

Memorandum for the President: Boston Series

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Perusing the enemy bureaucracy's most secret files.

The OSS station in Bern obtained access during the war to some of the classified communications among German government offices and between Berlin and its representatives abroad. A number of the intelligence reports paraphrasing these documents General Donovan considered worthy of the personal attention of the President, and carbons of these are included in his files of correspondence with the White House.¹ A sampling of historically noteworthy items thus transmitted is reproduced below.

New Source

10 January 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

We have secured through secret intelligence channels a series of what purport to be authentic reports, transmitted by various German diplomatic, consular, military and intelligence sources to their headquarters. The source and material are 'being checked as to probable authenticity both here and in London. We shall submit later a considered opinion on this point. It is possible that contact with this source furnishes the first important penetration into a responsible German agency.

We have labeled these reports the "Boston Series" and append hereto the first fourteen.²

GERMANS SECURE BRITISH REPORTS

Shortly prior to the 4th of November Ambassador Von Papen came into possession of certain documents on which he clearly places great value and which, seemingly, were secured from the British Embassy in Ankara by an important German agent.³ Among the cables was a list of questions which the British Ambassador took to Cairo for his own guidance in consulting with Eden. Also included was a Foreign Office memorandum of October 7, apparently entitled, "A Long-Range View of Turkish-British Policy." By a special courier these and additional documents were dispatched to Berlin. Among these additional documents was a memorandum presumably dealing with the steps which the English were taking in Turkey in preparation for war and which was referred to in a list of questions.

TREATMENT OF ITALIANS LOYAL TO KING

The following order was dispatched by Keitel from General Headquarters to all involved, on the 12th of September:

The following treatment shall be applied at the command of Hitler, to all Italian troops who permit their arms to come into

the possession of rebels or who in any manner unite with rebels for mutual ends; if captured, 1) Officers are to be shot at once; 2) Soldiers and non-commissioned officers, avoiding as much as possible any passage through Germany, are to be dispatched at once to the East and put under Military Command for labor.

TREATMENT OF ITALIAN JEWS

On October 6, 1943, the following recommendation was made to high German sources by a German official in Italy:

Orders have been received from Berlin by Obersturmbannfuehrer Kappler to seize and to take to Northern Italy the 8,000 Jews living in Rome. They are to be liquidated. General Stahel, the city commandant of Rome, will permit this action only if it is consistent with the policies of the Reich Foreign Minister. It would be better business, in my opinion, to use the Jews, as in Tunis, for work on fortifications. Together with Kappler, I shall present this view through Field Marshall General Kesselring.

SECRET NAZI RADIO IN DUBLIN ⁴

A secret radio transmitter is located in the Nazi Legation in Dublin, and the Irish are aware of its existence. Regular cables from Dublin are sent, with considerable delay, by way of Bern; the Nazis are keeping the secret transmitter for emergency use only. The Irish are putting pressure on the Nazis to give up this transmitter, but the Germans are stalling. The Nazi Minister, Hempel, was of the opinion that he should be permitted to state to DeValera that such a crisis might result from the Irish insisting on the surrender of the transmitter that it might result in the recall of Hempel, thereby causing a decrease in the independence now enjoyed by Ireland in relations with England.

NOTE: With reference to the above report, OSS is now advised by its London Office that this transmitter was removed on December 24th by the Government of Eire.

INTERNMENT OF GERMAN FLIERS IN EIRE

The German Government in December proposed that, to avoid being interned, Nazi airmen landing in Ireland should claim that they are on a practice flight. Munitions and bombs are to be dropped overboard prior to landing. On the basis of such actions by Nazi fliers, the German Government is to request that DeValera release all Nazi airmen who land in Ireland from now on. Then perhaps a civilian airplane could fly to Ireland for the purpose of picking up these fliers, thereby affording the German Government a chance to send a new German official to Dublin.

NOTE: With reference to the above report, OSS had been advised from London that, whether or not German aviators were engaged in "nonoperational" flights, everyone has been interned on landing and they will continue to be interned.

