

State Secret Concerning the Fuhrer's conversation with
Ambassador OSHIMA

DOC 4096

(10)

(17)

NOTE: Concerning the Fuhrer's conversation with Ambassador OSHIMA on 3 January 1942 in the presence of the German Foreign Minister in the Wolfsschanze from 1615 to 1800 hours.

The Fuhrer first of all began with a cordial assurance to Ambassador OSHIMA that he as a soldier and an ally was following the successful operations of Japan in the East Asia Theatre with the greatest possible interest and emotion; the fall of Manila was a severe blow to the Allies and the advance on Singapore a formidable threat to the English position; there could be no telling what reaction this success might release in England and the United States.

Passing over to the European Theatre, the Fuhrer declared that he was having powerful submarine and air force units transferred to the Mediterranean zone; however, weeks and months would elapse before these forces could be fully prepared for action. Unfortunately the rail connections with Italy were severely limited and as we had to send the Italians a million tons of coal every month, there remained few trains for other purposes. In particular the transportation of the ground organizations for the Luftwaffe took a great deal of time. Nevertheless the German fighting strength in the Mediterranean had met with very notable success at the present time. The movement of English ships had been appreciably disrupted and Malta had been brought under continuous assault. He planned to send, in all, 51 submarines into the Mediterranean. Unfortunately a considerable portion of the reinforcements were lost on the way to North Africa since the Italians were not in a situation adequately to protect the convoys. This alone had been the cause of Rommel's retreat. However the situation would again improve. A breathing space for Rommel had already begun. Moreover the losses had been relatively light. They amounted to about 5,000 combat troops, it was true, out of a total 60,000 men of the Afrika-Korps. Fourteen days ago it had finally again been possible to get panzers over. One hundred twenty panzers were waiting in Naples ready to move. Also, with the English the lines of communication were ever lengthening. He/Hitler/ hoped within a few weeks to send so many panzers to North Africa that Rommel would be able again to attack the English. We were not giving up the North African theatre. The English air activity had already diminished, while ours was constantly increasing.

The operations on the Eastern Front were characterized by a situation where the troops were withdrawing to a straight line and there were consolidating their position. Today the cold had been 42° (T.M. 43.6° F./ below in front of Leningrad so that every/kind of/war activity was suspended. One could no longer get the men out of the houses, their

hands froze fast to their rifles. If the German army had had a mere six days more of good weather before the beginning of the mud season they would, without more ado, have thrust into Moscow, but in view of the unfavorable weather conditions there was nothing for it but to call off the offensive. Above all the losses in motorized vehicles through the inroads of the cold were great so that with regard to materiel, too, a further advance could no longer be justified.

He was no longer contemplating carrying out any offensive in the center of the front. His target was the offensive on the south front.

The Fuhrer made the Ambassador aware that what he was saying on that occasion was intended solely for him and for the information of his Government. He was not to talk about it in any circumstances in Berlin and above all in foreign circles, particularly in regard to the Italians since the latter unfortunately were very incautious in their utterances; they carried on highly indiscreet telephone conversations and had moreover an insecure code. He had the utmost confidence in the discretion of the Japanese for they had proved that they could keep their mouths shut. The maintenance of secrecy regarding the preparation of the large scale operation(s) in the East Asia Theatre had been simply admirable.

Again taking up the thread of his discourse the Fuhrer explained that he was determined to take the offensive again in the direction of the Caucasus as soon as the weather should be favorable. This was the most important direction in which to make a thrust. Oil and Irak and Iran must be reached. If he could only become established there, he hoped to be able to help the independence movement in the Arab world to an awakening. Naturally he would, in addition, stake everything in order to destroy Moscow and Leningrad.

At present the first problem was to make the eastern front as short as possible so that the panzer and motorized divisions and some infantry units could be withdrawn in order to be freshened for the spring. Motorized weapons were useless in winter and must be withdrawn far behind the front so that the necessary repairs and replacements could be carried out. Through the pulling in of several salients by 50 or 100 km, the front near Moscow had been considerably shortened. Through this, 180 km of frontage had been saved whereby about 10 divisions had been freed. The Southern Army was standing fast and had gone into /permanent/ positions where it would remain the whole winter. The Russians were attacking here and there but had been driven back with fearful losses. The enveloping wings around Moscow which had pushed far in advance had been withdrawn. He would withdraw the inner curve also until March since he must bring them close to the reinforcement bases before the beginning of the mud season. In the north likewise he had brought the offensive to a halt. At Tichwin he had withdrawn to the former built up fortifications. The final objective

