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CI FINAL INTERROGATION REPORT (CI-FIR) NO 30

MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSPIRACY OF 20 JUL 44

General

Source: HEUSINGER, Adolf

Rank: Generalleutnant

General HEUSINGER was chief of Section 1 (Plans and Training) in the OKH from 1940-1944. After 20 Jul 44 he was arrested on suspicion of complicity in the plot and held for ten weeks in Gestapo custody, after which time he was released for lack of evidence. He was present when the attempt was made on HITLER's life and was injured by the explosion. The information in this report is based on prisoner's own knowledge and appears to be reliable.

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Approved for Release

Date OCT 1992

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1. REFERENCES

- a. OI-PIR/6, Military Intelligence Service Center, dated 13 Sep 45.
- b. Historical Interrogation Commission, War Department General Staff, G-2, Historical Branch, MID, dated 10-11 Sep 45, 12 Sep 45, 18 Sep 45 and 2 Nov 45.

2. REASON FOR REPORT

This report is being published in answer to Brief, British Army of the Rhine, PWIS/Rop/183(3), dated 8 Oct 45, referring to SAIC letter "Pending Interrogation Reports No 2", dated 12 Sep 45.

3. REPORTa. History

The germ of the plot originated in the days before the war when Col Gen BECK was still Chief of the General Staff. His critical attitude towards HITLER's domestic and foreign policy and the ensuing military consequences is well known. He foresaw that HITLER's plans would necessarily lead to a military collision with the Western Powers, and warned against such military developments and complications since they would produce a Second World War for which Germany in the long run was not sufficiently strong. Because of this attitude BECK was removed from his post in 1938. Yet BECK still retained the admiration of many of his former subordinates; especially men like HEUSINGER who worked directly under him, realized his value and were attracted by his personality. This small circle remained faithful to him even when he buried himself in military studies in retirement at BERLIN. This circle was composed of:

FELLGIEBEL, Gen
 SODENSTERN, Gen von
 STUELPNAGEL, Gen Heinrich von
 HEUSINGER, Lt Col
 SCHULZE-BUETTGER, Lt Col
 TRESCKOW, Lt Col von

These men were all opposed to HITLER's political actions, especially the opposition to the Church, the persecution of the Jews and the suppression of expression of opinion.

Their criticism reached its first high peak in the autumn of 1939 and the winter of 1939-1940 when HITLER invaded Poland and thus brought Britain into the war. It was heightened by the fact that no attempt was made to reach a peaceful solution after the Polish campaign was concluded. Anxiety was voiced in numerous discussions of the matter in small circles under the moral leadership of Gen von STUELPNAGEL, then Ib, Oberquartiermeister in OKH. No decisions were made, however, since it was hoped that the C-in-C of the Army and the senior generals might still influence HITLER's policies. The controversy in November between HITLER and the C-in-C strengthened this opinion.

The result of the military successes in the West in 1940 was to drive this criticism into the background, but it reached its next peak at the time of the invasion of Russia in 1941 and HITLER's personal assumption of command of the Armed Forces. The doubts created by this foolish move against Russia were confirmed by the retirement of the C-in-C. The declaration of war against the United States was the final confirmation of the fears of the German generals. The circle of critics became wider, and serious consideration was given to the way in which the threatening catastrophe might be averted. The three primary aims of this circle were as follows:

- (1) The two-front war must be stopped on one front since Germany could not in the long run win such a war. For ethical, cultural and historical reasons, only agreement with the Western Powers was conceivable.
- (2) In order to obtain agreement with the Western Powers, Germany must renounce all her military acquisitions in the West, North and South-east, and the National Socialist regime in Germany must be removed from power.
- (3) The Eastern Front must be held at all costs.

The course to be followed was first clearly stated by Lt Col von TRESCKOV in the early summer of 1942, namely, the removal of HITLER with, if possible, HIMMLER and GOERING. Only in this way could the foundation be laid for the execution of the program which was advocated. TRESCKOV went into the question of the possibility of assassinating HITLER and the other measures which must follow successful action. At the same time efforts were being made to alter the chain of command by legal means. Until May 1944 legal methods were pursued under the leadership of Gen ZEITZLER, Chief of the Army General Staff, but without success.

The STALINGRAD catastrophe of 1942-43 brought on the third crisis in the development of the plot. During 1943 any doubt as to the necessity of removing HITLER vanished because of the series of defeats produced by HITLER's mismanagement of operations. Preparations now followed two lines, first the actual assassination, then the assumption of authority over the State.

The main conspirators in the assassination group were:

FELLGIEBEL
 FREYTAG, von
 LINDEMANN
 STAUFFENBERG, Graf
 STIEFF
 STUELPNAGEL, von
 TRESCKOV, von
 WAGNER

The main members of the political group were:

BECK
 GOERDELER
 HASSELT
 POPITZ
 WITZLEBEN, von

HEUSINGER does not know how much contact was established with foreign powers, but von TRESCKOV told him that he had an assurance from Britain that discussions could take place.

