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THE GERMAN NAVY AND ADOLF HITLER
1933 - 1945

By

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B. A. Montana State University, 1963

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

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MAY 3 1965

Date
PREFACE

This study professes to answer two questions. What role did the German navy play in the formation and implementation of the policies of the Third Reich? And what was the relationship between the Führer, Adolf Hitler, and the German navy? The history of the German navy during World War II is often neglected and under-emphasized, overshadowed as the navy was by the army. But among the armed services the role of the navy in the creation of policy was paramount, and the influence that it exerted on Hitler was perhaps un-matched by any other service.

Hitler, often considered as "land-minded", is seldom considered in the role of a naval strategist. Hitler was continentally oriented, yet the Führer consistently adopted naval oriented strategies and the problem is "why". Moreover, the navy emerged in Hitler’s eyes as the sole service which maintained its fealty to National Socialism and the Third Reich. Therefore the relationship between the navy and Adolf Hitler becomes of extreme importance for the history of Nazi Germany at war.
I should like to express my thanks to Miss Kathelen

Sengorality as it humanity possible

the present study will be found to be an objective and
before overflown to instiutted. It is to be hoped that
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The historation kin to all writable of historate the
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assertion in the historate of Nazi Germany that the present
Reich has not yet been adequately considered. It is this
occupied of the scene by the German navy during the third
the threat posed and the attempt made to support Britain
to Hitlerian naval supremacy as well documented. Yet again,
during the empire and the naval threat posed by Germany
known. Much emphasis was placed in naval construction

The historate of the imperial Germany may be well
preparation of the study,
her encouragement, but for her tutelage or me during the
It might have. I expect I wish to thank my wife, not only for
of the manuscript has immensely improved any merit that
of my Robert E. Turner whose patience and tolerance entitle
to students. Most especially, I owe a debt of gratitude

APRIL 10, 1965
MORSEPRO, MONTANA
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
THE GERMAN NAVY AND ADOLP HITLER
1933 - 1945
When reference is made to German submarines
the term "U-boat" will be used in place of "submarine".

In accordance with international naval practice,

... German naval forces in commission must not exceed
that within two months of the coming into force of the treaty.

... Article 16 provides that the naval element was

present.

... symbolically represented what it had been unable to

... the signing of the treaty on June 26, 1919, the German

to the existence of the treaty. The German
... from the German delegation for approval. These same
... of the Treaty of Versailles, prevented

end date of the Treaty of Versailles, and the
the assessment, had been informed of the harsh terms of the
the Fleet, which had gone into British interment following
... total of 500,000 tons - escorted tender at Cape Town.
... 50 torpedo boats, and 102 U-boats - an aggregate
... at 10 battleships, 9 armed cruisers, 8 light

on June 26, 1919, the Imperial German Navy

THE PREPATORY YEARS

CHAPTER 1
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counts, later commanders-in-chief of the navy, but in 1919

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Not surprisingly, the navy did not accept an

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The navy's manpower was limited by Article 197 to a

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and emphatically forbade the mobilization of any vessels.

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6 battleships, 6 light cruisers, 6 destroyers,
service because of the assurance given him by the then
Director of Personnel that "within a couple of years or
so, . . . we shall once again have U-boats." 4

A historical survey of the clandestine violations
of the treaty stipulations is provided by the secret Service
Publication "The Fight of the Navy against Versailles, 1919-
1935", published in 1937 by the high command of the German
navy. 5 This publication well reflected the navy's attitude
toward the Treaty of Versailles; it was an unavoidable evil
which should be ignored or circumvented as often as the
Allied Control Commissions and the politicians of the Weimar
Republic would permit.

From the end of the war until the occupation of
the Ruhr in 1923, the violations consisted mainly of illegally
bolstering Germany's defensive capacity. Various coastal
batteries were modernized and some new ones constructed.
Gunnery records were then forged for these installations to
persuade the Allied inspectors that the batteries had existed
in current condition prior to the coming into effect of the

4Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, Memoirs: Ten Years and
Twenty Days, trans. R. H. Stevens, (London: Weidenfeld and
Nicolson, 1959), 5.

5U.S., Adjutant General's Department, Trials of War
Criminals before the Nuremberg Tribunals . . . October 1945 -
(Nuremberg Document [ hereafter cited as N.D. ] O-156)
a u-boat descent and construction office. The "
been established in the Netherlands to not as a front for
important weapon. By 1922, a fundamental proposition had
but the navy had no intention of neglecting this strategically
u-boats had been expressly forbidden to Germany.

Regular treaty year hitache.

them toward the navy to secure the long-established group for
democratic left in the Netherlands, and the resultant inactivity
the subterranean was discovered by a member of the Social
as treaty change forbidding short-term enlistment. However,
of course, it was read both the explicit and the letter of the
upon which the navy could draw. The scheme would have
would have allowed for the execution of a "ready reserve"
treatment. The rapid turnover such a program would provide
induce volunteerism for a three-month period of emergency
so pronounced as affecting the war of intervention to
In 1927, an attempt was made (remembering 192
ammunition, and the establishment of secret supply depots.
secret funds, the illicit export of arms and
and ammunition to peaceful interests in order to obtain
of heavy coastal guns to the army, the selling of supplies
Treaty of
Other subterfuges included the transference

5
voor Scheepsbouw (I.Y.S.), as the company was named, designed and built U-boats in Spain, Finland, and - after 1933 and prior to the repudiation of the Versailles Treaty - in Germany herself. Although the U-boats constructed abroad did not become part of the German navy, those built in Finland served as the prototypes for the later German 250-ton U-boats U-1 through U-24, and the 750-ton boat built in Spain for the first two flag U-boats, U-25 and U-26. The result of this clandestine activity was such (as the secret history proudly records):

... that it was possible to put the first submarine into service ... 3½ months after the restoration of military sovereignty declared on 16 March 1935 ... and then at intervals of about 8 days to put new submarines continuously into service, so that on 1 October 1935, 12 submarines with fully trained personnel were in service. 10

In 1927, some of these evasive activities came to light as part of the so-called "Lehmann exposures". Captain Lehmann had been head of the navy's transportation division since 1920 and was entrusted with the administration of the navy's "special funds". These "special" (and secret) funds were used to finance dummy corporations (including the afore-mentioned I.Y.S.) carrying on extensive experimental work. Lehmann's activities included motor-boat development,

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10T.W.C., X, 455. (N.D. C-156)
For the construction of the first Peace Fleet—she
for capital ship construction—and in 1926 funds were allocated
not to be expended to commence the construction of new ships
were increased in 1925. After a short period of the
where to commence, the first new capital ship, the cruiser
but in 1924 the work was started and building proceeded very
some partial construction plans were in the early 1920's.
progress, a material suspension had made any large-
new cruiser was replaced by another cruiser, then a
succeeded by Lieutenant-Corner William C Meyer.
Heinrich Schmitz, the second Colonial, was resigned and was
for the Navy, and the second ship, a capital battleship, was
considered the guarantee in office at an unprecedented height
of the naval command staff, testified: "Because he
undoubtedly proved that he was the brain of the attack and was
important to know the plan of all Navy activities. The
from the left to the Heimholtz for the construction of
The dismantling of the second remained in increased presence
the intelligence arm.
Independent of preparations at home and abroad and as an auxiliary
development of development of home and abroad and as an auxiliary
tender construction, and even a third company needed for the
Deutschland. Raeder also ordered the navy to construct another U-boat in Finland.

Raeder finally succeeded in inducing the government to include an appropriation for a second pocket battleship in the 1931 budget and to consider adoption of a long-range ship construction plan. Both the new pocket battleship and the building program were approved. The program provided for the construction of four battleships, with a provision that each had to be individually approved in the budget prior to beginning construction.

In 1932, the program was enlarged so as to provide the navy with 6 battleships, 6 cruisers, 16 U-boats (still forbidden), and various auxiliary vessels in three stages - 1932-1933, 1934-1937, and 1938 and thereafter. Personnel plans for 1933 were also approved which increased the strength of the navy by 1,450 petty officers and men. This, then, was the situation of the German navy on January 30, 1933 when Adolf Hitler became chancellor.

Hitler had little naval experience when he came to power. He had been born and raised in the old Austro-Hungarian

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13 The proposition barely carried, with 255 delegates voting in favor and 203 opposed, demonstrating the attitude of the Reichstag until the end of the republic toward naval construction. See Raeder, My Life, 147 ff.

14 Raeder, My Life, 162.

15 Ibid.
The course followed by our country would inevitably bring about terrible consequences.

The consequences would be far more serious if we were to continue on this path. The only way to prevent this is to adopt a more prudent and moderate approach to international relations. It is crucial that we maintain a balance between our interests and the interests of others.

The situation is critical, and we must act decisively to ensure the security and prosperity of our nation. Let us work together to find a solution that is beneficial for all parties involved.
her into conflict with the British thalassocracy was rejected. Instead, Hitler saw Germany's destiny in terms of continental expansion and criticized those who spoke of overseas colonies.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{Mein Kampf} also expressed the Führer's tactical doctrine which he never rejected: "... the ultimate success which is and can only be forever in attack."\textsuperscript{18} He was by nature attracted to the offensive. As Raeder later observed, Hitler always chose the most radical of the alternatives available. During World War II, the Führer more than once reproached the navy for being too hesitant in committing capital ships to battle. Caution was often interpreted as cowardice by Hitler, and this very issue would eventually lead to a crisis in naval leadership.

The first official contact between the navy and its new Führer was on February 2, 1933. Raeder attended a dinner at the home of General Baron von Hammerstein-Equord, Chief of the Army Supreme Command, in order to become acquainted with the new chancellor. Hitler knew where the power lay in Germany and took this opportunity to win over the generals and admirals present. In a brief speech, the Führer promised that the armed forces would never be used


\textsuperscript{18}Hitler, \textit{Mein Kampf}, 273.
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concept of Germany's future naval policy. Hitler assured Raeder that "he did not under any circumstance wish to have complications with England, Japan, or Italy - above all not with England."22 "The German Fleet's role lies within the framework of its responsibilities toward European continental policy,"23 Hitler said.

This statement implied that the navy would not expand in capital ships or submarines. Its role would be support of the army, amphibious operations, and coastal defense. Yet, incongruously, Hitler "...made the clear political request to build up for him in 5 years, that is, by the first of April 1938, armed forces which he could place in the balance as an instrument of political power."24

Clearly, Hitler did not intend to pursue his foreign policy goals from a position of weakness. Although Hitler envisioned German domination of the continent, he had no wish to come into conflict with Britain. Raeder therefore decided that the fleet was to be designed with an eye to French armament. Raeder then asked for and received approval for the construction of a further pocket battleship within the 1934 budget which already included two battle cruisers.

22 Raeder's testimony, T.M.W.C.A., XIV, 22.
23 Raeder, My Life, 166.
24 N.G.A., VI, 947 (N.D. C-135); see also Raeder's testimony in T.M.W.C.A., XIV, 165.
Thus, Hitler and Raeder were constructing ships which were ideal commerce raiders and consequently of greatest use against British shipping.

The first two pocket battleships, the Deutschland and the Admiral Scheer, had already been launched in May, 1931 and April, 1933 respectively. The 1934 pocket battleship, the Graf Spee, was constructed with the same specifications as the other two - namely 6 28-cm. and 3 15-cm. (11-inch and 5.9-inch) guns. Raeder attempted to get Hitler's authorization for the addition of a third triple-mount turret to the two battle cruisers also building (the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau), but Hitler, still cautious, refused. The Führer did permit the navy to prepare preliminary plans for such a project.

Both of the battle cruisers exceeded the permissible displacement limits of Versailles by some 27,000 tons.25 Raeder later argued that the additional tonnage served only to increase their defensive strength (heavier armament, more compartmentation, etc.),26 but this distinction between defensive and offensive capacity is meaningless. It is the purpose for which the vessel is used which dictates its tactics. At any rate, Hitler was nervous about such violations


26 Raeder, My Life, 168.
and he gave Raeder strict orders in June, 1934 that neither the displacements nor the speed in excess of 26 knots could be mentioned.\textsuperscript{27} Later Hitler agreed to Raeder's demand for the extra triple-mount turrets, but he still "... completely rejected the [navy's] proposal to increase the caliber of the guns from 28.5-cm. to 33-cm."\textsuperscript{28}

Although Hitler's ostensible policy was to reach an accord with Britain, he allowed Raeder's arguments to persuade him into building larger and more powerful ships - a practice invariably destined to alienate British opinion and cast doubts upon the Führer's intentions. Raeder, however, was the one who was doubtful whether Britain could be won "... permanently over to a policy of peace."\textsuperscript{29} In a conversation with the Führer in June, 1934, he expressed "... the opinion that later on the fleet must anyhow be developed to oppose England, [and] that therefore from 1936 onwards, the large ships must be armed with 35 centimeter guns..."\textsuperscript{30} Hitler succumbed to Raeder's urgings and allowed him to enlarge the caliber of the guns on the two new battleships. These monsters the Tirpitz and the Bismarck, were begun in 1936 and when launched in 1939 mounted 38-cm. (15-inch) main armament.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27}\textit{N.C.A.}, VI, 1017. (N.D. C-189)
\item \textsuperscript{28}\textit{Raeder, My Life}, 241.
\item \textsuperscript{29}\textit{N.C.A.}, VIII, 685. (Statement VII)
\item \textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, VI, 1017. (N.D. C-189)
\end{itemize}
Hitler still desired a rapprochement with Great Britain and therefore suggested to Raeder late in 1933 that an attempt ought to be made to fix the relative strengths of the British and German navies. He considered a ratio of three to one to be a reasonable proposal. For technical reasons, Raeder suggested that a 35 per cent ratio would be better than 33 1/3, and the Führer concurred. Staff talks were accordingly begun. By 1935, it was imperative that the agreement be reached because the first U-boats were approaching completion. Raeder therefore pressed strongly for an immediate conclusion to the talks, and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement was concluded by an exchange of notes on June 10, 1935.

The agreement provided that the German navy would not exceed the ratio of 35:100 in relation to the aggregate tonnage of the members of the British Commonwealth. Germany was given the right of building to 100 per cent equality in U-boats, although for the present the ratio was fixed at 45:100. If Germany decided to build over this limit, she was required to notify London prior to doing so. The immediate aggregate displacement this permitted Germany was 421,000 tons - only 56,000 tons less than that scuttled at Scapa Flow - and it was anticipated that when the Washington Agreement

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31 Affidavit of Walter Giese, Administrative Assistant to the Adjutant of the Supreme Commander of the Navy; N.C.A., Supplement A, 943. (N.D. D-772)
of 1930 expired in 1936, Britain would expand her fleet and thereby allow Germany to do likewise. 32

The Anglo-German Naval Agreement was a major foreign policy triumph for the Führer. Hitler had unilaterally repudiated the Treaty of Versailles' disarmament clauses on March 16, 1935 and now, only three months later, he obtained Britain's official recognition of Germany's right to re-arm. Moreover, he drove a wedge between France and Britain and shattered the so-called "Stresa Front" (formed under French leadership) of Italy, France, and Great Britain. The Stresa powers had banded together to protest Hitler's scrapping of the disarmament clauses. Britain's unilateral action and her ignoring of her erstwhile allies estranged France and convinced Italy that Britain would invariably subordinate the interests of her allies to her own selfish naval interests. 33 From this point onward, Mussolini increasingly drifted into the arms of Hitler.

It is difficult to understand why the British Admiralty agreed to this naval agreement. Churchill asserted that it was the prospect of having a three-to-one ratio which appealed to Britain's naval leaders when they compared


with the German navy.

Thirty-five U-boats had been commissioned and were operational by the end of 1936. A total of twenty-two U-boats were formed under the command of Admiral Admiral. They were formed at the 250-ton and 500-ton models.

On September 26, 1939, the three operational groups of the German navy, now a commander, returned to the battlefront. The speed of the (250-ton and 500-ton models) was operational. By the end of 1936, eighteen U-boats of the "especially satisfaction" group were commissioned on June 29, 1939.

By the spring of the year, the agreement came into effect, the three U-boats of the operational group were part of the German fleet.
The successful unilateral repudiation of the Versailles' disarmament clauses emboldened Hitler. Where he had previously moved cautiously in foreign affairs, henceforth he became more sure of himself and with each success more assured of his methods. On the same day (March 16, 1935) the Versailles restrictions were scrapped, Hitler introduced conscription with the announced intention of building up a peacetime army of thirty-six divisions (550,000 men). This act was followed on May 21 by the National Defence Act which reorganized and renamed the high commands of the armed services in order to eliminate all remaining vestiges of the hated Weimar Republic. 38

Defence Minister von Blomberg henceforth would hold the title "Minister for War". The Reichswehr became the Wehrmacht. Raeder, the Chief of the Naval Staff (Chef der Marineleitung) became the "Commander-in-Chief of the Navy" (Oberbefehlshaber der Kriegsmarine), a title more in accord with the growing strength of the navy. The new titles for the army and air force commanders were along similar lines.

On March 7, 1936 Germany marched into the Rhineland. Both the army and the navy were on the alert, but would have been hopelessly inadequate if even France alone had taken action. Fortunately for Hitler (or unfortunately for Germany in the light of later events), the Locarno powers acquiesced

38 N.C.A., V, 542-43. (N.D. RS-2879)
by doing nothing more than protesting. It was in Spain that the new German navy was to have its baptism under fire.

Four months after the occupation of the Rhineland, the Spanish Civil War erupted. The spark was a military coup on July 17, 1936 by the military leaders in Spanish Morocco. General Franco rapidly emerged as leader of the anti-socialistic and anti-democratic rebels. The ideological affinity induced Germany to take immediate note, and Generaladmiral Raeder,\textsuperscript{39} after conferring with Hitler, ordered Vice Admiral Rolf Carls to sail for Spain immediately. It had taken some convincing before Hitler would agree to the dispatch of naval forces. The Führer feared that some international incident might result, and also disliked the idea of German warships possibly having to enter Loyalist harbors. But Raeder, to whom the use of German naval forces "... for the protection of Germans in Spain ... was a forgone conclusion ...",\textsuperscript{40} won the Führer over and Hitler gave his consent.

Carls put to sea on the afternoon of July 23, 1936 with the pocket battleships Deutschland and Admiral Scheer.

\textsuperscript{39}No U.S. equivalent. Raeder was promoted on the occasion of Hitler's forty-seventh birthday (April 20, 1936). The obsolete Dutch rank was revived in order to avoid friction with Field Marshal Göring who was notoriously jealous of his unique status. See: Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika: Generals and Nazis in the Third Reich (New York: Simon and Schuster,1952), 117.

\textsuperscript{40}Raeder, My Life, 221-22.
The ostensible motive was, of course, protection of the lives and property of German citizens on Spanish territory. But Carls made immediately for Ceuta in Spanish Morocco where he arrived on August 3. The admiral conferred there with General France and presumably discussed cooperation and possible aid. France was pleased with this de facto recognition and "... expressed his thanks above all for the moral support which Germany and her Führer, by sending the German squadron, had shown for his [France's] efforts to overcome communism in Spain." Thus, Hitler, taking a leaf from the Kaiser's book (and on the instigation of Raeder), was demonstrating German foreign policy interests with Gunboats.

German aid to France materialized rapidly, and Raeder, concerned lest a war should break out for which his navy was not yet prepared, felt obligated to prepare a memorandum for the Führer. It was submitted to Hitler on August 21 by his adjutant, Lieutenant Colonel Hessbach. Raeder argued that France could not survive without massive foreign aid, and that if Germany was not prepared to offer assistance on such a scale, all "sentiment must be ruled out" and a more

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42 D.G.F.P., III, 50-52.
"impartial attitude" displayed. Further, Raeder emphasized the danger of complications arising from involvement in the conflict. Trouble could arise with either Russia, France, or Britain. Raeder concluded by emphasizing that "a decision in this question is especially important for the naval forces, since almost the whole German fleet is at present in Spanish waters."^{43}

Raeder was actually arguing for non-involvement, but Hitler did not subscribe to the naval officer's opinions. German assistance, including the Condor Legion, began to flow in ever-increasing amounts to the rebels. The international scene became dark with apprehension and the possibility of a major war loomed as the great powers lined up in opposition. In an effort to isolate the conflagration and prevent incidents which might lead to hostilities, a Non-Intervention Committee was established. This committee first met on September 9, 1936, and twenty-seventy nations, including the European great powers, subscribed to this experiment in collective security.

Finally, after months of negotiation, a naval patrol of Spanish waters was established on March 8, 1937 to enforce and supervise non-intervention. The cost of the patrol was to be born by all members of the committee, with the naval forces provided by Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany.

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^{43} Ibid., 52.
Germany and Italy were made responsible for patrolling
the east coast of Spain\textsuperscript{44} which was still in Loyalist
hands. Great Britain and France were charged with policing
the remainder of the Iberian coastline.

It was during participation in this patrol by
Germany that the infamous Almería incident occurred. On
May 29, 1937, the pocket battleship \textit{Deutschland} was bombed
off Ibiza by two Loyalist planes. Berlin was immediately
informed, and Hitler, absent at the time, hurried back to
the capital to take charge of the situation. A decision was
taken to bombard the Loyalist port of Almería in retaliation.
This was not a new course of action for the navy to propose.
In December of the previous year, a German steamer, \textit{Palos},
had been seized by the Spanish government. The ship was later
released although part of the cargo and one Spanish passenger
was detained. At that time, the navy submitted a memorandum
to Foreign Minister von Neurath advocating that sterner
measures be taken (only diplomatic overtures had been made)
since demands for the release of the cargo and passenger had
come to naught. In part, the navy's memorandum read:

\begin{quote}
Among the sterner measures contemplated, which
are not to be announced in the meantime, are:
1. Extension of the raids already carried out
to include Red Spanish steamers in convoy;
2. Measures against the Red Spanish naval forces
on the north coast of Spain;
\end{quote}

\footnote{Hugh Thomas, \textit{The Spanish Civil War} (New York: Harper
& Row, 1961), 394–95.}
3. Possible bombardment of a Red Spanish port.\footnote{D.C.F.P., III, 202. (Italics mine.)} 45

Von Neurath had agreed that sterner measures were in order but he had had serious objections to the measures proposed by the navy.\footnote{Ibid., 203.} 46 Instead three Loyalist merchantmen were captured and two of them handed over to the rebels.\footnote{Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, 340.} 47 But it appears that five months later, at the time of the Deutschland incident, the navy's "hard line" carried the day. On the day following the bombing, von Neurath informed London that the "Red Valencia Government was twice warned . . ." and that "this new criminal attack on the German ship compels the German Government to take measures . . . ."\footnote{D.C.F.P., III, 297.} 48 These "measures" accordingly were taken the next morning, the 1st. The pocket battleship Admiral Scheer and four destroyers fired 200 shots into Almería, demolishing 55 buildings and killing 19 people,\footnote{Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, 441.} 49 12 fewer than had died in the Deutschland attack.

This is one of the first clearly defined episodes in which Saeder's ability to influence the Führer on foreign policy questions is evident. Saeder was a man firmly imbued with the concepts of national and naval honor, and the attack on the Deutschland, especially by "communists", surely enraged him. Moreover, he prized the big ships which presumably added
It took you two hours to complete the puzzle. To test your memory, I asked you to remember a password. You remembered it.

From the moment you started, you had only two hours. The password was a combination of letters and numbers. You had to enter it in the correct order. The password was: "Password123". You entered it correctly.

The international protocol after a treaty was signed, Germany had just resigned. The treaty had just been signed, and Germany had just resigned as a result of the war. The great event was reported by newspapers everywhere. Germany had just signed a treaty.

The treaty was signed in Paris, and another international conference was immediately called with diplomats. You remembered.

A few weeks later, in June, 1920 another international conference was called to discuss the Treaty of Versailles. It was agreed that the Treaty of Versailles was to be ratified by all the nations that had signed it. The Treaty of Versailles was signed by all the nations that had been at war. It was signed on the 28th of June, 1919. It was signed by all the nations that had been at war. It was signed by all the nations that had been at war. It was signed by all the nations that had been at war.
and Raeder. They decided to demand internment of the
submarines of both factions in the Civil War and to ask
for a joint naval demonstration by the members of the naval
patrol.52 No agreement could be reached among the great
powers on these demands,53 and on June 23 Germany again
withdrew from the patrol, this time accompanied by Italy.
The last attempt to moderate the Civil War and keep it from
spreading had failed. The powers were now aligned along
the lines they would take in World War II.

In the fall of 1937, Hitler convened a conference
at which he expressed his views on Germany's current
situation and what path her future destiny should follow.
The commanders-in-chief of the Wehrmacht - Colonel General
von Fritsch of the army, Generaladmiral Raeder of the navy,
and Field Marshal Göring of the Luftwaffe - were present
as was von Neurath, the foreign minister, and von Blomberg,
the minister for war. The only further participant was
Colonel Hossbach who kept the notes which became the contro-
versial so-called "Hossbach memorandum".54 Years later, this
document played a major role in the prosecutions case at the

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52 D.G.F.P., III, 360-61.

53 Italy opposed the surrender of submarines by the
Spanish since this would, in turn, hamper the operations of

54 T.M.W.C., XXV, 402-13; D.G.F.P., I, 29-39; N.C.A.,
295-305. (N.D. P8-386)
Nuremberg trials.

Many interpretations of this document have been made, some as extreme as declaring that it was as early as November 5, 1937, at this conference, that "Hitler had communicated his irrevocable decision to go to war."\textsuperscript{55} This thesis is not borne out by successive events.\textsuperscript{56} On November 5, Hitler expounded at length on various alternative "cases" for which German foreign policy was to be prepared to take advantage of, but this was not the setting out of irrevocable plans for war. It is probable that the speech was designed to resolve problems of a domestic nature.\textsuperscript{57} And it is likely that the exaggerated character of the Führer's remarks was designed to override the mounting objections of von Fritsch and other old-guard conservatives to the pace of rearmament. For instance, at Nuremberg Baeder argued that Hitler was also attempting to force von Neurath out of the cabinet.\textsuperscript{58} In any event, Hitler was soon to have the opportunity to eliminate quietly those who continually raised objections to his policies.


\textsuperscript{56}For an excellent discussion of this document and its implications, see: Bullock, \textit{Hitler}, 367-71.

\textsuperscript{57}On this point see the controversial work: A. J. P. Taylor, \textit{The Origins of the Second World War} (New York: Athenaeum, 1982), 131-34.

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{A.M.W.C}, XIV, 34 ff.
The occasion was the re-marriage of von Blomberg in January, 1938. It was soon discovered that his wife had a police record as a prostitute. The German army, true to tradition, resolved that a head must roll, and von Fritsch was delegated to protest to Hitler. Hitler agreed - the affair undoubtedly shocked his delicate morals - and the problem of a successor arose. Fritsch himself was considered, but this alternative was rapidly discredited by a forged police dossier, ostensibly showing Fritsch to be a homosexual. 59

Hitler's solution to the entire problem was to re-organize the whole Wehrmacht high command structure. Blomberg and Fritsch were dismissed, and the post of minister of war abolished. Hitler had held the position of Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces since the death of President von Hindenburg in 1934, and he now added the powers of the war minister's office - commander-in-chief of the armed forces - to his own, thus abolishing any intermediary between himself and the Wehrmacht. The duties of the war ministry were incorporated into a newly created organization - the High Command of the Armed Forces (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht or O.K.W.). General Wilhelm Keitel was appointed to command this office. Von Neurath was also dropped, and was replaced at the Foreign Ministry by the anglophobe von

59 This material is based loosely on: Bulloch, Hitler, 416-19.
Ribbentrop.

Under O.K.W., the various armed services had their respective command organizations - O.K.H. (Oberkommando des Heeres) for the army, O.K.L. (Oberkommando der Luftwaffe) for the air force, and O.K.M. (Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine) for the navy. Werner von Brauchitsch succeeded von Fritsch as commander-in-chief of the army. Göring remained as G-in-C of the Luftwaffe, as did Raeder in the navy. Raeder, besides being chief of O.K.M., also retained command of S.K.L. (Seekriegsleitung - Naval War Staff) which served as the naval staff organization. Thus, S.K.L., because of the unique arrangement of Raeder occupying both commands, served both a staff and a command function.

Moreover, with his positions of both chief of staff and commander-in-chief, Raeder’s ability to direct his service was unparalleled in the other arms.

It is necessary at this point to return to the period immediately following the conclusion of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement. As has been mentioned, U-boats were promptly launched and a massive construction program was ordered. The battle cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were already on the ways in 1935. Two 10,000-ton cruisers, 16 destroyers of ultra-modern design, and 28 U-boats (3 of which had already been launched by July) were further laid down.\footnote{Supra, 16.}

\footnote{Supra, 16.}
Plans were also drawn up for the construction of Germany's first aircraft carrier and for additional battleships to be laid down in 1936.62

The planned battleships became the powerful Bismarck and Tirpitz - ships that would cause the British Admiralty much anxiety. Although their official displacements were given as 35,000 tons, they actually displaced 53,000 tons when fully equipped. They had a maximum speed of 30 knots and ranges of 8,100 miles. Their main armament consisted of 8 38-cm. (15-inch) guns, and their secondary armament was a still-formidable 12 15-cm. (5.9-inch) guns. They also mounted 32 smaller weapons and 6 torpedo tubes.63 They were therefore superior in both armament and defensive capability to any capital ship Britain possessed until after the outbreak of war.64

The German navy continued to expand at the fastest possible rate. Dockyards in Germany worked night and day to full capacity as the fleet rapidly took shape. The emphasis was initially placed on commerce raiders and auxiliary vessels as well as the capital ships. The U-boat was generally neglected by Raeder and the conservative high

62Ibid.
63Huge, Sea Warfare, Appendix I, 318-19.
64S.W. Roskill, The War at Sea, I: The Defensive (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954), Appendix D.
command of the German navy both on the grounds of their
partiality to capital ships and Hitler's repeated assurances
that war with Great Britain would be avoided. This
policy changed somewhat when Hitler informed Raeder in May,
1938 that henceforth Britain must be considered a possible
enemy. Raeder thereupon appointed a planning committee to
ascertain the course of future construction in the light of
the new factor. At that time, Hitler also demanded that the
Bismarck and Tirpitz be rushed towards completion, with
commissioning to be envisaged in the fall of 1940.

The planning committee laid down merchant warfare
as the strategic task of the navy vis-à-vis Great Britain.
Accordingly, in November 1938, Raeder reported to Hitler the
navy's assessment of the correct strategic tasks and the
proposed construction to accomplish such an end. He found
Hitler in a bad mood. The Führer criticized as inadequate

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65 The following table in Dönitz, Memoirs, 31, well illustrates this policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U-boats commissioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

66 The Bismarck was launched on February 14, 1939
and commissioned in 1940; the Tirpitz was launched on April 1
1939 and commissioned in 1941.
the capabilities of the Bismarck and Tirpitz. Raeder, his pride injured, took the criticism as a personal affront and proffered his resignation. Hitler, quickly retracting his accusations, entreated Raeder to remain as commander-in-chief. Raeder finally agreed, but only on the condition that Hitler would permit him to exercise complete freedom of action in the proposed fleet construction. 67

This was not the last occasion that Raeder would use the threat of resignation to win his point. 68 His "point" obviously was to construct a powerful high seas fleet which could successfully challenge any opponent. Raeder's new building program (the Z plan) envisaged the addition to the navy of 6 50,000-ton battleships (in addition to Bismarck and Tirpitz), 8 (later 12) heavy cruisers of 20,000-tons, 4 aircraft carriers, 60-odd cruisers, 233 U-boats, and the many necessary destroyers and auxiliary vessels. This program was approved by Hitler in January 1939, and the completion date was set for 1945. 69

It has often been asserted that Raeder was misled by

67Raeder, My Life, 251-52; see also Raeder's testimony in: T.M.W.G., XIV, 126-27.

68Early in 1939, Hitler's naval adjutant married a woman of whom Raeder did not approve. Raeder insisted to Hitler that either the adjutant be made to quit the service, or he would resign himself. Hitler acquiesced and dismissed (or rather permitted Raeder to dismiss) the adjutant. See: T.M.W.G., XIV, 126.

69Himmler, Memoirs, 37-8.
The annexation of the Austro-Hungarian, the invervment in the span-
the 4th of 1990 when Boeder drew up the Z plan - the
mation of the Prussian, Polish, and to the means where in
start of Hitler's Foreign Policy. Examples of the systematic
creation of this end that the Poles had not to the outcome
communication of a powerful battle fleet, and it was to the
with that great power meant the invariable removed from the
which have appeared to him. Remade constituted held the
command in the.certain and most powerful fleet ever launched
for capital ships is well known, and the process of
Bender was Hitler's promise. The operation's predilection
that self-destruction played at least as large a role with
that possibility certainty existed when pottery was modified, the possibility certainty existed and it was not until the war actually began to gather that
Bender declaredly de-emphasised the role in the Z plan
for the duty to prepare for any and all contingencies.
former's duty to prepare for any and all contingencies.
the army, but an commander-in-chief of the navy if it was the
Hitler's statement that he had some effect on Bender's
the western powers, then the place to shared by Bender
the Foreign Policy could withstand stricter on a map with
were given injunction in the better that he could surrender
owed be placed upon Hitler. But, it Hitler's assurance
the Z plan, and therefore the suasiveness of the navy
would not be expected prior to 1945, the largest area for
by Hitler's repeated assurance that war with England

Civil War, the dismissal of the moderates in the cabinet, the Anschluss with Austria, and the annexation of the Sudetenland. Yet Raeder, blind to events outside his naval world, continued planning capital ships, ships that took many years to commission and time was running out.

Whatever the reasons, Raeder’s choice of the long-range program was to have, as the British official naval historian later put it, "... very lucky consequences..." for Britain. The keels of 2 battleships, 1 aircraft carrier (Graf Zeppelin), and 3 cruisers were laid. Only the cruisers ultimately were commissioned, for on the outbreak of war the Z plan had to be scrapped. The dockyards were imperatively needed for U-boat construction and material was scarce.

On January 27, 1939, Hitler had directed that the Z plan was to take precedence over all other tasks, including expansion of the army or the air force. The German navy welcomed the decision, but, deciding certain precautionary measures were necessary, altered the emphasis in the Z plan. Apparently the possibility of a conflict with Britain breaking out prior to 1945 became evident to O.K.L. early in 1939. Priority was then given to the completion of the battleships and the U-boats as rapidly as possible. These would be the

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70 Roskill, The Defensive, 52.
71 Hague, Sea Warfare, 26-7.
72 Ibid., 27.
most useful vessels in a war against Britain and British commerce.

Six days after the occupation of rump Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939, the German navy participated in the Blumenkrieg by occupying Memel. Raeder and a seasick Hitler landed in this alte deutsche Burg on March 21, and another thousand square miles were added to the Third Reich. It was about time that the navy came in for a share of the glory of peacefully building the Greater German Empire. Raeder was promoted to Grand Admiral (Grossadmiral - Admiral of the Fleet) a fortnight later "... in recognition of his services in building up the Navy." Hitler personally announced the promotion on the occasion of the launching of the Tirpitz.

In June 1939, the developing tension induced Dönitz, although still a relatively junior officer in the high command structure, to report to Raeder the fears of the U-boat arm over a possible war with Great Britain. The U-boat arm was relatively small and weak and therefore desired that the Führer be informed of its limited capabilities. Dönitz therefore requested his commander-in-chief to place these views before Hitler. This was done and, on June 22, 1939 at Swinemünde, Raeder communicated Hitler's

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73Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 239.
74N.C.A., V, 546. (N.D. PS-2879)
But events were to take a different turn.

World War II and modern devant, the most formidable naval force in the world, would consist of the two or three largest belligerent powers. It was also anticipated to build toward 1945 toward the year more comfortably ex-annually, consistently to decorate itself. There was the cause for worry. The German navy, once with Britain so perilous to see and that, therefore, Hitler had decreed that in no circumstances would war reply to the auswechsel efforts of the U-boat service.
CHAPTER II

THE FIRST MONTHS
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A war for which it might not be eligible. If Germany won,

prevented assertions had intruded Germany and the bate in

and explictly that Hitler, contrary to the bunker's
decreet of retrovacy. If Germany lost, Hitler had promised

protesting the bate with positivness of assertion for either

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He concluded that in 1941.

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the article about the army's strength would have been in 1943

mother emphasized on the General theme by medially

the thinking hatcher proceeded.

believed that war with Britain was inevitable.

contrary to the General espriet, a post-war apportionment

war for which it was not yet prepared. Yet hatcher

Hitler's foreign policy which involved the German navy in

are not quite accurate. Importantly, hatcher was criticizing

those of quoted and silenced mattered remains
The grand admiral’s portrait of a situation in which the German navy could do no more than "die gallantly" is not correct. True, the German navy was numerically inferior to that of the British, but this was partly a result of Raeder’s own optimistic planning. Moreover, a comparative analysis of the relative caliber of the vessels available to both parties in 1939 diminishes Britain’s numerical superiority.

Upon the outbreak of war, German capital ship strength consisted of 2 battleships (Tirpitz and Bismarck, launched but not as yet commissioned), 2 battle cruisers (Gneisenau and Scharnhorst), and 3 pocket battleships. Britain had 11 battleships and 3 battle cruisers. But of these 11 battleships, the most modern were those of the Nelson Class (Nelson and Rodney) of 1927 vintage. The ancient Hood was the most modern of the battle cruisers - 1920 class.

The design of all Germany’s capital ships was more modern than that of any of Britain’s. Even the German pocket battleships made up for their smaller displacements with greater speed and newer armament and fire control. The mighty Tirpitz and Bismarck outclassed even the new British King George V Class battleships (under construction) in firepower, displacement, speed, range, and armament.4

4 The comparisons are based on statistics in: (for British ships) Reeskill, The Defensive, Appendix D; (for German) Huse, Sea Warfare, Appendix, 318-19.
Britain possessed more cruisers and destroyers than did Germany although the majority of the British vessels were outclassed by their German counterparts. Germany had two heavy cruisers which had been commissioned but were not as yet "shaken down" (Elbeher and Prinz Eugen, sister ships of Admiral Hipper), and these three cruisers were nearly half again as big as British cruisers of the same class.\(^5\)

Moreover, at the outbreak of war Germany had 57 U-boats, potent weapons against Britain's vital commerce, of which 46 were operational. Of the latter, 22 were suitable for service in the Atlantic, and the others could be used against British coastal traffic and in the North Sea. Britain had 69 submarines, but her role was necessarily defensive and the full potentiality of the submarine is in offensive operations.

Germany was weakest in aircraft carriers, only one (Graf Zeppelin, building but never completed) as contrasted to Britain's 6 and 6 more under construction. The shortage of aircraft carriers in the German navy was due to Raeder's conservatism. Hitler admired powerful air forces and certainly would have approved the construction of additional carriers. Indeed, later on in the war he would demand that the navy construct auxiliary aircraft carriers. But Raeder, enamored with the concept of a mighty capital ship fleet, only recommended

\(^5\)Boskill, _The Defensive_, 58.
the construction of 4 aircraft carriers in the Z plan.\(^6\) The one building was cancelled ultimately for two main reasons: the shortage of construction facilities and the necessary use of all available space for U-boat manufacturing, and the lack of suitably designed aircraft.

The inadequacy of the navy's air arm was indirectly attributable to Hitler. Although the German navy had begun to construct and develop naval aircraft as far back as 1923,\(^7\) by the time hostilities commenced naval aviation was woefully weak. This was a situation directly attributable to the obstinacy and vanity of Field Marshal Göring, the commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe. Göring stubbornly held the typical opinion of inter-war airmen that everything that flies should come under the jurisdiction of an independent air force, an attitude continually in conflict with Raeder's contention that all air operations over the sea must be controlled by the navy. Hitler avoided making a firm decision on this question whenever one or the other appealed for his support. He did not want directly to bolster Göring's ambitions, nor did he wish to alienate Raeder or the navy. So he procrastinated.

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\(^6\)Huge, *Sea Warfare*, 26-7. Admiral Huge commented: "It is perhaps understandable that the German Navy should have shown predilection for battleships of which it had previous experience . . . ." "It is also possible that indifference to aircraft carriers was due to lack of experience in this type." *Ibid.*, 28.

\(^7\)Raeder, *My Life*, 231. Also see: *N.G.A.*, VIII, 694. (Raeder's statement VII.)
Finally, agreement was resolved between the two commanders in January, 1939. They decided to compromise. Control of naval air forces was divided along functional lines. The Luftwaffe was given command over all operations pertaining to naval affairs other than reconnaissance duties and tactical air operations during contact between naval surface forces. This agreement left the Luftwaffe and Göring in command of such operations as attacks against merchant shipping, minelaying operations, and bombings of harbors and shipyards (all of which were primarily tasks that the navy desired for itself). It is not to Hitler's credit that he avoided the question, thus producing an unsatisfactory compromise. From this point forward, there was considerable jurisdictional friction between the two services. The war effort of Germany was hampered in no small measure by the Luftwaffe-Kriegsmarine antagonism.

The air force-navy agreement further provided that the navy was to have by 1942, in order to carry out its allocated duties, 41 squadrons (Staffeln) of 12 aircraft each. Nine of these squadrons were to be equipped with flying boats for reconnaissance, 18 to be general-purpose, 2 made up of shipborne catapult aircraft, and the balance to comprise the complement of the Graf Zeppelin. When war began, the navy had only been allotted 223 aircraft of the total of 492

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5 Hugo, Sea Warfare, 35.
the program contemplated, a number almost exactly equal
to the Royal Navy's first line air strength.⁹ The Luftwaffe
had also earmarked 6 wings ( Gruppen ) of Heinkel III bombers
for maritime operations against Britain although these were
under Luftwaffe command.

Post-war apologists for the German navy have
developed the thesis that the navy's relatively weak position
vis-à-vis Great Britain was Hitler's fault. This argument
is difficult to believe. Hitler, a relatively untrained
man in naval affairs, although widely read in technical
matters, was necessarily dependent upon the strategic advice
of his naval advisers. Raeder drew up the Z plan, and Hitler,
relying on the grand admiral's judgment, approved it. The
navy's apologists can ( and do ) criticize Hitler more justly
for his miscalculation in believing that Britain would not
fight for Poland in 1939.¹⁰ But this was a diplomatic mis-
calculation. And whereas Hitler attempted appeasement in the
opening weeks to redress his policy error, the naval high
command consistently demanded measures that would make reconc-
ciliation with France and Britain improbable if not impossible.

⁹Roskill, The Defensive, 60.

¹⁰Raeder, one of those who damn Hitler for this error,
records in his memoirs: When "Hitler told me that England and
France . . . had declared war on Germany, it manifestly was a
most unpleasant task for him. He was embarrassed over his faulty
judgement when he had to admit to me, 'I have not been able to
avoid war with England.' " Raeder, Memoirs, 278.
There are other considerations too often neglected in analyses of the relative strengths of the two navies in September, 1939. The German navy had certain advantages which tended to balance its numerical inferiority in ships. First, it had the option of the offensive, the initiative for engaging with forces of its own choosing at the most appropriate time and place. This was an important and significant advantage. The British navy possessed no reciprocal option because Germany was virtually invulnerable from the sea. The blockade was no longer a decisive weapon, and the only region where British sea power could immediately be brought to bear was along the Norwegian coast. There, vital iron ore shipments from Sweden, having first been shipped by rail to the Norwegian port of Narvik, proceeded down the coast in the winter when the Gulf of Bothnia was frozen. This traffic represented a potential Achilles’s heel of Germany.12

Second, the British navy had world-wide commitments which inevitably fragmented its strength. The British assumed that Mussolini would join Hitler immediately upon the outbreak of war, and, initially at least, this assumption tied down

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12This fact was quickly recognized by both sides. See Chapter III, infra.
The German navy was well aware of British weaknesses.

The German navy was readily prepared to provide each convoy with anti-aircraft protection, surface targets for destroyers, and the escorts were often operated by a convoy, mandatory because of the U-boat threat.

German commerce raiders attempted to use the shipping lanes. The British navy found itself terribly understrength when indeed, during the first months of the war, the German navy concentrated to dispersal British merchant power.

The British government had to lose a squadron in the far east to contain Japanese ambitions. Previously, the British fleet had much of the British strength and vastly all of the Pacific.
of the fleet, for comment. 14

Carls agreed with the main theme which assumed war with Britain to be inevitable if Germany was "to acquire a position as a world power . . . ." 15 He also concurred in the assumptions that "sufficient colonial possessions" and "secure naval communications" were the "inherent necessities" of attaining great power status. This concept of colonial expansion remained a tenet of the German navy's faith to the end of the Third Reich. But, such a viewpoint ran directly counter to Hitler's ideas of the "inherent necessities" for a "world power". Hitler believed that Germany's destiny lay on the continent and he was opposed to the possession of colonial territory overseas. He steadfastly maintained this position in subsequent differences of opinion with his naval advisers. The naval study concluded, finally, on the basis of its expansionistic assumptions, that "the decision to make Germany a world power therefore forces upon us the necessity of making the corresponding preparations for war," even though it would necessarily be waged " . . . against 1/2 to 1/3 of the whole world." 16

14 M.G.A., VI, 827-29. (N.D. C-23)

15 Ibid., 827. This idea of the inevitability of British antagonism is still to be found in the post-war memoirs, e.g.: Dönitz, Memoirs, 47: "If before 1914 the other side found the existence of Bismarck's small German National State intolerable, it could hardly be expected now [1939] to tolerate the existence of the Greater-German Empire."

16 M.G.A., VI, 828-29.
The "corresponding preparations for war" were begun in 1939 by emphasizing U-boats and surface raiders in the construction program. This was not Hitler's decision but rather that of O.K.N., which was becoming apprehensive concerning the gathering war clouds. The official naval position in the autumn of 1938 is contained in this O.K.N. order:

In order to make the Navy quickly effective as an instrument of policy, it is necessary to give preference to the ships inherently capable of sustained ocean warfare. The following categories must therefore be completed by 1943: Long-range and mine-laying U-boats, most of the smaller battleships and the K-class cruisers. The larger battleships, aircraft carriers and scouting cruisers will be relegated to the second part of the program.

The navy's strategy contemplated the destruction of Britain's maritime trade. The prime instrument was to be the U-boat. Capital ships would be used to compel the British to protect all their convoys with battleships. This would not only fragment the British navy's fleet-strength, but it would also expose the heavy ships to extensive wear-and-tear which in turn would necessitate long and costly repairs. The German surface raiders could easily accomplish such a task. They were superior to all British cruisers, and their high speed would enable them to evade the British battleships.

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17GAPPE, 33.
18Quoted in: Hugo, Sea Warfare, 27.
19N.C.A., VIII, 691-92. (Emder's Statement VII)
Hitler's expected concept, expressed con-
imports. Thus, the subtler strategy of the navy which contemplated a slow strangulation of Britain was not in accord with Hitler's more radical concept of an Armageddon-like battle. If Hitler had insisted on his ideas, the sortie of the German battle fleet would have inevitably ended in tragedy. But Hitler was content to leave the navy to its own methods.

Raeder listened politely at this conference, knowing full well that the navy's strategy had already been embodied in an O.K.W. directive (signed by the grand admiral) and issued exactly one week earlier on May 16. 24 The grand admiral knew Hitler was only expounding at length, a characteristic habit of the Führer, and, in the final analysis, no changes would be required in Fall Weiss (Case White - the projected invasion of Poland). The navy's role in Fall Weiss as set out by the directive of May 16 was to guard against British or French involvement. If a war with Poland began, and the western powers joined in, the entrance to the Baltic was to be guarded by U-boats while the remaining U-boats, 2 of the 3 pocket battleships, and the 2 battle cruisers were to prepare for war in the Atlantic. Only light naval forces were to be used against Poland. Annex II of O.K.W. Order No. 37

24 T.N.W.C., XXXIV, 423-42; T.W.C., X, 665-669. (N.D. C-126) See also Raeder's testimony on this document: T.N.W.C., XIV, 69-9, and Raeder's supplementary directive of August 5 for his confirmation of the navy's tasks against the western powers: T.N.W.C., X, 696-98. (N.D. EOKW-2761)
interpreted to short attention war stations between August 19
U-boats were deployed in antisubmarine at ocean-Gulf were
cooperative supply ships, the ALVEMIR and the WESTERNAA. The
position in the north Atlantic. They were joined by their
amount of, and three days later the deployment left for her
the Britain. The ALVEMIR waited for the south Atlantic by
barbarous to reach their coastal stations under fire
operational areas. The early estimates predicted the pocket
August, deepened the pocket battleships and U-boats to theater
pocket cruiser evacuation because her in the latter part of
approached and as "a very provocative measure" when the
change in these plans. Accordingly, stocks, which Hitler's
effort would be directed against Britain. Hitler made no
these forces. Therefore, the navy decided that the major
The cruiser and destroyer postponing could handle

and destroy ships.
5. Preparation of the coffee communications to be opened.
4. Reinforcement of the fall of military supplies.
3. Operations of the fleet, marine, and land.
2. Establish of the seas off the fleet.
1. Preparation of the distribution of the fleet.
with Dante's U-boats and the Pocket Battleships

On 25 May, the German Navy, supported by its air force, launched a massive attack against Allied shipping in the Mediterranean. The attack was intended to disrupt the flow of supplies to the Allied forces in North Africa. The operation was codenamed "Operation Torch," and it involved the deployment of two large Task Forces, code-named 'Taranto' and 'Tobruk.' The German submarines were supported by over 100 aircraft, including dive-bombers, torpedo planes, and fighter aircraft.