was as straight a line as possible from Leningrad to Taganrog. The following units had already taken up their winter positions: the 1st panzer, the 6th, 17th, 2nd/ panzer, 4th, 9th, 16th and the Northern Army. Their losses had been relatively light. In the previous month the missing amounted to no more than 3,000. The losses from frost also had not been large. In all there had been less than 100 amputations. Though the Russians were making a big to-do about it, their successes from a strategic point of view were insignificant. Moreover, they also had a reinforcement problem of increasing severity.

In the Crimea we were attacking Sevastopol. The Russians had made a landing in our rear. We had again reinforced our air force down there and he hoped that the Russians would be thrown out again in three or four days. If it was very cold he would prefer, however, to wait a few days more in order to spare the troops. He would withdraw the German units in the territories which he intended to evacuate only when the enemy attacked. He would make no "strategic retreats." Every day the Russian would have to spill his blood. He would have his masses attack, often up to ten or fifteen thousand on a kilometer-wide front and in consequence took terrific losses. He would keep this up until he simply could not take it any longer. In the South he had ceased major attacks for the past four weeks.

Again the Fuhrer asked the Ambassador not to mention his statements to the Italians. If anything were let out, all efforts would be in vain. In this connection he recalled 22 June. He added that he would discuss military affairs only with Ambassador OSHIMA personally.

We all, and Japan too, were engaged in a common battle for life or death and for that reason it was of the greatest importance that we exchanged our military experiences with each other. He would gladly apprise him of those things that we believed of decisive importance to the prosecution of the war. He did not know whether OSHIMA was aware of the following invention. This was a new grenade, the so-called hollow grenade /T.N. Hohlgranate/ with which any panzer could be shattered. He had hitherto withheld this invention since he was convinced that if the enemy should learn of this invention our panzers would also be a thing of the past. The Russians had now introduced their Panzer T34, which although not very heavily armored was still so perfect in design that all shots rebounded. This had induced him, among others, to release the hollow grenade, for it would demolish all panzers without exception. If, for example, this grenade should be used with the 3.7 Pak /Panzerabwehrkanone? 'anti-tank gun'/, a caliber which produced hardly any effect any more as an anti-panzer weapon, it would pierce up to 180 mm /T.N. 7.0866 in./. We should discuss minutely with Japan the mode of employment of these grenades. He felt sure that the Japanese Government would keep the invention secret.

He suggests that Germany deliver to Japan some of these grenades in order that they may be studied and copied in Japan. For this purpose it would doubtless be advisable for a German and a Japanese submarine to meet somewhere in order to transport the grenades to Japan.

Today and tomorrow the first German submarines were arriving in the coastal waters of the United States. He wanted to organize the submarine commitments on the North American coast to assure the relief /on station/ in such a way that the Americans would not get around to taking defense measures. They would then also be forced to withdraw further submarine protection from the Pacific.

He was somewhat worried about the Norwegian coast in its enormous extent of 2800 km. Only few airfields were useable in winter and troop movements were extremely difficult to carry out. The English turned whole fleet squadrons against one coast battery standing isolated on an island and were able in this way to achieve small successes. At the most important points, even at Narvik among others, the defense measures were such that nothing could happen.

The most important of all was the perfecting and thorough organization of the anti-armored defense, because Russia, England and America might come here with great masses.

Reverting to the East Front, the Fuhrer said that he would not give up precious terrain such as that of the Ukraine, that near Leningrad, and the industrial regions. In other places a matter of 20 or 30 km did not bother him. He was convinced that he could soon accomplish this task. Many things would have to be reorganized: the motorized units would all have to be converted into panzer units, for every motorized division had to have panzers at the head. He only wanted to prevent the enemy from obtaining information concerning our new weapons through a slip on our part. If he got it only ten months later such would have been won.

