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INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTION SECTION

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ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

DESCRIPTION OF ATTACHED DOCUMENT

Title and Nature: Certified Interrogation of
RIBBENTROP examination by Col. Howard Brundage

Date: 10 Sep 1945 Original Copy Language:
English

Has it been translated? Yes No

Has it been photostated? Yes No

LOCATION OF ORIGINAL

IMT, Nurnberg

SOURCE OF ORIGINAL: Nurnberg

PERSONS IMPLICATED:

CRIMES TO WHICH DOCUMENT APPLICABLE: Japan-German Relations

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT POINTS

RIBBENTROP states during the examination ". . . . I do remember that we had not given to Japan the counsel ever to attack the United States."

Analyst: 2d Lt Goldstein

Doc. No. 2131

2181

AFFIDAVIT.

I, JOHN H. AMEN, being first duly sworn on oath, depose and say:


1. That I am a commissioned officer of the Army of the United States of America, and my serial number is 0-484563

2. That I am now and have been continuously since 1 September 1945 Chief of the Interrogation Division of the Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for the prosecution of Axis criminality, and as such have been in charge of the interrogation of all the witnesses and prospective defendants incidental to the trials now being conducted by the International Military Tribunal at Nurnberg, Germany.

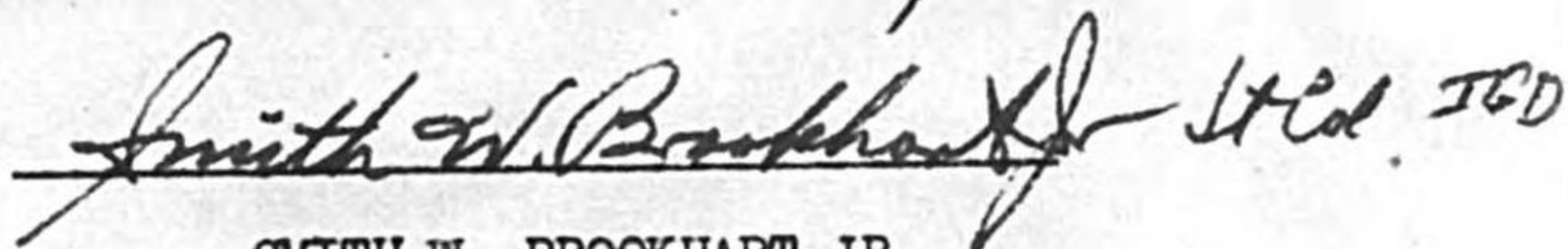
3. That one Colonel Howard A. Brundage in the month of September 1945 was a member of my staff and conducted interrogations of Joachim von Ribbentrop, who is now a defendant and on trial before the International Military Tribunal. That on the 10th day of September 1945 said Joachim von Ribbentrop was interrogated by said Colonel Howard A. Brundage. That said interrogation was conducted in English and was reduced to writing by Clair Van Vleck, a court reporter on my staff. That at the commencement of said interrogation an oath was administered to said Joachim von Ribbentrop and said interrogation was taken under oath. That an oath was also administered to said court reporter Clair Van Vleck, by the terms of which he swore to correctly transcribe the interrogation in all its details.

4. That said interrogation upon its completion was reduced to writing by said court reporter, and the original was filed with me, and since said filing has continuously remained in my custody. That said interrogator, Colonel Howard A. Brundage, and said reporter Clair Van Vleck, have each returned to the United States and are no longer on the staff of the Office of the United States Chief of Counsel.

5. That the document attached hereto is a true and accurate copy of the original interrogation filed with me and retained in my files as aforesaid.


John H. Amen
Colonel, I. G.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this *3rd* day of *May* 1946.


SMITH W. BROOKHART JR.,
LT COLONEL, IGD.
O-508524

Testimony of Joachim von Ribbentrop,
taken at Nuremberg, Germany on 10
September 1945, 1130-1215, by Col.
Howard A. Brundage, JAGD, OUSCC.
Also present: Clair Van Vleck, Court
Reporter.

COL. BRUNDAGE TO THE WITNESS:

Q Will you state your name?