On several occasions attempts to assassinate HITLER had to be abandoned because chances of success did not appear to be good. Plans had been made for the following dates:

14 Mar 43
 Autumn 1943
 1 Jul 44
 15 Jul 44

Graf STAUFFENBERG, Chief of Staff of the Commanding General of the Replacement Army, became more and more the driving force of the plot.

In the meantime the pressure of events grew, and finally, on 20 Jul 44, the attempt was made. It happened suddenly, without adequate warning by STAUFFENBERG to all the interested parties.

b. Aims and Justification of the Plot

After HITLER had been put out of the way, the following aims were to be pursued for the preservation of Germany and in justifying the plot:

(1) Military and Foreign Policy

The multiple-front war, which was beyond Germany's strength, was to be terminated and all German-occupied non-German territory evacuated (France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Poland, Bohemia, Yugoslavia and Greece). The submarine campaign and the air war against the Western Powers was also to be cancelled. Peace with the Western Powers was to be sought, while the Eastern Front was to be held at all costs in order to prevent further Russian penetration into Europe. All Germany's gains were to be abandoned, except for German-inhabited territories, viz. Austria, Sudetenland, Memel.

(2) Domestic Policy

National Socialism was to be overthrown. The old Parliamentary system was to be restored, with parties and trade unions. By such measures confidence in Germany was to be restored abroad and a foundation created for Germany's future. Leading Nazis like GOERING, HIMMLER, GOEBBELS, LEY and RIBBENTROP were to be removed and all important Party and SS men were to be taken out of positions of authority. It was believed that as soon as HITLER was killed the system would collapse like a pack of cards. Only HIMMLER was considered dangerous, and it was hoped that he could be destroyed along with HITLER.

It was realized, however, that the success of the plot would usher in a difficult time for Germany. No matter what government took office, it would be faced with tremendous and unenviable problems. The severe measures which would have to be taken would make the men in office unpopular and stir up personal animosities. The charges, when these men were later tried before the Volksgericht, that they had acted out of personal ambition and for personal advantage, or the accusation made by some, that the General Staff wanted power for itself were, in HEUSINGER's opinion, a malicious distortion of the facts. Actually, the conspirators could have expected only a troublesome, thankless task. They acted from a feeling of responsibility to the German people, and from a feeling of moral necessity and duty.

c. Personalities (Believed dead by source unless annotated.)

(1) Principal Conspirators

VITZLEBEN, Field Marshal von
 BECK, Col Gen
 HOEPPNER, Col Gen
 FELLGIEBEL, Gen d Nachr Tr (Signal Corps)
 LINDEMANN, Gen d Art
 OLBRICHT, Gen d Inf
 STUELPNAGEL, Gen d Inf
 THIELE, Gen Lt
 STIEFF, Gen Maj
 TRESCKOW, Gen Maj von

FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN, Col von
 STAUFFENBERG, Col Graf
 QUIRNHEIM, Lt Col Merz von
 SCHULENBURG, 1st Lt von der
 WARTENBURG, 1st Lt York von
 SCHLABERNDORFF, 2nd Lt von (living)
 GOERDELER, Mayor
 POPITZ, Minister of State

(2) Accomplices

KLUGE, Field Marshal von
 CANARIS, Admiral
 WAGNER, Gen d Art
 HAASE, Gen Lt von
 HEUSINGER, Gen Lt (living)
 GERSDORFF, Gen Maj (living)
 CAUDRE, Col
 ERDMANN, Col
 FINK, Col
 HAHN, Col
 HANSEN, Col
 LINSTOW, Col von
 MEIXNER, Col
 ROENNE, Freiherr von
 SCHULZE-BUETTGER, Col
 KLAMROTH, Lt Col
 RATHGENS, Lt Col
 SMEND, Lt Col
 KLEIST, Maj von (living)
 KUHN, Maj (living)
 SCHRADER, Maj
 ARNTZ, Lt (living)
 HASSEL, Ambassador von
 SCHULENBURG, Ambassador von der
 HELLDORFF, Police President Graf
 LEHNDORFF, Graf
 DORNA-TOLKSDORF, Graf

(3) Possible Participants

ROMMEL, Field Marshal
 FROMM, Col Gen
 SPEIDEL, Gen Lt
 BRANDT, Col
 HASSEL, Col
 PLATE, Col von (living)
 SCHUCHARDT, Col

Gen HEUSINGER saw quite a number of the above men in the Gestapo prison in BERLIN after 23 Jul 44 during his 10-week confinement there. He has spoken with Gen Maj STIEFF and Lt Col SMEND.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Gen HEUSINGER's version appears in general agreement with other versions which have appeared. Details as to the participation of individuals could not be given with certainty. The extent of participation of some of the junior officers may not have been as great as implied here.

5. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As one of the few surviving participants in the plot, Gen HEUSINGER could probably provide additional information on the basis of detailed briefs on this subject.

He has now been sent to NUREMBERG. Further interrogation if required can be arranged through this Center.

AKK (Ed: RLP)

For the Commanding Officer:

Malcolm S. Hilty
MALCOLM S. HILTY,
Capt, AC,
Chief, OI Section

10 Jan 46

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