During the attack, the German submarines were able to sink several Allied ships and damage many more. However, the operation was not without its setbacks. The German submarines were forced to return to port at the end of the operation due to fuel shortages, and the German navy's ability to intercept Allied shipping was limited by the distance between the U-boats and the target areas.

Despite the setbacks, the operation was a success in terms of the disruption it caused to Allied shipping. The German submarines were able to sink several Allied ships and disrupt the flow of supplies to the Allies in North Africa. The operation was a significant blow to the Allied forces and was a major setback for the Allies in the Mediterranean campaign.
lying in wait near the shipping lanes, great successes were expected against the unprepared British merchantmen, but Hitler's cautiousness "... cost the Navy many opportunities for quick success...". Hitler still hoped that war with the western powers could be delayed or avoided and his "Directive No. 1 for the Conduct of the War", issued on August 31, 1939, reflected this optimism. This directive, in part, stated:

In the West it is essential that England and France are unequivocally held responsible for opening the hostilities. Minor frontier violations are to be counteracted locally for the time being. The neutrality of Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, [handwritten notation on the copy for the navy: "and Denmark"] which we guaranteed, is to be observed most scrupulously. Germany's western front will not be crossed on land at any place without my express authorization.

At sea the same applies to all acts of war or acts to be interpreted as such. [handwritten: "Accordingly, the forces in the Atlantic ocean are to remain at action stations."]

If Britain and France began hostilities, the directive continued, the "Navy will conduct the war against...

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31 Raeder, My Life, 294.

32 T.W.C., X, 703-705; W.G.A., VI, 935-37. (N.B. C-126)


33 T.W.C., X, 704.
merchant shipping with its main effort directed against
England.*36 Thus, the navy's strategy was officially
recognized by Hitler and OKW, and included in the initial
instructions governing conduct of hostilities. Although
the navy's concept of carrying on the war at sea was
accepted, it was unable at first to receive the necessary
freedom of action to carry out such strategy. Hitler desired
to limit the conflict and would not permit immediate action
being taken against the western powers.

Hitler's procrastination continued throughout the
first weeks of war, a policy which cost the German navy one
of its few advantages - that of initial preparedness. Raeder
met with the Führer on September 7 and further confirmed
the policy of restraint. The grand admiral agreed to hold
off "... until the political situation in the West has
become clearer, which will take about a week."35 Raeder
suggested that "in view of the political restraint and military
restraint shown by France and the still hesitant conduct of
British warfare ..., the pocket battleships should be
withdrawn from their operational areas ... for the time
being."36 Raeder did not wish them recalled but only that they
return to their hiding areas. Furthermore, he argued, British

36Ibid., X, 705.
35F.C.N.A. 1939, 4.
36Ibid., 3.
trade was being halted and British naval forces were searching for the raiders so "the risk is thus out of proportion with the chances for success." 37 He also suggested that no operations should be conducted at sea against the French.

These views coincided exactly with Hitler's and the Führer fully concurred. He also ordered that passenger ships in the Atlantic were "... to be spared." And, "no attempt shall be made to solve the Athenia affair until the submarine returns home." 38

The "Athenia affair" to which Hitler referred was the navy's major political and psychological blunder of the first months of war. It appears that the incident was accidental, but it was directly in violation to the direct orders of the Führer. At 9:00 P.M. on September 3, the U-20 torpedoed and sank the British liner Athenia which was on route to Montreal from Liverpool. Of the 1,400 passengers, 112, including 25 Americans, lost their lives. Reminiscent of unrestricted U-boat warfare during World War I, and also reminiscent of the Lusitania incident, the affair prompted the German Propaganda Ministry to immediately issue denials that German U-boats were involved in the sinking. The ministry had first checked with O.K.U. and had been assured that no German

37Ibid.
38Ibid., 4.
German officers present.

The American officer had not notified the German commander that the American radio station was not to be used by German officers only. The German commander was not aware that the American radio station was not to be used by German officers only.

Because U-boat operations necessitated maintaining radio silence, the American officer had not notified the German commander that the American radio station was not to be used by German officers only.

The statement was made by the American officer to the German commander. The American officer was aware that the German commander had been in the area.

Furthermore, the American officer had not notified the German commander of the need to maintain radio silence. The American officer had not notified the German commander of the need to maintain radio silence.

The American officer had not notified the German commander of the need to maintain radio silence.
arrived at Wilhelmshaven, it was met by Dönitz, who later related this account at Nuremberg:

I met the captain, Oberleutnant Lemp, on the lockside [sic?] at Wilhelmshafen . . . and he asked permission to speak to me in private. I noticed immediately that he was looking very unhappy and he told me at once that he thought he was responsible for the sinking of the "Athenia" . . . . In accordance with my previous instructions he had been keeping a sharp lookout for possible armed merchant cruisers . . . and he had torpedoed a ship he afterwards identified as the "Athenia" . . . under the impression that she was an armed merchant cruiser on patrol.  

Lemp was immediately dispatched to Berlin to report to S.K.L., and Dönitz received instructions from S.K.L. that:

1. The affair was to be kept a total secret.
2. The CNH considered that a court-martial was not necessary as they were satisfied that the captain had acted in good faith.
3. Political explanations would be handled by the CNH.

Presumably, since C.K.H. was personified in Raeder, who ruled with an iron grip, Lemp had been saved from either Hitler's wrath or a naval court-martial by the grand admiral.

After the return of the U-30, the German navy was, of course, aware of the truth, but on Hitler's order and apparently concurring with his reasoning, it decided to keep the affair confidential. Hitler was annoyed because of the possible political repercussions, but it is significant that he

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42 N.C.A., VII, 114. (S.D. D-638)
43 Ibid., 115.
allowed the navy to decide what action should be taken against the U-boat commander (i.e., "a court-martial was not necessary"). It is difficult to see what else the navy could have done under the circumstances. The interests of the state, especially in wartime, came first. As Admiral Schulte-Hünting, later S.E.L., chief of staff, expressed it:

... we thought that any discrepancies which might arise and lead to political ill-humor in America were to be avoided as much as possible. Stirring up this case once more would have greatly aroused public feelings. I remember, for instance, the Lusitania case during the first World War [139 Americans were lost].

Therefore, the log of the U-20 and Dönitz's war diary were altered to exclude any mention of the Athenia. The German navy preferred to forget the whole affair, but the Propaganda Ministry considered the incident to be an ideal psychological weapon. On October 23, the Volksisher Beobachter published an article accusing Churchill of sinking the Athenia by means of an "infernal machine" in order to inflame American public opinion against Germany. This article was published, according to the evidence of Hans Fritzsche, chief of the German Press section of the Propaganda Ministry, on Hitler's direct order. The high

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45 T.M.W.C., XIII, 390-91 (N.D. D-659), and 529-31 (N.D. D-662) respectively.
46 N.G.A., V, 1008. (N.D. PB-3260)
command of the German navy, although knowing such an assertion was a complete fabrication, made no protest.

It is understandable and even commendable that the navy wished (after the truth had been ascertained) to keep the affair confidential. No useful purpose would have been served to bring the issue up again weeks after the actual sinking. Therefore, its concurrence to this effect with Hitler is comprehensible, but its allowance of such malicious stories as the Vossischer Beobachter article (and various radio broadcasts) to be disseminated is not. If the truth of the affair had become public (a wounded crew member of the U-30, sworn to secrecy, had been disembarked at Reykjavik prior to its return)\(^7\), all future German naval communiqués would have been seriously prejudiced. But no attempts to stop the slanderous attacks on Churchill were made by the navy.

The sinking of the Athenia had an immediate effect on the tactics of both sides. The British had devised an evasive routing policy for merchantmen upon the declaration of war because of their weakness in escort vessels. But, the sinking of the Athenia upset these plans, and they adopted convoy in the North Atlantic forthwith.\(^8\) On the German side, Hitler had placed severe operational restrictions

\(^7\)Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 352.

\(^8\)Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 424.
on the navy ... after the Athenia case and in the hope that after the overthrow of Poland France would withdraw from the war ... .

On September 4, the following order was issued to all U-boats:

By order of the Fuehrer and until further orders no hostile actions will be taken against passenger liners even when sailing under escort.50

Warfare against French merchant ships, attacks on French warships, and mine-laying off French ports was strictly prohibited.51 These are Hitler's orders, promulgated in hope of attaining peace with France.

The U-boat campaign was undoubtedly hampered by these restrictions. It is difficult to establish identity of vessels, especially at night, and German U-boat commanders were thus obliged to hold their fire for fear of mistaken identification. Ostensibly, German U-boats (under the terms of the Hague convention and the London Protocol on Submarine Warfare) were required to surface prior to sinking merchant vessels. This procedure would facilitate identification, but was difficult and highly dangerous because of the British practice of arming merchant vessels and ordering them to

49 [C. G. N. A., 1939, 5.]
50 [Deuts. Heeres., 1939, 57.]
51 [C. G. N. A., 1938, 5.]
immediately signal their positions upon being attacked.\(^{52}\) This would bring British anti-submarine forces rushing to the scene. Nevertheless, Hitler specifically ordered observation of Prize Regulations by U-boats.\(^{53}\)

The restrictions hampered naval successes, and Raeder therefore set about convincing Hitler to drop the bothersome restrictions. Actually, as time would show, he was aiming at securing the right of virtually unrestricted submarine warfare. On September 29, Raeder sent Admiral Schniewind to confer with the Führer. The naval chief of staff argued that the restrictions prevented:

... submarine action against the French battleships... it hampers our operations against the large convoys from North Africa to France, and interferes with effectively harassing British troop transports to France...

Since the campaign in Poland was nearing a conclusion, Hitler agreed to lift some of the restrictions. The limitations on attack of French merchantmen and warships were completely removed. Hitler also approved unrestricted

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\(^{52}\) The limitations created by these restrictions are illustrated by the fact that, during the first month of war—prior to organized convoy protection, etc. — Britain lost only 59 merchant ships (26 to U-boats, 2 to mines, and 1 to a surface raider) totaling 152,040 tons. This was approximately equal to one week’s total loss in 1917. See Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 349-50.


\(^{54}\) P.E.A.: 1939, 8.
action against vessels proceeding without lights in the
Channel and the Approaches. Further, he endorsed the
navy's proposal to end the prior-warning regulation, but
only on vessels positively identified as hostile. Thus,
prior-surfacing and examination of vessels was done away
with. Hitler also ordered, perhaps recalling World War I:

The expression "submarine warfare" is to
be replaced by the expression "war against
merchant shipping". The notorious expression
"unrestricted submarine warfare" is to be
avoided.\textsuperscript{55}

These orders were formalized in the "Führer Directive
No. 4 for the Conduct of the War" issued by O.K.W. on
September 25.\textsuperscript{56} Hitler still would not agree to attacks
on vessels unmistakably carrying passengers. The directive
stated: "As heretofore, no attacks are to be made on liners
or large steamers which are evidently carrying passengers in
large numbers in addition to goods."\textsuperscript{57} Further, Hitler
commanded the navy to conduct "warfare on shipping . . . in
accordance with prize law."\textsuperscript{58} He was still leery of causing
unpleasant incidents.

But Raeder persisted in his project to eliminate

\textsuperscript{55}\textsuperscript{55}\textsuperscript{Source: F.G.F.A. 1922, 9.}
\textsuperscript{56}\textsuperscript{Source: F.G.F.P., VIII, 135-36.}
\textsuperscript{57}\textsuperscript{Source: Ibid., 136.}
\textsuperscript{58}\textsuperscript{Source: Ibid., 135.}
all restrictions, and on October 10 he again met with Hitler. At this meeting, he again brought up the idea of unrestricted U-boat warfare (which had previously been discussed on September 23) masquerading it in the expression "siege of England" (Belagerung Englands zur See). The Naval Chief of Staff, Admiral Schniewind, had argued on September 23 that the proclamation of the "siege" would "free us from having to observe any restrictions whatsoever on account of objections based on International Law." 59 Hitler had put Schniewind off at that time, but now on October 10 Raeder returned to the argument:

If the war continues this [ siege of England ] must be carried out at once and with the greatest intensity. The Foreign Office, the Ministry of Economics, and the Ministry of Food will be previously notified regarding developments. All objections must be overruled. Even the threat of America's entry into the war, which appears as certain if the war continues, must not give rise to any restrictions. The earlier and the more ruthlessly we commence, the sooner the effect and shorter the duration of the war. 60

The Führer "agreed entirely." In the waters surrounding the British Isles, unrestricted warfare (although still excepting passenger-carrying vessels not in convoy) was begun.

Raeder returned to the subject again on November 15.

60 ibid., 15.
"As the next step", he suggested "sinking enemy passenger steamers without warning."61 Hitler again agreed, provided that the names of the large steamers concerned are made known previously and it is stated that they were being used as auxiliary cruisers and troop transport vessels.62 These orders were included in a new Führer Directive issued November 15, which stated:

b. Navy is authorized to take the following measures, authorized immediately:

(1) Sinking, without previous warning, of such passenger ships as are found to be armed, or of which it is known that they are armed, the names to be published regularly.

(2) Sinking, without warning, of tankers heading for England or France, and coming from England and France, within a limited area to be determined by the Cinc Navy, off the coasts of England and France. (Excluded are tankers recognized beyond doubt as American, Russian, Japanese, Italian, or Spanish tankers.)63

Raeder had now succeeded in removing virtually all restrictions on U-boat warfare in-as-far as enemy vessels were concerned. Neutral tankers were liable to be sunk on sight (excepting those of friendly or powerful neutrals). All that remained was to receive authorization to sink all neutral merchantmen to realize complete unrestricted U-boat warfare.

62 Ibid.
63Ibid., 6, 318. (H.D.HoK-2678) (From War Diary of S.K.L.) See also D.S. F.P., VIII, 417–18 for memorandum giving approval of foreign office.
See 33, 134.

A subsequent American memorandum of September 14, issued under the authority of the
proclamation of November 4, became effective as a proclamation.

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See 33, 135.

Western European forces were diverted to combat zones.

and the Pacific theatre, the Pan-American area was involved in the British Isles and
the Italian campaign. The American memoral of September 14 became effective as a proclamation.

success and Hitler began to press for her retreat.

23. In the north Atlantic, the North Atlantic Allied forces.

connected with the move of aircraft and great

unprecedented submarine warfare.

It had taken nearly two and a half years of war to reach

though the German navy to a stage that in World War

true, in a few months, German admiral Raeder had

area in which the shipment of time-critical goods can be upland.

meant to ship in these sections of the American

he plans were to parallel the navy to begin striking at

morning. Greek ships in the American protected area.

1939 when Hitler agreed to the proposal to "sink without

around Britain. Raeder accomplished this on December 30,
There was danger of incidents which would antagonize the United States in this area and Hitler wanted the ship to return home. There were also personal psychological reasons and an acute awareness of the value of symbolic names which induced Hitler to ask for her recall.

The Führer was invariably nervous when the capital ships were at sea, and with the Deutschland doubly so. At a conference with Raeder on October 23, he "... expressed the wish that owing to her name she should be recalled as her possible loss might be taken as a bad omen by the people." Raeder did not think this sufficient justification to recall one of his most powerful ships. The grand admiral convinced Hitler at this time that future results would justify leaving the pocket battleship at sea. But, Hitler did not give up on his idea, and a week later, after Hitler's having "... repeatedly emphasized the fact that the Deutschland should be recalled because of her name", Raeder acquiesced. To prevent any recurrence of the problem, Hitler also insisted that upon the Deutschland's return she be renamed Lützow.

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67 *F.C.M.A., 1939*, 22. In this connection, Hitler once said: "I rejected the suggestion that a battleship should be named after myself, because if such a ship has had bad luck, the superstitious [Hitler?] would regard it as an unfavorable omen for my own activities. Imagine a battleship named after me having to spend six months in dry dock for repairs." *Hitler's Secret Conversations*, 521, (July 4, 1942)

68 *F.C.M.A., 1939*, 33. Not to be confused with the cruiser Lützow, still building, and later sold to the Russians.
Raeder, using his own initiative, decided to
cover the return of the pocket battleship with a sortie
by the battle cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*. They
left Wilhelmshaven on November 21 and after sinking the armed
merchant cruiser *Rawalpindi* in a one-sided battle returned
home safely. The ruse had worked, and the *Deutschland*
managed to return home unscathed.

There were few notable successes or dramatic actions
on either side in the first months of war. But when the
wraps were taken off the pocket battleships on September 23,
the *Graf Spee* emerged from her isolated waiting area and
soon became involved in the major naval action of 1939.
Captain Langsdorff, commanding the *Graf Spee*, engaged a
British naval squadron off Montevideo on December 13.
Langsdorff had a decisive superiority over the two British light
cruisers and one heavy cruiser which comprised his opponents.
He mistook the British ships for destroyers, and thinking of
easy and glorious victory he accepted battle. Actually he
disobeyed orders in doing so for which he ultimately paid
with his ship and his life.

Langsdorff's operational orders (dated August 4, 1939)

69 With the notable exception of Lieutenant Prien's
feast in penetrating Scapa Flow with the U-47 and sinking
the battleship *Royal Oak* for which he was decorated and
his superior, Dönitz, who planned the exploit, promoted to
Rear Admiral. See U-47's log in: Anthony Martianssen, *Hitler*
governing his mission and which he violated, stated:

Enemy naval forces, even if inferior in strength are only to be attacked if this should be necessary to achieve the main objective. 70

Since his main objective was commerce raiding and since he could have easily fled with the Graf Spee's superior speed, he violated the cardinal rule not to engage. Hitler was adamantly opposed to such an order, believing that the purpose of warships was to engage other warships and all other considerations were secondary. Hitler may have criticized the navy’s order to avoid battle, but significantly he never countermanded it.

During the engagement the Graf Spee was damaged and Langsdorff found it necessary to put into the neutral harbor of Montevideo. The two remaining cruisers (the Exeter was damaged and forced to break off) shadowed the German pocket battleship at a respectable distance and took up station off the port when she entered Montevideo. Langsdorff, after a quick survey of his battle damage, realized that the seventy-two hours permitted a warship to remain in a neutral port for repairs was not sufficient. He accordingly requested the Uruguayan government for an extension of the time period to fourteen days 71 which he calculated would be sufficient to effect repairs. The Uruguayan government refused and Berlin

70 N.C.A., VIII, 917; Ruge, Sea Warfare, 38.
71 D.C.F.P., VIII, 541.
was duly informed.

At 1:06 on the morning of December 16, Langsdorff urgently wired Berlin that the situation was desperate: the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* and the battle cruiser *Bismarck* had joined the British "cruisers and destroyers" off Montevideo.\(^72\) He added that escape was hopeless and asked for a decision on which of three alternatives he was to adopt: 1) to fight his way through to Buenos Aires, 2) to scuttle, or 3) to be interned.

The navy replied the same day - he could either fight through to Buenos Aires or scuttle. Internment was forbidden.\(^73\) Actually it was Hitler who forbade internment. Raeder had conferred with the Führer immediately upon receiving Langsdorff's dispatch and requested a decision. Hitler refused to consider internment. He favored Langsdorff fighting her (the *Graf Spee*) way out of the port - even if the *Graf Spee* was sunk, she could possibly damage the enemy in return.\(^74\) Langsdorff chose to scuttle. The pocket battleship *Graf Spee* blew herself up in the shallow waters of the Río de la Plata slightly outside the three-mile limit at 4:56 P.M. on December 17.

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\(^72\) *Ibid.*, p. 42. Actually the *Ark Royal* and the *Bismarck* were off Río de Janeiro at this time; the British had spread the rumour that reinforcements had arrived.


This was Germany's first loss of a capital ship in the war and Hitler was furious. His faith and confidence in capital ships and especially the senior officers who commanded them was shaken. He henceforth became more attracted to the "... daring young destroyer and submarine commanders". The Führer was especially annoyed at the aforementioned operations order which forbade naval engagements. He criticized Langsdorff for not pursuing and sinking the Exeter when the opportunity had presented itself. Undoubtedly, Langsdorff did make the correct decision in breaking off the engagement. His ship was damaged beyond possibility of repair at sea and he probably decided that his only hope lay in rapid repair in a neutral port and then flight to escape the inevitable and gathering net of British warships. But, whether Langsdorff's decision was right or wrong, Hitler believed it to be wrong. After this affair, the Führer came to the conclusion that the navy's disengagement order reflected not strategic caution but cowardice. The Graf Spee episode was to have a profound effect on Hitler's subsequent opinion of the navy's capital ships.

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75 Raeder, Memoirs, 291.
77 Ibid., 64: "The Führer reiterated the fact that the Exeter should have been completely destroyed."
The year had ended with a major defeat for Raeder and the navy. But in the course of the first months he had demonstrated his and the navy's ability to influence policy. Raeder's intervention into policy matters steadily increased after this point. His intensification of U-boat warfare over Hitler's hesitant objections reflected Raeder's influence at this point. It would not be until later that Raeder lost a degree of his privileged status with Hitler. The first indications of this are apparent in the Graf Spee incident.

The navy was following an independent course, only abiding by the direct orders of the Führer, and Hitler was not yet disillusioned enough to interfere with the navy's actual tactical affairs. Indeed Raeder was already planning an operation which directly influenced strategy and policy. Moreover, the grand admiral's scheme was the major German naval operation of the war. Raeder and the navy also have the distinction of originating the only strategical operation of the war which Hitler had not initiated.78 This was the invasion of Norway and Denmark.

78 Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, ed. and trans. Anthony G. Powell, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1958), 153-54; "So invariably did [Hitler] insist on the right to initiate policy that - except in the case of Norway - I know of no instance in which a fundamental decision impinging on overall war policy can be placed to the credit of any of the three service staffs."
CHAPTER III
THE INVASION OF NORWAY AND DENMARK

The invasion of Norway and Denmark was one of the most audacious undertakings of the entire war. The ostensible reason was to forestall possible British countermoves in the area. But it is a mistake to assert that this was the only reason. The German navy had long cast covetous eyes on Norway.

In World War I, the large German battle fleet had been unable to reach the open ocean. It was effectively penned in by the geographical limitations imposed by its own bases and by the British Isles' strategic location. A glance at the map of northern Europe quickly and vividly illustrates the strategic position of Britain. There are only two main exits from the North Sea - through the English Channel or between Scotland and Norway. The former is completely interdicted, and the latter is blocked by the Orkney and Shetland Islands.
If the German navy was to have freedom of action of even a limited sort, it was therefore necessary to obtain bases outside this North Sea triangle. Such a strategic concept found expression in a work published by Vice Admiral Wegener between the wars.¹ Wegener argued that the primary mission of the German fleet was to keep the sea lanes open for shipping, and in order to fulfill this task bases outside what he called "the dead angle of a dead sea" (the North Sea) were necessary. He considered which countries would provide the most useful bases and concluded:

The Norwegian position was certainly preferable. England could then no longer maintain the blockade line from the Shetlands to Norway but must withdraw approximately to the line of the Shetlands–Faeroes–Iceland. But this line was a net with very wide meshes. Moreover, this line was hard for England to defend. In the first place, it lay comparatively near to our bases, but above all ... we could considerably outflank the English strategic position from the north.²

These arguments were still viable in 1939, but some of the vitalness was gone. Protection of German merchant shipping was no longer the prime role of the navy (Germany was virtually autarchic) but attacking British commerce predicated the same conditions. The only major commodity the German war economy was obligated to

²Ibid., 83.
In 1939 the annual average tax rate for iron ore
imported from Sweden was 11,000,000. See page, 547.

In September, 1939, the Norwegian Navy group, North Sea, surrendered,
and the Norwegian people in September, 1939, from Danish Holt,
had no plans for the occupation of Norway. The initial
plan to the occupation of war in 1939, Germany
expressed the idea of the Norwegian Government,
not even suggesting any plans of war. In May, 1940, it could be
considered to have been thought that the navy
in the strengthening of the navy, Hitler expressed the opinion
in 1937, at which the Grand Admiral asked for an increase
of the strength of the navy. In a conversation with Hitler,
Hitler recognized early the strengthening of the
through the Norwegian and the Ketzner into the Atlantic,
and then by car and vessel down the coast of Norway and
the ore was shipped by rail to the Norwegian port of Narvik
corner of Norway prevented the use of this route. Instead
Bornholm and the Baltic. Not in the winter, but in the
be shipped from northern Sweden through the Gulf of
report was iron ore which during the summer months could
Norway. Raeder later recalled this conversation:

He [Carls] informed me that he had composed a private letter addressed to me, in which he dealt with the question of Norway's being occupied by British forces and in which he was in a general way dealing with the question as to what disadvantages such a step would have for us, and whether we should have to forestall such an attempt, and also what advantages or disadvantages to occupation of Norway - that is of the Norwegian coast and the Norwegian bases - by our own forces would have.5

Raeder agreed with Carls' estimate of the situation and decided to bring the matter up with the Führer. But first he needed more information on the subject, and on October 3 a questionnaire was circulated to ascertain the opinions of other command officers:

The Chief of the Naval War Staff [Schniewind] considers it necessary that the Führer be informed as soon as possible of the opinions of the Naval War Staff [R.K.L.] on the possibilities of extending the operational base to the North. It must be ascertained whether it is possible to gain bases in Norway under the combined pressure of Russia and Germany, with the aim of improving fundamentally our strategic and operational positions. The following questions must be given consideration:

a. What places in Norway can be considered as bases?
b. Can bases be gained with military force against Norway's will, if it is impossible to carry this out without fighting?
c. What are the possibilities of defence after the occupation?

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5Testimony of Raeder at Nuremberg in: T.N.W.C., XIV, This account agrees with a secret memorandum dated 16/1/44 from Raeder to Vice Admiral Assmann explaining the development of Weserübung (code designation for the invasion of Norway and Denmark). See: H.C.A., VI, 891-92. (N.D. C-66)
d. Will the harbours have to be developed completely as bases, or have they possibly already decisive advantages as supply positions?

( F.O. U-boats [ Flag Officer U-boats - Oberbefehlshaber der U-boote - Dönitz ]

already considers such harbours extremely useful as equipment and supply-bases for Atlantic

U-boats to call at temporarily.)

s. What decisive advantages would exist for the conduct of the War at sea in gaining a base in

North Denmark e.g. Skagen? 6

This document is extremely important for an understanding of the motivation behind the Norwegian campaign. At Nuremberg, and in his memoirs, Raeder contended that the motivation was due to "... reports [ received ] during the last week of September through ...

the offices of Admiral Canaris [ chief of intelligence service in O.K.W. (Abwehr) ] that the British intended to

occupy bases in Norway." 7 This is not accurate. The British were considering the problem of stopping Swedish iron ore shipments, but no plans had been made for occupying any

Norwegian ports at this time. 8 Moreover, the word "already", used in connection with Dönitz's previously expressed opinion, indicates some prior discussion of the advantages accruing to seizure and use of Norwegian bases.

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6 W.C.A., VI, 928. (N.D. C-122) See also: T.M.C., XXXIV, 422-24; and: D.G.F.P., VIII, 204-05.
7 T.M.C., XIV, 85.
The questionnaires were returned to S.K.L., and apparently were generally hesitant. Dönitz, on the other hand, was enthusiastically for such a venture and proposed the establishment of bases in Narvik and Trondheim, the only two Norwegian ports he felt met the desired requirements. Raeder, armed with the data which S.K.L. had prepared, reported to Hitler on October 10. At the end of a lengthy situation conference, he brought up the subject of obtaining bases on Norwegian soil. The official transcript of the conference tersely recorded:

The Commander in Chief, Navy points out how important it would be for submarine warfare to obtain bases on the Norwegian coast, e.g., Trondheim, with the help of Russian pressure.

Apparently, Raeder was sounding out Hitler before committing himself fully to the project. The Führer put him off by saying he would "... consider the matter." It is significant that at this time no rationalizations were made for the projected acquisition of bases.

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9Raeder's testimony, T.N.V.C., XIV, 86-8; N.C.A., VI, 891: "My opinion was identical to that of Admiral Carls, while at the time, SKL was more dubious about the matter."

10N.C.A., VI, 815-16. (N.D. C-5)

11F.C.N.A. 1939, 14.

12Cf. Raeder, Memoirs, 303: "... on October 10 1939 I reported to him [Hitler] on the whole nexus of problems. I gave him the latest intelligence reports that had come in on British intentions, and pointed out that if England established bases in Norway, the consequences could be fatal to Germany's hope of winning the war." In the official transcript, signed by Raeder, nothing more than the above quote (in the text) appears vis-à-vis Norwegian bases.
The reference to acquiring bases "with the help of Russian pressure" indicates that Raeder was hoping at this stage to obtain the bases by diplomatic means. He was also advocating closer political and military ties with Russia.

Previously, on September 23, Raeder had suggested to Hitler that Russian cooperation could prove very useful to the German war effort. The Führer advocated the use of caution and discretion in any dealings with the Soviets, but certain naval privileges were extended by the Russians. By October 10, Raeder could report to Hitler "... auxiliary cruisers are being equipped, one in Murmansk." This was near the limit Hitler would permit in becoming involved with Russia, and on the same day the Führer rejected "... for political reasons, the proposal to construct submarine in Russia or to buy them from her." Hitler's intransigent attitude toward Russia offered Raeder little hope that the Führer would pressure her to act jointly against Norway. Therefore, Raeder dropped this line of argument and at the next conference at which the subject of Norwegian bases was

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13F.C.W.A., 1939, 10. Raeder desired: 1) cession of U-boats to the German navy, 2) equipment of auxiliary cruisers at Murmansk, and 3) permission for German warships to use Russian ports.

14Ibid., 12.

15Ibid., 13.
raised, no mention of making use of Russian diplomatic pressure was mentioned.\textsuperscript{16}

In the interim, Baeder found an ally for his scheme to interest the Führer in carrying the war to Scandinavia. Rosenberg, the Nazi "official philosopher", had long been interested in achieving a "Greater 'Nordic' Empire" and had been in contact with men of like opinion in Norway. On December 11, a meeting was arranged by Rosenberg between Baeder and Vidkun Quisling, the head of a neo-Nazi party in Norway and a former minister of war in the Norwegian parliament (Storting).

Quisling made (as Baeder said) a "reliable impression", and the following day Hitler was so informed. He also told the Führer that Quisling reported the following:

Public opinion in Norway is very hostile to Germany, as a result of the conflict between Russia and Finland\textsuperscript{17} even more so than formerly. England's influence is very great above all through the President of the Storting, Hambro, a Jew and a friend of Hore-Belisha, who is at present all-powerful in Norway. Q. [Quisling] is convinced that an agreement exists between England and Norway regarding a possible occupation of Norway.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, 51. At this meeting, Baeder commented on the difficulty in preventing trade between Scandinavia and England, and then stated: "It is important to occupy Norway."

\textsuperscript{17}The Russo-Finnish War had broken out on November 30, and the Germans worried (and justifiably so) that the British would use the pretext of aiding the Finns to act against the iron ore traffic. Their assumption was correct. Churchill had considered the use of Narvik as a supply point which would effectively stop the iron ore shipments. See Churchill, \textit{The Gathering Storm}, 541-48.
Q. had good connections with officers in the Norwegian army and has followers in important places (e.g. railways). Should the occasion arise, Q. is prepared to take over the government and to ask Germany for aid. In addition, Q. is ready to discuss preparations of a military nature with the German armed forces.  

Raeder then gave the Führer a few warnings. First, it would pay to be careful in dealing with Quisling since "it is impossible to know with such offers how much the people concerned wish to further their own party schemes and how important German interests are to them." The grand admiral also cautioned Hitler that "German occupation of Norwegian coastal bases would naturally occasion strong British countermeasures . . ." which " . . . the German Navy is not yet prepared to cope with for any length of time."  

Hitler decided that Raeder might have a point and proposed a meeting with Quisling. But first he desired to talk to Rosenberg in order to assure himself of Quisling's veracity since "Rosenberg has known Q. for quite a while." Raeder then showed his true colors. He had warned the Führer, as was his duty, of the dangers inherent in such a scheme, but the Führer now appeared to be swaying.

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18 P.C.N.A., 1932, 54; D.C.F.P., VIII, 519-21. Raeder's testimony in his own defense on this subject is in T.M.W.C., XIV, 92 ff.

19 P.C.N.A., 1932, 54; D.C.F.P., VIII, 520.

20 ibid.
The grand admiral therefore suggested:

... if the Fuehrer is favorably impressed
[ with Quisling ], the Armed Forces High
Command [ C.K.W. ] should be permitted to
make plans with Q. for preparing and executing
the occupation either:

a. by friendly methods, i.e., the German
Armed Forces are called upon by Norway [ Quisling ]
b. by force.21

Hitler made no comment but met with Quisling
and Baeder on December 14.22 He privately met again
with Quisling on December 16 and 18 but was still not
willing to commit himself wholeheartedly to an invasion
of Norway. The only report of the latter meetings extant
is a retrospective account prepared by the Office of
Foreign Relations of the NSDAP.23 This account, titled
"The Political Preparations of the Norway Action" and
dated June 15, 1940, rings true, although it was compiled
by Rosenberg's office in order to emphasize and enhance
its chief's role in the preparation of a triumphant campaign.
It gives the following description of Hitler's statements
to Quisling:

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21Ibid., 84-5. Marginal note in handwriting: "The
Fuehrer agrees"; note in D.C.F.P., VIII, 520. This is not
published in F.C.M.A., and was obviously inserted later.

22T.H.W.C., XIV, 95. See also T.H.W.C., XXXIV, 281
(N.D. C-66); N.C.A., III, 22. (N.D. PS-004)

23Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei -
National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi). N.C.A.,III,
19-27. (N.D. PS-004)
During this interview the Führer emphasized repeatedly that the most preferable attitude of Norway as well as all of Scandinavia would be one of complete neutrality. He had no intentions to enlarge the theatres of war to draw other nations into the conflict. If, however, the enemy were preparing an enlargement of the zones of war with the aim to further throttle and threaten the Greater German Reich then, of course, he would be obliged to warn against such steps.24

Hitler was by no means convinced of the necessity of expanding the war. The campaign on the western front was still in the planning stages and the power of the French army remained formidable. But the Führer had bowed to Raeder and Rosenberg's urgings on the 14th and permitted the forming of a "very restricted staff group" under O.K.W. to initiate preliminary study.25

Raeder was not satisfied with this half-measure and, becoming ever more nervous about a British occupation of Norway, returned to his theme on December 30. At this meeting with Hitler, General Keitel was also present and Raeder painted the darkest picture of British ambitions in Norway. The grand admiral's arguments ran as follows:

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24Ibid., 22. Even if Hitler was considering invasion, it is doubtful that he trusted Quisling enough to confide his policy without reservations.

25Jodl's Diary, December 13, 1939. (P-1611) This is not published in the official collection of T.H.W.G., but may be found in D.C.T.P., VII, 520. The actual date (December 14) can be ascertained by Raeder's testimony in: T.H.W.G., XIV, 91; and by N.D. C-66, Raeder's private memorandum to Assmann published in N.C.A., VI, 891-92.
assertions and made no comment. Reader's assessment of the
Hilfer was not impressed by December 30 with Reader's

The Kormetegon government would test such a move
England be averted from any British proposals to take
upset to remain neutral. It cannot be exactly

I believe I can remain for my ability to give
determination to remain neutral.

I sought for the Kormetegon government's

after Reader's trenchant argument to the press.

to the Foreign office on January 3, 1940, only a few days
Ambassador to Kormetegon, submitted the following report

The men in a position to judge the Kormetegon attitude
Kormetegon even with the Kormetegon government's acquiescence.
in disarray could occupy

and certainly have already begun to take
the Partition of Kormetegon between Russia
the other eastern powers; could be too great. The difficulties
will not occupy Russia, and the difficulties

It is dictated one cannot believe in any
probably also in Sweden, it is not to be expected.
readily. Serious resistance in Kormetegon
Therefore, it is necessary to be prepared and

and an unprovoked occupation of Kormetegon.

It is essential that Kormetegon does not fall
situation also varied with that of his own naval staff. On January 13, after receiving the initial "Study North" (the code-designation of the staff study drawn up within C.K.W.) plan, the Operations Division of S.K.L. recorded that it:

... does not believe that an imminent British occupation of Norway is probable. Apart from the fact that it is in any case doubtful whether England is at present capable of such a display of force ... such an operation would involve great risk and great difficulties for England.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff, considers that an occupation of Norway by Germany, if no British action is to be feared, would be a dangerous undertaking both from the strategic and economic point of view. After German seizure of Norway, the neutral Norwegian territorial waters would no longer be safe, and with Germany's at present still small naval strength, the maintenance of German ore imports ... from the Norwegian area, and of important sea routes to Base North [Murmansk] and to and from overseas could no longer be guaranteed.28

Nevertheless, the planning continued and the original "Study North" draft which S.K.L. received on the 13th was replaced on January 23 by a new directive from Hitler. "Study North" had envisaged a working committee headed by a Luftwaffe general. A naval officer would act as chief of staff, and the chief of army operations would be an army officer.29 The operation would be of combined operations nature and the original planning committee had reflected this factor. But

29 Ibid., 663-64.
new Hitler completely revised the organizational establishment
of the planning committee. The new orders read:

The Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the
Armed Forces desires that work on the Study
"N" be continued under his personal and immediate
influence and in closest collaboration with the
conduct of the war as a whole. For these reasons
the Fuehrer has ordered me [ Keitel, chief of O.K.W., ]
to take charge of further preparations.

For this purpose a working staff will be formed
within the High Command of the Armed Forces [ O.K.W. ];
this staff will at the same time represent the nucleus
of the future operations staff.

All further preparations will be conducted under
the codeword "Weserubung". [ Weser Exercise ]

The reasons behind this change of organization lay
first, as indicated by the phrase "under his personal and
immediate influence", in Hitler's desire to maintain the
closest control of all strategic operations. A second
reason, suggested by the then Colonel Warlimont who commanded
the original "Study North" staff, was that Hitler desired
to forestall the Luftwaffe's aspirations (as illustrated by
having a Luftwaffe general in command) to control the project.  

Certainly a third reason to create a unified staff was the
unwieldy nature envisioned by "Study North" of having all
three service staffs cooperate on the planning. Another
conceivable reason to incorporate the staff under O.K.W. was
to prevent the inevitable inter-service friction; the navy,
which bore the lion's share of the burden in the initial stages,

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30N.C.A., VI, 883. (N.D. C-63)

certainly would not acquiesce in being directed by G"oring
and the Luftwaffe.

At any rate, nothing of import happened to affect
the operation for the next month. Then on February 17,
1940, an incident occurred which convinced Hitler that
Raeder had been right all along. The Graf Spee's supply
auxiliary, Altmark, was seized and boarded by British naval
forces within Norwegian territorial waters. The British
released 299 British prisoners of war, and the Norwegian
navy patrol vessels which were present did nothing.

Hitler was furious. Admiral Voss, who was present
at headquarters when the news of the episode was received,
has said:

The British attack on the Altmark proved
decisive, in its effect on Hitler - it was the
"fuse" that touched off the Norwegian offensive. 32

Hitler was now certain that Weser"ubung was imperative
because of Norway's inability or lack of desire to defend
herself. 33

On February 19, the F"uhrer pressed "energetically"
(as Jodl recorded) for completion of the preparations and
ordered the ships and units to be made ready. In accordance

32Quoted in B. H. Liddell Hart, The German Generals

33Menstein, Lost Victories, 120: "... the reports
of a British destroyer's raid on the Altmark inside Norwegian
territorial waters prompted him [Hitler] to dwell at length
on the inability of small states to maintain their neutrality."
with the newly imperative nature of the operation, Jodl suggested appointing a general with his staff to take over direction.\textsuperscript{34} Hitler agreed, and General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst was appointed on the next day.

The Führer again conferred with Raeder on February 23 and now all objections on Hitler's part were dropped. He asked Raeder what the possibility of maintaining the iron ore traffic would be after the occupation of Norway, and Raeder replied:

a. The best thing for maintaining this traffic as well as for the situation in general is the maintenance of Norwegian neutrality.

b. What must not be permitted, as stated earlier, is the occupation of Norway by Britain. That could not be undone; it would entail increased pressure on Sweden . . . and cessation of all ore supplies from Sweden.\textsuperscript{35}

Raeder also stated that a German invasion of Norway would inevitably "suspend at least for a time" the ore shipments, but the occupation would also allow Germany to " . . . exert heavy pressure on Sweden, which would then be obliged to meet all our demands."\textsuperscript{36} Hitler and Raeder were now in agreement that an invasion of Norway was necessary and beneficial. They continued to differ about the means.

On March 1, 1940, the formal directive for Case Weserübung was issued by O.K.W. The strategic reasons were

\textsuperscript{34} Jodl's Diary, 19 February 1940, N.C.A., VI, 384.

\textsuperscript{35} F.C.H.A. 1940, 1, 14.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
given as: 1) the prevention of British encroachments on Scandinavia and the Baltic, 2) guaranteeing the ore base in Sweden, and 3) providing the Luftwaffe and navy with a wider start-line for attacks against Britain and British commerce. Raeder had completely succeeded in his scheme to enlarge the navy's sphere of operations; all of his arguments were included in the first paragraph of the directive.37

The directive further ordered the occupation of Denmark concurrent with the operation against Norway. It will be recalled that the October 3, 1939 questionnaire of S.K.L. had inquired about the usefulness of a base in Denmark.38 The major reason for the inclusion of Denmark in Wasserburg was the necessity of having closer air bases for air support of initial operations in Norway. The planning was to be concluded by March 10, "so that from that date the Führer can order the beginning of the action with a preparatory period of 4 days."39

On March 9, Raeder and Hitler conferred again. At this conference, at which General Keitel was also present, Raeder expressed in full his view (not necessarily the navy's) on the justification of the role of the navy in and chances

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(N.D. C-174)

38 Supra, 73.

39 W.G., X, 765. (Extract from War Diary of S.K.L., March 4.)
of success of Weserübung. The report of this conference as one of the clearest summary’s of the grand admiral’s strategic ideas, is worth quoting extensively:

The Commander in Chief, Navy states that he has always been, and still is today, of the opinion that the occupation of Norway by the British could have a decisive effect against Germany, since then Sweden might be drawn into the war against Germany and all the ore supplies from Sweden would cease. The British now have the desired opportunity, under the pretext of supporting the Finns, to send troop transports through Norway and Sweden and therefore to occupy these countries if they wish. Therefore operation "Weserübung" is urgent. The Commander in Chief, Navy feels it his duty, however, to present to the Führer a clear picture regarding the character of the naval operation. The operation in itself is contrary to all principles in the theory of naval warfare. According to this theory, it could be carried out by us only if we had naval supremacy. We do not have this; on the contrary, we are carrying out the operation in face of the vastly superior British Fleet. In spite of this, the Commander in Chief, Navy believes that, provided surprise is complete, our troops can and will be successfully transported to Norway.40

Raeder’s optimism and assessment of the value of the element of surprise was to be vindicated in the coming offensive. He had convinced Hitler that Scandinavia was a vital sphere of interest for Germany with which no chances could be taken. Raeder’s prestige and standing with the Führer was never higher than in the few months before the opening of the Norwegian venture and the enormously successful

(in the strategic sphere) campaign.\footnote{Evidence of Hitler's attitude is provided by an episode in which two German destroyers were sunk (February 22) by the Luftwaffe. Jodl recorded in his diary: "Navy High Command stresses that this is a consequence of uncoordinated conduct of sea warfare, regardless of whether it is conducted under, on or above the sea. Führer is furious. He is right. He says: 'I would not say anything if the whole Navy were sunk in battle with the enemy, but it is inexcusable if that happens on account of lack of coordination.' Jodl's Diary, N.C.A., IV, 386. (N.D. FS-1809) This is definitely a slap at Göring.}

Planning for \textit{Wasserübung} continued. Hitler had decided to undertake the Norwegian operation a few days prior to the opening of the offensive against France (Fall Gelb).\footnote{Jodl's Diary, 3 March, 1940; N.C.A., IV, 389.} On March 5, a meeting of the Führer and the three commanders-in-chief was held in connection with the conduct of \textit{Wasserübung}. Göring "vented his spleen" because he had been left out of previous planning. His vanity was hurt, and during the planning he was most un-cooperative.

Among the decisions taken at this conference was that the navy would be required to leave its warships in the ports following the successful occupation of Norway.\footnote{Ibid., 390. The troops were to be transported on warships; this idea apparently originated with the Führer who feared surprise would be compromised if fleets of transports were assembled. See interrogation of the military commander, von Falkenhorst in: N.C.A., Supplement B, 1540.} Hitler apparently believed such a course of action was crucial to a successful completion of the campaign, and felt strongly about the point. Jodl recorded in his diary on March 28:
In the evening, the Fuehrer steps into the
map room and explains sharply that he will
not be content with the Navy again quitting
the Norwegian ports right away. Narvik,
Tromsheim, and Oslo will have to remain
occupied by naval forces.44

Raeder was opposed to leaving the warships for any
length of time. He felt that the element of surprise would
provide the safety necessary to the naval forces on the
outward journey; but after landing the troops, their immediate
return was mandatory if they were to avoid encountering
stronger British forces.

Raeder's arguments again won the day. On April 2,
another high level meeting was held between the commanders
involved in the invasion. Göring, Raeder, and von Falkenhorst
were present. Göring, still smarting from being left out of
the initial planning, criticized the navy's intention to
withdraw its vessels immediately after disembarking the troops.
Hitler also disapproved, but "... did not want to intervene
too much in an exclusive concern of naval warfare."45 The
navy's vessels were permitted to withdraw. This was one
instance where Göring's objections and Hitler's apprehensions
were subordinated to the wishes of the grand admiral.

At this conference, the final date for the operation
was also fixed - April 9. The delay of a month between

44Ibid., 395.
45Jodl's Diary, N.C.A., IV, 396.
Hitler's original directive stating that the preparation must be completed by March 10 and now had been imposed by the end of the Russo-Finnish War on March 12. The outward reason for the occupation of Norway had vanished and Hitler "... was looking for some justification." If the justification for occupying Norway was gone for the Germans, so it was also for the British. Raeder reported to Hitler on March 26 that "in my opinion the danger of a British landing in Norway is no longer acute at present." 

But then forgetting his major argument for the projected invasion since the previous autumn - that a British invasion was imminent - Raeder continued:

"Sooner or later Germany will be faced with the necessity of carrying out operation 'Weserubung'. Therefore it is advisable to do it as soon as possible, by 15 April at the latest, since after that date the nights are too short; there will be a new moon on 7 April."

The grand admiral's arguments convinced Hitler that "justification be damned", and he agreed to start "... 'operation 'Weserubung' on X day around the period of the new moon." Apparently Raeder wanted to commit Hitler irrevocably to the grand admiral's scheme, but Hitler decided

46 Supra, 36.
49 Ibid. (Emphasis in original.)
50 Ibid., 23.
not to yet order the operation; the Führer still wanted to think it over a bit. Finally, on April 2 he made up his mind as to the date and ordered the carrying out of Weserübung on the 9th of April.

The decision was thus taken and Raeder was at long last successful in his persistent attempt to extend the navy’s geographical and strategical base. But he had also committed the navy to an undertaking which strained its small resources to the limit. This is certainly one of the better examples of the grand admiral’s influence on the Führer and the making of grand strategy. Raeder had been able to lead Hitler up to the edge of decision and then to push him over.

