutenant with commission dated 23 June 1913. In World War I he served at the various fronts from the outbreak of war to June 1917, with two brief breaks to recover from wounds. In June 1917 he was detached to serve as military attache on the staff of the German Embassy in Bern, Switzerland, from which he was transferred to the Historical Division of Army General Staff, Berlin, in January 1919, remaining there until discharged from the Army in March 1920, with rank of captain. Less than a month later GREINER was appointed archivist in the Military History Section of the Historical Branch of the Reichs Archives at Potsdam. He remained in this service until 1935, and it was during this period that he continued his studies in national economy and history at the Berlin University from 1921-24. Also during this period he did a great deal of writing on the German official history of World War I and was promoted Archivrat.

On 1 April 1935 GREINER was re-called for service in the Wehrmacht, promoted Regierungsrat (equivalent to major in rank) and attached to the re-organized Historical Division of the Reichs Archives, a branch of the Military History Research Institute of the Army. On 18 August 1939, he was transferred to the National Defense Branch, which later was re-designated

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\* Administrative official attached to Wehrmacht Command, equivalent in rank to a colonel.

Wehrmacht Operations Staff (Wehrmachtsfuehrungsstab), in Hitler's headquarters, as Keeper of the War Diary. Promoted Oberregierungsrat on 1 May 1936 and Ministerialrat on 1 October 1940, GRAINER was removed from his post on 22 April 1943 because of his known anti-national-socialist sentiments. Following this he was detached to the Office of the German General Attached to Italian Armed Forces Headquarters in Rome for a brief spell, 15 June - 31 July 1943.

From that date to the end of the War, GRAINER was not employed, being considered politically unreliable. He was captured by US forces at Oberhof, Thuringia on 4 April 1945.

In addition to his career in the civil service and the Wehrmacht, GRAINER is a well-known writer on military subjects in the historical vein, his published works including, VETERANS OF WORLD WAR I, a collection of essays by soldiers of that War; THE 1916 CAMPAIGN IN RUMANIA, written for the Swedish General Staff; THE 1916 INVASION OF BELGIUM AND THE FIRST MAJOR BATTLES; THE FRENCH MOBILIZATION IN 1914; THE AMERICAN WAR OF SECESSION; GUERRILLA WARFARE IN 1870-71 and FRENCH MOBILIZATION PLANS, 1885-1914, some of which were written specifically as instruction manuals for use in training.

## OPERATION BARBAROSSA

On the afternoon of 29 July 1940, General of Artillery JODL, the Chief of Armed Forces Operations Office,\* appeared at the special train of the Department for National Defense which was being held at Bad Reichenhall during HITLER's stay at the Berghof. Under the seal of strictest secrecy, he informed Colonel WARLIMONT, the Department Chief, as well as the chiefs of the operations divisions of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, Lieutenant Colonel von LOSZBERG, Lieutenant Commander JUNGE, and Major von FALKENSTEIN, that the Fuehrer had decided to conquer the Soviet Union by force of arms.

This news aroused extreme astonishment and consternation among the above mentioned officers. Indeed, had not HITLER, while addressing his generals at the Berghof on 22 August 1939 and in his Reichstag speech of 1 September, declared emphatically that the nonaggression pact signed by Germany and the U.S.S.R. on 23 August signified a complete reversal of German foreign policy and for all time precluded the possibility of hostilities between the two nations! Furthermore, had not HITLER concluded this pact principally to insure that Germany would not again become involved in a two-front war as it did during World War I! In addition, the Soviet Union thus far had fulfilled the terms of the treaty in every respect, and the German-Russian credit agreement of

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\* Later changed to Armed Forces Operations Staff.

19 August 1939 and the highly important commercial treaty of 11 February 1940 had resulted in remarkable benefits for Germany. Moreover, immediately after the fall of France, HITLER had issued the first instructions for a partial demobilization of the Army, particularly with regard to the discharge of the older age classes and especially technicians, and had ordered that there be a shift of emphasis on armaments in favor of the air force and the navy. These instructions indicated that he no longer anticipated any large-scale ground operations but was concerned only with war against England. Also, on 16 July 1940 he had actually ordered in his "Fuehrer Directive # 16" that preparations be made for landing operations in England. When in spite of this, HITLER suddenly announced his intention to attack Soviet Russia, the reasons which induced him to take this step could only be surmised.

In this connection, it is questionable whether HITLER ever actually intended to adhere to the German-Russian treaty and whether (as he had asserted in his Reichstag speech of 1 September 1939) he really regarded it as a decisive political turning point. It was possible that he had concluded the treaty simply to eliminate the danger in the rear, in preparation for the expected clash with the western powers, and had been convinced from the first that STALIN, too, would abide by the pact only as long as it served his purpose. It will probably be difficult to ever answer this question with absolute certainty. The fact that HITLER had always emphasized our ideological conflict with Communism and had proclaimed his foreign policy aims in his book "Mein Kampf," and his

unscrupulousness in connection with the signing and fulfilling of treaties, were definite indications that he did not look upon the German-Russian nonaggression pact as a permanent arrangement but as a stopgap measure serving to postpone the settling of accounts with the U.S.S.R.

An additional reason for the attack on Russia might have been the fact that the Russians were constantly advancing further westward, and endangering our own military operations. In 1939, when the treaty was signed at Moscow, the Soviet Government had declared emphatically that it had no intentions of occupying, bolshevizing, or annexing the states located within their sphere of influence. Yet in spite of that, the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Esthonia -- where the U.S.S.R. had maintained military strongpoints since the late fall of 1939 -- were occupied completely in June 1940, immediately bolshevized, and incorporated into the U.S.S.R. several weeks later as federal republics. In addition, the U.S.S.R. issued an ultimatum to Rumania on 26 June, requesting the return of Bessarabia as well as the northern part of Bukovina which had never belonged to Russia. Two days later the Soviets marched into those territories, and they were incorporated into the Soviet Union as Federal Republics of Moldavia and the Ukraine. This move had brought the Soviet Union alarmingly close to the Rumanian oil fields in which Germany was vitally interested. The Russian advance led to Rumania's waiver of the guaranty pledged by England and France on 13 April 1940 and to her closer connection with the Axis powers, while HITLER promised his full support to the Rumanian Government and instructed

the Foreign Intelligence and Counter Intelligence Office, headed by Admiral C. W. Clegg, to take measures for the protection of German oil interests in Rumania.

However, no matter how much the fundamental conflict with Communism and the Russian advance to the west might have played a part in HITLER's decision to attack the Soviet Union, I do not believe that they were the determining factors. Above all, they do not adequately explain why HITLER made this decision at a time when preparations for an invasion of England had just been started. For there can be little doubt that HITLER did not reckon at that time with any participation by Russia in the war against Germany. On the contrary, he believed -- as evidenced by repeated statements to this effect -- that for a reasonable length of time he could definitely depend on a friendly attitude on the part of STALIN. He was also of the opinion that the Soviet Union was too weak from a military point of view and too much handicapped by the state of its home politics to be willing to risk a major armed conflict. Consequently, in this connection, he was under no pressure to act hastily and could even postpone the final settlement of accounts with Russia until he had an absolutely free hand. Surely there must have been another important reason which gave rise to his plan to attack Russia in the near future. I believe we can hardly go wrong in assuming that the reason can be found in the following:

From the very beginning of the war, HITLER had looked upon England as his chief enemy. However, he lacked the military strength to conquer

her. Since it seemed to be out of the question to come to an understanding with England, at least under the conditions which HITLER desired, it became his principal aim to break England's will to resist by force of arms. When the British Government, contrary to expectations, remained firm in its decision to continue the war even after its fighting forces had been driven from the Continent and after France had fallen, HITLER ordered intensified air and naval warfare against England and preparations for landing operations. However, he undoubtedly took the latter step with some reluctance, because in view of Germany's hopeless inferiority at sea and the lack of naval transports, he probably did not really feel equal to this difficult task. He probably feared a setback which would certainly undermine his prestige considerably and might have very serious political consequences. He even seemed to have been rather skeptical from the outset of the prospects for success of the intensified naval and air warfare. In any event, he was apparently not nearly as optimistic about it as GOERING. This uncertainty induced him to look strategic stopgaps which might enable him to reach his goal with less risk. This then might have led to the plan to conquer Russia quickly -- for he had reckoned with just a brief campaign from the very beginning -- in order to deprive England of the last trump card she might still possess on the Continent and thus force her to come to terms. As I said before, all this is only conjecture, but many statements made subsequently by HITLER, as well as JODL, definitely indicate that these theories come quite close to the truth.

Owing to the fact that no specific data has been furnished by the parties concerned, I cannot say whether and to what extent General JODL offered any reasons for the new plan during his conference with the officers of the National Defense Department. He announced that the following spring would probably be the time when the campaign against Russia would begin. Originally HITLER apparently had planned to attack the Russians as early as the fall of 1940. However, he had given up this idea, evidently because he had been dissuaded by Generalfeldmarschall KEITEL, who probably pointed out that the Russian winter would greatly handicap the German advance and that the strategic concentration of the German Wehrmacht in the newly gained eastern area involved certain requirements which it would not be possible to carry into effect in a few weeks.

In order to fulfil these prerequisites the National Defense Department was assigned the task of compiling a Wehrmacht High Command directive for all the branches of the Wehrmacht, which was to be designated "Aufbau Ost" (Development of the Eastern Territories) and for which General JODL issued specific guiding principles during the conference on 29 July. On 2 August, General WAREIMONT\* submitted a first draft of this directive to Generalfeldmarschall KEITEL. In the introduction, the following statement appeared, in order to veil the real purport of the order:

The Fuehrer has abandoned the idea of establishing an independent Polish rump government and has decided to incorporate the occupied eastern territories into Greater

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\* The Chief of the National Defense Department was promoted to Generalmajor on 1 August 1940.

Germany. Owing to this fact, it also has become necessary for the Wehrmacht to consolidate and develop the newly won eastern territories, in all respects. Besides, during the war, the ever increasing menace of air attacks in the west requires that the protected eastern territories be utilized for military purposes in greater measure.

The directive further stipulated that these actions be governed by the following precepts:

Any reorganization or training of forces for which a need will arise in the future should be preferably effected in the eastern territories, and for this purpose the necessary facilities for training maneuvers should be set up immediately. If necessary, Wehrmacht supplies of all kinds should be transferred to the east from the western areas which are exposed to air attacks. The Wehrmacht requirements covering the improvement of the railway and road network are to be transmitted to the competent Reich agencies at the earliest possible moment; the signal communication system is to be improved; installations of the armament industry which serve the immediate troop requirements are to be set up in sufficient quantities; furthermore the mapping system for the east should be immediately adapted to the needs of the forces. On the other hand, the measures concerning the development of fortifications in the country, which have been scheduled on the basis of earlier regulations, are to be deferred for the present.

The directive added that these instructions would be sent simultaneously to the top level Reich agencies concerned and the Governor General of the occupied Polish territories.

Referring to these concluding remarks, the Supply Section of the National Defense Department on 7 August, called attention to the fact that, according to reports on hand, the civilian agencies were still uninformed about the pending incorporation of the Gouvernement Général into Greater Germany. It was pointed out that the OKW (Wehrmacht High Command)

directive would now apprise the top level Reich agencies and the Governor General of the political decision made by the Fuehrer from which these agencies would draw far-reaching inferences. In order to avoid this, it was proposed that the Fuehrer directive be made public by the Chief of the Reich Chancellery or the Reich Minister of the Interior, acting as central agency for all questions affecting the eastern territories.

As HITLER, contrary to statement made in the introduction to the Wehrmacht High Command directive solely to conceal actual motives, at that time was by no means clear as to what he should do with the Polish rump territory, he specified, as a result of the above mentioned objection, that the aerial warfare in the west should be the only reason offered for the measures scheduled for the east. In this amended form the directive was signed on 9 August by the Chief of Wehrmacht High Command and distributed to the Wehrmacht branches, the top level Reich agencies, and the Governor General.

In all probability, the Commander in Chief of Staff of the Army at that time had already been informed of HITLER's new plan and were therefore familiar with the real purpose of the Wehrmacht High Command directive; but exactly when this orientation took place is not certain. On 3 September 1940, when Generalleutnant PAULUS assumed his duties as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, General HALDER handed him an operations plan covering the campaign against Soviet Russia, which was still incomplete and on which Generalmajor MARCKS had been working thus

far, and instructed him to finish this plan after investigating all attack possibilities and proceeding on the assumption that 130 - 140 divisions would be available for this purpose. In this connection, he was to take into account from the first the utilization of Rumania as an area for the strategic concentration of the German southern wing. HITLER had set the following strategic objectives: (1) to annihilate the Russian forces stationed in western Russia and to make sure that none of the elements would escape in fit condition to the rear; (2) to capture Leningrad, Moscow, the Ukraine, and the northern part of the Caucasus with its oil wells; (3) to reach a line from which the Russian air force would no longer be able to effectively attack Germany; the final objective was to be the Astrakhan-Volga-Archangel line. \*

Independent of the considerations and investigations of the General Staff of the Army, the National Defense Department also had to compile an operations plan for the campaign against Russia. The Department was given its assignment either during the conference on 29 July or soon thereafter \*\* by General JOEL, who obviously tried to arrive at a basis on which to develop his own ideas concerning the planned operations, so as to be adequately prepared for the consultation with Generalfeldmarschall von BRAUCHITSCH, which was expected to take place in the near future, in connection with the results of the Army High Command investigations.

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\* According to testimony given by Generalfeldmarschall PAULUS during the first trial of war criminals held at Nuernberg in February 1946.

\*\* The exact date can no longer be ascertained.

The Commander in Chief of the Air Force also seems to have been informed by HITLER of his new plan early in the game, for it is reasonable to assume that the operations staff of the Air Force already knew of this project when, on 8 August, they requested the OKH (Army High Command) to furnish the necessary data in connection with the development of the ground organization of the Air Force in the east. On the other hand, the Commander in Chief of the Navy was apparently not notified by HITLER until the end of September, which, however, does not preclude the possibility that he had been previously informed of the new scheme by some other means.

For the present, the two plans of operations and the OKW (Wehrmacht High Command) directive were held in abeyance. On 21 August, HITLER merely sent word via General JOUL to the Commander in Chief of the Army that "it is urgently necessary to fortify immediately the Baltic Seacoast with batteries," and that, "for political reasons, it is desirable that an armored unit be detached without delay to East Prussia." The reason for the latter measure was undoubtedly the fact that the Soviet Union, through its recent occupation of all of Lithuania, had forged ahead right up to the eastern borders of East Prussia. The OKH (Army High Command) assigned the 1st Panzer Division which arrived in East Prussia at the beginning of September.

At this time, however, other projects were still foremost in importance -- above all Operation SEELÖWE as well as the plan for an attack on Gibraltar and the contemplated commitment of German armored forces in

Libya in support of the Italian campaign against Egypt. At the beginning of August, HITLER began to worry about the fact that, of late, relations between the Soviet Union and Finland had become strained. The Russians charged that the Finnish Government was making things difficult for the communistic "Association for the Advancement of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union" which had been founded in Finland at the close of the Russo-Finnish war. According to a report of the Yugoslav ambassador to Moscow published in Berlin, Russian Foreign Commissar MOLOTOV had called the Finnish ambassador to account for this. Furthermore, a whole series of reports submitted by attaches and agents indicated unanimously that the fifteen Russian divisions stationed at the Finnish border were being reinforced by armored elements and that in all likelihood these forces would be alerted beginning 15 August. We recognized as the true reason behind these moves the Soviet Union's designs against the Finnish nickel ore region of Petsamo; it was of the utmost importance for Germany's conduct of the war that this territory remain in Finland's possession. In addition, HITLER, who even then might have contemplated winning over Finland for participation in the campaign against Soviet Russia, was concerned that the latter might invade northern Norway. During the conference, which has been mentioned previously and which was held on 13 August in the Berlin Chancellery \* between HITLER, Admiral RAEDER, and the Chief of Staff of the Navy, HITLER therefore instructed Admiral RAEDER to fortify the area of northern Norway more intensely and above all to secure the fjords there.

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\* See Chapter III, page 7 (German original).

particularly at crossroads, to such a degree that Russian attacks would have no chance of success and that a foundation be laid for a subsequent occupation of Petsamo. The commitment of a naval commander in chief in this area was also to be taken into consideration. The next day HITLER discussed increasing the protection of northern Norway by means of GHR troops with the Commander in Chief of Norway, General von TALKENHORST, who had been summoned for this purpose. On this occasion the latter proposed that the entire mountain corps be transferred to the Narvik-Kirkenes area, which step HITLER approved. Reichsmarschall GOERING was delegated the task of making preparations for the construction of an air base in northern Norway.

Even though the tension between the Soviet Union and Finland soon relaxed and the reports concerning large-scale reinforcement of Russian troops at the Finnish border did not seem to be based on fact, the orders HITLER had issued nevertheless remained in effect. So far the only elements of the mountain corps in northern Norway had been the 3d Mountain Division. During the next weeks the 2d Mountain Division was also transferred to northern Norway from the area of Trondheim, to which region the 196th Infantry Division was moved from Oslo. In addition, the elements of an SS Brigade which was stationed in Oslo were also committed far up north, at Kirkenes, in the immediate vicinity of the Petsamo region. The problems of supplying all these troops via land route through Norway, which in spite

of the rapidly progressing construction of the Narvik-Kirkenes road, \* entailed great difficulties, and the construction of an air base in northern Norway, were considerably facilitated by reason of the fact that at the end of August the Finnish Government, owing to the GOERING's initiative, placed 50,000 tons of shipping for supply transports at Germany's disposal and granted the right to use the road leading from Kemi over northern Finland to Kirkenes. They also gave permission in mid-September for a German anti-aircraft artillery battalion in uniform to march through on its way to Kirkenes, but requested that the Russians be informed about the German transports. These arrangements were set down in a formal agreement which was signed on 23 September by the German and the Finnish Governments. In return, Germany pledged itself to supply Finland with arms on a large scale. Finland's standing army at that time comprised five army corps with sixteen divisions, totaling 140 - 150,000 men, but was rather weak in artillery, while her air force, numbering approximately six hundred planes, was not able to meet the requirements of modern warfare. In conformity with HITLER's order, the post of an "Admiral of the Polar Coast Region" was created at the beginning of September and Admiral BOENKE appointed to fill this position.

Meanwhile, in the southeast, serious political complications had arisen which affected German interests in far greater measure than the passing

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\* This road, which extended 810 kilometers, was completed at the beginning of November.

tension between the Soviet Union and Finland. Owing to the incorporation of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina into the Soviet Union, the territorial problems in the Balkans once again loomed large. Hungary and Bulgaria had requested the Rumanian Government to return their territories of Transylvania and southern Dobrogea, which they had ceded according to stipulations in the peace treaties signed after World War I. While the Rumanian-Bulgarian negotiations, initiated on 19 August at Craiova, had progressed favorably from the start, the Rumanian-Hungarian discussions, which had begun on 16 August at Turnu-Severin, shortly led to serious arguments and were broken off without result on 23 August. The two governments thereupon turned to the Axis powers, requesting them to act as arbitrators in this controversy. In view of the critical tension between Hungary and Rumania which had already led to border incidents and threatened to result in the outbreak of hostilities, the need for German-Italian intervention became all the more urgent. HITLER, bearing in mind the Rumanian oil shipments on which Germany's conduct of war depended to a large degree, as well as his other plans, was vitally interested in the preservation of peace in the Balkans. Moreover, at the Berghof, where HITLER had been staying since 17 August and where on 21 August he had been joined \* by the Chiefs of the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff,\*\* startling reports were received on 25 and 26 August concerning Russian troop

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\* The Field Echelon of the National Defense Department was detached on 25 August and arrived the next morning in its special train at the Salzburg main station, where it remained.

\*\* The Wehrmacht Operations Office had been changed to Wehrmacht Operations Staff on 8 August 1940.

concentrations at the Pruth River and in northern Bukovina. It was suspected that the reason behind these moves was the plan of the Soviet Union to seize the Rumanian oil field region in case of an armed conflict between Hungary and Rumania, which HITLER was determined to prevent at all costs.

Consequently HITLER, in conjunction with Italy, invited the two governments to a conference to be held at Vienna on 29 August, and at the same time took preventive military measures. On 26 August he ordered the Commander in Chief of the Army to immediately assign about ten divisions to Poland in order to reinforce the elements stationed there, but without seriously interfering with the regular flow of economic transports. In addition, he ordered that two armored divisions, after their equipment had been put in good repair in the Zone of Interior, be transferred to the extreme southeastern part of Gouvernement Général. The commitment of these divisions was to be effected in such a manner as to make sure that, should the need arise, it would be possible to take prompt action to protect the Rumanian oil field region. At the Hungarian-Rumanian border, according to latest reports, no less than 23 out of the regular 24 Hungarian Brigades were said to be massed, whereas of the 35 Rumanian divisions only 8 - 10 were stationed at the Hungarian border and, on the other hand, 22 - 24 were on the Russian border. New incidents at the Hungarian-Rumanian border induced HITLER two days later, on the morning of 28 August, to order the Army and the Air Force to make all necessary preparations without delay for the immediate occupation of the oil field region in case the intervention proceedings, which had been started, were to fail. It was stipulated

that for this purpose, they make use primarily of the mobile units of the Army which at the time were stationed in the Zone of Interior. These units consisted of five armored divisions and three motorized divisions, which, with the exception of one armored and one motorized division, were again fit for service beginning 1 September. In addition, they were to make provisions for the commitment of parachute and airborne troops for prompt on-the-spot protection of strategic points in Rumania. If necessary, permission was to be obtained from the Hungarian Government for the passage of our troops and, as far as possible, for railway transportation through Hungary. It was believed that there would be no difficulty in securing Rumania's agreement for the passage of our troops; she was also be charged with the responsibility for supplying the German troops stationed in Rumania. On the evening of 28 August, these instructions were supplemented to the effect that HITLER might order these movements to begin as early as 1 September, and that consequently, provisions might have to be made for some elements to be prepared for operations on that day. However, in this connection, it was ordered that no redistribution of troops was to take place before 1 September, whereas the shifting from west to east, which had been ordered on 26 August, was to be put into effect with the utmost speed.