11 January 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The following paraphrase comes from German sources, the ultimate source allegedly being the German Foreign Office. It purports to be a report to Berlin by the German Minister to Switzerland, embodying the substance of a report from the Swiss Minister in Washington to the Swiss Foreign Office:

"1. K. O. Schweiz [Note: Kriegs Organization, the Swiss secret intelligence agency] ⁵ has seen reports of the Swiss Minister, which were based upon talks with the Vice President.⁶ According to these reports, at the start of the Moscow Conference the Americans and British tried to vindicate both the past and future actions of the Allied GHQ's; however, their Russian partner exhibited practically no sympathy or appreciation of their position. On the other hand, it seems that the foundations were laid for coming military cooperation. Not until a second front has been opened up, i.e., not until the Allies have carried out a successful invasion of France, will this plan for cooperation go into effect. Until then Russia retains the right to unrestricted action in military and political matters. The Vice President stated, however, that Russian conditions for more complete military cooperation will soon be met.

"10. The report of the Swiss Minister is a valuable supplement to

the reports from friendly diplomats which I [the German Minister to Switzerland] sent earlier. The reason that the above report contains so much more concrete information than the data which came to Bern from the American and British governments is due to the fact that the Vice President was talking to the Swiss Minister, his brother-in-law, in the greatest confidence."⁷

The V-Weapons

10 July 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Here is a message just received through OSS in Berne from our informant strategically placed in Berlin:

"1. With reference to the rocket bombs, extremely secret information from Pari (Koerperbau) ⁸ reveals that the 'gerade Laufapparatur' ⁹ is produced in Gdynia, at the Ascania works; both the V-1 and V-2 models are made in Hersograd (sic), which is located in Niederdonaul ¹⁰ in the vicinity of St. Valentin; the 'Duesen' ¹¹ are built at the Krupp works in Wuppertal; additional parts which are not named are manufactured by the Siemensplauia ¹² factories at Murtenberglech (sic) ¹³, situated 30 kilometers north of Augsburg.

"2. Approximately 10% of the V-1 model rocket bombs will have short-wave transmitters installed in them. The purpose of this will be to direct the path and aim of the rocket bomb. The problem which arises with respect to this, however, is whether waves transmitted from England will be able to interfere with the apparatus.

"3. To the best of the informant's knowledge, Berlin has not been able to obtain any first-hand information regarding consequences of the bombing of southern England. They have secured the following indirect reports, however, through third persons:

"(A) On June 29th, von Papen wired Berlin that he was informed in confidence by the Deputy General Secretary that although England has ended the suspension of

diplomatic privileges and although the Turkish government has asked its Embassy at London for a report on this topic, still no report has been received.

Britain has requested all diplomatic representatives stationed in England not to transmit any information regarding the invasion situation and the Nazi weapon.

"(B) From Madrid, Ambassador Dieckhoff wired the following on July 2nd: In the last two days, the initial results of the rocket bombing of southern England have become a great deal graver. If this bombing is maintained, it is anticipated that there will be heavy damage and disorder, even though public services have not yet been halted. Dieckhoff's information was based on a cable from Alba which reached Madrid on July 1.

"4. In the neighborhood of Orlamuende, south of Kahla on the railroad line between Rudolfstadt and Jena, a large new airplane plant is being built. It is underground in part. It was already bombed on either June 29th or 30th, but this raid did not cause much injury and the plant will soon be in operation. Pursuit planes (Jagd maschinen) are manufactured here; in addition, perhaps new secret weapons are also produced. In comparison with the V-1 model, the V-2 travels through the stratosphere. It is radio-controlled and is therefore a more accurate weapon. In addition, it possesses a longer range. This new model will be in use by the Nazis within 60 days, at the outside."

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

We have just received through our representative in Bern the following report from a reliable source inside Germany, concerning the characteristics of the German V-2 bomb:

"A-4 is the designation applied to the V-2 bomb by the experts, but there are many conflicting reports concerning it. It is reported to be manufactured at Saint Gallen in Austria southeast of Steyr. The parts are assembled at MDW (Mittel-Deutschen Werke) Harz (sic) and all buildings for this work are located beneath the earth. The most effective way to cripple this production would be to smash the lines for rail shipment. The weapon is claimed to be capable of a speed of 1 kilometer per second and to sustain itself in flight for a distance of 500 to 600 kilometers. It carries anywhere from 1 to 2 tons of explosive charges and has a weight of about 20 tons. It is *not* directed by remote control, however. The fuse is manufactured in Moertingen near Augsburg. The bomb is propelled from steel plates which are mounted on a movable track. The Germans are said to be all ready to employ the weapon in Norway. On October 3, a wire was sent by General Jodal¹⁴ to the Oberbefehlshaber in the West that this is not a propitious time, politically, to launch these bombs against Paris, and no attack should be made in that region now. It is the opinion of everyone that any talk of other so-named V weapons is mere propaganda, or, at least if there are such bombs, they will not be ready for use till March or April next year. If the V-1 or V-2 are directed by remote control they use a wave length frequency of 24 to 56 centimeters. Operations have been resumed at Peenemuende."