Once the decision was taken and the campaign begun, Hitler lost his nerve and recriminations flew in all directions. On April 5, as the first echelon approached the Norwegian objectives, Jodl recorded: "Day of highest tension." The battle for Norway was confused and swayed back and forth between the Allies and the Germans. The force dispatched to Narvik, commanded by General Dieth, managed to seize the port without much trouble, but the destroyers which had acted as transports were delayed in the harbor waiting for a tanker from which to refuel. Here

51 Jodl’s Diary, 26 March, N.C.A. IV, 394.
52 Ibid., 393.
53 F.C.P.A. 1940, I, 42.
they were trapped in the narrow fiord and annihilated in
the two Battles of Narvik (April 10 and 13).

Dietl was now isolated, and Hitler panicked. He
wanted to order Dietl to withdraw to the south and relinquish
the valuable iron ore port, but Jodl convinced him to wait
on events. Hitler’s irritation spread even to the navy
and he reproached it for not speeding up the second echelon
which was travelling in slow transports. By April 18, the
situation had become stable and Dietl’s troops were in
command of the situation. Jodl was now able to record
that the “Führer is again calm.” Hitler’s mood vacillated
in the next few months according to the way the battle swung.
There was only one more clash of wills between Hitler and
Grand Admiral Raeder during the Norwegian campaign and this
was as a result of the Führer’s nerves.

The British had landed troops on April 22 at
Andalenes and Namssos and Hitler again saw disaster facing
him in Norway. Accordingly, he asked Raeder if the two

54 Raeder pompously recorded in the War Diary: "The
view which the Commander in Chief, Navy expressed to the
Führer, and which he held to the very last [ this refers
to the fact that Hitler continually attempted to persuade
Raeder to change his mind, as the army commanders wanted ],
that it was wrong to leave destroyers behind in the northern
ports as a support for the occupying forces on land, proved
to be correct." F.G.H.A., 1940, I, 42.


56 Ibid., 399. (April 18.)

57 Ibid., 401. (April 21 and 22.)
The western front...
The arrest of France was possible in a few months.

The British people, with the help of our friends, red out of the mire that the much-needed forces of the British have been able to achieve. The fact that the navy suffered so many casualties, the existence of a strong navy, and Hitler's
CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE OF FRANCE AND THE PROJECTED

INVASION OF BRITAIN

The German navy played, to say the least, a very
minor role in both the planning and execution of "Fall Gelb"
(Case "Yellow"), the invasion of the low countries and
France. After the completion of the Polish campaign, and
as hope of compromise with the western powers faded in the
autumn of 1939, Hitler on October 9 issued through O.K.W.
"Directive No. 6 for the Conduct of the War". He ordered,
in part:¹

1. If it should become apparent in the near
future that England, and, under England's
leadership, also France, are not willing to
make an end of the war, I am determined to act
vigorously and aggressively without great delay.
2. If we wait much longer, not only will Belgium
and perhaps also Dutch neutrality be lost, to
the advantage of the Western Powers, but the
military strength of our enemies will grow on

¹D.O.F.F., VIII, 248-50. The version published in
M.C.A., VI, 895-91 (N.D. C-62), does not give the authorships
of the marginal notes. Both are reproductions of O.K.K.'s
copy and are stamped "Received 10/10/39".
an increasing scale, the neutrals' confidence in a final German victory will dwindle, and Italy will not be encouraged to join us as a military ally.

3. Therefore I give the following orders for further military operations:
   a. Preparations are to be made for an attacking operation on the northern wing of the Western Front through the areas of Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland. This attack must be carried out with as much strength and at as early a date as possible.
   b. The purpose of this attacking operation will be to defeat as strong a part of the French operational army as possible, as well as the allies fighting by its side, and at the same time to gain as large an area as possible in Holland, Belgium and Northern France as a base for conducting air and sea^2 war against England . . . .^3

Hitler ended by requesting the commanders-in-chief to give him " . . . as soon as possible, detailed reports of their plans on the basis of this directive . . . ."

Raeder had no plans to submit but he had his ever-ready opinions to express. The very next day he presented his views to the Führer. Raeder explained that the " . . . conquest of the Belgian coast would be of no advantage for submarine warfare."^4 Raeder's statement was based on his World War I experience: Belgian bases were too close to British sea power, much too close to British air power, and still within the limited triangle of the North Sea. The Führer fully accepted

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^2 Marginal note in Raeder's handwriting: "Night" (No).

^3 D.C.F.P., VIII, 248-49.

Raeder's stand but emphasized that Belgium was of "value for the Air Force."\(^5\)

Although the navy had no use for Belgian bases, Holland would at least provide it some useful ports. On a copy of Directive No. 6, following a passage ordering preparation for occupying ". . . as much of Holland as possible in the direction of the West Coast\(^6\), there is a handwritten notation by Fricke, Operations Commander in S.K.L.: "This kind of procedure would be more desirable in every respect."\(^7\) But Raeder and the navy were not really interested in extending operational bases on the North Sea. There would be no strategic and little tactical value in doing so. Actually, the navy needed to break out of the cage imposed upon it by the enclosing geographical position of the British Isles. It is significant that it was immediately after rejecting Hitler's suggestion of using Belgian bases for naval requirements that Raeder first brought up the question of obtaining bases in Norway.\(^8\)

O.K.H. drew up an operational order on the basis

\(^5\)Ibid. Hitler again asked for Raeder's evaluation of Belgian bases on November 10, and Raeder's reply was again in the negative. See F.C.H.A. 1939, 36.

\(^6\)D.C.F.P., VIII, 249.

\(^7\)Ibid.

\(^8\)F.C.H.A. 1939, 14. See also supra, 75.
of Hitler's instructions in Directive No. 6 which was a modified version of the famous 1914 Schlieffen Plan. In the months before the opening of the offensive in the West in May 1940, controversy raged around the plans for Fall Gelb,\(^9\) and the invasion was repeatedly postponed. There is no evidence that the navy or Raeder participated in or were even consulted concerning the strategic objectives of the land campaign. During the autumn and winter of 1939-40, the German navy was busily engaged in the planning of the Norwegian operation and in carrying on the war against merchant shipping.\(^{10}\) Both the original Q.K.H. order and the later revisions only envisaged a limited land campaign against France. A one-blow knockout was not planned and such an event would have had to take place if the western offensive was to have significance for naval strategy.

Directive No. 8, issued November 20, 1939, set out the navy's role in Fall Gelb:\(^9\)

\(^{9}\) A good account of the controversy and ensuing changes in Fall Gelb may be found in: Manstein, *Lost Victories*, 94 ff. Field Marshal von Manstein was the prime mover behind the revision. An adequate account of the campaign in the West, although with a decided French bias, is: Jacques Benoist-Mehin, *Sixty Days That Shock the West: The Fall of France: 1940*, trans. Peter Wiles, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963).

\(^{10}\) Raeder complained to Hitler on January 26: "For months the Navy has been carrying on this war practically singlehanded." *P.C.N.A.: 1940*, I, 2.

\(^{11}\) *N.C.A.*, III, 398. (N.D. PS-440)
The Navy is authorized to take blockage measures for submarines against the Belgian and . . . Dutch harbors and waterways, in the night before the attack and from the time of the start of the blockade activities and the time of the land attack must also be kept as short as possible in the case of the use of submarines.

These limited measures attest to the fact that supreme headquarters paid little attention to possible naval participation. No landing operations were envisaged, nor did the navy's capital ships have orders to neutralize coastal forts and strong points. The navy, for its part, also was not interested in participating in the conquest of the lowlands. And since the campaign was not intended to completely conquer France, the navy turned its back on the preparations. The only areas of France which would be of any substantial value to the further conduct of the war by the navy were the coastal areas on the Bay of Biscay and at that time such far-reaching objectives were utopian.  

The navy and Raeder had a more easily attainable objective in mind. Norway would liberate them from the constricting confines of the North Sea, and on May 10, 1940 when the German offensive in the West began the navy was engaged in the Norwegian campaign.

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12 Schniewind confered with Halder (Chief of Staff in O.K.H.) in October 1939, and asked about the possibilities of attaining bases in western France. "As the most advantageous objective, I designated Normandy . . . or even better, Brest in Brittany." "The Chief of Staff of the German Army rejected such ideas or trains of thought as Utopian . . . ." Testimony of Schniewind in: T.W.C., X, 575.
Hence, the navy took no part whatsoever in the initial offensive against France. Indeed, naval patrol vessels in the Heligoland Bight only learned of the attack by means of news reports over the wireless.\textsuperscript{13}

The German ground forces had extraordinary success in their drive into France which was to lead to the armistice at Compiegne.\textsuperscript{14} One of the most valuable factors to consider in concluding an armistice was the French fleet, one of the three most powerful in existence. Two days before the armistice was signed on June 22, the Führer and Raeder had conferred, and Hitler had told the grand admiral his decision on the question of the French fleet:

\begin{quote}
France. The Armistice. The Führer wishes to refrain from taking any measures which would affect French honor. The fleet is therefore to be interned at Brest and Toulon (Italy)\textsuperscript{15} according to peacetime dispositions. The ships are to be inactivated in accordance with special
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13}Hugo, \textit{Sea Warfare}, 75-6. Hugo asserted that these units could have easily occupied the West Frisian Islands and various strategic Dutch harbors thus opening a safe sea-route to the west earlier than in fact occurred. This minor tactical oversight is interpreted by the admiral as indicative of the "land-bound mentality of those at Supreme Headquarters". \textit{Ibid.}, 76. These tactical operations would have come under the jurisdiction of S.K.L., which was authorized by Directive 8 to implement such action and were of no concern to O.K.H. or O.K.W. It is doubtful that the naval war staff had a "land-bound mentality".

\textsuperscript{14}Due to the German navy's weakness (as a consequence of \textit{WesenZwang}), no naval action could be taken against the \textit{Dunkirk} withdrawal.

\textsuperscript{15}Italy entered the war on June 10, and Toulon was to be included in the Italians' allotted zone following the signing of the armistice.
instructions. Some naval units must be available for the defence of Indo-China. Bases on the Atlantic coast with all their resources must be completely at the disposal of the German Navy for warfare against Britain. Demands for minesweepers and vessels to defend the harbors and channels are to be made during the negotiations.16

Raeder had not, formally at any rate, requested the seizure of the French fleet. Confiscation undoubtedly would have increased the strength of the German navy vis-à-vis Britain to almost par, and with the recently added Italian fleet the Axis would have enjoyed a measureable superiority. But a seizure of the French fleet was realistically almost impossible because of its geographic location on the south coast of France and in the French North African bases. For the present, Hitler was more concerned with ending the war. A harsh peace involving the cession of the fleet presumably would have encouraged France to continue the war from the colonies. Therefore Hitler presented reasonably moderate armistice terms. He had no desire to induce the French fleet to join the British.17

The Bizay bases were a good deal more important to the German navy than the fleet. U-boat command and Dönitz watched closely the progress of the campaign against France and during the period had a train standing by fully loaded with torpedoes and personnel for establishing bases on the Atlantic.18


17The British themselves ended any such danger with the attacks of July 3 on the French fleet at Oran and Mers-el-Kebir.

18Dönitz, Memoirs, 111-12.
Dönitz left for the Biscay bases on June 23, the day following the armistice, and construction of the bases rapidly followed. The first U-boat entered Lorient from the Atlantic on July 7, and by August 2 U-boats no longer returned to Germany for overhaul and leave, but instead returned to the Biscay bases.

The new ports were extremely valuable for conducting the war against merchant shipping. The British were no longer able effectively to bar the passage of U-boats to and from their hunting grounds. The passage was reduced by at least a week which provided the U-boats with additional time on station. This in turn resulted in increased sinkings. The value of such bases outside effective range of the British blockade was mentioned to Hitler by Raeder on June 20 (the day the Führer informed the grand admiral of the terms to be granted the French).

Raeder suggested that Dakar on the French African coast would be a valuable prize to wrest from France, but Hitler refused, not wanting to jeopardize the armistice. Annexations could wait for the peace treaty.18

With France crushed, the obvious question now for the Führer was how to end the war? Britain was the only

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18Hitler told Raeder that he intended to use Madagascar for settling Jews (under French supervision). "However, he realizes the importance of the proposal made by the Commander in Chief, Navy to exchange Madagascar for the northern part of Portuguese Angola, and he will consider the suggestion." F.C., N.A. 1940, I, 56. Nothing came of these proposals.
remaining enemy and the problem was to convince her to make peace. Various overtures were made by the Führer but the stubborn British refused to consider the prospect. Therefore, Britain must either be convinced of the futility of further continuing the war, or crushed. Three alternatives were available to Hitler: 1) to bomb Britain into submission, 2) to continue the slow process of mercantile warfare, or 3) to invade. Hitler chose the third solution to his quandry, but his heart was never really in an invasion.

The subject of invading Britain was first brought up by Grand Admiral Raeder on May 21. A short notation in the transcript of that day's conference reads:

The Führer and the Commander in Chief, Navy discuss in private details concerning the invasion of England, which the Naval Staff has been working on since November.

When Raeder brought this subject to the attention of Hitler on May 21 the German army had already reached the Channel at Abbeville and cut off the Allied forces around Dunkirk. The campaign was rapidly drawing to a close and

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19 F.D.R. A. 1940, 11, 51.

20 Ibid. Further evidence of the naval staff investigating the problem is found in Hitler's Diary entries for November 1939. This portion is not published, but is quoted in: Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 55.

21 The Department of Military Art and Engineering, The United States Military Academy, The West Point Atlas of American Wars: Volume II: 1900-1952, Chief Editor Colonel Vincent J. Esposito. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), Section 2, Map 14. (Not paginated.) I have followed this excellent study for comparative references to the land campaigns throughout.
take to clear such an area... and what changes...

it is impossible to tell how long it would

an invasion of Napoleon's superintendents...

mother than understood the necessary preparations of

 Would that by the

not for the part, therefore, adopted an illusion;

the commander in chief; may be

as a result of the maneuver, an illusion, and

their strength and how much could we do to make for peace,

their strength and pressure to the extent of a great extent;

the commander in chief; may be understood that

mother feel obligated once more to take the question.

It was after France had capitulated and reconquered the empire.

been introduced. But one month and three weeks later, in July

considerations any notion of which the Grand Admiral had not

mother was thoroughly aware that Hitler was not

no preparations for a landing be made.

yet been detected, and he ordered that for the time being

considered such a danger. The battle of France had not as

plane for an invasion. But Hitler was not yet ready to

from some irrepressible paternal protection.

mother, realizing that Hitler might accept an invasion plan
of transport facilities". He also explained that "deep inroads would be made [as a result of invasion preparations] into German economic and armament programs (submarine construction, withdrawal of transport facilities, etc.)".

Raeder had presented his case against attempting an invasion of the British homeland thoroughly. Hitler seemed convinced and assured the grand admiral that he (Hitler) "also viewed invasion as a last resort . . ." and further realized that air superiority was an absolute necessity. Raeder, probably to interest the Führer in operations other than assaulting Great Britain, then reiterated his interest in acquiring Dakar. Hitler replied that he was more interested in obtaining on of the Canary Islands from Spain "in exchange for French Morocco . . . ." He then ordered Raeder to investigate the situation and to ascertain which one of the Canaries was the most suitable for the navy's requirements. Staff studies were accordingly begun and Fall Felix developed out of this casual conversation.

But Raeder's arguments failed to prevent Hitler from

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25 Ibid., 69.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29Fall Felix (Case Felix) was the code designation for the seizure of Gibraltar and the Atlantic Islands in conjunction with the Spanish. See: infra, 126.
issuing the directive for Seelöwe ("Sea Lion" - code name for the invasion) five days later on July 16, 30

Since England, despite her militarily hopeless situation still shows no sign of willingness to come to terms, I have decided to prepare a landing operation against England, and if necessary to carry it out. 31

It should be noted here that Hitler was never committed irrevocably to an invasion of the British Isles. The last phrase quoted above ("if necessary to carry it out") indicates the Führer's reluctance even at this time. He wished the British would see reason and come to understand that a further pursuance of the war was hopeless. Hitler had purposely granted lenient armistice terms to the French in order to bring the war to a close. Some observers have even interpreted the allowing of the British expeditionary force to escape at Dunkirk as indicative of the Führer's desire not to entirely alienate the British (although this is unlikely). At any rate, since the fall of France, Hitler had been eagerly awaiting peace proposals from the British. He had made a few himself and negotiations (albeit clandestine) had been undertaken. But a few days after the issuance of Directive 16,

30 N.C.A., III, 399-403. (N.D. Ps-442) The best account of Seelöwe is: Ronald Wheatley, Operation Sea Lion: German Plans for the Invasion of England 1939-1942 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1958). Wheatley, as an official British war historian, had unrestricted access to captured German documents, a unique privilege as yet unavailable to other historians.

31 Ibid., 399-400.
Hitler, his patience exhausted, put forward his final peace offer to Britain. In a speech in the Reichstag, Hitler said:

In this hour I feel it to be my duty before my own conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense in Britain as much as elsewhere. I consider myself in a position to make this appeal, since I am not a vanquished foe begging favors, but the victor, speaking in the name of reason. I can see no reason why this war must go on. 32

This appeal was made despite Hitler's resignation that it would be rejected. On July 13, he had written Mussolini:

I have made to Britain so many offers of cooperation and have been treated so shabbily, that I am now convinced that any new appeal to reason would meet with a similar rejection. 33

Therefore Hitler was at an impasse. Some action must be taken to bring the war to a close. Directive 16 was his answer. The Führer's motive for issuing the directive was logical - Britain must be forced to make peace - and invasion was the direct means of accomplishing this end. Indirectly, invasion preparations could be expected to make the British more prone to consider peace discussions:

The Directive ordered:

1. The Landing must be carried out in the form of a surprise crossing on a broad front approximately from Beachgate to the area west of the Isle of Wight, in which air force units will take the roll.


December 1938

The memorandum is dated in the conference

December 1939

the memorandum is dated in

Figure 5.1.1.11, 1994. 400-401.

The invasion of England is an exception to the

commanders-in-chief, he concluded that

argument and only two days later, a conference of

strength. 35 Hitler was not only to be prepared with 50,000

allocations made completely by the

and it took only three days before 5,000 on July 19 submitted

and the navy were apprised of these instructions

Commande on both Flanks.

It will proceed, along with the navy, forces employed

the naval amphibious arm.

and amphibious to the amphibious of amphibious into

or by. Navy will secure the means of transport and

The tanks of the navy were

2. Non-free occurrence must be expected.

2. The British air force must be martyred and annihilated.

the German attack.

any considerable force against the

be the [ to far attempted, that it does not any longer

possible.

of choice conditions which make a landing in England

of artillery, and units of the navy the roll

106
the enemy. Forty Divisions will be necessary.37

Prerequisites are complete air supremacy, adequate artillery in the Straits of Dover, and protective mine fields. The time of the year is very important since in the second half of September the weather in the Channel and the North Sea is very bad . . . .38

Although Hitler was thus familiar with the difficulties, he ordered that all preparations were to be completed by the first of September since, "owing to the lateness of the season the main operation would have to be successfully completed by 16 September . . . ."39 The planning continued, but the navy, acutely aware of the hazards involved, prepared another dissenting memorandum for the Führer. S.K.L. forwarded this to Hitler on July 30, informing him that its preparations could not be completed before September 15.40

Nevertheless, the next day, July 31, Hitler convened a major conference on SeeLüwe at his villa (the Berghof) on the Obersalzberg. Besides the Führer and Raeder, Chief of Staff of O.K.W. Keitel, General Jodl, Commander von Puttkamer, the Commander in Chief of the Army, von Brauchitsch, and Chief of the Army General Staff Halder were present. Raeder,

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37The final O.K.H. plan called for 39 divisions and 2 airborne divisions. See: Wheatley, Operation See Lion, 158.
38F.C.M.A., 1940, i, 81.
39Raeder, My Life, 325.
40Naval Staff War Diary, quoted in Wheatley, Operation See Lion, 45. See also Raeder, My Life, 327.
according to his own memorandum, did most of the talking
and he went into great detail of the hazards and consequences
of the proposed invasion:

The Commander in Chief, Navy reports that all
preparations are in full swing. It can be
concluded from experiences gained during this
period that 15 September 1940 is the earliest
date which can be fixed for the operation . . . .

N:ine laying will begin at the end of August if we
have air superiority, and will last about two weeks.
The Commander in Chief, Navy again draws attention
to the effects which operation "Seelowe" has on
the German economy. 41 It will have a very detrimental
effect on the situation in Germany in the winter
of 1940 to 1941, therefore the autumn is not a
favorable time. 42

Hitler interrupted Raeder to inquire about the
expected weather conditions at the end of September. Raeder
replied that it was generally good in the Channel and North
Sea in the first half of October. He then set out the navy's
demands for the invasions implementation: 1) two hours after
high tide for the initial landings, 2) a landing at dawn,
and 3) sufficient light for navigation which implied at least
a half-moon. Therefore only August 20 to 26 or September 19
to 26 would be suitable. But the August period was "out of
the question" since preparations could not possibly be completed
by that date.

41 A memorandum by S.K.L. enumerating the "detrimental"
effects was submitted to Hitler at this time. F.C.N.A., 1940,II,13.
42 Ibid., 9.
The grand admiral emphasized the importance of the weather for conducting a successful invasion, and then turned to criticize the army's proposals:

The Army has requested that the landing should cover a wide front, from the Strait of Dover to Lyme Bay. Transports from Le Havre and Cherbourg will proceed virtually unescorted into the immediate vicinity of the main British bases of Portsmouth and Plymouth, from which even if British naval forces are considerably weakened by air attacks, PT [Patrol Torpedo; British boats actually designated "MTB", motor-torpedo-boats] boats and destroyers can come out in great numbers. The unloading of the steamers at the two western landing points will last thirty-six hours, during which time they will be lying off that coast. This is unjustifiable. 43

Raeder then warned that the British fleet would undoubtedly be prepared to interdict the landing. He therefore advocated limiting the landing beaches to the region "entirely on the Straits of Dover as far as Eastbourne." He concluded with a bombshell: "The best time for the operation, all things considered, would be May 1941." Raeder's arguments impressed the Führer, yet Hitler still wanted that an attempt be made to prepare the operation for September 15, 1940. He then gave his ruling:

The decision as to whether the operation is to take place in September or is to be delayed until May 1941 will be made after the Air Force has made concentrated attacks on Southern England for one week. 44

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43 Ibid., 11.
44 Ibid.
The grand admiral's summary of the difficulties and his recommendation to postpone Sealion provided Hitler with the opportunity he desired to announce plans for a new campaign to the assembled generals. He waited until Raeder left the conference, probably because he knew that the naval commander would have soon deluged him in memoranda pointing out the dangers involved in this new scheme - the invasion of the Soviet Union - and then said:

Britain's hope lies in Russia and America. If that hope in Russia is destroyed then it will be destroyed for America too because elimination of Russia will enormously increase Japan's power in the Far East.

Something strange has happened in Britain! The British were already completely down. Now they are back on their feet.

Russia needs only to hint to England that she does not wish to see Germany too strong and the English, like a drowning man, will regain hope that the situation in six to eight months will have completely changed.

But if Russia is smashed, Britain's last hope will be shattered. Then Germany will be master of Europe and the Balkans.

Decision: In view of these considerations Russia must be liquidated. Spring, 1941.

Hitler was here revealing to the majority of the generals present the thinking that developed into Barbarossa - the invasion of Russia in the spring of 1941. Although it had been his express intention to expand Germany eastward, he was not yet

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45 Halders Diary, July 31, 1940: "Raeder leaves." Quoted in Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters. 115. Warlimont also wrote: At the beginning of August, "the Commander-in-Chief Navy had not yet even been told of Hitler's plans [to invade Russia] and was not yet intended to know." Ibid. Raeder substantiates this

46 Ibid. Quoted in Shirer, The Rise and Fall. 798. The emphasis is Halders.
willing to abandon finally Seelöwe. According to this conference, Seelöwe was on or off according to the success (or lack of it) by the Luftwaffe. But Hitler was really only procrastinating. He essentially was not interested in invading Britain, a fact which after the middle of August the generals came to know well.\textsuperscript{47} Nevertheless, the preparations continued, and Raeder took the operation with deadly seriousness and continued to raise objections.

Raeder met with his supreme commander again on August 13. He reported to Hitler that a deadlock had been reached between O.K.L. and O.K.W.\textsuperscript{48} on the question of the scope of the initial landings. He demanded a decision as to whether

\textsuperscript{47}Blumenritt, Rundstedt's chief of operations, is indicative of this: 'It [Seelöwe] was all regarded as a "war game"," Among ourselves we talked of it as bluff, and looked forward to news that an understanding with Britain had been reached.' Quoted in: Liddell Hart, The German Generals Talk, 153. Liddell Hart agrees with this statement, but Shirer, The Rise and Fall, 760 ff. does not and questions Liddell Hart's credibility. It is safe to say that Shirer is unduly suspicious of the German generals' testimony. The documents bear out the interpretation that Hitler was disinclined to invade Britain.

\textsuperscript{48}Halder and Schniwind had met on August 7 to hash out the difference of opinion:

Halder dramatically stated: 'I utterly reject the Navy's proposal; from the point of view of the Army I regard their proposal as complete suicide. I might just have well put the troops that have landed straight through a sausage machine!' Schniwind replied just as dramatically that it would be equally suicidal, in view of British naval supremacy, to attempt to transport the troops over such a wide area.

Martienseen, Hitler and His Admirals, 76. Schniwind's less-dramatic account is in F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 15-16.
Seydlitz would be carried out on the army's wide front strategy or in conformity with the navy's proposals for a narrow front. Hitler agreed to give Raeder his decision after conferring the next day with von Brauchitsch, the commander-in-chief of the army. Raeder then said:

In view of the limited means available for naval warfare and transport, operation "Seelöwe", as emphasized repeatedly, should be attempted only as a last resort, if Britain cannot be made to sue for peace in any other way.49

Hitler agreed "completely". He stated that he recognized that failure would enhance British prestige and that therefore it would be necessary to "... wait and see what effects our intensive air attacks will have."50

Apparently Raeder's persistent opposition was beginning to tell. On the 16th, after conferring with von Brauchitsch on the 14th, Hitler issued a new order through O.K.W. This directive stated:

(a) Preparations for the operations to take place on 15 September are to be continued. Final orders will not be given until the situation is clear.

(b) Dispositions should be made in such a manner as not to exclude the possibility of an attack on a narrow front, should this be ordered at the last minute, and to leave open the possibility of a single landing in the Brighton area.51

49 F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 14.

50 Ibid.

51 Martienssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 78.
But, to clarify matters, a further directive issued on the same day stated: "Main crossing to be on a narrow front . . . ."

Therefore Hitler had sided with the navy's and Raeder's position. He had selected the narrow front strategy which surely appalled the generals. Although in the army's opinion, this was "suicide", Hitler had preferred to chance alienating his generals rather than to order Raeder to conform to the broad front concept. Hitler apparently had been caught "between the devil and the deep blue sea"; one alternative was "suicide" and the other "impossible". Actually, considering that by this time the Führer had virtually abandoned Seelüwe, the choice had little consequence. The carrying out of Seelüwe ostensibly depended on the Luftwaffe and the Battle of Britain had begun.

Göring had ordered the bombing into impotence of the British to begin on August 10 - code-named "Eagle Day". The Luftwaffe had initial success but gradually the toll exacted by the R.A.F. began to tell. The day prior to the issuing of the above-quoted directives, the Luftwaffe suffered the heaviest losses to date, 76 aircraft. It was soon apparent that Göring and the Luftwaffe would not be able to bomb Britain into submission.

On September 6, Raeder reported to Hitler on the current status of the navy. An O.K.W. directive issued three

52 Ibid.
53 Wilmot, Struggle for Europe, 43.
days earlier set out these orders:

The following dates for the completion of preparations for operation 'Sea Lion' have been decided:

(1) The earliest day for the sailing of the invasion fleet has been fixed as 20 September, and that of the landing for 21 September.

(2) Orders for the launching of the attack will be given on 'D. Day minus 10', presumably therefore on 11 September.\(^54\)

This directive apparently meant that the operation was nearing initiation.\(^55\) But this is not correct. The directive was probably standard staff practice informing the various commands of possible future orders for which to be prepared. The directive does not necessarily reflect Hitler’s desires. When the Führer conferred with Grand Admiral Raeder on September 6, Hitler said that his "... decision is by no means settled, as he is firmly convinced that Britain’s defeat will be achieved even without the 'landing'".\(^56\) At this conference Raeder and Hitler discussed a whole run of subjects from "The Problem of the U.S.A." to "The Inter-Allied Investigating Committee's Memorandum of January 1940, Views on German Warfare". See below only took up about one-tenth of the entire discussion and this was limited to policy questions. "What", asked Raeder, "are the

\(^54\)Martenssen, *Hitler and His Admirals*, 79-80.

\(^55\)And has been considered by some authorities as such, e.g., *Ibid*.

\(^56\)Naval Staff War Diary, September 6, quoted in Shirer, *The Rise and Fall*, 768.
Führer's political and military directives in the event that operation "Seeloewe" does not take place?" 57 Would he be permitted to return the barges and steamers collected for Seelöwe to Germany in order to re-establish "maximum production"? "Certainly", replied Hitler, and he also agreed to Raeder's proposal that, if Seelöwe was cancelled, "an appearance of an 'invasion of Britain' should be kept up." 58

Hitler still clung tenaciously to a program he actually had no interest in carrying out. Ten days earlier on August 27, he had directed that 10 infantry and 2 panzer divisions be transferred to the east "... to guarantee the protection of the Rumanian oilfields." 59 Actually, this move was indicative of the lines along which Hitler was thinking. If a major campaign against Britain were to be carried out, it was now illogical to strengthen the eastern front to this degree. 60 Hitler was deploying for the coming invasion of Russia.

57 FGNA, 1940, II, 18-19.
58 Ibid., 19.
59 DGP, X, 549-50. Also quoted in: Martienssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 81-2.
60 All indications are that Russia was not then planning an attack although Russia had occupied Bessarabia and northern Bukovina on June 28. This in turn caused a political upheaval in Rumania which brought Ion Antonescu to power. Raeder claimed that Hitler "... described the moving of troops to the eastern front in August to me as a large scale camouflage measure for Seelöwe ... " NCA, VI, 888. (N.D. C-66)
On September 6, Hitler and Raeder also discussed Dakar, and the Azores and Canary Islands. Raeder warned that the United States might enter the war and occupy the islands. Hitler agreed that this was conceivable and considered that a German occupation of the Canary Islands with the Luftwaffe to be both expedient and possible. He thereupon ordered examination of the problem of occupying various of the islands (and simultaneously Portugal) to be considered. As one authority and participant has expressed it: "This looked more like tactics designed to turn everyone's attention away from operation Sea Lion than serious intentions." But Hitler was still loathe to order cancellation of Seelöwe. As he continually reiterated, "military and moral pressure must be maintained on Britain." He was prepared to cancel the invasion altogether on September 13, but apparently the Luftwaffe convinced Hitler that it was making headway in its struggle to overcome the British air defenses:

The Führer has come to the conclusion that it would be wrong after all already to call off operation "Seelöwe" at this time, as he had apparently planned to do on 13 September. The air attacks have been very effective....

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61 The destroyers-for-bases agreement was consummated on September 2 and Raeder was not "... yet clear whether the United States ... is acting selfishly or in Anglo-Saxon interests." F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 19.


63 Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 110.

64 F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 22.
Haider recorded these thoughts in the naval records of September 14, and also Hitler's further rationalizing arguments:

The degree of air supremacy necessary to justify executing operation "Seelowe" has not yet been reached, however. If the pressure of the imminent landings were added to further air attacks, the total effect would be very strong after all. For not one attack is decisive, but the total effect produced. If operation "Seelowe" were called off now, British morale would be lifted and our air attacks would be easier to bear.65

Thus Hitler was ready to completely scrap the actual operation although he wished the maintenance of psychological pressure. Perhaps he was hoping that the stubborn British would at long last "see reason". Haider concurred in these rationalizations because he had always "... been of the opinion that operation 'Seelowe' should be the last resort ... ."66 He suggested:

If we wish to avoid loss of prestige, it will be permissible to abandon operation "Seelowe" only at the moment of maximum air successes, on the grounds that it is no longer necessary.67

Hitler readily agreed, although he stated his desire to withhold his final decision until September 17, presumably wanting to see what the air situation would be at that date. The grand admiral and Hitler were scheming on the best possible

65Ibid.
66Ibid.
67Ibid. (Emphasis in original.)
method and timing to finally jettison Seelöwe.

On September 17, an entry in the records of Raeder's conferences with Hitler records the final rejection of the plan to bring Britain to her knees by direct assault:

The enemy Air Force is still by no means defeated; on the contrary it shows increasing activity. The weather situation as a whole does not permit us to expect a period of calm . . . . The Führer therefore decides to postpone "Seelöwe" indefinitely. 68

Raeder and Hitler were to have a number of discussions in the coming year in which Seelöwe was touched upon. The pretense that the invasion might still be mounted some day was maintained although in fact after September 1940 neither the opportunity nor the means were available. On October 12, an O.K.W. directive set out the policy:

The Führer decided that from now until the Spring, preparations for Seelöwe shall be continued solely for the purpose of maintaining political and military pressure on England. 69

Of course in the spring Hitler set out on his greatest adventure the invasion of Russia - and Seelöwe was realistically impossible. The operation was finally cancelled in January 1942.

68Ibid., 25.

69Quoted in: Martienssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 90. As late as February 18, 1941, a Führer directive ordered:

In spite of the farreaching disintegration of the operation "Seelöwe" everything possible should be done to maintain the impression amongst our own troops that the invasion against England is being further prepared.

N.C.A., VI, 848. (N.D. C-33)
Throughout the planning of Sealion, the navy had been intimately and probably even paramontly involved. It had been a naval staff study begun as far back as November 1939 and brought out at the appropriate time by Raeder that had set Hitler on to the scheme. Raeder’s advice dominated the war councils and certainly affected in a large measure the development of the tactical plans. Hitler’s respect for the grand admiral and his opinions was still high at this point and it is certain that the commander-in-chief of the navy’s forebodings were not considered lightly.

Many explanations for Hitler’s half-hearted attempt to invade Britain have been forwarded: a love-hate attitude toward the English,70 the failure to gain air supremacy,71 or his ideological hatred of communism which impelled him to turn toward the east. It is true that he had no desire to gamble with the victory obtained on the continent. All of these factors played a part in Hitler’s reluctance to initiate the invasion, but it is not too much to say that the navy provided him with the expert rationale which he needed. Up

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70Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, 136: “There were some complex elements in his make-up which suggest that he had a mixed love-hate feeling toward England similar to the Kaiser’s.”

71Giving rise to Churchill’s memorable peroration: “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.” Winston S. Churchill, *Blood, Sweat, and Tears* (*New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1941*), 58. Speech to the House of Commons, August 20, 1940.
to this point in the conduct of the war, Hitler had generally accepted Raeder's suggestions, hints, and demands. During the planning of Seelöwe there is no reason to believe that the Führer had yet changed the pattern. Indeed, throughout the course of the entire war, Hitler over-ruled Raeder only a relatively few times. In the final analysis, the German navy, as it had been able to induce an invasion of Norway, was able to prevent the invasion of Britain. The navy's continual objections served to defeat the scheme. In both instances the interests of Raeder and the Kriegsmarine were served.

72 Chapters II and III: inter alia.
CHAPTER V

THE NAVY’S ALTERNATE STRATEGIES TO BARBAROSSA

Italy joined Germany in the war on June 10, 1940. Mussolini envisaged the Italian role as participation in a "parallel war": "Non con la Germania, ne per la Germania, ma solo per l'Italia, a fianco della Germania."1 Although this policy led to eventual Italian defeat and the overthrow of Mussolini's dictatorship, Germany for her part, at least in the early years of the war, tacitly accepted this situation. Germany likewise had little inclination fully to cooperate with Italy. Hitler respected the wishes of his nominally equal partner and initially left the Mediterranean war to the Duce.

Italian entry came only a few weeks before the French armistice, and the Italian armies contributed little to the collapse of the Third Republic. But at sea (and on paper) Italy provided the Axis with welcome naval forces. Italy's

1"Not with Germany, nor for Germany, but only for Italy, at the side of Germany." By this Mussolini meant that he would fight the same enemies, but without coordination with Germany.
geographic position was strategically located athwart Britain's Mediterranean "life-line" to the Empire, and the Italian navy was the fourth largest in the world after France's defeat. Besides the necessary auxiliary vessels and the small fighting units (M.T.B.'s, sub-chasers, mine-layers, etc.), the Italian navy included 6 battleships,² 7 heavy cruisers, 12 light cruisers, 140 destroyers, and 115 submarines.³

Consequently, good opportunities to strike at Britain's maritime power were available in the Mediterranean. Raeder and the German navy, loathe to attempt a direct assault on Britain, preferred to defeat her by means of a peripheral strategy - a strategy that would slowly but inevitably bring the British to their knees and permanently keep them there. Initially, at least, the German navy was satisfied to allow the Italians to control "Mare nostrum". However the western Mediterranean and the islands dominating sea communications in the eastern and central Atlantic (and the entrance to the Mediterranean) would be in a German sphere of operations.

The views of the navy in this respect were first put before Hitler by the commander-in-chief on June 20, 1940.

²Two, the powerful Vittorio Veneto and Littorio, were completed in August 1940 (35,000 tons, 15-inch guns).
³See Appendix D for full particulars and dispositions of the Italian navy in June 1940.
France had asked for an armistice, and Britain presumably would follow suit. Geelüwe was in the planning stages, and the navy decided to look to the future. Bader, in the course of a situation conference, gave the Führer a staff study drawn up by S.K.L. specifically for the Führer's enlightenment:

German policy concerning bases is ruled by the necessity for a final and basic improvement in the geographical and strategic position of the Greater German Reich, in order to eliminate for all time a British threat to Germany and her interests overseas. The elimination of the "British threat" for "all time" would be accomplished first by breaking the blockade line in the Shetlands and Iceland area "once and for all". Second, Germany would establish herself on the Channel coast and thus forever destroy Britain's "exclusive control" of this exit from the North Sea. These two basic demands of the navy were essentially the same that had led to Weserübung. A third, one directly opposed to Hitler's view of Germany's destiny, was to once again involve Germany in colonial affairs:

The creation of a large united German Colonial Empire in Central Africa (from French Guinea and Sierra Leone via Togo, Nigeria, the Cameroons, the French Congo, the Belgian Congo, to German East Africa) which is necessary for national and economic reasons, necessitates bases on the coast of the colonial

4 Supra, 103.
5 F.C.N.A. 1940, I, 65. (Emphasis in original.)
6 Ibid.
territory. Only thus can British naval supremacy in the Atlantic finally be destroyed and the sea routes to the German colonies be safeguarded.\(^7\)

In order to insure the security of a large African Colonial empire, the navy further proposed:

Agreement should be reached with Portugal and Spain regarding the purchase and development of bases in the Azores or the Canaries and the Cape Verde Islands, as well as exchange of purchase of the islands lying off German colonial territory, in the Gulf of Guinea, and off the coast of German East Africa.\(^8\)

Raeder and Hitler next met three weeks later on July 11. In the interim, Hitler had apparently read S.K.L.'s memorandum, and although he made no comment on the colonial suggestions, he had provided for the requested Channel and Biscay bases in the recent armistice. Moreover, the naval memorandum had also interested the Führer in the Atlantic islands. He commented that he would like to "... acquire one of the Canary Islands from Spain in exchange for French Morocco."\(^9\) Presumably, this was only an ad-lib observation, but Raeder immediately set out to expand the Führer's interest.

The grand admiral produced another S.K.L. study which expounded the navy's views on "Expansion of the Navy after the War." This is an extremely detailed document which explained

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\(^7\)Ibid., 69.

\(^8\)Ibid., 66.

\(^9\)Ibid., 69.
fully the navy's assumptions and plans. The first assumption made was that Germany would possess after the war complete hegemony in Europe:

Germany will be the dominating power on the European continent. The economic resources of the north, the west, and the southeast would equally be at our disposal. A political alliance of the northern or western states (Holland, Belgium, France) against Germany would be impossible.11

The second assumption was that "Germany will control a large Central African colonial empire from the Atlantic to the Indian ocean."12 This was a forlorn hope, to say the least, given Hitler's consistent and abiding disinclination to expand overseas.13 Colonies were worthless in the Führer's

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10Another S.K.L. memorandum, signed by Fricke, and dated "3/6/40", assumed that after the war, Denmark, Norway, and northern France would either become possessions of Germany or utterly dependent. N.C.A., VI, 868-69. At Nuremberg, defence counsel for Raeder attempted to portray this document as "fantastic" personal jottings of Fricke. It was a staff study signed by Fricke in his official capacity as indicated by the notation: "1. S.K.L." (the department he headed). Moreover, the suggestions for colonial expansion are almost identical as these in the above-quoted memorandum. See: T.N.W.C., XIII, 477-78.

11F.C.M.A., 1940, I, 73.

12Ibid.

13On the night of October 26, 1941, Hitler, at one of his nightly table-talks, commented:

"The essential thing for us is not to repeat the mistake of hurling ourselves into foreign markets. The importance of our merchant marine can be limited to three or four million tons. It is enough for us to receive coffee and tea from the African continent. We have everything else here in Europe." See: Hitler's Secret Conversations, 113. This was presumably directed at Admiral Fricke, who was present.
opinion. They not only would provide nothing of real use to the "thousand-year" Reich, by they would become millstones about Germany's neck.\textsuperscript{14} He once commented: "If it were only a question of conquering a colony, I'd not continue the war a day longer."\textsuperscript{15} This is certainly a concise and accurate assessment of the Führer's views on colonial policy.

Working on these two assumptions (German hegemony and possession of a large colonial empire), \textsuperscript{3}K.\textsuperscript{L.} continued that although:

\begin{quote}
... the fate of the British Empire after the war is uncertain ... it can be assumed that Great Britain will have to sacrifice all interests on the Continent and recognize German supremacy in Europe.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Next the navy proposed to defend the far-flung maritime empire it envisioned a mighty fleet\textsuperscript{17} built around a nucleus of

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\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Hitler's Secret Conversations}, 96. (October 18, 1941.)
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\textsuperscript{16}C.N.A., 1940, I, 73.
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\textsuperscript{17}This proposal will be discussed in detail \textit{infra}, 220 ff.
\end{center}
super-battleships. Hitler had no such desires and the proposal ultimately came to nought. But the idea of defeating Britain at sea began to appeal to him. **Seelöwe** was still in planning, but his (and the navy's) desire not to attempt a direct assault on the British Isles made the Führer more susceptible to the navy's suggestions.

At the important conference on **Seelöwe** on July 31, where Raeder put forward his arguments at great length against the invasion of Britain, and also where the Führer first announced his intention to invade Russia, Hitler also said that he was "planning an attack on Gibraltar."\(^\text{18}\) This announcement apparently stemmed from the navy's repeated contention that Britain could be defeated at sea. Anxious not to invade the British Isles, and also anxious to end the threat to his rear from the Soviet Union, Hitler eagerly took the navy's bait. If he turned against Russia without defeating Britain, he would violate his own principle and a traditional German policy - avoidance of a two-front war. Besides, Hitler would have left himself open to criticism from the generals who were hesitant about beginning a new venture before Britain capitulated. Therefore the navy's arguments regarding the Atlantic islands and the obvious importance of Gibraltar took root and began to grow in Hitler's mind into a new project - **Fall Fehéř**.

The commander-in-chief of the navy and Hitler met again

\(^{18}\text{F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 12.}\)
on September 6. Seelöwe virtually was abandoned by this date (although not yet formally), and Raeder again brought up the subject of defeating Britain by indirect means:

Britain should be excluded from the Mediterranean. Control of the Mediterranean area is of vital importance to the position of the Central Powers in southeastern Europe, Asia Minor, Arabia, Egypt, and the African area. Unlimited resources for raw materials would be guaranteed. New and strategically favorable bases for further operations against the British Empire would be won. The loss of Gibraltar would mean crucial difficulties for British import traffic from the South Atlantic. Preparations for this operation must be begun at once so that they are completed before the U.S.A. steps in. It should not be considered as secondary importance, but as one of the main blows against Britain.19

Thus Raeder was assuming, with Seelöwe not formally cancelled, that more than one blow against Britain would be necessary. Hitler agreed and gave "orders to this effect."20 Raeder also mentioned the great importance of the Canaries, and Hitler opined that their occupation would be both "expedient and feasible."21

On September 26, Raeder again returned to his argument, this time emphasizing the significance of Gibraltar and Suez. Raeder did not think the Italians were up to the task of capturing Suez by themselves. The ineptitude of the Italians would be a standard naval argument until the end of the war. Raeder

19F.G.N.A. 1940, II, 19. (Emphasis in original.)
20Ibid.
21Ibid., 20.
therefore urged:

The Suez Canal must be taken. It is doubtful whether the Italians can accomplish this alone; support by German troops will be needed. An advance from Suez through Palestine and Syria as far as Turkey is necessary. If we reach that point, Turkey will be in our power. The Russian problem will then appear in a different light. Fundamentally, Russia is afraid of Germany. It is doubtful whether an advance against Russia from the north will be necessary.22

Raeder had been informed by Hitler in the middle of September of the prospective invasion of Russia, and he was doing his utmost to dissuade the Führer. Raeder at this early date was either farsighted or desperate enough to warn Hitler that North Africa was of decisive importance for the conduct of the war and that "all indications are that Britain with the help of De Gaulle France, and possibly also of the U.S.A. . . ."23 would set up air bases in this region in order to strike at Italy.

Hitler agreed ". . . with the general trend of thought." He promised to confer immediately with Mussolini and possibly later also with Franco. Hitler had not made up his mind as to "whether cooperation with France or Spain is more profitable . . ."24 but cautioned that, in order to fulfill all of Raeder's plans, cooperation with both powers would be imperative. Hitler

22Ibid., 24. (Latter italics mine.)
23Ibid. (Emphasis in original.)
24Ibid., 25.
wished to confer with the Duce before making a decision on
these matters, and on that note the subject was dropped between
Hitler and the navy until December 14, 1940.

In the interim, Hitler conferred first with Franco
and then (after meeting with Pétain on October 24) with
Mussolini. The meeting with Franco took place at Hendaye,
a small railroad station on the Spanish-French border on
October 25. Diplomatic talks between Spanish and German
authorities had long prepared the way for this summit meeting.
Hitler expounded at length to El Caudillo essentially the
same strategic arguments which Grand Admiral Raeder had put
to him over a month earlier. It was essential that Spanish
participation in or at least cooperation be secured in order
to mount an operation against Gibraltar. With the invasion of
Russia approaching, Hitler could not afford to attempt to seize
Gibraltar over Spanish protests. This would likely involve
him in a guerrilla war in Spain and perhaps he reflected on

25D.C.F.P., XI, The War Years: September 1, 1940-
January 11, 1941 (Washington: United States Government Printing
Office, 1960), 371-76. For German-Spanish relations during
this period also see: U.S., Department of State, The Spanish
Government and the Axis (Washington: United States Government

26The Spanish Minister of the Interior (and Franco’s
brother-in-law) Serrano Suñer had conferred in Berlin with
Hitler and Ribbentrop, on September 17. The following day
Hitler composed a lengthy letter to the Caudillo explaining
the necessity of occupying Gibraltar and defending the Atlantic
islands. He also entreated Franco to enter the war. Franco
replied favorably on September 22 and accepted Hitler’s invita-
tion to confer personally. See: D.C.F.P., XI, 62 ff. (Documents
Nos. 63, 66, 70, and 88 respectively.)
Napoleon's experience. At any rate, Hitler managed to
convince Franco that the arguments were sound, but Franco
hedged as to the actual date he would enter the war. His
entrance also depended upon Germany's fulfillment of many
economic requirements.27

Hitler met with Pétain at Montoire-sur-Le-Loir the
following day, October 24.28 The Führer attempted to awe
the aged marshal with German strength and then left to
confer with Mussolini at Florence. Here the question of
Mediterranean strategy was again taken up. Both Hitler and
Mussolini agreed that Spain must be brought into the war and
the western entrance to the Mediterranean thereby effectively
sealed. The only problem was the "unreasonable" Spanish demands.
Spain, as price of her entry on the side of the Axis, demanded
"French Catalonia, a rectification of the Pyrenees frontier,
Oran, French Morocco, enlargement of . . . Rio de Oro [ and ]
. . . Spanish Guinea."29 Hitler realized these demands were

27 The record of the Führer-Caudillo talk is incomplete,
but Hitler gave this account to Mussolini five days later:

To a question from the Duce as to the exact
date of the intervention of the Spaniards in the
military operations, the Führer replied that Franco
had been very vague here and states only that he would
intervene when the military preparations were complete.