On the morning of 29 August the Army High Command reported that steps had been taken in preparation for the occupation of the oil field region, that the motorized 13th Infantry Division had started its march to the area around Vienna, and that it was their plan for the present to place this division and the two armored divisions (2d and 9th) already stationed there

under the command of the XXXX Corps Headquarters. The operations staff of the Air Force also sent word that they had taken preparatory measures. When a morning communication brought the news that the first British air attack on Berlin had been launched the night before, HITLER decided at noon to return immediately to Berlin in order to discuss reprisal raids against London with GOERING.\* HITLER, together with his party and the Field Echelon of the National Defense Department, arrived in the capital on the morning of 30 August. In the afternoon a conference was held at the Chancellery, presided over by General JODL, during which the measures for the protection of the oil field region taken thus far and those contemplated for the future were discussed. This conference was attended by General WANLIMONT accompanied by two officers of the National Defense Department; the Chief of the Foreign Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Office, Admiral CANARIS; the Chief of Counter-Intelligence Branch II, Lieutenant Colonel von BENTIVEGNI; the First General Staff Officer of the Operations Division of the General Staff of the Army, Colonel HAUSSINGER; and the Chief of the Operations Division of the Air Force Operations Staff, Generalmajor HOFFMANN von WALDAU.

General JODL began by stating that should the intervention fail, it would be necessary to protect the German sphere of interests in Rumania against attack by other powers, and that to this end it would be essential that the Wehrmacht occupy Rumania in the quickest way possible. Hungary

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\* See Chapter III, page 19 (German original).

and Rumania would presumably agree to this move. Although the latest reports indicated that the Vienna negotiations would result in a conciliation of the contending parties, preparations should nevertheless be continued for the present.

Admiral CANARIS then reported on measures taken by him for the protection of the oil field region. He stated that the following forces were available for the prevention of sabotage and surprise raids:

(1) approximately one hundred and fifty men led by able officers and stationed at Ruscuk on the Danube, about the same number at Bucharest, and around Floesti; these men, who had uniforms and weapons as well as heavy machine guns, would be able to reach the oil field region within 15 - 20 hours after the alert had been given; (2) about six Danube cutters and two motor boats which were equipped with arms; (3) armed men hidden on oil tankers. The order for the commitment of these defense elements should be issued twenty-four hours in advance, if possible.

General von WALDAU proposed the assignment of one reinforced parachute regiment consisting of three battalions, one antitank company, and one infantry howitzer company, one parachute antiaircraft, and one light battery. He stated that provisions had been made for the assembly of 270 transport planes, that 230 additional planes could be supplied by the training schools within 72 hours, and that the storing of fuel had begun in the area of XVII Air Force Administrative Command. He also reported that six landing sites were under consideration around Floesti; however, their present condition still had to be investigated. The Rumanians would be able to

take over the air defense and, for this purpose, had HEINKEL pursuit planes and German antiaircraft at their disposal. The withdrawal of fighter planes from the west was, in his opinion, undesirable as well as unnecessary. Should additional antiaircraft protection be required, one mixed motorized antiaircraft regiment and, in addition, one aircraft warning battalion for protection against low altitude attacks could then be assigned. Any parachute troops that landed would have to be conducted to the objective they were to protect by guides who were acquainted with the country.

Finally, Colonel HEUSINGER reported that, beginning 1 September, the motorized XXXX Infantry Corps under the command of General of Cavalry STUMME, in conjunction with the 2d and 9th Panzer Divisions and the 13th motorized Infantry Division, would be held in readiness in the area around Vienna. He added, however, that for the present the two armored divisions had at their disposal only one tank battalion each. Unless it encountered enemy resistance, the Corps would be able to reach the Hungarian border within three days and the oil field region around Ploesti within five days. This could be accomplished by wheeled vehicles by road march, using two or three routes, and by shipping track-laying vehicles by rail, using two routes. In addition it would be possible to commit the following: the motorized "Grossdeutschland" Infantry Regiment and the motorized "Adolf HITLER" \* SS Leibstandarte both of which were at present stationed

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\* The "Adolf HITLER" SS Leibstandarte, formerly HITLER's body guard, had been enlarged to a brigade as per Fuehrer directive of 12 August 1940 and now consisted of five battalions and one artillery regiment which also had available one light and one medium flak battery.

in Alsace-Lorraine and could be prepared to march within 48 hours, and after an additional 48 hours could be in a position to reach the German-Hungarian border. Besides, two infantry divisions had been earmarked for future relief of the XXIX Infantry Corps. Owing to the slowness of the Hungarian railway system it would be necessary to give one or two days' advance notice on railway transports passing through Hungary.

In conclusion, General JOML stated that these measures were sufficient for the present and that the preparations were to be continued on that basis. During the next few days, the National Defense Department compiled a "directive governing the occupation of the Rumanian oil field region" which, however, was to be signed and distributed only if and when developments necessitated our taking any action.

In the meantime, the conference, which had been called at Vienna for the purpose of settling the Hungarian-Rumanian dispute, had begun on 29 August in the upper Belvedere Castle, the former summer residence of Prince Eugene of Savoy. The negotiations were carried on by German Foreign Minister von RIB BENTROP and Italian Foreign Minister Count CIANO with the Hungarian and Rumanian delegations, which were headed by their Foreign Ministers Count CSAKY and MANOILESCU respectively. The conference ended on 30 August with a decision rendered by the Axis powers, according to which Rumania had to cede to Hungary most of Transylvania, an area comprising roughly 50,000 square kilometers. Consequently, Hungary's new southern border line was set to extend approximately as follows:

From Gyula-Aiud \* to Sighisoara \*\* along the course of the Oltul (Alt) River north of Brasov (Kronstadt), whereby Aiud was given to Hungary while Sighisoara remained in Rumanian hands. In order to make it easier for Rumania to accept this decision which involved such considerable territorial sacrifices on her part, Germany and Italy, on 30 August, undertook to guarantee the integrity and inviolability of the Rumanian sovereignty within its new borders. In spite of this, violent demonstrations took place in Rumania in protest against the decision reached by the arbitrators. In Bucharest these demonstrations developed into riots and led to the resignation of the GIURIU Cabinet on 4 September. The new Prime Minister General ANTONESCU established, as he called it in his proclamation of 5 September, "a new regime" with marked totalitarian tendencies, forced King CAROL II to abdicate on 6 September in favor of his son MICHAEL, and cultivated the Axis powers in even greater measure than the previous government. Following this, calm prevailed throughout the country. The march of Hungarian troops into the territory accorded to Hungary was also carried out without incidents during the period from 6 - 13 September. The Rumanian-Bulgarian negotiations held at Craiova ended on 7 September with the signing of a treaty according to which Southern Dobrudja including the Danube Fortress Silistria was ceded to Bulgaria; this was put into effect between 21 and 30 September.

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- \* Aiud is the Rumanian name for this locality, which is called Nagy Enyed in Hungarian and Straesburg in German.
  - \*\* Sighisoara, which is a Rumanian name, is called Segesvar in Hungarian and Schaessburg in German.

Although the decision reached in Vienna had made it possible to consider the danger of an armed conflict between Hungary and Rumania dispelled, there still existed the menace of further Russian advances in the Balkans. This was clearly indicated by Moscow's attitude during those days. Foreign Commissar MOLOTOV expressed to the German ambassador, Count von der SCHULEN-BURG, his astonishment at the fact that Germany had failed to promptly notify the Soviet Union of the decision and stated that Russia would continue to be interested in problems affecting the Balkans. Thereupon HITLER, on 2 September, mentioned to General JOEL that after the Hungarian-Rumanian tension had died down, he intended to request Hungary to permit, should the need arise, passage of German troops, the use of its railroads, and permission for German planes to fly over and make intermediate landings in Hungarian territory. HITLER also stated that he planned to ask Rumania's consent to the occupation of its oil field region, which might become necessary in order to protect it against seizure by other nations. He specified that the same goal was to be achieved in the interim by sending a military mission to Rumania which was to consist of army and air force officers and to which German antitank and antiaircraft "instruction forces" were to be attached. The Army High Command and the OKL (Air Force High Command) were asked to submit proposals in this connection.

These measures contemplated by HITLER coincided with the plans of General ANTONESCU who on 7 September told the German military attache in Bucharest, Colonel GERSTENBERG, that the Rumanian army would like to have German officers serve as instructors at the war college and the military

schools, and as technical advisors on the Rumanian General Staff. Furthermore they considered desirable the assignment to Rumania of German mechanized troop units and air task forces as well as the transfer of material for antitank and active air defense; in addition, he requested that a German general be sent to Bucharest in the near future to carry on discussions concerning the future collaboration between the German Wehrmacht and the Rumanian armed forces. General ANTONESCU furthermore stated that he intended to decrease the army and at the same time organize strong motorized and mechanized units and that he contemplated placing the focal point of defense at the eastern border while exposing the front lines facing Hungary and Bulgaria. He meant to cooperate with Germany to the fullest extent.

Two days later Admiral CANARIS returned from Rumania, where he had personally investigated the status of the temporary measures taken for the protection of the oil field region and where, among other things, he had detached some of the defense elements assembled at Ruscauk. He too considered it highly desirable to detach a German general to Bucharest at an early date for the purpose of concluding a military agreement. He stated that on the whole he had gained the impression that General ANTONESCU was master of the situation and that his regime would be lasting, although this would be true only as long as German forces remained victorious. In view of the fact that things had apparently calmed down, the order for "alert at a moment's notice," which had been issued to the army troops earmarked for Rumania's occupation, was rescinded on 10 September. Two

days later this same order, given to the airborne troops and transportation units which had been scheduled for commitment, was also cancelled.

During the night of 13 September however, the German military attache in Bucharest, reported by radio increasing tension between General ANTONESCU and the nationalistic, anti-Semitic "Iron Guard," and that the latter planned to hold large-scale demonstrations throughout the country on 13 September, marking the birthday of their leader CODREANU who was shot in November 1938. In view of the fact that the situation had again become unsettled, he considered the immediate assignment of a German military mission an urgent necessity. Since it was not possible to effect the necessary preparations with such speed, HITLER, on 14 September, ordered that as a first step, Generalleutnant von TIPPELSKIRCH, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence on the General Staff, who until now had been directing the preliminary work in connection with the Military Mission, be sent to Bucharest. The reports received from there that same day indicated that the demonstrations of the Iron Guard had been peaceful and that their leader, Horia SIMA, and General ANTONESCU had reached an understanding. This was evidenced by the fact that the Cabinet was reorganized and a royal decree issued, on 14 September, whereby Rumania was proclaimed a national legion state and the legion movement recognized as the only legal party in the new state. General ANTONESCU became the leader of the national legion state and chief of the legion regime, and in the new Cabinet, assumed the post of Minister of National Defense in addition to that of Prime Minister, while the commander of legionaries, Horia SIMA, was appointed

Vice-President of the cabinet council, and General PETROVICĂESCU, who had been proposed by the legionaries, was made Minister of the Interior.

General von TIPPELSKIRCH left for Bucharest on the evening of 14 September. On the next evening he had a conference with General ANTONĂESCU, at which they discussed all details, and on which occasion General ANTONĂESCU made the following statement:

Rumania still feels threatened to a marked degree by her neighbors, particularly Soviet Russia. Consequently, it is Rumania's aim to achieve outwardly visible security, and, hence, her desire that the German guarantee of her borders be put into practice. To this end, Rumania requests speedy German aid in the form of planes, antiaircraft, motorized, and armored units which are to be sent to Rumania under cover of the military mission. The units in question are to be sent with complete instructor personnel who are to give the Rumanian troops tactical and technical training in the use of the materiel, which should later on be turned over to Rumania.

In discussing his plans for the reorganization of the Rumanian Army, General ANTONĂESCU stated that the future army was to consist of roughly 100,000 enlisted men and 5,000 officers and was to be organized similarly to the former German 100,000-man army. It was to be equipped with the latest type of arms, particularly by antitank and antiaircraft weapons, motorized to a large extent, and led by young commanders. The combined arms brigade was to constitute the nucleus, and was to consist of a reinforced motorized brigade with two infantry regiments of two battalions each, one motorized artillery regiment, and one armored regiment, and was to combine a high degree of mobility and intense fire power.

Following General von TIPPELSKIRCH's report on this conference with

General ANTONESCU, which continued for two more days, HITLER, on 19 September, decided that, contrary to the Rumanian proposals, it was above all necessary to send German troops, approximately one division strong, to Rumania, and that this should be done as soon as possible. He disapproved the transfer of German war materiel to Rumania during the war but stipulated that during future negotiations with the Rumanian Government, this question was to remain open for the time being. The Foreign Office was instructed to approach the Hungarian Government concerning the transportation of these troops through Hungary and to duly inform the Soviet Union of the fact that the Military Mission had been sent to Rumania.

Thereupon, the 13th motorised Infantry Division was assigned as an instruction unit and orders were issued that this division be reinforced by the 4th Panzer Regiment, one corps engineer battalion with two bridge columns, and one corps signal battalion with one intercept platoon. Beginning on 10 October, it was to be held in readiness for evacuation in the area north of Vienna. Generalleutnant HANSEN was appointed chief of the Military Mission. He was aided by Colonel HAUFFE acting as Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel SCHWARZ serving as First General Staff Officer, and Major MERK acting as Supply Officer. This higher echelon of the staff was ordered to meet on 30 September, while the rest, together with the officers who had been appointed instructors at the Rumanian war college and service schools, was to convene in Dresden on 10 October. On 30 September General HANSEN reported to HITLER for instructions. HITLER emphasized the necessity for keeping together the forces at his disposal for

the protection of the German oil interests in Rumania, and in addition, with respect to Russia, warned him against attracting too much attention.

General SPHIDEL was appointed Chief of the Air Force Mission which was to be sent to Rumania at the same time. It was proposed that for the time being, the so-called "instruction unit" be composed of the following: one reinforced fighter group consisting of four squadrons and two reconnaissance squadron as well as a number of light and medium antiaircraft batteries. Attaching this Air Force Mission to the Military Mission was a difficult task. Since GOERING flatly refused to have the Air Force Mission under the control of General HANSEN and HITLER yielded, as he usually did, to GOERING's demands no matter how unjustified they were, there was no other alternative but to place both missions on an equal footing. In case of disagreements between the two mission chiefs, it was up to the Chief of OKW (Wehrmacht High Command) to settle their dispute, while it was incumbent on the Chief of the Military Mission, as the senior general, to safeguard the interests of the entire Wehrmacht with the Rumanian Government. These stipulations were incorporated in the directive compiled by the OKW (Wehrmacht High Command). However, negotiations with the Foreign Office concerning the assignment of the Military Mission were still pending. This Mission had high political significance by reason of the fact that world opinion was already vitally concerned with it. In order that the arrival of the German troops in Rumania should not unduly undermine the prestige of the Rumanian Government, and strain relations with the Soviet Union, the Foreign Office endeavored to obtain

for the German ambassador in Bucharest greater authority in all questions affecting the Military Mission, and, in addition, requested that the first transports be effected only with his approval.

After this had been established and the Hungarian Government had agreed to permit the transportation of German staffs and units through Hungary, the Chiefs of the Military Mission and Air Force Mission, together with their advance parties, left for Bucharest on 10 October. There they were greeted with enthusiasm. The remaining staffs left on 20 October, and, beginning 24 October, were followed by the army troops, air force, and antiaircraft units. By the end of the month, the Air Force Mission had reached its destination in full force, whereas only about one-third of the reinforced 13th motorized Division had arrived; the transportation of the remaining elements dragged on until nearly the middle of November. During the second half of October, one military economic staff and one special OKW (Wehrmacht High Command) agency of the Office of Wehrmacht Communications were also dispatched to Rumania. The enthusiasm first felt by the Rumanian people relative to the arrival of the German troops was somewhat dampened by the high costs of the Military Mission which, according to agreement, had to be borne by the Rumanian Government. These costs comprised almost one-sixth of the entire Rumanian budget, and, before long, this situation led to the presentation of vigorous protests to Berlin by the Rumanian Government. The attitude of the Soviet Union towards the assignment of the German Military Mission is not known. It might be deduced, however, that they viewed German aims on the Balkans with suspicion in view of the fact

that, at the end of October, four Russian officers arrived at the Soviet Embassy in Bucharest to act as observers with the German forces. In addition on 26 October, the Russians occupied three islands located in the Danube Delta between Ismail and Chilia Noua. The purpose of this move was not readily evident. In any case, it seemed advisable to observe proceedings at the northern border of Dobrudja with increased vigilance.

On that same day, 26 October, a reorganization of the German field forces was put into effect which might be regarded as the first step in the concentration of forces against Soviet Russia. This had been preceded by the transfer, ordered during the last ten days of August, of the 1st Panzer Division to East Prussia and of ten divisions to Gouvernement General. \* Shortly thereafter, on 5 September, instructions were issued to shift Army Group B under the command of Generalfeldmarschall von BOCK, in conjunction with Twelfth, Fourth, and Eighteenth Army Headquarters, from west to east and to effect this transfer by 24 October. In order to make available the necessary quarters in East Prussia for the field forces, the 141st and 151st Divisions which were stationed there and which constituted the replacement troops for the I Corps Area, were shifted to the Protectorate beginning on 14 September. On 17 September, Army Group B Headquarters moved to Berlin for a while and after 6 October, established themselves in their new headquarters at Posen. The Twelfth Army Headquarters (under Generalfeldmarschall LIST) was moved to Crakow, the Fourth

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\* See pages 10 and 14 (German original).

Army Headquarters (under Generalfeldmarschall von KLUGE) was shifted to Warsaw, and the Eighteenth Army Headquarters (under Generaloberst von KUECHLER) moved first to Bromberg and later to Koenigsberg. The headquarters of the reinforced army in Crakow under General of the Artillery ULUX, the Fifth Army Headquarters in Lodz under General of the Infantry LIEBMAN, and the headquarters of the reinforced army in Koenigsberg under General of the Cavalry Freiherr von GLENANTH which, since the fall of 1939, had been in command of the forces stationed in Gouvernement General and in East Prussia, were dissolved. On 30 October, the military command in Gouvernement General, with its attendant special duties and privileges which -- in accordance with Fuehrer directive of 19 October 1939, had been delegated to the OB East, Generaloberst BLASKOWITZ -- was assumed by General von BOCK, the Commander in Chief of Army Group B. He had now at his disposal in the east a total of 24 divisions, of which 20 divisions -- that is, 25 infantry and 3 armored divisions, one motorized infantry and one cavalry division -- were stationed in Gouvernement General and in East Prussia, while the remaining four divisions -- namely the 2d and 9th Panzer Divisions of the XXX Army Corps, the 11th Panzer Division which had just been formed out of the 11th Rifle Brigade, and the 60th Infantry Division which had become a motorized division -- were committed in Austria.

While this regrouping in the east, which was concluded on 24 October, was taking place, the army forces in the west and in the Zone of Interior were undergoing reorganization. The Commander in Chief of Army Group A,

Generalfeldmarschall von HUNDSTEDT, was appointed OB West on 26 October. He was in command of all army forces stationed in France, Belgium, and Holland, comprising the following: The Ninth Army (under Generaloberst SCHAUSS) and the Sixteenth Army (under Generaloberst BUSCH) of Army Group A which remained under his control, and the First Army of which General BLASCHOWITZ assumed command, the Sixth Army (under Generalfeldmarschall von REICHENAU) and the Seventh Army (under Generaloberst DOLLMANN) of the newly organized Army Group D which was under the command of Generalfeldmarschall von WITTELEBEN, the former Commander in Chief of the First Army. The Second Army (under Generaloberst Freiherr von WEICHS) of Army Group G, which was under the command of Generalfeldmarschall Ritter von LEBE, was transferred to the Zone of Interior where the newly activated Eleventh Army of Generaloberst Ritter von SCHOBERT was also placed under the command of Army Group C. Finally, on 30 October, the Army High Command moved from Fontainebleau to the Zossen troop training grounds south of Berlin, which was an obvious sign that the strategic emphasis had been shifted from the west to the east and southeast.

In order to adequately prepare the Army for its future major tasks, it was decided that during the winter months the Army was to expand up to 166 divisions, including 20 armored divisions, 4 armored brigades, and 12 motorized divisions and that a fourth motorized SS division should also be activated. This required an increase in Wehrmacht strength which was attained through the induction of the age classes of 1919 (last third) and

1920. The Wehrmacht thus gained additional strength, bringing the total to 6,703,000 men, of which 4,900,000 men (72.5%) were assigned to the Army, 298,000 men (4.4%) to the Navy, 1,485,000 men (22%) to the Air Force and 80,000 men (1.1%) to the Waffen-SS.

Simultaneously with the regrouping of the Army and in accordance with the directive "Aufbau Ost" (Development of Eastern Territories), large drill grounds were constructed such as the Mitte Training Center at Radom, new quarters set up, the railway, road and communication network improved, supply centers established and the air defense organized; in short, all necessary preparations were made for the strategic concentration of forces against Soviet Russia. On the other hand, HITLER rejected a proposal made by the Army High Command as early as the beginning of September, which called for commitment of a special Air Force squadron for the purpose of making aerial photographs of Russian territory, because he feared that such measures might prematurely cause a conflict with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, at the beginning of October, he ordered General of the Infantry

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\* The registration of the last third of the age class of 1919 provided 208,500 men while the registration of the age class of 1920 brought a total of 613,264 men. The registration total of the age class of 1919 was reduced by 16,424 men with indispensability status and 124,300 volunteers already inducted, while 92,525 men with indispensability status and 201,982 volunteers were deducted from the total registration results of the age class of 1920, which left a sum total of 386,533 men. Of these men, 322,061 were assigned to the Army, 14,687 to the Navy, 49,672 to the Air Force, and 113 to the Waffen-SS. The reason for the small number of recruits allotted to the Waffen-SS lies in the fact that the Waffen-SS had already inducted 17,718 volunteers of these 1-1/3 age classes, which was 9,877 men more than their quota of 1.1% called for.

THOMAS, the Chief of the Wehrmacht R. Command Office for Economic and Armaments, to give highest production priority to Russian orders which had been placed in accordance with the Russo-German trade agreements of 19 August 1939 and 11 February 1940 respectively. The Russians, from the start, systematically and punctually had been making their deliveries which were of such vital importance for the German war economy, and, therefore, it was HITLER's aim to effect curtailments to them with greater speed than heretofore.

At the end of October HITLER was faced with an entirely new situation because of the Italian attack on Greece. It had been his endeavor from the very beginning to prevent the war from spreading to the Balkans, primarily because of the vital German oil interests in Rumania. Consequently, he was now, in view of the contemplated campaign against Soviet Russia, all the more concerned that peace should prevail in the southeast. Hence his vexation about the highhanded action on the part of Italy, which was apt to have serious political and military consequences and might ruin all his plans. The greatest danger at present was the possibility that the British might gain a foothold on the Greek Mainland and the Aegean Islands, which would imperil the Rumanian oil field region. HITLER was determined to guard against this by having strong German forces push forward from Bulgaria up to the coast of the Aegean Sea. However, this necessitated a great many political measures. Bulgaria had to be induced to join the military and friendship agreement, the so-called Three-Power Pact, which had been concluded on 27 September between Germany, Italy and Japan.