A Joachim von Ribbentrop.

Q You are the same Joachim von Ribbentrop who has testified here
before?

A Yes, that is right.

Q As I remember, the last time we were together, you were going to
discuss the Polish situation; is that correct?

A Yes. I sent you a note about the other things. Did you get that?
About the American situation? I wanted to say something to you.

Q Yes. We can finish that, if you would like to. Was that the
American and Japanese situation?

A The Japanese, yes. There are a few points which struck me afterwards.

Q Yes; I think we went into quite a lot of that, didn't we?

A You asked me about Pearl Harbor and I have been thinking that over
again, and I come to the same conclusion. I think you asked me whether it
hadn't been discussed with us before, or something like that.

Q Yes.

A I came to the same conclusion; that it was a complete surprise to
us. I think there will be collaborators of mine; there were quite a number
of people, also military people, who can tell you about that. Nobody figured
on that. The Fuehrer was first very glad to have a new ally against Great
Britain, but in the talk with me, he showed that he thought that it had a
bad side.

Q Q When was that?

A This was after Pearl Harbor when I discussed that with him.

Q Soon after?

A Yes, a few days after. It must have been two days or something like that. Then you asked me whether there had been discussions with Japan about an attack against the United States and so on. Well, of course, there have been a tremendous lot of talks with Japan in all those days, you see. My memory goes as far as this: you remember I said the other day that there had been, to my mind, negotiations in Washington about approaching the American-Japanese point of view.

Q That was at the time of Pearl Harbor?

A Yes. Wasn't that several months before already? Didn't the negotiations go on for quite a number of months? I don't remember.

Q I don't recall that, but, of course, there were negotiations going on at the time of the attack.

A Yes; but there were also negotiations already months and months before. I recollect one matter quite clearly, because you asked whether we had advised Japan in any way, you see, in the way of taking a stern point of view and that sort of thing. Now, I remember there was a time--to my mind it was a long time before Pearl Harbor--that certain press, and also news from Tokyo, came that there were negotiations going on in Washington; and that certain press reports came, which made it rather doubtful whether our Three-Power Pact would work automatically, if Japan came to certain agreements with the United States of America. There was the possibility of formulations, I think, in our pact, and so on.

Q You mean by that, from an interpretation of the terms of the pact, that if there was a breaking off of relations between Japan and the United States, that automatically Germany would have to break off relations with the United States?

A Yes. You see, the situation was this: You see, the Fuehrer at that time had worries. He saw the attitude of the United States "short of war" and he was worried about an agreement, because there were certain groups in Japan who wanted to come to an arrangement with America. He was afraid that if an arrangement would be made between the United States and Japan, that this would mean, so to speak, the back free for America and the expected attack or entry into the war by the United States would come quicker. I remember there were preparations of that kind.

Q You mean by that, that he was afraid that if arrangements were made with Japan, that then the Pacific coast would be clear of trouble, and then all the attention of the United States could be directed toward the Atlantic?

A Yes. You see the situation--we had the situation short of war against us. We had this pact with Japan, but the pact--I don't know the exact wording any more at the moment. I shall have to look it up. I know there were certain difficulties. For instance, in the press it said, I think, that if the United States and Japan would come to certain arrangements, that would mean that they would not have to work automatically if the United States went into war against Germany. Do I make myself clear?

Q Yes. Was that the press comment or was that Hitler's reasoning?

A I think there were comments like that in the press going on, which went in that direction. I remember the Fuehrer talking of the thing out of the Three-Power Pact.

S E C R E T

Q Was that also Hitler's reasoning at the time?

A Yes. And I remember that we discussed it once and that is quite possible. I don't remember the details any more, but at that time there were discussions to keep them in line.

Q Then, summarizing, Hitler was opposed to Japan making any arrangements with the United States?

A Yes. One can say that; yes.

Q That was before Pearl Harbor?

A To my mind, I think a long time before Pearl Harbor. I don't recall it exactly, but one can see that in the press.

Q Would you say that it was in the Spring of '41?