29 Ibid., 420.
quite impossible if a satisfactory settlement was to be reached with France.

To a question from the Duce as to what the Spaniards should be given, the Führer replied that they could not get any more than a substantial enlargement of Spanish Morocco. At the same time he stressed the fact that Germany had to have bases on the African coast and that he would prefer to lay claim to one of the islands off the coast of Africa for this purpose. If this were not possible, bases would have to be found on the African coast. 30

Hitler had thus accepted the Naval War Staff's analysis of African bases and their requisite nature for the future of the Third Reich. This does not imply, though, that Hitler had changed his views on the possession of colonies per se.

Germany's eventual intervention in the Mediterranean theater became imperative because of the abortive Italian invasion of Greece. The attack had begun on October 28, 1940, the same day that Hitler arrived in Florence to dissuade Mussolini from this new venture. Britain had immediately occupied Crete and dispatched an expeditionary force to the Greek mainland, actions that endangered Germany's position in the Balkans. The threat posed to the Romanian oil fields especially worried the Führer. On November 4, a major military conference was called and Hitler assessed the current situation:

**The War in Greece:**

'This was definitely a regrettable blunder on the part of the Italians. On no occasion was

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30Ibid.
authorization for such an independent action given to the Duca by the Fuehrer. It seems that Italy has started the attack with entirely inadequate forces, i.e., three divisions.

The British have occupied Crete and Lemnos. As a result Britain's strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean has considerably improved. With Lemnos in her possession, she has an advanced position for the purpose of encroaching on the mainland, is able to influence and support Turkey, and also has facilities for launching bombing attacks against Rumania.31

Hitler decided to bolster the Italians with possibly two German divisions. Also, he thought Bulgaria might be induced to join the struggle. Turning to the western Mediterranean, he announced that he was "... determined to occupy Gibraltar as soon as possible."32 He opined that "Franco is obviously prepared to enter the war on Germany's side within a short time ... ."33 The Führer therefore ordered preparatory measures to begin immediately to occupy Gibraltar, the Canary Islands, and the Cape Verde Islands. These orders were formalized in a new directive issued on November 12, 1940.

This directive (Number 18) is a comprehensive document

31F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 32.
32Ibid., 33.
33Ibid. Hitler apparently derived this opinion from a letter delivered to Berlin by special envoy from Franco and presented to the Führer the previous day. Halder noted in his diary on November 4: "In a letter to the Führer, Franco has promised that he will seriously carry out the agreements which he has made orally - i.e., enter in on our side." See: D.G.F.P., XI, 432.
concerning all facets of German strategy in the autumn of 1940. With reference to the western Mediterranean, the Führer ordered:

Political measures to induce the prompt entry of Spain into the war have been initiated. The aim of German intervention in the Iberian Peninsula (code name *Felix*) will be to drive the English out of the Western Mediterranean.

For this purpose:
(a) Gibraltar should be taken and the Straits closed;
(b) The English should be prevented from gaining a foothold at another point of the Iberian peninsula or of the Atlantic islands. 34

With regard to the eastern Mediterranean, Hitler ordered preparations be made for invading Greece by way of Bulgaria. His ostensible reason was to provide bases from which the Luftwaffe could defend the Rumanian oil fields.

The directive also went into great detail as to the execution of the undertakings. Of particular interest for Hitler's relationship with the navy was the following passage:

The Atlantic islands (particularly the Canaries and the Cape Verde Islands) will, as a result of the Gibraltar operation, gain increased importance for the English conduct of the war at sea as well as for our own naval operations. The Commanders in Chief of the Navy and of the Luftwaffe are to study how the Spanish defense of the Canaries can be supported and how the Cape Verde Islands can be occupied.

I likewise request examination of the question of occupation of Madeira and of the Azores . . . . 35

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34 D.C.F.P., XI, 528. See also N.C.A., VI, 957-60. (N.D. C-147)
35 Ibid., 530.
The issuing of this directive reflects the weight of Grand Admiral Raeder's (and S.K.L.'s) influence on German strategy. Hitler was once more, although more pressured by events than in the case of Wasserübung, adopting the navy's strategic arguments as his own. Even the precise wording of Directive No. 18 for FALL FELIX did not fail to bear the impress of Grand Admiral Raeder. By the act of turning to the Mediterranean at this time, the Führer seemed about to fulfill the navy's wildest aspirations.

But Hitler was not able to meet the navy's desires. Raeder's, the navy's, and Hitler's bold plans to defeat the British in the western Mediterranean foundered on the rock of Franco's obstinacy. A few days after the issuing of the directive for FELIX, Serrano Suñer arrived at the Öbersalzberg. The Spaniard informed Hitler that Spain had not yet imported sufficient grain to enable her to enter the war. He further stated that it would be 1 to 1½ months before the total amount purchased in Canada would arrive. Serrano Suñer gave a wealth of arguments as to why Spain was procrastinating, and it was soon evident to Hitler that the Spanish had no intentions of beginning hostilities in the near future. He attempted threats and cajoling, but to no avail. The Spanish foreign Minister as he now was) parted with the promise to "... utilize the time of preparation in the military field to get as much Canadian,

American, and Argentine wheat as possible into Spain." 37

Hitler was coming to the conclusion that Spanish cooperation was a remote prospect. On November 20, he wrote to Mussolini and his phrasing reveals that he felt Spanish entry to be no longer assured:

Spam must be prevailed upon immediately to enter the war. The earliest date we can assume is in about 6 weeks. For us the purpose of Spain’s entry must be to seize Gibraltar and close the Straits . . . . 38

During the next few weeks, Spain’s requirements for entering the conflict became quite clear, and it was evident that Franco was not to be hurried. 39 On December 11, Hitler consequently ordered: "Operation Felix will not be undertaken as the desired political conditions have not been obtained."

On December 27, Raeder met with Hitler and, obviously annoyed at the change of plans, 40 the grand admiral launched into an extensive and pessimistic resume of the situation in the Mediterranean. He concluded:

Occupation of Gibraltar is of great importance for the continuation of German warfare. The strategic reasons for speedy execution of operation Felix still hold good. 41

37Ibid., 606.

38Ibid., 641.

39Documents 398, 420, 444, 476, 479, and 497 in D.C.F.F., XI.

40Directive 21 ordering the attack on Russia (Barbarossa) had been issued on December 18.

41F.C.N.A., 1940, II, 69. (Emphasis in original.)
Hitler patiently explained that he was in full agreement with the strategic arguments for Felix, but:

At the moment, Franco is not ready; his decision is delayed by British promises of food supplies. One day these will prove to be a fraud and Spain will find herself without supplies. The Führer will try once more to influence Franco through the Foreign Minister via the Spanish Ambassador.  

Hitler actually did better than this promise. He wrote Franco personally, but not until after Raeder had again brought up the subject on January 8, 1941. By this time Hitler was exasperated:

The Führer fully recognizes the strategic value of Gibraltar, which has so often been emphasized by the Naval Staff. Despite that fact, there is for the time being no prospect of Spain's becoming our ally. She is not willing to do so. This was made perfectly clear by Franco's remark that he will not take part in the war until Britain is at the point of collapse. The Führer has offered Franco a million tons of grain to relieve the acute economic situation. Despite this offer of food, Franco did not feel that he could acquiesce to the Führer's plans.

Hitler seems to have been rather annoyed at the obtuse naval viewpoint. Apparently the Führer thought that the naval officers were unable to recognize or accept that the execution of Felix was a political problem and the solution was not forthcoming. However, Hitler made one last effort (in order to pacify the navy, since troops allocated to Felix were dispersed

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42 F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 69.
43 F.C.N.A. 1941, I, 3.
to other tasks on February 8, and the operation was no longer militarily feasible) to sway the Caudillo to join the Axis actively in the war. Hitler wrote Franco on February 6 entreaty the Spanish dictator to change his mind. Franco did not bother to reply until February 26, and his answer was not encouraging. He spoke of continuing Spanish domestic problems and observed that possibly Germany should look to closing the Suez exit from the Mediterranean before instituting action against Gibraltar. Only then would seizure of the Straits "... have a decisive value."

Felix was effectively tabled for the duration although Raeder did not forget his scheme. He repeatedly brought up the subject, and, as late as May 1943 his successor, Dönitz, again urged Hitler to occupy Spain and seize Gibraltar. Hitler replied "... that this was possible in 1940, carrying Spain along with us, but that our forces are not sufficient for this purpose now and against Spain's will..." With the possibility of action against Britain in the western Mediterranean fading, Hitler turned eastward.

44 O.K.W. reported: 'It is clear that in view of operations for MARITA and BARBAROSSA the troops held in reserve for operation FELIX will have to be used in the new undertaking.' Quoted in: Admiral Raymond De Belot, The Struggle for the Mediterranean 1939-1945, trans. James A. Field, Jr., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 20.

45 The Spanish Government and the Axis, 28-33.

46 Ibid., 33-5.

47 N.G.A., Supplement A, 1025. (N.D. D-892)
Essentially, German operations in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, begun in 1941, were from the beginning of a defensive nature. The Italian offensive against Greece, begun on October 28, had collapsed by November 8 and the Greeks seized the initiative. Italian forces were steadily pushed back into Albania until the line was stabilized on March 1, 1941. Moreover, the Italian navy suffered a calamitous blow on the night of November 11. The British attacked with carrier aircraft and seriously damaged three battleships in Taranto harbor.

The situation in the eastern Mediterranean and the Italian "parallel war" were, in Hitler's opinion, deteriorating rapidly. At the diplomatic level, pressure was applied to the Balkan neutrals to join the Axis and, in late November, Hungary and Rumania complied. Bulgaria did not join until March 1, 1941, but permission for entry of German troops into the country was secured in the autumn of 1940.

In the middle of December, a series of directives was issued by Hitler regarding the further conduct of the war. First, on December 10, he directed that a force of about 400 aircraft be sent to Sicily to attack British shipping in the Mediterranean.\footnote{D.C.F.P., XI, 835-36. On the same day Hitler directed preparations be made for occupying un-occupied France. (Fall Attila) See: D.C.F.P., XI, 836-38.} Next, on the 13th, he
issued Directive No. 20, *Fall Marita* (invasion of the Balkans), which had originally taken shape in Hitler's mind on November 4, as has been observed. Directive 20 set out the strategic task in the eastern Mediterranean:

> The outcome of the fighting in Albania cannot yet be foreseen. In view of the threatening situation in Albania, it is doubly important that English attempts to create, under the protection of a Balkan front, an air base which is dangerous chiefly for Italy, but also for the Romanian oil region, should be frustrated.

The directive assumed Bulgarian participation and, after detailing necessary strength and objectives, it concluded:

> After Operation Marita is carried out, it is the intention to withdraw the mass of the units employed in it, for further use.

The "further use" envisaged was the invasion of the Soviet Union which Hitler had toyed with since the summer of 1940. It is no mere coincidence that the directive for *Fall Barbarossa* was issued during this Mediterranean crisis of the autumn and winter of 1940. Hitler was becoming increasingly impatient to eliminate one of Britain's possible and prospective allies, and the British successes against Italy only served to underline the imperativeness.

If Britain succeeded with her Greek ally in further humiliating

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49 [Ibid., 867.]

50 [Ibid., 868. (Emphasis in original.)]

51 General Wavell's offensive in North Africa began on December 7 and Italian resistance rapidly crumbled.
the Axis, there would be the danger that Russia would draw the conclusion that Germany might not win and would consequently throw her weight with the likely victor.

Therefore, on December 18 Hitler issued Directive 21 (Fall Barbarossa) which began:

The German Wehrmacht must be prepared to crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign (Operation Barbarossa) even before the conclusion of the war against England.52

The navy's role was simply to blockade the Baltic Sea to prevent Russian naval units from escaping to join the British. Otherwise, the directive stated, "the main effort of the Navy will remain unequivocally directed against England even during an eastern campaign."53 This order, of course, was obvious. The navy could not really damage the Soviet Union's war potential and as much the correct task of the Kriegsmarine lay against Britain. Presumably, the direct order was a sop to the navy's sensibilities and was especially designed to assure Grand Admiral Raeder that Hitler had not forgotten the importance of the British enemy.

But in Raeder's opinion, Hitler was neglecting the primary enemy, and with crystal clarity he told the Führer so a fortnight later on December 27:


53 Ibid.
It is absolutely necessary to recognize that the greatest task of the hour is concentration of all our power against Britain. In other words, the means necessary for the defeat of Britain must be produced with the utmost energy and speed. All demands not absolutely essential for warfare against Britain must deliberately be set aside.

There are serious doubts as to the advisability of operation "Barbarossa" before the overthrow of Britain. The fight against Britain is carried on primarily by the Air Force and the Navy. 54

Reeder went on to plead for priority for U-boat construction and Hitler agreed that "... the greatest possible progress in submarine construction ..." was necessary. Now, after acceding to the grand admiral's request for more U-boats, Hitler explained why Russia had to be conquered:

... Russia's inclination to interfere in Balkan affairs ... makes it necessary to eliminate at all cost the last enemy remaining on the continent before he can collaborate with Britain. 55

Hitler then agreed to Reeder's request that to ease pressure on construction facilities, the effort being delegated to the construction of barges for use in Seelowe be reallocated to the fabrication of U-boats.

The necessity of providing aid to the Italian ally for both ideological and strategic reasons had become increasingly evident as 1941 wore on. Wavell's offensive in North Africa had decimated the Italians, and the Greek

54 F.C.N.A. 1940, II, 70.
55 Ibid., 71.
forces were still advancing into Albania. On January 8 and 9, Hitler convened a major war council at the Berghof. Raeder and Fricke represented the navy, and Hitler launched into a characteristic evaluation of the current situation as a whole:

The Fuehrer is of the opinion that it is vital for the outcome of the war that Italy does not collapse, but remains a loyal member of the Axis. The Duce is emphatically pro-Axis.

The Fuehrer is determined to do everything in his power to prevent Italy from losing North Africa; he fears the very detrimental psychological effect this would have on the Italian people. It would also mean a great loss of prestige for the Axis powers. The possibilities for the Germans to bring aid to Africa are small, since they [the Italians] themselves badly need the few available ports for unloading their supplies.

The Fuehrer no longer considers it possible for either the Italians or ourselves to re-open the offensive against Alexandria and Egypt with any success. (The Italians themselves go so far as to believe that at best they can attempt defensive action there; even this appears doubtful to them!!)

Hitler reiterated his desire to support the Axis. He decided to transfer German panzer formations to bolster the Italian defences in North Africa. He further decided to send German troops into Albania to stiffen the Italians there until Taranto could be launched. Troops were also to be immediately dispatched to Bulgaria, and the operation should

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be fully prepared by March 26.

The Führer's analysis of the situation in Europe was truly optimistic (as well it might be considering the peak of German power):

The Führer is firmly convinced that the situation in Europe can no longer develop unfavorably for Germany even if we should lose the whole of North Africa. Our position in Europe is so firmly established that the outcome cannot possibly be to our disadvantage.

Britain is sustained in her struggle by hopes placed in the U.S.A. and Russia. British diplomatic overtures to Russia are apparent. Eden is very pro-Russian.

Stalin must be regarded as a cold-blooded blackmailer; he would if expedient, repudiate any written treaty at any time. Britain's aim for some time to come will be to set Russian strength in motion against us. If the U.S.A. and Russia should enter the war against us, the situation would become very complicated.57

The last opinion was a gross-understatement, to say the least. Nevertheless, planning for Barbarossa continued, and only half-way measures to stiffen Italian resistance began. A few days later on January 11, Directive No. 22 was issued embodying Hitler's wishes: 58 a "blocking unit" was ordered to Tripolitania, X CAT ("10 Air Corps") was to remain in Sicily 59 with the

57 Ibid., 4.

58 D.G.F.P., XI, 1074-75. The copy given in: N.C.A., III, 413-16, is incorrectly dated "11th January 1944".

59 When X CAT was dispatched on December 10 (supra, 141) it was only for a brief period and extended participation had not been envisaged.
specific mission of cutting British naval communications
between Gibraltar, Malta, and Suez, and an army corps was
designated to be sent to Albania. The operations in Albania
were designated *Alpenveilchen* (Alpine Violet or Cyclamen); those in *Tripolitania Sonnenblume* (Sunflower).

In the middle of February 1941, Raeder went to Merano
to confer with Admiral Riscardi, the Chief of Staff of
Supermarina (Italian Supreme Naval Headquarters). There was
never close cooperation between the two allies and the naval
sphere was no exception. But at Merano agreement was
reached between the two admirals that the Italian fleet would
conduct more aggressive operations in return for increased
amounts of German fuel oil. Greece and Tripolitania were also
discussed, and arrangements made for combined operations in
these regions.

The operations began first in Tripolitania where
General Erwin Rommel struck with his newly arrived *Deutsches
Afrika Korps* on March 24. His advance encountered only weak
British forces, and he was able to continue until April 30

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60 The Italian navy thought the German navy had the
"... evident goal of gradually penetrating the Italian war
machine in order to direct it according to German interests
... . . ." Commander Marc' Antonio Bragadin, and Fioravanzo,
Gale Hoffman, (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1957), 81. This view is perhaps too strong at this time, but it is true
that the German navy had little respect for its larger ally.

61 Naveall had under orders dispatched the bulk of his
forces to reinforce the Greeks.
by which time he expelled the British from Cyrenaica and established an advance base in Egypt. The German invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia began on April 6. The Yugoslavs capitulated on the 17th and the Greek campaign was over by the 30th.

With the right flank thus secure, Barbarossa was launched on June 22, 1941. It could be argued that Raeder's constant warnings against invading Russia prior to the capitulation of Britain had gone unheeded by the Führer. But this is an over-simplification. Hitler had recognized that Britain could be seriously, perhaps fatally, wounded in the Mediterranean theater. He had attempted to fulfill the navy's strategic demands with Felix, but Franco had effectively evaded all of the Führer's threats and cajolings. A larger role for Germany in the Italian war was not feasible until severe setbacks compelled Mussolini to permit German participation. The failure to intervene decisively in the Mediterranean in 1940 is not attributable to Hitler's oft-asserted "land-mindedness" but rather to political factors.

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62 Yugoslavia had been induced to join the Axis on March 25, but two days later an anti-German military coup d'état seized the government. This forced Hitler to alter his plans to include Yugoslavia in Marita. This in turn crucially delayed Barbarossa for some four weeks.

63 Mussolini said in the autumn of 1940: "If the Germans ever get here they will never go home." Quoted in: De Belot, The Struggle for the Mediterranean, 95.
which evaded his control.

Moreover, the invasion of Soviet Russia (although perhaps with the benefit of hindsight the greatest military blunder of the war on the German side) was designed to accomplish what Raeder had been continually advocating - the elimination of Britain from the war. Raeder viewed the Russian question as secondary. He felt that once the Mediterranean had been secured and Britain defeated, Russia would appear in a different light. But Hitler felt that elimination of Russia first would accomplish Raeder's main objective.

Actually the whole problem was whether Russia or Britain was to be defeated first. Arguments for both sides of the question can readily be found, but it is clear that Hitler did not simply neglect the navy's strategy. Political considerations and events forced him to reject it.
CHAPTER VI

HITLER, THE NAVY, AND THE UNITED STATES

Grand Admiral Raeder and S.K.L. had, as has been seen, a considerable influence on Hitler's strategic policy. During the first years of war, the grand admiral's cautions or his recommendations, if politically feasible, were seldom ignored or rejected. Although Raeder's influence on strictly naval problems was paramount, where naval questions blended with political considerations Hitler reserved the right to overrule his chief naval adviser. Such was the case with relations with the United States.

When war began in 1939, the United States adopted the legal status of a neutral. This pose, although legally maintained, became over the course of the next two years a political farce. Within two months, as a first step in the gradual process, President Roosevelt managed to induce Congress to repeal that section of the Neutrality Act embargoing arms (November 4). Henceforth, belligerent nations could purchase arms and munitions from the United States on a "cash-and-carry"
basis. Although legally providing Germany with the same rights and privileges as Great Britain and France, the new regulations actually favored the Allies. With the British fleet patrolling the Atlantic and blockading Germany, it was inconceivable that Germany could effectively import any substantial amount of American supplies.

Hitler had no desire to antagonize the United States, although it was quite evident to him that the Americans would be unable to intervene militarily for quite some time. The Führer's policy toward the United States was rather derived from his wish to limit the conflict. Lacking substantial support from the United States, perhaps Britain would be more susceptible to peace proposals. Therefore, during the first years of the war, the Führer's policy was one of restraint, often to the point of humility.

Britain and France declared war on September 3, 1939, and on the same day the Athenia was torpedoed and sunk. In this disaster, 28 American citizens were lost. The foreign ministry acted immediately to allay American fears of any repetition of unrestricted submarine warfare. State Secretary von Weizsäcker assured the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires (Alexander

1 An excellent assessment of the policy and capabilities of the United States was sent to O.K.W. from the embassy in the United States on December 1, 1939. D.G.F.P., VIII, 470-71.

2 supra, 53-58.
Kirk) that the German navy was not responsible. The guilty
U-boat did not return to harbor until September 27, but
Hitler and Raeder realized what consequences could result
if a German U-boat had been responsible. Hence, on September
7, in view of the "... waiting attitude of France ... and
the fact that the United States, at least outwardly, claims
strictest neutrality ..." Hitler decided to place severe
restrictions on U-boat warfare. Offensive action against the
French was forbidden, all passenger ships were to be spared,
and a proportion of the U-boats at sea withdrawn from active
operations. The Führer's order sparing passenger vessels was
given "... in order not to provoke neutral countries, the
United States in particular ...".

Hitler had no desire to add enemies unnecessarily to
the lists currently opposing him. Every possible measure was
taken to conceal the German navy's faux pas in the Athenia
incident. The situation was apparently considered serious
enough to warrant high level diplomacy. Accordingly, on
September 16, Grand Admiral Raeder received the American Naval
Attaché "... on the advice of the Reich Foreign Minister" and
presumably on the instructions of Hitler. Emphasizing that

3 F.C.N.A., 1939, 3.
4 Ibid., 5.
5 T.N.H.C., XIV, 294. (N.D. D-804)
the sinking of the *Athenia* was not attributable to the German navy, Raeder sought to assure the American that German U-boats intended to conform strictly to international law. This was not simply Raeder's contention, but the Führer's order.

But Raeder chafed under the restrictions which Hitler imposed on the navy's operations. The war must be won quickly by fast, effective action in the grand admiral's opinion. And one of the best weapons to use in bringing Britain to terms was the U-boat. Accordingly, Raeder began a long-lasting endeavor to free the U-boats from their political shackles. The grand admiral only managed to completely liberate the U-boat arm from Hitler's annoying restrictions after December 7, 1941. But his attempts began almost immediately.

The problem of ascertaining nationality, which plagued the U-boats throughout the first years, was somewhat eased in November 1939. On November 4, President Roosevelt declared the waters surrounding the British Isles (and roughly corresponding to the British "blockade zone") a "combat zone". American vessels were henceforth prohibited from entering this area. After this declaration, with the danger of an inadvertent sinking of an American merchantman removed, Hitler was more willing to consider Raeder's arguments.
to intensify U-boat warfare. 6

By November 15, Raeder had succeeded in having removed the restrictions governing attack of passenger vessels. But, even though American vessels were theoretically excluded from the area of U-boat operations, Hitler was sufficiently concerned about the navy's interpretation of the new orders specifically to exclude the ships of certain powerful neutrals, including those of the United States, from attack. 7 For many months, Hitler adamantly maintained his policy of restraint vis-à-vis the United States.

On October 9, 1939, the German navy again placed the Führer in a compromising position. The pocket battleship Deutschland seized in prize the American merchantman City of Flint. The Germans contended that the City of Flint carried contraband and that therefore seizure was legal and justifiable. A prize crew sailed the ship first to Murmansk and later to the Norwegian port of Haugesund. This action portended trouble with the United States. Hitler was informed by the Charge d'Affaires in the United States (Hans Thomsen) that the incident was being used by congressional forces

6 Supra, Chapter II. S.K.L. also recognized the value of the American declaration. Captain Fricke expressed this opinion to the foreign ministry on November 15. See D.G.P.P., VIII, 413.

attempting to secure repeal of the arms embargo. 8

Hitler met with the commander-in-chief of the navy to discuss the affair and they concurred in the opinion that incidents of this nature should be avoided. In November 10, the two commanders are recorded as agreeing that "the CITY OF FLINT case has been mismanaged." 9 They concluded that since "... the United States desires to avoid entanglements..." the advisable course would be to "... allow the CITY OF FLINT to return to the United States unmolested...." 10 This course was adopted, and, after the internment of the prize crew and release of the ship by the Norwegians, no action was taken by Germany to reconfiscate her. 11

During these first years, the navy's conduct of merchant warfare was hampered by the American Neutrality Zone and Patrol proclaimed on September 5, 1939 by President

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8 D.C., F.F., VIII, 343. (October 26, 1939.) Thomsen therefore advocated handling the situation with caution and conciliation.

9 F.C.N.A. 1939, 36. The boarding officer and commander of the prize crew had erred by putting in at Murmansk. This act had permitted the United States to make protests to a third party - Russia.

10 Ibid.

11 Raeder had U-boats deployed to intercept the City of Flint if Hitler had so ordered. See: F.C.N.A. 1939, 36.
Roosevelt. The president's intention in creating the zone was to discourage combat operations by the belligerents in waters adjacent to the American continents. Initially, the zone extended from a point east of Halifax south to a point some 600 miles below the Cape Verde Islands. German U-boats and surface raiders were ordered by Hitler to avoid entering the restricted area, thereby precluding possible incidents with the Pan-American states. The Graf Spee violated the forbidden area during her action with the British, but this occurred as a result of the engagement and Hitler made no recriminations against the navy. The British, for their part, never admitted any limitation on the right of pursuit and engagement. 12

Throughout the first half of 1940, Hitler was deeply engaged in the preparations for and implementations of Fall Gelb and Weserübung. He had little time to consider operations against the United States, and less wish to become so involved. Although Raeder and the navy were also engaged in the planning of Weserübung, they apparently were willing to take the chance of provoking the United States into the conflict. On February 23, Raeder beseeched to Hitler the fact that submarine warfare was not as effective as it could be made. Among other proposals for intensification,

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12 Hoskell, The Defensive, 112.
the grand admiral suggested that two U-boats with mines and torpedoes be sent to operate off Halifax. This was not the first time such an operation had occurred to Raeder and he had asked the Führer for permission before. But on this date, Raeder "... recommended operations within territorial waters with mines, and outside the safety zone with torpedoes." Although Halifax, as a Canadian and thus a combatant port, was fair game for U-boats, Raeder's disregard of its proximity to the United States was surely narrow-minded. American sensibilities should have been considered by the grand admiral in recommending such action. Operations on virtually the doorstep of the United States would be bound to cause apprehension throughout the country.

Moreover, the interventionists could use the publicity by harping on the ostensible similarities with German U-boat action during World War I. Hitler recognized the dangers and categorically forbade any such operations "... in view of the psychological effect on the U.S.A." Hitler decided that the navy needed express and unambiguous orders to respect American neutrality. He had previously forbidden entry of German warships into the

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13 Jodl's Diary, N.C.A., IV, 384. (F.1-1309) (February 16, 1940.)
14 P.C.N.A. 1940, I, 13. (Emphasis in original.)
15 Ibid.
Neutrality Zone, and shortly after the February 23 conference with Raeder the Führer ordered that "... U.S. ships are not to be stopped, seized, or sunk." Throughout 1940, Hitler's policy towards the United States remained consistent, and the navy was forced to operate under stringent limitations. It protested more than once that such limitations hampered effective conduct of U-boat warfare and requested their removal, but Hitler remained intractable.

After the conquest of Scandinavia and as the French campaign drew to a close, it became increasingly evident to Hitler that the United States was not prepared to sit idly by while Britain was crushed. On June 10, Roosevelt made his famous "stab-in-the-back" speech expressing contempt for the Italian entry into the war. But more importantly, he promised to "... extend to the opponents of force the material resources ..." of the United States. The United States was in the process of rearmament and it must have been evident to Hitler that a launching of Seelöwe could conceivably enlarge the war.

Hitler, loathe to attempt the cross-Channel invasion, convinced himself that the British held out stubbornly in

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16 T.M.W.C., XIII, 420. (N.D. Dönitz-86)

expectation of United States and Russian participation in the war. Therefore, to Hitler, an indirect means of defeating Britain was seized upon. This was to remove her two potential allies after which presumably Britain would be prone to consider peace. If Russia could be eliminated, one prospective ally would thus be denied Britain. This in turn would consequently strengthen Japan by freeing her rear. Then, Japanese action or threat of action could be expected to tie down the United States in the Pacific. This strategy became the Führer's resurgent theme.\(^\text{18}\)

In the autumn of 1940, the "destroyers-for-bases" agreement further convinced Hitler that America was considering intervening on the part of Britain.\(^\text{19}\) He met with Raeder on September 6 at which time the American action had strengthened the grand admiral's hand. Raeder brought up his favorite strategy - that of slow strangulation of Britain in the Mediterranean - and requested that "preparations for this operation [Felipe - the operation against Gibraltar and the Atlantic Islands] . . . begin at once . . . before the U.S.A. steps in."\(^\text{20}\) Hitler was now convinced as to the threat and

\(^{18}\)This rationalisation was first expressed by the Führer at the conference on Seelöwe on July 31, 1940. \textit{Supra}, 112.

\(^{19}\)On September 3, the United States transferred fifty destroyers to Britain in return receiving 99-year leases on strategic naval and air bases in Newfoundland, Bermuda, and Jamaica and other West Indian Islands.

\(^{20}\)F.C.H.A. 1940, II, 19. See also \textit{Supra}, 130.
issued orders to prepare for *Felix*.

Haeder then turned to examine the implications of the destroyer deal and concluded that this "hostile act" could conceivably be interpreted as "selfishness" on the part of the United States (e.g., the extension of her control of the South American countries by means of the strategic locations provided by the recently-acquired bases). It would be better to be "safe than sorry", the admiral concluded. If the United States did enter on the side of Britain, a danger existed that she would occupy the Azores and Canaries. Hitler concurred and ordered that measures be begun to forestall the threat.

Although Hitler was willing to institute precautionary measures against American entry, he was not yet prepared to annoy the United States. On October 29, 1940, the pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* left Gdynia for merchant raiding operations in the Atlantic. The foreign ministry was worried that the *Scheer* might cause an international incident by violating the "American Security Zone". This had been proclaimed by

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21 As Haeder called it and which it was. Roosevelt violated international law regarding neutrality and Germany had every right to declare war. Churchill commented: "... it [the destroyers-for-bases deal] was the first of a long succession of increasingly unneutral acts in the Atlantic which were of the utmost service to us." Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, II, Their Finest Hour* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 404.

22 D.C.F.P., XI, 505.
the twenty-one American governments at the Panama conference on October 2, 1939, and the United States had been the prime mover behind the declaration. The Graf Spee affair had brought a note of protest from the President of Panama representing the Pan-American states. Hitler was determined that such an incident not happen again and gave the Scheer "... strict orders not to extend its operations into the American security zone."23

The Foreign Ministry informed Vice Admiral Fricke of S.K.L, of the Führer's order. Fricke said that he personally recognized the implications involved in the Scheer's sortie, but that Grand Admiral Raeder would probably protest to Hitler concerning the naval difficulties arising from the limitation. Fricke explained that "the capability of the Admiral Scheer for operations would be seriously curtailed."24 If Raeder protested to Hitler, which he probably did, no record exists, but on November 11 the order still stood. Moreover, the same day the Foreign Ministry further recorded that "the word 'strict' is to be emphasized ..."25 During the Scheer's 161 day cruise, in which she sank 111,000 tons of shipping and dislocated the Atlantic convoy system, the order was completely adhered to.

23Ibid.
24Ibid., 506.
25Ibid., 514.
she did not enter the security zone.  

Hitler's desire to avoid war with the United States was not rooted in any affinity for the Americans or their institutions. It was simply based on the logical desire not to add additional numbers needlessly to his enemies. He had great respect for the economic potential of the United States although Hitler often underestimated the speed with which the Americans could change to war production. Hitler had long viewed the United States as a threat to Europe and was puzzled that Britain did not seem to share this view. As early as January 1930, Hitler had declared:

All Europe is moving toward a hard fate if American expansionist activity is not stopped somewhere and some time. But the British Empire will be struck hardest of all by this development.  

Hitler's basic foreign policy goal which eluded him because of his own ineptitude and character was to achieve an alliance with Great Britain. He believed that German expansion should be to the east, on the continent, and in alliance with Britain. Such a scheme would benefit both countries in Hitler's opinion: Germany would dominate Europe and shield Britain's rear while the latter pursued an overseas

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colonial and naval policy. This would allow the British to deal with the rising threat of the United States. Although Hitler's assessment and goals were wildly utopian, they were at least consistent. He reiterated his wish for a British-German entente throughout the pre-war years and even after two years of war with Great Britain. At one of his nightly "table-talks" (August 10, 1941), the Führer fondly visioned the day when the two "Nordic" powers would march arm-in-arm:

"I shall no longer be there to see it," Hitler said, "but I rejoice on behalf of the German people at the idea that one day we will see England and Germany marching together against America." 29

Hitler's opinion that America would be the only profitor from the destruction of the British Empire was one of the reasons which prompted him to abandon Seelöwe. Crushing Britain and seizing the homeland would have left the Empire at the mercy of a United States only awaiting the day, as Hitler said, "... when she will reap her inheritance." 30 It would only be a matter of time, in the Führer's opinion, before "... England will be obliged to make approaches to the continent." 31 Together, the "Nordic" nations, after Britain

28 Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, 139-40.
29 Hitler's Secret Conversations, 54.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 196. (January 7, 1942.) Notice that this opinion was expressed after American entry into the war.
had come to understand that her real enemies were the "half-Judaized, half-negrified" Americans, would turn against the United States: "And it will be a German-British army that will chase the Americans from Iceland." 32 Although none of these illusions came to pass, Hitler tenaciously clung to his dreams. Meanwhile, until and unless Britain switched sides he would not be tempted into provoking war with the United States.

Warning of possible American intervention was a recurrent theme of Grand Admiral Raeder. These warnings served a useful purpose from Raeder's point of view. He desired to see Britain crushed and cautioning Hitler about American support to Britain would imply that the latter must be acted against immediately. Raeder seized upon every argument to dissuade Hitler from invading Russia first and hence his emphasis on American aid to Britain. Raeder argued that, with the increasing amount of assistance provided by the United States, the task of defeating Britain was becoming ever more difficult. Moreover, throughout Raeder's project to interest the Führer in the Atlantic islands, he had emphasized the danger that the United States might do so first. Such an action by the United States would not only deny Germany the valuable strategic positions afforded by the islands, but the

32 Ibid. Hitler was referring to the occupation of Iceland by the United States on July 7, 1941. See infra, 172.
Americans would henceforth be ideally situated to meddle in the U-boat war. And, if the United States should enter the conflict, her strategic naval position would be greatly improved throughout the Central Atlantic.33

Then, on December 27, 1940, Raeder turned to a new theme. The grand admiral declared that British shipping requirements were being replenished by the United States. Further, "supply shipments from the U.S.A. are developing favorably for Britain." He also warned Hitler that some of Britain's naval duties might be taken over by the Americans, and possibly additional destroyers ceded. Raeder therefore demanded a greatly increased U-boat construction program to meet this new threat, and received Hitler's nominal agreement.

Increased American aid was an ominous portent in December of 1940. At a press conference on December 17, the recently re-elected president revealed the thinking that led to Lend-Lease.35 (Only two days later Raeder warned Hitler that the United States might come to the aid of the British.)

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34F.C.N.A., 1940, II, 70.

35Roosevelt, Selected Speeches, 268-71.
Roosevelt, in the Fireside Chat of December 29, proposed that the United States should make itself the "great arsenal of democracy". Hitler recognized the danger posed by increased American aid to Britain, but he was not dissuaded from continuing with Barbarossa. Instead of Germany becoming involved with the United States, the Führer saw on the horizon an effective means for the neutralization of America. If Japan, a newly-won ally to the Axis, could be freed from the Russian threat to her rear, and encouraged to enter the war against Britain and to expand in the Pacific, the United States presumably would become pre-occupied with the Pacific. A Japanese-American confrontation thus could be the key to eliminating the danger of the United States coming to the assistance of the British in Europe. The Führer again propounded this thesis to his military advisers on January 8, 1941. Raeder was especially impressed with the idea that Japan "... should be given a free hand ..." regarding her "... interests in Singapore ..." The grand admiral, fully understanding the Führer's weakness for such schemes, would return to this project again and again. Hitler's thesis that the threat of Japan would check the flow of American aid to Britain did not materialize. But

36Germany, Italy, and Japan concluded the Three-Power Pact on September 27, 1940 pledging total aid of all to all members for a period of ten years.

37N.C.N.A. 1941, I, 4.
Radder's thesis that the United States was actively encouraging the British to continue the war was supported by the German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington. The Chargé also warned that Roosevelt's policy was to "... provoke Germany and Italy to threats and outbreaks of anger..." which the president could then use to arouse American public opinion to a "war hysteria". This report substantiated Hitler's fears and should have strengthened Radder's hand in his arguing for action, but the Führer remained cautious and still would not allow the United States to become the recipient of U-boat attacks. Instead, the Führer turned to his idea of using Japan to divert American attention from European affairs. Barbarossa would soon begin and Hitler was not about to be diverted.

On March 5, 1941, the Führer issued "Basic Order No. 24 Regarding Collaboration with Japan". The directive began:

It must be the aim of the collaboration based on the Three Power Pact to induce Japan as soon as possible to take active measures in the Far East. Strong British forces will thereby be tied down, and the center of gravity of the interests of the United States of America will be diverted to the Pacific.

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38 E.G.F.P., XI, 989. (Telegram, January 1, 1941.)

39 Ibid., 990.

40 N.C.A., VI, 906-908. (N.D. C-75)

41 Ibid., 906. (Emphasis in original.)
In this directive, Hitler argued his thesis that Barbarossa would free Japan to enter the war. He dwelt at length on the significance of such an event for maritime warfare and ordered Raeder to take over the task of harmonizing the operational plans of Germany and Japan.

Raeder reported to Hitler on March 18, and expressed his views on Japanese collaboration.\(^42\) First, the grand admiral desired that Japan should seize Singapore as soon as possible. He argued that at present Britain was effectively contained by Germany and Italy, and that the United States fleet was not yet strong enough to intervene. But, Raeder explained, the Japanese probably would not march in Southeast Asia unless Germany invaded the British Isles. Since the latter event was extremely unlikely, he asked the Führer \(\ldots\) to concentrate all efforts on spurring Japan to act immediately.\(^43\) If Japan could be so induced, the entire strategic picture would be altered favorably.

The grand admiral then turned to the war at sea. Lend-Lease had become law exactly one week earlier, and American warships were escorting convoys as far as Iceland. Raeder therefore asked for relaxation of the policy governing attack of United States merchantmen. Hitler put him off,

\(^{42}\)Ibid., 966-67. (N.D. C-152)

\(^{43}\)Ibid., 966.
presumably still hoping that Japanese action might be able to stem the flow of American supplies.

Raeder returned to his argument on April 20, this time armed with a memorandum explicitly setting out the navy's objections to continued observance of the Pan-American Safety Zone. The grand admiral enumerated the strategic disadvantages imposed by the zone on the conduct of merchant warfare, and then complained that:

The operational freedom of our own naval forces is considerably restricted, as, in some parts, the zone covers half the Atlantic. All contraband traffic from South, Central, and North America moves as far as possible within the zone. The enemy can therefore concentrate his escort forces in the area where merchant shipping is forced to leave the zone, thereby making possible a considerable increase in escort forces and making attacks difficult not only for submarines and auxiliary cruisers, but also for cruisers and battleships.

Raeder also emphasized that the British had never respected the zone, not realizing that this line of argument was meaningless. The British were not really meant to be restricted in their pursuit of German warships and blockade runners. Raeder also said that a German auxiliary cruiser had violated the zone, sunk five steamers, and fought two actions, and "there were no repercussions of any sort." He was thus

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44 F.C.N.A. 1941, I, 55.
45 Ibid. (Emphasis in original.)
46 Ibid.
suggesting that it could be possible to ignore the zone and hope that the United States would not make capital out of such an indiscretion. This seems, with the benefit of hind-sight, a rather forlorn hope. Raeder was particularly anxious for Hitler to remove the restrictions at this time because the planned sortie of the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* would be unfavorably hampered by observance of the zone. Therefore, the commander-in-chief of the navy "... again suggested that offensive operations be permitted within the zone."47

Hitler was relatively unimpressed with Raeder's arguments. He still wished to maintain a cautious stance in dealing with the United States. The Führer therefore ordered that "in view of America's present undecided attitude"48 the zone would continue to be respected off the American coast. Hitler relented somewhat on operations further south and directed that it was only necessary there to observe a 300 mile limit - a quite respectable limitation. Ribbentrop, who was present during this policy discussion, requested that if any incidents should result from the projected sortie of the two capital ships, all public announcements be made out with him. It would be necessary to make the United States appear as the aggressor in order to invoke the *casus foederis*

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47 Ibid. (Emphasis in original.)
48 Ibid., 52.
of the Tripartite Pact with Japan. 49

Although Raeder had failed to get any substantial freedom of action for the navy, Hitler gave him some good news regarding Japan. A week earlier on April 13, Japan and Russia had concluded a neutrality agreement which presumably freed Japan to take a more active role in the Pacific. Now, Hitler said, no longer would Japan be tempted to attack Vladivostok; she would probably be tempted to attack Singapore instead. 50 Hitler next mentioned that the Japanese had informed him that their preparations would be completed by May. But Raeder was dubious and still thought the Japanese might need some prodding. He therefore informed the Führer that he "... intended to continue to try to influence..." them to enter the war.

During the remainder of the spring of 1941, Raeder continued to plead with Hitler to allow the navy some leeway in the Battle of the Atlantic. 51 Hitler refused to consider action against United States merchantmen, still hoping to avoid incidents damaging to German policy. But there were

49 Ibid., 53.

50 Ibid.

51 For examples, see Führer conferences of May 22 and June 21, 1941 in F.C.N.A. 1941, I. "The Battle of the Atlantic" is a euphemism used to refer to the war against merchant shipping which actually took place in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and later the Arctic Ocean.
numerous incidents all the same, although none could be held solely against Germany. As early as April 10, 1941, the U.S. destroyer Siblack depth charged a German U-boat.52 American warships ranged far out into the Atlantic and, upon discovering German U-boats or surface raiders, immediately informed the British of their location thus allowing the latter to take appropriate action.

After the invasion of Russia on June 22, Hitler was especially careful to avoid provoking the United States, although Roosevelt did not reciprocate. An especially provocative act on the part of the United States was the taking over from the British of the occupation of Iceland on July 7, 1941. The United States had previously undertaken the defence of Greenland on April 9, 1941, and had taken action against German weather parties on the island. Two days after the American move into Iceland, Raeder met Hitler at the Wolfsschanze (Wolf's Lair, Hitler's headquarters in East Prussia). Raeder had earlier made plans for occupying Iceland (Fall Ikarus) after the conquest of Denmark, but the plan had had to be abandoned because of the losses suffered by the navy during the Scandinavian campaign.53 The British had accomplished what Raeder had been unable to, and now the

52 Morison, The Battle of the Atlantic, 57.
53 F.C.N.A. 1940, I, 55. (June 20, 1940.)
Americans were in possession of this strategically placed island. Raeder demanded a decision from Hitler as to whether "from the political viewpoint" the American action could be considered as intervention into the war. Or should it be considered as "... an act of provocation which should be ignored?" 54

Hitler calmed his grand admiral and "explained in detail" that he was "most anxious" to avoid war with the United States for another few months. The eastern campaign required the complete attention of the Luftwaffe, and he could not and would not divert it from the main task. Anyway, he assured Raeder, after Russia's capitulation the attitude of the United States would surely change. She would not be so likely to provoke a victorious Germany. "Therefore, for the time being, [the Führer] does not want existing instructions changed, but rather wants to be sure that incidents will be avoided." 55

Hitler then gave orders that even in the combat zone around Britain, American merchant ships were to be spared as much as possible. Raeder retorted that "no guarantee can be given", and "a commander cannot be held responsible for a mistake." 56 Hitler, his point won, agreed that he would not

54 F.C.N.A. 1941, II, 3.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
hold U-boat commanders accountable for honest errors. But he tightened the restrictions by ordering that no warships be attacked, even in the United States' designated combat zone which was prohibitive to American ships, unless they were "definitely established" as enemy vessels.

Hitler, to insure that the navy was quite clear as to his intentions, issued an order on July 13 regarding restrictions on attack of American vessels. In the operational and combat zone around the British Isles, American merchantmen could be attacked, but Hitler specifically excluded the sea-route U.S.A.-Iceland. Presumably this route was put out-of-bounds because American troops were being transported to and from occupation duty. Further, in the operational areas of the North Atlantic all American warships and merchantmen were declared verboten.

Raeder again met with Hitler a week later on July 25 and took the Führer to task for forgetting the prime significance of merchant warfare. Apparently, the regulations were hampering intolerably the conduct of the U-boat war and were thus becoming too restrictive to the grand admiral. Hitler assured Raeder that:

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there is no reason for the concern of the Commander in Chief, Navy that he [Hitler] has changed his view as to the great importance of the blockade against Britain by submarines and the Air Force.

He [Hitler] would however like to avoid having the U.S.A. declare war while the Eastern Campaign is still in progress, also out of consideration to the Army which is involved in heavy combat. 58

In order to pacify Raeder, Hitler promised that he would "... never call a submarine commander to account if he torpedoes an American ship by mistake." Later in the conference, the Führer returned to his dream of a détente with Britain. According to Hitler, Britain was gradually recognizing that she could not win and would therefore be inclined to make peace. Moreover, he said, the American occupation of Iceland was already causing the British to have misgivings. 59 Surely this observation could not have been further from reality, and Raeder must have wondered for his Führer's sanity. Nevertheless, Grand Admiral Raeder made no comment and accepted Hitler's orders for the time being.

A torpedoing as a result of mistaken identification was bound to happen with American warships belligerently cruising the Atlantic. On September 4, 1941, the U.S. destroyer

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59 Ibid., 15.
Greer, directed by a British aircraft, pursued the U-662 and attacked with depth charges. Following this, the U-boat fired two torpedoes which the Greer successfully evaded.60 A week later Roosevelt made a radio broadcast in which he announced the "shoot-on-sight" policy.61 Other "accidents" had happened which Roosevelt could use to justify the policy of the undeclared naval war; the U.S. merchantman Robin Moor was sunk on May 21, and two other ships had been sunk near the end of the summer. But on September 1, even before the Greer affair, the United States had begun to escort convoys from Newfoundland to Iceland where the charges were handed over to a British escort.

Raeder was extremely concerned at the new developments, and, taking Dönitz with him, went to see Hitler on September 17. The admirals discussed Roosevelt's speech at length with Hitler and presented a series of suggestions for action to be implemented against the United States. Hitler would not be swayed, however, and ordered that the navy would just have to make do with the

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60 Dönitz, Memoirs, 191. Admiral Dönitz has written a justifiably bitter Chapter on the "Undeclared War". He quotes the account of the American Naval Commission which investigated the Greer incident, and it is now generally known that U.S. warships served as guides to British ships and aircraft even prior to this incident.

61 Roosevelt, Selected Speeches, 282-89. Roosevelt declared: "In spite of what Hitler's propaganda bureau has invented . . . I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired first upon this American destroyer without warning . . . ."

"intolerable" situation for the present. Hitler argued that a decision would be reached in Russia by the end of September and requested that the navy "... take care ... to avoid any incidents in the war on merchant shipping before about the middle of October."62

According to Dönitz, "further incidents were inevitable",63 and some soon took place. On October 17, U.S.S. Kearny, a destroyer, was torpedoed during a U-boat attack on the convoy she was escorting.64 At the end of October, another U.S. destroyer, the Reuben James, was torpedoed and sunk while escorting a convoy near Iceland. Early in November, the cruiser U.S.S. Omaha intercepted and seized in prize the German blockade runner Odenwald which was transporting a strategic cargo of rubber. The American warship seized the vessel illegally and the captain was obliged to report that he had taken in prize the Odenwald because "... she was suspected of being involved in the slave-trade."65

Hitler's opportunity to reply to the humiliating incidents he had so patiently endured for over two years came

63 Dönitz, Memoirs, 193.
64 Dönitz erroneously records the date as October 10. Ibid.
65 Kuegge, Sea Warfare, 182.
soon afterward. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, and on the 11th, Hitler declared war on the United States. The Führer probably calculated that his declaration of war would not have as great a consequence as it ultimately came to have. Presumably, he was counting on the Japanese monopolizing American energies in the Pacific. Certainly he had often maintained this viewpoint.