Bulgaria showed little inclination to take this step, especially since it was concerned about Turkey's attitude. In order to relieve them of this anxiety, HITLER intended to make an attempt to come to an understanding with Turkey. It was also necessary to win over Yugoslavia or at least bring about her friendly neutrality, because without such assurance HITLER considered it impossible to risk any operations in the Balkans. We had every reason to be convinced that Hungary and Rumania would shortly join the Three-Power Pact and that Hungary would allow the transportation through its territory of large German units, while Rumania would agree to the concentration of a German Army in its territory in preparation for a subsequent march into Bulgaria. However, it was by no means certain how the U.S.S.R. would react. Russia, time and again, had stressed her special interest in the Balkans and it was therefore highly doubtful whether it would be possible to induce Russia to turn her ambitions to the Orient. In addition, owing to the geographic and climatic conditions in the Balkans, the launching of an attack against Greece was now out of the question until next spring, which interfered with our plans for strategic concentration of forces against Russia. In any case it was necessary to effect this operation against Greece with such speed that by the beginning of May the units employed for this purpose would again be available for other commitments. HITLER looked upon the settling of the situation in the Mediterranean as the prerequisite for the campaign against Greece and therefore considered it the most urgent military task for the coming winter. To this end, it was his aim to convince Spain to enter the war soon so as to be

able in joint action to seize Gibraltar and seal off the western exit of the Mediterranean. \* He desired, at the same time, that the Italians should continue their offensive against Egypt and endeavor to reach Mersa Matruh, thus gaining an air base from which it would be possible for Italian and German air forces to attack the British Mediterranean Fleet which was stationed in Alexandria, and to mine the Suez Canal. \*\*

In conformity with these plans HITLER, during the conference which has already been mentioned several times and which was held at the Berlin Reich Chancellery on 4 November \*\*\*, instructed the Commander in Chief of the Army and the Chief of the General Staff of the Army to make preparations for the attack on Gibraltar and the campaign against Greece. These instructions, together with additional orders covering the tentatively postponed Operation "SEELÖWE" \*\*\*\* and the commitment of German air forces in North Africa, were outlined in the "Fuehrer Directive # 18" which was signed by HITLER on 13 November and distributed to the Wehrmacht branches. The all-important eastern campaign was referred to in this directive with just a few words and the chapter in question reads as follows:

"Political conferences, which aim at clarifying Russia's position for the near future, have been initiated. Regardless of what the outcome of these discussions may be, all preparations for the eastern campaign, which have already been ordered verbally, are to be continued. Directives in this connection will be issued as soon as the salient points of the operations plan of the Army have been submitted to and approved by me."

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\* See Chapter 4 (German original)

\*\* See Chapter 5 (German original)

\*\*\* See Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 7, page 1 (German original)

\*\*\*\* See Chapter 3 (German original).

The conferences mentioned above began on that same day, 12 November, between the Reich Foreign Minister von RIBBENTROP and the Soviet Foreign Commissar MOLOTOV who, upon our invitation, had come to Berlin accompanied by a large staff. The Wehrmacht Operations Staff was only superficially informed of the result of these discussions. The main topic seemed to have been the relation of the Soviet Union to the partners of the Three-Power Pact and the coordination of mutual interests. Russia's joining the Three-Power Pact was evidently mentioned but it is questionable whether HITLER seriously desired it. He probably attached greatest importance to the "clarification of Russia's position during the coming months" as mentioned in "Fuehrer Directive # 18", namely the winter months up to the start of the eastern campaign, and to his aim, meanwhile, to divert Russia's ambitions towards the Orient. It is definite that the assignment of the Military Mission to Rumania was the subject of discussion and that MOLOTOV was also informed of the contemplated commitment of an aircraft warning company in Bulgaria. \* The Soviet Foreign Commissar raised no objections to this and requested only that 200 men should be the maximum number sent and that they should wear civilian clothes only. At the same time, however, he emphasized Russia's special interest in Bulgaria and, with reference to the German Military Mission to Rumania, inquired what HITLER's reaction would be if Russia on her part should undertake to send a military mission to Bulgaria. HITLER replied that there was really no comparison, because the Rumanian Government had expressly requested Germany to send a military

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\* See Chapter 7, page 2 (German original).

mission, whereas the Bulgarian Government had thus far not yet approached Moscow with any proposal of this nature. This did not deter the Soviet Union from proposing to Bulgaria at the end of November that a mutual assistance pact be concluded and a military mission assigned. However, as has been mentioned previously, \* this was turned down by the Sofia Government.

It is open to question whether during the Berlin conference MOLOTOV actually requested -- as asserted in the diplomatic note of the Foreign Office to the Soviet Union which was published on 22 June 1941 -- that Germany and Italy, should the need arise, support a proposal to be made by Russia, Turkey give up military bases at the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. This much, however, is certain: the question was broached and RIBBENTROP, or even HITLER himself, on that occasion called MOLOTOV's attention to the Princes Islands located at the southern entrance to the Bosphorus. They also seem to have encouraged the Soviet Union's decision to request Turkey to return the Armenian territories of Kars and Ardahan which had been ceded to Turkey in 1917. In precisely this manner an attempt was made to divert Russia's attention from the Balkans and if possible involve her in a conflict with Turkey. Furthermore, Finland was discussed in great detail, at which point MOLOTOV protested against the transportation of German troops and supplies to Kirkenes via Northern Finland and emphasized the fact that the Soviet Union was vitally interested in the Petsamo nickel-ore mines. He also seems to have intimated

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\* See Chapter 7, page 9 (German original)

that Soviet Russia might feel compelled to resume her attack against Finland and would not want Germany to assist Finland in any way. In reply HITLER stressed that he had neither political nor territorial aims in Finland but was only concerned that there should not be any new Russo-Finnish war. With regard to the exploitation of the nickel-ore mines, an agreement was finally reached whereby 60 percent was to be allotted to Germany while Russia's share was to be 40 percent. These discussions were concluded on the evening of 13 November. MCLOTOV and his party left the next morning. It is doubtful whether HITLER was very pleased with the results of this conference, for it had not been possible to arrive at an absolute clarification of Russia's future position and much less still to divert her attention to the Orient. It was still necessary to reckon with the likelihood of Russia's interference in the Balkans, which considerably complicated our own plans, and by the same token there was no protection against unpleasant surprises far up north on the part of the Soviet Union.

On the afternoon of 14 November Admiral RAEDER reported to the Fuehrer on the situation as it appeared to the Navy General Staff. He called HITLER's attention with even greater emphasis than ever before \* to the vital significance of the Mediterranean and North Africa for the over-all situation. He pointed out the following:

Reports on hand clearly indicate that Great Britain is well aware of the dangers threatening there and is therefore determined to counteract this with all possible intensity. The statements made by British statesmen and high-ranking military men concerning England's forthcoming

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\* Particularly in his reports on 6 and 26 September respectively.

offensive operations; the political activity in Washington, Egypt, Palestine and Turkey; the large-scale military preparations being made in Egypt, West Africa and the mother country, England; as well as the current convoy movements are all unmistakable signs. To counteract all this it is of the utmost importance to retain the initiative in the entire Mediterranean area. To this end it seems essential to speed up the attack on Gibraltar and to give greater impetus to the Italian offensive against Egypt through increased German aid. England is and will always remain the chief opponent and all forces should be concentrated for her defeat. The simultaneous clash with Soviet Russia is liable to be too much of a strain on the Wehrmacht which might result in a long-drawn-out war. It would, therefore, be advisable to postpone this conflict until such a time as England should be defeated, all the more so since for the present, and probably also for some time to come there was no reason to fear that the Soviet Union would enter the war on the side of our enemies.

In reply to these statements HITLER merely remarked that it was impossible to expedite the planned operations in the Mediterranean and that these things take time. The Admiral's suggestion to postpone the campaign against Russia until a more propitious moment was apparently ignored altogether. He (HITLER) was at that time already too self-opinated and too much imbued with his own importance as a statesman and military commander to let himself be influenced by the advice of his closest collaborators, even though it might be well-founded.

On 19 November General JOIL had a discussion with General SPEIDEL, the Chief of the German Air Force Mission in Rumania. The latter reported that of late conditions in Rumania had become very critical. He made the following statements:

"General ANTONESCU stands completely alone and the Army as well as the Legionaries are against him. The Legion has ambitious plans, it claims command of the state as its

due, but lacks leaders. Consequently, General ANTONESCU awaits further developments with some apprehension but is firmly resolved to maintain peace in the country with all means at his disposal. The attitude of the Soviet Union continues to arouse serious misgivings. Therefore, during his discussions with the two Mission Chiefs -- which are being conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust -- General ANTONESCU keeps insisting on the speedy fulfillment of the agreements concluded with General von TIPPELSKIRCH in September. It is essential for the Military Mission to know what their line of action should be in case the Russians suddenly were to march into Moldavia."

General JOUL promised that instructions covering such a contingency would soon be issued and that the problem of Rumanian arms requirements would be clarified during the forthcoming visit of General ANTONESCU.

The Rumanian Chief of State arrived in Berlin on 22 November and the next day ratified the treaty whereby Rumania joined the Three-Power Pact, which step had been effected by the Hungarian Government at Vienna three days previously. During ANTONESCU's visit, HITLER, as mentioned previously \*, confided to ANTONESCU his plans for the Balkans and obtained the latter's consent to the assembly in Rumania of German fighting forces which had been earmarked for the attack on Greece, and to the contemplated increase for this purpose of the Military Mission which was to be enlarged by one armored division and additional air force units \*\*. ANTONESCU, however, asked that Rumania be exempted from bearing the costs resulting from this increase, which request was granted. He also repeated his demands

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\* See Chapter 7, page 4 (German original).

\*\* During the middle of November two more fighter squadrons were added to the four fighter squadrons and two reconnaissance squadrons (see page 25 - German original) originally assigned to Rumania.

for allocation of antitank guns, anti-aircraft guns, trucks and planes and was promised compliance with his request in the near future. An order issued during the following days in connection with the expansion of the Military Mission on the scale proposed also included guiding principles governing the line of action the German forces were to follow in case of a Russian invasion of Rumania. These instructions stipulated that border incidents were to be disregarded but that steps should be taken to guarantee protection against Russian attacks in the area of the German fighting forces on land and in the air and that major engagements should be put off until instructions had been received from the Fuehrer.

Immediately after General ANTONESCU's return to Bucharest, serious disturbances broke out in Rumania which indicated how unsettled the country's domestic affairs still were. During the night of 27 November, Legionaries, who had disinterred the body of Cornelius CODREANU \*, the founder of the Iron Guard, stormed the prison at Jilava (south of Bucharest) and shot about 50 political prisoners. Despite immediate appeals by ANTONESCU and Horia SIMA, in which the Legionaries were beseeched to refrain from all illegal actions, numerous political murders and programs still took place during the next few days. For all that, owing to severe measures taken by ANTONESCU, it was finally possible to reestablish order, although relations between ANTONESCU and the Legionaries continued to be strained. The German Military Mission was not affected by these developments.

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\* See page 22 (German original).

On 3 December, Admiral RAUNDER, while reporting to the Fuehrer on the situation at sea, again urgently stressed the requirements for waging war against the chief opponent, England\*, and once more warned him against undertakings which involved too great a risk, as they might lead to loss of prestige which should be avoided at all costs. Moreover, they would prolong the war and, above all, provoke the United States to an unfavorable attitude towards Germany. However, this appeal, too, had no effect, for by that time HITLER was already too unyielding in his determination to carry out his great eastern campaign to be dissuaded by arguments of this nature. HITLER considered it quite unlikely that America would enter the war on the side of the enemies within any measurable space of time. At the beginning of November, just before the American presidential election, he had expressed the opinion that ROOSEVELT's election would be more favorable for Germany than that of his opposing candidate WILKIE, because it seemed likely that the latter would speed up the American armament industry still more than ROOSEVELT. In addition, he had pointed out that both men had spoken against America's entering the war. After ROOSEVELT had been elected and it was reported he had declared that in the future one half of American industry would work for England and that, in addition to the 50 American destroyers sent to Great Britain in September 1940, he planned to supply England with more ships of this type, HITLER, nevertheless, remained convinced that ROOSEVELT would continue his efforts -- in

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\* See Chapter 3, Chapter 4, page 12 (German original).

which he was allegedly supported by the American Ambassador to London, Kennedy, -- to keep the United States out of the war. On 16 September, the Selective Training and Service Act was adopted in the United States, which provided for the registration of all men between the ages of 21 and 36, the yearly induction of up to 900,000 men for one year's training, and the expansion of the Army up to a total of 1,400,000 men.\* However, it was the opinion of the German Military Attache in Washington, General von BOETTICHER, that it would not be possible before the beginning of 1942 to make available the major portion of a modern army. However, by then, HITLER believed that the campaign against Soviet Russia would have been victoriously concluded long since and that perhaps even Great Britain would be ready to come to terms.

On the afternoon of 5 December, two days after the above mentioned conversation with Admiral RAEDER, General von BRAUCHITSCH and General HALDER submitted to the Fuehrer in the Berlin Reich Chancellery, in the presence of General KEITEL and General JODL, the plans of the Army High Command for the execution of the Operations FELIX and MARITA respectively, and put before him the conclusions of the operations analysis which had been compiled, in connection with the contemplated campaign against the Soviet Union, in the Operations Division of the General Staff of the Army under

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\* According to a report of the German military attache in Washington, it was planned to bring the Army up to 35 divisions, namely 13 active and 22 reserve (civilian defense) divisions, and to increase the army and the navy air forces up to a total of 4000 planes each.

the direction of General PAULUS \*. The operations plans \*\* which, for the same purpose, had been drawn up by the Department for National Defense had been submitted as early as 19 September to General JOEL by Lieutenant Colonel von LOSSBERG, the First General Staff Officer of the Department. However, this plan was apparently not presented to HITLER and certainly did not affect the operations plan of the Army in any way; it can therefore be left out of account here.

The results of HITLER's conference with the two leading men of the Army, during which all questions were discussed in great detail, have been recorded by General JOEL in an official memorandum, a kind of protocol, which was incorporated verbatim in the war diary of the Department for National Defense; it reads as follows: \*\*\*

"The Commander in Chief of the Army High Command states as follows: As regards Operation FELIX, emphasis until now has been placed on camouflage. On 6 December, the first reconnaissance staff comprising 15 officers in civilian clothes is leaving for Spain. If the operation is to be executed in the beginning of February, it will be necessary, in view of the fact that proper preparations take 38 days, to issue the appropriate instructions in the middle of December. The Commander in Chief of

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\* See page 8 (German original).

\*\* See page 9 (German original).

\*\*\* The passages in the official memorandum dealing with Operation FELIX and Operation MAHITA as well as the commitment of German air forces in the Mediterranean already have been quoted verbatim or the gist given in the previous chapters (Chapter 4, pages 12 to 17; Chapter 6, pages 2 to 3; Chapter 7, pages 4 to 6). Nevertheless, parts of it are quoted here again verbatim, so as to show clearly the simultaneous planning of these operations and the eastern campaign and how they were connected in regard to the time element.

the Army High Command proposes that General von REICHENAU be charged with the over-all command.

As far as Operation MARITA is concerned, it will not be possible to put it into effect until the beginning of March, when the snow will be melting. In view of the fact that the strategic concentration of forces will take 78 days, orders for this operation too should be issued in the middle of December.

In the east, the Army High Command hopes to be finished with the construction of the roads and railways by spring, provided no more motor vehicles are withdrawn. Preparations for the storing of supplies have been completed to the extent that it will be possible shortly to begin this operation.

As far as the duration of the planned actions is concerned, Operation FELIX will be concluded by the end of February and the troops committed to this end will again be available in the middle of May. The termination of Operation MARITA cannot be assessed with certainty; however, this operation will run at least 3 to 4 weeks, i.e. until the middle of April. The return transportation of the troops will take an additional four weeks and their rehabilitation will then require some extra time. Although these forces cannot be spared for the eastern campaign, it is essential that this operation begins at the earliest possible moment in order to be able to take full advantage of the season which is favorable for such operations.

Complying with the request of the Commander in Chief of Army High Command for a resume of the over-all situation, the Fuehrer makes the following statements: For the time being, German intervention in Libya is out of the question. It is not yet possible to obtain a complete picture of the situation in Albania. In case the Italians are repulsed still further, the danger exists that all of Albania will be lost. Yugoslavia apparently wants to wait until the situation in Albania is clarified before making a decision concerning her position. The most important factor in the Balkans is Russia which is making an attempt to gain control in Bulgaria since Rumania has been sealed off. This makes it evident that every weakness anywhere in Europe helps the Russians to push forward.

At present, the only way to help Italy is through the commitment of German air task forces out of Sicily (two groups of "Junkers 87") and out of Southern Italy (two groups of "Junkers 88") against the British Fleet in the Mediterranean, as well as through the capture of Gibraltar. The latter step is also necessary because of other reasons. In consequence of the new developments, France in substance refuses to cede anything to Italy and in this connection uses as an argument the possibility that French-Africa might break away from the PARIS Government. However, this contingency will cease to exist as soon as a few German divisions are stationed

in Morocco or dispatched there promptly. This will make it possible to set a different tone in dealing with the PETAIAI Government. Moreover, the psychological effect of the fall of Gibraltar will be considerable and the blocking of the western entrance of the Mediterranean will be an important step.

Our warnings that attacks launched from Greece against German spheres of interest would be followed by reprisals have resulted till now in no such attacks having been effected. In all probability, this will continue to be the case during the next few months. Nevertheless, German action against Greece is essential in order to settle the situation once and for all, -- unless Greece of her own accord would end the conflict with Italy and force the British to abandon her bases in Greece. In that case, our intervention will have become unnecessary, because the issue of European hegemony will not be decided in this territory.

The strategic concentration of forces for Operation MARITA is therefore absolutely essential. Even if its execution becomes superfluous, the assembly of troops can still be turned to advantage, because the forces committed for this purpose are then immediately available for the eastern campaign. There is no doubt that, in case of an eastern campaign, Rumania as well as Finland will side with Germany.

The planned operations will be executed in the following order:

- 1) The air attack on the British Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean will be launched beginning 15 December;
- 2) the attack on Gibraltar is to start the beginning of February and end four weeks later;
- 3) the campaign against Greece is to be launched the beginning of March; if conditions are favorable it will be concluded the end of March, however, it might take until the end of April. In the latter case, however, it will probably not be necessary to employ all forces until the end.

It is desirable to win over Yugoslavia to the side of the Axis powers, for which there seems to be a possibility if the Italian forces at the Albanian front are brought to a standstill.

In answer to the question of the Commander in Chief of the Army High Command whether the Fuehrer considers the German Air Force strong enough to be able to continue the air war against England in addition to the eastern campaign, the Fuehrer states that in the spring of 1941, the British air force will not be stronger than it is today and consequently will not be able to conduct any daytime raids against Germany, whereas the

German Air Force, in view of its present moderate losses, will be stronger in the spring of 1941 than it is now. Thus, the success of the defensive air war against England is assured, even if good-sized portions of the fighter formations and antiaircraft units are committed in the east, and it will be possible to continue large-scale night nuisance raids against England during a short eastern campaign.

The Russian armed forces are inferior to the German Wehrmacht with respect to armament and personnel, particularly as far as the command set-up is concerned. Consequently, the present moment is especially favorable for an eastern campaign. It is to be expected that the Russian Army, once it is weakened, will face an even greater collapse than was the case with the fall of France in 1940. The main thing to bear in mind is that the Russians should not be driven back in a body, but that on the contrary, after the front has been penetrated, large portions of the Russian Army should be encircled. The eastern campaign will come to a conclusion with the establishment of a line approximately on a line with the Volga, from where raids will have to be conducted for the destruction of armament factories which are located further off. Following that, new buffer states (Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania, Latvia) will be established and Rumania, Gouvernement General and Finland will be enlarged; about 60 divisions have to remain in the east.

In conclusion, the Fuehrer decrees that Operation FELIX is to be executed as soon as possible and that complete preparations are to be made for Operation MARITA as well as the eastern campaign. The divisions on leave\* should be recalled, but if at all possible, not before February. The eastern campaign will begin at the earliest in the middle of May, if the winter is a normal one. The Fuehrer no longer considers it possible for Operation SWELOEWE to be carried out.

The Commander in Chief of Army High Command inquires whether lending aid to the Italians in Albania is altogether out of the question, and the Fuehrer replies that he can see no possibility for it. The Commander in Chief of Army High Command also asks how many troops are to be sent to North Africa after Gibraltar has been taken, and in reply the Fuehrer states that one armored unit and one motorized unit are to be earmarked for that purpose."

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\* In a decree dated 28 September 1940, HITLER had ordered that 300,000 metal workers were to be withdrawn from the field forces and the replacement army and given a leave of absence in order to work in the armament industry during the winter months.

Following that, General HALDER presented the plans of the Army High Command for the execution of Operations FALIX and BARITA respectively. His statements as well as HITLER's comments and orders already have been quoted elsewhere \*. The official memorandum then continues as follows:

"The Chief of the General Staff of the Army then reports on plans for the eastern campaign. First he enlarges on the geographical aspects. Then he states the following: The most important armament centers are located in the Ukraine, in Moscow and in Leningrad. The Ukraine furthermore has a surplus of agricultural products. The Pripyat Swamps divide the entire zone of operations into one northern and one southern part. In the latter the road network is poor. The best roads and railways are located in the Warsaw-Moscow area. Hence, the northern part of the zone of operations provides more favorable conditions for large-area operations than the southern part.

The area north of the Pripyat Swamps is therefore apparently occupied by a larger number of troops than the southern part of the zone of operations. In addition, the distribution of Russian forces indicates heavy concentration according to the conflicting Russian and German interests. It is reasonable to assume that the supply base of the Russians, which is protected by field fortifications, is located just east of the former Russo-Polish border. The Dnieper and Dvina Rivers constitute the most eastern line where the Russians will have to take a stand. If the Russian forces fall back any further, they will no longer be able to protect their industrial areas. Consequently, it should be our aim to prevent the Russians, by means of armored wedges, from establishing a closed defense line west of these two rivers. One particularly strong assault detachment is to advance from the area around Warsaw for an attack on Moscow. The three Army Groups assigned for operations are to be employed as follows: The one on the north is to be committed for an assault on Leningrad; the one in the center is to advance via Minsk for an attack on Smolensk; while the one on the south is to concentrate her forces for a push on Kiev. Of the last named Army Group, one army is to advance from the area around Lublin, a second army from the area about Lemberg, and a third one should proceed from Rumania. The Volga River and the Archangel area constitute the final objective of the over-all operation. On the whole, 105 infantry divisions and 33 armored and motorized divisions are to be employed, of which a large number (in the strength of two armies) will, in the beginning, follow in a second line.