A I don't really know about dates. It is very difficult for me. I only know my recollection by this: that Pearl Harbor was a complete surprise to us all. We didn't expect anything like that and so these negotiations, of that kind, to my mind, must have been very much earlier. That is the way I recollect it, but I couldn't really tell you exactly when, but I do remember that we had not given to Japan the counsel ever to attack the United States. I don't remember that at all. With the position of the United States short of war, and the shaky attitude of certain Japanese circles, it might perhaps have been understandable, but I don't remember that we ever gave a counsel for that; but perhaps I may explain, chronologically, the way it went. First, our first dealings with Japan were against Russia. It was Anti-Comintern. It was more on the line of world perception. Then came the Three-Power Pact which was closed, as I think I said before here, in order to keep the United States neutral. Then during the war, since the declaration of Great Britain with war on Germany, the Japanese had discussed at various

S E C R E T

occasions the idea of attacking England through the south on Singapore. I remember myself discussing with the Japanese in Berlin, I think also in Tokyo, the interest we took in such an attack, on the neutrality of the United States. I remember pointing that out at various occasions.

Q Well, logically, it was much to your advantage that the United States did not enter the war against Germany.

A It has always been in my mind, and I remember quite well that I have talked with the Japanese in Berlin, in the sense that it would be in the interests of us all, to keep the United States neutral, which was the main object of the pact when closed. I don't know whether on the military sector there had been anything. I don't know; I was not informed, but I don't suppose so. I wanted to ask if you have any other news, which I think you pointed out, or you suggested the other evening, that my recollection might be wrong. I only want to state that I would be only too glad, if you would give me this information, I am perfectly willing to tell you exactly. Perhaps my recollections may be wrong in a point or two, but this is the general thought or recollection that I have of the whole affair.

Q I have a copy of an order dated the 5th of March, 1941.

A It was long before Pearl Harbor.

Q Yes; signed by Keitel.

A By Keitel?

Q By Keitel.

A That would be military.

Q Yes.

A About military things, you know, of course, I am not informed. I must tell you that right away.

S E C R E T

Q This may refresh your recollection on some of your discussions. It starts out by saying:

"For co-operation with Japan, the Fuehrer has ordered as follows:

"1. The aim of the cooperation, which has been established through the Three-Power Pact, must be to induce Japan to active operations in the Far East as soon as possible. Hereby strong British forces would be tied up."

A That is right.

Q "The main effort of the United States of America would be diverted to the Pacific."

A Well, the latter is something which I don't understand. The first years, that is quite right; that was always my view, to engage the strong English forces in the Pacific. But this letter, I don't know; I never heard of it. To what is that, an order to whom? To military people?

Q Yes; to all--

A But I have seen so much written and talked. I must tell you quite frankly the military side of all these questions has been kept absolutely separate.

Q This must have been discussed in your councils with Hitler, I should think.

A I assure you, no; quite assuredly no.

Q Did you ever hear of the plan "Barbarossa"?

A What is it called?

Q Barbarossa.

A Wait a minute. Yes; but I don't recollect what it was. To my mind it must have been for some military action. Was that the try to land in England?

S E C R E T

Q No.

A I don't remember. I remember the name, but I don't remember what it was. Perhaps you can tell me?

Q Let me read the rest of this paragraph:

"That prospects for success of Japan, in the face of the still undeveloped readiness for war of her adversaries, will be so much greater the earlier the intervention occurs. The enterprise 'Barbarossa' creates especially favorable political and military suppositions for this."

Does that refresh your recollection?

A No. Wait a minute -- the enterprise "Barbarossa" does what?

Q "Creates especially favorable political and military suppositions for this", meaning an early intervention. Let me read to you the second paragraph:

"For the preparation of the cooperation, it is necessary to strengthen the Japanese military power by all means. To this, the headquarters of the units of the Army, are to conform with Japanese requests for communication of German war and battle experiences and support the military, economical, and technical nature in a comprehensive manner."

A That is right. That has always been done.

