

Germany (American Zone)
 Opinions Expressed by Guderian
 Germany, Munich
 4 September 1950

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The following views were expressed by ex-General Heinz Guderian in a conversation with a reliable American source.

1. As a military man, Guderian is occupied with trying to determine how the defense of the West can be made possible in its present shattered state. Like most of the former German generals, he rejects the concept of narrow German nationalism, and regards a Franco-German rapprochement as the first and prerequisite, without which no defense is possible, even with unlimited American backing. He believes in German participation in West-European defense plans, but only on terms of full equality; in this view also, he is completely in accord with his colleagues. He thinks that reinforcement of the American troops in Europe would have an enormous beneficial effect on German morale, even though he admits at the same time that an additional division or two would not materially alter the present situation from a purely military point of view, and though he believes that the average German is also able to recognize this fact. (He pointed out that the Constabulary's armored scout cars are not calculated to impress a German who has stood face to face with a T-34 tank.)

2. Guderian states flatly that as matters now stand Germans could not and would not resist a Soviet invasion, and should not be expected to do so. He is particularly impressed by the logic and applicability of the question ascribed to Stalin, "How many divisions does the Pope have?" and emphasizes that the number of divisions (or the number of combat troops actually available) is the only consideration which will carry ~~any~~ any weight. In this connection, he is deeply concerned by the extent of American commitment in Korea, which he sees as a danger to Europe. Incidentally, he thinks that the number of divisions in the United States Army, in proportion to the number of men under arms, is "shockingly" low and represents an uneconomical disposition of manpower.

3. General Guderian has much respect for the Russian soldier and also for Russian military leadership, and rejects the commonly held belief that Russian staff work is bad and that Soviet strength is based solely on masses of not very mobile units. He remarked that during the war he and his staff habitually tried to calculate what tactics on the part of the Russians would cause the most trouble to the Germans, and they found that precisely those tactics were always adopted by the Russians. Furthermore, he mentioned that the Germans considered the Russians' feat of bringing the Siberian divisions from the east to Moscow in less than two weeks to have been little short of a miracle.

4. If, in his published statements and books, he puts stress on considerations of morale, ideological preparation, economic rehabilitation, etc., Guderian says this is chiefly lip service which he feels compelled to pay in public. These matters are of course important in their way and must not be ignored; but in his opinion the divisions always come first.

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