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\* See Chapter 4, pages 12 to 17, and Chapter 7, pages 5 to 8 (German original).

The Fuehrer expresses his approval of the outlined operations plans and in this connection also states the following: The main object is to prevent the Russians from withdrawing in a body. The advance to the east should be effected to such an extent that the Russian air force will no longer be able to attack the Zone of Interior, while on the other hand, the German Air Force will be in a position to carry out raids for the destruction of the Russian armament industries. By this means we are bound to bring about the defeat of the Russian armed forces and prevent their revival.

The very first attack should be launched in such a manner as to make it possible to annihilate sizable numbers of enemy forces. To this end, the mobile troops should be committed at the inner wings of the two northern Army Groups, on which the chief emphasis of operations will also be placed. In the north, attempts should be made to encircle the enemy forces stationed in the Baltic States. To this end, it is necessary to reinforce the Army Group which is to launch the attack on Moscow to such a degree that considerable portions will be able to pivot to the north. The Army Group advancing south of the Pripyat Swamps should not launch the attack until later, some of its elements possibly advancing from Rumania, and should endeavor to encircle large numbers of enemy forces in the Ukraine by means of an enveloping attack from the north. At this moment, it is not yet possible to decide whether -- after the bulk of the Russian forces encircled in the north and in the south has been annihilated -- we will advance on Moscow or to the region east thereof. What matters most is to prevent the Russians from reestablishing themselves in the rear. The 130 - 140 divisions earmarked for the over-all operations are considered sufficient.

In conclusion, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army reports that eight weeks will be required for the concentration of troops for action, and that from the beginning or the middle of April, it will no longer be possible to keep the operations secret. Finally, 37 divisions will still remain in occupied France and Belgium, while one division each will be left in Holland, Denmark and the Protectorate, and 8 divisions will still be stationed in Norway; some portions of the latter will be utilized for the eastern campaign. In addition, the Instruction Division and the Airborne Division are still available."

On the day following this conference, General JOLL gave the Chief of the Department for National Defense instructions for the compiling of directives of the Supreme Command governing the air war in the eastern Mediterranean, the Operations FALIX and MARITA respectively, and the eastern campaign. On this occasion, he also stated the following:

"The Fuehrer is firmly resolved to carry out the eastern campaign -- which, with respect to the time element and locality is to a certain extent connected with Operation MARITA -- because the Army will never again attain the great strength it has at present. In addition, Russia only recently -- by her attempt to dissuade Bulgaria from joining the Three-Power Pact -- has proven again that she will always try, whenever possible, to stand in Germany's way. We can definitely count on Rumania's and Finland's participation in the eastern campaign."

On 12 December, a first draft of the directive covering Operation FRITZ -- which, at first, was the cover name for the eastern campaign -- was submitted to the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff. Lieutenant Commander JUNGE, the Naval Staff Officer attached to the Department for National Defense, took advantage of this opportunity to again point out -- in an estimate of the situation presented from the standpoint of the Navy and with a view to a two-front war against England and Russia -- that Germany, in view of the fact that the hampering of naval warfare against England would be the inevitable result, should not engage in a war with the Soviet Union, as long as she was compelled to put forth all her strength to defeat Great Britain. In view of HITLER's determination, it was to be expected that this warning, the same as all previous ones, would have no effect and besides, General JOLL did not agree with the ideas of the Navy

General Staff but, on the contrary, was imbued with the conviction that his lord and master in this case too, with the intuition of a genius, had again chosen the only right way; consequently, the situation estimate was not even put before HITLER.

On 17 December, General JODL, after making some slight improvements, submitted the draft for the directive covering Operation FRITZ, and at that occasion, was informed of an important change affecting the mission of the Army Group which was scheduled for commitment north of the Pripyat Marshes. During the conference held on 5 December, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, commenting on the strategic plans, had expressed himself to the effect that an especially large armored wedge should advance from the area around Warsaw for an attack on Moscow and that of the three assigned Army Groups, the one on the north should be committed against Leningrad, the one in the center should advance via Minsk for an assault on Smolensk, while the one on the south should attack Kiev with concentrated force. HITLER had approved these plans and had merely pointed to the necessity for making an attempt to encircle the enemy forces stationed in the Baltic States and had suggested that for this purpose, it would be necessary to strengthen the Army Group scheduled to attack Moscow to such an extent that large portions of the Army Group would be able to swing to the north. He had added that it was not yet possible to decide whether we would advance on Moscow or the area east thereof, after we had annihilated the bulk of the Russian forces which were encircled in the north and in the south. At the time the directive was compiled, this suggestion had

not been set forth as clearly as HITLER wished; instead, it had been based primarily on the operations plan of the Army High Command which HITLER, to be sure, had approved and according to which the Army Group in the center, and particularly one especially strong armored wedge, was to push ahead via Minsk and Smolensk towards Moscow. In the meantime, however, HITLER had become still more convinced that the advance on Moscow should definitely be preceded by the annihilation of the enemy forces stationed in the Baltic States as well as the capture of Leningrad and Kronstadt, in order to eliminate the Russian Fleet the quickest way possible and bring about a speedy resumption of the flow of traffic in the Baltic Sea, particularly the shipments of ore coming from Lulea. Consequently, on 17 December, when the directive was submitted by the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, HITLER once again explained to the latter with great emphasis how vitally important it was for large numbers of the mobile troops of the Army Group in the center, after they had penetrated the enemy front in White Russia, to pivot to the north, in order to destroy the enemy forces fighting in the Baltic States and capture Leningrad, in joint operation with the Army Group in the north. Not until this most vital mission had been accomplished should offensive operations against Moscow be continued. In this connection, he pointed out the great advantage of then being able to effect a converging advance from the west and the northwest against the Russian capital. Only in case of an unexpectedly rapid collapse of the Russian armed forces would it be expedient for the Army Group in the center to simultaneously pivot to the north and advance on Moscow. In addition,

HITLER stipulated that the former cover name for the eastern campaign be changed to Operation BARBAROSSA.

"Fuehrer Directive # 21" was revised accordingly, signed by HITLER on 18 December and distributed to the Wehrmacht branches that same day. Unfortunately, the text of the directive is not available in its original form but only in the final version which is contained in a supplement published in March 1941, with which I will deal later. This version differs from the one published by Peter de MENDELSSOHN \* which was changed in part. I am quoting it herewith only insofar as it corresponds to the one issued on 18 December:

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\* Peter de MENDELSSOHN: Die Muernberger Dokumente. Studien zur deutschen Kriegspolitik 1937 - 45.  
(The Muernberg Documents. Analyses of German Military Policy 1937 - 45).  
Published by Wolfgang Krueger, Hamburg 1947. Pages 318 - 322.

The Fuehrer and Supreme Commander  
of the Wehrmacht

Fuehrer Headquarters  
18 December 1940

OKW/Wehrmacht Operations Staff/Department for National Defense (Group I)  
No. 23 408/ 40 Top Secret.

Directive No. 21

Operation BARBAROSSA

The German Wehrmacht is to make preparations for conquering Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign (Operation BARBAROSSA), even before the war against England has come to a conclusion.

To this end, the Army will employ all available forces, with the exception of those required to protect the occupied territories against surprise attacks.

The Air Force will have the important task of making available for the support of the Army in the eastern campaign, forces in such strength as to make it possible to count on a speedy conclusion of the ground operations and the task of making sure that enemy air attacks will inflict as little damage as possible on the eastern German area. This concentration of forces in the east will be limited only insofar as it will be necessary to assign sufficient troops to adequately protect the entire combat zone and arms-producing region under our control against enemy air attacks, and to make sure that offensive operations against England, especially her supply shipments, will not come to a halt.

Naval operations definitely will continue to be concentrated against England even during the eastern campaign.

I shall issue the order for the strategic concentration of forces against Soviet Russia, if the occasion arises, eight weeks prior to the contemplated start of operations.

Those preparations which require a longer period to get under way should -- as far as this has not been done already -- be initiated immediately and be concluded by 15 May 1941.

However, it is of decisive importance to make sure that there is no indication of any plan to attack.

The preparations made by the High Commands are to be based on the following elements:

## I. OVER-ALL OBJECTIVE:

The bulk of the Soviet Army stationed in western Russia is to be annihilated in bold operations and with far-extending drives of armored spearheads; the withdrawal to the rear of elements at fighting strength is to be prevented.

Thereupon a line will be reached in rapid pursuit, beyond which the Russian air force will no longer be able to attack the Zone of Interior. The final objective of the operation is the establishment of a general line from the Volga to Archangel which will constitute a covering line against Asiatic Russia. In this way, the Air Force, if necessary, will be able to destroy the last remaining Russian industrial areas in the Ural.

As a result of these operations, the Russian Baltic Fleet will be quickly deprived of its bases, which will render it unfit for combat. From the very beginning of the operation, we must, by means of powerful blows, prevent the Russian air force from taking any effective measures.

## II. PROSPECTIVE ALLIES AND THEIR MISSIONS:

1. We can count on Rumania's and Finland's active participation in the war against Soviet Russia on the flanks of our operations.

The Wehrmacht High Command (OKW), in accordance with current requirements, will arrange and determine the manner whereby the fighting forces of these two countries will be placed under German command.

2. Rumania's task will consist in pinning down the enemy troops they are facing in joint operation with the German forces stationed there, and on the whole, in rendering assistance in the rear area.

3. Finland's mission will be to cover the strategic concentration of the German northern Army Group (portions of XXI Group) withdrawing from Norway and to carry out joint operations with this Group. In addition, Finland will be assigned the task of depriving the enemy of the use of Hango.

4. We have reason to believe that Swedish railways and roads will be available for the assembly march of the German northern Army Group at the latest beginning with the start of operations.

## III. THE CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS:

A. Army (approval of the plans submitted to me):

In the zone of operations, which is divided by the Pripjat Marshes into one southern and one northern part, the emphasis will be placed in the north. Two Army Groups will be assigned here.

The Army Group in the southern part -- in the center of the over-all front -- will be charged with the mission to advance with particularly strong armored and motorized units from the area around Warsaw and north thereof and to rout the enemy forces in White Russia. This will perforce make it possible for large portions of the mobile troops to pivot to the north in order to be able to annihilate the enemy forces fighting in the Baltic States, in joint operation with the northern Army Group advancing from East Prussia in the general direction of Leningrad. Only after the success of this most urgent mission has been assured, which should be followed by the occupation of Leningrad and Kronstadt, should offensive operations for the capture of the important communication and armament center Moscow be continued.

A simultaneous attempt to accomplish both objectives could be justified only by a surprisingly rapid collapse of Russian resistance.

The protection of Norway is still the most important mission of the IXI Group, even during the eastern campaign. Those forces which are available beyond these requirements, will be committed in the north (Mountain Corps), first of all for the protection of the Petsamo region and its ore mines and also of the Arctic Sea Route. Following that, they will push forward, in joint operation with Finnish forces, for an attack against the Murmansk Railway and in order to prevent the land shipments of supplies destined for the Murmansk region. Whether or not it will be possible to conduct such an operation with larger numbers of German forces (2 - 3 divisions) advancing from the area of Rovaniemi and south thereof, depends on Sweden's willingness to place her railways at our disposal for such a strategic concentration.

The main body of the Finnish Army will be charged with the mission, in keeping with the progress made by the German northern wing, to tie down as many Russian forces as possible by attacking west of or on both sides of Ladoga Lake, and to take possession of Hangö. "

The two chapters of the directive quoted below cover the assignments of the southern Army Group and of the combined German-Rumanian Group, which was to be assembled in Moldavia, at the right Army Group wing. These chapters are available only in the wording contained in the supplement published in March 1941, with which I shall deal at the appropriate time. In the absence of their original version, we must content ourselves here with an approximate summary. The Army Group scheduled for commitment south of the Pripyat Marshes was to advance from the area around Lublin and push ahead with concentrated force in the general direction of Kiev, while the combined German-Rumanian Group, which was to be formed at the right wing of the southern Army Group, was charged with the task of protecting the Rumanian area and, following in the course of the northern wing of the Army Group, was to advance from Moldavia and push northeastward. The directive then continues as follows:

" As soon as the battles south and north of the Pripyat Marshes have been fought, the following objectives should be aimed at in the course of pursuit:

In the south, the early capture of the Donetz Basin which is important from the viewpoint of military economics;

in the north, the swift capture of Moscow.

The capture of this city means a decisive victory politically and economically and, in addition, spells the elimination of the Russian's most vital railway junction.

### B. Air Force:

The Air Force will be charged with the responsibility to as far as possible paralyze the activities of the Russian air force and put it out of commission, and to support the operations of the Army at its points

of main effort, particularly at the Army Group in the center and the wing which constitutes the focal point of the southern Army Group. The Russian railways -- depending on their relative value for the success of the operations -- are to be suspended or their most important nearby points (such as bridges!) captured in bold operations by parachute and airborne troops. In order to be able to concentrate all elements against the enemy air force and for the direct support of the Army, the armament industry should not be attacked during the major operations. Such attacks, particularly against the Ural region, are advisable only after the mobile operations have been concluded.

### C. Navy:

In this campaign, the Navy is charged with the mission of preventing the escape of enemy naval forces from the Baltic Sea, besides safeguarding our own coast. In view of the fact that after the capture of Leningrad, the Russian Baltic Fleet will be deprived of its last stronghold and thus be placed in a hopeless position, major naval operations should be avoided prior to that. After the Russian Fleet has been put out of commission, it will be essential to safeguard the total maritime traffic in the Baltic Sea, including the supply shipments for the northern army wing (mine sweeping!).

All measures which will be taken by the Commanders in Chief on the basis of this directive should definitely concur in one point: they are to be referred to as precautionary measures, in case Russia should change her previous attitude towards us. The number of officers, who will be assigned to preliminary duties at an early date, is to be kept as small as possible. Additional participants are to be briefed as late as possible and then only to the extent essential for the functions of each individual. Otherwise the danger exists that if our preparations -- the execution date of which is still altogether indefinite -- become known, very serious political and military complications will be the result.

I await the reports of the Commanders in Chief concerning their future plans based on this directive.

All Wehrmacht branches will report to me via the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW) on the measures they contemplate, including their chronological progress.

signed: Adolf HITLER \*

Although the wording of this directive hardly left room for any doubt concerning HITLER's determination to wage war against Soviet Russia, Admiral RAADER still considered it imperative to make one last attempt to bring about a postponement of the eastern campaign until after England had been defeated. He also might have been encouraged to do so by the concluding statements of the directive to the effect that the execution date of Operation BARBAROSSA was as yet altogether indefinite. On 27 December, while reporting to HITLER, he stressed once more that strict concentration of the entire war apparatus against England as the chief opponent was the urgent necessity of the hour. He also stated the following:

"On the one hand, Great Britain has gained in strength owing to the ill-fated Italian campaign in the eastern Mediterranean and due to increasing American aid. On the other hand, however, it is possible to deal her a fatal blow through cutting off her maritime traffic, which is already producing results. However, far too little is being done to promote U-boat construction and the development of the naval air arm. Germany's entire war potential should be employed to intensify the campaign against Great Britain, which means to strengthen the Navy and the Air Force. Any dividing of forces prolongs the war and endangers the ultimate success of the campaign. Consequently, the Navy General Staff, now as before, has serious misgivings about effecting this campaign before the defeat of England.

HITLER replied that U-boat construction should be promoted as much as possible and that the previous production of 12 to 18 boats per month should be increased. However, he stated that, in view of the present political developments and Russia's tendency towards interfering in Balkan affairs, it was absolutely necessary to first eliminate the Soviet Union, the last continental enemy, before thinking of the conquest of England. The Army

should therefore be brought up to the required strength; only then would it be possible to fully concentrate on the Air Force and the Navy. Thus, as was to be expected, this last attempt of the Chief of Naval Operations to effect a postponement of the eastern campaign was also doomed to failure.

Directive # 21 constituted the basis for additional preparations for Operation BARBAROSSA on the part of the Wehrmacht branches. The Army High Command (OKH) now decided they would not wait until February, as requested by HITLER during the conference of 5 December, but would begin as early as the middle of January to recall to a large extent the field forces which had been placed at the disposal of the armament industry during the winter and the twenty divisions which had been sent to work in the Zone of Interior on a leave of absence, on the basis of the Fuehrer decree of 28 September. However, the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW) managed to bring it about that the men were not recalled all at once but only in sections, after being replaced by civilians, and that the so-called "furlough divisions" too were called back only when needed and at certain intervals and for a while minus the armament workers. It was stipulated that those installations which were the most vital for the campaign against England should, for the time being, not be affected at all by this and the troops employed there should be organized to form an OKH reserve.

The task of procuring the necessary fuel for the contemplated operations involved considerable difficulties. On 28 November, General KEITEL

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\* See footnote on page 45 (German original).

had pointed out to the high commands of the Wehrmacht branches that during the last few months, the Wehrmacht's consumption of fuel for motor vehicles had been increasing steadily and to a marked degree -- in October, for instance, to about 100,000 tons of gasoline and 25,000 tons of motor fuel oil -- while on the other hand, the present situation, and particularly the great need for accumulating during the inactive months sufficient supplies for future operations, at the moment only warranted a maximum monthly consumption of 65,000 tons of gasoline and 20,000 tons of motor fuel oil. Therefore, he stressed that, effective immediately, the fuel ration should be adapted to this over-all quota. On 4 December, the Army High Command, which in matters of this kind was the competent authority for the three Wehrmacht branches, reported that the newly established allowance would not be sufficient for the tasks which had to be accomplished, but on the contrary, that the monthly requirements amounted to about 90,000 tons of gasoline and 27,000 tons of motor fuel oil and that even these quantities would be inadequate as soon as Operations FELIX and MARITA should get under way and as soon as the amount of supplies stored in the east should be increased, which probably would be in January. However, on 19 December, the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW) was compelled to reply that a decisive curtailment of fuel consumption was an absolute necessity, lest in the Spring of 1941 we be faced with a shortage which would make it impossible to effect the contemplated large-area operations.

In view of these plans, it was absolutely necessary to make sure that there was no disruption of oil shipments from Rumania. Therefore, now as before, it was of the utmost importance to protect the Rumanian oil region against seizure by a third power. In the meantime, on the basis of the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW) directive issued on 26 November \*, the Chief of the German Military Mission in Rumania had submitted his plans for the commitment of German instruction elements in case of military measures on the part of the Soviet Union. His report, which was received on 12 December, stated the following:

"The tactical grouping of Russian troops indicates a concentration of forces in Southern Bessarabia and in Bucovina. Consequently, we must reckon with the possibility of a westward thrust via Galati aimed at cutting off the Province of Moldavia and an advance from Bucovina in a southeasterly direction in order to roll up the Pruth River front.

The Rumanian plan of operations provides for the defense of the Pruth River front in a line running from Galati to Jassy and the withdrawal of the forces committed in Northern Moldavia and Southern Bucovina to a fortified field position extending from Jassy via Targu Neamt to the Carpathian Mountains. In case of a Russian break-through this line or the Pruth River front line, and in the event of a thrust via the Eastern Carpathian Mountains on the part of Hungary, the Province of Moldavia should be given up and a line of defense set up in a prearranged support position extending from Braila over Focsani to the Trotuzul Valley.

However, instead of the above, the German Military Mission has proposed to the Rumanian General Staff that the eastern and northeastern borders of the Moldavia Province, with the exception of the northeastern corner, be defended to the last, in order to prevent the enemy from breaking through at Galati and to stop enemy troops from pushing forward from Bucovina on both sides of the Sereth River. The German instruction elements would support the Rumanian armed forces in these operations. In case of an impending Russian attack, they are to be massed in the Focsani - Raznicul Serat - Buzau - Sereth sector for offensive defense against enemy

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\* See page 38 (German original).

attacks at Galati or a Russian thrust from Bucovina. The assembly of these forces will be concluded within eighteen hours of receipt of marching orders. The units of the German Air Force stationed in Rumania will, in the main, be charged with the mission to protect the Ploesti oil region.

In order to avoid any incidents at the Russo-Rumanian border, the Military Mission has decreed that a zone, 5 kilometers in width, be established along this border, which members of the German Wehrmacht are forbidden to enter. On the other hand, they have issued instructions to the German Wehrmacht to repulse any Russian attack, and in such cases to launch immediate counterattacks with all means at their disposal. The 16th Panzer Division\*, which has been on the approach route since 15 December, will for a short while serve as reserve of the Chief of the Military Mission, in order to be ready, if called upon, to be employed either in Northern Moldavia, after crossing the tip of Hungary, or in Southern Moldavia, advancing via Brasov and Buzau."

HITLER expressed his approval with these plans.

At the end of December, there began the transportation to Rumania of the advance echelon of the assembling Twelfth Army. In conformity with a request by Bulgaria, the two armored divisions which arrived first (the 5th and 11th) were billeted in and around Cernevođa, so as to make it possible for these divisions to resist a Russian penetration of Dobrudja and check a push on Varna, which Bulgaria feared might happen.\*\*

On 9 January 1941, a meeting took place at the Berghof which already has been mentioned several times.\*\*\* This conference was held by HITLER with General von BRAUCHITSCH, the Deputy Chief of Operations and the Chief of the Operations Division of the General Staff of the Army, the Chief of

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\* See Chapter 7, page 4 (German original).

\*\* See Chapter 7, page 10 etc. (German original).

\*\*\* See Chapter 4, page 19; Chapter 5, page 36 etc.; Chapter 6, page 8 etc.; and Chapter 7, page 11 etc. (German original).

the Operations Division of the Navy General Staff and the Chief of the General Staff of the Air Force, and was also attended by General KEITEL and General JOEL. The main topics of discussion were the measures to be taken in support of the Italian campaigns in Libya and Albania, the additional preparations for Operation MARITA and the procedure to be followed in conducting Operation ATILA \*. The only thing of interest in this connection is the remark made by the Commander in Chief of the Army High Command to the effect that the units committed for Operation MARITA would not in any case participate in the eastern campaign. In this connection HITLER stated that the forces earmarked for protection against Turkey as well as some of the other units could probably soon be withdrawn for commitment in the eastern campaign.