Q "Reciprocity is desired, but should not aggravate the negotiations. Naturally, in the foreground are those Japanese proposals which can produce an effect upon the conduct of the war in short time. In special cases, the Fuehrer reserves the decision for himself." And then it goes on to detail the functions of the Navy, etc.

S E C R E T

A Well, I can tell you only this: In the discussions I know that, for instance, the Japanese ambassador was at various occasions--once or twice at any rate--also with the Fuehrer.. There was always the question of an attack of Japan and getting into war against Great Britain, and about an attack on Singapore. That was the main essence of all the negotiations; not negotiations, but talks which were held. The Fuehrer never liked very much to go too deep into such things with Japan. He never did that, but I know the whole object of these talks was the idea of engaging British forces in the Far East. You see, it was not so that we discussed all details with Japan, that this or that might be done, but, as I pointed out two or three times, just in a general way, we pointed out if Japan took part, the great importance of the policy of the United States. This can also be confirmed by the Japanese.

I don't recollect this myself, and I don't think I was present with the Fuehrer, when it was ever discussed, when the Fuehrer said to the Japanese, "You are to attack the United States"; or even when an attack on the United States by Japan was discussed with the Fuehrer. We were all so surprised. To be quite frank with you, personally, I never had heard of the word of "Pearl Harbor." I heard it for the first time when this attack was had. I had never heard of this name before. That is the first time this name struck me. I remember that very well. "Pearl Harbor", I said, "Good Heavens, where is that"? I really didn't know this was the Pearl Harbor of the United States.

Q Do you interpret this order as meaning that the Japanese should attack the United States or should attack England?

A Of course, this one phrase is clear. Would you read it to me

S E C R E T

again, this one phrase about the United States?

Q "Hereby strong British forces will be tied up. The main effort of the United States of America would be diverted to the Pacific."

A I should imagine, you know, I mean I don't know, of course, but it might be possible that this letter by Keitel, this would go in the same line with what I am recollecting, that he simply meant that the United States would be politically engaged, you see, so to speak. You can ask the military people what they see about it, but I never recollect that this has been discussed. I don't recollect that, of course. I must say this: It was something that was always somewhat obscured, in the dark, to me. If the Japanese would do that, what would happen and so on. I remember that the Japanese ambassador was once to the Fuehrer, telling him about the possibilities of an attack on Singapore and so on. That I remember.

Q But not against the United States?

A I never remember that he had been discussing with the Fuehrer, or with me, the idea of what might possibly happen if they should go into the war. I don't remember that. Maybe he sometimes mentioned it, something like this.

Q At that time was the relationship so loose that Japan would have made such an attack without informing Germany?

A Attack on Pearl Harbor, you mean?

Q Yes.

A I can most definitely tell you, that we all, absolutely, during all these months, did not know at all what they were doing, or whether they were going to do anything or not. The Fuehrer was always uncertain about Japan. You know your situation with Japan was always tense during that whole year, wasn't it? And there was always people who tried to fix matters and so on? I remember that during that year there was a stage, where we were scared that we would come to the same situation as during the World War, that the Japanese

would come to an arrangement with the United States and the United States would declare war on us the next day. I remember that very well, I may say. Then we probably had details of that, and probably, we talked with the Japanese then. I surely must have done that several times, that it would be expected that they keep to the spirit and be loyal to the Three-Power Pact and so on. This is my frank recollection I have now. I am perfectly willing to say if I have been wrong in anything or not.

Q No, I think that that is quite logical, that Germany would not want the United States to get into war against Germany at a time when she was engaged in Europe.

A You see, Colonel, this corresponds. I mean this whole situation with Japan, as I explained to you, does correspond with our attitude in Europe, does it not? I mean what I explained to you the other day?

Q You and I take different viewpoints of it. I claim there was a program of aggression and that you were out to seize all the territory that you could and therefore it is quite logical that you didn't want the United States to get into that show.

A I assure you there was no program. I may perhaps say this also: I have thought over also this point, you see, and I can say something more to you about this. I remember one day the Fuehrer telling me--you always say that there always has been a scheduled program of aggression of this and that.

Q You will admit that it wasn't because you were, particularly, peace-loving, that you didn't want the United States to come into the war?