Field Comment¹⁵

15 April 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The enclosed dispatch from Berne and the accompanying evaluation of its source should, it is believed, be brought to your attention as early as possible.

You will recall earlier copies of a special character which were secured from original official German sources through our Agency in Switzerland. This cable is not such a message but it is the evaluation by our principal Swiss intelligence representative¹⁶ of two hundred such enemy documents (four hundred pages) which have just come into his hands.

As is customary with material of such special character these enclosures are also being delivered personally to the Secretary of State, General Marshall, Admiral King, General Eisenhower and the Secretary of the Joint Chiefs.

Under existing arrangements on this particular contact the British will see this cable and, as in the past, will doubtless show it to their highest officials.

MEMORANDUM TO ACCOMPANY 2787-92 ATTACHED

With regard to the attached message which left Bern April 12th, the following is to be said.

(1) The author of message is an American citizen, 52 years old, in charge of OSS secret intelligence in Switzerland since November 1942. His intimate knowledge of European politics dates back to 1915. During the last war he acted as an intelligence officer for the United States Government from the Legation in Switzerland. Subsequently, he represented the United States officially on several occasions in important diplomatic negotiations. During the last 30 years he has had a continuing expert and responsible interest in European affairs.

(2) All "Boston" (Kappa) material has been handled personally by him in Switzerland since it first appeared in October 1943.¹⁷

(3) The sender of this message has hitherto acted merely as a

reporter of material received by him, transmitting it as it reached him, and only occasionally making a brief note of comment on some point of fact or on some individual named in Boston material.

(4) His last previous evaluation, a month ago (not based primarily on earlier Boston material), was conservative, and by no means optimistic with regard to the possibility of an early German internal collapse.

(5) As a man experienced in affairs, he knows how significant the attached message may be and the responsibility he assumes by sending it.

(6) However, in view of the very great implications in this message, a cable has been sent to the author requesting him to review it carefully to see whether he wishes, on reflection, to modify any of its language and to report here by cable immediately.

(7) It would seem that the author, thanks to the sudden receipt of 400 pages of material all at one moment, finds himself in a position where he can see the whole picture rather than any single part. He is probably better able to see and evaluate that whole picture than the Germans are themselves, since they have neither the time nor the calm nor the undistracted minds to take an overall view of their own diplomatic situation.

(8) You will be further informed when and if any modification of this message comes from Bern.

Sincerely regret that you cannot at this time see Wood's material as it stands without condensation and abridgement. In some 400 pages, dealing with the internal maneuverings of German diplomatic policy for the past two months, a picture of imminent doom and final downfall is presented. Into a tormented General Headquarters and a half-dead Foreign Office stream the lamentations of a score of diplomatic posts. It is a scene wherein haggard Secret Service and diplomatic agents are doing their best to cope with the defeatism and desertion of flatly defiant satellites and allies and recalcitrant neutrals. The period of secret service under Canaris and diplomacy under the champagne salesman is drawing to an end. Already Canaris has disappeared from the picture, and a conference was hurriedly convoked in Berlin at which efforts were made to mend the gaping holes left in the Abwehr. Unable now to fall back on his favorite means of avoiding disconcerting crises by retiring to his bed, Ribbentrop has beat a retreat to Fuschl and

retains a number of his principal aides at Salzburg. The remainder of the Foreign Office is strung out all the way between Riesengebirge and the capital. Almost impossible working conditions exist in the latter, and bombing shelters are being permanently used for code work. Once messages have been deciphered, a frantic search begins to locate the particular service or minister to which each cable must be forwarded; and, when a reply is called for, another search is necessary to deliver this to the right place.

Borman or Neubacher will step forward if Ribbentrop is sacked, and one of them will carry out Gestapo diplomacy. Ample evidence of what this will mean is contained in 100-odd pages of Weesenmeyer cables describing the situation in the Hungarian capital. There, however, the drama involves that old fox, Horthy, playing the role of a 1944 Petain. Weesenmeyer's cable dated the 20th of last month ends on the following querulous note: "Within the last 24 hours, I have had three long talks with Von Horthy. As a result, I am becoming more and more convinced that on the one hand the Regent is an unmitigated liar and on the other he is physically no longer capable of performing his duties. He is constantly repeating himself, often contradicting himself within a few sentences, and sometimes does not know how to go on. Everything he says sounds like a memorized formula, and I fear that it will be difficult to convince him, let alone win him over."