Hitler met with Raeder on December 12 to consider the new situation. The grand admiral was evidently relieved. Now his U-boats and surface raiders could set about winning the war without being shackled by the political restrictions. For the first time since the war began, almost two and one-half years earlier, the navy had complete freedom of action in the Battle of the Atlantic. Raeder told the Führer that Japan's entrance into the war would considerably ease the situation in the Atlantic. Already, he said, reports had been received that the United States was transferring battleships to the west coast for service in the Pacific. Moreover, the Americans would have a dire need for transports in the new theater, and thus would increase the strain on the "life-line" of ships across the Atlantic. Britain now would be ever-more dependent on her own merchant marine. 67

66 Thereby presumably relieving Roosevelt of a dilemma.
Hitler then inquired: "Is there any possibilities that the U.S.A. and Britain will abandon East Asia for a time in order to crush Germany and Italy first?"\(^6^8\) Raeder replied that it was improbable that the Allies would give up Asia even temporarily since for Britain India was at stake, and the U.S. fleet would have to remain in the Pacific as long as the Japanese navy remained a threat.\(^6^9\) Both Hitler and Raeder were deluding themselves as to the future. Although Raeder was pleased at the new turn the war had taken, Hitler still had his hesitations. This difference stems from their entirely different mentalities. Raeder viewed events with a generally narrow viewpoint, only considering the naval factors, whereas Hitler had a broader compass. A characteristic of the Führer, even later when discussing strategy on the eastern front, was his tendency to introduce and weigh political factors in all decisions. Hitler never lost his preoccupation with politics. In the case of the United States, the Führer's reasoning was logical. He had no wish to unnecessarily add enemies, but in the case of the United States he had also gained an ally in Japan which, he felt, should be more than able to offset the might of the as-yet unprepared United States. Even

\(^6^8\)Ibid. Hitler (and Raeder) under-estimated the potential of the United States and, although the "Germany-first" strategy was adopted by the Allies, East Asia was not abandoned.

\(^6^9\)Ibid., 90.
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so, Hitler remained cautious in his estimate of the new war in which he had now placed Germany.

Throughout the long twilight period of American neutrality, Hitler had displayed extraordinary restraint. What must have been mortifying incidents to the Führer's pride had occurred, yet he had necessarily accepted them. The navy's continual pleading for more freedom in the conduct of the war if accepted might have brought the United States into the conflict much earlier. Hitler's ability to resist the grand admiral's requests was aided by the fact that the more serious provocations only occurred after the start of Barbarossa. The campaign on the Russian front inevitably overshadowed other problems with Hitler. But until he was victorious in the east, he would brook no interference with the United States.

Many considerations induced Hitler to declare war on the United States, including the fact that it was likely and apparent that the Americans would have come in regardless. But Hitler also believed, and Baeder supported this tenet, that Japan effectively added to German strength and counter-balanced, as it were, the weight the United States could throw into the scale. Hitler later said:

... it is obvious that the Japanese alliance has been of exceptional value to us, if only because of the date chosen by Japan for her entry into the war. It was in effect, at the
moment when the surprises of the Russian winter were pressing most heavily on the morale of our people, and when everybody in Germany was oppressed by the certainty that, sooner or later, the United States would come into the conflict.70

Whether everybody in Germany was certain that the United States would intervene or not, Grand Admiral Raeder was. This certainty and the constant reiteration of Raeder's belief that the war should not be decided on the steppes of Russia, but on the rolling swells of the Atlantic, had not been able to induce the Führer to act against the United States. Raeder's naval mentality vividly illuminated the problem of the war at sea. He unreservedly was convinced that the core of the problem of defeating Britain consisted of cutting her naval supply lines. But, throughout the first two years of war and even after American aid was obviously flowing into the British Isles in ever-increasing value, he was not able to persuade the Führer to allow unrestricted submarine warfare.

Although Hitler rejected Raeder's U-boat policy, the grand admiral's ideas on Japan (Raeder was among the foremost advocates of Japanese-German cooperation) were correlative with Hitler's. And when the moment came that Japan was irrevocably committed to the war, Hitler seized the opportunity to give not only himself satisfaction for

70Hitler's Secret Conversations, 460. (May 17, 1942.)
the humiliations of the past two years but his navy relief from his constricting regulations. Grand Admiral Raeder and the German navy had thus played a major role in creating a truly world-wide war.
CHAPTER VII

THE GERMAN NAVY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

Next to the Battle of the Atlantic, the German navy considered the Mediterranean the most important theater of war. As has been seen, Grand Admiral Raeder's efforts to whet Hitler's interest in the Mediterranean in the fall of 1940 and spring of 1941 had resulted only in secondary measures designed to bolster the Italians. Hitler had subscribed to some of the grand admiral's proposals, but was predominantly concerned with the approaching eastern campaign. But even after the start of Barbarossa when the Führer's attention was dominantly focused towards the east, the Mediterranean was by no means neglected.

In the spring of 1941 and prior to the invasion of Russia, Hitler asked Raeder to look into the advisability of dispatching U-boats to the Mediterranean. In reporting his conclusions to Hitler on April 20 and while admitting that the U-boats would find many targets and have great strategic effect, Raeder recommended that they not be dispatched.\(^1\) he argued

\(^1\)E.S.R.A. 1941, I, 51-2.

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any such successes to be achieved in the Mediterranean would not equal the disadvantages ensuing from the withdrawal of the U-boats from the Battle of the Atlantic. It was ironic that Raeder, the long-time advocate of German intervention in the Mediterranean, now had to oppose the Führer's suggestion.

During the summer of 1941, as Raeder told Hitler on July 25, the transport of supplies was the main problem in the Mediterranean.² What irony again that Hitler suggested anew the sending of U-boats to attack the British men-of-war, and that Raeder again replied that this was not possible. It would handicap operations in the Atlantic, he said, and:

Moreover, British submarines and aircraft are the forces used in the Mediterranean to attack transports, and these cannot be combatted with submarines.

Hitler accepted the grand admiral's arguments, at least temporarily. But shipping losses in the Mediterranean continued to rise until monthly losses totalled 70 per cent of the Italian tonnage servicing the North African land forces.⁴ Hitler therefore at his next meeting with Raeder overruled the grand admiral's objections and ordered the dispatch of a first contingent of six U-boats to the Mediterranean.

² F.O. 273/7, 1941, II, 14.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Dönitz, Memoirs, 158.
The U-boats began to arrive in the Mediterranean early in the fall of 1941, and their experienced crews had initial success. On November 14, the British aircraft carrier Ark Royal was torpedoed by a U-boat and sunk. Another U-boat sank the battleship Barham on the 25th, and before the end of the year, the heavy cruiser Galatea was also lost. These British losses to U-boats were serious enough, but when coupled with other naval disasters to capital ships during this crucial autumn, the British naval position in the eastern Mediterranean was in acute danger. Italian "human torpedoes" fastened time bombs under the battleships Queen Elizabeth and Valiant in Alexandria harbor and put the vessels out of action for many months. This brave exploit took place in December, the same month the British lost to mines a further cruiser and had damaged two others. But it was the German navy's U-boats which posed the greatest threat to the Allies. Initially though, only a small force was to be transferred to the Mediterranean. The navy's plan called for the dispatch of nine U-boats to the eastern Mediterranean and twelve to the western. By November 10, ten boats were either en route or operational. 6

5. The Italian navy's historian ruefully commented that these two sinkings and the later sinking of the aircraft carrier Eagle (August 11, 1942) "... gave the U-boats the three major Italo-German underwater victories of the war in the Mediterranean. Bragadin, The Italian Navy, 117.

But these operations which Hitler ordered to support his Italian ally did not really get at the heart of the problem: the British air and sea base on Malta. This strategically placed island located athwart the Axis supply route to North Africa allowed the British to wreak havoc with Axis convoys. This situation caused severe depleting of the strength of Rommel's forces. The following table illustrates the nature of the crucial situation in the autumn of 1941:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1941</th>
<th>Tonnage convoyed</th>
<th>Tonnage sunk</th>
<th>Tonnage damaged</th>
<th>Tonnage delivered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>18,800</td>
<td>12,800</td>
<td>15,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>8,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>123,000</td>
<td>57,800</td>
<td>20,400</td>
<td>44,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interdiction of the Afrika Korps' vital supplies aggravated Rommel's position in the western desert. The British had begun a new offensive (Auchinleck's Offensive) on November 18. Fierce battles ensued. Hitler considered the situation serious enough to warrant a new directive (No. 30) issued on December 2 and in which he decided that the time had come for Germany to make the Mediterranean a German sphere

7Marttiessen, Hitler and His Admirals, 125.
of operations. Since the Italians apparently could not be counted on to control their "Mare Nostrum", Hitler ordered the transfer to the Mediterranean from the eastern front of one air corps. The strategic task now set forth was to secure mastery of the air in the region between southern Italy and North Africa. Malta was to be kept in subjection.\(^d\)

In order to emphasize the importance with which Germany now viewed the Mediterranean, the Führer created a new command and appointed Field Marshal Kesselring as Commander-in-Chief, South. The directive, however, specifically exempted the German naval forces in the Mediterranean from Kesselring's jurisdiction.

The end of the year brought a new enemy in the United States and confusion to the navy's role in the Mediterranean. In the Führer's mind appeared a more crucial area of operations, Norway.\(^9\) He accordingly ordered the navy to dispatch all available surface forces to the defense of Norway. The battle cruisers in Brest escaped through the English Channel, the result of a plan originating with Hitler and opposed by Raeder. Hitler was pleased that his brain-child was successful and this left him in a benevolent mood toward the navy. Raeder decided to take advantage of it.

On February 13, the day after the Channel Dash, Raeder

\(^3\)Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's War Directives*, 105-106.

\(^9\)Infra, 228.
conferred with Hitler. The grand admiral had decided that
the time was again ripe to put forward his favorite strategy,
the elimination of British power in the Mediterranean and the
consequent increase in German overseas involvement. The grand
admiral argued that the entrance of Japan into the war created
optimum conditions for striking at the British in the
Mediterranean. In his opinion, the Japanese would soon be
established in Ceylon, and their strong naval forces would
thus be able to attack the British in the Suez area from the
rear. An attack thus must be prepared "... as quickly as
possible on Egypt and the Suez Canal." Impressed by the
grand admiral's arguments, Hitler consented to Raeder's looking
into the feasibility of the operation.

A month later Raeder reported to Hitler (March 12,
1942) the naval war staff's analysis of the projected offensive
and its recommendations. J.K.L. urged that the operation, for
strategic reasons, be carried out within the year. Since the
shortage of shipping space (which would hamper any drive to
Suez) could be solved, no time must be lost in beginning the
campaign;

\[\text{The favorable situation in the Mediterranean, so pronounced at the present time, will probably never occur again.}^{12}\]

\[\text{J.K.L. also emphasized the vital importance of neutralizin}\]

\[\text{10 P.C.N.A. 1942, 6-15.}\]

\[\text{11 Ibid., 8.}\]

\[\text{12 Ibid., 18.}\]
Malta. It advocated invasion and occupation, or if this were not feasible, continuous air attack. Hitler needed no convincing as to the strategic value of Malta, but he informed Raeder that the Duce planned to take Malta, "evidently in July." But knowing Mussolini, Hitler was "... afraid that the operation ... will again be postponed." The Führer promised Raeder that he would discuss the question at the next meeting with the Italian dictator. Despite the uncertainties, it is clear that Raeder had sown the seeds that grew into the great German offensive to the Nile (Aida) and the projected airborne invasion of Malta (Herkules).

Mussolini arrived in Germany on April 28 to confer with the Führer. Hitler brought up the subject the next day at Klessheim where the talks were being held. The two dictators reached agreement on Mediterranean strategy. Rommel would launch his drive to Suez near the end of May, and Herkules would be carried out in July. The use of a German parachute division, previously earmarked to participate in the invasion, was confirmed.

It should be noted here that Hitler had been, and was at this time lukewarm toward an airborne assault on Malta. It was not as has often been asserted, because it "... required the final assault to be made from the sea," but because the

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13 Ibid.
14 Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, 508-11.
15 Martiussen, Hitler and His Admirals, 128.
invasion of Crete the previous May had demonstrated to the Führer the tenuous nature of parachute operations against islands where control of the sea had not been achieved. Moreover, the invasion of Malta would be in conjunction with Italian forces, and Hitler did not like to depend on anyone for military support, especially the Italians. His opinion of the quality of the Italian fighting man had never been high, and he had less respect for the Italian military and naval commanders.

Although the navy did not share the Führer's hesitancy about the need for Herkules, it certainly subscribed to his assessment of the Italians. When, on June 15, Raeder submitted a memorandum concerning Malta to Hitler, 16 the former not only explicitly underlined the island's strategic nature and the difficulties of an airborne assault, but he had this to say about the navy's Italian allies:

The naval staff shares the Führer's doubts and misgivings particularly in regard to the Italians' ability to carry out the operation.

. . . the success of the difficult operation will be assured only if German leadership has the decisive word in its execution and if strong German forces are deployed. 17

But even if Italian aid had to be foregone, Führer was convinced that the occupation of Malta was an "... absolute necessity and therefore mandatory for us if we

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16 ibid., 1942, 95-6.

17 Ibid., 95.
want to continue shipping supplies to Africa, . . . and later hope to launch an attack against Suez.**18

But Hitler was not so certain as the navy that the ultimate objective - Suez - could not be reached another way. Rommel had begun his offensive on May 26, and the battle in North Africa was going well. Moreover, Hitler was looking for excuses to avoid another costly air assault. As with Seelowe, he feared disaster and worried that excessive prestige would be lost if the operation were unsuccessful.

Upon Raeder’s presenting of the above views to Hitler, the Führer assured his grand admiral that he recognized the importance of Malta’s capture. But Hitler argued that for the present it was not feasible in view of an eastern offensive then in progress, and anyway “. . . especially not with Italian troops.”19 He asked Raeder to be patient until Rommel seized Tobruk. This, Hitler asserted, would allow supplies to by-pass Malta by way of Crete. Anyway, he rationalized, the continual flow of enemy convoys to Malta “. . . gives us an opportunity to inflict much damage on the enemy.”20

The best course for the moment was to continue the air attacks. It is evident that Hitler was using all possible arguments to put Raeder off, and presently an ideal rationalization

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1**Ibid., 96.
2Ibid., 97.
20Ibid.,
for the abandonment of *Hermules* presented itself.

It is true that the navy was generally blind to the immense problems of the eastern front. It had a strategy to sell and constantly sought to turn Hitler to its old dream of African colonies. Raeder's Suez scheme and the linking up with the Japanese seemed to be feasible in the summer of 1942. On June 21, Rommel could report that he had taken Tobruk. The way seemed clear for the drive to Suez. But the navy's optimistic schemes did not find favor in other quarters. General Halder, the army chief of staff, for one, was extremely critical of Raeder's grandiose strategy:

The picture of the general situation which the navy has made for itself is completely at variance with our sober appreciations. Those people are dreaming in terms of continents. . . . they simply assume that according to our whim of the moment we can decide whether or when we will move overland from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf or drive from Cyrenaica through Egypt to the Suez Canal. They talk of land operations via Italian Africa to the East African coast and South Africa. They talk arrogantly about the Black Sea. One is wasting one's breath talking to them.21

But Hitler found a way to implement the navy's strategy without risking an attempt of *Hermules*. Rommel's capture of Tobruk solved all of his problems in the Mediterranean

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21*Halder's Diary.* (June 12, 1942.) quoted in: Earlhamont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, 229. Halder recorded these comments after conferring with the chief of staff of the navy.
it seemed, and when Raeder arrived back in Germany to plead his case for continuing to Suez Hitler readily agreed. Actually the decision to postpone Hekules had been taken a few weeks earlier. At that time, Hitler had penned a lengthy letter to Mussolini urging the shelving of Hekules until after the conquest of Egypt, after which presumably it would no longer be necessary. Mussolini, entranced with the prospect of conquering Egypt and over the protests of his own chief of staff, assented. Hekules was postponed until September, but because the airborne units earmarked for the invasion were later necessarily committed into the land battles of North Africa, the operation actually died at this time.

The postponement of Hekules came as a blow to Raeder and the navy, and on August 26 the grand admiral again met with Hitler. Although the conference mainly dealt with other problems, Raeder petulantly recorded this terse notation in the transcript of the conference: "The opinion of the Naval Staff regarding the importance of the capture of

22On June 27, Hitler happily observed: "The capture of Tobruk is a victory as great as it was inconceivable, and . . . a real stroke of fortune . . . " Hitler's Secret Conversations, 504.

23Martenssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 130.


25Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, 511.
Malta remains unaltered."26 Raeder said that he would withhold comment on the strategic significance of the projected operations against Egypt until the situation had further developed. The grand admiral pessimistically (and with considerable accuracy) again tried to alert the Führer to the potential threats in the Mediterranean:

The Commander in Chief, Navy continues to regard a possible attempt of the Anglo-Saxons to occupy Northwest Africa and get a foothold in North Africa with the aid of the French as a very great danger to the whole German war effort. They would attack Italy from there and endanger our whole position in the Mediterranean . . . ."27

Hitler replied that he fully concurred in this assessment but made no mention of what action he planned to take, although the Führer alluded " . . . to plans which he is not yet able to discuss."28

Any new plans that Hitler may have been concocting were soon made obsolete by the pressure of events. Rommel's offensive in North Africa stalled at the gates of Egypt. A British convoy managed to reach Malta to refurbish the thorn in the Axis supply line. And then in October 1942, the newly reinforced British Eighth Army struck at El Alamein and within ten days Rommel was obliged to order a withdrawal. The British

26 F.C.N.A. 1942, 102.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 103.
Vessels were commissioned "to destroy and expose ports, 16sampson, and 12 other 281
6 come containing 2 large artillery, 7 artillery, 29
HOTELER, NOT INTELLIGENCE, 4-6. For this 1880 \nEXTRACTION NO. 19. FOR TEXT 1880 EXTRACT-REPORT.

donated to the allies and welcome restoration.

In order to return to Toulon Harbour on November 27, 10 Hybrid had at least
would be present at the time, and the other French fleet was present

Austria, Germany also tried to get possession of the French

allyes and ordered the French fleet at Toulon to wait for

North Africa at the time of the landing, directed to be the

French Minister of War and was ordered to hasten the

found necessary to implement the plan. Admiral Daxton, the

allyes landed in North Africa, Minister and AVILLA into effect.

proved as long ago as December 1940. 29 It was now

the code name for the occupation of an encamped French that

air's situation in the Mediterranean. Immediately after the

became the aide to determine how to use the available

in the Indian Ocean was dead. Henderson, deranged event,

the necessity of three and the thinking up with the Japanese

The navy's grand strategy within had antagonized

Mediterranean area came to pass.

North Africa, and diver's torpedo about the

rose. Three days later, the allies landed in western

of a German army in a report which was later becoming

resolved to reoccupy, but as November 5 began the pursuit
On November 19, 1942, Raeder met with Hitler to express his opinions on the North African situation. He emphasized the importance of holding Tunisia, which Hitler had been reinforcing ever since the initial landings. Raeder pointed out that if the Axis were dislodged from North Africa, the immense shipping capacity of the Allies would soon permit "... an all-out attack on the southern flank of Europe."31 This attack might be launched in any one of three strategic areas:

(a) The Iberian peninsula;
(b) Italy;
(c) The Balkans.

Raeder also asserted that intelligence reaching him caused him to believe an attack from the Suez into the Aegean region was imminent.

Hitler certainly agreed with Raeder's assessment, and he had no intention of giving up Tunisia. Even prior to this meeting, plans were made to dispatch the 10th Panzer, Hermann Göring Panzer, and 335th Infantry Divisions to the Tunisian redoubt.32 Rommel's Afrika Korps, still fighting a rearguard action in Libya, would soon also be withdrawn to the defense of Tunisia.

In December 1942, Raeder, hoping that the pressing circumstances in North Africa would make the Führer more

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31 P.C.N.A. 1942, 130.
32 The West Point Atlas, Map 84.
susceptible to an old naval dream, again brought up the subject of occupying the Iberian peninsula. Felix had never really been cancelled. It had simply hung in limbo, as it were, waiting for Franco's permission and assistance. On December 22, the grand admiral urged Hitler to implement the plan, now named Isabella. Raeder argued that Spanish neutrality was the minimum tolerable situation, but if the military or economic resources were available for the task, Spain and Portugal should be occupied at once. Hitler agreed that Spain occupied an extremely strategic position in the Mediterranean and said that he intended to re-enter negotiations with the Spanish. Of course, no amount of negotiation at this stage could have induced Franco to abandon his neutrality. Only victories would sway El Caudillo.

The new year brought a change in naval leadership, and an added crisis to plague Hitler. German forces were surrounded at Stalingrad and a major defeat in the eastern campaign was looming. The navy's new commander-in-chief, Dönitz, now promoted to grand admiral, was not of the same stature as his predecessor. Dönitz was a younger man with more limited horizons. But the new naval C-in-C came to exert as much influence over the Führer as had Raeder.

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34 Infra: 245.
Dönhitz experienced his first conference on strategical questions with the Führer on March 14, 1943. On this date, a major conference was called at Hitler's field headquarters (Wolfsschanze) in East Prussia to consider the defence of North Africa. Besides Dönitz and four other high ranking naval officers, Field Marshals Keitel and Kesselring and Lieutenant General Jodl attended, the Luftwaffe being represented by General Jeschonnek. Hitler opened the discussion with his assessment of the strategic importance of Tunisia: he argued that Tunisia would provide a saving of 4-5,000,000 tons of shipping capacity to the Allies and it must therefore be held.

As to how to hold Tunisia, the Führer stated that the crux of the problem revolved solely around the supply situation. He had been informed by his Italian ally that only 80,000 tons a month could be provided to the forces defending the region. This was entirely inadequate, Hitler said: "rather 150,000 to 200,000 tons monthly are needed." He further asserted that since "it is impossible to supply armies by air," the requisite supplies must go by sea. Therefore, since the Luftwaffe could not adequately defend convoys, "the Straits of Sicily must team with escort and patrol vessels." The

36 Ibid., 16.
37 Ibid. Apparently this tenet had been driven home by the debacles at Stalingrad where air supply had been attempted.
38 Ibid.
entire operation required expert organization, and Hitler's next remark is illuminating as to his judgment of the navy:

Only the German Navy can organize this on the basis of its experience and success in this field.39

Therefore, the Italians were going to have to accept German control of the operation, and Dönitz was ordered to fly to Rome to lay down the law to the Duce:

It is therefore necessary at the present time to confront the Italians boldly with the alternative of either making an all-out effort to get through supplies regardless of personnel considerations, or to lose Tunisia, and with that also Italy. The Commander in Chief, Navy is authorized to present these views to the Duce and to insist on having his suggestions followed as closely as possible.40

Dönitz's mission arose out of the increased suspicions on Hitler's part that, other than Mussolini, the Italian high command had little enthusiasm for continuing the war.41 The grand admiral's trip to Rome was successful from the German point of view, and he returned with a signed agreement. He reported to Hitler on March 18 and informed the Führer that

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39Ibid.
40Ibid., 16-7.
41Actually rumours were circulating in Rome that Mussolini was about to be succeeded. Even Mussolini had sent Ciano (the Italian foreign minister) to urge the Germans to come to an agreement with Russia. For an excellent discussion of the entire context of Italo-German relations at this time, see: Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, 506-32.
Mussolini displayed emphatic approval of the German proposals. But, Dönitz said:

A note of restraint and disapproval was noticeable from the very beginning in his conference with the Italian Naval Staff . . . .\textsuperscript{42}

This seems only natural since the Italians had never been partial to German command and by this time many highly placed officers were downright hostile to their erstwhile allies. Moreover, the German scheme would inevitably subordinate the Italian navy to German absolute control which the former could not be expected to relish.\textsuperscript{43}

Dönitz continued with his report by observing that Mussolini had stressed his intention of committing the Italian fleet against a possible Allied landing, but only if Germany could relieve the pressing fuel oil shortage. Dönitz said that he had agreed to this proposal, which indicates that Hitler had given him plenipotentiary powers. Then Dönitz expressed an opinion that surely would have raised his prestige a notch with the Führer. The grand admiral stated,\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{42}F.C.N.A. 1941, 16.

\textsuperscript{43}In another connection, the Italian navy’s historian later wrote: "Germany was not an important naval power, and it was regarded as absurd and intolerable that the Italian Navy should have to accept German intrusion into its own affairs . . . ." "This intrusion seemed all the more ridiculous since the Italian Navy had nothing to learn, either then or later, . . . ." Bragadin, The Italian Navy, 81. This view is perhaps too narrow since the Italian Navy could have learned a little aggressiveness from someone.
with regard to the Italian fleet:

Furthermore he [ Dönitz ] feels that it would be better for the Italian ships to get into the fight even at the risk of heavy losses, rather than to fall into the hands of the enemy in harbors perhaps without a fight. 44

This very question of the committing of capital vessels to battle or of restraining them for pursuit of a different task ( i.e., commerce raiding ) had been a continual source of friction between Hitler and Raeder, and indeed had been a major factor in Raeder’s resignation. 45

Then Dönitz, perhaps not yet quite aware of the esteem with which Hitler held the defence of Norway, suggested that a PT boat flotilla based there be transferred for the additional defence of the Mediterranean. Hitler admonished his grand admiral for the suggestion of depleting Norway of "essential" defences and disapproved the idea. But Dönitz had proven his ability as the navy’s ambassador extraordinaire, and Hitler was duly impressed. 46

The measures to strengthen the defense of Tunisia continued. On March 14, when Dönitz had been delegated to

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44 F.G.H.A. 1943, 18.
46 Even before Hitler had dispatched Dönitz he had indicated in a letter to Mussolini that the emissary was " . . . the best naval officer that the German Navy ever had . . . ." Hitler e Mussolini, Lettere e Documenti (Rizzoli: 1946), 151. Quoted in Deakin, The Brutal Friendship, 215.
go to Rome, Hitler had announced his intention to further reinforce Tunisia with the 7th Airborne Division, the 999th Brigade, and the remainder of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division. The Axis poured troops into Tunisia, but the crucial situation in Russia and the tenuous supply lines to North Africa hindered the amount of aid which could be dispatched.

The situation in Tunisia deteriorated rapidly. Mussolini left for Salzburg on April 6 to plead again with Hitler to abandon the attempt to conquer Russia so that more attention could be given to the ever-worsening situation in the Mediterranean. The Duce was unable to sway Hitler to attempt anew an invasion of Gibraltar, and his pleas for fuel oil replenishment for the Italian navy were reluctantly but necessarily rejected. The Germans had little enough fuel to supply their own forces. The Axis was coming apart at the seams.

Grand Admiral Dönitz’s solution to the entire problem was characteristic. On April 11, he argued to Hitler that the deteriorating situation could possibly be retrieved with one weapon—the U-boat. He advocated giving top priority to the construction of U-boats which would inevitably bring the Allies to terms. "I believe that the enemy could not stand an..."
loss of 100-200,000 tons per month for any length of time," Dönhitz said. Moreover, he asserted, the situation in the Tunisian supply line demonstrated the consequences of allowing control of the sea to slip from the grasp of the Axis. 49

Hitler fully agreed with Dönitz's proposal to build U-boats and ever more U-boats. As the war increasingly shifted to the defensive, the Führer gradually came to the conclusion that the grand admiral's solution was the correct one. But at this time, Hitler realistically replied that all of this talk about more U-boats was fine, but where could the requisite resources be found? Hitler glumly said:

The problem remains: where can the steel be obtained? To be sure, in a totalitarian state [I] could order that the required amount be made available from some other arm. The pressing needs of the Army for tanks and anti-tank guns and of the Air Force for AA [anti-aircraft] guns etc. would not permit this over a period of time. 50

The Führer then stated that it was his intention to instruct Minister Speer to almost double steel production. Dönitz was also promised that U-boat production would be increased to twenty-seven boats per month.

But these measures really were long-range plans and could not have any effect on the logistics problem of supplying the Axis armies in Tunisia. By the middle of May, the last

50 Ibid., 21.
major Axis force in North Africa surrendered to the Allies. About 275,000 prisoners were taken, and the Axis had suffered another major defeat. The Italian navy characteristically made no attempt to evacuate the Axis defenders and the entire complement was lost.

It was now obvious to the Führer that a landing in the "soft underbelly of Europe" would soon take place. The problem was, of course, where? Dönitz, having proved his diplomatic ability, was again dispatched to influence the Italians to put forward their best efforts. He met with Mussolini on May 13 and found the Duce "... well, optimistic, composed, very frank, sincere, and amiable."\footnote{Martenessen, Hitler and His Admirals, 160. (Detailed memorandum concerning Dönitz's visit to Rome, May 12 to 15.)} Mussolini informed Dönitz that he thought Sicily would be the target of the Anglo-American invasion, but he still rejected Hitler's offer of five German divisions to bolster the defence of Italy. Mussolini apparently was still maintaining the fiction of a "parallel war".

Dönitz returned to Germany and laid the Duce opinions before Hitler. The Führer did not agree with Mussolini's assessment of the probable site of an Allied invasion. Hitler preferred to view Sardinia as a more likely choice than Sicily.\footnote{N.G.A., Supplement A, 1024. (N.D. D-892) An ingenious British scheme (code named "Minosment") had fortified Hitler's belief. A corpse in British officer's uniform, bearing documents implying that the invasion would come in Sardinia and the Peloponessus, was allowed to wash ashore in Spain.}
Actually, this belief stemmed from Hitler's respect for air power. From Sardinia Allied air forces could range to southern France and eastern Italy. Moreover, from this island, a threat could be posed to a number of further invasion sites, whereas Sicily would generally limit the Allied future choice to mainland Italy. But Hitler was over-estimating the capabilities of the Allies, and when invasion did come it came in Sicily.

A more important question than the location of the landing was plaguing Hitler. Would the Italians now defect? Dönitz's reports as well as others received by the Führer seemed to indicate that the Italians were no longer trustworthy allies. Therefore, preliminary studies were instituted to prepare for the now not unlikely contingency that Italy might unilaterally withdraw from the war.53

The blow fell on Sicily on July 10, and by August 17 the island had been secured. In the interim, Hitler made another attempt to encourage his fellow dictator. Mussolini and Hitler met on July 19 at Feltre near Venice. Hitler was annoyed at the Italian conduct of the war to date and in a two hour harangue told the Duce so in no uncertain terms. Hitler criticized the fighting quality of the Italian troops,

53 Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, 590. A series of plans were drawn up to neutralize Italian forces in Italy and elsewhere in the event of defection. Originally, the operations were given the code name "Alarich" but were later changed to "Achse" (Axis). See: Trevor-Roper, Hitler's War Directives, 146.
the actions of the high command, and the attitude of the
civilian administration. According to Field Marshal
Keitel, who was present, the object of the conference was
consolidation of: "all power in the hands of the Duce,
removal of the influence of the Royal House, German
reinforcements in Italy, and control by the German High
Command." But all that the Führer's diatribe accomplished
was to confirm the opinions of the conspirators against
Mussolini that action must be taken against him if Italy
were to avoid becoming a German province.

It is interesting to speculate what effect Dönitz
had in forming the opinions expressed at Feltre by the
Führer. Only two days earlier, on July 17, Dönitz had
met with Hitler at a major military conference and had
expressed his views on the Italian situation. Dönitz
had argued that there were many junior Italian officers
who were willing to fight on Germany's side, but that they
were prevented from doing so by the "anti-German" Italian
high command. Moreover, Dönitz said, entirely missing
the mark, "... the Italian navy would have been of much
greater help to us if it had been under German leadership."
 Dönitz also widened his scope to include military affairs in his argument. He said, "I believe my Führer, that we either have to do without the Italian army altogether, or we must try to strengthen it with German troops." Hitler replied that if it was expected to hold the entire Italian peninsula, support by the Italian army was mandatory (an opinion later proved erroneous). Dönitz answered: "That is why I believe that we must infiltrate our men into the Italian army." This conference presumably induced Hitler to decide that firm measures must be taken. It was the very next day that Hitler instructed the German ambassador to transmit an invitation to Mussolini to attend the summit conference at Feltre.

But the Führer's measures, as usual in the Mediterranean theater, were too little and too late. Mussolini was deposed by a palace revolution on July 22, and Marshal Badoglio became the new chief of the Italian state. One further conference between Dönitz and Hitler took place before the Italian armistice of September 3 and the Allied invasion of mainland Italy the same day.

Hitler had arrived at the stage where any and every possibility to brighten the ever-darkening picture was eagerly

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58Ibid., 98-9.
59Ibid., 99.
60Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, 536.
seized upon. Between August 9 and 11, Hitler and Dönitz
discussed grand strategy, and they came up with some very
optimistic conclusions. Hitler began by correctly
observing that "the present situation is perilous and
the coming months will bring hardships ..."61 Next
the Führer said: "... however, there are many instances
in history, when an unexpected way out presented itself in
the midst of a difficult situation such as ours."62 Now
Hitler turned to a theme which was to become increasingly
appealing to him for consolation and hope as the situation
deteriorated. He observed, accurately enough, that Britain
had entered the war to preserve the balance of power on the
European continent. But the awakened Russian behemoth had
now placed Britain in an extremely awkward position. By
destroying Germany, the British would be destroying Europe's
bulwark against Bolshevism. Britain must inevitably see,
as Hitler now saw it, that the day of a fragmented Europe
was over; only a Europe united under a strong central power
could effectively provide security in the future:

That means that in the future the challenge of
the East can be met only by a Europe united under
German leadership; this will be to the advantage
of Britain also.63

These words, with the benefit of hindsight, contain much
wisdom in the area of foreign policy. But Hitler (and often

61 F.G.H.A. 1943, 120.
62 Ibid.
63
the post-war critics of the destruction of Nazi Germany to the aggrandizement of the Soviet Union) are ignoring the fact that the war had taken on strong ideological overtones. It was not simply a war to preserve the old nation-state system of Europe. It was a war to eradicate fascism and to destroy forever the threat of German hegemony in Europe. The Casablanca conference with its "Unconditional Surrender" demand and the Morgenthau plan attest to the twentieth century nature of total war. In the eighteenth century, Hitler might have been correct. But now, in the twentieth, he was definitely day-dreaming.

 Dönitz added fuel to the fire of Hitler's imagination when the former expressed the opinion that the British were holding themselves in readiness to repel a possible Russian thrust toward the Balkans. The Mediterranean theater was vital for Britain, Dönitz said, and:

In the future she will wish to make the sea route through the Mediterranean fully secure; under no conditions will she give up Sicily and North Africa again, and under no conditions will she tolerate that the Russians get a foothold in the Dardanelles. 64

Hitler agreed and observed that North Africa could also cause America and Britain to fall out among themselves. Dönitz concurred and resignedly said: "As far as we are concerned,

64Ibid.
65Ibid.
everything will depend on our holding out stubbornly." 66
And this they faithfully did.
Hitler had found a soul-mate in Dönitz, and he
constantly leaned heavier on the grand admiral for advice
as the war wore on to its inevitable conclusion. This
advice was not only given in naval affairs, but as with
the case of his predecessor, Raeder, in strategical matters
as well. Dönitz’s influence also reached into an area where
Raeder’s had not—tactical military operations. It is no
exaggeration to observe that Dönitz became one of the most
influential men in Nazi Germany.
As far as Dönitz was concerned, he revered the
Führer and tended to regard Hitler as omniscient. At the
end of the transcript of the above-discussed conference in
August, Dönitz, in a delirium of admiration, appended a
personal note:
The enormous strength which the Führer radiates,
his unwavering confidence, and his far-sighted
appraisal of the Italian situation have made it
clear in these days that we are all very insignificant
in comparison with the Führer, and that our knowledge
and the picture we get from our limited vantage are
fragmentary. Anyone who believes that he can do
better than the Führer is silly. 67
Mussolini’s collapse and the Allied invasion of Italy
ended with marked finality the navy’s grand (and perhaps global)

66 Ibid., 121.
67 Ibid.
The Mediterranean had become the primary theater of operations for the Allied forces against the Axis powers. The Mediterranean theater was crucial in the development of a common understanding.

In the post-war period, the Mediterranean was recognized as the foremost war zone. The war in the Mediterranean was not the easiest to conduct, as it was already passed by the loss of the Mediterranean's flanks and already

When the primary threat became more of a danger, the importance of the Mediterranean increased.

The Mediterranean was a natural extension of the Mediterranean's character. After the defeat of the British and French, Hitler's abandonment of Sevastopol and Iran's capture.

Great Britain became Hitler's main goal, and the Mediterranean was the key to neutralize German power. There was much of the European's military might on the southern coast of the Mediterranean, and it came to a

Europe's mighty military power. Hitler and France deserted to support Britain's
take and grand冒险。The Mediterranean was a theater of operations without a
terrestrial. The Mediterranean was foremost in Allied
would not bear her full load. Italy inevitably became
the junior partner in the Rome-Berlin Axis because of the
discrepancies in power between the two nations. But Hitler,
although actually guiding the campaign because of the
dominance in German supplies and number of troops in Tunisia,
consistently maintained the fiction of equal status with
the Italian dictator. Even after Mussolini's fall, Hitler
propped him up in northern Italy as nominal ruler.

Throughout the tangled web of Axis relations, the
German navy's influence is clearly evident. Many of the
strategic decisions affecting the Mediterranean, such as
Rommel's great drive to the Nile and Suez, were forwarded
by the navy and were continually supported by the naval
leadership of Germany. Most critics take issue with Hitler
for not giving more cognizance to the navy's proposals,
but these criticisms do not really get to the heart of the
matter. If Hitler had managed to conquer the Soviet Union,
the entire strategic picture would have been completely
altered. Presumably Turkey could have been prevailed upon
to enter the war, and possibly even Spain. The British
sea and air base at Suez, guarding the canal and protecting
the Empire's life-line, would have been in a precarious
position indeed.

But one thing is certain. If the resources committed
in ever-increasing and gigantic amounts on the eastern front
had become available for commitment elsewhere, the Mediterranean could have become an Axis lake with ease. It is not really precrustean to assert that Italy was defeated and the Mediterranean freed for the Allies on the wintery steppes of Russia. Hitler's eastern ambitions truly opened a Pandora's box, not only for Germany and the Axis during the war, but for all the world in the post-war milieu.
CHAPTER VIII

HITLER, THE NAVY, AND CAPITAL SHIPS

Capital ships, until after World War II, formed the nucleus around which the world's great navies were built. The battleships and cruisers inspired romantic stories and attracted the attention of an admiring public. Possession then of a mighty battleship fleet was somewhat analogous today to the possession of a nuclear capacity. The big ships were awe-inspiring, more than slightly glamorous, and symbolic of great power status. The average man expected much from the great behemoths, and many must have been disappointed that World War I had provided only one great clash, and an indecisive one at that, between mighty battle fleets.

Hitler was such a man. The big ships fascinated him, and he placed great stock in their capabilities. He was therefore extremely critical of the leadership of the German navy during World War I. Hitler felt that it had adopted a cowardly and timid strategy, that it "... from
the outset inevitably assumed the defensive."¹ In the Führer's opinion, only offensive strategy could result in victory. The Great War's naval commanders also erred, he believed, by not enlarging the caliber of their vessels' armament: "... the goal should have been the achievement, not of equal but of superior fighting power."² These views were consistently maintained by the Führer in his later role as supreme commander.

Therefore, after Hitler ascended to power, he initially had little differences in this matter with Grand Admiral Raeder. Raeder was also a "battleship officer" and certainly must have welcomed a man of such opinions as Hitler for his superior, for during the Weimar Republic the navy had encountered much opposition in the Reichstag to its proposals for capital ship construction. For example, in 1928 the opposition forces in parliament to the proposed construction of the pocket battleship Deutschland used the slogan "pocket battleship or food for children".³ Nevertheless, under the Weimar governments the navy managed to begin construction of two of the pocket battleships and secure tentative approval for a long-range building program.

After Hitler became chancellor, naval rearmament was

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¹Hitler, Mein Kampf, 274
²Ibid., 273.
³Raeder, Memoirs, 150.
stepped up, and again increased after the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. During the entire pre-war period, Raeder received virtual freedom of action from Hitler, and the German dockyards were set working at full capacity to construct one of the most powerful capital ship fleets in the world. Raeder's Z plan of 1938 reflected his policy. Hitler made no changes in the Z plan except to insist that the capabilities of the new ships should exceed those of any prospective enemy. The Z plan construction began in the spring of 1939, but work on most of the larger ships was necessarily stopped upon the outbreak of war.

Nevertheless, Grand Admiral Raeder possessed a significant number of powerful, modern capital ships with which he could expect reasonable success in operations against Britain's maritime commerce. Although he had anticipated the war by some two weeks and had dispatched the pocket battleships to their operational areas, Raeder was prevented for over a month from initially making use of the merchant raiders by Hitler's political policy. Hitler wished to avoid or delay a war with the western powers and consequently refused to allow the navy to institute merchant

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Raeder and Hitler clashed in the fall of 1938 over Hitler's demand for increased heavy armament on the then-building Tirpitz and Bismarck. Raeder convinced him that any increase would be technically impossible without a radical revision of the designs. See: N.C.A., VIII, 713.
warfare until it had become quite clear that Britain and France would fight.

Because of the limited size of the German navy, it had adopted the strategy of commerce raiding. This policy differed radically from Hitler's. The Führer strongly believed that his powerful ships should engage enemy men-of-war instead of shunning battle. Yet Hitler allowed to stand the navy’s order requiring the capital ships not to engage enemy warships. Even after the Graf Spee accepted battle and was lost as a result, Hitler did not change his point of view, nor significantly, the navy's regulation. If anything, the Führer was reinforced in his opinion that the order reflected unnecessary caution on the part of the navy. The Führer believed that the Graf Spee's captain, Langsdorff, had correctly chosen to engage the British squadron, but that he had erred subsequently. After damaging the British cruiser Exeter, Hitler thought that Langsdorff should have pursued and sunk her instead of breaking off the engagement. Although Raeder received a dressing down for Langsdorff's action, Hitler continued to permit Raeder and the navy to pursue an independent naval policy.

Hitler's confidence in the capabilities of the big ships was shaken further during the Norwegian campaign. The
plan for the invasion of Norway necessitated using virtually
the entire strength of the navy. The warships were used in
the dual capacity of mobile artillery and troop transports,
the latter role apparently suggested by Hitler. The ships
were dispatched in six main combat groups to the various
Norwegian ports selected as invasion sites.

The German navy was severely crippled in the course
of the campaign. The 8-inch cruiser Blücher was sunk as a
result of torpedo and gunfire by the defences of Oslo, and
the light cruisers Karlsruhe and Königsberg were respectively
torpedoed and bombed. Ten destroyers were sunk in the two
battles of Narvik. A total of eight U-boats were lost during
participation in the campaign. Moreover, the battle cruisers
Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were severely damaged by torpedo
hits. The cruisers Hipper and Hessen were both damaged by
gunfire, and the pocket battleship Lützow (formerly Deutschland)
was crippled first by the Oslo coastal batteries and later
by a British submarine. By the end of the campaign on June
10, the German navy had intact only the cruiser Hipper, the
light cruisers Kiel and Nürnberg, and four destroyers at
effective fighting condition.\(^5\) No fleet capability remained
to the German navy.

\(^5\)See Appendix F, infra. 336.
The German submarine fleet had been destroyed at the Battle of Jutland. The British fleet had suffered severe losses in this battle, which had been the largest naval battle of World War I. The British fleet was now considered to be inferior to the German fleet, which had been severely damaged in the battle. The British fleet was no longer considered to be formidable, and the German fleet was feared.
decks on all new vessels be reinforced against air attack:
"On the big ships the upper deck must be the strongest in
order to be bomb-proof, and everything . . . must be at
least splinter-proof . . . ."3

Aerial attack was foremost in the Führer's mind
when he next put forward his views on future naval con-
struction. First, Hitler said, it would be necessary to
provide cruisers with flight decks if they were to be
effective against merchant shipping. He also suggested
that destroyers be provided with "quicker-firing anti-
aircraft guns". Finally, he approved that the aircraft
carrier Graf Zeppelin be completed and sent on trials. Hitler
was gradually coming to the realization that airpower had
made the battleship obsolete. Raeder and the navy did not
share this view. For the Führer's enlightenment, Raeder
then presented Hitler with a newly-composed memorandum by
S.K.L. setting out its recommendations for post-war naval
expansion.

In the memorandum, S.K.L. envisaged a large colonial
empire9 guarded by a large navy built around super-battleships.
Apparently, Hitler's developing dubiousness about the usefulness
of the big ships was known to S.K.L., for it began its

3Ibid.
9supra, 126 ff.
discussion of the composition of the post-war navy with a rhetorical question: "Is it necessary to build battleships?" The Naval War Staff answered its own question by commenting that it:

... considers the most important lesson of the war up to date the realization that, in spite of the unusual development and successes of the Air Force and experience of submarine and mine warfare, the battleship has not lost any of its importance.\textsuperscript{10}

S.K.L. next bluntly observed that war experience to date had clearly shown the necessity for building "precisely" this type of ship, providing of course, that all future battleships be "... bigger, heavier, and more powerful ... "\textsuperscript{11} S.K.L. then carried its argument to the logical extreme: Germany must build "... battleships as fast as possible." The Naval War Staff then spent five pages enumerating the requisite support vessels in order of importance and priority: 1) large scouting cruisers, 2) large fleet destroyers, 3) about 250 U-boats, 4) light cruisers, and 5) torpedo boats, minesweepers, N.T.B.'s, etc. Pocket battleships also must be constructed for commerce raiding purposes, but this class and all other classes of vessels must be subordinated to creating a powerful battleship.

\textsuperscript{10} F.C.M.A. 1940, I, 74.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
fleets:

The guiding principle should be that construction of battleships must in no way be injured or delayed by building cruisers or pocket battleships for raiding merchant ships. The backbone of naval strategy on the high seas against enemy sea communication is the battleship itself.\textsuperscript{12}

S.K.L. grudgingly recognized the usefulness of cruisers with flight decks but only for reconnaissance duties and "... possibly in place of the aircraft carrier." Incredibly, this is the only mention of aircraft carriers in the entire anachronistic document. Not one was proposed in the construction proposals for the mighty navy envisioned by the German Naval War Staff!

Hitler made no comment at the time on the S.K.L. memorandum, but he must have been amused by the grandiose nineteenth century viewpoint of his navy. The colonial empire and the mighty high seas fleet dreams of the Kaiser were dwarfed by this scheme proposed by S.K.L. Moreover, Hitler had often criticized just these same opinions. If followed as policy, Hitler believed, such a course ultimately would lead to the demise of Germany. Colonies and a fleet capable of sweeping Britain from the seas were of little or no interest to the Führer. Had not the diplomats of Imperial Germany fooundered on such a program?

The ensuing autumn of 1940 and spring of 1941 were

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, 76. (Emphasis in original.)
taken up with plans in quick succession designed to end
the war - Seelöwe, Felix, Marita, and finally Barbarossa -
and Hitler had no time for his navy’s post-war plans. Then,
in the spring of 1941, an incident occurred which finally
decided any respect which Hitler might have still retained
for the intrinsic value of battleships. Raeder, with his
eyes firmly locked on the need to defeat Britain at sea,
decided to commit the newly-commissioned battleship Bismarck
to the Battle of the Atlantic. This operation was going to
be the crescendo and culmination of the strategy which set
forth surface ship attack against British shipping. There
was not a single British battleship which could stand up to
the great fighting strength of the mighty Bismarck.

Raeder informed Hitler on April 20, 1941 of the
prospective sortie of the Bismarck and the heavy cruiser
Prinz Eugen in conjunction with the battle cruisers Seydlitz
and Gneisenau. The battle cruisers which had fled to Brest
after their previous sortie were later damaged by R.A.F. bombs
and consequently withdrawn from the operation. Raeder requested
lifting the restrictions on entering the American Safety Zone,
but Hitler emphatically refused.