The Fuhrer explained to the Japanese Ambassador on the map the prospective naval war situation in the Atlantic, emphasizing that he considered it his most important task to get the submarine war going full blast. The submarines were in their new positions. He had first called in all submarines operating in the Atlantic. They were stationed, as already mentioned, off United States harbors, later also off Freetown, and the large boats /were stationed/ as far down as Cape Town. He hoped that by February he could allot 20 to 24 boats to the coast of the United States alone. These boats were capable of remaining there on station four weeks before having to return. After making further explanations with the aid of the map, the Fuhrer pointed out that no matter how many ships the U.S.A. built one of their chief problems was the personnel shortage. For

this reason the merchant vessels were also being sunk without warning with the idea that as large a part as possible of the crew should perish in consequence. If word should once get about that most seamen were lost in torpedoings, the Americans would soon have difficulties in recruiting new people. The training of seafaring personnel took a long time. We were fighting here /T.M. here struck through in original/ for our existence and therefore could not permit any humanitarian points of view to govern. For this reason he had to give the order that in case foreign seamen could not be taken prisoner, which was not for the most part possible on the open sea, the submarines were to surface after torpedoing and shoot up the lifeboats.

Ambassador OSHIMA sincerely concurs in these statements of the Fuhrer and says that the Japanese, too, are forced to follow these methods. Once Singapore had fallen, the position of the Allies would be completely altered; the English Fleet could then go only to Ceylon or possibly to Bombay; Calcutta was already very dangerous for it. He did not think the United States and England were agreed on the manner of conducting the war. The Fuhrer is of the opinion that the English would like to see the armed forces of the United States brought to Libya to prevent them from entering the East Asiatic territories, as they /the Americans/ wanted to, for they /the English/ feared that the Americans would never leave. OSHIMA is of the opinion that the Japanese army would soon make a thrust toward the occupation of Burma in order to cut off the imports for Chiang Kai-shek. He considers it extremely important in this connection that Germany and Japan make a joint declaration regarding India. Once the English bases in India were eliminated, it would be a simple matter for Japan to send convoys to the Persian Gulf. It was also very important that Japan should be able to prevent all export of rubber and tin to America.

The Fuhrer pointed out to OSHIMA the great danger that, should the war last a long time, England might be able to switch her major power /T.M. literally: "central office"/ to Australia and New Zealand in order to fight Japan from there. He considered it very important for this reason that Japan limit herself in the immediate future entirely to the securing of the South-East Asia Region in order to prevent any dangers from still being able to develop here. OSHIMA, who was of the same opinion as the Fuhrer, added that Japan must also secure the North Region and for this purpose must occupy bases in the Aleutians in the spring.

The Japanese and the German Navy were in the midst of discussions on the opening up of a route north of the Asiatic continent by which an exchange of steamers might be possible. To his knowledge German auxiliary cruisers had already gotten through there once.

He particularly stressed that it was probably the first time in history that two so powerful military powers that were situated far apart from each other should be engaged in battle jointly. This situation

created the possibility through the exact timing of operations of producing a smoke-screen over military activity, which must have a considerable reaction on the enemy, as the latter would be forced as a result to keep shifting his main effort and in this way to scatter his forces hopelessly. He did not believe that the United States still had the courage to carry out attacking operations in the East Asia region.

Going into the methods of Japanese warfare, OSHIMA reported that only two aircraft carriers had taken part in the attack on Hawaii. OSHIMA stated as follows on the contribution of the aircraft carriers: The Japanese employed different tactics than the English. First of all the Japanese airplanes had a greater range than those of the United States and England. Thus the Japanese airplanes were able to take off earlier. They had the mission, not of sinking the enemy aircraft carriers, but only of destroying the flight decks with small bombs so as to prevent the enemy airplanes from taking off. The range of the heavy guns on the modern battleships is today about 30 kilometers. At this distance no hits can be obtained without air observation. By the abovementioned tactics the enemy observers were prevented from taking off, so that only the Japanese had observers in the air, so the guns of their battleships had a one-sided advantage.

He, OSHIMA, was empowered by his government to discuss the prosecution of the war with the German Foreign Minister. Even though individual questions could be discussed directly between the army, the air force, and, above all, the navy, in his opinion it was of the greatest importance that the main line /of policy/ should be laid down exclusively by him and the Foreign Minister. The same was true for the economic and political questions.

