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Conversation with General HEUSINGER
11 ~~February~~ July 1956

1. I made a special trip to Bonn just a few days prior to my departure from the German Mission for the specific purpose of spending an evening with General HEUSINGER and his wife. [. . .] who was also present in Bonn on other business, joined us for dinner with Mrs. HEUSINGER at their home at #5 Brombergweg on the Venusberg above Bonn. ~~During this time~~

2. The ~~situation~~ situation in the Defense Ministry is generally improved since our last meeting more than six months ago but extremely serious problems still face Defense Minister BLANK and his staff. The quantity and quality of American support, the willingness and capability of the U.S. ~~Forces~~ Forces to assist both in the United States and in Germany with training matters and the general relationship between the German Defense Ministry and U.S. Forces are no longer problems; U.S. aid and support ~~are~~ are completely satisfactory. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ The political problems related to remilitarization are, however, assuming discouraging proportions

2. HEUSINGER arrived home ~~at~~ a few minutes after our arrival; my first impression was that he look ~~was~~ harried and tired. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Our conversation during the next four or five hours ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ provided a number of reasons why he should be. During this time we explored a number of interested questions: What are the implications of the SPD commitment to drop the Wehrpflicht? What will be the BHE and FDP position on the Wehrpflicht? Can the SPD conceivably form a coalition with the BHE and the FDP ~~in~~ 1957? ~~Will~~ Will the 96,000 man commitment for this year be met? What are the problems related to this? What is the current strength and make up of the forces? Was the Def Min satisfied with the 9000plus contingent ~~picked~~ picked up from the Grenzschutz? Are U.S. material and training aid adequate? Are you having any problems in your relations with U.S. Forces? What will happen

after you have reached a 100,000 man level? A 500,000 man level? What do you anticipate the Soviets will do to further delay this development? Are you satisfied with the organization of the Def Min? What is your estimate of public sentiment regarding the new German Army? How are the reforms associated with the name of BAUDISSIN working out? How do you think the future development continuing development of the German Defense Forces will effect the basic issue of reunification? Of NATO? The following is a summary of what I found to be HEUSINGER's views on these and related ~~xxxxxx~~ matters discussed:

a. Current Status of Remilitarization: With the recent transfer of almost 10,000 men from the Grenzschutz, Germany now has almost 33,000 men ~~xxxxxxxx~~ in her forces. There are more than 5000 of these are officers—almost none of which are ~~xxxx~~ junior officers. There is a real problem in the NCO grades. Unless there is an immediate and effective recruitment campaign the 96,000 year figure cannot be met and the cadres to handle the draftees will be far from complete at the end of 1956. The reasons: (a) the pay of soldiers cannot compete with salaries on the German economy, and (b) a military existence has little appeal in the German of 1956 (c) those young who are interested in a military career are concerned that the Army may, because of either political or technical developments, be reduced in size before it ever reaches the planned size of 500,000. Once the draftees are in training a certain percentage will adjust well to the life and elect to s

a. Current Status of Remilitarization: With the recent transfer of almost 10,000 men from the Grenzschutz, Germany now has almost 33,000 men in her armed forces. More than 5000 of these, are, however, officers---almost none of which were brought on active duty in the junior officer ranks. The shortage of qualified NCOs is even more acute; no solution for staffing out the NCO grades for the planned cadre units in the 96,000 man force which is the early 1957 goal has been found. General HEUSINGER expressed the opinion that an immediate and effective recruitment campaign may partially solve the cadre problem in the enlisted grades, but will do little to offset the basic causes for the lack of response to Minister BLANK's efforts to build up the forces. He enumerated these as: (a) the pay of soldiers cannot compete with salaries on the German economy, (b) a military career has little appeal to the young German in 1956, (c) young Germans who are interested in a military career are concerned that the Army may, because of either political or technical developments, be reduced in size before it ever reaches the planned size of 500,000. On the longer range development of a competent group of NCOs, General HEUSINGER was more optimistic. Once the draft is implemented and the first classes have experienced the realities of life in the German armed forces, a ~~ninety~~ percentage of the draftees will probably elect to stay in the service. If, however, the first classes are badly trained and improperly handled because of the present acute lack of a training NCO cadre, the future reenlistment program will face rough going.