Supplementing these discussions, HITLER, addressing the members of the conference in the presence of the German Foreign Minister, set forth his views concerning the over-all military/political situation. The gist of his statements was as follows:

At the time, he viewed the chances for success of the campaigns in Poland and in the west with optimism, because cool-headed reflection had

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\* Owing to reports received at the beginning of December, we had become apprehensive that General WEYGAND and the French Colonies in North and West Africa might break away from the PETAIN Government. In that event, HITLER planned to immediately seize unoccupied France and on 11 December had issued Fuehrer Directive # 19, in which he instructed the Wehrmacht branches to take the necessary measures for this purpose. These preparations were referred to by the cover name "Operation ATILA". See Chapter 10.

convinced him that the claims made by the enemy powers with respect to their gigantic armament program could not possibly be true, owing to economic reasons. For instance, Germany's production of iron has been greater than that of England and France combined. Likewise, Germany has produced far more aluminum than these two nations and, in addition, has had larger numbers of workers at her disposal. Besides, democracies are not in a position to increase their economic power to the extent possible in Germany. He has arrived at the same conclusion after studying the financial expenditures of the enemy nations. In addition to all that, the German Wehrmacht definitely has taken the lead in technical knowledge. Such an analysis of economic, financial and military affairs can be depended on, and should also be applied at this time while evaluating the situation.

Norway is under our firm control and her protection is assured; it is not likely that British forces will make any landings there, and the only possibility to be considered is that of English nuisance raids.

The occupied western territories are threatened only by the British Air Force. The following situation exists in France: She has stumbled into the war and the first disillusionment took place in the Fall of 1939; the crushing defeat she suffered in the Summer of 1940 was utterly beyond anything the French had expected and the result was inevitable. At the present time, a certain change of attitude has set in owing to the Greek victories in Albania. In the occupied territory, the people have only one desire: to end the war as soon as possible. In unoccupied France, some portions of the population and of the Army too still entertained

hopes for a change of the situation; these people are still willing to resist Germany. On the whole, there is a growing tendency not to commit oneself. This is true of North Africa to an even greater degree. The entire French nation unanimously opposes the cession to Italy of Nice, Corsica and Tunis. The de GAULLE movement is certainly troublesome for the French VICHY Government, but has also gained many followers in France. Particularly dangerous is General WEYGAND, who undoubtedly has told Marshal PETAIN he would make North Africa independent if the PETAIN Government takes up the fight against England. Consequently, the French Government is in a dilemma. At the moment, opposition to Germany is increasing, although responsible military authorities are quite aware of the fact that France is weak and helpless. The preparations for Operation ATILIA have not remained a secret, which has made the French all the more inclined to await developments. Since LAVAL's dismissal \*, Germany is no longer under any obligation, and that is all the better.

Spain's attitude is one of hesitation. Although there is apparently little chance for success, another attempt will be made to convince the Spanish Government to enter the war.

In the Balkans, Rumania shows a friendly attitude; Bulgaria is loyal to the Axis powers. King BORIS' hesitation in joining the Three-Power Pact has been motivated by fear. As a result, he has been under pressure by Russia, whose aim it is to be able to use Bulgaria as a concentration area

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\* Pierre LAVAL, Vice-President of the French Council of Ministers, was dismissed from his post by Marshal PETAIN on 13 December 1940. See Chapter 10.

for action against the Bosphorus. Since then Bulgaria is determined to join the Three-Power Pact. Yugoslavia maintains a cautious attitude; she wants to win without any active intervention on her part, and therefore withholds her decision.

In these territories, a change to the detriment of Germany is out of the question. Even the loss of North Africa would, from a military viewpoint, only restore the situation as it existed prior to 25 June 1940. Consequently, Germany's over-all situation is far more favorable than it was on 1 September 1939.

An invasion of England is possible only after complete control of the air has been achieved and she has suffered a definite loss of power; otherwise it would be a crime to undertake it. The British, in fighting the war, ultimately aim at defeating Germany on the Continent; however, their own resources are not sufficient to accomplish this. The British Navy, owing to its commitment on two widely separated theaters of war, is weaker than ever and is not in a position to effect major reinforcements to any decisive degree. The British Air Force has been very adversely affected by the bottlenecks in the supply of British raw materials resulting from the stoppage of imports, especially of aluminum, and also by the effects of the German air and naval attacks on British industries. Their own aircraft industry has been impaired to such an extent that instead of an increase there has been a curtailment of production. These damaging attacks by the German Air Force should be continued even more systematically than heretofore. Finally, as far as the British Army is concerned, there is no chance

of its functioning as an invasion army. The main thing which keeps England going is the hope for aid from the United States and Soviet Russia, for the destruction of the English mother country is just a matter of time. However, England hopes to be able to hold out until she succeeds in effecting a large continental block against Germany. The diplomatic steps taken for this purpose are plainly evident.

STALIN, the leader of Russia, is a shrewd person; he will not openly come out against Germany, but we must reckon with the fact that in situations difficult for Germany, he will complicate matters to an increasing degree. It is STALIN's desire to fall heir to an impoverished Europe; besides, he stands in need of victories and is imbued with the drive to the west. He is also definitely aware of the fact that a total victory by Germany would place Soviet Russia in a very difficult position.

The British are sustained by the likelihood that Russia may enter the war. They will be out of the running only when this last hope left on the Continent is crushed. It is not his (HITLER's) belief that the English are "mad fools"; if they realize there is no longer any chance of winning the war, they will stop, for they know that if they lost the war they would be deprived of the power to hold the Empire together. However, if they could succeed in holding out and activating 40 - 50 divisions and should receive aid from the United States and Russia, Germany's situation would be very critical. This must not be allowed to happen.

Until now (HITLER continued), he has been guided by the principle to always smash the enemy's most important positions in order to advance.

Consequently, it is now necessary to defeat Russia. Then the British will either give in or Germany will be able to continue the fight against Great Britain under the most favorable conditions. Russia's defeat would also make it possible for Japan to attack the United States with all means at her disposal, which would prevent the latter from entering the war.

The time element plays a particularly important part in the defeat of Russia. Although the Russian armed forces resemble a giant made of clay and without a head, the nature of their future development cannot be predicted with certainty. Since it is necessary to conquer Russia in any case, it is preferable to do so now when Russia's armed forces lack leaders and are inadequately equipped, and while the Russians are struggling to overcome great difficulties in their armament industry, which has been developed with outside aid. Nevertheless, the Russians should not be underestimated even now, and it is therefore necessary to launch our attack with the greatest possible strength. Under no circumstances should the Russians be driven back in a frontal move. For this reason it is essential to effect the most savage penetrations. The most important task is the rapid cutting off of the Baltic Sea area; to this end it is necessary to especially reinforce the right wing of the German elements advancing north of the Pripyat Marshes. Distances in Russia are great, but not more so than those already being overcome by the German Wehrmacht. The operations are to be aimed at the annihilation of the Russian Army, the seizure of the most important industrial regions, and the destruction of the remaining industrial areas, particularly in the sector of Jekatarinburg; in addition, we

should take possession of the district of Baku.

The defeat of the Soviet Union will mean a great relief for Germany. It would then be necessary for only 40 - 50 divisions to remain in the east, while it would be possible to reduce the Army and to devote the entire armament industry to production for the Air Force and the Navy. Then it will be necessary to set up a fully serviceable system of antiaircraft - artillery protection and to transfer the most important industries to regions which are not in danger. Germany will then be unassailable. Russia's immense territory contains boundless riches. Germany should control this area economically and politically, without annexing it. Germany would then command all potentialities to also wage future wars against continents; then it could no longer be defeated by anyone. When the eastern campaign has been carried out, Europe will hold her breath.

The 15th of May had been tentatively designated as the starting date of operations. In the meantime, the railways had begun preparations for the strategic concentration according to plan. On 17 January, General GERCKE, the Chief of the Wehrmacht transportation system, reported to the Wehrmacht Operations Staff that so far, out of the total of 8,500 kilometers of railways in the east, which had to be prepared for most intensive utilization, 40 percent double track and 20 percent single track railways already had been completed. Upon commencement of the assembly march, 36 trains would be running daily on each of the scheduled assembly routes. In view of the fact that Operation BARBAROSSA would considerably aggravate

the already existing shortage of engines and railway cars, it was necessary to intensify accordingly the construction program of the Reich Railway.

The preparations for the eastern campaign were quite considerably handicapped because of the fact that they had to be carried out with the most perfect camouflage possible. It was essential to avoid anything which might make the Russians suspicious and prematurely cause strained relations with the Soviet Union. On 10 January, a new trade treaty as well as a boundary and resettlement agreement had been signed in Moscow. HITLER emphatically expressed his desire that the obligations specified in these agreements and undertaken by Germany should be fulfilled promptly. This complicated matters considerably, because the Russian requests submitted to the German industries conflicted with their shipments to the Wehrmacht. Nevertheless, the Russian deliveries were given priority status. Even in questions of a purely political nature HITLER exercised the greatest caution. At the beginning of January, he had issued instructions that the Soviet Union should not be informed of the German troop movements to Rumania until she herself should make inquiries. However, for the sake of maintaining more or less normal relations, he deemed it advisable to anticipate a Russian demarche by an explanation on our part. Consequently, on 12 January, the State Secretary of the Foreign Office, von WEIZSACKER, notified the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, DEKANOSOV, of the concentration of forces in Rumania, and in this connection the reason specified presumably was the presence of British troops in Greece. Thereupon, the Soviet Union raised vehement objections in Berlin, with the result that HITLER issued orders

to stop for the moment all visible preparations for the crossing of the Danube by the Twelfth Army. HITLER did not believe that the Twelfth Army's forthcoming entry into Bulgaria would bring on a war with Russia, but he thought it likely that the Soviet Union would make an attempt to induce Turkey to commit hostile acts against Germany.

As mentioned previously \*\*, the Italian Government and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff were informed about Operation MARITA during conferences which took place between HITLER and MUSSOLINI at the Berghof and which lasted from 18 to 20 January. On the last day, HITLER enlarged upon his ideas and interpretations of the situation before the Duce, Count CIANO and the Italian Generals GUZZONI, GANDIN and MARRAS, in the presence of the Reich Foreign Minister and his party, the Chiefs of the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW) and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, the authorized German General in Rome and the Chief Adjutant\*\*\* of the Wehrmacht; on this occasion, he also hinted at his attitude towards the Soviet Union, without, however, disclosing his true intentions.

HITLER started by pointing out that Finland, owing to its nickel-ore deposits, which were the only such deposits in Europe, was of great importance

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\* See Chapter 7, page 13 etc. (German original).

\*\* See Chapter 7, page 14 etc. (German original).

\*\*\* Chief Adjutant to HITLER. The full designation was "Chef Adjutant der Wehrmacht beim Fuehrer." His responsibilities were much wider than is normally the case with an adjutant. They included co-ordination of the work of the Army, Navy and Air Force adjutants (who were really more or less liaison officers) attached to HITLER's headquarters, and control of the Army Personnel Office.

for Germany. Then he went on to point out that although the Russians have promised to supply Germany with the required quantities of nickel they will do this only as long as they consider it desirable. Therefore, no further interference in Finland must be allowed.

The assembly of German troops in Rumania has resulted in a demarche on the part of the Soviet Government, which will be duly rejected. The Russians always become insolent during those periods when the weather makes it impossible to attack them. The strategic concentration in Rumania has a threefold purpose: To conduct a campaign against Greece, to protect Bulgaria against attacks on the part of Russia and Turkey, and to fulfill the guarantees given to Rumania. Each of these missions requires a special force; therefore, on the whole, it will be necessary to commit very large numbers of troops and their assembly will take a great deal of time.

It is desirable to effect this strategic concentration without enemy interference. Consequently, our plans should not be revealed prematurely, and it is therefore necessary to delay crossing the Danube as long as possible and then to launch the attack as early as possible. For this reason, it is also inadvisable to transport a German force to Albania at this time. If these troops remain behind the front, it will have an undesirable psychological effect; on the other hand, if they are committed for action, it would also prematurely set off the war in the southeast.

In all probability, Turkey will remain neutral. Things could become very unpleasant for us if Turkey would declare her solidarity with England and place her airfields at England's disposal.

However, (HITLER continued) the over-all situation in the east can be evaluated correctly only by taking as a basis the situation prevailing in the west. The attack on the British Isles is the final aim. Germany's situation in this connection resembles the predicament of a man who has only one shot left in his gun; if he misses, his situation will be much more critical than heretofore. By the same token, it would not be possible to effect another invasion, because a failure would involve too great a loss of materiel. Then it would no longer be necessary for England to worry about an invasion and she would be in a position to concentrate her forces wherever she wished and at any desired point of the perimeter. However, as long as the landings have not yet materialized the British will always have to consider the likelihood of an attack. The invasion, however, can be carried out only under certain conditions with regard to the weather, and these were not prevalent in the Fall.

The mission in the west also includes protection of the front extending from Kirkcubright to the Spanish border against attacks from England. In addition, it is necessary to always keep in readiness one force in Southern France which would be able to take action in case England should gain a foothold in Portugal. The blocking of the Strait of Messina by the Air Force is but a poor substitute for the possession of Gibraltar. The plans for the attack on Gibraltar guarantee certain success. With Gibraltar in her possession, Germany would also be in a position to establish herself with strong forces in North Africa and thus put an end to WEYGAND's black-mailing. Therefore, if the Italian Government should succeed in finally

convincing Franco to enter the war, it would be a great victory and within a short time would result in a fundamental change of the situation in the Mediterranean.

America, even if she participates in the war, does not represent any great danger. The giant block Russia is much more dangerous. Although Germany has concluded very advantageous political and economic agreements with the Soviet Union, it is better to rely on our power. To be sure, this would tie down a very considerable number of forces at the Russian border, which would make it impossible to provide the armament industry with the sufficient number of workers necessary to increase armament production for the Air Force and the Navy to maximum capacity. As long as STALIN, who is clever and prudent, is alive, there is probably no danger of any Russian attack; however, when he is gone it might be possible for the Jews, who are now keeping in the back ground, to again gain control. On the whole, the Russians are constantly endeavoring to read new claims into the agreements; that is why they also oppose any precise wording of such pacts. It is consequently necessary not to lose sight of the Russian factor and to protect ourselves with power and diplomatic skill. In the past, Russia constituted no danger whatsoever for Germany; however, today, in this age of aviation, it is possible to launch air raids out of Russia and the Mediterranean area on the Rumanian oil field region, which could reduce this territory to a smoking heap of ruins; and these oil fields are of vital importance for the Axis powers.

These statements were followed by HITLER's lengthy and didactic discourses concerning the determining factors in modern warfare, which are not of interest here. It is not known what impression HITLER's recital made on MUSSOLINI and his party. However, it is difficult to imagine that these views, some of which were really completely erroneous and foolhardy, had a very convincing effect.

Toward the end of January, the Eastern Foreign Armies Section of the Army General Staff coordinated the information they had obtained concerning the Red Army in a summary which was submitted to the Wehrmacht Operations Staff on 29 January. In this survey they estimated the peace strength of the Red Army at 100 rifle and 33 cavalry divisions as well as 24 motorized and mechanized brigades, all in all totalling 2 million men, while the war strength of the Russian field forces was calculated at 20 armies, 150 rifle divisions (15 of them motorized), 33 cavalry divisions and 36 motorized and mechanized brigades, with a sum total of roughly 4 million men. It was furthermore assumed that of these formations, 29 rifle and 7 cavalry divisions as well as 5 motorized and mechanized brigades were tied down in Asiatic Russia, so that it was necessary to reckon with 121 rifle and 25 cavalry divisions as well as 31 motorized and mechanized brigades in European Russia, although it was reasonable to assume that of these, 15 rifle divisions would be committed for protection against Finland and that 5 mountain divisions would be kept in the Caucasus. Owing to the absence of Russian figures, it is, for the present, not possible to ascertain to what extent these estimates were correct.

On 1 February, the Army High Command (OKH) submitted to the Fuehrer the "initial assembly order" for Operation BARBAROSSA which had been compiled by the Operations Division of the General Staff. This order too, the same as "Fuehrer Directive # 21", was not published in its original form but in the later final version\*, according to which -- owing to new instructions issued by HITLER in March 1941, which will be discussed later on -- the assignments for Army Group South and the armies under its command were changed through a supplement. The earlier version, with which we are concerned here, is not available. Consequently, as far as Army Group South is concerned, we must confine ourselves to general statements. Those portions of the initial assembly order which sets forth the assignments for the Army Groups and the armies and which deal with the over-all mission, the line of action the enemy is likely to follow, and our own aims, can be omitted here, because we are already familiar with the salient points through "Fuehrer Directive # 21" and records of HITLER's conferences with the Commander in Chief of Army High Command and the Chief of the General Staff.

The directive stipulated the following:

"The reinforced left wing of Army Group South under General von RUNDSTEDT will push forward from the area around Lublin in the direction of Kiev, annihilate the Russian forces in Galicia and in Western Ukraine while still west of the Dnieper River, and take prompt possession of the Dnieper bridges at and below Kiev in order to be able to continue operations on the other side of the Dnieper River.

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\* Peter de MENDALSSOHN, see also pages 332 - 339 (German original) .

As part of this mission, the right wing of Army Group South, i.e. the Twelfth Army which is assembling in Moldavia, will safeguard the Rumanian area, which is of vital importance for the German conduct of the war, against a Russian attack and, following in the path of the northern wing of the Army Group, will advance, supported by armored elements, across the Pruth and Dniester Rivers in a northeasterly direction.

The bulk of the armored elements which has been combined to form the First Panzer Army will, in conjunction with the Seventeenth and the Sixth Army, penetrate the enemy defenses between Lemberg and Kowel and, advancing via the Berditschev - Shitomir sector, will speedily reach the Dniester River at and below Kiev and then push forward along the Dniester River in a southeasterly direction, in order to prevent the enemy forces, which are fighting in Galicia and Western Ukraine, from escaping across the Dniester River and to annihilate them through a rear attack.

The Seventeenth Army, by vigorously pushing forward its left flank which is to be reinforced, will drive back the enemy to the southeast and, taking advantage of the assault by the armored elements, will quickly reach the Winniza - Berditschev area and then continue the attack either in a southeasterly or easterly direction, depending on the situation.

The Sixth Army, while covering the northern flank of the Army Group against attacks from the Pripyat Marshes, will send forward the largest possible number of forces to follow the Panzer Army as quickly as possible in the direction of Shitomir, in order to pivot to the southeast west of the Dniester River and, in collaboration with the Panzer Army, prevent the enemy from escaping across the Dniester River.

The Army Group Center, under the command of General von BOCK, is charged with the task of routing the enemy forces in White Russia and, by combining its mobile elements, which are to be moved up south and north of Minsk, will speedily reach the Smolensk area, thus making possible the coordinated action of large portions of its mobile elements and the Army Group North for the purpose of crushing the enemy forces fighting in the Baltic States and in the Leningrad region.

In addition, the Second Panzer Army, in combined operation with the Fourth Army, will penetrate the enemy lines at and north of Kobryn and, through a rapid advance towards Sluzk and Minsk together with the Third Panzer Army, which will push forward into the region north of Minsk, will bring about the destruction of the enemy forces stationed in the territory between Bialystok and Minsk. Then the Second Panzer Army, in close collaboration with the Third Panzer Army, will as speedily as possible reach the area of Smolensk and south thereof and prevent the assembling of enemy

troops in the Upper Dnieper region, so as to make sure that freedom of action for further missions be retained by the Army Group.

The Third Panzer Army, in joint action with the Ninth Army, will break through the enemy lines north of Grodno, and by rapidly advancing to the region north of Minsk together with the Second Panzer Army, will make possible the annihilation of the enemy elements committed between Bialystok and Minsk. Thereupon, in close contact with the Second Panzer Army, it will reach the area of Witebsk and north thereof as speedily as possible and prevent the concentration of enemy forces in the Upper Dvina region, so as to make sure that the Army Group will retain freedom of action for additional operations.

The Fourth Army is assigned the task of attacking with concentrated effort on both sides of Brest-Litovsk and to force a crossing over the Bug River, thus clearing the way towards Minsk for the Second Panzer Army, enabling the majority of its units to push forward across the Seczara River at Slonim and south thereof; and, taking advantage of the assault launched by the Panzer Armies, it will destroy the enemy troops stationed in the area between Bialystok and Minsk in cooperation with the Ninth Army. Then, following the Second Panzer Army and covering its southern flank against attacks from the Pripyat Marshes, it will force a crossing over the Berezhina River between Bobruisk and Borissov and reach the Dnieper River at Mogilev and north thereof.

The Ninth Army, in joint action with the Third Panzer Army, will concentrate its forces at the northern wing and penetrate the enemy lines west and north of Grodno; it will then press forward in the direction of Lida and Vilna and, exploiting the advance of the Panzer Armies, will rout the enemy elements stationed between Bialystok and Minsk together with the Fourth Army and then, following the Third Panzer Army, will get up to the Dvina River at Polotsk and south thereof.

The Army Group North, under the command of General von LEEB, is charged with the mission of crushing the enemy forces committed in the Baltic States, and of occupying the Baltic harbors as well as capturing Leningrad and Kronstadt, thus depriving the Russian Fleet of its bases. The Army High Command (OKH) will take steps in due time to arrange for the joint action of Army Group North and strong elements of Army Group Center which will advance towards Smolensk. In addition, the Army Group will penetrate the enemy front by attacking with concentrated force in the direction of Dvinaburg and, sending ahead its mobile elements, will drive with its right flank, which is to be reinforced, as rapidly as possible to the region of Opotschka, in order to stop enemy troops at fighting strength from escaping eastward from the Baltic States and to make possible further rapid thrusts in the direction of Leningrad.

The Fourth Panzer Army, in joint action with the Sixteenth and the Eighteenth Army, will penetrate the enemy front line between Lake Wytit (east of Goldap) and the Tilsit-Schaulen road; they will push forward towards the Dvina River at and below Dvinaburg and establish bridgeheads at the northern banks of the river; they will then reach the area north-east of Opotsch as speedily as possible and from there advance either northeastward or northward, depending on the situation.

The Sixteenth Army, in collaboration with the Panzer Army, will attack the enemy they are facing with concentrated force on both sides of the Gumbinnen - Kowno road. While vigorously driving with its right flank, which is to be reinforced, to follow the Panzer Army, they will as speedily as possible reach the northern banks of the Dvina River at and below Dvinaburg and then follow the Panzer Army to the region of Opotschka.

Finally, the Eighteenth Army will pierce the line of the enemy it is facing with concentrated force at the Tilsit - Riga road and east thereof and, by rapidly driving the majority of its elements across the Dvina River at and below Stockmannshof (17 kilometers northwest of Jakobstadt), it will cut off and annihilate the enemy troops stationed southwest of Riga. In addition, it will, by rapidly pushing ahead towards the Ostrov - Pskov line, prevent the enemy troops from escaping south of Lake Peipus and, following the instructions of Army Group North, will -- possibly in conjunction with mobile forces stationed north of Lake Peipus -- clear Estonia of enemy elements. The arrangements for the occupation of the Baltic Islands Oesel (Saaremaa), Dagoe (Hiiumaa) and Moon (Muhu) will be made in such a manner that it will be possible to carry them out suddenly, as soon as the situation warrants it.