Operation Rheinübung (Rhine exercise) began on May 18,
1941 when the powerful Bismarck and the modern and recently-
commissioned heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen sailed from Gdynia.
Raeder had decided to dispatch the ships even though there would
be no diversion provided by the battle cruisers at Brest. The grand admiral informed Hitler on May 22 of the squadron's departure, and the Führer (as was customary) became nervous for the success of the mission. The Bismarck was the world's newest and most powerful battleship, and her loss would be a considerable blow to German prestige. Presumably the approaching start of the Russian campaign added to Hitler's anxiety. Raeder later wrote that Hitler was nervous when the capital ships were at sea because he could not directly control their actions. 13 Moreover, the navy's standing order not to engage other warships was distasteful to him; a retreat by the Bismarck would have provided powerful propaganda material to the British. He would have much sooner seen the Bismarck fight and be lost than turn tail and ingloriously withdraw. At any rate, Raeder's persuasive ability on May 22 won Hitler's acquiescence for the continuation of the sortie. 14

Hitler initially was pleased with the success of the Bismarck squadron. The sinking of the British battle cruiser Hood and the defeat of the Prince of Wales induced him to personally congratulate Raeder. 15 But the Führer's nervousness continued and when the Bismarck was ultimately tracked down

13E.C.A., VIII, 719. (Statement IX.)
14Raeder, My Life, 357.
15Ibid.
and sunk on May 27, he was full of recriminations. Raeder
apparently expected trouble, for he arrived at the Berghof
on June 6 armed with a prepared account of the Bismarck
operation, explaining and defending the actions of Vice
Admiral Lütjens, the squadron’s commander. 16

Hitler immediately demanded to know why the Bismarck
had not returned to base after sinking the Hood. Raeder
patiently explained that Lütjens had apparently attempted
a withdrawal into the Atlantic that was, under the circum-
stances, safer than trying to break through the northern
straits to Germany. This explanation did not satisfy the
Führer, and he inquired as to why a withdrawal had been
necessary. Why did not the Bismarck, with her superior
strength, attack the Prince of Wales again “... even if
it had meant an all out fight?” “Even if this had led to
the loss of the Bismarck,” the Führer said, “the final score
would have been two British losses against one German one.” 17
Raeder explained that the Bismarck had re-engaged the Prince
of Wales but only for the purpose of allowing the Prince Regent
to slip away under cover of the re-engaged fire-fight. Anyway,
the grand admiral said attempting to excuse Lütjens' actions,
it had been the British battleship which had withdrawn and

16 F.C.N.A. 1941, I, 77-80.
17 Ibid., 77.
since the Bismarck only had 28 knot speed, she could not have pursued. Further, Lütjens had had to keep his main objective in view, that of “damaging enemy shipping.”

Hitler was obviously annoyed and upset at the calamity that had befallen the pride of his navy. But Raeder added insult to injury by again bringing up the desirability of waging war against United States' merchant shipping in order to facilitate the task of the surface raiders. The Russian campaign was due to begin in a few weeks, the Bismarck had just been sunk, and here was Raeder again playing with fire. Hitler ordered that his decision regarding American merchant traffic was to stand.

As a result of the Bismarck loss, Hitler made no radical changes in the command structure of the navy, and Raeder continued to govern absolutely over the Kriegsmarine. But Hitler did issue a directive forbidding sorties into the Atlantic by capital ships. This is the first direct interference by Hitler in naval affairs at the tactical level where political considerations did not apply. Hitherto he had allowed Raeder and the navy almost complete independence in naval affairs. But the Bismarck operation convinced Hitler

18Actually the Bismarck was capable of 30 knot sustained steaming, but presumably the action with the Prince of Wales had slowed her down. For an account of the tactical events, see: Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War, III, The Grand Alliance (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1950), 365-26.

19Raeder, My Life, 358.
that the days of capital ships were over. The end of an 
age had been reached, and Hitler, quick to turn against what 
he had once much admired, henceforth disparaged (in no 
uncertain terms) the large ships. 

Only a few months later, on August 10, Hitler himself 
admirably summed up in a few sentences his changed opinions:

The navy . . . has not changed, so to 
speak, since the first World War. There is 
something tragic in the fact that the battleships, 
that monument of human ingenuity, has lost its 
entire raison d'être because of the development 
of aviation. It reminds one of that marvel of 
technique and art which the armament of a knight 
and his horse - the cuirass and the caparison - 
used to be at the end of the Middle Ages.20

Hitler at this time finally rejected battleships and in the 
future advocated constructing aircraft carriers and U-boats. 
But Raeder and the navy were not yet ready to abandon 
battleships. On the same day that Raeder received Hitler's 
criticism for the Bismarck disaster, he had given the Führer 
a memorandum which expounded the continuous arguments of 
S.K.L. for construction of capital ships and conduct of 
merchant warfare with surface raiders. Raeder again raised 
the subject on July 25 and explained to Hitler why the 
surface ships were only achieving limited successes. He 
argued that the effort which the British were expending to 
damage the warships based on Brest was indicative of the 
respect with which the British held the German capital ships.

20Hitler's Secret Conversations, 55.
Hitler agreed that Raeder was probably right but would not relent on his order forbidding Atlantic actions. Another idea was taking shape in the Führer's mind, and he first mentioned it to Raeder on September 17.

On the 17th, Hitler asked his naval commander-in-chief whether it would be better to station the warships then in Brest along the Norwegian coast in order to defend the northern regions. Raeder readily denounced such a suggestion, replying that the ships would be more correctly and beneficially employed against merchant shipping in the Atlantic. Anyway, for the present the question was moot since the warships would not be ready for action until early in 1942. The warships to which they referred were the battle cruisers Schirmhorst and Gneisenau which had been in Brest since sortieing in January 1941 and which had put into Brest in March. These ships had been joined by the Prinz Eugen during the Bismarck chase, and the entire squadron virtually constituted the remains of the German battle fleet. Now that Hitler had abandoned surface action in the Atlantic, he desired to put the vessels to good use elsewhere. Moreover, in Brest they were subject to incessant British air attack and had been repeatedly damaged.

In the autumn of 1941, after the opening of the Russian

\[21\text{F.C.N.A. 1941, II, 34.}\]
offensive and the American occupation of Iceland, Hitler began to fear a possible Allied invasion of Norway. He realized the strategic importance of the area and the necessity of protecting the vital iron ore traffic. Grand Admiral Raeder had convinced the Führer of these factors in his arguments to enlarge the navy's sphere of operations prior to Weserübung. Now, late in 1941, with Germany engaged in mortal combat with the Soviet Union, the significance of the Scandinavian states again became paramount in the Führer's strategical calculations.

Hitler ordered Raeder to investigate the possibility of bringing the Brest squadron back to northern waters. Raeder reported his findings to the Führer on December 29, 1941. The grand admiral claimed that months were necessary to work the vessels up to the required state of preparedness and that any passage of the English Channel was "impossible".22 Hitler nevertheless, asserting that the British, if they "... go about things properly ...", would surely invade Norway in the near future, requested that Raeder dispatch all available ships and especially the Brest squadron to the defence of Norway. The Führer argued that with sufficient surprise the Brest squadron could break through the Channel. Then to insure that Raeder would do all possible to bring the ships successfully back to Germany, Hitler slyly commented:

22Ibid., 94.
If the surprise break through the Channel is impossible, therefore, it would be best to decommission the ships and to use the guns and crews for reinforcements in Norway. 23

Such a threat to decommission the ships was surely calculated to override all of Raeder's objections. The grand admiral said no more on the subject at this conference, but the chief of S.K.L. Frick, who was also present, launched into "sharp and detailed opposition", as the record of the meeting dryly puts it. Frick argued that the warships in Brazil formed a "fleet in being" which obligated the British to guard all convoys with battleships, thereby imposing a heavy strain on the already over-extended strength of the British navy. He further observed how difficult it would be justifying decommissioning to Hitler's Italian and Japanese allies. This last observation apparently induced the Führer to reserve making the final decision and he promised Frick that he would wait until the chief of the naval staff could present "... the whole question once more ...". 24

Hitler's decision was finally taken at a major conference held on January 12, 1942. 25 Among others, Keitel

23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 95.
25 F.G.NA. 1942, 1-5. Raeder composed a brief account of the Channel Dash after the war in which he attributed Hitler's motives to Göring's representations. See: F.G.NA. VIII, 701-707.
and Jodl from O.K.W., Raeder, Friske, and Vice Admiral Ciliax (the commanding officer of battleships) were present. The Luftwaffe was represented by Lieutenant General Jeschonnek and Colonel Galland. Raeder opened the conference by requesting to be relieved of the responsibility for presenting the plans since he was in opposition to the withdrawal of the ships from the Atlantic. Therefore, Vice Admiral Ciliax and Commodore Hugo would put forward the navy's case.

Hitler began by explaining his position. He agreed that the ships in Brest harbor had a certain "fly-paper" effect in that they attracted British airpower and thereby somewhat relieved the Fatherland of the ever-increasing weight of air attack. But this situation would only last until the ships had either been crippled or sunk which, in Hitler's assessment, was inevitable. Then they would no longer constitute a threat to the British and the latter would divert their air resources to other targets. Moreover, British capital ship strength which had to be deployed in the vicinity to counter the danger of another break out could be dispersed to other tasks. But if the ships were brought back to German waters and used in the defense of Norway, some inherent value might be preserved. The Führer next informed the assembled officers that "in view of the increasingly unfriendly attitude of Sweden . . ." he feared a large-scale Swedish-Russian offensive
norway. 

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The conference ended after the naval officers and the Luftwaffe representatives mutually prepared the groundwork for blaming the other in event of failure. As a parting bone to the navy, Hitler said that if the Brest squadron did escape through the Channel, "... there is a chance that it might be employed to good advantage at a later date."28

Presumably, this hint was designed to enhance the spirits of Grand Admiral Raeder and to encourage his support for the forthcoming operation. Possibly Raeder could be led to believe that if the mission were successfully accomplished, the reinforced squadron,29 although based on Norway, could again sortie forth to engage British merchant shipping.

The operation was given the code-designation Cerebus, and by the beginning of February preparations were completed. Accordingly, the Brest squadron sailed on February 11 and consisted of the battle cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the cruiser Prinz Eugen, and supporting destroyers and E-boats. Scarcely had been effectively maintained and the squadron was not sighted by the British until the following morning. Colonel Galland's "air-umbrella" proved remarkably effective, and the British attackers were driven off with heavy losses. The British had been caught napping and desperately tried to retrieve the situation. But to no avail. But their efforts

28 F. C. N. A. 1942, 5.
29 Tirpitz was also ordered to Norwegian waters.
at least caused Hitler a great deal of worry.\textsuperscript{30} Presumably, the Führer was greatly relieved at the success of the operation: the big ships escaped with only minor mine-damage, and the squadron lost only one destroyer and a minesweeper.\textsuperscript{31}

The operation caused much rejoicing throughout Germany, although Raeder was not pleased with the strategic retreat. To add to Raeder's displeasure, and to dampen Hitler's elation at the incredible success of the operation, the \textit{Gneisenau} was bombed and set afire a few days later. Repairs were never completed and the vessel was ultimately paid off at Gdynia. On the British side there was shock. Hitler and the navy had tweaked the lion's tail and escaped virtually unscathed. "'Vice-Admiral Ciliax,' wrote the \textit{Times}, 'has succeeded where the Duke of Medina Sidonia failed . . . .'

'Nothing more mortifying to the pride of sea power has happened in Home Waters since the 17th Century.'\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30}Goebbels recorded the Führer's anxiety in his diary on February 11 and that "it would be terrible if even one of these three ships were to share the fate of the \textit{S"ım"arşak}.'
\textsuperscript{31}Hugo, \textit{Sea Warfare}, 207. Hugo implies that the decision to take the ships out of Brest originated with Raeder and the navy. This, as has been demonstrated, is not correct.

\textsuperscript{32}Quoted in Martienssen, \textit{Hitler and His Admirals}, 123. British feeling was running high at this time because of the sinking a few months earlier of the battleships \textit{Repulse} and \textit{Prince of Wales} off Singapore by the Japanese on December 10, 1941. This action again demonstrated the vulnerability of the capital ships to air attack.
NORTHERN SOUVENIRS

The North of Europe (German Campaign, 1940)

Hitler knew that it was impossible to use any part of the Atlantic to prevent the German forces from entering the Allied positions. The Germans had to cross the English Channel to reach and subdue the Allied forces on the northern shore of France. The Allied forces were numerically inferior, not to mention their unpreparedness for the situation. German naval forces were not strong enough to proceed to a landing in the German navy and expected the unexpected, the concentration of forces in Norway and Denmark.

Because the Allies had not invaded Denmark, Hitler's expectations were raised. He believed that whether the withdrawal was necessary had not been tested. Operational tests in the Bay of Biscay and the question of whether the withdrawal was necessary had not been tested.

With surface tactics, the Germans had not been prepared for a surface battle. They had not been prepared for a surface battle. The German navy had suffered a severe defeat. It had been, however, that the German navy had suffered a great tactical victory.

But this comment does not produce very deeply into
might again see action against shipping. At any rate, for the remainder of the war, no further German capital ship operations were conducted in the Atlantic.

The necessity of aiding their Russian ally prompted the western powers to begin supplying materiel in the autumn of 1941. There were three main routes from the west by which aid could be transported: via Siberia, around Africa into the Indian ocean and by land through Iran, or by way of the Arctic Ocean to Murmansk or Archangel. The former two routes involved the expenditure of a prohibitive amount of time, and it became necessary to make use of the Murmansk run, the most dangerous of the three. Beginning in January 1942, the concentration of German naval strength in Norway steadily increased. A number of U-boats was also transferred in addition to all available capital ships.

At Raeder's urging, Hitler relented his previous decision to hold the capital ships in a defensive capacity, and the German navy began to prepare for operations against the Allied Arctic convoys. The "TARANTA" sortied in March 1942 to intercept a "PQ" convoy but was unable to engage. As she withdrew, the powerful battleship was attacked by aircraft from a British carrier and only narrowly escaped destruction. The episode bolstered Hitler's faith in the capabilities of the German forces.
aircraft carriers, and he ordered Raeder to rush the
_Graf Zeppelin_ to completion. Moreover, he asked Raeder
to convert merchantmen and small passenger liners into
aircraft carriers or auxiliary escort carriers.\(^{35}\)

On June 15, Raeder submitted to Hitler an estimate
of the practicability of such conversion.\(^{36}\) The ships under
consideration were the liners _Potemkin_, _Europe_, and _Conscience_,
and the heavy cruiser _Seydlitz_ (which was under construction,
but was never completed). The grand admiral argued that it
would not be possible to convert the _Seydlitz_ at such a late
stage in her construction, but that he would be able to
submit the final plans for conversion of the liners within
the week. Hitler was satisfied with Raeder’s explanations
and actions, but for one reason or another none of the liners
ever saw action as auxiliary carriers.

Raeder also submitted at this time a plan to attack
the next Arctic convoy with surface forces, U-boats, and
aircraft. Hitler tentatively agreed to the operation (code-
designated _Fliegsalsprung_ – “Flight’s Move”) but warned Raeder

\(^{35}\) Goebbels recorded Hitler’s displeasure with the
navy’s building program. “For a long time [Hitler] had
demanded that the ‘Strength-through-Joy’ steamers be converted
into airplane carriers.” “The Navy declined, claiming this
was impossible, whereas the Americans and the English are
carrying out such rebuilding with painful ease.” _The Goebbels
Diaries_, 187. (April 26, 1942.)

\(^{36}\) _PACNA_, 1962, 67.
that "the aircraft carriers must be located prior to the
attack . . . ."37 Hitler considered airpower to be a
"great threat" to the large ships, and he therefore ordered
that enemy carriers be neutralized by the Luftwaffe before
surface attacks took place. He gave Raeder permission to
initiate preparatory measures for the attack but insisted
that no action could be begun without his express permission.
Hitler was interfering with tactical operations, a practice
which he had avoided heretofore.

Rösselsprung envisaged an attack by the battleship
Tirpitz, the pocket battleships Lützow and Scheer, the
cruiser Hipper, and twelve destroyers. The object of the
attack was the Arctic convoy "FQ-17" and its date of
sailing was estimated by the Germans to be some time in
late June. The operational task was to destroy enemy shipping
and S.K.L. issued instructions which specifically stated:

The operation will be executed only if reconnaissance
has established with certainty that there is no risk
of becoming involved with superior enemy forces.38

The operation was instituted after "FQ-17" was sighted
by reconnaissance aircraft on July 1, and air attacks were
initiated initially. The surface ships sortied in two squadrons,

37 Ibid., 86.

but the second squadron with the Lithgow ran aground on its way to the jumping-off point. The Rimpitz and her supporting forces put to sea but were ordered to put about after a British aircraft carrier was reported in the vicinity. O.K.L. had no desire to suffer losses from air attack and thereby incur Hitler's wrath. A substantial defeat would have presumably been sufficient to induce the Führer categorically to forbid any future surface ship operations. Nevertheless, the brief presence of the German capital ships was sufficient to persuade the cautious British escort commander to order his charges to scatter. This tactic left the ships of the convoy extremely vulnerable to air and U-boat attack, and consequently twenty-three of the thirty-four merchant ships in the convoy were sunk.39

Raeder and the navy had achieved a remarkable victory, if only indirectly, with the capital ships. But Hitler's opinions did not alter as a result. If anything, he became more radically opposed to the battleship as an efficient weapon of modern warfare. To Hitler the battleship had become obsolescent and lost its value for modern warfare. About two weeks after the attack on "PQ-17", Hitler expressed his latest (and somewhat over-simplified) argument against further use of capital ships:

39The foregoing is based generally on: Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, 255-66.
When a battleship is sunk, the loss of life may be as high as two thousand souls. But if we could construct a mass of tiny craft, each fitted with a torpedo tube and manned by a single man, the losses we should suffer would be fractional in comparison, and the successes, from the combat point of view, might well be considerably greater.

Hitler's previous arguments against capital ships based on the power of air attack have a certain vindication, but this idle concept is obtuse to the extreme. But although the Führer had by now completely renounced battleships, he continued to allow Raeder and the navy to make use of the big ships against Arctic convoys.

During the summer and autumn of 1942, various sweeps were conducted by the capital ships based on Norway, but only minor results were achieved. Although Hitler was temporarily satisfied to allow the navy to conduct the subsidiary offensive operations in the Arctic, Raeder was not. He still desired to make use of the capital ships in the Atlantic. On August 26, Raeder reported to Hitler about the pocket battleship Admiral Scheer's movements in Arctic waters. Raeder argued that after the Scheer's return from her present sortie she should be dispatched to the South Atlantic. He suggested November as an ideal time for such an operation. But Hitler was not convinced, and he "expounded at length" as to why he wished all the larger units to remain.

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40 Hitler's Secret Conversations, 543. (July 19, 1942.)

41 For particulars, see: Hug, Sea Warfare, 211-16.
in northern waters. After summing up all of his previously expressed arguments about the vulnerability of Norway to amphibious assault, the Führer denied Raeder's request.42

Then at the end of the formal conference, Hitler and Raeder conferred privately. Raeder's views concerning immediate battleship construction were now somewhat altered. The grand admiral suggested to Hitler that no plans should be drawn up for the construction of new-model battleships until after the completion of the naval war between Japan and the United States. Raeder also said that it would perhaps be advisable in any event to design the battleships with guns of the "largest possible caliber."43 This statement was surely designed to appeal to Hitler's desire for ever larger guns. Hitler agreed with Raeder's suggestion but cautioned the grand admiral to insure that everything above deck must be armored. Raeder also asserted that it was now necessary to prepare plans for "... large aircraft carriers and cruisers with flight decks..." Of course, Raeder had often heard these opinions expressed by the Führer before, but apparently he was playing on the Führer's vanity. Although Raeder received Hitler's permission to look into these questions, the course of the war and the grand admiral's resignation prevented

43 Ibid., 104.
Raeder's plans from coming to fruition.

Raeder's resignation came about as the direct result of another surface ship operation in the Arctic, and indirectly because of Raeder's pride and stubbornness. The navy planned an operation similar to the attack on "PG-17". The Lützow, Hipper, and six destroyers sortied at the end of December in 1942 to engage another Allied convoy to Russia. The German squadron greatly outnumbered the Allied escorts of five destroyers and two corvettes. Yet the British vessels, by skillful handling and aggressive tactics, managed to hold the Germans at bay with the loss of only one destroyer. In accordance with his instructions, Vice Admiral Kummetz, commanding the German squadron, disengaged and retired upon the arrival of two British cruisers. During the engagement, the Hipper was damaged and one destroyer sunk. Therefore the losses came out about even, although a great victory should have been achieved by the Germans. To Hitler, this action was further proof of the undue caution with which the navy handled the capital ships.

During the operation, Hitler was unable to receive reports on its progress. Afterward, he still could not obtain information as to its outcome because of a communications breakdown. Finally on the night of December 31, Hitler obtained his first report about the operation - but by way of a Reuter's
news report. He received no information from naval sources until late the following afternoon, and by that time his patience had been sorely tried. Hitler, in a fit of anger, ordered Raeder to report to him and to prepare to scrap all of the big ships. Raeder managed to procrastinate until January 6, 1943 in order to obtain the necessary intelligence about the battle.

Hitler was still angry on the 6th and he launched into a ninety-minute monologue concerning the German navy. He observed that although the navy had been originally patterned after the British Royal Navy (which he admired), it had played no significant role during the wars of 1864, 1866, or 1870-71. Moreover, Hitler said, the High Seas Fleet had made no contribution during World War I. He further asserted that although "it is customary to blame the Kaiser for this inactivity . . .", the real blame lay with the navy’s leadership. The Führer accused the navy of exercising caution to the point of cowardice, and even criticized the scuttling of the fleet at Scapa Flow, an action which was greatly respected throughout the navy. Hitler went on to

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44 This information is derived from Vice Admiral Kranke, the navy’s permanent representative at O.K.W., who is quoted: Martienssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 134-53.


caustically observe that the capital ships were useless; the situation did not permit their idleness, requiring as they did constant protection by the Luftwaffe. Hitler then suggested that the big ships be broken up and their guns used to bolster coastal defenses. Next he suggested rather naively that a scrapping of the capital ships should not be considered by the navy as a degradation:

This would be true only if [I] were removing a fighting unit which had retained its full usefulness. A parallel to this in the Army would be the removal of all Cavalry Divisions.47

This assertion that the capital ships had entirely out-lived their usefulness must have grated hard on the ears of Hitler's naval advisers. Hitler ordered the navy to investigate various problems: should the aircraft carriers which were in planning be retained and, if so, should other vessels be so converted?; should the cruisers (with their greater speed) or should the pocket battleships (because of their more extensive operating radius be retained? Could a larger landing platform be built on the pocket battleships? And finally, where could the heavy guns of these big ships best be mounted on land?

This diatribe and consequent order to decommission the capital ships was a logical development in the pattern in which the Führer's opinions had developed since the early

47Ibid., 2.
years of the war. But Raeder, even though he had the impression that these arguments were not final and Hitler would rescind the order, decided to resign. 48

Accordingly, he requested a private conversation with the Führer. After the other participants had left the room, Raeder said that he no longer felt himself capable of holding the post of commander-in-chief of the navy. 49 Hitler immediately backed down. He had no desire to alienate the grand admiral and through him possibly the entire navy.

The Führer:

immediately tried to tone down very considerably his assertions about the morale of the navy, saying he had not criticized the morale of the navy as such, but he had merely contrasted the U-boat arm with the big ships. 50

But Raeder was adamant. Citing his advanced years and his long service to the Führer, the grand admiral insisted on being relieved. Hitler was still loathe to allow Raeder to quit and he tried to dissuade the grand admiral by pointing

48 Ibid. The summary of this conference was drawn up on January 11, and Raeder recorded that "his final impression was that the Führer, even though he described his decision as final, would reconsider some of his views if sound arguments were presented." This statement is indicative of the ability of Raeder to persuade Hitler to change his mind, and also of Hitler’s willingness generally to allow the navy great freedom.

49 N.C.A., VII, 158-59. (N.D. D-655) This transcript of the conversation does not agree with Raeder’s later account in his memoirs where he asserted that the entire diatribe "... was intended but for one thing - to insult me personally." This contention is dubious at least. See: Raeder, My Life, 371.

50 N.C.A., VII, 158.
out the burdens of his own position (Stalingrad was impending) and that an additional resignation following "... the numerous rumours about pensioning off of the generals" would impose an added strain on him. Raeder stubbornly insisted that his resignation be accepted, but suggested that a scandal might be avoided by kicking him upstairs to a nominally-superior post. This idea was accepted with alacrity by the Führer, and Raeder was accordingly pensioned off with the purely nominal post of Admiralinspekte ("Inspector-Admiral").

Raeder then suggested as replacements Bolf Carls, a "big ship" admiral, or Dönitz, the Oberbefehlshaber der U-Boote. Hitler, since it was his announced intention to emphasize U-boats, chose Dönitz. Raeder's resignation did not become effective until January 30, 1943, and in the interim he composed an extensive memorandum on the proposed decommissioning of the capital ships. All of Raeder's and S.K.L.'s previous arguments were incorporated in the document, but Hitler after reading it did not rescind his decision. 51

The capital ships were still to be scrapped.

But Hitler was only being stubborn. There would certainly be no advantage in alienating the entire navy by paying off the big ships. Not a month later, on February 26, the new commander-in-chief, Dönitz (now promoted to Grand

51 Martenssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 156.
Admiral) returned to the navy's argument. Dönitz reported to Hitler that some of the cruisers were in the process of decommissioning but suggested that the Tirpitz and the Lützow could again serve usefully against the Arctic convoys. Moreover, if the Scharnhorst could be dispatched to Norway, a fairly powerful task force would exist. Hitler sullenly replied that the big ships had continually let him down ("... beginning with the GRAF SPEE, one defeat has followed another"), and that he was strongly opposed to any further commitment of the ships to battle. Dönitz then promised the Führer that there would be ample targets to be found on the Archangel route and the ships in the future would assuredly achieve great successes. Hitler relented and allowed the Scharnhorst to proceed to join the Norwegian forces. But, Hitler sulkily said, no success would result and: 'Even if it should require six months, you will then return and be forced to admit I was right.'

Dönitz feared that his stand on the side of the "big ship" admirals might lead to his dismissal, but actually, he later recorded, from this meeting onward Hitler treated him with "exceptional civility" and henceforth addressed

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53 Ibid.
the grand admiral with "punctilious correctness". The Führer's alteration probably stemmed from his disinclination to offend the navy. The whole scene near the end of 1942 and in early 1943 was due first to Hitler's temper and second to his dislike of being contradicted. Besides, he was an exceptionally stubborn man. Whatever the reason, the order to decommission the capital ships did not last long and was ultimately cancelled never to be revived by the end of February.

Although Dönitz was primarily partial to U-boat strategy (he retained direct command of the U-boat arm even after his accession to the commander-in-chief's position), and henceforth the emphasis in the navy's construction program would lean to this arm, the surface ships continued to operate against the Arctic convoys. They were hampered by a shortage of fuel oil, and consequently few sorties took place. But Hitler henceforth did not attempt to interfere with the tactical operations of the navy.

One of the most dramatic naval operations of the European war took place in Arctic waters near the close of 1943. On December 26, the battle cruiser *Scharnhorst* was sunk by British naval forces while attacking a convoy to Russia. Although the admiral commanding the German squadron

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54 Dönitz, *memoirs*, 311.
committed severe tactical errors during the engagement, Hitler calmly listened to Dönitz’s explanations for the loss of the battle cruiser.\textsuperscript{55} The Führer did not lose his temper on this occasion and no repercussions resulted. The \textit{Scharnhorst} battle was the final engagement of the war between Allied and German capital ships. The pressing fuel problem, the lack of effective radar, the crucial situations developing on the land fronts, and the stepped-up U-boat construction contributed to the final abandonment by the German navy of capital ships.\textsuperscript{56} It is important to note that their ultimate demise was not as a result of Hitler’s orders but rather as a result of perhaps inevitable circumstances. The remaining capital ships were henceforth only used in the Baltic as coastal defense vessels, training ships, or, near the end, transports.

Hitler’s decision in 1943 to lay up the big ships stemmed from temper, frustration, and disillusionment. It was not that he did not understand the simple principle of a “fleet-in-being” as is often asserted. His love for the big ships has been amply recorded, and he studied technical


\textsuperscript{56}The Tirpitz was repeatedly attacked by R.A.F. aircraft until she finally capsized on November 12, 1944. For the fate of all German capital ships, see: Appendix I.
details closely. Hitler was widely and well read in pre-war naval studies such as that of the Battle of Jutland by the British Admiral Harper (The Battle of Jutland). He always kept at hand Jane's Fighting Ships and its German counterpart, Meyer's Handbook of Naval Fleets. But Hitler, characteristically, after becoming disillusioned because of the continual defeats of his capital ships, turned radically and unconditionally against them.

The Führer was always attracted to that which was successful. He was a pragmatic man and certainly not conservative in his outlook and prejudices. When it became apparent to him that air power had sounded the death knell of battleships - "the last of the knights in armor" - he whole-heartedly was willing to scrap battleships and build carriers. Yet, except for a brief fit of pique after the action at the end of 1942, Hitler did not order the navy to abandon the capital ships. He had transferred (over Raeder's objections) the two battle cruisers to Norway, but this strategic decision resulted from his belief that Norway would be the target of an Allied


58 Raeder, My Life, 240.

59 Hitler's Secret Conversations, 654. (June 19, 1943.)
invasion. Also this transfer and his order against further Atlantic sorties lessened the possibility of further humiliating warship losses such as the Graf Spee or the Bismarck. In all fairness to Hitler's views, it must be observed that during World War II the German navy's capital ships did evidence a certain timidity (second only to that of the Italian navy) and undue cautiousness. This characteristic was not only attributable to the navy's awareness of the fact that Hitler's displeasure would surely be incurred if a warship was lost, but also to the very real recognition that Germany only possessed a limited number of capital ships. Moreover, the German navy's surface ships had to operate far from friendly ports where they could be repaired if they were damaged during a naval action. All of these factors, including the additional strategic task of merchant warfare, played a part in the navy's standing order not to engage enemy warships. As has been observed, this order was consistently at variance with Hitler's beliefs. Taking into consideration all of the above reasons, German surface ship commanders often, when facing greatly inferior forces, displayed uncalled for hesitancy and consequently forfeited a number of golden opportunities. 60

Although in his assessment of the capital ships, Hitler's

60 This opinion is supported by the generally-objective study of Great Britain's official naval historian, S. W. Rempill.
opinions were diametrically opposed to those of the navy from 1942 until the end, it is significant that ultimately the naval point of view was to prevail. The capital ship argument was not sufficient to induce Hitler to completely subordinate the navy to his will. After Raeder's resignation, his successor, Dönitz, continued to steer the German navy on a virtually independent course. Moreover, Dönitz's counsel came to be considered with at least the same respect as Hitler had accepted Raeder's. Indeed, Dönitz rapidly emerged as one of the Führer's chief advisers, not only in naval affairs, but in strategic and political problems. Dönitz was able to establish a rapport with Hitler that Raeder, with his aloof and cold manner, had not been able to attain. Raeder's resignation did not substantially damage the navy's prestige with Hitler. His successor actually enhanced the navy's status and it continued to enjoy a privileged position amongst the armed services of the Third Reich.
CHAPTER IX

THE NAVY, NATIONAL SOCIALISM, AND ADOLF HITLER

The German navy enjoyed a somewhat unique status among the armed services in the Third Reich. Of the army, the air force, and the navy, only the latter managed to retain at its head a commander who was not intimately associated with National Socialism. The army eventually succumbed to Hitler's personal command, but even prior to December 1941 when Hitler became its commander-in-chief, various Nazi innovations such as the political indoctrination commissar had become integral parts of its organization. (In the later years of the war, a competitor to the army rapidly developed - the Waffen-SS - which was directly controlled by Heinrich Himmler.) The Luftwaffe, in a large measure the child of Hermann Göring, grew enormously during the Third Reich and really could recall little tradition prior to the advent of Naziism. But the navy under the command first of Erich Raeder and later of Karl Dönitz remained remarkably independent of various regulations and impositions which its sister services
either endured or enjoyed.

The reasons are many and varied. First, the inherent nature of the navy inevitably was reflected in its relationship with the political elements within the state. Navies necessarily are located in coastal regions - peripherally situated about the core of the nation and hence isolated to a degree from internal politics. The nature of the service further produces an awareness of the complex interdependence of nations arising out of international trade. This in turn would produce an urbane attitude. Presumably, many naval officers would be associated with such trade through family ties and might even have been born and raised in a great sea port. Haeder, for example, came from near the ancient Hanseatic sea port of Hamburg. Moreover, navies have long been associated with honor and tradition.

In Germany, where a unified navy had only a brief history, perhaps the emphasis upon such aspects was rather forced as compared to a country where the navy had long been an elite service as in Great Britain. During the years of the empire, the German navy was forced to endure a parvenu existence vis-à-vis its much more greatly esteemed British cousin, and this presumably led to an exaggerated emphasis upon the navy's past glories. In Germany, moreover, the navy was customarily relegated to second-class status under the army, and after the growth of the Luftwaffe was hard-pressed to retain even this

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position.

Second, the German navy had at its helm for a large part of its years under National Socialism a man who intimately and dictatorially guided its destinies—Erich Raeder. Raeder was a conservative officer of the old school, of the navy of Imperial Germany. Narrowly nationalistic, he reflected the navy's resentment of British sea power which checked German overseas expansion. Raeder was essentially a product of the German navy as it had been under Admiral von Tirpitz and Kaiser Wilhelm II and was one of those who deeply regretted the destruction of the imperial form of government and its replacement by the Weimar Republic. After his succession to the command of the navy in 1928, for example, Raeder created a minor political crisis by publicly toasting the Kaiser's health at a reception given in honor of the appointment. 2 Although Raeder later recorded in his memoirs that he and all other "responsible naval officers" were convinced by the Kapp Putsch in 1920 to give their unconditional loyalty to the government in power, 3 in so far as Raeder was concerned this was certainly not true. As had been demonstrated, naval rearmament during Raeder's seniority in the Weimar Republic was clandestine not only from


3 Raeder, My Life, 113. Actually Raeder made an effort to induce naval officers to support the putsch and as a result was relegated to the Department of Naval Archives for two years. See: Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, 190.
Allied investigators but from the legally constituted government of Germany. But it is worth mentioning that Raeder and the navy did not participate per se in any of the plots against Hitler.

A third factor to consider in assessing the navy's relationship to the political structure of the Third Reich is Hitler's mentality. The Führer admired the navy and held Raeder in high esteem. He took considerable interest in technical considerations and was well read in naval matters. He often referred casually to matters pertaining to naval affairs. During the war for example, the Führer once reminisced about the difficulty of purchasing a naval book in Munich before World War I.  

Hitler respected Raeder and placed considerable stock in the naval officer's opinions. Generally, Raeder was able to make use of his great prestige to institute policy within the navy and to keep the navy isolated from political influences. Raeder later wrote that he would have brooked no interference, even from Hitler, in such internal affairs "... for the Commander in Chief ... has a responsibility that he can share with no one."  

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4 *Hitler's Secret Conversations*, 196. (April 24, 1942.) Hitler said:

I am not at all sure that the inadequacies of our High Command in 1914-18 have not had their origins in the indifference of the whole German people towards naval warfare. I well remember how difficult it was in 1912, in a town like Munich, to buy a book on the Navy or the colonies.

The navy welcomed Hitler's accession to power. The Versailles Treaty had been exceedingly harsh in its naval articles, and the navy chafed under the restrictions. Hitler presumably was aware of the navy's desires. Raeder asserted that Hitler's initial "noticeable good-will" toward the navy stemmed from the influence of Rear Admiral von Levetzow who joined the party in its early stages. According to Raeder, von Levetzow associated with Hitler in order to insure that the Führer "... gained a better understanding of the Navy." 7

There was also a sociological factor in the unusual rapport Hitler developed with the navy. Unlike the army, the navy had never been attractive to the nobility. Hitler really never felt at ease with the Junkers among his generals and, as reflected by his critical opinion of the Italian Royal House, had only contempt for royalty and the higher nobility. But in the navy the higher echelon of command (and also therefore presumably the lower) was overwhelmingly bourgeois. For example in 1939, of thirty-two admirals of all grades, only four were "vons". 8 Further, in May 1940, of the twelve full admirals or above, only one was of the nobility. 9 The navy's bourgeois nature

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6Ibid., 240. See also: K.C.A., VIII, 707. (Statement IX)

7Ibid.

8Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 257.

9Taylor, March of Conquest, 412-13. (Table 5: Navy Rank and Assignment List: May 1940.)
The armed forces therefore regarded the situation with some alarm. The impact later worked

want to assure the armed forces that Hitler turned upon the

The armistice had been bitterly criticized. It is probable that the

appealed that the „Red Army“ and „socialist state“ were the

and that the „Red Army“ and the „socialist state“ were the

when Hitler in the „blood purge“ of June 30, 1934 ordered the

majority of the other loosely linked armed forces. Therefore,

by external phenomena, was disoriented not only by the army, but by the

was one such element. This paralyzing organizational, command

„flanker“ („Streitaktionskreis der Armee. or storm troops“)

read to elements in national socialism with some disdain and

Hitler and the armistice were regarded as mere

But although the army was reportedly involved toward

appointment of certain persons were welcomed in the army.

since the support of the communists was unimpassioned, Hitler's

only two alternatives: either the Reds or the Communists,

that at the time of Hitler's accession, despite business and professional attitudes, encountered the "Red

which inevitably led to a certain amount of conflict with

253
But as the Nazi Party consolidated its position friction inevitably occurred.

The growing persecution of the Jews exploded into a shameful excess in 1938. The immediate cause was the assassination in Paris of a minor German consular official, Ernst von Rath, by a refugee German Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, on November 7, 1938. This incident provided the excuse for launching a monstrous pogrom in Germany on the night of November 9 — the so-called "crystal night" because of the amount of broken glass resulting — and resulted in the damaging of thousands of Jewish homes and shops, the burning of synagogues, and the deaths of a number of Jews as a result of the "spontaneous demonstrations". 12

The pogrom was generally resented throughout the navy. Dönitz immediately conveyed his protests to the commander-in-chief of the navy via Admiral Böhm, Dönitz's immediate superior. His protestations were based on the assumption that such excesses did not conform with the honor of the officers' corps and therefore must be repudiated. 13 Other officers, according to Raeder, also made representations to the commander-in-chief pointing out the "... damaging effect of these anti-Jewish outrages on public opinion abroad." 14 Raeder then personally

complained to Hitler, but was assured that "the lawless outbreaks" represented a violation of the Führer's "... plans and policies as well as his personal beliefs ... ." Raeder was satisfied that the incident had arisen out of "only a popular retaliation" for von Raths' death and let the matter rest. Apparently Raeder had not read Mein Kampf.

Although Raeder and Dönitz got on exceedingly well with Hitler, neither was able more than to tolerate other high officials such as Göring and Himmler. The friction with Göring arose out of the Reichsmarschall's desire to control all spheres of aviation. There was never more than tacit cooperation between Göring and Raeder throughout the war, and on various occasions it was necessary for Hitler to intervene personally to settle their quarrels. For instance, in June 1940 Göring sent an insulting telegram to Raeder criticizing the German navy's role in Übung. Raeder was infuriated and immediately complained to Hitler. Göring was forced to apologize in a humiliating letter in which he begged Raeder to destroy the offending telegram and to keep his written apology strictly confidential.16

Raeder's opinion of Göring is best demonstrated by the following passage from his written statement at Nuremberg:

15Ibid.
16The text of the letter is published in: Martiensen, Hitler and His Admirals, 252-53. (Appendix III)
The person Goering had a disastrous effect on the fate of the German Reich. His main peculiarities were unimaginable vanity and immeasurable ambition, running after popularity and showing off, untruthfulness, impracticability and selfishness, which were not restrained for the sake of state or people. He was outstanding in his greed, wastefulness, and soft unsoldierly manner.\(^\text{17}\)

When Raeder tendered his resignation in 1943, he said to Hitler: "Please protect the Navy and my successor against Göring!"

 Dönitz, as Raeder's successor, actually needed little "protection" from Göring. The grand admiral's star rose steadily concurrently with Göring's loss of favor. Numerous incidents occurred between Göring and Dönitz which led to bad relations, and one is particularly illustrative. Early in 1941, Dönitz protested through Raeder to Hitler concerning the status of aircraft attached to U-boat command for aerial reconnaissance purposes.\(^\text{18}\) Dönitz demanded the control of a number of long-range reconnaissance aircraft. Hitler, without consulting Göring, placed a group under Dönitz's personal command.

When Göring learned of the decision he sought out Dönitz at the latter's command post in France and entreated the admiral to agree to a cancellation of the Führer's order.

\(^\text{17}\) N.C.A., VIII, 712. (Statement IX)

 Dönitz refused and the two parted "bad friends."

Göring had never held the high command of the navy in high esteem, and the recurring incidents in which Hitler took the navy's part surely added to the Reichsmarschall's dislike. It would perhaps not be too much to observe that an element of jealousy was involved in the relationship. The navy was preempting Göring's and the Luftwaffe's favored position with the Führer.

Relationships between the admirals and other highly placed officials in somewhat more complex. It is generally safe to observe that Dönitz was compatible with Reichsführer SS Himmler and Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels. Raeder, on the other hand, was outspokenly contemptible during his seniority of both Goebbels and Himmler. The grand admiral regarded these men as morally despicable and generally held himself aloof from such types. On the part of Goebbels, at least, the dislike was reciprocated. The propaganda minister's diary abounds with caustic observations about Raeder.

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19 Dönitz, Memoirs, 136-38.

20 Affidavit of Walter Ciese, administrative assistant in Raeder's Berlin office in: N.C.A., Supplement 6, 945. (N.D. L-722) Raeder also did not care for Dönitz. In his post-war statements he was extremely critical of Dönitz, even going so far as to call him "Hitlerboy Dönitz." See: N.C.A., VIII, 730.

21 See, for examples: The Goebbels Diaries, 184, 286, and 312. Presumably Himmler also felt little affinity with Raeder since the former's chief henchman, Reinhard Heinrich, later commander of the SS (Sicherheitsdienst - Security Service within SS) was cashiered from the navy in 1931 by Raeder for refusing to marry a woman he had compromised.
Although Raeder was not liked in the party hierarchy, this did not affect his status with Hitler. Raeder was able generally to prevent the introduction of political innovations into the navy where a less strong-willed and stubborn man might have failed. For instance, naval personnel who violated the law were tried in naval courts. After the Blomberg-Fritsch crisis in 1938, the pace of the proliferation of Nazi officials and organizations increased. Objections then were raised against allegedly harsh treatment of naval personnel who were also Nazi Party members in the naval courts. Raeder personally intervened in the disputes to establish the rule that all complaints would have to be made to himself through the Office of the Deputy to the Führer. Thus, Raeder prevented interference in naval affairs by raising a somewhat insignificant problem to the level of high command.\(^{22}\) In the navy, this independence of naval violators from civil authority was maintained even under Dönitz. He has asserted that because of his refusal to accept an order from Hitler that cases of sedition in the Wehrmacht should be transferred to the jurisdiction of the People's Court, Hitler modified the order to exclude the navy.\(^{23}\)

Raeder's influence managed to maintain the independence of the Navy from Nazi influence in yet another sphere - that of religion. Raeder was an extremely pious man of the Lutheran

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\(^{22}\)Raeder, My Life, 217.

\(^{23}\)Donitz, Memoirs, 313. See also: T.N.W.C., XIII, 440.
faith. Under the Weimar constitution, service personnel could not be ordered to attend church services. Therefore Raeder and his officers attended regularly in order to establish a "custom" to influence the men to religious observance. But after the advent of National Socialism, the Christian faith itself was threatened.

Ludwig Müller, an ardent supporter of the Nazi doctrine of race, was appointed personal adviser to Hitler in 1933. Müller had once been a naval chaplain and hence was familiar to Raeder. The grand admiral did not approve of Hitler's selection and "bluntly" questioned the Führer as to the reasons for the appointment. Hitler informed Raeder that he had selected Müller because the latter was very "energetic". Moreover, Hitler stated his intention to "... bring the Lutheran Church back to an even position with the Catholic Church, to which it had lost ground during the Weimar Republic." Raeder apparently was satisfied

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24 United States Army Chaplain Henry F. Gerecke who attended the Protestants at the first Nuremberg trial said that Raeder "... was the best lay Bible student he had ever encountered anywhere ...." See note by: Louis P. Lochner, ed., The Goebbels Diaries, 286.

25 Raeder, My Life, 124.

26 Ibid., 257-58.

with Hitler's explanations and attributed the excesses which followed in the religious sphere to the Führer's over-zealous followers, particularly Joseph Goebbels.

The persecution of the Churches continued, as did the attempt to subordinate all Protestant churches to the "German Christians' Faith Movement". To Raeder, this organization seemed "... more closely akin to the super-race myth of the Nordic gods than to any aspect of the gentle Christ."28 Raeder became alarmed for the status of his naval chaplains by the gradual infiltration and consolidation of the "German Christians' Faith Movement". Therefore, in 1934 when Hitler made a political speech at Hamburg in which the Führer promised to safeguard the doctrines of the religions within the Third Reich, Raeder seized the opportunity to forbid naval personnel from participating in the "German Christians' Faith Movement".29

The affair of Pastor Martin Niemöller again brought Raeder into disagreement with Hitler. Niemöller had been a much-decorated and popular U-boat commander during World War I. In 1933, he was among those who welcomed the National Socialist government as a necessary change, disillusioned as he was with parliamentary democracy and the growth of the left.

28Ibid. For an exposition of National Socialist policies regarding the Christian churches, see Martin Bormann's decree of December 12, 1941: "Relationship of National Socialism and Christianity", NAC, VI, 1035-39.

29Ibid., 259.
But the early excesses alienated him and he soon turned from an ardent supporter to a hostile critic of the régime. Niemöller broke with the established church to lead a group of pastors in the "Confessional Church" which opposed the Nazification and denounced the racial tenets of Goebbels and Rosenberg. Niemöller suffered persecution and ultimately was arrested and tried. He was acquitted of sedition but found guilty of "abuse of the pulpit". Since he had languished in prison awaiting trial for a longer period of time than he was sentenced to serve, he was released. But he was then immediately re-arrested and sent to a concentration camp by the Gestapo.

During the ordeal of Niemöller, Raeder constantly interceded with Hitler on the pastor's behalf. The admiral managed to obtain permission for a high-ranking naval officer, Admiral von Lans, to visit Niemöller at Cranenburg concentration camp where he was being confined. Admiral von Lans prevailed upon the pastor to give a written promise that he would cease all political activity. Such a promise "... would almost certainly secure his release." But to no avail; Niemöller refused to compromise himself, and Raeder and the navy appear to have taken no further action.

The attempts at infiltrating the naval chaplain's corps seem to be of a petty nature, and Raeder was able to maintain

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30This material is loosely based on: Shirer, The Rise and Fall, 234-40.

31Raeder, My Life, 260-61.
the independence of the navy in religious affairs throughout his tenure. One typical harassment which the navy faced in this sphere arose out of the content of its religious texts. The Nazi bureaucracy cut off the supply of hymn books which Raeder had supplied free to all personnel, another example of the grand admiral's piety. The navy retaliated by preparing a new edition, and after being refused permission by Goebbels for its printing, printed the hymn books itself outside of Germany. 32

Raeder was thus able to thwart the Nazi attempts at totalitarianizing the Protestant churches in so far as the navy was concerned and this did not please Dr. Goebbels. Raeder had made an enemy of Goebbels, and the propaganda minister henceforth did not alter his unfavorable opinion of Raeder. For instance, on April 25, 1942 Goebbels recorded his disbelief of the German navy's explanation for the damage of several vessels in Kiel harbor from air attack. He maliciously ascribed the happening to Raeder's piety:

The leadership of the German navy isn't what it ought to be. There is too much praying going on there and too little work. 33

Apparently Hitler also had little respect for Grand Admiral Raeder's religious attitude, although it is significant that the Führer never confronted Raeder personally with his

32 Ibid.
33 The Goebbels Diaries, 184. (April 25, 1942.)
criticisms. But behind Raeder's back and a few months after the grand admiral's resignation, Hitler gossiped on Raeder's religious beliefs with Goebbels:

The Fuehrer then told me a few funny stories about Grand Admiral Raeder and his somewhat bigoted Christianity which - that I [Goebbels] hadn't known before - is not anchored in the Church but rests on pure fantasy.34

At any rate, Hitler never attempted to override the authority of Raeder in this sphere, and naval chaplains remained free of party influence. Moreover, the navy's church organization not only remained free and active, but expanded during the course of the war.35

Although Raeder's formal belief in Christianity seems unquestionable, his morality leaves something to be desired. There is no record that he offered any opposition to the notorious "commando order" issued by Hitler on October 18, 1942. This order, in part, stated:

From now on all enemies on so-called Commando missions in Europe or Africa challenged by German troops, even if they are to all appearances soldiers in uniform or demolition troops, whether armed or unarmed, in battle or in flight, are to be slaughtered to the last man. It does not make any difference whether they are landed from ships or aeroplanes for their actions, or whether they are dropped by parachute.36

34Ibid., 286. (March 9, 1943.)