A Here we come back to the starting point of the whole situation, of course, which, of course, ours is different to yours, you see, but I just wanted to point out something which has struck me, a word which the

Fuehrer once told me, which shows you really the way things went. You see, there was a National Socialist program. I would like to point that out again, and I am more convinced today about what I told you the other day. With the position which Great Britain took towards this stronger Germany, and with the National Socialist program, which I told you about my attitude, it would have been the only possibility, in my mind, that the Fuehrer would have abandoned his whole program. It was the only possibility in my mind. That is, the program of the Party, but now I do not mean the program of aggression. So far as aggression is concerned, I can tell you about something, which the Fuehrer once told me quite frankly, that he was quite worried. I think it was during the time of the Serbian-Greek business, he said, "Here I am. I wanted to settle my new Germany, with the minorities and so on." You know, the program I told you about. "Here the enemy forces me to go everywhere in Europe, there and there, where I don't want to go at all." He said it in connection with the Greek business because they were so friendly with the Greeks, you know, and the Fuehrer repeatedly quoted and said again and again, "It is too stupid; this Italian business." You know, with Albania and the Greeks and so on, that they started. You know, we went to Florence then. We flew to Florence to stop it, and in the meantime the day before, they had marched on.

Q But, in retrospect, don't you agree now, of course, he was disturbed by the fact that he started out do something and he found out that he was getting in deeper every time he wanted to gain more territory for himself because somebody objected; when he went to get territory, he found a proprietor there who resisted?

A I am sure, Colonel, that is not right. The Fuehrer, the way I see it now, wanted to settle the Polish program, and he had a notion. You know, there has always been this business of the Corridor and Danzig and no

so, that it had to be settled, and he had a motion, also a vague motion, that Germany must have some more territory in the east somewhere. That motion was always there. I quite agree with you. This was never outspoken that it must be this or that.

Q You never heard of his saying that he wanted to get that territory by an arrangement of some kind, by buying it or leasing it?

A Well, you know, we tried very hard, but he saw, you see, that this was not possible by way of arrangements, you see. What I wanted to come to was this: That is what the Fuehrer really wanted and through England then taking the point of view, being behind Poland and declaring war on Germany, and France also; of course, this meant a big war, at least a European war, if not a World War. The Fuehrer, to my mind, had absolutely no sketched out definite program of any sort of forming what later on was called the Gross Germanic Reich or the Gross Germanic State. I want to say a word to you about that. He never had that idea. It all came during the war. He never had that before.

Q You admit he knew when he attacked Poland, that that meant war, a big war? I mean there was no doubt in anybody's mind about that?

A I can't answer you that question, what the Fuehrer really thought then.

Q Didn't you discuss that with him?

A Oh, yes; the Polish question, I can tell you exactly. I can tell you most definitely that the English guarantee, which the English had given to Poland, would mean war with Great Britain, you see, and that is because the Fuehrer --

Q That is what I say, there was no doubt that that meant war when he decided to attack Poland.

A I was of that opinion, and the Fuehrer was also, from the first, and, you know, on my proposal he stopped the advance. You know, the military operation had already started in August. He stopped that, which showed me that he was absolutely of the same opinion. He did not want war with Great Britian.

Q That was on the 25th of August?

A I think so, yes. Then he started these negotiations with Great Britian afterwards, with Henderson, you see. They did not come off. Then he wanted to negotiate with the Polish representative, who didn't come. Then he gave the order to go on. Whether he now thought that Great Britian would not march, that this could be settled locally or not, I couldn't tell you. He never told me.

Q But you told him that Great Britian would fight?

A I told him on the 25th when the news came about the English guarantees. I told him then, and after my last discussion with Henderson, I remember I told him that Henderson had been earnest. I don't think he said anything about Great Britain going to war or anything like that, but he had been earnest and to my mind the British guarantee stood. I told him that.

Q Time goes quickly, and we only have a few minutes left. You made a request a few times that you would like to talk with me about something in confidence or in private?

A Yes; if I could.

Q Very well.

APPROVED

INTERROGATER

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