At the start of operations, the Army High Command (OKH) will bring up its reserves as follows: One strong group each will be assigned to the region of Reichshof (Rzeszov) and the area east of Warsaw, while one smaller group each will be brought up to the territories of Zamosc, Suwalki and Lydka (Zydkuhnen) respectively."

The following instructions were issued to the Army Headquarters Norway which was under direct command of the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW) \* :

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\* Peter de MANDELSSOHN, See also pages 337/38 (German original).

"The most important task continues to be the certain protection of the entire Norwegian territory, not only against surprise raids but also against resolute invasion attempts on the part of the British, with which we must reckon during the course of the summer.

This mission requires

a) that first of all, the batteries earmarked for strengthening the coastal defense be set up by the middle of May with all possible energy and with the aid of all transportation facilities,

b) that the formations at present stationed in Norway not be weakened to any large extent through the operations conducted in connection with the BARBAROSSA campaign outside of Norway, but that they even be enlarged in the Kirkenes - Narvik sector which is the most vulnerable. Steps should be taken immediately to effect this reinforcement with the aid of elements already stationed in Norway.

In addition to these defensive functions, the Army Headquarters Norway is charged with the following missions:

a) At the beginning of operations, and if necessary even sooner, they will march into the Petsamo region and, together with Finnish forces, will protect it against attacks launched by land and sea and from the air; in this connection, the nickel mines, which are essential for German armaments, are particularly important. (Operation RENNTEUER);

b) they will take action to reduce as far as possible the area of the Murmansk base for use as an installation for offensive operations by enemy land, sea and air forces and, if sufficient troops become available, they will take possession of this strong point. (Operation SILBERFUCHS).

In any case, it is to be expected that Sweden will herself safeguard her northeastern border with sufficiently large numbers of troops. "

As far as the cooperation of other countries was concerned, the initial assembly order mentioned that we could rely on the active participation of Rumania and Finland in the campaign against the Soviet Union, and that the method of their collaborating and the placing of their fighting forces under German command would be regulated in due time.

It was stated that Rumania would be charged with the task of keeping occupied the enemy forces they were facing in conjunction with the German

elements assembling there, and on the whole would be responsible for rendering assistance in the rear area. Finland, after depriving the enemy of the use of Hango at the earliest possible moment, was to be responsible for covering the assembly march of the German troops in Northern Finland. Her troops were to launch an attack -- at the latest when Army Group North would be crossing the Dvina River -- on the Russian forces committed before the Finnish southeastern front, with their main effort either east or west of Lake Ladoga, depending on the instructions of the Army High Command (OKH), and were to aid the Army Group in routing the enemy troops.

We were informed that we could presumably not count on Sweden's active participation, but that there was a chance that Sweden would permit the utilization of her railways for the assembly and the supply of German elements in Northern Finland.

On 3 February, the Chief of the Army General Staff, on the basis of this initial assembly order, reported to the Fuehrer at the Berghof concerning the contemplated mode of procedure in connection with Operation BARBAROSSA. This conference was also attended by the Commander in Chief of Army High Command, the Chief of the Operations Division of the Army General Staff, Colonel HEUSINGER, as well as General KEITEL and General JOML. The war diary of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff contains the following entry concerning this parley:

"The Chief of the Army General Staff states as follows:  
It is to be expected that the enemy has available approximately 100 infantry,

25 cavalry and 30 mechanized divisions \*. It is important to note that the Russian infantry divisions too have at their disposal a relatively large number of tanks; however, they are odds and ends of inferior quality. While the Russian Army possesses more mechanized divisions, the German mechanized divisions are superior in quality. The Russians have standard artillery equipment, but here too the materiel is inferior. Among the Russian leaders, only TIMOSCHENKO \*\* is outstanding. The aims of the Russian command are not plainly evident. Strong forces are committed at the border; a withdrawal is feasible only to a limited degree, because the Baltic States and the Ukraine, for reasons of supply, are of vital importance for the Soviet Union. The Russians are constructing fortifications, especially in the northern and southern part of the Russian western border.

The instructions issued to the three Army Groups are aimed at breaking up the Russian front, splitting it into two parts, and preventing the enemy from escaping across the Dnieper and Dvina Rivers. The armored elements of the Army Groups Center and North, which have been combined into three Armies, are charged with the mission to advance northeastward across the Dvina River towards Smolensk. The Panzer Army farthest to the north has been started off towards Lake Peipus and from there will advance further eastward in conjunction with the two other Panzer Armies which are on the march to Smolensk. Army Group South will push forward south of the Pripyat Marshes towards the Dnieper River, which it will cross. The point of main effort will be north of the Pripyat Marshes; consequently, the majority of the OHQ reserves will also be committed there. The two northern Army Groups all in all have at their disposal 50 infantry, 9 motorized and 13 armored divisions, while the southern Army Group has 30 infantry, 3 motorized and 5 armored divisions; and in addition there are the Army High Command (OKH) reserves. We are in need of the six armored divisions which are part of the forces assigned for Operation MARITA; we particularly require the

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\* In the survey compiled by the Eastern Foreign Armies Division of the Army General Staff (see page 73 - German original), the Russian armored formations were referred to as brigades, which probably was more in keeping with their strength and composition.

\*\* TIMOSCHENKO was descended from Bessarabian small holders, fought in the civil war as a partisan leader and then led a squadron in BUDJONNY's cavalry army. As early as 1918, he was appointed division commander. In 1938, he became Commander in Chief of the Military District of Kiev, and on 8 May 1940, he assumed the post of People's Commissioner in charge of defense, taking the place of Marshal WOROSCHILOV.

two instruction divisions \*. Whether or not it will be possible to withdraw all six divisions, will depend on the situation in the Balkans, especially Turkey's position, at the time Operation BARBAROSSA will be launched.

In this connection, the Fuehrer expresses himself to the effect that Turkey will take no action when the die is cast. Consequently, no special protection of the Balkans will be necessary. Danger will arise if all of Libya falls into British hands, because England would then be able to employ all her available forces against and in Syria.

HITLER states that he approves in principle the operations plan drawn up by the Army High Command (OKH) for the BARBAROSSA campaign. He also makes the following comments: The zones of operation involved are immense. We must aim at encircling large portions of the Russian Army; however, this will come off successfully only if we will be able to make an out-and-out effort. We cannot expect the Russians to immediately surrender the Baltic States as well as Leningrad and the Ukraine; however, there is a chance that, after the first reverses and in recognition of the German strategic objectives, the Russians will fall back on a large scale further eastward in order to reassemble for defense behind some barrier or other. In that case it will be necessary to first of all occupy the Baltic States and the Leningrad area regardless of the Russian troops stationed further eastward, because it will thus be possible to gain the best supply base for future operations. The important thing is to annihilate large numbers of enemy forces and not to put them to flight. This can be achieved only if the flanking areas are occupied by the strongest possible forces, while the center halts all action and then, operating from the flanks, by maneuvering the enemy out of the center.

The Chief of the Army General Staff continues as follows: One and a half divisions of the forces stationed in Norway are to advance against Petsamo, while another one and a half divisions, including one SS brigade, will be transported to Northern Finland on Swedish trains, provided we are able to utilize them. These troops will be charged with the mission to protect the industrial area of Northern Finland and to tie down and cut off

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\* This refers to the 2d, 5th, 9th and 11th Panzer Divisions of the Twelfth Army and the two so-called instruction divisions attached to the Military Mission in Rumania, which were the 13th motorized Division, which had been reinforced through the 4th Panzer Regiment, and the 16th Panzer Division.  
(See Chapter 7, pages 3 to 8 - German original).

the Russian elements committed in the area of Murmansk. Finland plans to assemble approximately 4 infantry corps in the south; of these, 5 divisions will be committed for an attack on Leningrad, 3 divisions will advance against Lake Onega, and 2 divisions will launch an attack on Hango; however, they are in need of strong support\*. At the Russo-Finnish border, 18 Russian divisions are massed, and in the area of Murmansk about one division is committed.

To this, the Fuehrer replies as follows: He assumes that Sweden will be willing to cooperate in return for possession of the Aland Islands. A Swedish-Finnish union is out of the question, because it does not fit into the new European order. Norway must be safeguarded against British attacks and setbacks must not be allowed to happen there; it is therefore absolutely necessary to strengthen her artillery coast defense. In Rumania, the protection of the oil field region is the most important task, which necessitates readiness for rapid advance out of Rumania.

The Chief of the Army General Staff then discusses Hungary's position. He remarks that even if Hungary does not participate in the operation, she should at least agree to the detrainning of German troops in her territory. Rumania should be specified as the destination for these forces to march on, and only at the last moment will they pivot towards the Russian border.

The Fuehrer replies the following: Hungary will accede to all German demands in exchange for appropriate political assurances. However, the necessary discussions with the nations concerned should not take place until the last moment, with the exception of Rumania for whom active participation in the operations is of vital importance.

Then the Chief of Army General Staff reports on a number of special problems. He mentions that the question of anti-aircraft artillery protection is still undecided; the Air Force intends to provide 30 battalions and the Army will set up 30 new batteries. The Navy should open the supply routes to the Baltic Sea harbors as speedily as possible. The problem of supplies will have to be solved by means of motor transports, since the Russian tracks first have to be adapted to standard European gauge. It is planned to employ long distance trucks which would bring provisions up to the supply bases. We must take steps, in collaboration with the Air Force, to make sure that no transportation elements remain idle. At present, we

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\* On 30 January, General HALDAR had a discussion with the Finnish Chief of Staff, Generalleutnant HEIKRICH, at which time they covered in great detail the matter of mutual collaboration in case of a war against the Soviet Union, and the above information was received on that occasion.

are engaged in developing advance supply districts in Eastern Poland; Rumania is still being reconnoitered with regard to the establishment of such supply districts.

Finally, the Chief of Army General Staff, with the aid of maps, also submits the plans for the contemplated time schedule of the initial assembly. At present, the transports of the first advance echelon are on the move. The transports of the second advance echelon, which will begin to move in the middle of March, will already transfer large number of reinforcements to the east, although for the time being just to the rear area. From that time forward, it will be possible only with great difficulty, owing to the shipments from the west, to carry out Operation ATTILA. The economic transports too will be considerably restricted by these movements. At the beginning of April, it will be necessary to approach Hungary concerning the passage of our troops through her territory. The transports of the third advance echelon will be set in motion in the middle of April and with that the maximum capacity schedule will go into effect. In view of the fact that the majority of the GHO artillery will be transferred, it will then no longer be possible to effect Operation FALIX. At that juncture it will also no longer be possible to keep secret the initial assembly. The fourth advance echelon, which will take from 25 April to 16 May, will divert such large numbers of forces from the west, that Operation SEELOEWNE too will then no longer be feasible. The strategic concentration in the east will then be plainly evident. It will be a difficult task to accomplish the timely return of the eight divisions earmarked for Operation MARITA \*, which will be urgently needed for Operation BARBAROSSA.

The Fuehrer expresses his approval of the Army's plans. The world, he declares, will hold its breath, when Operation BARBAROSSA is executed."

Following this, the discussion, in which the Chief of Staff of the Air Force joined, turned to Italy's situation in the Mediterranean and the aid which would be rendered her by German forces, as has been already related previously \*\*. Immediately after the conference, HITLER also made the following comments to the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff: Finland, Sweden, Hungary and Slovakia should be approached concerning their

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\* This probably refers to the six Panzer divisions and two infantry divisions which have been mentioned previously.

\*\* See Chapter 6, page 19 etc. (German original).

participation or direct aid only when it will no longer be possible to disguise our objectives. Only the Rumanian Chief of State should be advised earlier that the time has come to reinforce the Rumanian elements in Moldavia. It is of the utmost importance to give the impression as long as possible that the strategic concentration in the east is a large-scale deceptive maneuver to divert attention from Operation SARKIS. The execution of Operation ATTILA should always remain feasible, even though to a limited extent. Consequently, the airborne corps should not be assigned in advance to Operation BARBAROSSA but should be held in readiness as reserve for all eventualities or emergencies.

On the day following the conference, Admiral RAUNDER, while reporting to the Fuehrer on the situation at sea, submitted the plans of the Navy in connection with its functions during the eastern campaign. On this occasion too, HITLER emphasized how necessary it was, especially during the spring, for the enemy as well as our own Wehrmacht to be under the impression that the preparations for Operation BARBAROSSA merely served as a pretext to divert attention from an imminent invasion of England.

During further studies of the Army's operations plan, HITLER began to wonder whether the contemplated flank protection would be sufficient against attacks from the vast region of the Pripyat Marshes. On 5 February, he therefore requested the Army High Command (OKH) to submit an evaluation of this territory with respect to the likelihood of the establishment of enemy defensive installations and the possible commitment of Russian troops, particularly cavalry units, against the flanks of the Army Groups which

would be advancing on both sides of the Pripyat Marshes.

The memorandum forwarded by the Army General Staff on 21 February reported the following findings:

"Although the Pripyat - Polesian region is not suitable for large-scale military operations, we nevertheless have to consider the probability that some Russian mobile units, particularly cavalry divisions, operating chiefly on the tongues of land projecting into the swamp region west of Pinsk and east of Kowel, in the hilly country of Ovruch and the area southeast of Slutsk, might attack the flanks of the German assault troops which are facing the Pripyat Marshes. Apart from that, it is possible almost anywhere and at any time in Pripyat - Polesian to conduct operations on a small scale, up to regimental level, provided the existing difficulties are taken into account by careful reconnaissance and preparations. The Russians, who are fighting on their own territory, derive advantage from the fact that they are accustomed to difficult terrain and traffic conditions and besides, can rely on the voluntary support of the resident population which is familiar with the country. Constant surveillance from the air will be the best means to ascertain the movement and whereabouts of large enemy forces."

Thereupon, on 8 March, HITLER issued orders that the inside flanks of the Army Groups South and Center, committed at the tongues of land projecting into the Pripyat Marshes, should be protected through the installation of mine obstacles.

HITLER devoted special attention to the problem of Norway's coast defenses, because he, same as the Army High Command (OKH), expected the British to make resolute attempts to invade the Norwegian coast during the execution of the eastern campaign. The Army High Command (OKH) had made arrangements for the immediate transfer to Norway of 15 heavy batteries from captured stock together with the necessary personnel, which

were to be under the command of the commanding general in charge of coast defense in Norway and which were to replace the division artillery stationed at the coast at the time. However, HITLER considered these measures insufficient, especially since this plan made no provision to reinforce the defensive equipment, consisting only of 150 mm guns, of Narvik, which was extremely important for the export of Swedish ore to Germany. Therefore, on 15 February, he issued a basic directive which covered the safeguarding of the coast lines from Kirkenes to the Spanish border against British attacks in case of large-scale operations at eastern theaters of war. In this order, the Commander in Chief West, who had been assigned by the Army High Command (OKH), was charged with the responsibility for the firm resistance against enemy attempts at landing on the coasts of the occupied western territories, and he was instructed to reinforce the garrisons at the British Channel Islands to such a degree that it would be possible to hold them even without the support of bomber units of the Air Force. The directive also stipulated the following: The strengthening of Norway's coast defense is foremost in importance. In this connection, it is particularly advisable to concentrate on Narvik, the Arctic Coast, and all those points where it might be possible for enemy naval forces or small landing parties to disrupt the coastal routes. We have to reckon with the fact that the British will also employ battle ships for this purpose. Besides, it is necessary for dive bombers, fighter airplanes and destroyers to be committed in Norway at all times for protection against enemy attacks at sea and from the air. In order to be able to manage with

the smallest possible number of forces, it is advisable to organize combined echelons or to set up schools and courses of instruction. When assigning German naval forces, we must in the spring also take into account the fact that enemy operations at sea will not aim at the Bay of Helgoland but at Norway and the coasts of the occupied western territories.

The measures adopted thereupon by the three Wehrmacht branches had been put into effect only in part, and the majority of the coast batteries transported to Norway -- 55 naval batteries in addition to the 15 batteries provided by the Army -- were not yet ready for action, when a naval operation effected by the British confirmed the necessity for stronger protection of the Norwegian coast. On the morning of 4 March, British light naval forces -- reportedly two cruisers and four destroyers -- carried out a successful surprise raid on the harbor of Svolvær (on the Lofoten Islands, approximately 110 kilometers west of Narvik), inflicted heavy damage on the steamer "Hamburg" which was berthed there, sank a large number of fishing vessels and took with them fifteen German soldiers and ten Quisling followers as well as three hundred Norwegians who voluntarily joined the British seamen who had landed. HITLER was greatly enraged about this event, demanded an investigation of the command setup and ordered the immediate strengthening of the coast defense system, particularly by means of artillery, for which purpose the Army was to provide additional 160 batteries. He also summoned the Wehrmacht Commander in Chief in Norway and the Admiral of the Arctic Coast to make personal reports to him. The conference with Generaloberst von FALKENHORST and Admiral BOEHM took place

on 14 March in the Berlin Reich Chancellery. On this occasion, HITLER emphasized the fact that the Wehrmacht Commander in Chief was fully responsible for the internal security of Norway and its defense against enemy attacks from the outside, and issued instructions to commit the forces assigned for coast defense in support of the coast batteries and to distribute them in such a manner that enemy surprise raids would in future be impossible.

Another subject of HITLER's discussion with General von FALKENHORST was the mission which devolved on Norway Army Headquarters in Northern Finland as part of Operation BARBAROSSA. In this connection, HITLER laid particular stress on the well-timed occupation of the Petsamo region which, owing to the great importance of its nickel-ore mines for the German armament industry, at all costs had to be safeguarded against a Russian invasion. HITLER remarked that only recently, the Russo-Finnish negotiations held in Moscow concerning the exploitation of the mines, had again demonstrated Russia's great interest in this territory. They had come to a deadlock almost immediately, because Finland was not inclined to recognize Russia's claim to the control of the mines and to the shareholders' majority. On 8 February, Feldmarschall MANNERHEIM had pointed out to the German Military Attache in Helsinki that compliance with this request would mean that supplies for the German troops in Northern Norway going via the Arctic Sea route would come under Russian control. The Finnish Government, fearing an act of violence on the part of the Russians, had been striving to secure Germany's strengthening of the rear. For a while, they had even contemplated

voluntarily ceding the Petsamo corner to the Soviet Union in order to settle things; however, upon Germany's urgent discussion, they had given up this idea. Finally, the German Government had been able, through diplomatic means, to prevent the Russians from gaining too much of a foothold on the nickel mines, and the Soviet Union had again ratified the treaty signed in November \*, according to which Germany's share of the output was to amount to 60 percent. However (HITLER continued), there was no doubt that Russian designs on the Petsamo region would continue undiminished and that the Russians would avail themselves of the first opportunity to take possession of this territory. It therefore seemed imperative that this area be occupied by German troops, at the latest with the start of the eastern campaign, but, if need be, even earlier.

In addition, HITLER now requested that the Russian base Murmansk should not only be cut off from its rear communications at land through a thrust against the Murmansk Railway, but that it should be captured in order to deprive the enemy of every chance to operate from there against Northern Finland and Northern Norway and in order to prevent the British from landing at the Murmansk coast. For this purpose he stipulated that the attack echelon, which was to be committed against Petsamo, should be reinforced by a motorized force which was also equipped with heavy tanks. HITLER considered this to be particularly important, because it was his opinion that Murmansk could be attacked only along the roads but not through the Tundra.

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\* See page 35 (German original).

In addition, he ordered that the harbors of Murmanak and Archangel be mined at an early date.

On 17 March, three days after this conference, HITLER had a long conversation with General von BRAUCHITSCH at the Berlin Reich Chancellery, during which, at first, some problems relating to Operation MARITA were discussed. In this connection, HITLER issued instructions, as already mentioned previously \*, that the operations against Greece be continued until the British had been driven out of there and that sufficient forces be committed for this purpose. He stated again, as he did during the conference held on 9 January \*\*, that we could reckon with the fact that it would be possible to withdraw the covering forces, committed for protection against attacks from Turkey, shortly after the start of operations, and that these elements would be utilized either for Operation BARBAROSSA -- for which the XIV Panzer Corps (6th and 11th Panzer Division \*\*\*) would have to be committed in any case -- or for Operation MARITA itself. However, it now became clear that, owing to the intensification of operations against Greece, the Army High Command (OKH) would be able to utilize for the eastern campaign only a considerably smaller portion of the units of the Twelfth Army than had been contemplated previously and that the Twelfth Army Headquarters too, which originally had been assigned to command the

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\* See Chapter 7, page 31 etc. (German original).

\*\* See page 61 (German original).

\*\*\* See Chapter 7, pages 8, 13, 29 and 31 (German original).

Army which was to be assembled in Moldavia, would probably have to remain in Greece. In that case, it was planned to commit in Moldavia an army headquarters which was to be newly organized and to place in command the Chief of the Military Mission in Rumania, General HANSEN, who then was to be replaced by General SPAIDEL, the Chief of the Air Force Mission, who would have to take over the command of the entire Military Mission.

In addition, HITLER requested that the Army's initial assembly order for Operation BARBAROSSA be changed with respect to the assignment for Army Group South. In the meantime, he had become convinced that it was not advisable for the Twelfth Army to advance, as had been originally contemplated, from Moldavia in a northeasterly direction, because the Dniester River constituted too great an obstacle. Therefore, he ordered that in even greater measure than had been envisaged, the main effort should be executed by the Sixth Army, which was scheduled to be assembled in the area around Lublin. He issued instructions to also commit all mobile forces of the Army Group at that point, to push ahead with them towards Kiev, and to breach the Dniester River line from the rear. He specified that at the Pruth River, the number of forces assembling there should not be larger than would be required to tie down the enemy elements they would be facing; they were to pursue those enemy troops who tried to escape. They should, however, be strong enough to be able to resist a Russian invasion of Moldavia. The protection of the Rumanian oil field region, which was of vital importance for Germany, was to be ensured at all costs and was to remain the responsibility of the Chief of the Military Mission. Consequently, it

was necessary to reinforce the fighting forces and the antiaircraft artillery units committed there. Hungary should in no way participate in Operation BARBAROSSA; Slovakia, on the other hand, was to be utilized for the assembling of troops and providing of supplies for Army Group South.

These new instructions by HITLER made it necessary to issue supplements for Fuehrer Directive # 21 and for the Army's initial assembly order covering Operation BARBAROSSA. The former now specified the following:

"The main effort of the Army Group committed south of the Pripyat Marshes will be placed in the area of Lublin, in the general direction of Kiev; they will rapidly and with strong armored elements advance against the deep flank and the rear of the Russian forces whom they will then roll up along the Dnieper River.