The Fuhrer then went on: "If England loses India, a world collapses. India is the heart of the English Empire. England has obtained her entire wealth out of India." OSHIMA said that Japan had suffered economically very much through the China war, but that as soon as it had occupied the South East Asia Region, the raw materials acquired there would put it in a position to last out a long war. It was necessary that Germany and Japan should devise common plans for 1942/43. The two allies should under no circumstances stop half way. The Fuhrer was of the opinion that England could be destroyed. He did not yet know how the U.S.A. was to be conquered. He was convinced that the countries of South America would slowly break away from North America. At a remark of the German Foreign Minister that Japan might perhaps be in a position in May to attack Russia, the Fuhrer said that the most important thing from Germany's point of view was that Japan should not succumb to the Anglo-Saxon powers. It should under no circumstances fritter away its strength prematurely. The main enemy for us /Germany/ too was England. We /Germany/ would certainly not succumb to the Russians. He again drew OSHIMA's attention

to the danger which in the long view would arise for Japan, if the United States and England should build themselves up to a large extent on the Australian continent. OSHIMA was of the same opinion and was convinced that Japan would very soon secure bases for herself in Australia. Moreover it was natural that Japan would have to strike Russia too one day, for otherwise a New Order in East Asia would not be possible. At the moment Japanese troops were still very much tied up in China, but he was convinced that the Chungking Government would grow increasingly weaker during the next months. Then Japan would be in a position to pull troops out of China.

Roosevelt's greatest mistake had been in imposing sanctions on Japan without being also correspondingly prepared militarily. This had been a policy of sheer madness. The Fuhrer was of the same opinion and said that if one didn't want to wait around until one's throat was slit one had to strike out first, and that Japan had recognized this aright and had done so.

The U.S.A. Ambassador, Craigie /sic/, OSHIMA went on to say, had become friendly with certain Japanese upper circles, who had no connection with the Japanese people and who through their economic interests had been turned into anglophiles. Because of this he had reported incorrectly to America and believed utterly that the Japanese could be intimidated by threats and extortion. He had had no inkling of the real inclinations of the Japanese people. The Fuhrer agreed and said that the same had been true in Germany as well. Henderson particularly had moved in circles who had given him completely false information on the strength and will of the German people. OSHIMA expressed the opinion that the English and American diplomats in Japan, if they had really opened their eyes, must have been able to notice the readying and mobilization of the fleet. In that case developments would have turned out differently. With regard to the mission of NOMURA and KURUSU he said that the right people had been chosen here. Oblivious to the true situation, they had negotiated with the Americans in an honest desire to reach an understanding.

The Fuhrer felt that it was of the utmost importance that Japan and Germany mutually exchange military discoveries. Germany had no interests in East Asia and Japan none in Europe and Africa. OSHIMA took up this thought enthusiastically and spoke of a Japanese major staying in Paris at the moment who could be characterized as the expert on landing operations. If it were agreeable to the German army, this major would place his experience and knowledge at the disposal of Germany. Japan had been carrying out landing operations for 50 years. For 2600 Japan had had no war on its own soil. Every war which she had had to fight out she had conducted outside the Japanese islands and every war involved landing operations. They had therefore a great tradition in this field which had been demonstrated to be surpassing by the recent operations.

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The methods had developed to the last detail. Thus in the jungles of Malaya, where the few roads are surrounded by morass and swamp, small, quite flat boats were employed, just as they were used in Japan in the cultivation of rice. These flat boats were equipped with machine-guns and manned by just two men and as a surprise for the English popped up everywhere in the jungle, harassed reinforcement and hindered deployment. He himself had been on the west front recently and had inspected the German landing boats in Rotterdam. He had gained the impression that the speed of these boats was far inferior to that of the Japanese boats.

An approaching problem for Japan was to keep her people tough somehow in the newly conquered territories. The South-East Asia countries were immensely rich in natural resources and even the soil itself was so fertile that it never required fertilizer. On the other hand, there was the enervating climate. It was a very important task to prevent the Japanese from losing their combative and dynamic qualities over a period of time. Here the Fuhrer remarked that Germany in this respect was in a better position, for anything could be expected rather than that the work in Russia should soften the Germans. In conclusion OSHIMA said that there was a great field for activity in East Asia for Germany too, for Japan certainly had a great need of German engineers and experts, who must help her to open up these territories. He expressed the hope that Germany and Japan would enter into close economic cooperation after the war.