In Sofia, cagy Bulgarians are playing all kinds of tricks on Beckerle and going off to Turkey on pleasure trips, while Nazi offices are accusing each other right and left of letting traitors clear out from under their noses. In Bucharest, Antonescu's harried aides try to think up excuses for the Stirbey-Chastelain incidents that will satisfy the Nazis, while the Marshall himself is getting reports that looting German troops are just ahead of the Russians.

The final death-bed contortions of a putrefied Nazi diplomacy are pictured in these telegrams. The reader is carried from one extreme of emotion to the other, from tears to laughter, as he examines these messages and sees the cruelty exhibited by the Germans in their final swan-song of brutality toward the peoples so irrevocably and pitifully enmeshed by the Gestapo after half a decade of futile struggles, and yet at the same time sees also the absurdity of the dilemma which now confronts this diplomacy both within and outside of Festung Europa.

19 April 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

In connection with the message from Switzerland (transmitted to you on 15 April 1944) giving an appreciation of the German political and diplomatic situation rendered by the principal OSS intelligence officer, Switzerland, he was immediately queried as to whether he wished to modify or add to that message, in view of its import. He has now replied.

He states:

(1) That he sees no reason to change or qualify his earlier message as a description of the current Nazi diplomatic and political scene.

(2) That though his evaluation is derived most immediately from the material recently received by him, and from conversations with one tried informant, he has received other similar reports recently from other well-proven informants in the same strain, and background data to him in Bern supports his view.

He adds:

That his message should not be read as indicating that the morale of the Nazi army is nearing collapse (excepting probably the so-called Gross Deutscher, Slav and other non-German elements). Nor does he think that any important Nazi military officials are ready and willing to let us come in through the West unopposed. He believes, rather, that fierce opposition may be given to any invasion attempt. A collapse of Germany might follow, however, a few months after the establishment of a firm toe-hold in the West.

He concludes:

The timing of the invasion attempt may be all important. The German people are war-weary and apathetic, and even in Nazi

circles the same kind of psychological depression can be seen as appeared last August and September.

Yet if they could stabilize the Russian front once more, they might catch a second wind, and put up an even stronger defense against invasion.

1 Described in the first of this series, subtitled "Sunrise," in *Studies* VII 2, p. 73 ff.

2 The source was publicly identified as "George Wood," a subordinate official in a branch of the Reich Foreign Ministry, in Edward P. Morgan's "The Spy the Nazis Missed" in *True* magazine for July 1950. Morgan's story, based on information from "Wood," is fictionalized and inaccurate in some of its details but otherwise substantially correct. It reveals that the first of Wood's reports were cabled from Bern to Washington in late August 1943. Why "the first fourteen" were not disseminated until after more than four months is not clear.

3 The famous Cicero. Documents supplied by Wood identified him sufficiently for the British to take counteraction. These were not among the first delivered, however; Morgan's story in *True* cites them as a sample of the "important news" with which "the secret circuit between Berlin and Bern," established after Wood had made two trips to Bern in person, "became heavily laden." Cicero's own memoirs (Elyesa Bazna, *I Was Cicero*) give Wood's true name as Kolbe.

4 Morgan puts the delivery of a fancifully embroidered version of this document not with the initial take but as one of Wood's reasons for making--still in 1943, "late October"--his second trip in person to Bern.

5 Erroneous. K. O. Schweiz would be the German Abwehr station in Switzerland.

6 Henry Wallace.

7 Admiral Leahy made excerpts from this memorandum public in his memoirs (*I Was There*, pp. 220-1).

8 Paris body works.

9 The edited version of this report which was delivered to the other recipients reads "flight control mechanism."

10 Translated in the edited version to "the lower Danube region."

11 Translated in the edited version to "jets."

12 Typo for Siemensplania.

13 Noted in the edited version as probable garble for Meitingen-bei-Augsburg, but later messages have Moertingen.

14 *Sic.*

15 Note that the memoranda in this section preceded those on the V-weapons, dating well before the invasion of Normandy.

16 Allen Dulles.

17 This date splits the difference between the actual first appearance in August and the first dissemination in January 1944. The volume of reporting did increase in October with Wood's second trip to Bern.

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