b. U.S. EQUIPMENT and TRAINING SUPPORT: General HEUSINGER expressed complete satisfaction with the assistance being received from the U.S. Armed Forces Mission. In recent years HEUSINGER had expressed to me his concern that (a) the Germans would initially receive 2nd class U.S. equipment, (b) the equipment would be handled via a SHAPE arms pool subject to political pressures and undue control by the French, (c) the U.S. military leaders were not being sufficiently active in Bonn and (d) the Germans would ~~be~~ find themselves with soldiers and trainees before U.S. training and aid could be organized. He admitted that all of his apprehensions had been proved

groundless. He spoke glowingly of the reaction of the first officers' students back from courses in the U.S. In this connection he diverged to discuss the problem of language in the NATO world and emphasized the importance the Federal Republic would give to English and French in their training. He spoke with enthusiasm of the recent ceremony at Bremerhaven marking the first major delivery of new equipment. He told me that he had ~~talked~~ spoken for five minutes in English to the consternation of most of the German press representatives who later requested German text. He said that he himself was unable to keep up with the details of the equipment problem and recounted his own surprise on hearing from a cadre tank battalion commander that he already had almost the full complement of U.S. M-47s. In short, General HEUSINGER is satisfied with his ~~WAF~~ relations with the U.S. Forces.

c. The American TANK: We were particularly interested to learn that the Germans will equip their armored units exclusively with American armor equipment. Something over a year ago I had spoken with General HEUSINGER shortly after his return from a visit to the UK which had included demonstrations of the CENTURION. At that time HEUSINGER indicated that they preferred the CENTURION and would probably equip ~~the~~ the German units with this superior piece of equipment. HEUSINGER ~~insisted that~~ said that it had become apparent during the past year that training, supply and maintenance problems would be greatly simplified by the adoption of only U.S. armored equipment. He did not comment on his views on the respective merits of American and British armored vehicles.

d. The German ROLE in SHAPE: Regardless of how badly things may be going in the building up of an Army, it will not be long before the German units under arms will roughly equal the limited ~~strength~~ combat units that the French still have on the continent. HEUSINGER left no room for doubt that the Germans would press for a more active role in SHAPE commands once the Federal Republic's combat strength and effectiveness and be compared with that of the French. ~~He stated~~ In commenting on the French role in SHAPE, HEUSINGER recalled a conversation with General JUIN during a visit in recent months. JUIN had been interested in the establishment of a military command on the North African area which would be associated with but not subordinate to SHAPE and would be considered a military organization of NATO. HEUSINGER felt that this thinking reflected

a mixture of France's political problems and Marshall JUIN's own ambitions. HEUSINGER expressed the view that it had not been easy for either JUIN or MONTGOMERY to accept subordinate military roles to a General as young as General NORSTAD and that this had undoubtedly played a role in JUIN's decision to give up his SHAPE European Command.

e. German Officers in SHAPE Assignments: With English and French well established as the dominant languages in SHAPE, any German officer that does not have fluency in one or the other will ~~xxxx~~, HEUSINGER feels, have little chance of success in a SHAPE post. He noted the case of a German officer who is fluent in French ~~xxx~~, assigned to JUIN's headquarters and successfully performing the position of chief of logistics. ~~In general~~ ~~the operations~~ HEUSINGER will attempt to increase the number of German officers assigned to SHAPE positions although he feels that the enthusiasm for a ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{united} European solution has ~~lost~~ ground during recent months.

f. Organization of the German Defense Ministry: Noting the large number of ^{heads} ~~departmentx~~ which are directly responsible to the Minister and the equally broad and unmanageable character of SPEIDEL's "joint staff", HEUSINGER said that his own role is becoming more and more that of an office dealing with problems that overflow from both BLANK's and SPEIDEL's offices. No reorganization of the Ministry will be considered, however, until the pending legislation on organization has been passed. A very real consideration, he admitted, was the comparatively large number of general officers that could be justified in the present organization. Generals brought on duty now would, he said, be available and familiar with Ministry problems at the time that the actual formation of ~~Divisionx~~ troop units gets underway. The first Corps will probably be formed next year under the command of General ~~MATZKY~~ MATZKY, present commander of BGS troops. MATZKY will probably be called to duty in the Army as a Major General (two stars). General von SCHWERIN is currently discussing with HEUSINGER the possibility that he might be recalled to active duty as a ^{Lt.} ~~xxxxxxx~~ General---his rank at the end of the war. HEUSINGER feels that this is out of the question and is opposed in principle to recalled officer's to duty ^{are} reduced ranks.

g. HEUSINGER's View on MENDES FRANCE: HEUSINGER has come to regard MENDES FRANCE as the individual most responsible for the destruction of the EDC philosophy. During the actual events of the summer of 1954 he had not, he said, been one of those ~~German~~ Germans who had pointed the finger of accusation at MENDES FRANCE. ~~Subsequent events~~ Subsequent events have convinced him that MENDES FRANCE, among the Europeans and excluding the British, ~~will~~ will historically assume the role of the destroyer of ~~the~~ a fragile but popular beginning of a European Union.