/illegible signature/

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Certificate No. D-423

(Place) Nurnberg
(Date) 12 March 1946CERTIFICATE

I, Kenneth H. M. Duke, Major, British Army, of the British War Crimes Executive (European Section), hereby certify that the attached document, consisting of twenty two photostated pages and entitled Aufzeichnung uber das Gesprach des Fuhrers mit Botschafter OSHIMA dated 3 Jan. 42, is a true copy of a document which the British Foreign Office delivered to me in my above capacity, in the usual course of official business, as a photostat copy from a microfilm found in German archives, records and files captured by military forces under the command of the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces. To the best of my knowledge and belief the original microfilm is at the Foreign Office, where it is in current use for other investigations.

/s/ Kenneth H. M. Duke, Maj.

SECRET REICH MATTER

NOTE: Concerning the Fuehrer's conversation with Ambassador OSHIMA on January 1942 in the presence of the Reich Foreign Minister in the "Wolfsschanze" from 1615 to 1800 hours.

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OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 18 July 1947

I certify that Document Number D-423 was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number GB-197 in the Trial by the International Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20. November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

/s/ Fred Niebergall
E.T.O.

Fred NIEBERGALL
Chief, Document
Control Branch.

REFILE COPY

RETURN TO ROOM 361

秘 密 國 家 事 項

一九四二年一月三日一六時十五分乃至十八時ノ
「ヴォルフシエンツエ」ニ於ケル獨逸外務大臣列席
ノ大島大使ト總統トノ會談ニ關スル

覺 書

Doc. 4096-A

再度總統ハ大使ニ伊太利人ニ對シテハ彼ノ陳述ヲ述
ペナイ様要請シタ。何事カ、漏レレバアヲユル努力
ハ水泡ニ歸スルダラウ。彼ハ之ニ關聯シテ六月二十
二日ヲ思ヒ出シタ。

彼ハ附言シテ自分ハ軍事事項ハ大島大使トダケ親シ
ク協議シヤウト言ツタ。

「國 家 機 密」

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ハアメリカ合衆國ガドンナニ多クノ艦艇ヲ建造シヨ

Ex 3813-A

ウトモ、米ノ主ナル問題ノ一ツハ要員ノ不足トイフコトデアアル點ヲ指摘シタ。此理由カラ、幾多ノ商船モ又無警告デ撃沈サレテイル。ソレハ其結果トシテ可綴的多數乗組員ノ喪失ヲ來ラシメヨウトスル意圖ニヨルモノデアアル。大多數ノ海員ガ魚雷攻撃デ喪失サレタトイフコトガ一度廣ク傳ヘラレルニ至レバ米國側ハ忽チ要員ノ新規補充ニ意々ナル困難ヲ感ズルニ至ルデアラウ。海上勤務ニ適スル要員ノ訓練ニハ相當長日月ヲ要スルモノデアアル。我々ハ自己ノ生存ノ爲メニ戦ツテイルノデアアル。隨テ人道的ナ觀點ガ支配スルコトハ許シ得ナイ。此故ニ、外國船員ヲ俘虜トシテ捕ヘ得ナイ場合ニハ、公海ニ於テハ大部分ノ場合不可能デアアルガ、

魚雷發射後潜水艇ハ水面ニ浮上シ、救命艇ヲ射ツベシトノ命令ヲ彼ハ出サ、ルヲ得ナカッタノデアツタ。

大島大使ハ總統ノ是等ノ言ニ誠心誠意共鳴シ且ツ日本側モ又斯カル方法ヲ探ルノヲ余儀ナクサレテイル旨ヲ述ベテイル。

彼大島ハ彼ノ政府カラ獨逸外務大臣ト戰爭ノ遂行ヲ協議スベキ制限ヲ與ヘラレテキタ。陸軍、空軍及

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戦争犯罪證據部合衆國首席檢察官事務局

一九四七年七月十八日

私ハ書類D-1四二三號ハ一九四五年十一月二十日
ニ開始セル「ヘルマンゲイリング」ソノ他ニ對ス
ル國際法廷ノ裁判ニ法廷證6B-1一九七號ヲシテ
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眞ハ原文ノ眞實且正確ナル寫シナルコトヲ證明ス

書類管理部長

「フレッド ニーベルゴール」

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OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES
EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date: 18 July, 1947

I certify that Document Number D-423 was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number GB-197 in the Trial by the International Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

(s) Fred Niebergall

S. T. O.

Fred Niebergall
Chief, Document
Control Branch

CHARGE OUT CLIP

DATE: Oct. 29 1947

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PRESSTRANS _____

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Signature F. L. Javenny

Room # 373

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