35Raeder, My Life, 263.

36N.C.A.A., VI, 1015. (N.D. C-179) This is a reproduction of S.K.L.'s copy, checked and signed by Admiral Wagner. He ordered the navy to pass the directive to lower levels of command verbally and to ensure the destruction of the order by higher commanders.
Not only was no protest made against a directive contrary to the accepted rules and customs of war, but the navy conscientiously carried it out. On December 22, 1942, the navy executed two saboteurs at Bordeaux, France, although the SD had requested delay of the executions so that the prisoners could be interrogated.\(^{37}\) As a consequence, the navy was ordered in the future to turn "Delinquents" over to the SD "to be shot". Various other incidents also occurred and apparently SD received inquiries from subordinate commands as to how the order was to be interpreted.

On February 11, 1943, SD circulated a memorandum to subordinate commands in order to clear up any possible ambiguity concerning the order. SD explained "that the shooting of uniformed prisoners acting on military orders must be carried out even after they have surrendered and asked for pardon."\(^{38}\) It then defined what categories of combatants could be considered as falling within the jurisdiction of the order. The criteria were announced as only excluding those troops "... participating in large scale landing operations and large scale air borne operations."\(^{39}\)

The barbarous order was accepted by the navy and apparently no

\(^{37}\text{Ibid.},\ 1011-12.\ (N.D. C-176)\)

\(^{38}\text{Ibid.},\ 1013.\ (N.D. C-178)\)

\(^{39}\text{Ibid.}\ (\text{Emphasis in original.})\)
protests based on moral considerations were made. 40

While Raeder commanded the navy, he attempted to keep the internal structure of the service free from political activities. And generally he succeeded. But his successor, Dönitz, was not of the same mentality as Raeder. Although both were primarily concerned with the navy and while both admired Hitler to a degree, Dönitz was less traditional in his outlook and therefore more attuned to the radical ideas of the Nazi Party. Dönitz moreover fell under the magnetic influence of the Führer to a much greater extent than had his predecessor. Although Dönitz was never a member of the party - as a serving officer this was prohibited to him - he reversed Raeder's policy of political aloofness and demanded that the navy subscribe to National Socialism. This action was directly antithetical to the tradition of von Seeckt, the general who commanded the army during the Weimar Republic, and apparently Dönitz was the only senior officer to so advocate in the navy. On February 15, 1944, in a speech to the commanders-in-chief, Dönitz said:

From the very start the whole of the officer corps must be so indoctrinated that it feels itself coresponsible for the National Socialist state in its entirety. The officer is the exponent of the state, the idle chatter that the officer is nonpolitical is sheer nonsense. 41

40 At Nuremberg, Raeder offered no defence other than that of necessity for the order. See T.M.W.C., XIV, 214.
41 N.C.A., VII, 116. (M.N. P-640)
This attitude was certainly unique among the officers of the high command of the Wehrmacht. Dönitz, at this late date, was going farther than most of the generals and admirals had ever advocated. A few days earlier, on February 12, Dönitz had expressed his fears over the radio to the entire German nation:

What would have become of our country today, if the Fuehrer had not united us under National-Socialism? Split into parties, beset with the spreading poison of Jewry and vulnerable to it, and lacking, as a defense, our present uncompromising world outlook, we would long since have succumbed to the burdens of this war and been subject to the merciless destruction of our adversaries.\(^{42}\)

Dönitz certainly was one of the most vocal of the naval officers and a few months later he would once again take to the air in outraged indignation.

The occasion was the attempted assassination of Hitler on July 20, 1944.\(^{43}\) A group of conspiratorial army officers, sparked by Klaus Philip Schenk, Count von Stauffenberg, attempted to eliminate Hitler and seize control of the state with the ostensibly purpose of ending the war. There had been previous attempts, but none came so close to success as the “July 20” conspiracy. The plan proposed the killing of Hitler by means of a bomb planted at his field headquarters during one of the daily military situation conferences. Berlin

\(^{42}\)NAC: V, 541. (N.D. PS-2878)

\(^{43}\)For an account of the plot, see: Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis of Power.
was then to be seized by army troops under the command of
the conspirators and a new government proclaimed.

The bomb was deposited virtually at the Führer's
feet by von Stauffenberg, but in the resulting explosion
Hitler escaped with superficial injuries. The conspirators
managed to seize control of military headquarters in Berlin
for a brief period, but due to various factors, including
inexpertise, the coup d'état was quickly suppressed. The
navy took no part in the actual conspiracy but played a
major role in subduing the revolt which took place in Paris.

In Paris, General von Stulpnagel, the Military
Governor of France, upon receiving word of Hitler's assassi-
nation (the conspirators initially believed that Hitler had
been killed), arrested and incarcerated 1,200 SS and SD officers
and men. Admiral Kranke, the commander-in-chief of naval
forces in the west with headquarters in Paris, discovered
the action taken by the military. After communicating with
both Jodlitz and Keitel, and having assured himself that the
revolt had failed and the Führer was still alive, Kranke
threatened Field Marshal von Kluge that if the Commander-in-Chief,

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44 Excepting Captain Alfred Kranzfelder, and Admiral
Generals who was technically a member of the navy but had
commanded the Abwehr (Military Intelligence Section of S.K.W.)
until February 18, 1944, when his office had been dissolved as
the result of compromise in a prior conspiracy.

45 For an excellent account of the revolt in the west,
see: Hilbert von Lohmar, Conspiracy Among Generals, trans.
West did not take action to suppress von Stulpnagel's treason, he would do so with the extensive naval units which he had under his control and in the vicinity of Paris. This threat effectively stirred von Kluge (who had been toying with the conspiracy himself) into action, and orders were issued for the release of the SS. 46

During the same evening, July 20, Dönitz broadcast a special message expressing his "... unequivocal disapproval of the attempted coup." 47 The following day, Dönitz addressed the navy:

Men of the Navy: Holy wrath and unlimited anger fill our hearts because of the criminal attempt which would have cost the life of our beloved Führer.

An insane small clique of generals which has nothing in common with our gallant army contemplated this murder in cowardly faithlessness committing the basest of treachery [sic] towards the Führer and the German people.

The Navy remained faithful to its oath in proven loyalty to the Führer, unconditionally prepared for engagements and battles. It takes orders only from me, the supreme naval commander, and from its own military leaders in order to guard against being misled by false instructions. It will recklessly destroy anyone who shows himself to be a traitor. 48

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47 Dönitz, *Röstige*, 403.

A few days later on July 24, Dönitz, Göring, and Keitel, presumably to express further the loyalty of the Wehrmacht to the Führer, formally requested the introduction of the 'German salute' into use in the armed forces. "The Führer granted the request of the armed forces and gave his approval."49

Raeder, for his part, thought the plot was "despicable, wholly unsoldierly behavior"50 and immediately flew to Hitler's headquarters to express his loyalty. Raeder met with Hitler on July 22 and assured the Führer of his fidelity and explained "... that [he] was prepared at any time to throw away [his] life for the German people ..."51 Upon taking leave of the Führer, Raeder took the opportunity to fully demonstrate his loyalty. He had lunched alone with Hitler and had had a loaded revolver in his pocket throughout the meal. After eating, Raeder took to task Hitler's personal SS guards for their sloppy security and presumably demonstrated thereby to Hitler that if he had not been incontestably loyal, or had been involved in the conspiracy, an assassination could have easily taken place.

Therefore the navy was not involved in the coup of July 20 to overthrow Hitler, nor was it involved in any of the other groups or plots. One reason is that the navy was fighting a war in the west where the hopeless position of the Third

49Ibid., 543.
50N.C.A., VIII, 726. (Statement IX)
51Ibid.
Reich was not yet apparent. New weapons such as the electro-U-boats and the schnorkel device offered a measure of hope in the war at sea. The navy had little contact with the immense and brutal struggle on the eastern front and knew little of the excesses perpetrated in the eastern occupied territories by the SS. But also the navy was, institutionally, generally less hostile to the Nazi régime than was the army. Dönitz, for one, continued to believe unreservedly in the Führerprinzip and staunchly maintained his loyalty to the Führer and the régime.

As far as other excesses of the Nazis such as those perpetrated in the concentration camps, Dönitz and Raeder have since maintained that they knew nothing. They were of course aware of the existence of the camps. In 1944, when Dönitz commanded the navy, S.K.L. recorded plans to further increase allocation of personnel resources for naval construction in which 12,000 concentration camp prisoners were to be employed in shipyards. S.K.L. had previously obtained the consent of the SS to fulfill the request.\(^52\) Raeder had knowledge of the camps even in pre-war days during his intercessions on the part of Niemöller, but his most shocking experience came about as a direct result of the "July 20" plot. Among the thousands arrested after the crushing of the coup was Otto Gessler, the former Weimar Minister of Defence. Gessler

\(^{52}\) N.G.A., VI, 1022-23. (N.D. C-195)
wrote to Raeder requesting the grand admiral to arrange a meeting with Hitler so as to prove the minister's innocence of complicity in the "July 20" plot.

Hitler agreed to the meeting, but in the interim Raeder was informed by the SS that Gessler had admitted prior knowledge of the attempted assassination. Thereupon Raeder discontinued his efforts to assist his former superior. But in March 1945 Gessler was released from a concentration camp, and Raeder visited him in the hospital where the former was now necessarily confined. Gessler was living evidence of the tortures which went on within the camps and Raeder was appalled. Moreover, Gessler minutely recounted his experience as well as that of other prisoners. Raeder felt that some protest was in order and consequently he took off his Golden Party Badge which he had worn since 1937.53 The English historian, Wheeler-Bennett, wrote of this act: "Such was the honour of the Officers Corps."54

As to the extermination of Jews and other atrocities which went on in the concentration camps, Raeder later asserted that he had had no knowledge of the barbarities. Not only did Raeder not know, but "had anyone in the Navy even suspected what was going on in the concentration camps . . ."55

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54 Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis of Power, 696.
55 Raeder, My Life, 264-65.
the grand admiral would have assuredly been informed. This statement is at least dubious. Although the navy was generally isolated from the camps, it is doubtful that the enormity of the "Final solution" could have been kept absolutely secret, especially from the commander-in-chief of one of the armed services. Moreover, proof exists that at least one naval base had cognizance of the murdering of Jews. The Naval Administration Inspector (Marine-Verwaltungs-Inspektor) and officer in command of Naval Quartermaster Stores in Libau, Latvia, Walter Kurt Dietmann, composed a deposition accusing the naval high command of knowledge of atrocities. Dietmann asserted that "thousands of Jews" were "evacuated" by the Gestapo from his area between August 1941 and April 1942. Many were machine-gunned in full sight of naval personnel and townspeople. Dietmann claimed that he complained to various superiors but no action was taken. He further asserted that many naval officers were directly involved or participated in the incidents. It is perhaps important to note that, at Nuremberg, defence counsel for Raeder made no factual objections to the document.57

Thus it is apparent that Raeder used his influence with Hitler sparingly. He only intervened in matters which directly affected the administration or organization of the navy or his own personal tenets. Raeder has recorded that

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56 N.C.A., Supplement A, 963-65. (N.D. D-841)
57 T.N.H.C., XIV, 211-13, and 238-41.
his influence was great and that the navy enjoyed great prestige in the Third Reich, so much so, in fact, that the Nazi Party "... considered it 'good taste' to keep on good terms with the Navy."58 Raeder apparently blinded himself to the excesses of the Hitler régime, perhaps considering that the long-term benefit to Germany would justify the short-run atrocity. Assuredly, the grand admiral was an honorable man and surely was sincerely horrified at the barbarities perpetrated in Germany especially during the latter years of the war. But if this assumption is correct, the explanation for his avoidance of the issue must lie elsewhere.

 Dönitz, on the other hand, was so completely enamored of Hitler that the light emitted by his adoration of the Führer would have been sufficient to dazzle his vision in other matters. Not only did Dönitz enjoy as great a prestige as his predecessor with Hitler, but he ultimately came to have the highest honor bestowed upon him and the navy by a grateful Führer — that of becoming the second and last Führer of the Third Reich.

 The navy therefore enjoyed a privileged position in Nazi Germany. It maintained an independent position politically just as it consistently was able to pursue an independent course militarily. The navy loyally followed the destinies

\[58\text{N.C.A.}, \text{VIII}, 711. (\text{Statement IX)}\]
of Hitler and the Third Reich until the very end of the régime. And in the final days of Götterdämmerung, the navy eventually received its reward. Of all the services in Nazi Germany, even including the SS, the navy emerged as the sole arm thought by Hitler to be worthy of the trust and responsibility of carrying on the thousand-year Reich.
CHAPTER X

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

In September 1943, the capitulation of Italy and the invasion of continental Europe by Allied forces portended the fate of Nazi Germany. The Allies had seized the offensive on all fronts: in Italy where a long drawn-out campaign continued until the very end of the war, in the East where the Russian juggernaut was inexorably grinding forward, across the English Channel where an enormous invasion army was in the process of assembly, and in the Battle of the Atlantic where new technological devices and air power were sweeping the U-boats from the sea. But in the latter arena, German hopes had begun to rise that the U-boat could again prove useful and perhaps decisive for the conduct of the war.

The previous year the U-boat had first proven its great value when committed in sufficient numbers and operating in Dönitz's "wolf pack" tactics. The German navy, or more specifically Dönitz, had not been able to secure what was felt to be the necessary allocation of resources for U-boat
construction. Since the first day of the war, he had bombarded his superiors with memoranda contending that the war against Britain could only be won by radically expanding the U-boat arm. But Dönitz had not been able to secure Raeder's full support nor Hitler's permission for his proposals until the spring of 1940 - and then only a limited program was anticipated. The navy planned a building program aimed at commissioning 29 U-boats per month, but in March 1940 Raeder reduced this figure to 25.1 Actually, this construction quota was not even approached until the end of 1941 when in a three month period 69 U-boats were commissioned. Similarly, the German navy which had had 49 operational boats in September 1939 did not again possess a like amount until July 1942.2

One reason for what Dönitz regarded as the agonizingly slow and limited expansion of the U-boat service was Hitler's initial belief that the war would be short. Each successive campaign begun by the Führer had been aimed at ending the war through either defeating his enemies or attaining a position of impregnable strategic power. But the stubborn resistance of Britain and Hitler's increasing involvement in other schemes in the summer of 1940 indicated that the war could conceivably continue for some time. Another attempt was made in Barbarossa to bring Germany to hegemony in Europe and

1Dönitz, Memoirs, 125.
2Roskill, The Defensive, 614, (Appendix G)
convince the British to come to terms, but by 1942 the course of this campaign also indicated that the war would not soon end.

In 1942, Hitler finally came to view the U-boat as of decisive importance for the conduct of the war. An expanded service (250 U-boats) and the entrance of the United States into the war aided the U-boats in achieving great success in the war on merchant shipping. Along the coast of the United States, a multitude of targets became available to the now-unrestricted U-boats. The United States was not prepared for the onslaught, and many months passed before convoys were instituted within the extensive American coastal traffic. This was known among the U-boat skippers as the "happy time". The newly instituted convoys to Murmansk also provided welcome targets for the U-boats. And in the North Atlantic, the availability of sufficient U-boats had at last provided Dönitz with the opportunity of instituting effective "wolf pack" tactics. In 1942, U-boats alone sent to the bottom 1,160 ships of total tonnage of 6,266,215 tons. Other causes added a further 504 ships which brought the total score for 1942 to 7,850,697 tons.

Success impressed the Führer, and in 1942 Dönitz

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3 Martienssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 133, erroneously records that the German navy had 250 U-boats available in January 1942. Actually only 91 of these were operational, the remainder being in trials or training.

4 Kemp, Key to Victory, 274.
first began to appear at Führer Headquarters (with Raeder) to report in person to Hitler. For instance, on September 28 a major conference on U-boat warfare was called in the Reichs Chancellery. Raeder, Dönitz, four vice admirals, and Keitel met with Hitler to review the conducting of merchant warfare and to lay down future policy. Hitler opened the conference with the remark that he wished to be briefed on current U-boat operations and then stated "... his great appreciation for the achievements of the submarine." This remark is to be contrasted with Hitler's previous attitude of dis-interest edness. Hitler pursued his theme of U-boat significance by first denying as Allied propaganda the reports of increased naval construction in Allied shipyards and second by advocating the killing of the crews of sunken vessels. These crews, the Führer said, if rescued, would soon be able "... to go to sea again on new ships."

The killing of merchant crews is a recurrent theme with both Hitler and Dönitz. Hitler, in a conversation with Japanese Ambassador Oshima on January 3, 1942, stated that to discourage recruiting and to deprive the Allies of re-enlistments, "U-boats were to surface after torpedoing and shoot up lifeboats." Again on September 6, 1942, Hitler

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6 Ibid.
7 N.C.A., III, 290. (N.D. P8-382)
in one of his table talks expressed these brutal and
callous opinions:

It is essential that we should give the
British as good as we get, an eye for an eye
and a tooth for a tooth. We must straightway
declare that from now on pilots descending by
parachute will be fired on, that submarines
will shell survivors from torpedoed ships,
regardless of whether they are soldiers or
civilians, women or children.\footnote{Hitler's Secret Conversations, 646.}

Dönitz was of like opinion. On September 17, 1942,
he issued, ostensibly as a result of the \textit{Laconia} incident,\footnote{The British liner \textit{Laconia}, with a British crew of 436 men, 268 British personnel (including women and children), 160 Polish ex-prisoners-of-war, and 1,800 Italian prisoners-of-war on board, was sunk by U-156 on September 12, 1942. German U-boats converged on the scene to conduct rescue operations after the position had been broadcast in clear by U-156. On September 16, U-156 was attacked by American aircraft while under Red Cross flag and damaged while transporting (on the surface) survivors. See log of U-156 in: \textit{T.M.Z.C.}, XL, 30-8. (N.D. ICHIZ-20)}
the following order to all U-boats:

\textbf{To: All commanding officers}

1. No attempt of any kind must be made at rescuing
members of ships sunk and this includes picking up
persons in the waters and putting them in lifeboats,
righting capsized lifeboats and handing over food
and water. Rescue runs counter to the rudimentary
demands of warfare for the destruction of enemy
ships and crews.

2. The attention of all commanding officers is again
drawn to the fact that all efforts to rescue members
of the crews of ships which have been sunk contradict
the most primitive demands for the conduct of warfare
by annihilating enemy ships and their crews.\footnote{N.C.A., VII, 100. (N.D. D-630)}
At the end of September, Dönitz in a speech to the training division at Gotenhafen—Grömitz again elaborated on these views.\textsuperscript{11}

In all fairness, it must be said that American submarines in the Pacific theater of war instituted un-restricted submarine warfare from December 7, 1941 and "... did not rescue enemy survivors if undue additional hazard to the submarine resulted or the submarine would thereby be prevented from accomplishing its further mission."\textsuperscript{12} Such is the nature of warfare in the twentieth century.

Returning to the conference of September 28, after Hitler finished speaking, Dönitz made a résumé of the situation with regard to U-boats. He stressed the power and danger evidenced by the Allied air forces and the new technical devices which were causing great losses.\textsuperscript{13} Dönitz mentioned the experimental Walther U-boat which promised to offset the growing Allied air superiority. These electrically-driven U-boats could travel submerged at a speed of 17 knots per hour. In the interim, the "schnerkel", a device to allow U-boats to run submerged on diesels, would be installed.

\textsuperscript{11} Affidavit of Oberleutnant zur See Peter Joseph Heisig, N.C.A., VII, 73. (N.D. D-566)

\textsuperscript{12} Testimony of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, U. S. Navy, in: T.M.W.C., XL, 110. (N.T. DONITZ-100)

\textsuperscript{13} F.C.N.A., 1942, 118-19. One of the most dangerous of the Allied inventions was airborne radar which permitted aircraft to attack U-boats at night while running surfaced to and from patrol in the Bay of Biscay.
Hitler fully supported these views, especially the introduction of the U-boat which he felt would have a "revolutionary effect". Innovations and daring solutions inherently attracted the Führer. A radical proposal to meet a problem often brought his whole-hearted support whereas a moderate solution might arouse only his contempt. And thus it was that Hitler became an ever more dogmatic supporter of Dönitz's U-boats. This attitude is reflected by the Führer's selection of Dönitz to replace Raeder in January 1943.

Typical of Dönitz's almost single-minded belief in U-boats as the means of winning the war are the opinions he expressed to Hitler on April 11, 1943. The grand admiral argued that losses in relation to sinkings were becoming prohibitively heavy. More U-boats was his solution to the problem. Hitler agreed, and after extensive negotiations between Minister for Arms and Munitions Speer (who by this time had autocratic control of Germany's war economy) and Dönitz, a greatly expanded program of U-boat construction was implemented. Initially, the plan scheduled the construction of forty U-boats per month.

Dönitz's arguments and influence were paramount at

14Ibid., 119.
16Dönitz, Memoirs, 348-53.
this time. Indicative of Hitler's new faith in Unterseeboote is Goebbels's recorded comment: "The Fuehrer is firmly convinced that submarine warfare has not reached the end of its development, but is only at its beginning." But by May 16, Goebbels again recorded some thoughts on U-boat warfare which now was not so encouraging:

"Developments in the realm of submarine warfare are very disagreeable. . . . we shall have to accustom ourselves to the thought that submarine warfare, at least for the present, has taken a turn that is unfavorable to us. The enemy air force, especially, is causing our submarines much trouble and worry."

This turn of events caused a major crisis in the German war effort. Hitler was extremely concerned, and Dönitz accordingly reported to the Fuehrer on the scope of the problem on May 31. Dönitz blamed the crucial situation (i.e., 37 U-boats, 30 per cent of all U-boats at sea were sunk in May) on the substantial increase in Allied air power, and:

"The determining factor is a new location device evidently also used by surface vessels, by means of which planes are in a position to locate submarines."

Moreover, Allied convoys now had increased air protection.
both from land-based aircraft and the new escort carriers which accompanied every convoy. Accordingly, Dönitz on his own initiative had pulled the U-boats out of the battle of the Atlantic.

Dönitz next informed Hitler of the various measures which were being tried to counter the new Allied tactics: radar detection devices, sound-location apparatus, jamming or dispersing of radar waves, and decoy buoys to be released in the Bay of Piscay which reflected signals similar to the conning towers of U-boats. In the meantime, until some counter-defence could be found, four-barreled anti-aircraft runs could be mounted on the U-boats. Dönitz also suggested increased aerial protection for the U-boats while transiting the Bay of Piscay which was now virtually a "death trap".

Part of Dönitz’s headache arose from the very fact that in 1942 the U-boat arm had proved so effective. The Allies had been quick to recognize the increased danger, especially as the invasion of western Europe required the transport of millions of tons of supplies to Britain. Therefore, both the British and Americans strategists unleashed a concentrated effort against the U-boats. For instance, in the first four months of 1943, 63 per cent of all American bombs and 30 per cent of all British bombs dropped on Europe were intended for U-boat construction areas and bases. Emden,

20Ibid., 72.
Wilhelmshaven, Kiel, Hamburg, Flensburg, Lübeck, and Bremerhaven as well as Lorient, Brest, and other U-boat havens in France were repeatedly raided.21

But since the U-boats themselves were protected in the thick concrete sub-pens, the immediate problem was the loss of U-boats at sea to air attack. Dönitz proposed a solution which had long been advocated by the navy and neverfully accepted by the Führer: the desirability of the navy possessing its own naval air arm. Hitler, given Dönitz’s influence, not surprisingly now agreed and also proposed that the Luftwaffe should be required to provide long-range bombers for reconnaissance purposes to the grand admiral.22

Dönitz also expressed the opinion that all possible measures must be instituted to retrieve the degree of effectiveness obtained in 1942 and since relinquished. Hitler emphatically agreed:

There can be no talk of a let-up in submarine warfare. The Atlantic is my first line of defence in the West, and even if I have to fight a defensive battle there, that is preferable to waiting to defend myself on the coast of Europe. The enemy forces tied up by our submarine warfare are tremendous, even though the actual losses inflicted by us are no longer great. I cannot afford to release these forces by discontinuing submarine warfare.23

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21 Galland, The First and the Last, 182-83.
22 F.C.N.A. 1943, 74.
23 Ibid., 75.
It was at this time that Hitler agreed to increasing production of U-boats to 40 per month.

But these measures to stem the turn of the tide were too late. The following month, Dönitz secured permission for the drafting of all available personnel for the construction program. The U-boat arm did not again feel a scarcity of men, but Allied sinkings of U-boats continued and so did the bombings of the U-boat construction sites. The service never again managed to pose the threat that it had in 1942. A prime factor in its failure was the date of the collapse. U-boats in ever-increasing numbers slipped off the ways until the end of the war but never enough to offset the enormous superiority of the Allies at sea.

At any rate, Dönitz's attempts to retrieve the U-boat situation achieved at least one result. His prestige with the Führer continued to mount:

The Führer was very happy that Dönitz pulled back our submarines at the right moment; namely, when we were technically inferior. Had he continued to leave them on duty the larger part of them would undoubtedly be lying at the bottom of the ocean today . . . .

Although Dönitz's stock had again risen, his and the U-boats'

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24 Ibid., 78. (June 15, 1943.)

25 The Goebbels Diaries, 466. (September 23, 1943.)
failure from the summer of 1943 on prepared the way for
the final defeat of Nazi Germany. During the autumn of
1943 and the winter of 1944, arms, supplies, men, and all
types of equipment flowed across the Atlantic to Britain.
A great armada was gathering in preparation for the assault
on "Festung Europa".

The invasion, anticipated by the Germans, came on
June 6, 1944 in Normandy. The initial landings and the
establishment of a secure beachhead were dependent upon
supplies from the sea. But this logistical vulnerability
of any amphibious invasion really had no significance in
the case of the Normandy landing ("Overlord"). The German
navy was virtually impotent, both in strength and in
comparison with Allied air and sea power. On June 29, a
major conference was held at the Berghof, and Dönitz reported
to Hitler the meager strength it would be possible to commit
against the Allied supply lines. There were only 12 PT boats
and 1 torpedo boat ready for action in the Channel area. Also
8 U-boats equipped with "schnorkel" were available.26 The
grand admiral proposed to dispatch a further 14 PT boats and
to commit the new midget U-boats when they became available.27

26 F.C.N.A. 1944, 56. These figures correspond exactly
with those recorded by Rommel (who was also present) in his
diary. See Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, The Rommel Papers,
ed. B. J. Liddell Hart, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and
Company, 1953), 480.

27 F.C.N.A. 1944, 56.
But this pitifully weak force did not have any significance against the mighty Allied armada. A further landing in the south of France was also virtually unopposed by the German navy (August 15). But Hitler, perhaps beginning to indulge in some wishful thinking, issued the following order to the navy on July 8:

It remains the navy's task to continue as before to attack the enemy's supply routes, to inflict damage on his naval forces and transports, wherever they may be . . . and to prevent new landings by the enemy. The U-boat arm is to be employed in such a way as to afford the greatest measure of relief to Army Group B . . . . Besides the attacks in the Channel consideration can always be given to the resumption of the U-boat war in the Atlantic. 28

The best intentions of the navy and all the will it could muster could not offset its weakness: the Allies remained ashore and their supply lines remained un-cut.

There were other and perhaps more serious problems plaguing Hitler during the summer of 1944. The gargantuan eastern campaign was going badly. The Russians had begun another summer offensive on a 350-mile front on June 23 designed to complement the landings in France and to pinch off the German salient north of the Pript marshes in Poland. 29 Hitler convened a conference on July 9 at the Wolfsschanze.


29 Spokes, The Best Joint Atlast, Cap 42.
to consider the situation. The participants at this meeting to decide eastern front strategy indicated a telling fact. From the eastern front, Field Marshal Model, General von Greim, and Lieutenant General Friesner were in attendance. The only other participant besides Hitler was the commander-in-chief of the navy, and it was Dönitz's counsel which prevailed. He now was the Führer's closest confidant.

The problem revolved around the question of a possible Russian breakthrough on the central sector of the eastern front and the consequential encirclement of the Northern Army Group in Estonia and Latvia. Dönitz argued that the Northern Army Group must remain where it was; any strategic withdrawal which would permit the Russians to reach the shores of the Baltic could be disastrous. If the Russians established a foot-hold on the open Baltic (i.e., outside the Gulf of Finland), Dönitz argued that this would decidedly affect further production of the last remaining hope - U-boats. Iron ore shipments from Sweden would be threatened, and these were vital if the new electro-U-boats were to be produced in significant quantity. Moreover, the Baltic was the only area safe enough to "work up" U-boats. Therefore Dönitz said:

The prime objective . . . to which everything else must be subordinated, even the possible withdrawal of the Northern Army Group, is the prevention of Russian break-through to the Baltic Sea. 31

31 Ibid.
This was the policy that was adopted.

 Dönitz also reported on the feasibility of supplying further naval infantry brigades for use in the land battles. He contended that 80 per cent of the navy's personnel was currently employed in the defence of Europe but that he could not make inroads into the remaining portion because they were needed for service in the newly commissioned U-boats and the prospective U-boats. The war was still going to be won with his favorite weapon. U-boats seemed to have almost become a fetish with the grand admiral. With stubborn single-mindedness, he pursued this train of thought to the end.

There is a curious item recorded in the transcript of the Führer-Dönitz conference of December 3, 1944. Both Hitler and his naval commander appeared to believe that the war would still turn out favorably. Dönitz said that he intended to send:

... ten to fifteen German naval officers to Japan, giving them the opportunity to become acquainted with naval warfare on a large scale by participating in fleet operations there. Their experiences could later be utilized to build up a German fleet. Since German naval warfare, with the exception of submarine warfare, has developed into a purely coastal war, we have no opportunity whatsoever to acquire experiences of this nature in the European theater.

Hitler agreed to the proposal, and then the two discussed the

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32 Ibid., 60.
33 Ibid., 95.
great successes which they were going to achieve with the new U-boats. In fact, Dönitz said that he would "... lull the enemy into a state of security" and not inform the German public initially of the great success so as "... not to provoke countermeasures on the part of the enemy prematurely."34

They were deluding themselves. The war appeared ever more irretrievable even though a new German offensive was being planned for the western front. Romania had switched sides in August 1944, and Bulgaria followed suit, declaring war on Germany on September 8. And on the western front the Allies were already bringing supplies in through Antwerp. Finland also capitulated in September. Moreover, what Dönitz had feared had come about. The Russians broke through to the open Baltic on October 10 and isolated twenty German divisions in the Baltic states. Budapest was reached by the Russians on October 29. But Dönitz and Hitler were not simply discussing measures designed to delay the end. They were still considering victory.

In the last six months of the war, the German navy was predominantly confined to, and concerned with, the Baltic. The pockets of German troops isolated by the Russian advance had to be supplied - or in some cases evacuated - by the navy. In the West, operations were generally limited to the "small

34Ibid., 96.
battle units" - midget submarines, one-man torpedoes, and remote-controlled motor-boats loaded with explosives. Obviously, only a limited success could be achieved, although these units did pose a degree of nuisance, especially in the Scheldt.

During 1945, Dönitz met with Hitler almost daily. They discussed a wide variety of subjects, mainly tactical problems designed to check the inevitable. Yet, strangely enough, the prospect of defeat and its consequences were never mentioned. Either Hitler and his grand admiral deluded themselves and one another, or they truly believed that defeat could be avoided. It is impossible to say which.

On January 3, 1945, Dönitz, obviously grasping for straws, reported to Hitler on the new weapons. In a curiously logical argument, he argued that success could be achieved by the "small battle units":

Assuming that out of the eighty "Seehund" [seal] midget submarines scheduled to operate per month only fifty are able to attack, then one hundred torpedoes would be fired at the enemy. If 20% of the torpedoes hit their targets, about 100,000 [tons] would be sunk.35

Of course, in military affairs, this line of reasoning was ridiculous, but Hitler bought the argument.

A few weeks later, on January 18, Dönitz proposed to raise a naval rifle regiment of 3,000 men to be sent to the eastern front. Hitler accepted the offer, desperate as he now was for troops.36 And only two days later, Dönitz increased

35 K. Goedkoop, 1945, 4.
36 Ibid., 5.
his offer to 20,000 troops, which Hitler again accepted.\textsuperscript{37} Apparently the situation was serious. It was decided to make use of these men from the naval training units in defense of Denmark to release twenty-two army replacement battalions for service on the eastern front. Then, still maintaining the fiction of eventual success, Hitler said that the naval troops could "... later be re-assigned to naval operations when the over-all situation has changed."\textsuperscript{38}

In January 25, Dönitz, although nine out of the ten "Seehund" U-boats sent out had returned because of technical defects, again argued that "... future mass operations by "Seehund" will score considerable success under favorable weather conditions."\textsuperscript{39} And so it went during these last months of war. Dönitz with insurmountable optimism recurrently presented the Führer with new projects to delay the end. The grand admiral steadily transferred more and more naval personnel to the army or else formed naval infantry brigades (and even one division) which remained under navy command but were committed to battle in the east.

The navy had a major chore to contend with in the Baltic. Troops were being returned home from Norway, and

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 16.
fuel oil for the transports was becoming a serious problem. Moreover, an enormous evacuation program was being conducted in the east. Civilian refugees from the Courland pocket and other areas in the eastern Baltic were being transported back to Germany to escape the approaching Red Army. Wounded were also involved in the evacuation. For instance, to give some idea of the scope of the operation, Dönitz reported to Hitler on February 11 that 76,000 wounded had been evacuated up to the present. A further 157,000 were returned between March 21 and April 10. Moreover, at least 1,500,000 refugees were withdrawn by sea in the first four months of 1945.

U-boats were also not neglected by Dönitz in these last hectic months. At almost every conference the subject was discussed. On February 15, Dönitz informed Hitler that 11,000 tons of shipping had been sunk in January. He asserted that this figure was as high as had ever been achieved (per operating U-boat) during the most successful period of U-boat warfare. Dönitz also observed that:

At present 237 submarines are being prepared for operational use: 111 of the old types, 34 of type XXI, 42 of type XXIII. Aside from these, about 60 additional submarines will be committed each month. The present total of 450 commissioned submarines is the largest number Germany has ever possessed.

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40 Ibid., 34.
41 Hugo, Sea Warfare, 307.
42 F.C.N.A. 1945, 41. Types XXI and XXIII U-boats were the electro-U-boats in which such faith was placed.
If Dönitz had possessed these forces in 1939, the war would have taken a very different course. But now, in February 1945, the U-boat no longer had any strategic consequence for the outcome of the war. But it is a mark of Dönitz's stature at this time that German dockyards were producing U-boats at the highest possible speed—a speed which the German navy could not even hope to match in producing trained crews.

Of the utmost significance for ascertaining Hitler's regard for Dönitz and the navy at this time of crisis was an opinion expressed by the Führer on March 26. Surrenders had taken place, and Hitler was of the opinion that his troops should fight to the death. His opinions were as follows:

The Führer orders an investigation of the officers occupying the posts of fortification commanders in the Western Area. He states that these positions should be filled mainly by naval officers, since many fortifications have been given up, but no ships were ever lost without fighting to the last man.\footnote{Ibid., 98.}

Apparently Hitler had forgotten his tirade against capital ships and their commanders in January 1943, as a result of which Raeder had resigned.

The stop-gap measures continued. Curiously enough, little mention is made in the records of the Führer conferences with the navy of the position in which Germany now found herself although the continual measures being taken vividly attests to the desperate situation. On April 14, Dönitz came up with
a typical proposal. He suggested a suicidal scheme
in which 3,000 "young men of the Navy, equipped with light
packs and bazookas..." would be thrown into the battle
behind the lines on the western front in order to "... harass enemy supply lines." Hitler welcomed the proposal,
 Dönitz was of like mind with his Führer. There would be
resistance until all resources and men were exhausted.

The resources of the navy, excepting the U-boat arm,
were disappearing fast. The old battleships Schlesien and
Schleswig-Holstein, after being damaged by a mine and a bomb
respectively, were blown up by their crews. The cruiser
Köln was struck by a bomb and put out of action on March 30.
The pocket battleship Scheer was also destroyed by air attack
and capsized in Kiel on April 9. The pocket battleship
Lützow was destroyed in a similar manner on April 16. The
cruisers Soden and Hipper were blown up by their crews after
also suffering air attack. At the end of the war, of the
German capital ships, only the Prinz Eugen, Leipzig, and
Nürnberg remained seaworthy. No protest by southing en
masse could be made at the end of this war. The dreams and
schemes of Grand Admiral Raeder as far as building a mighty
sea empire around a high seas fleet were dead forever.

But although the navy had virtually no matériel and
ships left to contribute to the war effort, it emerged as the

44 Ibid., 113.
45 See Appendix I, infra.
chosen service. Dönitz had his last conference with Hitler on April 18. Matters of little consequence were discussed and Dönitz then retired to Flöen in Holstein. By directive of the Führer, he had previously been appointed civil administrator of the northern part of Germany.\(^4\) This order of Hitler's, issued on April 10, premarked the ultimate appointment of the grand admiral as the second Führer of the Third Reich. It is also indicative that Dönitz was selected as the civil authority and, if Hitler should withdraw as a result of the Russian advance to southern Germany, military commander of northern Germany. It seemed that the generals were now no longer to be trusted. Actually, Hitler had been suspicious of the army since the "July 20" plot.

Dönitz's new authority in northern Germany was almost immediately exercised. The Gauleiter of Hamburg had been negotiating with the British in an attempt to arrange the surrender of his city. Dönitz, upon discovering the scheme, immediately overruled the Gauleiter and ordered the defence of the region. His motive (as recorded after the war) was to protect the naval bases in Schleswig-Holstein which were currently engaged in the evacuation of refugees from the East.\(^5\) At any rate, Dönitz quickly armed U-boat crews and other naval personnel and committed them as infantry into the battle.

\(^4\) Döritz, Memoirs, 475.

\(^5\) Ibid.
By the end of April, Berlin was isolated, and Hitler was trapped in his bunker under the Reichs Chancellery. Communications with the outside were tenuous, but on April 23 a telegram arrived from Göring which resulted in the Reichsmarschall's disgrace. Göring, since 1941, was the legally designated successor to Hitler and now with time running out, the former requested permission to take over the absolute favor concurrently with the decline of the strength of the Luftwaffe and as Hitler became gradually more contemptuous of the Reichsmarschall's indulgences. Hitler was now enraged and under the influence of Party Leader Himmler ordered Göring dismissed from all positions of state and party. Himmler went even farther, and Göring was arrested for "high treason" by the SS.

Then on April 28, word was received in the bunker (by means of a Reuters dispatch from Stockholm broadcast by the BBC in London) of Himmler's negotiations and offer to surrender the German armies in the West to Eisenhower. Hitler was stunned, and Himmler followed Göring into disgrace in the Führer's eyes. The army had betrayed Hitler, the Luftwaffe was treasonable, and now the SS had violated his trust. The only loyal service

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remained to the Führer was his navy.

Consequently, the next day, after his marriage and early in the morning, Hitler dictated his last will and testament. It was an *apologia pro vit. sua* and demonstrates that Hitler had not changed any of his fundamental creed since he had authored *Mein Kampf*. He still castigated the Jews as those responsible for the misery of the world and as direct instigators of the war. Yet some of Hitler's opinions had altered, and those of interest are concerned with the navy. In *Mein Kampf*, he had written disparagingly about the naval high command of World War I and critically of the naval mutiny of 1918 which had become revolution. Yet now the navy received the Führer's praise:

May it, at some future time, become part of the code of honour of the German officer - as is already the case in our Navy - that the surrender of a district or a town is impossible, and that above all the leaders here must march ahead as shining examples, faithfully fulfilling their duty unto death.

In part two of the testament, Hitler set out his policies for the future. Göring and similar were expelled from the Party and all offices of state. In Göring's stead, Hitler appointed Grand Admiral *Schultz* "President of the Reich" and "Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces". Hitler also appointed an extensive and detailed cabinet. He ended this last written

order of his life with the words:

> Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.\(^{51}\)

That night Hitler also dictated his valediction to the armed forces, he praised the navy saying that by its conduct during the war it had wiped out the disgrace of 1913. The navy could not be blamed for its defeat in this war.\(^{52}\) Hitler, in his last words, thus praised the navy which he had so long admired and respected. The following day, April 30, 1945, Adolf Hitler committed suicide.

On the evening of the 30th, Dönitz, at his headquarters in northern Germany, received the following signal:

> In place of the former Reichsmarschall, Goering, the Fuehrer appointed you, Grand-Admiral Dönitz, to be his successor. Written authority is on the way.\(^{53}\)

On May 1, Dönitz assumed office as chancellor of the Third Reich and the same evening broadcast to the German people.

\(^{51}\) *Ibid.*, 263.

\(^{52}\) Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, 194. The text was destroyed, but General von Below who was delegated to deliver it to Keitel reconstructed it after the war for Trevor-Roper.

\(^{53}\) Harten, *Hitler and his Admirals*, 239. With reference to the above signal, Dönitz writes: "This took me completely by surprise. Since July 20, 1944, I had not spoken to Hitler at all except at some large gathering." Dönitz, *Memoirs*, 441. This statement is completely untrue. The two had a multitude of conferences including many which were private. See: *F.C.N.A. 1944*, and *F.C.N.A. 1945 passim*. 
His speech is important enough to be quoted extensively:

German men and women, soldiers of the German armed forces. Our Fuhrer Adolf Hitler is dead. The German people now in deepest sorrow and respect. Early he had recognized the danger of Bolshevism and had dedicated his life in the fight against it. The fight having ended, he died a hero's death in the capital of the German Reich, after having led a straight and steady life.

His life was dedicated to the service of Germany. His devotion in the fight against the Bolshevist flood was in the interest not only of Europe but of the entire civilized world. The Fuhrer has nominated me as his successor. Fully conscious of the responsibility, I am taking over the leadership of the German nation in this fateful hour, my first task is to save German men from being destroyed by the advancing Bolshevist enemy. For this reason only do the Armed continue fighting. As far and as long as the achievement of this task is being prevented by the British and Americans, we have to defend ourselves against them too and must go on fighting. Thus the Anglo-Americans are no longer carrying on the fight for their own peoples but only for the spreading of Bolshevism in Europe.

 Dönitz's appeal was obviously designed to allow him to conclude peace on the western front but continue the battle on the eastern. The recurrent dream of the Nazi leaders - Hitler especially - that the western Allies would come to recognize the danger of Soviet Russia and change sides in a crusade against Bolshevism had apparently not yet died.

 Dönitz, with the intention of delaying an unconditional surrender which would require German troops to surrender to the hated Bolshevists, deployed his scarce forces and continued the war.

But Dönitz did not accept the cabinet appointed by Hitler.

54. C.A., VII, 56.
and selected men considered more moderate. He felt the western Allies might feel more prone to negotiate with his government if he weeded out the Nazis. But all of the grand admiral's actions to negotiate a partial armistice in the west were in vain. "Unconditional surrender" remained the policy of the Allies. Area surrenders were permitted though, and on May 5 Dönitz surrendered all German forces in Holland, northwest Germany and Denmark to Field Marshal Montgomery. The final act of surrender was signed by General Jodl on May 7, 1945. The "thousand year Reich thereupon ended.

As far as the navy was concerned, it had virtually no capital ships left. But there still remained the mighty U-boat arm. Of these, 166 U-boats surrendered in accordance with the terms of surrender, and a further 221 were either scuttled or destroyed by their crews. Dönitz, previous to the capitulation, had issued orders that no arms or vessels were to be destroyed. In doing this, he apparently attempted to appease the Allies in order to obtain more lenient peace terms. But in accordance with accepted naval honor and

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55 Martenssen, Hitler and His Admirals, 242.

56 Dönitz, Memoirs, 458-59. Dönitz also writes: "Except for a few U-boats which were blown up by their captains in the night of May 4-5 before the armistice came into force, no warships of the German Navy were sunk." Ibid., 459. This is inaccurate.
tradition, most captains chose to scuttle rather than surrender. The German navy of the Third Reich was no more.

During the last years of World War II, a most telling thread can be traced. This is the ever-growing power and influence of Grand Admiral Dönitz and, through him, of the German navy. The last hopes of the Third Reich were placed in the navy, ironic because of the ever more useless nature of the service for the conduct of the war. Also ironical is the fact that as the strength of the navy declined, its commander's prestige rose almost simultaneously. Of all the high ranking officers of the three services, perhaps Dönitz evidenced the greatest loyalty and reverence to the Führer. In the dark days of the spring of 1945 he received his reward, albeit short. Dönitz and the navy remained loyal to the end which in itself is not grounds for contempt. Hitler by placing his legacy in the hands of the German navy was paying it the highest possible honor.
CONCLUSION

The German navy during the Third Reich was materially the weakest of the three services. Military accounts of the period perhaps inevitably concentrate on the role of the army in the formation and implementation of policy and strategy. Often this tendency is carried to the point of historical inaccuracy. Possibly this situation is inherent to the study of Germany at war, for the army is a prominent thread which can be traced throughout the history of Prussia and Germany.

The Prussian roots and aristocratic tradition of the army, its often-demonstrated ability to decide the destiny of the state, and its long and venerable service provides an obvious and important factor for consideration in the study of German history. The Great German General Staff, popularly viewed in recent times as the great threat to European peace and security, has played a large role in the shaping of modern Europe. Especially in the west, where the army is often considered as a formidable monolithic machine, operating like clockwork and minutely efficient virtually devoid of moral considerations, and bent on subduing everything to the interest of the German state, its ability to
formulate policy and influence the destiny of the state
has produced a most voluminous and formidable literature.

Further, because it is now useful to demonstrate
how Hitler managed to subordinate and ultimately completely
dominate the powerful institution, army-oriented studies
proliferate. The fact is often obscured that Hitler, while
inexorably bringing the army to its knees and his control,
was in turn being influenced by that which he sought to control.

Between Hitler and the army friction resulted, first because
the Führer was increasingly viewed by the generals as an
amateur abrogating rights and duties properly resting with
the professionals, and second because with each successive
victory, Hitler further thought himself capable of abrogating
such powers.

With the case of the German navy, a somewhat different
situation existed. Hitler made no attempt to interfere either
internally or externally with its prerogatives. This fact
derives simply from Hitler's relationship with the navy. His
goals were not directly attainable by naval means. The Führer
was continentally oriented, and such strategy as originated with
Hitler bore the imprint of this characteristic. But this does
not imply that Hitler neglected naval questions. Simply, he
did not consider himself as competent in the naval sphere as
he did in the military.

To fully understand the nature of Hitler's and the
navy's relationship, it is necessary to understand the Third
Reich. Nazi Germany was ostensibly a totalitarian state ruled by an absolute dictator. Hitler and the Nazis proudly boasted that this was true, and that such was in fact the case has been popularly believed. Yet it is clear that in the twentieth century no one man can totally guide the destinies of an entire nation. All of the ramifications of a modern industrial society require the services of a myriad of highly skilled technicians, trained professionals, and a small army of bureaucrats. Especially in a nation at war are these requirements mandatory. The military is among the most highly detailed of professions and many years of training and study are necessary to evolve the elite cadre of higher command and staff officers. Without their services, a highly efficient war machine is not possible, and indeed the whole complex machinery of war would grind to a halt.

Moreover, in the twentieth century the head of state must have surrounding him learned counsellors, expert advisers, and loyal subordinates if the whole edifice of government is to operate. Nazi Germany recognized these facts with its credo of the *Führerprinzip* - the tenet of government that at each level in the hierarchy absolute command was exercised over subordinates and absolute obedience given to superiors.

Although Hitler attempted to govern absolutely in a few fields, perhaps it is significant to observe that in the majority of government departmental areas he did not interfere
but chose to leave control to specialized subordinates. In economics, Schacht, Göring, and later Speer all tried their hand at organizing the German economy. Himmler gradually assimilated all police functions under the 35 until by 1944 every local, state, and federal police agency came under the jurisdiction of the monolithic R.S.H.A. (Reichssicherheitshauptamt - Reich Main Security Office). Propaganda and Public Enlightenment were the demesne of Dr. Joseph Goebbels. In the internal administration and bureaucracy of the state, Hitler took no interest and left these fields to the bureaucrats and the party hacks. Even within the Nazi Party, Hitler paid little attention to internal matters after the start of the war, and control fell first to Rudolf Hess and later to Leiter der Parteikanzlei (Chief of the Party Chancellery) Martin Bormann.