The combined German-Rumanian forces at the right wing are charged with the mission

a) to protect the Rumanian area and consequently the southern wing of the over-all operation.

b) to contain the enemy forces facing them following the attack at the northern wing of Army Group South and, in the course of further operations, to pursue the enemy in conjunction with the Air Force, to prevent enemy troops from making an orderly retreat across the Dniester River."

In the Army's initial assembly order, the changed passage read as follows:

"Army Group South is charged with the task of driving its reinforced left flank -- mobile elements leading the way -- in the direction of Kiev, to annihilate the Russian forces stationed in Galicia and Western Ukraine while still west of the Dnieper River, and to take early possession of the Dnieper bridges at and below Kiev, in order to continue operations on the other side of the Dnieper River. Operations will be conducted in such a manner that the mobile troops advancing from the area of Lublin, will be assembled for a break-through in the direction of Kiev.

As part of this mission, the Armies and Panzer Armies, according to detailed instructions issued by the High Command of Army Group South, are

assigned the following tasks:

The Eleventh Army is responsible for the protection of the Rumanian area, which is of vital importance for Germany's conduct of the war, against invasion by Russian forces. Within the scope of the attack of Army Group South, it will, by feigning greater strength of assembled forces, hold the enemy troops facing it, and in the course of further operations, pursue the enemy in conjunction with the Air Force, and will prevent the Russian troops from making an orderly retreat across the Dniester River.

It will be the main objective of the First Panzer Army to penetrate the enemy lines near the border, between Rawa Ruska and Kowel, in joint operation with the Seventeenth and Sixth Armies, and, advancing via the Berditshev - Shitomir sector, to speedily reach the Dniester River at and below Kiev. From there, they will, without losing any time, continue the attack, according to instructions of the Army Group High Command, in a southeasterly direction along the Dniester River, with the objective of preventing the enemy forces fighting in Western Ukraine from escaping across the Dniester River and annihilating them through attacking them in the rear.

The Seventeenth Army will penetrate the enemy border defenses northwest of Lemberg. By vigorously driving with its reinforced left flank, it should endeavor to rush the enemy forces in a southeasterly direction and defeat them. In addition, it will be the objective of the Army, by taking advantage of the assault of the Panzer Army, to speedily reach the Winnisa - Berditshev area, in order to continue the attack either south-eastward or eastward, depending on the situation.

The Sixth Army will penetrate the enemy front in the area on both sides of Lucki, in conjunction with portions of the First Panzer Army and, while covering the northern flank of the Army Group against attacks from the Pripyat Marshes, will assign the largest possible number of forces to follow the Panzer Army towards Shitomir as quickly as possible. It should have ready strong forces which will pivot southeastward west of the Dniester River, according to instructions of the Army Group High Command, so as to be able, together with the First Panzer Army, to prevent enemy troops fighting in Western Ukraine from escaping across the Dniester River, and to annihilate them."

Finally, the conference held on 17 March also touched upon the operations to be carried out by Army Headquarters Norway in and out of Northern Finland. In this connection, however, the Commander in Chief of Army High

Command declared that he left all arrangements in this realm to the discretion of the Wehrmacht High Command, which had been in command in Norway from the first. HITLER agreed to this and now delegated General JOEL to draw up an Wehrmacht High Command directive to this effect, which was to be based on the following factors:

As has been mentioned previously, the plans call for a thrust from the Arctic region for the purpose of occupying Petsamo and launching an attack on Murmansk as well as pushing forward from Central Finland against the Murmansk Railway and the Bay of Kandalaksha. The forces required for the northern operation, which is referred to by the cover name HENNLER, are to be made available in Northern Norway; the 2d Mountain Division has been earmarked for this undertaking\*. For the southern project, which is referred to as Operation SILBERFUCHS, the Army High Command contemplates assigning the 199th Infantry Division as well as another infantry division from its reserves. Both divisions are to be transferred to Norway and from there shifted via Sweden to Finland. However, if the time element makes it impossible to carry this out, it is planned to transport the 163d Infantry Division, which is stationed around Celso, via Sweden to Finland and have a division from the GHQ reserves replace it in Norway, while the second division, on the other hand, is to be sent from the Zone of Interior by water to Finland. It is intended to give Stockholm the explanation that the troops to be transported through Sweden are replacements for the mountain corps. However, in case the Swedish Government does not agree to the utilization of its railways, we will procure a division by means of another

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\* See page 11 etc. (German original).

shift to the north \* of the forces stationed in Norway. Furthermore, one combined tank battalion of Army Headquarters Norway is to join the southern attack echelon instead of the northern one, which HITLER's order called for just a few days previously. The two German Battle Groups are to be assigned to the Finnish Commander in Chief, General MANNERHEIM, while the northern one is to be led by the commanding general of the Mountain Corps Norway, General of the Infantry DIETL.

In the meantime, the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command had issued a decree on 13 March, which was entitled "General Directions with Regard to Special Assignments, Supplementing Fuehrer Directive # 21 (Operation BARBAROSSA)", and which regulated the administrative setup of the Russian territories which were to be conquered. On 3 March, HITLER had expressed the following ideas in this connection:

"The forthcoming campaign is more than just a struggle of arms; it is also a clash of two different ideologies. In order to bring it to a conclusion, it is not sufficient, in view of the size of the territory, to defeat the enemy armed forces. The entire captured territory should be broken up into states that would have their own governments and with whom Germany would be able to conclude a peace treaty. The establishment of these governments requires a great deal of political skill and the application of well weighed general principles.

Every major revolution produces effects which are impossible to obliterate. The socialistic idea cannot be separated from the Russia of today, and this idea alone can constitute the basis for home politics when new states and governments are created. The Jewish-Bolshevistic intelligentsia, which has been the oppressor of the people till now, must be eliminated. The former middle-class and aristocrats, as far as they still exist, particularly among emigrants, are likewise out of the picture because they have been rejected by the Russian people and are

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\* As mentioned previously (see page 11), the first shift of this kind took place in the early fall.

on the whole anti-German. This is particularly true also of the former Baltic States. In addition, it must be avoided at all costs that a nationalistic Russia now takes the place of the bolshevistic regime, because history has taught us that such a government would again be opposed to Germany. Instead, it should be Germany's mission to establish as soon as possible, and with a minimum of military forces, socialistic states which will be dependent on the Reich.

This is such a difficult task that the Army cannot be expected to accomplish it. Consequently, the Army's zone of operations as far as possible should be restricted in depth. No military administration should be established in the rear; instead, Reich commissioners should be appointed to certain "Groesseume" \* which are to be determined on the basis of ethnic groups, and these Reich commissioners are to be responsible for the rapid development of new political states. They are to be assisted by military district commanders, who will be under the control of the Commander in Chief of Army High Command only in purely military matters connected with the progress of operations but in all other respects will be under the command of the Wehrmacht High Command. Their staffs should also incorporate the agencies for military economics, communications and defense. The majority of the police forces will be placed at the disposal of the Reich commissioners. The question of whether or not it will be necessary already in the zone of operations to employ, in addition to the Secret Police, agencies of the Reich Fuehrer SS (HIMMLER), will have to be determined in conjunction with the latter. It is an advisable measure, in view of the necessity to immediately render harmless all bolshevistic leaders and commissars. The military courts should have nothing to do with these problems but should devote themselves only to legal matters affecting the forces."

The discussions held thereupon between the Wehrmacht High Command, the Army and the Reich Fuehrer SS resulted in the fact that the Reich Fuehrer SS was charged with special assignments by the Fuehrer, which were to be effected also in the Army zone of operations "in preparation for the political administration", and in connection with which the Reich Fuehrer SS was to act with complete independence and on his own responsibility. These "special assignments", which, as stated in the "general directions", arose

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Transl. note: \* "Groesseume" - territories which retain their "independence" but which also fall under the "guidance" of the Reich.

from "the clash between two opposed political systems, which had to be fought to the finish", primarily involved political purges, which meant the extermination of whole classes of people, which HITLER's doctrine considered necessary. In conformity with HITLER's additional directives, the "general directions" stipulated that the Russian territory which was to be occupied in back of the zone of operations" should for the time being be subdivided, according to ethnic elements and approximating the dividing lines of the Army Groups, into a northern (Baltic States), central (White Russia) and southern (Ukraine) area.

On the morning of 30 March, HITLER held a meeting at the Berlin Reich Chancellery with the top-level Commanders in Chief of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force who were taking part in Operation BARBAROSSA, as well as their chiefs of staff, in order to personally brief them for the tasks assigned to them. After presenting in minute detail his reasons for waging war against the Soviet Union, he pointed to the following with emphasis:

"This war should not be fought according to general military rules; it is a clash of two opposed ideologies which requires relentless hard-heartedness. Consequently, the Wehrmacht should discard completely all the traditional conceptions and standards. The thing that matters is the eradication of bolshevism. The political functionaries and the commissars in the armed forces are the exponents of the bolshevistic idea. The latter cannot be regarded as soldiers and consequently, if the occasion arises, also cannot be treated as prisoners of war. These commissars, same as the political functionaries, should be separated from the other prisoners of war immediately upon capture and placed under the control of the special task detachments (Einsatzgruppen) of the SD (Security Service) who, under the command of the Reich Fuehrer SS, will accompany the German troops to Russia. Wherever the combat situation makes it impossible to turn them

over to the SD (Security Service), the functionaries and commissars should be shot by the troops."

HITLER, in explaining his motives for this order, which was entirely in keeping with his views expressed on 8 March, stated that the Soviet Union had not signed the Geneva Convention and would certainly not treat the German prisoners of war in accordance with its stipulations. He pointed to the behavior of the Russian soldiers and particularly the commissars in Poland, during the Finnish winter campaign, in the Baltic States and in Rumania as a warning example. \*

After a brief lunch, HITLER discussed in detail the conduct of the eastern campaign with the Commanders in Chief of the Wehrmacht. He set forth the following:

"At Army Group North, the Fourth Panzer Army under Generaloberst HOEPFNER will be committed north of the Niemen River in order to avoid having to cross it. Whether or not it will be necessary -- in order to cut off the enemy's retreat at the coast -- for them to pivot northward already when advancing against the Bay of Riga or later, along the Peipus Lake, will depend on the situation. It is to be feared, however, that the Russians, according to their customary procedure, will, particularly in the Baltic States, try to avoid a decisive engagement in the border area; we must seek to frustrate this attempt. There is also a chance that the enemy will make a flank attack; however, in that case, the LEEB Army Group will have to be concerned only about its right flank. The frontier guard of the Memel area is to be increased without delay to two divisions. At the Army Group Center, the Ninth Army, in conjunction with the Panzer Army of Generaloberst HOTH, will

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\* In addition to this so-called "Commissar Directive", which played such an important part in the Kuerberg war crimes trials, HITLER on 6 June also issued regulations with regard to the method of procedure, which cannot be discussed here because the text is not available.

be committed at the left, and the Fourth Army, together with the Panzer Army of Generaloberst GUDERIAN, at the right; the main effort of both will be placed at the southern wing. The Osowiec - Grodno fortress front is to be attacked only with one division. The two Panzer Armies should subsequently push ahead in the direction of Leningrad; however, not before they reached Minsk."

In this connection, General GUDERIAN remarked that he hoped to get to the Minsk area in five to six days.

MITLER continued by stating the following:

"The Panzer Armies' push on Leningrad is to be regarded as the ideal solution of the strategic problem. The spring-fed swamps of the Berezina River will probably seriously hamper the movements of the tank units. The air forces are to be controlled as firmly as possible within the attack sector of the Panzer Armies. The bulk of the GHQ reserves should follow north of the Pripyat Marshes. The point of main effort of Army Group South will be placed at the Sixth Army; the latter will have the task to make it possible for the First Panzer Army of Generaloberst von KLIMKE, which for the time being is operating in close contact with the Sixth Army, to cross the Bug and the Styr Rivers. Following this, the Panzer Army should advance against Kiev, and in this connection it will be necessary -- owing to the limited number of usable roads -- to reckon with the fact that the march columns will be extended to several 100 kilometers in depth. The Seventeenth Army will advance from the area northwest of Lemberg in a southeasterly direction to the right of the Sixth Army. Hungary will be bypassed.

In Moldavia, the Eleventh Army of General Ritter von SCHOBART\* will carry out its covering operations in three separate groups in order to render the necessary aid to the Rumanian troops."

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- \* The Seventeenth and the Eleventh Army Headquarters had just been activated in the Zone of Interior. The plan to appoint the Chief of the Military Mission in Rumania to the post of Commander in Chief of the Army which was to be assembled in Moldavia (see page 92 - German original) had been given up in the meantime, apparently because it was believed that he could not be spared in Rumania.

Finally, the practicability of a German advance from Hungary was also discussed. General von BUNDSHEKDT argued that in his opinion it was necessary to attack the six Russian divisions stationed at the Russo-Hungarian border. HITLER did not believe it would be possible to induce Hungary to agree to this step, unless we made certain territorial concessions at the Carpathian border; however, he stated he would continue to study this question.

The following two significant political events took place just prior to HITLER's meeting with the top-level Commanders in Chief of the Wehrmacht: One was the visit to Berlin of the Japanese Foreign Minister Yosuke MATSUOKA, and the other the coup d'etat in Yugoslavia. In order to correctly understand the significance of the former, it seems fit to briefly touch upon the relations between Germany and Japan as they had developed since the conclusion of the Three-Power Pact.

According to article IV of the Three-Power Pact, which was signed on 27 September 1940, three committees were to be organized in Berlin, three in Rome and three in Tokyo, namely, in each of these cities one central committee consisting of the foreign minister of the country in question, who acted as chairman, and the ambassadors of the two other countries who served in the capacity of members; one committee as an economic mission and one as a military mission. The latter was to be composed of the representatives of the various arms of the country in question and the military, naval and air force attaches assigned to the embassies of the two other countries. On 24 December 1940, the Chief of the Bureau for

Economic Warfare, Viceadmiral GROOS, was appointed chairman of the military mission in Berlin. According to an Wehrmacht High Command directive issued on 5 January, the following competent representatives of the various Wehrmacht branches were attached to him: By the Army, Colonel MATZKY, who formerly served as military attache in Tokyo and was now acting as Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence of the Army General Staff; Naval Captain ETANGE by the Navy and Colonel OLLBRECHT by the Air Force.

Before these commissions had a chance to join forces -- the Japanese especially attached great importance to having this take place soon -- a delegation of the Japanese Army, headed by Generalleutnant YAMASHITA and consisting of 16 members, arrived in Berlin on 9 January. This delegation had been sent to Germany and Italy upon the invitation of the German and Italian Governments in order to study European military methods and experiences on the spot. At the same time, the Japanese Navy too, on its own initiative had sent a delegation of officers to Germany for the purpose of studying and discussing problems of armament. The Chief of this delegation, Viceadmiral NOMURA \*, reached Berlin during the middle of January, while the other members of the mission did not arrive until 24 February. Neither of these two delegations had any connection with the Three-Power Pact; however, the Japanese Navy planned to appoint Admiral NOMURA as their chief representative at the military mission to be organized in Tokyo.

During his first conversation with Admiral GROOS, which took place on 18 January, Admiral NOMURA termed the following the most important points

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\* Not to be mistaken for Admiral KICHISABURO NOMURA who, in January, was appointed Japanese Ambassador to Washington.

of negotiation for the military missions of the Three-Power Pact:

1) Steps to be taken by the Axis powers in order to prevent the United States at the present stage from participating in the war, and to forestall the outbreak of a Japanese-American war;

2) joint operations plans to be drawn up by Germany, Italy and Japan in preparation for the contingency of America's entering the war;

3) support to be rendered Japan by Germany and Italy in order to strengthen the Japanese war potential.

On 23 January, Admiral GROSS submitted a report concerning this meeting to the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command, and on 29 January, General JOEL, commenting on this summary, expressed himself to HITLER as follows:

"The proposals made by Admiral NOMURA have raised the issue of Germany's views regarding joint military actions with Japan. The conclusion we can draw from these recommendations is that Japan desires the compilation of joint operations plans of the three powers and intends to approach Germany and Italy with requests for materiel. On the one hand, Operation BARBAROSSA will relieve Great Britain, particularly in view of the fact that only a small portion of her forces is contained in the Mediterranean area; on the other hand, however, it will also lighten Japan's burden. Besides, at the time the eastern campaign will be put into effect, the United States, owing to the inadequacy of its war preparations, will hardly represent a menace to Japan. If Japan, under these circumstances, would be ready to enter the war and launch an attack on Singapore, it would be of decisive importance from a military, economic and psychological point of view. According to information furnished by Oberst MATZKY, the former military attache in Tokyo, the Japanese armed forces have a very affirmative attitude in connection with the attack on Singapore. Consequently, we should contemplate entering into discussions with the Japanese with the aim of assembling forces for such a mission. Prior to that, it will be necessary to sound out the military missions of the Three-Power Pact; then arrangements should be made by the Wehrmacht and the Japanese armed forces to prepare the joint operations."

On 4 February, Admiral RAEDER, in his report on the situation at sea, expressed himself along similar lines. On that occasion, he submitted to the Fuehrer a memorandum of the Navy General Staff concerning Japan's mission in case her neutrality was to be maintained and for the eventuality of America's entering the war. Thereupon HITLER gave his approval that arrangements be made to prepare for military collaboration with Japan, and on 15 February, he instructed the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff to compile a directive, which should provide the Wehrmacht branches with guiding principles for handling the Japanese requests and safeguarding our own interests in the military missions of the Three-Power Pact. In this connection, HITLER expressed himself as follows:

"It should be Germany's aim to induce Japan as soon as possible to take active measures in the Far East. The earlier Japan will strike, the easier she will find the military situation. Japan should take possession of Singapore and all regions which are rich in raw materials, which she requires in order to continue the war against Great Britain and especially in the event the United States enters the war. The longer Japan hesitates the stronger will America become and the more difficult their own task. Germany has neither political nor military nor even economic interests in the Far East which might prompt her to restrict Japanese operations. Germany should specify all the military operations which she considers desirable in the interest of her war against England and perhaps even the United States. In exchange, the Japanese should be afforded comprehensive and openhearted insight into Germany's military methods and combat experiences and given permission to reproduce modern weapons and equipment. They can be trusted to keep secrets more than any other nation. It seems out of the question that the Japanese Government might still change sides."

Two days later, Admiral GROSS reported on his recent conversation with Admiral NOMURA who, in the meantime, had been appointed to serve as member

of the Tokyo Military Mission of the Three-Power Pact. Admiral NONURA expressed the following views, which, as he stated, he intended to advocate within the scope of his present mission as well as in Tokyo:

"Since the signing of the Three-Power Pact, the situation in the Far East has slowly become increasingly crucial. America is holding her naval forces in readiness for war in the Pacific and is reinforcing her bases there, while increasing economic pressure on Japan and supporting the Chungking Government\* in collaboration with Great Britain. In French Indo-China too, Anglo-American influence makes itself felt and in Netherlands Indies, Anglo-American machinations frustrate Japan's efforts to procure by peaceful means, through negotiations with the local government, the oil which is indispensable for home defense.

Japan really does not desire a war with the United States, but is firmly resolved to make it perfectly clear that she is holding herself in readiness to meet any provocation on the part of America and that little by little, her attitude towards the economic pressure exerted by Great Britain and the United States will undergo a complete change.

These views definitely necessitate joint action by the three Axis powers. Consequently, the Japanese Navy is of the opinion that the commissions envisaged in the Three-Power Pact should join forces at the earliest possible moment. Since the pact has been concluded, the Japanese Navy, in requesting aid, primarily asked for shipments of machine tools and weapons as well as technical advice. The respective requests have been transmitted via diplomatic channels. Furthermore, the Japanese Navy is extremely interested in obtaining an idea concerning the subsequent developments of the military situation, the German air and submarine warfare, the chances for an invasion of England, the Italian operations in the Mediterranean, and the extent of German aid rendered to Italy. Although they are aware of the fact that Germany is hardly in a position to indicate the time when the invasion of England will be effected, they would, however, at least like to know whether or not Germany expects Japan to undertake any operations in the Pacific in conjunction with such landing operations."

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\* This was the Chinese National Government headed by Marshal CHIANG KAI-SHEK, which since 10 December 1937, when the Japanese had captured Nanking, had had its seat in Chungking.

The Wehrmacht Operations Staff expressed the following opinion concerning these statements:

"It seems to be an established fact that Japan does not want a war with the United States and intends to launch operations against Great Britain only in the event Germany will strike a decisive blow against the latter. In the meantime, Japan will do everything possible to increase her war potential with German aid. It is now necessary to ascertain whether or not the views of the Japanese Navy are in harmony with the general political outlook in Japan, and investigations should be conducted to determine to what extent economic facilities will enable us to comply with Japan's requests."

At the end of February, Foreign Minister von RIBBENTROP discussed these questions with the newly appointed Japanese Ambassador, Generalleutnant HIROSHI OSHIMA who had just arrived in Berlin and who, for a long time, had been a friend of Germany and an advocate of closest possible collaboration of the Three-Power Pact nations. He announced that in May, Japan would be ready to attack Singapore by land route. To be sure, this gave no indication of the date when she would enter the war. It was expected that the forthcoming visit in Berlin of the Japanese Foreign Minister, Yosuke MATSUOKA, would provide additional clarification. On 7 March, the "Fuehrer Directive # 24 Concerning Collaboration with Japan", which, on the basis of the guiding principles and the memorandum issued by the Navy General Staff, had been compiled by the Department for National Defense, was distributed to the Wehrmacht branches, after the Chief of Wehrmacht High Command had signed it. This directive began by stating that the collaboration based on the Three-Power Pact should aim at inducing Japan to take active measures in the Far East as soon as possible, so that the

concentrated efforts and interest of the United States would be diverted to the Pacific area. The actual military conferences with Japan were not to be conducted by the German representatives attached to the Military Missions of the Three-Power Pact but by the High Command of the Navy as the Wehrmacht branch which was the most interested.