h. REARMAMENT Vs REUNIFICATION: General HEUSINGER feels that once the Federal Republic army, although only in cadre strength slightly in excess of 100,000, the Soviets will again move to utilize this issue to ~~swiftly~~ destroy SHAPE and NATO. If the Soviets ~~were~~ were to make a suggestion that all foreign forces be withdrawn from both ~~Germany~~ East and West Germany, HEUSINGER feels that even a very popular and strong German government would have difficulty in obtaining popular support for the continued stationing of U.S. and British troops in Germany. Beyond that he feels that ~~to ask for the withdrawal of~~ to ask for the withdrawal of foreign troops ~~is~~ a political move in Germany under these circumstances might well prove contagious in the other ~~western~~ European Countries in which SHAPE forces are stationed. HEUSINGER does not believe that such a move would necessarily be ~~directly~~ directly linked with the reunification question. He feels that the West should not seriously consider any Soviet offer that does not include concrete Soviet steps to free the Satellite areas of Soviet controls but does not offer any solution as to just how the United States and other NATO countries could, by peaceful methods, remain in Germany if public opinion favored a withdrawal of troops. HEUSINGER said that he had in fact talked over this eventuality with Chancellor ADENAUER as early as 1954.

(Comment: The UPSWING estimate on this point is, I believe, very firm. UPSWING feels that the Soviets will preoccupy themselves with economic matters during the next five years and will do nothing to disturb the present inclusion of the Satellites and the GDR in the controlled Soviet economic orbit.)

i. The 1957 Elections: Forecasting on the outcome of the German 1957 elections is, at this time, a waste of time and energy in HEUSINGER's opinion. The substantial elements in the German political picture (economic prosperity, 7 years of building and recovery under Adenauer, no immediate concern of World War III etc.) suggest that an election might bring about no significant changes if held today. There are, he admitted, a number of ~~factores~~ ^{elements} that have developed during the past year ~~which~~ with which political analysts are speculating. Most of these are, however, factors that could be fully reversed in the year that lies ahead. HEUSINGER lends great importance to the strength of the SPD in its opposition to doing business with the Pankow Regime. In spite of the carefully worded recent SPD ~~party~~ resolution regarding the military draft, he considers an SPD/FDP/BHE coalition with no military draft almost impossible. Thus, he does not feel that the remilitarization of Germany will be decisively influenced by internal Fed Rep political developments.

j. U.S. Representation in Bonn: HEUSINGER spoke deplorably of the tremendous turnover of qualified U.S. representatives in Germany during the last ~~year~~ year and particularly in the last months. In this connection he noted the activities of Soviet Ambassador ZORIN (this was a week before ZORIN's departure was announced) which he compared only with those of Francois PONCET---long the object of much admiration by both of the HEUSINGERS.

k. HEUSINGER and SPEIDEL: There is ~~not~~ ^{very} obviously a rift developing between Germany's two top Generals. This dates back to the days when SPEIDEL was carrying out his political and ~~tasks~~ ⁱⁿ HEUSINGER's opinion, comparatively pleasant duties in Paris with the Interim EDC Planning Group while HEUSINGER was faced with often unpleasant and certainly most demanding task of setting the German Defense Ministry organized. Up to the last moment, HEUSINGER had expected that he would be ~~the~~ only three star officer initially appointed and was concerned with "looking about ^{for} something ~~for~~ SPEIDEL to do". Most ~~persons~~ individuals who are well informed on the intricacies of the German military hierarchy feel that the tables were clearly turned

when SPEIDEL became head of the very active Department IV of "Joint Staff" with HEUSINGER moved outward and upward to ~~xxxxxxx~~ act as a planner and planning coordinator for the "joint chiefs"---i. e. the heads of the three ~~xxxxxxx~~ service departments and SPEIDEL. Additionally, SPEIDEL is known to maintain very close relations with General (Ret) GENLEN, Chief of the German Intelligence Service, and Defense Minister BLANKHinslef. HEUSINGER seems to be quite removed from many of the important day to day developments in the "joint staff" which will have far reaching impact on the character of the German Forces. ~~THE~~ unresolved question of a 4 star General Officer for the German Forces is probably another element which tends to keep relations between HEUSINGER and SPEIDEL on edge.

L. REFORMS IN THE GERMAN ARMED FORCES: The reform movement which blossomed in the midst of general public enthusiasm for doing away with the "old German army" during the early days of the BLANK office is, according to HEUSINGER, ~~going through a~~ ~~series of~~ being criticized by many of the very members of the Bundestag who were in the vanguard of the reformers just a few years ago. ~~Criticism of the uniform, the abolition of many minor items of equipment and the discarding of certain~~ The first parades in Bonn and the appearance of the German officers and soldiers in public and, indeed, the experiences of the first soldiers in barracks have produced a flood of ~~critic~~ criticism of the uniform and many of the distinctly new customs of the German armed forces that had been designed to minimize association with the Wehrmacht and its predecessors. HEUSINGER says that the reform movement intentionally was permitted to go to some extremes, in recognition of the inevitable reaction that would result. HEUSINGER steadfastly supported Genl BARDISSIN as having followed an enlightened and correct program.