But in foreign and military affairs, the Führer was not satisfied to delegate his authority. These were fields in which Hitler felt that he excelled. They were moreover too important to be left to the discretion of either party members or professionals. In 1938, Hitler took direct command of the armed forces and in at least one of the services he exercised this command. The army came directly under Hitler's domination in December 1941 with his dismissal of von Brauchitsch and assumption of the role of commander-in-chief of the army. The army increasingly felt the weight of Hitler's interference
and his subordination of the ancient and proud institution to his will. But the other armed services remained relatively free of the Führer's direct interference. The Luftwaffe was protected (if that is the correct word) by the vain and jealous Göring. And the navy remained independent first by reason of Hitler's character, and second by reason of its inherent nature.

One of the prime factors involved in Hitler's toleration of naval independence was the Führer's reluctance to antagonize the navy. Its venerable commander, Grand Admiral Raeder, was widely respected throughout the service. He was a conservative, the navy his entire life. Obviously this trait is diametrically counter to Hitler's radical nature, yet an unusual rapport was achieved between the two. To Raeder the navy was still the Kaiser's navy, a navy of mighty battleships and great fleet actions. Indeed during the war the saying was current in Germany that "we are fighting the war with the Prussian army, the Nazi Luftwaffe, and the Imperial navy." As far as the navy was concerned, or at least as far as Raeder desired, this aphorism approached the truth. Raeder stubbornly and tyrannically exercised command over the navy. He was also a man of considerable integrity. Hitler held the grand admiral in the highest esteem and carefully considered his advice.

Although Hitler admired the navy and evidenced considerable interest in its affairs, he did not feel on sure ground in
this sphere. This was one of the areas in which the Führer was satisfied to let the Führerprinzip operate - a fact of which Raeder took full advantage. Because of this situation, Raeder managed to achieve a position analogous to that of Hermann Göring, the head of the Luftwaffe, or Heinrich Himmler, the commander of the SS. They ran virtually independent services, vying with one another for the Führer's favor. These commanders jealously guarded their prerogatives and continually attempted to expand their influence. Raeder was uniquely successful in maintaining the internal independence of the navy, both from Hitler's possible interference and from the Nazi Party's attempted infiltration. This situation was maintained in the navy under the majority of Raeder's successor, Dönitz, although the latter was more intimately committed to National Socialism.

It is also true that the navy by reason of its inherent nature was not the instrument through which Hitler saw the execution of his will. The Führer's foreign policy goals were on the continent - a land-based and land-conceived strategy. Hitler was a landsman, his thoughts inevitably turning toward the east, towards Lebensraum. But the navy's and particularly Raeder's eyes were biased by the world war I concept of defeat by blockade and inexorably focused upon Britain. Raeder regarded Britain as the primary enemy and the major threat to Germany. Britain had to be crushed and the British navy
replaced as queen of the seas, in his opinion, if the war
was not to be irretrievably lost and if Germany was to attain
her rightful place in the sun. Moreover, Bader's vision
transcended the war to imagine a resurgent German colonial
empire which would be feasible only if British sea power was
vanquished once and for all. Hitler rejected this particular
concept. In his opinion, it would certainly be more beneficial
to ally with Great Britain: British naval power and German
military might - surely a world dominating combination. This
was one divergent view which Hitler and Bader never reconciled.

But this is not to say that Hitler neglected the German
navy nor its strategy. The navy through its prestigious
commanders obtained a position of greatest influence. Hitler
in the main was readily willing to adopt naval strategies
although in the final analysis they were directly antithetical
to his personal beliefs. The German navy aimed at supplanting
British sea power, creating a far-flung colonial empire for
Germany, and generally orienting Hitler toward a program of
naval expansion. Hitler listened tolerantly to his naval advice
and in many instances adopted its suggestions as policy.

The first step in the navy's shaking loose of the
bonds of British sea power was to achieve a base outside the
confines of the blockade. Bader's proposals for seizing Norway
developed into Weserübung, and the campaign's successful conclusion
provided the German navy with a strategic position henceforth
never improved. But not for the lack of trying. With Weserübung
Hitler had fulfilled the navy's desires even while the primary enemies remained undefeated in the west.

Hitler's susceptibility to Raeder's persuasiveness is again demonstrated with the abandoning of Seelöwe. The navy did not believe a direct assault on the British Isles to be feasible and its arguments certainly provided partial rationalization for the cancellation of the project. Following this, Hitler's adoption of Felix, Marita, and Sonnenblume—all secondary campaigns—again evidences naval influence. These projects were all navally oriented in that Britain was to be strangled in the Mediterranean and the back of the thalassocracy broken. Other campaigns also were forwarded by the navy, and there can be no denying its influence at the policy-making level.

With regard to internal affairs of the navy, Raeder and Dönitz "ran a taut ship." Both were stern and authoritarian commanders. Dönitz, for instance, after his succession completely reconstituted the higher command positions within the navy, removing those officers he considered as too conservative and replacing them with men more favorably inclined to U-boat warfare. Hitler made no attempt at interference with any disciplinary action taken internally by the navy nor did he promote or demote any of its officers (other than Dönitz). It is important to note that Raeder resigned and was not dismissed. During the latter years of the war, resignation by a command officer was
virtually unthinkable, yet the grand admiral succeeded.

In contradistinction to the army, Hitler generally did not interfere with the tactical operations of the navy unless a political question was involved. The navy's order so distasteful to Hitler not to engage enemy capital ships while on a mission of merchant warfare significantly was never countermanded by the Führer. A few instances of the Führer's intervention in the navy's tactical affairs do exist.

For example, he forbade the attacking by capital ships of enemy convoys under escort of aircraft carriers, yet by and large he avoided such interference.

Hitler's rejection of the capital ship as a useful weapon of modern naval warfare and consequent threat to decommission them might be considered as further interference by the Führer, but it is true that the order was never carried out and, indeed, in a few months had been cancelled. The navy carried the day in this argument, although it did not convince Hitler that his opinion was wrong. Rather, it persuaded him to tolerate a situation which actually was diametrically counter to his own belief.

It is ironic that Hitler, so definitely continentaly oriented, should come to have put so much faith in the opinions and advice of a service whose views were alien. Yet this in itself is part of the answer. Hitler was radically inclined, and views proposed by the navy would surely appeal to him as extreme and bold courses of action. The global strategy visioned
by the navy probably appealed to his sense of adventure, of seizing the initiative with daring, and of conducting glamorous exploits. Hitler presumably was attracted to the (to him) esoteric quality of the navy's strategy. Ikarus, a bold assault on Iceland; Felix, the seizure of Gibraltar and the interdiction of the western end of the Mediterranean to the British; a feat even Napoleon could not achieve; Aida, the drive to the Nile; and even Weserübung — all of these projects had the attractive quality of achieving a great success with a minimum expenditure of effort. Moreover, Felix and Aida might have brought two further participants into the Axis camp — Spain and Turkey.

There is little doubt that Hitler came to view himself as a "great captain". The navy's peripheral strategy aided in creating the public image and the self-delusion. Although it is misleading to compare Hitler to Napoleon, it is also enlightening. Both became involved in secondary campaigns and had initial successes. Both by virtue of rapid maneuvering were able to defeat their enemies singly in what are now called Blitzkrieg campaigns. And both were ultimately brought to their knees by the combined weight of British sea power and Russian armies. But this is not to suggest that Hitler was emulating Napoleon. It is only to suggest that in the history of modern Europe would-be creators of hegemony face similar problems. Napoleon's guerrilla nemesis in Spain could be paralleled with
the partisan activity on Hitler's eastern front. And, at least in Hitler's case, the steppes of Russia proved too much for the nation's war machine.

It is in the last days of the Third Reich as the Russian armies moved inexorably across the plains of eastern Europe, and the Western Allies approached the Rhine, that the German navy's influence becomes clearly evident. Hitler leaned ever more heavily on Dönitz as his chief adviser. The Führer had little respect left for the generals, and Göring's Luftwaffe was virtually impotent. Hitler turned to the navy and its exotic instrument of destruction - the U-boat - for the salvation of the "thousand-year" Reich. U-boats became a mania with the Führer as they already were with Dönitz. With single-minded purpose, the two determined to retrieve the situation with a weapon already past having a decisive strategic effect on the outcome of the war.

One of the factors which bolstered the navy's prestige in the eyes of the Führer was its loyalty. His appointment of Dönitz as Führer after the treasonable acts of Göring, Himmler, and the army is demonstrable evidence of the navy's fealty. The navy had taken no significant part in the "July 20" plot and indeed played a major role in suppressing the revolt in the West. Consistently, throughout the war, the navy demonstrated its allegiance to the Führer and the Third Reich. At the end the navy received its dubious reward.
It is ironic to note that the navy's prestige rose almost contemporaneously as its fortunes declined. Because power and prestige in Nazi Germany were often measured by the size and strength of the service, this phenomenon is the more remarkable. But the key to understanding this situation is that the promise of reconstituted strength existed for the navy. However utopian Hitler's dreams might have been, given the proper circumstances the newly developed naval weapons could have played a profound and perhaps a definite influence on the outcome of the war. But the electro-U-boats came too late in the conflict.

A further factor to consider in assessing the evolution of the navy's high prestige is the nature of the relationship between the Führer and his commanders-in-chief of the navy. As with Süring, Raeder and later Dönitz reported directly to Hitler and often in private. This situation derived from the Führer's desire to isolate the services and indeed all organs of government from one another. A system of this sort meant that Hitler was the sole person with access to complete information and that therefore the decisions rested more securely with him. But in the case of the navy, the system of direct and intimate reporting acted to its advantage. No generals would be present at the conferences to raise objections to the strategy advocated by the navy. The intimate conference moreover permitted Raeder and Dönitz to exercise their great personal
persuasive abilities on the Führer.

In conclusion, it is perhaps fitting to observe that the personalities of both commanders-in-chief of the navy had a great deal to do with the status of the service. Although differing in many respects, both Raeder and Dönitz shared certain personality traits in common. Both were stubborn men and were not easily swayed in their opinions. The grand admirals were steeped in naval tradition and proud of their service. Both were determined to achieve a larger role in the perennial inter-service rivalry and to enlarge the scope and size of the navy. Finally, both were politicians in the sense that a commander-in-chief is necessarily involved in strategy as well as tactics.

In the final analysis, it is proper to observe that the Kriegsmarine played a much larger role in the activities of the Third Reich and the conduct of World War II than is given cognizance. The navy's commanders-in-chief exerted an influence un-matched by the heads of any other armed service in Germany with the possible exception of Göring. Although throughout the war the navy remained the smallest of the armed services, its influence on Hitler must not be overlooked. The history of this association sheds light not only on the course of the war but on the personality of Adolf Hitler.

The Kriegsmarine did not fulfill Raeder's pessimistic prediction upon the outbreak of war - that the navy could have
little influence on the course of the war. Instead, Feder himself demonstrated that arms do not necessarily exert the greatest mastery of events; men and ideas sometimes have a greater sway.
Grand Admirals Taeder and Dönitz were included among the twenty-one high military and government officials tried at the first Nuremberg trial - 'The Trial of the Major War Criminals'. On May 23, 1945, Dönitz, whose government had been conspicuously ignored by the Allies, was arrested at Flensberg, a few miles from the Danish border in Schleswig-Holstein. His predecessor as Commander-in-Chief of the navy, Grand Admiral Taeder, previously had been captured by the Red Army on May 16 in Potsdam-Ubertsberg (where he had been living in retirement). Taeder was taken to Moscow where he wrote a number of statements relating to German naval affairs prior to his subsequent return to Germany to stand trial.

The trial was held in Nuremberg, beginning on November 14, 1945 and lasting almost a full year until October 1, 1946. The court was composed of four judges and four alternates, one of each having been delegated by the respective governments of the four great Allied powers. The authority for the establishment of the International Military Tribunal was the London Charter signed August 8, 1945 by the governments of Great Britain, France,
Russia, and the United States. A further nineteen
countries subsequently subscribed to the Charter.1

Grand Admiral Erich Raeder was indicted by the
prosecution on three counts, to all of which he entered
the plea of "not guilty":

(a) Crimes against peace: namely, planning,
preparation, initiation, or waging of a war of
aggression, or of a war in violation of international
treaties, agreements, or assurances, or participation
in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment
of any of the foregoing.

(b) War crimes: Namely, violations of the laws or
customs of war. Such violations shall include, but
not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation
to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian
population of or in occupied territories, murder or
ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the
seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private
property, destruction of cities, towns, or villages,
or devastation not justified by military necessity.

(c) Crimes against humanity: Namely, murder,
extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other
inhumane acts committed against any civilian population,
before or during the war, or persecution on political,
racial, or religious grounds in execution of or in
connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of
the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the
domestic law of the country where perpetrated.2

The Tribunal convicted Raeder on all three counts. He
was sentenced to imprisonment for life.

Grand Admiral Dönitz also was indicted as violating
the provisions cited under each of the three counts. Although
the Tribunal ruled that he "...was active in waging

1U.N., Opinion and Judgement (Washington: United States

2Ibid., 3-4.
Aggressive war*, his part was not thought to be important enough and Romitz was acquitted of this charge. He was convicted on counts two and three although in a lengthy opinion the tribunal specifically stated that his sentence was not *assessed on the ground of his breaches of the international law of submarine warfare.* The grand admiral was sentenced to serve ten years' imprisonment.

*See Vittis.*

One further naval officer of high rank was tried by the Allies. In the series of twelve Nuremberg *war crimes* trials, the *Wilhelm von Leeb, et al., Procedure* indicted *general admiral* Otto Schniewind, the former chief of staff of *S.K.L.* *This trial (The High Command Case)* was conducted by a tribunal of three American judges although under the international authority provided by the London Agreement. The court sat from November 28, 1947 to October 28, 1949. Schniewind was charged on four counts: (1) crimes against peace, (2) war crimes, (3) crimes against humanity, and (4) a common plan or conspiracy to commit the crimes charged in counts one, two, and three. Schniewind, of the thirteen officers charged under the indictments, was one of two who were exonerated and found not guilty on all counts.

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3*IV.C. X and XI.*
Grand Admiral Raeder was released from Spandau prison in Berlin in 1955 because of poor health. He died on November 6, 1960. His successor as commander-in-chief of the German navy, Grand Admiral Dönitz, served his full sentence and was released in 1956. He is now residing in retirement in West Germany.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF GERMAN AND AMERICAN RANKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Navy</th>
<th>U.S. Navy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crossadmiral</td>
<td>Admiral of the Fleet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generaladmiral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admiral</td>
<td>Admiral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vizeadmiral</td>
<td>Vice Admiral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kommandeur*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapitän zur See</td>
<td>Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fregattenkapitän</td>
<td>Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korvettenkapitän</td>
<td>Lieutenant Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapitänleutnant</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberleutnant zur See</td>
<td>Lieutenant (j.g.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leutnant zur See</td>
<td>Ensign</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Army and Air Force</th>
<th>U.S. Army</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generalfeldmarschall</td>
<td>General of the Armies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalleutnant</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General (der Inf., etc.)</td>
<td>Lieutenant General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalleutnant</td>
<td>Major General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oberst</td>
<td>Brigadier General</td>
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<td>Oberleutnant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hauptmann</td>
<td>Major</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rittmeister</td>
<td>Captain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oberleutnant</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leutnant</td>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Kommodore was not one of the regular ranks. A few officers with the rank of Kapitän zur See who were given command of a large number of small ships such as destroyers or U-boats were given the title Kapitän zur See und Kommodore. The American rank of Commodore was revived during World War II but has since been discontinued.
## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF CODE NAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achse (Axis)</td>
<td>Occupation of Italy, 1943.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida</td>
<td>Rommel's projected drive to the Nile, autumn 1942.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpenveilchen (Alpine Violet)</td>
<td>Intervention to assist Italians in Albania, spring 1941.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alarich (Alaric)</td>
<td>Earlier version of Achse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attila (later Anton)</td>
<td>The occupation of Vichy France, implemented November 1942.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbarossa</td>
<td>Invasion of Russia, June 1941.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebus</td>
<td>The Channel Dash operation, February 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix</td>
<td>Projected invasion of Gibraltar, 1940-19, later also contemplated the occupation of Spain and Portugal. (Changed to Isabella, May 9, 1941.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelb (Yellow)</td>
<td>Offensive against France, spring 1940.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herkules</td>
<td>Airborne assault against Malta, summer 1942.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikarus</td>
<td>Projected occupation of Iceland, spring 1940.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>Later version of Felix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Fleet cover-sortie off Norway for Weserübung, spring 1940.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marita</td>
<td>Invasion of Greece (and later Yugoslavia spring 1941.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheinübung</td>
<td>(Rhine exercise) Sortie of Bismarck and Prinz Eugen, May 1941.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rösselprungs</td>
<td>(Knight's move) Sortie of Norwegian squadron to engage Arctic convoy PQ-17 July 1942.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slebue (Sea Lion)</td>
<td>Projected invasion of Britain, summer 1943.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sonnenblume (Sunflower): ... Reinforcement of Italians in North Africa, spring 1941.

Weiss (White): ............ Attack on Poland, September 1, 1939.

Weserübung (Weser exercise): Invasion of Norway and Denmark, spring 1940.
APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF GERMAN MILITARY TERMS

Abwehr ........................................... Intelligence Dept. of O.K.W.
Befehlshaber ................................. Commander.
Fliegerkorps ................................. Air corps.
Flottenchef ................................. Commander of the fleet.
Gruppe ........................................... Group, in Luftwaffe, about 3 aircraft in 3 staffeln.
Heer ................................................. The Army.
Kriegsmarine ................................. The Navy (after 1935).
Luftflotte ................................. Air fleet.
Luftwaffe ........................................ The Air Force.
Marinegruppenkommando .............. Highest naval sector hqts.
Oberbefehlshaber ........................... Commander-in-chief (of army groups, armies, air fleets, naval group commands and a few other hqts.)
Oberkommando des Heeres ............. High Command of the Army. (O.K.H.)
Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine ... High Command of the Navy. (O.K.W.)
Oberkommando der Luftwaffe ...... High Command of the Air Force. (O.K.L.)
Oberkommando der Wehrmacht ...... High command of the armed forces (O.K.W.)
Oberster Befehlshaber ............... Supreme Commander of the armed forces. (Hitler).
Panzer ............................................ Armored.
Reichsführer SS .......................... Leader of the SS (Himmler).
Schutzstaffel der NSDAP .............. Protection squads, Himmler's component troops of the Nazi Party. (SS)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Seekriegsleitung</strong></th>
<th>Naval War Staff (S.N.A.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staffel</strong></td>
<td>Basic Luftwaffe formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of about 100 aircraft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U-boat</strong></td>
<td>U-boat, submarine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armee</strong></td>
<td>Armed and militarized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kriegsmarine</strong></td>
<td>forces of the 3rd Reich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The armed forces (from 1935).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zerstörer</strong></td>
<td>A destroyer (naval vessel).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX D**

**THE GERMAN NAVY AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR**

Key to dispositions on 1/9/39: (W) Wilhelmshaven; (B) Brunsbüttel; (K) Kiel; (H) Hamburg; (S) Swinemünde; (ST) Stettin; (P) Pillau; (D) Danzig; (Sea) At sea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fleet tenders</th>
<th>Gazelle (C-in-C. Fleet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pocket battleships</td>
<td>Admiral Sheer (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle cruisers</td>
<td>Scharnhorst (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Cruisers</td>
<td>Münster (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leipzig (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Königsberg (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Cruiser</td>
<td>Admiral Hipper (K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>Four flotillas comprising 17 vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torpedo boats, M.T.R.s, Minelayers, etc.</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old battleships</td>
<td>Schleswig-Holstein (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schlesien (K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-boats</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FORCES UNDER DIRECT OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF S.K.L.**

| Pocket battleships                | Deutschland (sea)        |
|                                   | Admiral Graf Spee (sea)  |
| U-boats                           | 11 boats (sea)           |

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Ship Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Battleships</td>
<td>Bismarck, Tirpitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft carrier</td>
<td>Graf Zeppelin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Cruisers</td>
<td>Blücher, Prinz Eugen, Gerditz, Wittow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light cruiser</td>
<td>Karlsruhe (recommissioned November, 1939)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

GERMAN CAPITAL SHIPS, STATISTICS

SCHARNHORST ..... Launched October, 1936; displacement (when full equipped) 38,000 tons; horse-power 165,000; maximum speed in knots, 31.5; range, 10,000 miles. Armament: 9 28-cm. guns, 12 15-cm., 14 10.5-cm., 16 3.7-cm. Fitted with 6 torpedo tubes.


TIRPITZ ..... Launched in February 1939; displacement (when fully equipped) 53,000 tons; horse-power 138,000; maximum speed in knots, 36; range, 8,100 miles. Armament: 8 38-cm. guns, 12 15-cm., 16 10.5-cm., 16 3.7-cm. Fitted with 6 torpedo tubes.

BISMARCK ..... Launched April 1939. Vital statistics identical to Tirpitz.

DEUTSCHLAND ..... Launched May 1931; displacement (when fully equipped) 12,000 tons; horse-power 57,000; maximum speed in knots, 28; range, 21,500 miles. Armament: 6 15-cm. guns, 8 15-cm., 6 10.5-cm., 8 3.7-cm. Fitted with 8 torpedo tubes.

ADIMIRAL SCHEER ..... Launched April 1933. Vital statistics identical to Deutschland.

GRAP SPEE ..... Launched June 1934. Vital statistics identical to Deutschland and Admiral Scheer.

ADIMIRAL HIPPER ..... Launched February 1937; displacement (when fully equipped) 18,000 tons; horse-power 132,000; maximum speed in knots, 32.5; range 6,000 miles. Armament: 8 20.3-cm. guns, 12 10.5-cm., 12 3.7-cm. Fitted with 12 torpedo tubes.

BLÜCHER ..... Launched June 1937. Vital statistics identical to Admiral Hipper.

---

2Kaye, Sea Warfare, 318-19.
PRINZ EUGEN ....... Launched August 1937; displacement, 19,800 tons (when fully equipped); other statistics identical to Admiral Hipper and Emden.

HÄDEN ............. Launched January 1925; displacement (when fully equipped) 7,000 tons; horse-power 46,000; maximum speed in knots, 29; range, 5,300 miles. Armament: 8 15-cm. guns, 3 8.8-cm., 4 3.7-cm. Fitted with 4 torpedo tubes.

KÖNIGSBERG ............ Launched March 1927; displacement (when fully equipped) 8,000 tons; horse-power 70,000; maximum speed in knots, 32; range 7,000 miles. Armament: 9 15-cm. guns, 6 8.8-cm., 8 3.7-cm. Fitted with 12 torpedo tubes.

KARLSRUHE ............ Launched August 1927. Vital statistics identical to Königsberg.


LEIPZIG .................. Launched October 1929; displacement, 8,700 tons; horse-power 72,000; maximum speed in knots, 32; range, 7,600 miles. Armament: 9 15-cm. guns 8 8.8-cm., 8 3.7-cm. Fitted with 12 torpedo tubes.

NÜRNBERG ............... Launched December 1934; displacement (when fully equipped) 9,200 tons. Other statistics identical to Leipzig.
### APPENDIX F

**GERMAN NAVAL LOSSES IN NORWEGIAN CAMPAIGN**  
**APRIL - JUNE 1940**

**Ships Sunk:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blücher</td>
<td>Torpedo and gun fire by Norwegian coast defences, Oslo, April 9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karlsruhe</td>
<td>Torpedoed by submarine Truant in Kattegat, April 9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Königsberg</td>
<td>Bombed by Fleet Air Arm, Bergen, April 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brummer</td>
<td>Torpedoed in Kattegat by submarine, April 15 (Gunnery Training Ship)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilhelm Heidkamp</td>
<td>Torpedoed, first attack on Narvik, April 10: (Destroyer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Destroyers)</td>
<td>9 sunk in second attack on Narvik, April 13. (Five of these had been damaged in the first attack of April 10.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U-boats)</td>
<td>Various causes, 8 lost. (three off Norway; Five in North Sea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albatross</td>
<td>(Torpedo boat) wrecked, Oslo, April 9.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ships damaged:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Action with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gneisenau</td>
<td>Renown, April 9. Torpedoed by submarine Clyde, June 20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scharnhorst</td>
<td>Torpedoed by Acasta, June 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hipper</td>
<td>Action with Glorious, April 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lützen (Deutschland)</td>
<td>Action with coastal batteries, Oslo, April 9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emden</td>
<td>Action with coastal batteries, Oslo, April 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremse</td>
<td>Action with coastal batteries, Bergen, April 9.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ships out of action the whole period:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheer</td>
<td>Engine repairs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leipzig</td>
<td>Torpedo damage repair.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Churcill, The Gathering Storm, 719-20.*
**Ships available on June 30, 1940:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Battle Cruisers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Scharnhorst and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gneisenau damaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocket Battleships</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Scheer under repair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mitzow damaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-inch Cruisers</td>
<td>Hipper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Cruisers</td>
<td>Koenig, Nuernberg</td>
<td>Leipzig and Emden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>Scheemann, Lady, Ina, Calster</td>
<td>Six under repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torpedo boats</td>
<td>Nineteen</td>
<td>Six others under repair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eight new craft working up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the two old battleships Schlesien and Schleswig-Holstein were available for coast-defence.
APPENDIX G

THE ITALIAN NAVY: STRENGTH AND DISPOSITION JUNE 1940

TARANTO

- Battlehips (3)........ Cavour, Cesare, Vittorio Veneto
- Heavy Cruisers (5)...... Zara, Fiume, Gorizia
- Light Cruisers (5)
- Destroyers (fleet) (20)
- Destroyers (escort) (6)
- Submarines (22)
- Escort Vessels, Minelayers, M.T.B.'s (14)

NAPLES

- Battlehip (1) ........ Littorio (not ready till August)
- Light Cruisers (4)
- Destroyers (fleet) (4)
- Destroyers (escort) (14)
- Submarines (11)
- Minelayers, M.T.B.'s (9)

SICILY (Messina and Augusta)

- Heavy Cruisers (4)..... Pola, Bolzano, Trieste, Trento.
- Light Cruisers (3)
- Destroyers (fleet) (16)
- M.T.B.'s (3)

SYRACUSE - PALERMO - TRIPOLI

- Submarines (17)
- Destroyers (escort) (12)
- Minelayers (2)
- M.T.B.'s (12)

SARDINIA (Cagliari)

- Destroyers (escort) (3)
- Submarines (16)
- Minelayer (1)
- M.T.B.'s (6)

DODECANESE (Leros)

- Destroyers (fleet) (4)
- Destroyers (escort) (2)
- Submarines (6)
- Minelayer (1)
- M.T.B. (1)

---

*Reeskull, The Defensive, Appendix II, 593-97.*

338
LIBYA (Tobruk)
- Destroyers (fleet) (8)
- Submarines (9)
- Escort vessels (3)
- Depot ship (1)

TRIPOLI
- Destroyers (escort) (4)

ADRIATIC
- battleship (1) ....... Andrea Doria
- Destroyers (escort) (6)
- Submarines (4)
- Escort vessels (1)
- M.T.B.'s (8)

BHINDI - PARI
- Destroyers (fleet) (2)
- M.T.B.'s (8)

SPLEIA
- Battleship (1) ....... Caio Duilio
- Destroyers (escort) (15)
- Submarines (18)
- Escort vessels (2)
- Submarine chaser (1)
- M.T.B.'s (20)

RED SEA
- Destroyers (fleet) (7)
- Destroyers (escort) (2)
- Escort vessels (4)
- M.T.B.'s (5)
- Submarines (3)

TOTALS
- Battleships .......... (6)
- Heavy Cruisers ...... (7)
- Light Cruisers ...... (12)
- Destroyers (fleet) ... (51)
- Destroyers (escort) .. (69)
- Submarines .......... (115)
- Other ............... (107)
### APPENDIX II

**CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF MOVES BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AFFECTING THE WAR AT SEA, 1939-1941.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th September 1939</td>
<td>President orders organization of Neutrality Patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1939</td>
<td>Neutrality Act repealed. War material supply 'on cash and carry' basis started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1940</td>
<td>President declares policy to be 'all aid (to Britain) short of war'. U.S. Naval Mission under Rear Admiral H.L. Chormley arrives in London to study British experience and methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th July 1940</td>
<td>Exchange of leases of British bases in Western Hemisphere for fifty old U.S. destroyers agreed in principle. The exchange agreement was not formally ratified until September 2nd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st February 1941</td>
<td>U.S. Atlantic Fleet formed under command of Admiral E. J. King.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th March 1941</td>
<td>Presidential assent given to Lend-Lease Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1941</td>
<td>U.S. Mission under Captain L. Denfeld arrives to choose naval and air bases in British Isles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd April 1941</td>
<td>President orders transfer of ten coast-guard cutters to Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th April</td>
<td>Arrangements made to refit British warships in U.S. dockyards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th April 1941</td>
<td>U.S. naval and air bases opened in Bermuda, air bases on east coast of Greenland opened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th April 1941</td>
<td>American Defense Zone extended to all waters west of 26° West (announced 18th April. Red Sea declared no longer to be a 'combat zone'.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15th May 1941 ............. U.S. naval forces take over the bases in Argentina, Newfoundland.

27th May 1941 ............. President Roosevelt announces 'Unlimited National Emergency'.

7th July 1941 ............. U.S. forces relieve British garrison on Iceland.

19th July 1941 ............. U.S. Navy ordered to escort shipping of any nationality to and from Iceland.

10th August 1941 ........ Atlantic Charter meeting off Argentina between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill.

1st September 1941 ........ U.S. Navy allowed to escort convoys comprising ships of any nation in Atlantic.


11th September 1941 ........ President Roosevelt announces, 'from now on if German or Italian vessels of war enter these waters they do so at their own peril'.

16th September 1941 ........ Convey HS.150 sails with U.S.N. escort.


31st October ............... U.S.S. Reuben James sunk while escorting Convey HX.156. These were the first casualties to the U.S. Navy.

7th, 11th November 1941 ........ U.S. merchant ships allowed to be armed and to enter war zones.
# APPENDIX I

**GERMAN CAPITAL SHIP LOSSES, 1939-1945**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.5.41</td>
<td>Bismarck</td>
<td>Surface action with R.N. ships and F.A.A. aircraft</td>
<td>North Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.11.44</td>
<td>Tirpitz</td>
<td>R.A.F. aircraft.</td>
<td>Tromso, Norway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BATTLE CRUISERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.12.43</td>
<td>Scharnhorst</td>
<td>Surface action R.N. ships.</td>
<td>Arctic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.3.45</td>
<td>Gneisenau</td>
<td>Badly damaged by R.A.F. aircraft at Kiel on 25.2.42. Moved to Gdynia and sunk as a blockship.</td>
<td>Gdynia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**POCKET BATTLESHIPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.12.39</td>
<td>Admiral Graf Spee</td>
<td>Scuttled after action with Exeter, Ajax, and Achilles.</td>
<td>Off the River Plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4.45</td>
<td>Admiral Scheer</td>
<td>R.A.F. aircraft</td>
<td>Kiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.45</td>
<td>Lützow</td>
<td>Beached after damage by R.A.F. aircraft, 16.4.45. and subsequently scuttled.</td>
<td>Swinemünde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OLD BATTLESHIPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.12.44</td>
<td>Schleswig-Holstein</td>
<td>R.A.F. aircraft</td>
<td>Gdynia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.45</td>
<td>Schlesien</td>
<td>Mine</td>
<td>Swinemünde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HEAVY CRUISERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.4.40</td>
<td>Blücher</td>
<td>Norwegian gun and torpedo batteries</td>
<td>Oslo fiord</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


342
### Aircraft Carrier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damaged by aircraft bombing and gunfire</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Heavy Cruisers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged by aircraft bombing and gunfire</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Light Cruisers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged by aircraft bombing and gunfire</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged by aircraft bombing and gunfire</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### German Navy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### German Army

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never completed</td>
<td>24.4.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX J

FIGURES CONCERNING GERMAN U-BOAT SERVICE
1939-1945

1. On September 1, 1939 the strength of the German U-boat
arm was 57 U-boats.

2. Between September 1, 1939 and May 8, 1945, a further
1,113 U-boats were commissioned. Of these 1,099 were
built in German yards, 4 in foreign yards, and 10 were
seized from the enemy.

3. Of the grand total of 1,170 U-boats, 863 became operational.

4. Losses:

a. At sea
   Through enemy action ................. 603
   Cause unknown ........................... 20
   Accidents ............................... 7

b. In port
   Air attack and mines ...................... 81
   Other causes ............................. 42

   TOTAL: 753

5. On evacuation of overseas bases and at the end of the war,
215 U-boats were sunk or blown up by their crews. During
the war, 38 U-boats were scrapped as the result of
irreparable damage or on becoming obsolete; 11 U-boats
were handed over to foreign navies or interned in neutral
ports after sustaining damage. At the end of the war,
153 U-boats were handed over in British or Allied ports.

Total tonnage sunk by U-boats, 1939-1945: 14,119,413 tons

6 Dönitz, Memoirs, 489-90. (Appendix 6)
Documents:


These letters provide an oft-humorous insight into the pompous and bombastic Nazi Weltanschauung.


A collection of the speeches and broadcasts of Churchill from May 5, 1939 to February 9, 1941.


Hitler's sometimes pensive but usually bitter reflections on why the war had developed so badly contain useful material.


This "White Paper" attempts to prove that Britain’s aggression against Norway prompted the German invasion. The Documents are in the main captured papers belonging to the British Expeditionary Force dispatched to Norway in the spring of 1940.


Gilbert has selected a number of documents of the secret records of Hitler’s daily military conferences.
In September, 1942, Hitler ordered the formation of a stenographic service to record every word uttered in his situation conferences. The record was kept, first for historical purposes and second to prevent any misunderstanding. Of the hundreds of thousands of pages accumulated during the war, only a very small proportion have survived. The originals are now in the University of Pennsylvania Library.


The stenographic record of Hitler's nightly "table-talks" provides extremely valuable insights into the Führer's character and his opinions. One must take note of the participants of the conversations, since Hitler evidently voiced many opinions according to the nature of his audience. Thus a number of diametrically opposed observations emerge from these records.


A compilation of the main directives issued by Hitler for the conduct of the war.


This series is the most valuable source of documents on the internal and foreign policy of Nazi Germany, although care must be exercised because the publication is in the main a prosecution brief. Volumes I through XXIII contain a verbatim record of the proceedings, translated entirely into English. Volumes XXIV to XLII contain all documents, defence and prosecution, entered in evidence at the trial in their original language, usually German. Very often, the testimony of defence and prosecution witnesses, and of defendants, proves extremely useful for clarification purposes. Again care must be exercised in considering such evidence.


A collection of Führer directives annotated and translated, this work makes a somewhat different selection than Hubatsch's (*supra*). The annotation is sometimes (although admittedly necessarily) over-simplified.


Popularly known as "The High Command Case", the defendants at this further war crimes trial included many highly placed command and staff officers from the three armed services. Excerpts from testimony, interrogations, and arguments are published. All documents introduced in evidence are included.


These documents provide the most valuable single source for the high command relationship of the German navy with Hitler and S.K.W. The publication includes the record of most of the conferences between the Führer and the commanders-in-chief of the navy as well as conferences of lower rank naval officers with Hitler. Other pertinent information relating to the discussions such as charts, statistical tables, memoranda under consideration, S.K.W. drafts of proposed directives, and other information are included. Important excerpts from the War Diary of the German navy are also published. These documents were captured in the latter days of the war and provide an extensive and quite complete record of the conduct of the war by the German naval high command.


In 1945, the Allies seized the records of the German Foreign Ministry and the Reichs Chancellery. The archives extended back to 1867, but this publication only includes documents relating to the years 1937 through 1941, except in the case of Volume III which deals with the Spanish Civil War and begins in 1936.
The intention was originally to cover the period 1918-1945 in twenty volumes. Series B now ends in December, 1941 and no further publication is contemplated. (Series C covers the years 1933-1937.)

The documents published in this collection, although selected, provide an adequate source for German foreign policy both immediately prior to the war and during the course of the earlier years. Many of the Nuremberg documents are here duplicated although with much more accurate and grammatical translations, and with diligence exercised as to the ascertaining of pertinent information as to source, author, etc. of the document.


This small publication contains documents usually duplicated in D.G.F.P., but occasionally some not published elsewhere.


An English translation of the majority of the documents entered in evidence at the first Nuremberg Trial, this series contains the full text of the documents. In T.M.W.C., documents are sometimes broken into parts and scattered throughout the transcript of the proceedings. This is due to the ruling that the Tribunal would consider no written matter as in evidence unless read in full, word for word, to the court. Therefore, N.C.A. provides useful service by publishing the documents in entirety and in translation. Also included are the indictments, oral arguments, and various useful appendices and charts. Moreover, Supplements A and B contain written statements by the defendants, final arguments by defense counsel, and interrogations of both witnesses and defendants all arranged in subject categories.


The judgment, reasoning, and sentences of the International Military Tribunal.
Diaries, Memoirs, and other primary sources


The Italian foreign minister (and Mussolini's son-in-law) has left a valuable and caustic account of Italo-German relations. Ciano was anti-German, and his intimate connection with the stormy relations between the Axis makes clear the fact that Germany and Italy pursued diverse foreign policy goals and were somewhat unwilling allies.


Admiral Cunningham commanded the British navy in the eastern Mediterranean and therefore provides an extraordinary viewpoint of the conduct of the war in this theater from the British side.


Mietrich was a minor functionary in the National Socialist hierarchy and he over-emphasizes his role and influence. The book was not published until after Mietrich's death on the grounds that this would ensure acceptability of its credibility. Some interesting insights into Hitler's character and personality are provided.


This work is perhaps the most accurate and truthful of the naval memoirs published by German naval officers. But, omissions often indicate the bias of the work, and in this case Dönitz is unreservedly pro-German. He is also unashamedly critical of Allied policies, especially in the latter days of the war when by not opening negotiations, in Dönitz's opinion, the western powers aided the westward movement of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence and incidentally the subjugation of millions of Germans. He remains unabashedly complimentary of Hitler with the exception of naval affairs. This latter fact (and his last chapter) is the glaring fault in the work.
Acquitted at Nuremberg, Fritzsche, a minor official in the propaganda ministry, apparently indicted as a substitute for Goebbels who committed suicide, has written an interesting account of the trial from the viewpoint of the defendants.

Miss Fromm was a diplomatic columnist in pre-war Germany and her work contributes useful insights into the personalities of various leaders of the Third Reich.

This work is of particular value for the Channel Dash for which Galland provided air cover. Also in the latter years of the war, Galland provides useful and important information regarding decisions taken on "secret" weapons and the jet-propelled aircraft.

The Propaganda Minister's unique position as confidant to the Führer makes this diary invaluable in any study of the Third Reich.

Guderian became chief of staff of OKH after July 20, 1944. Previously, he had held command of all Panzer troops. His memoirs suffer from the typical fault of all of the post-war general's memoirs - the attempt to lay the blame for defeat entirely at Hitler's door.

An educated (Ph.D. history, Harvard) and cultivated Bavarian, Hansen has written an exculpatory account of his association with Hitler. One of the best memoirs of the early Party cronies, this book is well worth considering when Hitler's personality or opinions are being studied.

from internal evidence it appears that the book was written in the late spring and early summer of 1928. there was not published and, in 1935, the typescript was placed in an air-raid shelter for safekeeping. recovered by an american officer in 1945, the manuscript was ultimately located by bernard e. winberg in the united states record center, alexandria, va., in 1956. supplements mein kampf.


this edition is an unexpurgated english translation. particularly valuable in that hitler remains remarkably constant in his fundamental beliefs, the work is often confused and sometimes radically fanatical.

hoffmann, heinrich. hitler was my friend. trans. by l. h. steven london: burke, 1955.

hoffmann, as hitler's personal and official photographer, was an intimate crony of the fuhrer. unfortunately, the picture of the fuhrer which he sketches is transparently shallow.

kesselring, field marshal albert. kesselring: a soldier's record. trans. by lynton m adson. new york: william morrow & company, 1944.

this luftwaffe officer was commander-in-chief, south, 1943-45, and his recollections are particularly valuable for the italian campaign. he was convicted of war crimes and condemned to death, but sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in july, 1946. his memoirs are somewhat bitter but generally objective.


perhaps the best of the german generals' memoirs, manstein played a major role in the development of the plan for the invasion of france in 1940. he commanded a corps and later an army on the eastern front but was retired by hitler in march 1945.


extremely biased, this was written during the war.

Baader, Erich. My Life. Trans. by Henry W. Drexel. Annapolis, Md.; United States Naval Institute, 1960. This work is generally useful for the pre-war years but often inaccurate in dealing with wartime events. Baader is frank regarding his opinions and his subjectivity. Except for his relationship with Hitler, where Baader becomes defensively apologetic, the grand admiral’s account epitomizes the viewpoint of the German navy as presently expounded by German naval historians.

Rauschning, Hermann. The Voice of Destruction. New York: E. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1940. Interesting, but Rauschning tends to over-dramatize in this book. He is decidedly hostile to Hitler and National Socialism as is to be expected from a repentant member of the Party.


Strasser, Otto. Hitler and I. Trans. by Gwenda Lloyd. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946. Strasser was an early member of the National Socialist movement and fought to keep the “socialist” predominant. He attempted to form an autonomous northern party in Germany but was forced to flee. His brother, Gregor, was murdered in 1934. This is a valuable little book, although Strasser includes many lengthy dialogues of questionable authenticity.

An excellent study of the relationship between W.A.S.S. and the subordinate commands (especially G.R.K.H.) by a participant. Warlimont was Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces Staff under General Jodl. Warlimont was tried, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment in the *High Command Case*, but has since been released.


Weizsäcker was State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry from 1938 to 1943. From 1943 to the end of the war, he was Ambassador to the Holy See. His account is somewhat self-serving.
Secondary Sources:

(a) Hitler


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In this edition, Bullock has incorporated much of the new evidence available since the first publication in 1952, although he has not altered substantially his conclusions regarding Hitler - a man insatiable for power. Perhaps this thesis is overdrawn and over-simplified.

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A definitely hostile work, it contains much information on Hitler's earlier years for which all authors writing about Hitler are indebted. This biography has been superseded by Bullock's book.

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This study is an excellent account of Hitler's years in Vienna and the consequential shaping of his personality and beliefs.
An examination of Hitler while the Third Reich crumbled around the "Führer," this study is somewhat biased.

(b) Naval Affairs


The authors have some difficulty praising those units of the French Navy who remained loyal to Vichy and those which sailed to join Free France, but generally succeed. A decided French bias mitigates the work's usefulness.


This book is generally a popular account and, contrary to the praise by admirals Franke and Lamer in the foreword, the interpretation is inaccurate. It was originally published in England in 1953 with the title: Swastika at Sea.


The authors definitely write on the behalf of their own service, these eclectic accounts are made regarding German-Italian naval relations which seem quite accurate.


An extremely well-written book which lucidly explains the modern role of naval strategy. Although perhaps the author allows his pro-capital ship bias to show.


Popular account of the sinking of the Schepennorst.

A tactical and popular version of the battle of the Atlantic. Busch includes useful statistics.


A better-than-average account of the U-boat war from the German side. decidedly biased in favor of Dönitz and the German navy.


A popular and fictionalized account of the Trafalgar's auxiliary, it is not very useful.


Despite the title, an excellent study of naval actions and problems of World War II. Kemp was British Admiralty Archivist and head of the historical section.


A very interesting narrative on surface vessels. The author recounts both strategic and technological innovations from the advent of the iron-clad to the end of World War II.


His work suffers from the early date of its publication and from Martienassen's inevitable bias. A British naval officer, he edited and compiled the German naval documents which were published by the Admiralty as "Reichsminister Conferences on Naval Affairs." A good deal of new evidence, including the memoirs of the two main naval subjects of his study, has appeared since
"Martenssen's book was published. A number of German naval documents not published in K.G. A., are included which adds to the usefulness of the work.


The official history of the United States Navy in World War II.


A general naval history of World War II with the emphasis on the role of sea power in the development of strategy.


His excellent series is the official British war history of the naval side of World War II. Toskell writes lucidly and with considerable authority. Particularly valuable for the multitude of appendices, not only on British naval statistics, but also on the Axis powers.


A good one volume treatment of the naval warfare of World War II, this book is less detailed than the official history.


The best work on the German navy from the "other side of the hill."
Frazer, 1953.
A collection of essays, only two of which deal with
the Red Navy in World War II.

Pulega, Chaddeus W., Twilight of the Sea Gods. New York: W.W.
A popular treatment of the German Navy in World
War II which is not very accurate.

(c) Monographs and general works

Enoist-Véchin, Jacques, Sixty Days that shook the last: the
fall of France: 1940. Trans. by Peter Miles. New York:
P. E. Putnam’s Sons, 1943.
A scholarly account of the events leading to the
fall of France in 1940. Footnotes are not included
which detracts from the caliber of the study. The
author is extremely critical of the British role in
the campaign and is decidedly nationalistic. Contains
a detailed account of the action at ‘ers-al-Adir.


II. The Second World War, II: Their finest hour. Boston:

III. The Second World War, III: The Grand Alliance. Also

IV. The Second World War: IV. Theinge of fate. Boston:

V. The Second World War, V: Closing the Ring. Boston:

VI. The Second World War, VI: Triumph and Tragedy. Boston:
Churchill’s monumental work deserves attention if
only for his style and the work’s literary merits.
His interpretation of events in the war site is
sometimes misleading. The series is of great value
for the numerous documents published in the appendices
and the text, and for the great scope.


Peakin has composed perhaps the most scholarly study yet to appear on the subject. He is particularly valuable for his inclusion of documents not published elsewhere.


An admirable and comprehensive account of the war in the Mediterranean which is objectively treated.


A very useful reference book which is composed of an easily readable tactical map on one face of the page and a summary text on the opposite.


Although not as definitive as Wheater's official study of Seelowe (infra.), Fleming provides a good deal of color and discusses (and documents) the contemporary climate of opinion in Britain.


An excellent anthology. Contains a large number of contemporary accounts of all facets of the war in all theaters.


Gilbert, A. The psychology of dictatorship based on an examination of the leaders of Nazi Germany. New York: Ronald Press Company, 1950.

Gilbert was resident prison psychologist during the trial of the Major War Criminals at Nuremberg.

A comprehensive study of the development of the German general staff. Somewhat sympathetic to the army and prone to damn Hitler.


A scholarly and detailed study of the tribulations of Leningrad during World War II.


Possibly the best best bio rep. of Mussolini. Kirkpatrick is uniquely qualified to write such a work. He served in Italy with the British Diplomatic Corps and was later permanent Under-Secretary of the British Foreign Office.


An excellent, scholarly, and penetrating study of the complex internal and external relationship of Nazi Germany with the Catholic Church.

Liddell Hart, . . . the German Generals after the war and has compiled this brief history of the military career. His book was originally published in England with the title: The Other Side of the Hill.


An adequate tactical account of the two battles of Narvik during the Norwegian campaign 1940 viewed from the naval angle.


For an was a member of the Allied Control Commission. His book is a bitter polemic against German and "German militarism."

The best account of the revolt in the west (which centered around Paris) of July 20, 1944.


Hirer has attempted a monumental task and has succeeded in producing a readable history. His greatest fault is the obvious anti-German bias and the oftentimes procrustean interpretation. Still, the best general history of the Third Reich.


A unique examination of the diplomatic origins of the war between Germany and the Western powers in which the author has made a biting analysis of the role of the " appeasers " and the ineptness of the Western diplomats. His controversial theme in one sentence: " The war of 1939, far from being premeditated, was a mistake, the result of blunders in diplomacy on both sides."


Taylor was chief of counsel for the prosecution at the series of Nuremberg trials and prosecuted the I.G. Farben Command Case.


Contains a very good account and background of the invasion of Scandinavia.


A well documented study which examines the atrocities committed against the Jewish population of Europe.


The finest available history in English of the Spanish Civil War. Thomas' sympathies tend to lie with the Republicans.


As an official British war historian, Wheatley had access to German documents captured after the war and deposited in the British Admiralty, a privilege as yet unavailable to other historians.


A minutely documented study of the subjecting of the German army to the will of Hitler.


One of the best works on the war in Western Europe from Dunkirk to the end.

**Articles**

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