On 26 March, the Japanese Foreign Minister MATSUOKA arrived in Berlin from Moscow, where he had had brief conferences with STALIN and MOLOTOV. It was his aim to establish personal contact with the German and Italian statesmen and to gain a picture of the situation through personal observation while visiting Berlin and Rome. On 27 March he was received by HITLER and during the next few days had conferences with von RIBBENTROP and GOERING. He then went to Rome where, after an audience with the King, he met with MUSSOLINI and Count CIANO. Upon his return to Berlin, he had another long discussion with HITLER and the Reich Foreign Minister \*. During this parley, the question of Japan's action against England through an attack on Singapore was taken first into consideration. MATSUOKA asked that the requests of the Japanese Military Mission be complied with as liberally as

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\* Information concerning this conference has been furnished through the notes of the trial of chief war criminals held before the International Military Tribunal in Nuernberg. During the proceedings on 26 November 1945, the American prosecutor read the major portion of an official "Record of the Conference between the Fuehrer and the Japanese Foreign Minister MATSUOKA, held in Berlin on 4 April 1941 in the presence of the Reich Foreign Minister and the Minister of State MEISSNER", on which the information which follows has been based (official text in German of the minutes of the meeting, published in 1947 by the Secretariat of the Tribunal in Nuernberg, volume II, pages 332 - 336).

possible, because Japan, particularly in the field of submarine warfare, was in need of information about the latest German military methods and technical improvements. He stated that the Japanese Government would do everything in its power to avoid a war with the United States. However, in case they did decide to strike a blow against Singapore, they would also have to make preparations for fighting against the United States, because the latter would then most likely side with Great Britain. Although it was his personal opinion that it might be possible, by means of diplomatic endeavors, to prevent America from entering the war on the side of Great Britain, it was nevertheless necessary to assume the worst and reckon with a war against the United States, and for this purpose the Japanese Navy required information about the latest technical developments.

HITLER promised fulfillment of the Japanese requests and declared that Germany, too, considered a conflict with the United States as undesirable but that he was taking such a contingency into account. He stated that he had made his preparations in such a manner that no Americans would succeed in invading Europe and that, with submarines and the Air Force, he would conduct a vigorous campaign against America and, owing to his greater experience, he would be far superior in this fight. Should Japan become involved in a conflict with the United States, Germany would immediately enter the war on her side, for the strength of the Three-Power Pact nations lies in joint action.

MIYAMOTO replied that in his opinion a war between Japan and the United States was inevitable and was likely to happen rather sooner than later.

Consequently, the Japanese Government must take resolute action at the right moment and take upon itself the risk of a conflict with the United States. However, in Japan they hesitated to follow such a train of thought. He related that recently, the United States had also attempted one last stratagem by declaring she would not fight Japan for the sake of China or the South Sea area if Japan would freely allow the exportation from there to America of rubber and tin, but that she would immediately take action against Japan if the latter should enter the war in order to assist in the defeat of Great Britain. In view of the fact that many Japanese had been given a pro-English education, it was only natural that such arguments did not fail to take effect.

To this, HITLER replied that the American maneuvering meant nothing more than that the United States was greatly interested in the preservation of the British Empire, because she hoped to be able one day to take action against Japan together with Great Britain, whereas in case of a collapse of the British Empire, she would have to face Japan completely isolated and would be helpless.

Finally, MATSUOKA pointed out that as Foreign Minister he was not able, not even under present conditions, to express anything in Japan about his plans as he had presented them here and that consequently, he was also not in a position to state how soon he might be able to submit to the Japanese Prime Minister or the Emperor a report concerning the questions which had been discussed. He stated that for the time being he would carefully watch further developments in Japan and then, at a propitious moment,

tell the truth about his actual plans to the Emperor and Prince KONOYE. Upon his return, if questioned by the cabinet members and the Emperor, he would state that the issue of Singapore had been discussed in Berlin but only as a hypothetical case.

On the day following this conference, the Japanese Foreign Minister left for Moscow in order to continue his negotiations with STALIN and MOLOTOV. It is doubtful whether he was very satisfied with the result of his Berlin talks, for the questions in which he was particularly interested, namely, whether or not Germany was still planning an invasion of England and information about relations between Germany and Russia, had not been clarified and naturally, much less still was he appraised of the forthcoming attack on the Soviet Union. To be sure, he himself had not made any promises concerning Japan's participation in the war and the attack on Singapore and evidently he did not state definitely how far he might possibly go in Moscow. Consequently, they were greatly surprised in Berlin when, on 13 April, it was reported that MATSUOKA had concluded a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union in Moscow and had signed a proclamation whereby they agreed to mutually honor their territorial integrity and the inviolability of Manchukuo and the Mongolian People's Republic. While Japan thereby gained freedom in the rear in case of an attack against British bases in the Far East, Russia, at the same time, gained the same advantage, in case of a German attack. The latter was definitely forthcoming, whereas the former was still uncertain; consequently, Berlin did not see any direct advantage for Germany in the Russo-Japanese neutrality pact.

MATSUOKA's arrival in the capital on 27 March coincided with the Belgrade military putsch, which necessitated a sweeping change of plans for Operation MARITA, as has been explained elsewhere \*. It was now arranged that the campaign against Greece, which was to have started on 1 April, would be combined with a simultaneous attack on Yugoslavia, which it was not possible to put into effect before 6 April. This resulted in a postponement of Operation BARBAROSSA. While previously, it had been doubtful whether those units of the Twelfth Army which were indispensable for the eastern campaign -- this referred above all to the armored divisions -- would be available for new commitments on time, we now had to realize it was out of the question for us to be able by the middle of May -- which hitherto had been the earliest date contemplated for the start of the eastern offensive -- to transport the majority of the divisions of the Second Army under General Freiherr von WEICHS from the Balkans to the area of Warsaw. This Army, according to the operations plan for the BARBAROSSA campaign, had been designated to follow the Army Group Center as the main reserve, but was now assigned to first launch the attack on Yugoslavia together with portions of the Twelfth Army. Even under the most favorable conditions and the speediest execution of the campaign against Yugoslavia and Greece, it seemed necessary to postpone Operation BARBAROSSA for about five weeks, which would be until the second half of June. In all probability, even if the operation lasted only three months, this would still bring us into Russia's rainy season during which all movements, particularly

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\* See Chapter 7, page 36 etc. (German original).

of the mobile forces, would be considerably handicapped due to the fact that the streets would turn into mud; however, it was unavoidable and we had to make the best of it. A new date was not set for the time being. After the Yugoslav Army had capitulated on 17 April and after the surrender of the Greek Epirus Army on 21 April, the Army High Command reported the next day that the transfer to the eastern front of the bulk of the Balkan forces would probably be concluded by 23 June and that consequently, the eastern campaign could begin on 25 June. Finally, since it seemed possible to speed up this transport movement by several days, HITLER on 30 April designated the 22d of June as the so-called B-Day (i.e. the day on which Operation BARBAROSSA was scheduled to begin). However, after operations against Crete had begun (on 20 May), it seemed advisable to again postpone this date by about ten days, because we did not believe we would be able to transfer in time to the area north of Warsaw the participating reinforced VIII Air Force Corps under Air General Freiherr von RICHTHOFEN, which, in the eastern campaign, was to be committed with the Second Air Fleet which was instructed to cooperate with Army Group Center. However, the rapid capture of Crete then nevertheless gave us a chance to effect the transfer of the VIII Air Force Corps from Craiova to Suwalki during the period from 7 to 20 June, which made it possible to adhere to the specified date for B-Day.

After the Belgrade military putsch, Yugoslavia sought closer collaboration with the Soviet Union and on 6 April, concluded a non-aggression and friendship pact with Russia, in which the two nations pledged themselves

to maintain their friendly relations even in the event one of them was attacked by a third power. HILLER regarded this as further evidence of Russia's aim to interfere in his Balkan policy. However, during the campaign against Yugoslavia and Greece, the Soviet Union concentrated on observing strict neutrality and seemed to endeavor as much as ever to closely cooperate with Germany in the economic field. As a matter of fact, she even increased her shipments effected on the basis of the trade agreements, although Germany, at this point, was increasingly delaying her reciprocal deliveries under one or the other pretext.

This line of conduct on the part of Russia proved very useful for the German war economy. The constant flow of rubber shipments from East Asia via Russia was particularly important. On 8 February, the Chief of the Office of Economics and Armaments, General THOMAS, had reported to General KNITTEL that the rubber reserves on hand and the anticipated quantity of rubber imported during the first quarter of 1941 would make it possible only until the end of March to achieve a volume of production such as was required by the procurement agencies. He pointed out that, if after the first of April no further importation would be possible, we would have at our disposal nothing but a small reserve of natural rubber which would, at the most, allow for a monthly production of 3500 tons of rubber for a period of eight months \*. According to this report, Germany would have

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\* In comparison, I wish to point out that in 1940 the consumption of rubber in the United States came to 650,000 tons and during the first half of 1941 amounted to 408,000 tons.

to depend entirely on buna \* (without the addition of natural rubber) which, for instance, was not suitable for the production of truck tires.

This report induced the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command to take additional measures to economize on rubber consumption and to instruct the Chief of the Bureau of Economic Warfare to investigate whether in future it would be possible to import rubber with the aid of blockade runners. The Reich Marshal too, in his capacity as General Deputy for the Four Year Plan, concerned himself with this extremely important question and consulted with economic experts. Plans were made which called for the traffic of blockade runners, consisting at first of four ships running between Brazil and the areas under German control. Furthermore, we hoped that in future we would be able, at least to some extent, to carry on by means of blockade-runners the importation of rubber from the Far East, which at present was still moving via the Trans-Siberian Railway; for this purpose, it was planned to employ primarily motor boats because of their greater radius of action. In order to save rubber, instructions were issued which called for a new decisive curtailment of civilian as well as military truck traffic and the appropriation of the tires of the vehicles which were out of commission. It was highly doubtful whether it would be possible in this way to procure rubber in sufficient quantities for future use. However, in the meantime, owing to the uninterrupted flow from East Asia via Russia, we received rubber in such large quantities that the top-level

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Transl. note: \* buna - a synthetic rubber made from butadiene.

Wehrmacht command did not fear any marked obstruction of the eastern operations due to rubber shortages. In March, the daily average of imported rubber amounted to 300 tons, and, according to the status as per 23 March, 8800 tons were being transported from Mandchuriya, the Manchuria-Siberia border station, to the Reich border; 3000 tons were on the way from the Manchurian harbor Dairen to Mandchuriya; 4000 tons were in Dairen, while 3800 tons were in Japan and 5700 tons on the way there. The largest portion of these quantities still reached Germany in time before the start of the eastern campaign, the last train being received on the eve of D-Day, which can be regarded as additional evidence that the Soviet Union at that time did not entertain any hostile plans against Germany. In May, the importation of rubber on blockade-running ships also began to function, the first of which sailed into a harbor in western France around the 20th of June.

On 6 May, Stalin took over the post of Chairman in the Council of the People's Commissars in place of MOLOTOV who continued to serve as Vice-President and Foreign Commissar. This too HITLER regarded as an indication of Russia's endeavor to maintain and even strengthen friendly relations with Germany. On the other hand, Russia of late was taking measures at the German border which were indubitably of a military nature, which, however, were evidently supposed to be for defense purposes only. This was not surprising in view of the strategic concentration in the east, which it was not possible to conceal from the Russians. Of the 121 rifle divisions, 25 cavalry divisions and 31 mechanized brigades, which the Eastern Foreign Armies Division of the Army General Staff took into account in

European Russia \*, we had, during the middle of March, ascertained that 84 rifle divisions and 8 mechanized brigades were along the German and Finnish borders. Since that time, the Russians were constantly bringing additional forces up to the borders. At the beginning of June, photographic reconnaissance and radio interception showed that there were about 4600 planes in the border districts and additional 1100 planes close behind them. During the middle of June, the German Naval Attache in Moscow reported the movement of large-scale railway transports from there to the Baltic States.

The largest concentration of Russian forces seemed to be in the Ukraine which again aroused German apprehensions with respect to the Rumanian oil field region, where the Air Force had committed one fighter group, 16 anti-aircraft batteries and 10 fire-fighting companies. The GHQ troops committed there consisted of the 22d Infantry (Airborne) Division which had been stationed around Ploesti since the end of the Balkan campaign; during the middle of June this Division was to be replaced by another formation and transported to Upper Silesia. At the beginning of June, the Eleventh Army began to assemble in Moldavia; at the same time, the instruction division (the 13th motorized Infantry Division) which, in the meantime, had been changed to an armored division and was coming from Rumania, and the 16th Panzer Division which, during the Balkan campaign, had been guarding the Turkish border, were transported to their assembly areas in Poland. In their place, portions of the 5th Panzer Division, which was still in Southern

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\* See page 73 (German original).

Greece, were attached to the Eleventh Army. A partial mobilization of the Rumanian Army and the intensification of defense measures at the Russian border were effected simultaneously with the strategic concentration in Moldavia. On 11 June, HITLER confided his plans to General ANTONESCU during a meeting held in Munich and discussed with him the mission which devolved upon the Rumanian armed forces within the scope of Operation BARBAROSSA. Beginning with the middle of June, we were, for the present, spared the apprehension concerning a Russian invasion of Moldavia owing to the fact that the Danube and Pruth Rivers were both in flood which, up to Jassy, made a crossing impossible.

Finland's participation in the campaign against the Soviet Union already had been discussed in conferences held at Salzburg from 25 to 29 May between General JODL and General HEINRICH, the Finnish Chief of General Staff. On this occasion, it had been agreed, in keeping with Finnish aims\*, that the major forces of the Finnish Army would be committed at the Karelian Isthmus against Leningrad, while smaller forces, consisting of about three divisions, would be employed in East Karelian, advancing in the direction of Petrosavodsk and south thereof, and two divisions would be launching an attack on the Russian naval base Hango. The support of German air forces had been contemplated for all these operations. In addition, the Finns had pledged the early occupation of the Aland Islands in order to block up the Gulf of Bothnia and had agreed that the 163d Infantry Division, as early

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\* See page 83 (German original)

as the first half in June, would be transported via sea-route from Oslo to Turku (Abo) and from there moved via railway to its assembly area east of Rovaniemi \*, however, they had expressed the request that the contemplated early shift of the SS Battle Group North from Kirkenes to Rovaniemi be postponed until E-Day. During additional conferences held by Colonel BUSCHMANNHAGEN, the Chief of the Army Headquarters Norway, with the Finnish General Staff, it was finally also agreed that beginning 10 June, the Finnish frontier guard would be reinforced and that the mobilization of the V Corps, which was stationed in Northern Finland, would get under way on 15 June. The transportation by water of the 163d Infantry Division began on 5 or 6 June and was concluded by 16 June. Ambassador SCHMURKE, who, at the beginning of June, had been sent to Stockholm in order to sound out the Swedish Government, reported on the 8th it was his impression that after the start of the eastern campaign, Sweden would consent to the railway

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\* The decision to do this had been made recently, because another shift to the right of the forces stationed in Norway, such as was contemplated in case it became necessary to procure one division for Operation SILBERFUCHS (see page 98 - German original), would have been too difficult and time-wasting. In the meantime, the Army High Command, as contemplated, had transferred the 199th Infantry Division to Oslo. The organizational structure of Army Headquarters Norway was now the following: In the Oslo area, the 163d Infantry Division and the 40th Panzer Battalion (on Special Assignment) were under its direct command. The 69th, the 199th and the 214th Infantry Division were also committed in the Oslo area and assigned to the XXXVI Superior Command. The 181st and 196th Infantry Division, assigned to the XXXIII Superior Command (Trondheim), were stationed at the west coast, while the 2d and 3d Mountain Division and the SS Battle Group North (consisting of two regiments with six battalions and several batteries) of the Mountain Corps (Narvik) in the far north, were stationed in Kirkenes. As replacement for the 163d Infantry Division, the Army High Command also contemplated transferring the 710th Security Division to Norway.

transportation of German troops through her territory. The ambassador was thereupon instructed to approach the Swedish Government on X-Day or shortly thereafter with a request to this effect.

On 2 June, HITLER had met MUSCOLINI at the Brenner Pass; however, on this occasion, too, he again seems to have confined himself to vague allusions to forthcoming events. It was decided not to inform Hungary until the last moment, because HITLER did not trust them. At the end of May, the German Ambassador in Budapest, General HIMER, had discussed with the Hungarian General Staff the protection of the Hungarian area in case of a Russo-German conflict and had been given the information that it would be possible to assemble an army at the Russo-Hungarian border within 12 days if there was danger of a Russian attack. On 15 June, Reich Foreign Minister von RIBBENTROP instructed the German Ambassador in Budapest to inform the Hungarian Government that it should reckon with a rift between Germany and the Soviet Union and that it would therefore be advisable if they would immediately reinforce their frontier defenses against Russia. This was actually done during the next few days; however, no additional measures were taken by Hungary, because to the last, they were in the dark concerning Germany's plans. On the other hand, during the middle of June, arrangements were made with Slovakia concerning the passage of German troops through her territory and the participation of Slovakian forces in the eastern campaign.

Meanwhile, the last preparations were being made in accordance with the "chronological table for Operation BARBAROSSA, which HITLER had approved

on 5 June. In endless succession, the transports of the fourth and last assembly echelon were rolling towards their points of destination at the border according to the maximum capacity schedule which had gone into effect on 22 May. Beginning with the 10th of June, the strategic concentration of the bomber units was effected in the east as follows: The assembly of the Fourth Air Force under Generaloberst LOHR took place in the area of Army Group South, that of the Second Air Force under Generalfeldmarschall KESSLERING was effected in the area of Army Group Center, while the First Air Force under Generaloberst KELLER was assembled in the area of Army Group North. The air force units committed in Finland were subordinated to the Commander in Chief of the Fifth Air Force in Norway, Generaloberst STUMPF. On 10 June, the planning staffs of the three military district commanders earmarked for assignment in the future Reich Commissariats in the east \* were also ordered to report for active duty. In the middle of June, the Navy laid two submarine mine fields in the Gulf of Finland, while five submarines were ordered to take up stand-by positions in the Baltic Sea. A request made by the Navy General Staff for permission to be alerted for action on the eve of D-Day was granted.

On the morning of 12 June, HITLER returned to the capital after a stay of nearly five weeks at the Berghof. Two days later, he summoned the top-level Commanders in Chief of the Wehrmacht and their chiefs of staff to the Reich Chancellery for a last address \*\*. On 17 June, he issued the

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\* See page 98 etc. (German original).

\*\* Records of HITLER's speech held at this occasion are unfortunately no longer available.

final instructions for starting Operation BARBAROSSA on 22 June and ordered that at 0330 A.M., the German-Russian border was to be crossed by land and air, however, with the reservation that as late as 1300 on 21 June, HITLER might still revoke the order at the last moment, for which contingency the code word was "Altona", while "Dortmund" was to be the signal for beginning the attack.

On 18 June, HITLER instructed the Reich Foreign Minister to appeal to him not later than the evening of the next day and, making reference to the reports received by the Wehrmacht High Command, to plead that in view of the danger of the Russian strategic concentration, further delay was no longer justifiable. At the same time, HITLER also stated he would explain the attack on the Soviet Union by asserting that an Anglo-Russian agreement had been in effect for a long time, whereby the Soviet Union was supposed to attack Germany in order to contain her forces in the east and thus relieve Great Britain. In the face of this threadbare pretext, it should again be emphasized that the Soviet Union did everything possible to avoid a conflict with Germany, at least at that juncture.

On the evening of 20 June, HITLER gave the signal "Dortmund" to the Wehrmacht and thus the command to launch the attack at the specified hour. The next day he notified MUSSOLINI of his decision in a personal letter and requested his participation. Finally, during the night of 21 June, RIBBENTROP transmitted to the German Ambassador in Moscow the text of the declaration which Graf von der SCHULENBURG was supposed to hand over early next morning to the Soviet Foreign Commissar. HITLER refrained from calling

a session of the Reichstag on 22 June for the purpose of issuing a statement of government policy, because, as he said, 700 Reichstag delegates would end the secret and thus spoil the surprise element. Instead, he issued a proclamation to the German people which on the morning of 22 June the Reich Propaganda Minister announced over the radio.

During his conferences with the Commander in Chief of Army High Command and the Chief of the General Staff held on 9 January and 3 February respectively, HITLER had stated that Europe, and even the world, would hold its breath when Operation BARBAROSSA should be executed. However, in reality it was probably true that the world felt relieved when HITLER, through the attack on the Soviet Union, unnecessarily burdened himself with a new enemy and thus, at the same, with a two-front war, which he had certainly always wanted to avoid. Besides, this was an enemy whose population was more than twice as large as that of Germany and whose country was huge in size and had mineral resources in enormous quantities. This colossus, which had never really been conquered, HITLER seriously believed he would be able to completely defeat and make submissive to his will in a blitz campaign lasting three, or at the utmost, four months. He was so firmly convinced of his success that even before the start of the eastern campaign, he hatched adventurous plans which aimed still higher. As early as the middle of February, HITLER had delegated General JODL to have the Department for National Defense draw up a plan concerning the assembly of troops in Afghanistan for an attack on India. In this respect too, he followed in the footsteps of NAPOLEON I. Strange to say, this time, the responsible

men in the Army also seemed to have believed in a rapid and decisive victory. In any case, no warning voices were heard from that quarter at the time. On the contrary, the Army High Command, as early as the beginning of June, suggested that the Wehrmacht Operations Staff at an early date form an idea with regard to the operations which would be conducted after the defeat of the Russian armed forces \*, which surely might be construed as an indication of their certain belief in victory. The fact that, up to the present, the campaigns had been conducted rapidly and successfully despite and beyond expectation, and HITLER's predictions had so far always proven true, notwithstanding the scruples and scepticism of the military,

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\* As a result, the Department for National Defense compiled a "Directive # 32" which was subtitled: "Preliminary Arrangements for the Period Following Operation BARBAROSSA", in which the following future Wehrmacht missions were envisaged:

- 1) The continuation of the fight against British positions in the Mediterranean and in Asia Minor by means of converging attacks launched from Libya through Egypt, from Bulgaria over Turkey and, if need be, also from Transcaucasia through Iran;

- 2) the blocking off of the western entrance to the Mediterranean through the capture of Gibraltar;

- 3) the resumption of the "siege of England" by means of naval and air force operations, and finally, the invasion of England in order to deliver the coup de grace to the collapsing enemy.

This directive, which was printed verbatim in Peter de MENDELSSOHN's book "The Nuremberg Documents" (pages 355 - 360) was, according to the latter's statement, signed by HITLER and issued on 11 June. However, in my opinion, this is apparently an error. As far as I remember, this document was nothing but a draft, which was not even submitted to General JOEL, much less to HITLER, but which was on 11 June probably transmitted to the Wehrmacht branches for preliminary analysis, which happened frequently, and which was then set aside under pressure of subsequent events.

evidently affected the power of judgement of the army leaders and caused them to underestimate the obstacles, such as the enormous size of the Russian territory, its traffic and climatic conditions, the self-denial, endurance and toughness of the population, and the energy and inflexibility of the bolshevistic regime, which stood in the way of HITLER's extravagant plans.